

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. 2222; No. 2226 footnote: 35 Cf. LG 11 S2.

www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/catechism

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– www.inthearmsofmary.org

Families of Nazareth Movement – www.familiesofnazareth.us

**Dec 29, 2024 ~ Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph ~ Year C
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

Sir 3:2-6, 12-14 or 1Sm 1: 20-22, 24-28

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 128:1-2, 3, 4-5 or Ps 84:2-3, 5-6, 9-10

Reading II

Col 3:12-21 or Col 3:12-17 or 1 Jn 3:1-2, 21-24

Gospel

Lk 2:41-52

Opening or Closing Prayer

**God and Father of us all,
in Jesus, your Son and our Savior,**
you have made us
your sons and daughters
in the family of the Church.

**May your grace and love
help our families**

in every part of the world
be united to one another
in fidelity to the Gospel.

**May the example of the Holy Family,
with the aid of your Holy Spirit,**

guide all families,
especially those most troubled,
to be homes of communion and prayer
and to always seek your truth
and live in your love.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Jesus, Mary and Joseph,

Pray for us!

Prayer for the World Meeting of Families – Philadelphia 2015

Spiritual Reflection

“Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?”

Lk 2:249

If, as mothers and fathers, we really want to rely on God, then we will do whatever it takes to fulfill in our children what is important for them. We will want them always and everywhere to believe that God loves them forever and **unconditionally**. Regardless whether they are successful in a particular field or experience repeated failures...

Each person, after all, wants to be loved unconditionally, regardless of the fact that he commits evil and fails. Each one of us desires this unique, complete and true love that God shows us. When a youngster does not receive this love through his parents, he becomes rebellious and goes overboard in protesting against this insufficiency...

The best thing for a child will be for us to lead him to falling in love with God, who is his only Father and Mother. How wonderful it would be if we led children to being in love with the will of the Creator, awakening this desire in the children, a desire similar to that of our Savior who lived on this earth and who said: “My food is to do the will of the one who sent me and to finish his work.” (Jn 4:34). The goal is not that children fulfill the will of their earthly parents or grandparents, but rather, the will of the Heavenly Father.

If children desired to fulfill God’s will, our situation as parents would be ideal because in so doing we would have allowed them to become instruments in the hands of God. Then we would neither count on them, nor seek in them illusory reliance; instead, all of our expectations would be directed toward the Creator. He, Himself, could take care of us, whether through our children, other people, or other circumstances.

Each one of us has God as our Father. If we were open to this truth, then our food would also be to fulfill God’s will. Our lives would become the best testimony for our children and for our grandchildren.

If parents, educators, and all the people to whom the faith of our children is entrusted do not live by faith and hope (in terms of allowing God’s plans to be fulfilled), then, to a great degree, they limit His designs for others. If they are unable to see the things not visible to the naked eye, and if they are incapable of expecting things not yet present, then the pragmatism of their actions will be useless. Obviously, we cannot deny the fact that everything has its practical aspect, but these aspects mean nothing if they are without a supernatural dimension.

God truly desires that we anticipate, with faith and hope, the fulfillment of His plans toward our environment and us. Therefore, we should always look upon our dear ones, as well as those who are away from the faith, as God looks upon them in His mercy. God looks at them as saints, even though they may convert in a year, maybe in ten years, or even – as in the case of the Good Thief – only at the last hours of their lives. The best way for us to help others on their way to conversion is to better appreciate God’s purpose connected to their lives, rather than trying to rely on them excessively.

It is crucial for us to place our reliance on God. At the same time, we must cooperate with His grace and anticipate, with great hope, what we have not yet received, but which we deeply believe is in accordance with God’s designs. In this way, the results of our reliance on God can also be the salvation of others.

S.C.Biela, *God Alone Suffices*, pp. 38-42

References from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

2222 Parents must regard their children as *children of God* and respect them as *human persons*. Showing themselves obedient to the will of the Father in heaven, they educate their children to fulfill God's law.

2226 *Education in the faith* by the parents should begin in the child's earliest years. This already happens when family members help one another to grow in faith by the witness of a Christian life in keeping with the Gospel. Family catechesis precedes, accompanies, and enriches other forms of instruction in the faith. Parents have the mission of teaching their children to pray and to discover their vocation as children of God.³⁵ The parish is the Eucharistic community and the heart of the liturgical life of Christian families; it is a privileged place for the catechesis of children and parents.

Questions for Reflection

1. As a parent, grandparent or educator, how often do I consider God’s will in the lives of the children entrusted to me? What are my priorities?
2. What kind of testimony do I give to my children, grandchildren or those in my care? Do they perceive the truth about God’s love and mercy or mainly the natural dimension of my expectations and reliance?
3. By contemplating the example of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, how can my family and myself learn more about faith, trust and love?

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.