

Decalogue for the Sharing Group

1. Meetings are led by the Holy Spirit through Mary.
2. Purpose of the meeting:
 - To become aware of my weaknesses and the truth of being loved by God
 - To respond to the desire to deepen my faith
 - To be open to others, my brothers and sisters in the group
 - To share different experiences of my faith and how God is present in my life
3. When I go to the meeting, I will pray to God for others and myself.
 - Prayer of empty hands or that of the tax collector is recommended.
4. I will remember that I am God's child who has the right to trust and await miracles.
5. As a participant in our meeting I will:
 - Serve others and not count my own merits
 - Create the atmosphere of calm, focus/concentration and openness
 - Not impose on others my ways of thinking, reacting and perceiving
 - Avoid giving advice or solving others' problems
 - Speak from my personal "I" rather than use such terms as "you, we, us, people, we should, others do this"
 - Avoid discussion and criticism
6. By keeping what is shared in the meeting confidential, I will preserve each participant's freedom to share openly and protect their dignity as a child of God.
7. I will not be afraid of moments of silence, since I or somebody else may need time to reflect. Moments of silence provide us with unique opportunities for prayer and entrustment to God.
8. I will remember to attentively listen to what my brother or sister is saying in order to help them in the process of sharing.
9. When I give a witness talk or share my faith, God's grace is not only given to me but it is being multiplied and given to others.
10. Above all, God expects from me humility and openness. Even one person who is humble and open to God can create an appropriate climate during a given meeting that will spread to all participants. The most important and desirable goal is not the format of the meeting, but it is to be open to God's grace and presence.

Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 1847, footnotes 116: St. Augustine, *Sermo* 169, 11, 13: PL 38, 923, **117** I *Jn* 1:8-9; **No. 1851, footnote 126:** Cf. *Jn* 14:30; **No. 2840, footnote 136:** Cf. I *Jn* 4:20 . www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/catechism

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André Daigneault, *The Long Journey to Serenity: to recover our heart of a child* (Ft.

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APRIL 7, 2024 ~ 2ND SUNDAY OF EASTER; DIVINE MERCY ~ YEAR B
SPIRITUAL REFLECTION ON SUNDAY'S READINGS

PREPARED BY:
FAMILIES OF NAZARETH MOVEMENT USA
COMMUNION OF LIFE WITH CHRIST THROUGH MARY

Opening Prayer
Read Decalogue
Read Scripture
Read Reflection

Reading I	Acts 4:32-35
Responsorial Psalm	Ps 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24
Reading II	1 Jn 5:1-6
Gospel	Jn 20:19-31

Opening or Closing Prayer

Dearest Father, Your Son tells us, "Unless you turn and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven." I long to be Your smallest child. Help me to rediscover You as the One Who delights in me, Who calls me as His own.

My Jesus, You say to us, "Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." You are the way to heaven. Thank You for saving me and giving me Yourself in the Holy Eucharist. Reactivate the call of my Baptism to serve the Church in childlike humility, "boasting only in God."

Holy Spirit, reveal to me my weaknesses that I may seek Jesus' strength. Reveal to me my nothingness, that I may await all things from Him. Convince me of Jesus' words, "What is impossible for human beings is possible for God."

Blessed Mother, I entrust my prideful doubt, fear, discouragement and ingratitude to your intercession so that I will believe, as God's beloved child and yours, "Ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you."

We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen

*Families of Nazareth USA
Summer retreat 2010*

Spiritual Reflection

Let those who fear the LORD say, "His mercy endures forever." Ps118:4

We are very fearful of facing our real culpability. The pharisaic side that lives in us leads us to suppress our faults and to perceive ourselves as just. One believes himself pure and just because he fears the anguish that would reveal his repressed culpability. He is afraid to admit his guilt and, the more fearful, the more he needs to appear strong and hide his fault. . .

Suffering from a feeling of guilt (and it could be a real culpability), this person will always fear being blamed. They will do everything to never be accused. They will develop behavior that protects them from all criticism in order to avoid the anguish of feeling guilty. Then they will appear before others with such a perfect demeanor that they become unassailable. Unconsciously, this person says to themselves: *"I do not want to be unmasked at any price – I will never admit. If I am unmasked, I will be seen as I am, I will not be loved anymore, I will be rejected"*. . .

Peace cannot be obtained by saying that everything is fine, that we should not feel culpable, and that sin does not exist. If we desire to reach a tranquil old age and die peacefully, we must be open to God's forgiveness and sincerely admit our faults.

Here, we need to avoid confusion. To forgive (to absolve) is not the same as to excuse, to understand, to close the eyes, to pass over or to clear away – that would mean not accepting certain facts, ignoring the real culpability, not taking it into account, justifying it. One must not confuse the concept of forgiving someone with that of reassurance or of liberating that person from feelings of guilt, by trying to stifle remorse. In this way, one denies the responsibility of that person and declares them partially or totally innocent. A man of a certain age who had killed in his youth, or a middle-aged woman who had an abortion at sixteen, eighteen, or twenty, does not need to be pronounced innocent, or for the priest to close his eyes by trivializing these faults. These persons need to confess the seriousness of their act and, through the minister of the Sacrament, **feel that God is Mercy and can forgive everything, even the worst things**,* if a person recognizes their fault without minimizing it, and truly confesses it. . .

In this long journey toward serenity, we need to descend into our heart to meet the One who loves us the way we are. God loves us and sees us as we are. There is no hiding from him. The heart of God is, at the same time, both love and truth. Therefore, **we must enter into our heart and accept ourselves with mercy by offering ourselves to Love**.* The look of the heart that God offers is a look of love. We cannot see ourselves in truth without seeing ourselves with love. When

we have accepted to acknowledge ourselves as sinners, we must recognize this wounded child in ourselves and see him with love and truth. Whatever we have done, whatever our pride, our pharisaism, we must, after admitting it to ourselves, let ourselves be forgiven and forgive ourselves. **emphasis added by editor*

Father André Daigneault, *The Long Journey to Serenity*, pp.106-107, 165

References from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

1847 "God created us without us: but he did not will to save us without us." ¹¹⁶ To receive his mercy, we must admit our faults. "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." ¹¹⁷

1851 It is precisely in the Passion, when the mercy of Christ is about to vanquish it, that sin most clearly manifests its violence and its many forms: unbelief, murderous hatred, shunning and mockery by the leaders and the people, Pilate's cowardice and the cruelty of the soldiers, Judas' betrayal - so bitter to Jesus, Peter's denial and the disciples' flight. However, at the very hour of darkness, the hour of the prince of this world, ¹²⁶ the sacrifice of Christ secretly becomes the source from which the forgiveness of our sins will pour forth inexhaustibly.

2840 Now - and this is daunting - this outpouring of mercy cannot penetrate our hearts as long as we have not forgiven those who have trespassed against us. Love, like the Body of Christ, is indivisible; we cannot love the God we cannot see if we do not love the brother or sister we do see. ¹³⁶ In refusing to forgive our brothers and sisters, our hearts are closed and their hardness makes them impervious to the Father's merciful love; but in confessing our sins, our hearts are opened to his

Questions for Reflection

1. How do I understand "fear of the Lord"? Do I have a reverential love for Him or a certain fearfulness of admitting the guilt that hides me from His Mercy?
2. Celebrating Divine Mercy Sunday, how does Jesus crucified and resurrected reveal Himself to me? How can I be more open to sincerely admitting my faults and accepting His forgiveness?
3. How can the example of Mary, in her attitude of a childlike spirit, be my guide and intercession to becoming more childlike toward my Redeemer?

Prayer after Sharing

Thank you, God, for allowing me to see the truth about my weaknesses and how it calls upon the abyss of your merciful Love.