

## 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. 272, footnotes 111:** I Cor 1:24-25, **112:** Eph 1:19-22; **No. 273, footnotes 113:** Cf. 2 Cor 12:9; Phil 4:13, **114:** Lk 1:37, 49.

[www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/catechism](http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/catechism)

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Andre Daigneault, *The Way of Imperfection: Holiness for the Poor*. (Ft. Collins, CO.

IAMF, 2016).. All rights reserved. – [www.inthearmsofmary.org](http://www.inthearmsofmary.org)

Families of Nazareth Movement – [www.familiesofnazareth.us](http://www.familiesofnazareth.us)

APRIL 21, 20 24 ~ FOURTH 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 4:8-12

**Responsorial Psalm** Ps Ps 118:1, 8-9, 21-23, 26, 28, 29

**Reading II** 1 Jn 3:1-2

**Gospel** Jn 10:11-18

### Opening or Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,  
you have taught us to be merciful like the heavenly Father,  
and have told us that whoever sees you sees Him.

You are the visible face of the invisible Father,  
who manifests his power above all by forgiveness and mercy:  
let the Church be your visible face in the world.

You willed that your ministers would also  
be clothed in weakness  
that they may feel compassion  
for those in ignorance and error:  
let everyone who approaches them  
feel sought after, loved, and forgiven by God.

Send your Spirit so that the Jubilee of Mercy  
may bring good news to the poor,  
proclaim liberty to captives and the oppressed,  
and restore sight to the blind.

We ask this through the intercession  
of Mary, Mother of Mercy,  
you who live and reign with the Father  
and the Holy Spirit  
for ever and ever. Amen.

*Prayer of Pope Francis for the Year of Mercy* [Abridged]  
Families of Nazareth USA  
Summer Retreat 2016

## Spiritual Reflection

*I am the good shepherd, and I know mine and mine know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I will lay down my life for the sheep.*

John 10:14-15

As Saint Bernard said to Pope Eugene:

Lower yourself to the last sheep of your flock; nothing can be too low in a ministry which is above man. Descend therefore, descend; do not fear anything, as one can never descend too low in imitation the Prince of Pastors who emptied himself to take the nature of a slave. Descend always lower.

In his *Spiritual Exercises*, Saint Ignatius of Loyola said that the true disciples of Jesus, those who desire to be at the service of their eternal King and universal Lord, would offer themselves entirely to the task (o.97), but would mainly imitate Jesus “in bearing any injury, disgrace, and poverty (no. 98), because “through all these things humility is acquired, and through humility all the other virtues” (no. 146). Therefore, for Saint Ignatius, it is impossible to undertake a real apostolic action which is valuable and fruitful if this action is not inspired by a humility similar to that of Jesus. If so, many works we have undertaken produce so few lasting results, could it not be that we have forgotten humility and the cross?

Indeed, we have difficulty believing in the fruitfulness of the cross, we reject or ignore it, and we seek more spectacular results and the praise of men who flatter our ego. Father Lallement says:

Some believe, because they are popular and welcomed everywhere, that they accomplish much good; they are mistaken. The means on which they are leaning are not those used by God to accomplish great things. One must remember that in order to save souls, the Lord did not only preach the truth. Because of love, he died on the cross for them. In turn, the apostles cannot save souls without suffering for them.

We often seek to project an image of ourselves which is of a good and generous person in order to be admired. We fire ourselves up. We develop projects, we organize an abundance of things, but this action does not always come from the interior and the depth of our heart. One bustles about, runs to assist others, one desires to “save” them, but refuses to face one’s own woundedness, and tries to dazzle by presenting an “idealized image” of oneself, the image of a savior.

The true apostle needs to undergo certain purifications so that Christ may use him, and he may humbly become a “servant” of the Gospel. . .

True conversion is to become poor in spirit, vulnerable and fragile, and to finally accept our poverty of heart – the wound which brings us side by side with the poorest and the most wounded of our brothers and sisters. To live the Gospel is to desire to be poor ourselves in order to reach the poor.

André Daigneault, *The Way of Imperfection*, pp.72-74

## References from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

**272** Faith in God the Father Almighty can be put to the test by the experience of evil and suffering. God can sometimes seem to be absent and incapable of stopping evil. But in the most mysterious way God the Father has revealed his almighty power in the voluntary humiliation and Resurrection of his Son, by which he conquered evil. Christ crucified is thus "the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men."<sup>111</sup> It is in Christ's Resurrection and exaltation that the Father has shown.

**273** Only faith can embrace the mysterious ways of God's almighty power. This faith glories in its weaknesses in order to draw to itself Christ's power.<sup>113</sup> The Virgin Mary is the supreme model of this faith, for she believed that "nothing will be impossible with God", and was able to magnify the Lord: "For he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name."<sup>114</sup>

## Questions for Reflection

1. What passage from this reflection speaks to me? How does this text apply to my life?
2. How do I understand “the cross” in my everyday life of service?
3. How can the example of Our Blessed Mother’s acceptance of crosses in Her life help me to accept my own crosses?

## 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.*