

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. 1384, footnote 217: *Jn* 6:53; No. 1385, footnote 218: *1 Cor* 11:27-29; No. 1386, footnote 219: *Roman Missal*, response to the invitation to communion; cf. *Mt* 8:8.

New American Bible © USCCB. All rights reserved. <http://www.usccb.org/nab/index.shtml>
S.C. Biela, *Open Wide the Door to Christ* (Ft. Collins, CO: In the Arms of Mary

Foundation 2005). All rights reserved. – www.inthearmsofmary.org

Families of Nazareth Movement – www.familiesofnazareth.us

February 2, 2020 ~ The Presentation of the Lord ~ Year A 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 Mal 3:1-4

Responsorial Psalm Ps 24:7, 8, 9, 10

Reading II Heb 2:14-18

Gospel Lk 2:22-40

Opening or Closing Prayer

My Lord Jesus,

Thank you for Your gift of the Eucharist in which You desire to meet with me, accept me, and love me just as I am.

Forgive me for constantly submerging myself in the world, seeking its innumerable temporal treasures, proving that You are not my one true treasure.

O my Lord, during Holy Mass, and during every moment of this day, I entrust to You all my affairs, fears, uncertainties and distractions, and I beg You to...

Open my soul to ever deeper contrition for wasting so many graces, and to gratefulness for Your constant bestowals.

Help me to have the attitude of a helpless child and a contrite sinner in need of Your Mercy.

Heal me of my spiritual leprosy.

Help me to discover You in the Eucharist and to desire You as my only true treasure – my only Love.

Transform me that I may decrease and You may increase.

Unite me to You, my Eucharistic Savior.

May our Blessed Mother await and receive in me and through me Your kenosis – Eucharist – and may she always be grateful within me for Your Sacrament of Love.

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

Summer Retreat 2007
Families of Nazareth USA

Spiritual Reflection

*Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon.
This man was righteous and devout, awaiting the consolation of Israel.
Lk 2:25*

Are you really being transformed by Christ's Redemptive Sacrifice when you participate in the Eucharist? Are you really being transformed when you receive God who offers Himself to you in Holy Communion? Does something change in your life? The elderly man, Simeon, waited his entire life for the grace to hold God in his own arms (see Lk 2:25-35). He was hungry for God. His heart was not immersed in the poisonous fumes of the temporal world. The person of Simeon symbolizes the ardor one must have while awaiting to meet with the Lord, for it is an awaiting filled with living faith, but void of the routine that corrodes and destroys it.

If you are immersed in the temporal world and your heart finds its treasure in it, then meeting with God in the Eucharist is only an episode or a passing effect. At the same time, the meeting is also a drama that reveals the emptiness of your faith. Unlike Simeon, we are not "thirsty" for God and so we are incapable of breaking through the veil of the Eucharistic Species to encounter the Living Presence of the Redeemer on the altar. Rather, we are left to acknowledge the truth about ourselves, confess that our hands are not as pure as Mary's hands, and admit that, unlike Simeon, we do not stretch out our hands in a begging gesture toward God. Our hands are covered with the "leprosy" of sin. They look like those of a son who has strayed away from the love of the Father. Ours are the hands of a blind man who stands next to a fountain but is unable to draw water from it.

God's Divine light reveals to us the truth about our lack of awaiting to meet and to receive Him in the Eucharist. However, we should not look at this truth by ourselves; this would not be good. By knocking with His light, Jesus tells us: *Let us, you and I, look at you, whom I love, together.* Jesus desires that, upon seeing the darkness of your soul, you experience His love. He wants you to long to be united with this love in the whole truth that is revealed to you.

Divine light calls out to you so that, upon acknowledging that you are closed, you, like the blind man from Jericho, will call out: "*Kyrie, eleison,*" or "Lord, have mercy on me." God wants you to try to obtain the grace of spiritual poverty by begging...Poverty is like a vacuum that waits to be filled. It hungers for the grace of forgiveness and the grace of freedom from the spiritual leprosy of sin, indifference and routine...

God wants to give you so much through the Eucharist. His desire to bestow graces upon you, however, needs the space that is created by your interior hunger for Him. Evangelical poverty creates this space...

God awaits each person in the Eucharist. In turn, He desires that each person await Him to the point that the attitude of awaiting becomes a growing hunger.

S.C. Biela, *Open Wide the Door to Christ*, pp. 55-58

References from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

1384 The Lord addresses an invitation to us, urging us to receive him in the sacrament of the Eucharist: "Truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you."²¹⁷

1385 To respond to this invitation we must *prepare ourselves* for so great and so holy a moment. St. Paul urges us to examine our conscience: "Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a man examine himself, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For any one who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself."²¹⁸ Anyone conscious of a grave sin must receive the sacrament of Reconciliation before coming to communion.

1386 Before so great a sacrament, the faithful can only echo humbly and with ardent faith the words of the Centurion: "*Domine, non sum dignus ut intres sub tectum meum, sed tantum dic verbo, et sanabitur anima mea*" ("Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul will be healed.")²¹⁹

Questions for Reflection

1. In light of this reflection, what do I realize about my attitude toward awaiting and preparing for the Eucharist?
2. In acknowledging my truth, how do I experience Jesus' love in the sacrament of the Eucharist and desire to respond to it?
3. How does Mary, the lowly Handmaid of the Lord, guide me to create inner space and hunger within myself to receive the Eucharist and be transformed by it?

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.