

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. 526, footnotes 205 Cf. Mt 18:3-4, 206 Jn 3:7; 1:13; 1:12; cf. Mt 23:12, 207 Cf. Gal 4:19, 208 LH, Antiphon I of Evening Prayer for January 1st. No. 2660, footnote 14 Cf. Lk 13:20-21.

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

Families of Nazareth Movement – www.familiesofnazareth.us

JANUARY 5, 2025 ~ EPIPHANY OF THE LORD ~ 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	Is 60:1-6
Responsorial Psalm	Ps 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-11, 12-13.
Reading II	Eph 3:2-3a, 5-6
Gospel	Mt 2:1-12

Opening or Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,

You give us your flesh and blood for the life of the world, and you desire that all people come to the Supper of the Sacrifice of the Lamb.
Renew in your Church the truth, beauty, and goodness contained in the Most Blessed Eucharist.

Jesus living the Eucharist, come and live in me.
Jesus healing in the Eucharist, come and heal me.
Jesus sacrificing yourself in the Eucharist, come and suffer in me.
Jesus rising in the Eucharist, come and rise to new life in me.
Jesus loving in the eucharist, come and love in me.

Lord Jesus Christ, through the paschal mystery of your death and resurrection made present in every Holy Mass,
pour out your healing love on your Church and on our world.

Grant that as we lift you up during this time of Eucharistic Revival, your Holy Spirit may draw all people to join us at this Banquet of Life.

You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
God forever and ever.

FNM Summer Retreat Prayer 2024
USCCB – euchristicrevival.org

Spiritual Reflection

*They prostrated themselves and did him homage.
Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts
of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Mt. 2:11*

Faith is the acknowledgement of one's own helplessness and the awaiting of everything from God. **This experience of helplessness and awaiting everything from God is humble means *par excellence*.** Do you see the value of humble means in your life? God certainly does not limit your opportunities of this kind. Who among us does undergo moments of torment, some particular difficulties or moments of the spiritual desert? Who among us does not have problems with our own selves and with the external conditions of life? All of this cannot be seen, classified, or evaluated. It is so unnoticeable that one cannot find any statistical data on this subject. Who could possibly know that, at a certain point in your life, you said *yes* to God, *I do want – I want everything that you expect from me*. Who could know that, at a certain point in time, when it was very hard for you, you said through tears that you love Him and always want to love Him? Who knows how many times you vanquished your own self, denied yourself something, and overcame your own will? **These humble means are of the utmost importance to you, to the Church, and to the world; these are the means that summon the might of God...**

...Since humble means by themselves do not guarantee your reaching your life's goal, the efficacy of humble means is based on faith; therefore, this efficacy is the evidence that it is God Himself who is acting...

...[God] loves humble gifts. He does not want beautiful flowers, but prefers simple and plain ones from the meadow because they do not feed our pride. Someone once said that among all gifts God likes humble gifts the best – gifts that are not something to be proud of. It is this that is needed also in prayer. God accepts each one of your gifts, even though it may not be worth more than a handful of dust. Simply by accepting your gifts, He will make each of them priceless. Your prayer may be just like a handful of dust, but it will become priceless because God, your loving Father, accepts it. He accepts it with the same joy as a mother accepts a little flower from a small child since it is the thought that counts.

It may also be that you do not have anything to offer God in prayer. Then you will give Him your "nothingness," your complete helplessness. Offer everything to the Lord. Offer yourself to His disposal, such as you are: small, helpless, and

poor in spirit. This is the best prayer, the best because it is in accordance with the first Beatitude. The prayer of the poor in spirit is a prayer of a man who is empty in the sense of an emptiness that summons the descent of the Lord – the descent of the Holy Spirit. When God sees a soul such as this, stripped of its own strength, He then descends into it with His strength. Blessed are the poor in spirit; blessed are those who pray the prayer of the poor in spirit.

Tadeusz Dajczer, *The Gift of Faith*, pp.152-154; 235-236

References from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

526 To become a child in relation to God is the condition for entering the kingdom.²⁰⁵ For this, we must humble ourselves and become little. Even more: to become "children of God" we must be "born from above" or "born of God".²⁰⁶ Only when Christ is formed in us will the mystery of Christmas be fulfilled in us.²⁰⁷ Christmas is the mystery of this "marvelous exchange":

O marvelous exchange! Man's Creator has become man, born of the Virgin. We have been made sharers in the divinity of Christ who humbled himself to share our humanity.²⁰⁸

2660 Prayer in the events of each day and each moment is one of the secrets of the kingdom revealed to "little children," to the servants of Christ, to the poor of the Beatitudes. It is right and good to pray so that the coming of the kingdom of justice and peace may influence the march of history, but it is just as important to bring the help of prayer into humble, everyday situations; all forms of prayer can be the leaven to which the Lord compares the kingdom.¹⁴

Questions for Reflection

1. In what ways does God Emmanuel offer me opportunities of humble means and humble gifts in my daily life? What is my usual response to these opportunities?
2. Do I consider helplessness in events a steppingstone or stumbling block in awaiting everything from God? What helps me or hinders me?
3. Pondering on the life of the Holy Family, how can I learn to more appreciate smallness and helplessness as precious "gifts"?

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.