

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. 272, footnotes 111: 1 Cor 1:24-25; 112: Eph 1:19-22; No. 273, footnotes 113: Cf. 2 Cor 12:9; Phl 4:13; 114: Lk 1:37, 49.

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Tadeusz Dajczer, *The Gift of Faith, 3rd ed.* (Ft. Collins, CO: In the Arms of Mary

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March 3, 2019 ~ Eight 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

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|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Reading I | Sir 27:4-71 |
| Responsorial Psalm | Ps 92:2-3, 13-14, 15-16 |
| Reading II | 1 Cor 15:54-58 |
| Gospel | Lk 6:39-45 |

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

“Why do you notice the splinter in your brother’s eye, but do not perceive the wooden beam in your own?.” Lk 6:41

If you feel that you are strong in the sense that you possess natural abilities, your faith cannot develop and deepen. That is why you have to experience your weakness; you have to realize that there are things you cannot do. This will be the call to faith. Your weakness, inability, and helplessness will become a crack through which the grace of faith will squeeze into your heart. **Through your woundedness, God gives you the grace of deepening your faith.** Charles Péguy, a great convert writes:

One has encountered an incredible generosity of grace and some unbelievable graces penetrating an evil and even depraved soul, and one has seen as saved that which appeared lost. However, one has not encountered what was varnished to be saturated, what was waterproof to be permeated, and what was hardened to be softened. From this source derive so many obstacles to the efficacy of grace – grace that, while bringing so many victories in the souls of great sinners, remains ineffective within righteous people.

This is because these “righteous” people, those mature in the evangelical sense, have no deficiencies, they are not wounded. They are powerful, strong, self-sufficient, and mature. Péguy continues:

Their moral skin constantly intact becomes their shell and armor of faultlessness. They do not present an opening caused by some kind of terrible wound, caused by an unforgotten distress, an inability to overcome regret, a stitch improperly joined, a mortal fear, an invisible and hidden anxiety, a secret bitterness, a fall perpetually masked, a scar badly healed. They do not present this point of entry to grace which, essentially, sin is. Since they are not wounded, they are not vulnerable. Since they lack nothing, nothing is given to them...

The so-called self-righteous adults are impenetrable to grace.

Perhaps in your life there is a terrible unhealed wound, maybe an unforgotten torment, a resentment that you have not been able to get over, some kind of hidden bitterness that accompanies so many things in this life, maybe some kind of disaster. You then think that this is the end, but this is not so. These can be your channel for grace. **God must allow so many wounds, so many hard moments, so that you feel**

weak and, through this, open to grace. When you feel very painfully touched, remember that this is a blessed pain that makes room for grace to penetrate your armor of maturity and self-righteousness. All of this is a chance for you to deepen your faith. Through faith, your weakness lets the might of God dwell in you. When coming closer to you, God must make you weaker so that you will need Him – so that, as your faith and trust in Him increase, you will seek support from Him. You have to be humbled because you are too great – and wounding humbles. Hence, every wounding gives you a chance to become more and more like an evangelical child. **Sometimes it will take many wounds to become a child so that you will walk “the little way.”**

Tadeusz Dajczer, *The Gift of Faith*, p.48-51

References from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

- 272** Faith in God the Father Almighty can be put to the test by the experience of evil and suffering. God can sometimes seem to be absent and incapable of stopping evil. But in the most mysterious way God the Father has revealed his almighty power in the voluntary humiliation and Resurrection of his Son, by which he conquered evil. Christ crucified is thus "the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men."¹¹¹ It is in Christ's Resurrection and exaltation that the Father has shown forth "the immeasurable greatness of his power in us who believe".¹¹²
- 273** Only faith can embrace the mysterious ways of God's almighty power. This faith glories in its weaknesses in order to draw to itself Christ's power.¹¹³ The Virgin Mary is the supreme model of this faith, for she believed that "nothing will be impossible with God", and was able to magnify the Lord: "For he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name."¹¹⁴

Questions for Reflection

1. How do I react in times of anxiety, distress, inability or bitterness?
2. How can I perceive God’s Love and Mercy in my woundedness?
3. Mary was a model of faith. How can she intercede for me so that I may obtain a deeper faith through my vulnerability?

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.