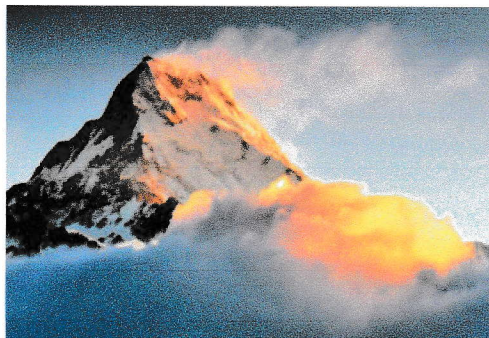


## Goal Setting: Helping the Legion Climb to New Heights

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High in the Alps – according to a story – stands a monument honoring a faithful guide who perished while ascending a peak to rescue an amateur stranded there due to inclement weather. The memorial plaque reads: “He died climbing.”

Legion members are asked to “die climbing,” too: to embrace a relentless pursuit of excellence in their service to Jesus through Mary. As the Handbook reminds us: “The call of the Legion is service without limit or reservation....” and where “excellence is not aimed at, a persevering membership will not be achieved” (*H*, 15). One expression of this legionary drive for excellence is the setting of meaningful and achievable goals within praesidia and by councils – the goals which we, on a regular basis, report to our governing bodies. When prayerfully prepared and wisely worded, these can become an effective means to scaling new heights through constant improvement, necessary correction, and creative expansion.

But what does such a goal look or sound like? According to business experts and others, each will have five characteristics – characteristics whose first letters combine to make the word “SMART.” They are “specific,” “measurable,” “action-oriented,” “realistic,” and “time-bound.”

- “Specific” means having a clear and definite wording. For example, it should not merely relate, “We need to do better,” but should mention in what specific areas improvement is desired – for example, “We will strive to increase the number of active members?”
- “Measurable” means inclusion of tangible numbers/amounts. Therefore, more than saying, “We will strive to increase the number of active members,” it will relate how many are desired. For example, “We will strive to increase the number of active members by two.”
- Next, it is “action-oriented.” This implies providing the “how” behind the “what.” Using the previous example, the goal should be augmented to read, “We will strive to increase the number of active members by two through interaction with parish members after every weekend Mass once a month.”
- In addition, a goal is “realistic.” It does not ask for the impossible, nor does it fail to adequately challenge. For example, a good goal does not seek the founding of a hundred new parish praesidia in a month. It also does not call for the addition of only one active member in a decade.
- Lastly, a goal is “time-bound.” It includes a deadline. This would require insertion into the statement of a temporal limit. For instance, “We will strive to increase in a year’s time the number of active members by two through interaction with parish members after every weekend Mass once a month.”

Someone once wrote, “When we are motivated by goals that have deep meaning, by dreams that need completion, by pure love that needs expressing, then we truly live.” Our hope in the army of Our Lady is that, through the motivation of prayerfully prepared and wisely worded goals, we will truly and fully “*live* the Legion.” For that sake, let us never stop “climbing,” using as our ropes the goals we courageously prepare and enthusiastically fulfill.

# SMART GOAL MAP 20\_\_\_\_\_

For (praesidium or council)\_\_\_\_\_

<b>S</b>	<b>Make it SPECIFIC</b>	Exactly what do you want to accomplish?
<b>M</b>	<b>Make it MEASURABLE</b>	How will you know when you have accomplished your goal?
<b>A</b>	<b>Make it ACTION-ORIENTED</b>	What specific actions will you take to accomplish your goal?
<b>R</b>	<b>Make it REALISTIC</b>	Is this something the Legion can accomplish in the next year?
<b>T</b>	<b>Make it TRACKABLE (in Time)</b>	How will you measure your progress over time?