

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. 215; No. 2006; No. 2007; No. 2008,

www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/catechism

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S.C. Biela, *Open Wide the Door to Christ* (Ft. Collins, CO: In the Arms of Mary

Foundation 2005). – www.inthearmsofmary.org

Families of Nazareth Movement – www.familiesofnazareth.us

February 16, 2025 ~ Sixth 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 Jer 17:5-8

Responsorial Psalm Ps 1:1-2, 3, 4 and 6

Reading II 1 Cor 15:12, 16-20

Gospel Lk 6:17, 20-26

Opening or Closing Prayer

Most Holy Trinity – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – I adore Thee profoundly.
I offer Thee the most precious Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ,
present in all the tabernacles of the world,
in reparation for the outrages, sacrileges, and indifferences whereby He is
offended.

And through the infinite merits of His Most Sacred Heart
and the Immaculate Heart of Mary,
I beg of Thee the conversion of poor sinners.

Most Holy Trinity, I adore Thee!
My God, my God, I love Thee in the Most Blessed Sacrament.
My God, I believe, I adore, I hope and I love Thee!
I ask pardon for those who do not believe,
do not adore, do not hope and do not love Thee.

Oh My Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of Hell,
lead all souls to Heaven, especially those in most need of Thy mercy.
Oh my Jesus, I offer this for love of Thee,
for the conversion of sinners,
and in reparation for the sins committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Prayers Taught at Fatima by the Angels & Mary
100th Anniversary of Fatima Apparitions

Families of Nazareth USA ~ Summer Retreat 2017

Spiritual Reflection

Blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD, whose hope is the LORD. Jer 17:7

There are times when it seems that God does not respond to us when we plead to be freed from our enslavement to certain sins. Why? Perhaps standing in truth and discovering our own weaknesses is more important than our external immaculateness? Perhaps in this way, God is curing us from our delusion of thinking positively about ourselves, and this process makes us progressively poorer. **God desires to teach us true trust and entrustment wherein we do not count on our own merits.** A person who is poor in spirit does not have any merits of his own before the Lord. Our desire to earn God's love by the power of our own deeds contradicts the attitude of someone who is poor in spirit and also contradicts the beatitudes of Jesus Christ. The desire to earn God's love is a symptom of spiritual misery.

God cannot shield you from your faults or free you from your weakness if authentic humility is not in you. When you attribute the graces of being shielded from sins and unfaithfulness to yourself, it strengthens your false conviction that you are finally perfect. Your pride inflates enormously and completely closes you off from the One who is knocking. However, through the discovery of your weaknesses and unfaithfulness, you have a greater chance to acknowledge that you are only a miserable beggar who deserves to be left and abandoned by God. Such was the attitude of the Good Thief as he was dying on the cross. His attitude can be an example to us. The Thief's plea for mercy, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom" (Lk 23:42), is the call of a beggar who is tormented not only by physical pain but also by the realization that he suffers justly because of his own evil. When a person who is poor in spirit stands before God, he is like the Good Thief who consented to allow his evil and spiritual misery to be talked about by those surrounding him. The Good Thief did not protest when people made fun of him and derided him as he was dying on the cross. Not only did he accept this, he also acknowledged that he deserved everything that happened to him...

When the light of God's truth liberates us from the illusion of thinking positively about ourselves, and when we discover our own weakness more clearly, then remaining in God's presence can become very difficult. Without seeing any good in ourselves, we do not know what kind of attitude to assume in order to behave properly. God expects that we will stand before Him in truth and that, by acknowledging our own spiritual misery, we will trust in His mercy.

Mary, the Mother of God, is the best example for us to imitate. She completely acknowledged her own nothingness, constantly called upon God's mercy, fully trusted Him, and was unceasingly grateful for every gift... "My soul proclaims the

greatness of the Lord;...For he has looked upon his handmaid's lowliness" (Lk 1:46, 48)... Since God looked upon the *lowliness* of Mary, perhaps in some respect she, too, felt like a spiritual beggar. The one who was exalted by God above all creatures remained before Him in an attitude full of humility.

When you discover your own spiritual misery, try to call upon Mary for help as often as possible. S.C. Biela, *Open Wide the Door to Christ*, pp. 48-51

References from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

- 215** God is Truth itself, whose words cannot deceive. This is why one can abandon oneself in full trust to the truth and faithfulness of his word in all things. The beginning of sin and of man's fall was due to a lie of the tempter who induced doubt of God's word, kindness, and faithfulness.
- 2006** The term 'merit' refers in general to the recompense owed by a community or a society for the action of one of its members, experienced either as beneficial or harmful, deserving reward or punishment. Merit is relative to the virtue of justice, in conformity with the principle of equality which governs it.
- 2007** With regard to God, there is no strict right to any merit on the part of man. Between God and us there is an immeasurable inequality, for we have received everything from him, our Creator.
- 2008** The merit of man before God in the Christian life arises from the fact that God has freely chosen to associate man with the work of his grace. The fatherly action of God is first on his own initiative, and then follows man's free acting through his collaboration, so that the merit of good works is to be attributed in the first place to the grace of God, then to the faithful. Man's merit, moreover, itself is due to God, for his good actions proceed in Christ, from the predispositions and assistance given by the Holy spirit.

Questions for Reflection

1. Which of my life experiences show me that I am trying to earn God's love?
2. Why is it hard for me to acknowledge that I deserve everything that happens to me?
3. How can I imitate Mary's true trust in God?

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.