

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. 526 footnote 205: Cf. *Mt* 18:3-4; **206:** *Jn* 3:7; 1:13; 1:12; cf. *Mt*. 23:12; **207:** Cf. *Gal* 4:19; **No. 2660 footnote 14:**Cf. *Lk* 13:20-21.
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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
Families of Nazareth Movement – www.familiesofnazareth.us

January 6, 2018~ Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord~ 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 Is 60:1-6
Responsorial Psalm Ps 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-11, 12-13
Reading II Eph 3:2-3a, 5-6
Gospel Mt 2:1-12

Opening or Closing Prayer

My Lord Jesus,

Thank you for Your gift of the Eucharist in which You desire to meet with me, accept me, and love me just as I am.

Forgive me for constantly submerging myself in the world, seeking its innumerable temporal treasures, proving that You are not my one true treasure.

O my Lord, during Holy Mass, and during every moment of this day, I entrust to You all my affairs, fears, uncertainties and distractions, and I beg You to...

Open my soul to ever deeper contrition for wasting so many graces, and to gratefulness for Your constant bestowals.

Help me to have the attitude of a helpless child and a contrite sinner in need of Your Mercy.

Heal me of my spiritual leprosy.

Help me to discover You in the Eucharist and to desire You as my only true treasure – my only Love.

Transform me that I may decrease and You may increase.

Unite me to You, my Eucharistic Savior.

May our Blessed Mother await and receive in me and through me Your kenosis – Eucharist – and may she always be grateful within me for Your Sacrament of Love.

I ask this through Christ our Lord who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Families of Nazareth USA
Summer Retreat 2007

Spiritual Reflection

They prostrated themselves and did him homage. Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Mt. 2:11

Faith is the acknowledgement of one's own helplessness and the awaiting of everything from God. **This experience of helplessness and awaiting everything from God is humble means *par excellence*.** Do you see the value of humble means in your life? God certainly does not limit your opportunities of this kind. Who among us does undergo moments of torment, some particular difficulties or moments of the spiritual desert? Who among us does not have problems with our own selves and with the external conditions of life? All of this cannot be seen, classified, or evaluated. It is so unnoticeable that one cannot find any statistical data on this subject. Who could possibly know that, at a certain point in your life, you said *yes* to God, *I do want – I want everything that you expect from me*. Who could know that, at a certain point in time, when it was very hard for you, you said through tears that you love Him and always want to love Him? Who knows how many times you vanquished your own self, denied yourself something, and overcame your own will? **These humble means are of the utmost importance to you, to the Church, and to the world; these are the means that summon the might of God...**

...Since humble means by themselves do not guarantee your reaching your life's goal, the efficacy of humble means is based on faith; therefore, this efficacy is the evidence that it is God Himself who is acting...

...[God] loves humble gifts. He does not want beautiful flowers, but prefers simple and plain ones from the meadow because they do not feed our pride. Someone once said that among all gifts God likes humble gifts the best – gifts that are not something to be proud of. It is this that is needed also in prayer. God accepts each one of your gifts, even though it may not be worth more than a handful of dust. Simply by accepting your gifts, He will make each of them priceless. Your prayer may be just like a handful of dust, but it will become priceless because God, your loving Father, accepts it. He accepts it with the same joy as a mother accepts a little flower from a small child since it is the thought that counts.

It may also be that you do not have anything to offer God in prayer. Then you will give Him your "nothingness," your complete helplessness. Offer everything to the Lord. Offer yourself to His disposal, such as you are: small, helpless, and poor in spirit. This is the best prayer, the best because it is in accordance with the first

Beatitude. The prayer of the poor in spirit is a prayer of a man who is empty in the sense of an emptiness that summons the descent of the Lord – the descent of the Holy Spirit. When God sees a soul such as this, stripped of its own strength, He then descends into it with His strength. Blessed are the poor in spirit; blessed are those who pray the prayer of the poor in spirit.

Tadeusz Dajczer, *The Gift of Faith*, pp.152-154; 235-236

References from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

526 To become a child in relation to God is the condition for entering the kingdom.²⁰⁵ For this, we must humble ourselves and become little. Even more: to become "children of God" we must be "born from above" or "born of God".²⁰⁶ Only when Christ is formed in us will the mystery of Christmas be fulfilled in us.²⁰⁷ Christmas is the mystery of this "marvelous exchange":

O marvelous exchange! Man's Creator has become man, born of the Virgin. We have been made sharers in the divinity of Christ who humbled himself to share our humanity.²⁰⁸

2660 Prayer in the events of each day and each moment is one of the secrets of the kingdom revealed to "little children," to the servants of Christ, to the poor of the Beatitudes. It is right and good to pray so that the coming of the kingdom of justice and peace may influence the march of history, but it is just as important to bring the help of prayer into humble, everyday situations; all forms of prayer can be the leaven to which the Lord compares the kingdom.¹⁴

Questions for Reflection

1. In what ways does God Emmanuel come to me this season?
2. Do I see the opportunities of humble means and humble gifts in my daily life? What is my usual response to these opportunities?
3. Do I consider helplessness in events a stepping stone or stumbling block in awaiting everything from God? What helps me or hinders me?
4. Pondering on the life of the Holy Family, how can I learn to appreciate more smallness and helplessness as precious "gifts"?

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.