

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 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 listen attentively 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. 661, footnotes 539: *Jn* 3:13; cf. *Eph* 4:8-10; 540: *Jn* 14:2; 541: *Roman Missal*, Preface of the Ascension; No. 844, footnote 333 LG 16; cf. *Rom* 1:21, 25.; No. 845, footnote 334 St. Augustine, *Serm.* 96, 7, 9: PL 38, 588; St. Ambrose, *De virg.* 18, 118: PL 16, 297B; cf. already 1 *Pet* 3:20-21..

www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/catechism

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June 1, 2025 ~ The Ascension 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	Acts 1:1-11
Responsorial Psalm	Ps 47:2-3, 6-7, 8-9
Reading II	Eph 1:17-23 OR Heb 9:24-28; 10:19-23
Gospel	Lk 24:46-53

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

*And behold I am sending the promise of my Father upon you.
But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.” Lk 24:49*

A supreme purification and genuine trial of faith occurred during the Passion of Christ. Good Friday, the day of Jesus’ Passion through which the Redemption of the world was brought about, concluded with a night full of purification for the apostles. Then everything fell apart for them; everything collapsed. There was no kingdom; Jesus was defeated; there was no prospect for the future; there was nothing to await and only despair remained. John must have also felt this despair when standing at the foot of the Cross, although the Gospel does not mention this directly. He must have been totally crushed.

Some may say that if you have not gone through a trial of despair then you really do not know anything. The apostles went through this kind of trial of despair on Good Friday. Being Pharisees in spirit, the apostles were then stripped of everything. After the Resurrection, the appearances of the resurrected Christ enlightened that night of purgation. They saw that He was alive and that He was present among them. However, this was a new Presence, a Presence that did not give a feeling of complete security or stability. It was connected with the newly risen humanity of Christ. This humanity was different from the former one; it was glorious and could no longer be confined to earth. His risen body could pass through closed doors, so sometimes the apostles doubted whether it was really their Master that they were seeing.

The trial of the apostles, their night of purgation, was not yet complete. The ten days between the Ascension and Pentecost brought with them trials of faith and further denudation. Then their main support, the humanity of Jesus, was definitely taken away from them. Then they had nothing to rely on. **The young Church being born in the upper room and devoting herself with one accord to prayer was stripped of everything.**

The second night of purgation, the night of the spirit, is the most difficult one. The theology of spiritual life states that it is then that one encounters Mary who, through her presence, illuminates this night. And after the Ascension, this is what happened to the apostles in the upper room. They were not alone there. Mary, who never succumbed to despair and whose faith never faltered, was with them. She was among them as an example of looking for the Holy Spirit to come. The apostles being truly poor – owning nothing, unable to see the humanity of Jesus – waited together with Mary. This was when the Holy Spirit, the “Father of the

poor,” as it is stated in the liturgy, came down upon the apostles who had been stripped of everything and left in complete emptiness. Then the strength of the Holy Spirit descended upon them. Only when they had been strengthened in this way were they sent to conquer the world for Christ.

Tadeusz Dajczer, *The Gift of Faith*, pp.192-193

References from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

661 "No one has ascended into heaven but he who descended from heaven, the Son of man."⁵³⁹ Left to its own natural powers humanity does not have access to the "Father's house," to God's life and happiness.⁵⁴⁰ Only Christ can open to man such access that we, his members, might have confidence that we too shall go where he, our Head and our Source, has preceded us.⁵⁴¹

844 In their religious behavior, however, men also display the limits and errors that disfigure the image of God in them:

Very often, deceived by the Evil One, men have become vain in their reasonings, and have exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and served the creature rather than the Creator. Or else, living and dying in this world without God, they are exposed to ultimate despair.³³³

845 To reunite all his children, scattered and led astray by sin, the Father willed to call the whole of humanity together into his Son’s Church. “She (the Church) is that bark which “in the full sail of the Lord’s cross, by the breath of the Holy Spirit, navigates safely in this world.” According to another image dear to the Church Fathers, she is prefigured by Noah’s ark, which alone saves from the flood.³³⁴

Questions for Reflection

1. In my daily life, what is my reaction to situations I cannot understand or when I seem to be stripped of human support??
2. What helps me to realize that I am in God’s heart in these situations or trials of faith when I see myself as truly poor, without human support?
3. Am I able to see Jesus in situations of darkness and hopelessness? Then, what trial today calls me to await the strength of the Holy Spirit like Mary?

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.