

Lesson #7

The Rule of Life, Part 2

The Grace I am seeking . . .

To continue 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 last month's section on *Missionary Cenacle Practice and Devotion* we look at the idea of a "practice" -- a virtue or attitude in which you found yourself weak and needed to grow. One way of addressing this need for growth in self-understanding and strength of character was through the development of a *Personal Growth Plan*. Did you find this helpful? Did you begin to look at dimensions of your life -- emotional, spiritual, apostolic, family, intellectual -- where the Spirit might be inviting you to grow? Did you begin to fill out this *Personal Growth Plan* and maybe talk about it with your sponsor, a good friend or spouse, or your spiritual guide? Take the time to look at your life, set goals for yourself under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, identify what helps God has given you to achieve this growth, and set some "benchmark" times to examine where you are in this process.

In understanding where God may be calling you to grow -- what the 12 Step Recovery Programs call our "character defects" -- take a look at what the Church calls the "Seven Capital Sins." These are not personal sins as such but rather fundamental sinful attitudes or dispositions that are in all of us. In most of us, some are stronger than others at any given moment in our lives. Father Judge identified seven virtues he called "Cenacle virtues" -- qualities of spirit necessary to lead a missionary, apostolic life. Each virtue relates to one of these capital sins. Listed below are the Seven Capital Sins and a corresponding Virtue that counteracts their effects:

CAPITAL SIN	CORRESPONDING CENACLE VIRTUE
Pride	Humility
Anger	Patience
Envy	Simplicity
Lust	Charity (Love)
Sloth/Laziness	Sacrifice (Zeal)
Avarice/Greed	Self-denial
Gluttony	Prudence (Temperance)

Ask the Holy Spirit to show you which is your predominant fault or sinful tendency right now in your life. What is the corresponding Cenacle virtue in which the Spirit is calling you to grow? Trust mightily and let God create this new "missionary heart" within you! Peace!

Introduction

This month we continue our prayerful study of the *Rule of Life and Constitution*. Last month we examined the sections entitled “Nature and Purpose” and “Spiritual Life.” This month we will finish the section on “Spiritual Life” and look at “The Ministry of Authority” and “Membership.” We then will go back and look at once again at other dimensions of some of the sections we prayed through last month.

The sections on “The Ministry of Authority” and “Membership” have a number of subparagraphs dealing with details regarding the functioning of the Missionary Cenacle Apostolate on the local and regional level and as an international organization. We will not look at those here since they deal less with the essence of the vocation and are more subject to change according to developing circumstances. What we want to prayerfully and deeply come to ever better understand through our prayer is the depths of the Cenacle mission and vocation. Your sponsor can help to explain the more practical -- and important! -- issues of election, leadership, structure, etc. Please make sure you ask! It’s an important dimension of coming to know the Missionary Cenacle Family!

Peace! May this time spent prayerfully entering into the *Rule of Life and Constitution* of the Missionary Cenacle Apostolate continue to be for you and your Missionary Cenacle 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:

“ . . . a great missionary re-awakening . . . ”

[Pope John Paul II wrote a message to the Church in 1998 on the occasion of World Mission Sunday. This message reflects the sense of challenge and yet the immense confidence and trust of the truly missionary heart. The Holy Father recognizes a major “re-awakening” of the missionary spirit and movement of the Church. The Cenacle is called to play a role in this movement.]

“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses not only in Jerusalem but throughout Judea, Samaria and indeed to the ends of the earth”. (Acts 1,8) The Spirit in fact is the principal agent of the whole of the Church’s mission ad gentes as can be clearly be seen in the early Church (*Mission of the Redeemer* #21).

It is certainly impossible to comprehend the work of the Spirit in the Church and in the world by examining statistics or other means of human knowledge, since it exists on another level, the level of grace perceived by faith. His work is often hidden, mysterious, but always effective. The Holy Spirit has lost none of the propelling force of the time of the early Church; He acts today as in the time of Jesus and the Apostles. The wonders He worked, described in the Acts of the Apostles, continue to happen in our day too, but often go unrecognized since in many parts of the world humanity lives in secularized cultures which interpret reality as if God did not exist.

[We must take this] opportunely [to] direct our attention to the marvelous undertakings of the Holy Spirit, so that we may be strengthened in our faith and there may be, precisely due to the power of the Spirit, a great missionary re-awakening in the Church. . . .

2. The knowledge that the Spirit is at work in the hearts of believers and intervenes in the events of history, is a reason for us to be optimistic and have hope. The first great sign of this action, which I wish to propose for common reflection, is paradoxically the situation of crisis which exists in our modern world: a complex phenomenon whose negative factors often provoke, as a reaction, heartfelt invocations for the vivifying Spirit, revealing the longing for the Good News of Christ the Saviour which is present in human hearts.

How can we fail to recall, in this regard, the accurate assessment of the contemporary world made by the Second Vatican Council in the pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* (nos. 4-10)? In recent decades the epochal crisis described in the document, has deepened: the lack of ideals and values has become more widespread; the sense of Truth has been lost and moral relativism has increased; not rarely there would seem to prevail an individualistic, utilitarian morality with no firm points of reference; on many sides it is underlined that modern man, when he rejects

God, is less man, full of fear and tension, closed in himself, dissatisfied and selfish.

The practical consequences are clearly visible: the model of consumerism, although widely criticized, is ever more dominant. There is a danger that concern, often legitimate, for many material problems, may become so absorbing as to render human relations cold and difficult. People find they are becoming arid, aggressive, unable to smile, to greet others, to say “thank you”, to take to heart the problems of others. Due to a complex series of economic social and cultural factors, in the more developed societies there is a preoccupying “sterility”, which is both spiritual and demographic. But it is often precisely situations such as these, which often bring people to the limits of desperation, which provoke the urge to invoke the One who is the “Lord, Giver of Life” because man cannot live without meaning and without hope.

3. A second great sign of the presence of the Spirit is the reawakening of a sense of religion among the peoples. . . .Man is not content with himself. It is now the widespread opinion that man is not content to dominate nature and the cosmos, the most advanced science and technology do not satisfy man, because they are unable to reveal the ultimate meaning of reality: they are merely instruments, but not ends for the life of man and the journey of humanity.

Together with this religious re-awakening, it is important to note “the affirmation among peoples of the Gospel values which Jesus made incarnate in his own life (peace, brotherhood, concern for the needy)” (*Mission of the Redeemer* #3). If we consider the history of the last two centuries, we realize how people have become more aware of the value of the human person, of the rights and men and of women, a universal longing for peace, a desire to do away with frontiers and racial division, a tendency to encounter between peoples and between cultures, tolerance towards those who are different, commitment to solidarity and voluntary work, rejection of political authoritarianism and the consolidation of democracy and an aspiration to a more balanced international justice in the economic field.

How can we fail to see in all this the work of divine Providence, who guides humanity and history towards more dignified conditions of life for all people. Therefore we cannot be pessimistic. Faith in God stirs us, on the contrary, to optimism, that optimism which springs from the evangelical message: “If we look at today’s world, we are struck by many negative factors that can lead to pessimism. But this feeling is unjustified: we have faith in God . . .God is preparing a great springtime for Christianity, and we already see its first signs” (*Mission of the Redeemer* #86).

As you look at the world today, are you filled with a sense of hope? Why? Do you see signs of a “missionary re-awakening” in the Church, the world, the Cenacle? Concretely what are these signs? Are you aware of cynicism or discouragement in your life? Ask the Holy Spirit to remove these and fill you, instead, with great joy, confidence, zeal, and enthusiasm.

▶ Write down your reflections briefly here:

WEEK I

Monday: “Spirit and virtues of the Cenacle”

From Father Judge:

22. *The Cenacle spirit is an apostolic spirit which finds its perfection in zeal, the white heat of charity. We are to become perfect in the spirit and virtues of the Cenacle, to live and die simple, prudent, humble, charitable men and women; men and women of sacrifice, of patience, of self-denial whose lives are spent and consecrated to the service of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.*

From the Word of God:

“**16** Instead, I tell you, be guided by the Spirit, and you will no longer yield to self-indulgence.**17** The desires of self-indulgence are always in opposition to the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are in opposition to self-indulgence: they are opposites, one against the other; that is how you are prevented from doing the things that you want to.**18** But when you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.**19** When self-indulgence is at work the results are obvious: sexual vice, impurity, and sensuality,**20** the worship of false gods and sorcery; antagonisms and rivalry, jealousy, bad temper and quarrels, disagreements,**21** factions and malice, drunkenness, orgies and all such things. And about these, I tell you now as I have told you in the past, that people who behave in these ways will not inherit the kingdom of God.**22** On the other hand the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness,**23** gentleness and self-control; no law can touch such things as these.**24** All who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified self with all its passions and its desires.**25** Since we are living by the Spirit, let our behaviour be guided by the Spirit**26** and let us not be conceited or provocative and envious of one another.”
(Galatians 5:16-26)

Father Judge identified the Cenacle virtues as “humility, simplicity, charity, patience, sacrifice, self-denial, and prudence.” These were essential qualities of a missionary spirit. With which of these graces has the Holy Spirit already blessed you? Give thanks! Which of these virtues most challenges you? Ask the Holy Spirit for this gift so that you can be a more effective agent of the Spirit in bringing the Good News to others.

p Write down your reflections briefly here:

Tuesday: “An apostolic family”

From Father Judge:

“MINISTRY OF AUTHORITY:

23. Relying on the Holy Spirit, we are to seek together in the Missionary Cenacle Apostolate and in our local Missionary Cenacle to discover God’s will in a climate of respect and trust. With genuine love, we call each other to grow in apostolic holiness through encouragement and mutually appropriate accountability. This practice of taking counsel in matters of life and mission is a cherished tradition in the Missionary Cenacle. After prayer and counsel, we humbly accept the decision made.”

From the Word of God:

“When he [Saul] got to Jerusalem he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him: they could not believe he was really a disciple.²⁷Barnabas, however, took charge of him, introduced him to the apostles, and explained how the Lord had appeared to him and spoken to him on his journey, and how he had preached fearlessly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.²⁸Saul now started to go round with them in Jerusalem, preaching fearlessly in the name of the Lord.²⁹But after he had spoken to the Hellenists and argued with them, they became determined to kill him.³⁰When the brothers got to know of this, they took him to Caesarea and sent him off from there to Tarsus.”
(Acts 9:26-30)

Barnabas -- his name means “son of encouragement” -- reached out to Saul when he was “on the outs” with the other disciples. In our local Missionary Cenacles and in our lives generally, are we “sons and daughters of encouragement” -- helping to create a “climate of respect and trust”? Or do we find ourselves criticizing often and finding fault with others? In what ways can you encourage one another in your Cenacle? In what way can you help one another be faithful to the mission you have received, be “accountable” for the task God has called you to individually and as a Cenacle?

✎ Write down your reflections briefly here:

Wednesday: Authority and Washing Feet

From Father Judge:

“24. Authority exercised in the Missionary Cenacle Apostolate and in our local Missionary Cenacle is to call us to be faithful to our vocation as Cenacle Lay Missionaries. The functions of this authority are to assist each other and to seek the will of God, to promote a true spirit of community and to unite us in pursuing our apostolic goals.”

From the Word of God:

“**1** Before the festival of the Passover, Jesus, knowing that his hour had come to pass from this world to the Father, having loved those who were his in the world, loved them to the end.**2** They were at supper, and the devil had already put it into the mind of Judas Iscariot son of Simon, to betray him.**3** Jesus knew that the Father had put everything into his hands, and that he had come from God and was returning to God,**4** and he got up from table, removed his outer garments and, taking a towel, wrapped it round his waist;**5** he then poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet and to wipe them with the towel he was wearing.**6** He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, ‘Lord, are you going to wash my feet?’**7** Jesus answered, ‘At the moment you do not know what I am doing, but later you will understand.’**8** ‘Never!’ said Peter. ‘You shall never wash my feet.’ Jesus replied, ‘If I do not wash you, you can have no share with me.’ Simon Peter said,**9** ‘Well then, Lord, not only my feet, but my hands and my head as well!’**10** Jesus said, ‘No one who has had a bath needs washing, such a person is clean all over. You too are clean, though not all of you are.’**11** He knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said, ‘though not all of you are’.**12** When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments again he went back to the table. ‘Do you understand’, he said, ‘what I have done to you?’**13** You call me Master and Lord, and rightly; so I am.**14** If I, then, the Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you must wash each other’s feet.**15** I have given you an example so that you may copy what I have done to you.**16** ‘In all truth I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, no messenger is greater than the one who sent him.**17** ‘Now that you know this, blessed are you if you behave accordingly.’ (John 13:1-17)

Father Judge wanted the leaders in the Missionary Cenacle called “Custodians.” He wanted to make absolutely sure that they understood their role was to serve and not to dominate! Jesus offers the perfect example of how Father Judge saw authority being exercised in the Missionary Cenacle. What has been your experience of “authority”? How do you deal with authority when it has been given to you? Is your conscious model the authority of Jesus exercised as He washed the disciples’ feet?

▶ Write down your reflections briefly here:

Thursday: “Not to be served but to serve”

From Father Judge:

“25. This authority, a ministry after the example of Jesus, who came not to be served, but to serve (Mt 20/28), is to be exercised according to the Rule of Life and Constitution of the Missionary Cenacle Apostolate. ”

From the Word of God:

“24 When the other ten heard this they were indignant with the two brothers.25 But Jesus called them to him and said, ‘You know that among the gentiles the rulers lord it over them, and great men make their authority felt.26 Among you this is not to happen. No; anyone who wants to become great among you must be your servant,27 and anyone who wants to be first among you must be your slave,28 just as the Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.’” (Matthew 20:24-28)

The world teaches us to “lord authority” over others -- to let others know just how important or influential or accomplished we are. The way of Jesus is totally contrary to that. The more important our position, the more we must humble ourselves. Authority in the Cenacle is to help the Cenacle be faithful to its mission and call as outlined in the Rule of Life, to assure that no “foreign” spirit creeps into the community. Look carefully at Jesus and His actions. Listen to His words in the Gospel today. Ask for the grace to be able to model your desires and your leadership according to the example He has set.

▶ Write down your reflections briefly here:

Friday: “Responsibility for decisions”

From Father Judge:

“26. We recognize the value of counsel and consultation in important matters of common concern. In the local Missionary Cenacle, we are to share the responsibility for decisions affecting the local Cenacle. The local Custodian is responsible for calling the local Cenacle to council and to serve the local Cenacle in carrying out the decisions in keeping with the Rule of Life and Constitution.”

From the Word of God:

“5 But certain members of the Pharisees’ party who had become believers objected, insisting that gentiles should be circumcised and instructed to keep the Law of Moses.6 The apostles and elders met to look into the matter,7 and after a long discussion, Peter stood up and addressed them.

‘My brothers,’ he said, ‘you know perfectly well that in the early days God made his choice among you: the gentiles were to learn the good news from me and so become believers.8 And God, who can read everyone’s heart, showed his approval of them by giving the Holy Spirit to them just as he had to us.9 God made no distinction between them and us, since he purified their hearts by faith.10 Why do you put God to the test now by imposing on the disciples the very burden that neither our ancestors nor we ourselves were strong enough to support?11 But we believe that we are saved in the same way as they are: through the grace of the Lord Jesus.’12 The entire assembly fell silent, and they listened to Barnabas and Paul describing all the signs and wonders God had worked through them among the gentiles. 13 When they had finished it was James who spoke.” (Acts 15:5-13)

No one person has all the answers. Father Judge felt it was very important for everyone to give their point of view on an issue. The Holy Spirit then could speak through the whole community, and the community together could discern where God was leading. He called this the process of “taking counsel”. As we can see from the above reading from Acts, this was very faithful to the apostolic process of arriving at decisions. Everyone told their experience, explained how they felt about things, and then they prayerfully came to a decision. Once the decision was made, they all worked together to carry it out since they saw this as God’s Will for them right now. How do you personally come to decisions? How have you experienced a group coming to decisions? Have you have had anything similar to Father Judge’s idea of “taking counsel” in your own life up until now? When? What was the experience like for you?

p Write down your reflections briefly here:

WEEK II

Weekend Reflection: “The Horizons of Evangelization”

[As we continue to read the message of John Paul II on mission, it is important to remember that we are part of an immense Church, the Body of Christ spread throughout the world. The Holy Father refers to “the young churches” -- areas of the world where large numbers of people are just now coming to the Faith! . We are brothers and sisters to people we have never met and yet who form an intimate and real part of our reality as people and Church.]

“4. The Spirit is present in the Church and he is the guide in mission to the nations. It is comforting to know that not we, but He is the principal agent of mission. This fills us with peace, joy, hope and courage. It is not the results that must concern the missionary, because they are in God’s hands: he or she must work with all his resources and let the Lord work in profundity. The Spirit, what is more, broadens the prospects of the Church’s mission to the ends of the entire world. [This] stresses the need never to restrict the horizons of evangelization but to keep them always open to the dimensions of the whole of humanity.

Even the fact that in the Church, born from the cross of Christ, still today there exists persecution and martyrdom is a powerful sign of hope for mission. How can we fail to recall, in this regard, that missionaries and ordinary believers continue to give their life for the name of Jesus? Also the history of recent years demonstrates that persecution gives rise to new Christians and that suffering, faced for Christ and his Gospel, is indispensable for the spreading of the Kingdom of God. I also wish to recall and to thank the countless people who, in the silence of their daily service, offer to God their prayers and sufferings for the mission and for missionaries.

5. In the young Churches, furthermore, the presence of the Spirit reveals itself with another sign, just as powerful: these young Christian communities are enthusiastic about the faith and their members, young people in particular, spread it with conviction. The panorama before our eyes, in this respect, is consoling. New converts, or even catechumens, are powerfully touched by the breath of the Spirit and, enthusiastic about their faith, they become missionaries in their environment.

Their pastoral activity is also out-reaching. In Latin America, for example, the principle and practice of “mission ad gentes” [unbaptized peoples] have been adopted above all after the two most recent CELAM Conferences in Puebla (1979) and Santo Domingo (1992). There have been five Latin American Missionary Congresses and the Bishops proudly affirm that, although they are still poor in apostolic personnel, they have a few thousand priests, nuns and lay volunteers on mission, above all in Africa. On this continent the sending apostolic personnel from one country

to another is a particular practice which is increasing as reciprocal help between the Churches, to which is added also availability for foreign mission ad extra. The Special Assembly for Asia of the Synod of Bishops, held in the Spring in Rome this year, highlighted the missionary spirit of the Asian Churches where several missionary Institutes of secular clergy have been founded: in India, the Philippines, Korea, Thailand, Vietnam, Japan. Asian priests and Sisters work in Africa, in Oceania, in the countries of the Middle East and in Latin America.

6. Before the flourishing of apostolic initiatives in every corner of the earth, it is not difficult to see that the Spirit manifests Himself in the diversity of charisma, which enrich the universal Church and make her grow. The Apostle Paul, in his First Letter to the Corinthians, speaks at length about the charisma distributed for the spreading of the Church (chapter 12-14). The “time of the Spirit” which we are living, directs us more and more towards a variety of expression, pluralism of methods and forms, which reveal the richness and vivacity of the Church. Hence the importance of missions in the young ecclesial communities, which have already fostered silently, according to the style of the Holy Spirit, a beneficial renewal of their life. There is no doubt that the third millennium appears as a renewed call for universal mission and at the same time, the inculturation of the Gospel on the part of the different local Churches.

7. I wrote in the Encyclical *Redemptoris missio*: “For the Church’s history missionary drive has always been a sign of vitality, just as its lessening is a sign of a crisis of faith”... missionary activity renews the Church, revitalizes faith and Christian identity and offer fresh enthusiasm and new incentive”. (no. 2). . . . Faith is strengthened when it is given to others (*Redemptoris missio* 2); the value of the universality of missionary commitment, since everyone, without exception, is called to cooperate generously in the Church’s missionary activity; prayer, offering up of sufferings and witness of life as primary elements, within reach of all the sons and daughters of God “Mission is still only beginning” I underlined in *Redemptoris missio* (no. 1) and this is why we must listen to the voice of Christ who still today calls: Follow me and I will make you fishers of men” (cfr Mt 4,19). Do not be afraid! Open the doors of your heart and you life to Christ! Let yourselves be involved in the mission of proclaiming the Kingdom of God: for the Lord “was sent” (cfr Lk 4,43) and he handed on the same mission to his disciples of all times. God, who cannot be outdone in generosity, will reward you a hundred fold and will give you eternal life (cfr Mt 19 29).”

Do you sense that “missionary drive” is increasing or lessening: in your life? In your local Church community? In the whole Church? If so, what are concrete examples of this renewed missionary spark? Be specific and grateful. If not, why do you think this is so? Is it a “sign of a crisis of faith” as the Holy Father writes? In what way might the Holy Spirit be calling you or your Cenacle to respond to this “crisis”?

Write down your reflections briefly here:

WEEK II

Monday: Servant leadership

From Father Judge:

“27. In the Missionary Cenacle Apostolate full authority shall be exercised by General Custodian assisted by the General Council. This authority encompasses leadership and government of the Missionary Cenacle Apostolate and the call of the members to our apostolic way of life.”

From the Word of God:

“1 I urge the elders among you, as a fellow-elder myself and a witness to the sufferings of Christ, and as one who is to have a share in the glory that is to be revealed:2 give a shepherd’s care to the flock of God that is entrusted to you: watch over it, not simply as a duty but gladly, as God wants; not for sordid money, but because you are eager to do it.3 Do not lord it over the group which is in your charge, but be an example for the flock.4 When the chief shepherd appears, you will be given the unfading crown of glory.” (1 Peter 5:1-4)

What do you most admire in a leader? What are the qualities you look for? How do these qualities compare to those outlined by St. Peter in the Scripture reading above? Dr. Margaret Healy was the first General Custodian of the Missionary Cenacle Apostolate. Appointed as a very young woman to this task by Father Judge, she lovingly and wisely led the Cenacle Lay Missionaries for nearly forty years. Her life, beautifully captured in the booklet Margaret or in the longer work Margaret: Called and Chosen, presents an excellent model of the type of “servant leadership” Father Judge envisioned in the Cenacle. You might want to at least try to read the briefer work Margaret to become better acquainted with this model for the “Ministry of Authority” in the Cenacle.

Write down your reflections briefly here:

Tuesday: “The evangelical call to unity”

From Father Judge:

“28. In all our apostolic commitments, we hold a deep reverence for the Priesthood. We recognize the evangelical call to unity and the authority of the bishops and their special roles as signs of unity and as pastors of the local Church and the authority of the Holy Father and his special role as the sign of unity in the universal Church.”

From the Word of God:

“13 When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi he put this question to his disciples, ‘Who do people say the Son of man is?’ 14 And they said, ‘Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.’ 15 ‘But you,’ he said, ‘who do you say I am?’ 16 Then Simon Peter spoke up and said, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’ 17 Jesus replied, ‘Simon son of Jonah, you are a blessed man! Because it was no human agency that revealed this to you but my Father in heaven. 18 So I now say to you: You are Peter and on this rock I will build my community. And the gates of the underworld can never overpower it. 19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of Heaven: whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.’ 20 Then he gave the disciples strict orders not to say to anyone that he was the Christ.” (*Matthew 16:13-20*)

Think of a priest who has touched and blessed your life in some way. Thank God for that priest. Now think of all the people throughout the centuries whose lives have been blessed by the gift of the priesthood. Thank and praise God for that outpouring river of grace. Pray for those priests who may have -- through ignorance, neglect, sin, or simple human failure -- hurt or alienated you or someone you love. Pray for them also. Unity with priests locally, the bishop in the diocese, and the Pope as Pastor of the Universal Church is an essential quality of the Cenacle. Unity often does not come easy, however. It requires much forgiveness, patience, and tolerance. Pray for that ever increasing gift of unity and reconciliation for yourself, for the Church, in the Cenacle, and for the whole world.

Write down your reflections briefly here:

Wednesday: “A rare spirit, a priceless spirit”

From Father Judge:

MEMBERSHIP

29. *The apostolic spirit is a rare spirit, a priceless spirit, a spirit high above that of those who are ordinarily devout. This is the spirit of those great, self-denying, sacrificing lovers of Jesus Christ who leave everything and dispose themselves to go anywhere..”*

From the Word of God:

“ 21 I say it to your shame; perhaps we have been too weak. Whatever bold claims anyone makes—now I am talking as a fool—I can make them too. 22 Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I. 23 Are they servants of Christ? I speak in utter folly—I am too, and more than they are: I have done more work, I have been in prison more, I have been flogged more severely, many times exposed to death. 24 Five times I have been given the thirty-nine lashes by the Jews; 25 three times I have been beaten with sticks; once I was stoned; three times I have been shipwrecked, and once I have been in the open sea for a night and a day; 26 continually traveling, I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from brigands, in danger from my own people and in danger from the gentiles, in danger in the towns and in danger in the open country, in danger at sea and in danger from people masquerading as brothers; 27 I have worked with unsparing energy, for many nights without sleep; I have been hungry and thirsty, and often altogether without food or drink; I have been cold and lacked clothing. 28 And, besides all the external things, there is, day in day out, the pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches. 29 If anyone weakens, I am weakened as well; and when anyone is made to fall, I burn in agony myself. 30 If I have to boast, I will boast of all the ways in which I am weak. 31 The God and Father of the Lord Jesus—who is for ever to be blessed—knows that I am not lying. 32 When I was in Damascus, the governor who was under King Aretas put guards round Damascus city to catch me, 33 and I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and that was how I escaped from his hands.” (2 Corinthians 11:21-33)

Some missionaries -- like St. Paul -- are called to go to distant places to proclaim the love of Jesus. Others, like St. Therese of Lisieux, a cloistered Carmelite nun who is the patroness of the missions, never leave the area where they were born and raised. What characterizes, however, all missionaries is the willingness to sacrifice, to give of themselves fully in love, faith, and service. In what way is God calling you to “sacrifice” yourself? Are you willing to reach out to others, to go beyond your “comfort zone”? Who are the poor and the abandoned that God brings into your life day by day? What is your response to them? Father Judge wrote that “our love for neighbor is a safe and rather accurate measure of our love for God.” With that as your measure, how is your love for God at this point in your life?

p Write down your reflections briefly here:

Thursday: Love, zeal, sacrifice

From Father Judge:

“30. We are to encourage and to foster vocations to the Missionary Cenacle Apostolate through our local Missionary Cenacles. We look for candidates who have, in addition to those human qualities requisite for the apostolic life, *a love of God, a zeal for neighbor and a spirit of sacrifice.*”

From the Word of God:

“¹³When the time of the Jewish Passover was near Jesus went up to Jerusalem,¹⁴ and in the Temple he found people selling cattle and sheep and doves, and the money changers sitting there.¹⁵ Making a whip out of cord, he drove them all out of the Temple, sheep and cattle as well, scattered the money changers’ coins, knocked their tables over¹⁶ and said to the dove sellers, ‘Take all this out of here and stop using my Father’s house as a market.’¹⁷ Then his disciples remembered the words of scripture: I am eaten up with zeal for your house. ¹⁸The Jews intervened and said, ‘What sign can you show us that you should act like this?’¹⁹ Jesus answered, ‘Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up.’²⁰ The Jews replied, ‘It has taken forty–six years to build this Temple: are you going to raise it up again in three days?’²¹ But he was speaking of the Temple that was his body,²² and when Jesus rose from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the scripture and what he had said.” (*John 2:13-22*)

Jesus’ love for His Father and His deep concern for the spiritual good of God’s People led Him to take drastic action -- and at great cost to Himself. Accusation, persecution and -- eventually -- His execution as a criminal were the consequences. A love like this is somewhat “crazy” -- beyond the limits of the normal or the expected. How far am I willing to go out of love for God? Do I keep my eye open for others who have a faith-filled, generous spirit? Am I willing to invite others to join me, to join all the Cenacle in this missionary vocation?

Write down your reflections briefly here:

Friday: Consecrated in truth

From Father Judge:

“31. Candidates are introduced to the nature and practice of the apostolic life according to our charism by the local Missionary Cenacle. At the completion of candidacy and at the minimum age of seventeen, those candidates who are admitted as Associates shall make an act of consecration, renewing their baptismal consecration, within the charism and according to the Rule of Life and Constitution of the Missionary Cenacle Apostolate. The act of consecration shall be received by the General Custodian or delegate on behalf of the Missionary Cenacle Apostolate. Acts of consecration will be received usually at the annual Pentecost meeting.”

From the Word of God:

“**13** But now I am coming to you and I say these things in the world to share my joy with them to the full.**14** I passed your word on to them, and the world hated them, because they belong to the world no more than I belong to the world.**15** I am not asking you to remove them from the world, but to protect them from the Evil One.**16** They do not belong to the world any more than I belong to the world.**17** Consecrate them in the truth; your word is truth.**18** As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world,**19** and for their sake I consecrate myself so that they too may be consecrated in truth.**20** I pray not only for these but also for those who through their teaching will come to believe in me.” (*John 17:13-20*)

Consecration in the Cenacle represents a deepening of one’s Baptismal consecration. It is a recognition of a call to be particularly close to the heart of God as a missionary. Ultimately it is God who “consecrates” us, sets us aside for a sacred task. In what way do you feel God is “consecrating” you, setting you aside for a sacred task? What is that sacred task? What is the deepest “truth” of your life in God? Reflect on these questions. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you your own sense of “consecration” through Baptism: you were set apart by God in the world. Do you understand and accept this consecration? It forms the basis for the Cenacle Act of Consecration for those who feel called to live out their baptismal call in this fashion.

p Write down your reflections briefly here:

WEEK III

Weekend Reflection: “To proclaim Christ!”

[The following selection is from the beginning of John Paul II's encyclical on missionary activity entitled Mission of the Redeemer (Redemptoris missio).]

“1. The mission of Christ the Redeemer, which is entrusted to the Church, is still very far from completion. As the second millennium after Christ's coming draws to an end, an overall view of the human race shows that this mission is still only beginning and that we must commit ourselves wholeheartedly to its service. It is the Spirit who impels us to proclaim the great works of God: "For if I preach the Gospel, that gives me no ground for boasting. For necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel!" (1 Cor 9: 16)

In the name of the whole Church, I sense an urgent duty to repeat this cry of St. Paul. From the beginning of my Pontificate I have chosen to travel to the ends of the earth in order to show this missionary concern. My direct contact with peoples who do not know Christ has convinced me even more of the urgency of missionary activity

2. The Council has already borne much fruit in the realm of missionary activity. There has been an increase of local churches with their own bishops, clergy and workers in the apostolate. The presence of Christian communities is more evident in the life of nations, and communion between the churches has led to a lively exchange of spiritual benefits and gifts. The commitment of the laity to the work of evangelization is changing ecclesial life, while particular churches are more willing to meet with the members of other Christian churches and other religions, and to enter into dialogue and cooperation with them. Above all, there is a new awareness that missionary activity is a matter for all Christians, for all dioceses and parishes, Church institutions and associations.

Nevertheless, in this "new springtime" of Christianity there is an undeniable negative tendency, and the present document is meant to help overcome it. Missionary activity specifically directed "to the nations" (ad gentes) appears to be waning, and this tendency is certainly not in line with the directives of the Council and of subsequent statements of the Magisterium. Difficulties both internal and external have weakened the Church's missionary thrust toward non Christians, a fact which must arouse concern among all who believe in Christ. For in the Church's history, missionary drive has always been a sign of vitality, just as its lessening is a sign of a crisis of faith. . . .

I wish to invite the Church to renew her missionary commitment. . . . For missionary activity renews the Church, revitalizes faith and Christian identity, and offers fresh enthusiasm and new incentive. Faith is strengthened when it is given to others! It is in commitment to the Church's universal mission that the new evangelization of Christian peoples will find inspiration and

support.

But what moves me even more strongly to proclaim the urgency of missionary evangelization is the fact that it is the primary service which the Church can render to every individual and to all humanity in the modern world, a world which has experienced marvelous achievements but which seems to have lost its sense of ultimate realities and of existence itself. "Christ the Redeemer," I wrote in my first encyclical, "fully reveals man to himself.... The person who wishes to understand himself thoroughly...must...draw near to Christ.... The Redemption that took place through the cross has definitively restored to man his dignity and given back meaning to his life in the world"

3. Peoples everywhere, open the doors to Christ! His Gospel in no way detracts from the human person's freedom, from the respect that is owed to every culture and to whatever is good in each religion. By accepting Christ, you open yourselves to the definitive Word of God, to the One in whom God has made himself fully known and has shown us the path to himself.

The number of those who do not know Christ and do not belong to the Church is constantly on the increase. Indeed, since the end of the Council it has almost doubled. When we consider this immense portion of humanity which is loved by the Father and for whom he sent his Son, the urgency of the Church's mission is obvious.

On the other hand, our own times offer the Church new opportunities in this field: we have witnessed the collapse of oppressive ideologies and political systems; the opening of frontiers and the formation of a more united world due to an increase in communications; the affirmation among peoples of the gospel values which Jesus made incarnate in his own life (peace, justice, brotherhood, concern for the needy); and a kind of soulless economic and technical development which only stimulates the search for the truth about God, about man and about the meaning of life itself.

God is opening before the Church the horizons of a humanity more fully prepared for the sowing of the Gospel. I sense that the moment has come to commit all of the Church's energies to a new evangelization and to the mission ad gentes. No believer in Christ, no institution of the Church can avoid this supreme duty: to proclaim Christ to all peoples."

How urgently or passionately do you feel the need to "proclaim Christ to all peoples"? Do you see signs of a "new springtime" in Christianity? What would they be? What are the obstacles you face in sharing the Good News of Jesus with others? Be as specific as possible. Ask the Holy Spirit to remove these obstacles.

▶ Write down your reflections briefly here:

WEEK III

Monday: Correcting faults

From Father Judge:

“ 32. As Associates we accept the obligation to attend regularly the apostolic meetings of our local Missionary Cenacle, the monthly days of recollection, and annual retreats; to receive regular spiritual guidance; to engage in apostolic works, and to abide by the Rule of Life and Constitution of the Missionary Cenacle Apostolate. If an Associate has made no notable effort to fulfill these obligations over a substantial period of time or should the conduct of an Associate be seriously harmful to the Church or to the Missionary Cenacle Apostolate, the local Custodian shall present a written summary of the facts to the Regional Custodian who shall also conduct an investigation and report the entire matter to the General Custodian. After personal consultation with the Associate regarding the charges, the General Custodian may dismiss the person from membership and so notify the person and the local Missionary Cenacle in writing.”

From the Word of God:

“ ¹⁵If your brother does something wrong, go and have it out with him alone, between your two selves. If he listens to you, you have won back your brother. ¹⁶If he does not listen, take one or two others along with you: whatever the misdemeanour, the evidence of two or three witnesses is required to sustain the charge. ¹⁷But if he refuses to listen to these, report it to the community; and if he refuses to listen to the community, treat him like a gentile or a tax collector. ¹⁸In truth I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven..” (*Matthew 18:15-18*)

What do you do when someone you love or care about is doing something wrong? Try not to notice? Look the other way? Talk about the person behind her/his back? Publicly denounce the person? Although very rarely used in the Cenacle, there is a method for dealing with the question of scandal -- what the Rule calls actions “seriously harmful to the Church or to the MCA.” What is much more common is how do we help each other when a brother or sister is failing to do what she or he promised? Or is causing a problem in the community? Or is employing apostolic methods that are inappropriate although well intentioned? The Gospel -- like the Rule -- offers us a “graduated approach”: one on one first, a few others, then finally to those in authority. Although always delicate, this process of mutual accountability is a necessary element of any community or shared mission.

▶ Write down your reflections briefly here:

Tuesday: Encouraging giftedness

From Father Judge:

“33. Fidelity to our vocation demands that we continue our spiritual, apostolic, academic, personal and social development, within our common goals and mission. We have gifts that differ according to the favor bestowed on each of us (Rom 12/6). In community we should be challenged to discover, develop and use our gifts, lest the grace of God be given in vain (1 Cor 15/10). This is a lifelong process, and, as we advance in age, we are to follow Jesus ever more faithfully in the power of the Spirit, until that day when, with him, we enter into the glory of the Father.”

From the Word of God:

“⁴There are many different gifts, but it is always the same Spirit;⁵there are many different ways of serving, but it is always the same Lord.⁶There are many different forms of activity, but in everybody it is the same God who is at work in them all.⁷The particular manifestation of the Spirit granted to each one is to be used for the general good.⁸To one is given from the Spirit the gift of utterance expressing wisdom; to another the gift of utterance expressing knowledge, in accordance with the same Spirit;⁹to another, faith, from the same Spirit; and to another, the gifts of healing, through this one Spirit;¹⁰to another, the working of miracles; to another, prophecy; to another, the power of distinguishing spirits; to one, the gift of different tongues and to another, the interpretation of tongues.¹¹But at work in all these is one and the same Spirit, distributing them at will to each individual.” (*1 Corinthians 12:4-11*)

Do you think you have been challenged to “discover, develop, and use” your gifts? If so, who helped you to do that? If not, what are the obstacles to your recognizing and being grateful for your gifts? Can you help others identify and use their gifts? How? Who? We sometimes mistakenly believe “humility” would not permit this. Humility, according to Father Judge, is a recognition of truth. The truth is that “each individual” has received the freely given gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor 12:11). The question is how am I utilizing those gifts for God’s glory and the service of my sisters and brothers, especially those most abandoned and in need.

▶ Write down your reflections briefly here:

Wednesday: “As you are, so others will be”

From Father Judge:

[The Rule concludes with this quote from Father Judge:]

“Do give this much thought, do hold yourselves responsible for the future of the Cenacle; do remember that as you are, so others will be. What more beautiful legacy can you leave than that of an example and life fragrant and rich in the Cenacle traditions. This means that even after your death you will be continuing your apostleship through others whom your virtue has attracted to the service of God. Such will be my constant prayer for you; do make it your constant effort.”

From the Word of God:

“Next let us praise illustrious men, our ancestors in their successive generations.²The Lord has created an abundance of glory, and displayed his greatness from earliest times.³Some wielded authority as kings and were renowned for their strength; others were intelligent advisers and uttered prophetic sayings.⁴Others directed the people by their advice, by their understanding of the popular mind, and by the wise words of their teaching;⁵others composed musical melodies and set down ballads;⁶others were rich and powerful, living peacefully in their homes.⁷All these were honoured by their contemporaries and were the glory of their day.⁸Some of them left a name behind them, so that their praises are still sung.⁹While others have left no memory, and disappeared as though they had not existed. They are now as though they had never been, and so too, their children after them.¹⁰But here is a list of illustrious men whose good works have not been forgotten.¹¹In their descendants they find a rich inheritance, their posterity.¹²Their descendants stand by the commandments and, thanks to them, so do their children’s children.¹³Their offspring will last for ever, their glory will not fade.¹⁴Their bodies have been buried in peace, and their name lives on for all generations.¹⁵The peoples will proclaim their wisdom, the assembly will celebrate their praises.” (Sirach 44:1-15)

On this great journey, we are not alone. We walk on paths that have been trod before us, paths opened up through the prayers, love and sacrifice of many others. What sort of “inheritance” do I want to leave to those who will follow me? How am I investing now my time, energy, and resources to assure that I will have a “spiritual heritage” to leave behind? Be as specific and concrete as possible in trying to answer this question.

▶ Write down your reflections briefly here:

Thursday: “Charity aflame”

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:

“Moses was looking after the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led it to the far side of the desert and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.²The angel of Yahweh appeared to him in a flame blazing from the middle of a bush. Moses looked; there was the bush blazing, but the bush was not being burnt up.³Moses said, ‘I must go across and see this strange sight, and why the bush is not being burnt up.’⁴When Yahweh saw him going across to look, God called to him from the middle of the bush. ‘Moses, Moses!’ he said. ‘Here I am,’ he answered.⁵‘Come no nearer,’ he said. ‘Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.’⁶I am the God of your ancestors,’ he said, ‘the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.’ At this Moses covered his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

⁷Yahweh then said, ‘I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying for help on account of their taskmasters. Yes, I am well aware of their sufferings.⁸And I have come down to rescue them from the clutches of the Egyptians and bring them up out of that country, to a country rich and broad, to a country flowing with milk and honey, to the home of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites.⁹Yes indeed, the Israelites’ cry for help has reached me, and I have also seen the cruel way in which the Egyptians are oppressing them.¹⁰So now I am sending you to Pharaoh, for you to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt.’¹¹Moses said to God, ‘Who am I to go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?’¹²‘I shall be with you,’ God said” (*Exodus 3:1-12*)

God revealed the Divine Presence to Moses in the midst of the bush that burned but was not consumed. Do you pray daily the Litany of the Holy Spirit asking for that “fire” which blazes in the heart of God? When God calls you as God called Moses to mission, what are your “excuses,” your “reasons” for saying “no” or suggesting that God send someone else? Do you have a sense of “confident assurance” that God’s blazing love embraces you, watches over you? Do you desire to be consumed by this love? Desire is often the measure of love.

p Write down your reflections briefly here:

Friday: Called to Community

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:

“¹God is both refuge and strength for us, a help always ready in trouble;²so we shall not be afraid though the earth be in turmoil, though mountains tumble into the depths of the sea,³and its waters roar and seethe, and the mountains totter as it heaves. (Yahweh Sabaoth is with us, our citadel, the God of Jacob.)Pause⁴There is a river whose streams bring joy to God’s city, it sanctifies the dwelling of the Most High.⁵God is in the city, it cannot fall; at break of day God comes to its rescue.⁶Nations are in uproar, kingdoms are tumbling, when he raises his voice the earth crumbles away.⁷Yahweh Sabaoth is with us, our citadel, the God of Jacob. Pause⁸Come, consider the wonders of Yahweh, the astounding deeds he has done on the earth;⁹he puts an end to wars over the whole wide world, he breaks the bow, he snaps the spear, shields he burns in the fire.¹⁰“Be still and acknowledge that I am God, supreme over nations, supreme over the world.”¹¹Yahweh Sabaoth is with us, our citadel, the God of Jacob.” (*Psalms 46:1-11*)

Individualism sees each person as an isolated entity, alone doing battle with all the forces of the world. In this scenario, a few come out “winners” but the majority are “losers”. This is not God’s view of society, individual human beings, or the world. We are created to live in community: the community of God’s heart, the community of the Church, the community of human society. There is a living “river” of life that “brings joy to God’s city.” Thank God for the community in your life: friends, family, members of the Missionary Cenacle Family. “Be still and acknowledge that I am God” says the Lord. Be grateful for being called out of isolation to relationship and unity.

▶ Write down your reflections briefly here:

WEEK IV

Weekend Reflection: One Lord, Jesus Christ

[This continues Pope John Paul II's teaching on the missionary work of the Church. Here he concentrates on the unique gift and place of Jesus as Lord of heaven and earth. It is through and in Jesus -- and only in and through Jesus -- that we are saved.]

"4 . . . 'the Church's fundamental function in every age, and particularly in ours, is to direct man's gaze, to point the awareness and experience of the whole of humanity toward the mystery of Christ.'

The Church's universal mission is born of faith in Jesus Christ as is stated in our Trinitarian profession of faith: "I believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father.... For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man." The redemption event brings salvation to all, "for each one is included in the mystery of the redemption and with each one Christ has united himself forever through this mystery." It is only in faith that the Church's mission can be understood and only in faith that it finds its basis.

Nevertheless, also as a result of the changes which have taken place in modern times and the spread of new theological ideas, some people wonder: Is missionary work among non-Christians still relevant? Has it not been replaced by inter-religious dialogue? Is not human development an adequate goal of the Church's mission? Does not respect for conscience and for freedom exclude all efforts at conversion? Is it not possible to attain salvation in any religion? Why then should there be missionary activity?

"No one comes to the Father, but by me" (Jn 14:6)

5. If we go back to the beginnings of the Church, we find a clear affirmation that Christ is the one Savior of all, the only one able to reveal God and lead to God. In reply to the Jewish religious authorities who question the apostles about the healing of the lame man, Peter says: "By the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by him this man is standing before you well.... And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved (Acts 4:10, 12). This statement, which was made to the Sanhedrin, has a universal value, since for all people--Jews and Gentiles alike--salvation can only come from Jesus Christ.

The universality of this salvation in Christ is asserted throughout the New Testament. St. Paul acknowledges the risen Christ as the Lord. He writes: "Although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth--as indeed there are many 'gods' and many 'lords'--yet for us there is one God,

the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist" (1 Cor 8:5-6). One God and one Lord are asserted by way of contrast to the multitude of "gods" and "lords" commonly accepted. Paul reacts against the polytheism of the religious environment of his time and emphasizes what is characteristic of the Christian faith: belief in one God and in one Lord sent by God.

In the Gospel of St. John, this salvific universality of Christ embraces all the aspects of his mission of grace, truth and revelation: the Word is "the true light that enlightens every man" (Jn 1:9). And again, "no one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known" (Jn 1:18; cf. Mt 11:27). God's revelation becomes definitive and complete through his only-begotten Son: "In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets; but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom he also created the world" (Heb 1:1-2; cf. Jn 14:6). In this definitive Word of his revelation, God has made himself known in the fullest possible way. He has revealed to humankind who he is. This definitive self-revelation of God is the fundamental reason why the Church is missionary by her very nature. She cannot do other than proclaim the Gospel, that is, the fullness of the truth which God has enabled us to know about himself.

Christ is the one mediator between God and humankind: "For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all, the testimony to which was borne at the proper time. For this I was appointed a preacher and apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth" (1 Tm 2:5-7; cf. Heb 4:14-16). No one, therefore, can enter into communion with God except through Christ, by the working of the Holy Spirit. Christ's one, universal mediation, far from being an obstacle on the journey toward God, is the way established by God himself, a fact of which Christ is fully aware. Although participated forms of mediation of different kinds and degrees are not excluded, they acquire meaning and value only from Christ's own mediation, and they cannot be understood as parallel or complementary to his."

How much has religious "indifference" become a part of your thinking?. Some people say "it doesn't matter what you believe as long as you're a good person." Others hold that "we're all going to the same place anyway so we'll each just believe what we want." The Pope reminds all of us that "no one comes to the Father" except through Jesus. This doesn't mean that anyone who has not been baptized will be definitely condemned. It does mean, however, that Jesus is the very reason and center of our existence. We want to proclaim Him to all because He is the Way, Truth, and Life. How passionate is this conviction within you?

p Write down your reflections briefly here:

WEEK IV

Monday: “God’s Name be hallowed”

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:

⁷In your prayers do not babble as the gentiles do, for they think that by using many words they will make themselves heard.⁸Do not be like them; your Father knows what you need before you ask him.⁹So you should pray like this: Our Father in heaven, may your name be held holy,¹⁰your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.¹¹Give us today our daily bread.¹²And forgive us our debts, as we have forgiven those who are in debt to us.¹³And do not put us to the test, but save us from the Evil One. ¹⁴“Yes, if you forgive others their failings, your heavenly Father will forgive you yours;¹⁵but if you do not forgive others, your Father will not forgive your failings either.” (Matthew 6:7-15)

A major part of Jesus’ mission was to bring forgiveness, peace, and reconciliation to those who were broken, lonely, lost, and afraid. This healed, reconciled world is what “hallows” -- gives glory -- to God’s Name! This asking for and promising to give forgiveness is a central part of Jesus’ own prayer, the Our Father. Are there people in your life with whom you are not at peace? If so, who are they? What could you do as a gesture of peace and reconciliation? Are there sins that you have committed which you have not confessed out of fear or shame? Are you willing to expose all the areas of your life to the healing warmth of God’s Love? Or are there areas that remain hidden within you and closed off even from God? Ask for the Light of the Holy Spirit to understand where you need healing and forgiveness. Ask the Holy Spirit also for the gift of being able to truly forgive those who have offended you.

Write down your reflections briefly here:

Tuesday: “Serve the abandoned”

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:

“Once, when Peter and John were going up to the Temple for the prayers at the ninth hour,² it happened that there was a man being carried along. He was a cripple from birth; and they used to put him down every day near the Temple entrance called the Beautiful Gate so that he could beg from the people going in.³ When this man saw Peter and John on their way into the Temple he begged from them.⁴ Peter, and John too, looked straight at him and said, ‘Look at us.’⁵ He turned to them expectantly, hoping to get something from them,⁶ but Peter said, ‘I have neither silver nor gold, but I will give you what I have: in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, walk!’⁷ Then he took him by the right hand and helped him to stand up. Instantly his feet and ankles became firm,⁸ he jumped up, stood, and began to walk, and he went with them into the Temple, walking and jumping and praising God.⁹ Everyone could see him walking and praising God,¹⁰ and they recognised him as the man who used to sit begging at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple. They were all astonished and perplexed at what had happened to him.” (*Acts 3:1-10*)

Many people in our world feel “abandoned.” They simply “do not experience the love of God” for them. The missionary’s role is to make that love real and present to these sisters and brothers. As long as they do not know God’s love, they will always be “crippled” like the man in Acts: emotionally, spiritually, physically, intellectually. Have you ever felt like this? How did God save you from that? Do you know others who feel “abandoned”? How can you be an instrument of God’s healing for them as Peter was for the cripple at the Temple Gate? Ask the Holy Spirit’s help to become a true “healer” in our world.

Write down your reflections briefly here:

Wednesday: “Every Catholic an Apostle”

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:

“¹⁶Meanwhile the eleven disciples set out for Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had arranged to meet them.¹⁷When they saw him they fell down before him, though some hesitated.¹⁸Jesus came up and spoke to them. He said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations; baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,²⁰and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you. And look, I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.’” (*Matthew 28:16-20*)

Do you consider yourself an “apostle”? In what way? Has this been a consciousness that has been growing in you? Or have you had this awareness for many years? What has helped this awareness or consciousness of “being an apostle” to grow? How can you help call others to “be apostles”? What does your experience or that of others tell you about how a person grows into “being an apostle”? What are the elements? Who specifically -- at home, in your family, at work or school -- can you help to become an apostle? Ask the Holy Spirit’s guidance and strength in this essential dimension of the Cenacle vocation.

p Write down your reflections briefly here:

Thursday: Those “desolate”

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:

³¹When the Son of man comes in his glory, escorted by all the angels, then he will take his seat on his throne of glory.³²All nations will be assembled before him and he will separate people one from another as the shepherd separates sheep from goats.³³He will place the sheep on his right hand and the goats on his left.³⁴Then the King will say to those on his right hand, “Come, you whom my Father has blessed, take as your heritage the kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the world.”³⁵For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you made me welcome,³⁶lacking clothes and you clothed me, sick and you visited me, in prison and you came to see me.”³⁷Then the upright will say to him in reply, “Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink?”³⁸When did we see you a stranger and make you welcome, lacking clothes and clothe you?”³⁹When did we find you sick or in prison and go to see you?”⁴⁰And the King will answer, “In truth I tell you, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me.”⁴¹Then he will say to those on his left hand, “Go away from me, with your curse upon you, to the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.”⁴²For I was hungry and you never gave me food, I was thirsty and you never gave me anything to drink,⁴³I was a stranger and you never made me welcome, lacking clothes and you never clothed me, sick and in prison and you never visited me.”⁴⁴Then it will be their turn to ask, “Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty, a stranger or lacking clothes, sick or in prison, and did not come to your help?”⁴⁵Then he will answer, “In truth I tell you, in so far as you neglected to do this to one of the least of these, you neglected to do it to me.”⁴⁶And they will go away to eternal punishment, and the upright to eternal life.” (*Matthew 25:31-46*)

As you consider the “poor” that God brings into your life daily, do you recognize the presence of Jesus there? When people -- because of their own personal pain and sorrowful history -- are mean and ugly, how do you respond? Are you able to recognize and honor the crucified Jesus there in such extreme pain and poverty?

Write down your reflections briefly here:

Friday: “Different ministries, the same Lord”

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:

“³⁹Mary set out at that time and went as quickly as she could into the hill country to a town in Judah. ⁴⁰She went into Zechariah’s house and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹Now it happened that as soon as Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the child leapt in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴²She gave a loud cry and said, ‘Of all women you are the most blessed, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. ⁴³Why should I be honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord? ⁴⁴Look, the moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leapt for joy. ⁴⁵Yes, blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled.’” (*Luke 1:39-45*)

Mary is a perfect example of someone who saw the need and responded. This is the very nature of ministry. There are as many ministries in the Church and the world as there are needs! Ministry means “service.” As Cenacle Lay Missionaries we try to help people recognize these many needs and, like Mary, respond according to their particular gifts. Some people try to “define” ministry by a certain movement or methodology. Others try to see “ministry” as only occurring in the Church. Reflect on Mary’s visit to Elizabeth. Was that “ministry”? Why? In what way? What other types of “ministries” can you recognize among the people you know?

Write down your reflections briefly here: