

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. 670, footnotes 553: *I Jn 2:18*; cf. *I Pt 4:7*, 554: LG 48 § 3; cf. *I Cor 10:11*, 555: Cf. *Mk 16:17-18*; No. 672, footnotes 561: Cf. *Acts 1:6-7*, 562: Cf. *Isa 11:1-9*, 563: Cf. *Acts 1:8*; *I Cor 7:26*; *Eph 5:16*; *I Pt 4:17*, 564: Cf. *Mt 25:1, 13*; *Mk 13:33-37*; *I Jn 2:18*; 4:3; *I Tim*; No. 965, footnotes 506: LG 69, 507: LG 594:1.
<http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/catechism>

New American Bible © USCCB. All rights reserved. <https://bible.usccb.org/readings>

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

Foundation, 2020). All rights reserved. – www.inthearmsofmary.org

Families of Nazareth Movement – www.familiesofnazareth.us

MAY 12, 2024~ THE SOLEMNITY OF THE ASCENSION ~ 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 1:1-11
Responsorial Psalm Ps 47:2-3, 6-7, 8-9
Reading II Eph 1:17-23
Gospel Mk 16:15-20

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

So then the Lord Jesus, after he spoke to them, was taken up into heaven. . . But they went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the word through accompanying signs. Mk 16:19-20

Love of Christ that deepens through faith begets the desire to be a witness of Christ. **Your call to sanctity and your love for the Church are also closely connected with the call to apostleship.** Reminding Christians of their obligation to witness for Christ, [Saint] John Paul II said, "Only profound love for the Church can support the fervor in giving witness. Faithfulness to Christ cannot be separated from faithfulness to the Church."

The Second Vatican Council stresses that:

Incorporated into Christ's Mystical Body through Baptism and strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit through Confirmation, [Christians] are assigned to the apostolate by the Lord Himself...One engages in the apostolate through faith, hope and charity which the Holy Spirit diffuses in the hearts of all members of the Church. Indeed, by the precept of charity, which is the Lord's greatest commandment, all the faithful are impelled to promote the glory of God through the coming of His Kingdom and to obtain eternal life for all men. (Second Vatican Council, *Apostolicam Actuositatem* (Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity), no. 3 [proclaimed by Pope Paul VI on November 18, 1965]).

Therefore, everything that you do should serve to build and expand the kingdom of God.

You have received a treasure and an extraordinary gift that you cannot keep just for yourself. This would be burying the treasure. You are to pass on this priceless treasure and share it with others. You should witness about what has been bestowed on you, what you have found, about what you love, and what the Holy Spirit has brought about in you. The more you surrender to the Holy Spirit, the more He will be able to form the image of Christ in you. The Holy Spirit, having deepened the love for the Church in your heart, will cause you to be faithful to your call to the apostolate. [Saint] John Paul II once asked France, "Are you faithful to the grace of your Baptism?" This question is also directed to you. Are you faithful to the graces of holy Baptism? Are you faithful to the graces of Confirmation? Are you growing in your sense of responsibility for the image and life of your Church, diocese, and parish?

The rite of Confirmation refers to concrete forms of witnessing about Christ, which should always flow from faith and love. You are to give witness to the One who died for you and was resurrected. He also died and was resurrected for those to whom you give witness about Him. Your apostleship should be an attitude of service to others strengthened by the Holy Spirit. You should also pray to the Holy Spirit for the grace of fortitude, which is necessary to defend faith and to undertake the difficulties of apostleship.

Fr. Tadeusz Dajczer, *The Gift of Faith*, pp.198-199

References from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

- 670** Since the Ascension God's plan has entered into its fulfilment. We are already at "the last hour".⁵⁵³ "Already the final age of the world is with us, and the renewal of the world is irrevocably under way; it is even now anticipated in a certain real way, for the Church on earth is endowed already with a sanctity that is real but imperfect."⁵⁵⁴ Christ's kingdom already manifests its presence through the miraculous signs that attend its proclamation by the Church.⁵⁵⁵
- 672** Before his Ascension Christ affirmed that the hour had not yet come for the glorious establishment of the messianic kingdom awaited by Israel⁵⁶¹ which, according to the prophets, was to bring all men the definitive order of justice, love and peace.⁵⁶² According to the Lord, the present time is the time of the Spirit and of witness, but also a time still marked by "distress" and the trial of evil which does not spare the Church⁵⁶³ and ushers in the struggles of the last days. It is a time of waiting and watching.⁵⁶⁴
- 965** After her Son's Ascension, Mary "aided the beginnings of the Church by her prayers."⁵⁰⁶ In her association with the apostles and several women, "we also see Mary by her prayers imploring the gift of the Spirit, who had already overshadowed her in the Annunciation."⁵⁰⁷

Questions for Reflection

1. What does "witnessing for Christ" mean to me and how am I engaged in the kingdom of God?
2. What is the Holy Spirit revealing to me in the midst of setbacks, failures or discouragement?
3. How can Mary, who never succumbed to despair and whose faith never faltered be my guide toward a deeper appreciation of God's love for me and how can I share this treasure?

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.