



Rule of Life and Constitution of the Missionary Cenacle Apostolate

This Rule of Life and Constitution was adopted on October 13, 1984 by the General Council of the Missionary Cenacle Apostolate after study and consultation with the membership. It is an adaptation of the Rule of Life of the Missionary Servants of the Most Holy Trinity and the Missionary Servants of the Most Blessed Trinity. Further revisions were made in 2007 and it was approved by membership in 2008. On April 17, 2009 the MCA General Council gave approval to print the Rule of Apostolic Life in a new format that reflect the international reality. Words in italics are direct quotes from Fr. Thomas Augustine Judge, C.M.

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 (Luke 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.*

IDENTITY AND PURPOSE

2. We, the Missionary Cenacle Apostolate (MCA), are a self-governing, international association of the Catholic faithful, who have been called by God to be missionaries in the providence of our daily lives. We have a special relationship with the Missionary Servants of the Most Blessed Trinity, the Missionary Servants of the Most Holy Trinity, and the Blessed Trinity Missionary Institute. Together we comprise the Missionary Cenacle Family.

2.1 Originally called the *Outer Missionary Cenacle*, the MCA was founded by Fr. Thomas Augustine Judge, C.M. in 1909 in Brooklyn, New York. The religious and secular institutes of the Missionary Cenacle Family find their origin in this *Outer Missionary Cenacle*

2.2 The MCA is comprised of Catholic lay persons eighteen years of age or older, who are called to holiness of life while sharing in the apostolic goals of the Missionary Cenacle Apostolate.

2.3 The MCA is made up of Associates, members with full rights, and Candidates, members in basic formation with limited rights. Rights and duties of Associates and Candidates are defined in the Norms and Policies.

3. By our lives 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 that first 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* (Matt. 6:9-10).

4. *The missionary thought, the missionary idea, the missionary spirit should be dominant in our Missionary Cenacles.* In thinking with the Church we strive to meet the pressing needs of our day by undertaking works that are good and necessary, and have their focus on the poor and abandoned. In all our apostolic works, we recognize the authority of the bishops and their special role as signs of unity and as pastors in the local churches.

4.1 In the providence of our everyday lives we look for opportunities to serve the economically and spiritually poor and abandoned, especially those who do not experience the love of God. We strive to live out Gospel teachings in our homes, our communities, and in our places of work and recreation.

5. Our specific mission is *the preservation of the faith* in the areas and among those people who are spiritually neglected and abandoned. Our *chief effort* is to develop a missionary spirit in the laity with the goal that *every Catholic be an apostle.*

5.1 We especially look for those Catholics not practicing their faith or who are in danger of losing the Catholic faith which is their heritage.

5.2 We are to manifest a particular concern for family life, especially for the spiritual and moral development of children and youth.

5.3 Recognizing the power of the laity to be apostles, we seek to empower those around us to do the same.

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. In response to the promptings of the Holy Spirit and the social teachings of the Church, we labor to proclaim the Gospel and to correct injustices.

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 the laity in the mission of the Church. We acknowledge "different gifts but the same Spirit, different ministries but the same Lord" (1 Cor. 12:24). We carry out our apostolates in such a way that we inspire and encourage others to participate more fully in the work of the Church.

8. We are to call forth apostolic men and women from everyday walks of life to become Associates in the Missionary Cenacle Apostolate and to encourage those who feel called to other branches of the Missionary Cenacle Family. We demonstrate a family spirit by having a loving regard for all the members of the family and, when possible, by collaboration in apostolic works. It is our particular responsibility as members of this family to spread the Cenacle spirit. 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.*

SPIRITUAL LIFE

9. *The Cenacle spirit is a Christ-like spirit of "faith working through love" (Gal 5:6). We 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.*

10. We 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.

11. We seek 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.

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 a fuller expression of our baptismal consecration. The uncompromising message of the Gospel calls us to exercise our prophetic role as *witnesses to truth.*

13. Our act of consecration unites us in faith, hope and love. We strive to emulate the early Christians who had one heart and one mind and were nourished by the teaching of the apostles, the breaking of the bread, and the common prayers (Acts 2:42; 4:32).

14. We 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 experience. Each member shall have a copy of the Sacred Scriptures and make frequent use of them in prayer and proclamation.

15. The Eucharist is the *center and sun* of our apostolic lives. We are to worship God in the frequent, even daily, celebration of the Eucharist. The Eucharist is 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 community and source of apostolic vitality. We are to have reverence for the sacramental presence of the Lord Jesus and for all that relates to the Eucharist.

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.

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 is placed upon periods of prayerful silence and recollection. We are to devote suitable time each day to personal prayer, meditation, and spiritual reading. Our reading should include Missionary Cenacle writings and, in keeping with our maxim “sentire cum ecclesia” (to think with the Church), we are to reflect prayerfully on the documents of Church.

18. Periodically we shall seek extended times of prayer and recollection. We are to make an annual 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, we are encouraged to seek spiritual guidance from a person well-versed in Cenacle spirituality. 18.1 Spiritual Guides shall be appointed for the well-being of the MCA as directed by the Norms and Policies.

19. We are to come together regularly to glorify the Triune God through common prayer. We pray individually and collectively to promote greater zeal in the apostolate, more supportive community life and stronger bonds within the Missionary Cenacle Family.

19.1 Cenacles are encouraged to come together frequently for a communal day of recollection.

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 and the world, especially for the Holy Father, for bishops, priests and religious; we pray for youth 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.

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.*

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 of sacrifice, of patience, of self-denial whose lives are spent consecrated to the service of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.*

22.1 Our spirituality is nurtured by the practice of the virtues of faith, hope and charity and the Cenacle virtues.

CONSECRATION IN THE MISSIONARY CENACLE APOSTOLATE

23. We seek to imitate Jesus who calls us to follow him with liberty of spirit and to share in his emptying of self for others. (Philippians 2:7) In Baptism we were anointed with the Holy Spirit and united to Jesus in his mission as a personal response with faith, to God, whose love, the Holy Spirit was spread in our hearts. (Romans 5,5)

23.1 We affirm with the Church that all Christians in any state or walk of life are called to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of love. (cf. Lumen Gentium, No. 40)

24. Our Act of Consecration joins us together for the sake of apostolic mission through the grace of the Holy Spirit. Our consecration encourages the expression of a more generous love of one another as a community. Community, in turn, contributes to the faithful living of our commitment to the Triune God and to the Missionary Cenacle Apostolate.

24.1 The act of consecration brings one into full membership as an Associate of the MCA, whereby we commit ourselves to live the Rule of Apostolic Life.

25. We strive to imitate the self sacrificing love of Jesus by a life of service for the love of God and neighbor.

26. In the spirit of the Missionary Cenacle, we are to offer each other support and understanding, *rejoicing with those who rejoice and sorrowing with those who sorrow*. In a special way, our love is given to our sick and aging members.

26.1 In that same spirit we also pray for the sick and aging members of the other branches of the Missionary Cenacle Family.

26.2 Associates who are sick know that they are united with the suffering Christ for the salvation of the world. They grow in holiness, accepting their sickness with faith.

26.3 Associates who are no longer able to fully participate in the life of the Cenacle due to aging or other infirmities are encouraged to take as their apostolate a ministry of prayer for the members of the MCA and the other branches of the Missionary Cenacle Family. Members shall treat these Associates as the treasure they are, seeking out their gift of wisdom and including them as much as possible in the activities of the Cenacle.

27. Jesus "made himself poor though he was rich, so that we might become rich through His poverty" (2 Cor. 8:9). This inspires us to depend upon the providence of God, to heed the cry of the poor and to live simply, using what we have for the honor and glory of God.

27.1 The lay vocation demands a profound involvement with the mission of Jesus in the world. We witness to our reliance on God as the source of all blessings in our daily work and service for the building up of the reign of God.

27.2 The Gospel urges us to a simple lifestyle. We frequently examine our lives, attitudes, decisions, and possessions in light of the call to simplicity and to freedom from attachment to worldly standards.

27.3 Associates and Candidates pledge to give freely of their time, talent and treasure to further the work of the MCA.

27.4 Our cenacle heritage directs us to be generous in sharing with others and in offering hospitality, according to the circumstances of our life.

28. Jesus, "humbled himself, obediently accepting even death, death on a cross." (Phil. 2:8) His example inspires us to daily surrender to the will of God. Our obedience should be *humble and of the heart, simple and entire, constant and strong in everything*.

29. We pledge to respect the authority of the Custodians in everything that pertains to the integrity of our act of consecration, the observance of our Rule of Life, Constitution and Norms and Policies.

30. Relying on the Holy Spirit, we are to seek together to discover God's will in a climate of respect and trust. With genuine love, we help each other to grow in apostolic holiness through mutual encouragement and appropriate accountability for our Cenacle responsibilities.