

# The Liturgy of Our Daily Lives: Devotions, Practices, & Customs

Missionary Servants  
of the  
Most Holy Trinity

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## **Introduction<sup>1</sup>**

The Missionary Servant *Constitution* invites the confreres to “reflect frequently on the *Book of Customs* and strive to make the virtues, practices and devotions of the Missionary Cenacle operative in their lives.”<sup>2</sup>

The *Book of Customs*, together with the *Constitution* and the *Directory*, were to be the three documents that formally defined our way of living this vocation of a Missionary Servant of the Most Holy Trinity. The revision of the *Constitution* mandated for all religious communities following Vatican Council II received formal ecclesial approval in 1985. Through the years various General Cenacles have reviewed and revised the *Directory* of legislation governing the congregation. What has remained undone up to now is the formal promulgation of a *Book of Customs*.

### *"Devotional Knowledge"*

For Father Judge certain key “devotions” defined the very nature of the spiritual and apostolic life of the Missionary Servant. He insisted that “our spirit is taken from the practice of our devotions.” The person who will “take over these devotions,...will have the Cenacle spirit.”<sup>3</sup>

It is not simply enough, however, to know them as intellectual truths, notions, or ideas. What is required is what Father Judge called *devotional knowledge*. This springs from entering deeply into these mysteries through prayer and contemplation and allowing oneself to be transformed by them. This encounter gives birth to a holy zeal, “a deeply personal and interior *faith that is restless until it finds expression in good works*.” These “good works, in turn, nourish our life of faith and bear fruit in apostolic holiness.”<sup>4</sup>

The central mysteries or “devotions” he recommended for our prayerful reflection and contemplation are:

- The Most Holy Trinity: one's whole life is to be spent glorifying this sacred mystery of life and communion. The Eucharist, “the sun and center of our apostolic lives,” opens the door into the heart of this mystery and so becomes the source of apostolic vitality in service to God's People.
- The Incarnation: God's absolute Love made flesh in the person of Jesus reaches its culmination in the total self-gift of the “naked, abandoned Jesus of Calvary.” The contemplation of the Cross, the Word-Made-Flesh crucified out of love, gives birth to a desire to give one's life in selfless service to all, but especially the poorest and most abandoned.

- The Holy Spirit: this Divine Energy makes it possible for broken, sinful humanity to live fully its vocation to divinity, to fullness of life in the communion of the Church. The Spirit empowers the sisters and brothers to live a life of apostolic virtue, to be transformed into Christ as bearers of the divine Life and Love to all they meet.

Father Judge insisted that it is impossible “to give yourself over to these devotions without producing a distinct type in the Church of God.” This “type” is “so distinct that if you were in among thousands of religious, you would be picked out, and they would say that he or she is ... a Missionary Servant.”<sup>5</sup>

### *The Liturgy of Our Daily Life*

What follows is an attempt to gather in one place what have been the customs of the Missionary Servants of the Most Holy Trinity. Custom may be defined as a practice or way of acting which is common in a certain community and is an external expression of the aspirations and beliefs which people deeply cherish. It is *the liturgy of daily life*, an externalization of our inner beliefs, our core devotions.

It is precisely the nature of a custom that it evolves. Our customs, in different ways, must evolve from these primary devotions which Father Judge set forth as key to our lives as Missionary Servants. First, there was the devotion. Then, certain pious practices developed to express that devotion. Finally, after a period of time, what was practiced by the community at large became custom for the community.

Practices become custom because they are found to be useful in the day-to-day living of a people. *A Book of Customs*, therefore, is not an arbitrary set of formal rituals to regulate our day-to-day living. It is, rather, an expression of the lived experience of the Missionary Servants who profess the same ideals that Father Judge set down.

The practices of Father Judge and his earliest followers were rooted in radically Catholic principles but conditioned by the historical, cultural and theological factors of their time. Over a period of years, some of these original practices never became customary. Others which were accepted as customs at one time were not felt to be valuable in a later age. Customs which proved, through time and practice, to be crucial to effectively living the vocation of a Missionary Servant eventually became enshrined as essential elements in the *Constitution*.

### *Conclusion*

The basic devotions of the Missionary Servants remain the same. The practices which express these devotions and, eventually, become customary in the living of the Missionary Servant vocation may vary according to historical and cultural circumstances.

Thus, this *Book of Customs* attempts to:

- Present the foundational devotion, as given to us by our Founder, from which all else flows;
- Affirm what have become enduring customs whose utilization have proven essential in maintaining and fomenting that “peace, unity and charity among us” fundamental to our community and apostolic lives;
- Indicate what are the current practices that have proven effective today for expressing these core devotions or beliefs in our daily lives.

“Devotions, practices and customs” are not mere pious acts. Rather they propel the charism from an idea to an action. They incarnate profound truths. They create a dynamic unity of contemplation and action. They are the deceptively simple but enduring expressions of the Missionary Servant’s *liturgy of daily life*.

# I. Living the Mysteries: Trinity, Incarnation, Holy Spirit

## Day by Day

*From the writings of Father Judge:*

“Our spirit is taken from the practice of our devotions. If you take over these devotions you will have a certain spirit.... You will have the Cenacle spirit.”<sup>6</sup>

“I am hoping and praying that the Holy Spirit will produce... in you ... a mind that lives in these Mysteries.”<sup>7</sup>

*In the Missionary Cenacle it is a long-standing custom to dedicate each day of the week to reflection on the particular mysteries or devotions that Father Judge identified as central to our spirituality.*

**Sunday - the Mystery of the Holy Trinity**

**Monday - the Mystery of the Holy Spirit**

**Tuesday - the Mystery of the Incarnation**

**Wednesday - Saints Joseph and Vincent de Paul**

**Thursday - the Mystery of the Eucharist**

**Friday - the Mystery of the Cross**

**Saturday - the Blessed Virgin Mary**

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## “Devotional knowledge”: in the Presence of Mystery

*From the Writings of Father Judge:*

The Missionary Servant “has for his endeavor God as the central point of his day. When he rises he calls to mind the Presence of God...., that he must be about his Father's business.... The first principle he has in view during the day is God's honor and glory, God's Will.”<sup>8</sup>

“Live in the Presence of God.”<sup>9</sup>

“Union with God means ...not only to live in the presence of God but to reach out towards God..., to be absorbed by God..., to live in God..., to be all for God.”<sup>10</sup>

“In the morning we begin by an act of love and the whole day should be one continued act of love. That may be accomplished by the presence of God, union with God, offering ejaculations during the day.”<sup>11</sup>

*To assist us in living more consciously in the presence of God, Father Judge encouraged certain daily practices. Some of these are essential to our life together. Others are more helpful depending on the needs and disposition of the individual and the situation. The essential customs include:*

- **Thirty minutes to an hour daily set aside for personal prayer with special attention to praying with the Scriptures.**
- **Daily community prayer, especially Morning and Evening Prayer from the Liturgy of the Hours.**
- **Daily spiritual reading, including Missionary Cenacle writings and the documents of the Church.**

*Other helpful practices from the tradition include:*

- **Prayer of thanksgiving on rising with the sign of the cross, offering the entire day to God’s glory.**
- **When possible, a brief Scripture reading before the community meal together.**
- **Prayer when beginning a journey no matter how brief.**
- **Brief prayers repeated often during the day, called in the tradition “ejaculations.”**

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## II. Glorifying the Triune God

“By our lives as Missionary Servants we seek first to glorify the Triune God.”  
(Constitution #3)

“All Christian doctrine is grounded on the great fundamental truth, the Mystery of the Blessed Trinity.”<sup>12</sup>

“How thankful we should be that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit gives us the grace to be servants, Missionary Servants; that we are permitted familiarity and intimacy with the sacred mysteries.”<sup>13</sup>

“Live more in the Presence of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Realize more and more that every human being whom you meet is the living image of the Blessed Trinity. Respect and honor all as a consequence.”<sup>14</sup>

*Father Judge believed firmly that each individual, no matter what their particular condition of life, bore within them the very Image of God. This Image of God must be respected, honored. Where damaged by sin or its effects, the Missionary Servant strives to be an instrument for the healing and the revealing of that sacred Image. The Missionary Servant's life in community and in the apostolate must reflect this belief and honor this holy presence.*

Essential customs to foster this include:

- Promoting the common life such as sharing meals together regularly and good communication in the Cenacle.
- A genuine care and concern for one another, supporting the confreres in times of sorrow and rejoicing with them in times of blessing and joy.
- A holy appreciation of the gift of the Missionary Cenacle Family and untiring effort to promote peace, unity and charity among us for the sake of the Gospel mission.
- Creating in the Cenacle a spirit of hospitality where others feel welcomed and honored.
- A particular solicitude for sick and aging confreres.
- Special attention to the poor and abandoned in our daily lives and missionary works.
- A recognition of the gifts of every individual and a desire to collaborate closely with all in advancing the Reign of God.

*Other helpful practices to keep alive this consciousness of the presence of the Holy Trinity include:*

- **Praying the Trinitarian doxology of Father Judge at the end of prayers or at the liturgy:**

*Blessed be God the Father who has created us!*

*Blessed be God the Son who has redeemed us!*

*Blessed be God the Holy Spirit who sanctifies us!*

*Blessed be the holy and undivided Trinity now and forever! Amen!*

- **Ring the bell three times when coming to a Cenacle.**
- **Prayerful remembrance of our benefactors on Fridays in grateful recognition for their generosity and our dependence on God's Providence.**

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## The Eucharist: Sharing in the Life of the Trinity

"The Eucharist is the *center and sun* of our apostolic lives."<sup>15</sup>

"The Holy Eucharist enlightens, strengthens, and gives us abidance in God."<sup>16</sup>

The "greatest good" a Missionary Servant can do is "to attract souls to the reception of the sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist and to urge [them] to the frequent reception of these sacraments."<sup>17</sup>

"Think how the Sacred Blood is flowing in the world today! It reservoirs in the tabernacle and in what great streams it flows around the altar railing! .... It is your ineffable grace daily in Holy Communion to catch it in your hearts and offer it up to His Eternal Father...." <sup>18</sup>

"The Incarnation was the visible manifestation of the Infinite and eternal Love which culminated in the Eucharist."<sup>19</sup>

"O God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, through the mystery of the Holy Eucharist, that more and more may come to the eating of the Sacred Body and to the drinking of the Precious Blood of Jesus ...."<sup>20</sup>

*The Eucharist is the door that opens a way into the heart of this mystery of Divine Love that is the Trinity. In turn, the heart of the Trinity's Love is poured forth upon the Church and world through the mystery of the Eucharist prayed and lived with love. Father Judge always promoted a special love and care for priests as the instruments through which this mystery is made present among us.*

*Essential customs to foster this include:*

- **Daily celebration of the Eucharist with appropriate preparation and thanksgiving.**
- **Seeking out, encouraging, and preparing others for the frequent reception of the Eucharist, especially children and youth.**
- **Supporting priests in their ministry through prayer, friendship, and special assistance in times of need or difficulty.**

*Other helpful practices to enter into this Eucharistic mystery include:*

- **Times of Eucharistic Adoration and prayer before the Blessed Sacrament both personally and in community.**
- **Making a visit to the chapel when entering and leaving the Cenacle and at other times during the day.**
- **Stopping briefly to pray, when possible, in churches where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved.**
- **Making the sign of the cross or some other prayer or act of reverence when passing in front of a church where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved. A traditional prayer in the Missionary Cenacle for such occasions is,**

*"O Sacrament most holy, O Sacrament divine, all praise and all thanksgiving be every moment thine! May the heart of Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament be praised, adored and loved with grateful affection in all the tabernacles of the world even until the end of time. Amen!"*

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### III. Cherishing the Incarnation

“To cherish a love and devotion to the mystery of the Incarnation .... means that with whole heart and soul, in every way possible, we will cherish a love of Jesus in our own hearts and strive to enkindle a like love in the hearts of others by spreading a knowledge of our Savior, our Lord, our King and our God.”<sup>21</sup>

"We are committed to the principles of Jesus Christ, to His cause, to His interests."<sup>22</sup>

The Missionary Servant should "put on the Lord Jesus Christ, ... put on His thoughts, His words, His personality" through a "great affection for the Lord, ... to love Him ... with a personal love."<sup>23</sup>

“The Mystery of the Incarnation means much to us, and that is only another way of saying that Jesus Christ is all to us.”<sup>24</sup>

*The Missionary Servant vocation is to live a personal, intimate relationship with Jesus: to contemplate him, to see how he acts, how he feels, what he loves, what pains and hurts him. Jesus is our Friend and wishes us to be his friend, and so he desires – more than anything – to reveal to us his heart. Our invitation is to this personal knowledge of Jesus, a knowledge that will inspire us to a deep and profound love and a self-giving service in response to this love.*

Essential customs to embody this profound truth are:

- **Nine days of prayer in preparation for the feasts of the Annunciation (March 25) and Christmas (December 25).**
- **Special celebrations of these feasts in the Missionary Cenacles with gatherings, special times of prayer and community.**
- **Daily prayerful reading of the Scriptures and a sharing of this Good News with others through word and testimony of life.**
- **Both in personal prayer and communal reflection, to consider the providence of our daily lives in the light of the Gospels so as to grow in the love of Jesus and better understand God's Will for us.**

*Other helpful practices include the following:*

- **A devotional renewal of the vows on the feast of the Annunciation (March 25) by all the confreres and, when possible, the profession of perpetual vows on this feast.**
- **A reading of a brief section of the New Testament prior to the community meal.**
- **Praying the Angelus either privately or in community, especially at the noon hour.**

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## Embracing the Cross

"Our Jesus, the Jesus of the Cenacle, is the naked, desolate, abandoned Christ of Calvary.... That is why you make the sign of the Cross on everything. Don't mind what people think of that cross.... Just think of the millions of acts of faith, acts of adoration, acts of love"<sup>25</sup>

For Missionary Servants, "this thought must never leave them, that the Book of Books and the True Fountain of Wisdom is their Crucifix; therefore, they shall have it ever before them."<sup>26</sup>

"Sorrow ... offered up in union with the sorrows of our Savior loses its deadly bitterness and becomes a divine blessing and a pledge of God's love and favor.... It gives us companionship with our Agonized Redeemer, our Sorrowful Mother and hosts of courageous and sacrificing friends of Our Lord who generously suffered with Him. They suffered even gladly for love of Him who suffered so much for them. Our Lord then robs death and misery of its bitterness and, by His example of presence and peace, ... brings a joyful light where otherwise there would be no gladness."<sup>27</sup>

"In the Cross is salvation, in the Cross is life, in the Cross is protection from enemies, in the Cross is infusion of heavenly sweetness, in the Cross is strength of mind, in the Cross there is joy of spirit, in the Cross is height of virtue, in the Cross is perfection of sanctity ... Let us love this Cross; let us cherish it, let it ever be with us; let it begin and continue our every action, open and close our day. Let it overshadow our lives; let us feel its sacred impress; let us lovingly clasp it; let us smother it with our kisses; let it be of all things our most treasured possession."<sup>28</sup>

*The crucified Christ – naked and abandoned -- has given all and taken upon Himself all the sufferings of poor, broken humanity. His life has been a pure and selfless gift, seeking always the good of the sisters and the brothers that came into his path. But*

*this final act of unbounded oblation opens the path to abundant life for all, to friendships beyond race and culture, to forgiveness and reconciliation, to a unity and peace that the world could never give. This holy, chaste love of Jesus urges us to reach out in love and service to the suffering sisters and brothers who are lost and abandoned. Thus our lives and sacrifices bear infinite fruitfulness, born out of his pierced side on the cross.*

*Essential customs to embody this profound truth are:*

- **The confreres receive a mission cross at the time of their final profession of vows. They should regularly reflect on its significance in their lives.**
- **In all our missionary works, we are to have a special care for and attention to those situations and people who are spiritually neglected or abandoned, especially the poor.**
- **In response to the social teaching of the Church, we identify and seek to correct injustices and care for immigrants and minorities with a special attention to the spiritual and moral development of youth.**
- **Frequent reception of the sacrament of Penance to experience the forgiveness and healing power of Jesus and so share this same compassion with others, especially those who are broken or troubled.**

*Other helpful practices include the following:*

- **Where possible, each Missionary Cenacle should have a large, rough-hewn cross before it as a sign of the missionary work to be accomplished there.**
- **Placing a small cross on all letters, documents, envelopes, etc.**
- **Daily make the Stations of the Cross.**
- **A special remembrance of the Passion of the Lord on Fridays, especially near 3 p.m.**

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## IV. Attracting the Holy Spirit

“Our vocation is to attract the Holy Spirit. Our vocation is to bring the Holy Spirit into people's hearts.”<sup>29</sup>

“We need the Spirit of God, we just must have the Holy Spirit move amongst us. He is the One to soften your hearts, enlighten your minds, to give power and strength to your will. We want strength and power, but that is of the Holy Spirit. Now let us put more unction in our prayer to the Spirit of God.... Everything that delights the eye, that delights the senses is of the Holy Spirit. Whatever we see of calm, of loveliness, whatever beauty there is, it is all of the Holy Spirit. O, we want beauty of soul, we want harmony of mind, we want peace of spirit. That must come from the Holy Spirit.”<sup>30</sup>

“That the Missionary Servants may ever put Jesus and His Church first they shall pray to the Holy Spirit for His Gifts and Fruits, especially for Wisdom and Fortitude.”<sup>31</sup>

“The apostolic spirit lives in the Church today and blessed indeed are they who possess it.... Those who desire it should perseveringly pray to the Holy Spirit.... The apostolic spirit is surely a spirit of love and therefore it is essentially inspired by the Holy Spirit. Would you have it? ‘Walk In the Spirit’ (Gal. 5:25).... Call upon Him frequently with short prayers.”<sup>32</sup>

*The Spirit descended upon Jesus at his baptism, led him into the desert, and moved in him as he carried out his messianic mission. Jesus breathed forth this same Spirit upon all creation as he gave up his life on the cross. The same Spirit descended in power on the Church at Pentecost, emboldening the church to bring the Good News to the whole earth. Father Judge urged his followers to constantly beg that same Spirit to be in us and with us, to “attract” the fire of that Spirit through our fervent prayer and desire. This is the Spirit of Power, the Lord and Giver of Life that has been given to us individually and as a People.*

Some essential customs to promote this:

- **Nine days of prayer in preparation for the feast of Pentecost and a special celebration of the feast throughout the Missionary Cenacle.**
- **The confreres of a given Missionary Cenacle are to gather regularly for house council. Relying on the Holy Spirit and in a climate of respect and trust, the confreres seek together to discover God's Will in matters of common life and mission.**

- **With fraternal love and respect, the confreres are to encourage one another to growth in apostolic holiness.**
- **Similarly, with prudence and fraternal love, a confrere is to bring to the attention of a brother concerns regarding behaviors inconsistent with his vocation or threatening to the person's or the community's welfare. If the matter is of grave consequence and shows no change or improvement, the confrere must bring the affair to the attention of the local or general custodian.**
- **Daily prayer to the Holy Spirit. Traditionally, the prayer "Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful" has been used at the beginning of morning and evening prayer and to initiate all important meetings.**
- **Frequent prayer daily for the Spirit's gifts, especially for wisdom to know God's will and fortitude or courage to accomplish it.**

*Other helpful practices from the Cenacle tradition include:*

- **Participation by each Missionary Cenacle at their designated time in the perpetual novena to the Holy Spirit begun in 1913.**
- **Praying the Litany of the Holy Spirit every morning for the gift of the apostolic spirit for the Cenacle.**
- **Beginning all correspondence with the salutation, "May the grace and peace of the Holy Spirit be with us forever!"**

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## Loving the Church

"Attract the Spirit of God. Love the Church and the things of the Church and try to do what the Church wants .... [The Spirit] is Her Mystical Head, He loves the Church and He loves those who love the Church."<sup>33</sup>

"He is the soul, the very breath of the Church. He is the Spirit .... Without the Holy Spirit no holy man or woman of God thinks or acts any good. No confessor makes confession. No martyr dies for the faith. No virgin can keep her radiant purity. Without the Holy Spirit, they cannot become saints."<sup>34</sup>

"What is the secret of the Church's longevity, her long life? Why is she so long-lived, what is the secret of her perennial youth? The Holy Spirit. What is the secret of that irresistible, invincible progress of the Church? The Holy Spirit .... The secret is the Holy Spirit, animating her, vivifying her, enlightening her, strengthening her, confirming her, taking care of her. Is it any wonder that the Church loves the Holy Spirit? O this

chaste, beautiful, lovely, spotless, stainless Spouse of Christ! What is the secret of her beauty and loveliness, youth and grace, and those years of her wisdom? .... It is because the Holy Spirit is the Soul of the Church."<sup>35</sup>

*From the first community of disciples, the mission of Jesus expanded to include women and men of every culture, race, and way of life in the family of God's People. Through the gift of God's Spirit, they entered ever more profoundly into an intimate life of communion with the heart of God. This growing intimacy, in turn, unleashed within them the rich fullness of the gifts they had received. They heard the Spirit cry out within them, "Abba, Father!" and desired to share this Good News with everyone they met. Living the abundant life of God's Kingdom, they became instruments of unity and peace for all creation. This salvific communion is the Church, born from the pierced side of Christ and suffused with the transforming light and power of God's Spirit.*

Some essential customs to promote this:

- **Our specific mission is *the preservation of the faith*, and so our focus is especially directed toward those Catholic peoples, especially the poor, whose life of faith is endangered due to their present circumstances.**
- **Our *chief effort* is to develop a missionary spirit in the laity with the goal that *every Catholic be an apostle*. All our missionary works should be marked by promoting and supporting the fullest possible development of the laity in the mission of the Church.**
- **We recognize the authority of the bishops and their special role as signs of unity and pastors in the local churches. Thus we undertake missionary works in dialogue with the authorities of the Church, seeking works that are good and necessary and have a note of abandonment about them.**
- **We call forth apostolic men and women to become lay associates in the Missionary Cenacle Family and collaborate with them, whenever feasible, in apostolic works.**
- **Our local Missionary Cenacles should be "*the sanctuary where the fire is kept*," centers of apostolic prayer, mission and hospitality where the lay associates can find encouragement, spiritual guidance and support.**
- **The Liturgy of the Hours unites us to the universal prayer of the Church and forms the basis of our community prayer. Our community prayer should include the needs of the entire Church, especially the Holy Father, bishops and priests; the sick, suffering and abandoned; living and deceased relatives, friends, benefactors and members of the Missionary Cenacle.**

*Other helpful practices include:*

- **Whenever possible, we should enter into formal covenants with the local bishops where our Missionary Cenacles are located. These covenants should clearly delineate the particular mission and focus of our charism as Missionary Servants.**
- **We should reflect prayerfully on the documents of the Church in keeping with our maxim *sentire cum ecclesia*.**

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## Growing in the Spirit

“You have been told and retold to develop a prayerful and humble spirit, to correct your faults and to advance in some particular virtue. In other words, you are given a Practice.... This is the work of your sanctification.”<sup>36</sup>

“Give yourself over more generously to your practice. Strive to watch yourself closer for the correction of your daily faults .... Watch over yourself for the correction of your predominant fault.”<sup>37</sup>

“You have Cenacle virtues -- simplicity, prudence, humility, charity, sacrifice, patience, and...self-denial. These demand that you are going....to die to yourself and live to God.”<sup>38</sup>

“Practice particular examination at noon. See how you have failed in that virtue which you have been trying to acquire. Ask God to protect you from yourself. ‘Lord protect me from myself. Protect me from my own pride, my own selfishness.’ Live in the Presence of God.”<sup>39</sup>

*Following a tradition received from St. Francis de Sales and St. Vincent de Paul, Father Judge utilized a very purposeful methodology for promoting growth in virtue. Fundamentally, it consisted of five steps: 1) with the help of one's spiritual director, identify one's predominant fault, the area where the person most needs to change; 2) determine a particular virtue – called a “practice”-- that would address the particular predominant fault identified; 3) daily – usually at noon or possibly in the evening – examine one's life to see how the person that day has responded or not to opportunities to exercise that particular virtue; 4) once a week, usually on Tuesday, dedicate one's personal prayer time to meditation on that virtue and its application in one's life; 5) periodically, discuss with one's spiritual director progress being made or difficulties encountered with one's “practice.” When the individual believes, in*

*dialogue with the spiritual director, that sufficient progress has been made in one's "practice," then the person moves on to another "practice."*

*Some essential customs to promote this are:*

- **A regular examination of one's life in light of the Missionary Cenacle virtues, identified as essential to the life of a missionary: humility, charity, simplicity, self-denial, prudence, patience and sacrifice.**
- **Frequent celebration of the sacrament of Penance.**
- **Regular dialogue with a spiritual director to determine needed areas of growth and daily attention to these areas.**
- **Time daily to review one's life in light of the Gospel and one's response.**

*Other helpful practices from the Cenacle tradition include a more specific implementation of the methodology used by Father Judge:*

- **In dialogue with a spiritual director or confessor, to determine specifically a "practice" in response to one's predominant fault with special attention to growth needed in the Missionary Cenacle virtues.**
- **Daily scrutinize one's life relative to that practice in an exercise called an "examen," usually done at noon or in the evening.**
- **On Tuesday of each week, dedicate one's personal prayer time to a special consideration of the virtue contained in one's practice.**

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## In Communion with the Saints

"Upon awakening we should be placing ourselves in the presence of God, humbling ourselves before His Divine Majesty, ... beseeching our Blessed Mother and the saints for help."<sup>40</sup>

Mary is "our Mother, the cause of our joy.... Thank the Triune God for what was done in the Church through her, for what was done in the human family through her, for what was done in the Cenacle through her."<sup>41</sup>

“I am placing all of you...under the care of Saint Joseph...that we all may be bound together more closely in the bonds of holy love, that the peace and joy and charity of the Holy Family may be reflected in the Cenacle Family.”<sup>42</sup>

“What a grace to think the thoughts of an Apostle! What a blessing to pray the prayers of an Apostle....To be inspired with their love means to inherit their promise of the kingdom of heaven.”<sup>43</sup>

“We look upon [St. Vincent de Paul] as our father... Plead with him that in...the heart of the Cenacle may be that great love of God that distinguished him:...that zeal may inflame our hearts...by an ardent zeal for the poor and those desolate in all things spiritual.”<sup>44</sup>

*Father Judge had a keen awareness of the reality and the closeness of the communion of saints. He wanted the Missionary Cenacle to count on them as heavenly friends, to rely on their intercession, and to follow their example. Especially important were the Blessed Mother, St. Joseph, the Apostles, and St. Vincent de Paul.*

*Some essential customs to promote this awareness were:*

- **Regular, daily prayer to the saints, especially to the Blessed Virgin Mary.**
- **A special recognition of and reflection on the feasts of the Cenacle saints in the liturgy of the day.**
- **Calling on St. Joseph to assist the Missionary Cenacle especially in areas of material need: *Ite ad Joseph.***
- **A list of the deceased members of the Missionary Cenacle should be maintained with regular prayer for the deceased, especially on their anniversary of death.**

*Some helpful practices include:*

- **The praying of the Rosary daily, whether privately or publicly.**
- **Pilgrimages in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary.**

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## V. Special Moments of Grace

### Beginnings

“The theme of the wonderful design in your life is already beginning to be seen. It is entrancingly beautiful. It makes one gasp. I wonder if you perceive it yourself. Understand there is a beautiful providence being worked in your life. You can begin to trace the hand of the Divine Artist.”<sup>45</sup>

- ***Reception into Novitiate*** is marked by a simple ceremony with the reception of the habit and the designation of the newly initiated novice as “Brother.”
- ***The profession of first vows*** is marked by a liturgy with confreres, family and friends. All the confreres locally are urged to participate in the liturgy and celebration following. At this liturgy, the confrere receives his “mystery,” that is, a particular aspect of the faith with which he particularly is identified.
- ***Renewal of vows*** is marked by a simple ceremony in the context of the liturgy with the local community present when possible.
- ***Profession of perpetual vows*** is preceded by a thirty day guided retreat utilizing the Missionary Cenacle Spiritual Exercises. The final vows themselves are taken in the context of a liturgical celebration in the presence of the General Custodian and the Missionary Servant community. Families, friends, and as many confreres as possible are urged to attend. The confreres making their final profession then receive a mission cross from the General Custodian. This cross has generally belonged to one of the deceased confreres. This cross marks the life-long commitment of the newly perpetually professed confrere to the mission as a Missionary Servant of the Most Holy Trinity. The Eucharistic celebration is followed by a celebratory gathering of all present.
- ***Ordination to the priesthood*** for those confreres called to this ministry takes place in a community context with the General Custodian, confreres, family and friends present. As with perpetual profession, a celebration for all present follows the ceremony. Following the ordination, the newly ordained priests then can return to their home parishes to celebrate the Eucharist with family and friends.
- ***The establishment of a new mission*** is marked by the raising of a mission cross, whenever possible, in front of the newly constituted Cenacle. The Missionary Cenacle also receives an official letter of establishment from the General Custodian and is designated with a name selected by the local confreres of the new Cenacle and approved by the General Custodian.

- *The General Cenacle* begins on the feast of Pentecost and is preceded by a time of special prayer to the Holy Spirit.
- *The newly elected General Custodian and his Council* begin their ministry on the feast of the Assumption of Mary, August 15. This is marked, whenever possible, with a special Eucharistic celebration.

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## Listening

"We need silence and recollection and a departure from the distractions of daily affairs to catch certain whisperings of the Holy Spirit.... Jesus wished to emphasize the value of the spiritual, the value of recollection."<sup>46</sup>

- *An annual retreat* of five to eight days is a time given to each confrere every year to "come apart" with Jesus and to listen in different ways to the whisperings of the Holy Spirit. Confreres are urged, at least every other year, to participate in one of the retreats provided by the congregation.
- *Days of recollection* for all the confreres on a local or regional basis are offered especially during Advent and Lent. The confreres are urged to make attendance at these days of recollection a priority.
- *A monthly day of recollection*, either individually or communally, is a practice that was customary in the early life of the Cenacle and mandated by Father Judge.
- *House Council - either once or twice each month --* is a necessary dimension of our Missionary Cenacle life. As the confreres gather, they dialogue about the life of the local Missionary Cenacle, their own experiences, the apostolate and some theme relative to the spiritual life. Through their dialogue and prayer together, they seek to come to a clearer understanding of God's Will for them as a local Missionary Cenacle and individually. They also can support one another in times of difficulty and rejoice in blessings received and shared.
- *Spiritual direction* allows the individual confrere to listen more carefully to the promptings of the Holy Spirit in dialogue with another person. It is a venerable tradition in the Church and in the Missionary Cenacle. Every confrere should have a spiritual director and meet with that person regularly.

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## Rejoicing and sorrowing with one another

“Love one another. How these Missionary Servants love one another! How do they love one another? First of all, we are going to be loyal to one another. We must have a family spirit. We must support one another; we must be patient with one another. We must cherish one another in Christ.”<sup>47</sup>

- *Celebrating birthdays, anniversaries of vows and ordinations, feast days and other key moments* are a vital dimension of sustaining and supporting one another in community life. Confreres shall be sure to recognize these moments and acknowledge them to the individual and, when appropriate and possible, with a community celebration.
- *Major feasts* – such as Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, the anniversaries of Father Judge and Mother Boniface – should be celebrated in the local Cenacles whenever possible. Such moments also offer the opportunity to gather with confreres from other Cenacles in the area and region for a celebration and shared meal.
- *Chronicles* that note significant events in the life of the local Missionary Cenacle or the apostolate should be kept and, when possible, shared with the wider community. Such accounts of missionary work can serve as an inspiration and encouragement to the other confreres.
- *Supporting confreres in times of sickness, loss or special difficulty* is a key dimension of our life together. Such support can be expressed in a variety of ways: prayer for the individual, letters or communication of some kind. When appropriate or possible, visits to the confrere in time of need or loss are a vital way of demonstrating support and love. A time-honored tradition of the Missionary Cenacle is to have confreres, whenever possible, attend the funerals of family members of a confrere.

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## Love unto Eternity

“We live to die. We are moving toward that moment and it is all so uncertain. We do not know when nor where nor how. O that is the beauty and grace of the religious life. If we are faithful..., we will surely die in the Lord!”<sup>48</sup>

- *Confreres who are sick or elderly* receive our special love and attention. Every effort is made to assure that they have the necessary assistance to live as full and dignified life as possible. Regular visits to these confreres and other types of

communication to assure them of our love, presence and prayers are an essential part of our response to this moment of their journey.

- **Dying confreres** should be carefully accompanied as they approach death. Whenever possible, other confreres should be present to them and join together in prayer for the brother who is preparing for death. The entire sacramental support of the Church as well should be made available to them in these last moments of their journey.
- **The death of a confrere** is a moment for thanksgiving, prayer and reflection in the Missionary Cenacle. At the wake service, it is the custom since the time of St. Vincent de Paul to recall the particular virtues which marked the life of the confrere. As many confreres as possible should make the effort to attend the wake service and funeral Mass. Masses and prayers for the eternal repose of the confrere should be offered in all the Missionary Cenacles. Following the funeral Mass and burial, the General Custodian sends a letter to the congregation reflecting on the life of the confrere and offering, for our consideration, the texts of the homilies preached at the funeral Mass and the Mass of Christian Burial.

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## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> This is the "Introduction" - with some editing - to the first *Book of Customs* under preparation in 1972 but never published. Although unsigned, its style and content indicate almost certainly that its author was Father Timothy Lynch, S.T., J.C.D. Father Timothy was the first Missionary Servant to receive a doctorate. He was an early follower of Father Judge and, many years later, gathered and edited for publication a number of his writings. He also served on the Constitution Committee.

<sup>2</sup> *Constitution, Missionary Servants of the Most Holy Trinity*, n. 22.1

<sup>3</sup> MF 12416-17 (Retreat Conference to Missionary Servants, August 26, 1930)

<sup>4</sup> *Constitution, Missionary Servants of the Most Holy Trinity*, n. 9

<sup>5</sup> MF 12416-17 (Retreat Conference to Missionary Servants, August 26, 1930)

<sup>6</sup> MF 12416-17

<sup>7</sup> MF 12422-24

<sup>8</sup> MF 8941-43

<sup>9</sup> MF 14127-28

- 10 MF 1880
- 11 MF 8371-72
- 12 MF 5742
- 13 MF 1352-54
- 14 MF 4112
- 15 *Constitution n. 15*
- 16 MF 14099-14101
- 17 MF 14312
- 18 MF 8332-33
- 19 MF 8840-41
- 20 MF 9668
- 21 MF 8629-30
- 22 MF 11998
- 23 MF 8451-8452
- 24 MF 4202-05
- 25 MF 8737-38; MF 12417-21
- 26 MF 12161-64
- 27 MF 4306
- 28 MF 830-33
- 29 MF 8669
- 30 MF 12373-75
- 31 MF 14295-96
- 32 MF 12139
- 33 MF 13271
- 34 MF 8665
- 35 MF 8506
- 36 MF 8600
- 37 MF 3631
- 38 MF 12273-76
- 39 MF 14127-28
- 40 MF 3731
- 41 MF 8487-88
- 42 MF 8462-63
- 43 MF 1395
- 44 MF 652-653
- 45 MF 10774
- 46 MF 11921, 12372-78
- 47 MF 8638-39
- 48 MF 12387-88