

DRAFT #3

040707

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 similar to the Rule of Life of the Missionary Servants of the Most Holy Trinity and the Missionary Servants of the Most Blessed Trinity. Further revision was made in 2007. 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.*

NATURE AND PURPOSE

2. We, the Missionary Cenacle Apostolate, are a self-governing association of the Catholic 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 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 Formerly known as *The Outer Missionary Cenacle*, we were founded by Father Thomas Augustine Judge, C.M. in 1909 in Brooklyn, New York. In this *Outer Missionary Cenacle*, the other branches of the Missionary Cenacle Family find their roots.

2.2 Our Association is comprised of Catholic lay persons eighteen years of age or older.

2.3 Associates are members with full rights. Candidates are members in basic formation with limited rights.

2.4 Each member is called primarily to holiness of life while sharing in the apostolic goals of the Association.

2.5 Headquarters of the Association is 3501 Solly Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19136.

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 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.* (Matt 6:9-10).

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 have a note of abandonment about them. In all our apostolic commitments, 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 live out the Gospel teachings in our homes 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, especially the poor. Our *chief effort* is to develop a missionary spirit in the laity with the goal that *every Catholic be an apostle.*

5.1 In our apostolic work we especially look for those Catholics not fully 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.

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.

6.1 In the providence of our every day life, we labor to proclaim the Gospel and to correct injustices. We do this in response to the social teachings of the Church.

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).

7.1 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. A family spirit should be demonstrated by loving regard among the members of the branches and, when feasible, by collaboration in apostolic works. It is our particular responsibility as 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 Christlike spirit* of "faith working through love" (Gal 5:6). We are to confess in our hearts the mysteries of faith: the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit. We aspire to *a devotional knowledge* of these mysteries; that is, a deeply personal and interior *faith that is restless until it finds expression in good works*; our good works, in turn, nourish our life of faith and bear fruit in apostolic holiness.
- 10.** We are to have a personal love of God our Father, of his Son, Jesus, and of the Holy Spirit who abides with us. In a particular way we *cherish in our prayer and labor the naked, abandoned Jesus on Calvary.* We express our love through personal service to his poor and abandoned members.
- 11.** We are to make the Holy Spirit better known and loved. By steadfast prayer in our Cenacles we seek *to attract the Holy Spirit* so that our own hearts may be enkindled with God's love and that we may spread this fire to others. We ask to be filled with the gifts of the Spirit, wisdom and fortitude especially.
- 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 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.
- 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 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, especially the priesthood.

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 "to think with the Church" we are to reflect prayerfully on the documents of Church.

18. Periodically we seek extended times of prayer and recollection. We are each 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, we are encouraged to seek personal spiritual direction.

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.

19.2 Spiritual Guides shall be appointed for the well being of the Association as directed by the Norms and Policies.

20. *Our prayer should not be narrow, personal prayer; it should reach the throne of God only after having touched the farthest bounds of God's creation and mourned in every human misery and rejoiced in God's goodness.* We are to pray, therefore, for the needs of the entire Church, especially for the Holy Father, for bishops and for priests; we pray for 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 We shall strive to make our virtues and devotions personal, practical and notable so that we exemplify them in the world.

CONSECRATION IN THE MISSIONARY CENACLE APOSTOLATE

23. Christ calls us to follow him with liberty of spirit and to share in his emptying of self for others (Philippians 2:7). We seek to imitate Jesus in his selfless love of God and neighbor, and his obedience to the Father. Our act of consecration is an affirmation of our Baptismal consecration and our personal response in faith to God whose love the Holy Spirit has poured out in our hearts.

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 #40)

24. By our act of consecration we are joined 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 missionary consecration.

24.1 Our act of consecration brings us into full membership as an Associate of the MCA.

25. We imitate the single-hearted love of Jesus who gave himself for us as an offering to God. Our act of consecration is an expression of our preferential love for Jesus and our call to a life of service for the love of God and for the sake of the Kingdom.

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 are encouraged to take as their apostolate a ministry of prayer for the

members of the Missionary Cenacle Apostolate and the other branches of the Missionary Cenacle Family. Members shall treat these aging associates as the treasure they are, seeking out their gift of wisdom and including them as much as possible in the local and regional 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 sake 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 Association.

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 obey those persons who exercise authority in our Association in everything that pertains to the integrity of our act of consecration and the observance of our Rule of Life, Constitution, and the 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 call each other to grow in apostolic holiness through mutual encouragement and appropriate accountability for our Cenacle responsibilities. The practice of taking counsel is a cherished tradition in the Missionary Cenacle. After prayer and counsel, we humbly accept the decision of those in authority.

MINISTRY OF AUTHORITY

31. Authority is exercised by those chosen to call us to be faithful to our vocation as Associates of the Missionary Cenacle Apostolate. The functions of this authority are to assist each other to seek the will of God, to promote a true spirit of community and to unite us in pursuing our apostolic goals.

32. This authority, a ministry after the example of Jesus, who came not to be served, but to serve, is to be exercised with charity, prudence and humility according to the Constitution and the Norms and Policies.

Custodians

32.1 A person responsible for shepherding the Missionary Cenacle Apostolate is called a Custodian. Only lay Associates may hold office.

32.2 The special duty of a Custodian is to coordinate efforts towards the common aims of the Association. They are to have concern for the individuals and the growth of a vital apostolic spirit among the members. Other duties of Custodians are specified in the Norms and Policies.

32.3 An Assistant Custodian, elected by the members of the Cenacle, assists the Custodian. If the office of Custodian is vacated, the Assistant completes the current term.

32.4 The term of office of the Custodians and Assistant Custodians are specified in the Norms and Policies.

Cenacles

33. We recognize the value of counsel and consultation in important matters of common concern. After seeking counsel, the Custodian has the responsibility for decisions affecting the local cenacle. The members share in the decision making by offering counsel. We all share responsibility for implementing the decisions.

33.1 An organized local unit of the Association is called a Missionary Cenacle.

33.2 Missionary Cenacles must have a minimum of two members and be established according to the procedures set forth in the Norms and Policies.

33.3 The person responsible for shepherding the local Cenacle is called a local Custodian. Local Custodians are elected by the Associates belonging to the local Cenacles.

33.4 Local cenacles may have other officers as established in the Norms and Policies.

33.5 If a local cenacle ceases to exist, its material goods shall be transferred to the Region in which it is located.

General Custodian and General Council

34. In the Missionary Cenacle Apostolate, full authority is exercised in an ordinary manner by the General Custodian assisted by the General Council. This authority encompasses leadership and governance of the Missionary Cenacle Apostolate, the call of the members to our apostolic way of life, and responsibility for administration of the temporal goods of the Association.

34.1 An individual must have been an Associate for three years to be elected to the office of the General Custodian or Assistant General Custodian.

34.2 The term of office of the General Custodian and the Assistant General Custodian are established in the Norms and Policies. They may be elected to a second term but not a third consecutively.

34.3 When feasible, nominations for the offices of General and Assistant General Custodian will be made at a General Assembly of the Association. In the absence of a General Assembly an alternate method of nominations is set forth in the Norms and Policies. Representation at the General Assembly is specified in the Norms and Policies. Elections will follow nominations.

34.4 The General Custodian, or his/her delegate, is to visit each Region at least once during the term of office. The purposes of this visit includes ascertaining the general welfare of the Association, revitalizing local community life and calling Associates to renewed fidelity to the Apostolic Life and to the Rule of Life and Constitution.

Regional Custodians

34.5 Each region of the Missionary Cenacle Apostolate elects a Regional Custodian and an Assistant Regional Custodian. Their terms of office and election procedures are specified in the Norms and Policies.

34.6 Regional Custodians are responsible for overseeing the cenacles in their region. Their specific responsibilities are established in the Norms and Policies.

General Council

34.7 The members of the General Council assisting the General Custodian, are the Assistant General Custodian and the Regional Custodians.

34.8 The General Council meets at least yearly at a place determined by the General Custodian.

34.9 The General Custodian and General Council discuss matters that concern the whole Association. General Councilors are free to propose agenda items. The General Custodian presides over the Council's deliberations.

34.10 A summary of the actions taken by the General Council shall be communicated to the general membership of the Association.

34.11 The General Custodian and General Council determine the practical application of the Constitution. Any proposed changes to the Constitution shall be sent to the membership. All changes must be approved by two-thirds of the voting Associates.

34.12 The Norms and Policies further specify the observance of this Rule of Life and Constitution. The General Custodian and General Council determine the practical application of the Norms and Policies. Changes and additions to the Norms and Policies must be approved a vote of two-thirds of the General Council.

General Assembly

35. A General Assembly may be called when the General Custodian and a majority of the General Council judge that this will be beneficial to the Association. It shall be concerned with setting direction for the Association, fostering its renewal and calling forth leaders.

35.1 The procedures for convening and conducting a General Assembly are outlined in the Norms and Policies.

MEMBERSHIP

36. *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 strived to be good, to do good, and to be a power for good in the providence of everyday life.*

Candidates

37. We are each to encourage and foster vocations to the Missionary Cenacle Apostolate. We look for candidates who manifest *a love of God, a zeal for neighbor, and a spirit of sacrifice.* The candidates are to be acquainted with the life and spirit of the Missionary Cenacle.

37.1 Any lay person who is eighteen years of age or older may be a candidate for membership in the Association.

37.2 Candidacy is a period of formal preparation leading to a mature commitment expressed in the act of consecration. It is a time to consider deeply his or her vocation, to experience the Association's way of life, to become formed in the Cenacle spirit, to accept the responsibility of membership, and to test suitability for a life time vocation in the Missionary Cenacle Apostolate.

38. The Candidates are introduced to the apostolic life of prayer and service, the practices and devotions of the Cenacle, the Rule of Life and Constitution, and the rights and responsibilities of membership.

38.1 After an appropriate period of orientation, Candidates are admitted to the program of candidacy by the Regional Custodian or his/her delegate upon recommendation of the local Custodian.

38.2 Candidacy is a period of at least two years, but in extraordinary cases, at the request of the local Custodian and with the approval of the Regional Custodian, the period may be shortened.

38.3 The Regional Custodian, based on the recommendations of the local Custodian, determines a Candidate's preparedness for the Act of consecration.

Associates

39. Those Candidates who are to be admitted as Associates shall make an Act of consecration according our Rule of Life and Constitution. The act of consecration is made to the Triune God in the presence of the Regional Custodian or delegate and the assembled members.

39.1 Jesus is the Way and the Truth and our very Life. The Rule of Life and Constitution helps us to walk in this Way, to live this Truth and to find this Life. The Associates shall esteem the Rule of Life and the Constitution, hold them sacred and keep them faithfully. They shall read them, meditate upon them and aspire to live them.

40. 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). We are to encourage one another 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.

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.