

Lesson #5

The Apostolic Spirit

The Grace I am seeking . . .

*To study Cenacle spirituality, to understand
Father Judge's motivation and our own.*

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 had a special prayer that he wrote for the needs of the Missionary Cenacle. It reveals the concerns and desires of his own apostolic spirit. In a slightly modified version, it is found in the MCA Morning Prayer contained in *The Apostolic Life*, page 103. It would be good to reflect on this prayer and pray it daily as you begin your day:

O God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, bless your Missionary Cenacle Family. Grant that all those who come under our care may never be lost to your grace, may never be lost to the Faith, but that they and we may attain the joys of eternal life.

O God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, grant that in all things we may do that which is of your holy will and pleasure, and to attain this that we may have an abundance of your gifts, wisdom and fortitude especially.

O God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, bless our children, save them from harm of soul and body; bless our Missionary Cenacles and all of the works we have in hand, and grant that good vocations may come to the Missionary Cenacle. Amen.

May the same apostolic spirit which comes from the Holy Spirit of God burn in all of our hearts. May it cause us to sacrifice much for the love of God, to reach out to our sisters and brothers in their need, and become aware of and attend to the pressing needs of our Church and world that God brings into the providence of our everyday lives.

Introduction

Father Judge was a man of action. He appreciated the need for thought and study. He urged his followers to take time daily for prayer. Apart from this attention to the life of the spirit, nothing else would work. Yet the fruitfulness of this interior attention must be seen in concrete works of charity and zeal. Without this, “spirituality” could become very simply just another disguise for self-absorption.

Father Judge summarized the “Cenacle spirit [as] a living, burning, operating love of God and neighbor” (quoted in *Rule of Life* #7). His first question to people would be “why do you want to do this missionary work?” They would come up with a variety of answers -- “to do good for others . . . to serve the poor . . . to come closer to God.” Although all these answers were good, they were never the right one. The only “right answer” for becoming a missionary was “for the love of God.” “For the love of God” we would do what was necessary to accomplish the mission of Jesus. This would be the only motivation that would adequately sustain us in this vocation.

But even “for the love of God” can remain somewhat vague in what it concretely means in a person’s life. God, after all, is unseen by human eyes. And so Father Judge’s next question always was “How much do you love God? What are you willing to sacrifice for Him?” Sacrifice, a willingness to go the extra mile, to do the generous thing, was essential. Without this type of attitude our love might remain just a pious sentiment with no genuine power to transform ourselves or our world. In another place, he reminded the early Cenacle missionaries, “A safe and rather accurate measure of our love for God is our love for our neighbor.”

As we prayerfully look at “the apostolic spirit” during this month, we need to beg God the Father, Son, and Spirit to give to each of us and to our Cenacle that “living, burning, operating love of God and neighbor.” God needs our hands, heart, feet, mind, and tongue to accomplish the ongoing mission of Jesus today. Ask for the same spirit of absolute self-giving Love that moved in the heart of Jesus. Allow God to do great things through you!

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: Holiness and Your Baptism

[John Paul II wrote an apostolic letter entitled Christifideles Laici: The Vocation and Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and the World in December 1988. It came in response to and support of a international Synod of Bishops held in 1987. Their theme had been the vocation of the laity in the Church. As will become evident as you read this exhortation of the Holy Father, the Missionary Cenacle's vision and the Church's vision of the role of the laity are totally in union. Father Judge prophetically saw this essential role of lay apostles and missionaries almost eighty years before Christifideles Laici was published! As you read the following selection, try to hear God speaking to you through it personally. Open yourselves to the invitation of the Holy Spirit as God invites you to participate ever more fully and actively in this divine work.]

“1. The lay members of Christ's faithful people (*Christifideles laici*) . . . are those who form that part of the People of God which might be likened to the laborers in the vineyard mentioned in Matthew's Gospel: "For the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard" (Mt 20:1- 2).

“The Gospel parable sets before our eyes the Lord's vast vineyard and the multitude of persons, both men and women, who are called and sent forth by Him to labor in it. The vineyard is the whole world (cf. Mt 13:38), which is to be transformed according to the plan of God in view of the final coming of the kingdom of God.

YOU GO INTO MY VINEYARD TOO

“2. "And going out about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; and to them he said, 'You go into the vineyard too'" (Mt 20:3-4).

“From that distant day the call of the Lord Jesus "You go into my vineyard too" never fails to resound in the course of history: it is addressed to every person who comes into this world.

“In our times, the Church after Vatican II, in a renewed outpouring of the Spirit of Pentecost, has come to a more lively awareness of her missionary nature and has listened again to the voice of her Lord who sends her forth into the world as "the universal sacrament of salvation." [1]

“You go too. The call is a concern not only of pastors, clergy and men and women

religious. The call is addressed to everyone: lay people as well are personally called by the Lord, from whom they receive a mission on behalf of the Church and the world. In preaching to the people St. Gregory the Great recalls this fact and comments on the parable of the laborers in the vineyard: "Keep watch over your manner of life, dear people, and make sure that you are indeed the Lord's laborers. Each person should take into account what he does and consider if he is laboring in the vineyard of the Lord." [2]

“The [Second Vatican] council, in particular, with its rich doctrinal, spiritual and pastoral patrimony, has written as never before on the nature, dignity, spirituality, mission and responsibility of the lay faithful. And the council fathers, re-echoing the call of Christ, have summoned all the lay faithful, both women and men, to labor in the vineyard: "The council, then, makes an earnest plea in the Lord's name that all lay people give a glad, generous and prompt response to the impulse of the Holy Spirit and to the voice of Christ, who is giving them an especially urgent invitation at this moment. Young people should feel that this call is directed to them in particular, and they should respond to it eagerly and magnanimously. The Lord himself renews His invitation to all the lay faithful to come closer to Him every day, and with the recognition that what is His is also their own (Phil 2:5), they ought to associate themselves with Him in His saving mission. Once again He sends them into every town and place where He himself is to come" (cf. Lk 10:1). [3]

“You go into my vineyard too. . . . In this assembly of bishops there was not lacking a qualified representation of the lay faithful, both women and men, which rendered a valuable contribution to the synod proceedings. This was publicly acknowledged in the concluding homily: "We give thanks that during the course of the synod we have not only rejoiced in the participation of the lay faithful (both men and women auditors), but even more so in that the progress of the synodal discussions has enabled us to listen to those whom we invited, representatives of the lay faithful from all parts of the world, from different countries, and to profit from their experience, their advice and the suggestions they have offered out of love for the common cause." [4]

In your daily experience, do you get a sense that the Church sees herself as “missionary”? If yes, what are the “signs” or evidence that the Church is missionary? If you don’t see the Church acting in a “missionary way” in your experience, why do you think that is? Do you feel “personally called by the Lord” to accomplish “a mission on behalf of the Church and the world”? If so, do you have an idea or feeling about what that mission is for right now in your life? How are you accomplishing that mission? If you don’t feel personally called to a mission, ask the Holy Spirit to give you a deepening knowledge of God’s call to you.

p Write down your reflections briefly here:

WEEK I

Monday: “Zealous workers”

From Father Judge:

[The selections from Father Judge for this week are taken from a talk he gave at St. John’s Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on February 9, 1921. His theme was the lay apostolate. This talk, in its entirety, can be found in Monographs 4: Writings of Father Judge: Key Documents published by the Missionary Cenacle Press. As a result of this talk several Cenacles were formed in the Philadelphia area.]

“I have been asked today to speak on the subject of the cooperation of the laity with religious and clergy. Surely we are all aware that in these days of widespread indifference and consequent laxity of morals that to combat the indifference requires a very large army of cooperators. Evil is becoming so multiplied, irreligion finds itself in the halls of learning. In fact, we might say that it stalks religious indifference. It stalks as a specter to the whole land, so much so that priests and sisters with their old fashioned methods realize that they are not capable of coping with the evil of the day. To produce results we must get workers. We must have zealous workers.” (*Monographs 4*, p. 39)

From the Word of God:

“⁹There he went into a cave and spent the night there. Then the word of Yahweh came to him saying, ‘What are you doing here, Elijah?’¹⁰He replied, ‘I am full of jealous zeal for Yahweh Sabaoth, because the Israelites have abandoned your covenant, have torn down your altars and put your prophets to the sword. I am the only one left, and now they want to kill me.’¹¹Then he was told, ‘Go out and stand on the mountain before Yahweh.’ For at that moment Yahweh was going by. A mighty hurricane split the mountains and shattered the rocks before Yahweh. But Yahweh was not in the hurricane. And after the hurricane, an earthquake. But Yahweh was not in the earthquake.¹²And after the earthquake, fire. But Yahweh was not in the fire. And after the fire, a light murmuring sound.¹³And when Elijah heard this, he covered his face with his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. Then a voice came to him, which said, ‘What are you doing here, Elijah?’¹⁴He replied, ‘I am full of jealous zeal for Yahweh, God Sabaoth, because the Israelites have abandoned your covenant, have torn down your altars and put your prophets to the sword. I am the only one left and now they want to kill me.’¹⁵‘Go,’ Yahweh said, ‘go back by the same way to the desert of Damascus.’” (*1 Kings 19:9-15*)

Would you consider yourself a “zealous” person for the Lord? If so, how does this zeal manifest itself? What are the “signs” of your zeal? Be as concrete and practical as possible about this. If not, why not? What are the obstacles to your becoming a “zealous worker”? Ask the Holy Spirit often each day to increase the zeal in your heart for God and God’s cause in the world: “Come, Holy Spirit, increase my zeal for you!”

✎ Write down your reflections briefly here:

Tuesday: “Burning with zeal and love”

From Father Judge:

“We must have [workers] who are like the Apostles themselves and their disciples who went out burning with the zeal and the love of Jesus Christ, convinced of every word He has spoken to them. Their motto ‘Thy Kingdom Come’ and animated with the grace of the Holy spirit, resplendent in their own souls, as a fire that lights up all, forcing them on, driving them in every direction, into every place. We might say driving them as the clouds of the heavens where He wills, to go detaching themselves from everything. I am thinking now of the picture that moves us all, of those early Christians, their detachment from their friends and relatives, their detachment even from themselves, surrendering their won wills and souls in to the hands of the Apostles, to do whatever they were told. This is the spirit that is needed today, men and women who are willing to give up everything, to go out and to seek and to find, to extend the glory of God.” (*Monographs 4*, p. 39)

From the Word of God:

“ In the church at Antioch the following were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen, who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.²One day while they were offering worship to the Lord and keeping a fast, the Holy Spirit said, ‘I want Barnabas and Saul set apart for the work to which I have called them.’³So it was that after fasting and prayer they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

⁴So these two, sent on their mission by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and from there set sail for Cyprus.⁵They landed at Salamis and proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews; John acted as their assistant.⁶They traveled the whole length of the island, and at Paphos they came in contact with a Jewish magician and false prophet called Bar-Jesus.⁷He was one of the attendants of the proconsul Sergius Paulus, who was an extremely intelligent man. The proconsul summoned Barnabas and Saul and asked to hear the word of God (*Acts 13:1-8*)

What do you most admire about the apostles, the early missionaries of the Church? Make a list of the three or four qualities that most attract you. Write them down. Ask the Holy Spirit many times each day, in the name of Jesus, to give you these qualities also. God will do it!

✎ Write down your reflections briefly here:

Wednesday: “Not their goods but themselves”

From Father Judge:

[After speaking of the multiplicity of missionary groups sending missionaries to “Africa and Asia,” Father Judge continues:]

“I am speaking of another movement, a missionary movement right at home in our very midst. The message is that it is not necessary for the pious Catholic lay man or lay woman to leave home in order to extend God’s Kingdom, to do good, to cooperate in that most divine of all works, the salvation of souls. It is not necessary. It may be that there are too many ties and good reasons for keeping them home, but even without leaving friends and relatives and home-times, it is possible. Aye, it is imperative that our Catholic people do work right in the vicinity of our city parishes. The cooperation of the laity, how well we priests know it. We depend entirely upon it. We look to the laity for our subjects, the children. We look to the laity to give their unstinted financial support. They are willing to give, but the must give more. What we ask now of them is not their goods alone but themselves, their own personal consecrated service, to offer at least a part of their free time, that they may go out as representatives or agents or co-laborers of those whose entire lives are given up to the preaching of the gospel, to do good, to extend God’s glory upon this earth, to go out as representatives, as missionaries.....” (*Monographs 4*, p. 39f.)

From the Word of God:

“But as we were judged worthy by God to be entrusted with the gospel, that is how we speak, not as trying to please human beings, but rather God, who judges our hearts. ⁵ Nor, indeed, did we ever appear with flattering speech, as you know, or with a pretext for greed—God is witness—⁶ nor did we seek praise from human beings, either from you or from others,⁷ although we were able to impose our weight as apostles of Christ. Rather, we were gentle among you, as a nursing mother cares for her children. ⁸ With such affection for you, we were determined to share with you not only the gospel of God, but our very selves as well, so dearly beloved had you become to us.

⁹ You recall, brothers, our toil and drudgery. Working night and day in order not to burden any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. ¹⁰ You are witnesses, and so is God, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved toward you believers. ¹¹ As you know, we treated each one of you as a father treats his children, ¹² exhorting and encouraging you and insisting that you conduct yourselves as worthy of the God who calls you into his kingdom and glory.

¹³ And for this reason we too give thanks to God unceasingly, that, in receiving the word of God from hearing us, you received not a human word but, as it truly is, the word of God, which is now at work in you who believe.

“For you, brothers, have become imitators of the churches of God that are in Judea in Christ Jesus.”

(1 Thessalonians 2:4-14)

What are you willing to give for the love of God? How do you actually use your time day in and day out? Take a good look at your days. Where and in what activities do you spend your time. Present your day in your imagination before Jesus. Ask Him how He would wish you to spend your day and time. Listen carefully to what He says. Write it down.

▶ Write down your reflections briefly here:

Thursday: “The Original Idea!”

From Father Judge:

“Now perhaps you may say this is a new thought and yet it is not. In looking back over the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles of St. Paul we are struck with the thought that there were missionaries before the nuns or the monks. St. Paul said he always had his pious women and all other Apostles too, and he recommended them to the different Churches You will notice at the end of the epistle to the Romans the long list of pious women and lay men to whom he sends his salutations and to whom he acknowledges that he owes so much.

“This was the original idea, this was the spirit that the Holy Ghost incited in those first believers, not only that they sanctify themselves by the cooperation with the teaching of the Apostles but they were willing to do anything and everything for the extension of that Kingdom on earth. So I say, it is not a new idea in the Catholic Church; on the contrary it is very old.” (*Monographs 4*, p. 40f.)

From the Word of God:

““Timothy who is working with me, sends greetings to you, and so do my kinsmen Lucius, Jason and Sosipater.²²I, Tertius, who am writing this letter, greet you in the Lord.²³Greetings to you from Gaius, my host here, and host of the whole church. Erastus, the city treasurer, sends greetings to you, and our brother Quartus.

²⁵And now to him who can make you strong in accordance with the gospel that I preach and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, in accordance with that mystery which for endless ages was kept secret²⁶but now (as the prophets wrote) is revealed, as the eternal God commanded, to be made known to all the nations, so that they obey in faith:²⁷to him, the only wise God, give glory through Jesus Christ for ever and ever. Amen.” (*Romans 16:21-27*)

Take a few minutes thinking about those early Christian communities. What did they look like? Who were the members? How did they deal with people in their families, their work environments, their neighborhoods? Did they share with others what they had found in Jesus? How does your life -- and that of your Cenacle community -- compare or contrast with theirs?

p Write down your reflections briefly here:

Friday: “What’s your excuse?”

From Father Judge:

“Today there are many pious souls in every city parish, hundreds, in fact, of them who are not only anxious but whose hearts are thrilled at the very thought that they can do something as ambassadors of Jesus Christ, and sent out by that great Catholic Church . . . that they can do a work which in a sense cannot be done by even the priests and religious.

“Now, my dear friends, I am not afraid to quote the example of those who are outside the Church. The human respect of it all comes home to us, the affected humility: ‘I have not the learning, I have not the knowledge, I have not the knowledge to give a reasons for the faith that is in me.’ I would show to them the picture of so many outside of the Church. Convinced of the falsity of their teachings, we cannot but pay tribute to their interest, their zeal, their enthusiasm and their earnestness. We have the figure of the Salvation Army [woman], and we wonder what is the power behind her, what moves her, what sends her into the slums of our cities. We know she is wrong, she has not the light of the true faith and yet she goes and does, and we are praying all the time that God’s Kingdom may come on earth and we see that simple woman going out as she says to extend it . . . What is the spirit behind them to urge them to do so much. We cannot condemn their motives. We are quite convinced that many of the m are sincere and earnest people, even those of the sect called ‘Latter Day Saints’ whose converts must spend at least a year in extending that gospel, going where they may be sent by the elders of the church..” (*Monographs*, p. 41)

From the Word of God:

“⁴The word of Yahweh came to me, saying:⁵‘Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you came to birth I consecrated you; I appointed you as prophet to the nations.’⁶I then said, ‘Ah, ah, ah, Lord Yahweh; you see, I do not know how to speak: I am only a child!’⁷But Yahweh replied, ‘Do not say, “I am only a child,” for you must go to all to whom I send you and say whatever I command you.’⁸Do not be afraid of confronting them, for I am with you to rescue you, Yahweh declares.’⁹Then Yahweh stretched out his hand and touched my mouth, and Yahweh said to me: ‘There! I have put my words into your mouth.’¹⁰Look, today I have set you over the nations and kingdoms, to uproot and to knock down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant.’” (*Jeremiah 1:4-10*)

As you consider your own life, is there something more you believe that God may be calling you to do for love of God? How does your willingness to sacrifice for your faith compare with that of other religious groups you know? Jeremiah had his “excuses” for not wanting to respond to God’s call to him. What are yours? Ask the Holy Spirit to show you. Write them down.

✎ Write down your reflections briefly here:

WEEK II

Weekend Reflection: The New Evangelization

[Representative bishops of South, Central, and North America met with John Paul II in Rome during 1998 in a special “synod” or meeting in preparation for the new millennium. They prayed about and discussed the situation of the Church in this hemisphere. In January 1999 Pope John Paul issued a pastoral letter entitled Ecclesia in America (The Church in America). It sets out a blueprint for the work of the Church into this next century and beyond. One of the major emphases of the letter deals with what the Holy Father calls “the new evangelization.” A section of this letter follows.]

Sent by Christ

“As the Father has sent me, even so I send you” (Jn 20:21)

“66. The Risen Christ, before his Ascension into heaven, sent the Apostles to preach the Gospel to the whole world (cf. Mk 16:15) and conferred on them the powers needed to carry out this mission. It is significant that, before giving his final missionary mandate, Jesus should speak of the universal power he had received from the Father (cf. Mt 28:18). In effect, Christ passed on to the Apostles the mission which he had received from the Father (cf. Jn 20:21), and in this way gave them a share in his powers.

“Yet “the lay faithful too, precisely as members of the Church, have the vocation and mission of proclaiming the Gospel: they are prepared for this work by the sacraments of Christian initiation and by the gifts of the Holy Spirit”. (239) They have been “in their own way made sharers in the priestly, prophetic and kingly functions of Christ”. (240) Consequently, “the lay faithful, in virtue of their participation in the prophetic mission of Christ, are fully part of this work of the Church” (241) and so should feel called and encouraged to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom. Jesus' words: “You too, go into the vineyard” (Mt 20:4), (242) must be seen as addressed not only to the Apostles but to all who desire to be authentic disciples of the Lord.

“The basic task for which Jesus sends out his disciples is the proclamation of the Good News, that is, evangelization (cf. Mk 16:15-18). Consequently, “to evangelize is the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her most profound identity”. (243) As I have said on other occasions, the new and unique situation in which the world and the Church find themselves at the threshold of the Third Millennium, and the urgent needs which result, mean that the mission of evangelization today calls for a new program which can be defined overall as a “new evangelization”. (244) As the Church's Supreme Pastor, I urgently desire to encourage all the members of God's People, particularly those living in America — where I first appealed for a commitment “new in its ardor, methods and expression” (245) — to take up this project and to

cooperate in carrying it out. In accepting this mission, everyone should keep in mind that the vital core of the new evangelization must be a clear and unequivocal proclamation of the person of Jesus Christ, that is, the preaching of his name, his teaching, his life, his promises and the Kingdom which he has gained for us by his Paschal Mystery. (246)

Jesus Christ, the “good news” and the prime evangelizer

“67. Jesus Christ is the “good news” of salvation made known to people yesterday, today and for ever; but he is also the first and greatest evangelizer. (247) The Church must make the crucified and risen Christ the center of her pastoral concern and her evangelizing activity. “Everything planned in the Church must have Christ and his Gospel as its starting-point”. (248) Therefore, “the Church in America must speak increasingly of Jesus Christ, the human face of God and the divine face of man. It is this proclamation that truly makes an impact on people, awakens and transforms hearts, in a word, converts. Christ must be proclaimed with joy and conviction, but above all by the witness of each one's life”. (249)

“Individual Christians will be able to carry out their mission effectively to the extent that they make the life of the Son of God made man the perfect model for their work of spreading the Gospel. The simplicity of his manner and his choices must be normative for everyone in the work of evangelization. In this perspective, the poor will certainly be considered among the first to be evangelized, following the example of Christ, who said of himself: “The Spirit of the Lord . . . has anointed me to preach good news to the poor” (Lk 4:18). (250)”

At the heart of all evangelization is a living, loving relationship with Jesus Christ. Apart from that, everything is so much wind signifying nothing. Take this opportunity to reaffirm your own faith in and love for Jesus Christ. Open your heart to Him fully. Hold back nothing. As you do this, recognize that John Paul II is calling the Church, especially in the Americas, to a “new evangelization.” The old methods of sharing the Gospel simply are not working in many situations today. What is working in your experience to help share the Gospel message? What is not working? As a Cenacle Lay Missionary, what can you do to help the Gospel be proclaimed more effectively in the providence of your everyday life?

▶ Write down your reflections briefly here:

WEEK II

Monday: The spiritually hungry

From Father Judge:

“We know full well that our Blessed Savior said that on Judgment Day He is going to give a crown of beatitude to those who have done good for Him when He was poor, when He was naked, when He was hungry and thirsty. Are there any of our Catholic lay men or women who know souls that are spiritually hungry, naked and thirsty and who are unwilling to go after them, who feel in their hearts that they possess the truth faith and the remedy for all the ills of the soul, that faith that gives to them such consolation and yet they are unwilling to go out and disperse it? How are they going to stand at Judgment Day with those women [of the Salvation Army] who are deluded enough but, as far as they know, [are] doing, not alone praying.” (*Monographs 4*, p. 41f.)

From the Word of God:

“The word of Yahweh was addressed to me as follows,²“Son of man, speak to the people of your country. Say to them, “When I send the sword against the people of that country, take one of their number and post him as a watchman;³if he sees the sword coming against the country, he must sound his horn to warn the people.⁴If someone hears the sound of the horn but pays no attention and the sword overtakes him and destroys him, he will have been responsible for his own death.⁵He has heard the sound of the horn and paid no attention; his death will be his own responsibility. But the life of someone who pays attention will be secure.⁶“If, however, the watchman has seen the sword coming but has not blown his horn, and so the people are not alerted and the sword overtakes them and destroys a single one of them, that person will indeed die for his guilt, but I shall hold the watchman responsible for his death.”⁷“Son of man I have appointed you as watchman for the House of Israel. When you hear a word from my mouth, warn them from me.⁸If I say to someone wicked, “Evil– doer, you are to die,” and you do not speak to warn the wicked person to renounce such ways, the wicked person will die for this guilt, but I shall hold you responsible for the death.⁹If, however, you do warn someone wicked to renounce such ways and repent, and that person does not repent, then the culprit will die for this guilt, but you yourself will have saved your life.” (*Ezekiel 33:1-9*)

Are there people who are “spiritually hungry, thirsty, and naked” in your life? What is your response to them? What concrete efforts are you doing individually or with your Cenacle to reach out to them? Think of a “success story” where someone who was spiritually hurting found their way back to God . Thank God for that goodness and ask the Spirit for the increased gift of zeal for the spiritually poor and abandoned.

p Write down your reflections briefly here:

Tuesday: Being industrious

From Father Judge:

“I might go further and speak of the great industrial success we see on every side. Our Divine Lord warned us that the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light, so are we impressed as we read the daily paper and travel through our great land. We see everywhere great manufacturing plants. Your city of Philadelphia is one of the greatest manufacturing cities in the world. . . . Going further you find other plants under the same name, offices here and there, scattered in every city and working day and night to produce quantities and quantities of manufactured articles so cheaply. In religion, we Catholics, knowing that we have the truth, that we possess it all, the entire truth, nothing save the truth, yet we do not know how to spread and communicate it to others, or rather we are unwilling to do it. We will see that in the mercantile world they scatter broadcast. They multiply and produce.” (*Monographs 4*, p. 42)

From the Word of God:

“ He also said to his disciples, ‘There was a rich man and he had a steward who was denounced to him for being wasteful with his property.’²He called for the man and said, ‘What is this I hear about you? Draw me up an account of your stewardship because you are not to be my steward any longer.’³Then the steward said to himself, ‘Now that my master is taking the stewardship from me, what am I to do? Dig? I am not strong enough. Go begging? I should be too ashamed.’⁴Ah, I know what I will do to make sure that when I am dismissed from office there will be some to welcome me into their homes.’⁵Then he called his master’s debtors one by one. To the first he said, ‘How much do you owe my master?’⁶“One hundred measures of oil,” he said. The steward said, “Here, take your bond; sit down and quickly write fifty.”⁷To another he said, “And you, sir, how much do you owe?” “One hundred measures of wheat,” he said. The steward said, “Here, take your bond and write eighty.”⁸“The master praised the dishonest steward for his astuteness. For the children of this world are more astute in dealing with their own kind than are the children of light.” (*Luke 16:1-8*)

Think about people in business, sports, or politics -- people who have great success in their fields. What are they willing to sacrifice to achieve this success? What does it cost them? How much are you willing to sacrifice for the extension of God’s kingdom? How industrious and creative are you in sharing the Gospel with others? Ask the Holy Spirit for an ever richer share of this creative, dynamic, industrious spirit.

✎ Write down your reflections briefly here:

Wednesday: Co-laborers, collaboration

From Father Judge:

“ . . . were this idea of the cooperation of the laity closely under the jurisdiction of the bishops, priests, and sisters, backed with authority, oh so much could be accomplished. Without that authority, of course, it would be an individualistic movement. For after all, only the Apostles were charged with the preaching of the gospel. St. Paul tells us how can they teach unless they be sent.

“I understand full well taht this is essential, that is must be under the guidance and direction of those to whom our Divine Lord has given primarily the office of teaching in the Church. You must work as assistants, as co-laborers. Experience shows where it has been tried that not only the individuals who give themselves to the work have reaped an increase of personal sanctity, but they even have been deluged with the graces of the Holy Spirit. . . .” (*Missionary Cenacle Meditations*, p. 50)

From the Word of God:

“This will be the third time I have confronted you. Whatever the misdemeanor, the evidence of two or three witnesses is required to sustain a charge. ²I gave you notice once, and now, though I am not with you, I give notice again, just as when I was with you for a second time, to those who sinned before, and to all others; and it is to this effect, that when I do come next time, I shall have no mercy.³Since you are asking for a proof that it is Christ who speaks in me; he is not weak with you but his power is at work among you;⁴for, though it was out of weakness that he was crucified, he is alive now with the power of God. We, too, are weak in him, but with regard to you we shall live with him by the power of God.⁵Put yourselves to the test to make sure you are in the faith. Examine yourselves. Do you not recognize yourselves as people in whom Jesus Christ is present?—unless, that is, you fail the test.⁶But we, as I hope you will come to recognise, do not fail the test.⁷It is our prayer to God that you may do nothing wrong—not so that we have the credit of passing a test, but because you will be doing what is right, even if we do not pass the test.⁸We have no power to resist the truth; only to further the truth;⁹and we are delighted to be weak if only you are strong. What we ask in our prayers is that you should be made perfect.¹⁰That is why I am writing this while still far away, so that when I am with you I shall not have to be harsh, with the authority that the Lord has given me, an authority that is for building up and not for breaking down.” (*2 Corinthians 13:1-10*)

What is your relationship to the authority in the Church: bishops, deacons and priests? Are you in a unity of heart and action with them? Is their discord and strife? What is your attitude toward those in authority in the Church: respect, admiration, hostility, indifference, obedience? Do you try to cooperate and collaborate with the Church authorities? Solidarity, unity in mind, heart, and action within the Body of Christ is a vital part of missionary life. Ask the Holy Spirit to let you and all the Cenacle share ever more fully in attitudes toward authority that “build up” and not “break down.”

p Write down your reflections briefly here:

Thursday: A “quantity harvest”

From Father Judge:

“[Those] who give themselves to the work . . . have seen wonderful results, like the disciples who came back to our Blessed Savior and said that even the devils told of the wonderful work that they had wrought in the Name of Savior. I say the same experience is felt by the simple man and woman of our parish who has tried to realize the Kingdom of God on earth . . . Personally they are sanctified. Their souls are awakened to a new realization of their faith. Their sanctity increases day by day. Almighty God’s name is glorified. Converts are made in a whole-sale manner of quantity production. The vineyard of the Lord is crowded with simple, humble men and women. They bring in that quantity harvest which is an amazing realization to all. It is the experience of those who have tried and possess the proof that the finger of God is here. The humblest and simplest of all have discovered that perhaps they could not give the reason of the faith that is in them, but at least they have sufficient knowledge to teach the Sign of the Cross, the Our Father, Apostles Creed, and the Ten Commandments. They have been astonished at the ignorance of religious things amongst the people in general and even amongst those who are teachers and preachers. . . .” (*Monographs 4*, p. 43)

From the Word of God:

“After this the Lord appointed seventy–two others and sent them out ahead of him in pairs, to all the towns and places he himself would be visiting.² And he said to them, ‘The harvest is rich but the laborers are few, so ask the Lord of the harvest to send labourers to do his harvesting.’³ Start off now, but look, I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. . . .

“¹⁷The seventy–two came back rejoicing. ‘Lord,’ they said, ‘even the devils submit to us when we use your name.’¹⁸ He said to them, ‘I watched Satan fall like lightning from heaven.’¹⁹ Look, I have given you power to tread down serpents and scorpions and the whole strength of the enemy; nothing shall ever hurt you.²⁰ Yet do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you; rejoice instead that your names are written in heaven.’” (*Luke 10:1-3, 17-20*)

Picture yourself being sent out on mission by the Lord. How does He look at you? What does His voice sound like? What does He say? Where does He send you? With whom does He send you? Now tell Him about your missionary life and work. Share with Him your successes and joys as did those first disciples. Let that joy and hope enter deeply within you.

Write down your reflections briefly here:

Friday: “Laborers by thousands”

From Father Judge:

“We know men [and women] of our colleges, universities, and high schools too who say that the spirit of Anti-Christ is there. The young men [and women] who sit under these professors are absolutely in danger of losing their faith. They tell us ‘I had to leave that university to save my faith.’ Surely never were the powers of evil so bold as they are today, never did they try to tear down institutions of religion as they do now.

“I say the harvest is so great it becomes necessary to produce laborers by thousands and thousands. Vocations to the Sisterhood and Priesthood, we all know how scarce they are. Surely they have not kept pace with the need, but on the other hand when our Catholic men and women find out that without abandoning their professions or business or their homes that they are able to do something authoritatively under direction, to do it effectively and see the results themselves in their own lives, that is encouragement and there is no difficulty in interesting others.” (*Monographs 4*, p.43)

From the Word of God:

“While they were still talking to the people the priests came up to them, accompanied by the captain of the Temple and the Sadducees.²They were extremely annoyed at their teaching the people the resurrection from the dead by proclaiming the resurrection of Jesus.³They arrested them, and, as it was already late, they kept them in prison till the next day.⁴But many of those who had listened to their message became believers; the total number of men had now risen to something like five thousand..” (*Acts 4:1-2*)

How can the mission of Jesus be spread? How can we invite more laborers to work in the harvest? Who do you know that would be a good missionary? Be specific. Name two or three people. Ask the Holy Spirit to call them to this apostolic way of life. Speak to your local Custodian about them. After consulting with the Custodian, speak to them about the Cenacle and invite them to a meeting. More and more workers are needed to undertake this mammoth task of the “new evangelization.”

▶ Write down your reflections briefly here:

WEEK III

Weekend Reflection: Doing Good in the World

[Continuing reading from Ecclesia in America, the 1999 apostolic letter of Pope John Paul II on the situation of the Church in the Americas. In this section, he is especially discussing the demands of the “new evangelization” as we enter this next millennium.]

67. As I have already noted, love for the poor must be preferential, but not exclusive. The Synod Fathers observed that it was in part because of an approach to the pastoral care of the poor marked by a certain exclusiveness that the pastoral care for the leading sectors of society has been neglected and many people have thus been estranged from the Church. (251) The damage done by the spread of secularism in these sectors — political or economic, union-related, military, social or cultural — shows how urgent it is that they be evangelized, with the encouragement and guidance of the Church's Pastors, who are called by God to care for everyone. They will be able to count on the help of those who — fortunately still numerous — have remained faithful to Christian values. In this regard the Synod Fathers have recognized “the commitment of many leaders to building a just and fraternal society”. (252) With their support, Pastors will face the not easy task of evangelizing these sectors of society. With renewed fervor and updated methods, they will announce Christ to leaders, men and women alike, insisting especially on the formation of consciences on the basis of the Church's social doctrine. This formation will act as the best antidote to the not infrequent cases of inconsistency and even corruption marking socio-political structures. Conversely, if this evangelization of the leadership sector is neglected, it should not come as a surprise that many who are a part of it will be guided by criteria alien to the Gospel and at times openly contrary to it.

The encounter with Christ spurs evangelization

“68. An encounter with the Lord brings about a profound transformation in all who do not close themselves off from him. The first impulse coming from this transformation is to communicate to others the richness discovered in the experience of the encounter. This does not mean simply teaching what we have come to know but also, like the Samaritan woman, enabling others to encounter Jesus personally: “Come and see” (Jn 4:29). The result will be the same as that which took place in the heart of the Samaritans, who said to the woman: “It is no longer because of your words that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world” (Jn 4:42). The Church, which draws her life from the permanent and mysterious presence of her Risen Lord, has as the core of her mission a duty “to lead all people to encounter Christ”. (253)

“She is called to proclaim that Christ is indeed the Living One, the Son of God, who became man, died and rose again. He alone is the Savior of every person and of the whole person; as the Lord of history, he is constantly at work in the Church and in the world through

his Spirit, until the end of time. This presence of the Risen One in the Church makes it possible for us to encounter him, thanks to the invisible working of his life-giving Spirit. This encounter takes place in the faith received from and lived in the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ. The encounter with Christ then has an essentially ecclesial dimension, and it leads to a life commitment. Indeed, “to encounter the living Christ means to accept the love by which he loves us first, to choose him, to adhere freely to his person and his plan, which consists in proclaiming and in bringing about the Kingdom of God”. (254)

“The calling gives rise to a search for Jesus: “‘Rabbi’ (which means Teacher), ‘where are you staying’. He said to them: ‘Come and see’. They came and saw where he was staying; and they stayed that day with him” (Jn 1:38-39). This “staying” is not limited to the day of one’s call, but rather extends to the whole of life. To follow Jesus involves living as he lived, accepting his message, adopting his way of thinking, embracing his destiny and sharing his project, which is the plan of the Father: it involves inviting everyone to communion with the Trinity and to communion among ourselves in a just and fraternal society”. (255) The burning desire to invite others to encounter the One whom we have encountered is the start of the evangelizing mission to which the whole Church is called. This mission has become particularly urgent today in America, five hundred years after the first evangelization, as we prepare to commemorate with gratitude the two thousandth anniversary of the coming of the only-begotten Son of God into the world.

A “leader” is one who has the ability to influence others. Leadership can be familial, economic, cultural, religious, political. Do you consider yourself a “leader”? Why? Why not? Do you have the ability to influence others? What others? How do you use this influence? Who are “leaders” with whom you come into contact? How do they influence the lives of others? In what way can you impact their lives in a way to lead them closer to Christ? Has your own relationship to Christ led you to a “life commitment”? In what way?

p Write down your reflections briefly here:

WEEK III

Monday: “A Spiritual Militia”

From Father Judge:

[Father Judge wrote an article entitled “A Spiritual Militia” for the American Ecclesiastical Review in September 1919. In the article he proposed a period of volunteer missionary for Catholics. He also revealed his own understanding of an “Apostolic Spirit.” We will be reading selections from this article this week.]

“The world, recently, was amazed by the spontaneous and generous response of the youth of our country to the call to the colors [at the time of World War I.] Recruits came from every walk and station of life into the democracy of patriotic endeavor. All other interests were cast aside; pleasures were forgotten and, because of the nation’s crisis, at the magic word of patriotism, millions generously suffered hardships and resolutely faced death . . .

“Right here, the priest likewise can begin an inquiry of even a higher order, and one that will be of the greatest importance to his sacred ministry: Can this magnanimity of spirit be supernaturalized and turned into a working force for religion? In other words, is not the time ripe for the organization of a Spiritual Militia?”
(Monographs 4, p.28)

From the Word of God:

“As his fellow-workers, we urge you not to let your acceptance of his grace come to nothing.²As he said, ‘At the time of my favour I have answered you; on the day of salvation I have helped you’; well, now is the real time of favour, now the day of salvation is here.³We avoid putting obstacles in anyone’s way, so that no blame may attach to our work of service;⁴but in everything we prove ourselves authentic servants of God; by resolute perseverance in times of hardships, difficulties and distress;⁵when we are flogged or sent to prison or mobbed; labouring, sleepless, starving;⁶in purity, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness; in the Holy Spirit, in a love free of affectation;⁷in the word of truth and in the power of God; by using the weapons of uprightness for attack and for defence;⁸in times of honour or disgrace, blame or praise; taken for impostors and yet we are genuine;⁹unknown and yet we are acknowledged; dying, and yet here we are, alive; scourged but not executed;¹⁰in pain yet always full of joy; poor and yet making many people rich; having nothing, and yet owning everything.” (2 Corinthians 6: 1-10)

What are the “noblest,” most “magnanimous” (great-spirited) ideals you have in your heart? Allow yourself to dream a great dream of what you would most desire. What would you be willing to give for, to sacrifice for the realization of that dream? Now ask the Holy Spirit to make you as resolute and great-spirited in the following of Jesus!

Write down your reflections briefly here:

Tuesday: No “neutral” with Christ!

From Father Judge:

“Patriotically we urge our young men to give a period of their life to their country, why not to the Church? If army training means much to them, spiritual training will mean more. If their service is of profit to the country, it will be so to the Church too. Is not every priest conditioned to encourage some good-hearted boy or girl to give at least two or three years service to some good work? Should not our children be taught [that], of all service, that given to the Church is the highest?

“This is the laymen’s hour, and we will be wise if we but practically note what a power one of our flock may be for good or evil.

“Our Divine Lord divides the human family into two classes, those who work for Him and those who do not He stands at the cradle of every generation to receive its devotion or to challenge its disloyalty. If our young men and young women could be made to understand that with Christ there is no neutral, that they must therefore either be for Him or against Him, either working for Him or for His enemy, the devil, . . . every parish would have many Saint Simons of Cyrene and Saint Veronicas.” (*Monographs 4*, p. 28)

From the Word of God:

“³⁰Anyone who is not with me is against me, and anyone who does not gather in with me throws away. . . .³³Make a tree sound and its fruit will be sound; make a tree rotten and its fruit will be rotten. For the tree can be told by its fruit.³⁴You brood of vipers, how can your speech be good when you are evil? For words flow out of what fills the heart.³⁵Good people draw good things from their store of goodness; bad people draw bad things from their store of badness.” (*Matthew 12:30,33-35*)

Sit or kneel before the Cross. Ask yourself as honestly as you possibly can: “am I with Him or against Him?” With Him or against Him. Remember there is no “neutral,” no “middle ground” with God. As the Twelve Step recovery programs say, “half measures avail nothing.” Speak to Jesus on the Cross about where you truly are in relationship to Him. Ask Him for the grace to stand ever more firmly, resolutely, and unashamedly under His banner.

▶ Write down your reflections briefly here:

Wednesday: “Stand for their Church”

From Father Judge:

“If our people did but realize that in the little circle where Divine Providence has placed them, they may become an invincible power for good; that they may stand for their Church, alert for its interests, zealous to reclaim the wayward, to strengthen the weak, to hinder the perverse and to save little ones from scandal, what allies we would have in our priestly care for souls. To effect this blessed condition, three things are necessary: good will, a spirit of sacrifice, and the priestly encouragement and enlightenment of the faithful. Good will is an essential to Church progress and missionary activity, and of nothing has the Church so much need from her children. Nothing takes its place. Our Lord glorified good will with a pledged blessing of peace, ‘On earth peace to men of good will,’ (*Luke 2:14*); ‘But glory and honor and peace to everyone that worketh good’ (*Romans 2:10*); and over the lack of good will the Holy Spirit has this lament, ‘There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. All have turned out of the way, they have become unprofitable together; there is none that doeth good, there is not so much as one’ (*Romans 3:10-13*).” (*Monographs 4*, p. 28f.)

From the Word of God:

“⁵Slaves, be obedient to those who are, according to human reckoning, your masters, with deep respect and sincere loyalty, as you are obedient to Christ:⁶not only when you are under their eye, as if you had only to please human beings, but as slaves of Christ who wholeheartedly do the will of God.⁷Work willingly for the sake of the Lord and not for the sake of human beings.⁸Never forget that everyone, whether a slave or a free man, will be rewarded by the Lord for whatever work he has done well.⁹And those of you who are employers, treat your slaves in the same spirit; do without threats, and never forget that they and you have the same Master in heaven and there is no favoritism with him.” (*Ephesians 6:5-9*)

Who do you “work for”? And is your service “willing”and “wholehearted” or just “getting by,” doing what needs to be done? What is Jesus’ invitation to you as His missionary, His disciple? An apostolic spirit, according to Father Judge, is characterized by a great “wholeheartedness,” a willingness to “go the extra mile” for the mission. Is that the type of spirit you have now? If so, thank God. If not, ask the Holy Spirit to grant it to you ever more fully. But be careful! God gives us what we ask especially when we ask for an “apostolic spirit”!

▶ Write down your reflections briefly here:

Thursday: Love, sacrifice -- “convertible terms”

From Father Judge:

“Of good will there is an abundance; but, like the scattered waters of a meadow which become a stagnant mass, offensive and disease-breeding unless turned to a useful purpose in conduit and stream, good will must be directed and streamed into channels of good Our Catholics have great impulses for good; they seek leadership.

“A spirit of sacrifice is necessary in the priest and in the workers. If the leader prays and works for this grace, he will taste the sweetest fruits of his ministry and accomplish one of its divinest ends, to encourage others to good If the priest is self-sacrificing, this blessed grace will become contagious, and the love of God in his own heart, through the grace of the Holy Spirit, will be instilled in the hearts of others. After all, the measure of our sacrifice is the measure of our love of God. Love of God and sacrifice for God are convertible terms. It is delightful to serve; those whom we love much we will serve much ” (*Monographs 4*, p. 29f.)

From the Word of God:

³He was at Bethany in the house of Simon, a man who had suffered from a virulent skin-disease; he was at table when a woman came in with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment, pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the ointment on his head.⁴Some who were there said to one another indignantly, ‘Why this waste of ointment?’⁵Ointment like this could have been sold for over three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor’; and they were angry with her.⁶But Jesus said, ‘Leave her alone. Why are you upsetting her? What she has done for me is a good work.⁷You have the poor with you always, and you can be kind to them whenever you wish, but you will not always have me.⁸She has done what she could: she has anointed my body beforehand for its burial.⁹In truth I tell you, wherever throughout all the world the gospel is proclaimed, what she has done will be told as well, in remembrance of her.’” (*Mark 14:3-10*)

“The measure of our sacrifice is the measure of our love for God.” Do you find it “delightful to serve”? If so, why? If not, why not? How much are you willing to “sacrifice” for the love of God and the needs of your neighbor? Is your service and sacrifice loving and willing like the woman in today’s Gospel reading? Or do you serve begrudging the fact that you have to or resenting the circumstances in which you find yourself? Whom are you serving?

p Write down your reflections briefly here:

Friday: “Thy Kingdom come!”

From Father Judge:

“‘Hallowed be Thy Name, Thy Kingdom come.’ This is the prayerful lesson of our Divine Lord. Can there be found a more perfect expression of the Divine Mind and Will than He gives us in these words? He would have this to be in our hearts and upon our lips. Anything that concerns this heartfelt wish of our Divine Lord is to us of the keenest interest. Therefore, even though burdened with many . . . cares, our zeal and love of our Holy Religion have no limits but are as far-reaching as the stretches of the Universal Church. Any plan that will help to realize these words of our Blessed Lord will be a welcome message . . . Encouraged by this, prayerfully and humbly we [offer] the following considerations

“A spiritual militia is not a mere theory. The name may be new, but the idea is as ancient as the Church. The plan of encouraging young men and women to offer two or three years of their life to the service of God has the cordial approbation of the Papal Delegate . . . and other prelates. . . . During some years of a long missionary career, pastors were urged in their own parishes to engage the help of those who showed some generosity above the ordinary. As a consequence, . . . children are being saved from fatal dangers; a very large number of sacramental reconciliations have taken place; and many -- after God’s grace -- will owe their eternity to quiet and devoted lay apostles” (*Monographs 4*, p. 30f.)

From the Word of God:

“²Now John had heard in prison what Christ was doing and he sent his disciples to ask him,³‘Are you the one who is to come, or are we to expect someone else?’⁴Jesus answered, ‘Go back and tell John what you hear and see;⁵the blind see again, and the lame walk, those suffering from virulent skin-diseases are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life and the good news is proclaimed to the poor; ⁶and blessed is anyone who does not find me a cause of falling.’” (*Matthew 11:2-6*)

Jesus said that the Kingdom of God is like a mustard seed or a bit of yeast -- small, seemingly insignificant but powerfully effective. Where do you see the Kingdom of God becoming a reality in your daily life? Be specific; think of particular people, places, and circumstances. Thank God for that Kingdom that is there coming to birth. Where do you notice the absence of the Kingdom of God? Again, be specific regarding people, circumstances, places. What do you think the Holy Spirit might be calling you to do to help the Kingdom of God come there also? Ask for the grace to be faithful to the Spirit’s inspiration and call.

Write down your reflections briefly here:

WEEK IV

Weekend Reflection: “Pressing Needs”

[From Christifideles Laici, an encyclical letter of Pope John Paul II on the role of the lay faithful in the mission of Jesus today:]

*The Pressing Needs of the World Today:
"Why do you stand here idle all day?"*

“3. The basic meaning of this synod and the most precious fruit desired as a result of it is the lay faithful's hearkening to the call of Christ the Lord to work in His vineyard, to take an active, conscientious and responsible part in the mission of the Church in this great moment in history, made especially dramatic by occurring on the threshold of the third millennium.

“A new state of affairs today both in the Church and in social, economic, political and cultural life, calls with a particular urgency for the action of the lay faithful. If lack of commitment is always unacceptable, the present time renders it even more so. It is not permissible for anyone to remain idle.

“We continue in our reading of the Gospel parable: "And about the 11th hour he went out and found others standing; and he said to them, 'Why do you stand here idle all day?' They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You go into the vineyard too'" (Mt 20:6-7).

“Since the work that awaits everyone in the vineyard of the Lord is so great, there is no place for idleness. With even greater urgency the "householder" repeats his invitation: "You go into my vineyard too."

“The voice of the Lord clearly resounds in the depths of each of Christ's followers, who through faith and the sacraments of Christian initiation is made like to Jesus Christ, is incorporated as a living member in the Church and has an active part in her mission of salvation. The voice of the Lord also comes to be heard through the historic events of the Church and humanity, as the council reminds us: "The People of God believes that it is led by the Spirit of the Lord, who fills the whole world. Moved by this faith it tries to discern authentic signs of God's presence and purpose in the events, the needs and the longings which it shares with other people of our time. For faith throws a new light on all things and makes known the full ideal to which God has called each individual, and thus guides the mind toward solutions which are fully human."[6]

“It is necessary, then, to keep a watchful eye on this our world, with its problems and values, its unrest and hopes, its defeats and triumphs: a world whose economic, social, political and cultural affairs pose problems and grave difficulties in light of the description provided by the council in the pastoral constitution, *Gaudium et Spes*. [7] This, then, is the vineyard; this is the

field in which the faithful are called to fulfill their mission. Jesus wants them, as He wants all His disciples, to be the "salt of the earth" and the "light of the world" (cf. Mt 5:13- 14). But what is the actual state of affairs of the "earth" and the "world," for which Christians ought to be "salt" and "light"?

“The variety of situations and problems that exist in our world is indeed great and rapidly changing. For this reason it is all the more necessary to guard against generalizations and unwarranted simplifications. It is possible, however, to highlight some trends that are emerging in present-day society. The Gospel records that the weeds and the good grain grew together in the farmer's field. The same is true in history, where in everyday life there often exist contradictions in the exercise of human freedom, where there is found, side by side and at times closely intertwined, evil and good, injustice and justice, anguish and hope.

In your experience and in the providence of your everyday life, what are “the pressing needs” the world faces? When faced with these challenges today, how do you respond? Do you choose to simply ignore them? Feel overwhelmed by them? Become passionate and desirous of doing something? Begin to analyze and plan what you might do? Pray? Think about them and talk about them? Act? What do you think Jesus would do? How would He respond if He were in your place right now?

p Write down your reflections briefly here:

WEEK IV

Monday: Missionary Volunteers

From Father Judge:

[Father Judge's missionary work in Alabama was made possible only through the generosity of some young men and women who came to donate their time and energy to the mission. Although the title was not used at that time, these were actually the first "Missionary Cenacle Volunteers" who arrived in Opelika, Alabama in January 1916. Ever since then, Missionary Cenacle Volunteers have been serving in the mission of the Church throughout the United States, the Caribbean, and Latin America. Father Judge continued to talk about the work of these first volunteers in his article on The Spiritual Militia.]

“Their [the Vincentian Fathers in charge of the mission] anxiety, then, was to enlist the cooperation of those who would [do] good works. Hence their joy when a number of young men and young women volunteered as teachers and catechists, or who in some capacity would touch the family and social life of the locality. The chief concern was to reach the mind of the child; in this lies the real hope of the mission. It surely is a sorrow of sorrows to know these little ones are maliciously filled with hatred and fear of the most glorious work that Christ accomplished on earth, His Church. How could we reach their minds? As far as the priests were concerned, it appeared to be an impossibility, inasmuch as many children [in this geographic area] are brought up in dread and contempt of them. It was left to the Lay Apostolate to solve this seemingly insuperable difficulty. To tell of their success is to relate the story of three years of hardship and struggle against insult and opposition. ” (*Monographs 4*, p. 33f.)

From the Word of God:

“²⁴Then Jesus said to his disciples, ‘If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him renounce himself and take up his cross and follow me.²⁵ Anyone who wants to save his life will lose it; but anyone who loses his life for my sake will find it.²⁶ What, then, will anyone gain by winning the whole world and forfeiting his life? Or what can anyone offer in exchange for his life?’²⁷ ‘For the Son of man is going to come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then he will reward each one according to his behavior.²⁸ In truth I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of man coming with his kingdom.’” (*Matthew 16:24-28*)

One early dimension of the Cenacle missionary vocation was men and women giving a year or more of their lives directly to some area of pressing need. Have you ever considered this possibility for yourself? Have you served before as a short or long-term missionary volunteer? What was the experience like for you? What did you learn from it? Do you encourage other Catholic women and men to consider giving of themselves in this way?

Write down your reflections briefly here:

Tuesday: Pressing on despite the cost

From Father Judge:

The first Missionary Cenacle Volunteers started the mission school in Alabama “with three children. A perfect bedlam of hate and insult was let loose against them. The meanest kind of trickery and unprincipled obstructive tactics were employed by their enemies. They were refused dwellings, or driven from the if they found some one with enough heart to give them shelter. They were even forced to share a barn with turkeys, rats, and snakes as their companions. Undaunted, they persevered. Their modesty, charity, meekness, and Christian refinement caused sentiment to turn gradually in their favor. The school began to increase. During that time many an insult, patiently suffered, they offered to Him who for them suffered so much. God was touched by their constancy, and He realized in their favor the words of the Psalmist, ‘Trust in the Lord and do good, and dwell in the land: and thou shalt be fed with its riches’ (*Psalms 36:3*). Easter of this year [1919] saw over three hundred pupils on the roll . . . Thank God! Now Catholicity has an exponent here in a number of Christian ladies, who by their charm and grace and modesty show that the Catholic Church is the mother of all that is sweet, refined, gracious and lovable.” (*Monographs 4*, p. 34)

From the Word of God:

“With so many witnesses in a great cloud all around us, we too, then, should throw off everything that weighs us down and the sin that clings so closely, and with perseverance keep running in the race which lies ahead of us.²Let us keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, who leads us in our faith and brings it to perfection: for the sake of the joy which lay ahead of him, he endured the cross, disregarding the shame of it, and has taken his seat at the right of God’s throne.³Think of the way he persevered against such opposition from sinners and then you will not lose heart and come to grief.⁴In the fight against sin, you have not yet had to keep fighting to the point of bloodshed.” (*Hebrews 12:1-4*)

The early Cenacle Lay Missionaries suffered taunts, severe physical deprivation and even threat of bodily harm. They truly are a “great cloud of witnesses” who have preceded us. Take a few moments to thank God for the faith, love, and perseverance of those early Cenacle Missionaries as well as the fidelity of Father Judge, Mother Boniface, Doctor Healy and so many others. As you “run the race,” do you sometimes become discouraged? What would the reading from Hebrews suggest we do in times of discouragement or temptation?

✎ Write down your reflections briefly here:

Wednesday: “A sense of moral responsibility”

From Father Judge:

[Father Judge addressed the National Conference of Catholic Charities in 1923. In this talk he laid out some general principles essential for missionary work. For the next several days we will be reading from this conference.]

“With your kind indulgence, I will speak not so much of Italian work [missionary work in the Italian immigrant community] as of Catholic work. I will therefore lay down principles and state doctrine which can be applied generally, whether it be a question of Italian work or German work or French work or Irish work, or any work of good will for our neighbor.

“The gospel of charity is a closed book. There is no new revelation to be made in this. Our Blessed Savior admirably, perfectly, divinely has instructed us in our relations with our neighbor and the methods of dealing with him. He has given us two precepts of charity, the one concerns Himself, God, the other concerns our neighbor. Who is our neighbor, how we should minister to our neighbor, he has defined. There remains to us, then, a sense of moral responsibility to our neighbor, of loving and helping him in God. It seems to me the love of our neighbor is a safe and rather accurate measure of our love of God. We are to love our neighbor as ourselves. This love consists in wishing for him those blessings and graces and goods we would wish for ourselves.” (*Monographs 4*, p. 76)

From the Word of God:

“But the man was anxious to justify himself and said to Jesus, ‘And who is my neighbor?’³⁰In answer Jesus said, ‘A man was once on his way down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell into the hands of bandits; they stripped him, beat him and then made off, leaving him half dead.’³¹Now a priest happened to be traveling down the same road, but when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side.³²In the same way a Levite who came to the place saw him, and passed by on the other side.³³But a Samaritan traveler who came on him was moved with compassion when he saw him.³⁴He went up to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them. He then lifted him onto his own mount and took him to an inn and looked after him.³⁵Next day, he took out two denarii and handed them to the innkeeper and said, ‘Look after him, and on my way back I will make good any extra expense you have.’³⁶Which of these three, do you think, proved himself a neighbor to the man who fell into the bandits’ hands?’³⁷He replied, ‘The one who showed pity towards him.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Go, and do the same yourself.’” (*Luke 10: 29-37*)

Do you have a sense of “moral responsibility” concerning your “neighbor”? If so, what sort of action does this sense of moral responsibility call forth from you? For you, who is “your neighbor”? The Samaritans were a totally despised group. How do you deal with people who are despised, rejected, marginalized? What is your response to them?

Write down your reflections briefly here:

Thursday: Both spiritual and temporal

From Father Judge:

“As a man and a Christian I must order my life [according to Jesus law of love of God and neighbor]. As a priest, I must be jealous of my neighbor’s rights to see that they are not injured, and zealous to instruct those whom my ministry affects in their duties and relations to their neighbor. Any method or system, any movement that helps the neighbor into his own, should be welcomed by the priest as it helps him to absolve himself of one of his most priestly duties. He must, however, analyze and investigate these methods and vigilantly observe how they minister to the neighbor. The neighbor’s spiritual needs must be served first and ever safeguarded. Any method, then, or system that shouts out the soul’s interests and does not help the individual to realize the purpose of his creation -- the salvation of his soul -- must be placed under suspicion and be considered as a menace to his welfare. Agencies and agents must be trained to serve him in an orderly way so that this spiritual interests will not be in danger and his temporal needs will not be neglected.” (*Monographs 4*, p. 77)

From the Word of God:

“¹³A man in the crowd said to him, ‘Master, tell my brother to give me a share of our inheritance.’¹⁴He said to him, ‘My friend, who appointed me your judge, or the arbitrator of your claims?’¹⁵Then he said to them, ‘Watch, and be on your guard against avarice of any kind, for life does not consist in possessions, even when someone has more than he needs.’¹⁶Then he told them a parable, ‘There was once a rich man who, having had a good harvest from his land,¹⁷thought to himself, “What am I to do? I have not enough room to store my crops.”¹⁸Then he said, “This is what I will do: I will pull down my barns and build bigger ones, and store all my grain and my goods in them,¹⁹and I will say to my soul: My soul, you have plenty of good things laid by for many years to come; take things easy, eat, drink, have a good time.”²⁰But God said to him, “Fool! This very night the demand will be made for your soul; and this hoard of yours, whose will it be then?”²¹So it is when someone stores up treasure for himself instead of becoming rich in the sight of God.’ (*Luke 12:13-21*)

The ultimate work of the missionary is to help an individual enter into an ever deepening relationship with God. Material assistance, education, cultural or sports programs have an important place; but their work is incomplete if they stop there. When you reach out to a person, are you content to stop with the material assistance you offer? Are you looking for ways always to lead this person into a deeper, living communion with God the Father, Son, and Spirit? To stop on the level of the material would be to deny the person we are serving the truly great treasure we bear.

p Write down your reflections briefly here:

Friday: All one in Christ

From Father Judge:

“There is a danger of creating a caste in charity workers. An impression could be produced that only those advantaged with education or those having culture or easy living conditions can do good. If the great body of the faithful can be taught that they are to spread their holy faith, that they are to be solicitous for their weaker brother and sister, then we are beginning a great missionary movement in the United States. They must realize that our holy faith is all that they have been taught. They must realize it is the faith for which men have lived and died and that the loss of this faith to themselves or to others is of all calamities, the greatest. This truth is easily within their capacity; in fact, they eagerly reach out for it. It has been my experience that the people of every day life are really great missionaries and charity workers. Every priest has converts. I have had converts but, if I speak to you in simplicity and candor, I must admit that others were responsible for my converts. Looking over a missionary experience of years, I must confess that in the converts who came to me, I was but a party to the fact with my converts. The first agent in those conversions generally was some man or woman in the office, store or factory, school or sick-room.” (*Monographs 4*, p. 78)

From the Word of God:

“Therefore, although in Christ I have no hesitations about telling you what your duty is,⁹I am rather appealing to your love, being what I am, Paul, an old man, and now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus.¹⁰I am appealing to you for a child of mine, whose father I became while wearing these chains: I mean Onesimus. ¹¹He was of no use to you before, but now he is useful both to you and to me.¹²I am sending him back to you—that is to say, sending you my own heart.¹³I should have liked to keep him with me; he could have been a substitute for you, to help me while I am in the chains that the gospel has brought me.¹⁴However, I did not want to do anything without your consent; it would have been forcing your act of kindness, which should be spontaneous.¹⁵I suppose you have been deprived of Onesimus for a time, merely so that you could have him back for ever,¹⁶no longer as a slave, but something much better than a slave, a dear brother; especially dear to me, but how much more to you, both on the natural plane and in the Lord.¹⁷So if you grant me any fellowship with yourself, welcome him as you would me;¹⁸if he has wronged you in any way or owes you anything, put it down to my account.¹⁹I am writing this in my own hand: I, Paul, shall pay it back—I make no mention of a further debt, that you owe your very self to me!” (*Philemon 8-19*)

Paul saw the immense value in the escaped slave Onesimus. He led him to a knowledge and love of Jesus. He was for Paul like a son. In the Christian way, each human being is of infinite value and importance. Social classes and distinction matter not at all. How do you deal with social classes and distinctions? Are they important to you? Be as honest as you can be. Ask for the grace to see ever more clearly and love all peoples equally as beloved sisters and brothers in the Lord. God can show you the truth of our oneness and unity in Christ Jesus. This is the essence of the apostolic spirit -- a universal love that embraces all humanity and all creation.

▶ Write down your reflections briefly here: