

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. 2742, footnotes 33: 1 Thess 5:17; Eph 5:20; 34: Eph 6:18; 35: Evagrius Ponticus, Pract. 49: PG 40, 1245C; No. 2744, footnotes 38: Cf. Gal 5:16-25; 39: St. John Chrysostom, De Anna 4, 5: PG 54,666; 40: St. Alphonsus Liguori, Del gran mezzo della preghiera; No. 2745, footnote 41: Jn 15:16-17.

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S. C. Biela, *Open Wide the Door to Christ*, (Ft. Collins, CO: In the Arms of Mary

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October 20th, 2019 ~ Twenty-Ninth 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	Ex 17:8-13
Responsorial Psalm	Ps 121:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8
Reading II	2 Tm 3:14-4:2
Gospel	Lk 18:1-8

Opening or Closing Prayer

We fly to thy patronage,

O Holy Mother of God;

despise not our petitions in our necessities,

but deliver us always from all dangers,

O glorious and blessed Virgin.

Amen.

Considered to be the most ancient complete prayer to Our Lady

*Families of Nazareth USA
Summer Retreat 2018*

Spiritual Reflection

Jesus told his disciples a parable about the necessity for them to pray always without becoming weary. Lk 18:1

In the light of faith, the most important activity in our day is prayer. It must take precedence over all other activities. **Contact with God determines the value and importance of our work.** Its efficacy depends on what is, as it were, in the back room; therefore it may depend on your knees that might be hurting very much from kneeling.

According to (Saint) John Paul II, it is not important what you do; it is important who you are. It is important that you are like this pope, a person of faith and prayer. When a Christian, as a disciple of Christ, stops being a person of prayer, he becomes useless to the world; he becomes like tasteless salt worth only to be “trampled underfoot” (cf. Mt 5:13).

The issue of prayer is a major issue in our Christian vocation. By praying, we not only pay homage to Christ on our own behalf, but we worship Him in the name of the whole world, which either does not know how, is unable to, or does not want to pray. One thing is certain: if we do not pray, no one will need us. The world does not need empty souls and hearts. When we ask what the relationship is between prayer and action, then the priority of prayer and sacrifice should be emphasized more than action. We can bring God into the lives of children whom we catechize at home or in school only to the extent of our having begged for it earlier on our knees. The issue of the relationship between prayer and action can be summarized in this statement: all authentic action is born of prayer and contemplation. For everything that is great in this world comes from God; everything that is great in this world is born of sacrifice and prayer.

Prayer is the crucial issue for every Christian. **You are as much a Christian as you are capable of praying.** Prayer and its particular stages are signs and indications of your closeness to or distance from God. The stages on your path to God are indicated by various stages of prayer. At each one there is a different form and kind of prayer because prayer is the expression of your bond with God...

We must continuously learn to pray. It is a task that stands before us in all times. The actual form of our prayer cannot be sufficient for us. We should continually advance and develop it...

Faith has a decisive influence on **what you pray for** and on the **intensity** of your prayer. If faith changes our mentality and tells us to put God in first place then, to the extent of its growth, our prayer will be increasingly simplified. It will become more and more subordinate to the work of the Holy Spirit (cf. Rom 8:26-27) and ever more concerned with the matters of the Kingdom.

Tadeusz Dajczer, *The Gift of Faith*, pp. 227-230

References from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

2742 "Pray constantly . . . always and for everything giving thanks in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father."³³ St. Paul adds, "Pray at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance making supplication for all the saints."³⁴ For "we have not been commanded to work, to keep watch and to fast constantly, but it has been laid down that we are to pray without ceasing."³⁵ This tireless fervor can come only from love. Against our dullness and laziness, the battle of prayer is that of humble, trusting, and persevering love. This love opens our hearts to three enlightening and life-giving facts of faith about prayer.

2744 *Prayer is a vital necessity.* Proof from the contrary is no less convincing: if we do not allow the Spirit to lead us, we fall back into the slavery of sin.³⁸ How can the Holy Spirit be our life if our heart is far from him? Nothing is equal to prayer; for what is impossible it makes possible, what is difficult, easy. . . . For it is impossible, utterly impossible, for the man who prays eagerly and invokes God ceaselessly ever to sin.³⁹ Those who pray are certainly saved; those who do not pray are certainly damned.⁴⁰

2745 *Prayer and Christian life are inseparable,* for they concern the same love and the same renunciation, proceeding from love; the same filial and loving conformity with the Father's plan of love; the same transforming union in the Holy Spirit who conforms us more and more to Christ Jesus; the same love for all men, the love with which Jesus has loved us. "Whatever you ask the Father in my name, he [will] give it to you. This I command you, to love one another."⁴¹

Questions for Reflection

1. What does my prayer life look like?
2. Where do I place prayer in the list of my daily activities? How is God present?
3. What role does Mary play in my prayer 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.