

K. Other Works Approved by Curia or Spiritual Superiors:

Draft Copy PPPx5 May 15, 2012 with Section III

***Organizing a New Praesidium
(Also valuable tips for existing praesidia)***



**Jacksonville Comitium
Legion of Mary**

May 15, 2012
Version 4

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Based on various Legion sources and personal experiences. We learn by doing. We learn from other's successes and our "post-poned successes." Do not be afraid to make mistakes.

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"The Legion of Mary presents the true face of the Catholic Church."

—Pope John XXIII to the Legionaries of France, July 13, 1960

"An efficient branch of the Legion of Mary 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 endeavor to bring about this desirable thing.—*Handbook*

PRELIMINARY NOTE: *The Legion is a system which can be thrown out of balance by suppressing or altering any of its parts... So if unprepared to work the system exactly as described (herein and in the Handbook) please do not start the Legion at all. Cf "The Legion System Invariable," Chapter 20. Without affiliation to the Legion through one of its councils there is no Legion membership. If past experience is an indication, no branch of the Legion which is worked faithfully according to rule will fail. (Handbook, p5)*

1. So, you completed the curia's extension assignment; an invitation drive was held; names were collected at the drive; the first meeting has been announced, what do you do now?

You should begin as always by getting together the "stuff" the new praesidium will need to start out:

- ❖ Altar
- ❖ Rosary and Tesseræ
- ❖ Handbooks
- ❖ Recruiting material
- ❖ Notebooks and pencils
- ❖ Worksheets for officers
- ❖ Secret bag and treasurer's book
- ❖ Forms for collecting names, addresses

Look for material especially appropriate for the spiritual director to use as allocutio material - "The Priest and the Legion," articles from magazines, *Maria Legionis*, other books.....

Sit down with the pastor/spiritual director and explain his role. Determine what works will be undertaken and when. Try to get a commitment for him to attend at least one meeting a month. Be sure he is present when you do your recruitment drive and supports you with his homily or remarks.

- Baby sitting (without pay) so parents or care-givers or other family members (not your own family) can attend church, shopping, doctors, etc.
- Conducting youth clubs, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, etc.
- Serving dinners for funerals (if assigned, and especially if no one else is available.)
- Preparing homes of the blind or sick for visitation by the priest.
- Setting up and/or leading retreats, days of recollection, or evening of reflections, primarily for auxiliaries.
- Service in soup lines (the Legion is not to provide the food.)

I. Legion Promotion – Extension and Recruiting

- Visiting priests to urge starting a Praesidium.
- Invitation Drives.
- Recruiting Auxiliaries.
- Visitation (after care) of Auxiliaries.
- Training a new Praesidium.
- Staffing and promoting Patricians.
- Serving as officer for Juniors (if in a senior Praesidium.)
- Contacting auxiliaries or shut ins by phone. (This work should be done by those who are not able to do more active work.)

J. Additional Considerations

- Any other works requested by the pastor that does not involve regular collection of funds or material aid should be assigned by the praesidium.
- Exceptions are made for the elderly and/or handicapped. Whatever they are capable of doing and find challenging may be assigned.
- If you curia or higher council has approved other works they may be added here. If your curia or spiritual superiors has forbidden any of these suggested works, you must obey them.

D. Conversion - Instruction

- Organizing and conducting instructions for children and adults; such as, RCIA, CCD, etc., as long as no pay is involved.
- Lecturing by Legionaries for right-to-life at schools, workshops, etc.
- Preparing people to receive the Sacraments, including marriage encounter type training
- Setting up and/or teaching Bible studies.
- Probation counseling for delinquent children.
- Counseling children or adults for substance abuse.
- Follow-up on children or adults seen in prison or juvenile facilities

E. Consolation

- Home visitation other than door-to-door evangelization.
- Nursing home and hospital visits
- Visitation of people in institutions of any kind - jails, mental wards, group homes, retirement homes, handicapped facilities, etc.
- Communion for the sick and shut-ins (but not serving at Mass.)
- Recruiting members for parish organizations (however work for other organizations cannot be counted as legion works.)

G. Para-liturgical Events – Religious Services

- Conducting para-liturgical services when no priest is available.
 - Promoting Enthronement of the Sacred Heart and conducting enthronement exercises.
 - Leading Rosary or wake services as funerals (if assigned by praesidium.)
 - Organizing and promoting the Pilgrim Virgin Statue.
 - Organizing Rosary Groups and teaching how to make Rosaries.
 - Organizing and leading holy hours or all-night adoration.
- (Again: The mere attendance at such events, no matter length of time, does not constitute active work.)

H. Works of Service

- Transporting those in need to church, doctors, shopping, etc. (Be sure to check is if this permitted by your parish and/or diocese.)

Gather a list of appropriate Handbook readings for spiritual reading. (For the first year, the praesidium must use the Handbook for spiritual readings. Some suggestions:

- ❖ The excerpts from Blessed John-Paul II show great insight into the Legion and cover the basics. It is found near the front of the Handbook along with quotes from other popes.
- ❖ Chapters 1 and 2 of the Handbook.
- ❖ If the spiritual director is present, a good reading is “The Priest and the Legion,” Chapter 10 #4.
- ❖ Or the first part of Chapter 5, “The Devotional Outlook of the Legion.”

2. Get ready for the first meeting.

Various councils have different ways of affiliating a praesidium. The Miami Regia and some other councils maintain that the first meeting of the praesidium at which Members of the governing council are present is the official date. Therefore, for most intents and purposes this first meeting is the founding date of the praesidium. It is meeting No. 1. So it must be done correctly, as much like a regular meeting as possible. You represent the Legion of Mary.

Review Handbook Chapter 19, “The Meeting and the Member” Especially take note of No, 3 through No, 7.

Study the meeting place, and plan the setting to be as appropriate as possible.

The Legion of Mary praesidium is like a family with Mary as its mother. The setting should be as home-like as possible with the members gathered around a table, the altar representing our mother. There should be no hint of a school atmosphere.

3. Now you are ready to conduct the first meeting Start on time and proceed as follows:

SECTION III

Suggestions for Assignments

- A. Pass out Rosaries and Tesseræ.
- B. Say, “Every Legion of Mary meeting since the very first one has begun with the Invocation of the Holy Spirit and five decades of the Rosary. I will lead the first, third and fifth decades, and you will respond. You will lead the second and fourth decades and I will respond. Don’t worry if you mess up – even experienced Legionaries do sometimes. These prayers are normally said kneeling, but many of us cannot, so it is OK to sit.”
- C. After the prayers, pass out Handbooks. It is OK if some have to share. Say: “The Legion of Mary Handbook costs us \$___. (price varies; check current price with treasurer.) It is the only thing we will ask you to pay for. I will collect the Handbooks after the meeting unless someone wishes to buy one today.”
- D. Spiritual reading (less than 5 minutes.)
- E. Minutes - prepare sample minutes telling works being done in the area and have one of the experienced Legionaries act as secretary. Show them the secretary worksheet.
- F. Standing Instructions - read and explain VERY briefly.
- G. Roll Call - Pass around a form for them to write their name, address, phone number and e-mail.
- H. Treasurer’s Report - Have an experienced Legionary explain the secret bag. Explain what the curia is giving to them to get them started and reasons why it is necessary to contribute to the higher council.
- I. Report on Assignments - Have experienced Legionaries explain the types of work they do, and recount an interesting event. (Less than 30 minutes.)
- J. Catena and Allocutio (Hopefully by spiritual director.)
- K. Discussion of Handbook. Allow for questions. (No more than 10 minutes.) Show the president’s worksheet and explain that this is the agenda for every meeting.
- L. **This is important:** Go around the table and ask each person, “Do you think the Legion of Mary would be an asset to your parish?” (“Yes” or “No” - no discussion.) Then ask: “Will you come again next week?” (“Yes” or “No” - no excuses.)

A. General Principle

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. (*Handbook* Chap. 37)

B. Some Types of Works Approved by Concilium

In September 2000 the *Concilium Legionis Mariae* revised its list of approved works. The following is based on those 35 suggestions. These suggestions are just examples and are not all-inclusive. We have categorized them and modernized the terminology. You can see that the works are *substantial and active*. Mere attendance at events, services, or prayers is active, but no matter how substantial, do not fulfill the active work requirement. Needless to say, works must be done in pairs (or more) whenever possible.

C. Conversion - Evangelization

- Home visitation door-to-door.
- Crowd contact work, (Examples: Book barrow, fairs, park rosaries, flea market booths, etc.) but must be done by two or more and be promoting religion and/or the Legion. If items are sold, it must be without profit.
- Side walk counseling in front of abortion facilities, but NOT picketing. Work must be done in pairs in a non aggressive manner.
- Distribution of Catholic literature at bus depots, train stations, hospitals, doctors’ offices, nursing homes, etc.
- PPC, *exploratio dominicilis*, Sunday search for souls, etc

The Rosary is an abridgment of the New Testament.

Guide for meditating on the mysteries:

1. Who are the principle persons in this mystery?
2. Why do those persons speak and act as they do?
3. What does the mystery teach me?

E. The Reports

Must be prepared by the partners in advance from their notebooks, (every members should have one) and should be about two minutes in length. Each should have a notebook.

They must teach members something which will help them grow closer to Jesus. Mention what was taught or observed on visitation (e.g. doctrine, Scripture, virtues, attitudes, etc.)

Good legionaries take care in preparing and giving reports. Make them personal, vivid, distinctive and interesting. Don't use routine phrases.

Report only work that was assigned by the praesidium (through the president); see list of approved works.

*“The Apostles returned to Jesus and **reported** all that they had done and taught.” --Mk 6:30*

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- M. Give each one material to recruit active members - do not talk about auxiliaries yet - assign them to contact at least one other person and bring them next week. If you have names of prospects that are not present, you may assign them to be contacted.
- N. Keep within the 90 minute time limit. Say: “After the closing prayers we will be available to answer questions.”
- O. Closing prayers and Frank Duff prayer.

4. Follow the same format for the second through the sixth meeting.

- A. At the third meeting introduce the idea of auxiliaries - how they are recruited, cared for, and how important they are. Auxiliary membership should not be regarded as an “easy out” from our apostolic obligation.
- B. Throughout this period be on the lookout for prospective officers.
- C. Invite a member to sit beside each of the experienced Legionaries and see how they do their officer jobs.
- D. About the fourth time (or when ready) have a member of the new group take over each office. An experienced Legionary may advise.
- E. By the fifth or sixth meeting the group should have their apostolic action in full swing. You may need to accompany them at first on more difficult tasks.
- F. After about the sixth meeting you can cut back the number of Legionaries you assign to attend the new praesidium. It is desirable to rotate the training duties among Legionaries. This way the new praesidium gets to meet more members and newer members gain experience in training.
- G. Explain that officers will be appointed by the curia after they have taken their promise. Explain the promise.
- H. Explain the curia and invite members to attend meetings and functions.
- I. Continue to stress the importance of the weekly meeting and that the praesidium must never skip a meeting. The may change the day, time or place, but they must hold a meeting every week, even if only one or two members are present!

5. Taking the promises and taking your leave.

Gradually start to wean the group away from your interventions. Go every other week for a time, and then go back after a month for a final check and answer questions. Encourage them to learn and grow by keeping close to the governing council.

After 12 weeks the members should start taking their promises one or two at each meeting, and always individually so each can hold the Vexillum. Make the promise taking an event. Follow directions in the Handbook.

Recommend officers to the curia. (Remind the new praesidium they do not vote on officers, the council appoints them.) When at least two officers are officially appointed by the council, fill out the affiliation form which the council must approve.

Visit the praesidium in about six weeks after they are affiliate to tie up any loose ends. (This can be an official council visit)

SECTION II

Check list for presiding officer and tips for a great meeting.

A. Before Meeting:

- Prepare president's worksheet
 - Spiritual Reading (suggest starting with Chapter 5)
 - Handbook Discussion (suggest starting with Chapter 39 – one member should be assigned to lead the discussion.
 - Assignments for the coming week.
- Get flowers and set up room for meeting.
- Prepare allocutio if SD cannot be present.
- If you cannot be present, be sure another member (vice-president or acting VP) has the workbook and is prepared to take over.

B. During Meeting.

- Speak in a clear voice so all can hear. Allow only one person at a time to speak.
- "Oversee" the other officers in the performance of their duties.
- As the reports are given, make sure the secretary has the following information:
Time spent, number of homes visited, number of "contacts," amount of literature and sacramentals distributed, any positive results, name and addresses for call backs. Also if you recruit any auxiliaries give the 3 x 5 card to the vice-president with their names, addresses, phone numbers, date contacted and legionary who contacted them.
- YOU assign the works to be done in pairs at the end of the meeting. Assigned work is not left for the members to pick and choose or to the spiritual director.

C. After Meeting

- Say Frank Duff prayer for the spread of the Legion of Mary and recruitment of new members.
- Be sure supply cabinet and room are secure.
- Keep in touch with the members and spiritual director to coordinate works.
- Once a month put a paragraph in the bulletin to recruit new members.
- Keep in touch with your council. Attend the meetings monthly. Send a donation monthly to your council.

D. The Rosary

Start the opening Prayers on the dot of time. Reflect that God is intimately close to us by His presence before we begin. Invoke the Holy Spirit to direct us rays of His light. Place ourselves in the presence of the Blessed Virgin Mary

As we meditate on the mysteries in Christ's life recall our union with Mary. She will perfect our prayers and meditations and offer them to God for us.