

### 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. 224, footnotes 48: 1 Cor 4:7; 49: Ps 116:12; No. 2097, footnote 14: Cf. Lk 1:46-49; No. 2638, footnote 120: 1 Thes 5:18; Col 4:2; No. 716, footnotes 87: Cf. Zeph 2:3; Pss 22:27; 34:3; Isa 49:13; 61:1; etc; 88: Lk 1:17.*

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### March 22, 2020 ~ 4th Sunday of Lent ~ 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

|                           |                         |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Reading I</b>          | 1 Sm 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a |
| <b>Responsorial Psalm</b> | Ps 23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6  |
| <b>Reading II</b>         | Eph 5:8-14              |
| <b>Gospel</b>             | Jn 9:1-41               |

### Opening or Closing Prayer

**Dear Lord,**

**The world of temporality** constantly pulls on my heart, although I want to seek only God's will for my life.

**Thank you for giving me your Mother** who teaches me, first of all, how to discover Your Love, and then how to trust in Pure Love.

**Transform me with the power of the Eucharist**, giving me your Divine Light to penetrate my heart and reveal its deepest truths.

**Through Mary, give me hope and lead me to contrition.** May my contrition give birth to gratitude for Your constant bestowals, given to me because You Love me just as I am ~ a sinner.

**Let every act of gratitude multiply in my heart** into new acts of gratitude as Blessed Mother carries me securely under Her mantle toward You, my Redeemer.

**I beg for these graces** through You, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

*Summer Retreat 2006*  
*Families of Nazareth USA*

## Spiritual Reflection

“While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” Jn 9:5

If the rich man from the parable had understood that he received everything that he had for free from God, then he would have shared generously with others. He was caught up in fulfilling his own desires. When a person is immersed in temporality and lives as if God does not exist, he becomes blind and deaf to God’s grace. By adoring temporality, he does not see God’s presence in his own life. Neither does he hear the Lord who knocks through certain events, especially when God’s knocking is very soft.

Is there not something of the attitude of the rich man from the parable in us? Do we not consider ourselves the **worthy** owners of the different graces that we receive from God? Do we not turn away from God because we think that we can manage without Him? Does God not continuously bestow countless graces upon us? Thanks to Him, we can see, hear and walk. God gives us the ability to think and to act. Are we grateful for these graces?

If God did not sustain us and bestow new graces upon us at every moment, then we would lose everything in an instant. Meanwhile, deafened to God’s knocking and immersed in the spirit of this world by looking at the world without faith and constantly maintaining the absurd conviction that we gain everything we have on our own, we turn away from God. Do we remember that the work by which we make a living is a gift from God? Certainly our Heavenly Father is the one who bestows upon us the necessary strength and ability to make it possible for us to work.

Everything is alms from God’s love. Do we thank Him more than just occasionally for these alms from His love? When we fail to thank God for these gifts that we receive from Him, we behave as if we were self-sufficient, as if our lives and the fate of the world depended on us. Is not a beggar, who is closed to his “knocking” Benefactor, a pitiful person because he has it in his head that he himself is a king? St. Paul asks, “What do you possess that you have not received? But if you have received it, why are you boasting as if you did not receive it?” (1 Cor 4:7). Why do we boast, even if in the depths of our own hearts, about our abilities, talents and achievements, instead of thanking God for these gifts?

If your openness to God continues to increase, then He will gradually take everything from you. Perhaps His knocking will take the form of certain events thanks to which you lose your friends or the environment and surroundings to which you are accustomed...Or, perhaps you will not be able to fulfill your own plans concerning your education, starting a new family or professional career.

It is very important that you **agree to lose**. In addition, it is very important that you joyfully accept the concrete realities of the path to sanctity to which you have been invited to follow. Do not forget that the pearl you want to obtain is the kingdom of God’s reign. Moreover, it is not a surprise that we have to do away with **our own wills**, and give up **our own visions** of life in order to open ourselves to everything that is **God’s will** and **His vision** of life.

S. C. Biela, *Open Wide the Door to Christ*, pp.14-17

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

- 224** [The implications of faith in one God] *It means living in thanksgiving*: if God is the only One, everything we are and have comes from him: "What have you that you did not receive?"<sup>48</sup> "What shall I render to the LORD for all his bounty to me?"<sup>49</sup>
- 2097** To adore God is to acknowledge, in respect and absolute submission, the "nothingness of the creature" who would not exist but for God. To adore God is to praise and exalt him and to humble oneself, as Mary did in the Magnificat, confessing with gratitude that he has done great things and holy is his name.<sup>14</sup> The worship of the one God sets man free from turning in on himself, from the slavery of sin and the idolatry of the world.
- 2638** As in the prayer of petition, every event and need can become an offering of thanksgiving. The letters of St. Paul often begin and end with thanksgiving, and the Lord Jesus is always present in it: "Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you"; "Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving."<sup>120</sup>
- 716** The People of the "poor"<sup>87</sup> - those who, humble and meek, rely solely on their God's mysterious plans, who await the justice, not of men but of the Messiah - are in the end the great achievement of the Holy Spirit's hidden mission during the time of the promises that prepare for Christ's coming. It is this quality of heart, purified and enlightened by the Spirit, which is expressed in the Psalms. In these poor, the Spirit is making ready "a people prepared for the Lord."<sup>88</sup>

## Questions for Reflection

1. What is Jesus telling me in this reflection? How do I respond?
2. How have I accepted the concrete realities of the path to sanctity? What are my struggles along the way?
3. How can Mary, the lowly Handmaid of the Lord, help me to *accept with joy and gratitude* the path of God’s will and His vision for my 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.*