

# *Lesson #14*

## *Apostolic Prayer*

**The Grace I am seeking . . .**

*To become a person of prayer*

**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*

A key element of the missionary life, for Father Judge, was “to have a prayerful spirit and a heart filled with the love of God; a mind that is conscious of God’s presence and a will that seeks union with God’s adorable will” (*MF 5181*). For “it is only a spiritual person who can lead an apostolic life, and that one cannot be spiritual without prayer” (*MF 14312-13*). Prayer is the engine that provides the energy for the apostolic life, the heart-beat of the Missionary Cenacle life. Without a regular life of prayer, good works quickly dry up or would become no more than a series of ever more feverish activities. The missionary becomes frustrated, discouraged, disillusioned, and the sisters and brothers whom we serve quickly become an aggravating annoyance rather than a revelation of the face of the living Christ among us.

To insure that the missionary’s life was “bathed” in prayer, Father Judge insisted on a variety of practices. Taken apart from one another, they might seem disjointed and unrelated. However, the intention of this plethora of devotional practices was to form a spirit or milieu of prayer in the individual and in the Missionary Cenacle. We have seen some of these devotions already above. These would include:

- Litany of the Holy Spirit before 9 a.m. every morning (*Lesson #1*)
- 20 minutes of quiet meditation each day (*Lesson #2*)
- Recitation of the three Trinitarian prayers composed by Father Judge (*Lesson #5*)
- Daily prayer for a particular virtue in one’s life - one’s “practice” (*Lesson #6 & 8*)
- Praying several times a day the Trinitarian “doxology” (*Lesson #9*)
- Daily celebration of the Eucharist with Communion (*Lesson #11*)
- Various prayer practices related to the Holy Spirit (*Lesson #12*)

Take a few minutes to go back and review all these prayer practices and devotions recommended since the beginning of this *Growing in the Spirit Workbook*. Which ones have you been able to incorporate into your daily life experience? How have these helped you? In what way? What difficulties have you found in incorporating these practices into your daily life? Are there other practices you find helpful in the development of a “prayerful spirit”, an apostolic spirit? What are they and how do they help?

Once again, the key element is not so much this or that practice but an ever developing sense of the presence and power of the Triune God working in and through your life. That living in the presence of God with gratitude, hope, and joy mark the life of the true missionary and apostle. It is ultimately apostolic prayer that helps the apostle to become a genuine “power for good.”

# *Introduction*

From his very earliest dealings with the Cenacle lay missionaries, Father Judge emphasized the central and fundamental role of prayer in their lives if they were to truly be apostles. The associates who lived together in community – for example, in Baltimore, Maryland or Bridgeport, Connecticut – were expected to have an hour in their house schedule for mental prayer, normally in the early morning at around 5:00 a.m. (MF 4424). The associates who were working in the world were also to devote a half hour or hour daily for mental prayer. However, the time these early lay missionaries were to devote to mental prayer did not have to be "consecutive." As he explained to them in a letter conference in 1916, it could be done at different times during the day -- ten or fifteen minutes at a time -- in the midst of other activities such as walking to the train station. (MF-10698). What was key and absolutely essential was specific time for prayer, conscious contact with the Triune God.

The centrality of prayer in the apostolic life -- the life of spiritual fruitfulness or fecundity -- could not be more clearly outlined than in this section from a letter conference to the Cenacle in March 1922:

*My dear Children, the longer I live, the more I am impressed with this truth -- it is only prayer which will effect the conversion of sinners. This conversion must begin in prayer. Any agency used, no matter how brilliant or resourceful or powerful, no matter with what prestige it is launched, unless it be accompanied by prayer, it will fail* (MF-5181).

Prayer was the very heart of the apostolic, missionary life. In a 1919 letter to a lay woman, Father Judge explained that there are "two kinds of prayer -- vocal and mental." There is no particular command to pray in any particular way -- "just to pray." "How and when" an individual prays "is left to our training, to our capacity, to our convenience, to our particular mental habits." Even though Father Judge recognized that "the masters of the spiritual life all maintain that mental prayer ... is a more perfect form of prayer," nonetheless he maintains a very pragmatic and practical approach to the life of prayer: the key element is to pray (MF 4785). How, when, where are all almost incidental elements if one is praying.

Let us pray for one another in this month as we reflect on and pray for the gift of an ever deepening apostolic prayer in our lives. For Father Judge, this is the most compelling assurance for an effective apostolic, missionary life. May the Holy Spirit grant us this grace!

# *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:**

### **Our Spiritual Roots and Contemplation<sup>1</sup>**

Recently, someone asked a very effective and prayerful missionary priest what he thought of when he heard the word “contemplative” or “contemplation.” He simply folded his hands, looked up to the skies piously, and said, “Monks.” With a single gesture and a word, this man had described the general Catholic perception about contemplation *and* the challenge of discussing it in the context of a missionary vocation. Yet totally the opposite is true: contemplation, properly understood, is not contrary to but forms the very heart of the Cenacle missionary vocation.

*Contemplation*, simply understood, is a *personal, intimate experience of God* given as a *free gift*. Slowly, this experience of the Divine Presence can grow to become an ever more permanent aspect of the consciousness of the individual so gifted. And so, it is fair to say that every true missionary *must be* a contemplative, someone who has *personally experienced* God and shares this living experience with others (John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio* #91).

To understand what contemplation means in our Missionary Cenacle tradition, it is very helpful to understand that Father Thomas Judge was, above all, a *good and devoted* Vincentian. In the corner of the primitive little chapel at Holy Trinity, Alabama is still preserved the statue of St. Vincent de Paul (1581-1660) which he placed there. His seat in the chapel was directly below that statue. Likewise, in the Motherhouse built at Holy Trinity, St. Vincent was one of the two major statues displayed in the front of the main chapel. His Vincentian roots are very clear. The fundamentals of his spirituality are Vincentian. And so what are some of the key elements in understanding St. Vincent’s approach an *active, apostolic contemplation*?

First, St. Vincent is keenly aware of the intimate divine Presence in the heart of creation in many ways. For example, he believes that *necessity* and *events* -- history -- are essential in revealing to individuals the will of God. What happens, what imposes itself upon human reality helps reveal the divine will. God is not “far from us” but rather *intimately involved* in all creation. God is “continuously giving His full attention to the direction of the world and to providing for the needs of all His creatures, even down to a tiny gnat!” God works unceasingly in “the creation and conservation of this great universe.” He is unfailingly present to all creation: the stars, planets, land, sea, atmosphere, seasons, and every human person. God is especially present in the person of the poor. The poor are Jesus’ members. He is “in” them: “Our Lord is in [the sick poor], and they in Our Lord.” And so he instructed the Daughters of Charity that, in an emergency, “when you leave prayer and Holy Mass to serve the poor, you are losing nothing, because serving the poor is going to God and you should see God in them.”

Second, the extent of St. Vincent’s activities was astonishing yet he also had a reputation for carefully contemplating all the dimensions of a situation before coming to decisions. He had a “particular devotion to follow step by step the admirable Providence of God.” Thus, in beginning or continuing apostolic works, he warned his disciples “not to go quickly. The works of God do not proceed in this way, they go ahead on their own; and those that He does do not soon perish.” “In the beginning what is possible is done, and little by little Providence disposes things for the better.” “Our Lord is honored by those who follow [Divine Providence] and do not try to get ahead of it.” One must “rest” in God’s mystery-- “wait on Divine Providence”, and then “work”-- “when God opens the

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<sup>1</sup> From a Study Paper given at the *Contemplative Dialogue* in Holy Trinity, AL (April 1996). All quotes from Vincent de Paul, *Saint Vincent de Paul: Correspondance, entretiens, documents*, ed. Pierre Coste, C.M., 14 vols. (Paris: 1920-1926).

door, run in the way of Divine Providence."

Third, the ideal of the spiritual way was, for St. Vincent, the person who was *both* active and contemplative since the active life was "more useful to the neighbor" whom "we have an obligation of loving as we love ourselves." The ability to live in the world intimately in love with God and bringing others to this love was the perfection of the spiritual journey.

Because of St. Vincent's clear vision of the dynamic unity between the active and the contemplative life, he was able to found -- together with St. Louise de Marillac -- the Daughters of Charity. This was truly *the first* women's religious community to "break out" of the cloister. Shortly before his death, Vincent depicted the radical unity between the contemplative and the apostolic life in a conference to the Daughters of Charity. The Daughters shall have

*... for a Convent the houses of the sick ..., for a cell a hired room, for a chapel their parish church, for a cloister the streets of the city, for enclosure, obedience, with an obligation to go nowhere but to the houses of the sick, or place that are necessary to serve them, for a grille, the fear of God, for a veil, holy modesty, making use of no other form of profession to assure their vocation than the continual confidence they have in Divine Providence and the offering they make to God of all that they are and of their service in the person of the poor...*

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***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. Be as specific and personal as possible as you think about these questions: Do you see or experience God in creation and other persons? How? When? Where? Do you personally experience or see God in the "poor", those who are abandoned, lonely, or afraid? As you look at the various events and circumstances of your life, can you see or discern the presence of God there? Do you somehow feel that people who can spend long periods of time in monasteries or retreat centers are "closer" to God than you can be in the midst of an active missionary life? What do you think St. Vincent -- or Father Judge -- would say to you about that feeling? Ask the Holy Spirit for the grace of a truly contemplative spirit in the midst of your active missionary life.***

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**Write** down your reflections briefly here:

# WEEK I

## Monday: “A prayer without words”

*From Father Judge:*

"Vocal prayer is the prayer in which you show your needs to God. Mental Prayer is a prayer of the mind-a prayer without words. You may object: 'I haven't any devotion. I haven't any grace for prayer. When I go to pray, I get sleepy... Everything gets so topsy-turvy and things go racing through my mind.' ...Now, that is a temptation. Remember, we are serving God through pure faith, because He is God, because He is infinitely good and desirable. Feeling devotion is not necessary. ...To pray like a clever lawyer filling up our hearts as if we were working out an argument which God could not withstand; to work out a prayer that Heaven must answer-that is feeling devotion.." (*Missionary Cenacle Meditations*, p. 1)

*From the Word of God:*

<sup>12</sup>Now it happened in those days that he went onto the mountain to pray; and he spent the whole night in prayer to God.<sup>13</sup>When day came he summoned his disciples and picked out twelve of them; he called them 'apostles':<sup>14</sup>Simon whom he called Peter, and his brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew,<sup>15</sup>Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Simon called the Zealot,<sup>16</sup>Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot who became a traitor." (*Luke 6:12-16*)

*Jesus often went away, by himself, to pray: on the mountains, in the desert, "very early in the morning". He had his regular "routine" of prayer like any good Jewish man of his day, but he also sought out those quiet times alone with his Father. What is your own practice of this type of "mental prayer" or "meditative prayer" or "contemplative prayer"? How often do you take time to just "be" with the Lord in silence like he was with his Father in silence in the midst of the desert?*

**Write** down your reflections briefly here:

## ***Tuesday: “Start thinking about God”***

*From Father Judge:*

“Get on your knees and start thinking about God. That is prayer. It may be nothing but a struggle in the dark-everything is so bitter, so sad. That is prayer. That is the kind of prayer God loves. You see, it is the intention in your heart. Some people base their religion on their human experience; they make it almost a matter of food and drink, a recreation of some kind. They practice religion for what they can get out of it. That is not right. Another person keeps at it. You do not see any progress at all. You start in at the proper time for prayer and are immediately surrounded with all kinds of darkness. You never knew you could think of so many things in five minutes-until you are on your knees-but you keep on trying. That is prayer. But to yield to drowsiness as soon as you stop fighting-that is not right. It seems that ten thousand devils are working to get us to stop praying. Say: "I will not give up this meditation even if I can only say: 'Jesus, Jesus', ...even if I can't get a complete sentence together." That is prayer. Bring your mind back (to the subject).” (*Missionary Cenacle Meditations*, p.1)

*From the Word of God:*

“<sup>7</sup>Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you.<sup>8</sup>Everyone who asks receives; everyone who searches finds; everyone who knocks will have the door opened.<sup>9</sup>Is there anyone among you who would hand his son a stone when he asked for bread?<sup>10</sup>Or would hand him a snake when he asked for a fish?<sup>11</sup>If you, then, evil as you are, know how to give your children what is good, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him!” (*Matthew 7:7-11*)

*As you try to pray silently or meditatively before God, often times distracting thoughts – hundreds of them – can come filtering into your mind and heart. Has this been your experience in prayer? How have you dealt with this experience of distractions? Has it been the cause of your giving up regular daily times of quiet prayer? Ask the Holy Spirit to give you the grace to persevere in prayer no matter what distracting or even disturbing thoughts come into your mind and heart.*

**✎ Write down your reflections briefly here:**

## **Wednesday: “Placed yourself in His Presence”**

*From Father Judge:*

“Never mind running after things that are sweet and attractive. Bring it back to Christian truths that may be terrifying... You may come out of your meditation drenched with a kind of spiritual perspiration. God has seen all that. He knows you placed yourself in His presence. Do not go away distressed. You did your part. You could not do any more.” (*Missionary Cenacle Meditations*, p. 1)

*From the Word of God:*

<sup>25</sup>Now in Jerusalem there was a man named Simeon. He was an upright and devout man; he looked forward to the restoration of Israel and the Holy Spirit rested on him.<sup>26</sup>It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death until he had set eyes on the Christ of the Lord.<sup>27</sup>Prompted by the Spirit he came to the Temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the Law required,<sup>28</sup>he took him into his arms and blessed God." (*Luke 2:25-28*)

*Sometimes we can think that prayer should be filled with light and consolation and peace. But often it is not. It can be very arid, very dry with seemingly little or no light or consolation. That is the experience of many of the preeminent saints of our tradition. As Father Judge says, the key to prayer is “placing yourself in His Presence.” God does all the rest. Ask the Spirit to give you this persevering love in His Presence through daily times for quiet prayer.*

**✎ Write down your reflections briefly here:**

## ***Thursday: “Humbled yourself before God”***

*From Father Judge:*

"Mental prayer is a difficult thing... Some people like to come to prayer all prepared to measure and weigh their thoughts. In mental prayer you are trying to dispose your soul to make it beautiful in the sight of God. You are wrong if you become discouraged and say that you did not make any prayer at all. You have placed yourself in the presence of God. You have asked God to help you. You have humbled yourself before God, the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph. Then you placed before your mind the subject of meditation. Then you should continue on a point until you get no more thought from it." (*Missionary Cenacle Meditations*, p. 1)

*From the Word of God:*

"<sup>29</sup>Now, Master, you are letting your servant go in peace as you promised;<sup>30</sup>for my eyes have seen the salvation<sup>31</sup> which you have made ready in the sight of the nations;<sup>32</sup>a light of revelation for the gentiles and glory for your people Israel. <sup>33</sup>As the child's father and mother were wondering at the things that were being said about him,<sup>34</sup>Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, 'Look, he is destined for the fall and for the rise of many in Israel, destined to be a sign that is opposed—<sup>35</sup>and a sword will pierce your soul too—so that the secret thoughts of many may be laid bare.'" (*Luke 2:29-35*)

***It's important, as Father Judge notes, not to “measure and weigh” your thoughts and experiences while you are at times of quiet prayer. This type of prayer is not a “test” of some sort to see how you are doing. Rather, it is an act of pure love of God, a strong desire to be one with, right with God. This is the heart of this type of prayer. As long as you persevere in the time of prayer, God is glorified and the light of God's loving kindness is more fully present in your being even if you do not feel or experience it in the moment. Prayer is like the effect of sun and water on plants or trees. The sun keeps shining, the rain keeps falling. God little by little, imperceptibly, gives the growth.***

**Write down your reflections briefly here:**

## ***Friday: “Pray always”***

*From Father Judge:*

The purpose of mental prayer is to conform your soul and heart to the will of God. ... Never admit, my dear children, that you are discouraged in prayer. ‘Pray always and faint not.’ (cf. Lk. 18:1)” (*Missionary Cenacle Meditations*, p. 1)

*From the Word of God:*

<sup>36</sup>There was a prophetess, too, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was well on in years. Her days of girlhood over, she had been married for seven years<sup>37</sup> before becoming a widow. She was now eighty-four years old and never left the Temple, serving God night and day with fasting and prayer.<sup>38</sup> She came up just at that moment and began to praise God; and she spoke of the child to all who looked forward to the deliverance of Jerusalem.” (*Luke 2:36-38*)

***Once again, Father Judge reminds us that the key to effective “mental prayer” is perseverance and a deep desire to “conform your soul and heart to the will of God.” God will never be outdone in generosity. Continuing in this sacred practice of daily prayer in quiet always brings incalculable blessings and gifts to the person who prays as well as to the whole Missionary Cenacle, Church, and world. Pray for the gift of persevering love in the practice of daily quiet prayer. As with the prophetess Anna, suddenly – when we least expect it – the moment of enlightenment and joy comes!***

**Write down your reflections briefly here:**

# **WEEK II**

## **Weekend Reflection:**

### **Some Misunderstandings about "Contemplation"**

*[Continuation of a Study Paper given at the Contemplative Dialogue]*

Through the years there have existed many misunderstandings about the “contemplative” way and the Cenacle missionary vocation. It is vital to clarify these misunderstandings so that this precious gift of contemplative prayer might be freely and whole-heartedly entered into by men and women very actively involved in the missionary life.

First, as noted above, contemplation often is identified with monks and monasteries. Yet Father Judge, in the original *Constitution* of the Sisters, wrote that each Sister must

*... give every minute possible that can be spared from active duty to prayerful exercises. She will indeed, as far as lies in her power, bring the cloister into the active life.<sup>2</sup>*

For him, the goal of Cenacle spirituality was to "combine the active and contemplative life."<sup>3</sup> There must be a way to combine effectively these two dimensions of the spiritual journey. Actually, the famous American Trappist monk and spiritual writer, Thomas Merton, makes clear that the outcome of his own spiritual journey *as a monk* was a heart ever more open to the concerns, needs, and aspirations of the world.

Second, some people contrast contemplation and an “incarnational” or an “apostolic” spirituality. What should become ever more clear as we examine the thought of our own missionary tradition is that contemplation constitutes the very heart of the apostolic life in Father Judge's thought. Full-time withdrawal to the silence of the desert would be contrary to the missionary call. Nonetheless, a genuine apostolic spirituality must imitate *the* Incarnate One who went to the desert, onto the mountain tops and into the garden to pray in silence and solitude. In that silence the apostolate was illuminated and nourished.

Third, contemplation is often identified with one style or type of prayer. Contemplation is a personal, intimate experience of God given as a gift. It cannot be identified with one type of prayer style. Rather any regular discipline of prayer faithfully practiced normally will lead to an ever deepening love of God. For example, there is one missionary priest who prays while walking in the early morning through the streets of his inner city parish. Certainly this is no less conducive to the growth of a contemplative spirit than the practice of the brother who sits quietly in the lotus position in his room for an hour's meditation daily. For others, the praying of the Rosary or the repetition of litanies may aid an ever deepening awareness of God's love and presence. The style of prayer is not the main issue but fidelity to a regular discipline of prayer. Such fidelity should bear fruit in an ever growing, personal, intimate relationship with God.

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<sup>2</sup>MF-2539. MSBT-II:3. In these notes, MF followed by a number refers to the microfilm number on Father Judge's collected writings in the Archives of the Missionary Servants of the Most Holy Trinity, Silver Spring, Md. The designation MSBT or ST followed by a Roman numeral and then a number or numbers refers to the original Constitutions of the Missionary Servants of the Most Blessed Trinity (MSBT) and the Missionary Servants of the Most Holy Trinity (ST). The Roman numeral refers to the chapter and is followed by the numbers referring to either the article or the paragraph.

<sup>3</sup>MF-9308 (Letter, 1930).

Fourth, some believe that an over-emphasis on contemplation can lead to "belly-button-gazing"; it is too self-absorbed and self-directed. This certainly is always a temptation in the spiritual journey. There are people who become "spiritual junkies", running from one workshop to the next, more concerned with their latest consolation in prayer than the devastation of wars or the sick person next door. This, however, is a false spirituality as the tradition makes clear. For both the monk and the missionary, the heights of the spiritual journey in contemplation sensitize us ever more fully to the agonies and joys of the world and capacitate us for being agents of change in that world.

*What do you understand by the word "contemplation"? Would you describe yourself as a "contemplative"? Would you say, based on the above description, that you have "tasted" what the tradition calls "contemplative prayer", that is, "a personal, intimate experience of God given as a gift"? Do you personally see any contradiction between the contemplative life and the missionary vocation? If so, what are they? Do you think they are valid objections? If so, why? If not, do they create an obstacle for you in entering into this type of quiet, contemplative prayer?*

**▶ Write down your reflections briefly here:**

## WEEK II

### Monday: “The gift of the Holy Spirit”

*From Father Judge:*

“The highest of all gifts that God has given us is the very Source and agent of all gifts, the gift of the Holy Spirit Himself. The Apostles in prayer remembered the promise of our Saviour: “How much more will your Father from heaven give the good spirit to them that ask Him?” (Lk. 11:13) And St. Paul tells us, “Now we have received not the spirit of this world, but the Spirit that is of God that we may know the things that are given us from God.” (1 Cor. 2: 12).” (*Missionary Cenacle Meditations*, p. 163)

*From the Word of God:*

“<sup>9</sup>So I say to you: Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you.<sup>10</sup>For everyone who asks receives; everyone who searches finds; everyone who knocks will have the door opened.<sup>11</sup>What father among you, if his son asked for a fish, would hand him a snake?<sup>12</sup>Or if he asked for an egg, hand him a scorpion?<sup>13</sup>If you then, evil as you are, know how to give your children what is good, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!” (*Luke 11:9-13*)

*We cannot pray at all without the direct grace and assistance of the Holy Spirit. To enter into a loving, living relationship with the Triune God requires the presence of God’s Spirit in our lives. The first and most important step as we seek to become ever more fully men and women of prayer is to ask daily, frequently for the gift of that Holy Spirit. The Spirit is the one that will open up the path for us to the encounter with the living God that we desire or seek.*

**p** Write down your reflections briefly here:

## ***Tuesday: “The Spirit of God within us”***

*From Father Judge:*

“The Spirit of God within us, as in His temple, makes us pleasing to God by the inpouring of His grace and this He gives to help us in the great work of prayer. He grants us this help in three ways: in attracting us to prayer, in teaching us prayer, and in helping us in prayer.” (*Missionary Cenacle Meditations*, p. 163)

*From the Word of God:*

“Are we beginning to commend ourselves to you afresh—as though we needed, like some others, to have letters of commendation either to you or from you?<sup>2</sup> You yourselves are our letter, written in our hearts, that everyone can read and understand;<sup>3</sup> and it is plain that you are a letter from Christ, entrusted to our care, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God; not on stone tablets but on the tablets of human hearts.” (*2 Corinthians 3:1-3*)

***Gradually, as the Spirit works in our lives, we are led to an ever deepening encounter with God through prayer. As Father Judge points out, it is the Spirit of God who attracts us to prayer, teaches us to pray, and assists us as we pray. The importance of calling regularly on the Spirit to make us men and women of prayer is the most vital dimension of a life of genuine prayer. A strong devotion to the Holy Spirit and a living life of prayer are intimately linked.***

**Write down your reflections briefly here:**

## Wednesday: “United in prayer”

*From Father Judge:*

“The Holy Spirit is the Substantial Bond of the Father and the Son in the Holy Trinity Who, upon earth, so unites its different members and parts as to form one Holy, Catholic, Apostolic, Roman Church. It pleases Him to see us united in prayer. We certainly, then, have much reason and encouragement to pray.” (*Missionary Cenacle Meditations*, p. 312)

*From the Word of God:*

“<sup>19</sup>In truth I tell you once again, if two of you on earth agree to ask anything at all, it will be granted to you by my Father in heaven.<sup>20</sup>For where two or three meet in my name, I am there among them.” (*Matthew 18:19-20*)

*The Holy Spirit not only attracts us to prayer, teaches us to pray, and helps us to persevere in the process, the Spirit also unites us intimately to every other member of the Body of Christ ... and to all creation! Prayer by its very nature – even when we are apparently in solitude – is really a “community” exercise because, through the Spirit, the whole Body of Christ is present wherever we are. Prayer is the source of our unity, charity, and peace together as members of the Missionary Cenacle certainly but also as agents of that peace in the Church and the world.*

**▶ Write down your reflections briefly here:**

## **Thursday: “Not narrow, personal prayer”**

*From Father Judge:*

“Our prayer should not be narrow, personal prayer; it should reach to the throne of God only after having touched the farthest bounds of God's creation and mourned in every human misery, and rejoiced in God's goodness to men. We should pray for the Church, for the Holy Father, for those rulers in the Church who are battling for religion, for saints and for sinners on earth, the latter especially. We pray, first of all, that the reign of the Holy Spirit will come in the hearts of men; that the Greek and Protestant Churches will return to union with Rome in faith and obedience; we pray for the Holy Father, and for sinners, and for every need of the Church.” (*Missionary Cenacle Meditations*, p. 163)

*From the Word of God:*

“<sup>18</sup>In all your prayer and entreaty keep praying in the Spirit on every possible occasion. Never get tired of staying awake to pray for all God's holy people,<sup>19</sup> and pray for me to be given an opportunity to open my mouth and fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel<sup>20</sup> of which I am an ambassador in chains; pray that in proclaiming it I may speak as fearlessly as I ought to.” (*Ephesians 6:18-20*)

***The universal nature of our prayer as missionaries should reflect the ever growing nature of our love. The encyclical Mission of the Redeemer says that the missionary should be the “universal sister, the universal brother.” This “universalist” sense of our prayer life in the Missionary Cenacle is so essential that this particular section from the writings of Father Judge is included in the Missionary Cenacle Rule of Life #20. How is your prayer? Is it broad and universal, touching the “farthest bounds of God's creation” or does it tend to be “narrow, personal” in its concerns? Ask the Holy Spirit to expand your heart and spirit ever more broadly, widely, fully: to give you a “magnanimous” (“great-spirited”) heart!***

**✎ Write down your reflections briefly here:**

## **Friday: “Men and women of prayer”**

*From Father Judge:*

“Let me sum up: you must be [men and] women of prayer, then you will be [men and] women of charity. We pray and labor for the extension of His kingdom on earth. May you receive the Holy Spirit and ever remain faithful to His inspirations. This is my prayer for you.” (*Missionary Cenacle Meditations*, p. 163)

*From the Word of God:*

“<sup>2</sup>Be persevering in your prayers and be thankful as you stay awake to pray.<sup>3</sup>Pray for us especially, asking God to throw open a door for us to announce the message and proclaim the mystery of Christ, for the sake of which I am in chains;<sup>4</sup>pray that I may proclaim it as clearly as I ought.” (*Colossians 4:2-4*)

*Father Judge saw the intimate link between prayer and apostolic charity or love. You cannot have one without the other. Prayer serves as the “motor” or the driving heart of zeal, the “furnace” of divine charity which inspires all genuine apostolic action. As apostles and missionaries, the most meaningful gift we can receive from the gracious hand of God is that we become “men and women of prayer.” Everything else will proceed from that. Examine your own practice of prayer. Are you taking time regularly, daily for times of quiet encounter with the Lord? If not, why not? If so, how could these encounters become better? What are the obstacles you are encountering? What are the remedies to these obstacles? Ask the Holy Spirit – with a grateful and confident heart – to grant you this gift of a truly prayerful spirit. Then you will become ever more fully a “power for good.”*

**p** Write down your reflections briefly here:

# **WEEK III**

## **Weekend Reflection:**

### **Growing in Love: "Devotional Knowledge"**

*[Continuation of a Study Paper given at the Contemplative Dialogue]*

Father Judge had many devout practices he urged the Cenacle members to faithfully perform. Among many others, these include frequently using "ejaculations and holy aspirations"; making frequent visits to the Blessed Sacrament; placing the Ten Commandments in a place of prominence in the Cenacle; praying when beginning a journey; having special celebrations for the feasts of the apostles.<sup>4</sup> These "practices and devotions" helped maintain ever before the missionary a vivid *awareness* of the mysteries of the Faith. They also offered the *opportunity for acts of faith and love*.

Next, he urged the Cenacle missionaries to a *frequent consideration* of the principal mysteries of the Faith. St. Augustine defined "contemplation" as a "serene and straight look on the object to be looked at."<sup>5</sup> In calling for a prayerful "consideration" of the mystery, Father Judge invited the missionaries to an ever-growing *contemplative* experience.

It is through contemplation-- a deepening, prayerful look at the depths of mystery-- that the missionary is led to love and, subsequently, to action for the Beloved. Not barren knowing but *knowing* that comes from prayerful consideration and leads to *love and action* is the key and essential element for Father Judge. This is what he called *devotional knowledge*, i.e., "a knowledge that begets fruit, that worketh in charity." Sterile knowing is not enough. Contemplation of the mystery must "arouse [the] will" so that the individual will "do good." Fruitful contemplation is what Father Judge described as "devotional knowledge."<sup>6</sup>

Thus the Cenacle vocation grows as the missionary prayerfully contemplates the revealed divine truths in his or her heart. What grows is a "great affection for the Lord, ... a *personal love*."<sup>7</sup> This is God's measureless desire: that "our relations and our thoughts of our Blessed Savior should be very personal." God wishes all to "be personal. Try and give Our Lord an intimate relation in our own heart."<sup>8</sup> Then the external proclamation of this truth is the exterior manifestation of an interior process of faith and love that has already occurred. The intimate personal nature of the relationship is the very definition of contemplation as we have defined it. This forms the very *heart* of the missionary vocation..

Thus, it is no surprise to note how profoundly "interior" is Father Judge's description of the missionary call. Writing in the Sisters' original *Constitution*, he insists that primarily the Missionary Servant of the Most Blessed Trinity "glorify God" for the mystery of the Trinity by

*offering up interior acts of praise, thanksgiving and adoration, by cherishing*

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<sup>4</sup> See MSBT-II:1-12 in MF-2538-2541. See also the Book of Customs published by the Missionary Servants of the Most Blessed Trinity (Philadelphia, PA: 1988). A similar book was compiled by the ST Constitution Committee. They both contain a good overview of the number and frequency of devout practices Father Judge recommended.

<sup>5</sup> Butler, Western Mysticism, 35.

<sup>6</sup> MF-8629f. (Letter conference, 11/28/26).

<sup>7</sup> MF-8451f. (Advent conference, December 1922). See also MF-14143 (Conference to Cenacle Associates, 7/8/16).

<sup>8</sup>MF-8357 (Retreat Conference, 8/6/15).

*this truth continually, by inflaming her love towards it with aspirations and ejaculations, by directing acts of love and desire to the Three Persons in One God, by grieving because of lack of reverence on the part of so many for it, and by entertaining desires of atonement and making acts of reparation for this indifference.<sup>9</sup>*

In the Cenacle vocation missionary fruitfulness flows from a contemplative union with the mystery which one seeks to proclaim. Such contemplative union leads to missionary action in a desire to share with others this profound encounter with Love. “Devotional knowledge” is preeminently *personal* – as it relates to an ever increasing knowledge and love of God – and *practical* – as it expresses its love for God in an ever more zealous service of the sisters and brothers in their need.

***A simple but profoundly significant question for this week’s reflection: how truly personal is your love for God, Father, Son, and Spirit? Do you see this God of the Universe as intimate and personal Friend, Lover, Companion, Sister/Brother, Father/Mother? Do you feel the same intimacy and comfort with God that you feel in the intimacy and comfort you find with your best friend, your spouse, your immediate or extended family? It is the gift of being able to just be yourself and to know that you are accepted, loved, forgiven just as you are: the gift of knowing that you are welcome always and “at home”? Is this your personal experience of God or is your experience of God in your life different? In what way(s) is it different? Why do you think this is so? Speak to God from the heart about whatever you come to see as you reflect on the nature of your personal relationship with God.***

**Write down your reflections briefly here:**

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<sup>9</sup>MSBT-I:2.

## WEEK III

### Monday: “A devotional knowledge”

*From Father Judge:*

“The message of [the Incarnation] is for every Christian. How much more, however, should this message of the Church mean to the Missionary Cenacle because of your particular graces. You have been so much more enlightened in the mystery of the Incarnation. You have been instructed so long and so frequently in this manifestation of divine love. You have, in fact, been brought so intimately into a knowledge of God's plan in the redemption of the world and as it were, taken into the Holy Family itself. We can take holy joy in this thought, that a devotional knowledge of a mystery may be considered a sign of God's favor. I said a devotional knowledge; that is a knowledge that begets fruit, that works in charity.” (*Missionary Cenacle Meditations*, p. 8)

*From the Word of God:*

“<sup>21</sup>It is not anyone who says to me, “Lord, Lord,” who will enter the kingdom of Heaven, but the person who does the will of my Father in heaven.<sup>22</sup>When the day comes many will say to me, “Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, drive out demons in your name, work many miracles in your name?”<sup>23</sup>Then I shall tell them to their faces: I have never known you; away from me, all evil doers! <sup>24</sup>Therefore, everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them will be like a sensible man who built his house on rock.” (*Matthew 7:21-24*)

*Consider the intimacy of family life with all its joys and sorrows. Think about these experiences for a few minutes. Be very concrete, practical, and specific. Now think about your relationship to God. How is it similar? How is it different? Why is there a difference? Father Judge says that we have been – through our loving knowledge of the mystery of the Incarnation – “taken into the Holy Family itself.” What does that mean to you very personally? Does it have a particular meaning to you? Allow the Holy Spirit to speak to your heart about these intimate mysteries of the heart of God*

**p** Write down your reflections briefly here:

## ***Tuesday: “Knowledge is not enough”***

*From Father Judge:*

“Knowledge, however, is not enough, for the rebellious angels knew and are lost. We pray further therefore, “Kindle my affections.” In other words, arouse my will, make it seek Thy ways that I may do good. This then is what I would call devotional knowledge. Let us be concerned that this knowledge will bear fruit for remember, our Lord cursed the barren fig tree and the Holy Spirit has this lament against those devoid of good works: “They are all gone aside, they are become unprofitable together, there is none that cloth good, no not one.” (Ps. 13:2)” (*Missionary Cenacle Meditations*, p. 8)

*From the Word of God:*

“<sup>18</sup>As he was returning to the city in the early morning, he felt hungry.<sup>19</sup>Seeing a fig tree by the road, he went up to it and found nothing on it but leaves. And he said to it, ‘May you never bear fruit again,’ and instantly the fig tree withered.<sup>20</sup>The disciples were amazed when they saw it and said, ‘How is it that the fig tree withered instantly?’<sup>21</sup>Jesus answered, ‘In truth I tell you, if you have faith and do not doubt at all, not only will you do what I have done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, “Be pulled up and thrown into the sea,” it will be done.<sup>22</sup>And if you have faith, everything you ask for in prayer, you will receive.’” (*Matthew 21:18-22*)

***Is there a notable difference between what you “know” about God and what you “do” about that knowledge? In other words, is your “knowledge” of God fruitful or barren like the fig tree? This is a hard question but an important one to reflect on. As you think and pray about this challenging question, keep looking on the face of Jesus in your mind and heart. Realize that He is there for you, inviting and empowering you to bear immense fruit for the glory of God’s Name and the service of your sisters and brothers.***

**▶ Write down your reflections briefly here:**

## Wednesday: “Cherish a love of Jesus”

*From Father Judge:*

“Thanks be to the divine mercy, this grace, a devotional knowledge, is abundant in the Cenacle for first of all, it has been given to us to cherish this mystery (of the Incarnation) This is a trust of our Holy Mother Church, it is true, a thousand times true, that we are unworthy of such a heavenly work but nevertheless one of the very particular ends of our institute is to cherish a love and devotion to the mystery of the Incarnation. We speak it this way: to extol the Holy Name of Jesus, which means that with whole heart and soul, in every way possible, we will cherish a love of Jesus in our own hearts and strive to enkindle a like love in the hearts of others by spreading a knowledge of our Saviour, our Lord, our King and our God” (*Missionary Cenacle Meditations*, p. 8)

*From the Word of God:*

“<sup>28</sup>What is your opinion? A man had two sons. He went and said to the first, “My boy, go and work in the vineyard today.”<sup>29</sup>He answered, “I will not go,” but afterwards thought better of it and went.<sup>30</sup>The man then went and said the same thing to the second who answered, “Certainly, sir,” but did not go.<sup>31</sup>Which of the two did the father’s will?’ They said, ‘The first.’ Jesus said to them, ‘In truth I tell you, tax collectors and prostitutes are making their way into the kingdom of God before you.<sup>32</sup>For John came to you, showing the way of uprightness, but you did not believe him, and yet the tax collectors and prostitutes did. Even after seeing that, you refused to think better of it and believe in him.’” (*Matthew 21:28-32*)

*This intimate knowledge of God, a knowledge that can only come from prayer, has been given to each of us in the Missionary Cenacle. Father Judge calls it a “trust of our Holy Mother Church.” How are we responding to this grace? Do we “cherish” this knowledge and love of Jesus that has been given to us? Do we desire and work to see that others have the opportunity to share in this same knowledge and love? As we see in the heart and the action of the Holy Trinity, true love, by its very nature, is diffusive, spreads to others, grows and is shared.*

**▶ Write down your reflections briefly here:**

## ***Thursday: “Jesus . . . Center of all hearts”***

*From Father Judge:*

“This cry should constantly be in the heart of the Cenacle: Jesus, King of the world and center of all hearts! We adore Thee, we Praise Thee, we bless Thee, we love Thee; hallowed be Thy Name; Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done.” (*Missionary Cenacle Meditations*, p. 54)

*From the Word of God:*

“You should pray like this: Our Father in heaven, may your name be held holy,<sup>10</sup> your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.<sup>11</sup> Give us today our daily bread.<sup>12</sup> And forgive us our debts, as we have forgiven those who are in debt to us.<sup>13</sup> And do not put us to the test, but save us from the Evil One. <sup>14</sup>Yes, if you forgive others their failings, your heavenly Father will forgive you yours;<sup>15</sup> but if you do not forgive others, your Father will not forgive your failings either.” (*Matthew 6:7-15*)

***Quietly and slowly pray the “Our Father”. Reflect on each phrase, each sentence, each word. Allow the deep and intimate knowledge of Jesus’ heart in His relationship to His Father enter the depths of your own being. Sit with this preeminent prayer of faith, love, and apostolic, missionary power. Listen to the depths of your heart, the innermost part of your spirit. There God is speaking to you.***

**Write down your reflections briefly here:**

## ***Friday: “A special knowledge and love”***

*From Father Judge:*

“[Cenacle missionaries] shall be taught to realize what is their privilege and grace in being called to do that which was the commission of the Apostles, to teach and baptize all nations in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit... By the grace of their vocation they have been introduced into the Holy Family of Nazareth, for it is their grace to have a special knowledge and love and devotion to the Mystery of the Incarnation and to make known and loved always and everywhere, the Word Made Flesh. It shall, then, be the ever constant joy of their [missionary] life, with the Archangel Gabriel, to adore the Word Made Flesh and to felicitate His Immaculate Mother.” (*Missionary Cenacle Meditations*, p. 336)

*From the Word of God:*

“<sup>2</sup>I seemed to be looking at a sea of crystal suffused with fire, and standing by the lake of glass, those who had fought against the beast and won, and against his statue and the number which is his name. They all had harps from God,<sup>3</sup> and they were singing the hymn of Moses, the servant of God, and the hymn of the Lamb: How great and wonderful are all your works, Lord God Almighty; upright and true are all your ways, King of nations.<sup>4</sup> Who does not revere and glorify your name, O Lord? For you alone are holy, and all nations will come and adore you for the many acts of saving justice you have shown.” (*Revelation 15:2-4*)

***Take a few minutes. Contemplate the face of Jesus either on a holy card, icon, statue or in your own heart. Look carefully upon Him. Love Him. Pledge to serve Him with the fullness of the love of your life. Fall down in worship – figuratively or literally – before the Word Made Flesh. Adore Him whom your heart has come and is coming to love ever more fully. This is perfect prayer.***

**Write down your reflections briefly here:**

# WEEK IV

## Weekend Reflection:

### “Prayer of the Heart”

*[Continuation of a Study Paper given at the Contemplative Dialogue]*

In a paper entitled "Considerations", composed around the Fall of 1921, Father Judge draws the contours of the interior life of a person advancing in contemplation and unity with God. It also may reflect his own spiritual experience at this point of his life. This sense of close, intimate, personal union with God in the sense that Father Judge starts to talk about it around 1921 is not particularly characteristic of his writings prior to this date. In 1921 he was fifty-three years old.

Of the considerations he offered, the first three are particularly significant for us. First, *intimacy with God* - a sense of God's absolute *presence* is key. God is not a distant reality but rather "we are in Him as the sponge is in the sea" or "as the bird is in the air ... Wherever we are there is God." There is an awareness of living in the Divine Presence. Second, this Presence is *intensely personal*. "Our friends are personal, but no one more personal than God." God is the *most* personal of all realities. This personal knowledge of God should lead us to want to be attentive to God's desires so as to please Him. From knowledge springs love and action in service to the Beloved. Third, Father Judge discussed what he called "prayer of the heart." It is unclear where he learned this particular expression for the type of prayer he was describing.<sup>10</sup> Nonetheless, he is very clear in describing it. This type of prayer requires "no book, no words." It consists in an interior movement or disposition,

*just thought, even just feeling ... towards God. To know where He is and not to wish to be anything but His. To do His will, to do nothing else but His will, to please Him ever.*<sup>11</sup>

The essential characteristic of this type of prayer is that we "set our hearts towards God just as the rock is set in the sea." No matter what distress or torment caused "by the contradictions and distractions of the day," our hearts remain "set towards God" and so "remain through it all."<sup>12</sup> As an apostolic religious, Father Judge experienced the need to pray while immersed in multiple demanding activities. Prayer of the heart offered a solution to this dilemma since it was simply

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<sup>10</sup> George Maloney, S.J. writes of "Prayer of the Heart" that "The Old and New Testaments and the best traditions in Eastern Christianity speak of the *heart* in prayer to refer to the whole person -- emotions, body, imagination, intellect and will -- meeting God. Such prayer has been described by the Eastern Fathers as putting the 'mind in the heart' as one prays. Such a spirituality that has as its aim a total integration of the human persona as he or she meets God in prayer and learns completely to surrender to his loving presence has been called 'hesychasm' ... 'Hesychia' is that state in which Christians, through grace and their own intense asceticism, reintegrate their whole being into a single *ego* that is then placed completely under the influence of God dwelling within them. Hesychia is that state of integrated 'ego-hood'. It is total healing in order to become the glory of God." See George A. Maloney, S.J., *Prayer of the Heart* (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1981), 15. In checking the translation and publication dates for The Philokalia: The Complete Text (London: Faber and Faber, 1979), the first volumes in English were published in early 1950s. At the time of this writing, we are still trying to determine when the first English edition of *The Way of the Pilgrim* became available. Both these works are prime sources for teaching on the "prayer of the heart."

<sup>11</sup>MF-13568 (Conference, undated).

<sup>12</sup>MF-13568 (Conference, undated).

*... a turning of the heart towards God, just to want God, to want to love Him more and more. Distractions, contradictions and upsets may come. They are not disloyal to internal peace .... If your heart is with God, you have a prayerful heart. If your heart is set towards God, to please Him and to love His law, you will not break it and you will want God more and more. All this is prayer. St. Teresa says that prayer is compatible with the most distracting employments.<sup>13</sup>*

\_\_\_\_\_ Father Judge grew to see prayer as a relatively simple and all-encompassing reality. In 1928 he urged a correspondent to "remember to talk to God in your heart. You know God is present within you when you are in the state of sanctifying grace." Do not "struggle with language." Instead simply acknowledge that "God is there," tell Him that "you are glad He is there and you want Him to be there and that you want to be united with Him." The individual should "speak and converse with Him as friend to friend."<sup>14</sup> Similarly the *name of Jesus* can and should be used often as prayer. "We can say it again and again" in blessing, with friends, in acts of praise, petition, reparation and thanksgiving. In this way it becomes "the sweetness of our mouths, the music of our ears, the love of our hearts, the light of our minds, the strength of our wills, the joy of our hearts."<sup>15</sup> For the missionary, an intimate, personal, constant, loving awareness of the Divine Presence was the ideal: contemplation.

*Father Judge saw this "prayer of the heart" as the ideal way for the missionary to pray. It did not mean that there still were not definite times for prayer set apart daily. What it did mean, however, was that these individual and specific times for prayer would begin to expand and to be a part of our daily consciousness as we would go about all the events of our lives. Re-read the above passage several times. See how it might relate to your own experience of prayer. Implore the Holy Spirit to inspire in your own heart this gift of prayer of the heart whenever God feels that you are ready to receive it. It is living in the presence of God.*

**▶ Write down your reflections briefly here:**

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<sup>13</sup>MF-7148 (Letter to Miss Sara Scalzo, 2/6/32).

<sup>14</sup>MF-6592 (Letter to Sister Emmanuel, 12/29/28).

<sup>15</sup>MF-1346 (Letter to Brothers, 12/31/28).

## WEEK IV

### Monday: “The virtue of self-sacrifice”

*From Father Judge:*

“To persevere and to progress in the spirit of her vocation, a Missionary Servant of the Most Blessed Trinity must be indeed a woman of prayer. At the commencement of the day she should form in her mind several pious intentions, to vivify and ennoble all her acts. She should offer them humbly and recollectedly to the Triune God in union with the intentions Jesus had while in this world. Ejaculatory prayers are of the utmost importance. Should she find difficulty in remembering to offer them, beg this grace. It is a sure sign that the heart which is ever speaking to God is united to Him. She must, then, in fact, give every minute possible that can be spared from active duty to prayerful exercises. She will indeed, as far as lies in her power, bring the cloister into the active life. She will ever hold before her the injunction: ‘Come apart into a desert place, and rest a little.’ (Mark VI, 31)” (MF 2539)

*From the Word of God:*

“<sup>30</sup>The apostles rejoined Jesus and told him all they had done and taught.<sup>31</sup> And he said to them, ‘Come away to some lonely place all by yourselves and rest for a while’; for there were so many coming and going that there was no time for them even to eat.<sup>32</sup> So they went off in the boat to a lonely place where they could be by themselves.” (Mark 6:30-32)

*Although the above passage from Father Judge’s writing is taken from the Constitution of the Missionary Servants of the Most Blessed Trinity, much of what he has to say regarding the life of active/contemplative missionary prayer are applicable to all the missionaries of the Cenacle Family. This dynamic between active apostolic involvement and time apart to rest, reflect, and relax with God is the constant challenge of any genuine missionary life. Reflect on your own life. Are you able to be actively engaged in various missionary works and, at the same time, find the time to “come apart” to be with Jesus?*

**p** Write down your reflections briefly here:

## ***Tuesday: “Perseverance”***

*From Father Judge:*

“[The Cenacle missionary] knows that perseverance is the reward of prayer, and particularly the prayer of the heart. [They] should keep in mind . . . the aspiring to the highest perfect that there is in this world, the union of her soul with God. [They] will be helped much by the practice of interior acts, by doing all external duties with a perfect interior recollection and a pure intention and entire conformity of her will to the will of God. Thus Jesus acted, so His holy ones have acted, and so [they] will be graced with union with God. If such a perfection seems too difficult, let [them] excite in [themselves] a great feeling of confidence in the infinite goodness and power of Him Who has called her. For in nothing can [they] give God more pleasure. And the foundations of [their] confidence will be invincible, because they are built upon God's infinite power, goodness and ineffable condescension which invites her to ask, to seek, and to knock, promising in return that it shall be given, it shall be found, and it shall be opened. 'Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you.' (Matt. VII, 7)" (*MF* 2539)

*From the Word of God:*

“<sup>5</sup>He also said to them, ‘Suppose one of you has a friend and goes to him in the middle of the night to say, “My friend, lend me three loaves,<sup>6</sup>because a friend of mine on his travels has just arrived at my house and I have nothing to offer him;”<sup>7</sup>and the man answers from inside the house, “Do not bother me. The door is bolted now, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up to give it to you.”<sup>8</sup>I tell you, if the man does not get up and give it to him for friendship’s sake, persistence will make him get up and give his friend all he wants.” (*Luke 11:5-8*)

***The only way, according to Father Judge, to grow into this “prayer of the heart” is through a constant, persevering exercise of interior acts of prayer over a period of time. This very active, conscious prayer on the part of the missionary eventually gives way to a more passive type of experience where prayer seemingly continues in one’s spirit without she or he even being consciously aware of it. If this type of prayer is difficult for you to imagine at this point, do not become concerned. Our part is to persevere in the acts of devotion that open us up ever more fully to the workings of God’s Holy Spirit.***

**✎ Write down your reflections briefly here:**

## Wednesday: “Frequent acts of thanksgiving”

*From Father Judge:*

“It will be a practice of the [Cenacle missionaries] to utter frequent acts of thanksgiving upon the hearing of any edifying or consoling news . . . It shall likewise be a practice upon the hearing of sad or direful news that prayers be said immediately for the afflicted, knowing that God mercifully permits these sorrows to men that chastened they may become wise and good. Let prayers, then, also be offered to God that our minds may be open and our hearts docile to whatever lesson He would teach, assuring Him that we wish Him to find us humble under these visitations and begging of His Divine Majesty if it please Him to spare us. 'Spare, O Lord, spare thy people.' (Joel. II, 17)" (MF 2541)

*From the Word of God:*

<sup>25</sup>At that time Jesus exclaimed, 'I bless you, Father, Lord of heaven and of earth, for hiding these things from the learned and the clever and revealing them to little children.'<sup>26</sup>Yes, Father, for that is what it pleased you to do.<sup>27</sup>Everything has been entrusted to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, just as no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.'" (Matthew 11:25-27)

***Gratitude – a heart filled with thanksgiving – is the surest sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit in a person's life. The ability to perceive and to be grateful for all that God is doing in us, our community, our Church, our world, in the lives of others – friends, families, associates – is an essential quality of a genuinely prayerful spirit. Consciously make a list of the people, situations, and things for which you want to be grateful. Thank God “with hymns of praise”!***

**✎ Write down your reflections briefly here:**

## ***Thursday: “Just to pray”***

*From Father Judge:*

In a letter to a Cenacle Lay missionary in 1919, Father Judge wrote: “... As for yourself, it seems to me that you need not be very much bothered about your prayer, for, judging from your letter, you must pray very well. There are two kinds of prayer, -- vocal and mental. We are not commanded to any particular form of prayer, or method, -- just to pray. Pray we must, but how and when, this is left to our training, to our capacity, to our convenience, to our particular mental habits. Oral prayer is held in very high esteem by the church, as a most profitable exercise. Our Lord Himself taught us oral prayer. However, the masters of the spiritual life all maintain that mental prayer, -- the kind of prayer that you pray so well -- is a more perfect form of prayer. You need not, then, be disturbed on this point ....” (MF 4758)

*From the Word of God:*

“ Be filled with the Spirit.<sup>19</sup> Sing psalms and hymns and inspired songs among yourselves, singing and chanting to the Lord in your hearts,<sup>20</sup> always and everywhere giving thanks to God who is our Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Ephesians 5:18-20)

*Father Judge recognized that there many ways to pray depending on one’s training, temperament, history, etc. He recommended that we always take the time daily each day specifically dedicated to prayer; however, he was reluctant to say that this or that particular ways of praying was “the” way. The key thing was, in his words, “just to pray”! How do you pray? How has your style or way of praying changed, evolved, or remained the same through the years? Do you make sure that you dedicate time each day to simply “be” in the presence of God and pray?*

**▶ Write down your reflections briefly here:**

## ***Friday: “Prayer of the heart”***

*From Father Judge:*

“To begin with, it is not necessary to concentrate when you pray. That would make out of prayer a mental discipline or study. Prayer is the lifting of our hearts and minds to God, whereby we adore Him, praise Him, and thank Him.

“Why not practice the prayer of the heart, that is, a turning of the heart towards God, just to want God, to want to love Him more and more. Distractions, contradictions and upsets may come. They are not disloyal to internal peace. But just to concentrate on every word we say to God, just never to have distractions, just never to get upset, if some wayward thought comes, it will mean headaches, and cause piety to become very tedious and make prayer very hard. If your heart is with God, you have a prayerful heart. If your heart is set towards God, to please Him and to love His law, you will not break it and you will want God more and more. All this is prayer. St. Teresa says that prayer is compatible with the most distracting employments. Do not be repeating your prayers if you are distracted ...” (MF 7148)

*From the Word of God:*

“The word is very near to you; it is in your mouth and in your heart, that is, the word of faith, the faith which we preach,<sup>9</sup> that if you declare with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and if you believe with your heart that God raised him from the dead, then you will be saved.<sup>10</sup> It is by believing with the heart that you are justified, and by making the declaration with your lips that you are saved.” (Romans 10:8-10)

*As we saw above, Father Judge experienced what he called “prayer of the heart” as particularly suited for the apostolic, missionary life. How do you continue to be a person of prayer in the midst of many activities and concerns? That is the key question. For Father Judge, the Holy Spirit would teach us to pray “in the heart,” that is, a constant, underlying awareness of, presence to, and gratitude for the living and loving God among us. If you do have this gift of “prayer of the heart,” then give thanks to the Triune God for this inestimable grace. If you have a difficult time understanding what this means or what this would feel or look like in your own life, ask the Holy Spirit to give to you and teach you about the “prayer of the heart.”*

**p** Write down your reflections briefly here: