

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 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. 1425, footnotes 9: 1 Cor 6:11; 10: Gal 3:27; 11: 1 Jn 1:8; 12: Cf. Lk 11:4; Mt 6:12; No. 1428, footnotes 18: LG 8 S3; 19: Ps 51:17; cf. Jn 6:44; 12:32; 1 Jn 4:10; No. 1878, footnote 1: Cf. GS 24 S3..

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Tadeusz Dajczer, *The Gift of Faith*, 3rd ed. (Ft. Collins, CO: In the Arms of Mary

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Families of Nazareth Movement – www.familiesofnazareth.us

September 17, 2017 ~ 24th Sunday in Ordinary Time ~ Year A 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	Sir 27:30—28:7
Responsorial Psalm	Ps 103:1-2, 3-4, 9-10, 11-12
Reading II	Rom 14:7-9
Gospel	Mt 18:21-35

Opening or Closing Prayer

Father of Mercy and of Love,

Thank you for the gift of reconciliation through the Redemptive Sacrifice of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Your love is more powerful than my sin. There is no evil that surpasses Your infinite mercy.

Send your Holy Spirit to convince me of my weakness so that I may live with a truth of conscience and a certainty of redemption.

Open me, Gracious Father, to the graces of being personally responsible for my sins, longing for forgiveness, and of being obedient to the call to conversion.

When I seek forgiveness, give me the courage to reveal the abyss of my misery and to accept my sins as "happy faults" so that, as Your child, I may run to Your loving embrace.

Through the help and intercession of Mary, Mother of Mercy, may I learn true contrition for the wounds I have caused Her Son.

And may my continual renewal, through the grace of Your sacraments, work to revitalize the Church, so that, as One Body in Christ, we may proclaim Your dominion over all the earth.

I ask this through Christ our Lord who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen

*Summer Retreat 2008
Families of Nazareth USA*

Spiritual Reflection

*Moved with compassion the master of that servant
let him go and forgave him the loan. Mt 18: 27*

Our faith should develop through the permanent process of our conversion. Christ's rising from the dead means that there is no ultimate failure in our life, that no life is doomed, and that no evil is final. This is stated in the Offertory of the former Liturgy of the Mass, "God...miraculously created the dignity of human nature and even more miraculously restored it." God would not allow evil if He were not able to extract good from it. Our sin can become the "happy fault" that is mentioned in the Liturgy of Holy Saturday. **God can turn every one of our faults into a *felix culpa* (happy fault).** It is a fault that will remind us and show us, in the light of faith, how much we are loved by the One who died and has risen for us. However, not every fault becomes a happy fault. There are times when you do not return to Christ immediately after the fall, and you may even become more hardened and intractable. It is then that the real tragedy takes place, because in this situation God is unable to forgive you.

All of your sins and infidelities should become happy faults, but this can happen only if you are contrite and you long for forgiveness. That is why God, in His desire to help you to overcome your obstinacy, always approaches you first so that He may induce you to desire forgiveness.

God, who does not remember the wounds inflicted by us, constantly opens His Heart to man. He does it in many ways. He often reveals Himself to us and calls upon us through the saints, whom He fills with His own Divine Love, or through the ministers of the Word and of the sacraments, especially the sacrament of Reconciliation. Father Huvelin, the confessor who led Charles de Foucauld onto the path of conversion, said that he was given the grace of an unusually fervent desire from God to absolve people from their sins. This longing to grant absolution, which God gave to Father Huvelin, revealed God's own constant and insatiable desire to forgive our sins. If you have strayed from God, regardless of how far you have wandered away, you can always return. **After every fall, remember that He is waiting. When you return and ask His forgiveness, you make Him happy, because you allow Him to love you through forgiveness.**

All your infidelities and sins will become happy faults if they help you know the mercy of the Lord more deeply. They will become happy faults if they make you more trustful and humble – trusting the Lord more and yourself less. You will grow in faith after they have been forgiven.

Your transgressions will become happy faults if knowing that you have hurt Jesus pours new life into your love for Him. They will become happy faults if the knowledge deepens your desire to give yourself over to Him – so that your heart may beat exclusively for Him, just as His wounded Heart beats exclusively for you.

Tadeusz Dajczer, *The Gift of Faith*, pp. 74-75

References from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

- 1425** "You were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God."⁹ One must appreciate the magnitude of the gift God has given us in the sacraments of Christian initiation in order to grasp the degree to which sin is excluded for him who has "put on Christ."¹⁰ But the apostle John also says: "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."¹¹ And the Lord himself taught us to pray: "Forgive us our trespasses,"¹² linking our forgiveness of one another's offenses to the forgiveness of our sins that God will grant us.
- 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."¹⁸ 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.¹⁹
- 1878** All men are called to the same end: God himself. There is a certain resemblance between the unity of the divine persons and the fraternity that men are to establish among themselves in truth and love.¹ Love of neighbor is inseparable from love for God.

Questions for Reflection

1. In most circumstances, what is my attitude towards my faults? The faults of others?
2. How do I perceive God's love in these circumstances and how can I respond?
3. How can the awareness of Blessed Mother's humility and acceptance be a path for me to receive Christ, give Christ to others and desire their good?

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.