



THE  
OFFICIAL HANDBOOK  
OF THE  
LEGION OF MARY



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*Solemnity of Mary the Holy Mother of God*

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## PRELIMINARY NOTE

*The Legion is a system which can be thrown out of balance by suppressing or altering any of its parts. Of it, could the following verse have been written:-*

*“Pluck one thread, and the web ye mar;  
Break but one  
Of a thousand keys, and the paining jar  
Through all will run.”*

*(Whittier)*

*So, if unprepared to work the system exactly as described in these pages, please do not start the Legion at all. In this connection read carefully chapter 20 “**The Legion System Invariable**”.*

*Without affiliation to the Legion (through one of its approved Councils) there is no Legionary membership.*

*If past experience is an indication, no branch of the Legion which is worked faithfully according to rule will fail.*

## PROFILE OF FRANK DUFF

### Founder of the Legion of Mary

Frank Duff was born in Dublin, Ireland, on June 7, 1889. He entered the Civil Service at the age of 18 and had a distinguished career. His free time he at first dedicated to sporting activities, but at the age of 24 he joined the Society of St. Vincent de Paul where he was led to a deeper commitment to his Catholic faith and at the same time he acquired a great sensitivity to the needs of the poor and underprivileged.

Along with a group of Catholic women and Fr. Michael Toher, a priest of the Dublin Archdiocese, he formed the first branch of what was to become the first praesidium of the Legion of Mary on September 7, 1921. From that date until his death, November 7, 1980, he guided the world-wide extension of the Legion with heroic dedication. He attended the Second Vatican Council as a lay observer.

He died on the evening of November 7, 1980 aged 91 years. His Cause for Beatification was introduced by His Eminence Desmond Cardinal Connell, the then Archbishop of Dublin, in June 1996.

His profound insights into the role of the Holy Spirit and the Blessed Virgin Mary in the plan of Redemption, and the role of the lay faithful in the mission of the Church, are reflected in this Handbook which is almost entirely his composition.

### Prayer for the Beatification of the Servant of God, Frank Duff

*God our Father,*

You inspired your servant Frank Duff with a profound insight into the mystery of your Church, the Body of Christ, and of the place of Mary the Mother of Jesus in this mystery.

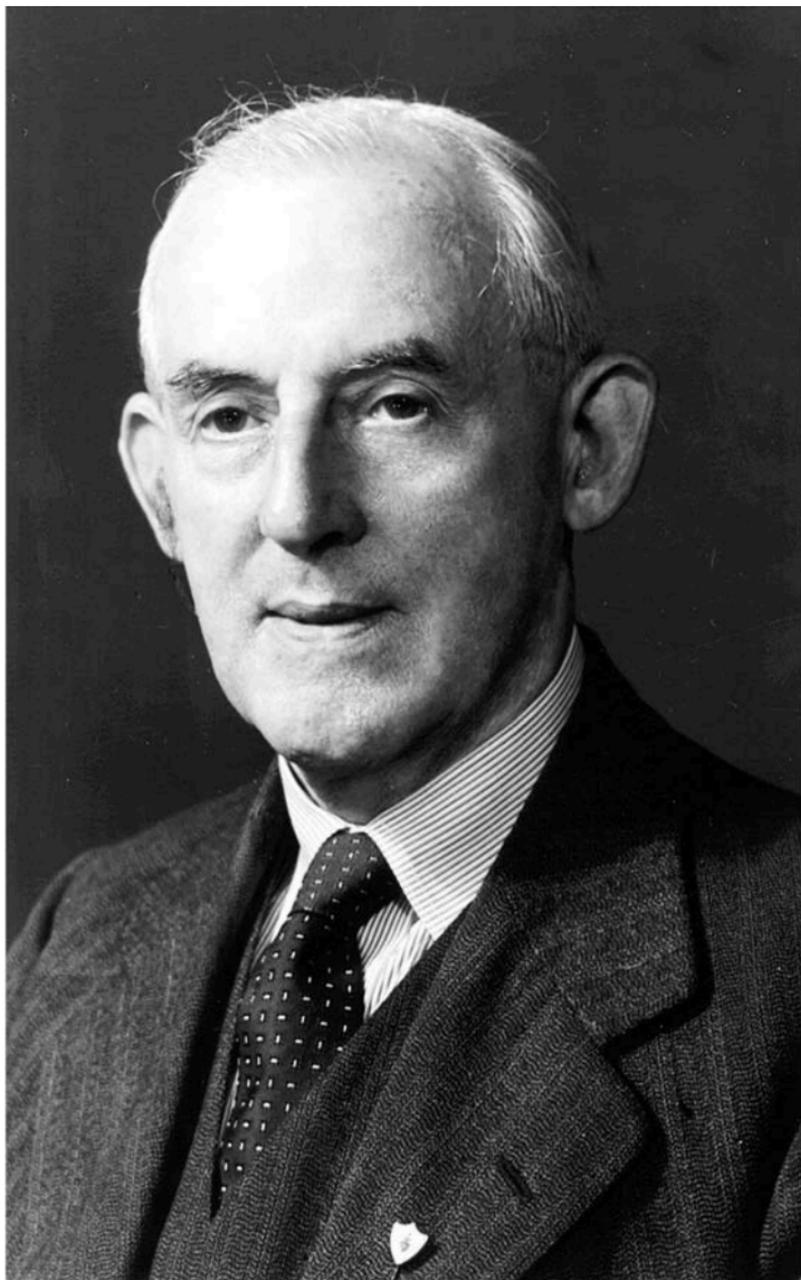
In his immense desire to share this insight with others and in filial dependence on Mary, he formed her Legion to be a sign of her maternal love for the world and a means of enlisting all her children in the Church's evangelising work.

We thank you Father for the graces conferred on him and for the benefits accruing to the Church from his courageous and shining faith.

With confidence we beg you that through his intercession, you grant the petition we lay before you .....

We ask too that if it be in accordance with your will, the holiness of his life may be acknowledged by the Church for the glory of your Name.

*Through Christ Our Lord, Amen*



FRANK DUFF



# THE LEGION OF MARY

“Who is she that comes forth as the morning rising, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, terrible as an army set in battle array?”  
(Song 6:10)

“The Virgin’s name was Mary.” (Lk 1: 27)

“The Legion of Mary! What a perfectly chosen name!”  
(Pope Pius XI)

## 1

### NAME AND ORIGIN

The Legion of Mary is an Association of Catholics who, with the sanction of the Church and under the powerful leadership of Mary Immaculate, Mediatrix of all Graces (who is fair as the moon, bright as the sun, and – to Satan and his legionaries – terrible as an army set in battle array), have formed themselves into a Legion for service in the warfare which is perpetually waged by the Church against the world and its evil powers.

“The whole life of men, both individual and social, shows itself to be a struggle, and a dramatic one, between good and evil, between light and darkness.” (GS 13)

The legionaries hope to render themselves worthy of their great heavenly Queen by their loyalty, their virtues, and their courage. The Legion of Mary is therefore organised on the model of an army, principally on that of the army of ancient Rome, the terminology of which is adopted also. But the army and the arms of legionaries of Mary are not of this world.

This army, now so considerable, had the most humble of beginnings. It was not a thought-out organisation. It sprang up spontaneously. There was no premeditation in regard to rules and practices. A suggestion was simply thrown out. An evening was fixed, and a little group came together, unaware that they were to be the instruments of most loving Providence. To look at that meeting, it was identical with what would be seen to-day were one to attend a Legion

meeting anywhere in the world. The table around which they met bore a simple altar, of which the centre was a statue of the Immaculate Conception (of the miraculous medal model). It stood on a white cloth, and was flanked by two vases with flowers, and two candlesticks with lighted candles. This setting, so rich in atmosphere, was the inspired notion of one of the earliest comers. It crystallised everything for which the Legion of Mary stands. The Legion is an army. Well, their Queen was there before they assembled. She stood waiting to receive the enrolments of those whom she knew were coming to her. They did not adopt her. She adopted them; and since then they have marched and fought with her, knowing that they would succeed and persevere just to the extent that they were united to her.

The first corporate act of those legionaries was to go on their knees. The earnest young heads were bent down. The invocation and prayer of the Holy Spirit were said; and then through the fingers which had, during the day, been toilsomely employed, slipped the beads of the simplest of all devotions. When the final invocations died away, they sat up, and under the auspices of Mary (as represented by her statue), they set themselves to the consideration of how they could best please God and make him loved in his world. From that discussion came forth the Legion of Mary, as it is today, in all its features.

What a wonder! Who, contemplating those inconspicuous persons – so simply engaged – could in his wildest moments imagine what a destiny waited just a little along the road? Who among them could think that they were inaugurating a system which was to be a new world-force, possessing – if faithfully and forcefully administered – the power, in Mary, of imparting life and sweetness and hope to the nations? Yet so it was to be.

That first enrolment of legionaries of Mary took place at Myra House, Francis Street, Dublin, Ireland, at 8 p.m. on 7 September, 1921, the eve of the feast of Our Lady's Nativity. From the title of the parent branch, that is, Our Lady of Mercy, the organisation was for a time known as "The Association of Our Lady of Mercy."

Circumstances which one would regard as accidental determined this date, which seemed at the time less appropriate than the following day would have been. In after years only – when countless proofs of a truly maternal love had made one reflect – was it realised that not the least exquisite touch of Mary’s hand had been shown in the moment of the Legion’s birth. Of the evening and the morning was the first day made (Gen 1:5), and surely the first, and not the last fragrances of the feast which honours her own Nativity were appropriate to the first moments of an organisation, whose first and constant aim has been to reproduce in itself the likeness of Mary, thus best to magnify the Lord and bring him to men.

“Mary is the Mother of all the members of the Saviour, because by her charity she has co-operated in the birth of the faithful in the Church. Mary is the living mould of God, that is to say, it is in her alone that the God Man was naturally formed without losing a feature, so to speak, of His Godhead; and it is in her alone that man can be properly and in a life-like way formed into God, so far as human nature is capable of this by the grace of Jesus Christ.” (St. Augustine)

“What a beautiful work of mercy and so appropriate to make known to many people who do not understand it, the true face of the Catholic Church.” (Pope Saint John XXIII)

## 2

### OBJECT

The object of the Legion of Mary is the glory of God through the holiness of its members developed by prayer and active co-operation, under ecclesiastical guidance, in Mary’s and the Church’s work of crushing the head of the serpent and advancing the reign of Christ.

Subject to the approval of the Concilium, and to the restrictions specified in the official handbook of the Legion, the Legion of Mary is at the disposal of the bishop of the

diocese and the parish priest for any and every form of social service and Catholic action which these authorities may deem suitable to the legionaries and useful for the welfare of the Church. Legionaries will never engage in any of these services whatsoever in a parish without the sanction of the parish priest or of the Ordinary.

By the Ordinary in these pages is meant the local Ordinary, that is, the bishop of the diocese or other competent ecclesiastical authority.

(a) "The immediate end of organisations of this class is the apostolic end of the Church; in other words: the evangelization and sanctification of men and the Christian formation of their conscience, so as to enable them to imbue with the Gospel spirit the various social groups and environments.

(b) The laity, cooperating in their own particular way with the hierarchy, contribute their experience and assume responsibility in the direction of these organisations, in the investigation of the conditions in which the Church's pastoral work is to be carried on, in the elaboration and execution of their plan of action.

(c) The laity act in unison after the manner of an organic body, to display more strikingly the community aspect of the Church and to render the apostolate more productive.

(d) The laity, whether coming of their own accord or in response to an invitation to action and direct cooperation with the hierarchical apostolate, act under the superior direction of the hierarchy, which can authorise this cooperation, besides, with an explicit mandate." (AA 20)

### 3

## SPIRIT OF THE LEGION

The spirit of the Legion of Mary is that of Mary herself. Especially does the Legion aspire after her profound humility, her perfect obedience, her angelical sweetness, her continual prayer, her universal mortification, her altogether spotless purity, her heroic patience, her heavenly wisdom, her self-sacrificing courageous love of God, and above all her faith, that virtue which has in her alone been found in its utmost extent and never equalled. Inspired by this love and faith of

Mary, her Legion essays any and every work and “complains not of impossibility, because it conceives that it may and can do all things.” (Imitation of Christ, Book 3 :5)

“Perfect model of this apostolic spiritual life is the Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Apostles. While on earth her life was like that of any other, filled with labours and the cares of the home; always, however, she remained intimately united to her Son and cooperated in an entirely unique way in the Saviour’s work.... Everyone should have a genuine devotion to her and entrust his life to her motherly care.” (AA 4)

## 4

# LEGIONARY SERVICE

### 1. Must “put on the whole armour of God”. (Eph 6:11)

The Roman Legion, from which the Legion takes its name, has come down through the centuries illustrious for loyalty, courage, discipline, endurance, and success, and this for ends that were often base and never more than worldly. (see appendix 4, *The Roman Legion*) Manifestly, Mary’s Legion cannot offer to her the name (like a setting stripped of the jewels which adorned it) accompanied by qualities less notable, so that in these qualities is indicated the very minimum of legionary service. St. Clement, who was converted by St. Peter and was a fellow-worker of St. Paul, proposes the Roman army as a model to be imitated by the Church.

“Who are the enemy? They are the wicked who resist the will of God. Therefore, let us throw ourselves determinedly into the warfare of Christ and submit ourselves to his glorious commands. Let us scrutinise those who serve in the Roman Legion under the military authorities, and note their discipline, their readiness, their obedience in executing orders. Not all are prefects or tribunes or centurions or commanders of fifty or in the minor grades of authority. But each man in his own rank carries out the commands of the emperor and of his superior officers. The great cannot exist without the small; nor the small without the great. A certain organic unity binds all parts, so that each helps and is helped by all. Let us take the analogy of our body. The head is nothing without the feet; likewise the feet are

nothing without the head. Even the smallest organs of our body are necessary and valuable to the entire body. In fact all the parts work together in an interdependence and yield a common obedience for the benefit of the whole body." (St. Clement, Pope and Martyr: Epistle to the Corinthians (96 .A.D.), chapters 36 and 37)

## **2. Must be "a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God ... not conformed to this world." (Rom 12:1-2)**

From that foundation will spring in the faithful legionary, virtues as far greater as his cause is superior, and in particular a noble generosity which will echo that sentiment of St. Teresa of Avila: "To receive so much and to repay so little: O! that is a martyrdom to which I succumb." Contemplating his crucified Lord, who devoted to him his last sigh and the last drop of his Blood, the legionary's service must strive to reflect such utter giving of self.

"What more was there to do for my vineyard that I have not done in it?" (Is 5:4)

## **3. Must not turn from "toil and hardship." (2 Cor 11:27)**

There will ever be places where Catholic zeal must be prepared to face the instruments of death or torture. Many legionaries have thus triumphantly passed through the gates of glory. Generally, however, legionary devotedness will have a humbler stage, but still one giving ample opportunity for the practice of a quiet but true heroism. The Legion apostolate will involve the approaching of many who would prefer to remain remote from good influences, and who will manifest their distaste for receiving a visit from those whose mission is good, not evil. These may all be won over, but not without the exercise of a patient and brave spirit.

Sour looks, the sting of insult and rebuff, ridicule and adverse criticism, weariness of body and spirit, pangs from failure and from base ingratitude, the bitter cold and the blinding rain, dirt and vermin and evil smells, dark passages and sordid surroundings, the laying aside of pleasures, the taking on of the anxieties which come in plenty with the work, the anguish which the contemplation of irreligion and depravity brings to the sensitive soul, sorrow from sorrows wholeheartedly shared – there is little glamour about these things, but if sweetly borne, counted even a joy, and

persevered in unto the end, they will come, in the weighing-up, very near to that love, greater than which no man has, that he lay down his life for his friend.

“What shall I return to the Lord for all his bounty to me?”  
(Ps 116:12)

#### **4. Must “live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us.” (Eph 5:2)**

The secret of all success with others lies in the establishment of personal contact, the contact of love and sympathy. This love must be more than an appearance. It must be able to stand up to the tests that real friendships can bear. This will frequently involve little mortifications. To greet, in fashionable surroundings, one who a little while before was the subject of one's visitation in a jail, to be seen walking with bedraggled persons, to grasp warmly the hand which is coated with grime, to partake of a proffered meal in a very poor or dirty home, may to some be difficult; but if avoided, the attitude of friendship is shown to have been a pretence, the contact breaks, and the soul that was being lifted sinks back in disillusion.

At the bottom of all really fruitful work must be the readiness to give oneself entirely. Without this readiness, one's service has no substance. The legionary who somewhere sets up the barrier: “thus far and no farther is self-sacrifice to go,” will accomplish only the trivial, though great exertions may be made. On the other hand, if that readiness exist, even though it may never, or but in small measure, be called upon, it will be fruitful of immense things.

“Jesus answered : ‘Will you lay down your life for me?’” (Jn 13:38)

#### **5. Must “finish the race” (2 Tim 4:7)**

Thus the call of the Legion is for a service without limit or reservations. This is not entirely a counsel of perfection, but of necessity as well, for if excellence is not aimed at, a persevering membership will not be achieved. A lifelong perseverance in the work of the apostolate is in itself heroic, and will only be found as the culmination of a continuous series of heroic acts, as indeed it is their reward.

But not alone to the individual membership must the note of permanence attach. Each and every item of the Legion's round of duty must be stamped with this selfsame seal of persevering effort. Change, of course, there must necessarily be. Different places and persons are visited; works are completed, and new works are taken on. But all this is the steady alteration of life, not the fitful operation of instability and novelty-seeking, which ends by breaking down the finest discipline. Apprehensive of this spirit of change, the Legion appeals unceasingly for a sterner temper, and from each succeeding meeting sends its members to their tasks with the unchanging watchword, as it were, ringing in their ears: "Hold firm."

Real achievement is dependent upon sustained effort, which in turn is the outcome of an unconquerable will to win. Essential to the perseverance of such a will is that it bend not often nor at all. Therefore, the Legion enjoins on its branches and its members a universal attitude of refusal to accept defeat, or to court it by a tendency to grade items of work in terms of the "promising," the "unpromising," the "hopeless," etc. A readiness to brand as "hopeless" proclaims that, so far as the Legion is concerned, a priceless soul is free to pursue unchecked its reckless course to hell. In addition, it indicates that an unthinking desire for variety and signs of progress tends to replace higher considerations as the motive of the work. Then, unless the harvest springs up at the heels of the sower, there is discouragement, and sooner or later the work is abandoned.

Again, it is declared and insisted that the act of labelling any one case as hopeless automatically weakens attitude towards every other case. Consciously or unconsciously, approach to all work will be in a spirit of doubt as to whether it is justifying effort, and even a grain of doubt paralyses action.

And worst of all, faith would have ceased to play its due part in Legion affairs, being allowed only a modest entrance when deemed approvable to reason. With its faith so fettered and its determination sapped, at once rush in the natural timidities, the pettinesses, and the worldly prudence, which had been kept at bay, and the Legion is found presenting a casual or half-hearted service which forms a shameful offering to heaven.

Hence it is that the Legion is concerned only in a secondary way about a programme of works, but much about intensity of purpose. It does not require from its members wealth or influence, but faith unwavering; not famous deeds but only unrelaxed effort; not genius but unquenchable love; not giant strength but steady discipline. A legionary service must be one of holding on, of absolute and obstinate refusal to lose heart. A rock in the crisis; but constant at all times. Hoping for success; humble in success; but independent of it; fighting failure; undismayed by it; fighting on, and wearing it down; thriving upon difficulties and monotony, because they give scope for the faith and effort of an enduring siege. Ready and resolute when summoned; on the alert though not called upon; and even when there is no conflict and no enemy in sight, maintaining a tireless precautionary patrol for God; with a heart for the impossible; yet content to play the part of stop-gap; nothing too big; no duty too mean; for each the same minute attention, the same inexhaustible patience, the same inflexible courage; every task marked with the same golden tenacity; always on duty for souls; ever at hand to carry the weak through their many weak moments; vigilantly watching to surprise the hardened at their rare moments of softness; unremitting in search for those that have strayed; unmindful of self; all the time standing by the cross of others, and standing there until the work is consummated.

Unfailing must be the service of the organisation consecrated to the *Virgo Fidelis*, and bearing, either for honour or dishonour, her name.

## 5

### THE DEVOTIONAL OUTLOOK OF THE LEGION

The devotional outlook of the Legion is reflected in its prayers. The Legion is built in the first place upon a profound faith in God and in the love he bears his children. He wills to draw great glory from our efforts, and he will purify them and

render them fruitful and persevering. We swing between the opposite extremes of apathy and feverish anxiety because we regard him as detached from our work. Instead, let us realise that we only have the good purpose because he has implanted it, and that we shall only bring it to fruition if he sustains us all the time. The success of the enterprise in hand is more by far to him than it is to us. Infinitely more than we, does he desire that conversion we are seeking. We wish to be saints. He yearns for it a million times more than we.

The legionaries' essential mainstay must be this knowledge of the companionship of God, their good Father, in their two-fold work of sanctifying themselves and serving their neighbour. Nothing can stand in the way of success except want of trust. If there be but faith enough, God will utilise us to conquer the world for him.

"For whatever is born of God conquers the world. And this is the victory that conquers the world, our faith." (1 Jn 5:4)

"To believe means 'to abandon oneself' to the truth of the word of the living God, knowing and humbly recognising 'how unsearchable are his judgments and how *inscrutable his ways*' (Rom 11:33). Mary, who by the eternal will of the Most High stands, one may say, at the very centre of those 'inscrutable ways' and 'unsearchable judgments' of God, conforms herself to them in the dim light of faith, accepting fully and with a ready heart everything that is decreed in the divine plan" (RMat 14).

## 1. GOD AND MARY

Under God, the Legion is built upon devotion to Mary, "that ineffable miracle of the Most High." (Bl. Pius IX) But what is the place of Mary herself in relation to God? It is that he brought her, as he did all the other children of earth, out of nothing; and though he has since then exalted her to a point of grace immense and inconceivable, nevertheless, in comparison to her Maker, she still remains as nothing. Indeed, she is – far more than any other – his creature, because he has wrought more in her than in any other of his creatures. The greater the things he does to her, the more she becomes the work of his hands.

Very great things he has done to her. From all eternity, the idea of her was present to his mind along with that of the

Redeemer. He associated her to the intimacies of his plans of grace, making her the true mother of his Son and of those united to that Son. He did all these things because, in the first place, he would gain from Mary herself a return greater than he would from all other pure creatures together. In the second place, he thereby intended, in a way which our minds cannot adequately grasp, to enhance the glory which he would receive from ourselves also. Thus, the prayer and loving service, with which we recompense Mary, our mother and the helper of our salvation, can represent no loss to him who made her so. What is given to her goes none the less surely and fully to him. But there is question of more than undiminished transmission; there is question of increase. And Mary is more than a faithful messenger. She has been set by God to be a vital element in his gracious scheme, in such sort that both his glory and our grace are **the greater** by reason of her presence there.

As it is the pleasure of the Eternal Father so to receive through Mary the homages intended for him, so too he has been graciously pleased to appoint her to be the way by which shall pass to men the various outpourings of his munificent goodness and omnipotence, beginning with the cause of them all – the Second Divine Person made man, our true life, our only salvation.

“If I will to make myself dependent on the Mother, it is in order to become the slave of the Son. If I aspire to become her possession, it is in order to render more surely to God the homage of my subjection.” (St. Ildephonsus)

## 2. MARY, MEDIATRIX OF ALL GRACES

The Legion’s trust in Mary is limitless, knowing that by the ordinance of God, her power is without limit. All that he could give to Mary, he has given to her. All that she was capable of receiving she has received in plenitude. For us God has constituted her a special means of grace. Operating in union with her we approach him more effectively, and hence win grace more freely. Indeed we place ourselves in the very flood-tide of grace, for she is the spouse of the Holy Spirit: she

is the channel of every grace which Jesus Christ has won. We receive nothing which we do not owe to a positive intervention on her part. She does not content herself with transmitting all: she obtains all for us. Penetrated with belief in this office of Mary, the Legion enjoins it as a special devotion for all its members.

“Judge as to the ardent love with which God would have us honour Mary seeing that he has set in her the fullness of all good: in such manner that all we have of hope, all of grace, all of salvation all – I say and let us doubt it not – flows to us from her.” (St. Bernard: *Sermo de Aquaeductu*)

### 3. MARY IMMACULATE

A second aspect of Legion devotion is towards the Immaculate Conception. At the very first meeting, the members prayed and deliberated round a little altar of the Immaculate Conception identical with that which now forms the centre of every Legion meeting. Moreover, the very first breath of the Legion may be said to have been drawn in an invocation in honour of this privilege of Our Lady, which formed the preparation for all the dignities and all the privileges afterwards accorded to her.

The Immaculate Conception is referred to by God in the same sentence in which Mary herself is first promised to us. The privilege is part of Mary: Mary is the Immaculate Conception; and, together with the privilege, prophecy is made of its heavenly sequel: the Divine Maternity, the crushing of the serpent's head in Redemption, and Mary's Motherhood of men.

“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.” (Gen 3:15)

To these words, addressed to Satan by Almighty God, the Legion turns as the source of its confidence and strength in its warfare with sin. It aims with all its heart to become in fullness the seed, the children of Mary, for there is the pledge of victory. In the measure that it makes her more and more its mother, is the Legion's enmity with the powers of evil intensified and victory made more complete.

“The sacred writings of the Old and New Testaments, as well as venerable tradition, show the role of the Mother of the Saviour in the plan of salvation in an ever clearer light and call our attention to it. The books of the Old Testament describe the history of salvation, by which the coming of Christ into the world was slowly prepared. The earliest documents, as they are read in the Church and are understood in the light of a further and full revelation, bring the figure of a woman, Mother of the Redeemer, into a gradually clearer light. Considered in this light, she is already prophetically foreshadowed in the promise of victory over the serpent which was given to our first parents after their fall into sin. (cf Gen 3:15)” (LG 55)

#### 4. MARY OUR MOTHER

But if we claim the inheritance of children, there must be esteem for the motherhood through which it comes. A third aspect of Legion devotion to Mary is the special honouring of her as our real mother, which in very fact she is.

Mary became the Mother of Christ and our mother when to the Angel's salutation she pronounced her meek assent, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord, let it be with me according to your word.” (Lk 1:38) That motherhood of hers was proclaimed at the moment when it reached its complete expansion, that is, when Redemption was consummated. Amid the sorrows of Calvary Jesus said to her from the cross: “Woman, here is your son” and to St. John “Here is your mother.” (Jn 19:26-27) Through St. John, these words were addressed to all the elect. Fully co-operating by her consent and sorrows in this spiritual birth of mankind, Mary became in the fullest and most perfect sense our mother.

Truly her children, we must behave as such, and indeed as very little children dependent utterly upon her. We must look to her to feed us, to guide us, to teach us, to cure our ailments, to console us in our griefs, to counsel us in our doubts, to recall us when we wander, so that wholly confided to her care, we may grow to the resemblance of our elder brother, Jesus, and share his mission of combating sin and conquering it.

“Mary is the Mother of the Church not only because she is the Mother of Christ and his most intimate associate in ‘the new economy when the Son of God took a human nature from her, that he might in the mysteries of his flesh free man from sin’ but also because ‘she shines forth to the whole community of the elect as a model of the

virtues.' No human mother can limit her task to the generation of a new man. She must extend it to the function of nourishing and educating her offspring. Just so the Blessed Virgin Mary, after participating in the redeeming sacrifice of the Son, and in such an intimate way as to deserve to be proclaimed by him the mother not only of his disciple John but – may we be allowed to affirm it – of mankind which he in some way represents, now continues to fulfil from heaven her maternal function as the co-operator in the birth and development of divine life in the individual souls of redeemed men. This is a most consoling truth which, by the free consent of God the All-Wise, is an integrating part of the mystery of human salvation, therefore it must be held as faith by all Christians." (SM)

## 5. LEGIONARY DEVOTION THE ROOT OF THE LEGIONARY APOSTOLATE

One of the dearest duties of the Legion shall be to show whole-hearted devotion to the Mother of God. It can only do so through its members, so that each one of these is asked to associate himself with it by serious meditation and zealous practice.

If the devotion is to be in real truth a legionary tribute, it must be an essential part of the Legion – as much an obligation of membership as the weekly meeting or active work: all must participate in it in a perfect unity. This is a point of view with which members cannot be too deeply impressed.

But this unity is something most delicate, for each member in a measure controls it, and can mar it. So on each one devolves a solemn trusteeship in the matter. If there is default; if the legionaries are not "living stones ... built into a spiritual house" (1 Pet 2:5), then is a vital part of the structure of the Legion defective. In measure as the living stones are found in this way wanting, will the Legion system tend more and more to become a ruin, which will not shelter, and hence with difficulty will retain, its children. Still less will it be the home of high and holy qualities, or a starting-point for heroic endeavour.

But with everyone adequately discharging this item of legionary service the Legion will be found possessed of a

marvellous unity of mind and purpose and action. This unity is so precious in the sight of God that he has vested it with an irresistible power; so that, if for the individual a true devotion to Mary is a special channel of grace, what shall it bring to an organisation which is persevering with one mind in prayer with her (Acts 1:14) who has received all from God, participating in her spirit; and entering fully into the design of God with regard to the distribution of grace! Shall not such an organisation be filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4) and shall there not be “many wonders and signs.” (Acts 2:43)

“The Virgin in the Cenacle, praying in the midst of the apostles and pouring out her heart for them with intensity unspeakable, calls down upon the Church that treasure which will abound in it for ever: the fullness of the Paraclete, the supreme gift of Christ.” (ISE)

## 6. IF MARY WERE BUT KNOWN!

To the priest struggling almost despairingly in a sea of religious neglect, the following words of Father Faber – taken from his preface to St. Louis-Marie de Montfort’s “True Devotion to Mary” (an abounding source of inspiration to the Legion) – are commended as a preliminary to his consideration of the possible value to him of the Legion. The argument of Father Faber is that Mary is not half enough known or loved, with sad results for souls: – “Devotion to her is low and thin and poor. It has no faith in itself. Hence it is that Jesus is not loved, that heretics are not converted, that the Church is not exalted; that souls, which might be saints, wither and dwindle; that the sacraments are not rightly frequented, or souls enthusiastically evangelised. Jesus is obscured because Mary is kept in the background. Thousands of souls perish because Mary is withheld from them. It is the miserable unworthy shadow which we call our devotion to the Blessed Virgin, that is the cause of all these wants and blights, these evils and omissions and declines. Yet, if we are to believe the revelations of the saints, God is pressing for a greater, a wider, a stronger, quite another devotion to his blessed mother.... Let a man but try it for himself, and his surprise at the graces it brings with it, and the transformations

it causes in his soul, will soon convince him of its otherwise almost incredible efficacy as a means for the salvation of men, and for the coming of the Kingdom of Christ."

"To the powerful Virgin it is given to crush the serpent's head; to souls who are united to her, it is given to overcome sin. In this we must believe with an unshaking faith, with a firm hope.

God is willing to give us all. All now depends on us, and on thee by whom all is received and treasured up, by whom all is transmitted, O Mother of God! All depends on the union of men with her who receives all from God." (Gratry)

## 7. BRINGING MARY TO THE WORLD

If devotion to Mary will work such wonders, then the great purpose must be to bring that instrument to bear, to bring Mary to the world. And how more effectively can this be done than through an apostolic organisation; lay – hence unlimited as to numbers; active – hence penetrating everywhere; loving Mary with all its might, and binding itself to involve the hearts of all others in that love; utilising all its avenues of action to fulfil this purpose.

And so, bearing her name with an inexpressible pride; built as an organisation upon an unbounded and childlike trust in her, to which it gives solidity by planting it in the heart of each individual one of its members: possessing then these members as working parts acting in a perfect harmony of loyalty and discipline – the Legion of Mary does not think it presumption, but rather a right degree of confidence to believe that its system forms, as it were, a mechanism which only requires operating by the hand of authority to compass the world, and which Mary will deign to use as an agency to accomplish her maternal work for souls, and to carry on her perpetual mission of crushing the head of the serpent.

"'Whoever does the will of God is my brother, and sister, and mother.' (Mk 3:35) What a marvel! What an honour! To what a height of glory Jesus elevates us! The women proclaim as most happy her who brought him into the world; but what prevents them from participating in that same maternity? For here the Gospel speaks of a new mode of generation, a new parenthood." (St. John Chrysostom)

## 6

# THE DUTY OF LEGIONARIES TOWARDS MARY

**1. The honouring of the Legion devotion to Mary by serious meditation and zealous practice is placed on each member as a solemn trusteeship to the Legion. It is to be regarded as an essential part of legionary duty, ranking before any other obligation of membership.** (See chapter 5, *The Devotional Outlook of the Legion*, and appendix 5, *Confraternity of Mary Queen of All Hearts*)

The Legion aims to bring Mary to the world as the infallible means of winning the world to Jesus. Manifestly, the legionary without Mary in his heart can play no part in this. He is divorced from the legionary purpose. He is an unarmed soldier, a broken link, or rather as a paralysed arm – attached to the body, it is true – but of what use for work!

The study of every army (and no less that of the Legion) must be to bind the individual soldier to the leader, so that the latter's plan passes smoothly into concerted action. The army acts as one. To this end is all the elaborate machinery of drill and discipline directed. In addition, there is found in the soldiers of all the great armies of history a devotion of a passionate sort for their leader, intensifying their union with him, and rendering easy the sacrifices which the execution of his plan called for. Of this leader it could be said that he was the inspiration and soul of his soldiers, in their hearts, one with them, and so forth. These phrases describe the operation of his influence and in a measure express a truth.

But at best such unity is only an emotional or mechanical one. Not so the relation between the Christian soul and Mary its Mother. To say that Mary is in the soul of the faithful legionary would be to picture a union infinitely less effective than that which actually exists, the nature of which is summed up by the Church in such titles of Our Lady as: "Mother of Divine Grace," "Mediatrice of all Graces." In these titles is expressed a sway of Mary over the life of the soul, so

complete that even the closest of earthly unions – the mother and the babe unborn – is inadequate to describe its intimacy. Other natural processes can help to make real to the mind this place of Mary in the operations of grace. The blood is not distributed except by the heart, the eyes are the necessary link with the world of vision, and the bird – despite the beating of its wings – cannot lift itself without the support of the air. So the soul, according to the divinely established order, cannot without Mary lift itself to God or do God's work.

Not being a creation either of the reason or of the emotions but a Divine arrangement, this dependence on Mary exists even though it is not adverted to. But it can be, and should be, immeasurably strengthened by a deliberate participation in it. In intensity of union with her, who is (as St. Bonaventure says) the dispenser of our Lord's Blood, lie marvels of sanctification and an incredible source of power over the souls of others. Those whom the plain gold of the apostolate could not ransom from the captivity of sin are freed – everyone – when Mary studs that gold with the jewels of the Precious Blood which she has in her gift.

So, beginning with a fervent Consecration, frequently renewed in some phrase embodying it (for instance: "I am all yours, my Queen, my Mother, and all that I have is yours"), this thought of the ever-present influence of Mary in the soul should be reduced to such methodical and vivid practice that the soul may be said to "breathe Mary as the body breathes air." (St. Louis-Marie de Montfort)

In the Holy Mass, Holy Communion, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, the Rosary, the Stations of the Cross, and other Devotions, the legionary soul must seek, as it were, to identify itself with Mary, and to meditate on the mysteries of the Redemption through that supremely faithful soul which lived them with the Saviour, and in them played an indispensable part.

And so, imitating her, thanking her tenderly, rejoicing and sorrowing with her, giving her what Dante calls 'the long study and the great love,' bringing some thought of her into every prayer and work and act of the spiritual life, forgetting itself and its own resources to depend on her; the soul of the legionary becomes so filled with the image and thought of

her that the two souls are but one soul. The legionary, lost in the depth of Mary's soul, shares her faith, her humility, her Immaculate Heart (and hence the potency of her prayer), and swiftly is transformed into Christ, which is the object of all life. While on the other hand, in and through her legionary, Mary participates in every duty and mothers souls, so that in each of those worked for and of one's fellow-workers, not only is the person of our Lord seen and served, but seen and served by Mary, with the same exquisite love and nurturing care which she gave to the actual body of her Divine Son.

Its members thus grown into living copies of Mary, the Legion sees itself in truth a Legion of Mary, united to her mission and guaranteed her victory. It will bring Mary to the world, and she will give light to the world and presently set it all ablaze.

"With Mary live joyfully, with Mary bear all your trials, with Mary labour, with Mary pray, with Mary take your recreation, with Mary take your repose. With Mary seek Jesus; in your arms bear Jesus and with Jesus and Mary fix your dwelling at Nazareth. With Mary go to Jerusalem, remain near the Cross of Jesus, bury yourself with Jesus. With Jesus and Mary rise again, with Jesus and Mary mount to Heaven, with Jesus and Mary live and die." (Thomas à Kempis: Sermon to Novices)

## 2. THE IMITATION OF MARY'S HUMILITY IS BOTH THE ROOT AND THE INSTRUMENT OF LEGIONARY ACTION

The Legion speaks to its members in terms of an army and battles. This is fitting, for the Legion is the instrument and visible operation of her who is like an army in battle array and who wages an intense warfare for the soul of every man. Moreover, the martial idea is one with great appeal to mankind. Legionaries, knowing themselves to be soldiers, are stimulated to impart a soldierly seriousness to their work. But the warfare of legionaries is not of this world, and must be waged according to the tactics of Heaven. The fire which burns in true legionary hearts springs only from the ashes of lowly and unworldly qualities. Particular among these is the virtue of humility, so misunderstood and despised by the world. Yet,

it is noble and strong, and confers a strange nobility and strength on those who seek it and practise it.

In the Legion system, humility plays a unique part. In the first place, it is an essential instrument of the legionary apostolate. For, the effecting and developing of the personal contact, on which the Legion relies so largely in its work, calls for workers with gentle, unassuming manners such as are derived only from true humility of heart. But humility is more to the Legion than a mere instrument of its external action. It is the very cradle of that action. Without humility there can be no effective legionary action.

Christ, says St. Thomas Aquinas, recommended to us humility above all things, for thereby is removed the chief impediment to the salvation of men. All the other virtues derive their value from it. Only when humility exists will God bestow his favours. When it fades, those gifts will be withdrawn. The Incarnation, the source of all graces, depended on it. Mary says, in the "Magnificat," that in her God has shown might in his arm, that is, he has exerted in her his very omnipotence. And she proclaims the reason. It was her lowliness which had won his regard and brought him down to terminate the old world and begin the new.

But how could Mary be a model of humility, considering that her treasury of perfections was altogether immeasurable – touching in fact the very borders of infinity, and that she knew it? She was humble because she was likewise aware that she was more perfectly redeemed than any other of the children of men. She owed every gleam of her inconceivable sanctity to the merits of her Son, and that thought was ever vivid in her mind. Her peerless intellect was full of the realisation that as she had received more, so no other creature stood as much in God's debt as she. Hence her attitude of exquisite and graceful humility was effortless and constant.

Studying her, therefore, the legionary will learn that the essence of true humility is the recognition and unaffected acknowledgment of what one really is before God; the understanding that one's worthlessness alone is one's own. Everything else is God's free gift to the soul: his to increase, diminish, or withdraw completely, just as he alone gave it. A sense of one's subjection will show itself in a marked

preference for humble and little-sought tasks, in a readiness to bear contempt and rebuffs, and generally in an attitude towards the manifestations of God's Will which will reflect Mary's own declaration: "Here am I, the servant of the Lord." (Lk 1:38)

The necessary union of the legionary with his Queen requires not only the desire for that union, but the capacity for it. A person may determine to be a good soldier, but yet may never possess the qualities which will make him an efficient cog in the military machine. In consequence that man's union with his general is an ineffective one, so that he impedes the working out of the military plan. Similarly, the legionary may aspire to play a great part in the plan of his Queen; yet he may be incapable of receiving what Mary so ardently longs to give. In the case of the ordinary soldier this incapacity would proceed from defects of courage, intelligence, physical fitness, and the like. In the case of the legionary, that incapacity would be caused by the absence of the virtue of humility. The purpose of the Legion is the sanctification of its members and the radiation of that holiness in the world of souls. But there can be no holiness without humility. Moreover, the Legion apostolate operates through Mary. But there can be no union with Mary without some likeness to her, and there can be little likeness to her in default of her special virtue of humility. If union with Mary is the indispensable condition – the root, so to speak, of all legionary action, then the soil on which these roots depend is humility. If that soil is deficient, the legionary life will wither.

It follows that the Legion's battle for souls must begin in the heart of the individual legionary. Each one must wage the battle with himself, determinedly conquering in his heart the spirit of pride and self. This terrible struggle with the root of evil within one, this constant striving after purity of intention, how exhausting it is. It is the battle of a lifetime. Reliance upon one's own efforts will make it the failure of a lifetime; for self winds itself even into the attack on self. Of what use are his own muscles to one struggling in a quicksand? A firm support is necessary.

Legionary, your firm support is Mary. Lean upon her with complete trust. She will not fail you, for she is deeply rooted in that humility which is vital to you. In the faithful practice

of the spirit of dependence upon her will be found a supreme, simple, comprehensive way of humility – what St. Louis-Marie de Montfort terms “a little-known secret of grace, enabling us quickly and with but little effort to empty ourselves of self, fill ourselves with God, and become perfect.” Consider how this is so. The legionary, in turning towards Mary, must necessarily turn away from self. Mary takes hold of this movement and elevates it; makes of it the supernatural dying to self which fulfils the stern but fruitful law of the Christian life. (Jn 12:24-25) The humble Virgin’s heel crushes the serpent of self, with its many heads: –

(a) of self-exaltation; for if Mary, so rich in perfections as to be called by the Church the Mirror of Justice, endowed with unbounded power in the realm of grace, is nevertheless found on her knees – the humblest handmaid of the Lord! – what must be the legionary place and attitude;

(b) of self-seeking; for, having given himself and all his goods, spiritual and temporal, to Mary to use as she thinks fit, the legionary continues to serve her in the same spirit of complete generosity;

(c) of self-sufficiency; for the habit of leaning on Mary inevitably produces distrust of one’s own unaided powers;

(d) of self-conceit; for the sense of partnership with Mary brings realisation of one’s own inadequacy. What has the legionary contributed to that partnership but painful weaknesses!

(e) of self-love; for what is there to love! The legionary, absorbed in love and admiration of his Queen, is little inclined to turn from her to contemplate himself;

(f) of self-satisfaction; for in this alliance higher standards must prevail. The legionary models himself upon Mary and aspires to her perfect purity of intention;

(g) of self-advancement; thinking with Mary’s thoughts, one studies God alone. There is no room for plans of self or reward;

(h) of self-will; completely submitted to Mary, the legionary distrusts the promptings of his own inclinations and in all things listens intently for the whisperings of grace.

In the legionary, who is truly forgetful of self, there will be no impediment to the maternal influences of Mary. She will develop in him energies and sacrifices beyond nature, and make of him a good soldier of Christ (2 Tim 2:3), fit for the arduous service to which that profession calls him.

“God delights to work on nothing; from that deep foundation it is that he raises the creations of his power. We should be full of zeal for God’s glory, and at the same time convinced of our incapacity to promote it. Let us sink into the abyss of our worthlessness; let us take shelter under the deep shade of our lowliness; let us tranquilly wait until the Almighty shall see fit to render our active exertions instrumental to his glory. For this purpose he will make use of means quite opposed to those we might naturally expect. Next to Jesus Christ no one ever contributed to the glory of God in the same degree as the Blessed Virgin Mary, and yet the sole object to which her thoughts deliberately tended was her own annihilation. Her humility seemed to set up an obstacle to the designs of God. But it was, on the contrary, that humility precisely which facilitated the accomplishment of his all-merciful views.” (Grou: Interior of Jesus and Mary)

### 3. REAL DEVOTION TO MARY OBLIGES APOSTLESHIP

Elsewhere in this handbook it has been stressed that we cannot pick and choose in Christ; that we cannot receive the Christ of glory without at the same time bringing into our lives the Christ of pain and persecution; because there is but the one Christ who cannot be divided. We have to take him as he is. If we go to him seeking peace and happiness, we may find that we have nailed ourselves to the cross. The opposites are mixed up and cannot be separated; no pain, no palm; no thorn, no throne; no gall, no glory; no cross, no crown. We reach out for the one and find that we have got the other with it.

And, of course, the same law applies to Our Blessed Lady. Neither can she be divided up into compartments as between which we may pick and choose what seems to suit us. We cannot join her in her joys without finding that presently our hearts are riven with her sufferings.

If we want, like St. John the beloved disciple, to take her to our own (Jn 19:27), it must be in her completeness. If we are willing to accept only a phase of her being, we may hardly

receive her at all. Obviously devotion to her must attend to and try to reproduce every aspect of her personality and mission. It must not chiefly concern itself with what is not the most important. For instance, it is valuable to regard her as our exquisite model whose virtues we must draw into ourselves. But to do that and to do no more would be a partial and indeed a petty devotion to her. Neither is it enough to pray to her, even though it be in considerable quantity. Nor is it enough to know and rejoice at the innumerable and startling ways in which the Three Divine Persons have encompassed her, and built upon her, and caused her to reflect their own attributes. All these tributes of respect are due to her and must be given to her, but they are no more than parts of the whole. Adequate devotion to her is only achieved by union with her. Union necessarily means community of life with her; and her life does not consist mainly in the claiming of admiration but in the communicating of grace.

Her whole life and destiny have been motherhood, first of Christ and then of men. For that she was prepared and brought into existence by the Holy Trinity after an eternal deliberation (as St. Augustine remarks). On the day of the Annunciation she entered on her wondrous work and ever since she has been the busy mother attending to her household duties. For a while these were contained in Nazareth, but soon the little house became the whole wide world, and her Son expanded into mankind. And so it has continued; all the time her domestic work goes on and nothing in that Nazareth-grown-big can be performed without her. Any caring of the Lord's body is only supplemental to her care; the apostle only adds himself to her maternal occupations; and in that sense Our Lady might declare: "I am Apostleship," almost as she said: "I am the Immaculate Conception."

That motherhood of souls being her essential function and her very life, it follows that without participation in it there can be no real union with her. Therefore, let the position be stated once again: true devotion to Mary must comprise the service of souls. Mary without motherhood and the Christian without apostleship, would be analogous ideas. Both the one and the other would be incomplete, unreal, unsubstantial, false to the Divine intention.

Accordingly, the Legion is not built, as some suppose, upon two principles, that is, Mary and apostleship, but upon the single principle of Mary, which principle embraces apostleship and (rightly understood) the entire Christian life.

Wishful thinking is proverbially an empty process. A mere verbal offering of our services to Mary can be as empty. It is not to be thought that apostolic duties will descend from Heaven on those who content themselves with waiting passively for that to happen. It is rather to be feared that those idle ones will continue in their state of unemployment. The only effective method of offering ourselves as apostles is to undertake apostleship. That step taken, at once Mary embraces our activity and incorporates it in her motherhood.

Moreover, Mary cannot do without that help. But surely this suggestion goes too far? How could the Virgin so powerful be dependent on the aid of persons so weak? But, indeed, such is the case. It is a part of the divine arrangement which requires human co-operation and which does not save man otherwise than through man. It is true that Mary's treasury of grace is superabundant, but she cannot spend from it without our help. If she could use her power according to her heart alone, the world would be converted in the twinkling of an eye. But she has to wait till the human agencies are available to her. Deprived of them, she cannot fulfil her motherhood, and souls starve and die. So, she welcomes eagerly any who will really place themselves at her disposal, and she will utilise them, one and all; not only the holy and the fit, but likewise the infirm and the unfit. So needed are they all that none will be rejected. Even the least can transmit much of the power of Mary; while through those that are better she can put forth her might. Bear in mind how the sunlight streams dazzlingly through a clean window and struggles through a dirty one.

"Are not Jesus and Mary the New Adam and Eve, whom the tree of the Cross brought together in anguish and love for the repairing of the fault committed in Eden by our first parents? Jesus is the source and Mary the channel of the graces which give us spiritual rebirth and aid us to win back our heavenly home."

"Along with the Lord let us bless her whom he has raised up to be the mother of mercy, our queen, our most loving mother, mediatrix of his graces, dispenser of his treasures. The Son of God makes his mother radiant with the glory, the majesty and the might of his own

Kingship. Because she was united to the King of Martyrs, as his mother and his assistant, in the stupendous work of redeeming the human race, she remains for ever united to him, vested with a practically unlimited power in the distributing of the graces which flow from the Redemption. Her empire is vast like that of her Son; such indeed that nothing is outside her sway." (Venerable Pope Pius XII: Discourses of 21 April, 1940, and 13 May, 1945)

#### 4. INTENSITY OF EFFORT IN MARY'S SERVICE

In no circumstances should the spirit of dependence upon Mary be made an excuse for lack of effort or for defects in system. Indeed the exact contrary must obtain. Because one works with Mary and for her so completely it follows that one's gift to her must be the choicest that can be offered. One must always work with energy and skill and fineness. Now and then, fault has had to be found with branches or members who did not appear to be making sufficient effort in connection with the ordinary Legion work or with extension or recruiting. Sometimes this kind of answer is forthcoming: "I distrust my own powers. I rely altogether on Our Blessed Lady to bring about the right result in her own way." Often this reply proceeds from earnest persons who are inclined to ascribe to their own inactivity a sort of virtue, as if method and effort implied a littleness of faith. There may be, too, a certain danger of applying human ideas to these things and of reasoning that if one is the instrument of a simply immense power, the exact degree of one's own effort does not so greatly matter. Why, it may be argued, should a poor man who is in partnership with a millionaire, exhaust himself to contribute an extra penny to the already overflowing common purse?

It is necessary, therefore, to emphasise a principle which must govern the attitude of the legionary towards his work. It is that legionaries are no mere instruments of Mary's action. There is question of a true co-operation with her for the purpose of enriching and ransoming the souls of men. In that co-operation each supplies what the other cannot give. The legionary gives his action and his faculties: that is all of himself; and Mary gives herself with all her purity and power. Each is bound to contribute without reserve. If the spirit of this partnership is honoured by the legionary, Mary will never

be found wanting. Therefore, the fate of the enterprise may be said to depend entirely on the legionary, so that he must bring to it all his intelligence and all his strength, perfected by careful method and by perseverance.

Even if it were known that Mary were going to give a desired result independent of the legionary effort, nevertheless that effort must be exerted in its fulness, with just the same intensity as if all depended on it. While placing a limitless confidence in the aid of Mary, the legionary's effort must always be pitched at its maximum. His generosity must always rise as high as his trust. This principle of the necessary interaction of boundless faith with intense and methodical effort is expressed in another way by the saints, when they say that one must pray as if all depended on that prayer and nothing on one's own efforts; and then one must strive as if absolutely everything depended on that striving.

There must be no such thing as proportioning the output of effort to one's estimate of the difficulty of the task, or of thinking in terms of "just how little can I give to gain the object in view?" Even in worldly matters, such a bargaining spirit constantly defeats itself. In supernatural things it will always fail, for it forfeits the grace on which the issue really hangs. Moreover, human judgments cannot be depended on. The apparent impossibility often collapses at a touch; while, on the other hand, the fruit which hangs almost within reach, may persistently elude the hand, and at long last be harvested by someone else. In the spiritual order the calculating soul will sink to smaller and smaller things and finally end in barrenness. The only certain way lies in unrestricted effort. Into each task, trivial or great, the legionary will throw supreme effort. Perhaps that degree of effort is not needed. It may be that a touch would be sufficient to bring the work to completion; and were the completion of the task the only objective, it would be legitimate to put forth that slight effort and no more. One would not, as Byron says, uplift the club of Hercules to crush a butterfly or brain a gnat.

But legionaries must be brought to realise that they do not work directly for results. They work for Mary quite irrespectively of the simplicity or the difficulty of the task; and in every employment the legionary must give the best that is in him, be it little or be it great. Thereby is merited the full

co-operation of Mary, so that even miracles are wrought where they are needed. If one can do but little, and yet does it with all one's heart, Mary will come in with power and will give that feeble movement the effect of a giant's strength. If, having done all that he can, the legionary is still a million miles from success, Mary will bridge that distance to carry their joint work to an ideal conclusion.

And even if the legionary puts into a work ten times the intensity which is needed to perfect it, nevertheless, not a particle of what he does is wasted. For is not all his work for Mary and at the service of her vast design and purpose? Mary will receive with joy that surplus effort, will multiply it exceedingly, and with it supply grave needs of the household of the Lord. There is nothing lost of anything which is committed to the hands of the careful housewife of Nazareth.

But if, on the other hand, the legionary's contribution falls meanly short of what might reasonably be required from him, then Mary's hands are held from giving munificently. The compact of common goods with Mary, so full of unique possibilities, is set aside by legionary negligence. O what sad loss to souls and to the legionary himself thus to be left on his own resources!

It is useless, therefore, for the legionary to justify insufficient effort or slovenly methods by alleging that he relies on Mary altogether. Surely that sort of reliance, which enabled him to shrink from reasonable endeavour on his own part, would be a weak, ignoble thing. He seeks to transfer to Mary's shoulders a burden which his own are adequate to bear. Would any common knight of chivalry serve his fair lady so strangely!

So just as if nothing had been said on this subject, let this root principle of the legionary alliance with Mary be stated once again. The legionary must give to the utmost of his capacity. Mary's part is not that of supplying what the legionary refuses to give. It would not be proper for her to relieve her legionary from the effort, method, patience, thought, which he can provide, and which is due by him to the treasury of God.

Mary desires to give profusely, but she cannot do so except to the generous soul. Therefore, desirous that her legionary children will draw deeply from her immensity, she anxiously

appeals to them, in her Son's own words, for a service "with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength." (Mk 12:30)

The legionary must only look to Mary to supplement, to purify, to perfect, to supernaturalise the natural, to enable weak human effort to achieve what is impossible to it. But these are mighty things. They can mean that mountains will be torn from their roots and hurled into the sea, and the land be made plain, and the paths straightened to lead on to the Kingdom of God.

"We are all unprofitable servants, but we serve a Master who is absolutely economical, who lets nothing go to waste, not a drop of the sweat of our brow, any more than a drop of his heavenly dew. I know not what fate awaits this book; whether I shall finish it; or whether I shall reach even the end of the page that lies beneath my pen. But I know enough to cause me to throw into it the remnant, be it great or small, of my strength and of my days." (Blessed Frederick Ozanam)

## 5. LEGIONARIES SHOULD UNDERTAKE DE MONTFORT'S TRUE DEVOTION TO MARY

It is desirable that the practice of the legionary devotion to Mary should be rounded off and given the distinctive character which has been taught by St. Louis-Marie de Montfort under the titles of "The True Devotion" or the "Slavery of Mary", and which is enshrined in his two books, *True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin* and the *Secret of Mary*. (see appendix 5)

That Devotion requires the formal entry into a compact with Mary, whereby one gives to her one's whole self, with all its thoughts and deeds and possessions, both spiritual and temporal, past, present, and future, without the reservation of the smallest part or slightest little thing. In a word, the giver places himself in a condition equivalent to that of a slave possessing nothing of his own, and wholly dependent on, and utterly at the disposal of Mary.

But the earthly slave is far freer than the slave of Mary. The former remains master of his thoughts and inner life, and thus may be free in everything that matters to him. But the surrender to Mary bears with it everything: each thought, the

movements of the soul, the hidden riches, the inmost self. All – on to the final breath – is committed to her that she may expend it all for God. It is a sort of martyrdom, the sacrifice of self to God, with Mary as the altar of that sacrifice. How conformed, indeed, to the sacrifice of Christ himself, which likewise began in Mary's bosom, was publicly confirmed in the arms of Mary uplifted in the presentation, embraced every moment of his life, and was consummated on Calvary on the cross of Mary's heart.

The True Devotion is inaugurated by a formal Act of Consecration, but it consists principally in the subsequent living of that Consecration. The True Devotion must represent not an act but a state. Unless Mary takes possession of all the life, and not merely of minutes and hours of that life, the Act of Consecration – even though frequently repeated – has but the value of a passing prayer. It is like a tree which has been planted, but which has never taken root.

But this does not mean that the mind has to remain ever fixed upon the Consecration. Just as one's physical life is governed by one's breathing or by the beating of one's heart, even though these operations are not consciously viewed, so it is with the True Devotion. Even though not adverted to, it works incessantly on the life of the soul. It suffices if the idea of Mary's ownership is now and then made vivid by deliberate thought, by acts and ejaculations; provided that the fact of one's dependence on her remains permanently acknowledged, always at least vaguely present to the mind, and put into force in a general way in all the circumstances of one's life.

If there is a warmth in all this, it can be a help. But if not, it does not affect the value of the Devotion. Oftentimes, in fact, warmth makes things soft and not dependable.

Mark this well: the True Devotion does not depend on fervour or emotions of any kind. Like every lofty edifice, it may at times burn in sunshine, while its deep foundations are cold like the rock they rest on.

Reason is commonly cold. The best resolve may be icy. Faith itself can be chill as a diamond. Yet these are the foundations of the True Devotion. Set in them, the latter will abide; and the frost and the storm, which cause mountains to crumble, will only leave it the stronger.

The graces which have attended the practice of the True

Devotion, and the position it has attained in the devotional life of the Church, would reasonably appear to indicate that it represents an authentic message from Heaven, and this is precisely what St. Louis-Marie de Montfort claimed it to be. He attached to it immense promises, and he asserted most positively that those promises would be fulfilled if the conditions which govern them are fulfilled.

And as to the everyday experience: speak to those whose practice of the Devotion is more than a surface affair, and see with what complete conviction they speak of what it has done for them. Ask them if they may not be the victims of their feelings or imagination. Always they will declare that there is no question of it; the fruits have been too evident to admit of their being deceived.

If the sum of the experiences of those who teach, and understand, and practise the True Devotion is of value, it seems unquestionable that it deepens the interior life, sealing it with the special character of unselfishness and purity of intention. There is a sense of guidance and protection: a joyful certainty that now one's life is being employed to the best advantage. There is a supernatural outlook, a definite courage, a firmer faith, which make one a mainstay of any enterprise. There is a tenderness and a wisdom which keep strength in its proper place. There is, too, the protectress of them all, a sweet humility. Graces come which one cannot but realise are out of the common. Frequently, there is a call to a great work, which is patently beyond one's merits and natural capacity. Yet with it come such helps as enable that glorious but heavy burden to be borne without faltering. In a word, in exchange for the splendid sacrifice which is made in the True Devotion by selling oneself into this species of slavery, there is gained the hundredfold which is promised to those who despoil themselves for the greater glory of God. When we serve, we rule; when we give, we have; when we surrender ourselves we are victors.

Some persons appear to reduce their spiritual life very simply to a matter of selfish gain or loss. These are disconcerted by the suggestion that they should abandon their treasures even to the Mother of our souls. Such as the following is heard: "If I give everything to Mary, will I not at the hour of my departure from this life stand empty-handed

before my Judge, and therefore perhaps have to go for a vast time into Purgatory?" To this, a commentator quaintly answers: "No, not at all, since Mary is present at the Judgment!" The thought contained in this remark is profound. But the objection to making the Consecration is usually due less to a purely selfish outlook than to perplexity. There is difficulty in understanding how those things for which one is bound in duty to pray, such as one's family, one's friends, one's country, the Pope, etc., will fare if one makes the unreserved gift of one's spiritual treasures. Let all these misgivings be put aside, and let the Consecration be boldly made. Everything is safe with Our Lady. She is the guardian of the treasures of God himself. She is capable of being the guardian of the concerns of those who place their trust in her. So, together with the assets of your life, cast all its liabilities – its obligations and duties – into that great sublime heart of hers. In her relations with you, she acts in a manner as if she had no other child but you. Your salvation, your sanctification, your multiple needs are peremptorily present to her. When you pray for her intentions, you yourself are her first intention.

But here, where one is being urged to make sacrifice, is not the place to seek to prove that there is no loss whatever in the transaction. For to prove this would sap the very foundations of the offering and deprive it of the character of sacrifice on which its value depends. It will suffice to recall that once upon a time a multitude of ten or twelve thousand were in a desert, and were hungry. (Jn 6:1-14) In all that number only one person had brought food with him. What he possessed amounted to five loaves and two fishes and he was asked to give them up for the common good; and he did so with willingness. Then those few loaves and fishes were blessed and broken and distributed to the multitude. And in the end all that immense throng did eat, until they could eat no more; and among them he who had given the original seven items of food. And yet what remained over filled twelve baskets, full and to overflowing! Now supposing that individual had said: "What good will these few loaves and fishes be to so great a multitude? Besides, I require them for the members of my family here with me and oppressed by hunger. I cannot give." But no! He gave and he and his people received far more from the miraculous repast than they had contributed to it. And

no doubt they had a form of claim to the twelve basketfuls, if they desired to assert it.

Such is always the way of Jesus and Mary with the princely soul which gives its possessions without reserve or stipulation. The gift avails to satisfy the wants of a vast throng. Yet, one's own needs and intentions, which had appeared to suffer, are filled to overflowing and still the Divine bounty lies scattered about.

Let us, then, hasten to Mary with our poor loaves and fishes, and press them into her arms, so that Jesus and she may multiply them to feed the souls of the millions hungering in the arid desert of this world.

The form of one's ordinary prayers and actions need not be changed as a result of the making of the Consecration. The customary paths of life may be pursued, and one may continue to pray for one's usual intentions and for all special purposes, but subject in future to Mary's good pleasure.

"Mary shows us her Divine Son and addresses to us the same invitation that she did of old to the serving men at Cana: 'Whatsoever he shall say to you, do ye.' (Jn 2:5) If at her command we pour into the vessels of Charity and Sacrifice the tasteless water of the thousand details of our everyday actions, the miracle of Cana is renewed. The water is changed into a delicious wine, that is to say, into choicest graces for ourselves and for others." (Cousin)

## 7

# THE LEGIONARY AND THE HOLY TRINITY

It is significant that the first corporate act of the Legion of Mary was to address itself to the Holy Spirit by his Invocation and Prayer, then proceeding by the rosary to Mary and her Son.

Similarly significant is the fact that when the vexillum was designed some years later, the same note was unexpectedly struck. The Holy Spirit proved to be the predominant feature

of that emblem. This was strange, for that design was the product of artistic and not of theological thinking. A non-religious emblem, that is, the Standard of the Roman Legion, had been taken and adapted to the purposes of the Marian Legion. The Dove entered in by mode of substitution for the Eagle; and Our Lady's image was in substitution for the image of the Emperor or Consul. Yet the final result portrayed the Holy Spirit as using Mary as the channel to the world of his life-giving influences, and as having taken possession of the Legion.

And later, when the Tessera picture was painted, it illustrated the same devotional position: the Holy Spirit broods over the Legion. By his power the undying warfare accomplishes itself: the Virgin crushes the head of the serpent: her battalions advance to their foretold victory over the adverse forces.

It is an additional picturesque circumstance that the colour of the Legion is red, and not, as might be expected, blue. This was determined in connection with the settling of a minor detail, that is the colour of Our Lady's halo in the vexillum and in the Tessera picture. It was felt that Legion symbolism required that Our Lady be shown as full of the Holy Spirit, and that this should be denoted by making her halo of his colour. This drew with it the further thought that the Legion's colour should be red. The same note is struck in the Tessera picture, which depicts Our Lady as the biblical Pillar of Fire, all luminous and burning with the Holy Spirit.

So, when the Legion Promise was composed, it was consistent – though initially causing some surprise – that it should be directed to the Holy Spirit and not to the Queen of the Legion. Again that vital note is struck: it is always the Holy Spirit who regenerates the world – even to the bestowing of the smallest individual grace; and his agency is always Mary. By the operation of the Holy Spirit in Mary, the Eternal Son is made Man. Thereby, mankind is united to the Holy Trinity, and Mary herself is placed in a distinct, unique relation to each Divine Person. That three-fold place of Mary must at least be glimpsed by us, inasmuch as an understanding of the divine arrangements is the choicest sort of grace, one which is not intended to be out of our reach.

The saints are insistent on the necessity for thus distinguishing between the Three Divine Persons and for rendering

to each one of them an appropriate attention. The Athanasian Creed is mandatory and strangely menacing in regard to this requirement, which proceeds from the fact that the final purpose of Creation and of the Incarnation is the glorification of the Trinity.

But how can so incomprehensible a mystery be even dimly probed? Assuredly by divine enlightenment alone, but this grace can confidently be claimed from her to whom, for the first time in the world, the doctrine of the Trinity was definitely intimated. That occasion was the epochal moment of the Annunciation. Through its high angel the Holy Trinity thus declared Itself to Mary: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God." (Lk 1:35)

In this revelation all the Three Divine Persons are clearly specified: first, the Holy Spirit, to whom the operation of the Incarnation is attributed; second, the Most High, the Father of him who is to be born; third, that Child who "will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High." (Lk 1:32)

The contemplation of Mary's different relations to the Divine Persons helps towards our distinguishing as between the Three.

**To the Second Divine Person** Mary's relation is the one nearest to our comprehension, that of Mother. But her motherhood is of a closeness, a permanency, and a quality infinitely surpassing the normal human relationship. In the case of Jesus and Mary the union of souls was primary, and of flesh secondary; so that even when separation of flesh occurred at birth, their union was not interrupted but went on into further incomprehensible degrees of intensity and association – such that Mary can be declared by the Church to be not only the "helpmate" of that Second Divine Person – Co-Redemptress in salvation: Mediatrix in grace – but actually "like unto Him."

**Of the Holy Spirit**, Mary is commonly called the temple or the sanctuary, but these terms are insufficiently expressive of the reality, which is that he has so united her to himself as to make her the next thing in dignity to himself. Mary has

been so taken up into the Holy Spirit, made one with him, animated by him, that he is as her very soul. She is no mere instrument or channel of his activity; she is an intelligent, conscious co-operator with him to such degree that when she acts, it is also he who acts; and that if her intervention be not accepted, neither is his.

The Holy Spirit is Love, Beauty, Power, Wisdom, Purity, and all else that is of God. If he descend in plentitude, every need can be met, and the most grievous problem can be brought into conformity with the Divine Will. The man who thus makes the Holy Spirit his helper (Ps 77) enters into the tide of omnipotence. If one of the conditions for so attracting him is the understanding of Our Lady's relation to him, another vital condition is that we appreciate the Holy Spirit himself as a real, distinct, Divine Person with his appropriate mission in regard to us. This appreciation of him will not be maintained except there be a reasonably frequent turning of the mind to him. By including just that glance in his direction, every devotion to the Blessed Virgin can be made a wide-open way to the Holy Spirit. Especially can legionaries so utilise the rosary. Not only does the rosary form a prime devotion to the Holy Spirit by reason of its being the chief prayer to Our Lady, but, as well, its contents, the twenty mysteries, celebrate the principal interventions of the Holy Spirit in the drama of redemption.

**Mary's relation to the Eternal Father** is usually defined as that of Daughter. This title is intended to designate: (a) her position as "the first of all creatures, the most acceptable child of God, the nearest and dearest to him" (St. John Henry Newman); (b) the fulness of her union with Jesus Christ which makes her enter into new relations to the Father,\* thereby entitling her to be mystically styled the Daughter of the Father; (c) the pre-eminent resemblance which she bears to the Father, which has fitted her to pour out into the world the everlasting light which issues from that loving Father.

But that title of "Daughter" may not sufficiently bring home to us the influence which her relation to the Father exerts on us who are his children and her children. "He has communicated to her his fruitfulness as far as a mere creature

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\* "As Mother of God, Mary contracts a certain affinity with the Father." (Lépicier)

was capable of it, in order that he might give her the power to produce his Son and all the members of his Mystical Body.” (St. Louis-Marie de Montfort) Her relation to the Father is a fundamental, ever-present element in the flow of life to every soul. It is the requirement of God that what he gives to man must be reflected in appreciation and co-operation. Therefore, that life-giving union must be made a subject of our thoughts, and so it is suggested that the Pater Noster, which is often on the lips of legionaries, should take particular account of that intention. This prayer was composed by Jesus Christ our Lord, and therefore it asks for the right things in the ideal way. If recited with the right advertence and in the spirit of the Catholic Church, it must accomplish perfectly its purpose of glorifying the Eternal Father and of acknowledging his everflowing gift to us through Mary.

“Let us recall here, as a proof of the dependence we ought to have on Our Blessed Lady, the example which the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit give of this dependence. The Father has not given and does not give his Son except by her. He has no children but by her, and communicates no graces but by her. God the Son has not been formed for the whole world in general except by her; and he is not daily formed and engendered except by her in union with the Holy Spirit; neither does he communicate his merits and his virtues except by her. The Holy Spirit has not formed Jesus Christ except by her, neither does he form the members of our Lord’s Mystical Body except by her; and through her alone does he dispense his favours and his gifts. After so many and such pressing examples of the Most Holy Trinity, can we without an extreme blindness dispense ourselves from Mary, and not consecrate ourselves to her, and depend on her?” (St. Louis-Marie de Montfort: *Treatise on True Devotion*, Par. 140)

## 8

# THE LEGIONARY AND THE EUCHARIST

### 1. HOLY MASS

Already it has been stressed that the holiness of the member is of fundamental importance for the Legion. It is moreover the primary means of action, for only in the

measure that the legionary possesses grace can he be the channel of it to others. Hence it is that the legionary begins his membership by a request to be filled, through Mary, with the Holy Spirit and to be used as an instrument of his power which is to renew the face of the earth.

The graces, which are thus asked for, flow one and all from the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on Calvary. By means of the Mass, the Sacrifice of the Cross is continued among men. The Mass is not a mere symbolic representation of the past, but places really and actually present in our midst that supreme action which our Lord consummated on Calvary, and which redeemed the world. The cross was not worth more than the Mass, because the two are but one and the selfsame Sacrifice, time and space being pushed aside by the hand of omnipotence. The priest and the victim are the same, the setting alone is different. The Mass contains everything that Christ offered to God, and all that he acquired for men; and the offerings of those who assist at Mass become one with the great offering of Christ.

Therefore, to the Mass must the legionary have recourse if a plenteous sharing in the gifts of redemption is desired for oneself and for others. By reason of the fact that opportunities and circumstances differ so much, the Legion does not impose any obligation on its members in this matter. Nevertheless, solicitous for them and their work, it urges and implores each one of them to assist frequently – every day if at all possible – at Mass, and at that Mass to receive Holy Communion.

Legionaries perform their actions in union with Mary. Especially does this apply to their taking part in the Eucharistic celebration.

The Mass, as we know, is made up of two principal parts – the liturgy of the Word and the liturgy of the Eucharist. It is important to bear in mind that these two parts are so closely connected with each other that they constitute one single act of worship. (SC 56) For this reason the faithful should participate in the whole of the Mass where both the table of God's Word and the table of Christ's Body are prepared, so that from them the faithful may be instructed and nourished. (SC 48, 51)

“In the Sacrifice of the Mass we are not merely reminded of the sacrifice of the cross in a symbolical form. On the contrary, the sacrifice of Calvary, as a great supra-temporal reality, enters into the

immediate present. Space and time are abolished. The same Jesus is here present who died on the cross. The whole congregation unites itself with his holy sacrificial will, and through Jesus present before it, consecrates itself to the heavenly Father as a living oblation. So holy Mass is a tremendously real experience, the experience of the reality of Golgotha. And a stream of sorrow and repentance, of love and devotion, of heroism and the spirit of sacrifice, flows out from the altar and passes through the praying congregation." (Karl Adam: *The Spirit of Catholicism*)

## 2. THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

The Mass is above all a celebration of faith, of that faith which is born in us and nourished through the hearing of the Word of God. We recall here the words of the General Instruction on the Missal (No. 9): "when the Scriptures are read in church, God Himself is speaking to his people, and Christ, present in his word, is proclaiming the Gospel. Hence the readings from God's word are among the most important elements in the liturgy, and all who are present should listen to them with *reverence*." Of great importance also is the homily. It is a necessary part of the Mass on Sundays and Holy days, while on other days it is desirable that there be a homily. By its means the homilist explains the sacred text in the light of the Church's teaching for the building up of the faith of those present.

As we participate in the celebration of the word, Our Lady is our model for she is "the attentive Virgin who receives the word of God with faith, that faith which in her case was the gateway and path to the divine motherhood". (MCul 17)

## 3. THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST IN UNION WITH MARY

Our Blessed Lord did not begin his work of redemption without the consent of Mary, solemnly asked and freely given. Likewise, he did not complete it on Calvary without her presence and her consent. "From this union of sufferings and of will between Mary and Christ, she merited to become most worthily the restorer of the lost world and the dispenser of all the graces Jesus purchased by his death and by his Blood." (AD 12) She stood by the cross of Jesus on Calvary,

representing all mankind there, and at each new Mass the offering of the Saviour is accomplished subject to the same conditions. Mary stands at the altar no less than she stood by the cross. She is there, as ever, co-operating with Jesus – the Woman, foretold from the beginning, crushing the serpent's head. A loving attention to her ought, therefore, to form part of every Mass rightly heard.

And also with Mary on Calvary were the representatives of a Legion, the Centurion and his men, who took a mournful part in the offering of the Victim, though indeed they did not know they were crucifying the Lord of Glory. (1 Cor 2:8) And, wonder of wonders, grace burst upon them! "Contemplate and see," says St. Bernard, "how piercing is the glance of faith. Consider attentively what lynx-eyes it possesses. On Calvary it enabled the Centurion to see life in death, and to recognise in a dying breath the sovereign Spirit." Looking upon their dead and disfigured victim, the legionaries proclaimed him to be the very Son of God. (Mt 27:54)

These fierce rude converts were the fruits, swift and unexpected, of Mary's prayers. They were strange children that the mother of men first received on Calvary; yet they must have ever made the name of legionary dear to her. So, who can doubt that when her own legionaries – united to her intention, part of her co-operation – come to the daily Mass, she will gather them to her, and give to them the "lynx-eyes" of faith and her own overflowing heart, so that they will enter most intimately (and with surpassing profit) into that continuation of the sublime sacrifice of Calvary.

When they see the Son of God lifted up, they will unite themselves to him to be but a single victim, for the Mass is their sacrifice as well as his sacrifice. Then they should receive his adorable Body; for this partaking, with the priest, in the flesh of the immolated Victim is essential, if the fullness of the fruit of the Divine Sacrifice is to be gathered.

They will understand the essential part of Mary, the New Eve, in those holy mysteries – such a part that "when her beloved Son was consummating the redemption of mankind on the altar of the cross, she stood at his side, suffering and redeeming with him." (Pope Pius XI) And when they come away, Mary will be with her legionaries, giving them a share and part in her administration of graces, so that on each and

all of those they meet and work for are lavished the infinite treasures of redemption.

“Her motherhood is particularly noted and experienced by the Christian people at the *Sacred Banquet* – the liturgical celebration of the mystery of the Redemption – at which Christ, his *true body born of the Virgin Mary*, becomes present.

The piety of the Christian people has always very rightly sensed a *profound link* between devotion to the Blessed Virgin and worship of the Eucharist: this is a fact that can be seen in the liturgy of both the West and the East, in the traditions of the Religious Families, in the modern movements of spirituality, including those for youth, and in the pastoral practice of the Marian Shrines. *Mary guides the faithful to the Eucharist.*” (RMat 44)

#### 4. THE EUCHARIST OUR TREASURE

The Eucharist is the centre and source of grace: therefore, it must be the very keystone of the legionary scheme. The most ardent activity will accomplish nothing of value if it forgets for a moment that its main object is to establish the reign of the Eucharist in all hearts. For thereby is fulfilled the purpose for which Jesus came into the world. That purpose was to communicate himself to souls so that he might make them one with him. The means of that communication is chiefly the holy Eucharist. “I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live for ever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.” (Jn 6:51)

The Eucharist is the infinite good. For in that sacrament is Jesus himself, as much present as he was in his home at Nazareth or in the Upper Room at Jerusalem. The holy Eucharist is no mere symbol of him, or instrument of his power, but is Jesus Christ himself substantially. So that she, who had conceived him and nurtured him, “found again in the adorable host the blessed fruit of her womb, and renewed in her life of union with his Sacramental presence the happy days of Bethlehem and Nazareth.” (St. Peter Julian Eymard)

Many who think Jesus little better than an inspired man are found to yield him reverence and imitation. If they thought him to be more, they would render him more. What, therefore, should proceed from the household of the faith?

How inexcusable are those Catholics who believe, but do not practise that belief. That Jesus whom others admire, Catholics possess – ever living in the Eucharist. They have free access to him and can, and should, receive him even daily as the food of their souls.

Considering these things, one sees how sad it is that such a splendid heritage should be neglected; that persons having the faith of the Eucharist should nevertheless permit sin and thoughtlessness to deprive them of this vital need of their souls, which Our Lord had in mind for them from the first moment of his earthly existence. Even as a new-born babe in Bethlehem (which means the House of Bread), he lay on that straw of which he was the Divine Wheat: destined to be made into the heavenly bread which would make men one with him and with each other in his Mystical Body.

Mary is the mother of that Mystical Body. As she once anxiously attended to the wants of her Christ-child, so now she yearns to feed that Mystical Body, of which she is, no less, the Mother. How her heart is anguished at seeing that her babe, in his Mystical Body, is hungry – even starving – by reason of the fact that few are nourished as they should be with the Bread Divine, while many do not receive it at all. Let those, who aim to be associated to Mary in her maternal care of souls, share her maternal anguish, and strive, in union with her, to allay that hunger of the Body of Christ. Every avenue of legionary action must be availed of to awaken knowledge and love of the Blessed Sacrament and to dissipate the sin and indifference which keep men from it. Each Holy Communion brought about is truly an immeasurable gain. Through the individual soul, it nourishes the entire Mystical Body of Christ, and causes it to advance in wisdom and growth and grace with God and men. (Lk 2:52)

“This union of the Mother and the Son in the work of redemption reaches its climax on Calvary, where Christ “offered himself as the perfect sacrifice to God” (Heb 9:14) and where Mary stood by the cross. (cf. Jn 19:25) “suffering grievously with her only-begotten Son. There she united herself with a maternal heart to his sacrifice, and lovingly consented to the immolation of this victim which she herself had brought forth” and also was offering to the Eternal Father. To perpetuate down the centuries the Sacrifice of the Cross, the divine Saviour instituted the Eucharistic Sacrifice, the memorial of his death

and resurrection, and entrusted it to his spouse the Church, which, especially on Sundays, calls the faithful together to celebrate the Passover of the Lord until he comes again. This the Church does in union with the saints in heaven and in particular with the Blessed Virgin, whose burning charity and unshakeable faith she imitates." (MCul 20)

## 9

# THE LEGIONARY AND THE MYSTICAL BODY OF CHRIST

### 1. LEGIONARY SERVICE IS BASED ON THIS DOCTRINE

At the very first meeting of legionaries the supernatural character of the service, which they were undertaking, was stressed. Their approach to others was to be brimful of kindness, but their motive was not to be that merely natural one. In all those whom they served they were to see the Person of Jesus Christ himself. What they did to those others – even the weakest and lowest – they were to remember that they did it to Our Lord himself, according to his own words: "Truly, I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." (Mt 25:40)

As at the first meeting, so ever since. No effort has been spared to bring home to legionaries that this motive is to be the basis of their service, and likewise that the discipline and internal harmony of the Legion rest chiefly upon the same principle. In their officers and in each other they must recognise and reverence Christ himself. In order to ensure that this transforming truth will remain impressed on the minds of the members, it is incorporated in the Standing Instruction which is read monthly at the praesidium meeting. In addition, the Standing Instruction emphasises the other legionary principle that the work must be done in such a spirit of union with Mary that it is she, working through the legionary, who really performs it.

These principles, upon which the Legion system is built, are a consequence of the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ. This doctrine forms the main theme of the epistles of St. Paul. This is not surprising, for it was a declaration of that doctrine which converted him. There was light from heaven. The great persecutor of the Christians was thrown, blinded, to the ground. Then he heard those overwhelming words: "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" and St. Paul rejoined: "Who are you, Lord?" And Jesus replied: "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting." (Acts 9:4-5) What wonder that these words burnt themselves into the apostle's soul, so that he must always speak and write the truth which they expressed.

St. Paul describes the union which exists between Christ and the baptised as being like the union between the head and the other members of the human body. Each part has its own special purpose and work. Some parts are noble and some are less so; but all are dependent one upon the other, and the same life animates them all. All are put to loss by the failure of one, as all profit by the excellence of one.

The Church is the Mystical Body of Christ and his fullness. (Eph 1:22-23) Christ is its head, its chief, indispensable, and perfect part, from which all the other members of the body derive their powers, their very life. In Baptism we are attached to Christ by the most intimate ties imaginable. Realise, therefore, that mystical does not mean unreal. To use the vehement expression of Holy Scripture, "we are members of his body." (Eph 5:30) Sacred obligations of love and of service are set up between the members and the head, and between the members themselves. (1 Jn 4:15-21) The image of the body helps to a vivid realisation of those obligations, and this is half-way to the fulfilment of them.

This truth has been described as the central dogma of Christianity. For, in fact, all the supernatural life, all the graces conferred on man, are a fruit of the Redemption. The Redemption itself is based on the fact that Christ and the Church form together but a single mystical person, so that the satisfaction of Christ the head, the infinite merits of his Passion, belong to his members, who are all the faithful. This is the reason why Our Lord could suffer for man and expiate faults which He had not Himself committed. "Christ is the head of the church, the body of which he is the Saviour."

(Eph 5:23) The activity of the Mystical Body is the activity of Christ Himself. The faithful are incorporated into Him, and then live, suffer and die in Him, and in His resurrection rise again. Baptism only sanctifies because it establishes between Christ and the soul that vital connection by which the sanctity of the Head flows into its members. The other sacraments, and above all the Divine Eucharist, exist for the purpose of intensifying the union between the Mystical Body and its Head. In addition, that union is deepened by the operations of faith and charity, by the bonds of government and mutual service in the Church, by labour and suffering rightly submitted to, and generally by every act of the Christian life. Especially will all of these be effective when the soul acts in deliberate concert with Mary.

Mary forms an eminent bond of union, due to her position as mother of both Head and members. "We are members of His body", (Eph 5:30) and hence, with equal reality and fullness, children of Mary His mother. The sole purpose of Mary's existence is to conceive and bring forth the whole Christ, that is the Mystical Body with all its members perfect, and fitly joined together (Eph 4:15-16), and one with its Head, Jesus Christ. Mary accomplishes this in co-operation with, and by the power of, the Holy Spirit, who is the life and soul of the Mystical Body. It is in her bosom and subject to her maternal care that the soul grows up in Christ and comes to the age of His fullness. (Eph 4:13-15)

"In God's scheme of redemption, Mary plays a principal part, unlike any other. Among the members of the Mystical Body, she holds a special place of her own, the first after the Head. In the divine organism of the whole Christ, Mary performs a function which is intimately bound up with the life of the entire body. She is its Heart.... More commonly, the role of Mary in the Mystical Body is (following St. Bernard) likened to that of the neck, which joins the head to the rest of the body. This comparison emphasises fairly well the universal mediation of Mary between the Mystical Head and his members. However, the neck does not exemplify as effectively as the heart the idea of the all-important influence exercised by Mary, and of her power, second only to that of God in the workings of the supernatural life. For the neck is no more than a connecting link. It plays no part in the initiating or influencing of life. The heart, on the contrary, is a reservoir of life which first receives into itself the richness which it has then to distribute to the whole body." (Mura: *Le Corps Mystique du Christ*)

## 2. MARY AND THE MYSTICAL BODY

The various offices which Mary fulfilled, of nourishing, tending, and loving the actual body of her Divine Son, are still her offices in regard to each member of the Mystical Body, the least brethren as well as the most honourable. So that, when "the members may have the same care for one another" (1 Cor 12:25), they do not act independently of Mary, even when, through thoughtlessness or ignorance, they fail to recognise her presence. They but join their efforts to Mary's efforts. It is already her work, and she has been exquisitely busied on it from the time of the Annunciation to this very day. Hence it is that legionaries do not really bring Mary to help them in their service of the other members of the Mystical Body. She it is who summons them to assist her. As it is her special and proper work, no one is able to take part in it save by her gracious permission. Let those who attempt to serve their neighbour, and who yet narrow down the place and privileges of Mary, give a thought to the logical consequence of the doctrine of the Mystical Body. Still more, this doctrine has its lesson for those who profess to receive the scriptures, but who at the same time ignore or decry the Mother of God. Let such persons recall that Christ loved his Mother and was subject to her (Lk 2:51), and that his example obliges the members of his Mystical Body. "Honour ... your mother." (Ex 20:12) By divine command, they must render her a filial love. All generations are bound to bless that mother. (Lk 1:48)

As no one can even attempt the service of his neighbour other than in the company of Mary, similarly no one can discharge this duty worthily except by entering to some degree into the intentions of Mary. It follows that the more close the union with Mary, the more perfectly is fulfilled the divine precept of loving God and serving one's neighbour. (1 Jn 4:19-21)

The special function of legionaries in the Mystical Body is to guide, console, and enlighten others. That function cannot be adequately discharged without a realisation of the position of the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ. The place and privileges of the Church, its unity, authority, growth, sufferings, miracles, triumphs, its conferring of grace and

forgiveness of sin, can only be appreciated by understanding that Christ lives in the Church and through it continues his mission. The Church reproduces the life of Christ and all the phases of his life.

Each member of the Church is summoned by Christ its head to play his part in the work of the Mystical Body. ““Jesus Christ” – we read in the Constitution *Lumen Gentium* – “by communicating his spirit to his brothers and sisters, called together from all peoples, made them mystically into his own body. In that body the life of Christ is communicated to those who believe.... As all the members of the human body, though they are many form one body, so also are the Faithful in Christ. (cf 1 Cor 12:12) Also in the building up of Christ’s body there is a diversity of members and functions” ... The spirit of the Lord gives a vast variety of charisms inviting people to assume different ministries and forms of service....” (CL 20).

To appreciate what form of service ought to characterise legionaries in the life of the Mystical Body we look to Our Lady. She has been described as its very heart. Her role, like that of the heart in the human body is to send the blood of Christ coursing through the veins and arteries of the Mystical Body, bringing life and growth with it. It is above all a work of love. Legionaries then, as they carry out their apostolate in union with Mary are called to be one with her in her vital role as the heart of the Mystical Body.

“The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I have no need of you’, nor again the head to the feet, ‘I have no need of you’.” (1 Cor 12:21) Out of this let the legionary learn the importance of his share in the apostolate. Not only is he one body with Christ and dependent upon Christ, but likewise Christ, who is the Head, is in a true sense dependent on him; so that even Christ, our Lord, must say to the legionary: “I need your help in my work of saving and sanctifying souls.” It is to this dependence of the head on the body that St. Paul refers when he speaks of filling up in his own flesh what is wanting of the sufferings of Christ. (Col 1:24) This striking expression does not suggest that Christ’s work was in any way imperfect, but simply emphasises the principle that each member of the body must give what it can give towards the working out of its own salvation and that of others. (Phil 2:12)

Let this teach the legionary his sublime vocation in the Mystical Body. It is to supply what is wanting to the mission of our Lord. What an inspiring thought for the legionary: that Christ stands in need of him to bring light and hope to those in darkness, consolation to those who are afflicted, life to those who are dead in sin. It goes without saying, that it must be the legionary's place and duty to imitate in a quite especial manner the surpassing love and obedience which Christ the head gave his Mother, and which the Mystical Body must reproduce.

"As St. Paul assures us that he fills up the sufferings of Christ, so we may say in truth that a true Christian, who is a member of Jesus Christ and united with him by grace, continues and carries to completion, by every action performed in the spirit of Jesus Christ, the actions which Jesus Christ himself performed during the time of his peaceful life on earth. So that when a Christian prays, he continues the prayer of Jesus during his life on earth. When he works, he makes up what was wanting to the life and conversation of Jesus. We must be like so many Christs upon earth, continuing his life and his actions, doing and suffering all in the spirit of Jesus, that is to say in holy and divine dispositions." (St. John Eudes: Kingdom of Jesus)

### 3. SUFFERING IN THE MYSTICAL BODY

The mission of the legionaries brings them into close touch with humanity, and especially with suffering humanity. Therefore, they should possess insight into what the world insists on calling the problem of suffering. There is not one who does not bear through life a weight of woe. Almost all rebel against it. They seek to cast it from them, and if this be impossible, they lie down beneath it. Thus are frustrated the designs of redemption which require that suffering must have its place in every fruitful life, just as in weaving the woof must cross and complement the warp. While seeming to cross and thwart the course of man's life, suffering in reality gives that life its completeness. For, as holy scripture teaches us in every page, God "has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for him as well." (Phil 1:29) and again: "If we have died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him." (2 Tim 2:11-12)

That moment of our death is represented by a cross, all dripping with blood, upon which our head has just finished

his work. At the foot of the cross stands a figure, so desolate that it seems impossible for her to continue to live. That woman is the mother alike of the Redeemer and of the redeemed. It was first from her veins that the blood was drawn which now lies scattered cheaply about, but which has ransomed the world. That Precious Blood will henceforth flow through the Mystical Body, forcing life, so to speak, into every crevice of it. But all the consequences of this flowing must be understood, so that they can be applied. That precious stream brings to the soul the likeness of Christ; but it is the Christ complete: not merely the Christ of Bethlehem and Thabor – the Christ of joy and glory, but as well the Christ of pain and sacrifice – the Christ of Calvary.

Every Christian should be made to realise that he cannot pick and choose in Christ. Mary realised this fully even in the joyful Annunciation. She knew that she was not invited to become only a Mother of Joys, but the Woman of Sorrows as well. But she had always given herself utterly to God, and now she received him completely. With full knowledge, she welcomed that infant life with all it stood for. She was no less willing to endure anguish with him than she was to taste bliss with him. In that moment, those Sacred Hearts entered into a union so close as to approach identity. Henceforth, they will beat together in and for the Mystical Body. Thereby Mary has become the Mediatrix of all Graces, the Spiritual Vessel which receives and gives our Lord's Most Precious Blood. As it was with Mary, so shall it be with all her children. The degree of man's utility to God will always be the closeness of his union with the Sacred Heart, whence he can draw deeply of the Precious Blood to bestow it on other souls. But that union with the heart and blood of Christ is not to be found in a phase of his life, but in the life entire. It is as futile, as it is unworthy, to welcome the King of Glory and to repulse the Man of Sorrows, for the two are but the one Christ. He who will not walk with the Man of Sorrows has no part in his mission to souls, nor share in its sequel of glory.

It follows therefore that suffering is always a grace. When it is not to bestow healing, it is to confer power. It is never merely a punishment for sin. "Understand," says St. Augustine, "that the affliction of mankind is no penal law, for suffering is medicinal in its character." And on the other

hand, the passion of our Lord overflows, as an inestimable privilege, into the bodies of the sinless and the saintly in order to conform them ever more perfectly to His own likeness. This interchange and blending of sufferings is the basis of all mortification and reparation.

A simple comparison with the circulation of blood through the human body will make this place and purpose of suffering more vivid. Consider the hand. The pulse which throbs in it is the beat of the heart. The warm blood from the heart courses through it. That hand is one with the body of which it forms part. If the hand grows cold, the veins contract and the flow of the blood is impeded. As it grows colder, the flow diminishes. If the chill is such that the movement of blood ceases, frost-bite sets in, the tissues begin to die, the hand becomes lifeless and useless. It is as a dead hand, and if left in that condition, gangrene will result. Those stages of cold illustrate the possible states of members of the Mystical Body. These may become so unreceptive of the Precious Blood flowing through that body that they are in danger of dying, like the gangrenous limb which must be cut off. It is plain what must be done in the case of a frozen limb. The blood must be induced to circulate again in order to restore it to life. The forcing of the blood through the shrunken arteries and veins is a painful process; yet that pain is a joyful sign. The majority of practising Catholics are as limbs not actually frost-bitten. Scarcely even in their self-satisfaction, do they regard themselves as chilled. Yet they are not receiving the Precious Blood to the degree that our Lord wills for them. So, he must force his life upon them. The movement of his blood, dilating their reluctant veins, gives pain; and this makes the sorrows of life. Yet, when this idea of suffering is grasped, should it not turn sorrow into joy? The sense of suffering becomes the sense of Christ's close presence.

"Jesus Christ has suffered all that he had to suffer. No more is anything wanting to the measure of his sufferings. His Passion then is finished? Yes: in the head; but there remains the Passion of his body. With good reason therefore does Christ, still suffering in his Body, desire to see us share in his expiation. Our very union with him demands that we should do so. For as we are the Body of Christ and members, one of the other, all that the head suffers, the members ought to endure with it." (St. Augustine)

# 10

## THE LEGION APOSTOLATE

### 1. ITS DIGNITY

To portray the dignity of the apostolate to which the Legion summons its members, and its importance to the Church, one can find no more emphatic words than the following authoritative declarations:

“From the fact of their union with Christ the head, flows the laymen’s right and duty to be apostles. Inserted as they are in the Mystical Body of Christ by baptism and strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit in confirmation, it is by the Lord himself that they are assigned to the apostolate. If they are consecrated a kingly priesthood and a holy nation (cf 1 Pet 2:4-10), it is in order that they may in all their actions offer spiritual sacrifices and bear witness to Christ all the world over. Charity, which is, as it were, the soul of the whole apostolate, is given to them and nourished in them by the sacraments, the Eucharist above all.” (AA 3)

“Pope Pius XII once stated: ‘The faithful, more precisely the lay faithful, find themselves on the front lines of the Church’s life; for them the Church is the animating principle for human society. Therefore, they in particular, ought to have an ever-clearer consciousness *not only of belonging to the Church, but of being the Church*, that is to say, the community of the faithful on earth under the leadership of the Pope, the head of all, and of the bishops in communion with him. These *are the Church ...*’” (CL 9).

“Mary exercises over the human race a moral influence which we cannot better determine than by comparing it to those physical forces of attraction, affinity and cohesion, which in the order of nature unite together bodies and the parts of which they are composed.... We believe we have shown that Mary took part in all the great movements which constitute the life of societies and their real civilisation.” (Petitalot)

### 2. AN APOSTOLIC LAITY ESSENTIAL

The proposition is ventured upon that the health of a Catholic community depends upon the presence of a large apostolic class – belonging to the laity, yet sharing the outlook of the priest, and providing points of contact with the people

and intimacy of control. Security depends on this complete union of priest and people.

But the essential idea of apostleship is an intense interest in the welfare and the work of the Church, and such interest there can hardly be without some feeling of participation. Thus the apostolic organisation is a mould which produces apostles.

Wherever these qualities of apostleship are not sedulously cultivated, it is certain that the next generation will have a serious problem to face in the lack of all real interest in the Church, and of all sense of responsibility. Out of this infantile Catholicism what good can come? And where is its safety but in a complete calm? History teaches that such a nerveless flock is readily stampeded even unto the destruction of its own pastors, or else, that it is devoured by the first fierce pack of wolves which comes upon the scene. St. John Henry Newman states it as a principle that "in all times the laity have been the measure of the Catholic spirit."

"The great function of the Legion of Mary is to develop the sense of a lay vocation. There is a danger that we lay folk may identify the Church with the clergy and religious, to whom God has certainly given what we too exclusively call a vocation. We are unconsciously tempted to regard the rest of us as an anonymous crowd who have a chance of being saved if we perform the prescribed minimum. We forget that our Lord calls his own sheep by name (Jn 10:3); that – in the words of St. Paul (Gal 2:20), who, like us, was not physically present on Calvary – 'the Son of God loved *me* and gave himself up for *me*'. Each of us, even if he be only a village carpenter as was Jesus himself or a humble housekeeper like his mother, has a vocation, is called individually by God to give him his or her love and service, to do a particular work which others may indeed surpass but cannot replace. No one but myself can give *my* heart to God or do *my* work. It is precisely this personal sense of religion which the Legion fosters. A member is no longer content to be passive or perfunctory; he or she has something to be and to do for God; religion is no longer a side-issue, it becomes the inspiration of one's life, however humanly commonplace. And this conviction of personal vocation inevitably creates an apostolic spirit, the desire to carry on Christ's work, to be another Christ, to serve him in the least of his brethren. Thus the Legion is the lay substitute for a religious order, the translation of the Christian idea of perfection into the lives of lay folk, the extension of Christ's Kingdom into the secular world of to-day." (Mgr. Alfred O'Railly)

### 3. THE LEGION AND THE LAY APOSTOLATE

Like many another great principle, the apostolate is in itself something cold and abstract. Hence there is a very real danger that it may not exercise an appeal, so that the laity does not respond to the high destiny which has been held out to it, and, worse still, may even be deemed to be incapable of responding. The disastrous sequel would be that the effort to make the laity play its proper and indispensable part in the battle of the Church would be abandoned.

But, in the words of one qualified to judge, Cardinal Riberi, formerly Apostolic Delegate to missionary Africa and later Internuncio to China: **“The Legion of Mary is apostolic duty decked out in attractive and alluring form; throbbing with life so that it wins all to it; undertaken in the manner stipulated by Pope Pius XI, that is, in dependence on the Virgin Mother of God; insistent on quality as the foundation of membership and even as the key to numerical strength; safeguarded by plenteous prayer and self-sacrifice, by exact system, and by complete co-operation with the priest. The Legion of Mary is a miracle of these modern times.”**

To the priest the Legion gives the respect and obedience which are owing to lawful superiors, yet more than this. Its apostolate is built upon the fact that the main channels of grace are the Mass and the sacramental system, of which the priest is the essential minister. All the strivings and expedients of that apostolate must have in view this great end: the bringing of the divinely-appointed nourishment to the multitude, sick and hungering. It follows that a first principle of legionary action must be the bringing of the priest to the people, not always in person – for that may be impossible – but everywhere in influence and in understanding.

This is the essential idea of the Legion apostolate. Lay it will be in bulk of membership, but working in inseparable union with the priests, and under their captancy, and with absolute identity of interests. It will ardently seek to supplement their efforts, and to widen their place in the lives of men, so that men, receiving them, shall receive him who sent them.

“Very truly, I tell you, whoever receives one whom I send receives me; and whoever receives me receives him who sent me.” (Jn 13:20)

#### 4. THE PRIEST AND THE LEGION

The idea of the priest, with a devoted band pressing round him to share his labours follows the example of our Lord whose preparation for the conversion of the world was to surround himself with his chosen ones, whom he tutored and filled with his own spirit.

That divine lesson was learned and applied by the apostles, who called on all to help them in the winning of souls. As has been beautifully said (Cardinal Pizzardo), it may well be that the strangers from Rome (Acts 2:10), who heard the preaching of the apostles on the day of Pentecost, were the first to announce Jesus Christ in Rome, thus sowing the seeds of the Mother Church which St. Peter and St. Paul soon after established officially. "What would the twelve have done, lost in the immensity of the world, if they had not gathered around them men and women, the old and young, saying: 'We carry with us the treasure of heaven. Help to scatter it abroad'." (Pope Pius XI)

The words of one Pontiff have been quoted. Let those of another be added to demonstrate finally that the example of our Lord and his apostles in relation to the conversion of the world is divinely meant to form pattern for **every priest** in relation to his own little world, be it parish, or district, or special work: –

"Happening to be one day among a group of Cardinals, the Holy Father (St. Pius X) said to them: – 'What is the thing most necessary at the present time to save society?' 'Build Catholic schools,' said one. 'No.' 'Multiply churches', replied another. 'No again.' 'Increase the recruiting of the clergy' said a third. 'No, no,' replied the Pope. 'What is most necessary at the present time is to have in each parish a group of laymen at the same time virtuous, enlightened, determined, and really apostolic.' This holy Pope, at the end of his life, counted for the salvation of the world on the training, by the zeal of the clergy, of Catholics devoting themselves to the apostolate by word and action, but above all, by example. In the dioceses in which, before being Pope, he had exercised the ministry, he attached less importance to the census of parishioners than to the list of Catholics capable of radiating an apostolate. He considered that in any class whatever, chosen ones could be

formed. And so he classified his priests according to the results which their zeal and their abilities had obtained on this point." (Chautard: *The Soul of the Apostolate*, 4, l.f.)

"The pastor's task is not limited to individual care of the faithful. It extends by right also to the formation of a genuine Christian community. But if a community spirit is to be properly cultivated, it must embrace not only the local church but the universal Church. A local community ought not merely to promote the care of the faithful within itself, but should be imbued with the missionary spirit and smooth the path to Christ for all men. But it must regard as its special charge those under instruction and the newly converted who are gradually educated in knowing and living the Christian life." (PO 6)

"God-made-Man found it necessary to leave his Mystical Body upon earth. Otherwise, his work would have ended on Calvary. His death would have merited salvation for the human race, but how many men could have gained heaven without the Church to bring them life from the cross? Christ identifies himself with the priest in a special way. The priest is like a supplementary heart pumping on its way the supernatural life-blood to souls. He is an essential part of the spiritual transmission system in Christ's Body. If he fails, the system is blocked, and those who depend upon him do not receive the life that Christ intends them to receive. The priest should be to his people what Christ is to the Church, within due limits. Christ's members are an extension of himself, not merely employees, followers, adherents, supporters. They have his life. They share his activity. They should have his outlook. Priests must be one with Christ in every possible respect. Christ found it necessary to form a spiritual body for himself; the priest should do the same. He should form for himself members who are one with him. Unless a priest has living members, formed by him, united with him, his work will be reduced to negligible dimensions. He will be isolated and helpless. "The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you', nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you'." (1 Cor 12:21)

So that if Christ has made the Mystical Body the principle of his way, his truth, his life to souls, this same order precisely operates through the new Christ, the priest. If he does not apply his function to a degree which is veritably that full building of the Mystical Body referred to in the Epistle to the Ephesians (4:12, a text usually translated by 'edification of the faithful'), it will be in diminished measure that the divine life will enter souls and then issue fruitfully from them.

Moreover, the priest himself will be left deprived by virtue of the fact that though it is the mission of the head to minister life to the body, it is no less a fact that the head lives by the life of the body, increasing with its increase, sharing in its weakness if it wanes.

The priest who does not comprehend this law of priestly mission will go through life realising only a fraction of his power, whereas it is his true destiny in Christ to measure the horizons." (Canon F. J. Ripley)

### 5. THE LEGION IN THE PARISH

"In the present circumstances the lay faithful have the ability to do very much and, therefore, ought to do very much towards the growth of an authentic ecclesial communion in their parishes in order to reawaken missionary zeal towards non-believers and believers themselves who have abandoned the faith or grown lax in the Christian life." (CL 27) It will be found that the growth of a true community spirit will be greatly promoted by the establishment of the Legion of Mary. Through the Legion, lay people become accustomed to working in the parish in close union with their priests and participating in pastoral responsibilities. The regulation of various parish activities through a regular weekly meeting is an advantage in itself. A higher consideration, however, is that those involved in the work of the parish will be provided, through membership of the Legion, with a spiritual formation, which will help them to understand that the parish is an Eucharistic community, and with a methodical system, which will enable them to reach out to everyone in the parish, with the aim of building up that community. Some of the ways in which the Legion apostolate may be undertaken in a parish are described in chapter 37, Suggestions as to Works.

"The lay apostolate must be considered by priests as a definite part of their ministry, and by the faithful as a duty of the Christian life." (Pope Pius XI)

### 6. ITS FRUITS ARE INTENSE IDEALISM AND ACTION

Again, the Church by exhibiting only a cautious routine would place the Truth, of which it is the custodian, in a very disadvantageous setting. If the young once form the habit of looking to purely worldly or even irreligious systems for the active idealism for which generous natures crave, a terrible harm has been done, for which future generations will pay.

Here the Legion can aid by making its programme one of enterprise and effort and sacrifice, such as will help to capture for the Church those two words "idealism" and "action," making them handmaids of the Church's doctrine.

According to the saying of Lecky, the historian, the world is ruled by its ideals. If this is so, those who create a higher ideal thereby lift all mankind; it being understood, of course, that the ideal is a practical one and that it is sufficiently in evidence to constitute a headline. Possibly it may be conceded that the ideals held up by the Legion conform to both of these requirements.

An important feature of the Legion is that its work is graced by many priestly and religious vocations among its members and their children.

But the objection will be made that amid universal selfishness, there are none who will assume the heavy burden of Legion membership. This reasoning is wrong. The many who answer the call to trivial action will quickly fade away and leave not a trace. The few who respond to the call to high endeavour will persevere, and little by little their spirit will communicate itself to the many.

A praesidium of the Legion can thus be a powerful means of helping the priest to enlist gradually the co-operation of the laity in the task of evangelising those committed to his care. Just so, the hour and a half spent once a week at the meeting, guiding, encouraging, spiritualising the members, will enable him to be everywhere, to hear everything, to influence everybody, to overcome all his physical limitations. Indeed, it seems as if zeal could not be employed to better purpose than in the directing of many praesidia.

Thus armed with his legionaries (in themselves such another humble equipment as staff, scrip, sling, and pebbles, yet because of Mary made the instruments of heaven), he can, like another David, go forth with certainty of victory against the most defiant Goliath of unbelief and sin.

"It is a moral force, not a material, which will vindicate your profession and secure your triumph. It is not giants who do most. How small was the Holy Land! Yet it subdued the world. How poor a spot was Attica! Yet it has formed the intellect. Moses was one, Elias was one, David was one, Paul was one, Athanasius was one, Leo was one. Grace ever works by few; it is the keen vision, the intense conviction, the indomitable resolve of the few, it is the blood of the

martyr, it is the prayer of the saint, it is the heroic deed, it is the momentary crisis, it is the concentrated energy of a word, or a look, which is the instrument of heaven. Fear not, little flock, for he is mighty who is in the midst of you, and he will do for you great things." (St. John Henry Newman: Present Position of Catholics)

## 7. THE MASTER AND APPRENTICE SYSTEM OF FORMATION

The notion is general that the formation of apostles is mainly a matter of listening to lectures and studying textbooks. But the Legion believes that such formation cannot be effected at all without the accompaniment of the work itself; and indeed that talk about the apostolate, divorced from the actual work, can have the opposite effect to that intended. For it will be appreciated that in discussing how a work should be done, it is necessary to describe its difficulties and also to propose a very high spirit and standard of performance. To talk in that way to recruits, without at the same time showing by actual practice that the work is within their power, and in fact easy, will only intimidate them and deter them from undertaking it. Moreover, the lecture system tends to produce the theorist and those who think to convert the world by play of intellect. These will be disinclined to devote themselves to the humble employments and the laborious following up of individual contacts, on which everything really depends, and which, let it be said, the legionary so willingly accepts.

The Legion idea of formation is the master and apprentice method. This, it contends, is the ideal way of training, used by every profession and craft, apparently without exception. Instead of delivering lengthy lectures, the master places the work before the eyes of the apprentice, and by practical demonstration shows him how it is to be done, commenting on the different points thereof as he proceeds. Then the apprentice himself attempts the work, and is corrected in his execution of it. Out of that system emerges the skilled craftsman. All lecturing should be based on the work itself; each word should be linked to an action. If not, it may yield scant fruit. It may not even be remembered. It is strange how little of a lecture is remembered even by regular students.

Another consideration is that if a lecture system is proposed

as the mode of initiation to an apostolic society, few will present themselves as recruits. Most persons are determined to be finished with school when they have left that state. Especially the simpler people are awed at the prospect of going back again into a sort of classroom, even though it be a holy classroom. That is why apostolic study systems fail to exert a wide appeal. The Legion is on simpler, more psychological lines. Its members say to other people: "Come along and do this work with me." Those who come are not presented with a classroom. They are presented with a work which is already being done by someone like themselves. Accordingly, they know that the work is within their own capacity, and readily they join that society. Having joined, having seen the work being done and taken part in it, having learned by listening to the reports and comments on that work the best method of doing it, they are soon found proficient in it.

"The Legion is sometimes criticised for lack of expertise on the part of its members, or because it does not insist that they devote long periods to study. So let it be said: (a) The Legion systematically utilises the contribution of its better equipped members. (b) While avoiding the extreme stressing of study, it does endeavour in appropriate ways to fit each one for his particular apostolate. (c) But the dominating purpose is to provide a framework through which the Legion may say to the ordinary Catholic: 'Come, bring your mite of talent; we will teach you to develop it and use it through Mary for the glory of God'. It must not be forgotten that the Legion is for the lowly and under-privileged as much as for the learned and powerful." (Father Thomas P. O'Flynn, C.M., former Spiritual Director of Concilium Legionis Mariae)

# 11

## SCHEME OF THE LEGION

### 1. PERSONAL HOLINESS: THE OBJECT AND MEANS

The general and essential means by which the Legion of Mary is to effect its object is personal service acting under the influence of the Holy Spirit, having Divine Grace as its moving principle and support, and the Glory of God and the salvation of souls as its final end and purpose.

Hence the holiness of life which the Legion of Mary seeks to promote in the members is also its primary means of action. "I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who abide in me, and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing." (Jn 15:5)

"The Church, whose mystery is set forth by this sacred Council, is held, as a matter of faith, to be unfailingly holy. This is because Christ, the Son of God, who with the Father and the Spirit is hailed as "alone holy", loved the Church as his Bride, giving himself up for her so as to sanctify her (cf Eph 5:25-26); he joined her to himself as his body and endowed her with the gift of the Holy Spirit for the glory of God. Therefore, all in the Church, whether they belong to the hierarchy or are cared for by it, are called to holiness, according to the apostle's saying: 'For this is the will of God, your sanctification'. (1 Thess 4:3; cf Eph 1:4) This holiness of the Church is constantly shown forth in the fruits of grace which the Spirit produces in the faithful and so it must be; it is expressed in many ways by the individuals who, each in his own state of life, tend to the perfection of love, thus helping others to grow in holiness; it appears in a manner peculiar to itself in the practice of the counsels which have been usually called "evangelical." This practice of the counsels prompted by the Holy Spirit, undertaken by many Christians whether privately or in a form or state sanctioned by the Church, gives and should give a striking witness and example of that holiness." (LG 39)

## 2. AN INTENSELY ORDERED SYSTEM

Unharnessed, the great natural sources of power run to waste. Likewise, zeal unsystematised, enthusiasm undirected, never bring large results, interior or exterior, and seldom are durable. Aware of this, the Legion places before its members a mode of life rather than the doing of a work. It provides an intensely ordered system, in which much is given the force of rule that in other systems is merely exhorted or left to be understood, and in regard to every detail of which it enjoins a spirit of scrupulous observance. It promises, in return, perseverance and conspicuous growth in the qualities of Christian perfection, namely, faith, love of Mary, fearlessness, self-sacrifice, fraternity, prayerfulness, prudence, patience, obedience, humility, gladness, and the apostolic spirit.

"The growth of what is usually designated the Lay Apostolate is a special manifestation of our modern days, possessing – were it for no other reason than the numbers concerned – infinite potentialities.

Yet, insufficient seems the provision for this giant movement. When one looks upon the multitude of beautifully conceived Orders which cater for those who are able to abandon the world, the contrast with the form of organisation thought good enough for those who are not so circumstanced, is very striking. On the one hand, what intensity and exact science, making the most of the material! On the other, how elementary and superficial is the provision made! The system calls, indeed, for some service from its members, but it forms for the generality of them little more than an incident in the week's round, and it hardly even endeavours to play a more considerable part. There must be a higher conception of it. Should it not be the staff of their earthly pilgrimage – the very backbone of their whole spiritual life?

Undoubtedly the Religious Order must form the pattern for workers in common and, other things being equal, it may be taken that the quality of the work done will improve in the measure that there is approximation to the Order idea. Still this brings with it the difficulty of determining the exact degree of rule which is to be imposed. Desirable though discipline is in the interests of efficiency, there is always the danger of overdoing it, and narrowing the appeal of the organisation. The fact must be borne in mind that the object in view is permanent lay organisation – not something equivalent to a new Religious Order, or which would eventually drift into becoming one, and of which history is full of instances.

The aim is this, and no other: the drawing into efficient organisation of persons living their ordinary life as we know it, and in whom the presence of various tastes and pursuits other than purely religious ones has to be allowed for. The amount of regulation attempted should be no more than will be accepted by the average of the class for whom the organisation is intended, but it should certainly be nothing less." (Father Michael Creedon, the first Spiritual Director of Concilium Legionis Mariae)

### 3. PERFECTION OF MEMBERSHIP

The Legion wishes perfection of membership to be estimated according to exact adherence to its system, and not according to any satisfaction or apparent degree of success which may attend the efforts of the legionary. It deems a member to be a member to the degree to which he submits himself to the Legion system, and no more. Spiritual Directors and Presidents of praesidia are exhorted to keep this conception of membership ever before the minds of their members. It forms an ideal attainable by all (success and consolation do not), and in its realisation will alone be found

the corrective to monotony, to distasteful work, to real or imagined failure, which otherwise bring to an inevitable end the most promising beginnings of apostolic work.

“It is to be noted that our services to the Society of Mary are to be measured not according to the importance of the post we fill, but according to the degree of the supernatural spirit and of the zeal for Mary with which we devote ourselves to the duty assigned by obedience, however humble, however hidden it may be.” (*Petit Traité de Marialogie: Marianiste*)

#### 4. THE PRIMARY OBLIGATION

Foremost in its system, the primary obligation of each member, the Legion sets the duty of attendance at its meetings. As the burning lens is to the rays of the sun, so is the meeting to the members. The focus collects them, begets the fire, and kindles everything that comes near it. It is the meeting which makes the Legion. This bond sundered or dis-esteemed, the members drop away and the work falls to the ground. Conversely, in measure as the meeting is respected, so is the power of the organisation intensified.

The following, written in the first years of its life, represents now as it did then the outlook of the Legion on the subject of organisation, and thus upon the importance of the meeting, which is the focus-point of such organisation: – “In the organisation, the individuals, however notable, are content to play the part of cogs. They yield up much of their independence to the machine, that is to their associates as a body, but thereby the work gains a hundredfold in the fact that a number of individuals, who would otherwise have been either ineffective or else standing idle, are brought into action – each one, not with his or her own individual weakness, but with the fervour and power of all the greatest qualities amongst them. Consider pieces of coal lying unused, and the same in the heart of the furnace. Such is the parallel which suggests itself.

Then the organised body has a well-marked life of its own, apart from the individuals who compose it, and this characteristic, rather than the beauty or urgency of the work done, seems in practice to be the magnet which attracts new members. The association establishes a tradition, begets a

loyalty, enjoys respect and obedience, and powerfully inspires its members. Talk to the latter, and you will see that they lean upon it as upon a wise old mother. And well it may be so. Does it not save them from every pitfall: the imprudences of zeal: the discouragement of failure: the elevation of success: the hesitancy of the unsupported opinion: the timidity of loneliness: and, in general, from the whole quicksand of inexperience? It takes the raw material of mere good intention and educates it: sets about its work with regular plan: secures expansion and continuity." (Father Michael Creedon, first Spiritual Director of Concilium Legionis Mariae)

"Considered in relation to us, its members, the Society of Mary is the extension, the visible manifestation of Mary our Heavenly Mother. Mary has received us into the Society as into her loving and maternal bosom, so as to mould us to the likeness of Jesus, and thus make us her privileged sons; so as to assign to us our apostolic task, and thus give us share in her mission as Co-redemptrix of souls. For us, the cause, the interests of the Society are identified with the cause, the interests of Mary." (Petit Traité de Marialogie: Marianiste)

## 5. THE WEEKLY MEETING OF THE PRAESIDIUM

In an atmosphere made supernatural by its wealth of prayer, by its devotional usages, and by its sweet spirit of fraternity, the praesidium holds a weekly meeting, at which work is assigned to each legionary, and a report received from each legionary of work done. This weekly meeting is the heart of the Legion from which the life-blood flows into all its veins and arteries. It is the power-house from which its light and energy are derived. It is the treasury out of which its own special needs are provided for. It is the great community exercise, where someone sits unseen in the midst of them according to promise; where the peculiar grace of the work is bestowed; and where the members are imbued with the spirit of religious discipline, which looks first to the pleasing of God and personal sanctification; thence to the organisation which is best calculated to achieve these ends, and then proceeds to do the work assigned, subordinating private likings.

The legionaries shall therefore regard attendance at their weekly praesidium meeting as their first and most sacred duty to the Legion. Nothing else can supply for this; without it their work will be like a body without a soul. Reason tells us,

and experience proves, that neglect in regard to this primary duty will be attended by ineffective work, and will too soon be followed by defection from the Legion's ranks.

"To those who do not march with Mary, we apply the words of St. Augustine: 'Bene curris sed extra viam': 'you run well, but you are out of the path.' Where will you arrive in the end?" (Petitalot)

## 12

# THE EXTERNAL AIMS OF THE LEGION

### 1. THE ACTUAL WORK IN HANDS

The Legion aims not at the doing of any particular work, but has as a primary object the making of its members holy. For the attainment of this it relies, in the first place, upon its members' attendance at its various meetings, into which prayer and devotion are so wound and woven as to give their complexion to all the proceedings. But then the Legion seeks to develop that holiness in a specific way, to give it the character of apostleship, to heat it white hot so that it must diffuse itself. This diffusion is not simply a utilisation of developed force, but (by a sort of reaction) is a necessary part of the development of that force. For the apostolic spirit is best developed by the apostolate. Therefore, the Legion also imposes on each member, as an essential obligation, the weekly performance of some active work prescribed by the praesidium. The work proceeds from the meeting as an act of obedience to it, and, subject to the exceptions later indicated, the praesidium can approve of any active work as satisfying the member's weekly obligation. In practice, however, the Legion outlook would require the directing of the work-obligation towards actual needs, and among the latter, towards the gravest. For that intensity of zeal which the Legion strives to generate in its members requires a worthy

objective. Trivial work will react unfavourably upon it, so that hearts that were ready to spend themselves for souls, and to return love for the Christ-Love, and effort and sacrifice for his labours and death, end by settling down to pettiness and lukewarmness.

“Not so easily was I remade as made. He spoke and all things were made. But while he made me simply and at once by a word, he has in the remaking of me said many words, and worked wonders and suffered much.” (St. Bernard)

## 2. THE REMOTER AND GREATER AIM – THE LEAVEN IN THE COMMUNITY

Important, however, as may be the work in hand, the Legion does not regard it as the ultimate or even as the chief object of its members' apostolate. Such work may employ two, three, or many hours of the legionary's week, whereas the Legion looks beyond this to every hour of that week as radiant from the apostolic fire which has been kindled at its hearth. The system that imparts this quality of fire to souls has put abroad a mighty force. The apostolic spirit enters in only as master, dominates every thought, word, and action; and in its external manifestations is not confined to set times and places. The most diffident and otherwise least equipped person becomes invested with a peculiar capacity to influence others, so that whatever the surroundings, and even without the pursuing of a conscious apostolate, sin and indifference will end by bowing to a power greater than themselves. Universal experience teaches this. Therefore, with the satisfaction with which a general contemplates important posts adequately held, does the Legion think of each home, shop, factory, school, office, and every other place devoted to purposes of work or recreation, in which a true legionary may be set by circumstances. Even where scandal and irreligion are at their worst, entrenched so to speak, the presence of this other Tower of David will bar the way to further advance and menace the evil. The corruption will never be acquiesced in; efforts at remedy will be essayed; it will be a subject of sorrow, of prayer; will be contended against determinedly, unremittingly, and probably successfully in the end.

Thus the Legion begins by bringing its members together to persevere with one mind in prayer with their Queen. Then it sends them into the sinful and sorrowful places, there to do a good work, and by catching fire in the doing to do a greater. Finally it looks out over the highways and byways of the everyday life as the object of a still more glorious mission. Knowing what has been done by limited numbers, reflecting that the potential material for its ranks is almost beyond number, believing that its system, if vigorously utilised by the Church, affords a strangely efficacious way of purifying a sinful world, the Legion yearns exceedingly for the multiplication of its members, that it may be legion in number as in name.

Between those working actively, those giving auxiliary service and those being worked for, the whole population can be embraced, and raised from the level of neglect or routine to that of enthusiastic membership of the Church. Consider what this can mean to village or town; no longer merely in the Church, but a driving force in it, sending directly or through the Communion of Saints its impulses to the ends of the earth, and into the dark places thereof. What an ideal – a whole population organised for God! And yet this is no mere ideal. It is the most practical and possible thing in the world to-day – if eyes are but uplifted and arms unfolded.

“Yes, the laity are a ‘chosen race, a holy priesthood’, also called to be ‘the salt of the earth’ and ‘the light of the world’. It is their specific vocation and mission to express the Gospel in their lives and thereby to insert the Gospel as a leaven into the reality of the world in which they live and work. The great forces which shape the world – politics, the mass media, science, technology, culture, education, industry and work – are precisely the areas where lay people are especially competent to exercise their mission. If these forces are guided by people who are true disciples of Christ, and who are, at the same time, fully competent in the relevant secular knowledge and skill, then indeed will the world be transformed from within by Christ’s redeeming power.” (Pope St. John Paul II’s address in Limerick, Ireland, October 1979)

### 3. TO WELD ALL TOGETHER

This seeking “first for the kingdom of God and His righteousness” (Mt 6:33), that is, its direct labours for souls, absorbs the Legion altogether. Nevertheless, it must not be

overlooked that other things have been "added unto it." For instance, the Legion has a social value. This becomes a national asset to the individual country, and represents spiritual gain to the souls which it contains.

The successful working of the social machine demands, like any other machine, the harmonious co-operation of its component parts. Each part, that is the individual citizen, must do exactly what it is intended to do, and with the least possible amount of friction. If each does not render complete service, then waste enters in to disturb that necessary balance, to throw all the cogs out of alignment with each other. Repair is impossible, as it is infinitely difficult to detect the degree or the origin of the trouble; hence the remedy which must be adopted is to employ more force or lubricate with more money. This remedy still further impairs the idea of service or spontaneous co-operation, so that there is progressive failure. Communities have such vitality that they continue to function even though half their parts are misfits. But they work at a terrible price of poverty, frustration, and unhappiness. Money and effort are poured out to drive parts which should be moving effortlessly, or which indeed should be sources of power. Result: problems, turmoil, crises.

Who can deny that this is what obtains even in the best regulated states to-day? Selfishness is the rule of the individual life. Hate turns the lives of many into purely destructive forces, and each new day brings new and universal demonstration of a vital truth which may effectively be stated thus: "Men who deny God, who are traitors to God, will be false to every person and to everything less than God, to all things on earth and in heaven." (Brian O'Higgins) The state is only the sum of the individual lives, so what heights can it be expected to reach? A danger and a pain to themselves, what are the nations offering to the world at large but a bit of their own turmoil?

But suppose that into the community there enters a force which spreads like a contagion from one to another, and which makes the ideas of self-sacrifice, mutual love, and idealism pleasing to the individual! What a change is effected! The grievous sores heal up, and life is lived on a different level. Suppose a nation were to arise which built its life on lofty standards, and held up to the world the example of a whole

people putting its faith into practice, and hence as a matter of course, solving its problems. Who can doubt that such a nation would be a shining light to the world, so that the world would come to sit at its feet for the purpose of learning.

Now, it is unquestionable that the Legion possesses the power of making the laity vitally interested in their religion, and of communicating an ardent idealism to those who come under its influence, so that they tend to forget their worldly divisions, distinctions and antagonisms, and are animated with the desire to labour for and love all mankind. This idealism, being rooted in religion, is not a mere sentiment. It makes the individual think in terms of service, it elicits great sacrifices, it reaches heights of heroism, and it does not evaporate.

Why? The reason lies in the motive. Power must have a source. The Legion has a compelling motive for that service of the community. It is that Jesus and Mary were citizens of Nazareth. They loved that town and their country with a religious devotion, for to the Jews faith and fatherland were so divinely intertwined as to be but one. Jesus and Mary lived the common life of their locality with perfection. Every person and thing there was an object of deepest interest to them. It would be impossible to conceive them as indifferent or neglectful in any respect.

Today the world is their country and each place is their Nazareth. In a baptised community they are bound more intensely to the people than they were to their own blood-kindred. But their love has now to issue through the Mystical Body. If its members exert themselves in this spirit to serve the place in which they live Jesus and Mary will move through that place shedding their beneficial influences not only on souls but on the surroundings. There will be material betterment; problems will shrink. Nor is true betterment to be gained from any other source.

This attention to Christian duty in each locality would add up to patriotism for the nation. This word denotes uncharted territory, for what is true patriotism? There is no map or model of it in the world. An approximation is the devotion and self-sacrifice which develop during a war. But this is motivated by hate more than by love, and appropriately it is

directed towards destroying. So it is imperative that a correct pattern of peaceful patriotism be provided.

It is this spiritualised service of the community which the Legion has been urging under the title: True Devotion to the Nation. Not only is that service to be undertaken out of the spiritual motive, but it and all the contacts arising from it must be used to promote the spiritual. Operations which produced advance but only on the material plane would falsify the whole idea of True Devotion to the Nation. St. John Henry Newman perfectly expresses that basic idea when he says that a material advance unaccompanied by a corresponding moral manifestation is almost too awful to consider. The correct balance must be preserved.

Look, peoples of the world! If such be the Legion, would it not seem as if it offers, ready for use, a chivalry with magic in it to weld all men together in high enterprise for God: in service far transcending that legendary warfare of King Arthur, who – in Tennyson's beautiful verse – "drew the knight-errantry of his realm: and all the realms: together in that Order of his Table Round: a glorious company, the flower of men: to serve as model for the mighty world: and be the fair beginning of a time."

"Thus the Church, at once a 'visible organisation and a spiritual community', travels the same journey as all mankind and shares the same earthly lot with the world: it is to be a leaven and, as it were, the soul of human society in its renewal by Christ and transformation into the family of God.

The Council exhorts Christians, as citizens of both cities, to perform their duties faithfully in the spirit of the Gospel. It is a mistake to think that, because we have here no lasting city, but seek the city which is to come, we are entitled to shirk our earthly responsibilities; this is to forget that by our faith we are bound all the more to fulfil these responsibilities according to the vocation of each one." (GS 40, 43)

"A practical answer to this need and obligation underlined in the Council Decree is found in the legionary movement begun in 1960 and known as True Devotion to the Nation. The measure of success already secured points towards vast possibilities of development. But let us emphasise that what the Legion has to offer to the temporal order is not exceptional knowledge or expertise, not outstanding skills, not even great numbers of workers, – but the spiritual dynamism which has made it a world force and which can be harnessed to uplift any section of the People of God who have the insight and good sense to employ it. But the initiative must come

from the Legion. While shunning anything suggestive of worldliness, nevertheless, the Legion must ever be mindful of the world in the sense of the above Decree. It must realise that man has to live amid material things and that his salvation is to a large extent bound up with them." (Father Thomas P. O'Flynn C.M., a former Spiritual Director of Concilium Legionis Mariae)

#### 4. IN HIGH ENTERPRISE FOR GOD

Such a chivalry is needed at this time of particular peril for religion. Secularism and irreligion, aided by able propaganda, spread their corrupting influences in constantly widening circles and seem capable of engulfing the world.

Compared with these formidable forces, what a modest little flock the Legion is. Yet that very contrast emboldens one. The Legion is composed of souls who are united to the Virgin most Powerful. More, it contains within itself great principles, and it knows how to apply them in effective ways. It may be that he who is mighty will do great things to it, and through it.

The aims of the Legion of Mary and of those other legions which deny "our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ" (Jude 4) are diametrically opposed. That of the Legion is to bring God and religion to every soul; the object of the other forces is to accomplish the very opposite. But it is not to be thought that the legionary scheme was conceived in deliberate opposition to this empire of unbelief. Things worked out more simply. A little band gathered around a statue of Our Lady and said to her: "Lead us". United to her, they began the visitation of an immense infirmary, filled with the sick and sorrowful and broken ones of a great city, seeing her Beloved Son in each of them. They came to understand that so also is he in each member of humanity and that they should join in Mary's mother-work for him in each one. So, hand in hand with her, they set about their simple work of service, and lo, they have grown into a legion; and over the world that Legion is doing those simple acts of the love of God in man, and of the love of men for the sake of God; and in every place that love shows its power to stir and win hearts.

Likewise, the secularistic systems profess the love and service of man. They preach a hollow gospel of fraternity. Millions believe that gospel. In its name, they desert a religion

which they think to be inert. And yet the position is not a hopeless one. There is a way of bringing back to Faith those determined millions, and of saving countless other millions. That hope lies in the application of a great principle which rules the world, and which St. John Vianney, the Cure of Ars, has stated thus: "The world belongs to him who loves it most, and who proves that love." People cannot help seeing, and being moved by a real faith which operates through a real heroic love for all men. Convince them that the Church loves them most, and they will return to Faith in spite of everything. They will even lay down their lives for that Faith.

No common love can conquer men thus. Neither will it be accomplished by a mediocre Catholicism which can hardly preserve itself. It can be done by a Catholicism which loves Christ its Lord with all its heart, and then sees him and loves him in all men of whatsoever description. But this supreme charity of Christ must be practised on such a scale that they who look on are driven to admit that it is indeed a characteristic of the Church, and not merely the acts of sublime members of the Church. Therefore, it must be exhibited in the lives of the general body of the laity.

But it seems a hopeless thing to fire the entire household of the Church with this exalted spirit? Yes, the task is herculean! So unending, indeed, are the perspectives of the problem, so infinite the hosts which possess the land, that even the courage of the strongest heart might well fail. But Mary is the heart of the Legion, and that heart is faith and love unutterable. So thinking, the Legion looks out over the world, and all at once excited hope is born: "The world belongs to him who loves it most." Then it turns to its great Queen, as it did at the beginning: "Lead us!"

"The Legion of Mary and its opposing forces, secularism and irreligion, confront each other. These forces, sustained by constant propaganda through the press, television, and video, have brought abortion, divorce, contraception, drugs and every form of indecency and brutality into the heart of every home. The simplicity and innocence of every new born babe is therefore left open to these devastating influences.

Nothing short of total mobilisation of the Catholic people will avail to resist that indoctrination. For this purpose the Legion of Mary possesses the perfect machinery. But machinery itself is useless without a sufficient driving force. This motive power lies in the Legion

spirituality, which is a real appreciation of and reliance on the Holy Spirit and on True Devotion to His Spouse, the Blessed Virgin Mary, nurtured on the Bread of Life, the Eucharist.

When these two forces come into conflict, the spirit of the Legion will prevail. Daily carrying their Master's cross, legionaries will effectively fight the modern softness, permissiveness, and weakness which is ruining our society today, and will finally triumph." (Father Aedan McGrath, S.S.C.)

# 13

## MEMBERSHIP

1. The Legion of Mary is open to all Catholics who:
  - (a) faithfully practise their religion;
  - (b) are animated by the desire to fulfil their role in the Church's apostolate through membership of the Legion;
  - (c) are prepared to fulfil each and every duty which active membership of the Legion involves.
2. Persons who wish to join the Legion must apply for membership in a praesidium.
3. Candidates under 18 years of age can only be received in Junior praesidia.(See chapter 36)
4. No one shall be admitted as a candidate for membership of the Legion of Mary until the President of the praesidium, to which admission is sought, is, after careful enquiry, satisfied that the person seeking admission fulfils the conditions required.
5. A satisfactory probation of at least three months is required before the candidate can be enrolled in the ranks of the legionaries, but from the first the candidate can participate fully in the works of the Legion.
6. A copy of the Tessera shall be given to every candidate.

7. Formal admission consists essentially in the Legionary Promise, and the entry of the name of the candidate on the membership roll of the praesidium. The wording of the Legionary Promise is given in chapter 15. It is set out in a form which will facilitate reading.

Mgr. Montini (later Pope Paul VI), writing on behalf of Venerable Pope Pius XII, stated: "This Apostolic and Marian Promise has strengthened the legionaries in their Christian warfare throughout the world, especially those who are suffering persecution for the faith."

A commentary on the Promise, "The Theology of the Apostolate," has been written by Cardinal L. J. Suenens and published in various languages. This invaluable work should be in the hands of every legionary. Likewise it should be read by every responsible Catholic, for it contains a remarkable exposition of the principles which govern the Christian apostolate.

(a) When the period of probation is judged to have been satisfactorily completed, the candidate is given at least a week's notice of reception. During that week the candidate should seek to become familiar with the words and the ideas of the Promise, so that at the actual reception it will be read with facility, understanding and earnestness.

(b) Then at an ordinary meeting of the praesidium, immediately after the recitation of the Catena, all the members still remaining standing, the vexillum is moved near to the candidate, who then takes in the left hand a copy of the Promise and reads it aloud, supplying his own name in the proper place. When beginning the reading of the third paragraph of the Promise, the candidate places the right hand upon the staff of the vexillum, and keeps it there till the reading of the Promise is completed. After which, the blessing of the priest (if he is present) is given to the new legionary. The latter's name is then entered on the membership roll.

(c) After this, the members resume their seats, the Allocutio is given, and the meeting follows its ordinary course.

(d) If the vexillum is not yet in the possession of the praesidium, the candidate should instead hold a pictorial representation of it. The Tessera will serve.

8. Once the candidate is deemed qualified, there should be no delay in taking the Promise. Two or more candidates may be received simultaneously. But this is not desirable. The greater the number of those received at the one time, the less solemn the ceremony becomes for each of them.

9. The ceremony of reception may constitute an ordeal for specially sensitive persons. But such are really favoured, inasmuch as the ceremony possesses for them a particular solemnity and seriousness which will have its effect upon their subsequent membership.

10. The duty of welcoming candidates, instructing them in their duties, and fostering them through their probation period and afterwards, is allocated in a special manner to the Vice-President; but this is a duty in which all should take a part.

11. If a candidate for some reason does not wish to take the Promise, his probation may be extended for a further period of three months. The praesidium has the right to postpone the Promise until it is sure of the suitability of the candidate. Similarly, it is only fair that the candidate be given ample opportunity of making up his mind. But at the end of that supplementary period, the candidate must either take the Promise without mental reservation or leave the praesidium.

If a member, after having taken the Promise, subsequently rejects it in his mind, he is in honour bound to leave the Legion.

The probation and the Promise are the gateway of the Legion. That gateway must not lie negligently open for unsuitable material to enter in, to lower standards and to dilute spirit.

12. The Spiritual Director is under no obligation to take the Promise. But it would be legitimate and pleasing and an honour to the praesidium for him to do so.

13. The Promise should be reserved for its own proper purpose. It shall not be used as an Act of Consecration at the Acies or other functions. But of course it may be used, as desired, by legionaries in their private devotions.

14. Absences from the praesidium should be viewed with a right degree of sympathy for the circumstances which are responsible. Names should not be lightly removed from the roll, especially where sickness is in question, even though it is likely to be long-continued. But when a membership is deemed to have been discontinued and the name has been formally removed from the roll, there is required for renewal a further probation and the re-taking of the Promise.

15. For the purposes of the work of the Legion, but only for those purposes, members are addressed by the title of "Brother" or "Sister" as the case may be.

16. Members may be grouped in men's, women's, boys', girls', or mixed praesidia, as the needs suggest, and as approved by the Curia.

The Legion came into existence as an organisation of women, and eight years passed before the first men's praesidium was established. Yet it forms an equally suitable basis for the organisation of men, and now there are in operation men's praesidia and mixed praesidia in great numbers. The first praesidia in the Americas, in Africa, and in China were of men.

**Though women have thus the place of honour in the organisation, the masculine pronoun is used throughout these pages to designate the legionary of either sex. It avoids a tiresome repetition of the phrase "he or she."**

"The Church was founded to spread the kingdom of Christ over all the earth for the glory of God the Father, to make all men partakers in redemption and salvation and through them to establish the right relationship of the entire world to Christ. Every activity of the Mystical Body with this in view goes by the name of "apostolate"; the Church exercises it through all its members, though in various ways. In fact, the Christian vocation is, of its nature, a vocation to the apostolate as well. In the organism of a living body no member plays a purely passive part, sharing in the life of the body it shares at the same time in its activity. The same is true for the Body of Christ, the Church: 'the whole Body achieves full growth in dependence on the full functioning of each part.' (Eph 4:16) Between the members of this body there exists, further, such a unity and solidarity (cf Eph 4:16) that a member who does not work at the growth of the body to the extent of his possibilities must be considered useless both to the Church and to himself." (AA 2)

# 14

## THE PRAESIDIUM

1. The unit of the Legion of Mary is called a *praesidium*. This Latin word was used to designate a detachment of the Roman Legion performing special duty, that is, a section of a military line, a fortified post, a garrison. The term *praesidium* is, therefore, appropriately applied to the branch of the Legion of Mary.

2. Each praesidium is named after a title of Our Blessed Lady, for example, Our Lady of Mercy, or from one of her privileges, for example, The Immaculate Conception, or from an event in her life, for example, The Visitation.

Happy the bishop who throughout his diocese sees praesidia sufficient in number to form, as it were, a living Litany of Mary.

3. The praesidium has authority over all its members and power to control their activities. The members on their part shall loyally obey all the legitimate orders of the praesidium.

4. Each praesidium must, either directly or through an approved council, as hereinafter defined, be affiliated to the Concilium Legionis. Otherwise there is no Legion membership. It follows that no new praesidium shall be instituted without the formal permission of its Curia, or (failing a convenient Curia) of the next-highest council, or in the ultimate resort, of the Concilium. The praesidium shall depend directly upon such governing body.

5. No praesidium shall be established in any parish without the consent of the parish priest or of the Ordinary. The parish priest or the Ordinary shall be invited to carry out the inaugural ceremony.

6. The praesidium shall hold a **meeting every week** which shall be conducted after the manner described in chapter 18, *Order of the Praesidium Meeting*.

This rule is absolutely invariable. Again and again, it will be suggested that, for various excellent reasons, it is difficult

to hold a weekly meeting, and that a monthly or fortnightly meeting would serve all purposes.

To this it is replied that in no circumstances can the Legion consent to other than a weekly meeting, nor does it give to any of its councils the power to vary this rule. Were the regulation of the active work on hand the only consideration, possibly a monthly meeting might serve, although this is to be doubted if the work is being done weekly according to rule. But a vital purpose of the meeting is weekly prayer in common, and it is superfluous to point out that this end will not be attained by a meeting held otherwise than weekly.

A weekly meeting may entail self-sacrifice. If the Legion cannot with confidence call for such, where is the whole groundwork on which to build its system?

7. Each praesidium shall have a priest as Spiritual Director. It shall also have a President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer.

The foregoing shall be the officers of the praesidium and its representatives on the Curia. Their duties are described in chapter 34, but their first duty is to satisfy the ordinary work-obligation in such a manner as to set an example to all the other members.

8. The officers should give a report to their praesidia on each meeting of the Curia, and thus keep their members in touch with the proceedings of the Curia.

9. The Spiritual Director is appointed to the office by the parish priest or by the Ordinary, and he holds his office at their pleasure.

A Spiritual Director may undertake the direction of more than one praesidium.

If the Spiritual Director cannot attend the meetings of the praesidium, he may appoint another priest or a religious, or in special circumstances a qualified legionary (who shall be named the Tribune) to act in his place.

Although the Spiritual Director should be apprised of the meetings, it is not essential for the validity of the meetings that he should actually attend the meetings.

The Spiritual Director shall rank as an officer of the praesidium, and he shall uphold all due legionary authority.

10. The Spiritual Director shall have decisive authority in all religious or moral questions raised at the meetings of the praesidium, and he shall have a suspensive veto on all the proceedings of the praesidium, with a view to obtaining the decision of the parish priest or of the Ordinary.

“This right is a necessary weapon; but, like any such weapon, must be used with great discretion and cautiously lest it become an engine of destruction, not of protection. In an association well constructed and well guided, it will never be necessary to use it.” (Civardi: *A Manual of Catholic Action*)

11. The officers of the praesidium, other than the Spiritual Director, shall be appointed by the Curia. Should there be no existing Curia, the officers shall be appointed by the next-highest governing body.

It is desirable to avoid open discussion as to the merits of possible officers, some of whom may actually be present. Therefore, it is the practice, on the occasion of a vacant officership, for the President of the Curia, after careful inquiry (above all from the Spiritual Director of the praesidium in question) with a view to ascertaining the most suitable person, to submit a name to the Curia; and the Curia, if it thinks fit, may appoint that person.

12. Every appointment of an officer (other than the Spiritual Director) shall be for a term of three years and may be renewed for one further term of the same length, that is six years in all. On the expiry of office, an officer must not continue to fulfil its duties.

The transfer of an officer to another office, or to the same office elsewhere, shall rank as a new appointment.

An officer may, after an interval of three years, hold anew the same office in the same praesidium.

Where an officer for any reason whatsoever does not complete the full term of three years, he is to be regarded as having served the term of three years on the date on which he vacates the office. Then the ordinary rule governing renewal of office applies, that is, (a) if a first term was in question, he may during the unexpired period be appointed to a second term in that office, and (b) if a second term was

in question, a period of three years from the vacating of the office must elapse before appointment to that same office.

“The question of tenure of office must be decided on grounds of general principle. The danger to be kept in view from first to last in any organisation – above all in a voluntary religious organisation – is that it, or any particular unit of it, would become fossilised. The danger of this is really great. It is the human tendency for enthusiasms to die down, for a spirit of routine to creep in, for methods to become stereotyped, whereas the evils to be met change constantly.

This process of deterioration ends in ineffective work and indifference, so that the organisation fails to attract or retain the most desirable type of member. A state of half-death supervenes. At all cost, this must be guarded against in the Legion. The springing up of perpetual enthusiasm must be ensured in each and every one of its councils and praesidia. Obviously, one’s first care must be for the natural sources of zeal, the officers. These must be kept always in the grip of first fervour; and this is best effected by change. If the officers fail, everything withers. If they lose fire and enthusiasm, the body they control will reproduce the same process. And worst of all, the members are satisfied with the state of affairs, to which they have become accustomed, so that, except from outside, there is no hope of remedy. In theory, such a remedy would exist in a rule providing for periodic renewal of the period of office. But in reality, this would not be efficacious, as even the governing bodies would fail to realise that a settling down process was at work, and would in practice automatically grant extension after extension.

It would seem, accordingly, that the only certain course lies in a system of changing the officers irrespective of merit or other circumstances. The practice of religious orders suggests a model upon which to shape Legion practice, that is a restriction of the period of office to six years, subject to the requirement that, after the first three years, a renewal would be necessary.” (Decision of the Legion limiting the period of office of officers)

13. “There are no bad soldiers,” said Napoleon, “only bad officers”; which is a biting way of saying that the soldiers will be as the officers make them. Legionaries, too, will never rise

above the standards of spirit and work created by their officers. Therefore, the latter must be the best obtainable. If the labourer is to be accounted worthy of his hire, surely the legionary should be deemed worthy of leadership!

The appointment of a succession of good officers should mean that the quality of the praesidium will constantly improve. For each new officer, while jealously guarding against the lowering of existing standards, will make his own distinctive contribution which will in turn become part of the fabric of the praesidium.

14. Especially should the appointment of the President be the subject of anxious thought. A mistake in this direction may ruin the praesidium. Choice should only be made after viewing each possible person in the light of the requirements which are set out later in chapter 34, section 2 on the President. Persons likely to fail in these directions should on no account be selected, even though their merits in other directions may be great.

15. Except very special reasons to the contrary exist, the Curia must make the changing of the President the accompaniment of the reorganisation of a defective praesidium. In almost every case, the falling-away lies in the neglect or the inability of the President to govern.

16. During probation a legionary can only hold an acting or temporary officership in a senior praesidium. If that officership has not been withdrawn during the probation period, it then becomes full officership, and the time already served counts as part of the three years' term referred to above.

17. No member of a praesidium shall leave it to join another without the consent of the President of the former, and the admission of such person into the latter shall be done in accordance with the Statutes and the rules for the admission of new members, except that the probation and the Promise shall not be required. The said permission, when asked, should not be unreasonably withheld. An appeal in this matter lies to the Curia.

18. The President of the praesidium, after consultation with the other officers, shall have authority to suspend any member of the praesidium for any reasons that they in their discretion deem sufficient, and they shall not be accountable to the praesidium for such action.

19. The Curia has authority to expel or to suspend any member of a praesidium, subject only to a right of appeal to the next-highest governing body. The decision of the next-highest governing body shall be final.

20. Any dispute as to the allocation of work as between praesidia shall be decided by the Curia.

21. It is an essential duty of the praesidium to raise up and preserve around itself a strong body of auxiliaries.

View a regiment of soldiers, well-officered, courageous, perfectly disciplined and armed, suggesting an irresistible strength! Yet, in itself that regiment represents only a short-lived efficiency. It depends from day to day on a great supporting host of workers who furnish it with munitions, food, clothing and medical help. Cut away from these services, what will a few days of conflict do with that fine body of men!

What that supporting host is to the regiment, the auxiliaries are to the praesidium. The auxiliaries are part of the system. The praesidium is incomplete without them.

The proper method of keeping in touch with the auxiliaries is by personal contact. The issue of circulars is not by itself a sufficient way of attending to this important duty.

22. An army always provides for its future by the establishment of military training schools. Similarly, it should be regarded as a necessary part of the system of each senior praesidium to conduct a junior praesidium: Two of the senior legionaries should be assigned to the junior praesidium as officers. As the training of juniors requires certain qualities, not every senior legionary is fitted for the office. Therefore, they should be carefully selected. Their work in that capacity may be held to satisfy their work-obligation for their senior praesidium. They shall represent the junior praesidium on the Curia, or on a junior Curia, if such exists.

The other two officerships should be filled by junior members who will thereby obtain admirable training in responsibility. They shall represent the praesidium on a junior Curia. Juniors may not sit on a senior Curia.

“The rays of the sun are numerous, but the light is one; the branches of a tree are many, but the trunk is one, strongly fixed on immovable roots.” (St. Cyprian: De Unitate Ecclesiae)

## 15

### THE LEGIONARY PROMISE

Most Holy Spirit, I, (*name of candidate*),  
Desiring to be enrolled this day as a legionary of Mary,  
Yet knowing that of myself I cannot render worthy service,  
Do ask of you to come upon me and fill me with yourself,  
So that my poor acts may be sustained by your power, and  
become an instrument of your mighty purposes.

But I know that you, who have come to regenerate the  
world in Jesus Christ,  
Have not willed to do so except through Mary;  
That without her we cannot know or love you;  
That it is by her, and to whom she pleases, when she  
pleases, and in the quantity and manner she pleases,  
That all your gifts and virtues and graces are administered;  
And I realise that the secret of a perfect legionary service  
Consists in a complete union with her who is so completely  
united to you.

So, taking in my hand the legionary Standard which seeks to  
set before our eyes these things,  
I stand before you as her soldier and her child,  
And I so declare my entire dependence on her. She is the  
mother of my soul.  
Her heart and mine are one,  
And from that single heart she speaks again those words  
of old:

“Behold the handmaid of the Lord”;  
And once again you come by her to do great things.  
Let your power overshadow me, and come into my soul  
with fire and love,  
And make it one with Mary’s love and Mary’s will to save  
the world;  
So that I may be pure in her who was made Immaculate  
by you;  
So that Christ my Lord may likewise grow in me  
through you;  
So that I with her, his Mother, may bring him to the world  
and to the souls who need him;  
So that they and I, the battle won, may reign with her for  
ever in the glory of the Blessed Trinity.  
Confident that you will so receive me – and use me – and  
turn my weakness into strength this day,  
I take my place in the ranks of the Legion, and I venture to  
promise a faithful service.  
I will submit fully to its discipline,  
Which binds me to my comrades,  
And shapes us to an army,  
And keeps our line as on we march with Mary,  
To work your will, to operate your miracles of grace,  
Which will renew the face of the earth,  
And establish your reign, Most Holy Spirit, over all.  
In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy  
Spirit, Amen.

“It was pointed out that the Legionary Promise was addressed to the Holy Spirit, who received far too little devotion from the general body of Catholics, and for whom legionaries must needs have special love. Their work, which is the sanctification of themselves and of the other members of the Mystical Body of Christ, is dependent on the power and operation of the Holy Spirit, and hence calls for a very close union with him. Two things are essential to this: deliberate attention to him, and devotion to the Blessed Virgin with whom he works in inseparable union. Probably it was the lack of the latter, rather than lack of the former, which has led to the general absence of a true devotion to the Holy Spirit, in spite of the many books which have been written and the many sermons which are preached on the subject. Legionaries are already full of the love of their Queen and Mother. If they join it to a definite devotion to the Holy Spirit, they

will enter most fully into the Divine plan, which has required the union of the Holy Spirit and Mary in the work of regenerating the world. As a consequence, their legionary efforts cannot fail to be attended by a great addition of force and success.

The first prayers ever said by legionaries were the invocation and prayer of the Holy Spirit, followed by the Rosary. The same prayers have opened each Legion meeting ever since; so that it is most appropriate to place under the same holy auspices the ceremony which opens the legionary membership itself. It returns to the idea of Pentecost, when the apostolic grace was conferred by the Holy Spirit through Mary. The legionary, seeking the Holy Spirit through Mary, will receive abundantly of his gifts, and among these gifts will be a truly enlightened love of Mary herself.

Moreover, the proposed form of promise would be in conformity with legionary devotion as pictured by the Standard, which shows the Dove presiding over the Legion and its work, through Mary, for souls." (Extract from the Minutes of the 88th Meeting of the Concilium Legionis)

[This quotation does not form part of the Legionary Promise]

# 16

## ADDITIONAL GRADES OF MEMBERSHIP

In addition to the ordinary active membership, the Legion recognises two other grades of membership:

### 1. THE PRAETORIANS

The Praetorian\* degree is a higher grade of active membership, consisting of those who to the ordinary obligations of membership undertake to add: (1) The daily recitation of all the prayers comprised in the Tessera of the Legion; (2) daily Mass and daily Holy Communion. No one should be deterred from undertaking the praetorian degree by fears that he will not succeed in attending Mass or receiving Holy Communion absolutely every day. No one can be certain of such exact

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\*The Praetorian Guard was the picked regiment of the Roman Army.

regularity as this. Anyone, who does not fail normally more often than once or twice a week, may register with confidence as a praetorian; (3) the daily recitation of an Office approved by the Church, especially the Divine Office or a substantial part of it, for example Morning and Evening Prayer. A shorter breviary containing these hours with night prayer has been approved for use.

Occasionally, comes the suggestion that meditation be substituted for, or made an alternative to, an Office. But this proposal would not accord with the essential idea of praetorian membership, which is that of uniting the legionary to the great official acts of the Mystical Body. The active work of the legionary is a participation in the official apostolate of the Church. Praetorian membership aims at immersing him still deeper in the corporate life of the Church. Obviously, it must prescribe Mass and Holy Communion, because these are the central ceremonies of the Church, renewing daily the paramount Christian act.

Next in the Liturgy comes the Office, the corporate utterance of the Church, in which Christ prays. In any Office which is built upon the Psalms we use the prayers inspired by the Holy Spirit and thus get close to that corporate Voice which must be heard by the Father. That is why an Office, and not meditation, is a condition of praetorian membership.

"As grace develops in us, our love must take on new forms," said Archbishop Leen to his legionaries. The reciting of the entire Divine Office, for those in a position to do it, would represent such an expansion of love.

The following is to be understood:

(a) This is only a degree of membership and not a separate unit of organisation. Thus, separate praesidia of praetorians shall not be set up;

(b) the praetorian degree of membership is to be regarded as no more than a private contract of the individual legionary;

(c) nothing implying the smallest degree of moral compulsion is to be resorted to for the gaining of praetorians. Thus, while legionaries may, and should frequently be recommended to undertake this degree, no names are to be taken or mentioned publicly;

(d) membership is effected by the entry of a name on a special roll;

(e) Spiritual Directors and Presidents shall endeavour to increase their praetorian membership, but shall, as well, keep in touch with existing members so that these may not tire in their chivalrous undertaking.

If the Spiritual Director were willing to allow his name to be inserted in the praetorian register, it would intensify his legionary membership, and bind him still more strongly to his praesidium. As well, it could not but react favourably upon the growth of the praetorian membership of the praesidium.

The Legion anticipates much from the praetorian degree. It will lead many members on to a life of closer union with God through prayer. It will mean the incorporation in the Legion system of a heart of prayer; in which more and more legionaries will tend to bury themselves. This will inevitably affect the whole spiritual circulation of the Legion and make the Legion grow in the spirit of reliance upon prayer in all its works. In fact, it will cause the Legion to realise ever more completely that its chief and true destiny is to spiritualise its members.

“Grow you must; I know it; it is your destiny; it is the necessity of the Catholic name; it is the prerogative of the Apostolic heritage. But a material extension without a corresponding moral manifestation, it is almost awful to anticipate.” (St. John Henry Newman: Present Position of Catholics)

## 2. AUXILIARY MEMBERSHIP

This membership is open to priests, religious and the laity. It consists of those who are unable or unwilling to assume the duties of active membership, but who associate themselves with the Legion by undertaking a service of prayer in its name.

Auxiliary membership is subdivided into two degrees:

(a) the primary, whose members shall be simply styled auxiliaries; and

(b) the higher, whose members shall be more particularly designated *Adjutores Legionis* or *Adjutorians*.

There are no age limits in the case of auxiliary membership.

This service need not be offered directly on behalf of the Legion. It will suffice to offer it in honour of Our Blessed Lady. Therefore, it is conceivable that the Legion might receive nothing from it, nor does the Legion desire to receive anything which would do more good elsewhere. But as this service is a legionary one, it is probable that it will incline the Queen of the Legion to have regard for the needs of the Legion.

However, it is strongly recommended that this and all other legionary service be offered to Our Lady as an unreserved gift to be administered according to her intentions. This would lift it to a higher level of generosity and thus greatly enhance its worth. This purpose would be kept in view by saying daily some formula of offering such as the following: "Mary Immaculate, Mediatrix of all Graces, I place at your disposal such portion of my prayers, works and sufferings as is permitted to me."

This twofold auxiliary membership is to the Legion what its wings are to a bird. With these wings widely expanded by possession of many auxiliaries, and beating powerfully under the rhythmic drive of their faithful prayer, the Legion can soar into the higher air of supernatural ideal and effort. It flies swiftly wherever it wills, and even the mountains cannot stay its course. But if those wings are folded, the Legion hobbles awkwardly and slowly along the ground, brought to a stop by the slightest obstacle.

### THE PRIMARY DEGREE: THE AUXILIARIES

This degree, named the auxiliaries, is one wing of the Legion's praying army. Its service consists in the daily recitation of the prayers comprised in the Tesserà, namely: the invocation and prayer of the Holy Spirit; five decades of the rosary and the invocations which follow them; the Catena; and the prayers described as "concluding prayers". These may be divided throughout the day, as convenient.

Persons who are already saying a daily rosary for any intention whatsoever may become auxiliaries without obligation to say an additional rosary.

"He who prays helps all the souls of men. He helps his brethren by the saving and powerful magnetism of a soul that believes, knows,

and wills. He supplies what St. Paul demands from us above all things: prayers, supplications, and acts of thanksgiving on behalf of all men. 'Cease not to pray and to make supplication at all times in the Holy Spirit.' (Eph 6:18) And does it not seem that if you cease to watch, to insist, to make efforts, to hold fast, everything will relax, the world will relapse, your brethren will feel in themselves less strength and support? Yes, surely it is so. Each one of us in a measure bears up the world, and those who cease to work and to watch overburden the rest." (Gratry: Les Sources)

### THE HIGHER DEGREE: THE ADJUTORIANS

This is the other wing of the praying Legion. It comprises those who will (a) recite daily all the prayers of the Tessera and in addition (b) agree to attend Mass and receive Holy Communion daily, and to recite daily an Office approved by the Church.

See the reference in praetorian membership to the special value of an Office.

Accordingly adjutorian membership is to the ordinary auxiliary membership what the praetorian membership is to the ordinary active membership. The additional duties are the same.

Failure once or twice a week to fulfil the required conditions would not be regarded as a notable failure in the duty of membership.

An Office is not required from religious who are not bound by their Rule to say one.

The effort should be made to lead on the ordinary auxiliary to adjutorian membership, for it offers a veritable way of life. What is said in the section on the praetorians in regard to the uniting of the legionary to the prayer of the Church, and to the special value of an Office, applies likewise to the adjutorians.

Special appeal is addressed to priests and religious to become adjutorians. The Legion earnestly desires union with this consecrated class, which has been specially deputed to lead lives of prayer and close intimacy with God, and which forms in the Church a glorious power-station of spiritual energy. Effectively linked up with that power-station, legionary machinery would pulsate with an irresistible force.

Consideration will show how little this membership would add on to their existing obligations – no more, indeed, than

the Catena, the Legion prayer, and some invocations: a matter of some minutes only. But through that bond with the Legion they have it in their power to become the driving force of the Legion.

“Give me,” said Archimedes of old, “a lever and a support for it, and I will lift the Earth itself.” United to the Legion, the adjutorians will find in it that essential support on which to rest the long lever of their holy prayers, which then become omnipotent to uplift the burdened souls of the entire world and move away its mountainous problems.

“In the Cenacle, where by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit the Church was definitely founded, Mary begins to exercise visibly, in the midst of the apostles and the disciples gathered together, a role which she will continue ever after to exercise in a more secret and intimate manner: that of uniting hearts in prayer and of giving life to souls through the merit of her all-powerful intercession: ‘All these were persevering with one mind in prayer with the women and Mary the Mother of Jesus and with his brethren’. (Acts 1:14)” (Mura: *Le Corps Mystique du Christ*)

#### **GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS AFFECTING BOTH DEGREES OF AUXILIARY MEMBERSHIP**

(a) Supplementary Service. The Legion appeals to auxiliaries of both degrees to regard the essential conditions of membership, not as limits of service, but as a minimum which they will chivalrously supplement by many other prayers and acts made specially with this intention.

It is suggested to priest-adjutores that they should in all their Masses make a special memento, and even occasionally offer the Holy Sacrifice, for Mary’s intentions and the Legion. Other auxiliaries might, even at the expense of some sacrifice, find it possible to have a Mass offered occasionally for the same intention.

However generously the auxiliary may give to the Legion, nevertheless he receives one hundredfold, one thousandfold, one millionfold in return. And how is this? It is because the Legion teaches its auxiliaries – no less than its active members how great is Mary, enlists them in soldierly service for her, and makes them love her properly. All this is something so great that words like “millionfold” do not measure the gain. It raises the spiritual life to a higher plane, and thereby assures a more glorious eternity.

(b) Who can refuse to Mary this sort of gift? For she who is the Queen of the Legion is, as well, Queen of the Universe and of all its departments and concerns, so that to give to her is to give where the need is greatest, where one's prayers will accomplish most.

(c) In administering the store thus placed in her hands, Mary Immaculate will have regard to the requirements of one's ordinary life and duties and to all existing obligations. The question may arise: "I would wish to join, but I have already given everything to Mary with complete abandon, or to the Holy Souls, or to the Missions. Everything is gone. There is nothing left over for the Legion, so of what use am I to its auxiliary ranks?" The Legion answers: It is of great benefit for the Legion to gain so unselfish a person. Your anxiety to help the Legion is in itself an additional prayer, a proof of special purity of intention, an irresistible call upon the limitless generosity of the guardian of the Divine treasury. Certain it is, that if you join, she will respond, and that the new intention will gain while the old intentions will not lose. For it is the art of this most wonderful Queen and Mother that, though she has availed of our offer and helped others liberally from our spiritual treasures, yet we ourselves have grown strangely richer. Her intervention has meant the doing of an extra work. A marvellous multiplication has taken place: what St. Louis-Marie de Montfort calls a secret of grace and thus describes: "Inasmuch as our good works pass through the hands of Mary, they receive an augmentation of purity and consequently of merit and of satisfactory and impetratory value. On this account they become more capable of solacing the souls in Purgatory and of converting sinners than if they did not pass by the virginal and liberal hands of Mary."

Every life has need of the potency of this admirable transaction, where what we have is taken, placed at usury, accomplishes its work, and then returns with increment. This force can be found in the gift to Mary of a faithful auxiliary membership.

(d) Possibly because of the number of souls in stress with which it is in touch, Mary seems to have given to her Legion some little of her own irresistible appeal to the heart. Legionaries will not find it difficult to enlist their friends in

this auxiliary service so vital to the Legion, and so valuable to the auxiliaries themselves. Thereby they are associated to Legion membership, with share in all the prayers and works of the Legion.

(e) The discovery, too, has been made that the membership of the Legion's auxiliary or praying ranks has the same power to catch the imagination that active membership possesses. Persons who otherwise would not think of saying the rosary every day, are found to be faithfully carrying out the obligations of auxiliary membership, which demands the daily recitation of all the prayers on the Legion prayer-card, already detailed. Numbers in infirmaries and other institutions, who had lost heart, have gained an interest in life through joining the Legion auxiliaries; while multitudes in villages, and living otherwise in circumstances which tend to make religion a tame thing, if not a matter of routine, have through their auxiliary membership realised that they are of importance to the Church; and have found themselves taking a proprietary interest in the Legion, reading with intense interest any scrap of news about it they chance to see. They feel themselves to be part of its most distant battles for souls. They realise it to be dependent upon their prayers. Accounts from different places of noble and exciting deeds done for souls fill their drab lives with the throb of those far-distant doings. Their existences have become transformed by that most inspiring of ideas, the sense of participation in a crusade. And even the holiest of lives require the stimulation of such an idea.

(f) It should be the object of every praesidium to bring every Catholic in its area into auxiliary membership. Thereby a favourable soil is provided for the working of other aspects of the Legion apostolate. A visitation for this purpose, implying a compliment, will be universally well received and a goodly response may be anticipated.

(g) To the extent that members of other Catholic societies and activities are brought into this auxiliary degree, there is effected a desirable integration of all those activities. They are thereby united in prayer, sympathy, idealism, under the auspices of Mary, but without the slightest interference with their own autonomy or characteristics and without alienating

their prayers from their own movements. For note that those auxiliary prayers are offered in honour of Our Blessed Lady and not on behalf of the Legion.

(h) A non-Catholic cannot be an auxiliary member. But in the event (which is of occasional occurrence) where such a person is willing to recite all the Legion prayers daily, he should be supplied with a Tessera and encouraged in his generous programme. Special note should be taken of his name so as to keep in touch with him. It is certain that Our Blessed Lady will be attentive to the needs of that soul.

(i) It is the Legion's world-wide adventure and battle for souls, rather than the local needs, which are to be represented to the auxiliaries as the object of their service of prayer. The conception should be placed before their minds that though they are not in the fighting ranks, nevertheless they play an essential part, comparable to that of the munition workers and the supply services, without which the fighting forces are powerless.

(j) Persons should not be lightly accepted as auxiliaries. In advance they should be made fully acquainted with the obligations, and there should be reasonable assurance that they will be true to them.

(k) With a view to intensifying the interest of the auxiliaries in the service undertaken by them, and thus (1) in the present, improving its quality and ensuring its perseverance; and (2) in the future, leading them on to adjutorian and active membership; they should be given an insight into the work of the Legion.

(l) The keeping in touch with the auxiliaries for the purpose of preserving their membership and interest will be necessary, and will provide admirable work for certain of the legionaries whose ideal should be the leading on still further of their charges.

(m) Every auxiliary should be made aware of the great benefits attaching to membership of the Confraternity of the Most Holy Rosary. As the auxiliary is already saying more than the amount of prayer required by the Confraternity, the only additional obligation entailed by joining the latter is the registration of name.

(n) Likewise, in the interest of the full development of the auxiliary soldiers of Mary, the *True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin* – or entire consecration of one's life to Mary – should at least be explained to them. Many of them might be glad to undertake this fuller service of her which entails the giving of their spiritual treasures to her whom God has already appointed his own Treasurer. Where is the room for mis-giving, because Mary's intentions are the interests of the Sacred Heart. They take in every need of the Church. They cover the whole apostolate. They extend the whole world over. They descend also to the Holy Souls bidding their time in the abode of Purgatory. Zeal for Mary's intentions is comprehensive care for the needs of our Lord's Body. For she is no less the solicitous Mother now than she was in the days of Nazareth. Conformed to her intentions, one goes straight to the goal, which is God's Will. But making one's own approach, what a tortuous route results: will it ever bring one to the journey's end?

Lest some might be inclined to think that this devotion can be practised only by persons of advanced spirituality, it is important to record that it was to souls just emerging from the bondage of sin, and to whose darkened memory it was necessary to recall the elementary truths of the Catechism, that St. Louis-Marie de Montfort spoke of the rosary, of devotion to Mary, and of the Holy Slavery of Love.

(o) It is desirable and in fact essential to set up amongst the auxiliaries some loose form of organisation comprising meetings or rallies of its own. Such a network in the community would tend to permeate it with the apostolic and prayerful ideals of the Legion, so that soon all may be found putting those ideals into revolutionary practice.

(p) A Confraternity based on auxiliary membership would be nothing less than any other Confraternity. But in addition, it would be the Legion, with all the Legion's warmth and colour. The periodic meetings of such a Confraternity would keep its members in touch with the spirit and needs of the Legion and make them more ardent in its service.

(q) It should be the aim to bring every auxiliary into the *Patricians*, for the two supplement each other ideally. The Patrician meeting will fulfil the purpose of the periodic reunion recommended for the auxiliaries. It will keep them

in touch with the Legion and develop them in important ways. Then on the other hand, if the Patricians are recruited into auxiliary membership, it would represent for them another step upwards and onwards.

(r) Auxiliaries must not be employed on ordinary active Legion work. Proposals to utilise them in this way are at first sight attractive. It seems a good thing to lead on the auxiliaries. But examination will show that what is really at stake is the doing of legionary work without the Legion meeting, in other words the setting aside of the vital condition of active membership.

(s) Where deemed desirable or possible, auxiliaries may participate in the *Acies*, which in such circumstances forms an admirable function for them and brings them into intimate touch with the active legionaries. Auxiliaries who are prepared to make the individual Act of Consecration, should make it after the active legionaries.

(t) The invocation to be inserted on the *Tessera* for auxiliary members shall be, "Mary Immaculate, Mediatrix of all Graces, pray for us."

(u) The Legion's call to the active member to be "ever on duty for souls" is addressed likewise to the auxiliary. Just as much as the active member, the auxiliary must strain every nerve to bring others into legionary service. By this addition of link to link the *Catena Legionis* can be made into a golden network of prayer enveloping the whole world.

(v) It is frequently suggested that the prayers of the auxiliary service should be reduced or changed to meet the case of blind or illiterate persons or of children. Apart from the fact that an obligation is inclined to lose its binding force according as it becomes less definite, the impossibility of administering such a concession should be manifest. It could not and would not long be withheld from the less illiterate, the partly blind, or the very busy. In time, the relaxation would become the ordinary practice.

No! The Legion must insist upon the performance of the standard service. If this is beyond the powers of certain persons, they cannot be auxiliaries. But they can give invaluable help by praying for the Legion in their own way, and they should be encouraged thereto.

(w) It is allowable to require the auxiliary to defray the cost of the Tesseræ and of a certificate of membership. But otherwise no subscription shall be payable in respect of auxiliary membership.

(x) A roll of its auxiliary members, containing names and addresses, and subdivided as to adjutorians and ordinary auxiliaries, shall be kept by each praesidium and shall be submitted periodically to the Curia or to its authorised visitors. This roll shall be examined carefully with a view to seeing that it is being properly kept, that new members are being zealously sought for, and that existing members are being visited occasionally to secure that having put their hand to the plough, they may not turn back. (cf. Lk 9:62)

(y) Membership of the auxiliary degree is effected by the entry of name upon the auxiliary roll of any praesidium. This roll shall be in the care of the Vice-President.

(z) Names of candidates for the auxiliary degree shall be placed on a provisional list until three months' probation has been served. Then the praesidium must satisfy itself that the obligations of membership have been faithfully discharged before placing the candidate's name on the auxiliary roll.

"What recompense will our good Jesus give us for the heroic and disinterested action of making a surrender to him, by the hands of his holy Mother, of all the value of our good works? If he gives a hundredfold, even in this world, to those who for his love quit outward and temporal and perishable goods, what will that hundredfold be which he will give to the man who sacrifices for him even his inward and spiritual goods?" (St. Louis-Marie de Montfort)

## 17

# THE SOULS OF OUR DEPARTED LEGIONARIES

The end of the campaigning has come and a legionary lies nobly dead. Now at last he is confirmed in legionary service. Through all eternity he will be a legionary, for the Legion has shaped that eternity for him. It has been the fibre and the

mould of his spiritual life. Moreover, the might of the united petition, uttered daily and earnestly by active members and auxiliaries alike, that the Legion should reassemble without the loss of any one, has helped him through the dangers and the difficulties of the long way. What a joyful thought for all legionaries – on his account and on their own! But for the moment, there is sorrow at the loss of friend and comrade, and there is need of prayer so that the deliverance of the departed soldier from the realm of Purgatory may be speedily accomplished.

The praesidium should without delay have a Mass offered for the soul of each one of its active members who may die; and each member of that praesidium should specially recite all the legion prayers, inclusive of the rosary, at least once for the same intention. But these duties do not extend to the deceased relatives of members. As many legionaries as possible, and not those of the particular praesidium alone, should attend the Mass and accompany the remains to burial. It is recommended that the rosary and other legion prayers should be recited while the interment is actually taking place. This could be done immediately after the official prayers of the Church. This practice, besides being of much benefit to the deceased, will be found to be a source of deep consolation to the sorrowing relatives, to the legionaries themselves, and to all the friends present.

It is trusted that the same prayers will have been said more than once beside the remains during the period of laying out. Nor should the duty of remembrance be deemed then to cease.

In the month of November each year, each praesidium shall have a Mass celebrated for the souls of the legionary dead, not of that praesidium alone but of all the world. In this, as on all other occasions where prayer is offered for departed legionaries, all grades of membership are comprised.

“Purgatory forms part of the realm of Mary. There, too, are her children, who in a passing spell of pain await their birth to the glory which will never pass.

St. Vincent Ferrer, St. Bernardine of Siena, Louis de Blois, as well as others, explicitly proclaim Mary to be Queen of Purgatory; and St. Louis-Marie de Montfort urges us to think and act in accordance with that belief. He wishes us to place in Mary’s hands the value of our

prayers and satisfactions. He promises us that, in return for this offering, those souls which are dear to us will be more abundantly relieved than if we were to apply our prayers to them directly.” (Lhoumeau: *La Vie Spirituelle a l’Ecole de St. Louis-Marie de Montfort*)

## 18

### ORDER OF THE PRAESIDIUM MEETING

**1. The setting of every meeting shall be uniform.** The members should sit around a table at one end of which for the purpose of the meeting a small temporary altar is erected. On a white cloth of sufficient size is placed a statue of the Immaculate Conception (in the attitude of the distribution of Graces), preferably about two feet (60 cm) high – flanked by two vases of flowers and two candlesticks with lighted candles. A little to the right of the statue, and a little in advance of it, should be set the vexillum, which is described in chapter 27.

Photographs of the setting of the altar and of the vexillum are to be found on pages 379-381.

As the idea is that the statue represents the Queen present among her soldiers, the altar must not be separated from the meeting-table or so placed as to remove the statue outside the circle of the members. Filial love towards our Heavenly Mother dictates that the equipment and the flowers should be as good as possible; the equipment is not a recurring item of expense. Possibly a benefactor or some other good fortune might put the praesidium in possession of silver vases and candlesticks. It should be regarded as an honourable duty on the part of some legionary to keep the vexillum and the vases and candlesticks clean and bright, and duly provided with flowers and candles at the expense of the praesidium.

If natural flowers are absolutely unobtainable, it would be allowable to use artificial ones with some greenery added to provide the element of living nature.

In climates where it is necessary to shield the flame of the candles, plain glass cups or globes, which will not conceal the candle itself, may be fitted on to the top of the candle.

The words "Legio Mariae" may be worked upon the cloth, but not the name of the praesidium. Points of unity, not of distinction, should be stressed.

"In effect, Mary's mediation is *intimately linked with her motherhood*. It possesses a specifically maternal character, which distinguishes it from the mediation of the other creatures who in various and always subordinate ways share in the one mediation of Christ, although her own mediation is also a shared mediation. In fact, while it is true that 'no creature could ever be classed with the Incarnate Word and Redeemer', at the same time 'the unique mediation of the Redeemer does not exclude but rather gives rise among creatures to a *manifold cooperation* which is but a sharing in this unique source.' And thus 'the one goodness of God is in reality communicated diversely to his creatures'." (RMat 38)

**2. Punctually at the appointed time**, the members shall be in their places, and the meeting shall begin. But a punctual start (so necessary for the efficiency of the praesidium) will not be possible unless the officers are in attendance some time in advance in order to make the requisite preparations.

No praesidium meeting is ever to begin without its written programme, termed the "**Work Sheet**". This should be drawn up in advance of each meeting, and from it the President will call the business. In the Work Sheet should be set down in detail all the work being done by the praesidium, and opposite to each item, the names of the members assigned to it. The various items need not necessarily be taken in the same order at succeeding meetings, but every member's name should be called and a report taken from each one, even though they may be working in parties of two or more.

Before the end of the meeting it is to be ensured that each member has been provided with his work for the coming week.

The President should have a bound book in which the Work Sheet can be compiled each week.

"Idealism, however fervent and absorbing, must never be an excuse for vague and unpractical emotion. As already pointed out, the genius of St. Ignatius consisted in his careful and methodical exploitation of religious energy. Steam is of no use, rather a nuisance, until we have a cylinder and piston for it. How much spiritual fervour

goes to waste, without a particular examen and definite application! A gallon of petrol might be misused to blow a car skyhigh; with care and inventiveness it can be employed to propel it to the top of the hill." (Life of Father William Doyle S.J.: Msgr. Alfred O'Rahilly)

**3. The meeting opens** with the invocation and prayer to the Holy Spirit, who is the source of that Grace, that Life, that Love, of which we rejoice to regard Mary as the channel.

"From the moment when she conceived the Son of God in her womb, Mary possessed, so to speak, a certain authority or jurisdiction over every temporal procession of the Holy Spirit, in such sort that no creature receives any grace from God except through her mediation

... All the gifts and virtues and graces of the same Holy Spirit are administered by her to whom she pleases, when she pleases, and in the quantity and manner she pleases." (St. Bernardine: Sermon on the Nativity)

(Note: The latter part of the above declaration in almost identical words is also found in the writings of St. Albert the Great (Biblia Mariana, Liber Esther I), who lived 200 years before St. Bernardine)

**4. There follow five decades of the rosary**, of which the Spiritual Director shall initiate the first, third, and fifth, and the members the second and fourth. No member is to act as if the rosary were a silent prayer. The same measure of dignity and respect should be imparted to its recitation as if the gracious personage to whom it is addressed were visibly present in the place of the statue representing her.

The proper recitation of the Ave requires that the second part should not begin until the first has been finished, and the Holy Name of Jesus reverently pronounced. The rosary, playing, both by rule and by recommendation, such an important part in the life of the legionary, each one is urged to register in the Rosary Confraternity. (see appendix 7)

Pope St. Paul VI insists that the rosary must be preserved. It is pure prayer. Its contents are eminently biblical. It effectively summarises the whole history of salvation, and it fulfils the essential purpose of exhibiting Mary in all her various roles in that history.

"Among the different ways of praying, there is none more excellent than the Rosary. It condenses into itself all the worship that is due to Mary. It is the remedy for all our evils, the root of all our blessings." (Pope Leo XIII)

“Of all prayers the Rosary is the most beautiful and the richest in graces; of all it is the one which is most pleasing to Mary, the Virgin Most Holy. Therefore, love the Rosary and recite it every day with devotion: this is the testament which I leave unto you so that you may remember me by it.”(Pope St. Pius X)

“For Christians, the first of books is the Gospel and the Rosary is actually the abridgement of the Gospel.” (Lacordaire)

“It is impossible that the prayers of many should not be heard if those numerous prayers form but one single prayer.” (St. Thomas Aquinas: on Mt 18)

**5. The rosary is immediately followed by Spiritual Reading**, to be given by the Spiritual Director (or in his absence by the President). Its duration should be limited to about five minutes. The choice of spiritual reading is free, but it is strongly recommended that, at least during the early years of a praesidium, the reading be taken from the handbook in order to familiarise the members with its contents, and to stimulate them to study it seriously.

On the conclusion of the reading, it is the custom for the members to make, together, the sign of the cross.

“Without any doubt, Mary is worthy of blessing by the very fact that she became the mother of Jesus according to the flesh (‘Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts that you sucked’), but also and especially because already at the Annunciation she accepted the word of God, because she believed it, *because she was obedient to God*, and because she ‘kept’ the word and ‘pondered it in her heart’ (cf. Lk 1:38, 45; 2:19, 51) and by means of her whole life accomplished it. Thus we can say that the blessing proclaimed by Jesus is not in opposition, despite appearances, to the blessing uttered by the unknown woman, but rather coincides with that blessing in the person of this Virgin Mother, who called herself only ‘the handmaid of the Lord.’” (RMat 20)

**6. The minutes of the previous meeting are read** and, if approved by the members present, are signed by the President. The minutes should strike a sensible mean between excessive and inadequate length, and shall designate each meeting by its proper serial number.

The importance of the minutes is stressed under the Secretary’s duties. The minutes, being the first item of the ordinary business of the meeting, hold, as it were, a strategic position. By their quality and the manner of reading them, they may set the tone, for better or for worse, of all that follows.

Good minutes are like good example. Poor minutes are like bad example; and it is necessary to insist that well-written minutes, badly read, rank as poor minutes. That example has compelling force upon the members. Their alertness, their reports, are affected, so that the meeting may be good or bad simply because the minutes were good or bad. And the quality of the work will follow the quality of the meeting.

So let the Secretary, when engaged on the hidden work of preparation of the minutes, reflect on these things; and let the praesidium, in the interest of its own efficiency, oversee them.

“It would indeed be shameful if in this matter Christ’s saying should be verified that ‘the children of this world are wiser than the children of light.’ (Lk 16:8) We can observe with what diligence they look after their affairs; how often they balance their credit and debit; how accurately they make up their accounts; how they deplore their losses and so eagerly excite themselves to repair them.” (Pope St. Pius X)

**7. Standing Instruction.** The following Standing Instruction is to be inserted on the Work Sheet (or otherwise placed so as to ensure that it will not be overlooked at the proper time) and read out by the President at the first meeting of each month, immediately after the signing of the minutes.

#### STANDING INSTRUCTION

“Legionary duty requires from each legionary:

First, the punctual and regular attendance at the weekly meetings of the praesidium, and the furnishing there of an adequate and audible report on the work done;

Second, the daily recitation of the Catena;

Third, the performance of a substantial active legionary work, in the spirit of faith, and in union with Mary, in such fashion that in those worked for and in one’s fellow-members, the Person of our Lord is once again seen and served by Mary, his Mother;

Fourth, absolute respect for the confidential nature of many matters discussed at the meeting or learned in connection with the legionary work.”

“Through me, Mary desires to love Jesus too in the hearts of all those whom I can kindle with love as the result of my apostolate and my perpetual prayers. If I wholly identify myself with her, she will so

flood me with her graces and with her love that I shall come to resemble an over-brimming stream, that in its turn will flood the souls of others. Because of me, Mary will be enabled to love Jesus and to fill him with joy, not only through my own heart but also through the countless hearts that are united with mine." (De Jaegher: The Virtue of Trust) [This quotation is not to be read out as part of the Standing Instruction.]

**8. Treasurer's Statement.** The Treasurer shall submit a weekly statement showing the income and expenditure of the praesidium and the resulting financial position.

"Souls are sometimes lost for want of money, or, in other words, for want of a more complete participation in the apostolate." (James Mellett, C.S.Sp.)

**9. Reports of the members are received.** Members should remain seated while delivering their reports, which should be verbal, though members may aid themselves by notes.

The praesidium should not take the non-performance of the legionary duty as a matter of course. When members have been validly prevented from performing their work, they should (if possible) furnish some explanation. The absence of a report, if unexplained, conveys the impression that neglect of duty is in question and constitutes a bad example for every member.

If members are attaching a reasonable degree of seriousness to their work, the necessity for excuse will arise but seldom, and happily so, for in an atmosphere of excuses zeal and discipline wither away.

The report is not to be directed to the President alone. For a certain mental process must be taken count of. When one person speaks to another individually, the voice automatically tunes itself to the precise distance and no more. This could mean that words addressed to the President would with difficulty be heard by persons further away.

The report, and all discussion upon it, must be delivered in a tone of voice which will reach every part of the room. A report, however full and faithful, which is inaudible to many of those present is – having regard to its depressing effect on the meeting – worse than no report. Whispering is no sign of modesty or gentleness, as some apparently imagine. Who so modest, who so gentle as Mary? Yet could anyone imagine her mumbling her words, or talking in such a fashion that those

close to her could not hear what she was saying? O legionaries! Imitate your Queen in this, as in all other ways.

Presidents must refuse to accept reports which require an effort to hear. But first let them be above reproach themselves. The President sets the tone for all the members. Usually, the members speak less loudly than the President. If the latter speaks only in a moderate or conversational tone, the members' reports will come back in whispers. For, members speaking clearly when the President is speaking softly, will imagine themselves to be shouting, and will reduce their tones to inaudibility. The members must insist on all, including the President, speaking out. Like a doctor, let the Spiritual Director make his own demand for audibility as a vital element in the health of the praesidium.

In its own way the report is as important to the meeting as the prayers. They supplement each other. Both elements are necessary to a praesidium meeting.

The report connects the work with the praesidium and therefore it must be a clear presentation of the doings of the member – in a sense as vivid as the picture on a cinema screen – such as will enable the other members mentally to engage in that work, to judge it, to comment on it, to learn from it. Accordingly, the report must show what has been attempted and achieved, and in what spirit; the time spent; the methods used; what has not been gained and the persons who have not been touched.

The meeting should be bright and cheerful. Therefore, the reports should be such as will interest as well as inform the meeting. It is impossible to believe that the praesidium is healthy if the meeting is deadly dull, and undoubtedly it will repel young members.

Some classes of work are so full of variety that it is easy to make a good report. Other works do not offer the same possibilities, so that each unusual feature, however small, should be remembered for mention in the report.

The report must not be too long; nor too brief; above all, it must not be a routine phrase. Failure in these directions not only shows that the member is neglecting his duty but also that the other members are assisting him in that neglect. This strikes at the whole legionary idea of the supervision of the

work. The praesidium cannot supervise a work unless it is fully informed about it.

Generally, the work of the Legion is so difficult that members, if not stimulated by the minute consideration of their efforts by the meeting, may be inclined to spare themselves. This must not be. They are in the Legion to do as much good as possible; and probably it will be in those very cases where the natural repugnances assert themselves most that the greatest need for their work exists. It is mainly through the meeting that the legionary discipline is exerted which overcomes those weaknesses and drives the member on to accomplishment. But if the report gives little indication as to what the legionary is really doing, then the praesidium can exert only a vague control over that member's actions. It will not stimulate him. It will not safeguard him. He will be deprived of the interest and guidance of the praesidium and he cannot afford to be without those vital things. Legionary discipline loses its grip on that member with unhappy results all round.

Let it not be forgotten that bad reporting will draw the other members by the strong chains of imitation. Thereby one who greatly desires to serve the Legion is found doing it tragic disservice.

No legionary should be content to give a merely good report. Why not aim very high, and deliberately set out to add to the perfect performance of the work a model report to the praesidium; and thus train the other members both in the doing of the work and in the way of reporting on it? "Example," says Edmund Burke, "is the school of mankind, and they will learn at no other." Acting on this, one individual can raise an entire praesidium to the highest pitch of efficiency. For the report, though not the whole meeting, is so much its nerve-centre as to cause everything else in the praesidium to react in sympathy with it either for better or worse.

Above, Our Lady has been pointed to as inspiration for one aspect of the report. But thought of her can aid in every other aspect. A glance at her statue, before beginning the report, will ensure that thought. It is certain that anyone, who tries to make his report as he imagines she would make it, will not deliver a report which is inadequate from any point of view.

“Some Christians see little more in Mary than a creature infinitely pure and exquisite, the tenderest and gentlest Woman that ever existed. Therein, they run the risk of having for her only a sentimental devotion, or – if they are of a forceful character – of feeling but little attraction towards her. They have never realised that this Virgin so tender, this Mother so gentle is, as well, the Woman above all the most indomitable, and that never was there man so full of character as this Woman.” (Neubert: *Marie dans le Dogme*)

**10. The recitation of the Catena Legionis.** At a fixed time, which experience has shown to be approximately mid-way between the signing of the minutes and the end of the meeting (that would be an hour after the opening of a meeting which usually lasts an hour and a half), the *Catena Legionis* (see chapter 22, *The Prayers of the Legion*) is recited, all standing.

The Antiphon is recited by all present; the Magnificat in alternate verses by the Spiritual Director (or in his absence, by the President) and by the members: the Prayer by the Spiritual Director (or President) alone.

The sign of the cross is not made before the *Catena*. It is made by all at the first verse of the Magnificat. It is not made after the Prayer because at once the *Allocutio* begins.

There is nothing in the Legion more beautiful than this united recitation of the *Catena*. Whether it finds the praesidium immersed in joy or disappointment or treading wearily the way of routine, it comes like a breeze from Heaven, all steeped in the fragrancy of her who is the Lily and the Rose, refreshing and gladdening most wonderfully. No mere picturesque description this – as every legionary knows full well!

“I lay special stress on the Magnificat because it seems to me that it may be considered, in a way perhaps not commonly realised, a document of outstanding importance in its bearing on Mary’s Motherhood of grace. The most holy Virgin, identified with Christ, as we know her to have been from the moment of the Annunciation, proclaims herself the representative of the entire human race, intimately associated with ‘all generations,’ and bound up with the destinies of those who are truly her own. This canticle of hers is the song of her spiritual maternity.” (Bernard, O.P.: *Le Mystère de Marie*)

“The Magnificat is Mary’s prayer par excellence, the song of the Messianic times in which there mingles the joy of the ancient and new Israel. As Saint Irenaeus seems to suggest, it is in Mary’s canticle

that there was heard once more the rejoicing of Abraham (cf Jn 8:56) who foresaw the Messiah, and there rang out in prophetic anticipation the voice of the Church.... And in fact Mary's hymn has spread far and wide and has become the prayer of the whole Church in all ages." (MCul 18)

**11. The Allocutio.\*** When the members resume their seats, a short talk shall be given by the Spiritual Director. Except in special circumstances, this should take the shape of a commentary upon the handbook with the object of eventually making the members completely familiar with every point contained therein. The allocutio will be greatly appreciated, and it will play an all-important part in the development of the members. Responsibility for the latter exists, and it would be an injustice both to them and to the Legion not to draw out all their possibilities. To do this it is essential that they be given a perfect knowledge of their organisation. The study of the handbook will greatly help towards this end, but must not be considered to be a substitute for the allocutio. Legionaries will believe that they have studied the handbook when they have read it attentively two or three times. But even ten or twenty readings would not bring the degree of knowledge which the Legion desires. This will only be imparted by a systematic verbal explanation and expansion of the handbook week after week, year after year, until the members have become completely familiarised with every idea it contains.

In the event of the absence of the Spiritual Director, the commentary should be made by the President or by any member designated by the President. It is stressed that a mere reading from the handbook or any other document does not suffice for the allocutio.

The allocutio should not occupy more than five or six minutes.

The difference between the praesidium where the allocutio has been thoroughly done, and the praesidium where it has been badly done, will be precisely the difference between a trained and an untrained army.

"I have long had the feeling that, since the world is growing so rapidly worse and worse and God has lost his hold, as it were, upon

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\*The allocutio was the Roman General's address to his legionaries.

the hearts of men, he is looking all the more earnestly and anxiously for big things from those who are faithful to him still. He cannot, perhaps, gather a large army round his standard, but he wants every man in it to be a *hero*, absolutely and lovingly devoted to him. If only we could get inside that magic circle of generous souls, I believe there is no grace he would not give us to help on the work he has so much at heart, our personal sanctification." (Life of Father William Doyle S.J.: Msgr. Alfred O'Rahilly)

**12. On the completion of the Allocutio**, the sign of the cross is made by all present. Then the taking of the Reports and the other business of the meeting is continued.

"The historic fact is that the speech of Our Lady was the speech of an extraordinarily refined woman. Her natural bent would easily have made her a poet. Each time she spoke, her words flowed in a rhythm that was actually poetry. Her phrasing was the picturesque language of the artist of words." (Lord: Our Lady in the Modern World)

**13. Secret bag collection.** Immediately after the allocutio, a secret bag collection is made, to which every member shall contribute according to means. The purpose is the defraying of the various expenses of the praesidium and the contributing to the Curia and the higher councils. It is repeated that these latter bodies have no means of support or of discharging their functions of government and extension other than what comes to them from the praesidia. (See chapter 35, *Funds*)

The meeting is not to be interrupted for the making of this collection. The bag should be passed unostentatiously from member to member, and each one should place his hand in the bag, even though he may not be contributing anything to it.

A proper bag should be provided for the purpose of receiving the members' offerings. A glove or a paper bag is not a proper receptacle.

The collection is secret because it is necessary to place those who have resources and those who have not, on precisely the same level before the praesidium. Therefore, the principle of secrecy should be respected, and no member should disclose to another what his contribution is. In the second place, all should appreciate that not alone the praesidium, but also the main running of the whole Legion, depends on what is put into the secret bag by the individual legionary. Accordingly, the matter is not to be viewed as a mere formality. The

obligation to subscribe is not complied with by the giving of a sum so inconsiderable as to mean nothing to him. The fact is that he is being afforded the privilege of sharing in the wider mission of the Legion. Therefore, the act of contributing to this Fund should be one for the exercise of the sense of responsibility and generosity.

It is only the individual gift which is secret. The total amount may be announced, and of course it must be properly entered up and accounted for.

“When Jesus praises the offering of the widow ‘who gives not of her abundance but of her indigence’ (Lk 21:3-4), we suspect that his thought is of Mary, his Mother.” (Orsini: History of the Blessed Virgin)

**14. Termination of the meeting.** When all the business has been transacted, including the assignment of work to each member and the marking of the attendance roll, the meeting ends with the concluding prayers of the Legion and the priest’s blessing.

The meeting shall not last longer than **one hour and a half** from the appointed time for starting.

“Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.” (Mt 18:19-20)

## 19

# THE MEETING AND THE MEMBER

**1. Respect for the meeting.** Everywhere in the natural order, the transmission of power depends on the making or the breaking of a connection. Similarly, in the Legion system there can be a vital interruption at one point. A member may attend the meetings, and yet receive little or no communication of that inspiration, devotedness and strength, which has been pictured above as the Legion life. There must be a

union between meeting and member, and this union is not effected by a mere mechanical attendance on the part of the latter. An element must enter in to make that attendance an efficacious link between meeting and member, and this element is **respect**. On this respect (manifesting itself in obedience, loyalty, esteem) of member for meeting, everything in the Legion system depends.

**2. The praesidium must be worthy of this respect.** A body, which does not in its standards rise above the average of its members, lacks the first essential of a guide, and will not long hold their respect.

**3. The praesidium must respect the Rules.** Proportionately as the legionary gives that respect to the praesidium, will a communication of legionary life be made to the legionary; and, as the essence of the legionary spirit is the effort to achieve excellence, the praesidium must set itself to win in the highest degree the respect of its members so that it may correspondingly influence them. A praesidium seeks to build upon sand, which claims from its members a respect which it does not itself give to the code under which it works; a fact which explains the insistence, throughout this handbook, on the necessity for exact adherence to the order of meetings and the general procedure as laid down.

**4. The praesidium to be a model of steadiness.** The Legion requires that the voice and action of its meetings shall be an example even to the most zealous member, and its multifold life enables it to play this part. The individual legionary may be prevented by illness, holidays or other unavoidable circumstances from performance of the duties of membership. But the praesidium, being composed of many who will not all be so hindered at the same time, will thus be able to rise above the limitations of the individual. The weekly meeting should not be omitted for any cause, short of actual inability to hold it. Should the customary day of meeting be definitely obstructed, the meeting should be transferred to another day. The fact that a great number of its members will be absent constitutes no reason for not holding the meeting. It is better to hold a meeting of a few members than to drop

it altogether. It is true that little business will be transacted at such a meeting, but at least the praesidium will have acquitted itself of its most important duty, and the business of its future meetings will gain immeasurably from the enhanced respect which its members will instinctively have for something which goes on almost in spite of those who compose it, which stands steady in the midst of their weaknesses, mistakes, and miscellaneous engagements, thus reflecting in some faint fashion the chief characteristic of the Church itself.

**5. Heat and light.** The room should be well-lighted and of comfortable temperature. Defects in this direction will convert to a penance the meetings that should be a pleasure, and will prejudice fatally the prospects of the praesidium.

**6. Seating accommodation.** Chairs, or at least benches should be provided for seating purposes. If the members are scattered around on school-desks or on other improvised seating-accommodation, an air of disorder will be created, in which the Legion spirit, which is a spirit of order, will not thrive.

**7. Praesidia must meet at suitable times.** The fact that most persons are at work during the day, dictates that meetings be ordinarily held in the evening or on Sunday. But there are many who work during the evening and at night, and these must be provided for by having meetings at hours which suit them.

Likewise, shift-workers, that is, those whose working-hours change periodically, must be catered for. Two praesidia with widely different meeting-times should co-operate to receive them. Those legionaries would alternate between the praesidia according to their free time. To ensure the continuity of attendance and work, the praesidia would need to keep in close touch with each other.

**8. Duration of meeting.** The meeting shall not last longer than **one hour and a half** from the appointed time for opening. If, in spite of efficient handling of the meeting, it is found that the business is frequently cut short or unduly

rushed by the automatic closure, it should be taken as a sign that the praesidium has too much to do, and the sub-division of the praesidium should be considered.

**9. Inadequate length of meetings.** There is no minimum duration prescribed, but if meetings habitually last less than about an hour (of which the prayers, spiritual reading, minutes and Allocutio occupy a half-hour), it looks as if there is inadequacy in some direction. Whether it lies in the number of members or in the quantity of the work, or in the quality of the reports, it should be rectified. In industrial circles it would be deemed a grave fault of system to neglect to work machinery to full capacity, if there is a market for the output. Similarly, the Legion system should be worked to the utmost. No one can suggest that there is not a need for the highest possible spiritual output.

**10. Late arrival or early departure.** Legionaries arriving late for the opening prayers shall kneel down and recite privately the prayers (on the Tessera) which precede the rosary and the invocations which follow it. But the loss of the praesidium rosary cannot be repaired. Similarly, members obliged to leave before the conclusion of the meeting should first ask the permission of the President, and then kneel and recite the prayer, *We fly to your patronage* and the invocations which follow.

In no circumstances can the persistent late-coming or early departure of a member be permitted. It is true that the work may be done and reported upon, but indifference to the missing of the opening or concluding prayers may well be believed to denote a cast of mind alien to or even hostile to the real spirit of the Legion, which is a spirit of prayer. Harm, not good, would be the fruit of such a membership.

**11. Good order the root of discipline.** Upon (a) the setting of the meeting faithfully according to rule; (b) the orderly succession of duty to duty; (c) the punctual taking of business as prescribed; (d) the pervading note of Mary as the main-spring of that order; does the Legion rely for the development in its members of the spirit of discipline, without which the meeting is as a clear head on a paralysed body, powerless either

to restrain its members or to drive them on, or to form them in any way. Without discipline, the members will be at the mercy of the natural human tendency to work alone, or with as little control as possible, at the work dictated by the whim of the moment, and in the manner one pleases – and out of which no good will come.

On the other hand, in a voluntarily-assumed discipline devoted to religious ends, lies one of the most potent forces in the world. That discipline will prove irresistible if it operates unwaveringly, yet at the same time without admixture of grimness, and in hearty responsiveness to ecclesiastical authority.

In its characteristic spirit of discipline the Legion possesses a treasure, which it is also able to bestow outside itself. It is a priceless gift, for the world alternates profitlessly between the opposite poles of tyranny and licence. A lack of interior discipline may be cloaked by the operation of a strong external discipline, the product of tradition or of force. Where individuals or communities are dependent on that external discipline alone, they will collapse if it be withdrawn, as in moments of crisis. Though the inner discipline is infinitely more important than any system of external discipline, it is not to be supposed that the latter is unimportant. Actually, each requires the other. When the two combine in proper proportion, with the sweet motive of religion intertwined, we hold that triple cord which – the Scripture pronounces – “is not quickly broken.” (Eccles 4:12)

**12. Punctuality paramount.** Without punctuality the Lord’s command: “Set your house in order” (Is 38:1) cannot be fulfilled. A system that is training its members to disorder is warping them in a radical way. In addition, it is forfeiting that respect which is the basis of all right education and discipline. Surely that neglect of something vital which could be so easily supplied, is as insane a proceeding as the proverbial spoiling of the ship for the halfpenny worth of tar!

Sometimes a watch is placed carefully on the table but exercises no influence whatever on the course of the meeting. In other cases it does play a part in regard to the beginning, middle, and end of the meeting but none in regard to the regulation of the reports and other business; whereas the

principle of punctuality and order must apply to everything from beginning to end.

If the officers are at fault in the above directions, the members should protest. Otherwise they are aiding and abetting.

**13. Manner of saying the prayers.** Some impetuous souls find it hard to hold back even in the matter of praying; and this wrong sort of leadership can draw an entire praesidium on to a way of saying the prayers which verges on the disrespectful. In fact, if there is one fault which is more or less general, it is that the prayers are recited too fast, seeming to denote a disregard of that injunction which bids legionaries to pray as if Our Blessed Lady herself, instead of her statue, were visibly present among them.

**14. Prayers to be one with the meeting.** From time to time it has been suggested that the rosary might be recited before the Blessed Sacrament, the members then proceeding to their meeting-room. This proposal is not allowable on the general principle that the unity of the meeting is essential to the whole Legion system. With the meeting one, all the business takes a distinctively prayerful character (producing eminent fruits of heroism and effort), which it would lose were the bulk of the prayers to be said elsewhere. Such a change would alter the whole character of the meeting, and hence of the Legion itself which is built upon the meeting. In fact, the resulting organisation, however great its merits, would not be the Legion of Mary at all. Having said this, presumably it is unnecessary to state that the actual omission of the rosary or any other part of the prayers is – no matter what the circumstances may be – still less admissible. What the breathing is to the human body, the rosary is to the Legion meetings.

**15. Church devotions and meeting.** For the foregoing reason, a praesidium which has said the Legion prayers at some Church or other function prior to its meeting, is bound to repeat the full prayers at the praesidium meeting.

**16. Special prayers at meeting.** It is frequently asked if it is permissible to offer the prayers of the meeting for special

intentions. As many applications for such prayers are made, it becomes necessary to define the position: – (a) If it is a question of offering the ordinary Legion prayers of the meeting for a special intention, the ruling is that those prayers should be offered for the intentions of Our Blessed Lady, the Queen of the Legion, and not for any other intention. (b) If it is a question of supplementing the Legion prayers by some other prayers for special intentions, the ruling is that the existing prayers are already long enough, and should not ordinarily be added to. It is recognised, however, that from time to time items of exceptional legionary concern may call for special prayer; and in that case, some short prayer may be added to the ordinary prayers of the meeting. It is emphasised that such additions must be of rare occurrence. (c) It would, of course, be allowable to recommend special intentions to the members for inclusion in their private devotions.

**17. Does the report offend against humility?** Members have been known to justify a valueless report by saying that they felt it to be contrary to humility to parade the good which they were doing. But there is such a thing as a pride which imitates humility, and the poets have termed it the devil's favourite sin. Those members, therefore, should beware lest in that thought of theirs may lie the subtle workings not of humility but of pride itself, and not a little of a desire to exempt their actions from minute control by the praesidium. For surely, true humility would not urge them to set a false headline, which if imitated by the other members would ruin the praesidium? No, to a certainty, Christian simplicity would impel members to avoid singularity, to submit themselves sweetly to the rules and observances of their organisation, and to play fully their individual but none the less essential parts in the building up of the meeting, of which each report forms, as has been said, a brick.

**18. Harmony the expression of unity.** Harmony, being the outward manifestation of the spirit of love in the meeting, must reign supreme; and efficiency, in the Legion sense of the word, never excludes the idea of harmony. Good accomplished at the expense of harmony is a doubtful gain; while those failings which are in their essence opposed to it must

be shunned in the Legion like a veritable plague. This refers to things like self-assertiveness, fault-finding, ill-temper, cynicism, and airs of superiority, at whose entry to the meeting harmony forthwith departs.

**19. Work of each one a concern of all.** The meeting begins with prayer, in which all realise that they have participated equally. This feeling of equal participation by all should characterise each item of the subsequent business of the meeting. Hence conversation or laughter between individual members must find no place there. Members should be taught that each case is a concern not merely for the one or two members who may be engaged upon it, but for all present, in such a degree that each one pays a spiritual visit to every person or place recounted as having been the subject of the work. Without this realisation, members will follow with a mere attention the reports and consideration of the work of others, whereas every moment must be full, not merely with the attention which one gives to an interesting account of work done, but with a sense of intimate contact, of personal concern.

**20. Confidentiality of paramount importance.** The Standing Instruction, read to the members month after month, should bring home to them the all important place of confidentiality in the Legion's scheme of things.

Lack of courage in a soldier is accounted shameful, but treachery is infinitely worse. It is treachery to the Legion to repeat outside matters of a confidential nature learned or discussed at the praesidium meeting. At the same time, there must be reason in all things. Sometimes over-zealous people may urge that in the interests of charity legionaries should withhold from the praesidium all names and reports which involve neglect of religion.

In this apparently plausible suggestion there is an error, and a threat to the Legion's life, as the praesidium could not function satisfactorily under such conditions:

(a) The adoption of this course would be contrary to the general practice of Societies, all of which are accustomed to discuss their cases.

(b) The logical conclusion of the proposal would be that the co-visitors should maintain confidentiality even between each other.

(c) The unit of action and knowledge and charity is neither the individual member nor the pair of co-visitors. The praesidium is that unit, and the detail of all ordinary cases is due to that unit. If the reports are withheld, the unit becomes ineffective. Under the plea of charity the real interests of charity are prejudiced.

(d) There is no analogy with the case of the priest, whose sacred functions put him on a different plane to the legionary. The latter learns in visitation little more than any other respected person would, and what is often common property in the adjoining homes or district.

(e) To remove from members the obligation to furnish adequate reports is also to remove that sense of minute control which means so much in the Legion system. No effective advice or guidance or criticism can be given so that the essential idea of the praesidium is frustrated. The education and safeguarding of the members, which are based on the reports, are rendered impossible. Unless the members' weekly reports are adequately detailed to enable the minute control already referred to, indiscretions will almost certainly occur, with perhaps, detriment to the Legion.

(f) Strangest of all, the bond of confidentiality itself becomes loosened. For the guarantee of legionary confidentiality (so wonderfully honoured at present) is the praesidium grip upon the member. If this grip is weakened, the bond of confidentiality weakens with it. In a word, the praesidium is not only the unit of charity and confidentiality, but is also their mainstay.

The reports to the meeting are to be regarded as being in the same category as a family's discussion of its secrets, and should allow for the same freedom of expression, unless and until it is demonstrated that leakage is taking place. And even then, the remedy is not to limit reporting, but to expel the traitor.

It is recognised, of course, that an occasional extreme case may be encountered in which the circumstances will suggest

an absolute privacy. Recourse should at once be had to the Spiritual Director (or, if he be unavailable, to some other competent adviser) who will decide the point.

**21. Freedom of speech.** Is it in order to voice one's disagreement with the methods of the meeting? The atmosphere of the praesidium should not be regimental but rather "family" in its character.

Therefore "fair comment" should be welcomed from the members. But obviously such comment must never be challenging in its tone or wanting in respect to the officers.

**22. The Meeting the mainstay of membership.** It is the human tendency to be impatient for visible results, and then to grow dissatisfied with whatever is obtained. Again, visible results are an uncertain test of successful work. One member secures them at a touch, while the heroic perseverance of another remains barren. A sense of wasted effort is followed by abandonment of the work, so that the work which is valued purely from the aspect of results, is a quicksand which will not support for long the ordinary membership. Such a support is essential. Legionaries will find it in the wealth of prayer, the ritual, the distinctive atmosphere, the reports of duty done, the blessed comradeship, the magnetism of discipline, the lively interest, and the very orderliness, which each week go to make up their praesidium meeting.

No thought there of waste of effort to unloosen membership, but everything to bind it fast! As meeting succeeds meeting in regular succession, there comes the sense of smoothly running machinery surely attaining the end for which it was contrived, and giving that fixed assurance of successful working upon which a persevering membership depends. Let the legionaries cast their thoughts a little further, and see in this mechanism Mary's engine of war for the extension of her Son's dominion. They are its parts. Its working depends upon the manner in which they lend themselves to it. Their faithful membership means its perfect working, which Mary utilises to achieve the results which she desires. These will be perfect results, for "it is Mary alone who knows perfectly where lies the greatest glory of the Most High." (St. Louis-Marie de Montfort)

**23. The praesidium is a "Presence" of Mary.** The advices of this section have in view the more perfect consolidation of the individuals into a body for comprehensive use in the official, pastoral apostolate of the Church. The relation between that communal apostolate and the individual apostolate might be likened to the relation between the liturgy and private prayer.

That apostolate is united to and sustained by the mothering of Mary "who gave to the world the Life that renews all things, and who was enriched by God with gifts appropriate to such a role" (LG 56). She continues to fulfil that role through the ministry of those willing to help her. A praesidium places at her disposal a group of loving souls eager to help her in that office. It is certain that she will accept that aid. Therefore a praesidium may be imagined as a sort of local presence of Mary through which she will display her unique gifts and reproduce her motherhood. So it can be expected that a praesidium which is true to its ideals will bestow around itself life and renewal and healing and solutions. Places with problems should apply this spiritual principle.

"Bend your shoulders and carry her, and do not fret under her bonds. Come to her with all your soul, and keep her ways with all your might. Search out and seek, and she will become known to you; and when you get hold of her, do not let her go. For at last you will find the rest she gives, and she will be changed into joy for you. Then her fetters will become for you a strong defence, and her collar a glorious robe. Her yoke is a golden ornament, and her bonds a purple cord." (Sir 6:25-30)

## 20

# THE LEGION SYSTEM INVARIABLE

1. Members are not at liberty to vary rules and practices as they choose. The system described is the Legion system. Each variation, however slight, makes others inevitable, till presently a body is in existence which indeed bears the name, but possesses little else of the Legion; and which the Legion would not hesitate to disown, even though work in itself valuable were being done.

2. Experience has shown that the name of an organisation has little definite meaning for some persons. For they regard it as a virtual tyranny if they are not permitted to cover with the name of a standard organisation some composition of their own minds.

Sometimes “modernisers” proceed to alter almost everything in the Legion while retaining its name. Can they not see that such an illegal transferring to their own possession of the established position and membership of the Legion would be the worst sort of depredation because it is in the spiritual order.

3. And places – like persons – are apt to conceive that they are out of the common and that their case has to be specially legislated for. Hence the proposals which are from time to time made that the Legion system should be flexed to meet alleged special circumstances. Such modifications, if made, will have an unhappy sequel. For almost invariably they spring, not from necessity (for the Legion has already demonstrated its universal adaptability), but from the operation of a false spirit of independence. Such will never attract the special blessings of Heaven, and the fruit of that independence will always be a falling away. However, as it will not always be possible to convince people of this, it is at least pointed out to those who are set upon exercising a right of private judgment in relation to the rules of the Legion, that their only course in honour is to refrain from covering their transactions with the name of the Legion.

4. Moreover, this ingenious picking of parts, which too-clever men often indulge in, never succeeds in capturing a quality of sweetness and inspiration which was the real power of the original, so that the usual result of this species of surgery is a corpse. But at the very best, what is created is a beautiful machine and nothing more. When poor results or failure follow, there is a heavy responsibility to be faced.

5. The various councils of the Legion exist chiefly for the purpose of preserving intact the Legion system. At all costs they must be true to the trusteeship committed to them.

“The system of the Legion of Mary is a most excellent one.”  
(St. John XXIII)

“You must accept the whole, or reject the whole; reduction does but enfeeble, and amputation mutilate. It is trifling to receive all but something which is as integral as any other portion.” (St. John Henry Newman: *Essay on Development*)

## 21

# THE MYSTICAL HOME OF NAZARETH

A particular application of the Doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ may be made to the Legion meetings, especially to the praesidium meeting, which forms the heart of the Legion system.

“Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.” (Mt 18:20) These words of our Lord assure us that his influential presence in the members of his Mystical Body is intensified according to the number in which they unite to serve him. He specifies number as a condition for the complete displaying of his power. Possibly, this is a consequence of our individual defectiveness, the virtues of each being so limited as to permit Christ to show himself only partially through that one.

A simple natural image may illustrate how this may be. A coloured glass will transmit only its own shade of light, obstructing all the other shades. But when glasses of all the different colours jointly project their shades, these unite to make the fullness of light. Similarly, when Christians in some number combine for the purposes of the Lord, their qualities supplementing each other, he is enabled through them to manifest his perfection and his power more fully.

So, when legionaries gather together in the praesidium in his name and for his work, he is present in that potent way; it has been made evident that power goes out from him there. (Mk 5:30)

Also with Jesus in that little Legion family are his Mother and St. Joseph, who have towards the praesidium the same relation that they had to him; which permits us to look on the praesidium as a projection of the Home of Nazareth, and this not as a mere devotional exercise but as something based

on reality. "We are obliged," says Bérulle, "to treat the things and mysteries of Jesus not as things past and dead, but as things living and present and even eternal." Likewise we may piously identify the premises and equipment of the praesidium with the fabric and the furniture of the Holy House, and we may regard the behaviour of the legionaries towards those adjuncts of the praesidium as a test of their appreciation of the truth that Christ lives in us and works through us, necessarily availing of the things that we are utilising.

This thought provides a sweet and compelling motive for a bestowing of a careful attention upon the things that surround the praesidium and form its home.

Legionaries may have limited control over the room in which they meet, but other accessories of the meeting are more fully in their charge, such as the table, chairs, altar, books. How are the legionaries enabling the mother of the praesidium Home of Nazareth to reproduce in it the devoted housekeeping which she started long ago in Galilee? Their aid is necessary to her. They can deny it to her or they can give it negligently – thus perverting her work for the Mystical Christ. Faced with this idea, let legionaries try to imagine how Mary kept her home.

Poor it was, and its furniture far from elaborate. Yet it must have been most beautiful. For among the wives and mothers of all time, this one was unique, gifted with exquisite taste and refinement which could not but show themselves in every item of her home. Each simple detail must somehow have possessed a loveliness, each common thing a charm. For she loved – as only she could love – all those things because of him who made them and who now made human use of them. She cared them and cleaned them and polished them and tried to make them nice, for they had to be quite perfect in their way. We may be certain that there was not one jarring note in all that domicile. There could not possibly be. For that little house was like no other. It was the cradle for the redemption, the frame for the Lord of the world. Everything in it served strangely to mould him who had made all things. Therefore, everything had to be fit to serve that sublime purpose and fit it was by the order, cleanliness, brightness and indefinable quality which Mary contrived to impart to it.

In its own fashion, everything about the praesidium plays its part in moulding the member and therefore should reflect those characteristics of the Holy Home, just as the legionaries themselves should reflect Jesus and Mary.

A French author has written a book entitled "A Journey Around My Room." Make such a thoughtful journey around your praesidium and analyse most critically everything that strikes the eye and ear; the floor and walls and windows; the furniture; the components of the altar, in particular the statue which represents the pivot of the home, its mother. Above all, observe the demeanour of the members and the method of conducting the meeting.

If the sum total of what is seen and heard is unattuned to the Home of Nazareth, then it is not likely that the spirit of Nazareth abides in that praesidium. But without that spirit the praesidium is worse than dead.

Sometimes officers, like worthless parents, pervert those entrusted to their care. Nearly always the shortcomings of praesidia can be traced back to the officers. If members are unpunctual and irregular in their attendance, doing insufficient work and doing it irregularly, failing in their attitude at the meeting, it is because that defective behaviour is being accepted from them, because they are not being taught any better. They are being warped by the training they are receiving from their officers.

Contrast all that inadequacy with the Home of Nazareth. Imagine Our Lady being thus neglectful about details and order, giving that disfiguring sort of training to her child! Try – it is difficult, but try – to think of her as slatternly, weak, unreliable, indifferent; letting the Holy House go to wrack and ruin, so that it is the contemptuous talk of the neighbours! Of course the very idea is fantastic. Yet more than a few Legion officers let things drift thus shamefully in the praesidium Home of Nazareth which they profess to be administering as the very embodiments of Our Lady.

But if, on the other hand, all those things by their perfection prove the praesidium's devotion, then we may know that our Lord is there in that fullness indicated by his words. The spirit of the Holy Family was not confined by the Holy House, nor by Nazareth, nor by Judea, nor by any boundary. Neither, therefore, can the spirit of the praesidium be confined.

“Catholic love for the Mother of God shows a praiseworthy sense of the artistic by its reluctance to ask for elaborate details of the life at Nazareth. We know that at Nazareth there dwells a life that is not of man’s experience, hardly of man’s comprehension. Is there anyone here on earth who could draw a picture of those two lives of superhuman intensity which find in their very intensity a most complete blending of all their movements, affections, aspirations? Let me watch from the hilltop over Nazareth a woman going down to the well with the pitcher poised on her head, a boy of fifteen at her side. I know that between the two there is a love such as is not found among the spirits that dwell before the throne of God. But I know, too, that I am not entitled to see more lest I die of wonderment.”  
(Vonier: *The Divine Maternity*)

## 22

### THE PRAYERS OF THE LEGION

The following are the prayers of the Legion of Mary, divided in the manner in which they are to be said at meetings. Privately recited, this order need not be followed.

All these prayers are to be said daily by the auxiliary members.

The sign of the cross, specified at the beginning and the end of each section of the prayers, has reference to the dividing up of the prayers. When the prayers are not divided up, the sign of the cross is to be made only at the very beginning and end.

#### 1. Prayers to be said at the opening of the meeting

In the name of the Father, etc.

Come, O Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and  
enkindle in them the fire of your love.

∩ Send forth your Spirit, O Lord, and they shall be created.

R/ And you shall renew the face of the earth.

Let us pray

God our Father, pour out the gifts of your Holy Spirit on the world. You sent the Spirit on your Church to begin the teaching of the gospel: now let the Spirit continue to work in the world through the hearts of all who believe. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

℣ You, O Lord, will open my lips.

℞ And my tongue shall announce your praise.

℣ Incline unto my aid, O God.

℞ O Lord, make haste to help me.

℣ Glory be to the Father, etc.

℞ As it was in the beginning, etc.

*Then follow five decades of the rosary with the Hail, Holy Queen!*

℣ Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.

℞ That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray

O God, whose only-begotten Son, by his life, death and resurrection, has purchased for us the rewards of eternal salvation; grant, we beseech you, that meditating upon these mysteries in the most holy rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we may imitate what they contain, and obtain what they promise. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

℣ Most Sacred Heart of Jesus                      ℞ Have mercy on us.

℣ Immaculate Heart of Mary                      ℞ Pray for us.

℣ St. Joseph    ℞ Pray for us.

℣ St. John the Evangelist                      ℞ Pray for us.

℣ St. Louis-Marie de Montfort                      ℞ Pray for us.

In the name of the Father, etc.

**2. The Catena Legionis:** *to be said mid-way through the meeting; and daily by every legionary.*

*Antiphon.* Who is she that comes forth as the morning rising, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, terrible as an army set in battle array ?

My soul glorifies the Lord,\*  
 my spirit rejoices in God, my Saviour.  
 He looks on his servant in her lowliness;\*  
 henceforth all ages will call me blessed.

The Almighty works marvels for me.\*

Holy his name!

His mercy is from age to age,\*  
 on those who fear him.

He puts forth his arm in strength\*  
and scatters the proud-hearted.  
He casts the mighty from their thrones\*  
and raises the lowly.

He fills the starving with good things,\*  
sends the rich away empty.

He protects Israel, his servant,\*  
remembering his mercy,  
the mercy promised to our fathers,\*  
to Abraham and his sons for ever.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the  
Holy Spirit.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,  
world without end, Amen.

*Antiphon.* Who is she that comes forth as the morning  
rising, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, terrible as an army  
set in battle array?

∨ O Mary, conceived without sin.

℣ Pray for us who have recourse to you.

Let us pray

O Lord Jesus Christ, our mediator with the Father, you have  
been pleased to appoint the most Blessed Virgin, your Mother,  
to be our mother also, and our mediatrix with you, mercifully  
grant that whoever comes to you seeking your favours may  
rejoice to receive all of them through her. Amen.

**3. The Legion Prayer:** *to be said at the conclusion of the  
meeting. It is set out in a form which will facilitate reading.*

In the name of the Father, etc.

We fly to your patronage, O Holy Mother of God; despise  
not our prayers in our necessities, but ever deliver us from all  
dangers, O glorious and blessed Virgin.

∨ (Invocation appropriate to *praesidium*) ℣ Pray for us.

(*On all occasions other than praesidium meetings the invoca-  
tion to be used by all members will be: –*)

V Mary Immaculate, Mediatrix of all Graces R/ Pray for us.  
 V Saints Michael, Gabriel and Raphael R/ Pray for us.  
 V All you heavenly Powers, Mary's Legion  
     of Angels R/ Pray for us.  
 V St. John the Baptist R/ Pray for us.  
 V Saints Peter and Paul R/ Pray for us.

*The following is to be said in unison down to the first Amen; after that by the priest.*

Confer, O Lord, on us,  
 Who serve beneath the standard of Mary,  
 That fullness of faith in you and trust in her,  
 To which it is given to conquer the world.  
 Grant us a lively faith, animated by charity,  
 Which will enable us to perform all our actions  
 From the motive of pure love of you,  
 And ever to see you and serve you in our neighbour;  
 A faith, firm and immovable as a rock,  
 Through which we shall rest tranquil and steadfast  
 Amid the crosses, toils and disappointments of life;  
 A courageous faith which will inspire us  
 To undertake and carry out without hesitation  
 Great things for your glory and for the salvation of souls;  
 A faith which will be our Legion's Pillar of Fire –  
 To lead us forth united –  
 o kindle everywhere the fires of divine love –  
 To enlighten those who are in darkness and in the shadow  
     of death –  
 To inflame those who are lukewarm –  
 To bring back life to those who are dead in sin;  
 And which will guide our own feet in the way of peace;  
 So that – the battle of life over –  
 Our Legion may reassemble,  
 Without the loss of any one,  
 In the kingdom of your love and glory. Amen.  
 May the souls of our departed legionaries  
 And the souls of all the faithful departed  
 Through the mercy of God rest in peace. Amen.

*(Then follows immediately the blessing of the priest; or if no priest be present: – In the name of the Father, etc.)*

“Mary’s faith surpassed that of all men and all angels. She saw her Son in the stable at Bethlehem and she believed that he was the Creator of the world. She saw him fly from Herod and she never wavered in her faith that he was the King of kings. She saw him born, and believed him eternal. She saw him poor and without even the elemental necessities, and nevertheless she believed him to be the Master of the universe. She saw him lying on straw, and her faith told her that he was the All powerful One. She saw that he spoke not a word, yet she believed that he was the eternal Wisdom itself. She heard him cry and she believed that he was the joy of Paradise. And in the end she saw him dying, exposed to all manner of insult, affixed to a cross, and though the faith of all others was shaken, yet Mary persevered in her unhesitating belief that he was God.” (St. Alphonsus Liguori)

[This quotation does not form part of the Legion prayers.]

## 23

### THE PRAYERS INVARIABLE

The prayers of the Legion are to be regarded as invariable. Even in the invocations, no alteration or addition is to be made, either in respect of national, local, or particular saints, or where such alteration or addition would be a debatable matter.

This is a demand for sacrifice, but the demand only follows on a sacrifice which is one of the greatest of its kind, as will readily be conceded by those who know the land from which these Constitutions have come, and who understand the unique place in its affections held by its National Apostle.

It is true that the toleration of special invocations would not in itself be a large departure from common usage. Yet therein is contained the germ of a divergence in system, and the Legion dreads even that germ.

Again, the soul of the Legion is shown forth in its prayers, and it is fitting that the latter, by a uniformity most exact, shall typify – in whatever language they may in time be said – the complete unity of mind, heart, rule and practice, to which the Legion exhorts all who may anywhere serve beneath its standard.

“As you are the children of Christ, so be you children of Rome.”  
(St. Patrick)

“The things I pray for, dear Lord, give me the grace to labour for.  
(St. Thomas More)

## 24

# THE PATRONS OF THE LEGION

### 1. ST. JOSEPH

In the Legion’s prayers, St. Joseph’s name follows the invocations to the Hearts of Jesus and Mary, as he ranks next to them in the Court of Heaven. He was head of the Holy Family, fulfilling in regard to Jesus and Mary a primary and altogether special part. The same – no more, no less – this greatest of saints continues to render to the Mystical Body of Jesus and its Mother. The existence and activity of the Church, and therefore of the Legion, are sustained by him. His care is unfailing, vital, possessed of parental intimacy; is second only in influence to the mothering of Mary, and is to be so appreciated by the Legion. If his love is to be potent in us, we must open ourselves fully to it by a behaviour which reflects the intense devotion which he lavishes on us. Jesus and Mary were ever mindful of him and grateful to him for all he did for them. Similarly, legionaries must be attentive to him in a constant sort of way.

The Solemnity of St. Joseph, husband of the Blessed Virgin Mary occurs on 19 March.

The memorial of St. Joseph the Worker, occurs on 1 May.

“We cannot dissociate the historical life of Jesus from his mystical life continuing in the Church. It is not without reason that the Popes have proclaimed St. Joseph protector of the Church. His task has remained ever the same amid changing times and ways. As protector of the Church of Christ, he does no less than carry on his earthly mission. Since the days of Nazareth, God’s family has grown and spread to the ends of the earth. Joseph’s heart has expanded to the dimension of his new fatherhood, which prolongs and surpasses the paternity promised by God to Abraham, the father of a myriad. God does not vary in his dealings with us; there are no second thoughts, no arbitrary changes to His plan. All is one, ordered, consistent and continuous. Joseph, the foster-father of Jesus, is likewise foster-father to the brethren of Jesus, that is, to all Christians through the ages.

Joseph, the spouse of Mary who brought forth Jesus, remains mysteriously united to her while the mystical birth of the Church proceeds in the world. Hence, the legionary of Mary who is working to extend here below the Kingdom of God, that is the Church, rightly claims the special protection of him who was the head of the newborn Church, the Holy Family." (Cardinal L. J. Suenens)

## 2. ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST

Designated in the Gospel as "the disciple whom Jesus loved," St. John appears therein as the model of devotion to the Sacred Heart. Faithful to the end, he clung to that Heart till he saw it stilled and pierced in death. Afterwards, he is manifested as the model of devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Pure as an angel himself, he took the place which Jesus himself had filled, and he continued to render her the love of a son till she too died.

But our Lord's third word from the cross contained more than a filial provision for his Blessed Mother. In St. John, our Lord pointed out the human race, but above all those who would by faith attach themselves to him. Thus was proclaimed Mary's motherhood of men – the many brethren of whom Christ himself was the firstborn. St. John was the representative of all these new children, the first to enter upon the inheritance, a model to all who were to come after him, and a saint to whom the Legion owes tenderest devotion.

He loved the Church and every soul in it, and spent every faculty in its service. He was apostle, evangelist, and had the merit of martyr.

He was Mary's priest: therefore, a special patron to the legionary priest in his service of the organisation which aims to be a living copy of Mary.

His feast occurs on 27 December.

"When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, 'Woman, here is your son.' Then he said to the disciple, 'Here is your mother'. And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home." (Jn 19:26-27)

## 3. ST. LOUIS-MARIE DE MONTFORT

"In view of other decisions as to the inadmissibility of particular and local patrons, the inclusion of the name of Blessed Grignon de Montfort would at first sight appear to

be debatable ground. It can, however, be safely asserted that no saint has played a greater part in the development of the Legion than he. The handbook is full of his spirit. The prayers re-echo his very words. He is really the tutor of the Legion: thus invocation is due to him by the Legion almost as a matter of moral obligation." (Decision of the Legion placing the name of Blessed Grignon de Montfort in the list of invocations.)

He was canonised on 20 July, 1947, and his feast occurs on 28 April.

"Not only a founder, but missionary as well! And more than missionary; for we see yet another aspect: He is doctor and theologian, who has given us a mariology such as no one before him had conceived. So deeply has he explored the roots of marian devotion, so widely has he extended its horizons, that he has become without question the announcer of all the modern manifestations of Mary – from Lourdes to Fatima, from the definition of the Immaculate Conception to the Legion of Mary. He has constituted himself the herald of the coming of the reign of God through Mary, and the precursor of that longed-for salvation which in the fullness of time the Virgin Mother of God will bring to the world by her Immaculate Heart." (Federigo Cardinal Tedeschini, Archpriest of St. Peter's: Discourse at unveiling of statue of St. Louis-Marie de Montfort in Saint Peter's, 8 December, 1948)

"I clearly foresee that raging beasts will come in fury to tear to pieces with their diabolical teeth this little book and him whom the Holy Spirit has used to write it, or at least to bury it in the darkness and silence of a coffer, that it might not appear. They will even attack and persecute those who read it and put it into practice. But what matter? So much the better! This vision encourages me and makes me hope for great success, that is to say, for a mighty legion of brave and valiant soldiers of Jesus and Mary, of both sexes, to fight the devil, the world, and corrupt nature in those more than ever perilous times that are to come!" (St. Louis-Marie de Montfort (died 1716): True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary)

#### 4. ST. MICHAEL ARCHANGEL

"Although the prince of all the heavenly court, St. Michael is the most zealous in honouring Mary and causing her to be honoured, while he waits always in expectation that he may have the honour to go at her bidding to render service to some one of her servants." (St. Augustine)

St. Michael, the "commander of the army of the Lord" (Josh 5:14), has always been the patron of the chosen people,

first of the Old Law and then of the New. He remains the loyal defender of the Church, but his guardianship of the Jews did not lapse because they turned away. Rather it was intensified because of their need and because they are the blood-kindred of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. The Legion serves under St. Michael. Under his inspiration it must strive lovingly towards the restoration of that people with whom the Lord made an everlasting covenant of love.

“According to Revelation, the angels who participate in the life of the Trinity in the light of glory, are called to play their part in the history of the salvation of man, in the moments established by Divine Providence.

‘Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to serve, for the sake of those who possess salvation?’ asks the author of the Letter to the Hebrews. (1:14) This is believed and taught by the Church, on the basis of Sacred Scripture, from which we learn that the task of the good angels is the protection of people and solicitude for their salvation.” (Pope St. John Paul II, General Audience, 6 August 1986)

The feast of Saints Michael, Gabriel and Raphael, Archangels is celebrated on 29 September.

## 5. ST. GABRIEL ARCHANGEL

In some of the liturgies St. Gabriel and St. Michael are jointly hailed as: champions and princes, leaders of the heavenly army; captains of the angels; servants of the divine glory; guardians and guides of human creatures.

St. Gabriel is the Angel of the Annunciation. It was through him that the compliments of the Holy Trinity were addressed to Mary; that the mystery of the Trinity was first stated to man; that the Incarnation was announced; that the Immaculate Conception was declared; that the first notes of the Rosary were struck.

Reference has been made above to the concern of St. Michael for the Jews. Perhaps the same can be said of St. Gabriel and the Muslims. These believe that it was he who communicated their religion to them. That claim, though unfounded, represents an attention to him which he will seek to repay in a fitting way, that is, by enlightening them in respect of the Christian revelation of which he was the custodian. But he cannot by himself effect that transformation. Always human co-operation must play its part.

Jesus and Mary have a strangely dominant place in the Koran, being shown there almost as in the Gospel but without any function. That holy Pair will be kept thus waiting in Islam until someone goes to help them to explain and assert themselves. It has been proved that the Legion has a gift in that way and that its members are received with appreciation by the Muslims. What rich substance for explanation lies in all that Koran material!

The feast of Saints Michael, Gabriel and Raphael, Archangels is celebrated on 29 September.

“The scriptures show us one of the highest of heaven’s nobility sent in visible form to announce to Mary the mystery of the Incarnation. Mary was asked to become the Mother of God by an angel because by her divine motherhood she would hold sovereignty, power and dominion over all angels. ‘It can be said,’ writes Pope Pius XII, ‘that the Archangel Gabriel was the first heavenly messenger of the royal office of Mary.’ (Ad Caeli Reginam). Gabriel is honoured as patron of those who undertake important missions, who bear important news for God. He bore God’s message to Mary. In that moment she took the place of all mankind and he was representative of all the angels. Their dialogue, which will inspire men to the end of time, made a treaty on which will arise ‘new heavens and a new earth’. How wonderful, then, was he who spoke to Mary; how wrong it is to reduce his role to one of mere passive recitation. He had been fully enlightened and gave evidence of the widest possible resource. Reverent to Mary, he met fully every enquiry she made, for he was God’s spokesman and trustee. From the meeting between Gabriel and Our Lady came the renewal of creation. The New Eve reversed the ruin wrought by the first Eve. The New Adam, as the Head of the Mystical Body which includes the angels, restored not only mankind but also the honour of the angels tarnished by the false angel.” (Dr. Michael O’Carroll, C.S.Sp.)

## 6. ST. RAPHAEL ARCHANGEL

Saint Raphael is known as the angel of healing not least spiritual healing. The Hebrew name Rafa’el means “God heals”. He is also known as the patron saint of travellers, the blind, happy meetings and Christian marriage.

He appears in the Old Testament Book of Tobit, in which he disguises himself as a man named Azarias and accompanies Tobias on his journey to Media, aiding him along the way. During the course of the journey, the archangel’s protective influence is shown in various ways, including the binding of

a demon in the desert of Upper Egypt. In chapter 3 (Tob 3:24-25) he is mentioned as follows: "This time the prayer of each of them (Tobit and Sarah) found favour before the glory of God, and Raphael was sent to bring remedy to them both." Chapter 12 refers to his healing powers (Tob 12:14-18): "I was sent to test your faith, and at the same time God sent me to heal you and your daughter-in-law Sarah. I am Raphael, one of the seven angels who stand ever ready to enter the presence of the glory of the Lord.' They were both overwhelmed with awe; they fell on their faces in terror. But the angel said, 'Do not be afraid; peace be with you. Bless God for ever. As far as I was concerned, when I was with you, my presence was not by any decision of mine, but by the will of God; it is he whom you must bless throughout your days, he that you must praise.'"

The Gospel of John (Jn 5:1-4) refers to the pool of Bethesda, where the multitude of the infirm lay awaiting the moving of the water, "... for at intervals the angel of the Lord came down into the pool, and the water was disturbed, and the first person to enter the water after this disturbance was cured of any ailment he suffered from." Because of the healing role assigned to St. Raphael, this particular angel is associated with the archangel.

The feast of Saints Michael, Gabriel and Raphael, Archangels is celebrated on 29 September.

## 7. THE HEAVENLY POWERS, MARY'S LEGION OF ANGELS

"Regina Angelorum! Queen of the Angels! What enchantment, what a foretaste of heaven it is to think thus of Mary our mother ceaselessly accompanied by legions of angels!" (St. John XXIII.)

"Mary is the general of the armies of God. The angels form the most glorious troops of her who is terrible as an army set in battle array!" (Boudon: The Angels.)

From the first, the angels were invoked in the Legion prayers. The form followed was:

St. Michael, Archangel, pray for us.

Our Holy Guardian Angels, pray for us.

In this one must suppose that the Legion was guided, for the closeness of the angels' relation to the Legion was not then so clearly seen. As time went on, the appropriateness of the recourse to the angels became more and more evident. It was realised that the angels are a heavenly counterpart of the legionary campaign. This alliance has different aspects. Every legionary, active and auxiliary, has a guardian angel who fights blow for blow at his side. In a sense that battle means more to the angel than to the legionary, for the angel perceives vividly the issues at stake: God's glory and the value of the immortal soul. So the interest of the angel is most intense, and his support unflinching. But all the other angels are likewise concerned in this warfare. For instance, all those for whom the Legion works have their guardian angels who lend their help.

In addition, the entire angelic army hastens to the scene. For our battle is part of the main struggle which from the first they have maintained against Satan and his minions.

An impressive place is assigned to the angels in both the Old and the New Testaments where there are several hundred references to them. They are represented as paralleling the human warfare and as having an intimate protective office in regard to men. They intervene at important junctures. The phrase constantly recurs: "God sent his angel." All the nine choirs of angels have guardianship of some kind: over individuals, places, cities, countries; over nature; and some even over their fellow-angels. Scripture shows that even heathen kingdoms have their guardian angels. (Dan 4:10, 20, 10:13) The choirs are named as being: Angels, Archangels, Cherubim, Seraphim, Powers, Principalities, Thrones, Virtues and Dominations.

The position is, accordingly, that the angels aid as a body as well as individually, playing a part analogous to that of an airforce in relation to a surface army.

It was finally seen that the existing angelic invocation was not expressive of this universal protective role of the angels. It was decided:

- (a) that it should be recast to a better form;
- (b) that the word "Legion" should be linked with the angels. Our Lord himself had applied it to the angels,

hallowing the word by thus taking it on his lips. When menaced by his enemies, he said: "Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels?" (Mt 26:53)

(c) that the name of Mary should be introduced into the invocation. She is Queen of the Angels. She is truly the Commander of the Angelic Legion and it would be a new grace to our Legion to salute her under that deeply significant title.

Prolonged discussion throughout the Legion resulted in the adoption on 19 August, 1962, of the following form of invocation:

"All ye heavenly Powers, Mary's Legion of Angels, pray for us."

The memorial of the Guardian Angels occurs on 2 October.

"Our Lady's queenship of the angels must not be taken as a term of honour only. Her royal office is a participation in that of Christ and he has absolute universal dominion over creation. Theologians have not yet explained all the modes of Our Lady's joint rule with Christ the King. But it is clear that her royalty is a principle of action and that the effects of this action reach out to the confines of the visible and invisible universe. She rules the good spirits and controls the bad. Through her is made that indissoluble alliance of human and angelic society by which all creation will be led to its true end, the glory of the Trinity. Her queenship is our shield, for our mother and protectress has the power to command angels to help us. For her it means active partnership with her son in the loosening and destruction of Satan's empire over men." (Dr. Michael O'Carroll, C.S.Sp.)

## 8. ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

It is a strange fact, not easily explained, that it was not until 18 December, 1949 that St. John the Baptist was formally placed among the patrons of the Legion. For he is more intimately bound up with the devotional scheme of the Legion than any of its other patrons, with the exception of St. Joseph.

(a) He was the type of all legionaries, that is, a forerunner of the Lord, going before him to prepare his way and make straight his paths. He was a model of unshakable strength and devotion to his cause for which he was ready to die, and for which he did die.

(b) Moreover, he was formed for his work by Our Blessed Lady herself, as all legionaries are supposed to be. St. Ambrose declares that the main purpose of Our Lady's considerable stay with Elizabeth was the forming and appointing of the little Great-Prophet. The moment of that formation is celebrated by the Catena, our central prayer, which is laid as a daily duty on every legionary.

(c) That episode of the Visitation exhibits Our Lady in her capacity as Mediatrix for the first time, and St. John as the first beneficiary. Thereby was St. John exhibited from the first as a special patron of legionaries and of all legionary contacts, of the work of visitation in all its forms, and indeed of all legionary actions – these being but efforts to co-operate in Mary's mediatorial office.

(d) He was one of the essential elements in the mission of our Lord. All those elements should find a place in any system which seeks to reproduce that mission. The precursor remains necessary. If he be not there to introduce Jesus and Mary, perhaps they may not come upon the scene at all. Legionaries must recognise this special place of St. John, and by their faith in him enable him to pursue his mission. "If Jesus is perpetually 'he who comes', likewise St. John is he who ever precedes him, for the economy of the historical Incarnation of Christ is continued in his Mystical Body." (Daniélou.)

(e) The appropriate place for the invocation of St. John is in the Concluding Prayers next after the angels. Those prayers then picture the Legion in forward march, dominated by the Holy Spirit manifesting himself through Our Lady as a Pillar of Fire; supported by the Angelic Legion and its heads, Saints Michael, Gabriel and Raphael, preceded by its scout or precursor, St. John, as ever fulfilling his providential mission; then its generals, Saints Peter and Paul.

(f) St. John the Baptist has two liturgical celebrations. That of his nativity occurs on 24 June, and of his martyrdom on 29 August.

"I believe that the mystery of John is still being accomplished in the world of today. Whoever is to believe in Christ Jesus, the spirit and virtue of John must first come into his soul and prepare for the Lord a perfect people, make straight the paths in the rough places of his heart and smooth the ways. Up to this day the spirit and virtue of John go before the coming of the Lord and Saviour. (Origen)

## 9. ST. PETER

“St. Peter, as prince of the apostles, is pre-eminently the patron for an apostolic organisation. He was the first Pope, but stands for all the illustrious line of Pontiffs, and for the present Holy Father. In invoking St. Peter, we express once again a Legion’s loyalty to Rome, the centre of our faith, the source of authority, discipline, unity.” (Decision of the Legion placing St. Peter’s name in the list of invocations.)

The feast of Saints Peter and Paul occurs on 29 June.

“And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” (Mt 16:18-19)

## 10. ST. PAUL

A soul that is to win others must be great and wide as the ocean. To convert the world, one’s soul must be greater than the world. Such was St. Paul from the day when a sudden light from heaven shone round about him, and threw its radiance into his soul, and enkindled therein the burning desire to fill the world with the Name and Faith of Christ. The Apostle of the Gentiles – his work is his name. Untiringly he laboured till the sword of the executioner sent his indomitable spirit to God, and then his writings lived on, and ever will live, to continue his mission.

It is the way of the Church ever to join him with St. Peter in its prayer, which is praise indeed. It is fitting, too, for together these two great ones consecrated Rome by their martyrdom.

The Church celebrates their feast on the same day, 29 June.

“With far greater labours, far more imprisonments, with countless floggings, and often near death. Five times I have received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I received a stoning. Three times I was shipwrecked; for a night and a day I was adrift at sea; on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from bandits, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers and sisters; in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, hungry and thirsty, often without food, cold and naked.” (2 Cor 11:23-27)

# 25

## THE LEGION PICTURE

1. This handbook bears a reproduction of the Legion Picture. The original was painted by a brilliant young Dublin artist as an offering to the Legion. As might be expected from work animated by this spirit, the picture is one of extreme beauty and inspiration, which is caught even by the small reproduction.

2. The picture is a most complete, in fact an astonishing showing forth of the devotional outlook of the Legion.

3. The legionary prayers are made visible. The invocation and prayer of the Holy Spirit and the Rosary, which comprise the opening prayers, are pictured by the Dove overshadowing Mary, filling her with light and the fire of his love. In these prayers the Legion honours the moment which is the centre-point of all time. Mary's consent to the Incarnation made her alike Mother of God and Mother of Divine Grace; so her legionary children bind themselves to her with her Rosary, taking to heart the words of Bl. Pius IX: "I could conquer the world if I had an army to say the Rosary."

Again, there is allusion to Pentecost, where Mary was the channel of that other outpouring of the Holy Spirit which may be called the Confirmation of the Church. With visible signs he promulgated the Church, filling it with the apostolic fire which was to renew the face of the earth. "It was her most powerful intercession that obtained for the new-born Church that prodigious outpouring of the Spirit of the divine redeemer" (MC 110). Without her, that fire would not be enkindled in the hearts of men.

4. The Catena is represented, as to its name, by the chain-border. Truly befitting the antiphon is the portrayal of Mary, coming forth as the morning rising, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, terrible as an army set in battle array. On her brow she bears a brilliant star, to mark her who is the true Morning Star, bathed from the first in the beams of redeeming grace and heralding the dawn of salvation.

The Magnificat is represented by its opening verse, the ever-present thought of Mary's mind, appropriately set in letters of fire above her head. The Magnificat sings of the

triumph of her humility. It is no less now than then the will of God to depend upon the humble Virgin of Nazareth for his conquests. By the agency of those united with her, he continues to accomplish great things for his name.

The versicle and response are those of the Immaculate Conception, a primary devotion of the Legion, which is expressed in the crushing of the serpent. The words set in the border: \* "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will strike your head." (Gen 3:15) have the same reference. The picture shows this undying warfare: Mary and the serpent; her children and the serpent's offspring; the Legion and the powers of evil, which fall back scattered in defeat.

The Catena prayer is that of Mary, Mediatrix of All Graces, Mother of God and Mother of all men.

At the top of the picture is the Holy Spirit the giver of all good gifts: below, the globe surrounded by the good and the bad, typifying the world of souls: between the two, Mary full of grace, all aflame with charity, the universal channel of intercession and distribution. But first she will enrich those truest children who, like St. John, have rested on the Heart of Jesus and have lovingly accepted her as mother. The words in the border: † "Woman, here is your son.... Here is your mother." (Jn 19:26-27) point to the manifestation, amid the inconceivable sorrows of Calvary, of that motherhood.

5. The concluding prayers are mirrored in every line of the picture. The Legion is depicted as a host innumerable, advancing in battle-array under the leadership of its Queen and bearing her standards, "the crucifix in their right hands, the Rosary in their left, the sacred names of Jesus and Mary in their hearts and the modesty and mortification of Jesus Christ in their behaviour" (St. Louis-Marie de Montfort). Their prayer is for a faith which will supernaturalise every instinct and action of their lives, and enable them to dare and do all things for Christ the King. That faith is represented by the Pillar of Fire which melts all legionary hearts into one, and guides them on to victory and to the Land of Eternal Promise,

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\* "Inimicitias ponam inter te et mulierem et semen tuum et semen illius; ipsum conteret caput tuum". (Gen 3:15)

† "Mulier, ecce filius tuus: ... Ecce mater tua." (Jn 19:26-27)

casting abroad as it proceeds the life-giving flames of divine love. The pillar is Mary who saved the world by her faith ("Blessed is she who believed." (Lk 1:45)\* in the border), and who now, through encircling gloom, leads on unerringly those who call her blessed, until the everlasting splendour of the Lord God come upon them.

6. The prayers end with a pointing from the legionary labours to that roll-call of eternity, when the faithful legionaries will muster shoulder to shoulder, not a single one missing, to receive the incorruptible crown of their membership.

In the meantime: a prayer for those for whom the conflict has ceased and who await the glorious Resurrection, and who may need their comrades' supplication.

"In the Old Testament we read that the Lord conducted his people from Egypt to the land of promise, 'by day in a pillar of cloud and by night in a pillar of fire.' (Ex 13:21) This stupendous pillar, at one time of cloud and at another of fire, was a figure of Mary and of the various offices which she performs on our behalf." (St. Alphonsus Liguori)

## 26

### THE TESSERA

A leaflet called the *Tessera*, containing the Prayers of the Legion and bearing a reproduction of the Legion Picture, shall be issued to every member, active and auxiliary.

In Latin, *Tessera* had the particular meaning of a tally or token which was divided among friends in order that they or their descendants might always recognise each other. As a military expression, it signified the square tablet upon which the watchword was written and circulated through the Roman Legion.

The Legion of Mary applies the word *Tessera* to the leaflet containing its prayers and picture. Here, too, are contained the ideas of (a) universal circulation in the Legion; (b) the setting out of the true watchword of the Legion – its prayers;

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\* "Beata quae credit." (Lk 1:45)

and (c) a token of unity and fraternity between all legionaries, wherever found. Incidentally this same idea of universality applies to the dozen other Latin terms used to designate features of the system. These so aid intercommunication as to be quite indispensable. The objection that they constitute a foreign element in the Legion is inadmissible. They have so taken root as now to be legionary words. It would do grave injustice to the Legion to strip it of such useful and distinctive plumage.

“Travellers together in this miserable world, we are all so weak that we mutually require the supporting arm of our brother to prevent our fainting by the way. But in the order of salvation and grace, God especially requires that we be united together. Prayer is the bond which thus unites all hearts and voices, making them as one. Our strength lies in united prayer; this alone will render us invincible. Let us then hasten to unite our prayers, our efforts, our desires together, all of which being powerful of themselves, will by union prove irresistible.” (Ramière)

## 27

# VEXILLUM LEGIONIS

### THE STANDARD OF THE LEGION

The *Vexillum Legionis* is an adaptation of the standard of the Roman Legion. The eagle which surmounted the standard is replaced by the Dove, the emblem of the Holy Spirit. Beneath the Dove a cross-bar bears the inscription “Legio Mariae” (Legion of Mary). Intermediate between cross-bar and staff (and joined to the former by a rose and a lily) is an oval frame bearing a representation of the Immaculate Conception (the Miraculous Medal). The staff is set in a globe which, for use on a table, stands on a square base. The whole design conveys the idea that the world is to be conquered by the Holy Spirit acting through Mary and her children.

(a) A representation of the vexillum should appear on the official notepaper of the Legion.

(b) A model of the vexillum should stand on the table at meetings about six inches (15 cm.) in advance of, and about six inches (15 cm.) to the right of the statue. The table model customarily used is inclusive of the base,  $1\frac{3}{4}$  inches (32 cm.) in height. A photograph is to be found on page 380. Vexilla in metal and onyx may be obtained from the Concilium.

(c) A large model (as shown in photograph on page 381) will be required for processional purposes and for use at the Acies. It should be about  $6\frac{1}{2}$  feet (2 m.) high, of which about 2 feet (60 cm.) would represent the length of staff below the globe. The remainder should be made according to the design on page 151 on the scale of one foot per inch (12 to 1). The staff fits into a base (not part of the vexillum) to hold it erect at the Acies and when not being carried.

This large vexillum is not supplied by the Concilium but can easily be made and painted locally. Councils and praesidia desiring more elaborate equipment will, no doubt, have recourse to materials other than wood. The design affords much scope for artistic treatment.

(d) The table vexillum is copyright and may be produced only with specific permission of the Concilium.

“That beautiful standard of the Legion of Mary.” (Pope Pius XI)

## VEXILLUM LEGIONIS

## The Standard of the Legion



“Saint Louis-Marie de Montfort has realised with the utmost clarity that there must be no separating of the Virgin from the Holy Spirit. The Legion of Mary has imbibed with a complete conviction his teaching in regard to that bond of union, and for that reason is earnestly seeking for a deeper knowledge of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.” (Laurentin)

# 28

## GOVERNMENT OF THE LEGION

### 1. OF APPLICATION TO ALL GOVERNING BODIES

1. The government, local and central, of the Legion shall be carried on by its councils, whose duty in their respective spheres shall be to ensure unity, to preserve the original ideals of the Legion of Mary, to guard the integrity of the Legion spirit and rules and practice as set forth in the official handbook of the Legion, and to spread the organisation.

The Legion in any area will be as good as these councils wish to make it.

2. All councils should hold regular frequent meetings, that is, as a general rule not less frequently than once a month.

3. The prayers, setting and order of the meetings of any council of the Legion shall be identical with that prescribed in the case of the praesidium, save that, (a) the time-limit on length shall not apply; (b) the standing instruction need not be read; (c) the secret bag collection shall be optional.

4. A primary duty of any council is that of allegiance to its next highest council.

5. No praesidium or council shall be instituted without the formal permission of its next-highest council or of the Concilium Legionis, and the approval of the appropriate ecclesiastical authority.

6. To the bishop of the diocese and to the Concilium Legionis severally is reserved the right to dissolve an existing praesidium or council. On dissolution, a praesidium or council ceases at once to be part of the Legion of Mary.

7. Each council shall have a priest as Spiritual Director, who shall be appointed by the appropriate ecclesiastical authority, and shall hold office at the pleasure of that same authority. He shall have decisive authority in all moral and religious matters raised at the meetings of the council, and he shall have a suspensive veto on all the proceedings, with a view to

obtaining the decision of the authority by whom he was appointed.

The Spiritual Director ranks as an officer of such council, and he shall uphold all due legionary authority.

8. Each council shall also have a President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer, and such other officers as shall be approved as necessary by the next-highest council. They shall be elected to serve for a period of three years and are eligible for re-election to the same respective offices for a further consecutive period of three years (that is a total of six years). A legionary whose term of office has expired must not continue to fulfil the duties of that office.

When an officer for any reason whatsoever does not complete a first term of three years, he is to be regarded as having served a period of three years on the date on which he vacates the office. During the unexpired period he is eligible for election to the same office for another period of three years, which will be considered as a second term. If an officer does not complete the full three years of a second term he is to be regarded as having served a period of six years on the date on which he vacates the office.

Having completed a second term of office an interval of three years must elapse before a legionary is eligible for election to the same office in the same council. This interval is not required where another officership in the same council or any officership in another council is in question.

Every council officer must be an active member of a praesidium and is subject to the standing instruction.

9. The raising of the status of a council (for example, Curia to Comitium, etc.) shall not affect the terms of office of the existing officers.

10. The officers of a council shall be elected at an ordinary meeting of the council by the members of the council (that is, the officers of any directly affiliated praesidia, the officers of any directly affiliated councils and any elected officers of the council) who are present. Every legionary is eligible for such election. If elected and if not a member of the council he shall become a member *ex officio*. All elections of officers

shall be subject to ratification by the next-highest council, but in the meantime the persons elected may discharge the functions of their offices.

11. Notice of the taking of nominations and the holding of an election shall be given to the members, if at all possible, at the meeting prior to that of the election. It is desirable that nominees should be made aware of the duties of the office.

12. It is allowable to comment – with proper restraint of course – on the suitability of candidates. It is also allowable for the officers of a council, if they are all agreed as to the suitability of a particular candidate, to declare that as a body they recommend that person. But that recommendation must not operate against the nomination of other candidates or against the full form of election.

13. The election shall be made by secret ballot. The manner of such election shall be as follows:

The election for each officership is to be taken separately, and in descending order. **Each name put forward must be formally proposed and seconded.** If only one name be put forward, it is of course unnecessary to proceed to a ballot. If two or more names are duly proposed and seconded, a ballot shall be taken. A voting paper is to be given to each member of the council (including the Spiritual Directors) who is present and entitled to vote. Careful attention is to be given to the latter requirement; only members of the council are entitled to vote. When filled up, the papers are to be folded carefully and then collected by the scrutineers. The name of the voter is not to appear on the voting paper.

If the count shows that one candidate has obtained a clear majority of the votes, that is, a number greater than those of all the other candidates added together, then that candidate is to be declared elected. But if no one has secured a clear majority, the results of the voting are to be read out; then the same candidates are to be re-voted for. Should this second ballot fail to yield a clear majority to one candidate, then the candidate who has secured the lowest number of votes is to be eliminated and a re-vote taken on the remaining candidates. If this third ballot is also ineffectual, procedure is to be by way of successive eliminations and re-votes until one

candidate has secured the necessary clear majority of the votes.

The fact that the election is in respect of officers of a spiritual organisation is not to be held to justify casual methods. The elections must be carried out in strict and proper form, and with due regard to the secrecy of the individual voting paper.

It is necessary that a complete record of the elections, including the names of the proposers and seconders and the number of votes received by each candidate (when there is more than one candidate) be included in the minutes of the meeting.

14. The representatives of a praesidium or of a council to its next highest council shall be its officers.

15. Experience has shown the appointment of correspondents to be the most effective way for a higher council to fulfil its functions of superintendence of its distant affiliated councils. The correspondent keeps in regular contact with the council and from the minutes received monthly prepares a report for presentation to the higher council meeting when required. He attends the higher council meetings and takes part in the proceedings but, unless he is a member of the higher council, he has not the right to vote.

16. With the permission of a council, other persons, whether members of the Legion or not, may attend the meetings of that council in the capacity of visitors, but shall not be entitled to vote there. Such persons are bound by the confidentiality of the meeting.

17. The councils of the Legion shall be the Curia, the Comitium, the Regia, the Senatus, and the Concilium Legionis, and any other councils which may be set up under the Statutes.

18. The Latin names of the various councils accord fairly well with the functions which those councils fulfil.

In the Legion, Mary is Queen. She it is who summons her legionary hosts to their glorious warfare and commands them in the field, inspires them, and personally leads them on to victory. It is a natural step from the Queen to her special

council, or "Concilium," which would represent her visibly and share her superintendence of all the other legionary governing bodies.

The district councils will be essentially representative bodies, the higher councils less so, by reason of the practical impossibility of securing a full attendance at the regular meetings of central councils representative of extensive areas. Thus the titles of "Curia," "Comitium," "Regia," and "Senatus," set forth the character and status of the respective bodies and are appropriate to the areas served.

19. A higher council may combine with its own proper functions the functions of a lower council. A *Senatus*, for instance, may also act as a *Curia*. This combination of functions can be advantageous for the following reasons: –

(a) Usually it will be the same persons who will be concerned in the management both of the higher council in question and of the district council. It would spare those legionaries if one meeting could be made to serve the purpose of two.

(b) But there is a more important consideration. The normal representation of the higher council is drawn from a large area, so that it may be found impossible to secure a full attendance at the regular frequent meetings which it must hold. As a result, a small group of earnest legionaries will be found burdened with a heavy responsibility and a great volume of work. Inevitably, much of the work will be performed indifferently or left undone, with serious hurt to the Legion.

The combination of the functions of such higher body with those of the lower will ensure a large and constant attendance of members. These will not only perform the duties proper to the lower council, but will be interested and educated in the work of the higher body. It then becomes possible to enlist them in the all-important supervisory, extension, and clerical work of the higher body.

It may be objected that such an expedient amounts to giving the government of a large area to a body which is virtually a district council. This is misleading, because it is only the nucleus of that higher council which is proper to the

district. The representatives of every affiliated council have the duty to attend and no doubt conscientiously do so to the best of their ability. The alternative which is proposed is that the higher council should function separately, contenting itself with, say, four meetings in the year. By this means it would be enabled to secure a large representative attendance. But indeed such a proposal, alleged to be in the interests of representative government, is far from being so in reality. For during the long intervals between its meetings, that council must necessarily leave its functions to be discharged by its officers. Thus only in name is the council exercising the functions of government. As a consequence its members soon lose the sense of responsibility and all real interest in its work. Moreover, a body meeting so rarely would be more like a Congress than a council. It would not possess the qualifications for governing, the chief of which is the sense of continuity and of mental closeness to the work of administration and its problems.

20. Every legionary is entitled to communicate privately with his Curia or with any higher council of the Legion. In dealing with anything thus imparted to it, that council shall act with circumspection and of course, with due respect for the position and rights of any subordinate Legion body. It may be objected that departure from the normal channel of communication with higher bodies, which is through one's own immediate body (praesidium or council), would be an act of disloyalty. That is not so. For the fact has to be faced that for various reasons officers sometimes withhold from higher bodies matters which should be reported to them; so that – were there no other avenue of information open – those higher bodies would be deprived of necessary knowledge. Each council has the right – without which it could not function properly – to know what is really taking place in the sphere committed to its care, and this essential right must be safeguarded.

21. The duty of contributing to the funds of its next highest council is imposed on each legionary body. In this connection see chapters 34 and 35.

22. The very essence of a legionary council is its frank and free discussion of its business and problems. It is not merely a supervising or decision-making body, but a school for officers. But how can these be educated if there is no discussion, no bringing out of legionary principles, ideals, etc.? Moreover, that discussion must be general. On no account must a council resemble a theatre in which a small minority is performing to a silent audience. The council only functions fully if all its members contribute to it. A member is not functioning in the council if he plays no active part in it. By listening, he may receive something from the council but he gives nothing to it. Indeed he may come away empty-minded from the council by virtue of the psychological fact that inertness dulls memory. The habitually silent member of the council is like an inert cell in the human brain or body, which is holding back something that is needed from it, which betrays its purpose, and which is a potential danger to the person. It would be sad if anyone became that danger to the legionary body which he so desires to serve. Passivity, where activity is vitally required, is like decay; and decay tends to spread itself.

Therefore, as a matter of principle, no member is to be passive. He must make his full contribution to the life of the body, not merely by being present and by listening but by talking. It sounds ridiculous to say, but it is seriously meant: **Each member should contribute at least an annual remark.** In some shy persons everything will rise up against the idea of talking. But their reluctance must be conquered, and herein should be displayed a little of that courage which the Legion expects in all circumstances.

To the foregoing there is the obvious retort that it would be impossible for everyone to talk in the time available; and no doubt that is the case. But let that problem be dealt with when it presents itself. Ordinarily the problem is the opposite one, namely inadequate participation, all the contributions coming from a handful of hardened speakers. Sometimes the silence of the body is masked by the eloquence of the few. Much too often, the President, by excessive speaking, suppresses all others. Greatly to be feared is the damping effect of the single voice. Sometimes the President excuses himself for this by alleging that if he did not talk, there would

be dead silence. Perhaps that is true, but he must not fear the moment of silence. That silence would be the most eloquent invitation to the members to bring the council to life with their voice-transfusions. It would be a reassurance to the more timid ones that now is their moment; now they are not preventing anyone else from talking by saying something themselves.

It must be the set policy of the President not to utter one unnecessary word. He should analyse his handling of the meeting from this point of view.

23. To help the meeting, do not speak challengingly; nor ask a question without adding some idea as to the answer; nor raise a difficulty without trying to solve it. To be merely negative is only a poor step from that destructive silence.

24. To win over, not to vote down, should be the keynote of any Legion meeting. A hasty forcing of a decision may leave two parties, a minority and a victorious majority, with irritated feelings and hardened differences. On the other hand, decisions which have been come to after patient examination and ample ventilation of views, will be received by all, and in such a spirit that the loser gains merit by his defeat, and the winner does not lose it by victory.

So, when differences of opinion are found to exist, those who are obviously in the majority must exhibit a complete patience. They may be wrong, and it would be a grievous thing to win an incorrect position. Decision should, if possible, be postponed to another meeting, and perhaps again and again, so as to allow minute consideration. Members should be made acquainted with every angle of the question, and taught to pray for light. All must be made to realise that it is not the victory of an opinion which is at stake, but a humble quest of God's wishes in the matter. Then it will commonly be found that unanimity has come about.

25 If the interests of harmony are to be vigilantly guarded in the praesidium, where occasions for differences of opinion occur but seldom, what caution must be exercised in the councils; because:

- (a) There, members are less accustomed to work together.

(b) Differences of opinion are many, one of the chief functions of the councils being to adjust such differences. The consideration of new works, efforts after higher standards, disciplinary interests in general, discussion of defects – all these necessarily tend to create differences of opinion which may develop unpleasantly.

(c) Where the members are numerous, it is only too easy to find among them a few persons who, though excellent workers, are of the type commonly termed “cranks.” These exercise on an assembly a most unhappy influence. Their working abilities win for them a following. They bring about an atmosphere of disputation with its sequel of ill-feeling. In the end the body which should be the model to those below it, an object-lesson in fraternity and in the method of conducting business, is found setting a bad example to all legionaries. The heart is pumping acid through the Legion circulation.

(d) False loyalties so often operate, that is, a tendency to tilt against some neighbouring or higher council, which is alleged (Oh how easily a plausible case is made and wins acceptance!) to be exceeding its powers or acting unworthily.

(e) “Never do men come together in considerable numbers, but the passion, self-will, pride, and unbelief, which may be more or less dormant in them one by one, bursts into a flame and becomes a constituent of their union. Even when faith exists in the whole people, even when religious men combine for religious purposes, still when they form into a body, they evidence in no long time the innate debility of human nature; and in their spirit and conduct, in their avowals and proceedings, they are in grave contrast to Christian simplicity and straightforwardness. This is what the sacred writers mean by the ‘world,’ and why they warn us against it; and their description of it applies in its degree to all collections and parties of men, high and low, national and professional, lay and ecclesiastical.” (St. John Henry Newman: *In the World*)

These are startling words, but they come from a very profound thinker. St. Gregory Nazianzen says the same thing in different terms. When analysed, what seems so strange a statement resolves itself into this: that the “world” is lack of charity; that charity is weak in us; that this weakness is

covered to some extent by ties of relationship, intimacy, friendship (things proper to small numbers); but that when the numbers grow large, and criticism and disagreements operate, the weaknesses in that charity tend to declare themselves with most unhappy results. "God Himself and charity are one and the same thing," says St. Bernard. "Where charity does not reign, the passions and lusts of the flesh rule. The torch of faith, if it be not lighted by the fire of charity, will never last long enough to guide us to eternal happiness .... There is no true virtue without charity."

It is of little use for legionaries to read the above pronouncements of danger, and then to vow that amongst them "such shall never be." It can be, and will be if there are defects of charity at their meetings, if the supernatural spirit is allowed to weaken there. Vigilance must never relax. We read in history that the Roman Legion never passed a night, even in the longest marches, without pitching a camp, entrenching it, and fortifying it most elaborately; and this even though only a single night would be spent in it, even though the enemy was afar, even in time of peace. With some approach to this exact discipline, let the Legion of Mary apply itself to the protection of its camps (which are its assemblies) against the possibility of invasion by this fatal spirit of "the world." This protection will lie in the exclusion of all words and attitudes which are hostile to charity, and, generally, in the saturation of the meetings with the spirit of prayer and full Legion devotion.

"Grace, no less than nature, has its feelings and its affections. It has its love, its zeal, its hopes, its joys, its sorrows. Now, those 'feelings' of grace have always been in their fullness in Our Blessed Lady, who lived much more by the life of grace than by the life of nature. The vast majority of the faithful are rather in the state of grace than in the life of grace. Quite different to them, the Holy Virgin has been always in grace and – more than that – in the life of grace, and in the very perfection of that life of grace, during the whole of her time on earth." (Gibieuf: *De la Vierge Souffrante au pied de la Croix*)

## 2. THE CURIA AND THE COMITIUM

1. When two or more praesidia have been established in any city, town, or district, a governing body termed the Curia should be set up. The Curia shall be composed of all the officers (Spiritual Directors included) of the praesidia in its area.

2. Where it is found necessary to confer on a Curia, in addition to its own proper functions, certain powers of superintendence, over one or several Curiae, such higher Curia shall be styled more particularly a Comitium and each of its meetings is considered to be a Comitium meeting whether or not representatives of the related Curia are present.

The Comitium is not a new council. It continues to act as a Curia in respect of its own area and to govern directly its own praesidia. In addition it supervises one or more Curiae.

Elections of officers of these Curiae are subject to ratification by the Comitium, as the next highest council.

Each Curia and praesidium directly related to a Comitium shall be entitled to full representation on the latter and, therefore, their officers have the right to vote at elections of officers of the Comitium.

In order to relieve the representatives of a Curia from attendance at all the meetings of the Comitium (which, added to the meetings of their own Curia, might form an undue burden), it would be permissible to deal with the business of that Curia and to require the attendance of its representatives only at every second or third meeting of the Comitium. It is not required that representatives of all related Curiae attend on the same month.

A Comitium shall not ordinarily cover an area larger than a Diocese, but may cover a smaller area. If a diocese has many Curiae or where the Curiae are widely separated, more than one Comitium, perhaps several, may be necessary and desirable. There may be circumstances where, for the purposes of good administration, and with ecclesiastical sanction, a Comitium could be asked to supervise one or more Curiae in another diocese or dioceses.

3. The Spiritual Director shall be appointed by the Ordinary of the Diocese in which the Curia (or Comitium) functions.

4. The Curia shall exercise authority over its praesidia, subject to the Statutes of the Legion. It shall appoint their officers (other than the Spiritual Director), and keep count of their terms of office.

As to the manner of appointment, see paragraph 11 of chapter 14, *The Praesidium*.

5. The Curia will ensure the scrupulous carrying out of the rules by the praesidia and their members.

The following shall form important parts of the work of a Curia:

(a) The education and supervision of the officers in their duties and in the general management of their praesidia.

(b) The receiving of a report from each praesidium not less frequently than once a year.

(c) The exchange of experiences.

(d) The consideration of new works.

(e) The creation of high standards.

(f) The ensuring that every legionary satisfactorily performs the work-obligation.

(g) The extension of the Legion and the stimulation of praesidia to recruit Auxiliaries (including the after-care and organisation of the latter).

It is manifest, therefore, that a high degree of moral courage will be required from the Curia, and especially from its officers, for the proper discharge of its functions.

6. The fate of the Legion lies in the hands of its Curiae, and its future depends on their development. The state of the Legion in any district must be counted precarious until a Curia has been established there.

7. Legionaries under 18 years of age cannot sit on a Senior Curia. But if deemed advisable by the Curia, a Junior Curia, subject to the Curia, may be set up.

8. It is absolutely essential that the officers of the Curia, and particularly the President, should be easily accessible to the legionaries who are subject to that Curia, so that difficulties, or proposals, or other matters which are not ripe for more public discussion, may be talked over.

9. It is most desirable that the officers, and particularly the President, should be able to devote considerable time to the duties of their positions, on which so much depends.

10. When there are a large number of praesidia attached to a Curia, the resulting number of representatives at the latter will be considerable. This fact may possibly involve

disadvantages from the aspects of accommodation and of administrative perfection, but the Legion believes that these will be amply compensated for in other respects. The Legion looks to its Curiae to supply another function than that of administrative machinery. Each Curia is the heart and brain of the group of praesidia which are attached to it. Being the centre of unity, it follows that the more numerous the bonds (that is, the representatives) which link it to the individual praesidia, the stronger will be that unity, the more certain will the praesidia be to reproduce the spirit and methods of the Legion. It will be at the Curia meetings alone that the things which relate to the essence of the Legion can be adequately discussed and learned. Thence they will be transmitted to the praesidia, and there diffused amongst the members.

11. The Curia shall cause each praesidium to be visited periodically, if possible twice a year, with a view to encouraging it and seeing that all things are being carried out as they should be. It is important that this duty be not fulfilled in a carping or fault-finding fashion which would end by causing the advent of visitors to be dreaded and their recommendations to be resented, but in a spirit of affection and humility which will presume that there is as much to be learned from as taught to, the praesidium visited.

At least a full week's notice of such intended visitation should be given to a praesidium.

Occasionally one hears of this visitation being resented on the score that it amounts to "outside interference." Such an attitude is not respectful to the Legion, of which those praesidia are but parts and of which they should be loyal parts: shall the hand say to the head "I need not your help" ? Furthermore, it is unthankful, for do not those units owe their very existence to that "outside interference." It is inconsistent, for how willingly they accept from their central authority things which they are pleased to regard as benefits. It is foolish, too, for thereby they set themselves against universal experience. It is the lesson of all organised life (whether religious, civil, or military) that an ungrudging, comprehensive, and practical recognition of the "central principle" is essential to the preservation of spirit and efficiency. A regular visitation of the units of organisation is

an all-important part of the application of that principle, and no competent form of authority neglects its duty in this respect.

Apart, however, from the fact that visitation from the Curia is necessary to health, each praesidium should remember that it is part of the Rule, and hence should insist that this duty is not overlooked by the Curia. It goes without saying that a cordial welcome should be given to the visitors.

On the occasion of this visitation, the various membership rolls, the Secretary's and Treasurer's books, the Work Sheet and the other items of the praesidium system must be examined with a view to judging if they are properly kept, and to ascertaining if the Legionary Promise has been made in the case of each member who has fulfilled the required period of probation.

This inspection should be made by two representatives of the Curia. These need not be restricted to Curia officers: any experienced legionary may be appointed. The visitors are to submit to the Curia officers a written report on the result of their inspection. A specimen report sheet can be obtained from the Concilium.

Defects which are found should not, in the first instance, be made the subject of open comment either at the praesidium itself or at the Curia. They should be discussed with the Spiritual Director and the President of the praesidium. If this does not secure rectification, the matter should be brought before the Curia.

12. The Curia stands in much the same relation to its members as a praesidium does to its members. Thus, all that is said in these pages regarding the attendance and conduct of legionaries at their praesidium meetings is to be taken as applying equally to the attitude of praesidium representatives towards their Curia meetings. Zeal in other respects will not compensate for failure on the part of officers to give a faithful attendance at meetings of their Curia.

13. The Curia shall meet at times and places to be fixed by the Curia itself, with the approval of its next-highest council. Such meetings should, if possible, be held not less frequently than once a month. See the reasons for this frequency: section 1, paragraph 19 of this chapter.

14. An agenda for the meeting shall be prepared beforehand by the Secretary in consultation with the President, and circulated to each Spiritual Director and each President previous to the praesidium meeting immediately before the Curia meeting. It shall be the duty of the President to notify the other representatives of the praesidium.

Such agenda should be provisional, and as much liberty as possible should be extended to members to raise additional points.

15. Vigilant watch must be kept by the Curia to ensure that praesidia do not drift into the giving of material relief, which would mark the end of all really useful legionary work. The periodic inspection of Treasurers' statements will help the Curia to discern the beginnings of any incorrect tendency.

16. The President (and of course the same applies to all those others in authority) should beware of falling into what is an exceedingly common fault, that of keeping even the most minute items of responsibility in his own hands. One result of such a tendency will be the slowing down of work. It may even paralyse the whole system in large centres where the work is considerable in quantity. The narrower the neck of the bottle, the more slowly will the contents be given forth, until sometimes people break off that neck in their impatience.

But another serious feature is that the denial of some responsibility to those who are fit to assume it does injustice both to those individuals and to the whole Legion. The exercising of some degree of responsibility is a necessary part of the development of great qualities in the individual. Responsibility, indeed, can transmute mere sand into gold!

The Secretary should not be held restricted to secretarial work, nor the Treasurer to the keeping of the accounts. All officers, and even senior and promising members, should be entrusted with spheres of initiative and control, for which – subject of course to the higher authority – they will be held responsible. The ultimate aim must be the filling of every legionary with a sense of responsibility for the well-being and extension of the Legion as a potent means of helping souls.

“All the works of God are founded on unity, for they are founded on Himself, who is the most awfully simple and transcendent of possible unities. He is emphatically One; and whereas He is also

multiform in His attributes and His acts, as they present themselves to our minds, it follows that order and harmony must be of His very essence." (St. John Henry Newman: Order, the Witness and Instrument of Unity. This and the next three quotations form, in the original, one passage)

### 3. THE REGIA

1. A council designated by the Concilium to exercise authority over the Legion of Mary in a large region, and ranking next in status to a Senatus, shall be called a Regia. The Concilium will decide whether a Regia shall be affiliated directly to the Concilium or to a Senatus.

2. When Regia status has been conferred on an existing council, it shall continue to exercise its original functions in addition to its new responsibilities (see section 1, paragraph 19 of this chapter on Government of the Legion).

Membership of the Regia shall consist of:

(a) the officers of every legionary body directly affiliated to the Regia and

(b) the members of the council on which Regia status has been conferred, when such is the case.

3. The Spiritual Director of a Regia shall be appointed by the Bishops of the dioceses in which that Regia has jurisdiction.

4. The election of officers of directly affiliated councils are subject to ratification by the Regia. These officers have the duty to attend Regia meetings unless circumstances (that is, distance, etc.) prevent them.

5. Experience has shown the appointment of correspondents to be the most effective way for the Regia to fulfil its functions of superintendence of its distant affiliated councils. The correspondent keeps in regular contact with the council and from the minutes received monthly prepares a report for presentation to the Regia meeting when required. He attends the meetings of the Regia and takes part in the proceedings but, unless he is a member of the Regia, he has not the right to vote.

6. A copy of the minutes of the Regia meetings should be sent to the council to which it is directly affiliated.

7. Any proposed change in the composition of the Regia, which would significantly affect the core attendance at the meeting, would require formal sanction by the Concilium, whether the Regia is affiliated directly to the Concilium or to a Senatus.

8. In Roman days the Regia was the residence and office of the Pontifex Maximus; later it designated a king's capital or court.

"To be many and distinct in his attributes, yet, after all, to be but one – to be sanctity, justice, truth, love, power, wisdom, to be at once each of these as if he were nothing but it, as if the rest were not – this implies in the Divine Nature an infinitely sovereign and utterly incomprehensible order, which is an attribute as wonderful as any, and the result of all the others." (St. John Henry Newman: Order, the Witness and Instrument of Unity)

#### 4. THE SENATUS

1. A council designated by the Concilium to exercise authority over the Legion of Mary in a country shall be called a Senatus. It must be affiliated directly to the Concilium.

In countries where, by reason of size or for other reasons, a single Senatus would not be adequate, two or more Senatus may be approved, each of which shall depend directly on the Concilium and shall exercise authority over the Legion in the area assigned to it by the Concilium.

2. When Senatus status has been conferred on an existing council it shall continue to exercise its original functions in addition to its new responsibilities (see section 1, paragraph 19 of this chapter on Government of the Legion).

Membership of the Senatus shall consist of: (a) the officers of every legionary body directly affiliated to the Senatus and (b) the members of the council on which Senatus status has been conferred, when such is the case.

3. The Spiritual Director of a Senatus shall be appointed by the Bishops of the dioceses in which that Senatus has jurisdiction.

4. The elections of officers of directly affiliated councils are subject to ratification by the Senatus. These officers have the duty to attend Senatus meetings unless circumstances (for example, distance, etc.) prevent them.

5. Experience has shown the appointment of correspondents to be the most effective way for the Senatus to fulfil its functions of superintendence of its distant councils. The correspondent keeps in regular contact with the council and from the minutes received monthly prepares a report for presentation to the Senatus meeting when required. He attends the meetings of the Senatus and takes part in the proceedings but, unless he is a member of the Senatus, he has not the right to vote.

6. A copy of the minutes of the Senatus meetings should be sent to the Concilium.

7. Any proposed change in the composition of the Senatus, which would significantly affect the core attendance at the meeting, would require formal sanction by the Concilium.

“God is an infinite law, as well as an infinite power, wisdom, and love. Moreover, the very idea of order implies the idea of the subordinate. If order exists in the Divine Attributes, they must have relations one to another, and though each is perfect in itself, it must act so as not to impair the perfection of the rest, and must seem to yield to the rest on particular occasions.” (St. John Henry Newman: *Order, the Witness and Instrument of Unity*)

## 5. THE CONCILIUM LEGIONIS MARIAE

1. There shall be a central council, which shall be called the Concilium Legionis Mariae, in which shall be vested the supreme governing authority of the Legion. To it alone (subject always to the rights of the Ecclesiastical Authority as provided for in these pages) shall belong the right to make, alter, or interpret rules; to set up or repudiate praesidia and subordinate councils, wherever situated; to determine the policy of the Legion on all points, to decide all disputes and appeals, all membership questions, and all points as to the suitability of works or the manner of carrying them out.

2. The Concilium Legionis Mariae meets monthly in Dublin, Ireland.

3. The Concilium may delegate portion of its functions to its subordinate councils or to individual praesidia, and may at any time alter the amount of such delegation.

4. The Concilium may combine with its own proper functions the functions of a subordinate council or councils.

5. The Concilium Legionis Mariae shall consist of the officers of every legionary body which is directly affiliated to the Concilium. The officers of the senior Curiae of the Archdiocese of Dublin form the core attendance at the meetings of the Concilium. Due to distance, etc. regular attendance on the part of the great majority of other legionary bodies is not possible. The Concilium reserves the right to vary the representation from the Dublin Curiae.

6. The Spiritual Director of the Concilium shall be appointed by the Irish Episcopal Conference.

7. The elections of officers of directly affiliated councils are subject to ratification by the Concilium.

8. The Concilium appoints correspondents to fulfil its functions of superintendence of its distant councils. The correspondent keeps in regular contact with the council and from minutes received monthly prepares a report for presentation to the Concilium meeting when required. He attends the meetings of the Concilium and takes part in the proceedings but, unless he is a member of the Concilium, he has not the right to vote.

9. The duly authorised representatives of the Concilium may enter into any legionary area, visit the legionary bodies there, carry on work of a promotional character and generally exercise functions which it is allowable for the Concilium to exercise.

10. To the Concilium Legionis Mariae alone shall belong, subject to the Statutes and rules of the Legion, the right to amend the handbook. The International Statutes of the Legion of Mary, recognised by the competent dicastery of the Holy See, should be read always in conjunction with the handbook of the Legion of Mary, since they are, to a great degree, drawn from it and are best interpreted in its light.

11. Changes of Rule cannot be effected save with the agreement of the great bulk of the legionary bodies. These, through their appropriate councils, shall be notified of any

proposed change of rule, and given sufficient time to signify their views on the subject. The views may be signified through their representatives actually present at the Concilium meeting or by writing.

“Thus God’s power, indeed is infinite but it is still subordinate to his wisdom and his justice; his justice, again, is infinite, but it, too, is subordinate to his love; and his love, in turn, is infinite, but it is subordinate to his incommunicable sanctity. There is an understanding between attribute and attribute, so that one does not interfere with the other, for each is supreme in its own sphere; and thus an infinitude of infinities, acting each in its own order, are combined together in the infinitely simple unity of God.” (St. John Henry Newman: Order, the Witness and Instrument of Unity)

## 29

### LEGIONARY LOYALTY

The whole idea of organisation is the unification of the many. From the member up through the ascending grades of authority in the Legion must the principle of connection exist, and in the measure that it is wanting, will there be a departure from the principle of life.

In a voluntary organisation, the cement of this connection is loyalty; the loyalty of the member to the praesidium, of the praesidium to its Curia, and so on through the ascending grades of legionary authority to the Concilium Legionis; and to the ecclesiastical authorities everywhere. True loyalty will inspire legionary and praesidium and council with a dread of independent action. On all doubtful points, in all difficult situations, and with regard to every new work or novel departure, recourse must be had to appropriate authority for guidance and sanction.

The fruit of loyalty is obedience, and the test of the latter is the readiness to accept situations and decisions which are unpalatable and – let it be remarked – to accept them cheerfully. This prompt and cordial obedience is always difficult. Sometimes, to give it violates one’s natural inclinations to

such an extent as to amount to heroism, to be in fact a sort of martyrdom. And in such terms does St. Ignatius of Loyola speak of it. "Those," he says, "who by a generous effort resolve to obey, acquire great merits; obedience in its sacrifice resembles martyrdom." The Legion expects from its children everywhere that spirit of heroic and sweet docility to proper authority of every sort.

The Legion is an army – the army of the Virgin Most Humble. It must exhibit in its everyday working what is forthcoming in profusion from any earthly army – heroism and sacrifice, even supreme sacrifice. Demands of a supremely exacting character are all the time being made on legionaries, too. Not so often are they called on to offer their bodies to laceration and death, like the soldiers of the world. But let them rise gloriously higher in the things of the spirit. Let them be ready to offer their feelings, their judgment, their independence, their pride, their will, to the wounds of contradiction and the death of a wholehearted submission, when authority requires.

"Deep harm to disobey, seeing obedience is the bond of rule," says Tennyson, but the Legion's life-line can be sundered by more than wilful disobedience. The same result is achieved by the officers whose neglect of the duties of attendance or correspondence cuts off their praesidia or councils from the main tide of legionary life. The same deep harm is done by those, whether officers or members, who attend their meetings, but whose attitude there – from whatever cause – is calculated to promote disunion.

"Jesus obeyed his Mother. You have read how all that the Evangelists tell of Christ's hidden life at Nazareth with Mary and Joseph is that 'He was subject to them' and 'advanced in wisdom and age' (Lk 2:51-52) Is there anything incompatible with his divinity in this? Certainly not. The Word is made Flesh; He has stooped so far as to take a nature like to ours, sin excepted: He came, said he, 'not to be ministered unto, but to minister' (Mt 20:28) to be 'obedient unto death' (Phil 2:8); that is why he willed to obey his Mother. At Nazareth he obeyed Mary and Joseph, the two privileged beings whom God had placed near him. In a certain measure, Mary shares in the authority of the Eternal Father over his Son's Humanity. Jesus could say of his Mother what he said of his Father in Heaven: 'I do always the things that please him' (Jn 8:29)" (Blessed Columba Marmion)

# 30

## FUNCTIONS

The duty of periodically bringing together the members of the Legion in any district in order that they may know each other and that the spirit of unity may be fostered, is imposed upon each Curia.

The following are the functions of the Legion.

### 1. THE ACIES

Bearing in mind the importance of devotion to Mary in the Legion system, each year there shall be a consecration of legionaries to Our Lady. The consecration – which shall comprise both an individual and a collective consecration – will take place on the 25 March or on a day close thereto, and will be known as the Acies. This Latin word, meaning as it does an army ranged in battle array, is appropriate to a ceremony in which the legionaries as a body assemble to renew their fealty to Mary, Queen of the Legion, and from her to receive strength and blessing for yet another year's battle with the forces of evil. Moreover, the word is in effective contrast with *praesidium*, which contemplates the Legion, no longer drawn up in united array, but split up into its various sections, each engaged in its own particular sphere of duty.

The Acies is the great central annual function of the Legion, so that it is necessary to stress the importance of attendance on the part of every member. The essential idea of the Legion, upon which all else is built, is that of working in union with and in dependence on Mary, its Queen. The Acies is the solemn expression of that union and dependence, the renewal – individual and collective – of the legionary declaration of fealty. Hence it is manifest that any legionaries who can attend, and yet fail to do so, have little or none of the spirit of the Legion in them. The membership of such persons is not an asset to the Legion.

The following is the procedure:

On the day fixed for the ceremony, the legionaries shall assemble – if possible in a church. At a convenient spot is placed a statue of the Immaculate Conception, suitably

decorated with flowers and candles. In front of the statue will stand a large-size replica of the Legion vexillum, which is described in chapter 27.

The proceedings commence with a hymn, followed by the opening prayers of the Legion including the Rosary. An address by a priest on the significance of the consecration to Our Lady follows. Then the procession towards the statue begins. The Spiritual Directors go first in single file. Then the legionaries, also singly, except in the case of great numbers when they may advance in pairs. On reaching the vexillum, each one (or each pair) pauses; then, placing the hand upon the staff of the vexillum, he repeats vocally, as an individual act of consecration, the following words: "I am all yours, my Queen, my Mother, and all that I have is yours." This done, the vexillum is relinquished, the legionary bows slightly and passes on. If the number of legionaries is large, the making of the individual act of consecration will occupy some time, but the impressiveness of the ceremony will gain rather than lose by that fact. It will help if an organ be played during the procession of the legionaries to and from the statue.

It would not be in order to use more than one vexillum. Such expedient would shorten the proceedings, but it would destroy their unity. Moreover, the note of haste would be discordant. The special characteristic of the *Acies* should be its order and dignity.

When all legionaries have resumed their places, an act of consecration to Our Lady is said aloud by the priest on behalf of all present. Following this, the *Catena* is recited, all present standing. Then follows, if at all possible, Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament; after which the concluding prayers of the Legion are recited, a hymn is sung, and the *Acies* terminates.

It would be in order, of course, to have Holy Mass celebrated on the occasion of the *Acies*, in place of the Benediction, the other details of the ceremony remaining the same. The Celebration of the Paschal Mystery would absorb into itself and present to the Eternal Father, through the "one Mediator" and in the Holy Spirit, all the consecrations and spiritual offerings which are placed in the maternal hands of "the generous associate and humble handmaid of the Lord." (LG 61)

The above formula of consecration: "I am all yours, etc." should not be mechanically or thoughtlessly pronounced. Each one should compress into it the fullest degree of understanding and gratitude. As a help towards this, he should study *A Marian Synthesis*, appendix 11. This endeavours to set forth the unique part played by Mary in salvation, and accordingly the extent of each one's debt to her. Perhaps the Synthesis could be made the subject of the spiritual reading and of the Allocutio at a praesidium meeting shortly before the Acies. It is suggested that it be also used as the collective act of consecration at the ceremony itself.

"Mary is an object of terror to the powers of hell. She is 'terrible as an army set in battle array' (Song 6:10), for, like a wise Commander, she well knows how to dispose her power, her mercy, and her prayers for the confusion of the enemy and for the benefit of her servants." (St. Alphonsus Liguori)

## 2. THE ANNUAL GENERAL REUNION

At a time as near as possible to the feast of the Immaculate Conception a reunion of all the members shall be held. If desired, this may begin with a church celebration.

There follows a social evening. If not already recited at a church function, the full Legion prayers are to be said, divided into three parts as at a meeting.

It is better to confine this programme to the contributions of legionaries. In addition to lighter items, there should be some addresses or papers of legionary interest.

It will surely be unnecessary to remind legionaries that formality must find no place there. This is to be specially guarded against where many legionaries are participating. It must be the object to make all those present know each other better. Therefore, the programme should afford opportunity for movement and conversation. Those in charge should contrive that the members do not keep together in parties and thus frustrate the main purpose of the function, which is the fostering of the spirit of unity and affection in the Legion family.

"Joyousness lent a sweet charm to the spiritual knighthood of St. Francis. As a genuine Knight of Christ, Francis was inexpressibly happy to serve his Liege, to follow him in poverty and to be like unto him in suffering; and this blissful happiness in the service, the

imitation, and the suffering of Christ he announced as knightly Minstrel and Troubadour of God to the whole world. Francis' entire life was attuned to this basic note of joy. With imperturbable calmness, and cheerfulness of mind he sang to himself and to God songs of joy in his heart. His ceaseless endeavour was to keep himself interiorly and exteriorly in a joyous mood. In the intimate circle of his brothers he likewise knew how to sound the pure key-note of joyfulness, and to make it swell to such full harmony that they felt themselves raised to an almost heavenly atmosphere. The same joyful note pervaded the converse of the Saint with his fellow-men. Even his sermons in spite of their burden of penance became hymns of gladness, and his mere appearance was an occasion of festive joy for all classes of people." (Felder: The Ideals of St. Francis of Assisi)

### 3. AN OUTDOOR FUNCTION

The holding of this function dates back to the earliest days of the Legion. It is not obligatory, but it is recommended. It may take the form of an excursion, pilgrimage, or outdoor function. As determined by the Curia, this may be either a Curia or a praesidium function. In the latter event, two or more praesidia may combine for the function.

### 4. THE PRAESIDIUM FUNCTION

It is strongly recommended that each praesidium will hold a social function about the feast of the Nativity of Our Lady. In centres where there are many praesidia, several praesidia may, if they desire, combine to hold such a festival.

Suitable persons, who are not legionaries, may be invited to attend, with a view to inducing them to undertake membership.

It is recommended that the full Legion prayers (including the rosary) be said, divided into three parts as at a praesidium meeting. The time thus taken from the social part of the evening does not amount to many minutes, but this tribute to Our Lady will be more than repaid by the enhanced success of the function. The Queen of the Legion is the "Cause of Our Joy," and she will reply by making the occasion one of special happiness.

Interspersed among the musical items should be at least one short Legion talk. All will, thereby, learn a little more about the Legion, and incidentally the programme will be diversified. Mere entertainment tends to pall.

## 5. THE CONGRESS

The first Legion Congress was held by the Clare (Ireland) Curia on Easter Sunday, 1939. Its success led to imitation, as success always does, and now that feature has been firmly grafted into the Legion system.

A Congress should be confined to a Comitium or a Curia. Assemblies on a wider basis would not be in line with the primary conception of a Congress and would not produce the intended fruits. Therefore, the name of Congress should not be applied to those assemblies, if held; nor should they be regarded as substituting for a Congress. But visitors from other areas may be invited to a Congress.

The Concilium has ruled that an area should not hold a Congress more often than every second year. A whole day should be devoted to the function. The availability of a Religious house will solve many of the problems. If possible, the proceedings should begin with Mass, followed by a short address by the Spiritual Director or other priest, and should terminate with Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

The day is divided into sessions, each session having its subject or subjects. Each subject should be very briefly opened up by someone who will have previously prepared his contribution. All should take some part in the discussions. This general participation forms the very life of the Congress.

Again it is emphasised that presiding officers are not to talk much nor to intervene constantly in the discussions. Congresses, like council meetings, are to be run on the parliamentary method, that is, on lines of universal participation regulated from the chair. Some chairpersons show a tendency to comment on the utterance of every speaker. This is the opposite idea to the Congress idea, and it should not be tolerated.

The assistance of some representatives of a higher governing body would be desirable. These could perform some of the special duties, for example, presiding, inaugurating discussions, etc.

Any striving after oratorical effect is to be avoided, for it would create an air of unreality. That is not the Legion climate; in it no one will be inspired, no problem will be solved.

Sometimes all the legionaries are brought to the Congress, sometimes only the officers of praesidia. In the former case it would be allowable at the first session to divide the legionaries according to their different offices, the ordinary members being in one body. Then, the special duties and needs of each would be considered. Or alternatively, the legionaries could be divided according to the works on which they are engaged. But such dividing up is optional, and in any case the subsequent sessions should not be subdivided. It would be inconsistent to bring the members together and then keep them separated for most of the time. It is to be noted that the duty of officers has a wider scope than the routine functions belonging to each office. A Secretary, for instance, whose official horizon was bounded by his minute book would indeed be a defective officer. As all the officers are members of the Curia, their session must investigate methods of perfecting the working of the Curia, both in regard to its actual meetings and its general administration.

A Congress must not amount merely to a Curia meeting, occupying itself with the same administrative details and queries that would fall to be dealt with at the Curia. It should apply itself to the fundamentals. But of course all the lessons learned at the Congress should be put into force by the Curia.

The subjects to be dealt with should concern the main principles of the Legion, broadly:

(a) The devotional system of the Legion. The Legion is not understood unless its many-sided devotional aspect is to some reasonable extent grasped by the members; and the Legion is not being properly worked unless that devotion be linked to the active work so intimately as to be its motive and its spirit; in other words, the devotion must animate the whole work as the soul animates the body.

(b) The legionary qualities, and how they are to be developed.

(c) The methodical system of the Legion, including the conducting of the meetings and the vital matter of the members' reports, that is, the manner of giving them and of commenting on them.

(d) The Legion works, including the improvement of methods and the planning of those new works which will enable the Legion to reach out to every person.

An item of the Congress should be a special Talk, by some Spiritual Director or legionary qualified to give it, on some aspect of legionary devotion, idealism, or duty.

Each session should begin and close with prayer. The Legion prayers will provide for three of those occasions.

Careful timekeeping and stewarding is imperative. Failure in this department will ruin the day.

There must be diversification as between successive Congresses in the same area. Only a limited number of topics can be covered at a single Congress, whereas it is necessary that over a period of years much new ground be ploughed up. Secondly, there must never be a sense of standing still. Therefore, change for the very sake of change must be sought. Thirdly, the success of a particular Congress naturally suggests that the same programme be adhered to on the next occasion. But part of that success was certainly due to the element of novelty, and this is spent by the first production. If novelty is to figure as a stimulating ingredient in each new Congress, the event must be preceded by ingenious planning.

“If we wish to know in what manner the faithful soul is to be prepared for the coming of the divine Paraclete, let us go in thought to the Cenacle where the disciples have come together. There, according to the order of the Master, they are persevering in prayer as they await the Power from on high that is to come on them and clothe them as with armour for the warfare which lies before them. In that sacred abode of recollection and peace our reverential eye rests on Mary, the Mother of Jesus, the masterpiece of the Holy Spirit, the Church of the living God. From her by the action of the same Holy Spirit will issue, as from the womb of a mother, the Church Militant, which this New Eve represents and still contains within her.”  
(Guéranger: The Liturgical Year)

## 31

### EXTENSION AND RECRUITING

1. The duty of extension is not for the higher councils alone, nor for Curia officers alone. It is the duty of each member of the Curia. Nay, more, it is the duty of each individual legionary, and each one must be made to realise

that fact and to account now and then for his stewardship. The influencing of others by interview or correspondence is an obvious method of fulfilling this duty, but special ways will suggest themselves to each one.

If many centres could be made to send forth impulses to spread the Legion, it would soon exist in all places, and the Lord's harvest fields would be thronged with willing labourers. (Lk 10 :2) Therefore these important subjects of extension and recruiting should frequently be brought to the notice of the members so that each one be made acutely conscious of his duty in those directions.

2. An efficient branch of the Legion will be the source of immense good. As one may suppose that this good will be doubled by the establishment of a second branch, every member (and not merely the officers) should endeavour to bring about this desirable thing.

As soon as it is found that the members' reports and other items of the agenda have regularly to be curtailed in order to anticipate the automatic closure, a stage will have been reached when division is not only desirable but necessary. If not then effected, a dropsical state will supervene, in which interest in the work will diminish and the membership will shrink. The praesidium will not only lose the power of transmitting life to another branch, but will find it difficult to preserve its own existence.

To the proposal to form an additional praesidium in a particular locality, it may be alleged that present numbers are coping satisfactorily with the existing needs. Against this, it is to be emphasised that, as the primary purpose of the Legion is the sanctification of its own members, and of the community at large through the play of that holiness, it logically follows that increase of membership must, for this reason alone, be also a principal aim. Possibly, the provision of work for the new members may be somewhat of a problem in small places. Nevertheless, let new members be accepted and sought. The Legion must never think in terms of limitation: better material than that already within the ranks might be excluded. When the more obvious needs have been covered, look deeper. Work is necessary to enable the machine to function. Therefore, it must be found and it is there.

In places where the Legion already exists, the effort should be made to provide the officers and a fair proportion of the new members by transfer from an existing branch. Praesidia should consider it as the greatest honour to supply their best material for the formation of a new praesidium. This is the healthiest form of pruning. A praesidium depleted by such a gift of its members will find its ranks quickly refill, and its apostolate attended by an added benediction.

In towns or localities where no branch of the Legion already exists, it may not be feasible to secure members with legionary experience, in which case the founders of the new praesidium must apply themselves all the more assiduously to the study of the handbook and whatever commentaries may be available thereon.

In setting up the first praesidium in a new place, it is well to diversify its work as much as possible. This will better ensure the interest of the meetings and thus promote the health of the praesidium. Moreover the varying abilities and tastes of the members can thereby be provided for.

3. There is need for a word of caution on the subject of recruiting members. There is a real danger that the requirements may be made too severe. Naturally, the standard of those who have been members for some time will be higher than general standards. This must be allowed for in considering new members. It would be incorrect to insist upon a standard from a new recruit which the existing members only reached after some time in the Legion.

It is very common for praesidia to excuse a low recruiting figure on the ground that suitable material is not available, but seldom will this explanation be found justified on an examination of all the circumstances. It is suggested that the fault lies almost invariably with the praesidium itself. Either:

(a) No serious effort is being made to recruit; which means that there is individual and collective neglect of duty by the legionaries;

or

(b) The praesidium is making the mistake of applying to possible recruits over-stringent tests, such as would have excluded the bulk of its original and present members.

Those responsible argue that they must not risk the entry of unsuitable material. But neither must they deny the benefits of membership to all, except a tiny few. If choice has to be made between undue rigour and undue laxity, the former is the greater error, because it kills the lay apostolate for want of workers. The other course would merely breed mistakes, and these can be repaired.

The praesidium will take a medium course, but some element of risk must inevitably be faced. The only certain way of ascertaining that material is suitable is by actual experiment. The real safeguard is that the unsuitable person, if he does enter, quickly drops out under the stress of the work.

Who ever heard of the raising of an army being abandoned because of the fear that inefficient material might creep in? The system of the army exists for the moulding and handling of average human material in quantity. Likewise, the Legion, being an army, must aim at a fairly large membership. It has, of course, its tests for membership, but those tests should not be such that good, average material cannot pass them. The spiritual and close-knit system of the Legion exists for the purpose of moulding and controlling persons who require moulding and discipline, not for supermen. There should be no question of taking in only a type which is so superlatively holy and discreet as not to represent the ordinary laity at all.

To sum up, therefore, the sorrow is not that so few are fit for membership, but that so few are willing to assume the burden of it. This leads to the further considerations which follow:

(c) Eligible persons may be deterred from joining because the atmosphere of the praesidium is excessively staid or stiff or otherwise uncongenial to them.

The Legion does not restrict its membership to the young, but the young must be specially sought for and catered for. If the Legion does not attract them, it is largely failing in its purpose, for the movement which does not appeal to the young will never exert a wide influence. Furthermore, the young are the key to the future. Therefore, the reasonable tastes of youth must be understood and allowed for. Bright, generous, enthusiastic youth must not be kept out by setting up standards which are inappropriate to the young or which may be nothing else than kill-joy standards.

(d) The usual excuse: "I have not the time" is probably true. Most people fill up their time. But it is not with religious activities; these rank as a last priority. It would represent an eternal benefit to those persons to make them see that they are living according to a wrong scale of values. **The apostolate should be a first priority** so that some of those other things would yield place to it.

"A primary law for every religious society is to perpetuate itself, to extend its apostolic action over the world, and to reach the greatest possible number of souls. 'Increase and multiply and fill the earth.' (Gen 1, 28) This law of life imposes itself as a duty upon each person who becomes a member of the Society. Père Chaminade thus formulates this law: – 'We must make conquest for the Blessed Virgin, make those with whom we live understand how sweet it is to belong to Mary so as to induce many of them to join us in our onward march.'" (Petit Traité de Marialogie: Marianiste)

## 32

### OBJECTIONS WHICH MAY BE ANTICIPATED

#### 1. "No need for the Legion here."

Zealous persons desirous of starting the Legion in a new area may expect the objection that the Legion is not required in that particular place. As the Legion is not an organisation for the doing of any one special type of work, but is primarily for the development of Catholic zeal and spirit (which can then be applied to the doing of any work desired), such an objection usually amounts to a statement that there is no local need for Catholic zeal – an assertion which sufficiently confutes itself. According to Père Raoul Plus' compressed definition, "a Christian is one to whom God has entrusted his fellowmen."

In every place, without exception, there is vital need for such an intense apostolate, and this for many reasons – Firstly, because those members of the flock, who are capable of it, should be given an effective opportunity of living the apostolic life. Secondly, because the stirrings of such an

apostolate in the general populace are necessary in these days, if religion is to be prevented from settling down into routine or materialism. Thirdly, the patient and intensive labours of such workers are required for the shepherding of those whose lives are frustrated or of those whose tendency is to stray.

On all superiors rests responsibility for developing to the full the spiritual capacity of those in their charge. What then, of apostleship, that distinctive and essential ingredient of the Christian character? Therefore, the call to the apostolate must be made. But to call, without providing the means for responding, is little better than silence, for few of those who hear will have the ability to work out the means for themselves. Thus, machinery, in the shape of an apostolic organisation, must be set up.

## 2. "Persons suitable for membership are not available."

As this objection usually proceeds from a misconception as to the type of worker required, it may in general be stated that every office, shop, and place of work holds potential legionaries.

Those potential legionaries may be learned or unlettered, labourers or leisured, or in the ranks of the unemployed. They are not the monopoly of any particular colour, race, or class, but can be found in all. The Legion has the special gift of being able to enlist in the service of the Church this hidden force, this undeveloped loveliness of character. Mgr. Alfred O'Rahilly, as the result of a study of Legion activity, was moved to write as follows: "I made a great discovery, or rather I found that the discovery had been made, that there is a latent heroism in seemingly ordinary men and women; unknown sources of energy had been tapped."

Standards for membership should not go beyond those which the Popes have had in mind when they declared that in any class whatever an elite could be formed and trained to the apostolate.

In this connection, paragraph 3 (b) of chapter 31, *Extension and Recruiting* should be read most carefully; also chapter 40, section 7, "The Legion as the complement of the Missionary," which urges the wide extension of legionary membership among the newly-won Christian communities.

A genuine difficulty in finding members would indicate an extraordinarily low spiritual standard in that locality, and so far from proving the need for inaction, would demonstrate conclusively the paramount need for a branch of the Legion to play the part of a good leaven. Mentally digest the fact that the leaven is our Lord's prescription for raising standards. (Mt 13:33) Let it be remembered that a praesidium can be formed with as few as four or five or six members. When these apply themselves to the work and understand its requirements, they will quickly find and introduce other suitable members.

### **3. "The Legion visitation would be resented."**

Were such indeed to be the case, the conclusion indicated is that other work should be selected, not that the idea of the Legion (with all its possibilities of good to members and community) should be abandoned. Be it stated, however, that nowhere so far, has the Legion experienced a permanent or general difficulty in this matter of its visitation. Assuming that the visitation is being undertaken in the true spirit of the Legion apostolate, it may ordinarily be taken that a coldness towards the legionaries testifies to the existence of religious indifference or worse, so that, just where the legionaries are least desired, exists the greatest need for their labours. Initial difficulties of this description do not justify the discontinuance of the visitation. Almost invariably, have the legionaries who braved these icy barriers, been able to thaw them, and to remove as well the graver underlying causes.

Full weight should be given to the fact that the home is spiritually the strategic point. To hold the home is to capture society. To win the home one must go to it.

### **4. "Young people have to work hard during the day and require their free time for rest."**

How reasonable this sounds, yet if acted upon, it would leave the world a religious wilderness, for it is not by the leisured that the Church's work is done. Moreover, is it not true that the high spirited young give their free hours to more or less disordered amusement than to genuine rest? In such an alternation between a day of toil and an evening of pleasure, it is very easy to drift into a practical materialism,

which, after a few years, leaves hearts without an ideal, eating themselves out for the youth which has prematurely fled, taking with it the only things they had been taught to prize. And things may end even more unhappily. Does not St. John Chrysostom say that he had never succeeded in persuading himself that anyone could achieve salvation who had never done anything for the salvation of his neighbour?

Infinitely wiser would it be to urge young people to give to the Lord, in a legionary membership, the first fruits of that free time. Those first fruits will inspire the whole life and keep the heart, and face too, serene and young. And there is still left an abundance of time for recreation, doubly enjoyed because doubly earned.

**5. "The Legion is only one among many organisations with the same ideals and programme."**

It is true that idealism abounds and, likewise, that a programme of desirable works can be drawn up in a few minutes by any one possessing pen and paper. It is, therefore, true that the Legion is only one among ten thousand organisations which propose a noble warfare for souls and a programme of important works. But it is also true that it is one of the few which make their apostolate definite. A vague idealism, with general appeals to members to do good in their surroundings, will always be attended by the vaguest performance. The Legion reduces its warfare to a definite spirituality, a definite programme of prayer, a definite weekly task, a definite weekly report and, it will be found, to definite accomplishment. Last, but not least, it bases this methodical system on the dynamic principle of union with Mary.

**6. "The Legion works are already being done by other agencies. The Legion might clash with them."**

How strange to hear these words spoken of places where high proportions of the population are non-practising or non-Catholic, and where progress is negligible!

How sad if anyone should reconcile himself to such a status quo, which means that in that place Herod is to occupy the throne of men's hearts while the Lord and his dear mother are to remain permanently relegated to the miserable stable!

Often, too, those words, which deny admittance to the Legion, are used in the interest of organisations which represent a name without performance, armies which may exist, but never conquer any enemy.

Moreover, work is not being done except it is being adequately done. Therefore, work is not being done which is engaging dozens of apostolic workers where, properly, there should be hundreds or even thousands; and unhappily this is ordinarily the case. Frequently, too, the lack of organisation, which the small numbers show, means corresponding lack of spirit and method.

Surely, it would be wise to put the Legion to the test by assigning to it even a limited sphere of action. The sequel may be convincing, and the members of a single little branch may, like the five barley loaves, be multiplied so that they fill all the needs, and over and above. (cf Mt 14:16-21)

The Legion has no particular programme of works. It does not presuppose new works, but rather a new setting for existing works not already sufficiently systematised, with effects analogous to those which would follow upon the application of electric power to a work previously done by hand.

**7. "There are already too many organisations. The proper course is to revive the existing societies or to extend their functions so as to cover the works proposed to be done by the Legion."**

This may be a reactionary argument. The words "too many" can be applied with truth to every department of life around. Yet the new is not rejected because it is new, and from time to time a great advance is made. So, too, the Legion claims the opportunity to prove itself. If it is not "just another," but from God, what loss to turn it from one's door!

Moreover, the above objection supposes that the work in question is not at present being done. In such circumstances, it is neither sensible nor the common practice to reject new machinery which has elsewhere demonstrated its capacity to do that work. How quaint would sound the same objection,

put as follows: "There is no need to import the aeroplane. There is already too much mechanism in this place. Let us, instead, develop the motor-car so that it will fly!"

**8. "This is a small place. There is no room for the Legion here."**

It is no uncommon experience to find these words spoken of places which, though not large, yet have an unenviable notoriety.

Again, a village may possess a routine goodness and yet be stagnant: stagnant in moral qualities, and stagnant in human interests, so that the young fly from it to the populous centres, where they lack moral support.

The trouble arises from the absence of religious idealism, following upon the spectacle of none doing more than their essential duties. With religious idealism gone, a religious desert remains (and villages are not the only such deserts). To make that desert bloom again, reverse the process: create a little apostolic band which will cast abroad its own spirit and set up new headlines of conduct. Works suitable to the place will be undertaken, life brightened, the exodus stemmed.

**9. "Certain of the works of the Legion consist in spiritual activities which, from their very nature, belong to the priest, and which should only be allotted to the laity when the clergy cannot undertake them. As it is, I am able to visit my flock several times in the year with satisfactory results."**

This objection is answered generally in chapter 10, *The Legion Apostolate*, also more particularly in what follows, but in advance, it is pointed out that no work deemed undesirable need be undertaken.

The intimate knowledge of what is unquestionably one of the holiest cities in the world, reveals there vast multitudes sick with sin and worldliness, and seething with the terrible problems of modern civilisation. For it or any other city-community the feeling that all is safeguarded by a visitation – however fruitful – once, twice, four times in the year is not

justified. If all is well, for instance, many will be approaching the altar daily, more weekly, and all at least once monthly. Why then do four or five hours a week in the Confessional so often suffice? Whence the dreadful disproportion?

Again, what degree of intimacy, or at least of personal touch, is required to satisfy the pastoral obligation towards each soul under its care: that soul which, as St. Charles Borromeo used to say, was diocese enough for a bishop? A simple calculation will show what even half-an-hour a year for each would mean in all. And would that half-an-hour be sufficient contribution? St. Madeleine Sophie Barat, in addition to countless interviews, wrote 200 letters to one difficult soul. How many legionary pursuits have lasted ten years and more, and are still in progress! Yet, if the harassed priest cannot spare even that half-hour; and if (as is claimed) the Legion will supply him with zealous representatives: many where he is one: obedient to his every word: of solid discretion: as capable (with his help) as he of gaining access to individuals and families: of irresistible gifts to entice souls to higher things: affording him the opportunity of giving souls more than a routine service; is it fair to his work and to himself to refuse that help?

“The Legion of Mary brings to the priest two blessings of equal value: first, an instrument of conquest which bears the authentic mark of the Divine Spirit – and I shall ask myself the question: Have I the right to neglect such a providential weapon? Secondly, a spring of living water capable of renewing our whole interior life – and I shall be brought naturally to a further question: If this pure and deep spring of life is offered to me, is it not my duty to drink of it?” (Canon Guynot)

#### **10. “I fear possible indiscretions on the part of members.”**

There is lack here of a sense of the realities of the position. As well refuse to reap a harvest because some ears may be spoiled by clumsy handling! The harvest at stake is souls: souls, poor and feeble and blind and lame: in such need, in

such numbers that there is a danger that one may accept the situation as irremediable. Yet it is for such that the Lord bids search to be made in the streets and lanes and the highways and hedges, so that his house may be filled with them. (Lk 14:21-23) In no other way can a harvesting so vast be wrought than by the marshalling of the lay battalions. It may be that some indiscretions will ensue. In some measure, they are inseparable from zeal and life. There are two ways of insuring against indiscretions: a shameful inaction, and a careful discipline. The heart which echoes that yearning of our Lord for the sick multitude will turn with horror from the former alternative, and throw itself with all its might into that harvesting of stricken souls.

The history of the Legion to date does not suggest that indiscretions, either serious or numerous, need be anticipated: and at the least there is exhibited a careful discipline.

### **11. Obstacles in the way of starting, there will always be.**

In this the Legion will not be alone amongst good works. A little resolution will show these difficulties, which seem so formidable in advance, to resemble a forest, which at a distance appears solid and impenetrable, but when once approached is found easy of entry.

Remember, too, that "they who are ever taking aim, make no hits; that they who never venture, never gain; that to be ever safe is to be ever feeble; and that to do some substantial good is the compensation for much incidental imperfection." (St. John Henry Newman)

In talking of a work of Grace, let no one be so worldly prudent as to ignore the existence of Grace. Objections and possibilities of harm should not be quoted without a thought as to the helps. The Legion is built upon prayer, works for souls, and belongs to Mary altogether. When considering it, therefore, speak not of human rules, tell of the rules of God.

"Mary is a Virgin Unique and unlike any other: *Virgo Singularis*. When considering her, speak not to me of human rules, tell me of the rules of God." (Bossuet)

# 33

## BASIC DUTIES OF LEGIONARIES

### 1. REGULAR AND PUNCTUAL ATTENDANCE AT THE WEEKLY MEETINGS OF THE PRAESIDIUM

(See chapter 11, *Scheme of the Legion*)

(a) This duty is more difficult when one is tired than when fresh; and in bad weather than in fine; and, generally, when one is tempted to go elsewhere. Yet where is the test but in the difficulty, and where the real merit but in the conquering of difficulties?

(b) It is easier to see the value of doing a work than the value of attendance at a meeting to report on that work, yet the meeting is the prime duty. The meeting is to the work as the root is to the flower; the latter will not live without the former.

(c) Fidelity in attendance in the face of long travelling to and fro is proof of a deep supernatural vision, for natural reasoning suggests that the value of the meeting is outweighed by the waste of time involved in the travelling. But it is not time wasted. It is a part, and a specially meritorious part, of the whole work done. Was Mary's long journey in the Visitation a waste of time?

"To her other virtues St. Thérèse joined an unflinching courage. It was always a principle with her that 'we should go to the end of our strength before we complain.' How many times did she not assist at Matins suffering from vertigo or violent headaches! 'I am still able to walk,' she would say, 'and so I ought to be at my post.' Thanks to this undaunted energy, she performed acts that were heroic." (St. Thérèse of Lisieux)

### 2. PERFORMANCE OF THE WEEKLY WORK OBLIGATION

(a) This work should be "substantial," that is, the legionary should spend a couple of hours a week at it. But legionaries should not thus mathematically restrict themselves. A large proportion of legionaries far exceed that minimum, going on to the gift of several days in the week. Many are found who give every day. The work must represent some definite active duty assigned by the praesidium, not something dictated by the pleasure of the individual legionary. Prayers or other

spiritual exercises, however considerable, do not satisfy this obligation, or even supply in part the place of active work.

(b) The work is but prayer in another form, and the rules of prayer must be applied to it. No work will persist for long without that supernatural framework. Either a duty will be easy, in which case it will become monotonous; or if interesting, it will most probably be difficult and marked by rebuffs and seeming failure. In either event, human considerations will quickly urge its abandonment. Instead, the legionary must be trained to look through the mists of human sentiments, which obscure every work, for its true outline which is the supernatural. The more that work is like a cross, the more it is to be esteemed.

(c) The legionary is a soldier, and duty should not be a less virile thing to the legionary than it is to the soldiers of earthly causes. Everything that is noble and self-sacrificing and chivalrous and strong in the soldierly character should be found at its height in the true legionary of Mary, and of course reflected in that legionary's work.

Soldierly duty may variously mean death, or the monotony of a sentry beat, or the scrubbing of a barrack-floor. But in each case, duty alone is looked to, not what that duty comprises. In all circumstances is found the same fidelity, and defeat or victory do not affect duty. No less solid must be the legionary's conception of duty; no less thorough its application to each item of work, the most insignificant as well as the most difficult.

(d) The legionary work is to be done in closest union with Mary. But, in addition, it must be regarded as an essential aim of that work to instil into those who are the object of it a knowledge of Mary and a true love of her, which will cause those souls to undertake some form of service of her. An understanding of Mary and a devotion towards her are necessary to the health and development of souls. "For she is a partner in the Divine mysteries and may indeed be described as their guardian. On her, as on the most noble foundation after Jesus Christ, rests the faith of all generations." (AD 5) The consideration of legionaries is invited to other thought-provoking words of Pope St. Pius X: "As soon as devotion to the august Mary has driven deep its roots into souls, then –

and not till then – will he who labours for those souls see proceed from them fruits of virtue and sanctity corresponding to his toils on their behalf.”

“Remember, you are fighting a winning battle, like our Lord on Calvary. Do not be afraid of the arms he sharpened nor to share the wounds he bore. Whether the victory should come in your generation or in the next, what is that to you? Carry on the tradition of patient toil; and let the Lord take care of the rest, for it is not for us to know the time nor the moments which the Father has appointed in his power. Take heart and bear the burden of your knighthood with the unflinching courage of the high-souled men who went before you.” (Fr. Thomas Gavan Duffy: *The Price of Dawning Day*)

### 3. FURNISHING AT THE MEETING A VERBAL REPORT OF WORK DONE

This is a very important duty, and one of the chief exercises which help to sustain interest in the work of the Legion. It is for this latter purpose as much as for the supplying of information to the meeting that the report is intended. A good test of the efficiency of the legionary is the care given to the preparing of the report, and the manner of presenting it. Each report is a brick in the edifice of the meeting, and the integrity of the latter depends upon the perfection of the reports. Each report missing or defective is a blow at the meeting, which is the source of life.

An important part of the training of the member should lie in the learning of the methods of other members, as disclosed through their reports, and in the hearing of the comments which one's own reports elicit from experienced legionaries. It follows that if a report gives only meagre information, it cannot be the means of helping either the member who makes it or those who listen to it.

For fuller consideration of the report and the manner of making it, see section 9, chapter 18, *Order of the Praesidium Meeting*.

“Bear in mind the insistency with which St. Paul calls on Christians to succour, and to be mindful of, and to pray for ‘*all men*; for God would have all men to be saved ... for Christ gave Himself in redemption for all.’ (1 Tim 2:6) And this principle of the universality of duty and of the object of it comes also into this sublime saying of St. John Chrysostom: ‘Christians, you will render an account not of yourselves alone but of the whole world’.” (Gratry: *Les Sources*)

#### 4. INVIOLENT CONFIDENCE MUST BE PRESERVED

Inviolable confidence must be preserved by the legionaries in regard to what they hear at their meetings or in the course of their work. This knowledge comes to them because they are legionaries, and it would be an intolerable treachery to the Legion for them to divulge it. Reports must, of course, be made to the praesidium meeting, but even here there must be circumspection. This question is more fully discussed in section 20, chapter 19, *The Meeting and the Member*.

“Guard what has been entrusted to you.” (1 Tim 6:20)

#### 5. EVERY MEMBER SHOULD HAVE A NOTEBOOK

In this notebook will be kept a brief record of cases. (a) It is due to the work to attack it in a business-like way; (b) past and unfinished cases will not be lost sight of; (c) without its aid a suitable report will not be made; (d) it will form a training in habits of order; (e) this tangible record of work done will prove a valuable corrective in that inevitable hour when present failure casts its hue over past performance.

This record should be of a guarded character (that is, a species of code should be devised), so as not to disclose delicate information to eyes other than those of the legionary. It should never be entered up in the presence of the persons concerned.

“All things should be done decently and in order.” (1 Cor 14:40)

#### 6. THE DAILY RECITATION BY EACH LEGIONARY OF THE CATENA LEGIONIS (CHAIN OF THE LEGION)

The Catena is composed principally of the Magnificat, Mary’s own prayer, the evening hymn of the Church, “the most humble and grateful, the most sublime and exalted of all the Canticles.” (St. Louis-Marie de Montfort)

As the name implies, this is the link between the Legion and the daily life of all its members, active and auxiliary, and the bond which unites them one to another and to their Blessed Mother. The name is suggestive, too, of the obligation of daily recitation. Let the idea of a chain, composed of links – each link vital to perfection – be to each legionary an admonition against forming a broken link in the Legion’s chain of daily prayer.

Legionaries whom circumstances have forced to relinquish active membership (and even those whom less weighty reasons have caused to forsake the ranks) should still keep up this beautiful practice and preserve at least this bond with the Legion unbroken during life.

“When I converse familiarly with Jesus, each time I will do this in Mary’s name, and partly in her person. Through me she desires to re-live those hours of sweet intimacy and of ineffable tenderness which she spent in Nazareth with her beloved Child. With my aid, she would once more talk delightedly with him; thanks to me, she would embrace him and press him to her bosom, as once she did at Nazareth.” (De Jaegher: *The Virtue of Trust*)

## 7. THE RELATIONS BETWEEN MEMBERS

Legionaries are ready enough to honour in a general way the duty of loving their fellow-members, but sometimes do not remember that it must include an attitude of kindness towards seeming shortcomings. Failure in this direction will deprive the praesidium of grace, and may have the dire effect of causing others to discontinue membership.

And, on the other hand, all should be sensible enough to realise that their membership is something quite independent alike of the fact that they have a President or colleague whom they find pleasant or the reverse, and of real or imagined slights or lack of appreciation, or of disagreements, or rebukes, or of other accidental circumstances.

Self-suppression must be the basis of all work in common. Without it even the best workers may threaten the organisation. Those serve the Legion best, who moderate their own individuality and adapt themselves most completely and most harmoniously to the system. On the other hand, he that says something or does something that departs from the sweetness which should characterise the Legion, may be opening an artery with fatal results. Let all, then, watch that they do those things which fall to the centre, not from it.

When discussing the attitude of legionary to legionary there is special need to refer to what are lightly, but incorrectly, called the “petty jealousies.” Jealousy is seldom petty in itself. It means acid in the individual heart. It enters all but universally into human relations, poisoning them. In the malevolent, it is a fierce and maddening force which can

perpetrate most dreadful things. But likewise, it tempts the unselfish and the pure of heart through their sensitive and loving natures. How hard it is to see oneself displaced by others, outpaced in virtue or in performance, put aside in favour of the young! How bitter is the contemplation of one's own eclipse! The best of souls have felt that secret pang, and have learned from it their own amazing weakness. For that bitterness is really smouldering hate, and near to bursting into destructive flame.

Relief may lie in trying to forget. But the legionary must aim at higher things than such a peace. He must be satisfied with nothing less than victory, a vastly meritorious conquest over stark nature arrayed in battle, the transformation of the half-hate of envy wholly into Christian love. But how can such a wonder be achieved? It will be done by putting into force the fulness of legionary duty to his fellow-members and to those around him, in each of whom he has been taught to see and reverence his Lord. Each sting of jealousy must be met by this reflection: That person, whose increase has caused my pain, is none other than the Lord. My feelings, therefore, must be those of St. John the Baptist. My joy is filled that Jesus is exalted at my expense. He must increase, but I must decrease.

That outlook is heroically holy. It is the raw material for a destiny. What glorious scope it gives to Mary to free from every stain of vanity a soul through which the light will shine unto others (Jn 1:7), for her fashioning of yet another selfless envoy to prepare the way before the Lord! (Mk 1:2)

A precursor must always desire his own eclipse by him whom he announces. An apostle will always see with joy the growth of those around him, and will never think to measure their uprise against his own. He is no apostle who wishes growth to all, except when that growth casts shadow on his own! That jealous thought would show that self is first when self is touched, whereas self in the apostle must be always last. Nay more! the spirit of envy cannot co-exist with true apostleship.

“With her first words of respect and loving salutation, Mary imparts that first sanctifying impulse which purifies those souls, regenerating John the Baptist and in the same moment ennobling Elizabeth.

But if those first words have worked such great things, what is to be thought of the days, the weeks, the months which followed? Mary is giving all the time.... And Elizabeth receives – and why not say it boldly out – receives without jealousy. That Elizabeth, in whom God has likewise effected a miraculous maternity, bows before her young cousin without the slightest secret bitterness at not having been herself the one chosen by the Lord. Elizabeth was not jealous of Mary; and later on, Mary will be incapable of feeling jealous of the love her Son will give to his apostles. Nor will John the Baptist have a jealousy of Jesus, when his own disciples leave him for Jesus. Without a trace of bitterness, he will see them go from him, his only comment being: ‘He that cometh from above, is above all.... He must increase but I must decrease’.” (Jn 3:30-31) (Perroy: *L’Humble Vierge Marie*)

### 8. THE RELATIONS BETWEEN CO-VISITORS

Legionaries owe an especial duty to their co-visitors. Here is the mystic number “two” – the symbol of charity upon which all fruitfulness depends: The Lord “sent them on ahead of him, two by two”. (Lk 10:1) But “two” must not signify merely two persons who happen to be working together but a unity such as that of David and Jonathan, whose souls were knit one with the other. Each loved the other as his own soul. (1 Sam 18:1)

“(They) shall come home with shouts of joy, carrying their sheaves.” (Ps 126:6)

It will be in small details that the union of co-visitor with co-visitor will be shown and developed. Broken promises, missed appointments, unpunctuality, failures in charity of thought or word, little discourtesies, airs of superiority: these dig a trench between the two. In such circumstances no unity is possible.

“Next to religious discipline, the most precious guarantee of blessings and of fruitfulness for a religious society is found in fraternal charity, in harmonious union. We must love all our brothers, without exception, as the privileged and chosen sons of Mary. What we do to each of them, Mary regards as done to herself, or rather as done to her Son Jesus – all our members being called by their vocation to become, with Jesus and in Jesus, the very sons of Mary.” (Petit Traite de Marialogie: Marianiste)

## 9. RECRUITMENT OF NEW MEMBERS

Part of the duty of every legionary shall be the winning of new members. We are commanded to love our neighbour as ourselves; hence if the Legion is a blessing to oneself, shall not one seek to bring that blessing to others? If one sees souls uplifted by its work, should one not aspire to extend that work?

And finally, can any legionary not strive to gather in new members, if he reflects that the Legion cannot but advance them in the love and in the service of Mary? This, after Jesus Himself, is the greatest blessing which can enter a life. For God has made her – in dependence on Christ and inseparable from Him – the root and the growth and flowering of the supernatural life.

If not approached and urged thereto, innumerable persons will never think to enter the High Way, for which they inwardly yearn, and which would lead on to such wonderful things for themselves and, through them, for other souls.

"To every man there openeth  
A way, and ways, and a way.  
And the High Soul climbs the High Way  
And the Low Soul gropes the Low,  
And, in between, on the misty flats,  
The rest drift to and fro.  
And to every man there openeth  
A High Way and a Low,  
And every man decideth  
The Way his soul shall go."

(John Oxenham)

## 10. STUDY OF THE HANDBOOK

It is imperative that every member should study the handbook thoroughly. It is the official exposition of the Legion. It contains in briefest possible compass what it is important that every properly equipped legionary should know of the principles, the laws, the methods and the spirit of the organisation. Members – and in particular officers – who do not know the handbook cannot possibly work the system properly; while, on the other hand, increased knowledge will always bring increased efficiency. The unusual feature will be presented of interest growing with time, and quality with quantity.

The cry "Too long!" is not uncommonly heard, and sometimes, by a strange disproportion, from persons who each day give to the perusal of the newspapers an amount of time adequate for the reading of the major part of the handbook.

"Too long! Too much detail!" Would the serious student of his country's laws, or of medicine, or of military science, apply such words to a text-book of only similar size which embodied all that he was expected to know concerning the particular science he was studying? Far from saying or thinking so, he would in a short week or two have committed to memory every idea, every word even, contained in such a treatise. Verily, "the children of this age are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light." (Lk 16:8)

And the objection is made that "the handbook is full of difficult ideas and advanced matters, so that many of our younger and simpler members can hardly understand it. So why not have a simplified handbook for such as them?" It should not have to be pointed out that such a suggestion is contrary to the first laws of education which require that the student be gradually led on into unknown territory. There is no education at all if a person understands a thing fully in advance; and when the new is no longer proposed to the mind, the process of education has ceased. Why should a legionary expect to understand the handbook straight away, any more than a student be expected to understand immediately his first text book? It is the function of the school and the whole idea of education to make clear what was not clear and to implant it as knowledge.

"Even the words are hard!" But can they not be learned? The vocabulary of the handbook is not so very advanced; it can be acquired by asking questions and by looking up a dictionary. In actual fact, it is precisely the vocabulary of the daily newspapers which are read by everyone. Who ever hears it suggested that those newspapers be simplified? And does not every legionary owe it to himself and to his Catholicism to master words that have been found necessary for the full explaining of the spiritual and other principles of the Legion?

What has been said of the handbook vocabulary is to be repeated in respect of the handbook ideas. They are not obscure ideas. "There cannot be in the Church's teaching an

inner body of doctrine which only the few can grasp" (Archbishop John Charles McQuaid). This has been proved by the fact that countless legionaries, ordinary and even simple people, have completely grasped those ideas and have made them food and fibre for their lives. Neither are those ideas unnecessary. Actually, they must be reasonably comprehended if the apostolate is to be properly fulfilled, for they are only the common principles, that is to say, the very life, of apostleship. Without a sufficient understanding of those principles, the apostolate would be deprived of its true meaning – its spiritual roots, and would not have the right to be called Christian at all. The difference between the Christian apostolate and a vague campaign of "doing good" is as the distance between heaven and earth.

Therefore, the apostolic ideas of the handbook must be absorbed, and the praesidium must play the part of teacher. This process will be accomplished through the spiritual reading, through the *Allocutio*, and by stimulating the legionaries in a systematic reading and study of the handbook. Knowledge must not remain theoretical. Each item of the active work must be linked to its appropriate doctrine and thus given spiritual significance.

Once when asked how to become learned, St. Thomas Aquinas replied: "Read one book. Whatever you read or hear, take care to understand it well. Attain certainty in what is doubtful." The master of learning was not here pointing to one particular great book, but had in mind any worthy book which aimed at the imparting of knowledge. Therefore legionaries can take his words as an incentive to an exhaustive study of the handbook.

In addition, it has a catechism value. It affords a simple, comprehensive presentation of the Catholic religion, conformed to the legislation of the Second Vatican Council.

"Although he held knowledge to be the result of interior illumination, St. Bonaventure, nevertheless, was well aware of the labour which study entails. And so, quoting St. Gregory, he put forward as an illustration of study the miracle at the marriage at Cana of Galilee. Christ did not create the wine out of nothing, but bade the servants first fill their pitchers with water. In the same manner the Holy Spirit does not grant spiritual intelligence and understanding to a man who does not fill his pitcher – that is his mind – with water – that is with matter learnt from study. There can be no illumination

without effort. An understanding of eternal truths is the reward of the labour of study which no man can avoid." (Gemelli: *The Franciscan Message to the World*)

### 11. TO BE IN A SENSE ALWAYS ON DUTY

As far as prudence will dictate, the legionary must aim at bringing the spirit of the Legion to bear on all the affairs of daily life, and must ever be on the alert for opportunities to promote the general object of the Legion, that is, to destroy the empire of sin, uproot its foundations, and plant on its ruins the standard of Christ the King.

"A man will meet you in the street and ask you for a match. Talk to him, and in ten minutes he will be asking you for God." (Duhamel.) But why not make sure of that life-giving contact by first asking him for the match?

So commonly as to tend to harden into custom, Christianity is understood and practised only in a partial sense, that is, as an individualistic religion directed exclusively towards the benefiting of one's own soul and not at all concerned with one's fellow-man. This is the "half-circle Christianity" so reprobated by Pope Pius XI. Evidently the Command that we must love God with our whole heart and with our whole soul and with our whole mind; and our neighbour as ourself (Mt 22:37-39), has fallen on many ears that are determined to be deaf.

It would be evidence of this gravely incorrect point of view to regard the legionary standards as a sort of sanctity, intended for chosen souls only. For these standards are only elementary Christian ones. It is not easy to see how one can descend much below them and at the same time claim to be rendering to our neighbour the active love which is enjoined by the Great Precept, and which is part of the very love of God; so much so, that if it be omitted, the Christian idea is mutilated. "We must be saved together. We must come to God together. What would God say to us if some of us came to Him without the others?" (Péguy)

That love must lavish itself on our fellow-men without distinction, individually and corporately, not as a mere emotion but in the form of duty, service, self-sacrifice. The legionary must be an attractive embodiment of this true

Christianity. Unless the True Light is made to shine before men through numerous and conspicuous rays of that Light, that is, by practical examples of real Christian living, there is not only the danger but the certainty that it will not be reflected in the common standards of Catholics. These may sink to the minimum compatible with keeping out of hell. This would mean that religion had been stripped of its noble and unselfish character – in other words, made the ridiculous opposite to what it is supposed to be, and therefore capable of attracting nobody and holding nobody.

Duty means discipline. Being always on duty means unrelaxed discipline. Therefore, one's speech, and dress, and manner, and conduct, however simple they may be, must never be such as to disedify. Persons will look for fault in those whom they observe to be active in the cause of religion. Failings, which in others would hardly attract notice, will in a legionary be considered disgraceful, and will largely spoil his efforts to do good to others. Nor is this unreasonable. Is it not just to require a goodly standard from those who are urging others on to higher things?

But there must be here, as in all things, right reason. Those who are well-intentioned must not be deterred from apostolic effort by the sense of their own deficiencies. For that would mean the end of all apostleship. Neither are they to think that perhaps it would be hypocritical for them to counsel a perfection which they do not possess. "No," says St. Francis de Sales, "it is not being a hypocrite to speak better than we act. If it were, Lord God! where would we be? We would have to remain silent."

"The Legion of Mary aims simply at the living of normal Catholicism. We say 'normal'; we do not say 'average'. In these days there is a tendency to think that the 'normal' Catholic is one who practises his religion altogether for his own sake without taking any active interest in the salvation of his brethren. To judge thus would be to caricature the real Catholic, and indeed Catholicism itself. Average Catholicism is not normal Catholicism. It would seem to be necessary to subject to a close scrutiny, to a process of revision, this prevalent notion of 'good Catholic' or 'practising Catholic'. One is not a Catholic if one falls below a certain apostolic minimum, and this indispensable minimum, on which will depend the Last Judgement, is not being reached by the mass of so-called practising Catholics. Therein is a tragic situation; therein lies a fundamental misunderstanding." (Cardinal Suenens: *La Théologie de l'Apostolat*)

## 12. THE LEGIONARY MUST PRAY AS WELL AS WORK

Though the recital of the *Catena Legionis* is the only daily duty imposed by the Legion on its active members, the latter are earnestly urged to include all the prayers of the *Tessera* in their daily programme. The auxiliary members' duty requires those prayers, and it would be a reproach to the active units were they to fall short of what the auxiliaries, in countless numbers, are contributing. It is true that the auxiliary does not perform the active work. Nevertheless, it is certain that the auxiliary is of greater service to the Legion's Queen than the active member who works but does not pray. This is the reverse of the intention of the Legion, which conceives the active membership as the spearhead of its attack and the auxiliaries as the haft only.

Moreover, the fervour and perseverance of the auxiliaries will depend in great measure upon their conviction that they are supplementing a self-sacrificing and in fact heroic service – one far beyond their own. For this additional reason, the active member must constitute a model and an inspiration to the auxiliary. But a genuine inspiration he can hardly be, if his service of prayer falls below that demanded from the auxiliary, leaving a doubt as to who serves the Legion the better.

Every legionary, active and auxiliary, should enrol in the Confraternity of the Most Holy Rosary. The benefits attaching to membership are immense. (see appendix 7)

"In all petitions the Most Holy Name of Jesus is at least implicitly invoked, even though the words 'through our Lord Jesus Christ' are not expressly said: because he is the necessary Mediator to whom appeals must be presented. Moreover, when the suppliant addresses God the Father directly, or when he confides his request to an angel or a saint without calling on the most holy name of Mary, then the same must be said of the Blessed Virgin as of her Divine Son. Just as his Name is ever implicitly invoked because he is the sole necessary Mediator, so the name of his Blessed Mother who is associated with him is also in all prayers implicitly invoked with his. Whenever God is asked, she is virtually asked. Whenever Christ as Man is asked, she is thereby asked. Whenever a saint is asked, she is asked." (Canice Bourke, O.F.M. Cap.: Mary)

## 13. THE INTERIOR LIFE OF LEGIONARIES

"It is no longer I who live" says the Apostle "but it is Christ who lives in me." (Gal 2:20) Interior life means that one's

thoughts, desires and affections converge on our Lord. The model for achieving this is Our Blessed Lady. She continually advanced in holiness, for spiritual progress, is, most of all, progress in charity or love, and charity grew in Mary during her whole life.

“All Christians in any state or walk of life are called to the fulness of Christian life and to the perfection of love. All the faithful are invited and obliged to holiness and the perfection of their own state of life.” (LG 40, 42) Holiness is a practical attainment. “All of holiness consists in the love of God, and all of the love of God consists in doing his will.” (St. Alphonsus Liguori)

“To be able to discover the actual will of the Lord in our lives always involves the following: a receptive listening to the Word of God and the Church, fervent and constant prayer, recourse to a wise and loving spiritual guide, and a faithful discernment of the gifts and talents given by God as well as the diverse social and historic situations in which one lives.” (CL 58)

The spiritual formation of legionaries at praesidium level greatly helps in the development of their holiness. But it must be noted that the spiritual guidance given is collective. Since each member is a unique individual with personal needs, it is desirable that the collective be supplemented by individual guidance and consequently that the member avail of a “wise and loving spiritual guide” (ibid.)

There are three necessary requirements for a Christian life: prayer, mortification and sacraments, and they are interconnected:

#### **(a) Prayer**

It has to be private as well as public, because there are two sides to our nature, individual as well as social. The duty of worship obliges us primarily as individuals, but the whole community, linked together by social bonds, is bound by it also. The liturgy, like the Mass and the Divine Office, is the public worship of the Church. However Vatican Council II comments: “The Christian is indeed called to pray with others, but he must also enter into his room to pray to his Father in secret; furthermore, according to the teaching of the apostle, he must pray without ceasing.” (SC 12) Private forms of prayer

include: “meditation [or mental prayer], examination of conscience, retreats, visits to the Blessed Sacrament, and special devotions to the Blessed Virgin Mary, above all, of course, the rosary.” (MD 186) “Nourishing the spiritual life of Christians, as they do, they cause them to take part with great profit in all the public functions, and prevent the liturgical prayers from degenerating into an empty ceremony.” (ibid. 187)

Private spiritual reading, as well as developing Christian convictions, greatly helps prayer-life. Preference is to be given to the reading of the New Testament, with a suitable Catholic commentary (cf DV 12) and spiritual classics, chosen according to one’s needs and abilities. It is here that the “wise” guide is especially important. Well-written lives of saints provide a good introduction to the spiritual life. They provide a headline which would draw us on to goodness and heroism. Saints are the doctrines and practices of holiness made visible. If we frequent their company, we will soon imitate their qualities.

Every legionary should, if at all possible, make an enclosed retreat once every year. The fruit of retreats and recollections is a clearer vision of one’s vocation in life and a brighter willingness to follow it faithfully.

### **(b) Mortification or self-denial**

It means getting rid of self to allow Christ to live his life in us and to share that life more fully. It is self-discipline in order to love God and others for the sake of God. Its need arises because by original sin our intellect is darkened, our will is weakened and our passions incline us easily to sin.

The first requirement is the willing fulfilment of what the Church lays down with regard to days and seasons of penance and how they are to be observed. The Legion system, followed properly, gives a valuable training in mortification.

After that comes the loving acceptance from God’s hands of “the crosses, toils and disappointments of life.” Positively there is the question of controlling our senses, especially with regard to what we permit ourselves to look at, listen to or say. All that helps to control the internal senses of memory and imagination. Mortification also involves the overcoming of laziness, moods and selfish attitudes. A mortified person will be courteous and pleasant to those he lives close to at home and at work. Personal apostolate, which is friendship carried

to its logical conclusion, implies mortification because it means taking trouble to put friends right with kindness and delicacy. "I have become all things to all people" says St. Paul "that I might by all means save some." (1 Cor 9:22) The efforts needed to check dangerous tendencies and cultivate good habits also serve as atonement for our sins and the sins of others in the Mystical Body. If Christ the Head suffered on account of our sins, it is only right that we should be in solidarity with him; if Christ the innocent one paid for us the guilty, surely we the guilty have to do something ourselves. Every fresh evidence of sin inspires generous Christians to make positive acts of reparation.

### (c) Sacraments

Union with Christ has its source in baptism, its further development in confirmation and its realisation and potent nourishment in the Eucharist. As these sacraments are dealt with elsewhere in the handbook, here mention should be made of the sacrament in which Christ continues to exercise his merciful forgiveness through one who acts in his person – a Catholic priest. It is variously called confession, penance, reconciliation. Confession, because it is a frank acknowledgement of sins committed; penance because it denotes change; reconciliation, because through the sacrament a penitent is reconciled with God, his Church and all mankind. It is closely linked with the Eucharist, because Christ's forgiveness comes to us through the merits of his death – the very death we celebrate in the Eucharist.

Let every legionary avail of Christ's invitation to meet him personally in his sacrament of reconciliation and to do so frequently and regularly, "for by this means we grow in a true knowledge of ourselves and in Christian humility, bad habits are uprooted, spiritual negligence and apathy are prevented, the conscience is purified and the will strengthened, salutary spiritual direction is obtained, and grace is increased by the efficacy of the sacrament itself." (MC 88) Through experiencing the benefits of the sacrament of reconciliation legionaries will be encouraged to share them by inviting people to confession.

To summarise, the salvation of souls and their sanctification as well as the Christian transformation of the world

come about only as a consequence of the life of Christ in souls. In point of fact, this is really the most vital issue.

“Marian *spirituality*, like its corresponding *devotion*, finds a very rich source in the historical experience of individuals and of the various Christian communities present among the different peoples and nations of the world. In this regard, I would like to recall, among the many witnesses and teachers of this spirituality, the figure of St. Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort, who proposes consecration to Christ through the hands of Mary, as an effective means for Christians to live faithfully their baptismal commitments.” (RMat 48)

“There is an organic connection between our spiritual life and the dogmas. Dogmas are lights along the path of faith; they illuminate it and make it secure. Conversely, if our life is upright, our intellect and heart will be open to welcome the light shed by the dogmas of faith.” (CCC 89)

#### 14. THE LEGIONARY AND THE CHRISTIAN VOCATION

The Legion proposes a way of life rather than the doing of a work. It gives a training which is meant to influence every department of life and every hour of that life. The legionary who is only a legionary for the duration of the meeting and the work assignment is not living the spirit of the Legion.

The Legion’s purpose is to help its members and all those in contact with them to live out their Christian vocation to the full. That vocation has its source in baptism. By baptism one is made another Christ. “We have not only become other Christs, but Christ himself.” (St. Augustine)

Incorporated into Christ at baptism, every member of his Church shares his role as Priest, Prophet and King.

We share in Christ’s *priestly* mission by worship, private and public. The highest form of worship is sacrifice. By spiritual sacrifice we offer ourselves and all our activities to our Father God. Speaking of the lay faithful, Vatican Council II says: “For all their works, prayers and apostolic undertakings, family and married life, daily work, relaxation of mind and body, if they are accomplished in the Spirit – indeed even the hardships of life if patiently borne – all these become spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. (cf. 1 Pet 2:5) In the celebration of the Eucharist these may most fittingly be offered to the Father along with the body of the Lord and so, worshipping everywhere by their holy actions, the laity consecrate the world itself to God.” (LG 34)

We share in Christ's *prophetic* (teaching) mission. He "proclaimed the kingdom of his Father both by the testimony of his life and by the power of his word" (LG 34). As lay faithful, we are given the ability and responsibility to accept the gospel in faith and proclaim it in word and deed. The greatest service we can render to people is to speak the truths of faith – to tell, for example, what God is, what the human soul is, what the purpose of life is and what follows death. Above all, about Christ Our Lord who contains all truth. It is not necessary to be able to argue and give proofs for what we say, but to know and live these truths and to be aware of the difference they make, and to talk about them intelligently, conveying enough of their meaning to arouse interest and possibly make the person willing to seek fuller information.

Legion membership helps to improve one's knowledge of the faith and how to live it. It helps also by strong motivation and experience to speak about religion to strangers. But people who have the greatest claim on our apostolic charity are those we meet habitually at home, school, trade, profession, social and leisure activities. These will not normally be part of our Legion assignment, but they are committed to our care all the same.

We share in Christ's *kingly* mission by overcoming in ourselves the kingdom of sin and by the service of our fellowmen, for to rule is to serve. Christ said that he came to serve, not to be served. (Mt 20:28) We share, above all, in this mission of Christ by doing our work well, whatever it is, in the home and outside it, out of love for God and as a service to others. By work well done we continue the work of creation and help make the world a better and more pleasant place to live in. It is the privileged task of lay Christians to permeate and perfect the temporal order, that is, all earthly affairs, with the spirit of the Gospel.

We pray in the Legion Promise that we may become instruments of the Holy Spirit's mighty purposes. Certainly our actions should always be supernaturally motivated, but our nature also must provide the Holy Spirit with as perfect an instrument as possible.

Christ is a Divine Person, but his human nature played a part in his actions, his human intelligence, his voice, his glance, his manner of behaviour. People, including children,

the most discerning of all, liked to be in his company. He was a welcome guest at everyone's table.

St. Francis de Sales was a man whose conduct and manners were not the least of the means by which he brought many souls to God. It was he who recommended that everyone who wished to practice charity should cultivate what he called "the little virtues": friendliness, courtesy, good manners, consideration, patience and understanding, especially with the difficult.

"Identity of blood implies between Jesus Christ and Mary a similarity of formation, of features, of inclinations, of tastes, of virtues; not only because identity of blood very frequently creates such a similarity, but because in Mary's case (her maternity being altogether a supernatural fact – the effect of overwhelming grace) this grace took hold of this more or less general principle of nature and developed it in her in such a manner as to make her the living image and portrait of her divine Son in every way so that whoever could see her, could admire the most exquisitely formed image of Jesus Christ. This same relation of motherhood established between Mary and her Son an intimacy not only as to intercourse and communion of life, but as regards an interchange of hearts and of secrets; so that she was the mirror reflecting all the thoughts, feelings, aspirations, desires and purposes of Jesus, as he in turn reflected in a more eminent manner, as in an unspotted mirror, the miracle of purity, of love, of devotedness, of immense charity which was the soul of Mary. Mary could, therefore, say with greater reason than the Apostle of the Gentiles: "I live, not I: it is Jesus who lives in me." (De Concilio: The Knowledge of Mary)

## 34

# DUTIES OF OFFICERS OF PRAESIDIA

### 1. THE SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR

As the Legion judges its success entirely according to the spiritual qualities developed in its members and brought to bear by them on their work, it follows that the Spiritual

Director, on whom the duty primarily falls of inspiring the members with those qualities, is the very mainspring of the praesidium. He will attend the meetings and he will, together with the President and the other officers, take care that the rules are kept, and the Legion system carried out both in the spirit and the letter. He will guard against all abuses, and he shall uphold all due legionary authority.

If his praesidium is worthy of the name, he has within it the special zeal and possibilities of his parish. But it depends on him for its work, which should be of a worthy and difficult kind. It depends on him for spurring on, because interior reluctances and external barriers have to be broken down. It looks to him to be the animating principle of its spirituality. So much, in fact, depends on him that Pope Pius XI puts it thus: "My fate is in your hands." It would be a sorrow if even in a single case that sense of trust should be misplaced; if even one little band, wishful to do its best for God and Mary and souls, should be left straying, truly a flock without its shepherd! What would the chief shepherd say of such a one, to whom he also had looked to be "the soul of the association, the inspiration of all good undertakings, the source of zeal"? (Pope Pius XI)

The Spiritual Director will regard his praesidium as a novice-master would those placed under his care, and will seek incessantly to develop their spiritual outlook and to elicit in them acts and qualities proper to a legionary of Mary. It will be found that these spiritual qualities will rise to the heights to which they are summoned, so that the Spiritual Director need not fear to make his call one to supreme virtue, or to place before his members work requiring heroic qualities to perform. Even the impossible must surrender to grace; and grace is for the asking. But likewise, he shall insist upon an unvarying fidelity in the minor details of their duty as the essential foundation for great achievement. Though character may be shown in the big moments, it is in the small moments that it is made.

He will see to it that his members do not approach their work in a spirit of self, and will thus ensure that they will return neither elated by success nor depressed by apparent failure, prepared, if bidden, to return a thousand times to the most disagreeable or most depressing duty.

He will see that they supplement a fearless and thorough execution of their active work by prayer for it and by acts of self-sacrifice, and he will teach them that it is just at the time when all ordinary means have failed, when things are humanly speaking hopeless, that the Queen of the Legion, their Mother, can be turned to with most certain confidence, and will grant them the victory.

Essentially it will be the duty of a Spiritual Director of the Legion of Mary to fill all his members with an enlightened and most intense love of the Mother of God, and in particular for those privileges of hers which the Legion specially honours.

Thus building patiently, fitting stone on stone, he can hope to erect in each member a fortress of the spirit which nothing will disintegrate.

As a member of the praesidium, the Spiritual Director will take part in its transaction of business and in its various discussions and undertakings, and will be "as necessity demands, teacher, counsellor and guide" (Pope St. Pius X.) He should, however, be careful that he does not find himself assuming as well the duties of President. Should there be a tendency in this direction, it will not be for the good of the praesidium. If to his prestige as priest, and his infinitely wider knowledge of life, is added the taking and conducting of the business by him, the effect upon the meeting will be overwhelming. It will be found that the consideration of each case will take the form of a dialogue between the Spiritual Director and the legionary concerned, in which the President and the members at large will play no part, remaining silent from a feeling that their intervention would bear the complexion of an effort to interfere with the judgment of the Spiritual Director. With the discontinuance of its free and general discussion of cases, the meeting will have lost what is at once its chief element of attractiveness, its principal educative force, and its greatest source of health. Such a praesidium will do no work on the occasion of the absence of the Spiritual Director, and may collapse in the event of his departure.

"He will – as every member is required to do – take the liveliest interest in everything which is told at the meeting. But he will not seize on every word as an opportunity for

injecting his own views. Of course he will interpose when his counsel or knowledge is definitely called for. But he should do this in a balanced way, not 'blacking-out' the President, not swamping the meeting; and on the other hand intervening enough to afford a model as to the extent and the manner in which the members should interest themselves in cases not their own." (Bishop Helmsing.)

In case a praesidium undertakes the work of study, the Spiritual Director will supervise the choice of books to be read. He will exercise a vigilant censorship on this work, and he shall allow no doctrines to be proposed to the members but such as are in full accord with the authentic principles of the Church.

Immediately after the recitation of the Catena, a short talk, preferably by way of commentary on the handbook (see section 11, *The Allocutio*, chapter 18, *Order of the Praesidium Meeting*) should be given by the Spiritual Director. In the event of his absence, this duty devolves upon the President.

Immediately after the conclusion of the final prayers of the meeting, he shall impart his blessing to the members.

"Christ actually did appoint a Priesthood, which should not only represent him and stand for him, but should in a certain sense be Himself – that is to say, that he should exercise divine powers through its agency. Therefore devotion and reverence towards the priest is a direct homage to the Eternal Priesthood of which the human minister is a partaker." (Benson: Friendship of Christ)

"The priest must be that husbandman who, at every hour of the day, from dawn to dusk, goes out into the public places to call for labourers in the Lord's vineyard. Without that call of his, there is a great risk that the majority will remain standing there 'all the day idle.' (Mt 20:6)" (Civardi)

## 2. THE PRESIDENT

1. A principal duty of the President shall be to attend the meetings of the Curia to which the praesidium is attached, and by this and by other means to keep the praesidium firmly united with the main body of the Legion.

2. In the meetings of the praesidium, the President shall occupy the chair and conduct the business. He shall allocate the work and receive the members' reports on their work. He shall remember that he is there as the Legion's trustee for the

faithful carrying out of the system in all its details. Default in this trusteeship is an act of infidelity to the Legion. The armies of the world would call it treachery and would visit the offender with the severest penalties.

3. He shall be primarily charged with the responsibility of seeing that the room of the meeting is ready (that is, as regards light, heat, seating, etc.) for the meeting to begin at the due time.

4. He shall begin the meeting punctually at the appointed hour, interrupt the proceedings at the ordained time for the recitation of the Catena, and bring the meeting to a conclusion at the prescribed time. In this connection, it is suggested that the President keep a watch before him on the table.

5. In the absence of the Spiritual Director, he shall give the Allocutio or assign someone to give it.

6. He shall instruct and supervise the other officers in the performance of their duties.

7. He shall always be on the alert for members of special merit whom he can recommend to the Curia in connection with vacant officerships in his own praesidium or elsewhere. As the efficiency of a praesidium depends on the excellence of its officers, it should be the glory of a President to raise up worthy ones, and thus provide for the future of the Legion.

8. He shall set a high level of spirituality and zeal to all his fellow legionaries, but not in such a way as to take upon himself work which his members should be doing. Were the President to do the latter, he might indeed show zeal, but he would not set example; for he is preventing those, for whom the example is intended, from following his lead.

9. He shall remember that whispered or indistinct reports are the enemy of the meeting. He must himself speak in a tone of voice which will ring throughout the room. If he relax in this, he will find his members delivering reports which can only be heard with an effort, and at once will the meeting languish.

10. It shall be his duty to see that each member makes an adequate report, to lead on by judicious questioning the inexperienced or shy members, and on the other hand to moderate those reports which, though excellent in themselves, threaten to absorb too great a proportion of the time available.

11. Conformably with conducting the meeting properly, the President should speak as little as possible. This means that he must steer a middle course between extremes. One extreme is that of administering neither check nor stimulation, so that the meeting is left almost to run itself. The result is that some members content themselves with giving monosyllabic reports; while others will not stop. By this averaging of "too little" and "too much", a praesidium may seem to transact its business in the proper time. But, needless to say, such a combination of incorrectnesses does not amount to correctness, no more than cloaked chaos is perfect order.

The other extreme is that of talking too much. Some Presidents talk feverishly all the time, thereby, (a) appropriating to themselves time which belongs to the other members, and (b) perverting the idea of the praesidium, which is not supposed to be a lecture-system but a united consideration of "Father's business," (Lk 2:49) (c) more than that, excessive talking from the chair lulls the members into a relaxed condition in which they do not want to open their mouths.

Either of those extremes forms thoroughly bad training for the members.

12. He shall cultivate the spirit of fraternity in the praesidium, knowing that when this is gone all is gone. He shall himself safeguard it by exhibiting the deepest affection for each and every one of his members, and in general by setting the example of a great humility. He shall receive our Lord's words: "Whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave." (Mt 20:27)

13. He shall encourage his members to express their views and volunteer their help in cases not their own, and thus

develop in them a lively sense of interest in all the work of the praesidium.

14. He shall satisfy himself that the work of each legionary is being done:

- (a) in the right spirit;
- (b) along the right lines;
- (c) that all the good which the Legion would wish to see reaped in each case is in fact achieved;
- (d) that old work is from time to time returned upon; and
- (e) that an enterprising spirit is kept alive in the members by the regular breaking of new ground.

15. He shall secure from the members the degree of effort and self-sacrifice of which they are capable. To require from a legionary of good capacity some petty task, is to do a great injustice to that legionary, whose eternity is being shaped. There are none who will not take things easily if they are encouraged to do so. Thus the President must urge each one on because God wants from each one of his creatures the maximum of its capacity.

16. The faults of a praesidium are usually the faults of its President. If the President accepts incorrectnesses, they will recur and get worse.

17. As the President occupies the chair about fifty times in the year, and is no more than human, it is inevitable that on some of those occasions he will be in an irritable frame of mind. If so, he must strive to show no trace of it, for nothing is more infectious than bad humour. Starting from one person, especially from one in authority, it can quickly devastate a whole body.

18. A President, who feels that the praesidium is drifting into careless ways or loss of spirit, should consult privately with the Curia Officers as to the proper course to be adopted; and if his own transfer to ordinary membership is recommended, he should most humbly abide by that decision which will be full of blessings for him.

19. He shall, like every other officer and member, satisfy the obligations of membership by doing the ordinary work of the praesidium. It would appear superfluous to enunciate this

rule in the case of a President, did not experience prove the contrary.

20. Finally, he must never be found wanting in those things which a leading authority on the lay apostolate (Cardinal Pizzardo) insists must characterise in a very special manner every leader in that movement: the virtue of docility to ecclesiastical authority, the spirit of self-denial, of charity and harmony with other organisations and with the individuals belonging to those organisations.

“From the moment I was given the charge of souls, I saw at a glance that the task was beyond my strength, and quickly taking refuge in our Lord’s arms, I imitated those babes who when frightened hide their faces on their father’s shoulder: ‘thou seest, Lord,’ I cried, ‘that I am too small to feed thy little ones, but if through me thou wilt give to each what is suitable, then fill my hands; and without quitting the shelter of thy arms, or even turning my head, I will distribute thy treasures to the souls who come to me asking for food. When they find it to their liking, I shall know that it is not to me they owe it, but to thee; while if on the contrary they complain, finding fault with its bitterness, I shall not be at all disturbed, but shall try to persuade them it comes from thee, and I will take care to give them none other’.” (St. Thérèse of Lisieux)

### 3. THE VICE-PRESIDENT

1. It shall be the duty of the Vice-President to attend the meetings of the Curia.

2. He shall preside at the praesidium meeting in the event of the absence of the President. It is, however, to be understood that the post does not carry any right of succeeding to a vacant presidency.

The following advice, adapted from the Manual of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, has equal application to the Vice-President of a praesidium: “When the President is absent, especially for some time, it should be understood that the Vice-president has all his powers and stands entirely in his place. An Association should never stand still for want of a member, and this would be the case if the members did not venture to do anything in the President’s absence. It is therefore not alone his right, but it is a conscientious duty on the part of the Vice-president to supply fully the place of the

President when absent, in order that, when the latter returns, he may not find that everything has been languishing for want of him."

3. He shall generally assist the President in the management of the praesidium and the carrying through of business. Too often it is supposed that his duty only begins when the President is absent. This is an error which will prove disastrous both to the Vice-President and to the praesidium. The correct view is that the Vice-President should co-operate intimately with the presidential action. The pair should be in relation to the praesidium much as the father and mother are to the home, or as the Commander-in-Chief and the Chief-of-Staff are to an army. The Vice-President supplements the President. He is meant to be an active officer, not a reserve officer or a passive one. During meetings, his special function is to supervise the innumerable things which are outside the attention of the President, but on which may depend the proper working of the praesidium.

4. In particular the Vice-President is charged with the duty of looking after membership. He should make the acquaintance of newcomers on the occasion of their first attendance, and welcome them to the praesidium; introduce them to the other members before or after the meeting; see that they are assigned to work, instructed in the obligations of membership (including that of daily recitation of the *Catena*), and made aware of the existence and details of the praetorian degree of membership.

5. During the meeting he shall mark up the attendance roll.

6. He shall keep the various registers relating to active, praetorian, adjutorian, and auxiliary membership, in each case subdividing as between full members and probationers. He shall see that auxiliary members are visited at the end of their probation period and, if found faithful to their obligations, transferred to the permanent registers.

7. He shall notify the active probationers of the drawing to a close of their probation, and shall make all arrangements for the taking of the Promise.

8. He shall note the fact that a member is absenting himself from the meetings; and then, by writing or otherwise, endeavour to prevent a complete falling away from membership.

It is obvious that between those whose membership is never in doubt and those who drop out at once through unsuitability, there must be a large intermediate class whose perseverance in membership will depend upon external or accidental circumstances, and whom the special care of a kindly membership officer would preserve in membership. Be it remembered, too, that the keeping of a member is more important to the Legion than the gaining of a new member. Thus the work of this officer, if faithfully carried through, would be directly responsible for a multitude of good actions and spiritual victories, would rapidly lead to the formation of new praesidia, and would in itself be an apostolate of quite a special kind.

9. He shall see to it that the duty of prayer for the deceased members is not neglected. That duty is defined elsewhere in a special section.

10. He shall visit the sick members, or secure that they are visited by other legionaries.

11. He shall supervise the other members in their efforts to gain auxiliary – and particularly adjutorian – members, and then to keep in touch with them.

“The novices expressed to Saint Thérèse their surprise at seeing her guess their inmost thoughts. ‘Here is my secret’, she explained to them, ‘I never make an observation to you without invoking the Blessed Virgin. I ask her to enlighten me as to what will do you the most good; and I am often astounded at the things which I then teach you. I feel, while I am speaking to you, that I am not deceived in believing that Jesus is speaking to you by my mouth.’” (St. Thérèse of Lisieux)

#### 4. THE SECRETARY

1. It shall be the duty of the Secretary to attend the meetings of the Curia.

2. On the Secretary devolves the responsibility of keeping the minutes of the praesidium. Great pains should be taken with the preparation of the minutes, which should be read in

distinct tones. The minutes play a most important part, both from the manner of reading and from their substance. Well read minutes, neither too long nor too short, which have obviously cost the Secretary considerable trouble, set a good headline for the rest of the meeting, and will in no small measure conduce to its efficiency.

3. The Secretary must have regard to his instruments, if he wishes to produce good results. It is a fact, dependent on the structure of the human mind, that even a good Secretary, writing with a pencil or a broken pen on inferior paper, will not ordinarily produce a worthy record. Therefore, the minutes should be written in ink or typed, and in a book of good quality.

4. The Secretary does not discharge his work-obligation to the praesidium by the performance of his secretarial duties.

5. He shall punctually furnish all information and all returns which may be required by the Curia, and shall generally be responsible for the correspondence of the praesidium. The Secretary shall also see that the stationery supplies of the praesidium are kept at a proper level.

6. Portions of the Secretary's duty may, however, be delegated by the President to other members of the praesidium.

"The Gospel says: 'Mary kept all these things in her heart.' (Lk 2:51) Why not on parchment as well? asked Botticelli. And without going deeper into the exegesis of the matter, he thus depicted the most perfect of all hymns of ecstasy and gratitude: An angel offers the ink bottle in his right hand, while with his left he supports the manuscript in which the Blessed Virgin has just transcribed the Magnificat in illuminated gothic lettering; her chubby Bambino takes on the air of a prophet and his tiny hand seems to guide his mother's fingers, those nervous, sensitive, almost thinking fingers that the Florentine master always associates closely with the expression of his idea of the Virgin. The inkstand likewise has its own meaning here. Although not of gold, nor incusted with gems like the crown upheld by the angels, yet it too symbolises the triumphal destiny of the Queen of Heaven and Earth. It foretells all that to the end of time will be written in human records in confirmation of what the humble servant of the Lord has predicted of her own glory." (Vloberg)

### 5. THE TREASURER

1. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to attend the meetings of the Curia.

2. He shall be responsible for the making and receiving of all payments by and to the praesidium, and for the keeping of full and properly written accounts thereof.

3. He shall see that the secret bag collection is made at each meeting.

4. He shall pay money only on the direction of the praesidium, and shall lodge funds in hand to the credit of the praesidium in such manner as the latter may direct.

5. He shall bear in mind the recommendation as to accumulated funds which is contained in chapter 35 on Funds, and shall from time to time bring the matter before the praesidium.

“Mary is the cellarer of the whole Trinity, for she pours out and gives the wine of the Holy Spirit to whomsoever she wills and to the extent that she wills.” (St. Albert the Great)

“Mary is the treasurer whose treasure is Jesus Christ. It is he himself whom she possesses, he himself whom she gives.” (St. Peter Julian Eymard)

## 35

### FUNDS

1. Every legionary body shall make a contribution towards the maintenance of its next-highest council. Subject to that and the following provisions, every legionary body has full control over its own funds and exclusive liability for its own debts.

2. The various bodies should not limit their contributions to percentages or bare minima. It is recommended that whatever surplus funds remain after the needs of the praesidium have been met, should be sent to the Curia for the

general purposes of the Legion. In this, as in all other matters, the relations of the praesidium to the Curia should be those of a child to its mother, the latter filled with solicitude for the interests of the former, which in turn tries to afford every assistance in lightening the maternal cares.

Very often praesidia do not sufficiently appreciate the fact that the general administration of the Legion is dependent on their contributions. They are found meeting only the bare needs of Curiae, and sometimes they fail even to do that much. As a consequence; those Curiae cannot aid the higher councils to bear the heavy burden attaching to the work of extension, the starting and visitation of branches, and other running expenses. This means that a vital legionary function is being crippled, which is a woeful thing to follow from mere thoughtlessness.

3. All proposals for novel expenditure are to be referred by praesidia to the Curia so that the latter may judge if anything is involved which might have faulty reactions.

4. The Curia may give money grants to a praesidium, but must not assume financial responsibility in respect of any work being carried on by that praesidium. That responsibility rests on the praesidium itself. The necessity for this regulation is obvious. Without it, any group running a Club, Hostel, or other work could, by being constituted a praesidium, turn the other praesidia into collecting agencies on its behalf.

It follows from this that no praesidium may call, otherwise than as a favour, upon any other praesidium or upon the Curia for assistance in the collection of funds.

5. Any transfer of funds, other than by a praesidium to its special work or vice versa, shall be a matter for Curia sanction.

6. In the event of a praesidium or a legionary council falling through, or ceasing to function as a Legion body, the ownership of its funds and property is thereupon vested in the next-highest governing body.

7. The Spiritual Director shall have no personal financial responsibility for debts which he has not himself advised.

8. The Treasurer's books shall be audited annually. It is suggested that two members of the praesidium or the council

(as the case may be), other than the Treasurer, be appointed to that duty.

9. It would be impossible to associate the idea of wastefulness with Our Lady's housekeeping. Therefore, it goes without saying that every legionary body must handle its property and its funds watchfully and economically.

"All mankind is one whole, a body in which each member receives and ought also to give. Life should live and circulate. It comes to all; he who would stop it, loses it. He who consents to lose it, finds it. Each soul, if it would live, should pour itself forth into another soul. Every gift of God is a force which must be passed on in order to be preserved and multiplied," (Gratry: The Month of Mary)

## 36

# PRAESIDIA REQUIRING SPECIAL MENTION

### 1. JUNIOR PRAESIDIA

1. Praesidia for persons under 18 years may be established with the approval of the Curia and subject to any special conditions which may be deemed necessary. See chapter 14, paragraph 22.

2. The only real way of learning the Legion is to work its system. Lectures are often given urging the young to undertake the apostolate when they go out into the world, but such lectures, however excellent, are but dry bones compared with the living body of actual practice. Moreover, without some actual training, an intention or desire to begin apostolic work is of little value. Inexperience is easily intimidated, or if a beginning is made along one's own lines, it will almost assuredly end in a morass.

3. It is to be regarded as an essential condition that at least the President of such a praesidium should be an adult. A second adult officer would be desirable with a view to

providing for the absence of the President, and for the possibilities of expansion. If these senior legionaries remain members of the senior praesidium, the work of officering the junior praesidium satisfies their work obligation. But, if they are members of the junior praesidium only, they must perform for it a substantial active work proportioned to their adult capacity. These officers should, if at all possible, be experienced legionaries, who understand perfectly the Legion system, and who are otherwise fitted to accomplish in these youthful legionaries the purpose which the Legion has in view in setting up the praesidium. That purpose is not primarily the doing of a certain amount of useful work, but the training and spiritualising of its members, and the preparing of them to take their place in the ordinary ranks of the Legion when school-days are finished.

4. Obviously the Allocutio will hold a doubly important place in the system by reason of the inability of many of the young legionaries to master the contents of the handbook through their own reading of it. Therefore, the Spiritual Director (or in his absence the President) should base every Allocutio on the handbook. A small section should be read, and then explained in such a detailed and simple way as to make it certain that every member fully understands it. The handbook should be ploughed through in this way week after week, from start to finish, and then returned upon. But indeed, the termination of junior membership comes so rapidly that there may not be the opportunity of covering the ground twice for the same legionaries. Each defective Allocutio, accordingly, represents an opportunity thrown away, a loss which cannot be made good.

5. If the handbook can be systematically studied after the method recommended in appendix 10, *Study of the Faith*, it will provide a most useful course, without being felt to be "just a school task." It will be invaluable training to these future props of the senior Legion.

6. As the works adopted by senior praesidia will probably not be available for a praesidium of this type, ingenuity will be required to provide each member weekly with a substantial active task fully equivalent to his capacity. Many juniors are

capable of doing work which is recognised as senior work, and in fact no junior who has reached 16 years should be given work which would not be accepted from seniors. The works of the praesidium should be diversified. Different works will educate in different ways. As each member cannot do all the works, the next best way of getting an all-round training is to watch all of them being done by others. Moreover the proceedings of the praesidium gain in interest.

7. A minimum of one hour's work per week, that is one-half of the senior obligation, may be accepted from the junior member.

8. Suggestions for the work are:

(a) Distribution of the miraculous medal after the following plan. At each meeting one or two medals (a fixed number) are served out to each legionary. They are to regard these as a ration of ammunition, which as soldiers of Mary they must use to the greatest advantage, by giving them, if possible, to non-Catholics or neglectful Catholics. This idea stirs the imagination and induces sacrifice. They should be instructed as to the manner of answering the questions which are likely to be asked and as to the utilisation of openings.

(b) Winning of auxiliary members. This will include the instructing of their recruits in the saying of the prayers, also the periodic visitation of them so as to ensure their fidelity.

(c) Endeavouring to have at least one additional person every week undertake: attendance at Holy Mass daily, or the practice of some devotion, or to join a sodality, the Apostleship of Prayer, or some Catholic society.

(d) Bringing of young children to Holy Mass and the Sacraments.

(e) Serving Mass.

(f) Teaching the Catechism and recruiting for catechism classes.

(g) Visitation of children in a hospital or other institution, or in their own homes.

(h) Visitation of the infirm and the blind and the performing for them of all sorts of needed services.

9. It is most strongly urged that every junior praesidium should have at least two members on each of the three last-named works, that is, (f) (g), (h). Those works, properly done, represent superb training for the young legionaries engaged on them, and would set the proper sort of standard for the other works of the praesidium.

10. It would be permissible for a junior to perform his work in company with a senior legionary.

11. In the case of internal praesidia it would be desirable to provide the members with ordinary active work outside. But Superiors, mindful of their responsibility, will fear lest this privilege be abused and may imagine other dangers. As to these apprehensions: (a) If those legionaries were in junior praesidia outside, they would be doing that ordinary work; (b) The future is only provided for by training. If there be no liberty now, there is no training for the time of unrestricted liberty. That outside work, safeguarded by the double discipline of college and Legion, can be made an ideal preparation.

12. It is in order to establish a praesidium in a college where the students go home for the vacations, rendering it impossible to hold meetings during that period. During that time the members may be able to work in the praesidia in their home towns.

13. It should be brought home to the members that their own holiness is not only the main object of the Legion but also the mainspring of the Legion's work. Hence, they should be encouraged to pray and make sacrifices for the intentions of the praesidium. But these exercises should not be assigned to the members, and they should not be reported on at the meeting. It is particularly emphasised that spiritual exercises cannot substitute for the active work. If they are performed, it must be in addition to the active work.

14. Special thought must be given by the members to the preparing of their reports, and they should be diligently educated by their officers in the manner of furnishing a report. The nature of their work will not usually provide

much material for an interesting or detailed report, so a special effort will be needed to render the proceedings interesting and varied.

15. The sense of identity with the senior Legion, fighting the Lord's battles in difficult and often dangerous circumstances and with many great enterprises in hand, will vitalise their own less enterprising work, and will catch the imagination of these youthful legionaries (a process which is helped by everything in the Legion system). This will preserve them, and many through them, from the disposition to regard religion as a mere imposed routine. If the latter idea takes root in the impressionable years, harm has been done for which the most resplendent scholastic attainments will not compensate.

16. The probation rule does not apply to junior members; nor will they take the legionary Promise; nor sit on a senior Curia. But in all other respects the full routine of prayers, system and meetings, inclusive of the secret bag collection, must be scrupulously followed, just as in the case of a senior praesidium.

On transfer from junior to senior membership, the ordinary probation term must be fulfilled.

17. A senior legionary serving in a junior praesidium, who has not already taken the Promise in a senior praesidium, should take it in that junior one. The contemplation of the ceremony will deeply impress the juniors and should cause them to look forward to the day when they themselves will perfect their membership by taking the Promise.

18. It has often been suggested that the prayers should be modified so as to facilitate the membership of children. The inadmissibility of such proposals should be evident from a reading of this chapter, which indicates that junior membership should be an approximation to senior membership. There is no question of "junior" meaning "trivial." High ideals of action and devotion are to be placed before the junior members, who should, in general, be expected to play the part of leaders among other young people. It is manifest that this

standard cannot be reached by any child who, after some instruction, is incapable of saying the full Legion prayers intelligently.

19. Similarly, propositions are made that a simplified handbook be provided for the use of juniors. This is discussed in section 10, chapter 33, *Basic Duties of Legionaries*.

20. Parents and all others in authority should co-operate fully with the legionary programme on which so much depends. Those young people are being fashioned into what St. Louis-Marie de Montfort calls: "a legion of valiant soldiers of Jesus and Mary to combat the world, the devil and corrupted nature in those more than ever perilous days which are to come." As simple in its ideas and structure as a pulley or a lever or other device for multiplying power, the Legion is able to make vivid the whole circle of Catholic Doctrine and to turn it into motive-power for every Christian purpose. But also there is an immediate outpouring of this power. It fills schooltime, playtime, home, and every other time, with holy, practical idealism. It gives its members a new vision of things, which is equivalent to making the world different for them – a new outlook:

(a) On the Church, once they have realised that they are its soldiers, with a definite place in its warfare, and with responsibility for its extension.

(b) On the everyday round and task. As a tiny point of light illuminates a room, so the little Legion task gives a new meaning to the whole course of the week. What the members learn and practise in the praesidium they will live in their ordinary life.

(c) On their neighbour, in whom they have been taught to see and serve Christ.

(d) On their home, which they have learned to surround with the atmosphere of Nazareth.

(e) On helping at home (or in the school if the praesidium be an internal one) in the spirit of the Legion, that is of Mary at Nazareth; seeking for work instead of trying to escape it; choosing the most unpleasant tasks; putting one's heart into

the doing of the least things; being always sweetness and thoughtfulness itself; working always for Jesus and preserving the sense of his presence.

(f) On school, for they will have absorbed to some extent the legionary ideals, and will as a consequence see school, teachers, books, rules and study in a different light. Accordingly, they will get things from school which others would not get. So that, even if the Legion did represent time taken from study (which is the common objection), the net effect would be incomparable gain.

(g) On "duty" and "discipline." These two all-important things, which are so odious to the young because so misunderstood by them, will be made comprehensible and beautiful when linked with those other two words: "Mary" and "Legion."

(h) On prayer, when they realise that it is not a mere custom-imposed task but a source of power, the support of their work, and their valuable contribution to the Legion treasury and thence to the Church.

21. Perhaps it is not too much to claim that in the proper working of a praesidium on the foregoing lines lies one of the greatest possible educative influences which could be brought to bear on the young. It will develop in them every quality which is proper to the Christian character, and will serve as a mould out of which will come in number holy and reliant young people, a joy to their parents and superiors, and a mainstay to the Church.

22. But all this programme, all these hopes, will be frustrated by the junior praesidium which does not give its members suitable work or which otherwise neglects the rules. That praesidium is a deforming mould. It is prejudicing its members and everybody else against the Legion. It would represent a service to the Legion to suppress it.

"Youth must not simply be considered as an object of pastoral concern for the Church: in fact, young people are and ought to be encouraged to be active on behalf of the Church as *leading characters in evangelisation and participants in the renewal of society*. Youth is a time of an especially intensive *discovery* of a 'self' and 'a choice of life'. It

is a time for *growth* which ought to progress 'in wisdom, age and grace before God and people.'" (Lk 2:52) (CL 46)

## 2. SEMINARY PRAESIDIA

"It is particularly important to prepare future priests for cooperation with the laity. The Council says 'they should be willing to listen to lay people, give brotherly consideration to their wishes and recognise their experience and competence in the different fields of human activity ...' The recent Synod too has insisted upon pastoral solicitude for the laity: 'The student should become capable of proposing and introducing the lay faithful, the young especially, to the different vocations.... Above all it is necessary that he be able to teach and support the laity in their vocation to be present in and to transform the world with the light of the Gospel, by recognising this task of theirs and showing respect for it.'" (PDV 59)

It is evident that a competent knowledge of such an effective and widespread organisation, as is the Legion, would be a valuable asset to future priests and religious. Academic knowledge of it, however, is a feeble substitute for that imparted by actual membership. The establishment of praesidia for seminarians therefore, assumes great importance. In cases where internal praesidia are not possible, those in formation would greatly benefit from membership of external praesidia. In both internal and external praesidia the members would be thoroughly grounded in the theory and practice of the Legion and given what one might call a complete philosophy of the apostolate. When eventually they proceed to their assignments, they will have a good grasp of how the Legion and other apostolic groups should operate.

In regard to internal praesidia especially, the following should be noted:

(a) It is essential that a fair amount of time be available for the weekly meeting. It would be difficult to conduct a meeting in less than an hour, and every effort should be made to allow it a little more time. The order of the meeting, as described in this handbook, shall be followed exactly.

(b) A main consideration is the allocation of active work to each member. Without substantial work there is no

praesidium. Having regard to the fact that time is limited, that suitable work may not be easy to find in the circumstances of seminary life, and that study of the handbook is given special attention, a minimum of one hour a week should be spent on active work. The possible lack of variety in the work must be compensated for by richness of spirit. The work must be done with sheer perfection and with emphasis on the note of union with Mary.

The selection of works will depend on the circumstances and rules of the house. Some suggestions are: the visitation of homes, hospitals and other institutions, instruction of converts, teaching of catechism, preparation of adults and children for the sacraments. It is very important that any works undertaken should tie in with pastoral training programmes set up by superiors.

(c) The reports to the praesidium must not be routine phrases. They should be vivid and interesting. Success in this direction will render the members masters in the art of making reports and qualified to teach that art to those whose legionary destinies they will be guiding in the future.

(d) Duties of a disciplinary or of a purely supervisory character should not be assigned by a praesidium. Such work would tend to make members of the Legion (and then the Legion itself) unpopular with their fellows.

(e) Membership should be completely voluntary. Anything that savours of compulsion or even of college routine would operate detrimentally. In order to stress the voluntary nature of Legion membership, it is a good idea to hold the praesidium meeting during free time.

(f) The praesidium shall be so conducted, both as regards meetings and activities, as not to interfere in the slightest way with the horarium and rules of the house. On the other hand, the conditions of active membership of the Legion must not be altered, for this would defeat the whole purpose in view. In practice, it will be found that the faithful working of such a praesidium will intensify the attitude of the students towards their vocation, their studies, and the discipline of the place.

## SUGGESTIONS AS TO WORKS

In this chapter are set down methods, shown by general experience to be especially fruitful, of employing the work-obligation of the Legion. They represent, however, only suggestions, and particular needs may call for particular works. It is urged that enterprising and difficult work should not be withheld from the Legion, which is admirably adapted to the doing of such work. Trivial tasks will react unfavourably on the spirit of the legionaries.

As a principle, every praesidium should be doing **some** work which can be called heroic. Even at the beginning it should not be impossible to find two members with a heart for such adventure, and let them be assigned to it. Then their example will be a headline towards which their fellow-members will almost automatically ascend. When the general level has in this way been lifted, the original intrepid two should again be sent in pursuit of the heroic. This **progressive pioneering** provides a means of continually raising standards. For the natural limitations do not exist in the supernatural order. The more one plunges into God, the wider become the horizons, and the greater the possibilities.

But at once there is dissent. The idea of running risks for religion disturbs a lot of people. These make the air resound with cries of "improper" and "imprudent." But the world is not talking in that weak way, and the Legion should not be less spirited. If a work is necessary to souls, and if a high headline is vital to the forming of the character of the Christian community, then caution must take a second place and courage must precede it. Weigh these words of Cardinal Pie: "When prudence will be everywhere, then courage will no longer be anywhere. You will find that we will die of prudence."

Do not let the Legion die of prudence.

### 1. APOSTOLATE IN THE PARISH

Some of the ways in which the legionaries may help the growth of a true community spirit are as follows:

(a) Visitation of the homes of the people. (see No. 2, of this chapter);

(b) Conducting para-liturgical services on Sundays and holidays of obligation in places where there is no priest available to celebrate Mass;

(c) Conducting religious instruction classes;

(d) Visitation and care of the handicapped, the sick and the old, including, when necessary, making arrangements for a visit of the priest;

(e) Recitation of the rosary at wakes and funerals;

(f) Promotion of Catholic Associations and Parish Societies, including Church Confraternities or Sodalities, where they exist, by recruiting new members and encouraging existing members to persevere;

(g) Collaboration in every apostolic and missionary undertaking sponsored by the parish and so help to bring every soul in some manner into the protective network of the Church, thus securing the safety alike of the individual and the community.

There are certain other parochial works which, though important, would not satisfy, except in special cases, the work obligation for senior legionaries. Among these works are: Altar Society work, the keeping of the church clean and beautiful, stewarding at Church services, Mass serving, etc. Where necessary, the legionaries could organise and superintend the performance of these duties, which would be a source of blessing to the persons undertaking them. The legionaries could then make the more difficult, direct approaches to souls.

"I desire, like the Mother of Grace, to work for God. I desire to co-operate by my labours and sacrifices towards my own salvation and that of the whole world, as the Holy Scripture says of the Machabees, who in the holy enthusiasm of their courage, 'did not care to save themselves alone, but undertook to save the greatest possible number of their brethren'." (Gratry: Month of Mary)

## 2. VISITATION OF THE HOMES OF THE PEOPLE

Though not its initial venture, the visitation of the homes has been traditionally the preferred work of the Legion, its special occupation everywhere and its avenue of greatest good. It is a characteristic of the Legion.

Through this visitation, personal contact can be made with a great many people and the Church's concern for every person and every family can be shown. "The Church's pastoral concern will not be limited only to the Christian families closest at hand; it will extend its horizons in harmony with the Heart of Christ, and will show itself to be even more lively for families in general and for those families in particular which are in difficult or irregular situations. For all of them the Church will have a word of truth, goodness, understanding, hope and deep sympathy with their sometimes tragic difficulties. To all of them she will offer her disinterested help so that they can come closer to that model of a family which the Creator intended from 'the beginning' and which Christ has renewed with his redeeming grace." (FC 65)

The praesidium must think out its methods of approach to the homes. Obviously, the legionaries have to introduce themselves and to explain why they are there. Visitation for the Enthronement of the Sacred Heart in the homes, for the making of the Parish Census and the dissemination of Catholic literature described in the following pages, are among some of the ways in which approach to the homes may be undertaken.

Not only Catholics who are living the Christian life but all can be brought within the sphere of the legionary apostolate through the visitation of the homes. Contact can be made with non-Catholics and non-Christians, and with Catholics who are estranged from the Church. Attention will be given also to those in irregular marriage situations as referred to above, to those in need of instruction, to the lonely and the infirm. Every home should be viewed from the angle of rendering service.

The legionary visitation will be marked by humility and simplicity. People may have incorrect ideas concerning the visitation, expecting to be lectured in a superior way. On the contrary, legionaries should aim initially at listening instead of talking. Having listened patiently and respectfully, they will have won the right to be heard.

"One cannot fail to stress the evangelizing action of the family in the evangelizing apostolate of the laity.

At different moments in the Church's history and also in the Second Vatican Council, the family has well deserved the beautiful

name of 'domestic Church'. This means that there should be found in every Christian family the various aspects of the entire Church. Furthermore, the family, like the Church, ought to be a place where the Gospel is transmitted and from which the Gospel radiates.

In a family which is conscious of this mission, all the members evangelize and are evangelized. The parents not only communicate the Gospel to their children, but from their children they can themselves receive the same Gospel as deeply lived by them.

And such a family becomes the evangelizer of many other families, and of the neighbourhood of which it forms part. Families resulting from a mixed marriage also have the duty of proclaiming Christ to the children in the fullness of the consequences of a common Baptism; they have moreover the difficult task of becoming builders of unity." (EN 71)

### 3. ENTHRONEMENT OF THE SACRED HEART IN THE HOMES

It will be found that the propagation of the devotion of the Enthronement of the Sacred Heart in the home provides a specially favourable introduction and avenue to the friendship of families.

The ideals and the methods which are to characterise that approach are considered in detail in chapter 39, *Cardinal Points of the Legion Apostolate*. Therein, it is sufficiently stressed that as far as possible no home should be passed over, and that in each home loving and persevering effort is to be directed towards the inducing of each person, young and old without exception, to ascend at least one step in the spiritual life.

Those detailed to this work may take to themselves in fulness the Twelve Promises of the Sacred Heart. Even the tenth: "I will give to the priests the grace to touch the most hardened hearts," belongs in a measure to those who go as the priest's representatives. Specially encouraged by this thought, the legionaries will go with perfect confidence to grapple with the cases branded "hopeless."

The Enthronement visitation forms the most fruitful of all introductions, striking the right note of simple piety from the very commencement, facilitating acquaintance and hence repeated visits, and rendering easy the development of the Legion apostolate.

As it is the mission of Mary to bring about the reign of Jesus, so there is a special appropriateness (which should

attract the special graces of the Holy Spirit) in the Legion of Mary propagating the Enthronement of the Sacred Heart.

“Loving the family means being able to appreciate its values and capabilities, fostering them always. Loving the family means identifying the dangers and the evils that menace it, in order to overcome them. Loving the family means endeavouring to create for it an environment favourable for its development. The modern Christian family is often tempted to be discouraged and is distressed at the growth of its difficulties; it is an eminent form of love to give it back its reasons for confidence in itself, in the riches that it possesses by nature and grace, and in the mission that God has entrusted to it. ‘Yes indeed, the families of today must be called back to their original position. They must follow Christ’. (AAS 72 (1980), 791)” (FC 86)

#### 4. THE MAKING OF THE PARISH CENSUS

This work provides an excellent way of getting in touch with the Catholics who need attention or who have drifted into the category of lapsed, that is, those who have lost all association with the Church. Going in the name of the priest, visitation should if possible be from door to door. It is taken as a matter of course by the persons visited that particulars as to religion should be asked, and as a rule they are cheerfully given. Included in what is learned is much that will form subject for long-continued effort on the part of Priest and legionaries.

But discovery is only the preliminary, and the easiest, step. To restore to the fold each one of those so found must be regarded as being in a measure a trusteeship conferred upon the Legion by God – one to be entered upon with joy and pursued with invincible spirit. Let not the Legion, through any cause in its own power, fail in the fulfilment of that trust, no matter how long-drawn-out the battle, how arduous the labours, how great the rebuffs, how hardened the cases, how hopeless the prospect.

In addition, it is repeated that not merely the indifferent, but all, shall be the subject of an affectionate attention.

“We have in the Church’s field of apostolic endeavour an official mission a providential mode of action, a special weapon of our own. It is that we go to souls not only in the name of Mary and under the auspices of Mary, but also and above all, that we labour with all our might to fill those souls with childlike love for her.” (Petit Traité de Marialogie: Marianiste)

## 5. VISITATION OF HOSPITALS, INCLUDING PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITALS

The visitation of a hospital for the poor was the first work the Legion ever undertook and for a while it did no other. It teemed with blessings for the infant organisation, and the Legion desires that this work will ever be attended to by its praesidia. The following, written in those early days, exemplifies the spirit which must always characterise it: – “Then a name was called and a member began her report. It concerned the visitation of a hospital. It was brief, yet showed great intimacy with the patients. She admitted with some confusion that the patients knew the names of all her brothers and sisters. She is succeeded by her co-visitor. Evidently work is done in pairs. It occurs to me that apart from there being apostolic example for this, the practice prevents procrastination in the making of the weekly visitation.

Report follows report. In some wards there is something new and there is an extended account, but most reports are short. Many are amusing, many touching, and all are beautiful in the obvious realisation shown of whom it is that is visited in the patient. There is evidence of it in every report. Why, many people would not do for their own flesh and blood what is here recounted as done, simply and naturally, for the least elements in our population. The exquisite care and tenderness of the visits are supplemented by the performance of many commissions – the writing of letters, the looking up of the neglectful friends or relatives, the running of errands. It is plain that nothing is too disagreeable or too trifling to look after.

‘One letter from a patient to her visitors was read out at the meeting. A phrase from it ran: ‘Since you came into my life.’ It rang of the cheap novelette, and all laughed. But later I thought back to a lonely person in a hospital bed to whom those words meant a great deal, and the thought filled me with emotion. I reflected, too, that though said of one, it could apply to all. Thus wonderful is the power of association which can bring together many persons into one room and thence send them out on angelic missions into the lives of thousands who have dropped out of the recollection of the outside

world.' (Father Michael Creedon, first Spiritual Director of Concilium Legionis Mariae.)

Legionary visitation should be used to educate the patients to a true conception of their sufferings, that they may bear them in the proper spirit.

They must be persuaded that what they regard as so intolerable is in reality a moulding to the likeness of Christ, and as such a great favour. "No greater favour," says St. Teresa of Avila, "can His Majesty bestow on us than to give us a life such as was led by His beloved Son." It is not difficult to bring home to people this aspect of suffering which, when once grasped, deprives it of half its sting.

They should be helped to realise the greatness of the spiritual treasures which they can acquire, by repeating often to them the exclamation of St. Peter of Alcantara to one who had long endured a most painful illness with admirable patience: – "O happy patient, God has shown me how great a glory you have merited by your illness. You have merited more than others can gain by prayer, fasting, vigils, scourging, and other penitential works."

It is desirable that the spending of these spiritual treasures should possess a variety which is lacking in the earning of them. Moreover, a gathering for self will not exercise so potent an appeal. So the legionary will unfold the idea of the apostleship of suffering. The patients should be taught to busy themselves in the spiritual affairs of the world, offering the treasures of their sufferings for its myriad needs, and conducting a campaign whose force must be irresistible because it is at once prayer and penance.

"Such hands, raised to God," cries Bossuet, "break through more battalions than those that strike."

It will aid towards perseverance if the patients feel a personal interest in what they are praying for. So it is important that particular needs and works (notably the legionary's own) be singled out and described to them.

Auxiliary membership must be an early objective, and then the adjutorian degree. Groups of these members could be formed who would then recruit others. In every other way, too, the patients should be encouraged to help each other.

But if those degrees of membership are practicable, why not active membership. Many psychiatric hospitals have praesidia composed of patients. To have such in the

institution is to set at work there a potent leaven. Those legionaries have abundant time to spend on their activities amongst the other patients, and can raise themselves to a high pitch of holiness. The value of their Legion membership – on its lesser level as a therapeutic or healing force – to themselves has been so evident as to be everywhere recognised by the medical staffs of those places.

This new view of life opened up to them, the patients, some of whom had touched the depths of misery in the thought of being so useless and a burden, will taste the supreme joy of feeling that they are of use to God.

The Communion of Saints must necessarily operate intensively as between the legionaries and those they visit, that is in the way of an advantageous interchange of burdens and benefits. May we not suppose that the sick are paying on behalf of the legionaries some portion of the debt of suffering which is due by every mortal man; but which, if borne by every man himself, would leave the whole world sick; so that some are given the privilege of bearing more than their share in order that the work of the world may be carried on.

And what is the legionary able to give in this invisible transaction? What else but a share in his apostolate – the sick person being unable (and sometimes unready) to fulfil that portion of his Christian obligation.

Thereby, each one would be delightfully benefited at the expense of the other. Yet it is not a mere matter of evenly balanced exchange. For the gain of each far outweighs his loss by virtue of the Christian principle that to give brings back one hundredfold. (see section 20, chapter 39, *Cardinal Points of the Legion Apostolate*)

“‘I am Christ’s wheat,’ said St. Ignatius of Antioch, ‘and that I may be made into bread worthy of God, I must needs be ground by the teeth of lions.’ Never doubt that the best of crosses, the safest, the most divine is always that one which Jesus Himself ordains without consulting us. Increase your faith in this doctrine so dear to saints cast in the mould of Nazareth. Adore, bless and praise God in all the contradictions and trials which come directly from His Hand and, conquering the repugnance of your nature, say with all your heart, ‘Fiat,’ or still better, ‘Magnificat!’” (Mateo Crawley-Boevey)

## 6. WORK FOR THE MOST WRETCHED AND DEJECTED OF THE POPULATION

This will involve the visitation of their haunts; and of lodging-houses, hostels and jails; and it may be, the conducting of hostels staffed by legionaries, resident and outdoor.

As soon as the Legion in any centre is in possession of members of sufficient experience and calibre, this work for the least of the least ones of Christ is to be undertaken. Too often it is to be found neglected, with consequent reproach to the Catholic name.

There should be no depths to which the Legion will not penetrate in its search for the lost sheep of the House of Israel. False fears will be the first obstacle. But false or founded, **someone must do this work.** If capable and trained legionaries, safeguarded by their prayerful and disciplined system, cannot essay it, then no one can.

Till the Legion in any centre can say with truth that its members know personally, and are in touch in some way with each and every individual member of the degraded classes, its work must be regarded as being still in a stage of incomplete development, and efforts in this direction must be intensified. No searcher after the rare and precious things of the earth must pursue his heart's desire more earnestly than the legionary pressing after these unfortunates of the world. His search may be their only chance of life eternal. Frequently they are so inaccessible to good influences that prison represents for them a blessing in disguise.

Moreover, the outlook of a campaigning soldier must be brought to bear on this work. Obvious inconveniences will face the legionaries. Perhaps to the 'slings and arrows' of outrageous words, worse things may be added. The 'rifle-fire' of blows or the 'artillery' of injuries may be turned upon them. Such things may humiliate and pain, but they must not intimidate; they should hardly even disconcert. Here lies the test of the solidity of the soldierly professions which have so often passed through the mind of the legionary and have so many times been uttered by him. He has spoken of a warfare. He has talked of seeking for the worst of people; now that he has found them, it would be inconsistent of him to complain.

Why should it cause surprise to see that the bad behave badly, and that the worst act vilely!

In short, in every circumstance of special difficulty, or in face of danger, the legionary should remind himself: "A war is on"! This phrase that nerves a war-ridden people to sacrifice, should steel the legionary in his warfare for souls and hold him to his work when most others would desist.

If there is any reality in the talk of precious and eternal souls, there must be readiness to pay a price of some sort for them. What price, and by whom paid? The answer is that if ever lay persons are to be asked to face a risk, who are they to be – if not those who are striving to be worthy of the title of Legionaries of Mary? If ever great sacrifices are to be required from lay Catholics, from whom – if not from those who have so deliberately, so solemnly enlisted in the service of her who stood on Calvary? Surely they will not fail, if called upon!

But leadership may fail, through a mistaken solicitude for those led. Therefore, Spiritual Directors and all officers are exhorted to set up standards which have some slight relation to those of the Colosseum. This word may ring unreal in these calculating days. But the Colosseum was a calculation too: the calculation of many lovely people – no more strong, no more weak than legionaries of Mary – who said to themselves: "What price shall a man give for a soul?" The Colosseum only summarises in a word what many words go to say in chapter 4 on Legionary Service, and that chapter is not intended to express mere sentiment.

Work for the derelict or abandoned classes will always be a difficult, long-drawn-out one. Its keynote must be a supreme patience. A type is being dealt with which will only rise after many fallings. If discipline be put first in dealing with them, nothing will be accomplished. In a short time the rigid system will have lost all the subjects it was constituted to treat, and will have as patients those who least require treatment. Therefore, the work must proceed upon **the principle of values reversed**, that is, it shall concern itself especially with those whom even the optimist would term utterly hopeless cases, and whose warped minds and initial insensibility to appeal would seem to justify this description. The vile, the malevolent, the naturally hateful, the rejects and black-listed of other societies and people, the refuse of cities, shall all be

determinedly persevered with in spite of rebuffs, utter ingratitude, and apparent failure. Of these a considerable proportion will form a life-long task.

Obviously such a work, carried on according to such ideas, calls for heroic qualities and a purely supernatural vision. The compensation for toil so great will lie in the seeing of the objects of that toil eventually die in the friendship of God.

Then what joy to have cooperated with "Him who from the mire, in patient length of days, Elaborated into life a people to His praise!" (St. John Henry Newman: *Dream of Gerontius*.)

This particular activity has been considered at length because it really concerns the whole spirit of the Legion. In addition, it holds, amongst services done to the Church, a key position. For it constitutes a special assertion of the Catholic principle that even the lowest of human beings hold in relation to us a position which is independent of their value or agreeableness to us: that in them Christ is to be seen, revered, loved.

The proof of the reality of this love is that it be manifested in circumstances which test it. That vital test consists in loving those whom mere human nature bids one not to love. Here is the acid-test of the true and the false love for humanity. It is a pivot of faith, a crucial-point of Christianity, for without the Catholic ideal this sort of love simply cannot exist. The very notion would be fantastic, if divorced from the root which gives it meaning and life. If humanity for its own sake is to be the gospel, then everything must be judged from the angle of its apparent utility to humanity. Something which would admittedly be valueless to humanity must logically, under such systems, be viewed just as sin would be viewed in the Christian dispensation, that is, as something to be eliminated at any cost.

Those who give self-sacrificing demonstrations of true Christian love in its highest forms, do a supreme service to the Church.

"It is hard, you say, to put up with the evil-doer. But just for that very reason you should devote yourself lovingly to him. Your set purpose must be to wean him from his sinful ways and to lead him on to virtue. But you retort that he does not mind what you say, nor

follow your advice. How are you so sure of this? Have you appealed to him and tried to win him round? You reply that you have often reasoned with him. But how often? Frequently, you say, time and time again. And do you look on that as often? Why, even if you had to continue for a whole lifetime, you should neither relax your efforts nor abandon hope. Do you not see the way in which God Himself keeps on appealing to us through His Prophets, through His Apostles, through His Evangelists? And with what result? Is our conduct all it should be? Do we set ourselves to obey Him in all things? Alas such is far from being the case. Yet in spite of that, He never ceases to pursue us with His pleadings. And why? It is because there is nothing so precious as a soul. 'For what doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul.' (Mt 16:26)" (St. John Chrysostom)

## 7. WORKS FOR THE YOUNG

"Children are certainly the object of the Lord Jesus' tender and generous love. To them he gave his blessing, and, even more, to them he promised the Kingdom of heaven. (cf. Mt 19:13-15; Mk 10:14) In particular Jesus exalted the active role that little ones have in the Kingdom of God. They are the eloquent symbol and exalted image of those moral and spiritual conditions that are essential for entering into the Kingdom of God and for living the logic of total confidence in the Lord: 'Truly I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the Kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child, he is the greatest in the Kingdom of heaven'. (Mt 18:3-5; cf Lk 9:48)" (CL 47)

If the preservation of the young in faith and innocence can be assured, how glorious the future! Then, like a giant refreshed, the Church could throw itself into its mission of converting the pagan world, and make short work of it. As it is, the great bulk of its effort is absorbed by the painful treatment of internal sores.

Furthermore, it is easier to preserve than later on to restore. The Legion will attend to both, for both are vital. But certainly it should not neglect the easier work of the two – that of preservation. Many children can be saved from disaster for the trouble it will later take to remake one debased adult.

Some aspects of the problem are as follows: –

(a) **Children's Mass attendance.** A bishop, delivering a programme of work to legionaries, placed as the item of first importance the conducting of a Sunday Mass Crusade

amongst children. Mass-missing by children he held to be one of the chief sources of all later trouble. Where they are found to be exempting themselves from this elementary Catholic requirement, it can be taken as certain that they are the victims of parental indifference and bad example, and the Legion apostolate should proceed mindful of this additional evil.

In the case of children, more even than in other directions, a spasmodic or short-term visitation will accomplish little or nothing.

(b) **Visitation of families.** The hardest heart softens somewhat at the thought of its own child. Persons may be dead to religion themselves, but deep-rooted impulses bid them not to wish their children the same fate, and instinctive joy is felt at seeing the movements of grace in their children. As a consequence, one who would repulse those who seek to approach him directly on a spiritual mission, will tolerate the same workers when their mission is to members of his family.

Competent legionaries, once admitted to the home, will know how to make **all** the members of that family feel the radiation of their apostolate. A sincere interest in the children will usually make a favourable impression on the parents. This can be skilfully utilised to cultivate in them the seed of the supernatural so that, as the children had been the key to their parents' home, likewise they will prove to be the key to their parents' hearts and eventually to their souls.

(c) **Teaching Christian Doctrine to children.** This supremely valuable work should be supplemented by the visitation of the homes of the children whose attendance is not satisfactory, or generally for the purpose of manifesting personal interest in the children, and of getting in touch with the other members of the families. Incidentally, the Legion can serve the purpose of a local branch of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine. See appendix 8.

The following instance shows the efficacy of the application of the Legion system to the Sunday Catechism classes in a populous parish. Despite earnest efforts of the Priests, including appeals from the pulpit, the average attendance of children had fallen to fifty. At this stage a praesidium was formed which added to the work of teaching,

the visitation of the homes of the children. A year's work was sufficient to bring the average attendance at the classes to 600. And this surprising figure does not take count of the spiritual benefits conferred on innumerable careless relatives of the children.

In all works, the legionary watchword should be "How would Mary view and treat these, her children?" In this work, even more than in others, that thought should be vivid. There is a natural tendency towards impatience with the children. But a worse fault would lie in the imparting to the instruction of a mere businesslike and secular tone, in such a way that these classes would only be regarded by the children as additional hours of school. If this comes to pass, nine-tenths of the harvest will be left unreaped. So once again consider: "How would the Mother of Jesus instruct those children, in each one of whom she sees her own Beloved?"

In teaching the young, memorisation and audio-visual aids play an important role. Special care is needed in selecting catechetical material which fully conforms to the Church's teaching.

A partial indulgence is granted to the person who teaches Christian doctrine also to the person who receives such instruction (EI 20.)

(d) **The non-Catholic or State school.** The life of the child who is not attending a Catholic school is one continual crisis, and it may be hard to prevent it developing in later years into one of the problems. Such measures of remedy as have been approved by the ecclesiastical authorities of each place will be taken up by the Legion and applied with all its might.

(e) **Sodalities for the young.** For children who have been at good schools, the crisis comes at school-leaving age. They are then emancipated from school with its sound influences, its protective restraints, its minute safeguards. Sometimes they were entirely dependent upon that support by reason of the fact that their homes did not provide religious or controlling influences.

There is the further complication that the withdrawal of these things occurs about the age of greatest moral difficulty, and unfortunately, too, when those young people have ceased to be children without becoming adults. Naturally, appro-

priate provision for that twilight stage is difficult, and accordingly is frequently lacking. Then, when that transition period passes, and the adult safeguarding system opens its arms to them, it usually does so unavailingly. The perilous charms of liberty have been tasted.

Therefore, the supervision which was maintained in school must in some measure be carried on when those children leave. A method which is recommended is that of forming, under the auspices of the Legion, Juvenile Sodalities, or at least special juvenile sections in the ordinary Sodalities. Before the children are due to leave school, those in authority will see that the names of such children are supplied to the legionaries. The latter will then call to their homes to make their acquaintance and to persuade them to join the Sodality. The children, who cannot be induced to join, should be made the subject of special visitation, as also those who attend irregularly.

Each legionary would be allocated a certain number of the young Sodality members, for whom he or she will be held responsible. Before each Sodality meeting, those members will be called upon to remind them of their duty to attend. An Annual Retreat (enclosed, if possible) and an annual entertainment should form part of the system.

There is no better way, in fact there is no other definite way, of ensuring a regular frequentation of the Sacraments by the young during the post-school period.

The case of young people discharged from Juvenile Detention Centres or Orphanages requires special attention in the above direction. Sometimes they are without parents altogether; sometimes they are the victims of bad parents.

**(f) The conducting of children's clubs, Scouts, branches of the Holy Childhood, etc.** Probably these would be carried on rather as the employment of the work-obligation of part of the membership of a praesidium than as the whole work of a praesidium. But it would be quite in order that a praesidium should devote itself solely to some special work, such as those mentioned. In this case, however, it must be understood that a distinct praesidium meeting shall be held and carried out fully according to rule. It will not supply the place of the meeting if, as has been suggested, the members

are gathered together, as an item of the evening's Special Work, for the purpose of reciting the prayers, reading the minutes, and rushing through a few reports. Possibly in this manner the essentials of a meeting might be conformed to, but a reading of chapter 11 on the Scheme of the Legion will show how little of the spirit of the rules is reflected in such an expedient. It is the desire of the Legion that during each session of a Special Work which is under the control of the Legion, the Legion prayers should be recited at the opening, intermediate, and concluding stages. If it is not possible to include the rosary, at least the remainder of the Tessera prayers should be said.

(g) **A Legionary youth formula.** It would seem to be necessary to propose some guiding principles to legionaries who are running Clubs or Youth groups. Usually the methods being followed depend entirely on the individuals in charge of such groups, so that wide diversity of system prevails, ranging from a daily to a weekly session, and from pure amusement or pure technical instruction to pure religion. Obviously these variants will work out to very different results, not always for the best. For instance, unmixed amusement represents dubious training for the young, even on the supposition that it 'keeps them out of trouble'. "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy" – runs the well-known saying. But this has been wittily complemented by another one which is still more true: "All play and no work makes Jack a mere toy."

The praesidium system has shown itself to be a standard which is suited to all types of people and works. Is it possible similarly to devise a simple standard system for applying generally to youth?

Experiments have suggested that a scheme on the following lines will operate satisfactorily, and praesidia in charge of Youth Groups are urged to make trial of it: –

1. Maximum age 21, no minimum age; age-segregation desirable.

2. Every member must attend a regular weekly session. If a group meets more frequently than once a week, these rules are optional in their application to the additional meetings.

3. Each member to say daily the *Catena Legionis*.
4. At the weekly session the Legion altar shall be erected, either on a table as in the case of the *praesidium* meeting, or apart, or raised up for the purpose of safety.
5. At each session the Legion prayers, inclusive of the rosary, shall be said, divided up as at a *praesidium* meeting.
6. The total length of the session shall not be less than one hour and a half, but may exceed that time.
7. Not less than half an hour shall be devoted to business and instructional purposes. The remainder of the time may, if desired be applied to recreation. By "business" is meant the conduct of the affairs which would naturally arise out of the running of certain groups, for example, football or other sports clubs, etc. By "instructional" is meant any sort of training or educational influence, religious or secular, which is brought to bear.
8. Each member to receive Holy Communion not less frequently than once a month.
9. Members should be stimulated towards auxiliary membership of the Legion, and the notion of service of one's neighbour and of the community should be instilled into their minds.

"It would be easy to dwell upon the many lessons of the extraordinarily active life of St. John Bosco. I select only one, because of its extreme and lasting importance, namely, his view of the relations which should exist between teachers and taught, superiors and subjects, masters and pupils, in school, or college, or seminary. He rightly held in extreme abhorrence the spirit of aloofness, of keeping at a distance, of exaggerated dignity which, sometimes on principle, sometimes from thoughtlessness, at times from pure selfishness, makes superiors and masters almost inaccessible to those whose training and formation God has entrusted to them. St. John Bosco never forgot the words: 'Have they made thee ruler? Be not lifted up; be among them as one of them: have care of them.' (Sir 32)" (Cardinal Bourne)

### 8. THE BOOK-BARROW

Legionaries might conduct a book-barrow or a portable bookstall in a public place, preferably in or near some busy street. Experience has shown the immense value of this as a legionary work. There is no more efficacious way of carrying on a comprehensive apostolate directed to the good, the mediocre, and the bad, or of bringing the Church to the notice of the unthinking many. Therefore the Legion earnestly desires that in every large centre there should be at least one of these.

It should be made so as to afford the greatest possible display of titles. It should be stocked with an abundant supply of inexpensive religious publications. Legionaries would form the staff.

Besides those whose primary purpose is to look through the stock with a view to purchase, almost every type of person will be drawn towards this. Catholics desirous to talk with their co-religionists; the thoughtless and the indifferent, killing time or led by curiosity; the mildly-interested who are not of the Church, and who would be reluctant to place themselves more directly in touch with it. All these will enter into conversation with the gentle and sympathetic legionaries in charge, who should be trained to look upon the enquiries and purchases as so many openings for the establishment of friendly contact. The latter will be utilised to lead on all of those encountered to a higher plane of thought and action. Catholics would be induced to join "something Catholic." Non-Catholics would be helped towards an understanding of the Church. One person will leave determined to undertake daily Mass and Holy Communion; another to become a legionary, active – or auxiliary, or a Patrician; a third to make his peace with God; another bearing in his heart the seeds of conversion to the Church. Visitors to town will be interested in the Legion (which otherwise they might not see), and may be induced to start it in their own places.

Legionaries are encouraged, however, not to wait passively for people to come to them at the Barrow. They should not hesitate to approach people in the vicinity, not necessarily for the purpose of selling more literature, but in order to establish

a contact, which can be used as described in the preceding paragraph.

It should be unnecessary to remind legionaries that the persevering following up of the introductions and friendships initiated is a necessary part of the whole work.

The proposal to start such a work will always elicit the objection that exceptionally well-versed Catholics would be required to do it, and are not available. It is true that special knowledge of Catholic Doctrine would be most useful. But the lack of this need not deter legionaries from starting. For the personal appeal will be the great consideration. As St. John Henry Newman says: "Persons influence us, voices melt us, deeds inflame us. We are not converted by syllogisms." In a word, earnestness and sweetness are more important than deep knowledge. The latter is inclined to lure those who possess it into deep water and tortuous channels which lead nowhere, whereas a candid confession of one's weakness: 'I do not know, but I can find out', will keep a discussion on bedrock.

It will be found that the vast bulk of the difficulties which are voiced spring from a great ignorance, and that the ordinary legionary is well able to deal with them. Less simple points will be brought to the praesidium or to the Spiritual Director.

Attacks on the Church on the score of evil-doing, persecution, and lack of zeal could be argued indefinitely, and hopelessly confuse the issue. An element of truth may underlie some charges, and thus add complication to confusion. To satisfy the hostile critic on these and all other minor points of dispute is completely impossible, even if great erudition is enlisted in the task. The course to be taken by the legionary must be that of persistently reducing the discussion to its very simplest elements: that of insisting that God must have left to the world a message – what men call a religion: that such religion, being God's voice, **absolutely must** be one, clear, consistent, unerring, and must claim divine authority.

These characteristics are to be found only in the Catholic Church. There is no other body or system which even claims to possess them. Outside the Church, there is only

contradiction and confusion, so that, as Saint Newman crushingly puts it: "Either the Catholic religion is verily the coming of the unseen world into this, or that there is nothing positive, nothing dogmatic whither we are going."

There must be a true Church. There can be only one true Church. Where is it, if it is not the Catholic Church? Like blows, ever directed to one spot, this simple line of approach to the Truth has over-whelming effect. Its force is manifest to the simple. It is unanswerable in the heart of the more learned, though he may continue to talk of the sins of the Church. Remind such a one briefly but gently that he proves too much. His objections tell at least as much against any other religious system as they do against the Church. If he proves the Church to be false by proving that Churchmen did wrong, then he has only succeeded in proving that there is no true religion in the world.

The day has gone when a Protestant would claim that his own particular sect had a monopoly of the truth. Nowadays he would more modestly contend that *all* Churches possess a portion or facet of the truth. But a portion is not enough. That claim is equivalent to an assertion that there is no known truth and no way of finding it. For if a Church has certain doctrines that are true and therefore others that are untrue, what means are there of recognising which is which; when we pick, we may take the ones that are untrue! Therefore the church which says of its doctrines: "Some of these are true", is no help, no guide for the way. It has left you exactly where you were without it.

So, let it be repeated until the logic penetrates: There can be but one true Church; which must not contradict itself, which must possess the whole truth; and which must be able to tell the difference between what is true and what is false.

"The world can find no helper more powerful than thee. It has its apostles, prophets, martyrs, confessors, virgins, good helpers to whom I pray. But thou my Queen, art higher than all these intercessors. That which they can all do with thee, thou alone canst do without them.

And why? Because thou art the Mother of Our Saviour. If thou art silent, no one will pray, no one will come to help us. If thou prayest, all will pray, all will help." (St. Anselm: *Oratio Eccl.*)

## 9. CROWD CONTACT

Apostleship views bringing the full riches of the Church to every person. The basis of this work must be the individual and persevering touch of one warm soul on another soul, what we call by the technical name of "contact". In the measure that personal "contact" weakens so does real influence. According as people become a crowd they tend to escape from us. We may allow the crowd to keep us from the person. These crowds are made up of individuals, each one representing a priceless soul. Each member of that crowd has his or her private life but much of their time is spent in crowds, of one kind or another – in the street or gathered together in any place. We have to turn those crowds into individuals and thus enable us to establish contact with their souls. How must Our Blessed Lady look on those crowds. She is the Mother of each individual soul comprised in them. She must be in anguish at their necessities, and her heart must yearn for someone to help her in her work of mothering them.

The value of a book-barrow in a public place has been already shown, however, a comprehensive apostolate to the crowd can be carried out as a separate work. An approach to people with a polite request to speak with them on the subject of the Faith can lead to fruitful contacts. This approach can be made on the streets, in parks, in public houses, in the vicinity of railway and bus stations and in other public places where people gather. Experience has shown that such an approach is generally well-received. Legionaries engaged on this work must remember that their speech and their manner are their instruments of contact. Therefore, they should be unassuming and deferential. In discussion they should avoid any word which suggests that they are battling with the other person, or anything that sounds like a preaching at them, or a laying down of the law, or anything showing superiority. They should believe most firmly that Mary Queen of Apostles gives weight to their weakest word and that she is almost infinitely anxious to make their apostolate fruitful.

## 10. MISSION TO THE CATHOLIC DOMESTIC WORKER

This can be carried out as part of visitation work or as a special work in itself. Only too often placed in households indifferent or hostile to the faith, viewed as mere machines, isolated, frequently migrants or immigrants with no friends, and reduced to forming chance acquaintanceships full of the possibilities of disaster, Catholic domestic workers are in need of special care and support. Making contact with them forms an apostolate of a notable kind.

To them, the regular visits of legionaries solicitous for their welfare, will come as rays of light. Generally the object will be to bring them into membership of Catholic societies or clubs, into suitable friendships, and perhaps, in many cases, into legionary membership itself. This work will help to direct many on new and happier paths, leading on to safety and holiness.

“At first sight we might certainly have anticipated that much state and dignity would have been allotted to God’s great Mother during some portion, at least, of her life upon the earth. How different was the reality as arranged by the Providence of God. We find Mary in her poor dwelling discharging such humble duties as sweeping the floor, washing the linen, cooking the food, going to and from the well with a pitcher on her head, engaged in that kind of work which we, in face of the example set by Jesus, Mary and Joseph, venture to call menial. Mary’s hands were doubtlessly reddened and hardened by toil; she was often weary and overworked; hers were the anxieties of a working man’s wife.” (Vassall-Phillips: *The Mother of Christ*)

## 11. WORK FOR ARMED SERVICES PERSONNEL AND PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

The circumstances of these people’s lives incline them to neglect of religion and expose them to many pitfalls. Therefore an apostolate among them is doubly desirable.

(a) As access to military establishments may not always be easy to civilians, effective work for soldiers may require the setting up of praesidia composed of soldiers. This has already been done in many places with signal success.

(b) Work for seamen will call for the visitation of ships and the provision of various facilities on shore. Praesidia

undertaking this work should affiliate with the recognized international society, the Apostolatus Maris, which has branch-headquarters in the majority of maritime countries.

(c) The legionaries must exhibit meticulous respect for military and marine discipline. Their actions must never run counter to regulations or traditions. In fact, they must aspire to earn for their apostolate the unreserved admission that it uplifts the personnel in every way and represents an unmixed asset to those services, and more than an asset – a positive necessity.

(d) Travelling people, gypsies and circus personnel are among people on the move who should be brought within the sphere of the legionary apostolate. Migrants and refugees should also be part of that apostolate.

“Among the great changes taking place in the contemporary world, migration has produced a new phenomenon: non-Christians are becoming very numerous in traditionally Christian countries, creating fresh opportunities for contacts and cultural exchanges, and calling the Church to hospitality, dialogue, assistance and in a word, fraternity. Among migrants, refugees occupy a very special place and deserve the greatest attention. Today, there are many millions of refugees in the world and their number is constantly increasing. They have fled from conditions of political oppression and inhuman misery, from famine and drought of catastrophic proportions. The Church must make them part of her overall apostolic concern.”  
(RM 37 (b) )

## 12. THE DISSEMINATION OF CATHOLIC LITERATURE

The lives of countless people, like St. Augustine of Hippo and St. Ignatius of Loyola, illustrate how reading of influential books, recommended to them by people, whose judgment they respected, proved to be instrumental in leading them to higher things. The dissemination of Catholic literature affords great opportunities for apostolic contacts with a wide variety of people, with whom matters of the Catholic Faith can be easily brought up. Without on-going religious adult education, people living in a secularized world are greatly disadvantaged. The Church teaches them one world and they live in another. The voice of the secularized world speaks louder than that of the Church. The imbalance must be

corrected. The Christian's mandate is to win the secularized world for Christ. This demands that we have the right values and attitudes – the Christian ones.

Without underestimating other kinds of communication, serious reading, that is, reading to learn, is a very rich and influential source of ideas. A little reading done regularly is much more helpful than a lot of reading done occasionally when one feels like it. There is a real problem of getting people to read religious books. Their interest must be aroused and if interest is not to evaporate, reading material must be easily available. Here is an opening for apostolic Catholics.

As well as religious books and booklets, there are Catholic newspapers and magazines, whose purpose is: (1) give a reasoned synthesis of current affairs and a thought-out evaluation of them; (2) act as a necessary corrective to distorted views or calculated silences; (3) review and give guidelines on current media offerings; (4) develop a healthy pride and concerned interest in the affairs of the Universal Church, and (5) cultivate a taste for reading of a more lasting relevance.

In addition to the printed word, audio-visual material plays a valuable role in handing on the Faith.

Before using any kind of material touching religion, it is always important to confirm from trustworthy sources that it fully agrees with the Church's teaching. Self-styled Catholic publications should be deserving of the name. "It is not names that give confidence in things, but things that give confidence in names." (St. John Chrysostom)

Among the tried and tested means of disseminating Catholic literature are the following: 1. House to house canvassing for subscribers; 2. Delivery of newspapers or periodicals to homes; 3. Staffing of Church kiosks and bookshops; 4. Staffing of a book-barrow or portable bookstall in public places; 5. Use of the *Patricians* to recommend follow-up reading material.

Book displays and their stands should be attractive and well maintained. In advertising the Catholic Church slipshod methods are not good enough.

During visitation for the purpose of disseminating Catholic literature, legionaries will try to pursue an apostolate directed towards the influencing of every member of the family.

“Mary is the inseparable companion of Jesus. Everywhere and always the Mother is beside her Son. Therefore, what binds us to God, what places us in possession of the things of Heaven is – not Christ alone, but that Blessed pair – the Woman and her Seed. Hence, to separate Mary from Jesus in religious worship is to destroy the order established by God Himself.” (Terrien: *La Mère des Hommes*)

### 13. PROMOTING THE PRACTICE OF DAILY MASS AND DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

“Every day, as is desirable, and in the greatest possible numbers, the faithful must take an active part in the sacrifice of the Mass, avail themselves of the pure, holy refreshment of Holy Communion and make a suitable thanksgiving in return for this great gift of Christ the Lord. Here are words they should keep in mind: ‘Jesus Christ and the Church desire all Christ’s faithful to approach the sacred banquet every day. The basis of this desire is that they should be united to God by the sacrament and draw strength from it to restrain lust, to wash away the slight faults of daily occurrence and to take precautions against the more serious sins to which human frailty is liable. (AAS 38 (1905), 401) More is required. Liturgical laws prescribe that the Blessed Sacrament be kept in churches with the greatest honour and in the most distinguished position. The faithful should not fail to pay it an occasional visit. Such a visit is a proof of gratitude, a pledge of love, an observance of the adoration due to Christ the Lord present in the Blessed Sacrament.” (MF 66)

Probably this will be carried on less as a work in itself than as one to be kept in mind and assiduously pursued as part and parcel of every legiary activity. See chapter 8: The Legiary and the Eucharist.

“We see how the Eucharist, sacrifice and sacrament, sums up in the abundance of its richness all that the Cross offered to God and procured for men. It is the Blood of Calvary and the dew of heaven at one and the same time: the Blood that cries for mercy, and the vivifying dew that raises up the drooping plant. It is the price paid for us, and the blessing brought to us. It is life and the price of life. The Cross was not worth more, nor the Supper, nor the two together, and all of it endures, and all of it is fraught with the hopes of humanity. For these reasons the Mass is well called the Mystery of Faith; not only because the whole Christian dogma – which is the dogma of our ruin in Adam and of our restoration in Jesus Christ – is

summed up in it, but also and chiefly, because the drama, the heroic action by which was accomplished that sublime uplifting of humanity and superabundant compensation for our former losses, continues in our midst by means of it. And it is not a repetition by way of a mere symbol, but actually realises in our midst what was accomplished by Christ Himself." (De la Taille: The Mystery of Faith)

#### 14. THE RECRUITING AND AFTER-CARE OF AUXILIARIES

Every praesidium which has a sense of appreciation of the power of prayer, will strive to possess a well-filled roll of auxiliary members. It is the duty of each legionary to gain auxiliaries and to try to keep in touch with them.

Consider the generosity of these auxiliaries who have given up to the Legion part of the precious breathings of their souls. What possibilities of sanctity are in them! The Legion is under infinite debt to them. That debt it can beautifully repay by leading those auxiliaries on to perfection. Active members and auxiliaries, both are children of the Legion. The active members are the elder children, and the Mother of the Legion, as in every family, will look to them to help her with the younger ones. She will not merely supervise that help. She will make it effective, so that in the "aftercare" of auxiliary by active legionary lie wonderful things for both of them. In the soul of the auxiliary rises a great edifice of sanctity; and for the active legionary there is the builder's reward.

This work for the auxiliaries is so full of possibilities that it seems to call for the specialised attention of some highly spiritual members of the praesidium, who will pursue it in the spirit of the "elder children".

"I think it is evident that in these days of awful sin and hatred of God, Our Blessed Lord wants to gather round him a legion of chosen souls who will be devoted, heart and soul, to him and his interests; and upon whom he may always count for help and consolation; souls who will not ask 'How much must I do?' but rather 'How much can I do for his love?': a legion of souls who will give and will not count the cost, whose only pain will be that they cannot do more, and give more, and suffer more for him who has done so much for them: in a word, souls who are not as the rest of men, and who may be fools, perhaps in the eyes of the world; for their watch-word is sacrifice and not self-comfort." (Life of Father William Doyle S.J.: Msgr. Alfred O'Rahilly)

“Then the legion of little souls, victims of merciful Love, will become as numerous ‘as the stars of heaven and the sands of the seashore’. It will be terrible to Satan; it will help the Blessed Virgin to crush his proud head completely.” (St. Thérèse of Lisieux)

### 15. WORK FOR THE MISSIONS

Concern for the missions is an integral part of a truly Christian life. It comprises prayer, material support and the fostering of missionary vocations, in accordance with each one’s circumstances.

Legionaries might, for example, run a branch of the Holy Childhood and surround themselves with a host of children whom they will inspire with love for the missions. Or again, they might gather about them a group of those unsuited for full Legion membership and (perhaps organise them on the basis of the auxiliary degree of Legion membership) set them to sew, make vestments, etc. Here are three works done in one – (a) the legionary sanctifies himself; (b) he sets many others to sanctify themselves; (c) the work of the missions is helped in a practical way.

In connection with this work, it is specially necessary to stress two points which, however, apply generally:

(a) No praesidium is to be turned into a mere collecting agency for any purpose whatsoever.

(b) The superintendence and regulation of persons engaged in sewing would be a satisfactory employment of work obligation. But the work of sewing, by itself, is not deemed to represent a substantial active work for a senior legionary except in very special circumstances, such as, for instance actual physical disability.

“The four societies – Propagation of the Faith, St. Peter the Apostle, Holy Childhood and the Missionary Union have the common purpose of fostering a universal missionary spirit among the People of God.” (RM 84)

### 16. PROMOTING RETREATS

Having personally experienced the benefit of a Retreat, legionaries should organise for them, spread abroad the idea of them, and where they are not yet established, aim to have this done.

This is the recommendation of His Holiness Pope Pius XI, in the Encyclical quoted below, to those "companies of pious lay people who have ambition to serve the Apostolic Hierarchy by the works of Catholic Action. In these sacred Retreats they will see clearly the value of souls and be inflamed with the desire of helping them; likewise, they will learn the ardent spirit of the apostolate, its diligence, its deeds of daring."

The emphasis laid by that great Pope on the forming of apostles is to be noted. Sometimes that purpose is not served; apostles do not emerge. In that case the utility of those Retreats is to be doubted.

Legionaries need not be deterred from trying to cast abroad the benefits of a Retreat by reason of the fact that there is no possibility of providing sleeping accommodation. Practical experience has proved that a form of Retreat, with manifest fruits, can be accomplished in a single day from morning to night: indeed there is no other way of bringing the system to the masses. Almost any sort of premises with some grounds attached can be converted to this use for a day, and the expense of providing a few simple meals will not be great.

"The Divine Master himself was wont to invite his apostles to the friendly silence of retreat: 'Come apart into a desert place, and rest a little.' (Mk 6:31) When he left this earth of sorrows to go to heaven, he willed that these same apostles and his disciples should be polished and perfected in the upper chamber at Jerusalem. There for the space of ten days 'persevering with one mind in prayer' (Acts 1:14), they were made worthy to receive the Holy Spirit: surely a memorable retreat, which first foreshadowed the Spiritual Exercises; from which the Church came forth endowed with virtue and perpetual strength; and in which, in presence of the Virgin Mary Mother of God, and aided by her patronage, those also were instituted whom we may rightly call the precursors of Catholic Action." (MN 5)

## 17. PIONEER TOTAL ABSTINENCE ASSOCIATION OF THE SACRED HEART

An admirable activity for a praesidium would unquestionably be the recruiting of members for this Association. The primary aim of the Association is the glory of God through the promotion of sobriety and temperance; its chief means of attaining this aim are prayer and self-sacrifice. Members are inspired by their personal love of Christ (a) to be independent

of alcohol in order to do good; (b) to make reparation for the sins of self-indulgence, including their own sins; (c) to win, through prayer and self-sacrifice, grace and help for those who drink excessively and for those who suffer as a result of excessive drinking.

The main obligations of members are: (1) to abstain for life from all alcoholic drink; (2) to recite the Heroic Offering (prayer) twice daily; (3) to wear the emblem publicly.

The Heroic Offering is as follows:

For your greater glory and consolation, O Sacred Heart of  
Jesus,

For your sake to give good example, to practise self-denial,  
To make reparation to you for the sins of intemperance and  
for the conversion of excessive drinkers,

I will abstain for life from all intoxicating drinks.

An arrangement exists: (1) whereby a praesidium may, with the approval of the Central Director of the Pioneer Association, be constituted a Pioneer Centre; (2) that in areas where a Centre of the Association is already established a praesidium would be permitted, subject to the consent of the existing Centre being obtained, to attach itself to that Centre for the purpose of promoting and recruiting for the Association. (see appendix 9)

## 18. EACH PLACE HAS ITS OWN SPECIAL NEEDS

Legionaries will employ any other means of achieving the objects of the Legion which local circumstances may suggest, and which may be approved by the governing authority of the Legion, conformity with ecclesiastical authority being always understood. Once again it is insisted that the outlook on possible works should be one of enterprise and courage.

Each deed of heroism done under the Catholic flag has an effect, which may be styled electrifying, upon the modes of thought of that place. All, even the irreligious, are startled into a new seriousness towards religion. Those new standards will modify the way of living of the entire population.

“‘Be not afraid,’ said Jesus. So let us put away fear. We want no timid ones among us. If ever there is need to repeat those words of Christ: ‘Be not afraid,’ it is unquestionably in relation to the apostolate. For fear unfits the mind for action and deprives us of the

power to judge truly. So – I say it again – fear must be put far from us – fear of every kind save one alone: that kind I would wish to teach you: it is the fear of God. Possessing it, you will not fear men nor the spirits of this world.

And as for prudence, it must be such as Holy Scripture defines it and does not tire in recalling: the prudence of the sons of God, the prudence of the spirit. It must not be – it is not – the prudence of the flesh – weak, lazy, stupid, selfish, miserable." (Discourse of Pope Pius XI: 17th May, 1931)

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### THE PATRICIANS

The Society of the *Patricians* was established in 1955. Its purpose is to build up the religious knowledge of the people, to teach them how to explain themselves and to encourage them to apostleship. Its method was intended to be experimental but it has remained unchanged. Though minds were busy at first in proposing alterations, it is realised that all of these were but reversions to other established methods, such as the catechism class, the lecture system, the question and answer session. These have their own essential place, but they do not cope with what is probably the root problem of the Church: adult religious ignorance and the paralysed tongues of the laity. The *Patricians* has been showing itself effective in that field and therefore must be jealously safeguarded. Its system is a delicately balanced one. A small interference with it can change it into something radically different, just as a slight alteration of tuning brings in a different radio station.

Those other systems provide for one or a few well-versed persons doing the work of instructing a number of others: whereas the method of the *Patricians* is that of the Legion itself – a united approach to the task in hand. All work together in an active quest for knowledge.

Analysis shows the *Patricians* to be a true child of the Legion, for it contains the various characteristic elements which combine to form the Legion itself; it is a projection of the Legion system into the sphere of religious education.

In this department, Mary presides. It was she who brought Jesus down and gave him to the world. She has charge of all subsequent communicatings of him to men. This dominance of hers is signified by the Legion altar which must form the centre-point of the Patrician meeting. The Patricians gather round her to talk about the Church in all its aspects, that is about Jesus who is present in their midst according to his promise. This is a high form of prayer which is made easy by the variety of the meeting; it would not be easy to spend two continuous hours in regular prayer. This is one reason why the *Patricians* spiritualises while it instructs.

In the praesidium, the primary requirement is the obtaining from each member of a verbal report. The *Patricians* strikes the same note; its primary aim is the eliciting of a vocal contribution from everyone. The setting and handling of the meeting are to be directed towards that end. The atmosphere is to be friendly, appreciative, in fact that of the good family in which, though some are more talkative than others, all are found expressing their opinions. That tone depends on the absence of its opposites. The ordinary tactics of public debate are based on attack, condemnation, ridicule. If these appear in the Patrician meeting, the members will disappear.

If the family spirit is established in which the "smallest people" feel at home, then the Patrician foundation has been laid. Each contribution will tend to 'spark off' another one, as each link of a chain draws another along. Gaps in knowledge are filled in, detached items are formed into the mosaic of Catholic doctrine. As knowledge and interest grow, the individuals merge more into the oneness of the Mystical Body of Christ and are penetrated by its life.

In its other features, too, the Patrician procedure represents the application of legionary doctrine and technique. It is important that the legionaries should fully realise this so that they will throw into the working of the *Patricians* the same sort of conviction that they give to the praesidium. Then they will be well-armed for the task which confronts them.

It is the sorrowful fact that Catholics do not speak about religion to those outside the Church, and seldom to those inside it. A term has been devised for this Christian disorientation: Mutism. Cardinal Suenens sums up the position thus: "It is said that those outside the Church will not listen. But

the real truth is that the Catholics will not speak." It seems to be the case that the average Catholic will not help another in the domain of religion. Sincere enquirers are not given the information which they seek, and the incorrect impression is created that Catholics are indifferent about conversions.

This extensive failure seems to menace the Christian character itself, for Christianity is not selfishness. But the position is not as bad as it looks. In the main, that silence and apparent unconcern proceed from lack of confidence:

(a) Those persons are excessively conscious of the defects in their religious knowledge. As a consequence they will avoid any occasion which would expose that weakness to the light of day.

(b) Even where knowledge is substantial, the items are separate, like the answers in the catechism. The mind has not performed the further operation of joining them properly together as the parts would be in, say, an automobile or the human body. There is the further complication that many items are missing and that others are not in proportion to each other. Even if assembled, the product would be similar to a machine in which the parts are misfits, and which will not function.

(c) In many cases there is such ignorance that faith has insufficient knowledge to rest upon. A state of half-belief exists. This has but to meet an irreligious environment to suffer disintegration.

Such is the problem.

The *Patricians* is a society controlled by the Legion. Each branch must be affiliated to a praesidium, and the chairperson must be an active legionary. A praesidium may have charge of several branches. A branch must have a Spiritual Director approved by the Spiritual Director of the praesidium. A Religious may act as Spiritual Director, and (where ecclesiastical authority permits) a lay person.

The term *Patricians*, like most of the other Legion names, is derived from the terminology of ancient Rome. The Patricians were the upper of the three grades of society, that is, the Patricians, the Plebs, the Slaves. But our Patricians aspire to bind all social grades into one spiritual nobility.

Moreover the Patricians were supposed to be full of love of their country and of responsibility for its welfare. So our Patricians must be supporters of their spiritual fatherland, the Church. The Rule does not insist that they be devout or even practising Catholics, but only that their allegiance be broadly Catholic. Rooted anti-Catholic Catholics do not enter into this category.

Unless the bishop declares to the contrary, non-Catholics may not attend the meetings.

The Patrician meeting is held monthly. Punctuality and continuity are essential. Meetings should not be omitted except it is genuinely impossible to hold them. It is not obligatory that a member attend every meeting. A system of reminding members of the next meeting will be necessary.

It is desirable that a branch should not exceed 50 in number, and even that size presents its difficulties.

**Setting:** To be avoided is the theatre effect of a platform and audience; but neither is there to be an air of disorder. As far as possible the seats are to be arranged in semi-circular formation with the table completing the circle. On the table is the Legion altar of which the vexillum is an essential part.

The meeting should possess all the elements of attractiveness, including the material comforts of proper seating, lighting, and temperature.

Expenses are to be met by a secret bag collection, and a statement of accounts is to be given at each meeting.

### **Order of the meeting**

1. The meeting begins with the Patrician prayer said in unison, standing.

2. A Paper or talk, strictly limited to 15 minutes, on the subject for discussion, is given by a lay person. It need not last that time. If it goes longer, it is like all excess – harmful. It is not necessary that the Paper be given by an expert. Expertness may mean too much learning and too great length, which at the beginning of the meeting could ruin it. It has been suggested, on the other hand, that there is no need for a Paper. But obviously it is necessary that some preliminary research be done on the subject. This can only be effectively ensured by appointing someone to do it. The meeting must be furnished with raw material on which to work.

3. The Paper is followed by a general discussion. All the other parts of the meeting exist for this part and are to be directed towards its full functioning. There can be no discussion if the individual members do not contribute. The Patrician problem consists in inducing persons, who are initially unequipped or reluctant to talk, to do so. This problem must be solved for their own sakes and for the health of the Church.

Accordingly, every aid is to be brought to bear, and all adverse influences should be withdrawn. A harsh attitude towards erroneous or foolish statements (of which there will be plenty) would be fatal. It would frustrate the Patrician purpose which is to coax each one to disclose himself. Therefore, freedom of speech is paramount and is to be fostered even if awkward things are uttered. It is to be remembered that those things are being repeated like a chorus outside where they receive no correction.

So the main thing is that the contributions be made and not that they be wise and correct. The perfect ones may shine the most, but the common ones accomplish the most; they are training the inarticulate to speak.

It is psychologically important that the contributions be directed to the meeting and not to any key-person in it. The idea is that when a speaker finishes, each listener is left face-to-face, so to speak, with that talk as something which calls for comment, almost as if it were a conversation between two persons. In the latter case, reply would at once be forthcoming, and this readiness to reply is the position which it is sought to establish in the *Patricians*.

It would disturb this psychological balance if people's minds were distracted elsewhere. For instance, it would form such a distraction for the chairperson to divert attention to himself or herself by interjecting a comment or even appreciation; or for the reader of the Paper to intervene repeatedly to deal with points raised on that Paper; or for the Spiritual Director to solve each difficulty as it arises. Any tendency in those directions would be destructive. It would transform the meeting into a panel discussion in which a few individuals put questions and receive answers from a few experts.

It is desirable that an atmosphere should be created which encourages timid persons to speak.

The chairperson should be tolerant in regard to isolated irrelevant contributions. The calling of a person to order could have an intimidating effect on the whole assembly. But if that irrelevancy leads others off the track, then the chairperson must restore them to it.

Persons should rise to speak. Probably the contributions would flow more freely if they remained seated. But this would risk reducing the discussion to a disorderly exchange of sentences amounting to a mere conversation.

Members are not limited to a single intervention. But a person who has not spoken has a prior right to one who has already spoken.

4. One hour after the beginning of the meeting the discussion is suspended. Immediately before this point the financial statement is given with a reminder that the secret bag will circulate immediately after the Spiritual Director's talk.

5. Then some light refreshment (for example, tea/coffee and biscuits) is served. This is an essential feature of the meeting and must not be left out. It fulfils many important purposes: (a) the imparting of a helpful social aspect to the *Patricians*; (b) the exchange of thoughts; (c) the loosening of tongues; (d) the opportunity for apostolic contact.

It has been suggested that the refreshments be omitted but that the interval be retained for the other purposes. In practice it would not be easy to justify the interval without the refreshments.

This interval is to last 15 minutes.

6. Then follows a talk of 15 minutes' duration by the Spiritual Director. Everything has worked towards this talk and it will be listened to with a concentrated attention. It is a vital ingredient, throwing into orderly, correct form the subject-matter of the discussion, raising it to the highest plane, and inspiring the members towards the greater love and service of God.

It has been said: Why not put this talk at the end of the meeting where it could take account of all that had been said? The answer is that the talk is intended to form precious material for further discussion. This it could not be if it were at the end. There is another reason. It is that the talk may not

be fully comprehended by all those present, in which case the "interpreting principle" (described later) will operate during the resumed discussion.

7. After the Spiritual Director's talk, the general discussion continues until 5 minutes before the end.

8. Then: (a) the chairperson briefly expresses the appreciation of the meeting to the reader of the paper; there are to be no formal votes of thanks; (b) the subject for the next meeting is to be determined. The subjects should bear on religion. Merely academic, cultural, literary or economic topics should be avoided; (c) any other announcements are made.

9. Then the final prayer, which is the Creed, is recited in unison, all standing.

10. The meeting concludes with the blessing of the priest. This should be received standing so as to obviate the disorder of trying to kneel down between chairs in a crowded room.

Thus the total length of the meeting is to be two hours. Precise time-keeping throughout is imperative. If any item exceeds its time, the others have to suffer and the balance of the meeting is upset. A chart, summarising the parts of the meeting and their timing, is given on pages 271/272.

There is to be no summing up. There is no need to be distressed if some important issues have remained unsettled. There will be another and another meeting and in the end completeness will be found.

There is no work-obligation. No tasks are to be assigned from the meeting. Pressure is not to be put on the members to take on additional activities. But the friendly contacts which develop should be used to lead people on in every way, particularly into Legion membership, active, auxiliary, or adjutorian. Wisely used, the *Patricians* can send out such strong impulses as will give benefit to everyone in the community.

### SOME PATRICIAN PRINCIPLES

**1. Group psychology.** People require the help of each other, and naturally they assemble into groups. The group exercises its influence in the degree that it has rules and a spirit. Individuals endeavour to keep up with a group to

which they belong, a fact which can work for good or for evil. They cease to be purely passive. They share in the life of the group. If they are at home in it, they will be a force in it. Applied to the *Patricians*, this means that a quiet but irresistible pressure exerts itself on all, including the most backward, to assimilate what they hear and to keep up in other ways. Of course, a group, while accomplishing that much, can itself fail to advance. This is provided against in the *Patricians* by having some high-minded members who will ensure the flow of superior ideas. By the force of that group psychology, these ideas will be absorbed by the members, so that the body can be made to expand in quality all the time.

**2. The painful pauses.** Long silences between contributions may prove disconcerting. The chairperson is tempted to start pressing the members to speak. This would be wrong policy. A sense of strain would be created, rendering everyone the less inclined to speak. The proper point of view here is that families do not feel the need for non-stop talking and that there is comfort in occasional pauses. So when that silence occurs, let all sit placidly as they would at home. The silence has to break. When it does, it will ordinarily be followed by an atmosphere of ease in which tongues move freely.

**3. Postponement of solution.** There are two broad ways of settling a problem. One is to get the answer straight away from an expert. The other is to try to work it out for oneself. The former seems the direct and simple way, and most education is based upon it. Its defects are that the answer is often only half-understood, and that the pupils' resource and sense of responsibility are not developed. The second method is more laborious. It throws the problem on to the learners. They must make their own effort. When they present their rough product, expert guidance is given to them. Then again they are thrown on their own to struggle a little higher. The final result of this process of **aided self-help** is that they have really learned. As the solution has emerged from their own slow fashioning, they are at ease with it, will remember it, and are made confident for the future. That is the Patrician method. It further requires that when something inaccurate

is stated, it should not at once be put right by authority, but should be left at the mercy of the discussion. It is most likely that it will be eliminated. If it should survive as grave error, it should be corrected but not in such a way as to humiliate. Think of Mary teaching her child.

**4. The asking of questions.** Lecture systems recognise the desirability of producing a reaction in the audience, and accordingly they invite questions. Some persons respond; then the lecturer replies. The *Patricians*, on the contrary, does not welcome this but regards it as an interruption of the debate – almost equivalent to a short-circuit in electricity. Many persons will initially have no other idea of contributing but to address questions to one of the key-persons. If the attempt is made to answer them, the discussion would be struck at, and in fact turned into a classroom in which the members will not stay.

Here the golden rule is that those propounding a relevant question must add on their own ideas as to the answer. This has proved itself able to turn the question usefully into the tide of the discussion.

**5. The building-up principle of the *Patricians*.** To build up knowledge by adding, so to speak, brick by brick is good. But what takes place in the *Patricians* is rather multiplication than addition. The *Patricians* builds with living bricks in the sense that each new contribution interacts with all that has already been said, springing from them and in turn affecting them. Opinions are modified and new ideas are germinated. This complicated operation, worked on by grace, must inevitably cause a fruitful ferment in each mind. But it also produces a common effect, that is on the whole body. This effect is comparable to a flowing tide. It gathers the characters and thoughts of the members into a forward, positive impulse. This imparting of energy and direction to stagnant faith and religious outlook must result in the changing of lives.

**6. The key-roles.** Just as the praesidium depends on its officers, so does the *Patricians* depend on its key-persons. These should be careful not to exceed their functions. If they do, they lessen the function of the ordinary members. They

stray towards the schoolroom. It is vital that the Spiritual Director, the chairperson, and the reader of the paper keep within the time and other limits specified for them, no matter what the temptation to the contrary may be. Most people are uncomfortable in the presence of expertness and authority. Therefore those key-persons should act according to our Lord's own formula for the successful passing on of knowledge: "Learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart." (Mt 11:29) Probably it can be said that the more they efface themselves during the actual discussion, the more freely it will run. But this is not to restrict them drastically to their own prescribed times; they may intervene as ordinary members would, but with restraint.

7. The "interpreting principle". Pre-eminent among the Patrician characteristics is its "interpreting principle." Thereby contributions, which for one reason or another are beyond the complete comprehension of the bulk of the members, are brought within the understanding of all. This means that advanced thoughts and difficult ideas can be expressed and eventually passed on to the simplest members in a form which they grasp. This capacity to place the most learned and the least learned on the footing of understanding each other is a jewel of great price. Here is how it operates: Let us suppose that the opening talk (or any contribution) is of such an advanced character that only ten per cent of those present understand it. Therefore if it were an ordinary lecture, it would be wasted. But in the *Patricians*, some of the ten per cent who had understood it, begin to discuss it. In practice they do this in a manner attuned to the standard of the bulk of the members, so that the difficult talk is in process of being reduced to the level of general understanding. Others then begin to speak, and finally an operation equivalent to that of grinding down corn into fine flour is accomplished. All the obscurities contained in that original talk have been, so to speak, interpreted or translated into the mental capacity of all the members. In this way nothing contributed to the *Patricians* is lost.

This feature of the *Patricians* possesses an unique value in conditions such as those of the missionfield. There the task of the missionary is the teaching of the fulness of Catholicism

to people whose language he does not completely understand and whose mentality is different from his own. The interpreting power of the *Patricians* bridges these deep chasms.

**8. Giving God something to work on.** In this matter there is more at stake than the bringing together of a number of bricks and the moulding of them into a structure. There is the principle of grace which, surpassing nature, enables us to construct an edifice far larger than that for which we had the materials.

We must realise that in the department of revealed religion nobody has the full answers. For faith and grace have always to enter in. Even the wisest arguments may not avail to bridge the gap, but it would be wrong to infer that less wise utterances are thereby useless. The fact is that God takes even the weakest contribution into his hands and does something with it. When all have done their best, the gap that seemed unbridgeable may have been covered. Whether it is that the gap was less than it was thought to be, or that the human contribution was bigger than it seemed to be, or that God just filled in what was lacking – one cannot tell. But the whole work has been done.

The foregoing must always be our philosophy – and on a wider scale than for the *Patricians*. All must make their contribution even though they know it to be inadequate. A feeble effort is better than none. The converting of the world is the question of bringing Catholic effort to bear. There will be insufficient effort so long as Catholics are whispering to themselves: “I do not know enough and therefore I had better lie low”. But this latter is the prevailing situation in which the *Patricians* seeks to play a helpful part.

### THE PATRICIAN PRAYER

(To be recited by all in unison, standing)

In the name of the Father etc. Beloved Lord,  
bless the Society of the *Patricians*  
into which we have entered  
for the purpose of drawing closer to you

and to Mary, your Mother, who is our Mother also.  
 Aid us to the knowing of our Catholic faith,  
 so that its transforming truths may be operative in our lives.  
 Help us also to an understanding of your intimate union  
 with us,  
 by which we not only live in you, but also depend upon  
 each other,  
 in such manner that if some relax, others suffer and may  
 perish.  
 Enable us to glimpse the weighty but glorious burden  
 which is thereby laid upon us,  
 and to yearn to bear it for you.  
 We realise the kind of people we are:  
 The reluctance of our nature:  
 how unfitted we are to offer our shoulders to you.  
 Yet we have confidence that you will regard our faith  
 rather than our frailty,  
 and the necessities of your work  
 rather than the inadequacy of the instruments.  
 So, uniting our voice with the maternal pleadings of Mary,  
 we beg from your Heavenly Father and from you  
 the gift of the Holy Spirit:  
 to abide with us:  
 to teach us your life-giving doctrine:  
 to supply all things that are needful to us.  
 Grant, too, that having been bounteously endowed,  
 we may generously give;  
 for otherwise the world may not receive the fruits  
 of your Incarnation and most cruel Death.  
 Oh do not let labour and suffering so great be wasted.  
 Amen.  
 In the name of the Father, etc.

#### AGENDA OF MEETING

- 0.00 Patrician prayer (*recited in unison, all standing*).  
 Address by lay speaker (**limited to 15 minutes**).
- 0.15 Discussion.
- 0.59 Financial statement and reminder that the secret  
 bag will circulate immediately after the priest's talk.
- 1.00 Tea interval.

- 1.15 Talk by priest (**limited to 15 minutes**).
- 1.30 Discussion resumed. Secret bag collection.
- 1.55 Announcements (word of thanks to reader of paper, date and subject of next meeting, etc.).
- 2.00 The Creed (*recited by all in unison, standing*).  
Blessing of priest (*to be received standing*).

### College and Junior Branches

In the following cases where it may be genuinely impossible to conform to the normal system, that is in: (a) branches inside colleges and institutions, and (b) branches where members are all under 18 years; the following compressed procedure (**total length 11/2 hours**) is permitted:

- 0.00 Patrician Prayer, followed by lay Paper (**limited to 5 minutes**).
- 0.05 Discussion (**40 minutes**).
- 0.45 Interval (**10 minutes**) (tea may be omitted).
- 0.55 Talk by Spiritual Director (**10 minutes**).  
Secret bag may be omitted.
- 1.05 Discussion resumed (**20 minutes**).
- 1.25 Announcements as above.
- 1.30 The Creed, etc. as above.

“The *Patricians* is a family affair. A family conversation about what concerns us all, open, frank and from the heart, is one of the delights of home life. We Christians, as Christ’s brothers, belong to God’s family. Thinking about our faith, talking it over and discussing its application in the spirit in which our Lord and the apostles chatted about the day’s teachings at the end of a missionary day in Galilee – this is the spirit of the *Patricians*.”

To know Christ Jesus as the wonderful, lovable teacher, master and Lord that he is, means that we have to soak our minds in his saving truths and feel thoroughly at home in talking about religion, just as we love to talk about our children, our home, our work. The Holy Spirit gives us all insights into Christ’s truth. These we share at a Patrician meeting with others and learn in turn from them. There we are witnesses to Christ and our hearts burn within us as he speaks to us through the mouth of our neighbour.

In and through the *Patricians* God comes nearer; his truths impress us more deeply; and the Church as our field of endeavour becomes more real to us. Minds catch light from minds, hearts glow with faith, Christ grows within us.” (Father P. J. Brophy)

# 39

## CARDINAL POINTS OF THE LEGION APOSTOLATE

### 1. SOULS ARE NOT APPROACHED EXCEPT WITH MARY

Sometimes Mary is kept in the background so as to meet the prejudices of those who make small account of her. This method of making Catholic doctrine more acceptable may accord with human reasonings. It does not reflect the Divine idea. Those who act in this way do not realise that they might as well preach Christianity without Christ as ignore Mary's part in redemption. For God himself has thought fit to arrange that no foreshadowing or coming or giving or manifestation of Jesus should be without Mary.

**From the beginning and before the world she was in the mind of God.** – God himself it was who first began to tell of her and to sketch out for her a destiny unquestionably unique. For all that greatness of hers had a beginning very far back. It began before the constitution of the world. From the first, the idea of Mary was present to the Eternal Father along with that of the Redeemer, of whose destiny she formed part. Thus far back had God answered the doubter's saying: "What need has God of Mary's help?" God could have dispensed with her altogether, just as he might have dispensed with Jesus himself. But the course which it pleased him to adopt included Mary. It placed her by the side of the Redeemer from the very moment in which the Redeemer was himself decreed. It went further: that plan assigned to her no less a part than that of Mother of the Redeemer and necessarily, therefore, of those united to him.

Thus from all eternity Mary was in a position exalted, alone among creatures, and utterly outside comparison even with the sublimest among them, different in the Divine idea, different in the preparation she received; and therefore fittingly singled out from all others in the first prophecy of redemption, addressed to Satan: "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel." (Gen 3:15)

Here is the future redemption summarised by God himself. Definitely, Mary is to be in an order of her own; even before her birth, and ever after, the enemy of Satan; below the Saviour, but next to him, and like unto him (Gen 2:18), and remote from all others. Not any prophet – even the Baptist – is thus set with him, nor king nor leader, nor apostle nor evangelist – including Peter and Paul themselves; nor the greatest among the popes and pastors and doctors; nor any saint; nor David, nor Solomon, nor Moses, nor Abraham. Not one of them! Alone, out of all creatures that will ever be, she is divinely designated as the Co-worker of Salvation.

**Vividly and unmistakably revealed in prophecy.** – The course of prophecy continues: “The Virgin,” “the Virgin and Child,” “the Woman,” “Woman and Child,” “the Queen seated at the right hand of the King,” the constantly recurring assurance that a woman is to be a prime element of our saving. What sort of future does this foretell of her? Do not the very greatest things that can be said of her seem to follow logically on? Hardly do we realise how crushing, how conclusive is the bearing of prophecy on this question of the place of Mary in the Christian religion. A prophecy is a shadow of a thing to come, a glance which pierces time instead of space, a pale outline of a distant prospect. Necessarily, a prophecy must be less vivid, less clear, less real, than the reality of which it speaks. But necessarily, too, it must preserve harmonious proportion with that reality. Prophecy which pictured redemption as wrought by a Woman and her Child together (and no other with that pair), who crush the head of Satan, would be radically inconsistent with an actual redemption which relegates the woman to obscurity. Thus, if prophecy is truly named, and if Salvation is a lifelong working of the Incarnation and the death of Jesus Christ into the fabric of the human soul (and Holy Church and Holy Scripture jointly so declare), then in the Christian system Mary must be found with Jesus, inseparable from him in his saving work, the New Eve, dependent on him but necessary to him – indeed no other than the Mediatrix of all Graces, as the Catholic Church sums up her gracious office. If what prophecy had glimpsed is really God’s country, then those who belittle Mary are aliens to it.

**Likewise, the Annunciation shows her key-position.** – The culmination of the prophecies arrives ; the fruition of her age-old destiny is now at hand.

Consider the awe-inspiring working out of the merciful design of God. Attend in spirit the greatest Peace Conference ever held. It is a Peace Conference between God and mankind, and it is called the Annunciation. In that Conference God was represented by one of his high Angels, and mankind was represented by her whose name the Legion is privileged to bear. She was but a gentle maiden, yet the fate of all mankind hung upon her in that day. The angel came with overwhelming tidings. He proposed to her the Incarnation. He did not merely notify it. Her liberty of choice was not violated; so that for a while the fate of mankind trembled in the balance. The Redemption was the ardent desire of God. But in this, as in all matters minor to it, he would not force the will of man. He would offer the priceless boon, but it was for man to accept it, and man was at liberty to refuse it. The moment had arrived to which all generations had looked forward, just as ever since all generations have looked back to it. It was the crisis of all time. There was a pause. That maiden did not accept at once; she asked a question, and the answer was given. There was another pause, and then she spoke the words: "Let it be with me according to your word" (Lk 1:38), those words that brought God down to earth and signed the great Peace Pact of humanity.

**The Father made redemption depend on her.** – How few realise all that follows from that consent of hers. Even Catholics in the main do not realise the importance of the part that Mary played. The Doctors of the Church say these things: Supposing that maiden had refused the offer of motherhood that was made to her, the Second Divine Person would not have taken flesh in her. What a solemn thing that is! "What a terrible thought to think that God has made the entrance of the Redeemer dependent upon the 'Let it be with me' (Lk 1:38) of the handmaid of Nazareth; that this saying should be the termination of the old world, the beginning of the new, the fulfilment of all prophecies, the turning-point of all time, the first blaze of the morning star which is to announce the rising of the sun of justice, which as far as

human will was able to accomplish, knit the bond that brought Heaven down upon earth and lifted humanity up to God!" (Hettinger). What a solemn thing indeed! It means that she was the only hope of mankind. But the fate of men was safe in her hands. She pronounced that consent which, though we cannot fully understand, commonsense nevertheless tells us must have been inconceivably the most heroic act ever performed in the world – such that in all ages no other creature but she could have performed it. Then to her came the Redeemer; not to herself alone, but through her to poor helpless humanity, on behalf of whom she spoke. With him, she brought everything that the faith means, and the faith is the real life of men. Nothing else matters. Everything must be abandoned for it. Any sacrifices must be made to get it. It is the only thing in the world of any worth. Consider, therefore, that the faith of all generations: those that have passed away up to the present, and the uncountable millions yet to come: the faith of all has depended on the words of that maiden.

**No true Christianity without Mary.** – In return for this infinite gift, all generations must henceforth call that maiden blessed. She who brought Christianity on earth cannot be denied a place in Christian worship. But what of the many people in this world who hold her cheaply, the many who slight her, the many who do worse? Does it ever occur to those people to think that every grace they have they owe to her? Do they ever reason that if they were excluded from her words of acceptance that night, then Redemption has never come on earth for them? In that supposition they would stand outside its scope. In other words, they would not be Christians at all, even though they may cry: "Lord! Lord!" all the day and every day. (Mt 7:21) And on the other hand, if they are indeed Christians, and if the gift of life has come to them, then it has only come because she gained it for them, because they were included in her acceptance. In a word, the baptism that makes a person a child of God makes one simultaneously a child of Mary.

Gratitude, therefore – a practical gratitude – to Mary must be the mark of every Christian. Redemption is the joint gift of the Father and of Mary. Therefore, with the words of thanks to the Father must go up the word of thanks to Mary.

**The Son is always found with his Mother.** – It was God’s will that the reign of grace should not be inaugurated without Mary. It was his pleasure that things should continue in the self-same way. When he desired to prepare St. John the Baptist for his mission of going before himself, he sanctified him by the charitable visit of his Blessed Mother in the Visitation. On the first Christmas night those who turned her from their doors turned him away. They did not realise that with her they refused him whom they awaited. When the shepherd-representatives of the chosen people found the Promised of all Nations, they found him with her. If they had turned away from her, they would not have found him. At the Epiphany, the Gentile races of the world were received by our Lord in the persons of the three Kings, but they only found him because they found her. If they had refused to approach her, they would not have reached him.

What had been done in secret at Nazareth had to be confirmed openly in the Temple: Jesus made offering of himself to the Father, but it was between the arms and by the hands of his Mother. For that babe belonged to its Mother; without her the Presentation could not be made.

Proceed, and it is learned from the Fathers that our Lord did not enter upon his public life without her consent. Likewise her request at Cana of Galilee was the beginning of the signs and wonders and mighty deeds by which he proved his mission.

**Man for man: Maid for maid: Tree for tree.** – When the last scene came on Calvary which finished the awful drama of Redemption, Jesus hung upon the tree of the Cross and Mary stood beneath it, not merely because she was a fond Mother, not in any accidental way, but precisely in the same capacity as she was present at the Incarnation. She was there as the representative of all mankind, ratifying her offering of her Son for men’s sake. Our Lord did not offer himself to the Father without her assent and offering, made on behalf of all her children; the Cross was to be their Sacrifice and his Sacrifice. “For as truly as she suffered and almost died with her suffering Son” – these are the words of Pope Benedict XV – “so truly did she renounce her maternal rights over that Son for the sake of our salvation, and immolate him, as far as with

her lay, to placate God's justice. Hence it may justly be said that with Christ she redeemed the human race."

**The Holy Spirit operates always with her.** – Come a little further to the feast of Pentecost – that tremendous occasion when the Church was launched upon its mission. Mary was there. It was by her prayer that the Holy Spirit descended on the Mystical Body and came to abide in it with all his "greatness, power, glory, victory and majesty." (1 Chron 29:11) Mary reproduces in respect of the Mystical Body of Christ every service which she rendered to his actual Body. This law applies to Pentecost, which was a sort of new Epiphany. She is necessary to the one as she had been to the other. And so of all divine things to the end: if Mary is left out, God's Plan is not conformed to, no matter what one's prayers and works and strivings may be. If Mary is not there, the grace is not given. This is an overpowering thought. It may provoke the question: "Do those who ignore or insult Mary receive no graces?" They do, indeed, receive graces, for failure to acknowledge Mary may be excused on grounds of utter ignorance. But what a sorry title to Heaven! and what a way of treating her who helps us! Moreover, the graces which come in such circumstances are but a fraction of what should flow, so that one's life's work is largely failing.

**What place must we assign her?** – Some may take alarm and say it is a slight to God to credit such a universal power to a creature. But if it has pleased God to make it so, how does it slight his dignity? How foolish it would sound were anyone to say that the force of gravity derogates from God's power! That law of gravity is from God, and accomplishes his purposes throughout all nature. Why should one think it disrespectful to allow as much to Mary in the universe of Grace? If the laws which God has made for nature show forth his might, why should the law which he has made for Mary do otherwise than manifest his goodness and omnipotence?

But even if it is conceded that acknowledgment is due to Mary, there still remains the question of its manner and amount. "How" – some will say – "am I to apportion prayer to Mary and prayer to the Divine Persons or to the saints? What is the exact amount – neither too much nor too little –

which I am to offer to her?" Others will go further and their objection will present itself as follows: "Would I not turn away from God were I to direct my prayers to her?"

All these grades of doubt proceed from applying earthly ideas to heavenly things. Such persons are thinking of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and of Mary and the saints, as if they were so many statues, so that to turn to one they must necessarily turn away from others. Various examples might be utilised to help towards a better understanding of the true position. But, strange to say, the simplest and at the same time the holiest solution of such difficulties lies in the recommendation: "You must, indeed, give all to God, but give it all with Mary." It will be found that this apparently extreme devotion to her is free from the perplexities which measuring and moderation bring.

**Every action should endorse her Fiat.** – The justification of this method is to be found in the Annunciation itself. In that moment all mankind were joined with Mary, their representative. Her words included their words, and in a sense she included them. God viewed them through her. Now, the daily life of a Christian is nothing else than the formation of our Lord in that member of his Mystical Body. This formation does not take place without Mary. It is an outpouring and a part of the original Incarnation, so that Mary is really the Mother of the Christian just as she is of Christ. Her consent and her maternal care are just as necessary to the daily growth of Christ in the individual soul as they were to his original taking of flesh. What does all this involve for the Christian? It involves many important things of which this is one: he must deliberately and whole-heartedly acknowledge Mary's position as his representative in the sacrificial offering, begun at the Annunciation and completed on the cross, which earned Redemption. He must ratify the things she then did on his behalf, so that he can enjoy, without shame and in their fulness, the infinite benefits thereby brought to him. And that ratification: of what nature is it to be? Would a once-repeated act suffice? Work out the answer to this question in the light of the fact that it was through Mary that every act of one's life has become the act of a Christian. Is it not reasonable and proper that likewise every act should bear some impress of

acknowledgment and gratitude to her? So the answer is the same as that already given: "You are to give her everything."

**Glorify the Lord with Mary.** – Have her before the mind, at least in some slight way, at all times. Unite the intention and the will to hers in such fashion that every act done during the day, every prayer you utter, is done with her. She should be left out of nothing. Whether you pray to the Father, or to the Son, or to the Holy Spirit, or to a saint, it is always to be prayer in union with Mary. She repeats the words with you. Her lips and your lips form the words together, and in everything she has a part. Thus she is far more than at your side. She is, as it were, in you; your life is you and she together giving to God all you jointly have.

This all-embracing form of devotion to Mary acknowledges handsomely the part she played and daily continues to play in the workings out of salvation. Likewise, it is the easiest devotion to her. It solves the doubts of those who say: "How much?" and of those who fear lest giving to her is taking from God. But even some Catholics may say: "It is extreme." Yet where does it offend against sweet reason? And wherein does it deny his due to the Almighty? The latter fault is better laid to those who say that they are jealous of the dignity of God, but will not work the plan which he has made; who say they hold the Scriptures as the sacred word of God, yet will not hear the verses which sing that he hath done great things to Mary, and that all generations shall call her blessed. (Lk 1:48-49)

To all these doubting ones it is best to speak in terms of this rich and full devotion. But how indeed can legionaries talk in any other terms of her? Minimising and reduction only leave her a mystery. If Mary is a shadow or a sentimental notion, then surely not the Catholics, but those who treat her lightly are justified! And, on the other hand, the statement of the fullness of her claims and of her essential place in Christian life contains a challenge which cannot be ignored by any heart in which grace has some dominion. Then calm examination of the role of Mary will leave such people at her feet.

The purpose of the Legion is to mirror Mary. If true to this ideal, the Legion will share her crowning gift to cast the light into the hearts of those who are in the darkness of unbelief.

“The great master of Thomas Aquinas, Albert the Great, has a delightful phrase in a commentary on the Annunciation portion of the Gospel, which, rendered freely, says that Mary’s Son gives infinitude to his Mother’s excellency, there being also in the tree which produces the fruit some of that infinite perfection which belongs properly to the fruit.

In practice the Catholic Church looks upon the Mother of God as being an unbounded power in the realm of grace. She is considered as the Mother of the redeemed on account of the universality of her grace. In virtue of her divine motherhood, Mary is simply the vastest, the most efficient, the most universal supernatural power in Heaven and on earth, outside the Three Divine Persons.” (Vonier: *The Divine Motherhood*)

## 2. INFINITE PATIENCE AND SWEETNESS MUST BE LAVISHED ON A PRICELESS SOUL

The note of sternness must be banished from the legionary mission. Qualities essential to success, and above all when dealing with the outcast and the sinner, are those of sympathy and unvarying gentleness. Constantly in the affairs of life, we persuade ourselves that particular cases are subjects for rebuke or for the cutting word, and we use those words, and later are left regretting. Possibly in every case a mistake has been made. Why cannot we remember in time that it is from rough usage – all no doubt well-deserved – that the hardness and perversity of which we complain have grown up! The flower that would have opened under the influence of the gentle warmth of softness and compassion closes tightly in the colder air. On the other hand, the air of sympathy which the good legionary carries with him, the willingness to listen, to enter wholeheartedly into the case as put before him, are sweetly irresistible, and the most hardened person, completely taken off his (or her) balance, yields in five minutes ground which a year of exhortation and abuse would have failed to gain.

Those difficult types of people are usually trembling on the verge of rage. He who further irritates them causes them to sin and hardens their resistance. He who would help them must lead them in the opposite way. He can only do this by treating them with extreme forbearance and respect.

Every legionary ought to burn into his soul these words applied by the Church to Our Blessed Lady: “For the memory

of me is sweeter than honey, and the possession of me sweeter than the honeycomb." (Sir 24:20) Others may effect good by stronger methods. But for the legionary, there is only one way of doing God's work – the way of gentleness and sweetness. Let him not depart from that way under any circumstances whatsoever. If he does, he will not achieve good; he will rather work harm. Legionaries who stray outside that realm of Mary lose touch with her on whom their work depends. What then can they hope to accomplish?

The very first praesidium of the Legion was given the title of Our Lady of Mercy. This was done because the first work undertaken was the visitation of a hospital under the care of the Sisters of Mercy. The legionaries thought they were choosing that name, but who can doubt that in reality it was conferred by the sweet Virgin herself, who thereby indicated the quality which must ever distinguish the legionary soul.

Ordinarily, legionaries are not found remiss in their pursuit of the sinner. Frequently years pile up in the tireless following of some determined defaulter. But sometimes persons are encountered who put one's faith and hope and charity to trial. They appear to be outside the category of the ordinary sinner; persons of superlative badness, incarnate selfishness, or bottomless treachery, or full of hatred of God or of a revolting attitude towards religion. They seem not to have a soft spot in them, a spark of grace, or a trace of the spiritual. So utterly detestable are they, that it is difficult to believe that they are not equally repellent to God himself. What can he possibly see in the midst of disfigurements so frightful to make him desire closest intimacy with them in Holy Communion, or their company in Heaven?

The natural temptation to leave such a one to himself is almost irresistible. Nevertheless, the legionary must not let go. Those human reasonings all are false. God does indeed want that vile disfigured soul; so much, so ardently, that he has sent his Son, our most dear Lord, to that soul, and he is with it now! Here is the motive for legionary perseverance, exquisitely put by Monsignor R. H. Benson: "If a sinner merely drove Christ away by his sin, we could let such a soul go. It is because – in St. Paul's terrifying phrase – the sinful soul holds Christ, still crucifying him and making him a mockery (Heb 6:6), that we cannot bear to leave it to itself."

What an electrifying thought! Christ our King in the possession, so to speak, of the enemy! What a watchword for a lifelong campaign, for the grimmest battle ever waged, for an unrelenting pursuit of the soul that must be converted in order that Christ's agony be ended! Everything that is natural must be burnt up in the white-hot act of faith that sees and loves and stands by Christ crucified in that sinner. Just as the toughest steel turns to liquid at the fiery breath of the blow-lamp, so will the most hardened heart soften under the flame of that invincible charity.

A legionary of wide experience of the most depraved sinners of a great city was asked if he had met any that were absolutely hopeless. Reluctant, as a legionary, to acknowledge the existence of that category, he replied that many were terrible but few were hopeless. Being pressed, he eventually admitted that he knew of one who seemed to be capable of being so described.

That very evening he received his overwhelming rebuke. Quite accidentally he met in the street the person he had named. Three minutes' conversation, and the miracle of a complete and lasting conversion took place!

"One episode stands out in the life of Saint Madeleine Sophie, in which the faithful pursuit of a soul is seen in all its paths. For twenty-three years she clung with persistent love to one whom God's providence had brought across her path: a lost sheep, who but for the Saint could never have found the fold. Where Julie came from, no one ever knew – she never told her own story twice in the same way. But she was alone and poor and of a difficult and wayward disposition; like nothing in ordinary life, it was said; deceitful, treacherous, mean, passionate to the verge of frenzy. But the Saint saw only a soul, found in dangerous places by the Good Shepherd and put into her care by him. She adopted her as her own child, wrote more than two hundred letters to her, and suffered much on her account. Repaid by calumny and ingratitude, the Saint still held on, forgave her again and again, and ever hoped.... Julie died seven years after the Saint and in peace with God." (Monahan: Saint Madeleine Sophie Barat)

### 3. LEGIONARY COURAGE

Each profession calls for its own particular type of courage, and counts as unworthy the member without that courage. The Legion's demand is especially for moral courage. Nearly all of its work consists in the approaching of persons with

intent to bring them nearer to God. Occasionally, this will be met by resentment or lack of understanding, which will show itself in various ways, less deadly than the missiles of warfare, but – as experience shows – less often faced. For the thousands who brave the hail of shot and shell, hardly one can be found who will not shrink from the mere possibility of a few jeers, or angry words, or criticism, or even amused looks, or from a fear that he may be thought to be preaching or making an affectation of holiness.

“What will they think? What will they say?” is the chilling reflection, where instead should be the Apostles’ thought on the joy of being deemed worthy to suffer contempt for the name of Jesus. (Acts 5:41)

Where this timidity, which is commonly called human respect, is allowed free play, all work for souls is reduced to triviality. Look around and see the tragedy of this. Everywhere the faithful are living in the midst of great communities of unbelievers or non-Catholics or lapsed Catholics. Five per cent of these would be won by the first serious effort which presented the Catholic doctrines to them individually. Then that five per cent would be the thin end of the wedge to conversions on a great scale. But that effort is not made. Those Catholics would wish to make it. Yet they do nothing, because their powers of action are paralysed by the deadly poison of human respect. For different people the latter assumes different labels: “common prudence,” “respect for the opinions of others,” “hopelessness of the enterprise,” “waiting for a lead,” and many other plausible phrases; but all of which end in inaction.

It is told in the life of St. Gregory Thaumaturgus that when he was about to die, he enquired of those about him how many unbelievers there were in the city. The reply came quickly: “Seventeen only.” The dying bishop meditated a while on the figure stated, and then remarked: “Exactly the number of believers whom I found when I became bishop here.” Starting with only seventeen believers his labours had brought faith to all but seventeen! Wonderful! Yet the grace of God has not been exhausted by the passage of the centuries. Faith and courage could draw on it as freely to do the same to-day. Faith is ordinarily not lacking, but courage is.

Realising this, the Legion must set itself to a deliberate campaign against the operation in its members of the spirit of human respect. Firstly, by opposing to its action the force of a sound discipline. Secondly, by educating its legionaries to look upon human respect as a soldier would upon cowardice. They must be taught to act in the teeth of its impulses, and brought to realise that love and loyalty and discipline are after all poor things if they do not bring forth sacrifice and courage.

A legionary without courage! What can we say about such except to apply the expression of St. Bernard: "What a shame to be the delicate member of a thorn-crowned Head!"

"If you fought only when you felt ready for the fray, where would be your merit? What does it matter even if you have no courage, provided you behave as though you were really brave? If you feel too lazy to pick up a bit of thread, and yet do so for the love of Jesus, you gain more merit than for a much nobler action done on an impulse of fervour. Instead of grieving, be glad that, by allowing you to feel your own weakness, our Lord is furnishing you with an occasion of saving a greater number of souls." (St. Thérèse of Lisieux)

#### 4. SYMBOLIC ACTION

It is a fundamental Legion principle that into every work should be thrown the best that we can give. Simple or difficult, it must be done in the spirit of Mary.

There is another reason which is important. In spiritual enterprises there is no telling how much effort is required. In dealing with a soul, at what point can one say "enough"? And, of course, this applies with particular force to the more difficult works. In the face of these we find ourselves exaggerating the difficulty and whirling around the word "impossible." Most of the "impossibles" are not impossible at all. Few things are impossible to diligence and skill. But we imagine them to be impossible, and then by our attitude we render them so.

But sometimes we are faced with works which are really impossible, that is to say, beyond human effort. Obviously, if left to our own devices, we will refrain from what we would regard as useless action in those cases of imagined or real impossibility. Perhaps that might mean that we would leave untouched three-quarters of the more important work which

is waiting to be done – which would amount to reducing to a mimic warfare the vast, adventurous Christian campaign. So the Legion formula demands effort in all circumstances and at all costs – effort as a first principle. Both naturally and supernaturally the repudiation of impossibility is the key to the possible. That attitude alone can solve the problems. It can go further, for definitely it is a hearing of the Gospel cry that with God no work shall be impossible. It is the believing response to our Lord's own call for the faith that casts the mountain into the sea.

To think of spiritual conquest without at the same time stiffening one's spirit into that indomitable attitude would be sheerly fantastic.

Appreciating this, the Legion's primary preoccupation is that strengthening of its members' spirit.

"Every impossibility is divisible into thirty-nine steps, of which each step is possible" – declares a legionary slogan with seeming self-contradiction. Yet that idea is supremely sensible. It forms the groundwork of achievement. It summarises the philosophy of success. For if the mind is stunned by the contemplation of the apparently impossible, the body will relax into a sympathetic inactivity. In such circumstances *every* difficulty is plainly an impossibility. When faced with such – says that wise slogan – divide it up; divide and conquer. You cannot at one bound ascend to the top of a house, but you can get there by the stairway – a step at a time. Similarly, in the teeth of your difficulty, take one step. There is no need yet to worry about the next step; so concentrate on that first one. When taken, a second step will immediately or soon suggest itself. Take it and a third will show – and then another. And after a series of them – perhaps not the full thirty-nine steps of the slogan, which only has in mind the play of that name – one finds that one has passed through the portals of the impossible and entered into very promising land.

Observe: the stress is set on action. No matter what may be the degree of the difficulty, a step must be taken. Of course, the step should be as effective as it can be. But if an effective step is not in view, then we must take a less effective one. And if the latter be not available, then some active gesture (that is, not merely a prayer) must be made which, though of no apparent practical value, at least tends towards or has some

relation to the objective. This final challenging gesture is what the Legion has been calling "Symbolic Action." Recourse to it will explode the impossibility which is of our own imagining. And, on the other hand, it enters in the spirit of faith into dramatic conflict with the genuine impossibility.

The sequel may be the collapse of the walls of that Jericho.

"And at the seventh time, when the priests had blown the trumpets, Joshua said to the people, 'Shout! For the Lord has given you the city' ... As soon as the people heard the sound of the trumpets, they raised a great shout, and the wall fell down flat; so the people charged straight ahead into the city and captured it." (Josh 6:16-20)

## 5. ACTIVE WORK MUST BE DONE

The Legion without its spirit would be like any other lifeless body. That spirit of the Legion, so transforming of its members, is not floating around in the air, waiting to be breathed in. No! that vital spirit is the product of grace out of effort. It depends on the work which is being done, and on the way in which it is being done by the individual legionaries. If there is no effort, the spirit flickers low and may die.

Due to: (a) a reluctance to embark on work which is considered difficult, or (b) to an inability to discern the work which exists abundantly even in the smallest places, but most of all to (c) a dread of adverse criticism; there may be a tendency to avoid active work or to allot insignificant tasks to the members. But all are warned that the Legion machinery is designed to supervise substantial active work. **There is no justification for setting up the system at all unless such work is being undertaken. An army which refuses to engage in battle: what a misnomer! Similarly, members of a praesidium, which is not engaged in some form of active work, have no right to the name of legionaries of Mary. It is reiterated that spiritual exercises do not satisfy the legionary obligation to do active work.**

The inactive praesidium is not only untrue to the Legion purpose of showing a virile apostolate in action, but it does a further grave injustice to the Legion. It creates the impression

that the Legion is not suited to the doing of certain work, whereas the real fact is that the Legion, though perfectly capable, is not even being employed on that work.

## 6. CONTROL OF THE WORK BY THE PRAESIDIUM

The work is to be appointed by the praesidium. Members are not free to undertake in the name of the Legion any work they may think fit. This rule, however, should not be interpreted so rigidly as to prevent a member from availing of a chance of doing good which may cross his path. In fact, the legionary must regard himself as being in a sense always on duty. Work, encountered accidentally, could be brought up and reported upon at the following meeting, and if adopted by the praesidium would then become ordinary legionary work. But in all this the praesidium should be careful. There is a natural tendency in many people of great goodwill to do everything but what they are supposed to do, to wander all over the field instead of standing at the work which has been assigned to them. These persons will do harm rather than good, and if not curbed will do much towards breaking down the legionary discipline.

Once the sense of responsibility to the praesidium, the idea that one is its messenger going from it with definite instructions and returning to it to report on the execution of the allotted work, is shaken, the work itself will soon cease to be done, or else be a source of danger to the Legion. Should a grave error be the sequel of such independent action, the Legion would be held to blame, although the fault had proceeded from disregard of the Legion system.

When specially enthusiastic legionaries complain that their efforts to do good are being fettered by too much discipline, it is well to analyse the matter along the above lines. But it is also necessary to take care that a complaint of this kind is not well founded. The essential purpose of discipline is to drive people on, not to hold them back; but some persons seem to have no other idea of exercising authority than to say "no" and otherwise act restrictively.

## 7. VISITATION IN PAIRS A SAFEGUARD OF LEGIONARY DISCIPLINE

Visitation should be carried out in pairs. In prescribing thus, the Legion has in view the following purposes: – First, the safeguarding of the legionaries. Ordinarily, it will be less the streets than the actual homes being visited, which will call for this precaution. Second, the visitation in pairs is a source of mutual encouragement. It is a help against the movements of human respect or common timidity when visiting difficult places or homes where one is exposed to a cold reception. Third, it puts the seal of discipline on the work. It secures punctuality and fidelity in the carrying out of the appointed visitation. If left to oneself, one is easily led to alter the time of, or postpone altogether, one's weekly visitation. Fatigue, bad climatic conditions, natural reluctance to face the unpleasant visit all operate freely if there is no appointment to be kept with another. The result is that the visitation becomes disorderly and irregular and unsuccessful, and eventually is abandoned altogether.

The usual practice in regard to the situation which arises as a result of a legionary failing to keep an appointment with his co-visitor is the following. If the work is, say, hospital visitation, or other work where there is, obviously, no element whatever of risk, the legionary may proceed to it alone. If, on the other hand, it is work which would throw the legionary into difficult circumstances, or where disreputable surroundings are in question, the legionary must forego the visitation. It is to be understood that the above permission to visit alone is exceptional. Repeated failures on the part of the co-visitor to keep appointments should be viewed very seriously by the praesidium.

This requirement as to visitation in pairs is not to be read as meaning that the two must together address themselves to the same persons. For instance, if a hospital ward is in question, it would be in order, and in fact the proper course, for the two legionaries to move about separately and devote themselves to different individuals.

## 8. THE INTIMATE NATURE OF THE LEGIONARY WORK MUST BE SAFEGUARDED

The Legion must guard against the danger of being made use of by too ardent social reformers. The work of the Legion

is essentially a hidden one. It commences in the heart of the individual legionary, developing therein a spirit of zeal and charity. By direct personal and persevering contact with others, the legionaries endeavour to raise the spiritual level of the whole community. The work is done quietly, unobtrusively, delicately. It aims less at the direct suppressing of gross evils than at the permeation of the community with Catholic principles and Catholic feeling, so that the evils die of themselves through lack of a soil favourable to them. It will consider its real victory to lie in the steady, if sometimes slow, development among the people of an intense Catholic life and outlook.

It is important that the intimate nature of the Legion visitation should be jealously safeguarded. It will not be preserved if legionaries gain the reputation of seeking out abuses for public denunciation. The visits of legionaries to people's homes, as well as their general movements, would tend to be looked on with doubt. Instead of being regarded as friends, in whom complete confidence could be reposed, the suspicion would attach to them that they were engaged on detective work for their organisation. Inevitably their presence would be resented, and this would mark the end of real legionary usefulness.

Therefore, those in charge of Legion activities will be chary of associating the name of the Legion with ends which, though good in themselves, presuppose methods which have little in common with those of the Legion. Special organisations exist for the purpose of combating the glaring abuses of the day. Let the legionaries avail of them when the need arises, and lend their support in their private capacities, but let the Legion itself continue to be true to its own tradition and its own methods of work.

## 9. HOME TO HOME VISITATION DESIRABLE

The Legion visitation should be as far as possible from home to home, irrespective of the people living there. Offence may be taken if persons think they are being singled out for attention.

Even the homes of those discovered to be non-Catholics should not – except strong reasons to the contrary exist – be

passed by. These are not to be approached in a spirit of religious aggression, but for the purpose of establishing a footing of friendship. The explanation that all homes are being visited to make the acquaintance of their tenants will lead to a kindly reception in many non-Catholic homes, a circumstance which Divine Providence may utilise as an instrument of grace to those "other sheep" which it desires to have within the fold. A friendship towards Catholics of the apostolic type will cause many prejudices to die; and a respect for Catholics will unquestionably be followed by a respect for Catholicism. Information may be sought, books asked for, and from all this still greater things may come.

### 10. MATERIAL RELIEF PROHIBITED

Material relief must not be given – even in the smallest ways; and experience shows that it is necessary to mention that old clothing belongs to this category.

In ruling thus, the Legion does not slight the act of relief-giving in itself. It simply declares that for the Legion it is impracticable. To give to the poor is a good work. Done with a supernatural motive it is a sublime one. The systems of many great societies rest upon this principle; notably that of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul to whose example and spirit the Legion rejoices to proclaim itself deeply indebted – so much, in fact, as to make it possible to say that the roots of the Legion lay in that Society. But to the Legion is assigned a different field of duty. Its system is built upon the principle of bringing spiritual good to every individual in the population. This programme and one of relief-giving are not compatible in practice because:

(a) The visits of an organisation which gives relief will seldom be welcomed by persons who do not need relief. They will fear lest such a visitation would label them in the eyes of their neighbours as benefiting in some material way. So the praesidium which earns the name of relief-giving will quickly find its field of work narrowed exceedingly. **Material relief may be to other societies a key which opens. It is the key with which the Legion locks itself out.**

(b) Those who expect to receive, and are disappointed, become aggrieved and hence impervious to legionary influence.

(c) Even among those who are subjects for relief, the Legion will not accomplish spiritual good by giving. Let the Legion leave this to those other agencies whose special work it is, and which have a special grace for it. Certainly, legionaries will have no grace for it, because thereby they break their rule. The praesidium which errs in this way will find itself involved in grievous complications, and will never bring anything but sorrow to the Legion.

Individual legionaries may plead the duty of giving charity according to one's means, and may urge that they do not desire to give relief as legionaries, but in their private capacities. Analysis of this contention will indicate what complications must inevitably arise. Take the case – and it is the usual one – of someone who did not indulge in such personal relief-giving prior to joining the Legion. In his rounds, he comes across persons whom he deems to be in need in some way or another. He refrains from giving anything on the day of the official Legion visit, but goes some other day “as a private individual” and gives. Surely he is breaking the Legion rule as to the giving of material relief, and surely the double visitation only covers a quibble? He visited in the first instance as a legionary. The cases came to his knowledge as a legionary. The recipients know him as a legionary; and certainly they do not enter into the quibble. To them, the transaction is simply one of Legion relief-giving, and the Legion agrees that they judge rightly.

Be it remembered that the disobedience or the indiscretion of a single member in this direction may compromise the whole praesidium. The name of relief-giving is easily won. It does not require a hundred instances. A couple suffice.

If a legionary, for some reason, wishes to help in a particular case, why not save the Legion from all complications by giving anonymously through a friend, or through some appropriate agency? Reluctance to do this, in the circumstances, would seem to indicate that the legionary is seeking an earthly rather than a heavenly reward for the act of charity.

Legionaries must not, however, be indifferent to the cases of poverty and want which they will inevitably find in their visitation, and they should bring them to the notice of other organisations suited to the type of need which is in question. But should all efforts by the Legion fail to secure the desired help, the Legion is not itself to step into the gap. That is not its work, and it is impossible to conceive that in any modern community no other individuals or agency can be found which will look to the relief of a deserving case.

“Unquestionably, the pity which we show to the poor by relieving their needs is highly commended by God. But who will deny that a far higher place is held by that zeal and effort which applies itself to the work of instruction and persuasion, and thereby bestows on souls not the passing benefits of earth but the goods that last forever.” (AN)

As many instances have shown that this rule can be interpreted too narrowly, it is necessary to state that works of service do not constitute material relief. On the contrary they are recommended. They turn aside the accusation that legionaries confine themselves to talking religion and are indifferent about people's needs. Legionaries should prove the sincerity of their words by pouring out their love and service in every permitted form.

## 11. THE COLLECTING OF MONEY

Much in the same category as relief-giving, and coming under the same ban, would lie the regular utilisation of the legionary visitation for the purpose of collecting money.

Such might secure the money, but never the atmosphere for the accomplishment of spiritual good and would represent a supreme example of the policy known as “penny-wise, pound foolish.”

## 12. NO POLITICS IN THE LEGION

No legionary body shall allow its influence or its premises to be used for any political purpose or to aid any political party.

### 13. SEEK OUT AND TALK TO EVERY SOUL

The essence of religious work is its desire to reach every individual, to take into the sphere of its apostolate not merely the neglectful, not alone the household of the Faith, not only the poor or the degraded, but ALL.

Especially the most repulsive forms of religious neglect must not intimidate the legionary. There is no person, however abandoned and hopeless to all appearance, in whom the faith and courage and perseverance of the legionary will not produce results. On the other hand, it would be an intolerable limitation of the mission of the Legion to confine attention to the graver evils. The special attractiveness of the search for the sheep that is straying or in the hands of the thief, should not blind the legionary to the fact that a wider field lies to hand in the urging on of that vast multitude who, though called by God to sanctity, are contenting themselves with a life of mere performance of the essential duties. Now, to induce persons, who have been content with merely satisfying their obligations, to take on works of zeal or devotion will only be accomplished by a long-continued visitation, requiring much patience. But if, as Father Faber says, one saint is worth a million ordinary Catholics; and if, as St. Teresa of Avila tells us, one soul, not a saint but seeking sanctity, is more precious to God than thousands living common lives, how delightful, then, the achievement of setting the first steps of many in the path that turns aside from the ordinary rut.

### 14. NO ONE IS TOO BAD TO BE UPLIFTED; NO ONE TOO GOOD

Not a single one of those encountered in visitation should be left on the same level as when found. There is no one so good that he may not be brought a great deal nearer to God. Frequently will legionaries find themselves approaching persons who are holier far than they, but even then it is not for them to doubt their capacity to do great good. They will impart new ideas, new devotions. They may enliven a routine. Certainly, they cannot fail to edify by their cheerful practice of the apostolic life. So, whether the legionaries are dealing with the saint or the sinner, let them proceed,

confident in the knowledge that they are not there in their own spiritual poverty but as the representatives of Mary's Legion, "united with their pastors and their bishops, with the Holy See and with Christ." (UAD)

### **15. A VAGUE APOSTOLATE IS OF LITTLE VALUE**

In each case the purpose must be the effecting of considerable and definite good. Great good must be done to a great number, if possible; if not, then great good to a smaller number; never be content to do a little good to a great number. The legionary who is treading the latter path may do a disservice in that he is labelling as done, work which is, according to Legion ideas, little more than begun, thus preventing others from entering upon it. But another danger lies in the fact that the moment of discouragement will represent the little good done to the many as being in reality no good done to anyone. This feeling of ineffective membership places membership itself in peril.

### **16. THE SECRET OF INFLUENCE IS LOVE**

It is to be emphasised that real and extensive good can only be effected by the establishing of friendship between the legionaries and those to whom they go. Good otherwise done will be only scanty or accidental. This must especially be borne in mind in the case of visitation carried out under the auspices of the Enthronement of the Sacred Heart. Though this work is excellent in itself and the source of blessings, it is not to be esteemed the principal aim. A visitation that quickly results in the enthronement, and is then discontinued would in the eyes of the Legion have reaped but little of the fruits intended. Many and extended visits to each family mean slow progress by a pair of legionaries, and hence the need for many legionaries and many praesidia.

### **17. IN EACH ONE WORKED FOR, THE LEGIONARY SEES AND SERVES CHRIST**

Nowhere and in no case is visitation to be carried out in a spirit of philanthropy or mere human pity for the unfor-

tunate. "Just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." (Mt 25:40) With these words written on his heart, the legionary must see our Lord in his neighbour (who is all mankind without distinction) and render service accordingly. The evil, the unthankful, the afflicted, the despised, the outcast, the greatest objects of natural repulsion, all are to be viewed in this new light. They are surely the least of Christ's brethren and (mindful of Christ's words) to be rendered a princely and reverential service.

Always will the legionary bear in mind that he is visiting not as a superior to an inferior, not as one equal to another, but as an inferior to his superior, as the servant to the Lord. It is the absence of this spirit that produces the patronising manner. The visitor, possessed of the latter, will accomplish neither supernatural nor natural good. His presence will be tolerated only when he is the bearer of gifts. On the other hand, the gentle, sympathetic visitor, humbly asking admission to the homes at which he knocks, will be joyfully received though his gifts are not material; and he will quickly establish himself on a footing of true friendship. Legionaries should bear in mind that a want of simplicity in dress or accent will raise a barrier between them and those they visit.

### 18. THROUGH THE LEGIONARY, MARY LOVES AND TENDS HER SON

The words of a legionary explaining the successful outcome of a very unpleasant and difficult visitation: "We got them to like us," admirably summarise legionary methods. To awaken this affection it is first necessary to show it: to love those visited. There is no other way, no other diplomacy, no other key to real influence. St. Augustine puts the same idea in another form when he declares "Love and do what you will."

In a masterly paragraph of his life of St. Francis of Assisi, Chesterton asserts that distinctive Christian principle: "St. Francis only saw the image of God multiplied but never monotonous. To him a man was always a man, and did not disappear in a dense crowd any more than in a desert. He honoured all men; that is he not only loved but respected them all. What gave him his extraordinary personal power was this: that from the Pope to the beggar, from the Sultan of

Syria in his pavilion to the ragged robbers crawling out of the wood, there was never a man who looked into those brown, burning eyes without being certain that Francis Bernardone was really interested in him, in his own inner individual life from the cradle to the grave; that he himself was valued and taken seriously."

But can one love to order in this way? Yes, by seeing in all of those met the person of our Blessed Lord. Love is enkindled at the very thought. Again, it is most certain that Mary will that there be shown to the Mystical Body of her Beloved Son just such another love as she lavished on his actual body. In this she will help her legionaries. Where she finds in them the gleam, the readiness to love, she will fan it to a consuming flame.

### 19. EVERY DOOR OPENS TO THE HUMBLE AND RESPECTFUL LEGIONARY

Inexperience is apprehensive of the "First Visit," but the legionary, whether new or tried, who has taken to heart the lesson of the preceding clause, possesses the passport to every home.

It is insisted that one does not enter by any form of right, but solely by the courtesy of the occupants. Approach must be made cap-in-hand, so to speak, one's whole demeanour showing the respect with which one would enter the palaces of the great. A statement of one's mission, accompanied by a humble request to be permitted to enter, will usually open wide the door and bring an invitation to be seated. Then the legionaries must remember that they are not there to lecture, or to ask a multitude of questions, but to sow the seeds of that eventual intimacy which will open the floodgates of knowledge and influence.

It has been said that the special glory of charity is to understand others. There is no greater need in this sad world than such a gift. For "the majority of people seem to suffer from a sense of neglect. They are unhappy because nobody takes them in hand, because nobody is ready to accept the confidences they offer." (Duhamel)

Initial difficulties must not be taken too seriously. Even where deliberate rudeness is at work, a meek submission will turn it to shame and produce its harvest at a later stage.

Interest in the children provides opportunity for conversation. Questions as to their religious knowledge and reception of the sacraments may be asked, which at this early stage might be resented by the elders if asked about themselves; and through the children, efficacious lessons may be addressed to the parents.

Departing, the way must be left open for another call. The simple intimation that one has enjoyed the visit, and hopes to see the family again, provides both a natural leave-taking and an effective preparation for the return visit.

## 20. ATTITUDE IN AN INSTITUTION

Legionaries visiting an institution must remember that they are there simply on tolerance, as much guests as if in a private house. The officials there always look somewhat doubtfully upon the charitable visitor who, coming in to visit the patients, is apt to forget that deference is also due to the staff and to rules and regulations. The legionary must never be found wanting in this way. Visiting should never be done at inconvenient hours, nor should medicine or other prohibited articles be brought to the patients; nor should sides be taken in any of the internal disputes of the place. Persons will profess to be the victims of ill-treatment by the staff or by other patients, but it is not the function of the legionaries to redress these grievances, even if they really exist. They will, of course, listen sympathetically to the woes narrated, and endeavour to instil feelings of resignation, but ordinarily the matter should finish there. Should strong feelings of indignation be aroused in the legionary, it will serve as a safety-valve to discuss the matter at the praesidium. The latter will see the circumstances in full perspective and will counsel appropriate action if desirable.

## 21. THE LEGIONARY MUST NOT SIT IN JUDGMENT

Not alone the legionary manner, but – still more important – the legionary mind, must be stamped with this delicate respect. It is inconsistent with the mission of the legionary for him to sit in judgment on his neighbour, or to set up his own standards of thought and conduct as standards which must

be conformed to by all. He must not assume that those who differ from him in various ways, who refuse to receive him or even oppose him, are necessarily unworthy persons.

There are many people whose actions seem open to criticism, but the legionary is not to be the critic. Too often such persons are like the saints who were wrongly accused. Again, the lives of many are unsightly with grave abuses. But God alone sees the heart and can judge as to the real position. For, as Gratry says: "Many lack the benefit of primitive education. They are born without moral patrimony, and perhaps as food for their journey through this difficult life have received only perverted maxims and examples. But likewise, nothing will be asked of anyone but that which has been given to him."

There are many, too, who parade their riches and whose lives are far from mortified. Of these it is the spirit of the day to speak in bitter words. But here again the legionary must reflect. There is always the possibility that such persons may resemble Nicodemus, who came to our Lord secretly by night, and who did much for him, won him many friends, loved him truly, and in the end had the unique privilege of assisting at his burial.

The role of legionaries is never to be that of judge or critic. They must always consider how Mary's soft eyes would look on all those circumstances and persons. Then let them try to act as she would act.

It was one of Venerable Edel Quinn's practices never to find fault without referring the matter to the Blessed Virgin.

## 22. OUTLOOK ON ADVERSE CRITICISM

Frequently in these pages, reference is made to the paralysing effect exercised upon even the best-intentioned by the fear of hostile criticism. Hence, it will be helpful to consider the following principle. A main object of the Legion – that by which it will win its widest results – is the creation of high standards of thought and practice. The members set themselves to live the apostolic life, and thereby hold up a lofty headline of lay life. By virtue of the strange instinct which leads men to imitate, even in spite of themselves, those things which impress them, all will be impelled in varying

degrees to approximate to that headline. One sign that an effective headline has been set is that many will openly and with good heart seek to follow it. Another, and more common, sign will be that symptoms of dissent will be evoked. For such a headline is a protest against the lower standards. It is a sting to the popular conscience, and like every other sting, it will provoke the healthy reaction of discomfort and protest, soon to be followed by the upward urge. But if there is no reaction of any kind, it proves that no effective headline has been set.

Therefore, there is no need to be unduly disconcerted should legionary activities stir up some little criticism; provided always that defective methods are not responsible for that criticism. Bear always in mind another great principle which must govern apostolic effort: "Men are conquered only by love and kindness, by quiet discreet example which does not humiliate them and does not constrain them to give in. They dislike to be attacked by the man who has no other idea but to overcome them." (Giosue Borsi)

### 23. THERE NEED NEVER BE DISCOURAGEMENT

Sometimes the most devoted labours, heroically prolonged, show little fruit. Legionaries do not set their hearts on visible results, but nevertheless it would not be for their good to work with a sense of frustration. It will console them, and it will nerve them to still more strenuous efforts, if they reflect that even a single sin prevented represents an infinite gain. For that sin would be an immeasurable evil, dragging in its train an endless series of calamitous consequences. "However tiny the mass, it plays its part in the balance of the stars. Thus, in a way that only Thy mind, O Lord, can perceive and measure, the slightest movement of my little pen running across the paper is connected with the motions of the spheres, and contributes to, and is a part thereof. The same takes place in the world of intellect. Ideas live and have their most complex adventures in that world of intellect, a world immeasurably superior to the material world; a world united and compact also in its vast, plenteous, and most varied complexity. As in the material and intellectual worlds, so it is in the infinitely greater moral world." (Giosue Borsi) Each sin shakes that world. It inflicts hurt on the soul of every man.

Sometimes the first link in this process is visible, when one person leads another to sin. But visible or unseen, sin leads to sin; and likewise one sin prevented wards off another. And similarly does not the averting of that second sin prevent a third, and so on unendingly until that chain gathers in the whole world and stretches throughout all time? Is it, therefore, too much to say that each sinner converted to a good life, will eventually represent a goodly host marching behind him into heaven?

Accordingly, to prevent a grave sin would justify most arduous labours – even the effort of a lifetime – for thereby every soul will feel the glow of extra grace. It may be that the saving of that sin will be a moment of destiny, the inauguration of a process of uplift, which will in time transfer a whole people from a godless life to one of virtue.

#### 24. THE MARK OF THE CROSS IS A SIGN OF HOPE

But the chief danger of discouragement does not lie in the resistance – however strong – of the forces against which the Legion finds itself arrayed. It lies in the distress which the legionary cannot but feel when aids and circumstances, on which he feels entitled to rely, are found wanting. Friends fail, good people fail, one's instruments fail; and all whereon we lean is traitor to our peace. O what a harvest of good could be reaped – it seems – but for the bluntness of the sickle, but for the deficiencies in one's own camp, but for that cross which crushes one!

This impatience at the narrowing down of the possible good to souls may be a danger. It may bring the discouragement which the hostile forces had not been able to create.

It must always be remembered that the work of the Lord will bear the Lord's own mark, the mark of the cross. Without that imprint, the supernatural character of a work may be doubted: true results will not be forthcoming. Janet Erskine-Stuart states this principle in another way. "If you look," she says, "to Sacred History, Church History, and even to your own experience which each year must add to, you will see that God's work is never done in ideal conditions, never as we should have imagined or chosen." That is to say – amazing thought! – that the very circumstance which to the limited

human vision seems to prevent those conditions from being ideal and to spoil the prospects of the work, is not an obstacle to success but the requisite for success; not a flaw but a hallmark; not a deadweight on effort but fuel which feeds that effort and aids it to achieve its purpose. For it is ever God's pleasure to show his power by extracting success from unpromising conditions and by accomplishing his greatest projects with inadequate instruments.

But the legionaries must note this important proviso: If those difficulties are to be salutary, they must not proceed from legionary neglect. The Legion cannot expect to derive grace from its own faults of omission or commission.

## **25. SUCCESS A JOY. FAILURE ONLY A POSTPONED SUCCESS**

Viewed aright, the work should be an endless source of joy. Success is a joy. Failure is a penance and an exercise of faith – a higher joy to the thoughtful legionary, who sees therein merely a postponed and greater success. Again, it is a natural pleasure to be received with the grateful smiles of the many who value intensely the visit. But the doubtful looks of others should bring a deeper consolation, for here is something seriously amiss which has been escaping attention. It is the legionary experience that true Catholic feeling – even when complicated by some religious neglect – is responsive to the friendly, sympathetic visitor, so that the contrary not infrequently marks a soul in peril.

## **26. ATTITUDE TOWARDS DEFECTS OF PRAESIDIA AND LEGIONARIES**

There must be patience with the defects of praesidia or individual legionaries. The fact that zeal is so sluggish, that improvement seems negligible, and that worldly failings are sadly in evidence should not bring discouragement. The following line of thought will help in such circumstances.

If those legionaries, with the drive of their system behind them and unquestionably influenced by its prayer and devotion, are nevertheless found wanting, what would their

standards be without the Legion altogether? Again, what are the spiritual levels of the community which cannot produce the few worthy workers required to make a good praesidium?

Plainly, the logic is that those spiritual levels must be raised at all costs. The best, in fact the only, means of doing this lies in the infusion of an apostolic leaven which will work in the population until the whole be leavened. (Mt 13:33) Therefore, the apostolic material available must be cultivated with invincible patience and sweetness. Ordinary Catholic spirit itself is a thing of slow growth. Why, therefore, expect the apostolic spirit to be an instantaneous product? If heart be lost, the only remedy is gone.

### **27. NO SEEKING OF SELF**

The Legion shall not permit itself to be made an instrument for the personal material benefit of any of its members. But, indeed, no legionary should have to be admonished against the unworthy exploitation, either inside or outside the Legion, of his membership.

### **28. NO PRESENTATIONS TO MEMBERS**

The giving of money or equivalent presentations by branches of the Legion to their members is prohibited. The number of such presentations, if tolerated, would tend to be large and to constitute a financial burden. This must be guarded against, especially in view of the great number of persons of small means whom the Legion is happy to have in membership.

Therefore, if praesidia or other legionary bodies want to signalise some special event in the life of a member, let them do it by presenting a spiritual bouquet.

### **29. NO DISTINCTIONS IN THE LEGION**

Generally, the Legion is opposed to the formation of praesidia whose membership is restricted to a particular class or section of the community. Some reasons are: – (a) Too often restrictive will mean exclusive, with consequent injury to fraternity; (b) The best method of recruitment is normally that by the members amongst their friends, and these might

not be entitled to join a particular sectional praesidium; (c) It will almost invariably be the case that praesidia with a membership representative of various walks of life will prove the most efficient.

### **30. TO BRIDGE MUST BE THE AIM**

Of set purpose the Legion should aim to combat the divisions and the innumerable antagonisms of the world. This process must begin in the Legion's unit of organisation, the praesidium itself. It would be sheer futility for the Legion to talk of bridging differences if at the same time the spirit of disunity were evident in its own ranks. So let the Legion think in terms of the unity and charity of the Mystical Body, and try to organise accordingly. When it has brought together, as fellow-members of the one praesidium, persons whom the world was keeping apart, it has accomplished something really great. The contact of charity has been made, and out will go the sacred contagion which may seize on and kill the turbulence of the world around.

### **31. SOONER OR LATER THE LEGIONARIES MUST ATTACK THE MOST DIFFICULT WORK**

The choice of work may create a doubt. Sinister problems may exist, but perhaps the priest may fear to entrust them to an infant praesidium. Motives of timidity should generally not prevail, lest to ourselves be applicable the saying of St. Pius X that the greatest obstacle to the apostolate lies in the timorousness, or rather cowardliness, of the good. Still, if doubts persist, let the beginning be along lines of caution and let the praesidium feel its way on simpler work. As meeting follows meeting, and experience is gained, certain of the members will emerge as manifestly capable of the most difficult work. Let these be assigned to the work of early doubt: then others as the work requires, and as the members prove themselves. Even if only a couple of legionaries are engaged on difficult work, it exerts a tonic effect upon the work of the remainder.

### **32. THE OUTLOOK ON DANGER**

The system will reduce unfavourable possibilities to an absolute minimum, but perhaps the element of risk may

attach to some important work. Should calm consideration show: (a) that otherwise a work, on which depends the salvation of souls, will in whole or part remain undone, and (b) that everything possible has been done in the interests of safety; then let the attack go on with picked material. It would be an intolerable thing for legionaries to look on impassively while their neighbours were going to ruin. "God keep from us the serenity of the ignorant. God keep from us the peace of cowards." (De Gasparin)

### 33. THE LEGION MUST BE IN THE FOREFRONT OF THE CHURCH'S BATTLE

Legionaries share in Mary's faith in the victory of her Son – her faith that through his death and resurrection all the power of sin in the world has been conquered. According to the measure of our union with Our Lady the Holy Spirit puts this victory at our disposal in all the battles of the Church. With this in mind, legionaries should be an inspiration to the whole Church by the trust and courage with which they take in hand the great problems and evils of the day.

"We must understand what the warfare is. It is being fought not simply to enlarge the Church, but to bring souls into union with Christ. It is that strangest of wars which is fought *for* the enemy, not against him. Even the term 'enemy' must not be allowed to mislead.

Every unbeliever is, as every Catholic is, a being with an immortal spirit, made in the image of God, for whom Christ died. However violently hostile to the Church or to Christ he may be, our aim is to convert him, not simply to defeat him. We must never forget that the devil wants his soul in hell as he wants ours, and we must fight the devil for him. We may be forced to oppose a man to prevent his endangering souls; but always we want to win him for his own soul's salvation. It is in the power of the Holy Spirit that we must fight, and he is the Love of the Father and the Son; in so far as the Church's soldiers fight in hatred, they are fighting against him." (F. J. Sheed: *Theology for Beginners*)

### 34. THE LEGIONARY MUST PROPAGATE EVERYTHING CATHOLIC

Legionaries will not neglect the use of the scapulars, medals, and badges approved by the Church. In distributing these and spreading devotion to them, channels are set up, along which – as a million instances have shown – it is the will of God that grace will copiously flow.

Particularly, they should think in terms of the brown scapular which is the very livery of Mary. "Some interpret literally the text: 'He who dies wearing this habit will not be lost.' St. Claude de la Colombière would brook no restriction: 'One may lose one's scapular, but one who wears it at the hour of death is saved.'" (Père Raoul Plus)

Likewise, they will promote piety in the homes of the people by encouraging them to have crucifixes and statues, to hang upon their walls religious prints and pictures, to keep holy water in the house, and beads properly blessed for the Indulgences. The home wherein the sacramentals of the Church are despised runs great risk of gradually forsaking her sacraments. Children are especially receptive of external aids to devotion, and in a house which lacks a statue or a holy picture they will find it hard to acquire the true and intimate character of the Faith.

### **35. VIRGO PRAEDICANDA: THE VIRGIN MUST BE BROUGHT AND TAUGHT TO ALL MEN, FOR SHE IS THEIR MOTHER**

A theme dear to Pope Leo XIII was that Mary is the Mother of all people, and that God has implanted the germ of love for her in every heart, even in those who hate her or do not know her. This germ is meant to grow, and like any capacity it can be fostered by giving it proper conditions. Souls must be approached and informed as to the maternal role of Mary.

The Second Vatican Council has proclaimed that universal motherhood of Mary (LG 53, 54), and has declared that she is so much the source and model of apostleship that the Church must depend on her in its efforts to save all people. (LG 65)

Pope St. Paul VI requires that everywhere, and especially where there are many non-Catholics, the faithful shall be fully instructed in the maternal office of Mary so that they may share that treasure of knowledge. Moreover, he commends to her loving heart the entire human race that she may fulfil her mission of orientating all souls towards Christ. Finally, in order to set in a revealing light her maternal and unifying duty towards all the members of the human family, His Holiness confers on Mary the significant title: "Mother of Unity."

Therefore, they err sadly who regard the Blessed Virgin as a barrier to conversion which should be lowered. She is the Mother of grace and unity so that, without her, souls will not find their way. Legionaries must consistently apply this principle to their efforts to convert, that is, by explaining to all what is sometimes, but incorrectly, called the legionary devotion to Mary. It is no property of the Legion which has only learned it from the Church.

“The Virgin Mary has always been proposed to the faithful by the Church as an example to be imitated not precisely in the type of life she led, and much less for the socio-cultural background in which she lived and which today scarcely exists anywhere. She is held up as an example to the faithful rather for the way in which, in her own particular life, she fully and responsibly accepted the will of God (cf Lk 1:38), because she heard the word of God and acted on it and because charity and a spirit of service were the driving force of her actions. She is worthy of imitation because she was the first and the most perfect of Christ’s disciples. All of this has a permanent and universal exemplary value.” (MCul 35)

## 40

# GO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE WHOLE CREATION

(Mk 16:15)

### 1. HIS LAST TESTAMENT

A solemnity attaches to last words, even though they are uttered in turmoil or weakness. What then is to be thought of our Lord’s final injunction to the apostles: what has been called his last will and testament, delivered at a moment more awesome than that of Sinai – that is, as the completion of all his earthly lawgiving and immediately before his Ascension? As he speaks, he is already clothed with the very majesty of the Trinity: “Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation.” (Mk 16:15)

Those words supply the Christian keynote. Faith must strain after people with inextinguishable ardour. Sometimes that essential note is missing. People are not sought after, neither those in the fold nor those outside it. But if that Ascension commandment be disregarded, it will be at a price – the price of loss of grace, of diminution and decay, even to the extinction of faith. Look around and see how many places have already paid that awful price.

When Christ said all, he meant *ALL*. Actually he had before his eyes each individual one – “for whom he had worn the Crown – and borne the Cross, the nails, the lance – the rabble’s ignominious glance – unnumbered griefs, unmeasured woes – faintings and agonising throes – and death itself on Calvary.” Labour so great must not be thrown away. The Precious Blood must now be touched to everyone for whom it was so prodigally shed. That Christian commission drastically drives us out to people everywhere – to the least ones, to the greatest ones, to those near, to those remote, to the ordinary people, to the wickedest, to the farthest shack, to all afflicted creatures, to the diabolical types, to the loneliest lighthouse, to the leper, to the forgotten sort, to the victims of drink and vice, to the dangerous classes, to the dwellers in caves and caravans, to those on the battlefield, to those who hide, to the avoided places, to the lowest den, to the icy wastes, to the sun-baked desert, to the densest jungle, to the dismal swamp, to the uncharted island, to the undiscovered tribe, out into the absolute unknown to find if there is someone living there, right on to the ends of the earth where the rainbow rests! No one must evade our search, lest the gentle Jesus frown upon us.

The Legion must be, so to speak, obsessed by that final commandment. It must, as a first principle, set out to establish a contact of some sort with every soul everywhere. If this be done – and it can be done – then the Lord’s command will be moving towards fulfilment.

Our Lord, it will be noted, does not order that every person be converted, but only that approach be made to every one. The former may be beyond human possibility. But it is not impossible to make the approach. And if that **all-embracing, indiscriminating contact** be made, what then? It is certain that there would be an aftermath. For our Blessed Lord does

not order unmeaning or unnecessary steps to be taken. When that comprehensive approach to people has been effected, at least the divine command has been obeyed; and that is the important circumstance. What happens next might well be the renewal of the Pentecostal fires.

Many earnest workers believe that by labouring to the limits of their strength, they have done all that God expects of them. Alas, such single-handed effort will not carry them far; nor will the Lord be satisfied with that solitary striving; nor will he make good what they leave unattempted. For the work of religion must be set about like any other work which exceeds the individual power, that is by mobilising and organising until the helpers are sufficient.

This mobilising principle, this effort to join others to our own efforts, is a vital part of common duty. That duty applies not merely to the higher ones of the Church, not merely to the priests, but to every legionary and every Catholic. When the apostolic ripples proceed from every believer, they will add up into a universal deluge.

“You will find that your powers of action will always be equal to your desires and your progress in faith. For it is not in heavenly as it is in earthly benefactions; you are stinted to no measure or boundary in receiving the gift of God. The fountain of Divine Grace is ever flowing, is subject to no precise limitations, has no fixed channels to restrain the waters of life. Let us encourage an earnest thirst after those waters and open our hearts to receive them, and as much will flow in upon us as our faith will enable us to receive.” (St. Cyprian of Carthage)

## 2. THE LEGION MUST DIRECT ITSELF TO THE INDIVIDUAL SOUL

“We must not allow the crowded altar-rails at the morning’s Mass to blind us to the existence of horrible contrasts: entire families where things are wrong, or even whole neighbourhoods corrupted and abominable, where evil is, as it were, enthroned with its court all around it. Second, we should remember that although sin is in such places congested and doubly repulsive, it is none the less vile where it is more spread out. Third, though we see there the matured fruit – the Dead Sea fruit of evil – the roots lie in the soil of

every corner of the country. Wherever neglect is creeping in or venial sin putting up its head, there is a preparation for abominations. Wheresoever the worker may be, there is work to hand to do. Were it nothing else, speak words of consolation to some poor old body in an infirmary, or teach little children to bless themselves and lisp the answer to: 'Who made the world?' and, little though you realise it, you strike a fierce blow at the whole machinery of evil. Fourth, and this is a message of hope to the apostolic worker who is overmuch inclined to lose heart in the presence of formidable evil, even such a riot of disorder as we have pictured is not incurable. There is a remedy – and there is only the one – and it lies in the intense and patient application of the religious system of the Church.

Under all that crusted depravity, the bare outline of which makes one shudder, there is a faith which in better moments longs for goodness. If, then there is someone at hand to coax and encourage and speak of better things and hold out hope that all can be repaired, the worst victim of that depravity can be brought to priest and sacraments. With these received, a renovation has taken place which can never be completely undone. Frequently, the great power which goes out from Christ in his sacraments is manifested, and we are left marveling to find that the miracle of the changed life – an Augustine or Mary of Magdala in a minor key – has been renewed.

For others the cure will be less striking. The draw of the evil habits and the old influences will be irresistible. There will be the falling and rising again. They may never be made into what would be called good citizens, but sufficient of the supernatural will probably find a place in their lives to bring them to port in the end. The great object will have been achieved.

In fact, there will be little failure for the legionary with simple, courageous faith, no matter where or in what dark and evil places he or she may labour. The rule is short – spread abroad the reign of the sacraments and the popular devotions, and sin will melt away before you. Do good anywhere, and you raise all, it suffices to break the opposing battle-line at any point. Shape your instruments to the necessity. Six families in a house are standing aloof from Mass and the

sacraments and resist persuasion. Possibly you can induce one of these to do something which requires a smaller degree of cooperation. Get the Sacred Heart enthroned in that home and you have already won the day. They will lift themselves farther and the others with them. In the end people who have dragged each other down by bad example will prove an inspiration to each other.” (Father Michael Creedon, first Spiritual Director of Concilium Legionis Mariae.)

“This robber stole Paradise! No one before him ever received such a promise not Abraham, or Isaac, or Jacob, or Moses, or the prophets, or apostles; the thief pressed in before all these! But his faith also surpassed theirs! He saw Jesus tormented, and adored him as if he were in glory. He saw him nailed to a cross, and petitioned him as if he were enthroned. He saw him condemned, and asked a favour of him as of a king. O admirable thief! thou didst see a crucified man, and thou didst proclaim a God.” (St. John Chrysostom)

### 3. THE SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH OUR SISTER CHURCHES OF THE ORTHODOX TRADITION

The work of bringing the message of Jesus Christ to every person, which, in the words of Pope St. Paul VI, is the “essential mission of the Church” (EN 14), is closely linked to that other great commitment of the Church which is the promotion of reconciliation and unity among Christians. We recall here the prayer of our Lord at the Last Supper, “May they all be one. Father may they be one in Us, as You are in Me and I am in You, so that the world may believe it was You who sent Me.” (Jn 17:21)

In the wake of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) Christian Unity is one of the great priorities of the Catholic Church in these times, for as the same Council points out “the division among Christians openly contradicts the will of Christ, scandalizes the world, and damages that most holy cause, the preaching of the gospel to every creature”. (UR 1).

In the context of the above the following quotation from Pope St. John Paul II’s Apostolic Letter “*Oriente Lumen*”, written as an aid to restoring unity with all Christians of the East, is of the greatest importance: “Since in fact, we believe that the venerable and ancient tradition of the Eastern Churches is an integral part of the heritage of Christ’s Church,

the first need for Catholics is to be familiar with that tradition, so as to be nourished by it and to encourage the process of unity in the best way possible for each.

Our Eastern Catholic brothers and sisters are very conscious of being the living bearers of this tradition, together with our Orthodox brothers and sisters. The members of the Catholic Church of the Latin tradition must also be fully acquainted with this treasure and thus feel, with the Pope, a passionate longing that the full manifestation of the Church's catholicity be restored to the Church and to the world, expressed not by a single tradition, and still less by one community in opposition to the other; and that we too may all be granted a full taste of the divinely revealed and undivided heritage of the universal Church which is preserved and grows in the life of the Churches of the East as in those of the West. (*Oriente Lumen* No 1)."

Further on, the Holy Father speaking of the Orthodox Churches, says: "A particularly close link already binds us. We have almost everything in common; and above all, we have in common the true longing for unity. (*Oriente Lumen* No. 3)."

These Orthodox Churches are truly our Sister Churches, we must promote in every way possible reconciliation and unity between us according to the mind of Christ and in keeping with the guidelines of the document "*Unitatis Redintegratio*" of the Second Vatican Council.

In the succeeding sections of this chapter, what is said in reference to the conversion of those who are not Catholics does not apply to our brothers and sisters of the Orthodox Churches.

#### 4. THE SEEKING OF CONVERSIONS TO THE CHURCH

"The Church," Pope Pius XI has solemnly declared, "has no other reason for its existence than to extend over the earth the Kingdom of Christ and so to render people sharers of his saving Redemption." It is sad, therefore, that Catholics should live in the midst of multitudes who are not of the Church, and make little or no effort to win them to it! Sometimes this arises from the fact that the problem of shepherding those

who are in the fold is thought so grievous that those outside it are lost sight of as part of the problem. Need one be surprised if in the end neither those inside are preserved nor those outside brought in?

Make no mistake about it. The faith must be brought to the notice of every person outside the Church. Timidity and human respect and difficulties of one kind and another must all be swallowed up in the supreme desire to share that gift of faith with those who have it not. The Gospel must be brought to every creature. The exertions to that end must be like those of people beside themselves, thought St. Francis Xavier. But others will counsel prudence. Yes, much depends on it in its true sphere, which is that of safeguarding necessary action, not crippling it. The rightful place of prudence in a system is that of brake, whereas the error is almost invariably made of supposing that it is to be the engine. And then there is surprise at the inaction. Oh there is need for those people beside themselves, who do not think in terms of selfish caution, who live above base fear, not erring into what Pope Leo XIII branded as criminal excesses: recklessness, and that so-called prudence. For souls are being swept along in the rapid flowing river of time. Delayed effort will gather in other souls – but not **those** souls – the abyss of eternity will have enfolded **them!**

“By dint of repeating that people are not ready to receive the Gospel, one would end up by not being ready to bring it to them.” (Cardinal L. J. Suenens)

Persons outside the Church toss on a sea of doubt from which their hearts crave rest, but they need to be persuaded that in the Church there is really faith and calm. The first step towards convincing them must necessarily be the approaching of them. How can they understand the truth unless some man show them? (Acts 8:31) How can fantastic misunderstandings be dispelled if Catholics ever preserve a stately silence on the subject? How can the opponents of the Church guess from the outward chill of Catholics the warmth of faith that lies beneath? And are they not to be excused for thinking that Catholic belief, which seldom shows any enthusiasm, is little or not at all removed from their own admitted unbelief?

There is a tendency to think that sufficient has been done when the Catholic claims have been made known by the

communications media, or by the addressing of public meetings. But, in fact, the approach becomes the less effective according as it loses the personal touch. If conversions depended on the reaching of people in bulk by means such as the above, the present age of technology should also be one of conversions on a grand scale. But, instead, it is found difficult to keep even the Catholic fold intact.

No! The approach to be really effective must be an individual and intimate one! The media can be made to play an awakening or supporting part in a scheme to bring those "other sheep" to the Good Shepherd, but the centre of that scheme must be the appeal of one person to another person. According to the laws that rule the spiritual world, as Bl. Frederick Ozanam puts it, the attraction of one soul is needed to elevate another. In other words the law of charity must operate; and the gift without the giver is bare. But only too often does the individual Catholic assume an attitude of helplessness. He may think that many outside the Church are too firmly rooted in prejudices and in ignorance to be moved. Admittedly, prejudices are many, traditional, almost inborn, and hardened by education. What resources would the Catholic have to deal with such a situation? He need not fear. He possesses in the doctrine of the Church, however simply explained, a shining sword whose efficacy is best described in St. John Henry Newman's noble words: "I have an intense feeling in me as to the power and victoriousness of truth. It has a blessing from God upon it. Satan himself can but retard its ascendancy; he cannot prevent it."

But also he must remember another principle to which he must not prove false: "Truth in combating error never grows angry. Error is never calm in contending with truth" (De Maistre). As has been repeatedly urged in these pages, the approach to those whom it is desired to win must be like to that which the Divine Shepherd would make in such a search. There must be nothing of the controversial, nothing overbearing. Every word must breathe humility, affection, sincerity. And actions as well as words must show forth one essential thing, that they are backed by a genuine belief. Then they will seldom be seriously resented and will never fail to leave a deep impression, which will ripen in a high proportion of cases to conversion.

“We must always remember,” said Dr. Williams, former Archbishop of Birmingham, “that religion is caught, not taught. It is a flame set alight from one person to another. It is spread by love and not in any other way. We take it only from those whom we think friendly to us. Those whom we regard as indifferent or hostile cannot recommend religion to us.”

If personal contact is necessary, not many cases can be dealt with by the individual worker. Therefore for many conversions many workers will be required. Legionaries must be multiplied.

As part of any scheme the following should receive attention: –

(a) The work of study should be undertaken, not for the purpose of mere controversy, but to fit oneself to assist the sincere enquirer.

(b) Existing converts should be looked up in order to ensure that they have the support of Catholic friendships, or to bring them, if suitable, into Legion membership. None will be more qualified than they to meet the difficulties of their former brethren.

(c) The following up (from lists supplied by those who specialise in instruction) of those who had embarked on a course of instruction in which they did not persevere. Experience indicates that the default is usually due, not to a loss of the desire to become Catholics, but to accidental circumstances which cause a break in the attendance; shyness or procrastination then prevents resumption.

(d) The opportunities of effective contact with people who are not Catholics are plentiful if legionaries would only act towards them in a natural Christian way. To Catholics who are in perplexity, in grief, or in trouble of any kind, the legionary would counsel prayer or would seek to induce them to read something likely to help them. He would speak to them of God’s love and of the motherhood of Mary, thereby comforting them and uplifting them. Similarly effective use could be made of the oft-recurring periods of trial in the lives of people who are not Catholics, but they are not utilised. The topic of religion is taboo. Only worldly sentiments are uttered which do not console, nor show forth faith, nor accomplish

anything. But let legionaries avail of those perfect opportunities of approach. At those times, when normal barriers are shaken, the spiritual words would be gratefully received and could be made to develop fruitfully.

(e) A system of one-day retreats for people who are not Catholics has been established in innumerable places. The standard form would comprise: Mass, three lectures, question session, lunch, tea, Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, and sometimes a film with a spoken commentary. If a Religious house can be secured it will provide the ideal atmosphere, and will dispel misunderstandings and prejudices.

The procedure has been to fix a day, and then to print invitation cards bearing on the back the time-table. Through the legionaries of the district and all other possible channels, these cards are brought to the notice of people who are not Catholics and the idea of the retreat is explained to them. There is a helpful psychology attaching to the right use of these cards. Therefore, at no stage are they to be distributed indifferently in the fashion of advertising matter. Record should be kept of those to whom they are issued, and there should be a subsequent check-up on the disposal of the cards. The card must only be given to persons who afford some degree of hope that they will go on the retreat.

The taking of the card by the legionary represents the acceptance of a commission to find someone willing to make the retreat. Until this end is achieved, the card remains accusingly in one's possession, the tangible reminder of an unfulfilled commission.

It has been the custom that people who are not Catholic would be accompanied by the Catholic friend who had been instrumental in bringing him or her on the retreat. The purpose of this is to make the people who are not Catholic at home in the novel conditions, to deal with questions, and to encourage recourse to the priest during the day. Silence is not enforced. The retreats are open to both men and women. They should keep to their own purpose. Converts and neglectful Catholics should not be brought on them.

The larger the number who are approached, the larger will be the number on the retreat; and the larger the number on the retreat the larger the number received into the Church.

Experience has shown that a chain of proportion runs through this sequence. Accordingly the doubling of the number of the initial contacts (which is definitely within our power) will double the number of conversions.

“That they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us.” (Jn 17:21)

“Take away Our Blessed Lady’s contribution to the Gospel testimony, efface her testimony to Christianity, and you find not simply a link broken, but the very fastening of the whole chain wanting; not merely a gap, or a break, made in the structure, but the foundation gone. The belief in the wonders wrought in the Incarnation, the belief of ages, the belief of the world, rest upon one point of testimony, a unit, a single voice – that of the Blessed Virgin Mary.” (Cardinal Wiseman: *The Actions of the New Testament*)

## 5. THE HOLY EUCHARIST AS AN INSTRUMENT OF CONVERSION

Too much time is often spent on arguments which – even if they are proved – do not attract to the Church. The aim in all discussions should be to make those outside the Church catch a glimpse of the treasures which are within. There is no more effective way of doing this than by the presentation of the doctrine of the Eucharist.

Even those who know Jesus dimly and uncomprehendingly are lost in admiration of him. On the strength of human evidence they acknowledge that he exercised an unexampled power over nature, so that the elements obeyed him; the dead returned to life; and infirmities fled at his command. He did all these things directly of his own power, because, though man, he was likewise the Eternal God himself, who made all things, whose word is might.

The Scriptures tell how once that God-man – among innumerable other wonders – accomplished the sweet miracle of the Eucharist. “Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said ‘Take, eat; this is my body’.” (Mt 26:26) This is a mighty scripture, but for how many has it not been a sealed one? “This teaching is difficult; who can accept it?” (Jn 6:60) The objection of some even of his own disciples has echoed down through the centuries to the infinite loss of souls: “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” (Jn 6:52) Those disciples could almost be pardoned

for their unbelief, for they had not grasped the real nature of him who stood in their midst. But what is it that clouds the minds of those persons who acknowledge the Divinity and hence the omnipotence of Christ? Surely these should see how deceptive – how unthinkable therefore – it would be for that same Divine Person – when solemnly addressing simple folk – to say “My Body,” while meaning “not My Body.” Let them absorb the ruthless logic of Pascal: “How I detest this folly of not believing in the Eucharist. If the gospel is true; if Jesus Christ is God; where is the difficulty in the matter?”

The challenge of so overwhelming an idea as the Eucharist cannot be heard unheeding. To hold up persistently to the notice of those who are not Catholics this crowning glory of the Church must force their minds to contemplate its possibility; so that many will reason to themselves: “If this is true, how dreadful is my present loss!” In the pang of that thought will come the first big impulse towards their true home.

Many earnest persons outside the Church read the Scriptures, and in meditation and sincere prayer seek to draw Jesus out from the dim past of history, rejoicing if their imagination creates a vivid picture of their Lord engaged in his works of love. O! if these souls could only understand that in the Church there is the wonder of the Eucharist, which could bring Jesus as he is, whole and entire, in all his physical reality, with all his Divinity, into the sphere of their present lives! If they could realise that by this means they could touch him, talk to him, contemplate him, or busy themselves about him more closely, more intimately by far than did his dear friends at Bethany! Nay more! By Holy Communion in union with Mary they could render to that Divine Body all the loving cares of a Mother, and thus, in some sense, thank him adequately for all that he has done for them. Surely the unsurpassable good of the Eucharist has only to be explained to multitudes outside the Church to cause them to yearn for light. Then Jesus will give them understanding of the things that are concerning him. Like the disciples journeying to Emmaus, their hearts will burn within them as he speaks on the way and opens to them the sense of that “hard saying” of his: “Take, eat; this is My Body.” (Mt 26:26) And their eyes will

be opened, and they will know him in the breaking of the Bread Divine. (Lk 24:13-35)

In this recognition of the Eucharist, the misconceptions and prejudices which chilled the understanding and darkened the view of heaven, melt away like snowflakes in a burning sun, so that he who had walked unseeing will exclaim with overflowing heart: "One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." (Jn 9:25)

"Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament is Mary receiving in her capacity as universal dispenser of grace the full and absolute disposal of the Eucharist and of the graces which it comprises. For this Sacrament is the most efficacious means of salvation, the most excellent fruit of the redemption brought by Jesus Christ. Consequently, it is for her to make Jesus known and loved in this Sacrament. It is for her to spread the Eucharist all over the world, to multiply churches and to plant them among infidel peoples, to defend the belief in the Eucharist against heretics and the impious. It is her work to prepare souls for Communion, to move them to visit frequently the Blessed Sacrament and watch constantly before it. Mary is the treasury of all the graces which the Eucharist contains, of all which lead to it, of all which flow from it." (Tesièriè: Moie de Notre-Dame du T. S. Sacrement)

## 6. THE IRRELIGIOUS POPULATIONS

There is the awful problem of irreligion on a great scale. In very many of the world's centres of population, entire districts, which are nominally Catholic, are leading lives in which Mass or the sacraments or even prayer play no part whatsoever. In one such case, a survey discovered only 75 practising Catholics out of a total population of 20,000. In another case, 400 attended Mass out of 30,000, and in another 40,000 out of 900,000. Only too frequently the irreligion of such areas is left to fester and to grow in peace. No effort worthy of the name is made to deal with it. It is argued that direct approach would be fruitless or would be resented, and perhaps prove dangerous. And, strange to say, such arguments are accepted even by those who think it natural that missionaries should go to the ends of the earth to face danger and even death.

The saddest thing about such places is that the clergy are practically debarred from that direct approach. One of the dire complications of the frenzy of irreligion is that its victims turn

against their fathers in God and drive them from them. Here is the unique value of the Legion. It represents the priest and carries through his plans; yet it is of the people, so that it cannot be kept at arm's length. It lives the life of the people, so that the irreligious cannot destroy its work. Nor can they prevent its approach by the smoke-screen of lies, which can so easily be raised against a separated order like the clergy

**What can they give in return for their life?** (Mk 8:37) What effort shall a man make for the salvation of his neighbour? Assuredly, it must be a supreme effort – even to the peril of death, were such necessary. Those great irreligious areas must be evangelised with no less determination than are the far-distant mission fields. It is not suggested that those who cry “hopeless”, or those who allege “danger”, should be entirely ignored. Possibly something they say will conduce to the success and to the safety of the Legion campaign. But in no circumstances should any word of theirs be allowed to paralyse that attack. Great faith must be shown if mountains of evil are to be removed: faith akin to that referred to by St. Ignatius of Loyola when he said that so great was his trust in God that he was prepared to commit himself to the deep in an oarless, sailless skiff.

It will be found that martyrdom does not await the legionaries, but that a remarkable degree of success does await them. A fair number of souls are actually waiting for the first direct appeal to them.

**A method of approach.** – In conditions such as those supposed, where the most elemental obligations of religion are being ignored, the first efforts of the legionaries might be applied to the emphasising of that great central requirement – attendance at Mass. Let a leaflet be secured which sets out in simple but effective language the beauty and power of the Mass. If the leaflet bears a coloured picture illustrative of its subject, its effect will be enhanced. Armed with a supply of these, the legionaries will undertake a home to home visitation. To each person who will accept one, a copy of the leaflet is given, accompanied, if possible, by a gentle exhortation on devotion to the Mass. Legionaries need not be reminded that their attitude in all circumstances must be one

of infinite sweetness and patience; never one of mere interrogation; never one of rebuking neglect.

Rebuffs at first may be many, but these will be compensated for by many immediate successes. The ordinary methods of Legion visitation will be followed, the underlying idea being the effort to establish relations of true friendship with the persons visited. That gained, almost everything is gained.

Each individual case of resumption of the practice of religion must be regarded as soldiers would view the capture of a point of vantage in war, for each one will bring others. As the captures grow in number, public opinion will begin to suffer modification. All in the area are observing the legionaries. All are talking, criticising, thinking; and hearts that were chill begin to burn. Year will follow year, each with its substantial list of captures. For many years the general attitude of the populace towards religion will seem to be unchanged. Then, just as a touch causes an ant-eaten fabric, which looked sound, to fall suddenly into dust, some event reveals that the hearts of the people have returned to God.

**The result of effort.** – Of a certain town, with a population of 50,000, it could be said that hardly any were practising their religion. This condition of neglect was complicated by abnormalities of every kind. A priest could not pass through many districts without insult. A praesidium was started in a spirit of faith, and the apparently hopeless task of visitation was embarked upon. All were surprised by an immediate flow of results, increasing in number and in importance as the legionaries gained numbers and experience. After three years of unexpected success, the Church authorities were emboldened to call for a General Communion of men, and ventured to hope for an attendance of 200. The actual number that participated was 1,100, showing that the entire population had been stirred to its depths by the three years' apostolate. Plainly, the end is already in sight, so that the next generation in that town will be born into a changed order of things. Holiness will reign where once the Mass had been universally scorned and its ministers were derided. Other places, similarly circumstanced, should seek a remedy in the same way.

“Jesus answered them, ‘Have faith in God. Truly I tell you, if you say to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and thrown into the sea’, and if you do not doubt in your heart, but believe that what you say will come to pass, it will be done for you. So I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.” (Mk 11:22-24)

## 7. THE LEGION AS THE COMPLEMENT OF THE MISSIONARY

### **The Mission situation**

Missionary activity here refers to that directed to peoples and groups who do not know Christ or believe in him – among whom the Church has not yet taken root and whose culture is untouched by Christianity.

In those to be evangelised there exist wide differences in levels of culture, education and social conditions. Even within the boundaries of one country, one can find both densely populated cities and scattered rural communities. There can be contrasts of rich and poor, highly educated and unschooled, diversity of ethnic and language groups.

The number of people on the global scale who do not know Christ is expanding faster than the number of true believers.

Into this vast field enters the missionary: priest, religious or layperson. Coming from outside, they are hindered by differences of race, language and culture. Experience and training will ease but hardly remove these handicaps.

In a newly opened-up territory their task is to establish local Christian communities which will eventually grow into self-supporting Churches, intended in turn to evangelise.

Initially, they will endeavour quickly to make a wide range of contacts and friends. Where possible, they will establish needed services, such as schools and medical clinics, to give Christian witness and facilitate contacts. From converts will be selected catechists and other Church personnel.

The missionary or local catechist can only instruct those who want it. Creating that desire is, properly speaking, convert-making. Under God, it normally comes from contact with a Catholic layperson and only later with a priest. It is a gradual growth in friendship and confidence. “I came because I know a Catholic”, inquirers are wont to tell a priest.

To the hard-pressed missionary, the Legion offers itself as a tried and tested instrument for winning converts and ensuring their perseverance. Local in membership, with missionary leaders initially as Spiritual Directors, it will instruct, form and move new converts to evangelise continually and systematically. Unlike the missionary, its members do not penetrate society from the outside. They are already there, able, with due formation, to act as light, salt and leaven in the community, in the manner of the first Christians.

### **Legion expansion**

As the number and quality of legionaries grow, it will be necessary, in order to ensure proper training, to increase the number of praesidia. Perhaps the Spiritual Directors may be able to assume control of more than one praesidium each. Perhaps too, it may be possible to utilise catechists and other experienced persons in the capacity of Presidents for the training and inspiring of praesidia. Each new praesidium means ten to twenty soldiers of the faith in action.

Success in the policy of multiplying praesidia would mean then, in the course of time, each priest would be organising the efforts of a great number of apostolic workers. The result would be that he would veritably play in all but the supreme functions a part analogous to that of a diocesan bishop. As for the bishop, he would find himself in possession of an innumerable and irresistible hierarchy of workers for the faith, through whom he would be able to preach the gospel to every person in his territory.

What is here proposed is not an untried plan but the fruit of many years of successful experience of evangelisation on the mission fields under varied conditions.

### **A definite duty for each legionary**

In the plan proposed, a well defined sphere of action would be assigned to each legionary. Each area of work would be surveyed and reduced to terms of individual duties for assignment to the legionaries, each one of whom would be held strictly responsible for their proper performance. Legionaries must be made to realise that in the discharge of their duties they freely place themselves at the disposal of the priest. Through him they are in communion with the

Church's mission. One of the main objects of the Legion system will be the bringing home of this responsibility to each legionary, and the fitting of each one to bear it creditably.

Among the duties found suitable for legionaries in the mission situation are: (a) preparing the missionary's periodic visits to isolated stations; (b) instructing catechumens and seeking new ones and encouraging their regular attendance; (c) encouraging careless and lapsed Catholics to return to the full practice of the faith; (d) conducting para-liturgical services; (e) acting as Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion; (f) caring for the spiritual needs of the dying and for their Christian burial. Local needs will suggest other examples of spiritual and corporal works of mercy.

### **Must legionaries be advanced in religious knowledge?**

The degree of knowledge depends on the kind of work required. Certainly for winning converts and encouraging their perseverance a basic knowledge of the faith suffices. This is amply illustrated by the rapid spread of the Church in its early days. In many cases conversions were brought about by the little, feeble and oppressed members of that powerful, rich and enlightened society in which they lived. Here we do not speak of formal instruction, which is always necessary, but of the effort of one heart to pour its supreme possession into another heart. It is accomplished most effectively when like deals with like, but experience shows that social barriers can be readily crossed. Each convinced Catholic, however imperfect his knowledge, has a certain mental picture of his faith and possesses the capacity to convey this impression to the mind of another whom he seeks to influence. But he will not exercise that capacity unless moved to do so by force of organisation or other strong impulse. The Legion system provides that driving force through motivation and apostolic assignments. As a result of his formation, a member on his own initiative is likely to be on the lookout for opportunities to communicate his faith.

### **The Legion means Mary at work**

The introduction of the Legion means the application to the work of the mission of two great forces: (a) the principle of methodical organisation, which is always attended by

increase in interest and power; and (b) that most potent element, the mother-influence of Mary, which is attracted in fulness by the Marian system of the Legion, and is lavished on souls through the medium of its intensive apostolate. In very fact, the spreading of the light of faith cannot be accomplished other than in concert with her. Efforts over which she does not preside are like the oil without the lamp. Perhaps it is an insufficient appreciation of this fact that accounts for the rarity of magnificent conquests for the faith today. In earlier ages whole peoples were rapidly converted. St. Cyril of Alexandria did not hesitate to declare at the Council of Ephesus in 431 that it was by Mary that they were all won to Christ. Moreover, the great patron of the missions, St. Francis Xavier, gave it as his own experience that wherever he omitted to place at the foot of the Saviour's Cross the figure of the Divine Mother, those countries revolted against the gospel which he had brought to them.

If, through the legionary apostolate, this most fruitful action of Mary can be enabled to exert itself in the mission fields, why should not those days, referred to by St. Cyril, come once again on earth, so that whole territories and nations will put aside their errors and joyfully embrace the Christian faith?

"How foolish the presumption, or how sublime and heavenly the inspiration, which has now taken possession of those fishermen? Consider for a moment their enterprise. Never has prince, or empire, or republic conceived so lofty a plan. Without any apparent chance of human aid, these Galileans partitioned out the whole world for future conquest. They formed a determined plan to change the religion established all over the world, whether false or in part true – whether Jewish or Gentile. They desired to establish a new worship, a new sacrifice, a new law, because said they, a certain Man whom men crucified at Jerusalem so ordained it." (Bossuet)

## 8. THE PEREGRINATIO PRO CHRISTO

The ambition to get in touch with every soul must begin with those near at hand. It must not stop there but should proceed to symbolic steps far beyond the sphere of normal life. That purpose is facilitated by the legionary movement known as the *Peregrinatio Pro Christo*. This name is adopted from the missionary epic of the Monks of the West,

immortalised in Montalembert's classic; "That invincible multitude went forth from their own country and from their kindred and out of their father's house." (Gen 12:1) and traversed Europe in the sixth and seventh centuries, rebuilding the faith which the fall of the Roman Empire had brought down with it.

In the same idealism the *Peregrinatio Pro Christo* sends teams of legionaries, who have the time and means to spend limited periods in distant places where the religious conditions are bad, on "the delicate, difficult, unpopular mission of revealing that Christ is the Saviour of the world. It must be undertaken by the people." (Pope St. Paul VI) Nearby places do not qualify for the *Peregrinatio Pro Christo*. If possible it should be to a different country.

This assertion, even for as little as a week or two, of the principle of travelling and venturing for the faith can transform legionary thinking and strike the imagination of all.

## 9. INCOLAE MARIAE

Indeed, generous hearts in many instances will not be content with giving just a week or two but will wish to offer a more substantial term of service away from home. Such legionaries who can secure for themselves a means of livelihood in the place in view and who can stay away for as much as six months, a year or even more without detriment to family or other commitments, may be appointed by the Concilium or a Senatus or Regia to such a missionary assignment for an appropriate period. The concurrence of the authorities of the place in view is, of course, necessary. These volunteers are known as *Incolae Mariae*, a word expressive of their temporary sojourn in a distant place, in a spirit of immolation through Mary.

## 10. EXPLORATIO DOMINICALIS

*Exploratio Dominicalis* is the term by which is known what might be called a mini-*Peregrinatio* and which might be translated as the Sunday search for souls.

Every *praesidium* in the world is urged, if possible as a body, to devote at least one Sunday in the year to an expe-

dition to some place – possibly a problem area – at a little distance away, but at the same time not so far as to absorb undue time in travelling. The Exploratio need not be limited to one day; two or three days might be found possible. Exploratio Dominicalis enables the majority (in many cases all) of the members of a praesidium to undertake such a venture. It is recognised that even with the best of will, the Peregrinatio Pro Christo itself is not a possibility for the majority of legionaries. Experience shows that it is necessary to stress, what the Concilium has repeatedly emphasised, that is, that Exploratio Dominicalis is essentially a praesidium project. Councils and praesidia are asked to keep this point in mind when Exploratio Dominicalis is being organised.

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### "THE GREATEST OF THESE IS LOVE"

(1 Cor 13:13)

Mary was so utterly full of charity that she was found worthy to conceive and bring into the world him who is Charity itself. The Legion of Mary, depending for its very life on devotedness to her and imitation of her, must necessarily be distinguished by this selfsame quality of intense charity. It must be full of charity: then only will it bring charity into the world. It is important, therefore, that the following directives be carefully observed.

**1. For entry to the ranks of the Legion**, there shall be no social, racial, national or colour discrimination. Fitness for membership is to be the only test. The legionary apostolate will accomplish even more by indirect action, that is, as the leaven in the community, than directly by the works in hand. If the entire community is to be brought fully under the influence of legionary action, it follows that the Legion's ranks must contain representatives of every section of the community.

**2. Within its own ranks** there should be an unaffected simplicity and sincere mutual charity among the members, all distinctions being non-existent. If love is due to those whom the legionary serves, it is no less due to one's fellow-members. The spirit of distinction is evidence of the absence of the first qualification for membership, which is the spirit of love. The whole idea and spirit of the Legion is one of intense charity and sympathy, which before radiating its warmth outside must first of all burn brightly and strongly on the domestic hearth of the Legion itself. "By this everyone will know you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (Jn 13:35)

Charity practised in its ranks will soon be practised at large. Divisions removed by membership are on the way to being removed from people outside.

**3. Towards other organisations**, whose aims are compatible with the Church's mission, there should be a spirit of readiness to give co-operation and assistance whenever possible. Not all Catholics can be brought into the Legion's own ranks, for its requirements are far from easy. However, all should be encouraged to participate in some way in the work of the Church. Legionaries can further this through their apostolate and personal contacts. It should be noted, however, that whatever co-operation is given should not place additional burdens on legionaries to the detriment of their own apostolate. It is important, also, that there be discernment in regard to the degree and type of assistance which is given and to whom it is given. In this connection, reference should also be made to the sections 'Control of the work by the Praesidium' (ch 39, no. 6) and 'The intimate nature of the legionary work must be safeguarded' (ch. 39, no. 8).

**4. Towards the Pastors of the Church** there should be shown the filial love due to them as spiritual fathers and shepherds. Legionaries should share their anxieties and help them by prayer and, as far as possible, by active work so that they may be better able to overcome difficulties and carry out their duties with greater success.

Since pastors of the Church have the God-given role of communicating divine truth and graces of the sacraments, it should be the legionaries' concern to keep people in touch with these bearers of divine gifts and to repair the link where it has been broken.

This is especially necessary in the case of those who are in anyway alienated from the clergy for reasons, justified or unjustified.

People who are seriously ill can be very reluctant to consult a doctor. Often it takes one's marriage partner, family or friend to supply the necessary encouragement.

When spiritual health is at stake, much depends on the quality of charity in those who are close to the one needing help.

The formation of legionaries helps them to take the initiative in mediating between priests and souls, and to do so with gentle refinement. This is an exquisite form of charity. They act as agents of the Good Shepherd who calls them, through their baptism to enter into his work.

"If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end."  
(1 Cor 13:1-8)

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# APPENDIX 1:

## Papal Letters and Messages



PIUS XI

TO THE

Legion of Mary

16th September, 1933

*“We give a very special blessing to this beautiful and holy work — the Legion of Mary. Its name speaks for itself. The image of Mary Immaculate on its Standard portrays high and holy things.*

*The Blessed Virgin is mother of the Redeemer and of us all. She co-operates in our Redemption, for it was under the Cross that she became our mother. This year we are celebrating the centenary of that co-operation and of that universal maternity of Mary.*

*I pray for you that you may exercise still more earnestly that apostolate of prayer and work to which you have set your hands. So doing, God will make you, too, co-operators in the Redemption. This is the best of all ways in which to show your gratitude to the Redeemer.”*

## PIUS XII to the LEGION OF MARY

---



Dal Vaticano,  
July 22nd, 1953.

Dear Mr. Duff,

It is my honoured charge, at the august direction of the Holy Father, to convey a message of greetings and encouragement to the Legion of Mary, founded some thirty years ago on the fertile soil of Catholic Ireland.

His Holiness has followed with paternal interest over the years the progress of the Legion as it swelled the army of those devoted and stalwart clients of Mary who are combating the forces of evil in the world to-day; and he rejoices with you in now beholding the Legion's standard set up in the four corners of the globe.

It is thus most appropriate that the Legionaries of Mary should receive at this time a word of grateful appreciation for the good accomplished, and as well, of exhortation to persevere with increasing zeal in their generous co-operation given to the Church in her divinely committed mission to bring all men under the headship of Christ, Who is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

The effectiveness of their contribution to this apostolate will be measured in great part by their sound spiritual formation which, under the prudent guidance of their spiritual directors, will conspicuously develop in them a truly apostolic spirit and cause all their activities to be characterised by a ready obedience to the directives of the Holy See and a loyal submission to the local Ordinaries, whose direction they will seek and faithfully carry out. Imbued with this supernatural character of the genuine lay apostle, they will go forward with holy courage and continue to be a powerful auxiliary to the Church in her spiritual warfare against the powers of darkness.

While invoking Mary's intercession on behalf of her Legionaries throughout the world, His Holiness would have me convey as a token of his special benevolence to you personally, to the Spiritual Directors, and to all the active and auxiliary members of the Legion, the Apostolic Benediction.

With sentiments of high esteem and religious devotion, I am,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Mr. Francis Duff,  
Concilium Legionis Mariae,  
De Montfort House,  
North Brunswick Street,  
Dublin, Ireland



JOHN XXIII  
TO THE  
LEGION OF MARY

*To the Officers and Members of the Legion of Mary throughout the World, as a token of Our paternal affection and as a pledge of ever more copious spiritual fruits upon their praiseworthy work, We impart from Our heart a special Apostolic Blessing.*

From the Vatican, March 19th, 1960.

*“What a beautiful work of mercy and so appropriate to make known to many people who do not understand it, the true face of the Catholic Church.”*

To the Legionaries of France, July 13th, 1960.

*John XXIII*  
*JJ*

PAUL VI to the LEGION OF MARY



DI SUA SANTITÀ



N. 34614

Vatican City,  
January 6, 1965.

Dear Mr. Duff,

The letter which you recently addressed to the Sovereign Pontiff, inspired by devoted filial sentiments, brought Him pleasure and gratification. His Holiness desires to take this occasion to send His Message of praise and encouragement to the Legion of Mary, which, first born in the mystic climate of Catholic Ireland, has by now extended its beneficent action to every continent.

Such a Message the Holy Father considers to be amply deserved by your movement by reason of its pious aims and of the many activities it has so wisely produced and developed to the great advantage of the Catholic apostolate, thus proving itself to be an instrument of astonishing efficacy for the building up and spreading of God's Kingdom.

His Holiness still preserves vivid remembrances of the meetings had with you while He was in the service of this Secretariat of State. It was in particular from those conversations that He was able to derive a full conception of the spirit which animates your movement and constitutes the secret of its vitality. Indeed, the spirit of the Legion of Mary, while properly drawing fruitful nourishment from the strong interior life of its members, from their discipline, their dedication to the salvation of their neighbour, their unflinching loyalty to the Church, nevertheless is distinguished and characterized by an adamant confidence in the action of the Blessed Virgin. Recognizing in her the model, the guide, the joy and the support of all its members, the Legion of Mary, by its eloquent activities, helps us to

understand how much the apostolate must draw its inspiration from Her, who gave Christ to the world, and was so closely associated to Him in the work of redemption.

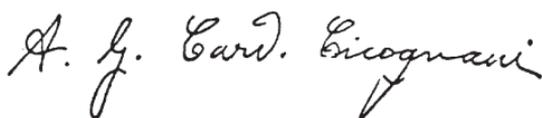
His Holiness, therefore, is happy to rely on this spirit of the Legion, which has already trained in every part of the world great numbers of ardent apostles and heroic witnesses to Christ especially in those places where the Faith is attacked and persecuted.

In the conviction that the results already achieved will not decelerate but rather constantly increase the energies and the apostolic efforts of all the Legionaries, the Holy Father expresses to you and to all your collaborators His deep gratitude; and He exhorts you all to continue with the same love for the Church, ever in closest dependence from the Bishops in the works of the apostolate and in a spirit of active collaboration with all other Catholic associations.

Confiding the numerous ranks of your members to the maternal protection of Our Blessed Lady, the Sovereign Pontiff lovingly bestows upon you, upon each and every legionary, their directors and their activities, His special paternal Apostolic Blessing.

With the assurance of my cordial esteem and regard, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "A. G. Kard. Cicognani". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'A' and a decorative flourish at the end.

Mr. FRANK DUFF  
President of the Legion of Mary  
Concilium Legionis Mariae  
De Montfort House  
North Brunswick Street  
DUBLIN

## John Paul II to the Legion of Mary

### Address delivered by the Holy Father, St. John Paul II, to a group of Italian legionaries on 30th October 1982

1. My welcome is addressed to each and every one of you. It is reason for joy for me to see you in this hall in such great numbers from various regions of Italy, more so in that you are only a small part of that apostolic movement, that in the span of sixty years has rapidly spread in the world and today, two years from the death of its founder, Frank Duff, is present in so many dioceses in the universal Church.

My predecessors, beginning with Pius XI, have addressed words of appreciation to the Legion of Mary, and I myself on 10 May 1979, when receiving one of your first delegations, recalled with great pleasure the occasions I had previously had to come in contact with the Legion, in Paris, Belgium and Poland, and then, as Bishop of Rome, in the course of my pastoral visits to the parishes of the city.

Today, therefore, as I receive in audience the Italian pilgrimage of your movement, I would like to emphasise those aspects which constitute the substance of your spirituality and your *modus essendi* within the Church.

#### Vocation to be a leaven

2. You are a movement of lay people who propose to make faith the aspiration of your life up to the achievement of personal sanctity. It is without doubt a lofty and difficult ideal. But today the Church, through the Council, calls all Christians of the Catholic laity to this ideal, inviting them to share in the kingly priesthood of Christ with the witness of a holy life, with mortification and charitable works; to be in the world, with the splendour of faith, hope and charity, what the soul is in the body (LG 10, 38).

Your proper vocation as lay people, that is the vocation to be a leaven in the People of God, a Christian inspiration in the modern world, and to bring the priest to the people, is eminently ecclesial. The same Second Vatican Council exhorts all the laity to accept with ready generosity the call to be united ever more intimately to the Lord and, considering as one's own everything that is his, to share in the same salvific mission of the Church, to be its living instruments, above all where, because of particular conditions of modern society – a constant increase in population, a reduction in the numbers of priests, the appearance of new problems, the autonomy of many sectors of human life – it could be more

difficult for the Church to be present and active (*ibid.* 33).

The area of the lay apostolate today is extraordinarily enlarged. And so the commitment of your typical vocation becomes more impelling, stimulating, live and relevant. The vitality of the Christian is the sign of the vitality of the Church. And the commitment of you legionaries becomes more urgent, considering on the one hand the needs of the Italian society and of the nations of ancient Christian tradition, and on the other hand the shining examples which have gone before you in your own movement. To give just some names: Edel Quinn, with her activity in Black Africa; Alfonso Lambe in the most emarginated areas of Latin America; and then the thousands of legionaries killed in Asia or ending up in work camps.

### **With the spirit and solicitude of Mary**

3. Yours is an eminently Marian spirituality, not only because the Legion glories in carrying Mary's name as its unfurled banner, but above all because it bases its method of spirituality and apostolate on the dynamic principle of union with Mary, on the truth of the intimate participation of the Virgin Mary in the plan of salvation.

In other words, you intend to render your service to every person, who is the image of Christ, with the spirit and the solicitude of Mary.

If our one and only Mediator is the man Jesus Christ, as the Council states, "Mary's motherly role towards men in no way dims or diminishes this unique mediation of Christ: on the contrary, it demonstrates its efficacy" (LG 60). So the Blessed Virgin is invoked in the Church under the titles of Advocate, Auxiliatrix, Perpetual Help, Mediatrix, Mother of the Church.

For its birth and growth, apostolic work looks to her who gave birth to Christ, conceived by the Holy Spirit. Where the Mother is, there too is the Son. When one moves away from the Mother, sooner or later he ends up keeping distant from the Son as well. It is no wonder that today, in various sectors of secularised society, we note a widespread crisis of faith in God, preceded by a drop in devotion to the Virgin Mother.

Your Legion forms a part of those movements that feel personally committed to the spread or the birth of that faith through the spread or the revival of devotion to Mary. It therefore will always be able to do its utmost that, through love for the Mother, the Son, Who is the way, the truth and the life of every person, will be more known and loved.

In this perspective of faith and love I impart the Apostolic Blessing to you from my heart.

## Benedict XVI to the Legion of Mary



SECRETARIAT OF STATE

FIRST SECTION - GENERAL AFFAIRS

No. 102.129

From the Vatican, 5 December 2008

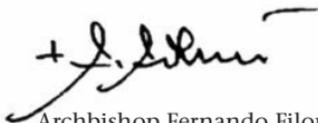
Dear Mr McCabe,

His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI was pleased to learn of the one thousandth meeting of the Concilium of the Legion of Mary taking place in Dublin and has directed me to send his greetings and good wishes for the occasion.

The Holy Father wishes me to assure you of his appreciation for the generous service to the Church offered throughout the world by so many members of the Legion who, under the heavenly patronage of Mary, the Mother of God, seek to draw all persons to Christ, the Redeemer of mankind.

Please be assured of His Holiness's prayers for your intentions and for all taking part in the deliberations of the Concilium. Commending you and all the members of the Legion to the loving intercession of Mary, the Queen of Apostles, the Holy Father cordially imparts his Apostolic Blessing.

Yours sincerely in Christ,



Archbishop Fernando Filoni  
Substitute

Mr Tommy McCabe  
President  
Concilium Legionis Mariae  
De Montfort House  
Morning Star Avenue  
Brunswick Street  
Dublin 7

## Francis to the Legion of Mary



*To Ms Mary Murphy  
President of the Concilium Legionis Mariae*

I was pleased to learn that the Legion of Mary is celebrating this year the hundredth anniversary of its foundation, and I send the assurance of my prayerful closeness to all taking part in the concluding Mass of the centenary in Dublin on 19 November 2022.

In a particular way, I join you in giving thanks to Almighty God for the graces received by countless people in many parts of the world through the witness of faith and charitable efforts of the Legion. I likewise pray that the various anniversary events will lead to a renewed missionary zeal as you continue to respond to the vocation of spreading the saving message of the Gospel through your important apostolate. In this regard, may you always seek to imitate your heavenly patron, Mary Immaculate, in steadfast generosity and trust in divine providence.

Commending those associated with the Legion of Mary to the intercession of Our Blessed Lady, I invoke upon all of you the Lord's blessings of strength, joy and peace as a pledge of my affection in Christ. And I ask you, please, to pray for me.

Francis

Rome, from Saint John Lateran, 14 November 2022

# Abbreviations of Documents of the Magisterium

## Documents of Vatican II (1962-1965)

|    |   |
|----|---|
| AA | Apostolicam Actuositatem (Decree on the apostolate of lay people)         |
| DV | Dei verbum (Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation)                   |
| GS | Gaudium et Spes (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the modern world) |
| LG | Lumen Gentium (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church)                       |
| PO | Presbyterorum Ordinis (Decree on the ministry and life of priests)        |
| SC | Sacrosanctum Concilium (Constitution on the sacred liturgy)               |
| UR | Unitatis Redintegratio (Decree on Ecumenism)                              |

## Other Documents of the Magisterium

|      |   |
|------|---|
| AAS  | Acta Apostolicae Sedis (Acts of the Apostolic See)  |
| AD   | Ad Diem Illum (Jubilee of definition of the Immaculate Conception, Pope St. Pius X, 1904)                                       |
| AN   | Acerbo Nimis (The teaching of Christian doctrine, Pope St. Pius X, 1905)  |
| CCC  | Catechism of the Catholic Church, (1992)  |
| CIC  | Codex Iuris Canonici (The Code of Canon Law)  |
| CL   | Christifideles Laici (The vocation and mission of the lay faithful in the Church and in the world, Pope St. John Paul II, 1988) |
| CT   | Catechesi Tradendae (Catechesis in our time, Pope St. John Paul II, 1979)   |
| EI   | Enchiridion Indulgentiarum (Official list of Indulgences and the laws governing them – The Sacred Penitentiary, 1968)           |
| EN   | Evangelii Nuntiandi (Evangelisation in the modern world, Pope St. Paul VI, 1975)  |
| FC   | Familiaris Consortio (The Christian family in the modern world, Pope St. John Paul II, 1981)                                    |
| ISE  | Iucunda Semper Expectatione (The Rosary, Pope Leo XIII, 1894)   |
| MC   | Mystici Corporis (The Mystical Body of Christ, Venerable Pope Pius XII, 1943)   |
| MCul | Marialis Cultus (The right ordering and development of devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, Pope St. Paul VI, 1974)             |
| MD   | Mediator Dei (The Sacred Liturgy, Venerable Pope Pius XII, 1947)  |
| MF   | Mysterium Fidei (The mystery of faith – on the mystery of the Eucharist, Pope St. Paul VI, 1965)                                |
| MN   | Mens Nostra (Retreats, Pope Pius XI, 1929)  |
| PDV  | Pastores Dabo Vobis (The formation of priests in circumstances of the present day, Pope St. John Paul II, 1992)                 |
| RM   | Redemptoris Missio (The permanent validity of the Church's missionary mandate, Pope St. John Paul II, 1990)                     |
| RMat | Redemptoris Mater (Mary, Mother of the Redeemer, Pope St. John Paul II, 1987)   |
| SM   | Signum Magnum (Consecration to Our Lady, Pope St. Paul VI, 1967)  |
| UAD  | Ubi Arcano Dei (On the peace of Christ in the reign of Christ, Pope Pius XI, 1922)  |

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## APPENDIX 2:

### EXTRACTS FROM THE DOGMATIC CONSTITUTION ON THE CHURCH, LUMEN GENTIUM, OF THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL

This Constitution should be read in its entirety. For this promulgation opens up a deeper comprehension of the Mystical Body of Christ and thereby offers a surer, grander life to the Church. It is not a substitute for the Constitution itself that some extracts are here given which specially concern the essence of the Legion – Mary’s motherhood of the Mystical Body. The Constitution exhibits her in a new setting. Mary is, after Christ, the first and noblest member of the Mystical Body. It is as an inseparable part of the Church that she must be treated if the proper proportions of the total structure are to be safeguarded.

**Article 60.** In the words of the apostle there is but one mediator: “for there is but one God and one mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a redemption for all.” (1 Tim 2:5-6) But Mary’s function as mother of men in no way obscures or diminishes this unique mediation of Christ, but rather shows its power. But the Blessed Virgin’s salutary influence on men originates not in any inner necessity but in the disposition of God. It flows forth from the superabundance of the merits of Christ, rests on his mediation, depends entirely on it and draws all its power from it. It does not hinder in any way the immediate union of the faithful with Christ but on the contrary fosters it.

**Article 61.** The predestination of the Blessed Virgin as Mother of God was associated with the incarnation of the divine word: in the designs of divine Providence she was the gracious mother of the divine Redeemer here on earth, and above all others and in a singular way the generous associate and humble handmaid of the Lord. She conceived, brought forth, and nourished Christ, she presented him to the Father in the temple, shared her Son’s sufferings as he died on the cross. Thus, in a wholly singular way she cooperated by her obedience, faith, hope and burning charity in the work of the Saviour in restoring supernatural life to souls. For this reason she is a mother to us in the order of grace.

**Article 62.** This motherhood of Mary in the order of grace continues uninterruptedly from the consent which she loyally gave at the Annunciation and which she sustained without wavering beneath the cross, until the eternal fulfilment of all the elect. Taken up to heaven she did not lay aside this saving office but by her manifold intercession continues to bring us the gifts of eternal salvation. By her maternal charity she cares for the brethren of her Son, who still journey on earth surrounded by dangers and difficulties, until they are led into their blessed home. Therefore the Blessed Virgin is invoked in the Church under the titles of Advocate, Helper, Benefactress and Mediatrix. This, however, is so understood that it neither takes away anything from nor adds anything to the dignity and efficacy of Christ the one Mediator.

**Article 65.** But while in the most Blessed Virgin the Church has already reached that perfection whereby she exists without spot or wrinkle (cf Eph 5:27), the faithful still strive to conquer sin and increase in holiness. And so they turn their eyes to Mary who shines forth to the whole community of the elect as the model of virtues. Devoutly meditating on her and contemplating her in the light of the Word made man, the Church reverently penetrates more deeply into the great mystery of the Incarnation and becomes more and more like her spouse. Having entered deeply into the history of salvation, Mary, in a way, unites in her person and re-echoes the most important doctrines of the faith: and when she is the subject of preaching and worship she prompts the faithful to come to her Son, to his sacrifice and to the love of the Father. Seeking after the glory of Christ, the Church becomes more like her lofty type, and continually progresses in faith, hope and charity, seeking and doing the will of God in all things. The Church, therefore, in her apostolic work too, rightly looks to her who gave birth to Christ who was thus conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of a Virgin, in order that through the Church he could be born and increase in the hearts of the faithful. In her life the Virgin has been a model of that motherly love with which all who join in the Church's apostolic mission for the regeneration of mankind should be animated.

“Already at the Annunciation Mary’s Motherhood is the first, and secret, shape of the Church. At that moment do not see in Jesus and Mary only the Society of a Son and his Mother, but of God and man, of the Saviour and the first one redeemed by him. All men are called to be incorporated in that Society, which is the Church. And in the persons of Jesus and Mary, the Church acquires not only its essence but even at this stage its principal characteristics. It is perfectly one and holy. It is virtually Catholic, that is to say universal in those two universal Members. There is only lacking to it Catholicity in act and apostleship.” (Laurentin)

## APPENDIX 3:

### EXTRACTS FROM THE CODE OF CANON LAW ON THE OBLIGATIONS AND RIGHTS OF THE LAY MEMBERS OF CHRIST’S FAITHFUL

Can. 224 Lay members of Christ’s faithful have the duties and rights enumerated in the canons of this title, in addition to those duties and rights which are common to all Christ’s faithful and those stated in other canons.

Can. 225 §1 Since lay people, like all Christ’s faithful, are deputed to the apostolate by baptism and confirmation, they are bound by the general obligation and they have the right, whether as individuals or in associations, to strive so that the divine message of salvation may be known and accepted by all people throughout the world. This obligation is all the more insistent in circumstances in which only through them are people able to hear the Gospel and to know Christ.

§2 They have also, according to the condition of each, the special obligation to permeate and perfect the temporal order of things with the spirit of the Gospel. In this way, particularly in conducting secular business and exercising secular functions, they are to give witness to Christ.

Can. 226 §1 Those who are married are bound by the special obligation, in accordance with their own vocation, to strive for the building up of the people of God through their marriage and family.

§2 Because they gave life to their children, parents have the most serious obligation and the right to educate them. It is therefore primarily the responsibility of Christian parents to ensure the Christian education of their children in accordance with the teaching of the Church.

Can. 227 To lay members of Christ's faithful belongs the right to have acknowledged as theirs that freedom in secular affairs which is common to all citizens. In using this freedom, however, they are to ensure that their actions are permeated with the spirit of the gospel, and they are to heed the teaching of the Church proposed by the *magisterium*, but they must be on guard, in questions of opinion, against proposing their own view as the teaching of the Church.

Can. 228 §1 Lay people who are found to be suitable are capable of being admitted by the sacred Pastors to those ecclesiastical offices and functions which, in accordance with the provisions of law, they can discharge.

2§ Lay people who are outstanding in the requisite knowledge, prudence and integrity, are capable of being experts or advisors, even in councils in accordance with the law, in order to provide assistance to the Pastors of the Church.

Can. 229 §1 Lay people have the duty and the right to acquire the knowledge of Christian teaching which is appropriate to each one's capacity and condition, so that they may be able to live according to this teaching, to proclaim it and if necessary to defend it, and may be capable of playing their part in the exercise of the apostolate.

2§ They also have the right to acquire that fuller knowledge of the sacred sciences, which is taught in ecclesiastical universities or faculties or in institutes of religious sciences, attending lectures there and acquiring academic degrees.

§3 Likewise, assuming that the provisions concerning the requisite suitability have been observed, they are capable of receiving from the lawful ecclesiastical authority a mandate to teach the sacred sciences.

Can. 230 §1 Lay men whose age and talents meet the requirements prescribed by decree of the Episcopal Conference, can be given the stable ministry of lector and of

acolyte, through the prescribed liturgical rite. This conferral of ministry does not, however, give them a right to sustenance or remuneration from the Church.

§2 Lay people can receive a temporary assignment to the role of lector in liturgical actions. Likewise, all lay people can exercise the roles of commentator, cantor or other such, in accordance with the law.

§3 Where the needs of the Church require and ministers are not available, lay people, even though they are not lectors or acolytes, can supply certain of their functions, that is, exercise the ministry of the word, preside over liturgical prayers, confer baptism and distribute Holy Communion, in accordance with the provisions of the law.

Can. 231 §1 Lay people who are pledged to the special service of the Church, whether permanently or for a time, have a duty to acquire the appropriate formation which their role demands, so that they may conscientiously, earnestly and diligently fulfil this role.

§2 Without prejudice to the provisions of Can 230 §1, they have the right to a worthy remuneration befitting their condition, whereby, with due regard also to the provisions of the civil law, they can becomingly provide for their own needs and the needs of their families. Likewise, they have the right to have their insurance, social security and medical benefits duly safeguarded.

## APPENDIX 4:

### THE ROMAN LEGION

The Roman Legion was probably the most magnificent fighting unit the world has ever seen. The secret of its invincibility lay in the marvellous spirit of its members. The soldier had to merge his personality in that of the Legion to which he belonged. An unquestioning obedience to his commanding officer was demanded, such that he was expected to obey "ad nutum", that is "at the nod", irrespective of the merits of the officer or of the soldier's personal likes or dislikes. There might be no grumbling if promotion did not

come and if resentment happened to be felt it might not be allowed to appear either in word or deed. Hence all moved together as one man, because directed by a common purpose, each was bound to the leader and to one another. Shoulder to shoulder and flank to flank, their hosts patrolled the world and upheld Roman prestige and Roman law wherever they appeared. Their devotedness made them irresistible in the face of the enemy, their undaunted courage and dogged perseverance wearing him out and compelling him either to surrender or to fly. They were the outposts of the Empire: on them fell the brunt of maintaining it in its integrity. Such examples as that of the Roman Centurion found standing at his post when Pompeii was excavated, or the famous Theban Legion, massacred with its generals, Saints Maurice, Exuperius, and Candidus in the persecution of Maximian, illustrate their unflinching heroism.

The spirit of the Roman Legion may be summed up as one inspired by submission to authority, an unflagging sense of duty, perseverance in the face of obstacles, endurance in hardship, and loyalty to the cause in the tiniest details of duty. Such was the pagan ideal of reliable service. The legionary of Mary must also have this virility, but supernaturalised and tempered and sweetened by contact with her who can best teach the secret of loving, gracious service.

“Standing before the cross, the Centurion watched the Saviour die. Struck by the cry he had uttered before rendering up his soul, he glorified God, saying: ‘Truly this man was the Son of God.’ (Mk 15:39) And the legionaries that were with him watching Jesus, having seen the earthquake and the things that were done, were sore afraid, saying: ‘Indeed this was the Son of God.’ (Mt 27:54)

The soldiers of the Roman army thus became the first converts.

The Church of the future, which must be called the Roman Church, began in a mysterious manner around Calvary the function which she was destined to fulfil in the world. The Romans it was who offered up the Victim and elevated it in the sight of the multitude. These future guardians of the unity of the Church would refuse to tear the tunic of Jesus. These depositories of the faith would be the first to write and to uphold the principal dogma of the new faith – the royalty of the Nazarene. They would smite their breasts at the moment when the sacrifice would be consummated saying: ‘Truly this was the Son of God.’ Lastly, with the same spear which would open up to the Gospel all the highways of the universe, they would open the Sacred Heart of the Master, from whence flow streams of

benediction and of supernatural life. Since all humanity is guilty of the death of the Redeemer, since all have steeped their hands in his blood, and since therefore the future Church could not be represented but by culprits, does it not seem as though the Romans, as early as the time of Calvary, were, though unconsciously, inaugurating, substantiating, their immortal destiny?

The cross had been fixed in such a position that the back of Jesus was turned upon Jerusalem, while his face was to the west, towards the Eternal City." (Bolo: Tragedy of Calvary)

## APPENDIX 5:

### THE CONFRATERNITY OF MARY, QUEEN OF ALL HEARTS

1. St. Louis-Marie de Montfort, in his *Treatise on the True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary*, expresses the desire that all those who practise this devotion should be grouped together into a Confraternity. This wish was realised in the year 1899, when the Confraternity of Mary, Queen of All Hearts, was established at Ottawa, Canada. It is under the care of the Company of Mary or the Montfort Missionaries.

2. The Confraternity is composed of those faithful who wish to live out their baptismal vows by means of a total consecration to Christ by the hands of Mary, that is, by the perfect practise of true devotion to Mary as taught by St. Louis de Montfort and summed up by him in the following words:

"This devotion consists in giving oneself entirely to Mary in order to belong entirely to Jesus through her. It requires us to give:

- (1) our body, with its senses and members;
- (2) our soul with its faculties;
- (3) our present material possessions and all we shall acquire in the future;
- (4) our interior and spiritual possessions, that is, our merits, virtues and good actions of the past, the present and the future.

In other words, we give her all we possess, both in our natural life and in our spiritual life as well as everything we shall acquire in the future in the order of nature, of grace and of glory in heaven. This we do without reservation, not even of a penny, a hair, or the smallest good deed. And we give for all eternity without claiming or expecting, in return for our offering and our service, any other reward than the honour of belonging to our Lord through Mary and in Mary, even though our Mother were not – as in fact she always is – the most generous and appreciative of all God’s creatures.” (St. Louis-Marie de Montfort: *Treatise on True Devotion*, Par. 121)

3. The conditions of enrolment are:

(a) The consecration of oneself to Jesus Christ, Eternal and Incarnate Wisdom, by the hands of Mary, according to the formula of St. Louis de Montfort. A suitable preparation should be made, and it is fitting that a special day be chosen, such as one of Our Lady’s feasts, for the consecration. It should be renewed each day using some such formula as: “I am all yours, and all that I have I offer to you, O most loving Jesus, through Mary your holy Mother.” This form would also satisfy the morning offering of the Apostleship of Prayer. Another form would be that so dear to the Legion: “I am all yours, my Queen, my Mother, and all that I have is yours.”

(b) The inscription of one’s name at any centre of the Montfort Missionaries.

(c) To live habitually and always (this is the essence of the devotion) in a state of complete dependence on Mary’s will, after the example given by the Son of God at Nazareth; doing all our actions through her, with her, in her, and for her, in such manner that we consider her as acting always in union with us, directing all our efforts and administering all their fruits. See chapter 6 on *The Duties of Legionaries towards Mary*.

4. “Membership in this Association brings with it spiritual communion with the entire Montfortian family.

Members will want to celebrate those liturgical feasts that are both a symbol and fulfilment of this communion. They will especially celebrate: the Annunciation of the Lord, March 25 which is the principal feast of the Association; the Nativity

of Our Lord, December 25; the Immaculate Conception, December 8; the feast of St. Louis de Montfort, April 28.

Members likewise share in the spiritual riches with which the Montfortian family has been endowed by Mary who 'gives herself completely in a wondrous manner to him who gives all to her.'" (*Queen*, May-June, 1992, p.25)

5. For the proper understanding and practise of this devotion it is essential that one read not once but frequently St. Louis-Marie de Montfort's *Treatise on the True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin*, and his smaller work, *The Secret of Mary*.

"St. Pius X, especially, has set out vividly the doctrine of the universal mediation of Mary and of her spiritual Maternity in his beautiful Encyclical *Ad Diem Illum*, which is substantially but a transposition of St. Louis-Marie de Montfort's book of the True Devotion. The Holy Pontiff was a fervent admirer of this celebrated little treatise. He particularly recommended all to read it, and he conferred his Apostolic Benediction on those who would do so. Moreover, in that Encyclical of his on Mary, are to be found not only the most familiar thoughts of the great servant of Mary, but often his very expressions." (Mura: *Le Corps Mystique du Christ*)

"Loving slaves of Jesus in Mary should hold in high esteem devotion to Jesus, the Word of God, in the great mystery of the Incarnation, March 25, which is the mystery proper to this devotion, because it is inspired by the Holy Spirit for the following reasons:

(a) That we might honour and imitate the wondrous dependence which God the Son chose to have on Mary, for the glory of his Father and for the redemption of man. This dependence is revealed especially in this mystery where Jesus becomes a captive and slave in the womb of his Blessed Mother, depending on her for everything.

(b) That we might thank God for the incomparable graces he has conferred upon Mary and especially that of choosing her to be his most worthy Mother. This choice was made in the mystery of the Incarnation.

These are the two principal ends of the slavery of Jesus in Mary." (St. Louis-Marie de Montfort: *Treatise on True Devotion*, Par. 243)

## APPENDIX 6:

### THE MEDAL OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CALLED THE MIRACULOUS MEDAL

“Then the Blessed Virgin said to me: ‘Get a medal struck after this model; those who wear it when it is blessed will receive great graces, especially if they wear it round their neck. Graces will be abundant for those who have confidence’.” (St. Catherine Labouré)

Legionaries should greatly esteem this medal, which has been prominently associated with the history of their organisation. It was not the result of deliberation that a statue of the 1830 model graced the table at the first meeting, yet it effectively summarised the devotional outlook of the organisation which came into life around it.

The use of the medal in the work was then recommended. The invocation which appears on the medal commenced to be said at that first meeting and now, as part of the Catena, is recited daily by every member. The design of the medal is incorporated in the Legion vexillum.

It is provocative of thought that the medal should in this manifold way insert itself into the Legion devotional system. Whether accidental circumstances were at work, or yet another of the delicate and wonderful fashionings of Providence, may be judged from the following additional considerations:

(a) The aim of the medal is the furthering of devotion to the Immaculate Conception. But the medal likewise exhibits Mary in her role as Mediatrix of Grace, thus comprehensively showing her in the various aspects under which she is regarded by the Legion, viz., Mary Immaculate, Mother and Mediatrix.

The representation of the Immaculate Conception is complemented by that of the Immaculate Heart on the reverse of the medal. The former portrays Mary stainless in her conception; the latter shows her sinless ever after.

(b) The reverse of the medal bears the images of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, both of which have been invoked in the opening prayers of the Legion from the very first meeting. This representation of the two Hearts, the one pierced with a circlet of thorns, the other by

a sword, the two surmounted by the cross and the letter M, recalls the Passion and the Compassion, which earned those graces which legionaries pray to be privileged to bear to others in company with Mary.

(c) An astonishing circumstance is that it was at the precise moment of the centenary of the apparition to St. Catherine Labouré (which had special reference to France) that His Eminence Cardinal Verdier, Archbishop of Paris, opened the audience in which he gave his approbation and blessing to the Legion.

Thus, one can almost say that the medal has been assimilated by the Legion, so that the mission of the legionary includes that of the medal. The legionary is, as it were, a living Miraculous Medal, a humble instrument of Our Lady's graces to the world.

A certain class of Catholics, anxious to show itself "advanced, intellectual", is found deriding this medal, as well as the other medals and the scapulars, as superstition. This attitude of disrespect for the sacramentals approved by the Church is a rash one. Likewise, it is against the facts, for there is no doubt that the use of the medal has been blessed in dramatic fashions. As legionaries are encouraged to regard themselves as soldiers, likewise should they look upon the medal as their special ammunition. To a certainty, Mary will impart to it a double power in the hands of her legionaries.

By the enrolment ceremony one is made a member of the Association of the Miraculous Medal without any formal inscription in a register required. The member is entitled automatically to all the indulgences attached to the Association.

The feast of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal is celebrated on 27 November.

"Mary brought into the world apostolicity itself – him who came to cast fire on earth and willed that it be enkindled. Her role would have now been incomplete if she had not been in the very centre of the tongues of fire which the Spirit of her Son sent upon the Apostles to make them burn with his message even to the consummation of the world. Pentecost was Mary's spiritual Bethlehem, her new Epiphany, in which as Mother standing by the crib of the Mystic Christ, she makes him known once again to other shepherds and other kings." (Bishop Fulton Sheen: *The Mystical Body of Christ*)

## APPENDIX 7:

### THE CONFRATERNITY OF THE MOST HOLY ROSARY

1. This is an association that unites into one great family the faithful who undertake to recite the twenty decades of the Rosary at least once a week. Membership of a family implies a sharing among the members. Those who join the Rosary Confraternity are invited to place in Our Lady's hands not only their rosaries, but the value of all their works, sufferings and prayers, to be distributed as seems best to her among the other members and for the needs of the Church. The Confraternity was founded by the Dominican Alan de la Roche in the year 1470. Its promotion is a special responsibility of the Dominican family. For this reason all those inscribed become sharers in the spiritual benefits of the Order.

2. The fact that St. Louis-Marie de Montfort was not only a member of the Confraternity, but devoted himself ardently to its propagation, should be a headline for legionaries. The following interesting document is still in existence: "We, the Provincial of the Order of Preachers (Dominicans), do certify and declare that Louis-Marie Grignon de Montfort, Brother of our Third Order, preaches everywhere and with much zeal, edification, and fruit, the Confraternity of the Rosary in all the Missions which he gives continually in the towns and country places."

3. In order to join, one's full name must be enrolled on the register in a Priory of the Dominican Order or in a Church where the Confraternity has been established. To obtain the many indulgences and privileges of membership it is necessary to meditate on the mysteries as best one can while reciting the prayers. It was St. Louis-Marie de Montfort who said that "meditation is the soul of the Rosary."

The obligation to recite the twenty decades at least once a week does not bind under sin. The ordinary daily Rosary more than fulfils. The entire Rosary need not be said together; the decades may be recited one or more at a time according to convenience. There is no obligatory meeting or subscription.

4. Some of the advantages of the Confraternity are as follows: (a) The special protection of Our Lady, Queen of the Rosary; (b) a share in all the good works and spiritual benefits of the members of the Dominican Order and of the Rosary

Confraternity, the world over; (c) a share, after death, in the prayers and suffrages offered by the same for the dead; (d) a plenary indulgence may be gained on the day of enrolment, on the feasts of Christmas, Easter, Annunciation (the Incarnation of the Lord), Assumption, Our Lady of the Rosary, Immaculate Conception, Presentation of Our Lord in the Temple.

5. Apart from indulgences to be gained as members of the above Confraternity, a plenary indulgence is attached to five decades of the Rosary said while meditating upon the mysteries at the one time in a church or public oratory, or with a family, or in a religious community, or at a meeting of a pious association (which would include the Legion). A partial indulgence is attached to its recital in other circumstances.

6. The conditions for gaining a plenary indulgence are:

(a) Sacramental confession – the one confession will satisfy for the gaining of several indulgences;

(b) Holy Communion – to be received each time one wishes to gain a plenary indulgence;

(c) Prayer for Pope's intentions – one Pater and Ave or any other prayer according to liking, will satisfy the condition. The prayers are to be repeated for the gaining of each plenary indulgence.

(d) It is required also that one be free from any affection for sin, even for venial sin.

"The Holy Rosary is the fairest flower of our Order. Should it come to pass that this flower withers, simultaneously the beauty and lustre of our Institute is seen to fade and disappear. And on the other hand, when that flower revives, forthwith it draws down on us the heavenly dew, imparts to our stem an aroma of grace and causes it to bring forth, as from a root of piety, fruits of virtue and of honour." (de Monroy, O.P.)

## APPENDIX 8:

### THE TEACHING OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

In some countries, the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine has played and is still playing an important part in organising the teaching of Christian doctrine. Many legionaries are

involved in the work of the Confraternity and the Legion fully endorses their work.

It is important to note that the teaching of christian doctrine is for all age groups and for all levels of education as Pope St. John Paul II points out. (CT 16)

“I am anxious to give thanks in the Church’s name to all of you, lay teachers of catechesis in the parishes, the men and the still more numerous women throughout the world, who are devoting yourselves to the religious education of many generations. Your work is often lowly and hidden but it is carried out with ardent and generous zeal, and it is an eminent form of the lay apostolate, a form that is particularly important where for various reasons children and young people do not receive suitable religious training in the home.” (CT 66)

“The third lesson is that catechesis always has been and always will be a work for which the whole Church must feel responsible and must wish to be responsible. But the Church’s members have different responsibilities, derived from each one’s mission. Because of their charge, pastors have, at differing levels, the chief responsibility for fostering, guiding and coordinating catechesis. For his part, the Pope has a lively awareness of the primary responsibility that rests on him in this field: in this he finds reasons for pastoral concern but principally a source of joy and hope.” (CT 16)

## APPENDIX 9:

### PIONEER TOTAL ABSTINENCE ASSOCIATION OF THE SACRED HEART (See chapter 37)

(a) When an existing Pioneer Centre would agree to having a praesidium attached to it for the purpose of promoting and recruiting for the Pioneer Association, the praesidium would be supplied with the necessary stationery, literature, record books, certificates and emblems, to enable it to operate as a self-contained unit. Advance payment for these items is requested.

(b) Recruiting for and enrolments in the Pioneer Association could be done and dealt with, as would any other approved work of a praesidium.

(c) Applications for membership of the Pioneer Association would be processed at the *weekly* meeting of the praesidium, just as would be done by any Pioneer Centre at its *monthly* meeting.

(d) All enquiries about the Pioneer Association should be addressed to: Central Director, Pioneer Total Abstinence Association, PO Box 13492, Dublin 7, Ireland. More information can be found on the website [www.pioneers.ie](http://www.pioneers.ie).

## APPENDIX 10:

### STUDY OF THE FAITH

Study could advantageously be carried on by some or all of the members of a praesidium as an addition to their other work. Certain types of praesidia should undertake it as a matter of course, for example, internal and Junior praesidia and those which specialise in the giving of instruction.

The intense spirit of prayer and the devotional system of the Legion secures an admirable approach to such study and averts the disadvantageous possibilities which sometimes attach. The self-sufficient, the knowledge-proud, and such like, who would enter only to disturb and to drop out, will be repelled by the system. On the other hand, the system will hold to membership those whom the quickly-spent novelty of study would not retain.

Moreover, the success of the study will be guaranteed by its being undertaken in a spirit of union with her whose seeking of light was so humble, so simple, that it forms ever the perfect model for its pursuit: "How can this be?" (Lk 1:34) Then to her he was given who is the Divine Wisdom, the Eternal Truth, the True Light. She remains the guardian of this treasure. To her must come those who wish to draw from it. Those legionaries will see in their weekly praesidium meeting a clustering round their lovely Mother, a twining of their hands in hers so full of the treasures of knowledge which they seek.

Thus the salient characteristic is that the legionary approaches his work of study from the angle of devotion rather than as an intellectual exercise. Another distinctive

feature is that the study is not based on a lecture system; partly because the latter could not be accommodated to the praesidium system; but still more because it is a human tendency to relax in the face of a situation where one or a few assume all the work and all the responsibility, as the lecturer does. Moreover, in practice a lecture is graded to the maximum intelligence of the audience, and hence presents difficulties to the bulk of the hearers. The result is that the subject matter is not completely comprehended, and as an inevitable consequence is quickly forgotten. Again, the proportion of those who listen to a clever lecture in an appreciative, but otherwise completely inert mental condition, is quite remarkable.

On the other hand, in the Legion system the member is not allowed to relax. Each one is called upon to render an account of his work. This ensures in his case – on a different grade, it is true, but with equal intensity – the assumption of the effort and the responsibility which in the lecture system falls practically entirely on the lecturer. The member is not merely a listener. His mental state is active, not merely receptive. He is definitely at work. At the same time his progress is checked and supervised.

The report of each member is delivered sitting. His text-book is before him. Any notes he may have taken are beside him. There is nothing in the surroundings to deprive him of confidence. His report is couched in his own phraseology, and conveys his own thoughts and difficulties in a way which rings simple and familiar to every other ear. There may be comment or questioning from others. Then the next report is taken. It will be seen that the meeting progresses, not as a motor swiftly carrying its passengers over the ground, but as the plough and harrow painfully tearing it up. By the time the chapter of a book has been dug and re-dug by the succeeding reports of the members of the praesidium, it will certainly be understood by all, and therefore remembered.

The work of study being one with the general work of the praesidium, it is certain that it will be animated with the active spirit of the Legion, which will urge the members to put their knowledge to practical use. To that end, praesidia which have made progress in studies, should consider the taking up of classes, instruction work, Catholic Evidence

Guild work, and other means of radiating the special knowledge which the members have acquired. Incidentally, they cannot fail to spread abroad in the Legion a greater desire to be well-informed in matters of the Faith. Knowledge possessed in the Legion must tend to diffuse itself to the general population through the medium of the innumerable avenues of legionary contact. Thus, a step is made towards "the removing of that deepest disgrace of Catholic peoples, the ignorance of Divine religion." (Pope Pius XI: *Motu Proprio*, 29 June, 1923)

The very first book to be studied should be the Legion handbook. Indeed, it is the essential duty for the legionary. For, unless the Legion system is properly understood, it cannot be successfully applied to the work of study or to any type of work. All would regard it as a senseless proceeding to erect a house without looking to its foundations. It would be equally futile to seek to build the edifice of study on the foundation of the Legion system, without giving the latter the solidity which only comes from a complete knowledge of it.

The branches of study which could most profitably be undertaken under the supervision of the Spiritual Director would be: – Dogma and Apologetics, Sacred Scripture, Social Science, Liturgy, Church History, Moral Theology.

A definite portion of the meeting – possibly part of the time following the *Allocutio* – should be earmarked for the consideration of this work. Special care should be given to this part of the agenda so as to provide a firm framework for this section of the meeting and thereby ensure that it will not develop into a mere desultory discussion.

At each meeting a section of the course will be set for subsequent private study by the members. The members must apply themselves to this work with a high degree of legionary thoroughness and devotion, for there is a tendency to drift, without realising it, into negligent and unworthy performance. The actual study is free from the effective observation of any but heavenly witnesses. Moreover, the *praesidium* is not an ordinary school-class. It is easy to produce a passable report to it, even where the study has been carelessly done.

At each meeting, the members must individually report on their week's work. In their reports they may bring forward any difficulty which has been encountered in the course of the week's reading. Members, however, should be discouraged

from lightly bringing forward difficulties of a kind which could be solved by a little additional effort on their part.

Self-help and individual effort on the part of the members should be encouraged as much as possible. Care should be exercised that the discussions do not err into unnecessary or undesirable channels, and that points too deep or in any way misleading or irrelevant are not pursued. In all these matters, the chief reliance of the praesidium will, of course, be the Spiritual Director.

It is stressed that the work-obligation of each member can only be discharged by the performance of a substantial active weekly task. It may not be satisfied, not even in part, by study.

"How closely allied are purity and light! The purest souls are those to whom God gives the most light. That is why our Blessed Lady is of all creatures the most illumined. It has been said of her that she enlightens the angels. But likewise, she enlightens men, and the Church styles her the Seat of Wisdom. It follows that our studies, our contemplations, our whole life, should gravitate ever more closely around that Woman, of all women the most blessed, the Mother of the Light of light – the Word made flesh. For God has clothed that incomparable creature with the sun, and has set her to cast the light of Jesus over the entire world and into every soul which will open to receive it." (Sauvé: Marie Intime)

## APPENDIX 11:

A MARIAN SYNTHESIS: PRESENTING IN BRIEFEST POSSIBLE COMPASS THE STUPENDOUS ROLE OF COOPERATION GIVEN TO MARY IN THE TOTAL SCHEME OF SALVATION. IF DESIRED, IT MAY BE USED AT THE ACIES AS THE COLLECTIVE ACT OF CONSECRATION, OR (WITH THE FIRST PARAGRAPH OMITTED) ON OTHER OCCASIONS

Our Queen, our Mother,

The momentary pause before your standard gave time only for the briefest formula of love. Now we are more free to let our hearts reveal themselves and to enlarge that little act of consecration into a fuller profession of our faith in you.

We realise the immensity of our obligation to you. You gave us Jesus who is the source of all our good. But for you, we would still be in the darkness of the lost world, still under the ancient sentence of death. From that extreme of misery, Divine Providence willed to rescue us. It was pleased to utilise you in that merciful design, assigning to you a part which could not be more noble. Though utterly dependent on the Redeemer, you were decreed his helpmate, brought as near to him as a creature could be, made indispensable to him.

From all eternity you were with him in the intention of the Most Holy Trinity, sharing his destiny: Proclaimed with him in the original prophecy as the Woman of whom he would be born: Joined with him in the prayers of those who awaited his coming: Made one with him in grace by the Immaculate Conception which wondrously redeemed you: United to him in all the mysteries of his earthly career from the angel's message to the cross: Established in glory with him by your Assumption: Seated beside him on his throne and administering with him the realm of grace.

Of all mankind, you alone were pure enough and strong enough in faith and spirit to become the New Eve who, with the New Adam, would reverse the Fall. Your prayer, already full of the Holy Spirit, drew Jesus down to earth. Your will and flesh conceived him. Your milk nourished him. Your surpassing love enveloped him and enabled him to grow in age and strength and wisdom. In a real way you moulded him who had made you. Then when the hour ordained for the offering was come, you freely gave the divine Lamb to his mission and to his sacrificial death on Calvary, enduring with him a plenitude of suffering like unto his own – such that you would have died along with him but that you were detained to nurse the infant Church.

Having thus been his inseparable helper throughout the accomplishing of Redemption, you have been no less with him, no less necessary to him, in the Christian dispensation. Your maternity expanded to receive all those for whom he died. You mothered mankind as you mothered him, because we are in him. Each soul remains committed to your patient care until at last you give it birth to life eternal.

As it was willed for the completeness of the plan of salvation that you should be instrumental in every part of it,

so was it required that you be included in our worship. We must appreciate what you have done, and through our faith, our love, our service, attempt an adequate acknowledgement.

Having thus declared the vast extent and sweetness of our debt to you, what more is there to say but to repeat with all our hearts: "We are all yours, our Queen, our Mother, and all that we have is yours".

"This is the first time that an Ecumenical Council has presented so vast a unification of the Catholic doctrine on the place which Mary most holy occupies in the Mystery of Christ and the Church. But such is in conformity with the purpose, which the Council had proposed to itself, of manifesting the face of Holy Church. For Mary is joined to the Church in the very closest way. As has been magnificently declared: 'She is its grandest part, its best part, its special part, its choicest part.' (Rupert de Apoc.)

In truth the reality of the Church does not consist solely in its hierarchical structure, its liturgy, its sacraments, its judicial pronouncements. Its deeper essence, the primary source of its efficacious power to sanctify, are to be sought in its mystical union with Christ. This union cannot be regarded as something apart from her who is the Mother of the Word Incarnate, and whom Jesus Christ willed to unite so intimately to himself for the accomplishing of our salvation. This explains why it is that into that survey of the Church must properly be inserted the loving contemplation of the wonders which God has wrought in his holy Mother. The knowledge of the correct Catholic doctrine on Mary will always constitute a key to the exact comprehension of the Mystery of Christ and the Church.

And so it is that we proclaim the most holy Mary to be the Mother of the Church, that is to say of all the people of God, of the faithful and their pastors." (Pope St. Paul VI: Discourse during Vatican Council II)

[This quotation does not form part of the Synthesis.]

## APPENDIX 12:

### A PORTRAIT OF MARY

“My Lady is beautiful, beautiful beyond compare: so beautiful that when one has seen her once, one would wish to die so as to see her again; so beautiful that when one has seen her, one can no longer love anything earthly.” (St. Bernadette.)

To St. Epiphanius is attributed the earliest portrait of Our Lady that lies in the deposit of history. Whether it is based on traditions handed on, or on the saint’s local knowledge of how girls looked in the Holy Land or has some other explanation, can be debated. Whatever its origins, it has the merit of being the earliest portrait of Our Lady suggested to us.

“The Virgin, according to this bishop, was not tall of stature, though her height was a little above the middle size; her colour, slightly bronzed like that of the Sulamite by the sun of her country, had the rich tint of ripe ears of corn: her hair was light, her eyes lively, the pupil being rather of an olive colour, her eyebrows perfectly arched and black; her nose, remarkably perfect, was aquiline; her lips rosy; the shape of her face a fine oval; her hands and fingers long. She was utterly full of divine grace and loveliness; all the Fathers eagerly attest, with one accord, this admirable beauty of the Virgin.

“But it was not to this assemblage of natural perfections that Mary owed the power of her beauty; it emanated from a higher source. St. Ambrose understood it well when he said that this attractive covering was but a transparent veil which let all the virtues be seen through it, and that her soul, the most noble, the most pure that ever was, next to the soul of Jesus Christ, was entirely revealed in her look. The natural beauty of Mary was but the remote reflection of her intellectual and imperishable beauties. She was the most beautiful of women, because she was the most chaste and most holy of the daughters of Eve.

“The greatest propriety reigned in all the actions of the Virgin; she was good, affable, compassionate, and never tired of hearing the long complaints of the afflicted. She spoke little, always to the purpose, and never did an untruth defile her lips. Her voice was sweet and penetrating; and her words

had something gracious and consoling which shed calm over the soul. She was the first in watchings, the most exact in fulfilling the divine law, the most profound in humility, the most perfect in every virtue. She was never seen in anger, she never offended, afflicted, or railed at any one. She was an enemy to pomp, simple in her attire, simple in her manners. Never had she a thought of displaying her beauty, her ancient nobility, or the rich treasures of her mind and heart. Her presence seemed to sanctify all around her, and the sight of her banished the thought of the things of earth. Her politeness was no vain formality, made up of words of falsehood; it was an expansion of universal benevolence which came from the soul. In fine, her look already revealed the Mother of Mercy." (Orsini: *History of the Blessed Virgin.*)

"Identity of blood implies between Jesus Christ and Mary a similarity of formation, of features, of inclinations, of tastes, of virtues; not only because identity of blood very frequently creates such a similarity, but because in Mary's case (her maternity being altogether a supernatural fact the effect of overwhelming grace) this grace took hold of this more or less general principle of nature and developed it in her in such a manner as to make her the living image and portrait of her divine Son in every way; so that whoever could see her, could admire the most exquisitely formed image of Jesus Christ. This same relation of motherhood established between Mary and her Son an intimacy not only as to intercourse and communion of life, but as regards an interchange of hearts and of secrets; so that she was the mirror reflecting all the thoughts, feelings, aspirations, desires and purposes of Jesus, as He in turn reflected in a more eminent manner, as in an unspotted mirror, the miracle of purity, of love, of devotedness, of immense charity which was the soul of Mary. Mary could, therefore, say with greater reason than the Apostle of the Gentiles; I live, now not I; it is Jesus who lives in me."

(De Concilio: *The Knowledge of Mary.*)

Following her,  
 invoking her,  
 thinking of her,  
 upheld by her,  
 shielded by her,  
 guided by her,  
 favoured by her,



you stray not;  
 you despair not;  
 you wander not;  
 you fall not;  
 you fear not;  
 you grow not weary;  
 you reach the goal.

(St. Bernard)

“Per te, O Maria, resurrectionis nostrae tesseram certissimam tenemus.”

“Through you, O Mary, we have a most sure pledge of our resurrection.”

(St. Ephraem)

# Abbreviations of Books of the Bible

## OLD TESTAMENT

|                |                         |
|----------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Gen</b>     | Genesis                 |
| <b>Ex</b>      | Exodus                  |
| <b>Josh</b>    | Joshua                  |
| <b>1 Sam</b>   | 1 Samuel                |
| <b>1 Chron</b> | 1 Chronicles            |
| <b>Tob</b>     | Tobit                   |
| <b>Ps</b>      | Psalms                  |
| <b>Song</b>    | Song of Solomon         |
| <b>Sir</b>     | Sirach (Ecclesiasticus) |
| <b>Is</b>      | Isaiah                  |
| <b>Dan</b>     | Daniel                  |

## NEW TESTAMENT

|                |                      |
|----------------|----------------------|
| <b>Mt</b>      | Matthew              |
| <b>Mk</b>      | Mark                 |
| <b>Lk</b>      | Luke                 |
| <b>Jn</b>      | John                 |
| <b>Acts</b>    | Acts of the Apostles |
| <b>Rom</b>     | Romans               |
| <b>1 Cor</b>   | 1 Corinthians        |
| <b>2 Cor</b>   | 2 Corinthians        |
| <b>Gal</b>     | Galatians            |
| <b>Eph</b>     | Ephesians            |
| <b>Phil</b>    | Philippians          |
| <b>Col</b>     | Colossians           |
| <b>1 Thess</b> | 1 Thessalonians      |
| <b>1 Tim</b>   | 1 Timothy            |
| <b>2 Tim</b>   | 2 Timothy            |
| <b>Heb</b>     | Hebrews              |
| <b>1 Pet</b>   | 1 Peter              |
| <b>1 Jn</b>    | 1 John               |
| <b>Jude</b>    | Jude                 |

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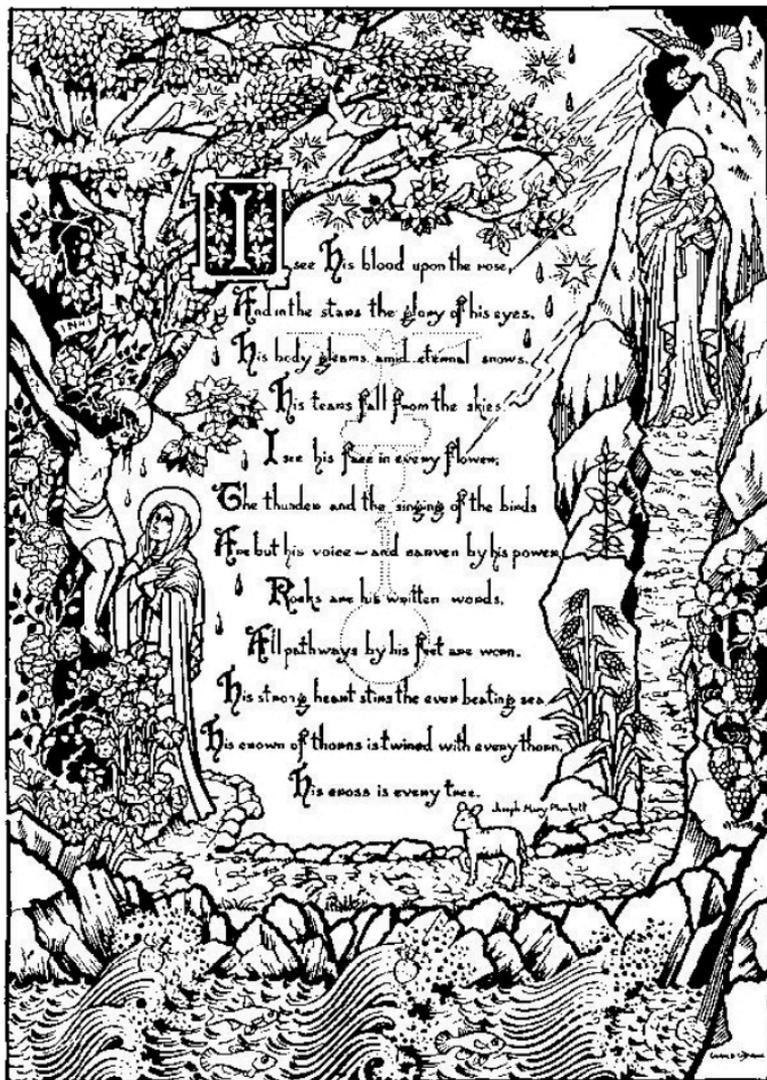
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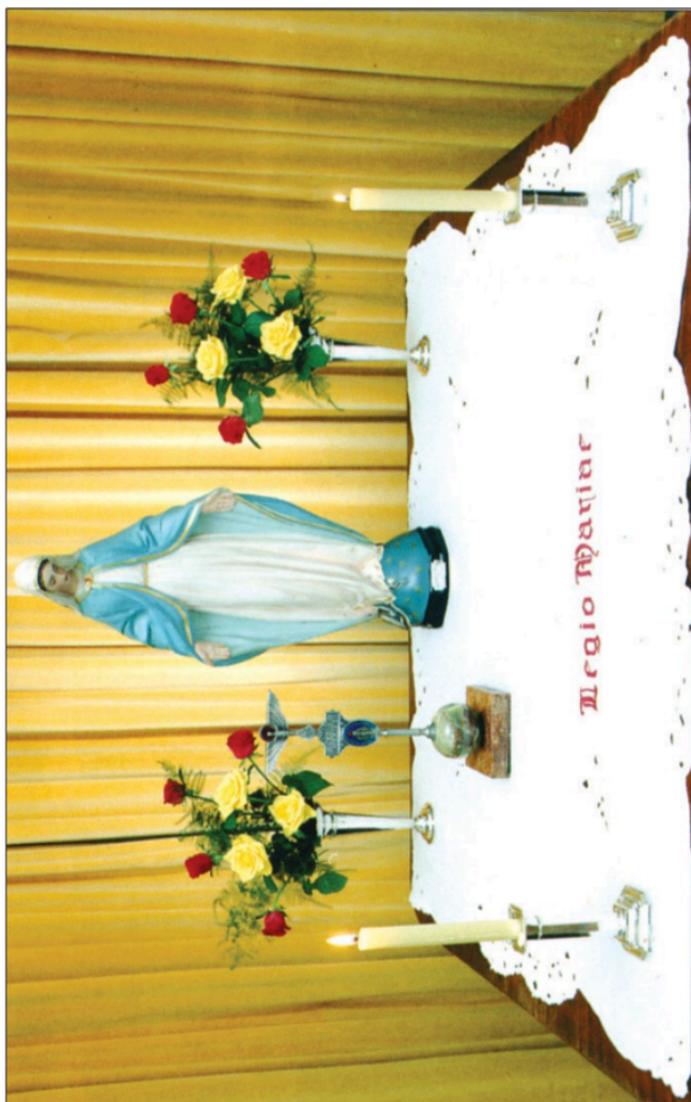
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### NOTE

References to our blessed Lord have not been indexed. For every word of this handbook has him in mind, and therefore he should be found in every part of it. In every place, in every circumstance and happening the legionary should meet Jesus and, no less than the poet, be able to exclaim: *"I see his blood upon the rose, and in the stars the glory of his eyes."*



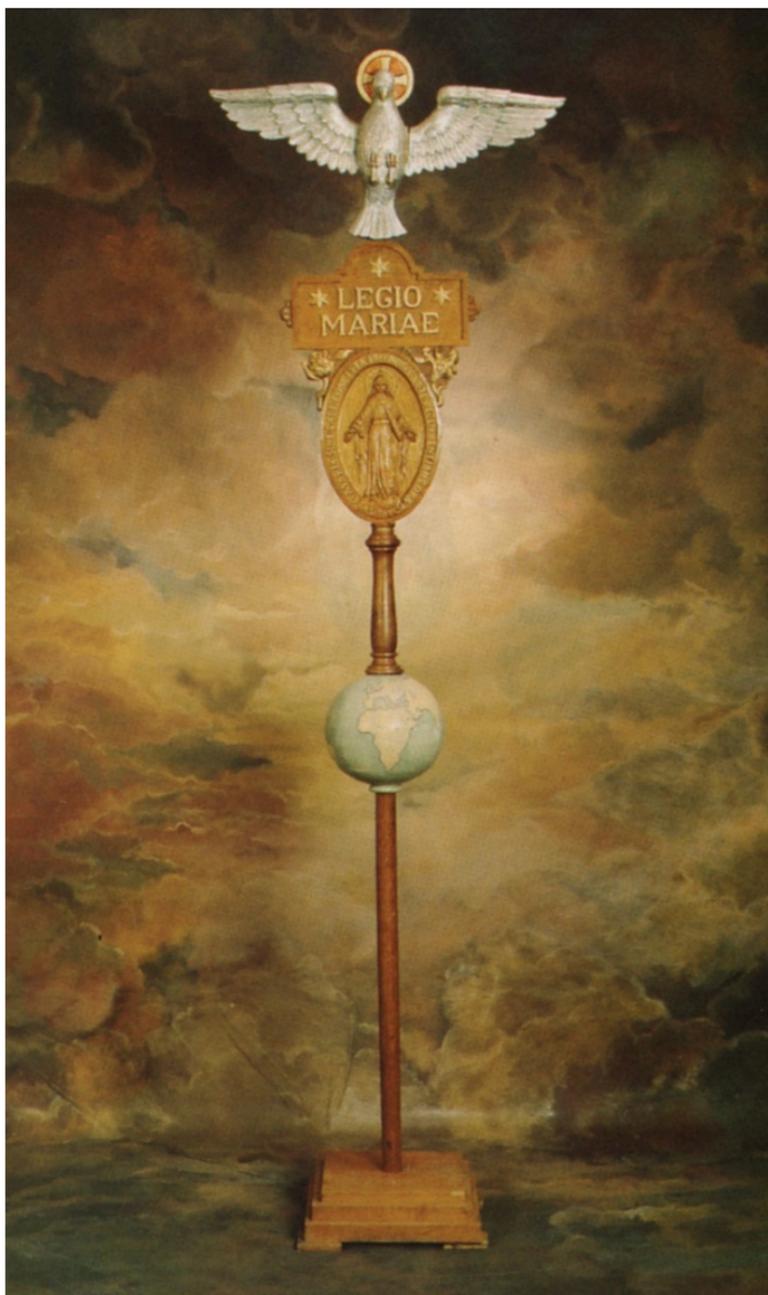


THE SETTING OF THE LEGION ALTAR

The altar must not be outside the circle of the meeting



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