

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. 2222; No. 2223 footnote: 31 CA 36 S2.
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S.C.Biela, *God Alone Suffices* (Ft. Collins, CO: In the Arms of Mary Foundation, 2003). All rights reserved. – www.inthearmsofmary.org
Families of Nazareth Movement – www.familiesofnazareth.us

December 30, 2018 ~ Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph ~ Year C Spiritual Reflection on Sunday's Readings

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Opening Prayer
Read Decalogue
Read Scripture
Read Reflection

Reading I

Sir 3:2-6, 12-14 or 1Sm 1: 20-22, 24-28

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 128:1-2, 3, 4-5 or Ps 84:2-3, 5-6, 9-10

Reading II

Col 3:12-21 or Col 3:12-17 or 1 Jn 3:1-2, 21-24

Gospel

Lk 2:41-52

Opening or Closing Prayer

God and Father of us all,
in Jesus, your Son and our Savior,
you have made us
your sons and daughters
in the family of the Church.
May your grace and love
help our families
in every part of the world
be united to one another
in fidelity to the Gospel.
May the example of the Holy Family,
with the aid of your Holy Spirit,
guide all families,
especially those most troubled,
to be homes of communion and prayer
and to always seek your truth
and live in your love.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.
Jesus, Mary and Joseph,
Pray for us!

Prayer for the World Meeting of Families – Philadelphia 2015

Spiritual Reflection

“Why were you looking for me?

Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house”? Lk 2:49

The tendency for parents to seek illusory reliance on their children does not fade away, even when the children become grownups. This tendency manifests itself in the parents’ desire to know all of the endeavors of their adult children. We fail to understand that, at this point in our children’s lives, they are entitled to have a private, intimate relationship of their own with the Creator – the only Father.

When our children grow up and have children of their own, our reliance spreads further to encompass our grandchildren. New conflicts and sufferings arise because we forget that parents, not grandparents, are responsible for raising their children.

If we truly want our grandchildren to fall in love with God, for Him to become their only means of reliance, and His will to be their only food, then we will not count on our grandchildren fulfilling expectations in our lives. We will understand that we should focus on fighting for only one thing – that the grandchild will be fulfilled in a way that will lead him to what is most important – a relationship with our God, the Father. . .

If children desired to fulfill God’s will, our situation as parents would be ideal because in so doing, we would have allowed them to become instruments in the hands of God. Then we would neither count on them, nor seek in them illusory reliance; instead all of our expectations would be directed toward the Creator. He Himself, could take care of us, through our children, other people, or other circumstances.

Each one of us has God as our Father. If we were open to this truth, then our food would also be to fulfill God’s will. Our lives would become the best testimony for our children and for our grandchildren.

If parents, educators, and all the people to whom the faith of our children is entrusted do not live by faith and hope (in terms of allowing God’s plans to be fulfilled) then to a great degree they limit His designs for others...

God truly desires that we anticipate, with faith and hope, the fulfillment of His plans toward our environment and us. Therefore, we should always look upon our dear ones, as well as those who are away from the faith, as God looks upon them in His mercy. God looks at them as saints, even though they may convert in a

year, maybe ten years, or even - as the case of the Good Thief – only at the last hours of their lives. The best way for us to help others on their way to conversion is to better appreciate God’s purpose connected to their lives, rather than trying to rely on them excessively.

It is crucial for us to place our reliance on God. At the same time, we must cooperate with His grace and anticipate, with great hope, what we have not yet received, but which we deeply believe is in accordance with God’s designs. In this way the results of our reliance on God can also be the salvation of others.

S.C.Biela, *God Alone Suffices*, pp. 39-42

References from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

2222 Parents must regard their children as *children of God* and respect them as *human persons*. Showing themselves obedient to the will of the Father in heaven, they educate their children to fulfill God’s law.

2223 Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children. They bear witness to this responsibility first by *creating a home* where tenderness, forgiveness, respect, fidelity, and disinterested service are the rule. The home is well suited for *education in the virtues*. This requires an apprenticeship in self-denial, sound judgment, and self-mastery - the preconditions of all true freedom. Parents should teach their children to subordinate the "material and instinctual dimensions to interior and spiritual ones."³¹ Parents have a grave responsibility to give good example to their children. By knowing how to acknowledge their own failings to their children, parents will be better able to guide and correct them.

Questions for Reflection

1. As a parent, grandparent or educator, how often do I consider God’s will in the lives of the children entrusted to me? What are my priorities?
2. What kind of testimony do I give to my children, grandchildren or those in my care? Do they perceive the truth about God’s love and mercy or mainly the natural dimension of my expectations and reliance?
3. By contemplating the example of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, how can my family and I learn more about faith, trust and 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.