

### 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. 2541, footnote 330: *Gn* 3:6; No. 2542, footnotes 331: Cf. *Rom* 7:7; 332: *Rom* 7:23; cf. 7:10; No. 2744, footnotes 38: Cf. *Gal* 5:16-25; 39: St. John Chrysostom, *De Anna* 4,5: PG 54,666.

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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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### December 16, 2018 ~ 3rd Sunday of Advent ~ 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

<b>Reading I</b>	Zep 3:14-18a
<b>Responsorial Psalm</b>	Is 12:2-3, 4, 5-6
<b>Reading II</b>	Phil 4:4-7
<b>Gospel</b>	Lk 3:10-18

### Opening or Closing Prayer

#### **Holy Mary, full of God's presence**

during the days of your life, you accepted with full humility the Father's will,  
and the Devil was never capable to tie you around with his confusion.

**Once with your Son** you interceded for our difficulties, and,  
full of kindness and patience,

you gave us the example of how to untie the knots of our life.

And by remaining forever Our Mother, you put in order, and make more clear  
the ties that link us to the Lord.

#### **Holy Mother, Mother of God and our Mother,**

to you, who untie with motherly heart the knots of our life,  
we pray to you to receive in your hands (name), and to free them [him/her]  
of the knots and confusion with which our enemy attacks.

#### **Through your grace, your intercession, and your example,**

deliver us from all evil, Our Lady,  
and untie the knots that prevent us from being united with God,  
so that we, free from sin and error,  
may find Him in all things,  
may have our hearts placed in Him,  
and may serve Him always in our brothers and sisters. Amen

Pope Francis' prayer to *Our Lady, Untier of Knots*  
*Families of Nazareth USA*  
*Summer Retreat 2013*

## Spiritual Reflection

*The crowds asked John the Baptist,  
“What should we do?” Lk 3:10*

...Thank God for each truth that He reveals to you. Desire to be God's servant. Long to be someone who is poor in spirit and trusts his Lord so much that he does not ask unnecessary questions.

If something of the poor in spirit's folly arises within you, then you will “mirror” Mary's attitude that leads to full union with Christ.

### Sensitivity to the Subtlest Promptings of God

Not everyone who faces life's great storms and becomes submissive to God's will always remain faithful to God like Zacchaeus. A brick that is carried off by a hurricane does not necessarily change forever into a balloon that is sensitive to every gust of wind. If you do not take advantage of the graces that special storms in your life bring, then your life will barely change after the storm passes.

If you see, in the light of God's grace, that you resemble a brick rather than a balloon, then do not wait for a hurricane to hit you and your surroundings. Rather, acknowledge the truth that you are very attached to your own plans. Admit that you are closed to God's call. Confess that, in relation to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, you are as dead and heavy as a brick. From the depth of your misery, call upon the Blessed Mother:

*Mary, carry me in your arms like your own child. Please allow me to become light like a balloon carried by the wind of the Holy Spirit, docile to carrying out God's will and free from attachments. I do not want to know where this Divine Wind comes from or to where it will carry me. I do not want to impose my own plans and visions on God. I want to be docile like you.*

Once you pray in this way, Mary will lift you up into her arms and, even if you still remain heavy and resistant like a brick, she will carry you where the Holy Spirit wants to lead you. She is the one who is fully sensitive to the subtlest promptings of the Spirit. She is the one who is always obedient to Him. . .

Christ's extraordinary hunger to do God's will is the ideal example and role model for us to imitate. The person who hungers to fulfill God's will is the one

who widely opens the door to the One who is knocking. The more you **empty yourself of your own will** and become poor in spirit, the wider you will open the door. As a result, you will be free for the coming of the Lord and His will, which is love. He desires to heal you and fill you with Himself

S. C. Biela, *Open Wide the Door to Christ*, pp. 145-147

### References from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

**2541** The economy of law and grace turns men's hearts away from avarice and envy. It initiates them into desire for the Sovereign Good; it instructs them in the desires of the Holy Spirit who satisfies man's heart. The God of the promises always warned man against seduction by what from the beginning has seemed "good for food . . . a delight to the eyes . . . to be desired to make one wise."<sup>330</sup>

**2542** The Law entrusted to Israel never sufficed to justify those subject to it; it even became the instrument of "lust."<sup>331</sup> The gap between wanting and doing points to the conflict between God's Law which is the "law of my mind," and another law "making me captive to the law of sin which dwells in my members."<sup>332</sup>

**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.<sup>38</sup> 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.<sup>39</sup>

### Questions for Reflection

1. Am I a balloon or a brick? What life situations support this realization?
2. How can I call on Mary to help me to be docile – to carry out God's will and be free of attachments?
3. In my daily life, what experiences have shown me that Blessed Mother has carried out God's will in me and for me?

### 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.*