

### 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.478, footnotes 116; No. 1823, footnotes 96:* Cf. *Jn* 13:34; **97:** *Jn* 13:1; **98:** *Jn* 15:9, 12; **No. 1825, footnotes 100:** *Rom* 5:10; **101:** Cf. *Mt* 5:44; *Lk* 10:27-37; *Mt* 25:40,45.

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<http://www.usccb.org/nab/index.shtml>

Tadeusz Dajczer, *The Gift of Faith*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Ft. Collins, CO: In the Arms of Mary Foundation, 2012). All rights reserved. – [www.inthearmsofmary.org](http://www.inthearmsofmary.org)

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## February 3, 2019 ~ Fourth 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

<b>Reading I</b>	Jer 1:4-5, 17-19
<b>Responsorial Psalm</b>	Ps 71:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 15-17
<b>Reading II</b>	1 Cor 12:31—13:13 or 13:4-13
<b>Gospel</b>	Lk 4:21-30

### 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

*If I have all faith so as to move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing ...  
So faith, hope, love remain, these three; but the greatest of these is love.  
1 Cor 13:2,13*

Faith works “through Love” (Gal 5:6), and in love it finds its fulness of life. Faith invites us to enter into “communion” with God and our brothers. God reveals His love (Greek: *agape*) to us, which we accept through faith, so that in turn we may pass it on to others. [Saint] John Paul II has said it is in love that entrusting oneself through faith to God attains its true character and the dimension of a reciprocal gift.

...This love is described by the famous words of St. Paul in his Letter to the Corinthians, “Love is patient, love is kind...It does not seek its own interests, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury...It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things” (1 Cor 13:4-7). This kind of love in the original Greek language is defined by the term *agape*. In the Christian concept, God is *agape* – a love that descends on a person and loves that which is unworthy of love. This is a spontaneous love that imparts itself only because it is love. *Agape* is a gratuitous love that encompasses a person. It sometimes seems to us that we should win God over, that we should merit His love. But He loves you because you are His child, not because you are worthy. **Agape is love that creates, that loves you not because you are worthy of being loved, but to make you worthy of it.** *Agape* desires to create an ever-increasing good in you. Someone who has received special graces from God is surprised that these graces have been bestowed on him. But *agape* love descends on the unworthy – descends on us all – because we are all unworthy and we all need this creative love that creates good. The anguish for God, who is love, is that He cannot pour out His love fully, that he cannot boundlessly flood the human soul with his love. God is continuously seeking open hearts on which He may pour out His infinite love without limits.

To every loving mother, her child will always be the most beautiful, even if the ugliest, because this is her own child. Is it important how many flaws you have? Maybe you have a multitude of them; maybe they depress you; maybe you cannot stand them any longer. **But God wants to embrace you with His love; He wants to descend upon you, to create love in you in order to make you, who are sinful and unworthy, a masterpiece of His love.**

*Agape* love, which descends upon you from God, and that you accept through faith, cannot be kept within you. Love, as a value, as a good, must be poured out and must be passed on. *Agape* is Christ who lives in you and wants to love others through you and in you. A person gifted with *agape* love, a selfless love, begins to

give love. Strictly speaking, it is Christ within him who begins to love others. *Agape* is not so much an emotional love as a love from the will, which wants to bestow good on others. The bonds it creates between people can last even after death. It is not important who the other person is – ugly or pretty, pleasant or unpleasant, full of flaws and sin, or not. What is important is that the *agape* love wants to love him so that he may become a better person. That *agape* love, which grows within you because of Christ descending into your heart, is often expressed in trivial things, in gestures or looks. It is very important for you to express this love in the warmth of your look, in the acceptance, in the wonder, and in the continual, friendly welcome of another person.

*Agape* is not only a love that creates, but it is also a love that forms a communion, a community of people.

Tadeusz Dajczer, *The Gift of Faith*, pp.243-246

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

- 478** Jesus knew and loved us each and all during his life, his agony and his Passion, and gave himself up for each one of us: "The Son of God. . . loved me and gave himself for me."<sup>116</sup> He has loved us all with a human heart...
- 1823** Jesus makes charity the *new commandment*.<sup>96</sup> By loving his own "to the end,"<sup>97</sup> he makes manifest the Father's love which he receives. By loving one another, the disciples imitate the love of Jesus which they themselves receive. Whence Jesus says: "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love." And again: "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."<sup>98</sup>
- 1825** Christ died out of love for us, while we were still "enemies."<sup>100</sup> The Lord asks us to love as he does, even our *enemies*, to make ourselves the neighbor of those farthest away, and to love children and the poor as Christ himself.<sup>101</sup>

## Questions for Reflection

1. How has God used events in my life this week to reveal the type of love that is in my relationships with my loved ones, neighbors, co-workers, those I don't particularly like?
2. Since God loves me because I am His child and not because I am worthy, what encourages or hinders me from being more open to Him and/or to others?
3. In gazing at Mary at the foot of the Cross, how can she teach me supernatural, *agape* love?

## 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.*