

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. 1641, footnotes 147: LG 11 S2; 148: LG 11 S2; cf. LG 41; No. 1642, footnotes 149: GS 48 S2; 150: Eph 5:21; cf. Gal 6:2.

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Families of Nazareth Movement – www.familiesofnazareth.us

OCTOBER 7, 2018 ~ 27TH 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 Gn 2:18-24

Responsorial Psalm Ps 128:1-2, 3, 4-5, 6

Reading II Heb 2:9-11

Gospel Mk 10:2-16

Opening or Closing Prayer

Holy Mary, full of God's presence during the days of your life,
you accepted with full humility the Father's will,
and the Devil was never capable to tie you around with his confusion.

Once with your Son you interceded for our difficulties, and,
full of kindness and patience,
you gave us the example of how to untie the knots of our life.
And by remaining forever Our Mother, you put in order, and make more clear
the ties that link us to the Lord.

Holy Mother, Mother of God and our Mother,
to you, who untie with motherly heart the knots of our life,
we pray to you to receive in your hands (name), and to free them [him/her]
of the knots and confusion with which our enemy attacks.

Through your grace, your intercession, and your example,
deliver us from all evil, Our Lady,
and untie the knots that prevent us from being united with God,
so that we, free from sin and error,
may find Him in all things,
may have our hearts placed in Him,
and may serve Him always in our brothers and sisters. Amen

Pope Francis' prayer to *Our Lady, Untier of Knots*
Families of Nazareth USA
Summer Retreat 2013

Spiritual Reflection

God made them male and female. Mk 10:6

For couples who enter the sacrament of marriage, the most important psychological reliance is usually their spouses. Even in the initial stages of dating, while looking for a spouse, consciously or subconsciously, people are looking for someone on whom to rely. Even though men and women have a different understanding of reliance, they both pursue it with like eagerness...

Couples are usually fascinated by one another during their initial period of engagement. Out of fear of turning the other person off, couples put their greatest effort into respecting and fulfilling each other's expectations and needs. This is motivated by egoism. This self-preoccupation cannot be avoided, even by people who have faith and who desire to put God above their own caprices...

But after this initial period of living in illusion, which is based to a large degree on emotions and feelings, both husband and wife begin to see each other and their relationship in a truer light. Later they begin to recognize the things that previously they were blinded to, for example, their spouse's egocentric approach, egoism, pride, greed, etc.

This process of losing marital illusions is connected to suffering, but in our journey to sanctity, it is a very precious gift. The less that the spouses can rely on each other, the greater the chance that they will start to desire Christ, and in Him they will begin to discover the only true support.

Each spouse ultimately has to fall in love with God as the only true source of love in his life. All aspects of a person's existence, including married life, lead to and prepare each spouse to espouse God...

Obviously, spouses should be kind toward each other. The temptation, however, to find substitute forms of happiness within the marital relationship is like poison, leading to abuse, deviation, and bitterness; it brings distaste and emptiness into a person's life. We are not able to be truly happy and to have meaning in our lives when we close ourselves to God...

A person who seeks a true love tries to see the spouse in the light of faith and tries to view him or her the way that God does. Consequently, we should frequently seek the answer to this question: *How does God love my husband/my wife?* It is in this way that we should relate to our spouses...

It can be extremely difficult to adopt this posture of faith in our daily lives with our spouses. Quite often it will simply **be impossible** to look at our spouses through the eyes of God. However, we have to remember that what counts most of all is that we **attempt** to do this, not that we always succeed. We need to humbly turn to God and beg Him to grant us the grace of looking at our spouses as if through his eyes. We have to ask ourselves these questions: *Are we doing this? Are we asking for such grace? Are we begging for Him to dwell in us, live in us, and use us as instruments in His relationship to our spouses?*

Slawomir Biela, *God Alone Suffices*, pp.29-32

References from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

1641 "By reason of their state in life and of their order, [Christian spouses] have their own special gifts in the People of God."¹⁴⁷ This grace proper to the sacrament of Matrimony is intended to perfect the couple's love and to strengthen their indissoluble unity. By this grace they "help one another to attain holiness in their married life and in welcoming and educating their children."¹⁴⁸

1642 *Christ is the source of this grace.* "Just as of old God encountered his people with a covenant of love and fidelity, so our Savior, the spouse of the Church, now encounters Christian spouses through the sacrament of Matrimony."¹⁴⁹ Christ dwells with them, gives them the strength to take up their crosses and so follow him, to rise again after they have fallen, to forgive one another, to bear one another's burdens, to "be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ,"¹⁵⁰ and to love one another with supernatural, tender, and fruitful love. In the joys of their love and family life he gives them here on earth a foretaste of the wedding feast of the Lamb.

Questions for Reflection

1. What is my perception of love in my relationship with my spouse? How does God see and love my husband/wife?
2. How can I experience God's love when my expectations are not met in my spousal and/or family relationships?
3. Our Blessed Mother was the "lowly handmaid." How can she help me to ask for the grace of deeper faith so that God may live more in me and that I may become an instrument in my relationship with my spouse and family?

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.