

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. 2712, footnote 8: Cf. *Lk* 7:36-50; 19:1-10; No.

2713, footnote 9: Cf. *Jer* 31:33; No. 2714, footnote 10: *Eph* 3:16-17.

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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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November 10, 2019 ~ Thirty-second 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 2 Mc 7:1-2, 9-14

Responsorial Psalm Ps 17:1, 5-6, 8, 15

Reading II 2 Thes 2:16-3:5

Gospel Lk 20:27-38

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

*“May the Lord direct your hearts
to the love of God and to the endurance of Christ”.*
2 Thess 16:5

Thomas A. Kempis, the author of *The Imitation of Christ*, describes the individual as a pilgrim, a wanderer who should maintain a distance from all temporal things by putting his trust in Christ.

“This world is not your permanent home; wherever you may be, you are a stranger, a pilgrim passing through. You will never find peace unless you are united with Christ in the very depths of your heart.

Why do you look around here to find peace when you do not really belong here? Your place is in heaven, and you should do everything else in terms of heaven. All things pass away, and you pass away with them too. See that you do not cling to passing things, lest you become caught up in them and perish with them.

Let your highest thoughts be with the Most High, and your prayer be directed to Christ without ceasing.” (Thomas A. Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*, Bk. 2, chap. 1)

This path on which we travel to fulness entails faithfulness to Christ’s call to separate ourselves from our illusory attachments. The call also entails that we must not place our hearts in anything which we pass on the path – anything that will not reconcile us with the pilgrimage to our true homeland. When traveling toward this fullness, we must gradually rise to the freedom of spiritual poverty of a soul that does not want to be rooted in this world. While traveling along this path, we have to lose everything of which we are possessive and everything that we attributed to ourselves. In turn, by becoming poor and, through this poverty, free, we can travel farther along the path that leads to union with God.

We cannot stop time. Here on earth, we are travelers who have to unceasingly journey on the pilgrimage to our heavenly homeland. The world in which we live and everything upon which a person, thanks to God’s grace, builds, are subject to the law of passing away. Someone who is poor in spirit **knows and accepts** this truth about the temporal order of the things of the

world...Our countless attachments bind our hearts to things of this world which do not last, and things that will disappear like a flowing stream of water. All our worries, preoccupations, bitterness, and disappointments come from our possessiveness and our attempts to rule over which we cannot rule,

...The things of this world are meant to serve our sanctification. Therefore, it is important that we treat things of this world in an instrumental way by maintaining a proper distance from them – the distance of spiritual poverty.

S. C. Biela, *Open Wide the Door to Christ*, pp.156-158

References from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

2712 Contemplative prayer is the prayer of the child of God, of the forgiven sinner who agrees to welcome the love by which he is loved and who wants to respond to it by loving even more.⁸ But he knows that the love he is returning is poured out by the Spirit in his heart, for everything is grace from God. Contemplative prayer is the poor and humble surrender to the loving will of the Father in ever deeper union with his beloved Son.

2713 Contemplative prayer is the simplest expression of the mystery of prayer. It is a gift, a grace; it can be accepted only in humility and poverty. Contemplative prayer is a covenant relationship established by God within our hearts.⁹ Contemplative prayer is a *communio* in which the Holy Trinity conforms man, the image of God, "to his likeness."

2714 Contemplative prayer is also the pre-eminently intense time of prayer. In it the Father strengthens our inner being with power through his Spirit "that Christ may dwell in [our] hearts through faith" and we may be "grounded in love."¹⁰

Questions for Reflection

1. In what ways have I considered myself a pilgrim or traveler in this life? How has this thought occurred to me?
2. In what areas of my life am I disturbed with the old saying, “you can’t take it with you?” How is God present in this saying and how do I respond?
3. In the life of Mary, what can particularly help me to understand the meaning of doing everything in terms of heaven?

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.