

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. 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. 716, footnotes 87: Cf. Zeph 2:3; Pss 22:27; 34:3; Isa 49:13; 61:1; etc.; No. 2545, footnote 337: LG 43 s3

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September 29, 2019 ~ Twenty-Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time ~ 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 Am 6:1a, 4-7

Responsorial Psalm Ps 146:7, 8-9, 9-10

Reading II 1 Tm 6:11-16

Gospel Lk 16:19-31

Opening or Closing Prayer

Dear Lord,

The world of temporality constantly pulls on my heart, although I want to seek only God's will for my life.

Thank you for giving me your Mother who teaches me, first of all, how to discover Your Love, and then how to trust in Pure Love.

Transform me with the power of the Eucharist, giving me your Divine Light to penetrate my heart and reveal its deepest truths.

Through Mary, give me hope and lead me to contrition. May my contrition give birth to gratitude for Your constant bestowals, given to me because You Love me just as I am ~ a sinner.

Let every act of gratitude multiply in my heart into new acts of gratitude as Blessed Mother carries me securely under Her mantle toward You, my Redeemer.

I beg for these graces through You, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Families of Nazareth USA
Summer Retreat 2006

Spiritual Reflection

*Though our Lord Jesus Christ was rich,
He became poor,
So that by his poverty you might become rich. Alleluia*

Up to the very end, Lazarus was stripped of material goods and had to beg for the things most necessary for his survival... This means that he did not rebel against his dramatic situation; instead, he accepted it and, in this manner, became poor in spirit.

Lacking something does not guarantee a person's salvation. Nevertheless, it does present a chance for salvation by making it easier to purchase the pearl of the Kingdom. However, it is easy to waste this chance when we rely on and place our hope in material things, rather than God. Normally, we fail to have Lazarus' attitude. Regardless of whether or not we are poor or rich, we resemble the rich man from the parable...

If the rich man from the parable had understood that he received everything that he had for free from God, then he would have shared generously with others. He was caught up in fulfilling his own desires. When a person is immersed in temporality and lives as if God does not exist, he becomes blind and deaf to God's grace. By adoring temporality he does not see God's presence in his own life. Neither does he hear the Lord who knocks through certain events, especially when God's knocking is very soft.

The rich man from the parable felt that he was self-sufficient – that he needed neither God nor other people... The rich man, whose heart was full of the deception of riches and self-sufficiency did not need God. He even regarded salvation like he did everything else – as something he deserved. He considered himself great in the eyes of God. He probably had something in him of the attitude of the rich young man who was so attached to his material possessions that he was incapable of giving them away in response to Christ's invitation (see Mt 19:22).

Is there not something of the attitude of the rich man from the parable in us? Do we not consider ourselves the **worthy** owners of the different graces that we receive from God? Do we not turn away from God because we think that we can manage without Him? Does God not continuously bestow countless graces upon us? God sustains our lives and gives us health and strength. Thanks to Him, we can see, hear and walk. God gives us the ability to think and to act. Are we grateful for these graces?

Everything is alms from God's love. Do we thank Him more than just occasionally for these alms from His love? When we fail to thank God for these

gifts that we receive from Him, we behave as if we were self-sufficient, as if our lives and the fate of the world depended on us... St. Paul asks, "What do you possess that you have not received? But if you have received it, why are you boasting as if you did not receive it?" (1Cor 4:7); Why do we boast, even if in the depths of our own hearts about our abilities, talents and achievements, instead of thanking God for these gifts?

S. C. Biela, *Open Wide the Door to Christ*, pp.13-16

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";²⁵³ he declares them blessed, for "theirs is the kingdom of heaven."²⁵⁴ To them - the "little ones" the Father is pleased to reveal what remains hidden from the wise and the learned.²⁵⁵ Jesus shares the life of the poor, from the cradle to the cross; he experiences hunger, thirst and privation.²⁵⁶ Jesus identifies himself with the poor of every kind and makes active love toward them the condition for entering his kingdom.²⁵⁷

716 The People of the "poor"⁸⁷ - those who, humble and meek, rely solely on their God's mysterious plans, who await the justice, not of men but of the Messiah - are in the end the great achievement of the Holy Spirit's hidden mission during the time of the promises that prepare for Christ's coming. It is this quality of heart, purified and enlightened by the Spirit, which is expressed in the Psalms. In these poor, the Spirit is making ready "a people prepared for the Lord."⁸⁸

2545 All Christ's faithful are to "direct their affections rightly, lest they be hindered in their pursuit of perfect charity by the use of worldly things and by an adherence to riches which is contrary to the spirit of evangelical poverty."³³⁷

Questions for Reflection

1. In my daily life, what is my attitude toward temporality? How aware am I of God's alms and graces?
2. What is my reaction if/when God reveals to me something of the attitude of the rich man? What is His invitation?
3. Mary, the lowly Handmaid of the Lord was blessed in fulfilling the desires of God. How can she intervene to obtain for me a humble and meek spirit that relies on God's mysterious plans?

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.