

### 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 (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. 1428, footnote 18: LG 8 S3; 19: Ps 51:17; cf. Jn 6:44; 12:32; 1 Jn 4:10; No. 1723.*

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## December 1, 2019 ~ 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent 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

<b>Reading I</b>	Is 2:1-5
<b>Responsorial Psalm</b>	Ps 122: 1-2, 3-4, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9
<b>Reading II</b>	Rm 13:11-14
<b>Gospel</b>	Mt 24:37-44

### 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 2010*

## Spiritual Reflection

*“You also must be prepared,  
for at an hour you do not expect,  
the Son of Man will come.” Mt 24:44*

God does not expect us to struggle with exaggerated concerns and with thoughts about our future. Oh, how happy is the one who in the simplicity of his heart looks at his present life situation and does not get ahead of himself. In his thoughts about the future, he sees that it does not depend on him, but lies totally in the hands of God. Moreover, the examples of various saints confirm our conviction that God’s intervention can be so powerful that even death by terrible tortures can be permeated with His presence. In this way, a person can be united with the One who shows His presence in the most tender love.

During the period of purifications, our active renunciation should be concentrated on constant questioning of the exaggerated concern that we have about our future and the future of those who are entrusted to us. When we experience the temptation to be rebellious, fearful or discouraged, we have to readily **admit** to our enslavement to human reliances, and our lack of faith, while simultaneously calling upon God’s mercy with trust. In this way, Jesus will lean over to look upon our misery and He will take upon Himself our denudation, overcoming barriers that are insurmountable for us.

We also can defend ourselves against exaggerated concern through acts of faith, hope and trust, even when these acts seem to be totally unsuccessful. Regardless of that, we should call upon our loving God – as the blind man from Jericho, as Peter who was drowning, or as the Apostles during the storm on the lake: *Lord, rescue me! Jesus, have pity on me!* We should pray in this way, in order that He Himself will prevent us from trampling on God’s love. We should cry out: *Lord, You see that I am not only being unfaithful to You, but I also spread my sadness and my thinking in human terms to others. Lord please rescue me!*

In this way, lack of faith, sadness, even discouragement as well as rebelliousness, are not definite obstacles on the path to sanctity. These obstacles exist only when we give up calling upon the depth of the Sacrifice of Christ...

Our minds, however, might not agree to this process. Our memories may even protest, suggesting to us various experiences from the past, from which we conclude decisively that the losing of these reliances will lead to a total disaster...And, precisely because of this fact, purification of mind and memory is needed...

God desires that we be more united to Him, and that we lead fuller lives of faith, relying solely on His power and His love.

S. C. Biela, *God Alone Suffices*, pp. 58-60

### References from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

**1428** Christ's call to conversion continues to resound in the lives of Christians. This *second conversion* is an uninterrupted task for the whole Church who, "clasping sinners to her bosom, [is] at once holy and always in need of purification, [and] follows constantly the path of penance and renewal."<sup>18</sup> This endeavor of conversion is not just a human work. It is the movement of a "contrite heart," drawn and moved by grace to respond to the merciful love of God who loved us first.<sup>19</sup>

**1723** The beatitude we are promised confronts us with decisive moral choices. It invites us to purify our hearts of bad instincts and to seek the love of God above all else. It teaches us that true happiness is not found in riches or well-being, in human fame or power, or in any human achievement – however beneficial it may be – such as science, technology, and art, or indeed in any creature, but in God alone, the source of every good and of all love.

### Questions for Reflection

1. What events have shown me my concerns and worries about my future and/or the future of my loved ones? What was my reaction to these events?
2. In what areas of my life is God calling me to confront my human or spiritual reliances and call upon His mercy with trust?
3. *Mary, Mother of the great surrender, I entrust myself to you without reservation.* How can this prayer of entrustment to Mary be a path to Jesus through which He overcomes my barriers to union with Him?

### 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.*