

## 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. 2546, footnotes 338: Mt 5:3 ;339: Cf Lk 6:20; 340: St. Gregory of Nyssa, De beatitudinibus 1: PG 44, 1200D; 2 Cor 8:9; No 2547, footnotes 341: Lk 6:24; 342: St. Augustine, De serm. Dom. In monte 1, 1, 3: PL 34, 1232; 343: Cf. Mt 6:25-34.*

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S.C. Biela, *Open Wide the Door to Christ* (Ft. Collins, CO: In the Arms of Mary

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## February 17, 2019 ~ Sixth 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** Jer 17:5-8

**Responsorial Psalm** Ps 1:1-2, 3, 4 and 6

**Reading II** 1 Cor 15:12, 16-20

**Gospel** Lk 6:17, 20-26

### 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

*“Blessed are you who are poor, for the kingdom of God is yours.” Lk 6:20*

St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus teaches us “to recognize our nothingness, to (await) everything from God as a little child (awaits) everything from its father.” An expression of this awaiting can be the gesture in which you trustfully stretch out your hands like a beggar toward God.

The evangelical beggar trusts because he knows that he is a beloved child of the most caring Father and King. He sees his spiritual misery very clearly and knows that when he stands before God, he is *dust and ashes*. As a result of this, he agrees even to be pushed aside and brushed off. Even though he stretches out his hands, he accepts the fact that he may be refused. How many beggars go without anything? How many people refuse to respond to their call? If we had the attitude of a beggar, then we would accept any perceived lack of God’s response to our prayers.

There are times when it seems that God does not respond to us when we plead to be freed from our enslavement to certain sins. Why? Perhaps standing in truth and discovering our own weaknesses is more important than our external immaculateness? Perhaps, in this way, God is curing us from our delusion of thinking positively about ourselves, and this process makes us progressively poorer. God desires to teach us true trust and entrustment wherein we do not count on our own merits. A person who is poor in spirit does not have any merits of his own before the Lord. Our desire to earn God’s love by the power of our own deeds contradicts the attitude of someone who is poor in spirit and also contradicts the beatitudes of Jesus Christ. The desire to earn God’s love is a symptom of spiritual misery.

God cannot shield you from your faults or free you from your weaknesses if authentic humility is not in you. When you attribute the graces of being shielded from sins and unfaithfulness to yourself, it strengthens your false conviction that you are finally perfect. Your pride inflates enormously and completely closes you off from the One who is knocking. However, through the discovery of your weaknesses and unfaithfulness, you have a greater chance to acknowledge that you are only a miserable beggar who deserves to be left and abandoned by God. Such was the attitude of the Good Thief as he was dying on the cross. His attitude can be an example to us. The Thief’s plea for mercy, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom” (Lk 23:42), is the call of a beggar who is tormented not only by physical pain but also by the realization that he suffers justly because of his own evil. When a person who is poor in spirit stands before God, he is like the

Good Thief who consented to allow his evil and spiritual misery to be talked about by those surrounding him. The Good Thief did not protest when people made fun of him and derided him as he was dying on the cross. Not only did he accept this, he also acknowledged that he deserved everything that happened to him. . .

When the light of God’s truth liberates us from the illusion of thinking positively about ourselves, and when we discover our own weakness more clearly, then remaining in God’s presence can become very difficult. Without seeing any good in ourselves, we do not know what kind of attitude to assume in order to behave properly. God expects that we will stand before Him in truth and that, by acknowledging our own spiritual misery, we will trust in His mercy.

S.C.Biela, *Open Wide the Door to Christ*, pp.47-51

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

**2546** "Blessed are the poor in spirit."<sup>338</sup> The Beatitudes reveal an order of happiness and grace, of beauty and peace. Jesus celebrates the joy of the poor, to whom the Kingdom already belongs:<sup>339</sup>

The Word speaks of voluntary humility as "poverty in spirit"; the Apostle gives an example of God's poverty when he says: "For your sakes he became poor."<sup>340</sup>

**2547** The Lord grieves over the rich, because they find their consolation in the abundance of goods.<sup>341</sup> "Let the proud seek and love earthly kingdoms, but blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven."<sup>342</sup> Abandonment to the providence of the Father in heaven frees us from anxiety about tomorrow.<sup>343</sup> Trust in God is a preparation for the blessedness of the poor. They shall see God.

## Questions for Reflection

1. What is God revealing to me about myself in this reflection?
2. How do I see God’s Love and Mercy for me in this meditation?
3. How can I allow our Blessed Mother – as an instrument of the Holy Spirit – to lead me on the way of an evangelical beggar?

## 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.*