

# Lesson #6

## *The Rule of Life, Part 1*

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

*To begin studying the Rule of Life and see how it applies to our lives and the Church.*

**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*

In the last lesson on the “The Apostolic Spirit,” we looked at the need for self-understanding. Self-knowledge, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, leads to enhanced knowledge and love of God. The two go hand in hand. Father Judge, following the teaching of St. Francis de Sales and others, recommended that each missionary have a “practice” they were always working to develop. This “practice” was a virtue or attitude in which they found themselves weak and needed to grow.

Some Cenacles have found it helpful for each Cenacle associate to develop a “Personal Growth Plan.” Simply put, it is a modern day adaptation of the idea of the practice. It highlights areas of our lives we ought to regularly examine. It asks simply, what are your **goals** or **objectives** for growth in this particular dimension of your life? Then it asks, what is your **plan** to help you attain these objectives and what are the **resources** you have to assist you in this? Finally, what sort of **scheduling** or **timetable** are you going to follow in working toward these goals and implementing your plan for growth? You might want to try to fill out the following Personal Growth Plan on your own, and then review it with a trusted spiritual friend or guide.

## **PERSONAL GROWTH PLAN**

### *Emotional Maturity:*

Goals/Objectives \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Plan/Resources \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Scheduling/Timetable \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### *Spirituality:*

Goals/Objectives \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Plan/Resources \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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Scheduling/Timetable\_\_\_\_\_

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***Apostolic Spirit:***

Goals/Objectives\_\_\_\_\_

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Plan/Resources\_\_\_\_\_

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Scheduling/Timetable\_\_\_\_\_

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***Community/Cenacle/Family:***

Goals/Objectives\_\_\_\_\_

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Plan/Resources\_\_\_\_\_

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Scheduling/Timetable\_\_\_\_\_

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***Study/Learning:***

Goals/Objectives\_\_\_\_\_

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Plan/Resources\_\_\_\_\_

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Scheduling/Timetable\_\_\_\_\_

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# *Introduction*

The *Rule of Life and Constitution* of the Missionary Cenacle Apostolate is just thirty-three paragraphs long. And yet it contains the essential core of the vocation and spirituality of a Cenacle Lay Missionary. It will be our privilege over the next several weeks to look more carefully at the *Rule of Life and Constitution* (sometimes simply referred to as the *Rule of Life* or *Rule* in this workbook.) Each paragraph is relatively brief but emphasizes another dimension of the vocation. The meaning of each and its implications for our lives are profound and long-lasting if we look just a little deeper at them.

And so over the next eight weeks we will look at different paragraphs from the *Rule* each day together with a Scripture relating to that particular theme. Take your time praying over each paragraph. Although the column heading says “From Father Judge,” actually only the italicized words in the *Rule* are direct quotes from Father Judge. However, each paragraph represents a distillation of some fundamental element of his thought.

Don’t be fooled by their brevity. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you the deeper meaning there as it relates to your life and call as a missionary. The first of the weekend reflections is a concise history of how the *Rule* came about. What will become clear there, hopefully, is that this *Rule of Life* is shared by all the branches of the Missionary Cenacle Family. Most of the essential elements of the *Rule* are the same for the religious branches and the secular institute. We share a common heritage, a common vocation, a common spirituality. The other weekend reflections consist of a more in-depth look at certain key paragraphs from the *Rule*.

Peace! May this time spent prayerfully entering into the *Rule of Life and Constitution* of the Missionary Cenacle Apostolate be a time of growth in commitment to and understanding of this missionary way of life.

# *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:*

### **“Be united in following my rule of life ...”**

*(Philippians 3:17)*

There is nothing more boring than rules, no surer recipe for glassy-eyed boredom than a review of “handbooks” or organizational “by-laws.” So if you’re tempted to get a severe case of the yawns as you think about reading or studying the *Missionary Cenacle Rule of Life*, don’t be surprised. But we would invite you to stifle that yawn for just a moment and take a second look. It might be a lot different than you think!

First, the Cenacle *Rule of Life* lays out a way to holiness based on experience. It does not present so much “rules” as a spirit. The Rule offers a concrete, practical way to live the Gospel today -- an apostolic or missionary spirituality for men and women in every walk of life. The prodigious apostle Paul clearly saw the need for such aids and did not hesitate to recommend himself and other “successful” Christians for imitation:

*My brothers and sisters, be united in following my rule of life. Take as your models everybody who is already doing this and study them as you used to study us (Phil 3:17).*

Second, the Rule synthesizes the shared wisdom of thousands of men and women, lay and religious, living as missionaries in the midst of the world. Preeminent among them were people like Father Thomas Judge, Mother Boniface Keasy, and Doctor Margaret Healy who laid the foundations of this way of life in the early part of the twentieth century. But others -- homemakers, elderly, young adults, business people, carpenters, laborers, sisters, brothers, priests -- have built their lives on this foundation for almost ninety years. It has borne fruit in countless acts of love, faith, and goodness in service to the abandoned and marginated people of our society, the “little ones.” Each phrase of the Rule reflects some facet of this collective experience.

#### *The Church’s “Seal of Approval”*

How did this *Rule of Life* come into existence? The history of its development is somewhat complicated. The Second Vatican Council in the mid-1960s mandated communities of sisters, priests, and brothers to review and revise their Constitutions. The bishops wanted to help religious look for ways to be even more faithful to the Gospel, the original vision of their founders, and the conditions of the modern day.

As the religious of the Missionary Cenacle -- *Missionary Servants of the Most Blessed Trinity* (sisters) and *Missionary Servants of the Most Holy Trinity* (brothers and priests) --

embarked on this process, they eventually concluded that they shared an identical vision and spirituality. Father Judge saw the Missionary Cenacle as a closely interwoven network of women and men, lay and religious, at the service of the mission of the Church. Although the details would be different for each group, the basics were indistinguishable. And so the sisters, brothers, and priests formed a “Joint Constitution Committee” to revise the original Constitutions and present the revision to the Vatican for the Church’s approval.

The Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes was the group in Rome responsible for reviewing all the revised Constitutions submitted by religious communities from around the world. They suggested that what would be most appropriate for the Missionary Cenacle was a “Rule of Life.” Unlike a Constitution with legal, binding force, a “Rule of Life” is a spiritual document. It summarizes the fundamentals of a certain spiritual vision and way of life and offers them to others for inspiration and emulation. The Sacred Congregation felt that such a “Rule of Life” would be the best way to express the commonality of spirituality and mission that supported and united the Missionary Cenacle. The Church’s approval of such Rules is rare; there had been no new Rule of Life sanctioned since the 1500s and relatively few before that. Nonetheless, on May 26, 1985 (the feast of Pentecost) the Sacred Congregation in the name of the whole Church officially approved the Missionary Cenacle *Rule of Life*.

While the religious congregations were proceeding with their process in Rome, the *Missionary Cenacle Apostolate* engaged in a year of study and consultation regarding their own guiding documents. Father Judge’s vision -- “every Catholic an apostle” -- and the fundamental elements of a spirituality to support such an ideal were in place before the religious communities of the Missionary Cenacle came into existence. And so it was a simple step to adapt the Missionary Cenacle Rule of Life approved by Rome for the religious congregations to the Cenacle Lay Missionaries as well.

On October 13, 1984 -- even before the official approbation of the *Rule of Life* by the Vatican -- the Missionary Cenacle Apostolate General Council adopted the *Rule of Life* as its own with some modifications. There now existed one fundamental norm or model for living the missionary life in the Cenacle for both lay missionaries and religious as well.

*The Rule is not just the invention of a few people. It contains the distilled lived experience of thousands of missionary men and women. It is a way of holiness. Who has been most influential in the development of your faith life? How did this individual(s) touch or form your life of faith? Who attracted you to the Missionary Cenacle? What was it about their lives that appealed to you? As you think of your own missionary call, who continues to be a model for you? What qualities in their lives would you like most to emulate?*

**Write down your reflections briefly here:**

# WEEK I

## Monday: “Fire on the earth”

*From Father Judge:*

1. *Our Lord had very much at heart the creating of a spirit, a missionary spirit, an evangelical burning that would sweep over the whole world. He came to cast a fire on the earth, and he willed that it would be enkindled (Lk 12/49). The Holy Spirit has enkindled this fire in our hearts. This is our heritage: an apostolic spirit, a Gospel spirit, a Catholic spirit. The Missionary Cenacle spirit is charity, charity aflame.*

*From the Word of God:*

“**1** When Pentecost day came round, they had all met together,**2** when suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of a violent wind which filled the entire house in which they were sitting;**3** and there appeared to them tongues as of fire; these separated and came to rest on the head of each of them.**4** They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak different languages as the Spirit gave them power to express themselves.**5** Now there were devout men living in Jerusalem from every nation under heaven,**6** and at this sound they all assembled, and each one was bewildered to hear these men speaking his own language.**7** They were amazed and astonished. ‘Surely,’ they said, ‘all these men speaking are Galileans?’**8** How does it happen that each of us hears them in his own native language?**9** Parthians, Medes and Elamites; people from Mesopotamia, Judaea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,**10** Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya round Cyrene; residents of Rome—**11** Jews and proselytes alike—Cretans and Arabs, we hear them preaching in our own language about the marvels of God.’**12** Everyone was amazed and perplexed; they asked one another what it all meant.**13** Some, however, laughed it off. ‘They have been drinking too much new wine,’ they said.” (*Acts 2:1-13*)

*This idea of “fire” is central in Father Judge’s writing and preaching. The missionary must be a person “on fire” with love for God. How is the “fire” in your heart? In your local Missionary Cenacle? What can be done to promote or enhance the intensity of that “fire” of apostolic zeal in yourself? In your Cenacle? What is a good example of apostolic zeal that you have seen in a Cenacle missionary? Be as specific as possible. Thank God for the zeal manifest there and in your own life and the life of your Cenacle.*

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

## ***Tuesday: “An apostolic family”***

*From Father Judge:*

“2. We, the Missionary Cenacle Apostolate, are a community of lay persons, an association of the Christian faithful, one branch of an apostolic family, who have been called by God to be missionaries in the Church. We have a special relationship with the Blessed Trinity Missionary Institute, the Missionary Servants of the Most Blessed Trinity and the Missionary Servants of the Most Holy Trinity. Together, with them we comprise the Missionary Cenacle Family.”

*From the Word of God:*

“**23** As soon as they were released they went to the community and told them everything the chief priests and elders had said to them.**24** When they heard it they lifted up their voice to God with one heart. ‘Master,’ they prayed, ‘it is you who made sky and earth and sea, and everything in them;**25** it is you who said through the Holy Spirit and speaking through our ancestor David, your servant: Why this uproar among the nations, this impotent muttering of the peoples?**26** Kings on earth take up position, princes plot together against the Lord and his Anointed.**27** ‘This is what has come true: in this very city Herod and Pontius Pilate plotted together with the gentile nations and the peoples of Israel, against your holy servant Jesus whom you anointed,**28** to bring about the very thing that you in your strength and your wisdom had predetermined should happen.**29** And now, Lord, take note of their threats and help your servants to proclaim your message with all fearlessness,**30** by stretching out your hand to heal and to work miracles and marvels through the name of your holy servant Jesus.’**31** As they prayed, the house where they were assembled rocked. From this time they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to proclaim the word of God fearlessly.” (Acts 4:23-31)

*We are not alone in this missionary vocation. Like the early apostles, we are part of an “apostolic family.” We support one another in prayer, share our experiences with one another, and together -- according to the gifts received -- engage in mission. Do you feel you are growing in a “family spirit”? If so, what are the manifestations of that? If not, what could you do to support and strengthen the family spirit in your own Cenacle and among the other branches of the Missionary Cenacle Family? Be as specific and practical as possible. Commit yourself to do one of those things to strengthen and support the family spirit this week.*

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

## Wednesday: They “went forth”

*From Father Judge:*

“3. By our lives as Cenacle Lay Missionaries we seek first to *glorify the Triune God*. We follow in the *footsteps of the apostles* who, filled with the Holy Spirit, went forth from the Cenacle to *spread everywhere the knowledge and love of Jesus*. We live and work that *God’s name may be hallowed, that his kingdom come, that his holy will be done* (Mt 6/9-10).”

*From the Word of God:*

“1 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.2 One 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.’3 So it was that after fasting and prayer they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

4 So these two, sent on their mission by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and from there set sail for Cyprus.5 They landed at Salamis and proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews; John acted as their assistant.6 They travelled the whole length of the island, and at Paphos they came in contact with a Jewish magician and false prophet called Bar-Jesus.” (Acts 13:1-6)

*Do you feel like you are “sent forth” to do mission? Who sends you forth? With what authority do you “go forth”? How is your local Cenacle involved in your particular mission? Do you see your life’s task as “spreading everywhere the knowledge and love of Jesus”? If so, how are you carrying out that mission? If not, how could make this more your life’s direction and task? Do you really desire to have that as your life’s mission? Ask the Holy Spirit to help you answer these questions as honestly as possible.*

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

## ***Thursday: “The missionary idea ... dominant”***

*From Father Judge:*

“4. *The missionary thought, the missionary idea, the missionary spirit should be dominant in our Missionary Cenacles. We meet the pressing needs of our day by undertaking works that the Church wants, that are good and necessary, and that serve the abandoned, those who do not experience the love of God.*”

*From the Word of God:*

“1 It happened that at Iconium they went to the Jewish synagogue, in the same way, and they spoke so effectively that a great many Jews and Greeks became believers.2 (However, the Jews who refused to believe stirred up the gentiles against the brothers and set them in opposition.)3 Accordingly Paul and Barnabas stayed on for some time, preaching fearlessly in the Lord; and he attested all they said about his gift of grace, allowing signs and wonders to be performed by them.4 The people in the city were divided; some supported the Jews, others the apostles,5 but eventually with the connivance of the authorities a move was made by gentiles as well as Jews to make attacks on them and to stone them.6 When they came to hear of this, they went off for safety to Lycaonia where, in the towns of Lystra and Derbe and in the surrounding country,7 they preached the good news.” (Acts 14:1-7)

***How much do you identify with apostles like Paul and Barnabas? In what ways are you like them? Name three. In what ways are you not like them? Name three. The apostles are known, after Pentecost, for their fearlessness. How much is your life governed or enslaved by fear? What are you afraid of? Be as specific and concrete as possible. Ask the Holy Spirit to take away all fear from your mind and heart so that you can act “fearlessly” like those first apostles.***

**Write down your reflections briefly here:**

## Friday: “Preservation of the Faith”

*From Father Judge:*

“5. Our specific mission is *the preservation of the faith* in those areas and among those people who are spiritually neglected and abandoned. Our chief effort is to develop a missionary spirit with the goal that *every Catholic be an apostle*. In all our efforts we are to manifest a particular concern for children, especially for their spiritual and moral development.”

*From the Word of God:*

“**1** When he had come to the end of all he wanted the people to hear, he went into Capernaum.**2** A centurion there had a servant, a favourite of his, who was sick and near death.**3** Having heard about Jesus he sent some Jewish elders to him to ask him to come and heal his servant.**4** When they came to Jesus they pleaded earnestly with him saying, ‘He deserves this of you,**5** because he is well disposed towards our people; he built us our synagogue himself.’**6** So Jesus went with them, and was not very far from the house when the centurion sent word to him by some friends to say to him, ‘Sir, do not put yourself to any trouble because I am not worthy to have you under my roof;**7** and that is why I did not presume to come to you myself; let my boy be cured by your giving the word.’**8** For I am under authority myself, and have soldiers under me; and I say to one man, “Go,” and he goes; to another, “Come here,” and he comes; to my servant, “Do this,” and he does it.’**9** When Jesus heard these words he was astonished at him and, turning round, said to the crowd following him, ‘I tell you, not even in Israel have I found faith as great as this.’**10** And when the messengers got back to the house they found the servant in perfect health.” (Luke 7:1-10)

*For Father Judge there was no greater loss or poverty than the loss of faith. Faith was the power that could transform lives as it did in that of this centurion. How much do you personally value your faith in Jesus Christ? Where does your faith stand in your scale of values: is faith in Jesus #1 on the list, #8, or way, way down? Do you know anyone who has abandoned or lost their faith? Have you attempted to reach out to that person in some way as a missionary? If so, in what ways? If not, why not? What is it that inhibits you? Ask the Holy Spirit for an ever deepening sense of the value of your own faith and that of others. Ask for the grace never to become indifferent or casual regarding the faith.*

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

## **WEEK II**

### ***Weekend Reflection: “Fire in the belly!”***

The *Rule of Life*, in the first 11 short paragraphs, uses the word “fire” or some term relative to “fire” 11 times: “burning,” “enkindled,” “afame,” “ardent.” It is a central and controlling symbol for understanding the meaning of the *Rule* and the type of spiritual vision it presents. It is anything but “laid back”!

#### *“Fire” imagery in the Scriptures*

Scripturally, “fire” is a very powerful symbol as well, charged with a variety of meanings. God reaffirms the Covenant with Abraham, giving him the Promised land in the midst of a darkness illumined by “a smoking furnace and a firebrand” (Gen 15:17). God appears to Moses “in the shape of a flame of fire,” “the bush blazing” (Ex 3:2) and makes known to him the sacred Name. Moses continues to hear “the voice of the living God speaking from the heart of the fire” (Dt 4:33) and his face shines dazzlingly with the effects of that divine communion (Ex 34:29-30). In response to this divine election, a perpetual fire burns in the sanctuary of the Temple: “The fire that consumes the holocaust on the altar must not be allowed to go out .... An undying fire is always to burn on the altar; it must not go out” (Lev 6:5-6).

The classical prophet of Israel, Elijah, arises amidst the people “like a fire, his word flaring like a torch” (Ecclesiasticus 48:1). For the prophet Jeremiah, the Word of Yahweh “seemed to be a fire burning in my heart, imprisoned in my bones” (Jer 20:9; see also Jer 23:29) despite the insult and derision he bore because of it. Yahweh allows the beloved to be tested and strengthened with persecution and humiliation as “gold is tested in the fire” (Ecclesiasticus 2:4; see also Dn 3). The power of such proven love, however, is invincible; no power or force can defeat the person of tested fidelity (Song of Songs 8:6).

Jesus will baptize His chosen ones in this dynamic force of love, the Holy Spirit and fire (Mt 3:11f.). He pours forth His life so as “to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were blazing already!” (Lk 12:49). The Pentecost burning is a manifestation of this outpouring gift upon the first apostles and the whole Church (Acts 2:1-13). This fire enlivens, strengthens, tests, and purifies those whose hearts are open to receive it (see 1 Pt 1:7; 1 Pt 4:12-17; 1 Co 3:15). The hearts of those who listen to the Word of the Risen Lord “burn” within them (Lk 24:32). This is the apostolic fire, the prophetic “charity at white heat”, the zeal which is to consume and characterize the apostle and missionary. It is the Fire of God, the Holy Spirit. It is the heart of the Cenacle vocation.

*The Missionary Cenacle Vocation:  
No half measures*

The New Testament speaks of the reality of this direct encounter of woman and man with the living God. It is no longer a “blazing fire, or a gloom turning to total darkness, or a storm; or trumpeting thunder or the great voice speaking” (Heb 12:18-19) which we discover. Rather, we have drawn near to “the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem,” “to Jesus, the mediator who brings a new covenant and a blood for purification which pleads more insistently than Abel’s” (Heb 12:22,24). What the holy prophets of the Old Testament knew only in sign and symbol, we have received in its fulness (Heb 12:28-29).

For Father Judge, there were no “half-measures” in our relationship to God. Although he always urged infinite compassion and patience with poor men and women seeking to find their way back to God, nonetheless God was not to be played with. He understood completely the notion of a “jealous God” (Dt 4:24) who brooked no rivals for our affection, devotion, and love. Like any true Lover, God would never be satisfied with anything less than the full devotion of our heart. The missionary vocation was a call to totally surrender her or himself on the altar of Love for the sake of the Beloved. This fire of love consumes the victim, but his or her life thus becomes a fragrant offering to the Divine Heart. Nothing is held back from the Beloved; no sacrifice is too great. Such utter submission is not to be feared since “should you walk through fire, you will not be scorched and the flames will not burn you. For I am Yahweh, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your savior” (Is 43:1-3).

Only in the full and total gift of oneself to Divine Love -- hopes, dreams, expectations, fears, concerns, anxieties -- will true Life be discovered: “For anyone who wants to save his life will lose it; but anyone who loses his life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it” (Mk 8:35; see also Mt 16:25; Lk 9:24; Jn 12:25). This is the Life and the Call of the missionary. Like the Master on Calvary, their lives become a “holocaust,” a “victim” totally consumed by the fire of Love, a “sweet fragrance -- the sacrifice that God accepts and finds pleasing” (Phil 4:18).

*What is the intensity of my love for God? What is the intensity of my love for others, especially people who are unattractive or difficult to get along with? What am I willing to do for the love of God? Concretely, how am I living out my service to God and others? Are there things or people or comforts that I cling to? Who are they? What are they? Do I put conditions on my love for God? What are those conditions? Make a list. Be as specific as possible. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you put Jesus eventually, if not right now, at the top of that list! If I had to take my “spiritual temperature” right now, where would you be on the scale?*

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Passionately ablaze      Burning      Flaming out      Embers      Fairly cool      Frigid

## WEEK II

### Monday: Ardent zeal for the poor

*From Father Judge:*

“6. We are to have *an ardent zeal for the poor, for those desolate in all things spiritual* and for victims of injustice. Charity urges us to action on behalf of justice as an integral part of announcing the coming of the kingdom.”

*From the Word of God:*

“**1** Oh, come to the water all you who are thirsty; though you have no money, come! Buy and eat; come, buy wine and milk without money, free!**2** Why spend money on what cannot nourish and your wages on what fails to satisfy? Listen carefully to me, and you will have good things to eat and rich food to enjoy.**3** Pay attention, come to me; listen, and you will live. I shall make an everlasting covenant with you in fulfilment of the favours promised to David.” (*Isaiah 55:1-3*)

“**1** The spirit of Lord Yahweh is on me for Yahweh has anointed me. He has sent me to bring the news to the afflicted, to soothe the broken-hearted,**2** to proclaim liberty to captives, release to those in prison, to proclaim a year of favour from Yahweh and a day of vengeance for our God, to comfort all who mourn**3** (to give to Zion’s mourners), to give them for ashes a garland, for mourning–dress, the oil of gladness, for despondency, festal attire; and they will be called ‘terebinths of saving justice’, planted by Yahweh to glorify him.**4** They will rebuild the ancient ruins, they will raise what has long lain waste, they will restore the ruined cities, all that has lain waste for ages past. . . .**8** For I am Yahweh: I love fair judgement, I hate robbery and wrong–doing, and I shall reward them faithfully and make an everlasting covenant with them.” (*Isaiah 61:1-4,8*)

*Jesus intimately identified His mission with the poor. Who are the “poor” in your life? Who are “victims of injustice” in your local community or in the nation? Be as concrete and specific as possible. What do you think Jesus would do in these situations or with these people? What do you think Jesus is asking you to do or say on behalf of the poor? For the sake of justice? Ask the Holy Spirit to show you.*

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

## ***Tuesday: “Fostering involvement”***

*From Father Judge:*

“7. *The Cenacle spirit is a Catholic spirit, a living, burning, operating love of God and neighbor. We are to share this spirit by promoting and supporting the ministries of all the baptized people of God in the mission of the Church. We acknowledge “different gifts but the same Spirit, different ministries but the same Lord” (1 Cor 12/24). Thus, we foster involvement of all in the mission and ministries of the Church not only as a particular aim, but as a part of our apostolic efforts.*”

*From the Word of God:*

“12 For as with the human body which is a unity although it has many parts—all the parts of the body, though many, still making up one single body—so it is with Christ.13 We were baptised into one body in a single Spirit, Jews as well as Greeks, slaves as well as free men, and we were all given the same Spirit to drink.14 And indeed the body consists not of one member but of many.15 If the foot were to say, ‘I am not a hand and so I do not belong to the body,’ it does not belong to the body any the less for that.16 Or if the ear were to say, ‘I am not an eye, and so I do not belong to the body,’ that would not stop its belonging to the body.17 If the whole body were just an eye, how would there be any hearing? If the whole body were hearing, how would there be any smelling?18 As it is, God has put all the separate parts into the body as he chose.19 If they were all the same part, how could it be a body?20 As it is, the parts are many but the body is one.21 The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I have no need of you,’ and nor can the head say to the feet, ‘I have no need of you.’ . . . 26 If one part is hurt, all the parts share its pain. And if one part is honoured, all the parts share its joy.27 Now Christ’s body is yourselves, each of you with a part to play in the whole.28 And those whom God has appointed in the Church are, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers; after them, miraculous powers, then gifts of healing, helpful acts, guidance, various kinds of tongues.29 Are all of them apostles? Or all prophets? Or all teachers? Or all miracle-workers?30 Do all have the gifts of healing? Do all of them speak in tongues and all interpret them?” (1 Corinthians 12:12-21, 26-30)

*Look around you in your Cenacle. What are some of the gifts people have there? Name those gifts. Are you able to identify what are some of the gifts you have? Are you grateful for these gifts? Are you a person who helps people identify their gifts and encourages them? Who has helped you identify your gifts in your life and use them? How did they do that? This encouragement of others is a necessary part of the missionary vocation. Today try to identify the gifts of two people you generally don’t pay too much attention to.*

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

## Wednesday: “Loving regard”

*From Father Judge:*

“8. We are to call forth apostolic persons from everyday walks of life to become members of the Missionary Cenacle Apostolate and to encourage those who feel called to other branches of the Missionary Cenacle Family . A family spirit should be demonstrated by loving regard among the members of the branches and, when feasible, by collaboration in apostolic works. It is our particular responsibility as Cenacle Lay Missionaries to spread this Cenacle spirit through word and example. Father Judge declared that *if the right spirit is maintained, if the primitive spirit is passed down, this family idea will engender the most beautiful fruits for the honor and glory of God and for the edification of the Church.*”

*From the Word of God:*

“Though I command languages both human and angelic—if I speak without love, I am no more than a gong booming or a cymbal clashing.<sup>2</sup> And though I have the power of prophecy, to penetrate all mysteries and knowledge, and though I have all the faith necessary to move mountains—if I am without love, I am nothing.<sup>3</sup> Though I should give away to the poor all that I possess, and even give up my body to be burned—if I am without love, it will do me no good whatever.<sup>4</sup> Love is always patient and kind; love is never jealous; love is not boastful or conceited,<sup>5</sup> it is never rude and never seeks its own advantage, it does not take offence or store up grievances.<sup>6</sup> Love does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but finds its joy in the truth.<sup>7</sup> It is always ready to make allowances, to trust, to hope and to endure whatever comes.<sup>8</sup> Love never comes to an end. But if there are prophecies, they will be done away with; if tongues, they will fall silent; and if knowledge, it will be done away with.<sup>9</sup> For we know only imperfectly, and we prophesy imperfectly;<sup>10</sup> but once perfection comes, all imperfect things will be done away with.<sup>11</sup> When I was a child, I used to talk like a child, and see things as a child does, and think like a child; but now that I have become an adult, I have finished with all childish ways.<sup>12</sup> Now we see only reflections in a mirror, mere riddles, but then we shall be seeing face to face. Now I can know only imperfectly; but then I shall know just as fully as I am myself known.<sup>13</sup> As it is, these remain: faith, hope and love, the three of them; and the greatest of them is love.” (*I Corinthians 13:1-13*)

***Father Judge constantly prayed for “peace, unity, and charity among us.” He warned that the work of the Cenacle could really only be destroyed from within: by bitterness, uncharitableness, resentments, gossiping among the members of the Cenacle. As you consider your missionary vocation and your own Missionary Cenacle, what is your practice of the gift of charity or love? Are you a peace-builder, a reconciler? Are people happy to have you as a part of the Cenacle community or do you have a negative, biting attitude? The practice of love towards the brothers and sisters is the primary means for promoting the missionary work of the Cenacle. Examine yourself on your own attitudes carefully. Call on the Spirit of Love.***

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

## **Thursday: “Faith working through love”**

*From Father Judge:*

9. *The Cenacle spirit is a Christlike spirit of “faith working through love” (Gal 5/6). We are to confess in our hearts the mysteries of faith: the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit. We aspire to a devotional knowledge of these mysteries, that is, a deeply personal and interior faith that is restless until it finds expression in good works; our good works, in turn, nourish our life of faith and bear fruit in apostolic holiness.*

*From the Word of God:*

“**14** How does it help, my brothers, when someone who has never done a single good act claims to have faith? Will that faith bring salvation?**15** If one of the brothers or one of the sisters is in need of clothes and has not enough food to live on,**16** and one of you says to them, ‘I wish you well; keep yourself warm and eat plenty,’ without giving them these bare necessities of life, then what good is that?**17** In the same way faith, if good deeds do not go with it, is quite dead.**18** But someone may say: So you have faith and I have good deeds? Show me this faith of yours without deeds, then! It is by my deeds that I will show you my faith.**19** You believe in the one God—that is creditable enough, but even the demons have the same belief, and they tremble with fear.**20** Fool! Would you not like to know that faith without deeds is useless?**21** Was not Abraham our father justified by his deed, because he offered his son Isaac on the altar? **22** So you can see that his faith was working together with his deeds; his faith became perfect by what he did.**23** In this way the scripture was fulfilled: Abraham put his faith in God, and this was considered as making him upright; and he received the name ‘friend of God’.” (*James 2/14-23*)

*Just “knowing” the right thing or “feeling” very spiritual counts for very little. Father Judge, and the Scriptures, insist that our faith must find “expression in good works.” Think back on this past week. Where have been a few instances where your faith has found “expression in good works”? What about in your Cenacle? Are there concrete good works that reach out to the poor and the abandoned? What are they? What might the Holy Spirit be calling you to individually or as a Cenacle?*

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

## ***Friday: “A personal love”***

*From Father Judge:*

“10. We are to have a personal love of God our Father, of his Son Jesus, and of the Holy Spirit who abides with us. In a particular way we *cherish in our prayer and labor the naked, abandoned Jesus on Calvary*. We express our love through personal service to his poor and abandoned members.”

*From the Word of God:*

“**36** One of the Pharisees invited him to a meal. When he arrived at the Pharisee’s house and took his place at table,**37** suddenly a woman came in, who had a bad name in the town. She had heard he was dining with the Pharisee and had brought with her an alabaster jar of ointment.**38** She waited behind him at his feet, weeping, and her tears fell on his feet, and she wiped them away with her hair; then she covered his feet with kisses and anointed them with the ointment.**39** When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, ‘If this man were a prophet, he would know who this woman is and what sort of person it is who is touching him and what a bad name she has.’**40** Then Jesus took him up and said, ‘Simon, I have something to say to you.’ He replied, ‘Say on, Master.’**41** ‘There was once a creditor who had two men in his debt; one owed him five hundred denarii, the other fifty.**42** They were unable to pay, so he let them both off. Which of them will love him more?’**43** Simon answered, ‘The one who was let off more, I suppose.’ Jesus said, ‘You are right.....**47** For this reason I tell you that her sins, many as they are, have been forgiven her, because she has shown such great love. It is someone who is forgiven little who shows little love.’**48** Then he said to her, ‘Your sins are forgiven.’**49** Those who were with him at table began to say to themselves, ‘Who is this man, that even forgives sins?’**50** But he said to the woman, ‘Your faith has saved you; go in peace.’” (*Luke 7:36-50*)

*Think of someone you love very “personally.” How is this love made manifest? How does it feel? How do you demonstrate it? How does the other person respond to your love or not? What are you willing to do for the person you love? Now compare those feelings with your love for Jesus. Does your love for Jesus have those similar qualities? In what way is it the same, in what way is it different? Ask the Holy Spirit to give you a personal love for Jesus like that of the woman in the Gospel.*

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

## WEEK III

### ***Weekend Reflection: Prophetic Passion for the Poor***

Prophets are not fortune-tellers or some type of divinely sanctioned astrologers. Instead a prophet is a person who “feels fiercely.” And what does the prophet “feel”? What is at the heart of her or his sensibility? “Fellowship with the feelings of God” -- but not just any feelings. Rather the prophet experiences a profound “*sympathy with the divine pathos*”: prophets are taken up into the pity and compassion that most intensely consume God’s heart. The prophet hears God’s voice, feels one with the pain and sorrow of the divine heart, and tries to communicate the depths of that passion to all.

Prophets are keenly aware of two things: how awesome is God’s hope for the world and for each human being in the world and how far we are from the realization of that divine dream for all humankind. The pain of this awareness burns in the prophet’s heart and, at times, moves the prophet to speak and act in ways that cause others to react with anger and resentment. Prophets are not easy people to live with since they are intensely more conscious of what remains to be done, of what is not right than being content with what is. Prophets do not act out of anger -- although their words may be angry. They act out of intense love for those whom they see being denied their rightful place at the banquet table of the King. They speak harsh words at times to shake us from our complacency and to make us think of who we really are and what we are called to become. As Rabbi Abraham Heschel writes:

*God has thrust a burden upon [the prophet’s] soul, and he is bowed and stunned at man’s fierce greed. Frightful is the agony of man; no human voice can convey its full terror. Prophecy is the voice that God has lent to the silent agony, a voice to the plundered poor, to the profaned riches of the world.*

Jesus is the prophet *par excellence*, the one who understood more than anyone the most profound compassion that lies at the heart of God. As Jesus looked on the poor, the broken, the lonely, the abandoned, His heart was moved with immeasurable sorrow. The Greek word for compassion used most commonly in the New Testament is *splagchnoisomai*; “it means to let one’s innards embrace the feeling or situation of another.” Confronted with the reality of human pain and anguish, Jesus responded with this heart-felt oneness with the suffering sister or brother (see Mt 9:35-36; see also Mk 6:34).

Despite personal grief over the loss of His cousin John, the plight of the poor and sick took priority over His personal need (see Mt 14:13-14). Faced with the hunger of and possible danger to the masses of people who had followed Him, Jesus was not content with “well-there’s-nothing-we-can-do” attitude. His solidarity with their dilemma forced Him to look for solutions (see Mark 8:1-4). Jewish law considered leprosy and death such dread realities that all who came into contact with them were to be considered “unclean,” “impure.” Jesus, defying the

prohibitions, not only heals the leper and brings the widow's son back to life. He reaches out and touches the leper, He puts His hand on the pallet bearing the body of the dead man. He heals human sickness and overcomes the power of death not from a distance but by entering fully into these loathsome realities. Prophets not only spoke God's Word from the heart of compassion but acted in ways that made clear the living presence of that tender mercy (see Mark 1:40f.; Luke 7:12-15).

By Jesus' willingness to forget Himself, to seek solutions to the human dilemma, to enter deeply into the depths of human devastation, He helped to bring about a *new reality*. This is a further dimension of the prophetic task. Prophets help to make things new, different, closer to God's dream and plan for the world both by their words as well as by their actions. The sick were healed; the dejected were given hope and instruction; the hungry were fed; the outcast leper was reunited to society; the dead man and his widowed mother were given a new beginning and saved from despair.

All this is possible only if there is compassion, a willingness to enter into the sorrow, the pain, the agony of another. Jesus shows us that this is God's way of bringing newness to all of humankind, the coming of the divine Reign. The missionary must be willing to enter into the sorrow and pain of God as God beholds the world. For it is only in this way that the missionary can be a man or a woman of the Beatitudes (see Matthew 5:5f.). The person willing to enter into the fiery heart of God will know grief, will know incompleteness but also has the promise of truly abundant life, comfort, consolation, and -- one day with all the broken, little, lonely, seemingly hopeless ones -- will find complete satisfaction and joy. This is the life of the missionary; this is the life of the prophet. This is at the heart of the Missionary Cenacle vocation: "*charity, charity aflame,*" "*ardent zeal for the poor,*" "*a living, burning, operating love of God and neighbor.*" (Rule of Life #1, #6, #7).

*How do you feel when you are confronted with injustice against yourself or others? What is your response? How do you react before human misery -- sickness, pain, sorrow, violence? Do you flee? Stay and fight? Feel paralyzed and do nothing? What are you willing to put up with to be an apostle or missionary? How passionately do you feel about your call? Are you indifferent? Why? What are the elements that go into making you feel the way you do?*

**Write** down your reflections briefly here:

## WEEK III

### Monday: “To attract the Holy Spirit”

*From Father Judge:*

“11. We are to make the Holy Spirit better known and loved. By steadfast prayer in our Cenacles we seek *to attract the Holy Spirit* so that our own hearts may be enkindled with God’s love and that we may spread this fire to others. We ask to be filled with the gifts of the Spirit, wisdom and fortitude especially.”

*From the Word of God:*

“1 Thus, condemnation will never come to those who are in Christ Jesus,2 because the law of the Spirit which gives life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death.3 What the Law could not do because of the weakness of human nature, God did, sending his own Son in the same human nature as any sinner to be a sacrifice for sin, and condemning sin in that human nature.4 This was so that the Law’s requirements might be fully satisfied in us as we direct our lives not by our natural inclinations but by the Spirit.5 Those who are living by their natural inclinations have their minds on the things human nature desires; those who live in the Spirit have their minds on spiritual things.6 And human nature has nothing to look forward to but death, while the Spirit looks forward to life and peace,7 because the outlook of disordered human nature is opposed to God, since it does not submit to God’s Law, and indeed it cannot,8 and those who live by their natural inclinations can never be pleasing to God.9 You, however, live not by your natural inclinations, but by the Spirit, since the Spirit of God has made a home in you. Indeed, anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.10 But when Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin but the spirit is alive because you have been justified;11 and if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead has made his home in you, then he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your own mortal bodies through his Spirit living in you.” (*Romans 8:1-11*)

*How faithful are you in your prayer to the Holy Spirit? Are you praying daily the Litany of the Holy Spirit? Do you often call on the Holy Spirit during the day as you go about your tasks? Can you think of a concrete example in the last month where the Spirit “transformed” a situation: in your family, at work, in the Church community, among your friends? How did this “transformation” come about, what did it look like? Pray often every day to “attract the Holy Spirit” simply by repeating from the heart, “Come Holy Spirit. Give me the gifts of Wisdom and Fortitude.”*

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

## ***Tuesday: Consecrated apostles of Jesus Christ***

*From Father Judge:*

“12. *The Cenacle spirit is a Gospel spirit.* In order to follow Jesus more closely, as set forth in the Gospels, we consecrate ourselves to be apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ within the Missionary Cenacle Apostolate as an expression of our baptismal consecration. The uncompromising message of the Gospels calls us to exercise our prophetic role as *witnesses to truth.*”

*From the Word of God:*

“18 As he was walking by the Lake of Galilee he saw two brothers, Simon, who was called Peter, and his brother Andrew; they were making a cast into the lake with their net, for they were fishermen.19 And he said to them, ‘Come after me and I will make you fishers of people.’20 And at once they left their nets and followed him.21 Going on from there he saw another pair of brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John; they were in their boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them.22 And at once, leaving the boat and their father, they followed him.23 He went round the whole of Galilee teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing all kinds of disease and illness among the people.24 His fame spread throughout Syria, and those who were suffering from diseases and painful complaints of one kind or another, the possessed, epileptics, the paralysed, were all brought to him, and he cured them.25 Large crowds followed him, coming from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judaea and Transjordan.” (*Matthew 4:18-25*)

*The Act of Consecration taken by the Cenacle Lay Missionary is an external sign of their interior commitment to be an “apostle of Jesus Christ.” Picture those fishermen. How did they feel, what were they thinking as this man Jesus approached? What would have made them respond in the way they did? How did they understand His mandate that they would be “fishers of people”? Now put yourself in the picture. As Jesus approaches you, what does He say? How does He look at you? How do you feel? How do you respond? Let the Holy Spirit guide you.*

**Write down your reflections briefly here:**

## Wednesday: “Word of God in high esteem”

*From Father Judge:*

“14. We shall hold *the Word of God in high esteem*. We cherish the Gospels in particular because they depict Jesus showing by word and example the way to the Father. By reflection on the *providence of everyday life* in the light of the Gospels we come to a *devotional knowledge* of the mysteries of faith and a deeper understanding of our own experiences. Each shall have a copy of the Sacred Scriptures and make frequent use of them in prayer and proclamation.”

*From the Word of God:*

“12 The word of God is something alive and active: it cuts more incisively than any two-edged sword: it can seek out the place where soul is divided from spirit, or joints from marrow; it can pass judgement on secret emotions and thoughts.13 No created thing is hidden from him; everything is uncovered and stretched fully open to the eyes of the one to whom we must give account of ourselves.” (*Hebrews 4:12-13*)

“19 Remember this, my dear brothers: everyone should be quick to listen but slow to speak and slow to human anger;20 God’s saving justice is never served by human anger;21 so do away with all impurities and remnants of evil. Humbly welcome the Word which has been planted in you and can save your souls.22 But you must do what the Word tells you and not just listen to it and deceive yourselves.23 Anyone who listens to the Word and takes no action is like someone who looks at his own features in a mirror and,24 once he has seen what he looks like, goes off and immediately forgets it.25 But anyone who looks steadily at the perfect law of freedom and keeps to it—not listening and forgetting, but putting it into practice—will be blessed in every undertaking.” (*James 1:19-25*)

*Do you take time daily -- especially at the end of the day -- to reflect on what’s happened during those last twenty-four hours? What events have occurred? Who have you met and spoken to? What was the nature of those interchanges? Now think about those same events and people in the light of Jesus, as if Jesus were standing right there with you seeing, looking, speaking, feeling. How were your actions and reactions like those of Jesus? How much time do you spend each day reading the Bible, the Word of God, especially the Gospels? Do you really believe the Gospels will give you light and understanding for your daily living? In what way?*

**Write** down your reflections briefly here:

## ***Thursday: “Eucharist -- center and sun”***

*From Father Judge:*

“15. The Eucharist is the *center and sun* of our apostolic lives. We are to worship God in the daily celebration of the Eucharist, our sacramental participation in the mystery of Jesus’ death and resurrection. We should so prepare and celebrate the Eucharistic Liturgy that it will be a genuine expression of ecclesial community and source of apostolic vitality. We are to have reverence for all that is related to the Eucharist.”

*From the Word of God:*

“53 Jesus replied to them: In all truth I tell you, if you do not eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.54 Anyone who does eat my flesh and drink my blood has eternal life, and I shall raise that person up on the last day.55 For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink.56 Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood lives in me and I live in that person.57 As the living Father sent me and I draw life from the Father, so whoever eats me will also draw life from me.58 This is the bread which has come down from heaven; it is not like the bread our ancestors ate: they are dead, but anyone who eats this bread will live for ever.” (John 6:53-58)

*What role does the Eucharist play in your life? Do you receive the Eucharist daily? Weekly? Is the Eucharist the “sun and center” of your life? In what way? How is your love for Jesus made manifest in the Eucharist? Do you make visits to the Blessed Sacrament at times other than the Mass? Do you acknowledge Jesus present in the Eucharist in churches either by some small prayer you say or making the sign of the cross as you go in front of the Church? Do you speak to others about the Eucharist and its meaning for you in your life? Do you find the Eucharist a “source of apostolic vitality”? In what way?*

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

## ***Friday: Knowing and sharing God's mercy***

*From Father Judge:*

“16. Because of our need for God's mercy in our brokenness, we are to approach the Sacrament of Penance frequently for reconciliation and healing. By our experience of sacramental forgiveness, we grow in mercy and compassion towards others.”

*From the Word of God:*

“Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.<sup>2</sup> At daybreak he appeared in the Temple again; and as all the people came to him, he sat down and began to teach them.<sup>3</sup> The scribes and Pharisees brought a woman along who had been caught committing adultery; and making her stand there in the middle<sup>4</sup> they said to Jesus, ‘Master, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery,<sup>5</sup> and in the Law Moses has ordered us to stone women of this kind. What have you got to say?’<sup>6</sup> They asked him this as a test, looking for an accusation to use against him. But Jesus bent down and started writing on the ground with his finger.<sup>7</sup> As they persisted with their question, he straightened up and said, ‘Let the one among you who is guiltless be the first to throw a stone at her.’<sup>8</sup> Then he bent down and continued writing on the ground.<sup>9</sup> When they heard this they went away one by one, beginning with the eldest, until the last one had gone and Jesus was left alone with the woman, who remained in the middle.<sup>10</sup> Jesus again straightened up and said, ‘Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?’<sup>11</sup> ‘No one, sir,’ she replied. ‘Neither do I condemn you,’ said Jesus. ‘Go away, and from this moment sin no more.’” (*John 8:1-11*)

*What is your practice of the Sacrament of Penance or Reconciliation? Do you go the Confession “frequently” or is it a once or twice a year affair for you? Do you experience “reconciliation and healing” through the Sacrament? In what way? What obstacles or difficulties do you have with the Sacrament? Have you noticed how an awareness of your own brokenness helps you to be more compassionate with others? Think of a concrete example where this has happened. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you an immense love of and desire for the Sacrament of Penance or Reconciliation. Commit yourself to going to Confession at least once a month.*

**Write** down your reflections briefly here:

## **WEEK IV**

### **Weekend Reflection: Act of Consecration**

**“ . . . we consecrate ourselves to be apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ  
within the Missionary Cenacle Apostolate as an expression of  
our baptismal consecration” (Rule of Life #12)**

First, a definition of terms. According to *Webster's New American Dictionary* (1995), to “consecrate” is “to make or declare sacred . . . , to devote solemnly to a purpose.” A “vow” is a “solemn promise . . . by which a person is bound to an act, service, or condition.” So “vows” confirm or make public individuals’ “consecration” for a special, holy purpose or task.

The Jewish people consecrated or set aside for sacred use objects, places, and people. Priests smothered the altar with oil to signal its special role in the sanctification of the people (see Exodus 29/26f.; Exodus 30/26-29; Leviticus 8/10f.). Jacob erected a small shrine at Bethel to claim that land for himself and his descendants. Through this simple gesture, he marked it forever as the Land of God's People (see Genesis 28/18). The kings of Judah received a solemn anointing in the temple as they began their reign. God had elected or consecrated them as divine instruments for governing the people (see 1 Kings 1/39; 2 Kings 11/12).

Jesus public consecration “with power and the Holy Spirit” (Acts 10/38) occurred at his Baptism in the Jordan (Luke 3/21-22). After this, He set out on His mission, described it in the words of Isaiah:

*The Spirit of the Lord has been given to me,  
for he has anointed me.  
He has sent me to bring good news to the poor,  
to proclaim liberty to captives  
and to the blind new sight,  
to set the downtrodden free,  
to proclaim the Lord's year of favor (Isaiah 61/1-2).*

Sent by the Father for this holy, sacred purpose, He gave Himself with single minded passion to its accomplishment until the very end: “It is finished.” And bowing his head, he handed over the spirit” (John 19/30).

But the mission does not end there. Jesus prays that His disciples will receive the same consecration, the same mission, that He has received. The “truth” that guided His life -- the Father's love, the power of the Spirit -- will now guide and inform their lives. They will continue the mission:

*Consecrate them in the truth;  
your word is truth.  
As you sent me into the world,*

*I have sent them into the world,  
and for their sake I consecrate myself  
so that they too may be consecrated in truth (John 17/11,17-19).*

The anointing with the holy oil of chrism at our Baptism and then again at our Confirmation sets every Christian apart for the sacred mission of Jesus. All are consecrated. All confirm this consecration through the vows first made at Baptism and renewed solemnly every year at Easter.

How we will live out this consecration will vary from person to person. Whatever the particular manifestation of the consecration, the attitude of living a life consecrated to God and God's service provides the fundamental unity among the baptized. Some will make the path of their dedication explicit through particular vows. Many will dedicate themselves through marriage vows to the solemn purpose of loving one man or one woman. Others will vow to live a life of celibacy for the sake of the Kingdom and as a sign of their single-hearted love of God. John Paul II in his 1996 letter on *The Consecrated Life (Vita Consecrata)* recognizes the emergence of "new forms of evangelical life." They "are composed of mixed groups of men and women, of clerics and laypersons, of married couples and celibates, all of whom pursue a particular style of life."<sup>1</sup> Whether new or old, the basic elements of this life of consecration are the same for all: "to follow Jesus -- chaste, poor, and obedient -- in the pursuit of perfect charity."<sup>2</sup>

The sign of "perfect charity" is the Cross: "No one has greater love than this: to lay down one's life for one's friend" (John 15/13). Yet this final surrender does not happen overnight but is the result of multiple experiences of "small deaths" daily over many years (Luke 9/23-24). However, the result of these multiple daily deaths -- the surrenders of ego and self -- is life, never failing life (John 12/24-25). Ultimately, the death to self opens one to community and the final Community of God's Life in the Trinity forever. This is the final result of consecration well lived: death for life!

*What were the circumstances of my own call or vocation to the Missionary Cenacle? Has my understanding of this call changed through the years? In what ways? Who are the "communities" that make up my life: religious sisters and brothers, family, spouse, fellow workers? What is my attitude toward these different communities? What helps to nourish our life together in community? What damages it? Do I see my life daily as an extension or continuation of the mission of Jesus? In what ways? Do I experience myself as "special" or "consecrated," "beloved," "chosen" of God?*

**Write down your reflections briefly here:**

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<sup>1</sup> John Paul II, *The Consecrated Life (Vita Consecrata)* (1996), para. 62.

<sup>2</sup> *The Consecrated Life (Vita Consecrata)*, para. 12.

## **WEEK IV**

### **Monday: The apostle, “a prayerful person”**

*From Father Judge:*

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

*From the Word of God:*

“1 Now it happened that he was in a certain place praying, and when he had finished, one of his disciples said, ‘Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.’ 2 He said to them, ‘When you pray, this is what to say: Father, may your name be held holy, your kingdom come; 3 give us each day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins, 4 for we ourselves forgive each one who is in debt to us. And do not put us to the test.’

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

9 ‘So I say to you: Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you. 10 For everyone who asks receives; everyone who searches finds; everyone who knocks will have the door opened. . . . 13 If you then, evil as you are, know how to give your children what is good, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!’” (Luke 11:1-13)

*There are four “ends” or goals to prayer: praise, thanksgiving, petition, repentance. The “Our Father” -- the prayer that Jesus Himself taught us -- contains all these elements in just a few lines. Pray this prayer quietly, slowly. Repeat each phrase. Think about what it means for you, for the world, for the Church, for your family and community. Recognize that Jesus promises the gift of the Holy Spirit super-abundantly to all who seek! Seek the Spirit. Call out to the Spirit. Give thanks and praise for the presence of the Spirit in your life. Recognize your own great poverty and sinfulness before God. All this gives glory to God and opens you up to the inpouring gift of the Spirit.*

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

## ***Tuesday: “Times of prayer and recollection”***

*From Father Judge:*

“18. Periodically we shall seek extended times of prayer and recollection. We are encouraged to make an annual Missionary Cenacle retreat. In order that we may be more attentive to *the lights and impulses* of the Holy Spirit in our following of Christ and in our continuing formation as Cenacle Lay Missionaries, we are encouraged as individuals to seek spiritual guidance from a person well-versed in Missionary Cenacle spirituality.”

*From the Word of God:*

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

17 He then came down with them and stopped at a piece of level ground where there was a large gathering of his disciples, with a great crowd of people from all parts of Judaea and Jerusalem and the coastal region of Tyre and Sidon18 who had come to hear him and to be cured of their diseases. People tormented by unclean spirits were also cured,19 and everyone in the crowd was trying to touch him because power came out of him that cured them all.”  
(Luke 6:12-19)

*Jesus goes away by Himself to the mountain to pray. After being alone with His Father, He calls the Twelve, continues on His mission of healing, and immediately afterwards preaches Luke’s version of the “Sermon on the Mount”. All this springs from His time alone with His Father. How do you deal with silence? Do you find it attractive, scary, or a little of both? Do you regularly take times to be quiet and alone with God and yourself? When? Where? How frequently? How do you feel when you take these “times away” from the daily grind? Think of a decision you made after prayerful reflection. Was it different than the decision you would have made just “off the top of your head”? What made the difference?*

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

## Wednesday: “Pray together”

*From Father Judge:*

“19. We are to come together regularly to glorify the Triune God. We pray together to promote greater zeal in the apostolate, more supportive community life and stronger bonds within the Missionary Cenacle Family. A common day of recollection shall be held each month for communal prayer. We shall encourage others to share our prayer by attending these days of recollection.”

*From the Word of God:*

“12 The apostles worked many signs and miracles among the people. One in heart, they all used to meet in the Portico of Solomon.13 No one else dared to join them, but the people were loud in their praise14 and the numbers of men and women who came to believe in the Lord increased steadily. Many signs and wonders were worked among the people at the hands of the apostles15 so that the sick were even taken out into the streets and laid on beds and sleeping-mats in the hope that at least the shadow of Peter might fall across some of them as he went past.16 People even came crowding in from the towns round about Jerusalem, bringing with them their sick and those tormented by unclean spirits, and all of them were cured.” (Acts 5:12-16)

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

*The “signs and wonders” done by the apostles were done not as individual acts of “greatness” but rather as part of the Christian community that supported and prayed for them. We regularly should meet with others, especially those of the Cenacle community, to pray. There is no such thing, in the plan of God, as an “isolated, lone ranger apostle.” How does your Cenacle pray together? Do you pray together regularly? Do you pray together well? Are there certain occasions -- the annual retreat, Advent and Lenten Days of Recollection, special events - - when you make the effort to be present with the community? If not, why not? What personal benefits have you received from living and working in community?*

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

## **Thursday: Prayer, “touching the farthest bounds”**

*From Father Judge:*

“20. *Our prayer should not be narrow, personal prayer; it should reach the throne of God only after having touched the farthest bounds of God’s creation and mourned in every human misery and rejoiced in God’s goodness.* We are to pray, therefore, for the needs of the entire Church, especially for the Holy Father, for bishops and for priests; we pray for children and for those who are sick, suffering or abandoned. We have a special obligation to pray for our living and deceased relatives, friends, benefactors and members of the Missionary Cenacle Family.”

*From the Word of God:*

“**1** The apostles and the brothers in Judaea heard that gentiles too had accepted the word of God,**2** and when Peter came up to Jerusalem the circumcised believers protested to him**3** and said, ‘So you have been visiting the uncircumcised and eating with them!’**4** Peter in reply gave them the details point by point,**5** ‘One day, when I was in the town of Jaffa,’ he began, ‘I fell into a trance as I was praying and had a vision of something like a big sheet being let down from heaven by its four corners. This sheet came right down beside me.**6** I looked carefully into it and saw four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, reptiles, and birds of heaven.**7** Then I heard a voice that said to me, “Now, Peter, kill and eat!”**8** But I answered, “Certainly not, Lord; nothing profane or unclean has ever crossed my lips.”**9** And a second time the voice spoke from heaven, “What God has made clean, you have no right to call profane.”**10** This was repeated three times, before the whole of it was drawn up to heaven.” (Acts 11:1-18)

*There is always a human tendency to try to, to make God fit our human standards. God showed the early Christian community that all peoples were God’s People: their concerns, hurts, and joys were God’s as well. Do your prayers tend to be “narrow” and somewhat self-centered or do they reflect a concern for others and the needs of the world? Ask the Holy Spirit for that “magnanimous” (great-hearted!) spirit that allows the missionary to embrace all humanity.*

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

## ***Friday: “Mary, Queen of the Missionary Cenacle”***

*From Father Judge:*

“21. In our Missionary Cenacle Family we have a special devotion to *Mary, Queen of the Missionary Cenacle, to Joseph, an unfailing and powerful friend*, to the Apostles, ardent followers of Jesus, and to Vincent de Paul, patron of charity and humility.”

*From the Word of God:*

“25 Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala.26 Seeing his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing near her, Jesus said to his mother, ‘Woman, this is your son.’27 Then to the disciple he said, ‘This is your mother.’ And from that hour the disciple took her into his home.” (*John 19:25-27*)

“12 So from the Mount of Olives, as it is called, they went back to Jerusalem, a short distance away, no more than a Sabbath walk;13 and when they reached the city they went to the upper room where they were staying; there were Peter and John, James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Jude son of James.14 With one heart all these joined constantly in prayer, together with some women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.” (*Acts 1:12-14*)

*Mary has been present to the Church as Mother and companion from its very beginning. She certainly cared for John the apostle as much as he cared for her. Mary was with all the first apostles praying with them for the outpouring gift of the Holy Spirit. Her role is a quiet but essential one. What is your relationship to Mary? Do you see in Mary a mother, a friend, a support? If not, why not? Concretely, do you place your life and your missionary call and work under the care of Mary? She knew how to care for the vocations of those first apostles, to support them. Through the communion of saints, she can do the same for you. Call on her maternal love and intercession. Thank her for continuing to pray for and with the Church on our long pilgrimage home to the Father.*

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