

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. 301, footnote 160: Wis 11:24-26; No. 309.

www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/catechism

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Tadeusz Dajczer, *The Gift of Faith, 4th ed.* (Ft. Collins, CO: In the Arms of Mary

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Families of Nazareth Movement – www.familiesofnazareth.us

APRIL 14, 20 24 ~ THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER ~ 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 3:13-15, 17-19

Responsorial Psalm Ps 4:2, 4, 7-8, 9

Reading II 1 Jn 2:1-5a

Gospel Lk 24:35-48

Opening or Closing Prayer

Dear Father, great is Your Mercy.

My true vocation is intimacy with You in the Kingdom of Heaven. May the new model of righteousness Your Son has given me, "as I have done, you should also do," open me more to Your mercy and transform me into Your divine likeness.

Dear Jesus, holy is Your Name.

May your prayer, "that they may be one as you, Father, and I are one," become my own desire. Teach me how to build up the unity of Your Mystical Body by embracing and living out my vocation to authentic holiness and happiness.

Dear Holy Spirit, amazing is Your Grace.

Grant me your gifts in order to "always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks" the reason for my hope. Thank you that, through You, I can encounter Jesus daily in the Eucharist, the source of my hope, even in the situations of my life that are most difficult to understand.

Dear Mother Mary, source of my joy.

"Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled." As a vessel of the Holy Spirit, teach me to live the Beatitudes of your Son. Wrap me in your mantle, where I can believe in His mercy and fulfill my vocation to be salt of the earth and light of the world.

I 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 2011*

Spiritual Reflection

Jesus was made known to them in the breaking of bread. Lk 24:35.

The difference between knowing naturally and knowing through faith is not merely a difference of degree, but is the essence of the matter. Faith brings about our unity with God's thinking and an eternal sharing in the light by which God knows Himself. In this sense, it leads to contemplation and an introduction to the future knowledge of God in eternal life. . .

Faith enables us to overcome pretenses and to see the primary cause above secondary causes. It allows us to see that all that happens around us does not happen due to man's power. Faith allows us to discover the traces of God in creation. It gives us the ability to perceive God's will in phenomena and to see events as signs of God passing by. . .

Faith allows us to notice the traces of God's works in everything, to understand that He is present within us – in our spiritual, emotional and physical lives. **If we know how to see God in everything, our prayer will become a prayer of faith.** It will be a prayer not only of words but also a prayer of seeing and admiring the world, a prayer of gratitude for everything that God gives us. Through faith we discover that man only seems to be the protagonist in the history of the world; in reality God is the main protagonist. The presence of God throughout history affects equally the things that happen in the realm of politics, society, and the economy, as well as in our family or in professional matters. He is present everywhere, and everything depends on Him. In His hands lie the destinies of all of us, as well as the destinies of nations and of the world. We come to know all this through faith, which brings about inner peace in us. This peace flows from faith that gives us the understanding that He, who is the eternal might and eternal Love, holds everything in his hands filled with mercy. He guides everything with His eternal wisdom and total love. Faith gives us feelings of security and peace, and the confidence that we are **always immersed in God's love.** Faith is a different way of looking at the world, another way of seeing that which is especially difficult. Faith allows us to come to know God in the phenomena of nature in which we can continually discover the traces of his works and the traces of His concern for us and the world that surrounds us.

St. Francis was a man of great faith who saw traces of God in everything. What incredible faith comes through the attitude of Francis when he prays with the words: "Praise to you, Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars. Praise to you, Lord, through Brothers Wind and air." ...Everything comes from the Lord – good times and bad. Bad weather is also His weather. Living faith permits us to see God's miracles in the world around us, in our ordinary, everyday lives. Even murky

weather and rain are miracles performed for us by God. Rain, which has certainly soaked us more than once, is the Lord's touch. If you see this, that will be your **prayer of faith. . .**

God waits for us to look with the eyes of faith at all the experiences we live through, especially the difficult ones. In the parable of the talents, Jesus warns us not to close ourselves off from coming to know Him through faith, and not to be slothful in using the things that God is continuously giving us.

Tadeusz Dajczer, *The Gift of Faith*, pp. 4-5; 7-10.

References from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

301 With creation, God does not abandon his creatures to themselves. He not only gives them being and existence, but also, and at every moment, upholds and sustains them in being, enables them to act and brings them to their final end. Recognizing this utter dependence with respect to the Creator is a source of wisdom and freedom, of joy and confidence:

For you love all things that exist, and detest none of the things that you have made; for you would not have made anything if you had hated it. How would anything have endured, if you had not willed it? Or how would anything not called forth by you have been preserved? You spare all things, for they are yours, O Lord, you who love the living.¹⁶⁰

309 If God the Father almighty, the Creator of the ordered and good world, cares for all his creatures, why does evil exist? To this question, as pressing as it is unavoidable and as painful as it is mysterious, no quick answer will suffice. Only Christian faith as a whole constitutes the answer to this question: the goodness of creation, the drama of sin and the patient love of God who comes to meet man by his covenants, the redemptive Incarnation of his Son, his gift of the Spirit, his gathering of the Church, the power of the sacraments and his call to a blessed life to which free creatures are invited to consent in advance, but from which, by a terrible mystery, they can also turn away in advance. *There is not a single aspect of the Christian message that is not in part an answer to the question of evil.*

Questions for Reflection

1. In contemplating Jesus's death and resurrection, how has God revealed himself to me this week? How do I perceive His Presence in my daily life, surroundings, and even the weather?
2. Where do I need to grow in faith and gratitude for everything given to me?
3. How can Mary, whose faith was boundless, guide me toward knowing I am immersed in God's love in every situation, especially the difficult ones?

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.