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Allocutio By Fr. Bede McGregor O.P.
Spiritual Director to the Legion of Mary
Substantial Active Legionary Work

Today I would like to offer a reflection on the third item of the Standing Instruction. It really is self-explanatory and many legionaries probably known it by heart. Nevertheless it is so fundamental to the very existence of the Legion that we do need to go back to it at least once a month. We need to ask ourselves are we really living this basic principle of Legion spirituality;

“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.”

I think it might be helpful to put this great Legion principle in a Gospel context. Every Christian vocation is primarily contemplative. This is true for the lay person, the priest, the bishop, and Our Holy Father. Being a contemplative means being at ease and habitually at home with the indwelling Trinity at the core of our being; it means being in tune with the liturgical life of the Church, especially with Mass and Holy Communion; it involves a deep and authentic relationship with Mary and the Communion of Saints; it includes an habitual effort to live the theological and moral virtues and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. Basically, it means abiding in Jesus. This is the most radical and central truth of a biblical spirituality. Abide in Me. Without Me you can do nothing. Abide in Me and you will infallibly bear much fruit.

There are of course many other things I should speak about when considering the primacy of contemplation in the life of every Christian. So we should have a special devotion to the role of the Holy Spirit in our lives; we should be immersed in Sacred Scripture and the guidance of the magisterium of the Church; the duties of our state in life play an integral part in a truly contemplative life. All this should be self evident to a legionary because the spirit of the Legion is the spirit of Mary and she is the contemplative par excellence. She habitually abides in Jesus and keeps all His words in her heart. But there is a special dimension to the contemplative life of the Legion and without it the Legion would simply not exist. It is the apostolate. Not simply apostolic in theory but in practice. The substantial active legionary work has its roots and source in its contemplative spirit but the apostolate is also a grace filled means of forming a contemplative soul.

Mary is also a woman of action, she is in a sense the apostolate and the Legion joins itself to the spirit and action of Mary. The Legion seeks to be an instrument of Mary’s maternity of the mystical Body of Christ and indeed of all mankind without exception. The way and the spirit of our apostolic work are of supreme importance. First it must be done in a spirit of faith and not simply out of a natural inclination to do good and to feel useful. It must be done in union with Mary and thus it would be a good thing to prepare our work with her, to be aware of her at least in some general way during the

actual work and again to reflect with her and in the company of our fellow legionaries on the work done.

The last part of this third item of the Standing Instruction is the key to all legionary work and a major factor in living a truly contemplative life. We must see and serve Jesus in those we work for with the eyes and heart of Mary. We must also, and I would say especially see and serve Jesus in our fellow legionaries in the spirit of Mary. It is my conviction as Spiritual Director of Concilium that wherever in the world there is tension and division and grave infidelity to the spirit of the Legion embodied in the Handbook it must inevitably be because some legionaries have ceased to live the Standing Instruction especially the sentence that invites us to see Our Lord in each other with the eyes and heart of Mary. Getting back to basics must mean getting back to the role and presence of Mary in our personal lives as legionaries and in all our meetings. Amen.