

## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ACCOUNTABILITY AND REPORTING

By Rev. Francis Lendacky

The principle of Legion Accountability is solidly based upon a multi-layered foundation which is securely buttressed by tried and true experience, sound reason, biblical example, and eschatological promise. The practice of Legion Accountability perdures in the written or vocal Reporting of Member to Praesidium, of Praesidium to Council. Legion Accountability is ordinarily verified by Council Visitation. In the matter of Accountability, Reporting, stemming from an honest self-scrutiny, is by far the more informative. And it should be the most reliable. This is the reason why clear and adequate Reporting is so important in the Legion.

However, the most frequent remark made concerning Reporting, by both Praesidia and Councils, is that the reporting is very inconsistent. Some reports are long and laborious; others are sketchy and unsatisfactory. Many reports focus mainly on the various works and functions of the Legionaries; only a few give a glimpse of the conduct of the meeting and the participation of the members at the meeting. If the Legion considers the Meeting to be more important for the Legionary than the actual activities performed by the Legionary, then many Praesidium Reports are not reflecting that belief. Perhaps it may be observed that the Council Visitation may provide that information, but it is not reasonable to expect an accurate assessment of any Praesidium meeting from only one visitation during the year. Legion Accountability should have its surest footing and most effective results in the one area over which the Praesidium should have fullest control; that is, its own formative Praesidium meeting.

Another important area of Legion Accountability concerns itself with the Works of the Praesidium. In this area the Praesidium is most likely to sense loss of control, and Accountability can become confusing. The Legion of Mary indeed emphasizes the necessity of the performance of substantial apostolic works. It often reminds the members to report those works accurately and adequately. But it also indicates that only assigned works should be reported. But more and more Legionaries are reporting works which are not assigned, and activities which may not be assigned.

One reason why the Reports are so heavy on listing works performed by the members, and why so many works, especially unassigned and non-Legion activities, are included in the Report may be that we are falling into the trap of Activism. The more we can say we are doing, the more- we believe we are making progress, either personally or communally. But progress does not necessarily follow activity, even constant activity. The Legion of Mary has never used the results-gauge to measure the progress of its members. If the Legionaries continue to regard the multiplication of works as a sign of their progress, then the drastic effect of that attitude may be the dilution of Legion spirit. The member's energy may be sapped prematurely; the member's interest may become less intense. The Legionary may forsake his membership, and the Praesidium will grow weaker and may gradually be disbanded.

And it could happen because the many inadequately-inspired works may extinguish the spirit.

Another reason why the Reporting may be so inconsistent and unsatisfactory may be that Legionaries do not have a proper concept of what the Legion calls 'Accountability.' If the notion of Legion Accountability were properly understood, then the Reporting would be vastly improved.

Legion Accountability may be related to the Catena Legionis. If the Legionary recites the Catena (the Song of Mary) every day, then Legion Accountability reports the 'Presence of Mary' through her Legionaries. The Catena, sung along with Mary, can be the overture of the Legionary's loving Devotion to Mary and living cooperation along with Mary. If the Catena can be seen as a synopsis of Mary's role as Mediatrix of all Graces, then Legion Accountability could present the full ledger of Her continuous service to Her Son in the world through Her Legionaries. The style and discipline of Reporting must be equal to the substance of the Marian Legionary Apostolate. (How compatible with that Third Standing Instruction!)

Legion Accountability should focus its attention on two major phases of Legion Spirit-and-Scheme. The first area of , Accountability--and perhaps the more important--must consider 'the Meeting.' The Officers, who are members of the Curia, must see to it that the Meeting--every meeting--meets the requirements established for it in the Handbook. That is the first area of Accountability. If the Meeting is not conducted properly, then the Legion will not be properly formed or informed, and it may be inadequately presented.

The paradigm of Accountability concerning the Meeting is presented at length in the Legion Handbook. In Chapters 18 and 19 the Legionary will find many notes and rules which will guide him to accurate and complete Accountability. Where some specific details may not be found in print, then the tradition or custom which is generally practiced in the local or regional Council ought to be upheld.

The second area of Accountability concerns Assigned Works of the Legion. The Legion Praesidium should be held accountable for its assigned works, and it should not be afraid to be held accountable for them. But it should make certain that the Legionary is properly employed in proper Legionary work. To make the Legion accountable for any works which the Legionaries might do--assigned or unassigned--once again puts the Legion in a compromising position.

The parameters of Legion Accountability when it concerns the Assigned Works are determined by four criteria. These criteria are: 1) the Work Assigned is a work proper to the Lay Apostolate of the Faithful, 2) the Work is not specifically prohibited by the Legion, 3) the Work must be fully controllable by the Praesidium, and 4) the Work is a bonafide Legion work actually assigned by the President of the Praesidium. All four criteria ought to be verifiable in every Legionary Accountable work.

A better understanding of Legion Accountability will improve Reporting on every level. It is hoped that clarification of Accountability will lead to the perfection of 'Assigned Works' performed by the Legionaries. By insisting that every work be made completely 'Accountable' by Legion standards, the Legion seeks to render every work more efficaciously Marian. And the performance of the weekly work obligation will be fashioned into what the Handbook describes in (b) on Page 192: the Work of the Legionary is but prayer in another form. And with full Legion Accountability focused on the Meeting, every Praesidium Meeting could be remodeled into t at 'Mystical Home of Nazareth,' from which will emanate true Legionary work.