

## THE PRAESIDIUM ROSARY

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One of the references in the Handbook about the Rosary recited at the Legion meeting calls it the "Praesidium Rosary." Although the manner of recitation at any Legion gathering is similar to the manner the Rosary is recited at each weekly Praesidium meeting, the description can readily be taken to mean something significant and special.

It should not be surprising that the Legion of Mary puts so much importance upon the devotion known as the Rosary. In every meeting and assembly which the Legionaries attend, a most frequent devotion is the praying of the Rosary. Some reasons for this may be the following.

The history of the Rosary and its origin reflect the importance and excellence of the devotion. Some episodes in the history of Christendom exhibit the power of the devotion. In many apparitions Our Lady almost always promotes the recitation' of the Rosary. The Church, in applying significant Indulgences upon those who pray the Rosary, confidently endorses the devotion. Popes have repeatedly encouraged the Faithful to include this devotion in their daily life-routines.

The proper recitation of the Rosary entails more than the mere repetition of the vocal prayers. Even though the 'Our Father,' and 'Hail Mary' are excellent prayers of themselves, the efficacy of the Rosary devotion consists in the deliberate meditation of the mysteries which comprise the Incarnation, Redemption, and Glorification by God. Thirteen out of the fifteen mysteries, which have been consistently mentioned for many years, are founded in Sacred Scripture; the final two mysteries are rooted firmly in the bonafide Tradition of the Church. The handbook affirms what is mentioned in many other spiritual writings: meditation is the soul of the Rosary. The Rosary, prayed in meditative fashion, enables us to focus our attention upon the wonderful works of God in redeeming us and sanctifying us. Meditating upon the works of God can fill our mind with the Good News of the Lord and can fill our hearts with the confidence we need to be faithful apostles for Christ Our Savior.

In the Legion of Mary every member is expected to pray the Rosary every day. The Auxiliary members are required to pray the Rosary every day; it is part of the Tessera prayers. When they are recruited as Auxiliary members, they assume that daily duty. Active Members are not required to pray the Rosary every day-in fulfillment of their Legionary duties-but they are encouraged to do so. But once a week, at the Praesidium Meeting, the Active Member does recite the Praesidium Rosary; it is included in the Opening Prayers of the Meeting.

The "Praesidium Rosary" is purposely scheduled at the beginning of the meeting for a number of reasons. The Praesidium Rosary establishes a specific unity in the

meeting. Meditating upon the mysteries of the Rosary should serve to unite our minds and hearts with Our Queen and Mother. We can imagine Mary sharing memories of the life of Her, Son and herself in a way in which any mother shares "family memoirs" with her growing children. Special insights may come to Legionaries who regard the meditation of the mysteries at the Praesidium Rosary as Mary's report to Her Legionaries at the meeting. In her own way, Mary may offer to us a heaven-view insight of the work She was able to accomplish through our weekly apostolate. If we have that kind of concept in mind, we can see and hear most readily how Mary is serving Her Son through us. The Third Standing Instruction becomes more a magnificent blueprint than a recited maxim.

The handbook further states that the recitation of the Praesidium Rosary at the meeting can be compared to breathing. Mary's inspiration at each meeting, in effect, sets her graceful "handmaiden" rhythm on the praesidium proceedings. If we believe that the praesidium meeting is a local presence of Mary, then the Mother of the Home of Nazareth will surely inspire us to be brothers and sisters to one another, and effective apostles to all. We could enjoy, at least for an hour and a half, a unity which reflects the unity of the Holy Family of Nazareth. We could inhale the holy fragrance of that sanctuary home of Galilee which, like some aromatic incense, dissipated the suffocating smog of sin around Golgotha's altar of sacrifice. Perhaps, to endure that hour of her maternal mediation of the Redeemed, Mary had to enjoy the many years of her unique maternity of the Redeemer. In a similar way, the persevering, fruitful work of the Legionary's apostolate is nourished and sustained by the authentic, faithful formation at the weekly meeting-the Legion's unique spiritual exercise.

When we are reciting the Praesidium Rosary, we should make a deliberate effort to recite the Rosary in unison with the other members. It should sound as if only two voices were reciting the Rosary. Sometimes members follow their own personal cadences and gestures as when they pray in private. Conscious effort should be made to recite the Rosary together with the members at the Praesidium or Council meeting. That effort is part of the Praesidium discipline. What manner the member may decide to follow in private should be kept in private. Even in the matter of reciting Legion prayers in unison, a member can employ self-suppression which leaves ample room for Mary to assume rightful reign in the heart of the Legionary.

Many Praesidia meet on the same day at the same hour for years. Perhaps the same mysteries of the Rosary have been mentioned for years. In order to benefit from all 15 mysteries at the Praesidium Rosary, the members could follow the Sunday scheme of selection during the major seasons of the liturgical year. In that way the Praesidium will meditate on all the mysteries during the course of the year, and enjoy the benefit of meditating on all the mysteries of the Rosary at the Praesidium, which should be considered a special recitation of the Rosary.

Through the Standing Instructions the Legionaries are reminded of certain essential notions in the Legion. Not so often are the members requested to recite the

prayers with proper attention, and intention. During the month of October--the month of the Rosary--every Legionary should try to improve his meditation of the Rosary mysteries, and to examine the manner of his recitation of the Rosary and the other prayers of the Legion.

It is not presumption to expect that with the sincere and devout recitation of the Praesidium Rosary at the Meeting, the members of the Praesidium may profit immensely, from their effort. Mary, whose Heart holds many secrets, wishes to disclose many treasured memories to Her Legionaries. What better time to bestow those treasures than at the Praesidium Rosary at the weekly Legion Meeting!