

# Manual for the Cenacle Spiritual Guide

## Introduction

To become a Spiritual Guide in the Cenacle is to enter into a challenging and fulfilling apostolate. In this privileged position we are given the opportunity of helping others to be apostles for Jesus. It is a wonderful opportunity to be able to extend the Cenacle vocation beyond ourselves in the service of the reign of God. But it is also for us an occasion of grace and an invitation to greater fidelity in our own vocation.

As members of the Missionary Cenacle Family, our purpose in the life of the Church is to be apostolic men and women intent on making apostles of others. It is this calling to be “makers of apostles” that we have in common with all the branches of the Missionary Cenacle Family. It is this, which binds together the Missionary Cenacle Apostolate, the Missionary Servants of the Most Blessed Trinity, the Missionary Servants of The Most Holy Trinity and the Blessed Trinity Missionary Institute. All in the Family are called to spread the apostolic spirit. There are many kinds of apostles in the Church, and many ways to form and organize them. However, the Spiritual Guide has a special role in forming apostles in the Missionary Cenacle Apostolate. This means first of all that the Spiritual Guide attends to the formation of members in the Cenacle vocation, according to the Cenacle Rule of life, in the charism given to Father Judge.

Father Judge himself is our best model for the role of Cenacle Spiritual Guide. He was convinced of the power of ordinary Catholic men and women to be missionaries “*in the providence of their everyday lives*”. With a consuming devotion to the Holy Spirit, he dedicated himself to organizing Cenacles and forming others to be apostles. In spite of his many responsibilities he devoted a great deal of time to visiting Cenacles, giving retreats and conferences. He wrote volumes of letters, encouraging, guiding and counseling the lay associates. He shared with them a profound apostolic spirituality, and challenged them to a high degree of holiness. As a result a new vocation developed, the Cenacle vocation, which is shared by all in the Missionary Cenacle Family.

As Spiritual Guides, living out the Cenacle vocation in the tradition of Father Judge, we can be sure that he will continue to intercede and guide us in this wonderful apostolic work.

## Chapter 1

### **The Authority of the Custodian and The Spiritual Guide**

The Missionary Cenacle Apostolate has two key figures of authority: the Custodian and the Spiritual Guide. Both figures are found at each level of the organization:

- a. In each cenacle there is a local Custodian and a corresponding local Spiritual Guide.
- b. At the regional level there is a Regional Custodian and a Regional Spiritual Guide.
- c. At the general level there is a General Custodian and a General Spiritual Guide.

#### **The Authority of the Custodian and the Spiritual Guide are different in kind:**

The Custodian and the Spiritual Guide have different kinds of authority according to their distinct roles. One is not superior to the other. Rather they compliment each other as collaborators in a common task.

The authority of the Custodian comes from being elected by the Cenacle members. It reflects the confidence of the members in the willingness and ability of the Custodian to lead and represent them.

The authority of the Spiritual Guide, on the other hand, comes from being selected by the Custodian with the approval of the Custodian at the next higher level. These Custodians acknowledge the wisdom of the Spiritual Guide, his or her experience in the Cenacle and willingness to help form apostles and guide the Cenacle.

The Custodian has authority to govern the Cenacle and represent the members. The Spiritual Guide has authority to guide the spiritual growth of the Cenacle and to attend to the formation of the members. Although of different kinds, the authority of both is at the service of a common purpose, namely, the fostering of the Cenacle vocation.

### **The Purpose of Authority in the Cenacle:**

In the first two years of the Cenacle Father Judge was its sole authority. But as it developed he came to see the need to assign someone to be in charge. And so, in February of 1911 he appointed Miss Amy Croke to be the first Custodian. He explained that she needed authority *“because she must be responsible for the continuation of our work and for its accounting”* (Monograph #6, p.35).

In time Father came to realize that an entirely new vocation was developing in the Church. In a conference to the MCA in 1921 he describes a chief characteristic of the Cenacle vocation: *“Our vocation is to attract the Holy Spirit. Our vocation is to bring the Holy Spirit into (people's) hearts.”* (MCA Rule of Life, # 11). As understanding of the Cenacle vocation grew, so also did the sense that authority is not simply for the sake of organizing the apostolic work but also of fostering, developing and encouraging the Cenacle vocation of the members. This fuller view of the purpose of authority found voice in the MCA Rule of Life: *“Authority is exercised by those chosen to call us to be faithful to our vocation as Associates of the Missionary Cenacle Apostolate.”* (MCA Rule of Life, #24)

### **Three Ways Authority Serves the Cenacle Vocation:**

Since the Cenacle vocation is a threefold call to holiness, to community, and to mission, Cenacle authority works in three ways:

- 1) *to assist each other to seek the will of God,*
- 2) *to promote a true spirit of community,*
- 3) *and to unite all in pursuing our apostolic goals.* (Cf. MCA Rule of Life, #24).

### **Cenacle authority is exercised in the spirit of servant leadership:**

The leadership role of the Custodian and Spiritual Guide is modeled on *“the example of Jesus, who came not to be served, but to serve. (Mt 20:28)”* (MCA Rule of Life, #25).

Custodians are called “custodians” to remind them that their attitude must be that of Jesus, who in the cenacle washed the feet of his disciples and called them to do the same. (John 13:1-20) A dictatorial style has no place in positions of Cenacle authority.

**The Need to Be Familiar With the Rule of Life and Constitution:**

The spirit of servant leadership reminds all that authority is not to be exercised arbitrarily, but according to the Rule of Life and Constitution and the Directory of the Missionary Cenacle Apostolate (MCA Rule of Life, #25). Both the Custodian and the Spiritual Guide must take the time to study and familiarize themselves with these documents. Failure to do so may result in unnecessary confusion, bad decisions and hurt feelings.

**The Need For A Good Relationship Between the Two:**

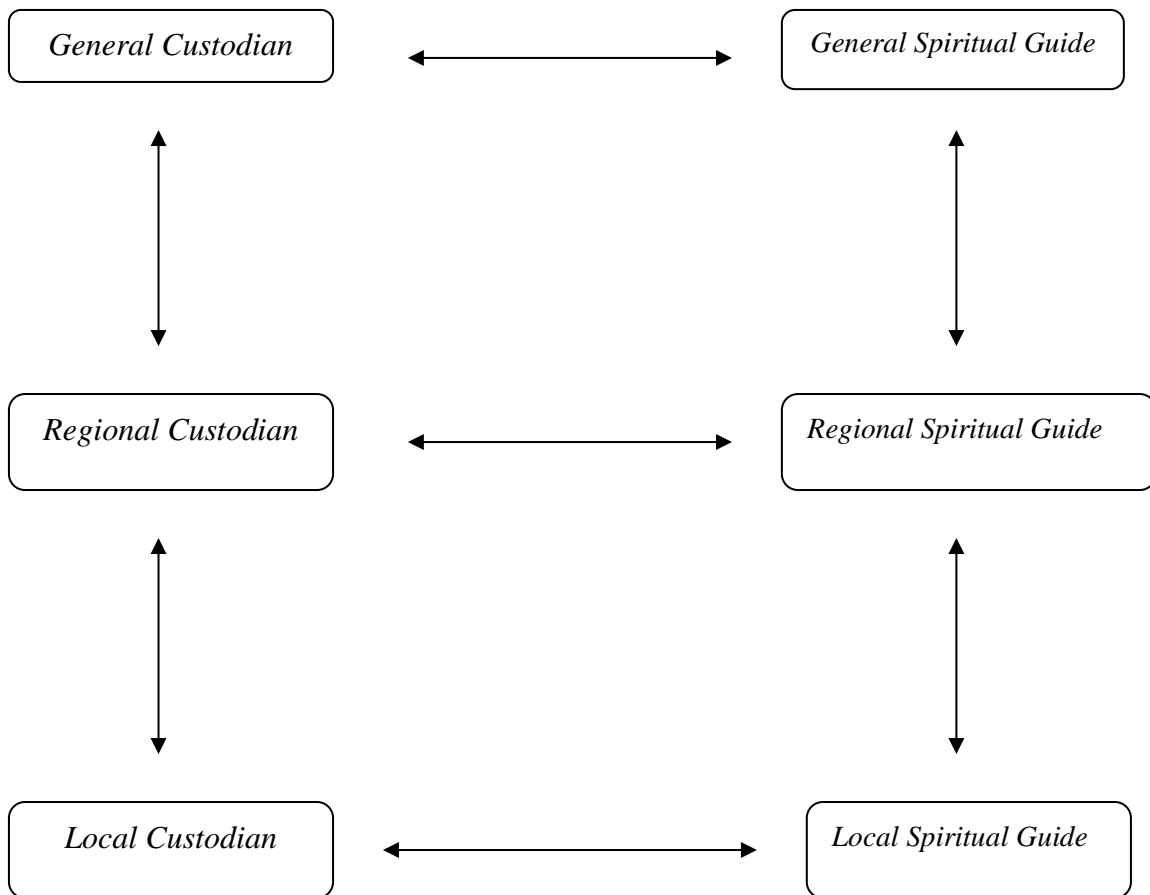
It is essential that the Custodian and the Spiritual Guide have a good working relationship based on mutual respect and trust. They need to be in frequent and regular communication with one another regarding the Cenacle.

## Ordinary Lines of Communication between Custodians and Guides:

When decisions are being made lines of communication should be respected in order to avoid confusion of roles. The following chart illustrates the ordinary lines of communication between Custodians and Guides.

Keep in mind that this chart illustrates the ordinary and routine lines of communication when decisions are being made concerning the Cenacle. It is not meant to refer to all Cenacle communication.

### Ordinary Lines of Communication in Decision Making



## Chapter 2

### **The Role of the Local Custodian**

#### **Custodians govern the Cenacle in council with the members:**

Although the local Custodian is the principal leader, decision-making in important matters is a shared responsibility. On this point the Rule of Life is very clear:

*“We recognize the value of counsel and consultation in important matters of common concern. We are to share the responsibility for decisions that affect the local Cenacle. The local Custodian is responsible to call the local Cenacle to council and to serve the local Cenacle in carrying out the decisions in keeping with the Rule of Life and Constitution. The Custodian has the responsibility for decisions affecting the local Cenacle.”* (Rule of Life, #26)

Custodians should seek counsel from the Cenacle members as well as the local Spiritual Guide.

#### **Custodians are elected annually:**

Custodians are elected to terms of one year, from Pentecost to Pentecost. They may be reelected to successive terms. The Constitution does not the number of their terms. Also, a Custodian, after a break in terms, may be returned to office by reelection. Annual elections are held preceding the Feast of Pentecost. (cf. Rule of Life #26)

#### **Custodians have the authority to make decisions for the Cenacle:**

Custodians are not merely coordinators or facilitators. They are servants with authority. They are required to take counsel in matters of importance and respect the views of the members. But they are the ultimate decision makers and as such must do what they believe is the will of God for the Cenacle.

**Custodians should seek to follow the will of God in their decisions:**

Custodians should seek the will of God in all things and make decisions thoughtfully after prayer and counsel so as to give the Holy Spirit opportunity to guide their judgment. Decisions should never be based on impulse, anger, personal likes and dislikes, or the desire to be popular. Custodians need to accept that there will often be some disagreement about a particular decision. They should welcome opposition as healthy and make an effort not to take it personally.

Although the Custodian seeks the counsel of the Spiritual Guide in making decisions, the final decision is the responsibility of the Custodian. Once a Spiritual Guide begins to make the decisions in a Cenacle, the appropriate distinction between the roles has broken down to the detriment of the development of the Cenacle leadership.

**Specific responsibilities of the local Custodian:**

According to the MCA Constitution the local Custodian is the person responsible for all matters pertaining to the local Missionary Cenacle. The specific responsibilities of the local Custodian are found in the Directory. They include:

- conducting the semi-monthly apostolic meeting in a spirit of simplicity so that all will be encouraged to take an active part,
- encouraging all Cenacle Lay Missionaries in their respective apostolates and ministries by being familiar with them and helping them when needed,
- maintaining all records of the apostolic work, administering all finances, maintaining all membership records,
- encouraging the continuing formation of all local members in close collaboration with the Spiritual Guide.
- maintaining contact with local pastors, keeping them informed of the activities of the local Missionary Cenacle,
- serving as liaison with and making reports to the Regional Custodian. (cf. MCA Rule of Life #26)

**Responsibility Should Be Shared:**

Because of their many responsibilities Custodians should delegate as many tasks as possible to others. Sharing responsibility strengthens Cenacles, develops future leaders, and makes the burden of leadership lighter.

The Custodian might, for instance, appoint a secretary, a treasurer, a formation team, communicators to keep the members informed, and any other positions deemed necessary. He/she should see that they are prepared to carry out their tasks, and hold them responsible for doing their job.

**The Role of the Assistant Custodian:**

Each local Cenacle also elects an Assistant Custodian who takes the place of the local Custodian, whenever the later cannot be present. The Assistant Custodian may take on any task requested by the local Custodian.

In the event that the Custodian cannot complete his/her term of office for any reason, the Assistant Custodian assumes the office of Custodian in order to complete the term. Meanwhile a new Assistant Custodian is elected. (cf. Rule of Life # 26)

In the annual elections for a new Custodian any qualified member may be elected to the office. The Assistant Custodian does not automatically become the new Custodian.



## **The Seven Principal Tasks of the Custodian**

The Custodian, in collaboration with the members, works to accomplish seven principal tasks:

- 1. To get to know the members personally,**
- 2. To organize the apostolic work of the Cenacle,**
- 3. To foster a spirit of community,**
- 4. To provide for the formation of the members in the Cenacle vocation,**
- 5. To preside at the meetings,**
- 6. To develop Cenacle leaders, and**
- 7. To represent the Cenacle and connect it to the rest of the Cenacle Family.**

### **1. To get to know the members personally.**

*“Know your people.”* Sr. Josepha McNutt, MSBT

Cenacle leadership is not based on the ability to speak convincingly before a group of people. Rather it is based on personal relationships of mutual trust and respect between Cenacle leaders and members. These relationships develop primarily in one-on-one conversation between the Custodian, or other leader, and the members. This is done outside the context of the regular meetings, usually in a visit or informal meeting. In these one-on-one conversations leaders and members get to know one another personally. They share their stories; they talk about what attracted them to the Cenacle, where their fire is and what gives them life. They share their love of God and their desire that others know God’s love. In these conversations Custodians get to know the gifts and apostolic interests, the strengths and weaknesses of each members. Trust and respect is built up. They connect and begin to care about one another as apostles and everyday missionaries.

One-on-one conversations take time, especially when the Cenacle is large. There is always the temptation to bypass them in favor of more pressing tasks. Nevertheless, experience has shown the importance of these conversations in involving each member in the work, in fostering community, and in keeping the fire in the Cenacle.

## **2. To direct the apostolic work of the Cenacle.**

*“Make the cause of God the main issue. Put the work of the Cenacle first, and may God's honor and glory be ever the proximate and ulterior purpose.” (MCM, p.47)*

Cenacles exist primarily to carry on the evangelical mission of Jesus under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The mission of the Cenacle is the Custodian's principal focus. His/her primary task is to organize and direct the talent, time and energy of the members so that the greatest possible good can be accomplished in the apostolate. Consequently, the Custodian, and all the members, should be keenly aware of the apostolic mission of their Cenacle. A simple statement of the mission of the Cenacle, read frequently at the meetings, will help keep the focus on its apostolic purpose.

Custodians should take care not to let the time and energy of the Cenacle be sidetracked into activities that, while good in themselves, do not achieve the purpose for which the Cenacle exists. This is a common error and one of the principal reasons why Cenacles decline.

It is a primary responsibility of the Custodian to organize the apostolic works so that each person is involved and the best fruits are obtained. Each member's talent, time and energy should be used. No one should be left out of meaningful apostolic work. Members who do not feel useful have a tendency to drift away from Cenacle life.

Furthermore, experience has shown that when the energies of the members are not outwardly directed into a positive apostolic experience, they tend to be directed internally into discord, criticism and negativity. As Fr. Judge said: *“Lest charity be hurt, keep the work in the foreground.”* (MCM, p.47) When little work is being done, when the apostolate has fallen into a deadening routine, when the members do not feel challenged by it, or do not see results, then things start to fall apart quickly.

A substantial amount of time should be given in the meetings to discussing the apostolic work, reporting on what has been done, evaluating its effectiveness, dealing with apostolic challenges, planning apostolic activities, and learning from one another's experience.

An annual evaluation of the work together with plans for the coming year help to assure that the mission continue to be fruitful as time and circumstances change. This evaluation is included in the annual report sent to the Regional Custodian and to the local pastor where applicable.

New activities or projects are undertaken only after prayer and counsel. Always ask: *Is it a pressing need? Is it an abandoned work? Can someone else do it? What are the reasons for and against taking on this work? What does it have to do with the mission of the Cenacle? What are the signs that it is of the Holy Spirit?*

It is a primary concern of the Custodians that “ *the missionary thought, the missionary idea, the missionary spirit should be dominant in our Missionary Cenacles.*” (Rule of Life #4)

### **3. To foster a spirit of community.**

*“That fraternal love be in the Missionary Cenacle should be our constant prayer. This love of the neighbor should be manifest on all occasions. It should drive far from us envy and jealousy and those other pests that wound Christian love.”* (MCM p.167)

The Cenacle is not meant to be simply a group of apostolic laity, but rather a community of apostles filled with the spirit of charity. It was in the Cenacle that Jesus gave a new commandment to his disciples: “*Love one another as I have loved you.*” (John 15:15) Living out of this commandment transforms a group into a Cenacle.

The Custodian, then, must first be a model of fraternal charity, especially charity in speech. He/she should make all feel welcome, wanted, and needed, especially the newer or more timid members of the Cenacle. Social gatherings help the members get to know one another.

Always inquire after any member who is sick, absent, or experiencing difficulty. Whenever a member has a death in the family, it is important that the Cenacle be attentive to and supportive of that member. The Custodian cannot do this alone. All members need to accompany any suffering brother or sister, and to realize that it is the responsibility of all to share in the work of forming community.

It is difficult to persevere in the apostolic work. We need to support one another if we are to continue through the many trials and difficulties that we experience in our life.

### **4. To provide for the formation of the members in the Cenacle vocation.**

*“Remember that you are in training not so much to learn this or that art as you are to become apostles.”* (MCM, p.228)

The Cenacle vocation is a call to a high degree of spiritual maturity, apostolic zeal and self-sacrifice for the love of God. It requires a substantial commitment of time and energy to the initial and ongoing formation of the Cenacle members.

The Custodian collaborates closely with the Spiritual Guide, and whenever possible, assigns wise qualified persons to help in the formation of members.

Custodians should see that prospects are suitably prepared and qualified before being admitted into candidacy. As the time of candidacy draws to a close Custodians, in counsel with those responsible for the Candidates' formation, should determine which ones are ready to make their Act of Consecration. Their names are then submitted to the Regional Custodian for approval.

#### **5. To preside at the meetings.**

Custodians preside at the meetings of the Cenacle. In their absence Assistant Custodians or someone delegated by the Custodian preside. It is the presider's responsibility to see that the meetings are well prepared and conducted in an orderly manner.

As much as possible, different members should share the various tasks, such as hospitality, refreshments, teaching, clean up, etc. During the part of the meeting devoted to sharing, everyone should have a chance to talk. A few members should not dominate. When one person is sharing all should listen.

Each Cenacle should develop a set of ground rules for the conduct of meetings covering such matters as the time to begin and end, confidentiality, the need to notify the Custodian when unable to attend, visitors and guests, etc. All members should have a copy. Non-members should attend only with the prior knowledge and permission of the Custodian.

Custodians should set a positive and uplifting tone for the meeting. A spirit of warmth, hospitality and mutual respect should prevail so that members leave the meeting encouraged and energized.

## **6. To develop Cenacle leaders.**

It takes time to develop leaders in the Cenacle. One may be tempted to think: “It is easier just to do it myself.” In the short term that may be true, but for the personal growth of the members and the future growth of the Cenacle, it is essential that the members be challenged and encouraged to develop their leadership abilities.

In many cases the leadership abilities of members may be hidden, or the person may be reluctant to assume the responsibility of a leadership role. We may be inclined to let a few handle all the responsibility. However, the strongest Cenacles are generally those in which leadership is shared among many rather than one or two.

We develop leadership by delegating responsibilities to others, seeing to it that they are adequately prepared and, finally, held accountable and given constructive feedback so that they might improve.

It is always a joy to see people who didn’t believe they had leadership abilities discover their gifts and put them to use for the good of others and the glory God.

## **7. To represent and connect the local Cenacle to the rest of the Cenacle Family.**

*“If this family spirit flourishes amongst us, you will be a blessed, mutual help one to another: you will be conditioned to do much more good....It is a sacred duty of Custodians to see that this good and pleasant dwelling of brethren in unity continues, and that they effect all in their power that it may go on producing beautiful and lovely fruits.” (MCM p.121)*

The seventh task is to represent the Cenacle, connecting it to the larger organization of the Missionary Cenacle Apostolate, so that it truly becomes part of the Cenacle Family. The local Custodian represents the Cenacle to the local pastor, to the Regional Custodian, and to the Cenacle Family. In the different areas of each Region, the local Custodians form a council with the Regional Custodian to deal with matters of area or Regional interest.

Experience has shown that it is important that the local Cenacle be part of the Missionary Cenacle Apostolate as a whole and not an isolated unit. Custodians should see to it that the local Cenacles have a strong connection to the other members of MCA in the Region. When weakly connected Cenacles experience problems, it is difficult for the Regional leadership to help them.

Whenever possible Custodians should see that local Cenacles support and collaborate with one another so that greater good can be done. Furthermore, collaboration between local Cenacles and members of the Missionary Servants of the Most Holy Trinity, Missionary Servants of the Most Blessed Trinity and Blessed Trinity Missionary Institute in apostolic works is to be encouraged. In the spirit of family, they should be invited to participate in Cenacle gatherings and special events.

## Chapter 3

### **The Role of the Local Spiritual Guide**

*“There is no problem about the extension of the Missionary Cenacle. The only problem is to keep in your heart the Cenacle Spirit. The great problem is this: being right with the Cenacle Spirit” (MCM, p.184)*

A local Spiritual Guide is one who guides the Cenacle in the life in the Spirit and forms others in the Cenacle vocation. Thus the role of the Spiritual Guide is twofold:

- 1) to care for the spirit of the Cenacle, and
- 2) To form *men and women from everyday walks of life* in the Cenacle vocation.

#### **The Spiritual Guide cares for the spirit of the Cenacle.**

It is the primary focus and responsibility of the Spiritual Guide is *“to conserve the Cenacle spirit and to be the sanctuary where that fire is kept.”* He/she encourages and inspires the members so as to stir up the fire of apostolic zeal.

The Spiritual Guide is like a sentinel, always vigilant, caring for the spirit of the Cenacle: *“Is there fire in the Cenacle? Is it spreading? Are they growing in their love of God? in apostolic zeal? in their love for one another? in their prayer? Are they attracting the Holy Spirit? What is the Holy Spirit saying to us through all these things that are happening?”*

#### **Form everyday men and women in the Cenacle vocation.**

*“It has been my experience that the people of everyday life are really great missionaries... What can I do to make every Catholic a missionary? ...What can be done to inspire, to provoke, to lead the everyday Catholic into missionary work in the providence of his everyday life?”*

(MCM, p.223, 226)

The role of the Spiritual Guide includes the formation of the members in the Cenacle vocation. This is a major work and one that is never finished. It involves both the initial formation of candidates and the ongoing formation of the associates. It is all encompassing and

includes the MCA Rule of Life, the Cenacle history and charism, the Cenacle virtues, practices and devotions.

It is important to keep in mind that the responsibility for formation is that of the Missionary Cenacle itself, and should be shared with the members. The Spiritual Guide is the primary resource and principal agent in the work of formation, but he or she should not be working alone.

Thus, while formation is a particular concern and a privileged task of the Spiritual Guide, it is prudent the Cenacle associates be trained to share in this work. With a new Cenacle this may be difficult to do, but as Cenacles mature, there should be greater sharing in the work of formation.

### **What are the principal qualities of a Cenacle Spiritual Guide?**

To be a good Spiritual Guide one must first have the heart of an apostle and the fire of the Holy Spirit, especially an abiding love of the Triune God, a love of neighbor and a spirit of sacrifice. He/she should believe in the power for good that exists in a spiritualized laity and must aim, not simply at being a missionary, but forming others to be missionaries. He/she must not only understand and love the Cenacle vocation, but have the time and will to devote to the task.

### **The Distinction Between a Cenacle Spiritual Guide and a Spiritual Director:**

The Spiritual Guide focuses on the communal spirit of the Cenacle, and not just on the spiritual life of the individual members. He/she is a missionary, who forms others to be missionaries. Thus the Cenacle Spiritual Guide is not the same as a spiritual director.

The spiritual director is focused on the individual being directed, not on a Cenacle. The goal is to discern what God is doing in that person's life in order to affirm and support it. While it is not unusual for a Spiritual Guide to give some informal spiritual counsel to a Cenacle member, it should be kept in mind that not all Spiritual Guides are qualified or trained to do formal spiritual direction. Spiritual Guides should be aware of their limitations and not hesitate to refer somebody to a qualified spiritual director whenever the situation requires it.



### **Who can be a local Spiritual Guide?**

Any Catholic person, lay, religious or ordained can be appointed a local Spiritual Guide. Care should be taken that he/she be familiar with Cenacle history and charism, the Rule of Life, Constitution, and Directory, and Cenacle devotions, practices and customs.

### **Who selects the local Spiritual Guide?**

The local Custodian, in council with the Cenacle, selects the local Spiritual Guide. He/she should work closely with the Regional Spiritual Guide, who is responsible for the formation and coordination of the local Spiritual Guides. The Regional Custodian then formally appoints the person selected to the position of local Spiritual Guide.

Once selected, the local Custodian should not remove a local Spiritual Guide without counsel from the Cenacle and the approval of the Regional Custodian.

### **What is the process for selecting a local Spiritual Guide?**

The local Custodian and the Regional Spiritual Guide should collaborate on the selection of a local Spiritual Guide. Together they work out a procedure according to the circumstances of the Cenacle. The Regional Spiritual Guide should make sure that the candidate selected is competent and willing. The Custodian should make sure that the local Cenacle is consulted and that the candidate meets their approval. When this has been done, the candidate's name is proposed to the Regional Custodian, who appoints the person to the position.

After the appointment, the Regional Spiritual Guide sees that the local Guide is prepared to carry out his or her role.

### **What is the term of office for the local Spiritual Guide?**

The term of office of the local Spiritual Guide is the same as that of the local Custodian, i.e. one year (Pentecost to Pentecost). Once selected, however, a Spiritual Guide may continue in office for succeeding terms, providing the local Custodian approves. A new Custodian, upon taking office, may choose to continue with the Spiritual Guide or may propose a new one.

### **To whom are the local Spiritual Guides accountable?**

The Local Spiritual Guide is directly accountable to the Regional Spiritual Guide and indirectly to the Regional Custodian.

He/she should meet regularly with the Regional Spiritual Guide and Regional Custodian to report on his/her Cenacle, to plan for its spiritual growth, to continue his/her formation as Guide, and to support one another.

### **The Degree of Involvement of A Spiritual Guide Varies From Cenacle to Cenacle:**

The extent of the involvement of the Spiritual Guide may vary from Cenacle to Cenacle depending on the needs, maturity, and leadership of the Cenacle. Guides of new Cenacles tend to have a lot more work to do than Guides of veteran Cenacles. Young adult Cenacles sometimes depend more on Guides than more mature Cenacles. Cenacles in crisis or in need of reorganization need much more immediate attention and direct intervention than would be appropriate in smoother working Cenacles.

### **The Spiritual Guides presence at meetings:**

The Custodian, or the Assistant Custodian, run the Cenacle meeting. It is good for the Spiritual Guide to be present at the meetings, especially in Cenacles that are new. But this does not mean that he/she should dominate the meetings, even at the request of the members. It is often more productive to silently observe the Cenacle as it meets, making mental notes of the positives and negatives. At an appropriate time, usually toward the end of the meeting, the Spiritual Guide might make some comments based on what he or she has observed.

However, the Spiritual Guide does not need to be at each meeting of the Cenacle, unless it is a new Cenacle. In some cases it is preferable for the maturation of the leaders not to have the Spiritual Guide present at all the meetings. Still, regular communication with the Custodian should continue.

### **The agendas and biases of the Spiritual Guide:**

The Spiritual Guide should be aware of his or her own agendas and biases. As much as possible he/she should be open about them. The Spiritual Guide should pray always to be open to the Holy Spirit with a desire that God's plan take precedence over his /her o

**The Holy Spirit is the One Spiritual Guide of the Cenacle.**

*“The beginning, the continuation and all activity of the Inner and Outer Cenacles is grounded on a practical devotion to the Holy Ghost...”* (Monograph 6, p.36)

Father Judge was deeply aware that there is but one Spiritual Guide in the Cenacle, namely, the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who transforms the followers of Jesus into apostles. For three years Jesus Himself formed the Twelve. Yet on Good Friday they fled and hid. Their fears overcame their formation. Formation was not enough. They needed transformation and transformation is the work of the Holy Spirit.

The lesson for us today is the same. Formation without transformation is incomplete. And a Cenacle without the Holy Spirit is nothing. Unless the Holy Spirit transforms and guides the Cenacle there will be a great loss of grace and much waste of time. Therefore, it should be the abiding concern of the Spiritual Guide to make sure that it is the Holy Spirit, and not mere human minds, that guide the Cenacle.

## The Principal Tasks of the Local Spiritual Guide

- 1. To get to know the members personally.**
- 2. To pray for the Cenacle and its members.**
- 3. To act as the sentinel of the Cenacle.**
- 4. To maintain the spirit of counsel in the Cenacle.**
- 5. To attend to the formation of the members in the Cenacle vocation.**
- 6. To inspire and encourage the members.**
- 7. To model the Cenacle vocation.**

### **1. To get to know members personally.**

The first responsibility of the Spiritual Guide is to get to know each of the Cenacle members, especially by means of personal visits and one-on-one conversations with them. This time spent with each member is important to develop a relationship of trust and confidence that will enable the Spiritual Guide to influence the formation of the Cenacle apostles.

A common mistake is to know the Cenacle members only through meetings, retreats or other communal activities. As important as these are, it is still necessary to get to know them individually. This may take a little time, especially if the Cenacle is a large one, but it will be time well spent.

Every person has a story. Listen to it. Know the person through it. Each person's story reveals how the Holy Spirit has guided him/her, how he/she came to know the Cenacle and why he/she is attracted to it.

Share with them some of your own story and discover the common values and visions that build the bonds of good relationship. Do not let the conversation become an interview, a counseling session, or simply an informal chat. Stay focused and disciplined.

### **2. To pray for the Cenacle and its members.**

*“Prayer for one another is a mark of God's favor upon the Cenacle.”* (MCM p. 121)

Father Judge put much emphasis on prayer. *“Prayer is a necessity.... Any means or agency that will excite prayer, encourage it and perpetuate it will be a transcending grace.”* (MCM, p.121) The Spiritual Guide is to pray daily for the members of the Cenacle. Prayer attracts the Holy Spirit.

Pray that the Holy Spirit may guide you, that the work of the Cenacle be fruitful. We pray for the members that they may grow in faith and apostolic love. We pray especially for any member who is sick or in need of special prayers.

### **3. To act as the sentinel of the Cenacle.**

*“...be on your guard lest there be any departure from the simplicity and tranquility and Christ like charity that has ever been in evidence in our Cenacles... We must be vigilant lest a foreign spirit creep in and destroy what God has built.” (MCM, p.262.)*

It is the primary task of the Spiritual Guide to be alert to the spirit of the Cenacle, encouraging what is good and calling attention to what is not so that it may be corrected. The Spiritual Guide needs “a good eye” to observe the little details that will reveal whether the Cenacle remains true to its original spirit.

### **4) To maintain the spirit of counsel in the Cenacle.**

*“Custodians shall show zeal for counsel. If they would rule wisely let them be mindful that designs are brought to nothing where there is no counsel, but they are established where there are many counselors.” (MCM, p. 316)*

It is important to remember that the Spiritual Guide does not make decisions with regard to the administration and governance of the Cenacle. That is the role of the Custodian in counsel with the Cenacle. Custodians should seek the counsel of the Spiritual Guides before making important decisions with regard to the Cenacle. However, the final decision is in the hands of the Custodian.

Giving counsel is a means of formation in the life of the Spirit. For this reason the Guide needs to be present to the members. When the Guide is present to the Cenacle, the Cenacle is quick to seek the Guide’s counsel. When not very present, they are less inclined to do so.

However, Custodians should avoid depending exclusively on the counsel of the Guide, but rather develop the habit of taking counsel with the members. Failure in this might give the impression to the members that their opinion doesn’t matter and discourage them from taking ownership of the Cenacle. Many times the best counsel that the Guide can give is to remind the Custodian take counsel of the members.

The Custodian may not always follow the counsel of the Guide. Here the Guide should refrain from intervening except to avoid grave harm to the Cenacle

## **5) To attend to the formation of the members in the Cenacle vocation.**

A large part of the work of the Spiritual Guide is that of formation. The Spiritual Guide helps with instruction on the many essential components of the Cenacle vocation such as the prayer, Cenacle history, the Rule of Life, Cenacle virtues, practices and devotions, especially the Incarnation, the Holy Trinity, and the Holy Spirit. As needed there could be instruction on evangelization, the Cenacle method, social justice, and pertinent documents of the Church.

Remember the responsibility for formation is that of the Missionary Cenacle itself, and should be shared with the members. The Spiritual Guide is a primary resource and agent in the work of formation, but he/she should not be working alone. Whenever possible, involve Cenacle members in the formation work. This will help to develop their leadership skills as well as to train future Spiritual Guides for the Cenacle.

## **6. To Encourage and Correct the Members.**

*“Our people have strong instincts for good, and they look for encouragement and leadership.”*  
(MCM, p.229)

Cenacle work is difficult work. There are innumerable ups and downs, difficulties and discouragements. Encourage the members so that they do not lose heart. This often involves helping them to understand that their setbacks, difficulties and humiliations form an essential part of their growth, of being emptied of self so as to be filled with the Spirit.

When a member begins to slack off, first try to find out the why. Then do what you can to reanimate him or her.

But encouragement is not always enough. Sometimes the Spiritual Guide must correct. As a general rule it is the role of the Custodian to correct the members when there is a need to do so, but for the sake of formation the Spiritual Guide often needs to make corrections also. These should be done gently, fairly and with love. But they must be done. The Spiritual Guide should not be timid or apologetic about this. It is a necessary part of the job.

Fr. Judge’s advice to Miss Amy Croake in 1915 on correction is still pertinent today:

*“Be non-committal; be impartial and most judicial. Give out nothing, but listen and when you are morally sure, do not spare correction or admonition. But let all be done in the Spirit of*

*Christ so that the guilty may be quite charmed with your gentle and sweet justice more than soft and favoring words from others.” (MCM, p.15)*

### **7. To model the Cenacle vocation.**

*“ Do give this much thought; do hold yourselves responsible for the future of the cenacle; do remember that as you are, so will others be. What more beautiful legacy can you leave than that of an example and life fragrant and rich in 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 you make it your constant effort.” (MCM, p.214)*

We best understand the Cenacle vocation and are inspired to imitate it in our lives when we see others living it. Father urges us: *“You are to inspire others to this Cenacle spirit.”* (MCM, p.184) Spiritual Guides must be willing to undergo continual conversion and growth if they are to be models for others.

## Six Rules for Spiritual Guides

### 1. The Golden Rule: *“Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”* (Matt. 7:12)

How the Spiritual Guide treats each one in the Cenacle, especially the less popular members is of critical importance. When the Spiritual Guide ignores some while appearing to give special treatment to others, people get hurt. He/she may not be aware that he/she is favoring some more than others. But others will notice, even if nothing is said to him/her.

Whenever members are going through crises or difficulties the Spiritual Guide should be there for them. Moments of crisis are moments of both opportunity and danger. Make it a point to be available to accompany the member through the crisis so that it may become an opportunity for growth. It is not so much what you say as it is your accompanying them and letting them know you care.

Conflicts are bound to arise in the Cenacle among the members, and sometimes between the Custodian and the members. Approach conflict with an impartial mind. If the members think you are partial, they will not seek your help. Father’s words on this are clear: *“Never form a judgment until you hear both sides. You must be most impersonal and unemotional in settling conflicting accounts or charges and be slow to action. Should a condition exist, adjust it prudently so that no feelings will be hurt. Never attribute or permit another to attribute this or that motive to another. God alone knows the secrets of hearts.”* (MCM, p.15)

### 2. The Silver Rule: *Always speak with charity.*

The Spiritual Guide must be a model of charity in the way he or she speaks about others, as well as encourage the members to do the same. *“Where there is charity of speech, there is heaven, and the love of God and the love of neighbor flourish like a bay tree.”* (MCM, p.95)

When charity of speech is offended great damage is done not only to individuals but also to the work of the Cenacle and the work of God. Father Judge notes: *“The longer I live the more this truth grows on me, that more harm is done to the work of God, that there is more interference with good work, more confusion among his servants because of evil words spoken by good people than the harm that is effected against good works by fiends.”* (MCM, p.95)

Be prudent in what you say and to whom you say it. People sometimes misinterpret what



you say, or misuse it to promote their own agenda.

Keep in mind that it is especially important to respect the confidentiality of any conversation that you have with members. Reveal nothing confided to you without the express permission of the person. Father Judge reminds us of the charity of silence: *“Let your ears receive and your mouth give out nothing.”* (MCM, p.15)

### **3. The Iron Rule: *Do not do for others what they are capable of doing for themselves.***

All of us want to feel needed. But this should not cause us to do for the Cenacle what it is capable of doing for itself. Rather we should encourage and train others to assume the various roles in the Cenacle. Otherwise we create dependency.

It is normal and appropriate for a new Cenacle to depend substantially on the Spiritual Guide, but every effort should be made to help the members grow quickly towards independence. Even early on the leaders can run the meeting. The Spiritual Guide may help the leaders to prepare the meeting and afterwards help them to evaluate it so that they learn by doing.

### **4. The Rule of John the Baptist: *“He must increase, but I must decrease.”*** (John 3:30)

The Spiritual Guide is important and his or her influence can be significant. Nonetheless, the Spiritual Guide should avoid dominating or controlling the Cenacle, lest the Cenacle become too dependent. This dependency may have its origin in a Spiritual Guide’s need to be needed. More often it may have its origin in the reluctance of the members to take ownership of the Cenacle. Regardless of its origin a spirit of dependency on the Spiritual Guide only impedes the movement of the Holy Spirit and the growth of the members.

The growth of the members is encouraged by a culture of formation through action where the Spiritual Guide: 1) helps leaders prepare for something, 2) observes them as they do it, and 3) helps them evaluate how they did so as to learn from their own experience. Gradually they will grow in self-confidence.

Perhaps there is someone in the Cenacle who can be formed as a Spiritual Guide. If so, work with that person so that he/she may take over the role of Spiritual Guide and you can move on to another Cenacle

### **6. The Rule of Peter: *We can give only what we have.***

Peter and John encountered a crippled beggar on their way to the Temple. Peter said: *“I have neither silver nor gold, but what I do have I give you: in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazorean rise and walk’ ...He leaped up, stood, and walked around.”* (Acts 3:6-8)

Father Judge believed that if we had an ardent faith we would always have something to give to the Cenacle. *“You must have an abundance to give. If you have a burning Faith, a truly Catholic Faith, an apostolic Faith, that will stay in the Missionary Cenacle.”* (MCM, p.144)

If we are not growing spiritually, how can we call others to holiness or help them grow? If you are to be a Spiritual Guide, you shouldn't you have one yourself? Who is guiding you?

#### **6. The Rule of Father Judge: *“As you are, so others will be.”***

It is a sobering thought. It is not simply what we say, but who we are that influences others. Father Judge's simple words are reminders to live always conscious of the need for ongoing personal conversion. As Spiritual Guides we will make mistakes, but none bigger than that of failing to take this Rule of Father Judge seriously.

## The Local Spiritual Guide and the Local Custodian

	<b>The Local Spiritual Guide</b>	<b>The Local Custodian</b>
<b>Principal Role</b>	Care for the Spirit of the Cenacle. Attends to formation of members.	The Custodian governs, administers and represents the Cenacle.
<b>Principal Focus</b>	The Spirit of the Cenacle The Formation of the Members	The Mission of the Cenacle The Community Life of the Cenacle
<b>Basis of Authority</b>	The wisdom, holiness, apostolic spirit and personal presence of the Guide, together with knowledge of Cenacle spirituality.	Receives authority through election by the members.
<b>Eligibility</b>	Any member of the MCF, as well as other priests, deacons, and religious.	Only members of the MCA
<b>How chosen</b>	Recommended by the local Custodian in consultation with Regional Spiritual Guide. Appointed by the Regional Custodian.	Elected by the members of the local Missionary Cenacle.
<b>Term of office</b>	Term coincides with that of the Custodian New custodians may recommend a new spiritual guide.	One year (Pentecost to the Pentecost). May be reelected to successive terms.
<b>Accountability</b>	Accountable to the Regional Spiritual Guide Indirectly to the Regional Custodian	Accountable to the Regional Custodian Indirectly to the General Custodian
<b>How Role Is Accomplished</b>	Loving the Cenacle, praying for the members, giving counsel, teaching, animating, correcting and giving example.	Making decisions in counsel with the Cenacle, sharing responsibility, governing in collaboration.
<b>Counsel</b>	Gives Counsel to the Custodian. Maintains the spirit of counsel in the Cenacle. Consults with other guides.	Seeks counsel from the Guide and the members of the Cenacle. Consults with others.
<b>Leaders</b>	Attends to the formation of the Cenacle leaders.	Leads as well as shares leadership. Appoints leaders. Holds them accountable.
<b>Formation of Members</b>	Close collaboration with the Custodian and others in initial and ongoing formation. Trains formation team. Directly involved.	Collaborates with the Guide in initial and ongoing formation. Delegates much formation to others.
<b>Meetings</b>	Dialogues with Custodian to prepare meetings. Need not be at all meetings.	Responsible to run the meetings. The Assistant Custodian may substitute.
<b>Apostolates</b>	Assists the Custodian as needed with the apostolic work of the Cenacle.	Organizes, coordinates and evaluates the apostolic work of the Cenacle. Makes reports.
<b>Spiritual Growth</b>	In collaboration with the Custodian plans days of recollection, retreats, conferences.	Collaborates with the Guide to provide days of recollection, retreats, conferences, etc.
<b>Admitting New Members</b>	Consults with the Custodian in recommending new candidates and associates.	Approves the selection of new candidates and associates after consulting with the Cenacle and the Guide.
<b>Availability</b>	It is best to be the Spiritual Guide for only one Cenacle. May be available for more.	Should be Custodian of only one Cenacle at a time.

## Chapter 4

### **The Role of the Regional Custodian**

The Missionary Cenacle Apostolate is divided into six Regions: 1) Incarnation Region in the Northeast USA, 2) Trinity Region in the Southern USA, 3) Holy Spirit Region in the West, 4) San Juan Bautista in Puerto Rico and other areas in the Caribbean, 5) Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe in Mexico, and 6) Reina de Los Angeles in Central and South America. A Regional Custodian, aided by an Assistant Regional Custodian, is in charge of each Region. Each Region also has a Regional Spiritual Guide.

The Regional Custodian oversees the Cenacles in his region. His/her concern is for the overall wellbeing of the region. He/she has authority, in council with the local Custodians, to make decisions affecting the region. Together they oversee the apostolic work of the Cenacles, the formation of the members, the training of leaders, and the establishment of new Cenacles. The Regional Custodian is the liaison between his/her region and the General Custodian. As General Councilors Regional Custodians share with the Custodian General the responsibility for decisions concerning the MCA as a whole.

#### **The Election of Regional Custodians:**

The Regional Custodian is elected by majority vote of the Associates of the region for a term of four years. He/she may be reelected for a second term. If for any reason he/she is unable to complete the term, the Assistant Regional Custodian assumes the office and a special election is held to choose a new Assistant Regional Custodian.

#### **Who can be a Regional Custodian?**

Any experienced Associate with leadership abilities, who has demonstrated a commitment to the MCA is eligible. He/she should have a genuine love of the Missionary Cenacle Apostolate, be willing to take counsel, delegate authority, share responsibility and travel to the MCA General Council meetings. He/she should have the time and skill needed to fulfill

his role, especially in communicating with the Custodian General, the Custodians of the region and other Cenacle leaders.

### **The Assistant Regional Custodian:**

The qualifications for the office of Assistant Regional Custodian are the same as those of the Regional Custodian. Generally, the Assistant Regional Custodian takes the place of the Regional Custodian whenever the latter is unavailable. The specific responsibilities and duties of the Assistant Regional Custodian vary according to the needs and circumstances of each Region.

### **Sharing regional responsibilities:**

The work of the Regional Custodian is substantial. For this reason, and to develop leadership the Regional Custodian should delegate responsibilities to others, such as Area Coordinators, Regional Secretaries, Treasurer, Stewardship Program Coordinators, Formation Teams. As always, they should be prepared to carry out their tasks, supported in their work, and held responsible for doing their job.

### **The Regional Custodian governs the region in council with the Custodians:**

Following Cenacle principles, the Regional Custodian makes his decisions in council with the local Custodians in his region. However, because it is difficult for all of the Custodians to meet regularly in council, it is often more practical to divide each region into smaller areas, each with an Area Coordinator or Representative. These Area Councils should meet regularly. Whenever possible the Regional Custodian or Assistant Regional Custodian should be present and preside.

### **Specific responsibilities of the Regional Custodian:**

The specific responsibilities of Regional Custodian include:

- Serving as a General Councilor, representing their region to the General Council, and the Council to their region, maintaining good communication with the General Custodian,
- Forming Regional or Area Councils through which the region is governed, events are planned and Cenacles collaborate with one another, presiding at regional meetings, Area Councils, workshops, etc.

- Promoting a spirit of unity and charity among the Cenacles, visiting the Cenacles on an annual basis, settling disputes regarding Cenacle matters,
- Collaborating with the Spiritual Guides to provide days of recollection and annual retreats,
- Overseeing the formation of the Candidates, approving Candidates for the Act of Consecration, pinning new Associates.
- Appointing local Spiritual Guides, installing local Custodians in office,
- Provide training and support for local Custodians,
- Organizing new local Cenacles and recommending their establishment to the Custodian General,
- Maintaining records of the apostolic work of the Cenacles of the region, keeping the membership records up to date, administering the finances of the region, developing a budget, submitting reports, writing articles for the MCA newsletter, etc.
- Promoting collaboration with other branches of the Missionary Cenacle Family in common apostolates, formation programs, and vocation efforts, etc.
- Serving as the delegate of the General Custodian when authorized.

## **The Principal Tasks of the Regional Custodian**

### **1. To visit the Cenacles and foster a spirit of community in the region.**

It is important for the Regional Custodian to get to know the work the local Cenacle do, to support the leaders, and to encourage the members to be faithful to their Cenacle vocation. The Regional Custodian's visits and presence at special events, funerals, celebrations, etc. do much to unify the region and build a spirit of community.

Regional Custodians should work to encourage communication and collaboration among the Cenacles in the Region. Cenacles that are connected to other Cenacles tend to handle crises better and avoid stagnation.

Promoting the Cenacle family spirit and collaboration with other branches of the Missionary Cenacle Family should be a major priority.

Disputes within local Cenacles, unfortunate but unavoidable, should be settled locally whenever possible. When needed, the Regional Custodian intervenes to resolve them with charity and fairness.

### **2. To govern the region through meetings of the Area Council or Regional Council.**

Together the Custodians of the region form the Regional Council. Since distances make it difficult for all the Custodians to meet on a regular basis, regions may be divided into areas. Someone from each area is chosen to represent it and act as a coordinator. Each area's Custodians then meet regularly forming an Area Council. Whenever possible the Regional Custodian or Assistant Regional Custodian should be present at Area Council meetings, and may even preside.

It is the responsibility of the Regional Custodian to see that Area Councils are set up and meet regularly to connect the Cenacles, foster community, collaborate in apostolic work and support one another.

If there is only one Cenacle in a given geographical area, the Regional Custodian should take special care to be in regular communication with its Custodian, so that there is a sense of connection with the rest of the region.

### **3. To collaborate with the Spiritual Guides in the spiritual growth of the members.**

With the help of the Regional and local Spiritual Guides the Regional Custodian sees that annual retreats are planned for all of the members of the Region. These may occur at any time of the year, but usually take place in May or June, especially on the Feast of Pentecost. In November, the Cenacles gather as a Region on the Feast of Christ the King or on November 23, the anniversary of the death of Fr. Judge, or on November 22, that of Mother Boniface.

Throughout the year days of recollection for Cenacles within the areas are encouraged for the ongoing spiritual growth of the members. Other special events, such as picnics and social gatherings foster a spirit of community and strengthen the members.

### **4. To provide for the formation of Cenacle leaders.**

Without good leaders the Cenacle does not grow. Regional Custodians need to be in regular communication with Cenacle leaders, especially the Custodians to encourage their work and support them in their difficulties.

It is the responsibility of the Regional Custodian to see to it that new Custodians and Assistant Custodians understand and can fulfill their duties. He/she should always encourage potential leaders by giving them leadership opportunities at the local or regional level and delegate responsibilities to them. See that they are prepared. Hold them accountable

Those who have served in leadership positions in the past should be encouraged to serve in other positions. For example, some former Custodians might be trained to become Spiritual Guides. Others may serve in positions of formation or administration at various levels in the region. Still others might head up special projects.

Training workshops for leaders and potential leaders should be held regularly in the region.

### **5. To oversee the apostolic work of the Cenacle of the region.**

The Regional Custodian should show particular interest in the apostolic work of the Cenacles. In addition to regular reports he/she should, where appropriate, accompany the Associates so as to gain a more intimate knowledge of the work. His/her presence will encourage zeal; his/her wisdom help evaluate the work so that it may be more effective.



Where the work has slacked off he/she should, with the help of the Guide, seek to discover the reason why and do what is necessary to revive it.

The Regional Custodian reports to the MCA General Council on the apostolic work of the region. These reports may also be shared with the region itself, so that all may have a clearer picture of the work being done.

#### **6. To administer the affairs of the region.**

As the number of Cenacles grows so too does the amount of administrative work. Regional Custodian should prudently delegate administrative responsibilities by appointing competent members to handle the tasks as needed. These might include a Regional Secretary, a Regional Treasurer, someone to oversee the stewardship program, a formation coordinator, area coordinator, etc. All should be properly prepared and held accountable.

#### **7. To act as a General Counselor and to represent the region.**

The MCA General Council is made up of the Assistant General Custodian and the six Regional Custodians of the MCA. The MCA General Council meets at least twice a year to report on the regions, give counsel to the General Custodian, and make decisions affecting the MCA as a whole.

In addition to the MCA General Council there is the Missionary Cenacle Family Council, which is made up of the General Custodian and two General Councilors from each branch of the Missionary Cenacle Family. Thus, a Regional Custodian may be asked to serve on the Missionary Cenacle Family Council. The Missionary Cenacle Family meets three times a year. It promotes collaboration among the branches of the Missionary Cenacle Family, and works to foster the Cenacle Family spirit.

## Chapter 5

### **Role of the Regional Spiritual Guide**

In addition to the Spiritual Guides for the local Cenacles, a Regional Spiritual Guide is assigned to each Region.

#### **Who can be a Regional Spiritual Guide?**

The Regional Spiritual Guide may be chosen from the ranks of any branch of the Missionary Cenacle Family.

#### **How Regional Spiritual Guides Are Chosen:**

The Regional Spiritual Guide is appointed by the General Custodians of his branch of the Cenacle Family, after first having been recommended by MCA General Custodian.

When a vacancy occurs, the MCA General Custodian and the Regional Custodian collaborate to select a person for the position. They should seek the counsel of the General Spiritual Guide and other appropriate persons. The MCA General Custodian then recommends the person selected to his or her own General Custodian, who in turn formally appoints the person to this Apostolate. The General Spiritual Guide sees to it that the new Regional Spiritual Guide understands his role and is prepared to carry it out.

#### **The Term of Office of the Regional Spiritual Guide:**

The Regional Spiritual Guide's term of office corresponds to that of the Regional Custodian with whom he serves, i.e. four years. A new Regional Custodian may continue with the same Regional Spiritual Guide, or may choose to select a new one. In either case, it is important that the two have a good working relationship. If for any reason a Regional Spiritual Guide is unable to complete his term of service, he should notify the Regional Custodian and the General Custodian of the MCA, as well as his own General Custodian.

**Accountability:**

The Regional Spiritual Guide is directly accountable to the General Spiritual Guide and indirectly accountable to the General Custodian. Regional Spiritual Guides meet twice a year with the General Spiritual Guide to give reports on the spiritual needs of the Region, to plan programs for the spiritual growth of the Cenacle, for ongoing formation and mutual support.

## **The Responsibilities of the Regional Spiritual Guide**

### **1. To pray for the spiritual needs of the Region.**

*“I believe that there is a special grace and blessing given to the Cenacle in the prayer that we say for one another...”* (MCM, p.164)

To pray for the Cenacle and its members is one of the Spiritual Guide’s most important duties. Through daily prayer for the Cenacle and meditation on its needs much guidance and inspiration from the Holy Spirit is received. It is helpful to develop a regular routine in this matter, rather than leave it to impulse.

### **2. To meet regularly with the Regional Custodian.**

An important duty of the Regional Spiritual Guide is to meet regularly with the Regional Custodian to assess the spiritual needs of the Region and devise ways to respond creatively to those needs. This would include planning retreats, days of recollection, visits to the cenacles, workshops, or other special events.

In addition, the Regional Spiritual Guide is to encourage, support, and give counsel to the Regional Custodian on matters related to the MCA. It is essential that he take time to get to know one another so as to develop a relationship of trust and mutual respect. They should develop the habit of regular communication so as to maintain an ongoing dialogue regarding the needs of the cenacles.

The counsel given by the Regional Spiritual Guide to the Regional Custodian should supplement, not replace, the counsel that the Regional Custodian seeks and receives from the Custodians of the Region. Sometimes the best counsel a Regional Spiritual Guide can give is to remind the Regional Custodian to seek counsel from the Custodians of the Region.

### **3. To be present whenever possible at the meetings of the Regional or Area Councils.**

The Regional Spiritual Guide should be a positive presence whenever meetings of the Regional Council or the Area Councils are held. These meetings are excellent opportunities to offer them counsel, support and encouragement, to receive informal reports, and to provide some form of ongoing formation in Cenacle leadership.

#### **4. To attend the biannual meetings of all the Regional Spiritual Guides and to give reports to the General Spiritual Guide.**

The General Custodian and the General Spiritual Guide meet at twice a year with all the Regional Spiritual Guides to discuss the spiritual needs of the whole Missionary Cenacle Apostolate. These meetings usually take place in the spring (April or May) and in the fall (September or October). They may be held anywhere, but generally are held at the Mother Boniface Spirituality Center in Philadelphia.

Each Regional Spiritual Guide gives a written report on his/her respective Region and discusses issue of concern. As the Guides share their reports the distinctive situation of each Region become clearer. Together they can make plans that respond to the spiritual needs of the members. These meetings are occasions of mutual support for the Regional Spiritual Guides and provide opportunities for development in the work of spiritual guidance.

#### **6. To meet regularly with local Spiritual Guides.**

The Regional Spiritual Guide meets with the local Spiritual Guides either at the Regional or the Area level no less than twice a year. At these meetings the local Guides report to the Regional Spiritual Guide regarding the spiritual health and needs of the local Cenacles. They can clarify issues, share experiences, and support one another. These meetings provide opportunities for the growth and development of the Guides in the art of Cenacle Spiritual Guidance.

In addition, the Regional Spiritual Guide should meet informally with local Spiritual Guides in order to get to know them and help them personally. Time spent meeting individually with local Spiritual Guides, as well as local Custodians, is always time well spent.

#### **7. To visit the local Missionary Cenacles.**

It is good for the Regional Spiritual Guide to visit the local Missionary Cenacles periodically to get to know firsthand the realities of the Cenacle, to encourage and strengthen the members. Always advise the local Custodian and the local Guide of any intended visit and be sure to ask how they are doing in their respective roles. They will appreciate the opportunity to talk to someone who understands and who will maintain confidentiality.

## **8. To help select and form local Spiritual Guides.**

The Regional Spiritual Guide assists the local Custodian in selecting qualified persons for the role of local Spiritual Guide. The Regional Spiritual Guide then recommends them to the Regional Custodian for confirmation as Guides. It is then the responsibility of the Regional Spiritual Guide to make sure the local Guides understand their role and receive the formation they need to fulfill it. It is also important that they be kept up to date with recent developments in the MCA.

The Regional Spiritual Guide meets periodically with both the local Custodian and the local Guide to make sure they have a good working relationship and to work out any problems they may have.

The Regional Spiritual Guide also looks to the future growth of the Cenacle in the Region. New Cenacles will need willing and qualified Guides. Most will come from membership of the MCA itself. Many dedicated and zealous former Custodians, with proper training, can make good Guides for new Cenacles. A Regional Spiritual Guide can help to identify these potential Guides and provide them the training that they need.

## **9. To foster a Cenacle Family spirit in the Region.**

The spirit and growth of the MCA is closely related to the quality of Cenacle Family spirit. Because of his unique position, the Regional Spiritual Guide is able to strengthen relationships between the MCA and the other branches of the Cenacle Family and promote greater collaboration in apostolic works.

## The Regional Spiritual Guide and the Regional Custodian

	<b>The Regional Spiritual Guide</b>	<b>The Regional Custodian</b>
Principal Role	To guide the growth of the Region To supervise the Local Spiritual Guides	To govern, administer and represent the Cenacles at the Regional level. To serve on the MCA General Council.
Principal Focus	The Spirit of the Cenacle in the Region The Formation of the Guides	The growth and good order of the Region. The Formation of Cenacle Leaders
Basis of Authority	Selected by Regional Custodian and General Custodian. Assigned by one's General Custodian.	Given authority through election by the associates of the Region.
Eligibility	Any qualified member of the MCF	Only associates of the MCA
How chosen	Appointed by their General Custodian after first having been selected by the MCA General Custodian in collaboration with the Regional Custodian.	Elected by the associates of the Region.
Term of office	Same as that of the Regional Custodian. May or may not be reselected.	Four Years. Can be reelected to a second term.
How role accomplished	Collaborates with the Regional Custodians and the Local Guides. Supports local leadership. Visits Cenacles.	Leads Region through Regional or Area Councils and individual meetings with leaders. Visits Cenacles.
Regarding leaders	Assists the Regional Custodian in the formation of local Custodians and local Spiritual Guides.	Leads Region in collaboration with the local Custodians. Attends to the formation of Cenacle leaders.
Regarding counsel	Gives Counsel to the Regional Custodian and Councils. Consults with other Guides.	Seeks counsel from the Guide and the Cenacle. Consults with others.
Accountable To	Directly to the General Spiritual Guide. Indirectly to the General Custodian.	Directly to the General Custodian
Meetings	Visits Cenacles. Is present at Area and Regional Meetings. Presides at Meeting of the Spiritual Guides.	Is present at Area or Regional Meetings and events. May preside at any meeting or delegate that to others.
Formation	Responsible for the formation of local Spiritual Guides. Acts as a resource in the formation of the Cenacle membership.	Responsible for the initial and ongoing formation of the members in the Region.
Apostolate	Assists as needed in evaluating the apostolic work of the Cenacles. Reports to the General Spiritual Guide.	Evaluates and accounts for the apostolic work of the Cenacles of the Region. Reports to the General Custodian.
Spiritual Life	Initiates plans for conferences, retreats, days of recollection, workshops, etc.	Collaborates with the Guides to provide days of recollection, retreats, conferences, etc.
Membership	Advises the Regional Custodian as needed on issues of membership.	Responsible to see that new associates are properly formed. Presides at the Act of Consecration.

## Chapter 6

### **The Role of the General Custodian**

According to the MCA Rule of Life *“full authority is exercised in an ordinary manner by the General Custodian assisted by the General Council. This authority encompasses leadership and government 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.”* (MCA Rule of Life #27)

#### **The Election of the General Custodians:**

The General Custodian is elected by a majority vote of the Associates of the MCA for a term of four years. He/she may be elected to a second term, but not a third consecutively. If for any reason he is unable to complete their term, the Assistant General Custodian assumes the office. A special election is then held to choose a new Assistant General Custodian as specified in the Directory.

#### **Who can be a General Custodian?**

The General Custodian is chosen from experienced Associates with leadership abilities. He/she must have been Associates for at least three years. He/she should have a genuine love of the Missionary Cenacle Apostolate, be willing to take counsel, delegate authority and share responsibility. He/she should be able to communicate with the leadership of all the regions and be willing to travel. He/she should have the time and skill time needed to accomplish his role.

#### **The Assistant General Custodian:**

The qualifications for the office of Assistant General Custodian are the same as those of the General Custodian. The Assistant General Custodian takes the place of the General Custodian whenever the latter is unavailable. The specific responsibilities and duties of the Assistant General Custodian may vary as circumstances and needs present themselves.



### **The General Custodian and the General Council:**

The General Custodian governs in collaboration with the General Council, which meets at least twice a year to discuss matters that concern the MCA as a whole. The General Custodian presides at the meetings. The General Councilors as well as the General Custodian may propose items for the agenda. At the General Council meetings the Regional Custodians report on their regions, the General Custodian reports on general finances and on the progress of projects and programs concerning the MCA as a whole. The decisions of the General Council are to be communicated to the membership.

### **The General Custodian and the General Assembly:**

A General Assembly may be called when the General Custodian and a majority of the General Council judge that there would be sufficient benefit to the MCA. The General Assembly is made up of the General Custodian, the General Council and delegates representing all the regions. They may propose policies, establish priorities, and set direction for the ongoing renewal and growth of the MCA. Their determinations may act as a kind of mandate for the General Custodian and the General Council. When general elections are to be held the General Assembly may also nominate candidates for the offices of General Custodian and Assistant General Custodian, according to the procedures outlined in the Directory.

### **Specific responsibilities of the General Custodian:**

The specific responsibilities of General Custodian include the following:

- Prepare and preside at meetings of the MCA General Council, follow up on decisions taken by the General Council.
- Serve as a member of the Missionary Cenacle Family Council, maintain good communication with the General Custodians of the other branches of the Missionary Cenacle Family.
- Select the General Spiritual Guide and the Regional Spiritual Guides, collaborate with the General Spiritual Guide in developing plans and programs to promote the spiritual growth of the membership, participate in the meetings of the Regional Spiritual Guides.
- Administer the affairs of the MCA, appoint general officers to assist in the general administration, appoint ad hoc committees to implement plans and programs, maintain

the records of the MCA, oversee the publication of the MCA newsletter, etc., account to the General Council and the membership on the general finances.

- Administer the general funds of the MCA, develop a budget for the general finances, disburse funds, oversee the stewardship program, etc.
- Install Regional Custodians in office; approve the establishment of new Cenacles.
- Visit each region at least once during the four-year term in order to ascertain firsthand how each region is doing, encourage the leaders, call the Associates to fidelity to their vocation as expressed in the Rule of Life and Constitution.
- Promote collaboration with other branches of the Missionary Cenacle Family in common apostates, formation programs, and vocation efforts, etc.
- Represent the Missionary Cenacle Apostolate at major events and celebrations within the Missionary Cenacle Family and to outside officials.

## Chapter 7

# **The Role of the General Spiritual Guide**

The General Spiritual Guide provides counsel and assistance to the General Custodian and the General Council of the MCA. He or she also directs, coordinates and assists the Regional Spiritual Guides and acts as a liaison between the Regional Spiritual Guides and the General Custodian. He or she may also suggest general and special programs for the spiritual benefit of the MCA.

### **Who can be a General Spiritual Guide?**

By tradition General Spiritual Guides are chosen from the ranks of the priests and sisters of the Missionary Cenacle Family. It is possible to have Co-General Spiritual Guides.

### **How chosen:**

The General Custodian of the MCA selects the General Spiritual Guide after consultation with the General Council. The General Custodian of the ST's or MSBT's must then approve and assign the person to this work.

### **The term of office:**

The term of office is four years and coincides with that of the General Custodian of the MCA. He or she may be reappointed. If for any reason the General Spiritual Guide is unable to fulfill his responsibilities, another is selected to finish the term following the above procedure.

### **Accountability:**

The General Spiritual Guide is accountable both to the General Custodians of the MCA and to the General Custodian of their respective branches.

## **The Responsibilities of the General Spiritual Guide**

- 1. To pray for the needs of the MCA.**
- 2. To provide counsel and assistance to the General Custodian of the MCA.**
- 3. To be present at the meetings of the MCA General Council**
- 4. To direct, coordinate and assist the Regional Spiritual Guides.**
- 5. To visit local Missionary Cenacles when possible.**
- 6. To foster a family spirit in the Cenacle as a whole.**

### **1. To pray for the needs of the MCA.**

The General Spiritual Guide prays for the material and spiritual needs of the Cenacle, especially for its Custodians and Guides, for its apostolic works, for the needs of the members and their growth in the Cenacle vocation. He/she should pray constantly that the Holy Spirit Guide the Cenacle.

### **2. To provide counsel and assistance to the General Custodian of the MCA.**

The General Spiritual Guide collaborates with and supports the General Custodian, especially providing counsel to the General Custodian on matters related to the MCA. Even if distance prevents face-to-face meetings, they must communicate regularly by phone or e-mail as often as necessary. They should strive to maintain an ongoing dialogue that continually seeks the will of God as events unfold.

The General Spiritual Guide's role is not merely passive; he/she should feel free to initiate ideas and to propose programs for the spiritual development of the MCA.

### **3. To be present at the meetings of the MCA General Council**

The MCA General Council meets regularly twice a year, in spring and autumn. The General Spiritual Guide sees to it that Mass and prayer services are provided. At the meetings he /she gives counsel as needed

Before the meeting the General Custodian may seek advice regarding the agenda. The two do everything necessary to assure a successful and fruitful meeting. Afterwards, the General Spiritual Guide can help in the evaluation of the meeting.

#### **4. To direct, coordinate and assist the Regional Spiritual Guides.**

The General Spiritual Guide and the General Custodian meet twice a year with the Regional Spiritual Guides to discuss the spiritual needs of the MCA. It is an important opportunity to learn from one another and to offer mutual support. The sharing of the Guides provides a broad range of experience and ideas. Their written reports reveal the similarities and differences of each Region so that plans can be developed for the spiritual growth of the Cenacle.

The General Spiritual Guide can also provide opportunities for ongoing development in the work of spiritual guidance. The General Spiritual Guide can arrange for a speaker to make a presentation on a topic of interest and relevance to the Regional Spiritual Guides.

When a new Regional Guide comes on board it is the responsibility of the General Spiritual Guide to see that he/she is properly oriented and given all necessary support.

#### **5. To visit local Missionary Cenacles whenever possible.**

The General Spiritual Guide visits local Missionary Cenacles and their leaders whenever possible, for example when traveling through their area. He/she tries to be available for retreats and special meetings of the Cenacle, especially for the feasts of Pentecost and Christ the King. The positive presence of the General Spiritual Guide encourages the members and renews their spirit.

#### **6. To foster a family spirit in the Cenacle as a whole.**

Although mentioned last, it is by no means the least, given Father's stress on the importance of preserving a family spirit in the Cenacle. The General Spiritual Guide is in a good position to achieve this by building and strengthening relationships among the various branches of the Missionary Cenacle Family.

## The General Spiritual Guide and the General Custodian

	<b>The General Spiritual Guide</b>	<b>The General Custodian</b>
Principal Role	Provide counsel to the General Custodian and the MCA General Council Direct and assist the Regional Guides	The general governance and administration of the MCA. Represent the MCA on the Missionary Cenacle Family Council.
Principal Focus	The Spirit in the Cenacle The Formation of the Spiritual Guides	The Mission of the Cenacle The Community Life of the Cenacle
Eligibility	By tradition an ST and/or an MSBT.	Only associates of the MCA
How chosen	Selected by the MCA General Custodian, appointed by their own General Custodian	Elected by the associates Of the Missionary Cenacle Apostolate.
Term of office	Coincides with the term of the MCA General Custodian. May be reappointed.	Four Years. May be reelected to a second term.
Basis of Leadership	Given authority through appointment to the position by the General Custodians.	Given authority through election by the MCA associates.
How role accomplished	Following established practice.	Following established practice.
Regarding leaders	Supports the General Custodian and the members of the General Council. Attends to the formation of the Guides.	Shares leadership responsibilities and the members of the General Council. Appoints committees and administrators.
Regarding counsel	Gives Counsel to the Custodian, the General Council and the Regional Guides	Seeks counsel from the Guide and the General Counsel. Consults with others.
Accountable To	To the MCA General Custodian To their own General Custodian	To the MCA General Council To the Missionary Cenacle Family Council
Meetings	Present at the meetings of the MCA General Council. Presides at the meetings of the Regional Spiritual Guides	Presides at meetings of the MCA General Council and MCA committees. Participates at the MCF Council meetings. Present at the Regional Guides meetings.
Formation	Attends to the formation of the Regional Spiritual Guides. Assists as needed in developing programs and material for formation.	General responsibility for maintaining quality formation of candidates, associates, and Cenacle leaders. Promotes leadership training programs.
Apostolate	Encourages the Cenacle to be zealous in its apostolic work.	Receives reports from the Regions and promotes their apostolic work.
Spiritual Life	Promotes spiritual life using all means available.	Collaborates with the General Spiritual Guide
Membership	Advises the General Custodian on matters of membership.	Sees that the Constitution is followed in matters of membership.
Availability	While not always seen as a full time job, still requires major commitment of time	It is in fact a full time job.

## **Suggested Readings for Cenacle Spiritual Guides**

### *The Apostolic Life*

This is the basic handbook for the Missionary Cenacle Apostolate, including the Rule of Life, vital background to the history and spirituality of the Missionary Cenacle and some prayers.

### *Outlines for Meetings*

This is an excellent resource for planning and conducting meetings. Included are outlines or one to two years of prayer meetings for the Cenacle.

### *Father Judge: Man on Fire* by Fr. Joachim Benson, S.T.

A profile of the life of Father Judge, written by one of his intimate first collaborators and published one year after the founder's death.

### *God's Valiant Warrior* by Fr. Dennis Berry, S.T.

This is the story of Father Judge and the founding of the Missionary Cenacle Family, detailing the elements of Father Judge's vision and spirituality.

### *Ecclesial People* by Sr. Joseph Miriam Blackwell, MSBT

Outlines Father Judge's theological basis for the Missionary Cenacle, his teaching on Church, the baptismal call of all the faithful, and mission as relevant in the post Vatican II era.

### *Missionary Cenacle Meditations*, edited by Fr. Timothy Lynch, S.T.

A selection of the Father Judges's letters, conferences, and retreats arranged for each day of the liturgical year.

### *The Monographs*, edited by Fr. Timothy Lynch, S.T.

A series of six booklets covering a variety of subjects: stories of Father Judge's early and final days, his missionary journal in Puerto Rico, key documents of the Missionary Cenacle, a synthesis of the Charism, and accounts of the founding and its pioneering members.

### *Margaret: Called and Chosen*, by Sr. Josepha McNutt

The biography of Margaret Mary Healy, Ph.D., the Custodian General of the MCA from 1928 to 1965, and a key figure in the formation of the early Missionary Cenacle.

*Awake the Giant*, by Fr. James O'Bryan, S.T.

This is the story of the founding of the Missionary Cenacle Apostolate. It offers an interesting reflection on the application of the founding principles to the realities of today.

*Led by the Spirit* by Sr. Mary Tonra, M.S.B.T.

A well researched and engaging book recounting the life of Mother Boniface Keasey, the first General Custodian and co-founder of the Missionary Servants of the Most Blessed Trinity.

All of these books may be obtained from the Missionary Cenacle Press:  
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