

Lesson #13

The Cenacle Virtues

The Grace I am seeking . . .

*To know and grow in the Cenacle virtues,
especially the one of which I am most in need*

Before each prayer session:

O Holy Spirit, fill me with Yourself; fill me with love. Help me to feel loved by the Father and by Jesus. Help me to feel loved by my Associates. Set me on fire with love. Teach me how to love the Father and Jesus. Teach me to love my Associates and my neighbors. As you taught the first Apostles at Pentecost to communicate the love of God to all persons, teach me to be the apostle I have been called to be. Let me bring the message of the Father's love and Jesus' love to all, but especially to those who really do not know You, who do not feel loved. Help me, O Holy Spirit of love, to be an apostle of love. Amen.

After each prayer session:

Jesus, spark me with your Holy Spirit and grant that I may never merit the condemnation of the lukewarm, whom You have declared You will vomit from Your mouth. Fire me with a passion for life, and a passion for loving You, my brothers and sisters, and all of creation. Holy Spirit, completely fill me as You filled my brother Jesus. Produce in me the same mind that was in Jesus so that I, like Him, will be consumed with a passion for the will of His Father and my Father. Amen.

Missionary Cenacle Practice and Devotion

Father Judge encouraged each Cenacle Missionary to choose a virtue and work and pray for its acquisition until it became a “natural” part of one’s character. This programmed approach to growth in virtue came from his own Vincentian tradition. Both St. Vincent de Paul and St. Francis de Sales urged their spiritual disciples to concentrate for a period of time on the development of a particular virtue. As we have seen above, this was called one’s **practice**.

Father Judge regularly gave his own spiritual disciples a “practice” to work on in their spiritual lives. Some of these “practices” were certainly the seven Cenacle virtues. But others might be “generosity,” “joy,” “the presence of God,” “kindness,” “the providence of God.”¹ They gave a particular focus to the spiritual journey of a person. At this point in your formation process, it’s probably helpful to look briefly once again at the basics of a “practice”: you should have a “practice” of your own that you are working on.

- 1. Take time to examine your life, especially your weaknesses and failings.** In what areas is the Holy Spirit inviting you to grow? Where do you sense that you are the weakest or most in need of conversion?
- 2. Choose a virtue that will best help you to grow in this area.** It might be especially helpful this month to look at how the Cenacle virtues might help focus your efforts.
- 3. Talk to your spiritual director or a trustworthy spiritual friend about your choice.** Sometimes we don’t see or know ourselves as well as others do. A good spiritual director or spiritual friend should be able to help you in this.
- 4. Daily do an examination of conscience on this virtue.** Spend a few minutes each day to see how I am doing on this virtue during these past twenty-four hours?
- 5. Once a week, on Tuesdays, reflect and pray about the pursuit of this chosen virtue.** What Scriptures or other readings can help you understand and love this virtue more? What good role models can help you live this particular virtue more fully?
- 6. Regularly talk to your spiritual director about your practice.** Your spiritual director can offer advice or suggest resources for your consideration as you seek to grow in this area or can help you know when to move on to another virtue.

¹The *Missionary Cenacle Meditations* on every Tuesday concentrate as their theme for the day a different “Practice.”

Introduction

The word “virtue” comes from the Latin word “virtus”: bravery, moral excellence, strength. Interestingly, the root of the word “virtus” is the Latin word “vir” which means “man”. For the ancient world, what distinguished a true man was courage, boldness and nobility of character in confronting the dangers and vicissitudes of life. “Virtues” were the inner qualities of a person which facilitated her or him acting correctly, purposefully and consistently no matter what the circumstances. They were “good habits” developed over a period of time which defined an individual’s character.

Father Judge recommended certain key virtues for all his spiritual disciples. Specifically, the missionaries were to be “practiced” in "Simplicity, Prudence, Humility, Charity, Sacrifice, Patience, and Self-Denial."² He urged all the missionaries to have an intense, burning desire to grow in these “virtues of the Cenacle.” For him it seemed impossible to truly help another draw closer to the heart of God unless the missionaries themselves were seeking earnestly to grow in their own spiritual journey. For

if you are not anxious about your own sanctification, you cannot be expected to be anxious about the service of others, and therefore a love of your own soul, a love of your sanctification is a tremendous help toward working for the salvation of others. (MF 8395)

Healthy self-love meant, therefore, having a "supreme" interest in one's own "spiritual interests" (MF 8395). Such a burning desire to grow in holiness and virtue was a good measure of the missionary’s genuine zeal in promoting the spiritual life of another. Jesus’ dictate to "love your neighbor as you love yourself" meant, first of all, seeking beyond all else to grow into Christ, the first Missionary from the heart of the Father.

As you meditate and pray about and for these Missionary Cenacle virtues, may your heart be ever more conformed to that of Christ the Missionary who gave up his life in perfect self-giving that all peoples might have life . . . and have it to the full (*John 10:10*).

²*Original ST Constitution-I:7. The Sisters' list of missionary virtues was identical except that "zeal" replaces "self-denial." (Original MSBT Constitution-II:1). Although he did not have a listing as such for the lay associates in their rule, the need for the above virtues were clearly present in the attitudes and actions he described as necessary for their apostolic work. For example, charity (Outer Missionary Cenacle Constitution 17,18,21), sacrifice and humility (18), prudence (23,41), patience (31). These virtues were essential for the missionary and constituted the very "soul of our society" (Original MSBT Constitution-II:1).*

Process for Daily Prayer

▮ Read each passage once slowly, then reread it. Underline or mark any phrases or ideas that strike you.

▮ Think about what you've read. What attracts, challenges, excites, or upsets you? Perhaps the questions below can help you in your reflection.

▮ Talk to God about it. Whatever is on your heart -- concerns, anger, hopes, dreams, joy, thanksgiving -- open it up to God.

▮ Rest a while and let God speak to you in the quiet.

WEEK I

Weekend Reflection: **Becoming Christ the Missionary**

[From a Commentary on the Missionary Cenacle Rule of Life]

To become holy and advance in virtue is not some veiled contest or competition: "I'm holier than you are!" Rather it is to enter into God's unfathomable plan for all creation – to be renewed, made whole, reconciled: "a new heaven, a new earth, a new creation" (see *Revelation 21:1; 2 Corinthians 5:17*). God's passionate dream for us is that we become, over the course of our life's journey, *another Christ*: that we might cry out with St. Paul, the missionary par excellence, "I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me!" (*Galatians 2:20*) The preeminent doctor of the Church, St. Augustine, hinted at the profundity of this mystery when he exclaimed, "Let us rejoice and give thanks; we have not only become Christians, but Christ himself Stand in awe and rejoice, we have become Christ!"³

Apostolic holiness is having "every thought, word and action ... measure and square" with the "perfection" of life and holiness presented to us by Jesus (see *Matthew 5:48*).⁴ Every Cenacle missionary's endeavor should be to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ," i.e., "put on His thoughts, His words, His personality." In this way "we will resemble Him."⁵ Growing in apostolic holiness is a life-long task. Little by little throughout the course of our lives, obedient to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, we grow into Christ, the first missionary from the heart of the Father. Becoming "perfect in the spirit and virtues of the Cenacle" means not a mere external imitation of Jesus but a profound union of heart and mind that makes one an intimate friend, a co-worker with, an apostle of Jesus. One becomes another Christ, and so the world experiences ever more fully and richly the precious gift of light, life, and salvation. This is the gift of the Kingdom.

Let's take a few moments to reflect on two of the virtues which Father Judge considered essential for the missionary life: humility and charity. He invited the missionaries to pray often a little prayer to St. Vincent de Paul who was especially notable for these virtues in his life and mission: "*St. Vincent de Paul, patron of charity and humility, pray for us!*"

Humility. Father Judge began with the simple principle that "there are two loves in our hearts The greater the love of Jesus, the less there is of the love of self." Humility slays pride and self-seeking by allowing Jesus to "reign supremely in the soul." By dethroning self humility allows Jesus to ascend the throne of the human heart and, in this very process, charity enters. For "if you be in humility, you are in charity, and if you are in charity, truly you have put on the Lord Jesus Christ."⁶

³Cited in John Paul II, *Christifideles Laici* #17.

⁴12145 (Letter, 4/8/24).

⁵8451f. (Conference, December 1922).

⁶MF 8451f. (Conference, December 1922).

Charity. "Charity" or the "love of God" is "the very quick of the spiritual universe." This love of God is the "secret, the inspiration of all good." Growth in charity or love of God in the heart of the individual brings about "a fecundity in good works." Reversing what might be expected, Father Judge urged a certain lay man to "aspire, then, to do much for God, to work many great works for Him, then love more." Love grows as a result of the work as well as being the "mainspring" that had moved one to the work in the first place. A love for the poor is not an "ordinary grace" since, for Father Judge, there exists "no more practical or speedy way of increasing in the love of God than developing that love of the poor."⁷ There is a constant dynamic that begins with love for God, leads to service of God in the poor, increases love in the very act of service, and returns the individual to contemplation of the sacred humanity of Jesus which, in turn, leads to an increase of love. As Father Judge wrote, "love of God" is certainly, from this perspective, "the very quick of the spiritual universe."

Read the invitation of Jesus to the first apostles and missionaries to follow Him: Mark 1:16-20; Matthew 9:9-13; Matthew 9:35-10:4; John 1:35-51. See how they struggled to understand and live the "way" Jesus was teaching them: Mark 4:35-41; Mark 6:34-52; Mark 8:27-33; Mark 14:43-52; Luke 22:24-34. Look at the marvelous workings of grace, the strength of virtue in these same apostles and disciples: Acts 2:14-17,37-41; Acts 4:1-14; Acts 5:12-16; James 1:1-11; 1 Peter 5:1-14.

Think about what you have read. Is there anything particularly that strikes you? Anything that you don't understand? Anything that you disagree with or are troubled by? As you think about this, reflect on your own experience. What were you like in the beginnings of your walk as a disciple of Jesus? What struggles have you faced? How did – or do – you experience Jesus in the midst of these challenges? In what ways have you experienced the growth of virtue in your own life? Be as concrete and specific as possible.

Write down your reflections briefly here:

⁷MF 1082 (Letter to Mr. Bernard O'Hallorhan, 3/28/27).

WEEK I

Monday: Humility, “the least understood”

From Father Judge:

"At one of the conferences, mention was made that the work of sanctification depended upon the possession of the theological virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity. You were also told that you possessed these if you tried to obtain a prayerful and a humble spirit. What is a humble spirit? Of all virtues perhaps humility is the one least known, least understood, and of all the virtues it is the most beautiful and the greatest. First of all, in a very particular way it is the virtue of Jesus Christ. The world knew little and practiced little humility until He came. In a certain sense, He introduced that virtue into the world. It was He Who glorified it... Jesus came-and see how He came! He came in defiance of all traditions. King of kings. Lord of lords, He came without a cradle. The poorest waif, the beggar's child, can at least claim a crib, but Jesus was glad to share the straw of the hillside beast. Think of that! Oh, there is a royalty and glory about kings and the infants of kings. They are heralded in with state ceremonial. They come in national holiday and rejoicing. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not."(Jn. 1:11) Every door closed against Him.." (*Missionary Cenacle Meditations*, p. 145)

From the Word of God:

"⁹It is right that the brother in humble circumstances should glory in being lifted up,¹⁰ and the rich in being brought low. For the rich will last no longer than the wild flower;¹¹ the scorching sun comes up, and the grass withers, its flower falls, its beauty is lost. It is the same with the rich: in the middle of a busy life, the rich will wither."(*James 1:9-11*)

The following prayer on the Cenacle virtue of humility is found in a booklet entitled Cenacle Prayer, compiled by Father William Burkert. You might want to pray it as you reflect on this virtue of humility:

Spirit of God, we wish to live in truth, always recognizing our relationship with you. To be humble is not to deny who we are or what we have, but to acknowledge that what we are and what we have are Your gifts to us. Each of us is beautiful and gifted, yet every gift is ours only because of Your generosity. Our talents, knowledge and determination often enable us to accomplish a lot. Throughout our lives we may become important but never let us forget that it is You who gives us this life. Help us not to be jealous or envious. But rather help us to enjoy and encourage the gifts of others as well as to be happy with our own. In the spirit of humility and love, help us to develop our gifts for service to others and for your glory. Amen!

▶ Write down your reflections briefly here:

Tuesday: “To glorify humility”

From Father Judge:

“The very first work in teaching that Jesus did, was to glorify humility. He came not only to save us, but to teach us. (Humility) is the virtue of the Blessed Virgin and of all the saints. What is it, anyway? What is this humility? Some people think it is a detected demeanor, a humble carriage, some may think it is a servile virtue, a cringing aspect, a disposition to allow a trespass of rights. That is not it at all.

“‘Blessed are the meek: for they shall possess the land’ (Mt. 5:5). You can never get the best of a meek person. You can get the best of a person who is angry and cantankerous. You can get them in a rage and fury. You can throw them off their guard. You can set them to sputter and stutter, but you cannot get the best of those who are meek and humble. They look at you in a quiet kind of way. They say nothing, do nothing (to contradict you, they) go about their business and they are serene and passive as a summer's day. It makes you mad that they don't get mad.” (*Missionary Cenacle Meditations*, p.14)

From the Word of God:

“⁵When he went into Capernaum a centurion came up and pleaded with him.⁶‘Sir,’ he said, ‘my servant is lying at home paralyzed and in great pain.’⁷Jesus said to him, ‘I will come myself and cure him.’⁸The centurion replied, ‘Sir, I am not worthy to have you under my roof; just give the word and my servant will be cured.’⁹For I am under authority myself and have soldiers under me; and I say to one man, ‘Go,’ and he goes; to another, ‘Come here,’ and he comes; to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.’¹⁰When Jesus heard this he was astonished and said to those following him, ‘In truth I tell you, in no one in Israel have I found faith as great as this.’¹¹And I tell you that many will come from east and west and sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob at the feast in the kingdom of Heaven;¹²but the children of the kingdom will be thrown out into the darkness outside, where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth.’¹³And to the centurion Jesus said, ‘Go back, then; let this be done for you, as your faith demands.’ And the servant was cured at that moment.” (*Matthew 8:5-13*)

As you reflect on the Cenacle virtue of humility, ask the Holy Spirit to show you if this is an area where you need to grow. If so, ask the Holy Spirit to make you truly humble as Jesus is truly humble. If not, seek forgiveness for your arrogance, pride, sense of self-sufficiency. If this virtue is already present in your life, give abundant thanks “for the Kingdom of Heaven is yours.”

Write down your reflections briefly here:

Wednesday: Humility - “A recognition of truth”

From Father Judge:

“What is humility? It is nothing but a realization of truth, acknowledging our relations with God, recognizing this-that of ourselves and by ourselves we have nothing. It is a true inventory. When humility is true, it finds nothing in its coffers-all belongs to God. We may have a little talent. God gave that to us. We may have a few good looks. God gave us that. He put a splash of roses in your cheek. He has given you form, movement and grace. He has given you a little success. It all belongs to God.” (*Missionary Cenacle Meditations*, p. 145)

From the Word of God:

"Miriam, and Aaron too, criticised Moses over the Cushite woman he had married. He had indeed married a Cushite woman.²They said, 'Is Moses the only one through whom Yahweh has spoken? Has he not spoken through us too?' Yahweh heard this.³Now Moses was extremely humble, the humblest man on earth..⁴Suddenly Yahweh said to Moses, Aaron and Miriam, 'Come out, all three of you, to the Tent of Meeting.' They went, all three of them,⁵and Yahweh descended in a pillar of cloud and stood at the entrance of the Tent. He called Aaron and Miriam and they both came forward.⁶Yahweh said: Listen to my words! if there is a prophet among you, I reveal myself to him in a vision, I speak to him in a dream.⁷Not so with my servant Moses; to him my whole household is entrusted;⁸to him I speak face to face, plainly and not in riddles, and he sees Yahweh's form. How, then, could you dare to criticise my servant Moses?" (*Numbers 12:1-8*)

Sometimes humility can be confused with a cowering type of personal demeanor, a person who does not know how to properly assert himself or herself. Yet the Scriptures call Moses – the preeminent leader of the Israelite people – “the humblest man on earth.” Father Judge reminds us that humility is the recognition of a simple but profound truth: all that we are and have comes from God, to be used for God's service and glory. What is your personal attitude toward “humility”? Have you considered an undesirable or a desirable trait to have? Ask the Holy Spirit to clarify your mind and heart on this and to give you an immense desire for humility in your own life.

p Write down your reflections briefly here:

Thursday: “Our dirty, nasty pride”

From Father Judge:

"Why did Jesus go through those terrible, extraordinary humiliations? It wasn't necessary for our salvation. Just one drop of blood, one pain and we would have been saved. He didn't have to hang Himself on a Cross and listen to that blasphemy and insult. It wasn't necessary that His life should go out in an atmosphere of cursing and outrage. It wasn't necessary that He should be treated as the king of fools-treated as no man. It wasn't necessary for our salvation. Why did He do it? He did it to tear out of our hearts our dirty, nasty pride. We are just reeking with it. It is defeating the work of God... " (*Missionary Cenacle Meditations*, p. 146)

From the Word of God:

"Alexander of Macedon son of Philip had come from the land of Kittim and defeated Darius king of the Persians and Medes, whom he succeeded as ruler, at first of Hellas.²He undertook many campaigns, gained possession of many fortresses, and put the local kings to death.³So he advanced to the ends of the earth, plundering nation after nation; the earth grew silent before him, and his ambitious heart swelled with pride.⁴He assembled very powerful forces and subdued provinces, nations and princes, and they became his tributaries.⁵But the time came when Alexander took to his bed, in the knowledge that he was dying.⁶He summoned his officers, noblemen who had been brought up with him from his youth, and divided his kingdom among them while he was still alive.⁷Alexander had reigned twelve years when he died.⁸Each of his officers established himself in his own region.⁹All assumed crowns after his death, they and their heirs after them for many years, bringing increasing evils on the world." (*1 Maccabees 1:1-9*)

It's easy to become proud and arrogant. Any achievement, large or small, readily becomes an occasion for our considering our own "greatness," how different we are from others, how much "better". One excellent cure for this "dirty, nasty pride" that can be so detrimental in the work of God is to keep in mind the shortness of life and the quickly passing nature of so called "glory". Thinking and praying about the experience of world-renowned leaders like Alexander the Great can give us some insight into this human reality. How does this same sort of experience occur in our own lives or in the lives of our communities and nations: "his ambitious heart swelled with pride" (1 Maccabees 1:3).

✎ Write down your reflections briefly here:

Friday: The Pharisee and the Tax Collector

From Father Judge:

“You know the story of the Pharisee and the publican. The Pharisee was a good man. He paid his debts; he came often to the temple. He had the Commandments before his eyes always; sitting down to his meals he was looking at the Commandments. He came into the temple and told the angels what a fine man he was; he told heaven what a credit he was to heaven, and he told God how he fasted, that he gave alms.

He was distracted saying his prayers and talking about himself, and upon looking around he saw a poor man creeping into the temple. This poor man beat his breast and said, “O God, be merciful to me a sinner.” (Lk. 18:13) The Pharisee was so angry at being distracted that he said all sorts of things to the poor man. He thanked God that he wasn't like that man. Supposing you had been there and had heard that poor tramp, with all those crimes charged up to him. Yet, mystery of mysteries, when God chose between those two men, He rejected the man who kept all the Commandments and elected the other man. Of those two the publican went down justified, because he was humble.” (*Missionary Cenacle Meditations*, p. 146)

From the Word of God:

⁹He spoke the following parable to some people who prided themselves on being upright and despised everyone else,¹⁰Two men went up to the Temple to pray, one a Pharisee, the other a tax collector.¹¹The Pharisee stood there and said this prayer to himself, “I thank you, God, that I am not grasping, unjust, adulterous like everyone else, and particularly that I am not like this tax collector here.¹²I fast twice a week; I pay tithes on all I get.”¹³The tax collector stood some distance away, not daring even to raise his eyes to heaven; but he beat his breast and said, “God, be merciful to me, a sinner.”¹⁴This man, I tell you, went home again justified; the other did not. For everyone who raises himself up will be humbled, but anyone who humbles himself will be raised up.’” (*Luke 18:9-14*)

Keeping our eyes on the supposed failures of others can give us a momentary sense of relief or even of superiority. But it is a false and unhealthy approach to life. The Pharisee commended himself to God, comparing himself to the tax collector or publican. Instead, Jesus teaches us, the one who kept his mind and heart focused on his own failings and need for God's mercy found mercy and life. The Pharisee continued in a self-contained, isolated, self-justifying type of existence. Do you spend much time comparing yourselves to others either positively or negatively? Jesus teaches us that comparing oneself with others is not a way to healthy living and does not assist us in developing a missionary spirit or heart.

Write down your reflections briefly here:

WEEK II

Weekend Reflection: **Father Judge on Five More Cenacle Virtues**

[From a Commentary on the Missionary Cenacle Rule of Life]

This week we will continue our reflection on the remaining five Cenacle virtues. These reflections attempt to encapsulate the key elements of each of these virtues from Father Judge's perspective.

Sacrifice. The type of love which Father Judge was speaking of is a love which is characterized by sacrifice. He bemoaned the failure of the faithful to use "idle hours" for the service of "our little brothers and sisters" who are going to be "lost to God because we have not sacrificed enough." There is "so much good to be done," and "so many souls are in danger of eternal damnation"⁸ that there should be "nothing small or mean in you. The Cenacle, souls, the Church, our Holy Father the Pope, religion should be first." The love of God demands a "holy self-violence, self-denial, the correction of wayward self." It requires that "never should our little mean self, our petty interests, our likes or dislikes, our sentiments or emotions obtrude or trespass in the least." Rather what is needed is the "developing of generous impulses and the cordial cooperation with the graces the Holy Spirit is giving."⁹

Self-denial. This spirit of sacrifice for which self-denial ("holy self-violence") has prepared the way is an essential characteristic of the apostolic spirit, "the greatest gift in the giving of the Church." There is little personalism in Father Judge's writings: "to be true apostles, the cause -- the Cenacle, the Church, our Holy Religion -- must always be first. Never allow the personal or self-interest to trespass."¹⁰

Simplicity. This virtue is a single-minded desire to do God's will alone. Simplicity encourages a complete indifference as to the results of the work one is doing: "worry about nothing concerning prosperity nor diversity, good health nor bad health; success in our school nor failure. This is God's business to give or take." The missionaries' only concern is "to serve God with purity of intention, that is, with love and desire to have His kingdom extended, His Name blessed." With "humility of heart" "let us do as well as we can." In success, "let us thank Him with great fear lest this success cause us to offend Him." In failure, "let us thank Him for the privilege of having worked for Him," remembering always that "our failure may save us from the sin of pride or self-complacency."¹¹

Patience. In this whole process of growth in conformity with Jesus, patience is always necessary with both ourselves and others since "perfection is not an accomplishment of a few days or even a few years." Instead it comes slowly and its progress is almost imperceptible even to the individual himself."¹²

Prudence. He likewise urged individuals to always exercise prudence in the means chosen for advancing this life of Jesus both within themselves and among the people they are seeking to bring to this same life. They must be neither precipitous nor cowardly in the means they adopt. For example, the early Associates in the South were urged to proceed slowly and prudently so as not to jeopardize the work by any indication of superiority in their

⁸MF 5907f. (Letter to Sister Marie of the Holy Trinity Healy, M.S.B.T., 2/22/27).

⁹MF 5996 (Letter to "My dear children," 10/20/27).

¹⁰MF 8005 (Letter to Mother Boniface, 6/29/27).

¹¹MF 4562 (Letter, 11/26/18).

¹²MF 9679 (Letter to Sister Regis, M.S.B.T., 8/14/24).

attitude toward their Southern Protestant neighbors. However, in 1927, despite pressing financial, personnel, and community difficulties in the States, Father Judge felt compelled by the desperate situation in Puerto Rico to leave aside "essential duties" to "comfort His Church, to protect the innocent and to bring help to those defrauded laborers." If he had committed himself in this way to the needs of God's People, he was confident that God "is going to help us at the proper time. I know help is coming from the same source where it has always come from All we can do is our best."¹³ Father Judge's prudence followed a certain divine logic. "Do as well as you can and leave the rest to God" seems to succinctly summarize his fundamental attitude toward the missionary work.¹⁴ The key lies in attempting to understand what is God's will in a given circumstance and to do one's best in accomplishing it. All the rest will occur inevitably by the divine power.

Reflect carefully on the description of each of these Cenacle virtues by Father Judge. Where do you see them being practiced today? Who can be role models for you of each of these virtues? Are these virtues present in your life? To what degree? Do you desire to have them become ever more fully a part of "who you are"? Ask the Holy Spirit to help you understand the beauty of these virtues and to give you a burning desire to have them as part of your own life.

Write down your reflections briefly here:

¹³MF 8053 (Letter to Mother Boniface, 11/22/27)

¹⁴MF 4571 (Letter to Miss Florence Turner, 6/17/18).

WEEK II

Monday: “God resists the proud”

From Father Judge:

“The devils and wicked angels never committed a sin against holy purity. Their sin was the sin of pride. The Holy Spirit says that God resists the proud.(cf. Jas. 4:6) God has a repugnance for the proud. It makes me creep to think of that thing; to think that if I am proud God is going to have a dislike for me! Is there (in my heart) a secret pocket of self-love that is causing me to be an annoyance to my Maker? Something causing me to have a proud spirit, to lord over another?.” (*Missionary Cenacle Meditations*, p. 146)

From the Word of God:

“God opposes the proud but he accords his favour to the humble.⁷Give in to God, then; resist the devil, and he will run away from you.⁸The nearer you go to God, the nearer God will come to you. Clean your hands, you sinners, and clear your minds, you waverers.⁹Appreciate your wretchedness, and weep for it in misery. Your laughter must be turned to grief, your happiness to gloom.¹⁰Humble yourselves before the Lord and he will lift you up.” (*James 4:6-10*)

Take a few moments and quietly ask yourself “is there in my heart a secret pocket of self-love that is causing me to be an annoyance to my Maker? Something causing me to have a proud spirit, to lord over another?” If you discover, with the help of the Holy Spirit, these “secret pockets of self-love”and arrogance, “humble yourself before the Lord, and he will lift you up!”

p Write down your reflections briefly here:

Tuesday: “Great graces and humiliations”

From Father Judge:

“I notice that great graces always come after humiliations; always. That is why I told you the condition of depression is a glorious way to be. The world doesn't understand that. It is too supernatural, too spiritual. When we are recognizing that we can do nothing without God, we can gain great graces, for “The prayer of him that humbleth himself, shall pierce the clouds.”(Sirach 35:21) We have to have a mean opinion of ourselves. When you get restless and uneasy if the Lord doesn't notice you, look out, for you are not humble..” (*Missionary Cenacle Meditations*, p. 146)

From the Word of God:

“¹² The Lord is a judge who is utterly impartial. ¹³He never shows partiality to the detriment of the poor, he listens to the plea of the injured party. ¹⁴He does not ignore the orphan's supplication, nor the widow's as she pours out her complaint. ¹⁵Do the widow's tears not run down her cheeks, as she accuses the man who is the cause of them? ¹⁶Whoever wholeheartedly serves God will be accepted, his petitions will carry to the clouds. ¹⁷The prayer of the humble pierces the clouds: and until it does, he is not to be consoled.” (*Sirach 35:12-17*)

When Father Judge writes that “the condition of depression is a glorious way to be,” he is not referring to the mental illness called depression. Rather it is what the spiritual tradition calls “the dark night”. It is the absolute recognition of our helplessness and powerlessness. This sort of “depression” is the exact opposite of arrogance. This healthy darkness we sometimes experience in our lives helps us to understand that without God we can do nothing and are nothing. But with God and in God “I can do all things in him who strengthens me” (Philippians 4:13) Have you ever experienced this type of healthy “depression” in your life? Are you currently experiencing it? How do you or have you dealt with it?

Write down your reflections briefly here:

Wednesday: “Self-denial”

From Father Judge:

“Your zeal for souls causes you to practice humility and because of searching for strayed souls self ease suffers much. If sinners have been reconciled to God it has only been, after grace, because of your self-denial-a denial that has separated you from even the innocent pleasures of your family and friends and caused you much practice of the bitter virtue of mortification.” (*Missionary Cenacle Meditations*, p. 312)

From the Word of God:

““²² He said, “The Son of Man must suffer greatly and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed and on the third day be raised.” ²³ Then he said to all, “If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. ²⁴ For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. ²⁵ What profit is there for one to gain the whole world yet lose or forfeit himself?” (*Luke 9:22-25*)

Intimately connected to humility, in the thought of Father Judge, is self-denial. Self-love demands that we pamper ourselves, seek our own wills, look for our own self-fulfillment and “success” in life. Healthy self-denial takes the focus off self and places the focus on God’s will and the good of our neighbor. It is precisely in this gift of self for the love of God and on behalf of the sisters and the brothers that we find genuine life and happiness. This is the meaning of and the promise of a salutary self-denial in the missionary life. How much is self-denial a reality in your own daily life? In what ways might the Holy Spirit be inviting you to practice this healthy self-denial?

p Write down your reflections briefly here:

Thursday: “The true and generous follower”

From Father Judge:

“Surely, this [self-denial] is to bear the Cross, the Cross of Jesus. This is His condition of discipleship. This is the test of the true and generous follower of the Savior, and so few approach it. He Himself says: “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, and wife and children, and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.” (Luke 14, 26-27) This is, indeed, an extreme call upon human nature, a terrible tugging at our heart strings, a frightful exhaust of self.” (*Missionary Cenacle Meditations*, p. 312)

From the Word of God:

“²²Blessed are you when people hate you, drive you out, abuse you, denounce your name as criminal, on account of the Son of man.²³ Rejoice when that day comes and dance for joy, look!—your reward will be great in heaven. This was the way their ancestors treated the prophets. . . .²⁷ But I say this to you who are listening: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,²⁸ bless those who curse you, pray for those who treat you badly.²⁹ To anyone who slaps you on one cheek, present the other cheek as well; to anyone who takes your cloak from you, do not refuse your tunic.³⁰ Give to everyone who asks you, and do not ask for your property back from someone who takes it.” (*Luke 6:22-26,27-30*)

Living this life of self-denial is carrying the cross of Jesus according to Father Judge. It is, in fact, the very meaning of what it means to be a “true and generous follower” of Jesus. How do you deal with the contradictions and difficulties and challenges of your life? How do you respond when you are rejected or looked down upon or actually persecuted? Do you see it as a mark of divine blessing . . . or some kind of “curse” or sign that you have done something wrong? The ability to live the mystery of the Cross in self-denying love opens us to the gift of authentic joy. Have you experienced personally this type of joy that comes from self-denial? In what way? When? Have you seen this type of joy in others? Be as specific and personal as possible. Ask the Holy Spirit to teach you interiorly the profound paradox of life that comes from death to self and egoism.

p Write down your reflections briefly here:

Friday: “Source of consolation and holy joy”

From Father Judge:

“Let me ask you to turn your prayers especially to praise and thanksgiving to our merciful Savior for the graces He has bestowed upon you in sending me on this mission. It gives me joy to tell you that our Lord has sent me to the poorest house in our province-to a condition of irreligion and impiety that is a constant trial and an agonizing cross and that is not far removed from persecution.

“No grace that He could have sent us would be a surer sign of His pleasure and benediction upon our work. Therefore, the present manifestation of His divine will in placing me here is a constant source of consolation and holy joy. So render Him thanks for His mercy to all of us in this. . . .

“Only supreme grace of renunciation, that is, of poverty of spirit can help us to do this. This grace will not be wanting to us if we only ask for it: “My grace is sufficient for thee, for strength is made perfect in weakness! Gladly, therefore, I will glory in my infirmities, that the strength of Christ may dwell in me. Wherefore I am satisfied, for Christ’s sake, with infirmities, with insults, with hardships, with persecutions, with distresses. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”(2 Cor. 12:9-10)” (*Missionary Cenacle Meditations*, p. 312)

From the Word of God:

“⁷Wherefore, so that I should not get above myself, I was given a thorn in the flesh, a messenger from Satan to batter me and prevent me from getting above myself.⁸About this, I have three times pleaded with the Lord that it might leave me;⁹but he has answered me, ‘My grace is enough for you: for power is at full stretch in weakness.’ It is, then, about my weaknesses that I am happiest of all to boast, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me;¹⁰and that is why I am glad of weaknesses, insults, constraints, persecutions and distress for Christ’s sake. For it is when I am weak that I am strong.” (*2 Corinthians 12:7-10*)

Father Judge wrote the above letter from Opelika, Alabama on September 3, 1915, just a few weeks after his arrival there. He encountered there rejection, extreme opposition, personal insult and persecution. His response was to offer prayers of “praise and thanksgiving.” Instead of complaining about the seeming “injustice”that had been done to him, he told the early Cenacle of the “joy” he was experiencing in having been sent “to the poorest house in our province”! How do I respond or react when seeming “injustices” or slights are done to us? Is my response gratitude and thanksgiving that I have been invited and allowed to share a little more deeply in the cross of Jesus? Or do I find myself lashing out toward those who have done this to me? When genuine self-denial is operating in our lives, it allows us to find blessing and grace in the most difficult and adverse circumstances. Ask the Holy Spirit to live this mystery of self-denying love ever more fully and so experience this joy, one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit!

▶ Write down your reflections briefly here:

WEEK III

Weekend Reflection: The Cenacle Virtues Today - I

[From a Commentary on the Missionary Cenacle Rule of Life]

The Cenacle virtues form the very basis of the apostolic character. They were basic in the life and experience of Jesus as “apostle”: the One sent from the heart of the Trinity to redeem humanity. They must be key in the formation of the Cenacle apostle as well. The following table shows each of the virtues, another name for or description of that virtue, a related Scripture or two, and the opposite of the virtue.

Cenacle Virtue	Other Description	Opposite Vice	Related Scripture
Humility	Honesty, Truthfulness	Pride, Refusal to Accept Reality	Matthew 3:13-17
Simplicity	Integrity	Duplicity	Matthew 5:33-37
Charity	Kindness, “Other-directed”	Self-centered	Mark 3:7-12; Mark 10:46-52
Self-denial	Selfless service	Lazy, slothful	John 13:1-17
Sacrifice	Courage	Cowardice	John 10:7-18
Prudence	Decisiveness	Impulsiveness, Foolishness	Luke 7:24-35; Luke 6:12-16
Patience	Perseverance, Fidelity	Unreliability, Fickleness	Luke 24:13-35

Why these particular virtues for a missionary spirituality? This week let us once again examine specifically three of these virtues -- humility, simplicity, and charity -- in the context of our lived experience as missionaries in the Missionary Cenacle Family.

Humility. Missionaries need to know who they are with confidence. They need to be absolutely certain that they are called by God and sent, that they are – like Jesus – the “beloved Son,” the “beloved Daughter.” Humility is the “hinge” virtue because it is the virtue of truth. Father Judge taught that “humility is a virtue of courage. It takes courage to be humble. It is a virtue of truth and justice. Humility is a great virtue because it safeguards so many other virtues. Now all that humility is, is simply the truth. It is recognizing our real relation with God. Humility does not consist in denying what we are or denying what we have, but attributing what we are and have to Him Who gave it.”¹⁵

Simplicity. Missionaries need to live with clarity of mind and heart and expression. People have to see that they are women and men who can be trusted, who are not duplicitous or manipulative. Jesus said clearly, “let your yes be yes and your no no!” Personal credibility and integrity is at the heart of the missionary witness.

Charity. At its heart, this is old fashioned “kindness” – concern especially for those who are most hurting and abandoned among us. Jesus’ life clearly centered on the people whom others considered unclean, impure,

¹⁵MF 8401-02 (Retreat Conference to Pioneer Cenacle Members, 7/15/17).

“crazy,” of little value. Missionaries must reflect this same love and concern in a simple, human way for the people that the Spirit brings daily into their lives, especially those who are naturally most troublesome or rejected by society in general.

First, read over one or more of the Scripture passages connected with the various virtues – especially humility, charity, and simplicity -- as well as the descriptions of each of the virtues.

Second, think about what you have read. Is there anything particularly that strikes you? Anything that you don't understand? Anything that you disagree with or are troubled by? As you think about this, reflect on your own experience. What are the virtues that are most present, strongest in my life right now? What are the virtues – or virtue – where I most have to grow? Be as practical and specific about this as possible as you reflect on your own life in light of this call to be formed ever more fully in a missionary character.

Third, talk to God about what you have read, thought, questioned, felt. Tell God what is most on your mind and in your heart as you read these passages and reflected on your own experience as a disciple and missionary. Any one of a range of emotions and feelings is possible to express to God: hope, joy, consolation, gratitude, anger, sorrow, adoration. Ask the Holy Spirit to teach you about the virtues you are considering, to pour forth upon you this or that particular quality or strength of character. Ask forgiveness and divine assistance in those areas where you are weak or lacking in virtue. Honestly open your heart up to God. Now sit quietly and do nothing. Give God a chance to speak.

Write down your reflections briefly here:

WEEK III

Monday: “Simplicity”

From Father Judge:

“As the Cenacle Spirit manifests itself there is a simplicity about it-and persons with the Cenacle Spirit are simple persons. They do not have recourse to deceptive methods, they are straightforward. Their simplicity begins with purity of intention. They are doing everything for the love of God.” (*Missionary Cenacle Meditations*, p. 54)

From the Word of God:

“³³Again, you have heard how it was said to our ancestors, You must not break your oath, but must fulfil your oaths to the Lord. ³⁴But I say this to you, do not swear at all, either by heaven, since that is God’s throne;³⁵or by earth, since that is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, since that is the city of the great King. ³⁶Do not swear by your own head either, since you cannot turn a single hair white or black.³⁷All you need say is “Yes” if you mean yes, “No” if you mean no; anything more than this comes from the Evil One.” (*Matthew 5:33-37*)

Do you consider yourself a “simple person”? As Father Judge describes it, who among your friends and acquaintances would you take as an example of a genuinely “simple person”? Why do you believe that this type of simplicity is so important in the missionary life? Ask Mary, the Mother of the Church and of the Missionary Cenacle, to pray for you that your “yes” to God might be as “simple”and “straightforward”as was hers.

p Write down your reflections briefly here:

Tuesday: “Purity of intention”

From Father Judge:

“Human respect, human interest, self-seeking, naturalism should be evacuated from our motives by purity of intention. When purity of intention urges us for God’s sake, our acts are extremely pleasing to God. The spirit of our actions is what makes them acceptable to God. “For the letter kills, but the spirit gives life.”(2 Cor. 3:6) It is the supernatural motive and the grace of God that imprints its supernatural stamp on our least action. Unless we take heed of this spirit we may in fact incur God’s displeasure even in acts which otherwise would be good. Our Lord says: “Unless your justice exceeds that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.”(Mt. 5:20)

“If there is anything true it is that people forget us. I knew a man and it was an obsession with him that he was going to be forgotten. Often he would say to me, “Do you think I will be forgotten when I am dead?” “Well,” I said, “maybe not. They don’t forget saints. Just get busy on the saint end of it.” Do you want to know what he did? He got his grave all fixed up and put a cross on it. Then he had all the diagrams of his grave put on the mantel piece with a picture of it. The idea back of that was that he would not be forgotten. The good man died. He had been in the public eye, a great speaker, great Churchman, and I do not know how often he passed up and down this land. He was known all over. He spent several... fortunes entertaining. God rest his soul, I think he was forgotten before he was a month in his grave.” (*Missionary Cenacle Meditations*, p. 317)

From the Word of God:

“.³¹Whatever you eat, then, or drink, and whatever else you do, do it all for the glory of God.³²Never be a cause of offence, either to Jews or to Greeks or to the Church of God,³³just as I try to accommodate everybody in everything, not looking for my own advantage, but for the advantage of everybody else, so that they may be saved. Take me as your pattern, just as I take Christ for mine.” (*1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1*)

What motivates your actions? Desire for success? Recognition? Power and authority? Love of God? Desire to serve your neighbor? Compassion for the poor? Or a mix of all of the above? Ask the Holy Spirit to show you what the deepest movements of your heart are and to purify them more and more so that all may be for the love of God alone!

Write down your reflections briefly here:

Wednesday: “To forget ourselves”

From Father Judge:

“Did you come to the community to have people appreciate you? Did you come... to have them pin medals on you, to have pictures taken?... No, we came to [the missionary vocation] to forget ourselves for Christ's sake.... O children, do not worry about being appreciated... If you are an edification, a help and consolation among us, you will be appreciated, but you are never going to be appreciated because... you think you are important...

“We have no ‘Who's Who’ in the [missionary] life except the favorites that Christ Himself mentioned: ‘The last shall be first.’ (Mt. 19:30) Don't worry about being forgotten, and not appreciated... If you want to be appreciated, be a comfort, be a consolation to others, seek to be unknown..” (*Missionary Cenacle Meditations*, p. 317)

From the Word of God:

“²⁷Then Peter answered and said, ‘Look, we have left everything and followed you. What are we to have, then?’²⁸Jesus said to them, ‘In truth I tell you, when everything is made new again and the Son of man is seated on his throne of glory, you yourselves will sit on twelve thrones to judge the twelve tribes of Israel.²⁹And everyone who has left houses, brothers, sisters, father, mother, children or land for the sake of my name will receive a hundred times as much, and also inherit eternal life.³⁰‘Many who are first will be last, and the last, first.’” (*Matthew 19:27-30*)

Do you have any “hidden agendas” as you go about your missionary life? Do you seek the last place, to be “unknown”? Or is it important to you that you be recognized, taken note of, thanked, appreciated? Seek the Holy Spirit's help to be free from any motive that is not purely and simply God's glory and the service of your sisters and brothers. This is true simplicity

p Write down your reflections briefly here:

Thursday: “...the truth will set you free”

From Father Judge:

“What do I look for in you? Docility, straight-forwardness and loyalty to your Superiors and community. An unfortunate adulation of yourself, tenacity of opinion, the disposition to act and talk superior to your peers—all these bring disfavor upon you and put you under suspicion. How can I fully trust you if I have proof that you are making misstatements? What must the Spirit of Truth think of this? What do you propose to gain by conduct that borders on duplicity? You need the virtue of simplicity to forget self so that you will take correction without contention, self-defense or argument. Do not attempt to fool yourself by putting the blame on your Custodian, your work, your health or anything else. The Holy Spirit says: ‘His communication is with the simple.’ (Prv. 3:32) When you are simple, when you cease tricky ways, His speech will be with you and then you will have peace and favor and trust. May God give you this grace!” (*Missionary Cenacle Meditations*, p. 54)

From the Word of God:

“³¹To the Jews who believed in him Jesus said: If you make my word your home you will indeed be my disciples;³² you will come to know the truth, and the truth will set you free.³³ They answered, ‘We are descended from Abraham and we have never been the slaves of anyone; what do you mean, “You will be set free?”’³⁴ Jesus replied: In all truth I tell you, everyone who commits sin is a slave.³⁵ Now a slave has no permanent standing in the household, but a son belongs to it for ever.³⁶ So if the Son sets you free, you will indeed be free.” (*John 8:31-36*)

Do I have a tendency to lie either directly or indirectly by being coy, by “shading the truth,” or by simply deceiving myself or others? How strong is this tendency in me? Do I have a spiritual director of a confessor with whom I am totally honest about my motivations, my “secret feelings”, the things I would rather not share with others or even recognize as present in myself? This fearless self-honesty is a very important practice in the spiritual life and strongly promotes the virtue of simplicity in our lives as missionaries. Ask the Holy Spirit of Truth to descend ever more fully upon you day by day.

✎ Write down your reflections briefly here:

Friday: “...that beautiful simplicity”

From Father Judge:

“I have been worried for some months because of a new spirit that is making itself manifest at Holy Trinity Station and promises to be destructive of that beautiful simplicity that hitherto attracted so many. Before going South I told you that the spirit of the Cenacle is an open spirit. I insisted on everything being done in council and with simplicity. . . . Be on guard lest a pride of manner creep into your speech or action. Manifest always a divine simplicity. Could we have seen our Blessed Mother we would have been charmed with her simplicity, and she is the greatest of all. Beware of a patronizing or self-assertive spirit; beware of displeasure when you are checked or disappointed or contradicted. For the sake of humility and simplicity we must be on our guard lest even one word encourage the snobbish.” (*Missionary Cenacle Meditations*, p. 54)

From the Word of God:

“When you give, you should give generously from the heart; if you are put in charge, you must be conscientious; if you do works of mercy, let it be because you enjoy doing them.⁹ Let love be without any pretense. Avoid what is evil; stick to what is good.¹⁰ In brotherly love let your feelings of deep affection for one another come to expression and regard others as more important than yourself.¹¹ In the service of the Lord, work not halfheartedly but with conscientiousness and an eager spirit.¹² Be joyful in hope, persevere in hardship; keep praying regularly;¹³ share with any of God’s holy people who are in need; look for opportunities to be hospitable..” (*Romans 12:8-13*)

Here is a prayer composed by a Missionary Cenacle member for the gift of simplicity:

“Spirit of God, help us to be simple. We know with you we don’t have to hide behind ulterior motives. Help us to honestly keep moving forward, realizing only one aim, Your active love. We know simplicity doesn’t mean childish ignorance, being naive or foolish, but rather knowing the things that are really important and being at peace with them. Being simple is knowing who we are, what needs to be done and doing it. Help us to be open and honest with you and the people around us. Keep us trusting in the powerful love You have for us. Amen!”

▶ Write down your reflections briefly here:

WEEK IV

Weekend Reflection: The Cenacle Virtues Today - II

[From a Commentary on the Missionary Cenacle Rule of Life]

We continue our reflection on the Cenacle virtues of charity, self-denial, sacrifice, prudence and patience in light of the experience of the missionary life and the Scriptures. [The following table is the same one found in *Weekend Reflection for Week III*. It is included here once again for your convenience.]

Cenacle Virtue	Other Description	Opposite Vice	Related Scripture
Humility	Honesty, Truthfulness	Pride, Refusal to Accept Reality	Matthew 3:13-17
Simplicity	Integrity	Duplicity	Matthew 5:33-37
Charity	Kindness, “Other-directed”	Self-centered	Mark 3:7-12; Mark 10:46-52
Self-denial	Selfless service	Lazy, slothful	John 13:1-17
Sacrifice	Courage	Cowardice	John 10:7-18
Prudence	Decisiveness	Impulsiveness, Foolishness	Luke 7:24-35; Luke 6:12-16
Patience	Perseverance, Fidelity	Unreliability, Fickleness	Luke 24:13-35

Self-denial. Missionary life requires a definite “selflessness.” For the whole Christian life, learning to die daily to one’s own self-interest, self-concern is the the measure of one’s journey into Christ. The only way we can truly be “for others” if we have learned daily to die to our own self-preoccupation and self-concerns. This is the opposite of the way of the world and yet is, paradoxically, the only true way to Life. The first apostles had immense difficulty in comprehending this fact of the spiritual journey – and often we do also!

Sacrifice. This self-giving is not a “half-way” or “50-50%” affair: I give my part, you do yours, and we’ll both be happy. It means the willingness to give everything – even one’s very life – for the beloved irregardless of the response of the other. Jesus’ horizon-breaking message had to do with who were the “beloved”. Ultimately this total gift of self had to extend to all humanity, even to – and perhaps especially – to “enemies” and outcasts and the folks that just don’t “count”. The more our love becomes universal like His, the more then we will be bearers of the genuine Good News of God’s love to every person we meet as missionaries.

Prudence. For many “prudence” has become a code word for indecisiveness or weakness of character. When a person can’t make a decision or lacks moral courage in the face of difficult circumstances, euphemistically we often call them “prudent”. This is an unfortunate degradation of this key virtue – or strength – in the formation

of the apostolic character. Prudence, in the Christian spiritual tradition, was the key virtue, the one that made all the other virtues “work”. It was the ability to carefully consider all the circumstances of a situation, understand the various options available for action, and then prayerfully and purposefully decide which is the best course of action in this given moment. Genuine prudence is the virtue of direct, decisive, and effective doing of the Will of God!

Patience. The word “patience” comes from the Latin word “pati”: to suffer, to endure. It is the ability to “hang in” until the end no matter what the cost or the consequences. Without patience, we would give up in the face of adversity, rejection, insults, self-doubts, and set-backs. The fundamental nature of patience is not necessarily a stoic quality of character, a certain “passionlessness”. This sort of placidity can mask a genuine lack of the virtue of patience. Authentic patience is the passionate ability to go forward with courage and confidence in the face of overwhelming odds, to stay the course, to persevere until the end. The ultimate act of “patience” was the passion and death of Jesus: Jesus “loved his own in the world, and he loved them to the end” (*John 13:1*).

As the Cenacle missionary grows in each of these virtues, the work of God becomes ever more effective through his or her life. These virtues active and alive in the missionary make the apostolic life seem like “second nature” - “just the way I am . . . just the way I do things.” This sense of “naturalness” as time goes on are the surest sign of the development and presence of these Cenacle virtues in the person’s life. As Father Judge writes and the *Rule of Life* reminds us, the goal is to “live and die simple, prudent, humble, charitable, . . . men [and women] . . . of sacrifice, of patience, of self-denial whose lives are spent and consecrated in the service of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.”

First, read over one or more of the Scripture passages connected with the various virtues – especially sacrifice, self-denial, prudence and patience – as well as the descriptions of each of the virtues.

Second, think about what you have read. Is there anything particularly that strikes you? Anything that you don’t understand? Anything that you disagree with or are troubled by? As you think about this, reflect on your own experience. What are the virtues that are most present, strongest in my life right now? What are the virtues – or virtue – where I most have to grow? Be as practical and specific about this as possible as you reflect on your own life in light of this call to be formed ever more fully in a missionary character.

Third, talk to God about what you have read, thought, questioned, felt. Tell God what is most on your mind and in your heart as you read these passages and reflected on your own experience as a disciple and missionary. Any one of a range of emotions and feelings is possible to express to God: hope, joy, consolation, gratitude, anger, sorrow, adoration. Ask the Holy Spirit to teach you about the virtues you are considering, to pour forth upon you this or that particular quality or strength of character. Ask forgiveness and divine assistance in those areas where you are weak or lacking in virtue. Honestly open your heart up to God. Now sit quietly and do nothing. Give God a chance to speak.

✎ Write down your reflections briefly here:

WEEK IV

Monday: “The virtue of self-sacrifice”

From Father Judge:

“An apostolic life means progress in the virtue of self-sacrifice, and, that the [members of the Missionary Cenacle Family] may ever put Jesus and His Church first, they must free themselves of every species of self-interest; hence, they shall always be mindful that “we the living are constantly being handed over to death for Jesus sake, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our mortal flesh.”(2 Cor. 4:11) To aid and sustain them in this therefore:

- (a) They shall cherish in their prayer and labor the agonizing Christ of Gethsemane and Calvary.
- (b) They shall strive to develop a spirit that is derived from the Cross and that is suggestive of Gethsemane and Calvary.
- (c) They shall pray to the Holy Spirit for His Gifts and Fruits, especially for Wisdom and Fortitude.” (*Missionary Cenacle Meditations*, p. 102)

From the Word of God:

“³⁶Then Jesus came with them to a plot of land called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, ‘Stay here while I go over there to pray.’³⁷He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee with him. And he began to feel sadness and anguish.³⁸Then he said to them, ‘My soul is sorrowful to the point of death. Wait here and stay awake with me.’³⁹And going on a little further he fell on his face and prayed. ‘My Father,’ he said, ‘if it is possible, let this cup pass me by. Nevertheless, let it be as you, not I, would have it.’⁴⁰He came back to the disciples and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter, ‘So you had not the strength to stay awake with me for one hour?’⁴¹Stay awake, and pray not to be put to the test. The spirit is willing enough, but human nature is weak.’⁴²Again, a second time, he went away and prayed: ‘My Father,’ he said, ‘if this cup cannot pass by, but I must drink it, your will be done!’⁴³And he came back again and found them sleeping, their eyes were so heavy.⁴⁴Leaving them there, he went away again and prayed for the third time, repeating the same words.⁴⁵Then he came back to the disciples and said to them, ‘You can sleep on now and have your rest. Look, the hour has come when the Son of man is to be betrayed into the hands of sinners.’⁴⁶Get up! Let us go! Look, my betrayer is not far away.’” (*Matthew 26:36-45*)

Spend a few moments just contemplating Jesus on the Cross, His perfect sacrifice of Himself out of love for you and for all creation. Let that image penetrate deeply into your being and guard it safely there in your heart. Jesus’ perfect gift of self is the missionary’s constant call, promise, and confidence.

✎ Write down your reflections briefly here:

Tuesday: “Men and women of sacrifice”

From Father Judge:

“The Cenacle calls for a spirit of sacrifice. You should be known as men and women of sacrifice. In other words, you ought to have that virtue down so fine that not a murmur of complaint should come from you no matter what would happen. That desire for redress, determined that you be treated with consideration (should be totally absent). The poorer you are in spirit the more of the Kingdom of Heaven you are going to possess. ‘Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.’ (Mt. 5:3) Give up all things for the love of Christ. It is so hard. It requires prayer. Prayer will set it for you, the spirit of the Kingdom of Heaven you are going to possess. ‘Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.’ (Mt. 5:3) Give up all things for the love of Christ. It is so hard. It requires prayer. Prayer will set it for you, the spirit.” (*Missionary Cenacle Meditations*, p. 102)

From the Word of God:

“⁷But what were once my assets I now through Christ Jesus count as losses.⁸Yes, I will go further: because of the supreme advantage of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, I count everything else as loss. For him I have accepted the loss of all other things, and look on them all as filth if only I can gain Christ⁹and be given a place in him, with the uprightness I have gained not from the Law, but through faith in Christ, an uprightness from God, based on faith,¹⁰that I may come to know him and the power of his resurrection, and partake of his sufferings by being molded to the pattern of his death,¹¹striving towards the goal of resurrection from the dead.¹²Not that I have secured it already, nor yet reached my goal, but I am still pursuing it in the attempt to take hold of the prize for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.¹³Brothers, I do not reckon myself as having taken hold of it; I can only say that forgetting all that lies behind me, and straining forward to what lies in front,¹⁴I am racing towards the finishing–point to win the prize of God’s heavenly call in Christ Jesus” (*Philippians 3:7-14*)

Father Judge invites us to “give up all things for the love of Christ”. What things or people in my own life am I holding onto, “grasping” – those things and people that are more important to me than Christ Jesus? Gently make a list of them. Slowly, one by one, over a period of time let go of them very consciously and deliberately. Give them back to God. Ask the Holy Spirit each and every day for the grace to die to self and to live only for God in absolute love. This is true freedom and joy. This is what frees us to be a genuine “power for good.”

Write down your reflections briefly here:

Wednesday: “Hard and difficult places”

From Father Judge:

“Consider missionary effort in hard and difficult places-either foreign or home. Suppose the missionaries had not trusted in God and sacrificed themselves? The most glorious chapters of [the missionary life] are the chapters made by missionaries who went to places where there was seemingly no hope. The [missionaries of the Missionary Cenacle] will gladly go forth into the territory in which the spiritual needs of the people cannot be attended because of the lack of priests or the lack of funds to support them..” (*Missionary Cenacle Meditations*, p. 102)

From the Word of God:

“⁹A great deal of time had been lost, and navigation was already hazardous, since it was now well after the time of the Fast, so Paul gave them this warning, ¹⁰Friends, I can see this voyage will be dangerous and that we will run considerable risk of losing not only the cargo and the ship but also our lives as well. ¹¹But the centurion took more notice of the captain and the ship’s owner than of what Paul was saying ¹³A southerly breeze sprang up and, thinking their objective as good as reached, they weighed anchor and began to sail past Crete, close inshore. ¹⁴But it was not long before a hurricane, the ‘north-easter’ as they call it, burst on them from across the ¹⁸As we were thoroughly storm-bound, the next day they began to jettison the cargo, ¹⁹and the third day they threw the ship’s gear overboard with their own hands. ²⁰For a number of days both the sun and the stars were invisible and the storm raged unabated until at last we gave up all hope of surviving. . . . ⁴¹But the cross-currents carried them into a shoal and the vessel ran aground. The bows were wedged in and stuck fast, while the stern began to break up with the pounding of the waves. ⁴³But the centurion. . . . gave orders that those who could swim should jump overboard first and so get ashore, ⁴⁴and the rest follow either on planks or on pieces of wreckage. In this way it happened that all came safe and sound to land.” (*Acts*)

As you consider the providence of your daily life what are those “hard and difficult places” to which God may be calling you? Do you have fears and concerns in saying “yes” to this missionary invitations to these places and situations? What would keep you from saying “yes” ? Seek daily, often each day, the Holy Spirit’s gift of Fortitude or Courage. “Come, Holy Spirit! Give me the gift of Fortitude!”

p Write down your reflections briefly here:

Thursday: “The idle hours of our life”

From Father Judge:

In a letter from Puerto Rico in 1927 Father Judge wrote: “We have just returned from a missionary work amongst the most wretched and sadly conditioned people on the island. Any number of these unfortunates are not baptized. We are surprised when we find any who have made their First Holy Communion. Tonight it was my blessed pleasure to be associated with two priests, three of our Sisters and a Brother, and a little band of University girls who are teaching catechism, and trying to help bring a little multitude to the knowledge, love and fear of God.

“I never realized as much as I do when I visit those poor, neglected people the catastrophe of the idle hours of our life. Idle hours! What these would mean for the Church and religion if put to a purpose that would bring peace of mind and help to our neighbor! I tell you, my dear children, thousands and thousands of the souls of our little brothers and sisters are going to be lost to God because we have not sacrificed enough. As for myself, I wish that I might have many lives to give unto these little ones. These people cannot help themselves..” (*Missionary Cenacle Meditations*, p. 86)

From the Word of God:

“³³They came to Capernaum, and when he got into the house he asked them, ‘What were you arguing about on the road?’³⁴They said nothing, because on the road they had been arguing which of them was the greatest.³⁵So he sat down, called the Twelve to him and said, ‘If anyone wants to be first, he must make himself last of all and servant of all.’³⁶He then took a little child whom he set among them and embraced, and he said to them,³⁷ ‘Anyone who welcomes a little child such as this in my name, welcomes me; and anyone who welcomes me, welcomes not me but the one who sent me.’” (*Mark 9:33-37*)

What am I willing to sacrifice, to give up, for God’s “little ones”? Who are God’s “little ones” in my experience, in the providence of my life? Do I recognize that every time I “welcome,” reach out to, work on behalf of, serve these “little ones,” I am welcoming and serving Jesus? As you go about your missionary life, look carefully into the eyes of the sisters and brothers you serve. Listen to their stories with compassion. Serve them with attention, care, and devotion. There the Spirit will reveal to you the face and the heart and body of Christ Jesus in these sisters and brothers.

p Write down your reflections briefly here:

Friday: “Our thorn-crowned King”

From Father Judge:

“There is no reason for us to envy the saints or apostles, for those opportunities are right here today. If we do not take the higher place in heaven, and if many souls are going to be lost, it is because some of us have reason to be disquieted and to beat our breasts in sorrow at those words of our Divine Lord, “He that taketh not up his cross, and followeth me, is not worthy of me.” (Mt. 10:38)

“When so much good is to be done, and when so many souls are in danger of eternal damnation, this thought comes to me. If so many of our young men and women, because of home ties and attachments cannot, for the love of God and their brother and sister in God, offer themselves to help, how can they separate themselves from all that is dear to them when God's Angel of Death comes and summons them to judgment-summons them, maybe, to answer for the greater good in their lives that has never been done.

“The spirit of sacrifice!-do at least pray that we will get more of it. The Cross, Calvary, the Man of Sorrows, the Woman of Sorrows, our thorn-crowned King-these should ever be before us. “He that taketh not up his cross, and followeth me, is not worthy of me.” (Mt. 10:38) May we be worthy of Jesus, for what an appalling thing He says of some, that they are not worthy of Him. Let us pray that we will be worthy of Him, that we will show forth in our lives, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, all that those words imply-that we are worthy of Jesus.”
(*Missionary Cenacle Meditations*, p. 181)

From the Word of God:

“³⁷No one who prefers father or mother to me is worthy of me. No one who prefers son or daughter to me is worthy of me.³⁸ Anyone who does not take his cross and follow in my footsteps is not worthy of me.³⁹ Anyone who finds his life will lose it; anyone who loses his life for my sake will find it.” (*Matthew 10:37-39*)

Contemplate, behold the Cross of Jesus. Realize that He is there out of love for you. Thank Him for the immensity of this gift. Ask for the grace to be able to love the sisters and brothers with the same self-sacrificing, total Love with which He has loved us. This is the heart of the missionary life and the fulfillment of being conformed to Christ the Missionary.

Write down your reflections briefly here: