

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. 1213, footnote 4: Cf. Council of Florence:DS 1314; *vitae spiritualis ianua*; 5: *Roman Catechism II*, 2, 5; cf. Council of Florence DS 1314; CIC, cann.204 S1; 849, CCEO, can. 674 S1; No. 1216, footnote 8: St. Justin, *Apol.* 1, 61, 12:PG 6, 421; 9: *Jn* 1:9; *I Thess* 5:5; *Heb* 10:32; *Eph* 5:8.

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Tadeusz Dajczer, *The Gift of Faith*, 3rd ed. (Ft. Collins, CO: In the Arms of Mary Foundation, 2012). All rights reserved. – www.inthearmsofmary.org
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January 12, 2020 ~ The Baptism of the Lord ~ Year A 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	Is 42:1-4, 6-7
Responsorial Psalm	Ps 29:1-2, 3-4, 3, 9-10
Reading II	Acts 10:34-38
Gospel	Mt 3:13-17

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

*Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him.
John tried to prevent him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you,
and yet You are coming to me?" Jesus said to him in reply,
"Allow it now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness."
Mt 3:13b-15*

Because of our little faith, Baptism remains the sacrament not yet fully appreciated by Christians. Deep faith is needed to understand the words of St. Paul: "For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God" (Col 3:3). Paul's expression "have died" has the same meaning as the words used by the apostle in his letter to the Romans when he writes about the importance of the sacrament of Baptism leading us into the life of Christ: "Or are you unaware that we who are baptized in Christ were baptized into his death?" (Rom 6:3). It is a consequence of His death that we enter a new life through Baptism. This first sacrament of the Church is the beginning of our being "hidden with Christ in God." **Baptism is the origin and source of faith.** It begins a supernatural life in us, which is a life of faith, hope, and love.

Baptism allows us to share in the absolutely new life that Christ began in the history of mankind through His Resurrection. This newness of life is our freedom from the legacy of sin, from its "enslavement," and is our sanctification in truth. **It is the discovering of God's call to be united with Him and to live with Christ in Him.** This newness has within itself the beginnings of all human vocations. Ultimately every call, be it a call to the priesthood or religious life, or to fatherhood or motherhood, leads toward the full actualization of the sacrament of Baptism.

Dying with Christ, which is initiated at Baptism, allows us to partake in the fruits of His Resurrection, like the seed that must die in order to bear fruit that is new life. **Through Baptism a fundamental consecration is brought about, the offering of a human being to God to belong only to Him.** This consecration can be brought about thanks to the graces of Christ's Redemption, and, at the same time, it is our answer to it.

We should continually return to the grace of the sacrament of Baptism so that, through our faithfulness to these extraordinary and particular graces, we may achieve to a degree the state of purity of our soul as was given to us at the moment of Baptismal initiation. By immersion into the death and Resurrection of Jesus through Baptism, we achieve a certain state of immaculateness, which we often waste later. The graces of Baptism are given to us for a lifetime. Nevertheless, we often squander them by submitting to evil. However, if we desire to progress toward sanctity, then by going through various stages of purification, we can once again reach this particular state of immaculateness that we have wasted by being unfaithful to the graces of

Baptism. Our whole path to sanctity is nothing other than achieving the same state of our soul that we received at the moment of Baptism.

Progress in our interior life depends on an ever stronger desire to actualize the graces of Baptism – graces of being molded into the image of Christ by living in the spirit of the eight Beatitudes: "Whoever loses his life for my sake will find it" (Mt 16:25). This "losing of one's life" begins with the sacrament of Baptism and is to be actualized throughout a person's entire life...

The gift of faith given to us in the sacrament of Baptism should lead us to the steady growth of our adherence to Christ. Baptism stands before us not only as something accomplished, but also as a certain mission and purpose. Similar to faith, Baptism is a mission for us that will not be completely fulfilled until the moment of our union with Christ. Tadeusz Dajczer, *The Gift of Faith*, pp. 168-172

References from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

1213 Holy Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit (*vitae spiritualis ianua*),⁴ and the door which gives access to the other sacraments. Through Baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as sons of God; we become members of Christ, are incorporated into the Church and made sharers in her mission: "Baptism is the sacrament of regeneration through water in the word."⁵

1216 "This bath is called *enlightenment*, because those who receive this [catechetical] instruction are enlightened in their understanding . . ."⁸ Having received in Baptism the Word, "the true light that enlightens every man," the person baptized has been "enlightened," he becomes a "son of light," indeed, he becomes "light" himself:⁹

Questions for Reflection

1. Although I may not remember my Baptism, how do I reflect upon this miraculous event in the ordinary situations of my daily life? How do I strive to actualize the graces of Baptism?
2. In the light of this reflection, how have I or haven't I perceived God's love and the redeeming action of Christ present in what I experience?
3. How can Blessed Mother, the Spouse of the Holy Spirit, help me to remember my baptismal call and open my heart and life to the graces God wants to bestow on me and the community of the whole Church through the eternal event of my Baptism?

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.