

## 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. 2608, footnote 64:* Cf. *Mt* 5:23-24, 44-45; 6:7, 14-15, 21, 25, 33; **No. 2844, footnotes 144:** Cf. *Mt* 5:43-44; **145:** Cf. *2 Cor* 5:18-21; John Paul II, *DM* 14

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S.C. Biela, *Behold, I Stand at the Door and Knock* (Ft. Collins, CO: In the Arms of Mary Foundation, 2005). All rights reserved. – [www.inthearmsofmary.org](http://www.inthearmsofmary.org)  
Families of Nazareth Movement – [www.familiesofnazareth.us](http://www.familiesofnazareth.us)

## February 24, 2019 ~ Seventh 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** 1 Sm 26:2, 7-9, 12-13, 22-23

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

**Reading II** 1 Cor 15:45-49

**Gospel** Lk 6:27-38

### Opening or Closing Prayer

**Dearest Father**, Your Son tells us, "Unless you turn and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven." I long to be Your smallest child. Help me to rediscover You as the One Who delights in me, Who calls me as His own.

**My Jesus**, You say to us, "Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." You are the way to heaven. Thank You for saving me and giving me Yourself in the Holy Eucharist. Reactivate the call of my Baptism to serve the Church in childlike humility, "boasting only in God."

**Holy Spirit**, reveal to me my weaknesses that I may seek Jesus' strength. Reveal to me my nothingness, that I may await all things from Him. Convince me of Jesus' words, "What is impossible for human beings is possible for God."

**Blessed Mother**, I entrust my prideful doubt, fear, discouragement and ingratitude to your intercession so that I will believe, as God's beloved child and yours, "Ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you."

**We 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 2010*

## Spiritual Reflection

*“To you who hear I say, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.” Lk 6:20*

By giving us the new commandment to love one another as He has loved us, Jesus Christ wants us to become **servants and, as if, slaves of others**. A slave has the dignity of a child of God, acknowledges he has no rights, and depends on the will of his Master, the Lord, in everything. If the slave loses something because of God’s will, then he accepts this loss with joy, knowing that it is an expression of the Lord’s purest love that **frees him from something that was unnecessary**. This posture was fully realized by the Blessed Mother, who, by Her own example, allows us to clearly understand the new commandment of love. When Christ gives us this commandment, He is telling us to love the other person as He loves this person, so that we die to ourselves and embrace the Cross.

God bestows His love on everyone, even those who persecute Him or crucify Him. If you want to imitate Him, then you too should love the people who are a source of suffering and torment for you. St. Thérèse describes this for us:

The Lord, in the Gospel, explains in what *His new commandment* consists. He says in St. Matthew: “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love *your neighbor and hate your enemy.*’ *But I say to you, love your enemies...pray for those who persecute you.*” No doubt, we don’t have any enemies in Carmel, but there are feelings. One feels attracted to this Sister, whereas with regard to another, one would make a long detour to avoid meeting her. And so, without even knowing it, she becomes the subject of persecution. Well, Jesus is telling me that it is this Sister who must be loved, she must be prayed for even though her conduct would lead me to believe that she doesn’t love me: *“If you love those who love you, what reward will you have? For, even sinners love those who love them.”* St. Luke, VI. And it isn’t enough to love; we must prove it. We are naturally happy to offer a gift to a friend; we love especially to give surprises; however, this is not charity, for sinners do this too. (Thérèse, *Story of a Soul*, 224-225. Citation is from Manuscript C, 15v-16r, - Ed.)

If you willingly help the people who are kind and good toward you, who understand and love you, then you are not doing anything extraordinary, even if you are capable of making great sacrifices. You then act as those who do not lean

on God and do not take advantage of His special power. The One Who is knocking expects something much more from you. If you invite Him to yourself in the posture of an evangelical child, and if you open up to Him the world of your difficult relationships with various persons, those whom you cannot love, He Himself will lead you with His light and **will teach you how to also love those who wound you. . .**

It is best if we learn from Blessed Mother, Mary, how to look at the world and how to receive the kingdom of God like a child. She perceives everything the way God does and She loves every person in the same manner as God does.

S.C.Biela, *Behold, I Stand at the Door and Knock*, pp.87-89

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

**2608** From the *Sermon on the Mount* onwards, Jesus insists on *conversion of heart*: reconciliation with one's brother before presenting an offering on the altar, love of enemies, and prayer for persecutors, prayer to the Father in secret, not heaping up empty phrases, prayerful forgiveness from the depths of the heart, purity of heart, and seeking the Kingdom before all else.<sup>64</sup> This filial conversion is entirely directed to the Father.

**2844** Christian prayer extends to the *forgiveness of enemies*,<sup>144</sup> transfiguring the disciple by configuring him to his Master. Forgiveness is a high-point of Christian prayer; only hearts attuned to God's compassion can receive the gift of prayer. Forgiveness also bears witness that, in our world, love is stronger than sin. The martyrs of yesterday and today bear this witness to Jesus. Forgiveness is the fundamental condition of the reconciliation of the children of God with their Father and of men with one another.<sup>145</sup>

## Questions for Reflection

1. What is my most usual reaction when I lose something or when I am misunderstood by someone?
2. How do I perceive God’s Love and Mercy in these situations?
3. How can I allow Blessed Mother’s example to teach me – in a deeper way – the new commandment of love given by Jesus Christ?

## 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.*