

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. 1784; 1785, footnotes 54: Cf. Ps 119:105; 55: Cf. DH 14; No. 1787.

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AndréDaigneault, *The Way of Imperfection*, (Ft. Collins, CO: In the Arms of Mary

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SEPTEMBER 30, 2018 ~ 26TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ~ YEAR B
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 Nm 11:25-29
Responsorial Psalm Ps 19:8, 10, 12-13, 14
Reading II Jas 5:1-6
Gospel Mk 9:38-43, 45, 47-48

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 2006

Spiritual Reflection

If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. Mk 9:43

To Be Purified

It is essential to accept the light and to recognize that we have a need to be purified. One needs to recognize that apostolic desires which compel us to action sometimes come from God, but sometimes come from ourselves, and at times from our lesser selves. As delicately noted by Saint Gregory in his *Pastoral*, it is easy to be mistaken on this point. “Very often, indeed, the soul lies to itself in what pertains to itself. The soul imagines itself to seek none of the world’s glory in its good works although it likes this glory.” It is the same with our best projects; the love of God, the love of others, and self-love are strangely mixed. We are inclined to call this mixture with a most noble expression: the desire for apostolic endeavors or the desire to evangelize.

Hidden Pride

We look for success, even apostolic success. Too often in the Church we seek something other than Jesus - and Jesus crucified - that is why we do not find Him.

If we desire to meet Christ resurrected, it is necessary to go through the crucible of his Passion. We need to *descend* into the abyss of our poverty - we need to *die* with Christ.

After having faced our hidden pride without discouragement, after having left all personal and human ambitions, after ceasing to seek the first place in the Church, then the Spirit will invade our weakness and Jesus will accomplish great things in us – but not before – otherwise all our deeds would be like “resounding cymbals” which make noise but do little real good.

Louis Lochet writes:

A passionate desire to succeed, to do good, to do better than others, does not have as its only motivation to convert but also to attract admiration. Any apostle who is consumed by a personal project (even apostolic) becomes unable to be open to the other and to receive him. If he listens to the other, it is to make him part of his own designs; if he takes care of him, it is to make him contribute to his project; if he directs him, it is, in part, to monopolize him

Then there will be a need for the apostle to be purified through failures and sufferings so that he may die to himself and Christ may live in him.

André Daigneault, *The Way of Imperfection*, pp.93-94

References from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

1784 The education of the conscience is a lifelong task. From the earliest years, it awakens the child to the knowledge and practice of the interior law recognized by conscience. Prudent education teaches virtue; it prevents or cures fear, selfishness and pride, resentment arising from guilt, and feelings of complacency, born of human weakness and faults. The education of the conscience guarantees freedom and engenders peace of heart.

1785 In the formation of conscience the Word of God is the light for our path,⁵⁴ we must assimilate it in faith and prayer and put it into practice. We must also examine our conscience before the Lord's Cross. We are assisted by the gifts of the Holy Spirit, aided by the witness or advice of others and guided by the authoritative teaching of the Church.⁵⁵

1787 Man is sometimes confronted by situations that make moral judgments less assured and decision difficult. But he must always seriously seek what is right and good and discern the will of God expressed in divine law.

Questions for Reflection

1. What is my usual reaction to success or praise, advancement or a task well done?
2. How can I experience God’s love when I discover some prideful attitudes, complacency, or discouragement in my daily life?
3. Our Blessed Mother was the “lowly handmaid.” How can she help me to recognize that my small efforts to become more humble can be an invitation for God to pour a flood of graces into my life?

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.