

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. 1847, footnotes 116: St. Augustine, *Sermo* 169, 11, 13: PL; 38,923; 117: *1 Jn* 8-9; No 1848, footnotes 118: *Rom* 5:20; 119: *Rom* 5:21; No. 1849, footnote 121: St. Augustine, *Contra Faustum* 22:PL 42, 418; St. Thomas Aquinas, *STH I-II*; No. 1850, footnote 122: *Ps* 51:4.

www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/catechism

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February 9, 2025 ~ Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time ~ 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 6:1-2a, 3-8

Responsorial Psalm Ps 138:1-2, 2-3, 4-5, 7-8

Reading II 1 Cor 15:1-11 or 15:3-8, 11

Gospel Lk 5:1-11

Opening or Closing Prayer

Lord, send forth Your Holy Spirit, renew the face of the earth, and renew me in Truth.

Come Holy Spirit, my Consoler, Sacred Bond of the Father and the Son, please dwell in me. Open me fully to the gift of Redemption.

Come Holy Spirit, pour Your light into my heart, my soul, and my mind. In abandoning myself to You, convince me of my sin and lead me to repentance. In the midst of this world where evil is called good and sin is called freedom, allow me to know the truth. For only in You, can I find my true identity.

Come Holy Spirit, capture my heart and free me, that I may live in Your eternal embrace, for Your love casts out all my fears, fills me with joy, and enables me to receive everything as a grace.

Come Holy Spirit, that Your fruits within me may be reflected through service to the Church and concern for all the Mystical Body of Christ.

Come Holy Spirit, enlighten the world and deliver me from sin. Through the intercession of Your Spouse, my Mother, come!

I ask this through 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 2009

Spiritual Reflection

*When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at the knees of Jesus and said,
"Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man."
Lk 5:8*

From a person who only minimally responds to the expectations of God, who has bestowed on him a special grace, should emerge the consciousness of great infidelity. Externally, this kind of person can appear better than others. Nevertheless, such a person can be aware that he deserves a long and severe purgatory or even condemnation. He sees that he is closed to the graces that God bestows on him and he is focused only on himself. He sees it and recognizes that he is one of the greatest sinners. **Why?** Because living according to **one's own** visions and dreams hinders God in realizing **His** plans. And the consequences of our impassability can be tragic because such consequences can also be extended to many people. The evil that can happen in this situation becomes greater in accordance to the degree to which we do not respond to God's plan. This awareness can be overwhelming, but at the same time can 'spur us to do something' –

in order that we may recognize our evil;
in order that we may cry out to Christ with greater intensity for His mercy.

When the awareness of your sinfulness begins to crush you heavily, faith in God's mercy can be particularly difficult for you.

The aspiration to sanctity will appear as something completely unreal to you. Strong temptations of establishing a convenient life and adhering yourself to the spirit of the world can surface. If you lack faith in God who loves you in spite of your evil, at that point you will begin to succumb to these temptations.

But, in fact, in showing you more of your sinfulness, He wants to empower you to trust even more.

If you do not benefit from such a grace, you could easily be tempted to look for a substitute to inner peace and anything or anybody that can give you a feeling of security other than God, just to calm your dejection. Then you will begin again to live according to the spirit of this world. And your egoism will 'whisper' and suggest to you:

You have to rest and take care of yourself.
You're just a human being.
Don't be so preoccupied and 'tire yourself' so much.

On the other hand, if, in experiencing your misery, you are able to trust to the point of folly, you would not direct yourself toward the pleasures of this world. You would try all the more to adhere to Christ. And you would accept the situations that make you aware that, with your evil, you belong to the worst. You would accept them as a call to trust in God's mercy without limits.

S.C. Biela, *In the Arms of Mary*, pp.94-95.

References from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

1847 "God created us without us: but he did not will to save us without us."¹¹⁶ To receive his mercy, we must admit our faults. "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."¹¹⁷

1848 As St. Paul affirms, "Where sin increased, grace abounded all the more."¹¹⁸ But to do its work grace must uncover sin so as to convert our hearts and bestow on us "righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."¹¹⁹ Like a physician who probes the wound before treating it, God, by his Word and by his Spirit, casts a living light on sin.

1849 Sin is an offense against reason, truth, and right conscience; it is failure in genuine love for God and neighbor caused by a perverse attachment to certain goods. It wounds the nature of man and injures human solidarity. It has been defined as "an utterance, a deed, or a desire contrary to the eternal law."¹²¹

1850 Sin is an offense against God: "Against you, you alone, have I sinned, and done that which is evil in your sight."¹²² Sin sets itself against God's love for us and turns our hearts away from it.

Questions for Reflection

1. In what life situations have I, like Peter, experienced feeling too unworthy of Love? What is my reaction to this type of discovery?
2. Considering these experiences, how can this reflection help me to appreciate the advantage of my weakness and encourage me to respond to God's love?
3. How can Mary's trusting *Fiat* influence my soul in benefitting from God's boundless mercy?

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.