



## *The Spirit of the Cenacle*

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*The Spirit of the Cenacle* is the official newsletter of the Missionary Cenacle Apostolate. It is published three times during the year in conjunction with the liturgical seasons of Advent, Lent/Easter, and Ordinary Time. The deadline for the next issue is December 1, 2007. Send materials to Smittie Bolner, 460 Bancroft Way, Baton Rouge, LA 70808-4805. E-mail: [sbolner@cox.net](mailto:sbolner@cox.net).

### ***From the General Custodian***

On the Feast of Saint Ignatius of Loyola, July 31, 2007

Dear Associates and Candidates of the MCA,

May the Grace and Peace of the Holy Trinity be with us forever!

I've always had a great love for Saint Ignatius of Loyola, so I believe that this is a good day for me to express my gratitude to all of you. Saint Ignatius' spirituality, a combination of action and contemplation, is a great gift to our church. The intense apostolic work of the Society of Jesus is guided by its motto—for the greater glory of God. With these words it has contributed to the mission work of the church and to the education of youth. This spirituality was given to us in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

During these past months we have all felt the gift of the love of our God, the grace of apostolic service, the call to live our baptism in faithful service as sons and daughters of God. The experience we had at the 2007 Margaret Healy Leadership Assembly has been engraved in the heart of each of the attending delegates. We all expressed our thanks to Josie Morales, Joanne Jones and Father John Seymour for the years they served, challenged, and accompanied us along the road as leaders and Custodians, caring for the spirituality to which we have been called.

At the Assembly in Holy Trinity many of us took the opportunity to visit Fr. Judge's chapel. I went to pray there several times. More than once I asked the Lord: "And now what?" To say "Yes" is to answer Jesus when he calls out: "Do you really love me? Follow me!" And here we all are, you and I, giving our answer—"Yes."

We have trusted to the grace of the Holy Spirit, the process of electing our custodians and assistants, aware that we will all be serving God, and that this is the beginning of a

greater understanding of our identity as the founding branch of a missionary family. This is our first task, to identify ourselves, to act to make real our consecration, to live out a spirituality which challenges us to develop ourselves as apostles in the providence of our daily life. We are not only to live in the world, but be capable of transforming it. It is to share with another the embrace of the Perfect Community of Love, our Triune God.

Our Founder, Father Thomas A. Judge, C.M., ardently formed the laity of his time to reach out to others, so great was his concern for the faith. From then until now he invites us to take a look around us and be present to those whom the Church still has not reached. How much are we concerned about the faith? Father Judge dedicated a great deal of his time to lay people re-envisioning apostolic action as an encounter with the great mystery of the Holy Trinity.

“The sign of the cross on a child’s forehead is your nearness to the Trinity.” It is the same God of Community, One and Triune, who transforms us into a FAMILY.

Oh, blessed be God! Just imagine what a great gift we have to give the church—a community of laypersons who, while dedicated to the preservation of the faith, founded two religious communities and a lay Institute. Our spirituality is born of a prophetic and hopeful vision. We are a family working in the mission of the church. The intensity of our apostolic activities in the Missionary Cenacle Family has as its motto “to make every Catholic an apostle.” Is it our goal to make apostles with missionary fervor and apostolic zeal? Then our apostolic work has a prophetic dimension, to form and guide the laity to live as a family modeled on the Holy Trinity. It is your duty and mine to communicate to the family its apostolic dimension in society. It is up to us to “Be a Power for Good.”

We have a spirituality to give to the Church of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Only in this way we will be able to preserve the faith.

Yours in the Trinity

Alma Perfecto Robles, MCA  
General Custodian

### **A Changing of the Guard for the MCA**

The election in spring 2007 of Alma Perfecto Robles, MCA, Puerto Rico, as the new General Custodian and of Miguel Juarez , MCA, Mexico, as the Assistant General Custodian of the MCA marks the beginning of a new era in the MCA. This is the first time that the MCA will have a non-U.S. citizen as one of its top leaders. It reminds us that we have become a truly international organization.

Under the leadership of Josie Morales and Joanne Jones we have experienced eight

years of growth and vitality. We know that we speak for the entire MCA when we say to Josie and Joanne, "Thank you! Gracias!" Josie and Joanne demonstrated those qualities of leadership, tact, and cooperation which brought out the best in the members of the MCA General Council, the Associates and Candidates, and the friends of the MCA. Their emphasis on spiritual growth and formation have resulted in a stronger and more prayerful lay association. They also demonstrated the value and importance of close consultation and cooperation with the other branches of the Missionary Cenacle Family. We know that Alma and Miguel will build upon this most solid foundation which they inherit. May they be assured that God will give them the grace to do the work at hand. May they also be reminded that the entire MCA is supporting them in their initiatives as they meet the many challenges which face us.  
—Jim and Smittie Bolner, MCA



Alma Perfecto Robles, General Custodian



Miguel Juarez, Assistant General Custodian

### **MCF—Celebrating 100 Years**

The celebration of the one-hundredth anniversary of the Missionary Cenacle Family will take place in 2009. Alma Robles and Joanne Jones represent the MCA on a committee which is planning the celebration.

Though the major celebration will take place in the year 2009, other celebrations or MCF gatherings will take place in five areas—northeastern USA, southeastern USA, western USA, Puerto Rico, and Mexico. As of this time, the exact area celebration locations have not all been selected. Training and support will be provided for liaisons to promote and coordinate these celebrations. As the time for the celebration approaches, you will be given more information and instructions on how you can participate in the celebration

### **Norms and Policies**

After many months of hard work, a committee composed of Kay Knott, MCA, Regional Custodian, Trinity Region, Joanne Jones, MCA, Assistant General Custodian, and Father

John Seymour, ST, International Spiritual Guide, completed work on a document that defines the authority, structure, and governing procedures of the MCA. Entitled *Norms and Policies*, this document was approved by the MCA General Council, after review by the membership, on October 8, 2006.

The purpose of the *Norms and Policies* is to define the overall organizational structure of the MCA and provide for its effective governance. It is expected that all members will become familiar with the rights and responsibilities outlined in the *Norms and Policies*. Those in leadership positions are to be sufficiently knowledgeable of its contents so as to provide guidance and interpretations for compliance with its rules and procedures.

The text of the *Norms and Policies* can be found at the link below. Click on *Norms and Policies*. You are invited to make paper copies.

<http://mcenacle.org/mca/mca.htm>

## Stewardship: Sharing of Time, Talent and Treasure

As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied gifts. (1 Peter 4:10)

The concept of "stewardship" as a practical and spiritual way for Associates and Candidates to show their commitment to the Missionary Cenacle Apostolate was introduced in the year 2000 after our first International Leadership Assembly. Since then, the MCA has become self-sufficient in terms of being able to provide for our own operational expenses—the bulk of which is for the annual meeting of the MCA Council and Regional Spiritual Guides, and for the Leadership Assembly held every four years. Before the Stewardship program was initiated, we relied heavily on grants from the religious branches. Last year, MCA members contributed nearly \$30,000 through stewardship, which completely covered the operating expenses. The majority of the contributions came from the Holy Spirit Region—in particular, the associates and candidates in California. From the beginning, members from that region have embraced the stewardship model, and are themselves "models" for the rest of the MCA!

In the United States, our initial goal was to have 75% of members practicing stewardship of time, talent, and treasure and to be able to cover the operating expenses of the MCA by 2003. The goal of the regions outside the United States was to have 50% of their members practicing stewardship by 2003. As already noted, we have met the goal of covering our operating expenses, and many are involved in the effort. Our goal now should be 100% participation in stewardship! Stewardship is defined as the return to God for the gifts we have been given. It involves our time, talent and

treasure. We are faith-filled men and women who have committed our lives to the MCA and the Missionary Cenacle Family. Practicing stewardship gives each of us the forum for expressing our commitment in varied ways.

If you have not begun participating in the stewardship program yet, please consider what your contribution can be. Everyone is capable of making a contribution. The size of the gift is not as important as the fact that you participate. One way you can contribute more than you might otherwise is to make a monthly commitment of an amount that is comfortable for you. Over the course of a year, modest monthly contributions amount to an annual gift that would be more than you could make at one time.

Father Judge reminded us that we are responsible for the future of the Cenacle. Let each of us make a commitment today to share our time, talent and treasure for the good of all.

Pat Regan, MCA  
Treasurer and Stewardship Coordinator

Contributions should be sent to the Regional Custodian or Regional Stewardship Coordinator:

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# Do Good: Called to Mission

A Reflection by Pat Regan

In the Missionary Cenacle Apostolate, we have a motto: Be Good! Do Good! Be a Power for Good! This reflection will explore the second part of the motto – “Do Good” – and see how this calls us to mission.

In order to DO GOOD we must BE GOOD. Who I am has an impact on what I do. The good news is we know who we are. We are children of God! In Romans 5:5, St. Paul tells us that “the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has given it to us.” **The love of God has been poured into our hearts!**

The Catechism of the Catholic Church describes sacraments as “efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us.” The scriptures tell us that in baptism, we are born again. My changed reality as a baptized person changes the way I see the world. Because God first loved me, I can love others. I can’t give away what I don’t possess. If I haven’t experienced the love of God myself, I can’t share that love with others. To the extent that I have been changed by my own relationship with Jesus, I can bring others to a deeper knowledge of Christ.

The late Pope John Paul II reminded us that the true missionary is a saint. In his 1990 encyclical letter, *Redemptoris Missio (Mission of the Redeemer)*, he writes: “The call to mission derives, of its nature, from the call to holiness.” He adds, “The Church’s missionary spirituality is a journey towards holiness.”

Paul Tillich was a Lutheran theologian who was very influential in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He wrote about holiness this way: “Holiness is not a moral, cognitive or even religious quality but the power of pointing beyond oneself.” It is this “pointing beyond oneself” that helps us make the jump from “being good” to “doing good.”

Father Judge also understood this link between holiness and mission. He told the early Cenacle missionaries that their primary aim was to “glorify the Triune God.” This is just another way of saying that we are to point beyond ourselves, to God, in all we do. Now, the kind of “doing good” we are talking about here is more than “do-goodism” ... more than altruism. Researchers at the University of Oregon recently published a study that finds a biological basis for altruistic behavior. They used brain imaging to monitor subjects as they donated money to a food bank. When a person chose to donate money, neurons in the *nucleus accumbens*, a portion of the brain that has long been associated with a sense of reward and satisfaction, started firing. Doing good made them feel good!

When we talk about “doing good,” we mean much more than this. Yes, sometimes “doing good” does make us “feel good” – but sometimes it doesn’t. It’s when we keep focused on “pointing beyond ourselves” – when our primary aim is glorifying the Triune God – that we grasp the true meaning of “doing good.” And it is when we are “doing good” in that deepest sense that we are truly responding to our baptism – to the call to mission.

The love that God has poured into our hearts is what we call “grace.” It is God’s gift to us, given freely without our having to do anything to deserve it. But as believers who have accepted the gift, it is only natural that we want to respond. We want to make a return to the Lord for all we have been given.

Through our baptism, we share in the divine life. In Galatians 2:20, we read: “...the life I live now is not my own; Christ is living in me.” It is by participating in the divine life that we offer our response to God’s grace. How do we do that? Well, we know that God dwells within the world. The first chapter of the Gospel of John gives us that beautiful and familiar doxology:

The Word became flesh  
and made his dwelling among us,  
and we have seen his glory:  
The glory of an only Son coming  
from the Father,  
filled with enduring love.

God is in the world. As Christians, then, we share divine life by actively participating in the world. Pope John Paul II called us to be “contemplatives in action.” While we grow in holiness, we do it while fully engaged in the world.

How do we know how God is asking us to share or participate in the divine life? We do this through a process of discerning the will of God. Different spiritual thinkers and movements through the centuries have taken various approaches to discernment. For us in the Cenacle, Father Judge’s approach is useful. His experiences showed him that God’s will is evident in everyday life, in what he calls “Providence.” In a 1922 letter, he writes: “The circumstances of our life make manifest the Will of God; that is what is known as His Providence over us.” In the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – long before the laity played a prominent role in the Church – Father Judge had a vision of every Catholic being an apostle. In 1909, in Brooklyn, New York, he gathered a handful of lay women who became the first members of the lay apostolate from which the whole Missionary Cenacle Family grew.

At the heart of this lay apostolate – of our Cenacle vocation – is an understanding that God is calling each to be a missionary in his or her given situation. In a 1928 article published in *Holy Ghost Messenger*, Father Judge writes, “We will find the field of

sanctity in the circumstances of our every day providence.” To help us in this discernment of Divine Providence, Father Judge relies on the Holy Spirit and urges us to “be in tune” with the Holy Spirit daily.

In other words, it is not necessary to move to another state or country to be a missionary, although some missionaries are called to do that. It isn't only when we are volunteering at a soup kitchen or engaged in a ministry in our parish that we are apostolic. We don't have to look any further than our own families, neighborhoods, circle of friends or workplaces to find opportunities to share the love of God that has been poured into our hearts!

In the circumstances of our very ordinary lives, God wants to use us. Every day, God puts in front of us opportunities to “point beyond” ourselves – to glorify the Triune God through our actions and interactions with others. Every day, we have the opportunity to “do good” in the deepest sense.

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.

Patricia Regan, MCA  
Divine Providence Cenacle  
September 2007

### **Puerto Rico—An Island Blessed by God**

Puerto Rico truly is an island of blessings. We have received the mantle of love of our Father as we serve as missionaries in the providence of our everyday lives. Although our primary blessing is the presence of God in our lives, we have received other signs of God's love. We would like to share with the Missionary Cenacle Family some of the ways in which God has blessed us.

As a child, Allen Rodriguez, now Father Allen Rodriguez Castro, ST, guided by his loving parents, showed a great interest in spiritual things. Following the arrival of the Missionary Servants of the Most Holy Trinity in his parish, Allen grew even stronger in his faith. Through the years the STs directed Allen towards a vocational calling. On June 16, 2007, Allen was ordained at St. Maria Mother of God church. What a joy for his family and friends to witness one of their loved ones receive the sacrament of Holy Orders. Father Allen is now serving in Tallahassee, Florida, living the life that he has always envisioned as a follower of Christ.

We in Puerto Rico are honored to have one of our own as the new General Custodian of the MCA. Alma Perfecto Robles exemplifies those attributes that we find in the writings of Father Judge—service, zeal, and love. Alma's service consists in giving

herself wholly—sacrificing self for the glory of God. She has zealously worked to extend her love of Christ to others, believing wholeheartedly that through the grace of God, anyone can be an Apostle. We are confident that Alma will fulfill her role as MCA General Custodian to the best of her abilities as she continues her present role of wife, mother, teacher and servant of the Lord.

We have received many more blessings, too many to recount here. In closing, I would like us to recall that our mission is to serve, to love, and to take action to make each Catholic an apostle. We live in a competitive global society. Our challenge is to use the resources of the digital revolution, particularly the Internet, mobile telephones, and other tools of mass media to expand our horizons and to communicate the word of God.

We give thanks to the Holy Spirit in whom is embodied all goodness and ask for continued guidance.

Linda Landin, MCA  
Puerto Rico

### **Living Waters Cenacle Hosts Day of Reflection**

On Saturday, September 5, 2007, we had the good fortune to attend a day of reflection for the Gulf Coast Area Cenacles (Trinity Region). The meeting was hosted by Living Waters Cenacle of Pensacola, FL, and was held at the Diocesan Pastoral Center in Pensacola. In addition to Living Waters, other Cenacles represented were Spirit of Light, Fort Walton Beach, FL; Joyful Spirit, Milton, FL, and Christ the Servant, Baton Rouge, LA. Kay Knot, Trinity Regional Custodian, also attended. Fr. Guy Wilson, ST, served as facilitator. Since it was the feast of the birth of Our Lady, the prayers and music were centered around Mary. The theme of the day was "What can we learn from our Founder? The first session was devoted to the question: What are the gifts we have received from Father Judge? Following a short break, we discussed the application of Fr. Judge's legacy in today's world. In the final session we examined the question: What does Father Judge expect of us today and in the future? The day concluded with a guided tour of the Pastoral Center and Mass in the Diocesan Center chapel. It was a wonderful day, one which reminded us of our roots as a lay apostolic community and the great debt we owe to our founder.

Smittie and Jim Bolner, MCA  
Christ the Servant Cenacle  
Baton Rouge, LA