

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.

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OCTOBER 21, 2018 ~ 29 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 Is 53:10-11

Responsorial Psalm Ps 33:4-5, 18-19, 20, 22

Reading II Heb 4:14-16

Gospel Mk 10:35-45

Opening or Closing Prayer

Mary, Virgin and Mother,
you who, moved by the Holy Spirit,
welcomed the word of life in the depths of your humble faith –

as you gave yourself completely to the Eternal One,
help us to say our own "yes" to the urgent call,
as pressing as ever,
to proclaim the good news of Jesus.

**Obtain for us now a new ardor
born of the resurrection,**
that we may bring to all the Gospel of life
which triumphs over death.

Give us a holy courage to seek new paths,
that the gift of unfading beauty
may reach every man and woman.

Mother of the living Gospel,
wellspring of happiness for God's little ones,
pray for us.
Amen.

Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 288 [Abridged]
Families of Nazareth USA
Summer Retreat 2006

Spiritual Reflection

“Grant that in your glory, we may sit one at your right and the other at your left...Rather, whoever wishes to be great among you will be your servant.”

Mk 10: 35;43

Running to Save Others

We often seek to project an image of ourselves which is of a good and generous person in order to be admired. We fire ourselves up. We develop projects, we organize an abundance of things, but this action does not always come from the interior and the depth of our heart. One bustles about, runs to assist others, one desires to “save” them, but refuses to face one’s own woundedness, and tries to dazzle by presenting an “idealized image” of oneself, the image of a savior.

Not Leaning Over the Poor

The true apostle needs to undergo certain purifications so that Christ may use him, and he may humbly become a “servant” of the Gospel, for we can be Pharisees in our apostolate toward the poor and the wounded. For example, one often speaks of becoming poor with the poor – and that is good. But repeatedly, one speaks of it like a rich man leaning over a poor man from the height of his riches. We think instinctively; we on the one side from above; those poor who need us on the other side, at the bottom. We then present ourselves as superior to them.

True conversion is to become poor in spirit, vulnerable and fragile, and to finally accept our poverty of heart – the wound which brings us side by side with the poorest and the most wounded of our brothers and sisters. To live the Gospel is to desire to be poor ourselves in order to reach the poor.

Nevertheless, to reach the poor and the little ones with the heart of a poor, one needs to learn how to receive from the poor. It is not enough to reach the poor who need bread, love, or light with our projects, our generosity, or even from a sense of duty since the Gospel tells us to visit the poor. The danger would then be that we “use” the poor to embellish our “image” of being a good and generous Christian. To love the poor, one must live compassion of heart; one must be like Jesus, “poor of heart,” “gentle and humble,” “compassionate,” and receive from the poor by saying like Jesus: “Give me to drink.”

The Gospel is the world upside down; it is a folly for human wisdom. Jean Vanier explains the folly of love that descends lower and lower in this way:

We admire someone important and we fear him also. We also love someone who is small and needs us. Therefore, this is the mystery; taking off his clothing, Jesus renders himself small and vulnerable. Through this humble gesture, Jesus reminds us that, from now on, he is hiding in the poor; to know the poor, one must descend with them. After manifesting his compassion toward them, Jesus himself became poor. The man of compassion becomes the man in need of compassion...The omnipotent God became the helpless one.

Fr. André Daigneault, *The Way of Imperfection*, pp.73-75

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

Questions for Reflection

1. When have I been of service to the poor in order to improve my self-image or the self-satisfaction of being a good Christian?
2. How does this reflection help me to discover the truth of my own woundedness and poverty? When do I take time to look at my own weakness or neediness?
3. “Blessed Mom, I need you”. Have I called on Mary this week?

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.