

### 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 my 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.716, footnotes 87:* Cf. *Zeph* 2:3; *Pss* 22:27; 34:3; *Isa* 49:13; 61:1 etc.; **88:** *Lk* 1:17; **No. 2629, footnote 102:** Cf. *Rom* 15:30; *Col* 4:12; **No. 2631, footnotes 105:** *Lk* 18:13; **106:** *1 Jn* 3:22; cf. 1:7-2:2.

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André Daigneault, *The Way of Imperfection* (Ft. Collins, CO: In the Arms of Mary

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February 23, 2020 ~ 7th Sunday in Ordinary Time ~ Year

A

Spiritual Reflection on Sunday's Readings

Prepared by:

Families of Nazareth Movement USA

Opening Prayer  
Read Decalogue  
Read Scripture  
Read Reflection

**Reading I** Lv 19:1-2, 17-18

**Responsorial Psalm** Ps 103:1-2, 3-4, 8, 10, 12-13

**Reading II** 1 Cor 3:16-23

**Gospel** Mt 5:38-48

**Opening or Closing Prayer**

**Dear Father,** great is Your Mercy.

My true vocation is intimacy with You in the Kingdom of Heaven. May the new model of righteousness Your Son has given me, "as I have done, you should also do," open me more to Your mercy and transform me into Your divine likeness.

**Dear Jesus,** holy is Your Name.

May your prayer, "that they may be one as you, Father, and I are one," become my own desire. Teach me how to build up the unity of Your Mystical Body by embracing and living out my vocation to authentic holiness and happiness.

**Dear Holy Spirit,** amazing is Your Grace.

Grant me your gifts in order to "always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks" the reason for my hope. Thank you that, through You, I can encounter Jesus daily in the Eucharist, the source of my hope, even in the situations of my life that are most difficult to understand.

**Dear Mother Mary,** source of my joy.

"Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled." As a vessel of the Holy Spirit, teach me to live the Beatitudes of your Son. Wrap me in your mantle, where I can believe in His mercy and fulfill my vocation to be salt of the earth and light of the world.

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

*Families of Nazareth USA  
Summer Retreat 2011*

## Spiritual Reflection

“So be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect.” Mt 5:44

It is neither our poverty nor our weaknesses that prevent us from becoming saints but rather our lack of thirst, of desire, and a self-sufficiency which closes us to the gift of God...

The saint is not a witness of strength of will or of natural virtues, but he is a witness of the folly of the Cross and weakness transformed by grace...

The real way of holiness is the way of the poor and imperfect one who recognizes that “everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be exalted” (Lk 18:14).

Is it not this holiness of the poor which, in my opinion, must become *the great spirituality of the third millennium*? Holiness of the poor is to open oneself to merciful love: it is to discover that to love is not, first of all, being heroic, but it is to offer one’s weakness, and to be open to God’s gift in crying out to Him from the depth of one’s poverty. We do not build our own holiness, not even through *our* generosity. We do not build holiness through *fidelity* that can engender pride. In a heart poor and humble we receive holiness like that received by the good thief on the cross with the crucified Jesus.

We often make for ourselves a false image of holiness: holiness of the virtuous and the perfect. The real saints are not the perfect ones in the way understood by men. The real saints are the perfect evangelical children. They are not superhuman. They are weak and helpless. They are made fun of, and the world rejects or ridicules them.

The saint does not pretend to be strong; he often has the fear of suffering and, as Saint Therese of the Child Jesus says: “He carries his cross feebly.” In the end, what must be understood is that when the Lord speaks of being “perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Mt 5:48), he does not ask that our efforts and our works fulfill this perfection, but he asks that we become *the poor and thirsty* who humbly cry out to God. He asks that we *desire* holiness, that is, the mercy offered to our misery, because our holiness will be as great as our desire. “The one who desires God with a sincere heart already possesses the one he loves.” [Saint Gregory the Great]

The only goal of prayer is to bring us to this radical humility spoken of by Jesus in the Gospel. It is the prayer of the poor one who, thrown into the abyss, cries out for help.

André Daigneault, *The Way of Imperfection*, pp.62-64

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

**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>

**2629** The vocabulary of supplication in the New Testament is rich in shades of meaning: ask, beseech, plead, invoke, entreat, cry out, even "struggle in prayer."<sup>102</sup> Its most usual form, because the most spontaneous, is petition: by prayer of petition we express awareness of our relationship with God. We are creatures who are not our own beginning, not the masters of adversity, not our own last end. We are sinners who as Christians know that we have turned away from our Father. Our petition is already a turning back to him.

**2631** The first movement of the prayer of petition is *asking forgiveness*, like the tax collector in the parable: "God, be merciful to me a sinner!"<sup>105</sup> It is a prerequisite for righteous and pure prayer. A trusting humility brings us back into the light of communion between the Father and his Son Jesus Christ and with one another, so that "we receive from him whatever we ask."<sup>106</sup> Asking forgiveness is the prerequisite for both the Eucharistic liturgy and personal prayer.

## Questions for Reflection

1. In what ways or in which areas of my life am I still trying to merit/earn Heaven?
2. What does God’s merciful love mean to me? When have I experienced God’s merciful love in my daily life?
3. Mom, I need you! How can I take advantage of the Blessed Mother’s humility and meekness?

## 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.*