

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. 1431, footnote 24: Cf. Council of Trent (1551): DS 1676-1678; 1705; cf. *Roman Catechism*, II, V, 4; No. 1989, footnotes 38 Mt 4:17; 39: Council of Trent (1547); DS 1528.

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Tadeusz Dajczer, *The Gift of Faith*, 3rd ed. (Ft. Collins, CO: In the Arms of Mary Foundation, 2012). All rights reserved. – www.inthearmsofmary.org
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November 3, 2019 ~ Thirty-First 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	Wis 11:22-12:2
Responsorial Psalm	Ps 145:1-2, 8-9, 10-11, 13, 14
Reading II	2 Thes 1:11-2:2
Gospel	Lk 19:1-10

Opening or Closing Prayer

Father of Mercy and of Love,

Thank you for the gift of reconciliation through the Redemptive Sacrifice of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Your love is more powerful than my sin. There is no evil that surpasses Your infinite mercy.

Send your Holy Spirit to convince me of my weakness so that I may live with a truth of conscience and a certainty of redemption.

Open me, Gracious Father, to the graces of being personally responsible for my sins, longing for forgiveness, and of being obedient to the call to conversion.

When I seek forgiveness, give me the courage to reveal the abyss of my misery and to accept my sins as "happy faults" so that, as Your child, I may run to Your loving embrace.

Through the help and intercession of Mary, Mother of Mercy, may I learn true contrition for the wounds I have caused Her Son.

And may my continual renewal, through the grace of Your sacraments, work to revitalize the Church, so that, as One Body in Christ, we may proclaim Your dominion over all the earth.

I ask this through Christ our Lord who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen

Families of Nazareth USA
Summer Retreat 2008

Spiritual Reflection

*“Zacchaeus, come down quickly,
for today I must stay at your house.” Lk 19: 5*

One of the patrons of the sacrament of conversion, is Zacchaeus. When we mention this unusual person, we are reminded, in contrast, of the rich young man in the Gospel. It must have been very difficult for the “righteous” rich young man to be contrite. He had followed all the commandments of the Decalogue, so why should he be contrite? But Jesus said that for such a person it would be very difficult to enter the kingdom of heaven. The rich young man did not see within himself the greatest evil, the fact that he was so attached to riches and position that he did not choose God completely. He felt that since he followed the Decalogue he was “all right” before God. We don’t know what happened to him later, but the evident pain felt by Jesus after he left indicates just how bad his spiritual state was.

Next to the “righteous” young man, the Gospel shows us an extreme case, the scoundrel Zacchaeus. This harsh description can be used because Zacchaeus, the chief tax collector (meaning he was chief of the collaborationists and thieves) was really a person worthy of pity, in his own opinion and in that of others around him...

The side candelabras found in many Polish churches are called “*zacheuszki*” from the name Zacchaeus. The symbolism is profound. The *zacheuszki* reminds us of the unusual incident in which Jesus did not go for a meal with somebody “righteous” such as the rich young man. Instead, He said to the ringleader of thieves, “Zacchaeus, come down quickly, for today I must stay at your house” (Lk 19:5). Coming to someone’s house in those days meant entering into a kind of spiritual communion. This was not an ordinary visit for a meal or party. It was not only to eat something, but also to enter into a special, intimate relationship. Jesus chose Zacchaeus to enter into this personal communion with Him. Coming to his house, the house of presumably the most notorious thief in Jericho, He consecrated it just by His presence. Because of this, the house of Zacchaeus became almost a temple or sanctuary. Sometimes, maybe we feel like saying to Jesus, *Lord Jesus, what poor taste You have if You chose the home and heart of a thief as Your sanctuary. But that is the way God is – to the point of folly in His love for man.* Jesus came to Zacchaeus to bring redemption to his home. Bringing redemption to his home meant bringing it, not only to Zacchaeus himself and his family, but also to all of those similar to Zacchaeus – tax collectors and sinners – who came to him and sat with him at his table. Jesus came to enter into a communion with them, to

receive them into the temple that He consecrated. **Zacchaeus’ heart became God’s sanctuary, for it was truly contrite.** Only from the heart of the contrite can Jesus make his true sanctuary.

The good thief is also a patron of the sacrament of Reconciliation. His “confession” took place on the cross. There he admitted his guilt, “And indeed, we have been condemned justly, for the sentence we received corresponds to our crimes” (Lk 23:41)...This man must have been very contrite because with certainty he would have considered himself to be the worst...It is certain that his attitude of contrition and deep humility made his heart ready to accept God’s gift of faith...It is so difficult for us to be converted because there is too little contrition in our hearts. If there is so little contrition, then our faith is very shallow.

Tadeusz Dajczer, *The Gift of Faith*, pp. 88-91

References from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

1431 Interior repentance is a radical reorientation of our whole life, a return, a conversion to God with all our heart, an end of sin, a turning away from evil, with repugnance toward the evil actions we have committed. At the same time it entails the desire and resolution to change one’s life, with hope in God’s mercy and trust in the help of his grace. This conversion of heart is accompanied by a salutary pain and sadness which the Fathers called *animi cruciatus* (affliction of spirit) and *compunctio cordis* (repentance of heart).^{24!}

1989 The first work of the grace of the Holy Spirit is *conversion*, effecting justification in accordance with Jesus’ proclamation at the beginning of the Gospel: “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”³⁸ Moved by grace, man turns toward God and away from sin, thus accepting forgiveness and righteousness from on high. “Justification is not only the remission of sins, but also the sanctification and renewal of the interior man.”³⁹

Questions for Reflection

1. In my daily life, what attitudes might I discover that can be similar to the “righteous” rich young man?
2. In what areas of my life do I experience God’s call to be reconciled and converted to Him especially through the Sacrament of Reconciliation?
3. How can entrusting myself to Mary, Mother of Mercy, be a path to conversion, justification and renewal in my interior 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.