

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: 2546, footnotes 338: Mt 5:3; 339: Cf. Lk 6:20; 340: St. Gregory of Nyssa, De beatitudinibus 1:PG 44, 1200D; cf. 2 Cor 8:9; No. 1503, footnotes 104: Lk 7:16; cf. Mt 4:24; 105: Cf. Mk 2:5-12; 106: Cf. Mk 2:17; 107: Mt 25:36.

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Families of Nazareth Movement – www.familiesofnazareth.us

October 11, 2020 ~ 27th 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	Is 25:6-10A
Responsorial Psalm	Ps 23:1-3A, 3B-4, 5, 6
Reading II	Phil 4:12-14, 19-20
Gospel	Mt 22:1-14 OR 22:1-10

Opening or Closing Prayer

Dearest Father, Your Son tells us, "Unless you turn and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven." I long to be Your smallest child. Help me to rediscover You as the One Who delights in me, Who calls me as His own.

My Jesus, You say to us, "Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." You are the way to heaven. Thank You for saving me and giving me Yourself in the Holy Eucharist. Reactivate the call of my Baptism to serve the Church in childlike humility, "boasting only in God."

Holy Spirit, reveal to me my weaknesses that I may seek Jesus' strength. Reveal to me my nothingness, that I may await all things from Him. Convince me of Jesus' words, "What is impossible for human beings is possible for God."

Blessed Mother, I entrust my prideful doubt, fear, discouragement and ingratitude to your intercession so that I will believe, as God's beloved child and yours, "Ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you."

We ask this through Jesus 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 2010

Spiritual Reflection

“Go out, therefore, into the main roads and invite to the feast whomever you find.” The servants went out into the streets and gathered all they found, bad and good alike, and the hall was filled with guests. Mt 22:9-10

Jesus’ disciple is not called to virtue but to holiness, and holiness is not the search for human perfection, concentrated on our efforts or generosity. This is why the spiritual Masters “consider the search for perfection for itself a demonic narcissism” and do not cease to denounce it as a religious trap.

“Invite the Poor”

In the Gospel, doesn’t Jesus say that the last will come first? And doesn’t he summon the most miserable and wounded to sit in the wedding banquet hall?...

Why then would holiness be reserved for the “perfect,” the “just,” and the “virtuous”? In the Gospel it is clear, however, that the banquet is first offered to the poor and the crippled, not primarily to the rich neighbor.

In the *Magnificat*, the Virgin Mary says that God has cast down from their thrones those who have placed themselves on the pedestal of their false virtue, those who have thought themselves to be mighty and able to do great things by themselves. And what did he do? He went to look for the little ones – the lowly, the humble, the poor, the wounded – and he exalted them...

In this third millennium, it is urgent to open the door of holiness to the poor and the wounded because the parable of the banquet is a true hope for them. All the strong and perfect who would normally have been invited to the banquet refused to come. So it was said to the servants: “Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in here the poor and crippled, the blind and the lame” (cf. Lk 14:21).

Holiness must be offered along the alleys because God wants to fill his banquet hall with the poor and the wounded. Maxence Van Der Meersch writes:

Every man can be a saint at the same moment that he desires it even if, exteriorly, in the eyes of the world, he is only a creature of sludge and vice...

The wounded in life, the weak, the alcoholic, the drug addict, those with dependencies of all kinds – the poor who accept the suffering of their miseries and who fight despite it all – if they open themselves to mercy, as with the good thief, they will enter the Kingdom of God before the pure who put their

confidence in themselves by relying on their natural virtues. “But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first” (Mt 19:30).

Such is God’s love that invades the heart as soon as there is an opening by which God’s grace can penetrate it.

In this way, the Son of Man found, by sweeping, the lost drachma minted in his own image. In this way, he recovered what was lost in muck. God is born in the poverty of a stable and he wants to meet us in the poverty of our miseries.

André Daigneault, *The Way of Imperfection*, pp.4-7

References from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

2546 "Blessed are the poor in spirit."³³⁸ The Beatitudes reveal an order of happiness and grace, of beauty and peace. Jesus celebrates the joy of the poor, to whom the Kingdom already belongs.³³⁹ The Word speaks of voluntary humility as "poverty in spirit"; the Apostle gives an example of God's poverty when he says: "For your sakes he became poor."³⁴⁰

1503 Christ's compassion toward the sick and his many healings of every kind of infirmity are a resplendent sign that "God has visited his people"¹⁰⁴ and that the Kingdom of God is close at hand. Jesus has the power not only to heal, but also to forgive sins;¹⁰⁵ he has come to heal the whole man, soul and body; he is the physician the sick have need of.¹⁰⁶ His compassion toward all who suffer goes so far that he identifies himself with them: "I was sick and you visited me."¹⁰⁷ His preferential love for the sick has not ceased through the centuries to draw the very special attention of Christians toward all those who suffer in body and soul. It is the source of tireless efforts to comfort them.

Questions for reflection

1. In my daily life, what is my experience of riches? of poverty?
2. How can I respond to God’s call in this saying of Saint Mother Theresa: “God needs our poverty, not our abundance”?
3. Pondering on her Magnificat, how can I rely on Mary to help me to grow on the path of holiness through the poverty of spirit that recognizes weaknesses, woundedness and dependencies in order to be fully opened to God’s grace of conversion?

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.