

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 my 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, footnotes 205: Cf. Mt 18:3-4; **206:** Jn 3:7; 1:13; 1:12; cf. Mt 23:12; **207:** Cf. Gal 4:19; **208:** LH, Antiphon I of Evening Prayer for January 1st; **No. 405, footnote 295:** Cf. Council of Trent: DS; **No. 2090.**

<http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/catechism>

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S.C. Biela, Behold, I Stand at the Door and Knock (Ft. Collins, CO: In the Arms of Mary Foundation, 2005). All rights reserved. – www.inthearmsofmary.org

Families of Nazareth Movement – www.familiesofnazareth.us

December 6, 2020 ~ Second Sunday of Advent ~ Year B 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 40:1-5, 9-11

Responsorial Psalm Ps 85:9-10-11-12, 13-14

Reading II 2 Pt 3:8-14

Gospel Mk 1:1-8

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

*Like a shepherd he feeds his flock;
in his arms he gathers the lambs, carrying them in his bosom,
and leading the ewes with care. Is 40:11*

Humility is the truth about yourself and the truth about God. The truth about you is that you receive everything from God. The truth about God is that He gives you everything and He wants to continue to bestow gifts upon you. He wants to do so, however, under the condition that you follow His command to be continually renewed in the posture of the **evangelical child** (see Mt 18:4) whose entire existence is a cry to God for His bestowals. Only childlike humility opens the door of a person's heart to God's knocking.

God, Who knocks on the door of your heart with the light of His truth, wants to show you that, regardless of what you think about yourself, about your achievements, or even about your social status, you are, in reality, only a small helpless child who can do nothing on your own, without Him. A person who is preoccupied with himself and turns his back on God's light is unaware of his own identity and lives in the illusion of his own might and self-sufficiency.

Only when various levels of the whitewashed tomb are consecutively exposed, will a person discover who he essentially is, especially in light of the outpouring of God's love over the world. But the truth about that which lies most deeply hidden within the murky recesses of our soul can terrify us.

The best medicine for the despair that inevitably appears under the influence of hopeless analysis of the ugly, filthy state of our whitewashed tomb is to maintain the posture of spiritual childlikeness. As you discover each new state of your whitewashed tomb, this posture will allow you to throw yourself into the arms of your Heavenly Mother. Spiritual childlikeness will enable you to thank Mary for loving you in spite of your misery. It is true that the interior of the whitewashed tomb is filthy and abominable. However, it is also true that you are loved not because of some kind of imaginary perfection or cleanliness of soul, but because you are a child - the Heavenly Father's child. He will always accept you.

When you throw yourself into His arms, with childlike trust, He will never despise you or abandon you.

S.C. Biela, *Behold, I Stand at the Door and Knock*, pp 65-66

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

405 Although it is proper to each individual,²⁹⁵ original sin does not have the character of a personal fault in any of Adam's descendants. It is a deprivation of original holiness and justice, but human nature has not been totally corrupted: it is wounded in the natural powers proper to it, subject to ignorance, suffering and the dominion of death, and inclined to sin - an inclination to evil that is called concupiscence." Baptism, by imparting the life of Christ's grace, erases original sin and turns a man back towards God, but the consequences for nature, weakened and inclined to evil, persist in man and summon him to spiritual battle.

2090 When God reveals Himself and calls him, man cannot fully respond to the divine love by his own powers. He must hope that God will give him the capacity to love Him in return and to act in conformity with the commandments of charity. Hope is the confident expectation of divine blessing and the beatific vision of God; it is also the fear of offending God's love and of incurring punishment.

Questions for Reflection

1. Relate in what ways I place my reliance on my own strengths and achievements.
2. What experience have I had in which I have acutely felt my helplessness?
3. How can I demonstrate my readiness to entrust my helplessness to Our Blessed Mother?

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.