

## 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: 544, footnotes 253: Lk 4:18; cf. 7:22; 254: Mt 5:3; 255: Cf. Mt 11:25; 256: Cf. Mt 21:18; Mk 2:23-26; Jn 4:6-7; 19:28; Lk 9:58; 257: Cf. Mt 25:31-46; No.545, footnotes 258: Mk 2:17; cf. 1 Tim 1:15; 259: Lk 15:7; cf. 7:11-32; 260: Mt 26:28; No. 2015, footnotes 68: Cf. 2 Tim 4; 69: St. Gregory of Nyssa, Hom. In Cant. 8: PG 44, 941C.*

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Families of Nazareth Movement – [www.familiesofnazareth.us](http://www.familiesofnazareth.us)

## September 27, 2020 ~ 26th 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** Ez 18:25-28

**Responsorial Psalm** Ps 25:4-5, 8-9, 10, 14.

**Reading II** Phil 2:1-11 OR 2:1-5

**Gospel** Mt 21:28-32

### Opening or Closing Prayer

**My Lord Jesus,**

**Thank you** for Your gift of the Eucharist in which You desire to meet with me, accept me, and love me just as I am.

**Forgive me** for constantly submerging myself in the world, seeking its innumerable temporal treasures, proving that You are not my one true treasure.

**O my Lord,** during Holy Mass, and during every moment of this day, I entrust to You all my affairs, fears, uncertainties and distractions, and I beg You to...

**Open my soul** to ever deeper contrition for wasting so many graces, and to gratefulness for Your constant bestowals.

**Help me** to have the attitude of a helpless child and a contrite sinner in need of Your Mercy.

**Heal me** of my spiritual leprosy.

**Help me** to discover You in the Eucharist and to desire You as my only true treasure – my only Love.

**Transform me** that I may decrease and You may increase.

**Unite me** to You, my Eucharistic Savior.

**May our Blessed Mother** await and receive in me and through me Your kenosis – Eucharist – and may she always be grateful within me for Your Sacrament of Love.

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

*Families of Nazareth USA, Summer retreat 2008*

## Spiritual Reflection

*“Amen I say to you, tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the Kingdom of God before you”.*

Mt 21: 31

...Jesus proposes to us a holiness for the poor and the imperfect.

This little way of the imperfect, the road of imperfection that opens the door of holiness to the weak and the poor, is first a consciousness that *God is mercy, par excellence*, to the point that he *descends* toward a soul that recognizes its misery and has confidence in him. Thérèse of the Child Jesus discovered mercy to the extent that God's Love is a love that thrusts itself from the top to the bottom, that *descends*, that searches for the poor and the little one – *especially because he is little* – in order to fill him completely. Thérèse says that mercy is *for the little one because mercy is great and he is little*. Her way, her *little way*, is a call to holiness which opens to all the poor and little ones.

Thérèse thinks that it is a need of God to be able to *descend* as low as possible to transform the poor and the imperfect by the fire of his merciful Love. Thérèse then explains that Love must lower itself because the more Love descends, meaning the more it gives itself to the poor, the more it can shower down holiness. Love's joy is complete when it can lower itself to nothingness in order to transform it into fire.

If holiness consists in entering fully into this desire of the merciful God, it is actualized by a descent into our poverty – that “nothingness” (nada) spoken of by Saint John of the Cross – by the theological confidence which transforms into a receptive capacity.

Little Thérèse thinks that mercy has such a need of giving freely that it is only satisfied when descending to the depths of misery.

Little Thérèse of the Child Jesus, who has been declared a doctor of the Church, completely revolutionized the way of looking at holiness. She rediscovered *the great theology of hope* that gives God absolute primacy in the movement toward Good who is himself.

To a novice who was saddened by her weakness, she said:  
One is happy to feel weak and miserable because, the more one humbly recognizes oneself, awaiting everything from the good God without any merit from ourselves, the more the good God lowers himself to fill us with his gifts.

For her, recognized poverty and weakness that is laid before God attracts mercy. She said:

He gave me his infinite Mercy and it is through this Mercy that I contemplate and adore the other divine perfections. . .

...Thérèse revealed that what is the most miserable and weak, the least likeable – physically, psychologically, or spiritually – is perhaps the greatest treasure to attract and open the Heart of God.

André Daigneault, *The Way of Imperfection*, pp.120-121

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

**544** The kingdom belongs *to the poor and lowly*, which means those who have accepted it with humble hearts. Jesus is sent to "preach good news to the poor";<sup>253</sup> he declares them blessed, for "theirs is the kingdom of heaven."<sup>254</sup> To them - the "little ones" the Father is pleased to reveal what remains hidden from the wise and the learned.<sup>255</sup> Jesus shares the life of the poor, from the cradle to the cross; he experiences hunger, thirst and privation.<sup>256</sup> Jesus identifies himself with the poor of every kind and makes active love toward them the condition for entering his kingdom.<sup>257</sup>

**545** Jesus invites *sinners* to the table of the kingdom: "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."<sup>258</sup> He invites them to that conversion without which one cannot enter the kingdom, but shows them in word and deed his Father's boundless mercy for them and the vast "joy in heaven over one sinner who repents".<sup>259</sup> The supreme proof of his love will be the sacrifice of his own life "for the forgiveness of sins".<sup>260</sup>

**2015** The way of perfection passes by way of the Cross. There is no holiness without renunciation and spiritual battle.<sup>68</sup> Spiritual progress entails the asceticism and mortification that gradually lead to living in the peace and joy of the Beatitudes:

He who climbs never stops going from beginning to beginning, through beginnings that have no end. He never stops desiring what he already knows.<sup>69</sup>

## Questions for reflection

1. In my daily life, what is my experience of being poor and imperfect? How do I react most of the time?
2. How confident am I that God desires to meet me in my nothingness in order to affect my transformation?
3. As I contemplate Mary's life of faith and trust, how can she guide me to boundless trust that opens God's heart of infinite 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.*