

# *Lesson #2*

## *The Cenacle Story*

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

*To learn more about Father Judge, how his work and the MCA began and evolved.*

**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 always urged the Cenacle Lay Missionaries to spend time daily in some type of **personal, quiet prayer**. He called it “mental prayer” or “meditation.” The idea was simply to set apart anywhere from **20 minutes to 1 hour each day** to spend with God in a direct, conscious, and personal fashion. This Missionary Cenacle practice was enshrined in the Missionary Cenacle *Rule of Life*, article 17:

“The Cenacle spirit is a prayerful spirit. We recognize that only a spiritual person can lead an apostolic life, and that we cannot be spiritual without prayer. Great value, then, shall be placed upon periods of prayerful silence and recollection. We are to devote suitable time each day to personal prayer, meditation, and spiritual reading. Our reading should include Missionary Cenacle writings and, in keeping with our maxim *sentire cum ecclesia* [to think or feel with the Church], we are to reflect prayerfully on the documents of the Church.”

The important thing is to **set aside this time each day for an “appointment” with God**. Make it a priority. This is the vital thing. The *Daily Prayer Guides* are designed to help you make good use of your time and to grow in a knowledge and love of the Cenacle vocation. There is a separate Meditation for each day of the week, Monday to Friday. The weekends are for reading the Scriptures for that particular Sunday. (These can be found in your *Missionary Cenacle Ordo*.)

To help you keep track of how you are doing in spending some time each day in prayer, here’s a little checklist -- if you find it helpful! Just write in the time you spend each day in your “appointment” with God.

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wedndy	Thursdy	Friday	Saturdy
Week 1							
Week 2							
Week 3							
Week 4							

# *Introduction*

Father Judge's life -- his story and that of the early Missionary Cenacle -- is a **parable**, a story with special significance and meaning for us today. Father Judge's vision and apostolic mission were a **charism** given to the Church. **Charism**, as we use it here, comes from the Greek work *charisma*, "a gift freely and graciously given, a favor bestowed." The Cenacle's charism is a **missionary charism**, an **apostolic grace**. This gift was first given by the Holy Spirit to Father Judge in the early 1900s. But its use, growth, and development were meant for future generations of missionaries. We prayerfully examine his life and his response to the events and circumstances surrounding it to understand and imitate his missionary heart and the spirit that burned there.

Our **Daily Prayer Sessions** this month will center on various themes that emerge from an examination of Father Judge's life and experience. Each day as we look at a small section from his writings, we also will get a brief picture of what was going on in his life, what he experienced to bring him to the convictions we read. We then will look at a Scripture that relates to this new learning. A few questions will follow the readings to help focus our prayerful reflection.

Peace! And may you grow in a knowledge and love of the gift -- the **charism** -- of the Missionary Cenacle in the weeks ahead! May this charism become ever more fully yours in our day and time.

# *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: “Man on Fire”

*[The first book ever published about Father Judge was written by one of his earliest followers, Father Joachim V. Benson. Entitled “The Judgements of Father Judge,” it was “intended as a memoir for the members of the Missionary Cenacle family to coincide with the first anniversary of the death of Father Judge,” i.e. November 23, 1934. It was reprinted in 1978 with a new title, “Father Judge: Man on Fire.” In the preface to the 1978 reprint, Father Joachim -- in his own right a very interesting Cenacle character! -- noted that he “was a seminarian at the time it was published and wondered if it might hinder my ordination. Father Judge was still very controversial.” The story told by a man who knew him intimately has a certain freshness, immediacy, and vibrancy that other histories could never have. The following is a selection from the book’s Introduction.<sup>1</sup>]*

“This was the life of Father Judge. He would do whatever God willed, how and when God willed it. In obeying the Divine Will as a humble and obedient servant of the Triune Go, his aim was ‘to lead others to a greater eating of the Sacred Body of Christ and a greater drinking of His Precious Blood.’ There was no middle course or compromise or quibble of conscience. ‘As God wills It,’ he would say, and ‘Let God’s Church speak.’

“It was part of his *credo* not to question the Divine Wishes but to fulfill them. He considered himself as apprentice in the school of the Master Carpenter. A privileged pupil allowed to contribute his daily labors as outlined in the Eternal and Divine blue print. If he labored well, it was because the Master Carpenter sustained his labors. If he suffered physical or mental pain, the thought of the Man of Sorrows soothed him. If he was more successful than the least of his hopes, then the Providence of God be praised and all honor to His Triune Majesty. He lived convinced that the Cause of All Life quickened his breath, and that when this life would be withdrawn, the All Merciful One would not be unmerciful to him, the least of His servants.

“And each morning above His holy altar, the Son of God looked down from the pure hands of Father Judge and beheld in His apostle the steady growth of Faith and Hope and Charity. Faith that became more profound as Divine Providence exacted its profession. Hope that increased as trials and tribulations demanded greater confidence. And charity that daily bloomed more Christlike as it sprang from deep wells of love and kindness and sympathy, and overflowed his simple heart in an eagerness to know, and love, and follow the Great High Priest.

---

<sup>1</sup>Joachim V. Benson, S.T., *Father Judge: Man on Fire* (Holy Trinity, AL: The Cenacle Press, 1978), pp. 5-8.

“And as he lifted up the cup to the Eternal Father, the chalice filled with the Precious Blood of His Divine Son, he asked only to be allowed to drain it completely with all the anguish of the Crucified Who spilled it. And too, that he might place within the chalice the sorrows of a redeemed humanity, still burdened with the effects of original sin, struggling toward the Fountain of Life.

“It was the opinion of many that he was far in advance of his time. Many openly disagreed with him and opposed his work. But even those who criticized him most severely have not failed to mention his sweet sincerity, his love of God, his solid determination never to swerve from the path of duty as he saw it, after counsel and prayer, and always under the obedience of superiors. . . .

“A true son of St. Vincent,<sup>2</sup> he followed the teachings of the Apostle of Charity, and gave a modern adaptation to his principles. His early years, even those in the seminary, reveal nothing remarkable, other than that he did ordinary things in an extraordinary way. No one could see in the young and diligent Novice a future Founder of two religious Communities, one for men, The Missionary Servants of the Most Holy Trinity, and one for women, The Missionary Servants of the Most Blessed Trinity. He himself never dreamed of such a possibility, even after his ordination, when he was deeply involved with the Lay Apostolate. But looking back through the years, we see the bright light of the Holy Spirit guiding this humble servant as he climbed upwards by the mighty impulse of love, continually purifying his intentions, doing violence to his will and his body, seeking the God-Man, imitating Him, loving Him, and dying with Him every day in his meditations upon the Sacred Passion.

“A great saint once said, ‘Show me someone who forgets himself or herself completely and I will show you someone whom the world will not willingly forget.’ Father Judge never thought of himself. He lived for God and for his fellow man. His death was the exhaustion of self. His doctors said they had never seen a man so completely worn out. Fatigue moved in on him like the blackness of night, and he slipped away in God.”

*As you read this selection from someone who knew Father Judge very intimately, what is it that most strikes you? What challenges you? What can you most relate to in your own life and experience? If Father Judge faced obstacles in his life’s mission, what obstacles do you face in accomplishing your life’s work? Ask the Holy Spirit to make all this clear to you.*

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

---

<sup>2</sup>Father Judge was a member of the Congregation of the Mission. This community of priests and religious brothers was founded in the 1600s in France by a French priest, St. Vincent de Paul. He also founded -- with St. Louise de Marillac -- a community of religious women, the Daughters of Charity, one of the largest congregations of women in the Church. The focus of St. Vincent’s work was the service -- spiritual and material -- of the poor.

# WEEK I

## Monday: A Humble Spirit

*From Father Judge:*

*[Father Judge came from an early childhood experience of poverty and discrimination. Son of Irish immigrants, he knew firsthand what it felt like to be “on the fringe,” marginalized. Also as a seminarian he became seriously ill to the point that they thought he would die. All this brought him to some conclusions about what was really important in life.]*

“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 rose 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:*

“My son, conduct your affairs with humility, and you will be loved more than a giver of gifts. Humble yourself the more, the greater you are, and you will find favor with God. What is too sublime for you, seek not, into things beyond your strength, search not. What is committed to you, attend to; for what is hidden is not your concern.” (*Sirach 3/17-21*)

“When pride comes, disgrace comes; but with the humble is wisdom.” (*Proverbs 11/2*)

“Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light.” (*Matthew 11/28-30*)

***What does “humility” mean for you? Have you ever wanted to be “humble”? Why or why not? What are three experiences of your life that have helped you recognize how much you must depend on God?***

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

## ***Tuesday: The Humility of Jesus***

*From Father Judge:*

“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 . . . 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:*

“In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that the whole world should be enrolled. This was the first enrollment, when Quirinius was governor of Syria. So all went to be enrolled, each to his own town. And Joseph too went up from Galilee from the town of Nazareth to Judea, to the city of David that is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. While they were there, the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

“Now there were shepherds in that region living in the fields and keeping the night watch over their flock. The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were struck with great fear. The angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord.’” (*Luke 2/1-11*)

***What do you feel as you reflect on the humility and poverty of Jesus? What does this example of humility call you to in your life? What would you have to change to conform your life more closely to His? Where does pride manifest itself in your life, plans, goals, thinking?***

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

## ***Wednesday: The Humility of Mary***

*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 dejected manner, a humble carriage, some may think it is a service 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 get 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. 145)

*From the Word of God:*

“And Mary said:

“My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my savior.

For he has looked upon his handmaid’s lowliness; behold, from now on will all ages call me blessed.

The Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

His mercy is from age to age to those who fear him.

He has shown might with his arm, dispersed the arrogant of mind and heart.

He has thrown down the rulers from their thrones but lifted up the lowly.

The hungry he has filled with good things; the rich he has sent away empty.

He has helped Israel his servant, remembering his mercy, according to his promise to our fathers, to Abraham and to his descendants forever.” (*Luke 1/46-55*)

***Think of a person you would describe as “humble.” Why would you call this person “humble”? According to what Father Judge says, do you think your understanding of humility is accurate or inaccurate? In what ways? As you read over the Canticle of Mary above, does she seem “humble”? Why or why not? Based on the Canticle of Mary, how would you describe her humility? In what way was Mary “humble”?***

**Write down your reflections briefly here:**

## ***Thursday: The Humility of the Sinner***

*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 this 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:*

“[Jesus] then addressed this parable to those who were convinced of their own righteousness and despised everyone else. ‘Two people went up to the temple area to pray; one was a Pharisee and the other was a tax collector. The Pharisee took up his position and spoke this prayer to himself, ‘O God, I thank you that I am not like the rest of humanity -- greedy, dishonest, adulterous -- or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week, and I pay tithes on my whole income.’ But the tax collector stood off at a distance and would not even raise his eyes to heaven but beat his breast and prayed, ‘O God, be merciful to me a sinner.’ I tell you, the latter went home justified, not the former; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be exalted.’” (*Luke 18/9-14*)

***Am I conscious of my need for God’s mercy and forgiveness in my life? In what areas of my life do I most need this healing and transformation? Be as specific as possible. Am I grateful for the Sacrament of Penance? What is my practice of the Sacrament of Penance? Do I go regularly -- for example, once a month? If so, how has the Sacrament changed my life? If I don’t go regularly, why? Speak to Jesus about this.***

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

## ***Friday: Humility and the Heart of Jesus***

*From Father Judge:*

“Our Lord is a teacher. This is His hardest lesson, humility. But if we have a personal feeling for Christ, we shall not find it hard, for He is so close to us. God loves the humble best of all, and we all want God to love us . . . God fights and resists the proud, those who have an inordinate love of themselves. They think they are built of a certain kind of clay, of a superior sort . . . .

“Humility is a realization of one’s relation to God, knowing that what I have is of the grace of God. Humility is not calling oneself names. This may be a very subtle form of pride. Our gifts have all been given us by God, and he can take them away in a moment. Proud people are curious, envious, impossible, overbearing, mischief making, desirous of more attention than others, unyielding, easily hurt and those who imagine every one to be against them. No one is more miserable than a proud person . . . .

“Did anyone ever spit in your face? Ever slap you in the face? Ever treat you like a fool? Christ endured these things that he might teach us to be humble.

“If you want to be dear to God you must try to be dear to the Sacred Heart, and you must imitate it. Jesus has said, ‘Learn of me because I am meek and humble of heart’ (*Mt 11/29*). It is always to the humble that the Blessed Virgin and Our Lord have come. Not to self-seekers but to the humble.” (*Missionary Cenacle Meditations*, p. 202)

*From the Word of God:*

“See, my servant shall prosper, he shall be raised high and greatly exalted. Even as many were amazed at him -- so marred was his look beyond that of man, and his appearance beyond that of morals -- So shall he startle many nations, because of him kings shall stand speechless; for those who have not been told shall see, those who have not heard shall ponder it.

“Who would believe what we have heard? To whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? He grew up like a sapling before him, like a shoot from the parched earth; there was in him no stately bearing to make us look at him, nor appearance that would attract us to him. He was spurned and avoided by men, a man of suffering, accustomed to infirmity, one of those from whom men hide their faces, spurned, and we held him in no esteem.

“Yet it was our infirmities that he bore, our sufferings that he endured, while we thought of him as stricken, as one smitten by God and afflicted. But he was pierced for our offenses, crushed for our sins, upon him was the chastisement that makes us whole, by his stripes we were healed. We had all gone astray like sheep, each following his own way; but the Lord laid upon him the guilt of us all.” (*Isaiah 52/13-53/6*)

***How do you deal with insults and offenses against yourself? When someone corrects you or contradicts you, how do you respond? How would you measure your attitudes and reactions against those of Jesus? Seek the grace to be “meek and humble of heart” like Jesus.***

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

## WEEK II

### ***Weekend Reflection: Father Judge and Zeal***

*[We continue reading from Father Joachim's account of Father Judge's life. Characteristic of him was the quality of zeal. Wherever he went, whatever he was called to do, he approached with a quality of vigor that marked all his life. He was not a man easily defeated or discouraged.]*

“Thomas Augustine Judge was ordained a priest of the Congregation of the Mission on May 27, 1899, by Archbishop Patrick John Ryan, at St. Charles' Seminary, Overbrook, Pennsylvania. The following day, Trinity Sunday, he said his first Mass in St. Vincent's Seminary, Germantown, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. For more than a year previous he had been a victim of tuberculosis and everything thought that he would die soon. The young priest did not think so. He sang his first Mass, entered into all the celebrations, and spent the day with his family and friends.

“There is no doubt that he was very sick, and his superiors sent him home with his mother with this remark, ‘If anyone can cure him, you can. If not, then send him back to us.’

“He went home and tried as best he might to regain his health. He said Mass at the houses of the Sisters of Charity. He was very weak and had a severe cough. But his will was as strong as his cough, and his faith in Our Blessed Mother stronger than either.

“Filled with the principles of St. Vincent -- inflamed with zeal, impulsive, determined, God-loving and God-fearing -- we find him in September, 1899, in St. Vincent's Church, Price Street, Germantown, Philadelphia. His health was still poor, so he was not immediately detailed to the mission band or given exact duties. But his pent-up zeal knew no bounds and he began to work among the Italian poor of the neighborhood. A story is told of that early endeavor to help the poor.

“Through his workers he learned of a young girl very ill with tuberculosis who lay, apparently dying, amid conditions that could not have been much worse. Father Judge was himself tubercular, and yet in any danger was perfectly fearless. He visited this poor, frail, creature every day, brought her the Lord God of Hosts, cheered her, and became the one bright light in her dreary days. It cost him a great deal of physical anguish, and almost every day after visiting his patient he would ask the druggist next door to fix him something to dispel the feeling of nausea. The druggist was not a Catholic, though married to a Catholic girl. He was an honest man who, having witnessed the self-sacrifice of this young priest, remarked to his wife one day, ‘There's Christianity for you.’ She made no reply. They did not discuss religion.

“Shortly after, the druggist sent his wife abroad to regain health. Father Judge continued his visits to the tubercular girl. When the wife of the druggist returned she was surprised to discover that he husband was studying catechism. Father Judge had made his first convert, not by a crusade of words, but by Christlike example. And this story comes, not indirectly, but vividly with appreciation by the converted druggist, who still lives with his wife above the same drug store.

“The idea of spiritualized laity seems to have been with Father Judge constantly. In the first days of his priesthood he did not have a clear concept of just what it would lead to, but he was willing to be

guided by the Holy Spirit. He saw then the tremendous power of the laity . . . .

‘Did you ever think of gathering children on the street and bring them to Mass,’ he asked a group of women one day, ‘or seeking out some poor lost sheep and guiding him or her to the confessional and to the Communion rail? For you know there are hundreds of children of Catholic parents unbaptized, and many more uninstructed in our Holy Faith? Do you realize there are countless homes where the parents have never been married by the priest? And did you ever think that by your prudent sympathy and patient kindness in going from home to home you could bring these souls to Christ?’

“All through his life he cried, ‘Save the child and you save all.’ And again, ‘What you propose to do, especially for the children, is Christlike, a divine work -- quickly to glide in between the child and seduction to threaten the tempter. What a work that is, and the with the patience and kindness of the heart of Christ to win back to the Church those who are wayward.’

“. . . . He was a marvelous talker and he felt it was his duty to preach. It made no different to him where he preached. God was everywhere, and He should be talked of everywhere. Whenever he felt that there was an opportunity to tell someone of the Unknown God he did not let that opportunity go unheeded.

“Once in later years while sitting in a crowded theater in Phenix City, Alabama, waiting for the children’s annual Christmas play to begin, he suddenly nudged his companion and said, ‘Ask me to say a few words.’ His companion was at a loss to understand, and replied, ‘But, Father, no one said to.’ ‘That’s all right,’ he said decisively, ‘you ask me to say a few words.’ What matter that the theater was hot, and that of the three or four hundred packed in, not more than twenty were Catholics? . . . . ‘Well, Father, why don’t you say a few words?’

“It was all he needed. Before anyone realized [it], he was confronting the audience, his hand uplifted -- his voice happy -- ‘My friends’ -- they look up and beheld him beaming upon them through the shadows, ‘I have just been asked to say a few words’ -- and for thirty or more minutes he told them of the Abandoned Christ who hung limp, and taut, and died upon a tree that would bring forth the Fruit of Life.”

*Father Judge was a “holy opportunist,” always searching for the way to make God better known, loved, and served in the circumstances of his daily life. He saw the same possibilities available in the lives of the lay baptized men and women of the Church. How quick are you to notice the needs of those around you? How do you respond to those needs? Are you aware of spiritual or material needs of people in your daily life? What are you currently doing to respond to those needs? That is the very heart of what it means to be a “missionary” according to the Cenacle charism received from the Holy Spirit through Father Judge.*

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

## WEEK II

### Monday: Wasting God's Grace or not?

*From Father Judge:*

“By the grace of God, I am what I am; and his grace in me hath not been void’ (*1 Corinthians 15:10*). Now I wonder what your impressions are of that Epistle . . . . What effect have those words had upon you? I know this. I know that you have received graces above other [men and] women . . . . I know that some of you have received extraordinary graces. Now I wonder, are those graces becoming void, inoperative, no use?

“I do not wish to be your judge in this matter. I pass no judgment at all for I wish to be your advocate before God. Therefore, if you are chastened, if you are corrected, if you are admonished, it is that I may be your advocate later on and not your judge. . . . I know of these graces . . . that you have . . . . You must ask yourselves whether you are making these graces void or not.” (*Missionary Cenacle Meditations*, p. 247)

*From the Word of God:*

“**3** The tradition I handed on to you in the first place, a tradition which I had myself received, was that Christ died for our sins, in accordance with the scriptures;**4** and that he was buried; and that on the third day, he was raised to life, in accordance with the scriptures;**5** and that he appeared to Cephas; and later to the Twelve;**6** and next he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still with us, though some have fallen asleep;**7** then he appeared to James, and then to all the apostles.**8** Last of all he appeared to me too, as though I was a child born abnormally.**9** For I am the least of the apostles and am not really fit to be called an apostle, because I had been persecuting the Church of God;**10** but what I am now, I am through the grace of God, and the grace which was given to me has not been wasted. Indeed, I have worked harder than all the others—not I, but the grace of God which is with me.**11** Anyway, whether it was they or I, this is what we preach and what you believed.” (*1 Corinthians 15:3-11*)

*“The grace which has been given to me has not been wasted.” Can you say that about yourself? What are the graces that are given to you in your daily life? Try to name several “daily” graces that are yours: opportunities that present themselves to you. How do you deal with these graces? Are they “wasted” or are they put to good use for the glory of God and the service of others? Be as specific and personal with these questions as you can be.*

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

## ***Tuesday: “The daily battle”***

*From Father Judge:*

“How much have you heard about the work of personal sanctification and what does it all mean to you? How happy you should be when you have been told that the Will of God for you is the highest expressed Will of God. God has made manifest His Will to His creatures . . . but that is a varied Will. He does not exact as much from some as from others. But the Will of God for you, my dear children, exacts the highest tribute that a creature can pay its God.

“How little do we thank the good God for His graces! How little do we appreciate them. Sometimes we do feel that battle going on, that struggle within us between our higher and our lower nature, hours of good and hours of evil -- the struggle between the spirit and the flesh. Sometimes these graces exasperate us. We haven't the conscience, the bravery to explain these graces. And sometimes we feel there is no grace at all within us. Then there comes the restrained grinding of conscience. Then comes the beating back of the higher powers. There are moments when pride rises in magnificent revolt, when our outraged feelings become dominant. . . . We are in temptation and are being proved at that moment. These moments show us the necessity of watching and praying always. These moments prove to us the existence of grace within us. If we did not have that grace, it would not be difficult to do the wrong thing. If we had gotten used to doing the wrong thing, conscience would have been dead. . . .”  
(*Missionary Cenacle Meditations*, p. 247)

*From the Word of God:*

“<sup>32</sup>They came to a plot of land called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, ‘Stay here while I pray.’<sup>33</sup>Then he took Peter and James and John with him.<sup>34</sup>And he began to feel terror and anguish. And he said to them, ‘My soul is sorrowful to the point of death. Wait here, and stay awake.’<sup>35</sup>And going on a little further he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, this hour might pass him by.<sup>36</sup>‘Abba, Father!’ he said, ‘For you everything is possible. Take this cup away from me. But let it be as you, not I, would have it.’<sup>37</sup>He came back and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter, ‘Simon, are you asleep? Had you not the strength to stay awake one hour?’<sup>38</sup>Stay awake and pray not to be put to the test. The spirit is willing enough, but human nature is weak.’<sup>39</sup>Again he went away and prayed, saying the same words.<sup>40</sup>And once more he came back and found them sleeping, their eyes were so heavy; and they could find no answer for him.<sup>41</sup>He came back a third time and said to them, ‘You can sleep on now and have your rest. It is all over. The hour has come. Now the Son of man is to be betrayed into the hands of sinners.’<sup>42</sup>Get up! Let us go! My betrayer is not far away.’ (Mark 14:32-42)

***What are the most difficult battles in the providence of your daily life? The battles with self, with others, with the spirit of evil, with injustices? What is the nature of these battles: who are the participants and how do they usually turn out? As you go about waging these battles, whose power are you most relying on? What are your principal weapons in these battles? When have you been conscious of grace working in you to do battle for you? How do you respond to those graces: with gratitude or indifference?***

**Write down your reflections briefly here:**

## Wednesday: Daily listening

*From Father Judge:*

“By the grace of God, I am what I am: and his grace in me hath not been void’ (*1 Corinthians 15:10*). You read that Epistle . . . . That Epistle must have appealed to you with a very personal meaning. When you see that word ‘Epistle,’ just open your heart a little bit more because there may be a personal message to you. Of course, St. Paul spoke of himself and of the other Apostles, but there is an implied meaning which you may appropriate, because the great grace they had so perfectly, and what concerns them, in some manner concerns you also . . . .

“He tells us . . . that by the grace of God he was what he was. By the grace of God; and then he says, ‘that grace in me hath not been void.’ He did not lose it. He cooperated with that grace. Now it seems to me, my dear children, this is the message for us today . . . . Let us assume that Epistle is just for me, just for you.

“When you listen, that is the voice of the Holy Spirit, the voice of Jesus speaking. It is for me, first of all. Of all creatures in the world, I am the one; I am the one that Heaven has spoke to this morning.” (*Missionary Cenacle Meditations*, p. 245)

*From the Word of God:*

“<sup>4</sup>Lord Yahweh has given me a disciple’s tongue, for me to know how to give a word of comfort to the weary. Morning by morning he makes my ear alert to listen like a disciple.<sup>5</sup>Lord Yahweh has opened my ear and I have not resisted, I have not turned away.<sup>6</sup>I have offered my back to those who struck me, my cheeks to those who plucked my beard; I have not turned my face away from insult and spitting.<sup>7</sup>Lord Yahweh comes to my help, this is why insult has not touched me, this is why I have set my face like flint and know that I shall not be put to shame.<sup>8</sup>He who grants me saving justice is near! Who will bring a case against me? Let us appear in court together! Who has a case against me? Let him approach me!<sup>9</sup>Look, Lord Yahweh is coming to my help! Who dares condemn me? Look at them, all falling apart like moth-eaten clothes!<sup>10</sup>Which of you fears Yahweh and listens to his servant’s voice? Which of you walks in darkness and sees no light? Let him trust in the name of Yahweh and lean on his God!<sup>11</sup>Look, all you who light a fire and arm yourselves with firebrands, walk by the light of your fire and the firebrands you have kindled! This is what you will get from me: you will lie down in torment!” (*Isaiah 50:4-11*)

*To really “hear the Word of the Lord” as we go about our daily lives, we need to learn to listen. This “listening” is the first quality of a disciple and an apostle. How do you listen? Are you, in general, a good listener? How are you at “listening” in prayer? Do you take at least 20 minutes each day to be with God, to open your heart to God and listen to God’s Word penetrate your mind and heart? If so, as the Holy Spirit to show you how you can better listen. If not, set a specific time each day -- preferably earlier in the day -- when you can “listen” to God in prayer. It’s the only way you will recognize God as God comes to you in the circumstances and events of your daily life.*

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

## ***Thursday: “Half-hearted”***

*From Father Judge:*

“As that voice penetrates my ears, into my conscience, the thought comes to me: What about the grace that I have received? Can I say with St. Paul that this grace has not been void? I am, by the grace of God, what I am, but ‘the grace of God has not been void.’ Can I say that? I hesitate to say that; I dare not say it. With confusion and shame I must admit I cannot say it, ‘It has not been void.’ I wish I could say that. I think there is plenty of room for regret that there has not been a complete and perfect cooperation with that grace. Thank God that there is an abundance of remorse, an abundance of good will to make the grace full.’

“I am giving you my own personal impressions. I recognize that God has given me, in some ways, graces above others and this is my own personal accounting; that if He did give me such graces, they were not for my own self-aggrandizement, but for the greater good of souls. If I have only been half-hearted with those graces, there is a lack of response. The Church will receive less, souls will receive less, God will receive less. Now I thank the Holy Spirit that I am a little bothered about this thing. I am disturbed about it . . .

“It would be a dreadful thing if I went to bed tonight and had not made that word personal. . . . I certainly do thank God for the graces He gave me, and I thank the Holy Spirit that I am not going to bed tonight indifferent. I thank God that that Epistle has made me penitent and that there is a determination to make more use of this grace.”  
*(Missionary Cenacle Meditations, p 245)*

*From the Word of God:*

“<sup>14</sup>Write to the angel of the church in Laodicea and say, “Here is the message of the Amen, the trustworthy, the true witness, the Principle of God’s creation:<sup>15</sup>I know about your activities: how you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were one or the other,<sup>16</sup>but since you are neither hot nor cold, but only lukewarm, I will spit you out of my mouth.<sup>17</sup>You say to yourself: I am rich, I have made a fortune and have everything I want, never realizing that you are wretchedly and pitifully poor, and blind and naked too.<sup>18</sup>I warn you, buy from me the gold that has been tested in the fire to make you truly rich, and white robes to clothe you and hide your shameful nakedness, and ointment to put on your eyes to enable you to see.<sup>19</sup>I reprove and train those whom I love: so repent in real earnest.<sup>20</sup>Look, I am standing at the door, knocking. If one of you hears me calling and opens the door, I will come in to share a meal at that person’s side.<sup>21</sup>Anyone who proves victorious I will allow to share my throne, just as I have myself overcome and have taken my seat with my Father on his throne.<sup>22</sup>Let anyone who can hear, listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches.” *(Revelation 3:14-22)*

*As we go about our missionary work in the providence of our daily lives, we can become easily indifferent or somewhat lazy. We can go through the motions, but our deepest heart just isn’t in it anymore. This is a moment of grace: to call upon the Lord and have God take from us this “ho-hum” attitude toward God’s grace and blessing active in our lives. How would you describe your own attitudes toward Jesus and His mission? Blase? Zealous? Half-hearted? Whole-hearted? Imagine Jesus speaking to you this evening as He spoke to the Church at Laodicea. What would He say?*

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

## ***Friday: A Virgin maid of Israel***

*From Father Judge:*

“The promise [of a Redeemer] became the treasured, precious hope of God’s people, solacing them in their sorrows, a guiding star in their wanderings . . . Among others who prayed was a virgin maid of Israel named Mary. That her Redeemer might come had been the intense prayer of her life, and of all the earth’s . . . prayerfully uplifted hearts. Of all prayers that reached the throne of God, none was so noticed . . . none preferred more and so speedily heard as Mary’s.

“It was her prayer in a particular way that moved God to realize His promise of a Redeemer. To her . . . one of the greatest spirits of the heavenly host was sent with a message, with the word that had been the coveted wish of every Jewish maiden . . . She, of all the daughters of Israel, was the favored one . . .

“Her part was to be essential . . . Hesitation followed the angel’s greeting . . . Without placing herself against the will of God, but for enlightenment, she asked, ‘How shall this be done, because I know not man?’ (*Luke 1:34*). The Archangel’s response, ‘No word shall be impossible with God’ (*Luke 1:34*) made known to her that by God’s power and His Holy Will, she would have the privilege of maternity with the glory of virginity. Adoringly and thankfully, then, bowing her head she answered, ‘Be it done to me according to they word’ (*Luke 1:38*). ‘And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us’ (*John 1:14*).” (*Missionary Cenacle Meditations*, p. 219)

*From the Word of God:*

“<sup>10</sup>Yahweh spoke to Ahaz again and said:<sup>11</sup>Ask Yahweh your God for a sign, either in the depths of Sheol or in the heights above.<sup>12</sup>But Ahaz said, ‘I will not ask. I will not put Yahweh to the test.’<sup>13</sup>He then said: Listen now, House of David: are you not satisfied with trying human patience that you should try my God’s patience too?<sup>14</sup>The Lord will give you a sign in any case: It is this: the young woman is with child and will give birth to a son whom she will call Immanuel.” (*Isaiah 7:10-12*)

***As Mary went about the daily tasks of her life, the archangel Gabriel suddenly came to her. Through her openness to his visitation and her “yes” to his request, God became flesh among us -- “Emmanuel”! How open are you to God’s daily visitations in your life? Do you recognize them when they come? What is your response to those visitations: yes, no, maybe or just don’t care? Pray the Hail Mary. Ask Mary to help you to be open to God’s Word as it comes to you on a daily basis in the providence of your daily life.***

**Write down your reflections briefly here:**

## **WEEK III**

### ***Weekend Reflection: “How much do you love God?”***

*[We continue reading from “Man on Fire” by Father Joachim Benson, S.T.]*

“About 1905 his zeal flared white, like magnesium, and the dazzling light of his love for God plunged him irrevocably into a series of good works that led him through a labyrinth of persecutions and triumphs, weariness of body, and the loneliness of misunderstanding . . . .

“He labored . . . with the same intensity that characterized all his works. And he used the same methods. He worked tirelessly and sleeplessly. He went from place to place giving missions and gathering more members [into his lay apostolic movement]. His correspondence increased daily. He would be in his room until one in the morning writing letters.

“[When he was giving parish missions as part of the Vincentian Mission Band team], he would be in the confessional at five o’clock in the morning. And from half past one until three o’clock in the afternoon when others would be resting, he would be out organizing his ‘associates’ [of the Missionary Cenacle Apostolate] in Manhattan or Brooklyn and hurrying to get back to the confessional for the three o’clock session. ‘He worked harder at the mission than any of us,’ writes one of his companions of the mission, ‘and besides, outside of the mission work, he did work that was far more exhausting -- and all but with four hours sleep at night. I just knew he couldn’t last -- but he did. He was dreadfully in earnest.

“With the young missionary, [Father Judge], it was always the same.

“‘Child, how much do you love God?’ he would ask a boy, a girl, or a man or woman; and upon receiving an encouraging answer he would tell them of the great good they could do and encourage them not to be fearful, that God would reward their humble courage. ‘It would be too bad,’ he said, ‘because of a slight emotion of timidity, to omit a great good, or to do ourselves a little violence for God’s honor for the small price of doing something a little unpleasant.’

“He loved his own with the love of a Father, and he selected them for their genuineness and their willingness to give themselves entirely to the service of God and his poor. The ungenerous soul was discarded. The secret of his success may be found in this: that he insisted that all of his spiritual children should sanctify themselves. ‘Let your conversation be in heaven.’

“In all of his undertakings, prayer was the power behind the movement. ‘Prayer will give you power over the demons and render you victorious in every temptation.’ ‘The prayerful spirit sees God in everything, hears His Will in the wind, and sees Him in the city streets.’ ‘The Will of God is learned in prayer. There we become courageous.’

“It was not that he simply preached prayer, he prayed himself. He was tireless in prayer. When he started to pray you could never be certain when he would stop. Just when you might begin to feel that he had finished his conversation with Heaven, he would recall some Saint to whom he had not paid respects. And when fatigue would overcome his children, he would be liable to ask you, ‘I wonder do we pray enough,’ or ‘Hold on to your rosary, we have to keep that moving because we need all kinds of things.’

“The car would not start until prayers had been said. The rosary must be recited on the way to town. What better conversation that with her who is the Queen of the Cenacle, the Mother of Light? Before he would talk with you, you would be asked to pray with him. It is told that once while riding on a train he offended another because in the very middle of a conversation he stopped his friend and asked him to pray the rosary. This might be rudeness in another, but not with Father Judge. His mind was constantly on the things of God. How could he help the sweet breeze of the Dove of Peace that forever pressed against his ears?

“Again, his [Vincentian] confreres give testimony of his devotion to prayer, and his exactitude in the observance of the rule. Hear then: ‘He was a model Religious.’ ‘He was the most intense Novice I ever was acquainted with.’ ‘He was easily the best Religious of his time.’ ‘He loved to talk religious subjects with those who were interested, but his made him a little unpopular for we felt that we had directors for such purposes.’

“He seemed to live continually in the awareness of the Presence of God. No one could carry one a conversation with him without having it lead back to God, His Church or His Saints. He never pedantically intruded religion, but his mind was so much concerned with the things of God that he could not but speak of them. There was nothing of the Puritan in his attitude. He was pious, indeed, but he could also discuss current topics as well as religious matters, being well versed in the affairs of the day. . . .

“The fever that filled the veins of the Apostles on the first Pentecost [was in him]. We see him in these years in Manhattan and Brooklyn and Connecticut and New Jersey, gathering the children, instructing them himself or turning them over to his devoted workers, whose numbers increased daily. We see him follow in the footsteps of Saint Vincent, a father to the poor. How true are the words of *The Vincentian* in recording his death, ‘The poor have lost a friend.’”

*When approaching a potential missionary, Father Judge always had two key questions: “How much do you love God?” and “How much are you willing to sacrifice for God?” Another key concern in his life was “Who are the poor? Where are they? What are their needs? What must we do to respond to those needs?” Spend some time allowing the Holy Spirit to ask you these same questions. Answer them as honestly as possible.*

**Write** down your reflections briefly here:

## WEEK III

### Monday: “Certain necessary truths”

*From Father Judge:*

“There are certain necessary truths we must believe. You have been taught these; namely, that there is one God; that there are three Divine Persons in God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; that the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity became man, suffered, shed His Blood and died to redeem us. He instituted a Church, one Church. He instituted the Sacraments.

“Notable among these is the Sacrament of His Body and Blood, the Holy Eucharist. We must believe there is another world, another existence, either of great and eternal happiness, or of great and eternal misery; in other words, there is a heaven to gain and a hell to avoid.” (*Missionary Cenacle Meditations*, p. 235)

*From the Word of God:*

“The angel of the Lord spoke to Philip saying, ‘Set out at noon and go along the road that leads from Jerusalem down to Gaza, the desert road.’<sup>27</sup> So he set off on his journey. Now an Ethiopian had been on pilgrimage to Jerusalem; he was a eunuch and an officer at the court of the kandake, or queen, of Ethiopia; he was her chief treasurer.<sup>28</sup> He was now on his way home; and as he sat in his chariot he was reading the prophet Isaiah.<sup>29</sup> The Spirit said to Philip, ‘Go up and join that chariot.’<sup>30</sup> When Philip ran up, he heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, ‘Do you understand what you are reading?’<sup>31</sup> He replied, ‘How could I, unless I have someone to guide me?’ So he urged Philip to get in and sit by his side.<sup>32</sup> Now the passage of scripture he was reading was this: Like a lamb led to the slaughter—house, like a sheep dumb in front of its shearers, he never opens his mouth.<sup>33</sup> In his humiliation fair judgement was denied him. Who will ever talk about his descendants, since his life on earth has been cut short?<sup>34</sup> The eunuch addressed Philip and said, ‘Tell me, is the prophet referring to himself or someone else?’<sup>35</sup> Starting, therefore, with this text of scripture Philip proceeded to explain the good news of Jesus to him.<sup>36</sup> Further along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, ‘Look,<sup>37</sup> here is some water; is there anything to prevent my being baptized?’<sup>38</sup> He ordered the chariot to stop, then Philip and the eunuch both went down into the water and he baptized him.” (*Acts 8:26-38*)

***How did you learn the “necessary truths” of your faith? Who taught you? Whom has God invited you to teach the “necessary truths” of faith? With whom have you shared your faith in the last six months? This is a personal sharing in the prophetic, teaching mission of Jesus.***

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

## ***Tuesday: “Your purpose in this life”***

*From Father Judge:*

“. . . you are pilgrims in this world. Your purpose in this life is to know, love and serve God, and to be happy with Him forever in the next life. These, understand, are supreme, essential truths. You know them because you have been taught Christian Doctrine, you have been fed with it, soothed with it, nursed with it. You know . . . these saving truths for you have been very much favored.

“You know likewise . . . that there are thousands and tens of thousands and hundreds of thousands of your . . . brothers and sisters who do not know these necessary and saving truths, or they know them very obscurely; and unless you help there will be no one to feed . . . them with Christian Doctrine. In other words, they will live and die without knowledge of the truth which Jesus Christ came into this world to teach, the only truth through which men can save their souls.” (*Missionary Cenacle Meditations*, p. 235)

*From the Word of God:*

“<sup>14</sup>I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own know me,<sup>15</sup>just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for my sheep.<sup>16</sup>And there are other sheep I have that are not of this fold, and I must lead these too. They too will listen to my voice, and there will be only one flock, one shepherd.<sup>17</sup>The Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again.<sup>18</sup>No one takes it from me; I lay it down of my own free will, and as I have power to lay it down, so I have power to take it up again; and this is the command I have received from my Father.” (*John 10:14-18*)

***Do you know what your “purpose in life” truly is? Is the main goal of your life to “know, love, and serve God in this life” and be with God forever in “the next life”? As you go about the tasks of your daily life, do you have clarity about this? Or are you confused? Like the Good Shepherd, can you speak convincingly to others about life’s purpose? Can you lead them along the right path? Do you? If so, in what way? If not, why?***

**Write down your reflections briefly here:**

## Wednesday: “My brother’s keeper”

*From Father Judge:*

“We hear frequently of a terrible disaster, many lives are lost. This scourge may have been an earthquake . . . a hurricane, or indeed any catastrophe. The whole world is shocked; aid is rushed from every quarter to [the] stricken. What do such misfortunes amount to in comparison to the misery and torments of the thousands upon thousands . . . who, unless helped by you, will live and die without a knowledge or love of God and be lost for all eternity? Do you realize that unless something is done at once, a generation and the children of that generation and their children will be lost to God, lost to Jesus Christ, lost to His religion, lost to heaven and will be lost, indeed, for all eternity?

“That you may realize this appalling situation, lest you be indifferent to it, we have been sent . . . to fasten this obligation on your conscience. You cannot . . . be indifferent. Unless these multitudes are helped by you, they will live without a knowledge or love of God and be lost for all eternity. You may answer: ‘What is that to me? I am trying to save my own soul. Am I my brother’s keeper?’ You certainly are and, as far as you can help your brother or sister to save their souls and refuse to do it, God will certainly hold you accountable for that soul should it be lost . . .

“Oh what story is that of the misspent hours of our lives! Those fruitless hours . . . wasted in diversion or worse. What a terrible thing it is to lead a life fruitless in good works!” (*Missionary Cenacle Meditations*, p. 235)

*From the Word of God:*

“The man had intercourse with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain. ‘I have acquired a man with the help of Yahweh,’ she said.<sup>2</sup>She gave birth to a second child, Abel, the brother of Cain. Now Abel became a shepherd and kept flocks, while Cain tilled the soil.<sup>3</sup>Time passed and Cain brought some of the produce of the soil as an offering for Yahweh,<sup>4</sup>while Abel for his part brought the first-born of his flock and some of their fat as well. Yahweh looked with favor on Abel and his offering.<sup>5</sup>But he did not look with favor on Cain and his offering, and Cain was very angry and downcast.<sup>6</sup>Yahweh asked Cain, ‘Why are you angry and downcast?’<sup>7</sup>If you are doing right, surely you ought to hold your head high! But if you are not doing right, Sin is crouching at the door hungry to get you. You can still master him.<sup>8</sup>Cain said to his brother Abel, ‘Let us go out’; and while they were in the open country, Cain set on his brother Abel and killed him.<sup>9</sup>Yahweh asked Cain, ‘Where is your brother Abel?’ ‘I do not know,’ he replied. ‘Am I my brother’s guardian?’<sup>10</sup>‘What have you done?’ Yahweh asked. ‘Listen! Your brother’s blood is crying out to me from the ground.’” (*Genesis 4:1-10*)

***Do you feel like you are called to be your “brother’s -- or sister’s -- keeper” or “guardian”? In what ways? Or is your rule to look after your own affairs, and let everyone else handle their own business? Is that attitude compatible with a genuine sharing in the priestly and prophetic role of Jesus? As we go about our daily lives, what sort of responsibility does our Baptism give us toward others?***

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

## ***Thursday: “Be renewed”***

*From Father Judge:*

“Let all begin [this week] generously by promising themselves and our dear Lord to do something [more] for Him . . . . Be renewed in those holy and generous impulses for good, be renewed in your love for souls so that the words of the Gospel may be realized in you: ‘They, going out, spread his fame abroad in all that country’ (*Matthew 9:31*) Be renewed in your apostolic courage and zeal to fight the demons of irreligion, indifference, and vice. Tear their unfortunate victims from them, bringing them to the confessional.

“To do this is a divine work, and you must become [men and] women of prayer -- after the Heart of our Divine Savior: men and women of prayer, great faith, and of frequent reception of the Sacraments. If you have fallen away [somewhat] from the great grace that the Holy Spirit has given you, humble yourself, asking pardon, and begin anew . . . .

“St. Paul exhorts, ‘Whilst we have time, let us work good to all men, but especially to those who are of the household of the faith’ (*Galatians 6:10*). Take the message of the great apostle home to yourselves, and remember: if you are faithful, souls are to be saved through you and if, because of sloth or any other unworthy reason, you do not cooperate with this grace, I am afraid that good will be left undone and that souls will be lost whom God’s Providence has given in the keeping of your charity.” (*Missionary Cenacle Meditations*, p. 197)

*From the Word of God:*

“He entered Jericho and was going through the town<sup>2</sup>and suddenly a man whose name was Zacchaeus made his appearance; he was one of the senior tax collectors and a wealthy man.<sup>3</sup>He kept trying to see which Jesus was, but he was too short and could not see him for the crowd;<sup>4</sup>so he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to catch a glimpse of Jesus who was to pass that way.<sup>5</sup>When Jesus reached the spot he looked up and spoke to him, ‘Zacchaeus, come down. Hurry, because I am to stay at your house today.’<sup>6</sup>And he hurried down and welcomed him joyfully.<sup>7</sup>They all complained when they saw what was happening. ‘He has gone to stay at a sinner’s house,’ they said.<sup>8</sup>But Zacchaeus stood his ground and said to the Lord, ‘Look, sir, I am going to give half my property to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody I will pay him back four times the amount.’<sup>9</sup>And Jesus said to him, ‘Today salvation has come to this house, because this man too is a son of Abraham;<sup>10</sup>for the Son of man has come to seek out and save what was lost.’” (*Luke 19:1-10*)

***Who are some of the people -- like Zachaeus -- that God’s Providence has brought into your life? Have you tried to ignore them because they were disreputable, “on the outs,” unattractive? Or, like Jesus, did you seek to become their friend, actually visit them at their home, sit down and eat with them? This was characteristic of Jesus’ mission and ministry: can it be any less yours?***

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

## ***Friday: The “love of Christ overwhelms us”***

*From Father Judge:*

“Think of the glorious reward awaiting you, . . . God’s benediction on everything you do. ‘Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him’ (1 Corinthians 2:9). It would take an eternity to narrate . . . what God has in store for those who do good, but there is one very definite thing that should rejoice you much. St. James says, ‘He who causeth a sinner to be converted from the error of his way, shall save his soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins’ (James 5:20).

“On the contrary, it might be a very serious misery to neglect an opportunity of doing good, for the same apostle, St. James, declares, ‘To him therefore who knoweth to do good and doth it not, to him it is sin’ (James 4:17). ‘I say then, walk in the spirit’ (Galatians 6:9). May the Holy Spirit comfort you all and give you the grace to conquer, and ever to cry out as did the Apostle, ‘The charity of Christ presseth us’ (2 Corinthians 5: 14). May it drive us on to love, to serve, to do good.”(Missionary Cenacle Meditations, p. 197)

*From the Word of God:*

“<sup>11</sup>And so it is with the fear of the Lord always in mind that we try to win people over. But God sees us for what we are, and I hope your consciences do too.<sup>12</sup>Again we are saying this not to commend ourselves to you, but simply to give you the opportunity to take pride in us, so that you may have an answer for those who take pride in appearances and not inner reality.<sup>13</sup>If we have been unreasonable, it was for God; if reasonable, for you.<sup>14</sup>For the love of Christ overwhelms us when we consider that if one man died for all, then all have died;<sup>15</sup>his purpose in dying for all humanity was that those who live should live not any more for themselves, but for him who died and was raised to life.<sup>16</sup>From now onwards, then, we will not consider anyone by human standards: even if we were once familiar with Christ according to human standards, we do not know him in that way any longer.<sup>17</sup>So for anyone who is in Christ, there is a new creation: the old order is gone and a new being is there to see.<sup>18</sup>It is all God’s work; he reconciled us to himself through Christ and he gave us the ministry of reconciliation.<sup>19</sup>I mean, God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not holding anyone’s faults against them, but entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.<sup>20</sup>So we are ambassadors for Christ; it is as though God were urging you through us, and in the name of Christ we appeal to you to be reconciled to God.” (2 Corinthians 5:11-20)

***Take a while just to look at Jesus on the Cross. Look at Him there. Consider why He is there: for you individually, personally. Your name is written on His Heart and in His Mind. Everything He did, His very reason for being one with us was to bring us home to the heart of the Father. No cost was too great, even that of His life. Ask yourself: what am I willing to give Him in return? What gift does He ask of me? Does the “love of Christ overwhelm” you?***

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

## WEEK IV

### *Weekend Reflection:*

# **“Your vocation -- to do Jesus Christ a personal service”**

*[We continue to look at the foundations of the Missionary Cenacle in its earliest days, prior to the founding the two religious communities of the Cenacle. In its roots, the Missionary Cenacle was a lay missionary movement that would eventually come to be supported and encouraged by sisters, brothers, and priests of the Cenacle. In 1909 Father Judge was removed from the work on the mission band based in Germantown, Philadelphia and assigned to do parish work at St. John's parish in Brooklyn. Father Joachim picks up the story here.]*

“It is easy to understand that his heart was sorely tried by this change, but he took it heroically. Complaints were made that he was using the missions simply to gain recruits for his associations [of lay missionaries. Some of his fellow Vincentians] could not fathom the reason for it all. But who can understand a man of God? Who could understand that the Holy Spirit was pushing him on, guiding him? Who could understand the desolation of his heart when he saw the thousands and thousands that were being lost to the Faith?

“Christ Himself was terribly misunderstood even by those whom He had trained. Nor could he please everyone. And so Father Judge let the sweet Providence of God guide him. The movement spread as he moved about. It sprang up wherever he gave a mission. He could not help himself. He believed sincerely that God wished him to do this work. He had no assurance of what it would lead to or where it would end. When complaints reached him he paid no attention to them. ‘Let no man interfere with a vocation,’ he said, ‘or with God’s work. . . .’

“About 1910 he was changed again to St. Vincent’s Mission in Springfield, Massachusetts. The work followed him and grew. Since he could not be with the various groups in as many cities, he kept constantly in touch with them by means of letters, and by message through other associates.

“‘This is your vocation,’ he said, ‘to do Jesus Christ a personal service. It is your vocation to go amidst horrible conditions, abandoned conditions, impossible conditions, to do something for the image of the Blessed Trinity, threatening perils for the sake of a soul. There was the crucifying; it opened those wounds so large. They left nothing undone. Not a drop was left in the Body.’

“The good works performed by these devoted followers increased and multiplied. Hundreds of children were gathered in city streets and country lanes, wherever a place was

accessible, and taught the truths of their religion; children, who for many reasons, might never otherwise have learned there was a God; babies and grown children, too, were brought to the baptismal font; hardened sinners to the confessional and parents to the Church where their marriages were validated and their homes preserved.

“How pleased he was when he heard of their progress and labors. He drove them on by the very force of his own goodness. They must not lag behind, or slow up. Theirs is a mission that admits no tepidity.

“‘I intended to get all I could out of you for Christ and His Church,’ he tells them on retreat. ‘I came with that deliberate purpose -- to develop your life so that the Church could get much out of you. The battles of the Church are fought outside -- in the house, and in the workshop. All good movements have a care for the Christian laity strengthened by the priests. The Saints have done work for the Church; you are the successors of these. Your lives are to be so high, so pure, so unpolluted, so virtuous that they will be an invincible argument for the Church of Christ.’

“Again, we ask, who could understand this? He could not understand himself. ‘God’s Will be done. . . .’ And just when it seemed that the work had become firmly rooted, a ‘catastrophe’ happened that seemed to his zealous workers the end of their hopes and plans. Father Judge was transferred from Springfield, Massachusetts to Opelika, Alabama . . . . [The lay associates] began a novena at that time that the change would not materialize. Father Judge stopped it. ‘*If it is of God,*’ he said once more, ‘*the work will go on. If it is not, let it perish immediately . . . .*’

“He left for Alabama with this one thought only in his mind, ‘God’s Will be done.’ But you could not stop Father Judge. Timidity was never one of his failings. Rather, resourcefulness was one of his shining qualities. He was in a flash that here was a marvelous field for the Lay Apostolate. Here again he met children, thousands of children without any knowledge of God or of His Mother. He called upon his volunteers in the North to help him. And who will tell the story of those first few workers who gave up everything that this life could offer to go South . . . .”

*As you reflect on the life of Father Judge, what are the three things or characteristics that most strike you? What were the qualities of his life or his most compelling ideas or visions that capture your attention? Write them down. Why do they strike you? What is it that you find appealing, challenging, or not attractive? Speak to the Holy Spirit about whatever comes to your mind and heart.*

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

## WEEK IV

### Monday: “His providential care”

*From Father Judge:*

“One of the most consoling and illuminating doctrines of our Holy Religion is the truth of God’s providence overshadowing us. It is at once a compensation and an indisputable pledge of our faith . . . We are neither the puny victims of some fatalistic power nor the cast-off subjects of an indifferent and loveless Lord. We are the creatures of an infinitely good and wise and powerful Being. He is our Father in heaven, and His Will is that in all our needs we will have recourse to Him. His providential care is ever at our service. He makes but one condition: that in all things we ‘seek . . . first the kingdom of god and His justice’ (*Matthew 6:33*).

“To doubt God’s promise of providential care, to give in to empty and groundless fears of future evils is sinful and offensive to His fatherly love. ‘The just cried, and the Lord heard them and delivered them out of all their troubles’ (*Matthew 6:33*).” (*Missionary Cenacle Meditations*, p. 128)

*From the Word of God:*

<sup>25</sup>“That is why I am telling you not to worry about your life and what you are to eat, nor about your body and what you are to wear. Surely life is more than food, and the body more than clothing!<sup>26</sup> Look at the birds in the sky. They do not sow or reap or gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they are?<sup>27</sup> Can any of you, however much you worry, add one single cubit to your span of life?<sup>28</sup> And why worry about clothing? Think of the flowers growing in the fields; they never have to work or spin,<sup>29</sup> yet I assure you that not even Solomon in all his royal robes was clothed like one of these.<sup>30</sup> Now if that is how God clothes the wild flowers growing in the field which are there today and thrown into the furnace tomorrow, will he not much more look after you, you who have so little faith?<sup>31</sup> So do not worry; do not say, “What are we to eat? What are we to drink? What are we to wear?”<sup>32</sup> It is the gentiles who set their hearts on all these things. Your heavenly Father knows you need them all.<sup>33</sup> Set your hearts on his kingdom first, and on God’s saving justice, and all these other things will be given you as well.<sup>34</sup> So do not worry about tomorrow: tomorrow will take care of itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.” (*Matthew 6:25-34*)

***What are the things that make you feel anxious, nervous, or afraid? Do you find yourself getting easily upset? If so, why? If you find yourself generally feeling at peace, what is the cause of that peace? When problems present themselves, how do you deal with them? How much does God consciously play a part in your attempting to resolve the difficult situations of your life? Do you ultimately see God as someone who is trustworthy and dependable . . . or not to be fully trusted? Why?***

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

## ***Tuesday: “Sorrow”***

*From Father Judge:*

“God does not ask of us to desire suffering or evils, but when they come, He commands submission to His Will which permits afflictions. It is even His Will that we do all that we can do to avoid them, but to practice submission if He sees fit to allow them to happen. The riches of our Faith, then, are found in this: that sufferings and sorrows which God sends us are for our good and salvation. This is why the doctrine of Divine Providence is one of the most consoling truths of Revelation, for it tells us that, excepting sin, nothing will ever happen outside of God’s Holy Will.

“In the course of events, the sad and calamitous word [sorrow] must reach us. If it be personal, then there must be the quick, generous act of resignation, with the heart prayer: ‘Thy Will be done!’ If the sorrow be of others, there must be a prayer for those in distress or suffering, for we know that God permits these harassing events for some good reason known to Himself . . . that He makes use of untoward things to discipline man’s will, to make him wise, and to detach his spirit from those things which endanger his eternal destiny. . . .” (*Missionary Cenacle Meditations*, p. 128)

*From the Word of God:*

“<sup>5</sup>Have you forgotten that encouraging text in which you are addressed as sons? My son, do not scorn correction from the Lord, do not resent his training,<sup>6</sup> for the Lord trains those he loves, and chastises every son he accepts. <sup>7</sup>Perseverance is part of your training; God is treating you as his sons. Has there ever been any son whose father did not train him?<sup>8</sup>If you were not getting this training, as all of you are, then you would be not sons but bastards.<sup>9</sup>Besides, we have all had our human fathers who punished us, and we respected them for it; all the more readily ought we to submit to the Father of spirits, and so earn life.<sup>10</sup>Our human fathers were training us for a short life and according to their own lights; but he does it all for our own good, so that we may share his own holiness.<sup>11</sup>Of course, any discipline is at the time a matter for grief, not joy; but later, in those who have undergone it, it bears fruit in peace and uprightness.<sup>12</sup>So steady all weary hands and trembling knees <sup>13</sup>and make your crooked paths straight; then the injured limb will not be maimed, it will get better instead.” (*Hebrews 12:5-13*)

***There is no simple explanation for suffering and evil. The one thing of which we are sure as missionaries is that sorrow and evil will come into our lives and into the lives of those we are called to serve. How do we respond? What do we think, say, do? There is no one “right” answer. The Letter to the Hebrews suggests one possible reason today. The main ingredient in our response must be trust and confidence that, despite all signs to the contrary, God has not abandoned us. Take this occasion to reaffirm your absolute trust in God’s never-failing, provident care no matter what circumstance or event might come into our lives.***

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

## Wednesday: “A great joy . . . trials”

*From Father Judge:*

“It is a wholesome practice to show God that while we may not know the particular lesson He has in mind, nevertheless we are disposed to know what lesson and with His holy grace we wish to put that lesson into practice.

“We wish, in other words, to be right with God, that it may please Him to accept our protestations of resignation to His holy will and fidelity to His divine ordinances, so that it may please Divine Providence. May it not be found necessary to visit us with those sorrows that are apportioned to the obdurate in order that they may correct their ways. Do not the Holy Scriptures tell us that many tribulations we enter the kingdom of God? Does not the Holy Spirit Himself reveal why these evils are sent? ‘Fill their faces with shame; and they shall seek thy name, O Lord’ (*Psalms 82:17*)”

*From the Word of God:*

“<sup>2</sup>My brothers, consider it a great joy when trials of many kinds come upon you,<sup>3</sup>for you well know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance, and<sup>4</sup>perseverance must complete its work so that you will become fully developed, complete, not deficient in any way. . . . <sup>12</sup>Blessed is anyone who perseveres when trials come. Such a person is of proven worth and will win the prize of life, the crown that the Lord has promised to those who love him.<sup>13</sup>Never, when you are being put to the test, say, ‘God is tempting me’; God cannot be tempted by evil, and he does not put anybody to the test .<sup>14</sup>Everyone is put to the test by being attracted and seduced by that person’s own wrong desire.<sup>15</sup>Then the desire conceives and gives birth to sin, and when sin reaches full growth, it gives birth to death.” (*James 1:2, 12-15*)

*One of the sure realities of the apostolic life is that you will deal with people who are suffering and hurting. Never try to “explain” to another person the reason for their suffering or sorrow. This puts you in the position of those who tried to give Job the reason for all his losses -- and they were all wrong! Rather be present to the person in his or her need. Help them to understand and experience through your love that God has not abandoned them; they are not alone! Think of someone in particular who is passing through a difficult trial right now. How have you dealt with that person? How might you deal with that person as a missionary and apostle in a more effective way? Ask the Holy Spirit to give you God’s divine help and guidance on this.*

**Write** down your reflections briefly here:

## ***Thursday: “He is in the boat”***

*From Father Judge:*

“Remember, the Lord is with us, He is in the boat. There may be a financial tempest about, any kind of a tempest, but always remember that Jesus is with us. Have the confidence and courage, then, that first of all will save us from the reproach, ‘O ye of little faith’ (*Matthew 8:26*), secondly, that will bring upon us His joy and blessing and praise -- ‘I have not found so great faith, not even in Israel’ (*Luke 7:9*).

“There is one advantage of necessity, there is one joy to be found in biting need. There is a consolation even when the darkest clouds overshadow. It is this: we have an opportunity of registering a supreme act of trust and confidence in a Being supremely and infinitely good and loving. It is not so much that we do a thing or get a thing or have a thing or have any prayer answered but that we show an invincible faith and courage in Jesus Christ.

“Supposing we can get a faith and trust like that! What a soothing to one’s conscience to be able to say I have not failed in faith or trust in God. Again, supposing we can develop such a faith and confidence throughout the Missionary Cenacle world -- think what shock-troops the Missionary Cenacle would furnish to the Church! It seems to me that, living in these troublesome times, when there is so much fear in the hearts of churchmen, statesmen and men of affairs, when any forecast of the future shows it will be a time that shall demand picked men [and women] -- if the logic of present events is trouble and distress to state and church, to our holy religion and to our country, then God has in training at present men and women of faith and courage.” (*Missionary Cenacle Meditations*, p. 65)

*From the Word of God:*

“<sup>35</sup>With the coming of evening that same day, he said to them, ‘Let us cross over to the other side.’<sup>36</sup>And leaving the crowd behind they took him, just as he was, in the boat; and there were other boats with him.<sup>37</sup>Then it began to blow a great gale and the waves were breaking into the boat so that it was almost swamped.<sup>38</sup>But he was in the stern, his head on the cushion, asleep.<sup>39</sup>They woke him and said to him, ‘Master, do you not care? We are lost!’ And he woke up and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, ‘Quiet now! Be calm!’ And the wind dropped, and there followed a great calm.<sup>40</sup>Then he said to them, ‘Why are you so frightened? Have you still no faith?’<sup>41</sup>They were overcome with awe and said to one another, ‘Who can this be? Even the wind and the sea obey him.’” (*Mark 4:35-41*)

***Think of an instance when your faith carried you through a difficult circumstance. Think of another incident where you were weak and doubting in faith. How were the two experiences different? Why would people of immense faith and trust in God’s Providence be like “shock troops” for the Church? Ask the Holy Spirit to give you an “invincible faith and courage in Jesus Christ.”***

**Write down your reflections briefly here:**

## ***Friday: “Founded . . . in faith and trust”***

*From Father Judge:*

“If . . . a current jamming and pressure of events furnish us opportunity to qualify for such high graces we should feel a present joy in what to many men [and women] might mean fear, anxiety, and even despondency. Should your present work furnish you those difficulties that would develop in you such faith and confidence, you are a picked man and should be ready to speak at any time your Te Deum.

“If this discovers you to be present under stress and in difficulty, and if the above principles be true, let me extend to you my felicitations. Your need discovers to me indeed a fortunate and God-blessed man [or woman]. Occasionally say this to any tremors occasioned by worldly wisdom, ‘Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth’ (*Psalms 123:8*).

“May you be founded more and more in the faith and trust in a God Whose loving providence takes note of the burnt blade of grass in the field and the passing of the animal in the bush and the fluttering of the smallest resident of the land.” (*Missionary Cenacle Meditations*, p. 65)

*From the Word of God:*

“<sup>22</sup>Then he said to his disciples, ‘That is why I am telling you not to worry about your life and what you are to eat, nor about your body and how you are to clothe it.’<sup>23</sup>For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing.<sup>24</sup>Think of the ravens. They do not sow or reap; they have no storehouses and no barns; yet God feeds them. And how much more you are worth than the birds!<sup>25</sup>Can any of you, however much you worry, add a single cubit to your span of life?<sup>26</sup>If a very small thing is beyond your powers, why worry about the rest?<sup>27</sup>Think how the flowers grow; they never have to spin or weave; yet, I assure you, not even Solomon in all his royal robes was clothed like one of them.<sup>28</sup>Now if that is how God clothes a flower which is growing wild today and is thrown into the furnace tomorrow, how much more will he look after you, who have so little faith!<sup>29</sup>But you must not set your hearts on things to eat and things to drink; nor must you worry.<sup>30</sup>It is the gentiles of this world who set their hearts on all these things. Your Father well knows you need them.<sup>31</sup>No; set your hearts on his kingdom, and these other things will be given you as well.<sup>32</sup>‘There is no need to be afraid, little flock, for it has pleased your Father to give you the kingdom.’ (*Luke 12:22-32*)

***Just sit and relax for a few minutes. Notice what is around you: your own breathing, the noises, the smells, the feel of the air against your skin. Be aware of any people who may be near you, the sound of their voices, their appearance. Look at any animals or birds in the vicinity. God loves and cares for each of them . . . and for you! Be aware and give thanks. The same provident God that has brought you to this day will care for your every need tomorrow and that of all creation. Be at peace . . . and know that God is truly God!***

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