

## 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. 537, Footnotes 238: Rom 6:4; 239: St. Gregory of Nazianzus, Oratio 40, 9: PG 36, 369; 240: St. Hilary of Poitiers, In Matth. 2, 5: PL 9, 927; No. 608, Footnotes 422: Jn 1:29; cf. Lk 3:21; Mt 3:14-15; Jn 1:36; 423: Isa 53:7, 12; cf. Jer 11:19; Ex 12:3-14; Jn 19:36; I Cor 5:7; 424: Mk 10:45; No. 720, Footnote 100: Cf. Jn 3:5. <http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/catechism>

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André Daigneault, *The Way of Imperfection* (Ft. Collins, CO: In the Arms of Mary

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## JANUARY 10, 2021 ~ THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD ~ YEAR B SPIRITUAL REFLECTION ON SUNDAY'S READINGS

PREPARED BY:  
FAMILIES OF NAZARETH MOVEMENT USA  
COMMUNION OF LIFE WITH CHRIST THROUGH MARY

<b>Reading I</b>	Is 42:1-4, 6-7 Or Is 55:1-11
<b>Responsorial Psalm</b>	Ps 29:1-2, 3-4, 3, 9-10 Or Is 12:2-3, 4bcd, 5-6.
<b>Reading II</b>	Acts 10:34-38 Or 1 Jn 5:1-9
<b>Gospel</b>	Mk 1:7-11

### Opening or Closing Prayer

#### Lord Jesus,

You were sent by the Father  
to gather together those who are scattered.  
You came among us, doing good and bringing healing,  
announcing the Word of salvation  
and giving the Bread which lasts forever.  
Be our companion on life's pilgrim way.

**May your Holy Spirit** inflame our hearts,  
enliven our hope and open our minds,  
so that together with our sisters and brothers in faith  
we may recognize you in the Scriptures  
and in the breaking of bread.

**May your Holy Spirit** transform us into one body  
and lead us to walk humbly on the earth,  
in justice and love,  
as witnesses of your resurrection.

#### In communion with Mary,

whom you gave to us as our Mother  
at the foot of the cross,  
through you  
may all praise, honor and blessing be to the Father  
in the Holy Spirit and in the Church,  
Now and forever. Amen

*50th International Eucharistic Congress Prayer, Dublin 2012*  
*FNM Summer Retreat 2012*

## Spiritual Reflection

*On coming out of the water he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit, like a dove, descending upon him. Mk 1:10*

Baptism associates us with the mystery of Christ:

Through Baptism the Christian is sacramentally assimilated to Jesus. . . [he] must enter into this mystery of humble self-abasement and repentance, go down into the water with Jesus, in order to rise with him (Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 537).

Life events, trials of all kinds, configure us to Christ in his Passion because we must *die with him* in order to *rise with him*. "Every life is a Mass and every soul is a host," Marthe Robin has said. The Christian renunciation is not ascetic or voluntarist but *mystical*, since, in Jesus, the Son who "was of divine origin" *descended* and lowered himself to the human condition, excluded and despised in dying crucified like a criminal. Therefore, there is no sanctity possible without abasement and without the cross. To our mind, the mystery of the cross is the summit of the revelation of a disconcerting God. It is in the folly and weakness of the cross that God's power is exposed. Have we forgotten it? Is this theme of the cross valued enough in the formation of future priests and Christian leaders? As Pope John Paul II said to a group of bishops:

We come to the very heart of the mystery of Christian shepherding, since Christ the Shepherd is also the Lamb. . . No pastor can be a true shepherd of God's flock unless he is one with the Lamb of God, slain for the sins of the world. We cannot hope to be shepherds conformed to Christ unless we live the mystery of his Cross (cf. Phil 3: 10). . . What is true of the pastors is also true of the whole Church . . . The heart of all pastoral activity and of every form of apostolate is union with Christ's Paschal Mystery. By becoming one with the crucified and risen Lord through the grace of the Holy Spirit, all the baptized become capable of taking part in the Church's evangelizing mission. (Address of the Holy Father, John Paul II to the bishops of Canada in their "Ad Lumina" visit, September 25, 1999)

Trials, sufferings, failures, and contradictions unite us to Jesus crucified and make our life *fruitful*. We become a lamb offered with the Lamb, and live the mystery of the Cross. . .

Saint John of the Cross tells us:

In descending into the night of dryness and emptiness, the soul obtains spiritual humility which is the opposite virtue of spiritual pride. Indeed, the soul, seeing itself arid and miserable, does not think of itself as being

more perfect than others, that it is ahead of them. It sees only its miseries and the good which is so dried up that it is impossible to talk about.

André Daigneault, *The Way of Imperfection*, pp 83-85

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

**537** Through Baptism the Christian is sacramentally assimilated to Jesus, who in his own baptism anticipates his death and resurrection. The Christian must enter into this mystery of humble self-abasement and repentance, go down into the water with Jesus in order to rise with him, be reborn of water and the Spirit so as to become the Father's beloved son in the Son and "walk in newness of life".<sup>238</sup>

Let us be buried with Christ by Baptism to rise with him; let us go down with him to be raised with him; and let us rise with him to be glorified with him.<sup>239</sup> Everything that happened to Christ lets us know that, after the bath of water, the Holy Spirit swoops down upon us from high heaven and that, adopted by the Father's voice, we become sons of God.<sup>240</sup>

**608** After agreeing to baptize him along with the sinners, John the Baptist looked at Jesus and pointed him out as the "Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world".<sup>422</sup> By doing so, he reveals that Jesus is at the same time the suffering Servant who silently allows himself to be led to the slaughter and who bears the sin of the multitudes, and also the Paschal Lamb, the symbol of Israel's redemption at the first Passover.<sup>423</sup> Christ's whole life expresses his mission: "to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."<sup>424</sup>

**720** Finally, with John the Baptist, the Holy Spirit begins the restoration to man of "the divine likeness," prefiguring what he would achieve with and in Christ. John's baptism was for repentance; baptism in water and the Spirit will be a new birth.<sup>100</sup>

## Questions for Reflection

1. In Baptism I have become one with the crucified and risen Lord. How has my awareness of this changed over time? How is it affecting my present life?
2. How do I understand that "trials, sufferings, failures, and contradictions unite us to Jesus crucified and make our life *fruitful*"? What part of my life reflects this and in what areas am I resistant to this surrender?
3. By her Immaculate Conception, Mary came into the world without needing Baptism. Her entire life consisted in freely doing God's will in everything. How can I profit from meditating on her life and entrusting my own life to her?

## 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.*