

## *Lesson #3*

# *The Missionary Cenacle Family*

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

*To become familiar with the Missionary Cenacle Family and grow in our relationship with each other.*

**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 saw the development of a “Family Spirit” as essential to the life of the Missionary Cenacle. He insisted that

“We must be loyal to one another. We must have a family spirit. . . . We must support one another, we must be patient with one another; we want others to be patient with us. We must cherish one another; we must cherish one another in Christ.” (*Archives, MF/8639*)

### **To encourage and promote the Family Spirit . . .**

- Whenever possible, we choose to celebrate the major feasts of the Cenacle in community: **Christmas, the Annunciation** (March 25), **Easter, Pentecost, Trinity Sunday**, and the feast of **Christ the King**. We make special commemoration of **Father Judge’s** (November 23) and **Mother Boniface’s** (November 22) **anniversaries of death**. When not possible to celebrate these feasts on the day itself with the Cenacle members, we try to have some communal celebration in commemoration near the time of the feast.
- It is our custom to **pray daily for peace, unity, and charity among us**. We also **pray for the special needs of our families and loved ones**.
- We have a strong tradition of supporting one another by **going to wakes and funerals of Cenacle Family members and their families**. When not possible to attend because of distance or schedule, we try to demonstrate our support **through letters of condolence or a phone call**.
- We show concern for the Cenacle members by **visiting them when they are sick or writing a note or card** to express our concern and prayer for them.
- Whenever possible, we **actively support and, whenever possible, participate in the events and activities sponsored by the Missionary Cenacle Family**.

All these customs together with a general loving concern for the brothers and sisters of the Missionary Cenacle Family helps that precious gift to grow among us of a Family Spirit.

# *Introduction*

What Father Judge, together with Mother Boniface and Doctor Margaret Healy, founded was a **missionary family** in the Church. He did not start out with some strategic apostolic “master plan.” Rather he followed the promptings of the Holy Spirit as these became evident through the events and circumstances of his life and ministry. His most fundamental insight was a simple one: **every baptized person is called and empowered by God to live out their faith fully, passionately.** Only when all the baptized understand and fully seize this apostolic mission and gift that is theirs will the mission of Jesus in this world be accomplished.

This awesome task of sharing in the redeeming work of Jesus could never be accomplished alone. Father Judge’s instinct always was the **family, the community.** His intention was never to have a series of “lone ranger” missionaries, each creating her or his own “little kingdom.” Rather from the beginning what is clear was his recognition that **everyone has a place at the table,** no one can or should be excluded from this missionary work. He worked among and with the poor and alienated. His vision was not elitist but **populist.** Some missionary movements target the “leaders” in a society -- those with influence, power, education. Father Judge never hesitated to work with these people when the opportunity presented itself. However, for him the immigrant Italian shoe repairman, the cotton field worker, and the mother of eight at home were equally as influential and important in God’s missionary plan. All needed to be reminded of their call and their own particular gifts is so that they could seize the missionary opportunities that came their way each day.

To remind us of our mission, to support us in our journey, to invite others to share in this divine mandate -- this is the work of the **Missionary Cenacle Family.** We are never alone in responding to God’s call. From the first gathering of Cenacle Lay Missionaries on the evening of April 11, 1909 in the St. John Gabriel Perboyre Chapel to this day, our call is to form part of a **missionary family, a missionary community.** As in the previous lessons, during our **Daily Prayer Sessions** this month (Monday to Friday) we will look at a small section from Father Judge’s writings and a Scripture that centers on our theme of **family, community, mission, and gift.** Our **Weekend Reading** will be a little more extensive. Excerpts from a talk given by Father Gary Banks, S.T., and from John Paul II’s *Familiaris Consortio (The Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World)* help give us a broader biblical and theological understanding of “family” for our prayer and reflection.

Peace! And may the **experience** of the Missionary Cenacle Family be ever more fully ours in the months and years ahead. It is the gift of community. It is the gift of family. It is a concrete realization of the gift of God -- Father, Son, and Holy Spirit -- who is **God-Family, God-Community.**

# *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: Cenacle Family - God's Idea

*[Excerpts from "The Cenacle Method" by Dr. Harold Grant in The Apostolic Life, pp. 73-92]*

“Father Thomas A. Judge founded the Missionary Cenacle Apostolate as a means for lay persons to respond to their call from God to be apostles of Jesus. He founded two religious communities to guide and support this lay movement.

“On August 14, 1933, Father Judge spoke with a few members of the Misisionary Cenacle Family before entering the hospital where he died on November 23, 1933. Sister Marie of the Precious Blood, M.S.B.T., recorded Father's statement, and it is contained in the monograph, *The Early Days and Final Days*:

*I know we are sitting around the table having coffee, feeling Father was settled for a while, when he unexpectedly walked in and sat down at the table with us. He was in a reminiscent mood, and he went back over the beginnings. He spoke of himself and his distress at seeing many souls drifting away from the Church. Priests and Religious seemed helpless. Going back to the time of Our Lord, he noted what lay people did to spread the faith, drawing from this consideration the conclusion that lay people should be able to do the same thing now for the preservation of the faith. He then spoke of his approach to lay people, his plea with them to use their leisure time working for souls. After a while he saw the movement growing, he said, and then he began to fear. There was evidence that it might really be a movement and yet he felt, as he said, 'so unwise, so foolish, so sinful' that it did not seem possible God could be selecting him for it. On the other hand, he did not want to fail God, and he was willing to go ahead with it at any cost to himself. He said if it was the work of God, he wanted to do it; if it was his own work, he wanted it to stop at once. He explained more than once in that resume he was giving of his aims, efforts and work, that he had repeatedly taken his ideas and thoughts and sifted them down, compared them with the first principles as set down in Scripture and in the writings of the Doctors of the Church; that he had never gone ahead with any step until he had plumbed it to the depths and assured himself that it was not counter to any principles of the Church or its Founder.*

“Father Judge saw the founding of the Missionary Cenacle Apostolate [and the Missionary Cenacle Family] as the will of God. With careful discernment, Father structured every *detail* of the M.C.A. to insure that its method would be in accord with God's will.

“We can view the M.C.A. and its mission and method as a gift to each of us and all of us called to live out our baptismal commitments to be followers of Jesus as Cenacle Lay Missionaries. Rather than accept this gift blindly and live the life of a Cenacle Lay Missionary in a rote manner, we seek to understand the gift given to us and respond in understanding and freedom. We seek to exercise the same diligence and discernment in living our apostolic lives within the context of this movement as Father Judge did in founding it.

## *Our Mission*

“Our mission is to give honor and glory to the Triune God by encouraging every Catholic to live an apostolic life for the preservation of the faith especially among the abandoned, those who, for whatever reason, are not experiencing the love of God.

“Faith in God is knowledge of God. We can know God insofar as He reveals Himself to us. The Father has revealed Himself through His Son, who is the image of the invisible God. God continues to reveal Himself through the Church, which is the Body of Christ on earth and the teacher of the entire body of revelation including the Scriptures, the very Word of God. Jesus taught that the Father desires a personal relationship with each of us, and in this intimacy we gain knowledge of a loving Father. Jesus expressed His desire to develop a personal friendship with each of us rather than a master-servant relationship.

“Thus, faith is a gift, insofar as we accept this gift and use this gift to develop a personal relationship, we grow in faith, we grow in our knowledge of God. Insofar as we bury this talent or ignore this knowledge, our faith is not operative in our lives. Insofar as we are intimately involved in the Church, the Body of Christ, our faith is strengthened. Alienated from the Body of Christ, the faithful, our faith becomes dormant.”

*Father Judge became convinced that God was calling him to help to create a new “family” in the Church - a “missionary family.” As present or future members of the Missionary Cenacle Family, it’s important for us to reflect a little on your own experience of “family.” When you hear the word “family,” what feelings does it create in you? Try to specifically name three of those feelings. Do you know why you feel this way? What were two or three experiences in your family that caused you to think or feel about your family the way you do?*

*How important has “family” been in the development of your own discipleship, your walk with Jesus? Has your own natural family encouraged or impeded your growth and response to Jesus? Your missionary activity? In what ways? Try to name three or four examples.*

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

# WEEK I

## Monday: “Hope and treasure of the Church”

*From Father Judge:*

*[Father Judge’s founding insight was that everyone has a role in the mission of Jesus.” Many of the references from Father Judge in the following selections are cited in an excellent work on the early history of the Cenacle, Awake the Giant, by Father James P. O’Bryan, S.T. ]*

“To my mind, the great hope and treasure of the Church in the United States, at least, is the laity. We have here an undeveloped treasure for good and if enlightened and encouraged they will do much to bring a remedy for all the ills that afflict the Church in the United States. . . .”

“Giving missions over a period of fifteen years, it was found that many of the most striking cases were brought to the exercises by some good willed man or woman. These instances occurred so frequently and universally that the thought suggested itself to encourage [lay men and women] to give themselves to parochial mission work in their neighborhoods.” (Cited in *Awake the Giant*, p. 291f.)

*From the Word of God:*

“The next day the rulers, elders and scribes had a meeting in Jerusalem with Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, Jonathan, Alexander and all the members of the high-priestly families. They made the prisoners stand in the middle and began to interrogate them, ‘By what power, and by whose name have you men done this?’ Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, addressed them, ‘Rulers of the people, and elders! If you are questioning us today about an act of kindness to a cripple, and asking us how he was healed, then I am glad to tell you all, and would indeed be glad to tell the whole people of Israel, that it was by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, the one you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by this name and by no others that this man is able to stand up perfectly healthy, here in your presence, today. . . . For of all the names in the world given to men, this is the only one by which we can be saved.’ They were astonished at the assurance shown by Peter and John, considering they were uneducated laymen; and they recognized them as associates of Jesus . . . .” (*Acts 4/5-13*)

***When was the last time you spoke of your faith to someone? How did you feel as you did it -- confident, fearful, anxious, timid, bold? Think of two situations or people in this past week where the presence of Jesus was especially needed. How did you respond? Ask for the grace of “parrhesia” -- boldness or assurance -- from the Holy Spirit.***

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

## ***Tuesday: The Mission Calls***

*From Father Judge:*

*[Father Judge gathered the first six Cenacle Lay Missionaries on April 11, 1909 in response to the crying needs he witnessed in his parish work.]*

“I was missioned for parish work in Brooklyn, New York -- St. John’s -- one of the largest parishes in the city. Conditions were disheartening, such that the strength of the best willed and strongest men would be soon sapped and seemingly with little fruit. This was due, partly, to want of system and, partly, to a shifting New York population. However, I gave myself generously to my duty but soon realized, if I would do any considerable and lasting good, I must have cooperation: therefore after prayerful thought and experiment I laid a plan before the Superior by which, if wished, a detailed and complete statement of the parish could be had every week; the negligent, new comers would be known, abuses and danger spots discovered and . . . school children safeguarded. The plan was to divide the parish into sections to be officered by those who quietly and charitably would be vigilant. It was not long before their zeal urged them to apostolic activity in their stores, offices, factories, libraries, shops, schoolrooms, and other environments of their work-a-day life. The results were surprising. It was an easy matter to attract devoted souls to volunteer for this work. It remained for us to encourage, to train and spiritualize them. I am convinced that there are thousand of men and women who ardently are longing to be led into some such movement.” (Cited in *Awake the Giant*, p. 291f..)

*From the Word of God:*

“Think of what Christ suffered in this life, and then arm yourselves with the same resolution that he had: anyone who in this life has bodily suffering has broken with sin, because for the rest of his life on earth he is not ruled by human passions but only by the will of God. You spent quite long enough in the past living the sort of life that pagans live, behaving indecently, giving way to your passions, drinking all the time, having wild parties and drunken orgies and degrading yourselves by following false gods. So people cannot understand why you no longer hurry off with them to join this flood which is rushing down to ruin, and then they begin to spread lies about you. They will have to answer for it in front of the judge who is ready to judge the living and the dead. And because he is their judge too, the dead had to be told the Good News as well, so that though, in their life on earth, they had been through the judgement that comes to all humanity, they might come to God’s life in the Spirit.” (*I Peter 4/1-6*)

***Are the missionary needs of God’s People foremost in your life, in your list of priorities? If not, where do the needs of others come on your list? Try to make a list of the 10 Most Important Things in your life. Are the missionary needs of God’s People on your list of priorities? If so, where do they fall and why? If not, why not? Ask the Spirit to hear the cries of the poor.***

**Write down your reflections briefly here:**

## Wednesday: “What’s the problem anyway?”

*From Father Judge:*

*[Father Judge analyzed the situation of his time in the following way.]*

There are “certain conditions peculiarly distinctive of our day which imperil the faith and morals of our generation, namely:

- “1. A growing worldliness and an extraordinary seeking for pleasure.
- “2. The breaking up of home life
- “3. The child problem. The ordinary American child is so disadvantaged in life’s struggle because the Christian and vigilant home life of former years is disappearing. If we lose the children or if the influence of the Church over them is greatly lessened, the consequence will be calamitous to religion of the next decade.
- “4. Growing hatred and opposition to the Church.
- “5. Widespread indifference to God’s teaching.
- “6. Impious attacks on the law of God and our traditional faith.
- “7. The agencies of irreligion seem to conspire in a particular way despiritualize and corrupt the springs of the coming generation, that is the children of today.” (Cited in *Awake the Giant*, p. 291)

*From the Word of God:*

“The anger of God is being revealed from heaven against all the impiety and depravity of men who keep truth imprisoned in their wickedness . . . . They knew God and yet refused to honor him as God or to thank him; instead, they made nonsense out of logic and their empty minds were darkened. The more they called themselves philosophers, the more stupid they grew . . . . That is why God left them to their filthy enjoyments and the practices with which they dishonor their own bodies, since they have given up divine truth for a lie and have worshiped and served creatures instead of the creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen . . . .

“In other words, since they refused to see it was rational to acknowledge God, God has left them to their own irrational ideas and to their monstrous behavior. And so they are steeped in all sorts of depravity, rottenness, greed and malice, slanderers, enemies of God, rude, arrogant and boastful, enterprising in sin, rebellious to parents, without brains, honor, love or pity. They know what God’s verdict is: that those who behave like this deserve to die -- and yet they do it; and what is worse, encourage others to do the same.” (*Romans 1/18,21-25,28-32*)

*Spend a few moments reflecting on what are the “conditions” today which “imperil the faith and morals of our generation,” especially families and children. See if you can make a “list of seven” dangers for today like Father Judge’s -- or St. Paul’s! Ask the Holy Spirit to help you in this.*

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

## ***Thursday: “Cenacles” -- A Response***

*From Father Judge:*

*[In 1910 Father Judge was assigned to the “Mission Band” of the Vincentian community based in Springfield, Massachusetts. “Missions” were parish “revivals” preached normally by a priest or team of priests. In this work he traveled extensively. As he did, the work grew.]*

“The next step was placing this [idea about the laity] before pastors on missions, showing them that they possess in their parish the elements of what might be a very useful and powerful auxiliary in their work of saving souls. Many pastors adopted the idea. The movement grew into a rather numerous body, scattered through many dioceses, that were officered and controlled by a common rule of procedure. This body became known as the ‘Cenacle Lay Apostolate.’ The Associates were encouraged, instructed, work planned, and from all this developed efficient and what might be called spiritual sociologists [or social workers]. Their assembly places were known as ‘Cenacles’.” (Cited in *Awake the Giant*, p. 292)

*From the Word of God:*

“These remained faithful to the teaching of the apostles, to the brotherhood, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers.

“The many miracles and signs worked through the apostles made a deep impression on everyone.

“The faithful all lived together and owned everything in common; they sold their goods and possessions and shared out the proceeds among themselves according to what each one needed.

“They went as a body to the Temple every day but met in their houses for the breaking of bread; they shared their food gladly and generously; they praised God and were looked up to by everyone. Day by day the Lord added to their community those destined to be saved.” (*Acts 2/42-47*)

***On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being the “most similar”), in your experience how much does the Missionary Cenacle Family resemble that first Christian community? In what ways is it similar? In what ways is it different? In what ways does your experience of Church resemble or not that first Christian community?***

**Write down your reflections briefly here:**

## ***Friday: “The workers should be legion”***

*From Father Judge:*

“Permit me to suggest that the Cenacle will keep clearly in mind the spirit of our work and its purpose. This is to effect that every Catholic will become a missionary. Let all be done in a quiet and inoffensive way. It is but right that the laity should know their power for good and may God speed the day when this power is universally evoked. Personally, I have no sympathy or interest in any movement that schools but exclusive workers of good. The needs to which we would minister are universal, and the multitudes are beyond computation. Therefore, the workers should be legion. It seems to me that unless we can fuse our people with the missionary spirit we are only theorizing, always beginning, and ever writing in the sands. Whosoever or what ever agency then will infuse a missionary spirit into the faithful at large and create a widespread Catholic interest is doing a service for God and the Church that men will never measure. Be happy in this that you . . . are at least attempting this . . . . Go on then in God’s Holy Name, but remember that human wisdom and cleverness are the maxims of profane schools and will avail you very little in this work. What the Church needs and only needs, is good will. . . . I feel towards you and your brothers [and sisters] as St. Paul felt when he wrote to the Romans, ‘I constantly mention you in prayer, always pleading that somehow by God’s Will I may at last find my way clear to visit you. For I long to see you and share with you some spiritual gift (*Romans 1/10-12*) . . . .’ (Cited in *Awake the Giant*, p. 323f.)

*From the Word of God:*

“The apostles rejoined Jesus and told him all they had done and taught. Then he said to them, ‘You must come to some lonely place all by yourselves and rest for a while;’ for there were so many coming and going that the apostles had not time even to eat. So they went off in a boat to a lonely place where they could be by themselves. But people saw them going, and many could guess where; and from every town they all hurried to the place on foot and reached it before them. So as he stepped ashore he saw a large crowd; and he took pity on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd, and he set himself to teach them at some length.” (*Mark 6/30-34*)

***Who among your friends and acquaintances would make a good Cenacle Lay Missionary? Who would you look for to increase the number of lay missionaries? What qualities would you look for in the person? Ask the Holy Spirit to place the name of at least one person in your mind and heart -- and then mention the name of the person to your local Custodian. “Growing the Family” is part of the mission.***

**Write down your reflections briefly here:**

## WEEK II

### ***Weekend Reflection:*** **“Be good, do good, be a power for good”**

*[Excerpts from “The Cenacle Method” by Dr. Harold Grant in The Apostolic Life, pp. 73-92]*

“No one can come to the Father except through His Son. No one can come to the Son unless the Father draws that person. We, who have been drawn to Jesus by the Father, are called to walk in the footsteps of Jesus and like Him relate to the Father as His children. Like Jesus, we seek to be the images of God, as we have been created to be, and thus instruments through which the Father reveals Himself to others. Like Jesus, we are especially concerned about those who have wandered away from the household of faith and do not seem to be experiencing the love of God in a personal way.

“To work for the preservation of the faith especially among the abandoned, then, involves *being good*, that is using and developing our own gift of faith as members of the Church in intimate relationship with the other members of the household of faith and with God who is the giver of faith, and *doing good*, that is seeking out those who are not experiencing this intimate love and through our presence and serving bring them back to an intimacy with God and His people.

“As we grow in faith, as we grow in the knowledge of God, as we grow in our awareness of the love of God, we also grow in our desire to love God through service to our sisters and brothers. As we become more and more apostolic, we grow in our desire to encourage others to be apostles, that is [*be a power for*] *good*. It becomes our fervent desire that every Catholic be an apostle.

#### *Our Method*

“The heritage given to us through Father Judge is a method of living apostolic lives. It is a simple method, a method devised by Father with the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We seek the same guidance from the same Holy Spirit in understanding and using the method in our own lives.

“**Community.** The foundation of the method is a devotion to the triune nature of our God. We practice this devotion by being one with each other. Jesus prayed that His apostles and those who would believe in Him through their word would be one with each other as He and the Father are one. Community is then an essential element in living the apostolic life.

“In our local Missionary Cenacles we seek to be united. We seek to live a life together reflective of the life of the Trinity. The first apostles became one with each other in the upper room, the Cenacle, by spending time with each other, through common prayer, and through discussion. We seek to spend at least an hour a week together in prayer, in discussion of our apostolates, and in council for the primary purpose of growing in unity.

***“We are devoted to being one with each other; we are devoted to the Holy Trinity.”***

“**Love.** We have a special devotion to the Holy Spirit, the bond of love between the Father and the Son. We practice this devotion by seeking to love one another as the Father and the Son love one another. This bond of love among us is the same bond of love between the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit. As the first Apostles grew in unity in the Cenacle, they were given the gift of love, the Holy Spirit on Pentecost.

“We will be known as followers of Jesus only if we are known for our love for one another. We will be able to love the abandoned only if we have learned to love with one another. Father Judge claimed that the apostolic success experienced by the early Cenacle Lay Missionaries was due to the Cenacle’s devotion to the Holy Spirit. Father urged these missionaries to spend individual and private time each day in personal prayer to the Holy Spirit in order to experience the love of God which is the Holy Spirit. He urged the Cenacle to pray together to the Holy Spirit that the Cenacle might become a true family.

***“We are devoted to loving one another; we are devoted to the Holy Spirit.”***

***Reflect on the Missionary Cenacle Family “motto” or “mission statement”: “Be good. Do good. Be a power for good.” What does it mean to you? How would you apply it to your life as you are right now? Does it challenge you to grow? In what areas of your life?***

***Two key elements of what Father Judge called our Missionary Cenacle Family “method” are devotion or special, loving attention to the mysteries of the Holy Trinity and the Holy Spirit. What has been your experience of “community” in the Missionary Cenacle Family? Have you experienced a spirit of love and concern among the members? What gifts do you bring that can help contribute to a growing sense of loving community within the Missionary Cenacle Family?***

**Write down your reflections briefly here:**

## WEEK II

### Monday: “Work-a-day people”

*From Father Judge:*

*[In a certain sense, the Missionary Cenacle Family is a “populist” movement: there is a “place for everybody at the table” in the mission of Jesus. In the early Cenacle history, Father Judge referred to the lay missionaries as the “Outer Cenacle” and the sisters, priests, and brothers as the “Inner Cenacle.”]*

“The Outer Cenacle is made up of ordinary, work-a-day people pursuing all vocations, house-keepers, clerks, nurses, teachers, and workers from factories and stores.” In other words, “their members are recruited from men and women of work-a-day life. These lay workers give their time after the day’s work is over, to this missionary work.” To be more particular, “the members are carefully chosen from generous-hearted young women and men, practical Catholics, who are prudent, able to keep their own counsel.” (Cited in *Awake the Giant*, p. 295)

*From the Word of God:*

“Take yourselves, for instance, brothers and sisters, at the time when you were called: how many of you were wise in the ordinary sense of the word, how many were influential people, or came from noble families? No, it was to shame the wise that God chose what is foolish by human reckoning, and to shame what is strong that he chose what is weak by human reckoning; those whom the world thinks common and contemptible are the ones that God has chosen -- those who are nothing at all to show up those who are everything. The human race has nothing to boast about to God, but you, God has made members of Christ Jesus and by God’s doing he has become our wisdom, and our virtue, and our holiness, and our freedom. As Scripture says, ‘If anyone wants to boast, let him boast about the Lord.’” (1 Corinthians 1/26-31)

***Thank the Triune God for your own calling to be a follower of Jesus and a missionary. As you look at the Cross of Jesus, readily admit to God your own failings, weakness, and sinfulness. Name them. What are they? How do they affect your life and the life of others? Now ask the Holy Spirit to transform and heal them, to make your wounds “glorious.”***

**Write down your reflections briefly here:**

## ***Tuesday: Different gifts, the same Spirit***

*From Father Judge:*

*[From the early Cenacle Lay Missionaries and volunteers in Alabama, the religious communities of the Missionary Cenacle grew. Father Judge always saw an intimate, interdependent connection between them. Father Judge explained the different branches of the Missionary Cenacle Family to Bishop Malloy of Brooklyn in this way:]*

“The Cenacle Apostolate is composed of two divisions, the Inner and Outer. The Inner Cenacle is composed first of all of Brothers and Sisters who live in community, a religious life, missionary in their labors. They are being trained for a rugged missionary life, to work in abandoned places. The Outer Cenacle [now known as the Missionary Cenacle Apostolate] is composed of people of work-a-day life. These are encouraged to frequent communion and devotion to the Holy Ghost, and are trained to be alert to the interests of the Church, in fact, in the circumstances of their every day life -- to be the Church. Personal service is asked of them. An inspiration to this is, ‘Every Catholic Should be an Apostle.’ This without offense, they are trained to live out in fact.” (Cited in *Awake the Giant*, p. 294)

*From the Word of God:*

“Everything will soon come to an end, so, to pray better, keep a calm and sober mind. Above all, never let your love for each other grow insincere, since love covers over many a sin. Welcome each other into your houses without grumbling. Each one of you has received a special grace, so, like good stewards responsible for all these different graces of God, put yourselves at the service of others. If you are a speaker, speak in words which seem to come from God; if you are a helper, help[ as though every action was done at God’s orders; so that in everything God may receive the glory, through Jesus Christ, since to him alone belong all glory and power for ever and ever. Amen.” (1 Peter 4/7-11)

***Name some of the different gifts you have seen in brothers and sisters of the Missionary Cenacle Family. Name several gifts -- at least three -- which you feel the Holy Spirit has given to you. In what way have you been a “good steward responsible for all these different graces of God”? In what way could you be an even more responsible steward of God’s gifts to you? Be as specific as possible.***

**Write down your reflections briefly here:**

## **Wednesday: “Dear to God and Church”**

*From Father Judge:*

“How anxious . . . should we be that this good and pleasant dwelling together in unity persevere . . . . If, then, this family spirit continue between the Cenacles . . . . it will fortify all to withstand a great deal of the adverse that must be met within the service of God and labor for the Church. If this family spirit flourishes amongst us, you will be a blessed, mutual help to one another . . . . The family idea is dear to God and to the Church . . . . I hope and pray that your affairs will be so conditioned that you must depend upon one another, that you may realize that you need one another.” (*Archives, MF/00850-3*)

*From the Word of God:*

“Brothers and sisters, if one of you misbehaves, the more spiritual of you who set him right should do so in a spirit of gentleness, not forgetting that you may be tempted yourselves. You should carry each other’s troubles and fulfill the law of Christ. It is the people who are not important who often make the mistake of thinking they are. Let each of you examine his own conduct; if you find anything to boast about, it will be least be something of your own, not just something better than your neighbor has. . . . We must never get tired of doing good because if we don’t give up the struggle we shall get our harvest at the proper time. While we have the chance, we must do good to all, and especially to our brothers and sisters in the faith.” (*Galatians 6/1-5,9-10*)

***Ask the Holy Spirit to show you what blessings you have already received through the Missionary Cenacle Family. Be as specific as possible. What are/were the graces you have received? Through whom or through what circumstances did you receive them? Give thanks!***

**Write down your reflections briefly here:**

## ***Thursday: “The Lord wants this family spirit”***

*From Father Judge:*

“It is a sacred duty of Custodians to see that this [family spirit] . . . continues . . . Encourage . . . this family spirit. If you do so and if it grows and develops properly, it will be of great value to the Church of God, and it seems to me that Lord wants this family spirit . . . I can see . . . if the primitive spirit is passed down, this family spirit will engender the most beautiful fruits for the honor and glory of God and for the edification of the Church . . . Help foster this tradition of the family spirit.” (*Archives, MF/00850-3*)

*From the Word of God:*

“His mother and brothers now arrived and, standing outside, sent in a message asking for him. A crowd was sitting round him at the time the message was passed to him, ‘Your mother and brothers and sisters are outside asking for you.’ He replied, ‘Who are my mother and my brothers?’ And looking round at those sitting in a circle about him, he said, ‘Here are my mother and my brothers. Anyone who does the will of God, that person is my brother and sister and mother.” (*Mark 3/31-35*)

***What concretely can you do to “foster this tradition of the family spirit”? What practices help to promote the family spirit? What practices take away from or diminish the family spirit? As you attempt to do God’s Will in your daily life, are you consciously aware of being a part of God’s Family as Jesus promises? If so, how does this make you feel? If not, what blocks this awareness?***

**Write down your reflections briefly here:**

## ***Friday: “A hundred times over”***

*From Father Judge:*

“The Spirit of the Cenacle is, first of all, a spirit of prayer, doing all things for God’s greater honor and glory. It is a self-sacrificing spirit, a spirit of personal service. It is a willing spirit, generous and zealous, ready to undertake anything and everything for Christ’s sake. It is a humble spirit, self always taking the last place. It is a joyous and cheerful spirit with personal sorrows and troubles kept hidden. It is a sympathetic spirit, rejoicing with those who rejoice, and sorrowing with those who sorrow. It is a broad spirit reaching out to all, those who do not attract us as well as those who do. It is a large spirit which makes allowances and exceptions where necessary. It is an obedience spirit which does not question. It is a charitable spirit, summed up in the words of St. Paul to be all things to all [people] to gain all to Christ. It seems there is a spirit in the Cenacle that doesn’t mind sacrifice . . . .” (Cited in *Awake the Giant*, p. 304f.)

*From the Word of God:*

“Peter took this up. ‘What about us?’ he asked him. ‘We have left everything and followed you.’ Jesus said, ‘I tell you solemnly, there is no one who has left house, brothers, sisters, father, children or land for my sake and for the sake of the gospel who will not be repaid a hundred times over, houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and land -- not without persecutions -- now in this present time and, in the world to come, eternal life. Many who are first will be last, and the last first..’” (*Mark 10/28-31*)

***Jesus clearly tells us that following Him brings with it many rewards. It’s His Promise! Have you sacrificed for the mission of Jesus? In what way? What are the rewards of discipleship in the Family of Jesus that you have already experienced? Through the Missionary Cenacle Family or the Church or some other community have you personally experienced the “hundred fold” Jesus guarantees?***

**Write down your reflections briefly here:**

## **WEEK III**

### **Weekend Reflection: Cenacle Family - A Missionary Style of Life**

*[Excerpts from "The Cenacle Method" by Dr. Harold Grant in  
The Apostolic Life, pp. 73-92]*

**“Service.** We have a devotion to the Incarnation. ‘Yes, God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him may not die but may have eternal life. God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him’ (*John 3:16-17*).

“We practice our devotion to this ‘Son of Man who has come, not to be served by others, but to serve, to give his life as a ransom for many’ (*Matthew 20:28*), by imitating him, by walking in his path, by serving, by giving our life to bringing his good news to the abandoned and poor.

“Empowered by the Holy Spirit, every word and action of Jesus expressed the love of the Father for His children. Empowered by the same Holy Spirit, our words and actions express the same message of our Father’s love to those we meet in the providence of our everyday lives.

“As we grow in love, that love is expressed in each and every ordinary action of our lives. In our meetings we discuss our apostolic works with each other to aid us in discerning the most loving way to act in our apostolic endeavors. Every detail of our lives is transformed by God’s love for us and by our love for God and one another. We seek to put on the mind of Jesus. We practice behaving as he behaved. . . . Through the practice of . . . Christ-like behavior, we seek to be like Christ, the incarnation of the love of God.

***“We are devoted to serving one another as Christ; we are devoted to the Incarnation.***

**“Empowerment.** We have a devotion to the Holy Agony of Jesus. Jesus became sin and suffered the consequences of sin (*see 2 Corinthians 5:21*). He experienced the abandonment that sin causes in a human life, the lack of oneness with God and other persons, the inability to experience love from God and other persons, the loss of power to be truly human.

“Our growing in the knowledge of the agony of Jesus enables us to understand the fruit of sin in our own lives and in the lives of others. Growing in our ability to love the abandoned Christ enables us to love the abandoned persons we meet in our daily lives.

“We practice our devotion to the Holy Agony by being present to and serving those who embody the abandoned Christ so that they might be empowered by love to be faith-filled

children of the Father, to be loved and loving vessels of the Holy Spirit, to walk in Jesus' footsteps as his apostles, to be truly human.

***“We are devoted to the empowerment of the abandoned; we are devoted to the Abandoned Christ.***

**“Missionary.** We have a devotion to the Apostles, our models for the apostolic way of life. We are grateful for each of them and seek to grow in our knowledge of them as real persons like us so that we might become like them.

“We practice this devotion by making the missionary idea central in our lives. We may be involved in religious education programs, but basically we are not called to be teachers. We may use nursing skills to aid the sick, but primarily we are not called to be nurses. We may be involved in social work with the poor, but our first call is not to be social workers. We may serve on parish councils or as lectors or Eucharistic ministers, but these are not our primary calling.

“We are not called to be involved in main-line ministries to the ninety-nine, but we are called to be missionary, seeking out and going out to the one who is not experiencing the love of God. We choose whatever form of ministry that seems to be needed and that enables us to spend time with the abandoned and relate to them intimately so that they experience being loved. Home visiting is a ministry that is particularly suited to our apostolic way of life, and it is one of our basic missionary methods.

“Being Cenacle Lay Missionaries is not something we do during a portion of our lives. Living the apostolic life means our total lives are transformed. We continue as members of our families, as laborers in our working places, as citizens in our neighborhoods. We continue to live our lives in the contexts in which God has called us. We bloom where we are planted, but the blossoming is a transformation of all of the details of our lives according to the providence of God.

***“We are devoted to a missionary style of life; we are devoted to the Apostles.”***

*The Missionary Cenacle vocation is centered on loving service to those who are “abandoned” or on the margins of society, those who -- for whatever reasons -- do not experience the love of God in their lives. It is truly a “vocation,” a way of life, rather than another activity or group to which I belong. Who are the “poor and abandoned” in your life? What is your attitude or approach to these sisters and brothers? Do you experience in and through them the Person of the Living God, the Abandoned Christ? If so, in what way, how? If not, why not? These are all key questions for understanding and living this apostolic vocation as a member of the Missionary Cenacle Family.*

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

## WEEK III

### Monday: “In the home of the Holy Family”

*From Father Judge:*

“There has been the constant flowing of grace through the Cenacle and the joy and peace that come in the prosecution of corporal and spiritual works of mercy. We owe so much thanksgiving for these deeper and hidden persona graces given to our own souls . . . . How thankful we should be that God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit gives us the grace to be servants . . . ; that we are permitted familiarity and intimacy with the sacred mysteries as almost to be a familiar in the home of the Holy Family, of the Incarnation. . . .” (*Missionary Cenacle Meditations*, p. 84)

*From the Word of God:*

“Every year his parents used to go to Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover. When he was twelve years old, they went up for the feast as usual. When they were on their way home after the feast, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem without his parents’ knowing it. They assumed he was with the caravan, and it was only after a day’s journey that they went to look for him among their relations and acquaintances. When they failed to find him they went back to Jerusalem looking for him everywhere.

“Three days later they found him in the Temple, sitting among the doctors, listening to them and asking them questions; and all those who heard him were astounded at his intelligence and his replies. They were overcome when they saw him, and his mother said to him, ‘My child, why have you done this to us? See how worried your father and I have been, looking for you.’ ‘Why were you looking for me?’ he replied. ‘Did you not know that I must be busy with my Father’s affairs?’ But they did not understand what he meant.

“He then went down with them and came to Nazareth and lived under their authority. His mother stored up all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom, in stature, and in favor with God and people.” (*Luke 2/41-52*)

*As you read this Gospel passage, put yourself in the scene. How do you relate to the members of the Holy Family? What do they look like? What do they say to you? How do you feel with them? Do you have a sense of being “intimate” with the Holy Family? Ask the Holy Spirit to lead you to an ever growing “intimacy” with the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph.*

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

## ***Tuesday: Cenacle -- an Evangelizing Family***

*From Father Judge:*

*[The idea of lay men and women sharing as “family” with religious in the mission of the Church was strongly opposed by many. Father Judge endured bitter criticism.]*

“I really had no one to go to. Of course, here and there a priest would be friendly. I got great comfort from these men, but they had their own limitations. They could go so far. I would check up with the Fathers and check up with the Scriptures. Whenever I could check up with the Church theology and general Church policies, I knew I was right. ‘Prove the spirits to see if they be of Christ.’ The Church makes much of the works of mercy, spiritual and corporal. Catholic formula is Faith and Good works; not works alone but Faith. You have the signs of Catholicity in that, Faith without good works is vain and good works without Faith are human. Or Faith energizes itself in charity. Wherever I saw that working I knew I harmonized; I knew I had the heart beat of the Church. I turned to the Epistles of St. Paul where he said, ‘I commend to you Phoebe, our sister, who is in ministry of the Church,’ and also ‘I beg Evodia and I beseech Syntyche to be of one mind in the Lord. And I entreat thee also, my sincere companion, help those women who have labored with me in the gospel with Clement and the rest of my fellow laborers whose names are written in the book of life.’ These things I knew were the purest Catholicity in the Church.” (Cited in *Awake the Giant*, p. 293)

*From the Word of God:*

“I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deaconess of the church at Cenchreae. Give her, in union with the Lord, a welcome worthy of saints, and help her with anything she needs: she has looked after a great many people, myself included.

“My greetings to Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who risked death to save my life: I am not the only one to owe them a debt of gratitude, all the churches among the pagans do as well. My greetings also to the church that meets at their house.

“Greetings to my friend Epaphroditus, the first of Asia’s gifts to Christ; greetings to Mary who worked so hard for you; to those outstanding apostles Andronicus and Junias, my compatriots and fellow prisoners who became Christians before me; to Ampliatus, my friend in the Lord; to Urban, my fellow worker in Christ; to my friend Stachys; to Apelles who has gone through so much for Christ; to everyone who belongs to the household of Aristobulus; to my compatriot Herodion; to those in the household of Narcissus who belong to the Lord; to Tryphaena and Tryphosa, who work hard for the Lord; to my friend Persis who has done so much for the Lord; to Rufus, a chosen servant of the Lord, and to his mother who has been a mother to me too. Greetings to Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and all the brothers who are with them; to Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas and all the saints who are with them. Greet each other with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ send their greetings.” (*Romans 16/1-16*)

***Who are important brothers and sisters on your faith journey? In the Cenacle Family? Name them and thank God for them one by one as Paul does in his letter.***

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

## ***Wednesday: “To be a peacemaker”***

*From Father Judge:*

“Remember, I have often warned you that no harm can come to you except from the inside. If we are united, the evil one rages in vain. Your work is of such a nature that it is going to bring assaults from the evil spirit. Let each one of you determine that you will keep the peace and that if adjustments are necessary they will be made in charity and in obedience. That God’s will prevail, let each determine that you will not be tenacious of your own will, and that if you cherish any ambition, it will be to be a peacemaker and to obtain the promise that the Beatitude holds forth.

“We must expect no [true peace], we cannot hope for any such thing, unless fraternal charity be active . . . . This means good will. This is the good will of which the angels sang. This is the good will which angels attest has its reward in peace . . . . This is the good will, which lest we lose, our Jesus lived and labored and prayed and suffered and died . . . . Oh, how God-like is good will; how hateful and fiendish is ill-will and intolerance and their scurvy brood of malice and bigotry, of envy, jealousy, misrepresentation and all those imps that work for the destruction of peace among men [and women] . . . . May you ever show forth the spirit of a follower of Christ, which is good will to all men [and women], even to those who revile and persecute you.” (*Missionary Cenacle Meditations*, p.256)

*From the Word of God:*

“I, the prisoner in the Lord, implore you therefore to lead a life worthy of your vocation. Bear with one another charitably, in complete selflessness, gentleness and patience. Do all you can to preserve the unity of the Spirit by the peace that binds you together. There is one Body, one Spirit, just as you were all called into one and the same hope when you were called. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God who is Father of all, over all, through all and within all. Each one of us, however, has been given his own share of grace, given as Christ allotted it.” (*Ephesians 4/1-7*)

***Are you at “peace” with all the members of your local Cenacle Community? If not, have you attempted to reconcile with that person? If not, why? If so, how did it come out? What else can you do to create peace and harmony among all? What are the greatest enemies of peace in your own life or in the life of your community: “ill-will, intolerance, envy, jealousy,” gossip? How do you deal with these individually? as a community?***

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

## ***Thursday: “Humility protects charity”***

*From Father Judge:*

“May human infirmity that you detect in your brother [or] . . . sister never sour [your] disposition or lessen your good will towards [that person]. May you ever show forth the spirit of a follower of Christ, which is good will to all men [and women], even to those who revile and persecute you.

“To be charitable, it is very necessary that you be humble. Remember, as you have been so often told, humility is the virtue of Jesus. It is the virtue of His Blessed Mother, of His saints, and it must be your virtue if you are to be His servant. Humility protects charity. It feeds charity and where there is a fault against charity, it is a sure sign that instead of humility, a person has become a victim of self-love and pride.

“I am confused to death as I write this since I know it often from my own miserable, sinful experience. This experience may be profitable to you, if because of it you will avoid falling into those faults that wound charity and drive the Spirit of Jesus from your hearts.” (*Missionary Cenacle Meditations*, p. 256)

*From the Word of God:*

“Finally: you should all agree among yourselves and be sympathetic; love the brothers [and sisters], have compassion and be self-effacing. Never pay back one wrong with another, or an angry word with another one; instead, pay back with a blessing. That is what you are called to do, so that you inherit a blessing yourself. Remember: ‘Anyone who wants to have a happy life and to enjoy prosperity must banish malice from his tongue, deceitful conversation from his lips; he must never yield to evil but must practice good; he must seek peace and pursue it. Because the face of the Lord frowns on evil men [and women], but the eyes of the Lord are turned towards the virtuous.’” (*1 Peter 3/ 8-12*)

***What are the three qualities, characteristics, or virtues that you find most attractive in Jesus? Name them and think of an example where Jesus lived out that quality in His dealings with others. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you those same qualities and attitudes in your own life.***

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

# ***Friday: At the same table***

*From Father Judge:*

*[In Father Judge's time even "active" communities of Sisters, e.g. teaching Sisters, always ate alone and never with the laity. Father Judge had a totally different idea. He explained his thoughts in a letter to Bishop Caruana of Puerto Rico in 1923:]*

"... the ordinary Sisterhoods have but few visitors at their convents and the obligation of hospitality comes to them as an exceptional thing. Our Sisters must entertain because of the outer Cenacle, who are really a part of their family, so that their mission gets practically as many workers as there are members in the Inner and Outer Cenacle. It is no uncommon thing, for example, for fifteen or twenty to be at a meal in Brooklyn. The Inner Cenacle could never handle the volume of work done there. It is quite likely that as the Outer Cenacle grows in Puerto Rico, the group around the dining table of the Inner Cenacle will also grow"

"Now as to receiving the visitors in the Cenacle -- I make a distinction between the Outer Cenacle and general public. Every Cenacle is the home of the outer Cenacle so much so that if anyone of them were to pass through a city and not stay at the Cenacle it would be a matter of wonder." (Cited in *Awake the Giant*, p. 314)

*From the Word of God:*

Jesus said, "May they all be one. Father, may they be one in us, as you are in me and I am in you, so that the world may believe it was you who sent me. I have given them the glory you gave to me, that they may be one as we are one. With me in them and you in me, may they be so completely one that the world will realize that it was you who sent me and that I have loved them as much as you loved me. Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, so that they may always see the glory you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. Father, Righteous One, the world has not known you, but I have known you, and these have known that you have sent me. I have made your name known to them and will continue to make it known, so that the love with which you loved me may be in them, and so that I may be in them." (John 17/21-26)

***Eating together can symbolize love and help create unity. As people witness this unity and love, "the world may believe" in the Good News of Jesus. As a Cenacle Community, what is your relationship to other local Cenacles, to your Region, to the other branches of the Missionary Cenacle Family? Do you know one another? Do you ever visit? Do you invite others to your gatherings? Do you participate in regional or community-wide events or activities, retreats? Do you work together in missionary activities and planning?***

**Write down your reflections briefly here:**

## WEEK IV

### ***Weekend Reflection:*** **“Family” as the Way of Evangelization**

*[Excerpts from a talk given by Father Gary M. Banks, S.T.]*

“Discipleship was never conceived as an individual enterprise but always as a community venture. The community, in spite of cultural horizons, was, from earliest times, inclusive. The Apostle Paul, in each of his letters, identifies himself and the members [of] his team as the senders. Only in Romans does he write alone. His farewell greetings in Romans, probably the last of his direct letters, are replete with the names of the men and women who sustained the lives of the earliest communities. In Romans 16/1-16, the couple Prisca and Aquila (*Romans 16/3; also in I Corinthians 16/19*), the deaconess Phoebe (*Romans 16/2*), other women such as Mary (*Romans 16/6*), Julia (*Romans 16/15*) all figured prominently. The mention of ‘households’ . . . could be a reference to ‘family.’ Paul credits Rufus’ mother as being also a ‘mother’ to him (*Romans 16/ 13*).

“Paul’s response to the pastoral problems of the community that he founded in I Corinthians is spurred by the visit of Chloe and a delegation from the church that met at her house (*I Corinthians 1/11*). Paul writes not only to Philemon but also to Apphia (his wife?), and the church that meets in their house. To define early Christian ministry strictly in terms of men is much too restrictive (*I Corinthians 9/5*). As in any vibrant community, the women and the family were there.

“The structures that have been excavated of the early communities give contour to this aspect of family life. . . .The church-house found at Capharnaum is located within a structure that in New Testament times sheltered a family of considerable size. Both archaeological and textual evidence point toward the family structure as central to the missionary impulse of the early Church . . . . Family life was part of the essential infrastructure of successful ministry. Family was the basis of every enterprise, both economic and otherwise. Family was a way of mission.

“With this as a given, it raises some interesting considerations for the pastoral life of the Church. In light of the worry engendered by the ‘break-up’ of family life in the modern mobile, individualistic, industrial society, the Church -- from *Gaudium et Spes*[*The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* of Vatican Council II] on -- has sought to address herself to the situation. However, most of our parishes continue to reveal antiquated community structures, which -- rather than nourishing family life -- carry on a pastoral which assumes an intact family, much as is found in rural areas. There continue to be separate spiritual groups divided by the sexes (Altar and Rosary Society, Knights of Columbus, Holy Name Society, etc.), projects with a specific goal in end (finances, fund raising, maintenance, etc.) or ministry to the marginated (the

widowed, divorced, dependent and dysfunctional). There is very little specifically oriented to the family as family, and not as one more structure to be maintained in the maintenance model of ministry, but as a nourishing, life-giving structure to empower the mission of the Church . . . .

“Creative approaches need models for community and family as mission. The domestic church needs to be fortified as the center for successful evangelization.”

*How has the Church helped or supported your family life? The life of other families you know? Does the normal activity of the Church encourage family? If so, in what ways? Name a few examples. If not, why not? Name a few examples. Has the Missionary Cenacle Family encouraged and helped your family life? If yes, in what ways? In not, why? Name some examples.*

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

## WEEK IV

### Monday: “Let the little children come”

*From Father Judge:*

“During all the Retreats I have been putting the cradles of the world before the [retreatants] and telling them . . . to save [the babies] to Christ and His Church. The poor babies coming along now are certainly in a sad plight. The more men develop themselves industrially, socially, educationally, and financially, the more many of the more getting away from God. In this their poor little children will be cursed for they grow up just animated things. The law of their life will be impulse and their aspiration will be present pleasure. I got into this thing rather deeply Sunday at the breakfast table with a couple of the Brothers. Sister Mary of the Incarnate Word put the question to me flatly, ‘What are we going to do?’ . . . Someone will have to get at the child and make the child right.

“You know that in the United States one of the greatest sorrows of the Church is the dissolving family, particularly the family falling away from the child. We have as a consequence legions of unprotected children.” (In *Awake the Giant*, p. 318)

*From the Word of God:*

“People were bringing little children to him for him to touch them. The disciples turned them away, but when Jesus saw this he was indignant and said to them, ‘Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. I tell you solemnly, anyone who does not welcome the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.’ Then he put his arms round them, laid his hands on them and gave them his blessing.” (Luke 2/41-52)

***Imagine Jesus looking at the world today. Does He see the world “turning away” the children? If so, in what way? Who are these children? How are they treated? Are we treating the children in the way that Jesus would treat them? Ask Him. Let Him tell you. Ask Him what He would want you to do about that, if anything. Listen and ask for the grace to obey faithfully and enthusiastically.***

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

## ***Tuesday: Children and the Cenacle***

*From Father Judge:*

*[In Father Judge's vision, everyone, of any age or condition, could and should be an apostle, a missionary. One of the most dynamic developments in the early Cenacle history was the existence of "Angel Cenacles," Cenacles for young children. There the children were taught a love for Jesus in the Eucharist and the Holy Spirit. They did apostolic work according to their situation, often reaching out to other children in ways that only they could.]*

"You know my thoughts on these little ones. My thought is becoming more and more confirmed that we have in the Outer Cenacle, especially in the Angels' Outer Cenacle, a most extraordinary blessing and priceless treasure. I think first of all, it is an open sign of God's pleasure that He is attracting these children to our Missionary Cenacles. The Holy Ghost is leading these little ones to us for a reason. We must not fail Him in His Providence over them. Let us have this fear, if we do not cooperate with this beautiful grace He is giving us, we may lose it. I say the Holy Ghost has given you an attractive grace to children; you can attract children. If you let that grace become inactive, allow it to rust, I am afraid you will lose it. I wish you would feel troubled, bothered about that thing.." (Cited in *Awake the Giant*, p. 319)

*From the Word of God:*

"After they had left, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, 'Get up, take the child and his mother with you, and escape into Egypt, and stay there until I tell you, because Herod intends to search for the child and do away with him.' So Joseph got up and, taking the child and his mother with him, left that night for Egypt where he stayed until Herod was dead. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken through the prophets, 'I called my son out of Egypt.'

"Herod was furious when he realized that he had been outwitted by the wise men, and in Bethlehem and its surrounding district he had all the male children killed who were two years old or under, reckoning by the date he had been careful to ask the wise men. It was then that the words spoken through the prophet Jeremiah were fulfilled, 'A voice was heard in Ramah, sobbing and loudly lamenting: it was Rachel weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted because they were no more.'" (*Matthew 2/13-18*)

***What was your own experience as a child? Were you cared for and loved? abused, neglected, or abandoned? orphaned very young or still with parents living? from a stable or a very unstable family? Were you brought up as a person of Faith or did you come to Faith later in your life? Does the situation of children today cause you any concern or pain? What sort of life would you like children today to have? Is there anything God may be calling you or your Cenacle to do to make this dream for the children more a reality? Ask the Holy Spirit to illuminate the mystery of "childhood" in your own life and the life of children today.***

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

## **Wednesday: Mary, Mothers, and the Cenacle**

*From Father Judge:*

*[Besides Cenacles for children, Father Judge also began Cenacle Communities for young women, single and married. Once again, his reason was to look for creative missionary responses to the needs of his day. He called these Cenacles for young women “Madonna Missionary Cenacles.” He also saw the challenges faced by so many adolescent youth, especially in the inner cities. His response to this was to help form “Junior Cenacles” for these youth.]*

Father Judge hoped to “get the mother, and get her before she becomes a mother and ‘Cenacalize’ her. You know during some of the recent general retreats, . . . I told [the young women] I would be interested in them and help them if they would try to realize that ideal [of the Catholic woman] in their own life. As a consequence one of them said that she had a number of girl friends just married and she wanted them to hear the same things. I do not see why they cannot measure up to the Cenacle ideals. Now if we get them with the Cenacle spirit, their children will be safe. If we can get this spirit into our young married women, I think we will have very little of the . . . problem [with our children] and, if we do not, I do not know what is going to happen.” (Cited in *Awake the Giant*, p. 318)

*From the Word of God:*

“Mary set out at that time and went as quickly as she could to a town in the hill country of Judah. She went into Zechariah’s house and greeted Elizabeth. Now as soon as Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the child leapt in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. She gave a loud cry and said, ‘Of all women you are the most blessed, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. Why should I be honored with a visit from the mother of my Lord? For the moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leapt for joy. Yes, blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled.’” (*Luke 1/39-45*)

***Mary was probably about fifteen when the above Gospel story occurred. Picture her in that situation. Imagine the encounter between her and her cousin Elizabeth. Put yourself in the picture. Ask Mary to show you what God’s plan and desire is for mothers and young people. Speak to Mary about the realities you see today. Call on the Holy Spirit who brought Jesus to life in the womb of this young Jewish girl. May the Spirit bring Jesus to life in the lives of mothers and youth today. What place do mothers and youth have in the Missionary Cenacle Family today? What place should they have?***

**Write down your reflections briefly here:**

# ***Thursday: Growing the Cenacle Family***

*From Father Judge:*

*[Father Judge never wanted the Cenacle to become some type of “elitist” society. He always encouraged life and faith where he saw it. His attitude is demonstrated in the following passage regarding new potential members of the Cenacle.]*

“We must, I think, be wary of becoming too critical of the girl [and boy] of today. Perhaps tolerance on a very broad scale is necessary in order to reconcile the general flippancy of the modern world with our high ideals of what should be expected. We should remember, I think, that our ideals become more elevated as our vision grows -- as it should with the years -- and that sometimes we are looking for the end before the beginning has been made. It is very natural and very human to forget that we, too, were not always so serious or so wise, and we probably had more advantages and training than the ordinary young person of today. At any rate, if we are going to have new members, we must take them from [this] generation, or where shall we get them? Then they may be trained and grace will not fail to do its part today anymore than yesterday. Are we perhaps too reluctant to take new members to Cenacle meetings? If we won’t expose them to the training, how shall they get it?.” (Cited in *Awake the Giant*, p. 307)

*From the Word of God:*

“Here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom my soul delights. I have endowed him with my spirit that he may bring true justice to the nations.

“He does not cry out or shout aloud, or make his voice heard in the streets. He does not break the crushed reed, nor quench the wavering flame.

“Faithfully he brings true justice; he will neither waver, nor be crushed until true justice is established on earth, for the islands are awaiting his law.

“Thus says God, Yahweh, he who created the heavens and spread them out, who gave shape to the earth and what comes from it, who gave breath to its people and life to the creatures that move in it:

“I, Yahweh, have called you to serve the cause of right; I have taken you by the hand and formed you; I have appointed you as covenant of the people and light of the nations, to open the eyes of the blind, to free captives from prison, and those who live in darkness from the dungeon.” (*Isaiah 42/1-7*)

***Am I -- are we as a Cenacle Community -- open to new people with different ideas or ways of doing things? What is our attitude toward younger people or people of other cultures? Are we able to recognize in them the call of the Holy Spirit to mission? Ask for this grace.***

**Write down your reflections briefly here:**

## ***Friday: The Basic Ingredient -- “a generous heart”***

*From Father Judge:*

“To do this missionary work is not nearly so difficult as it sounds. One does not have to start with a fund of knowledge nor with an ability to talk well. Some of the finest apostolic work done in the Cenacle, done in the South, has been done by those who had very little opportunity for education. All that is necessary is a good will and a generous heart. Ability comes with experience. Since the work is all done with the assistance of prayer, even the most timid need not fear inaptitude. The work is not a hardship and does not require heroic self-sacrifice. It grows on one and becomes a delight. There is necessarily a great joy in knowing that one is cooperating with the Savior’s work of redemption in gathering souls who might otherwise be lost. It is not hard to find a number of souls generous enough to do this work. To do good the worker need not give all her [or his] time. Much good may be accomplished even in one’s leisure. There is a vast amount yet to be done, and we shall strive to do our part. You all have different circumstances in life. Try to do all you can in your little circle, whatever it may be. . . . The good will and good heart, that is the thing. These are the things that God wants. What God wants of us is a good will and a good heart. Nothing else is useful if we haven’t got that.” (Cited in *Awake the Giant*, p. 300)

*From the Word of God:*

“The word of Yahweh was addressed to me, saying, ‘Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you came to birth I consecrated you; I have appointed you as prophet to the nations.’ I said, ‘Ah, Lord Yahweh; look, I do not know how to speak: I am a child!’ But Yahweh replied, ‘Do not say, “I am a child.” Go now to those to whom I send you and say whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to protect you -- it is Yahweh who speaks’!

“Then Yahweh put out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me: ‘There! I am putting my words into your mouth. Look, today I am setting you over nations and over kingdoms, to tear up and to knock down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant.’” (*Jeremiah 1/4-10*)

***Review this past month of prayer. Has my understanding of the Missionary Cenacle Family deepened? Am I sensing a deepening identification with this special vocation in the Church? As I look back over these past four weeks, what special graces or insights have I received? Be as specific as possible in naming and thanking the Triune God for these special blessings.***

**Write down your reflections briefly here:**