

“Why I Love the Legion of Mary in a Special Way”

Cardinal Suenens of Belgium is probably the most ardent supporter of the Legion among the hierarchy. He is the author of “Theology of the Apostolate of the Legion of Mary,” commended by Pope Pius XII. He also authored a best seller on the life of Edell Quinn. It was due to the urgent insistence of Cardinal Suenens that the Council Fathers of Vatican II proposed the Virgin as the model of the apostolate. The following tribute to the Legion is a condensation of a talk, which he gave to 1000 Legionaries in Liverpool, England.

... WHAT STRIKES ME MOST in the Legion of Mary, I should say is its courage. Legionaries do show courage when every week they simply offer themselves to be instruments of grace and so making it possible for our Lord to do His wonders. As Legionaries you do not just talk but you hope and have enough faith to go out and walk on the water. That is the wonder of the Legion of Mary, its spirit of faith and of courage, of apostolate and of perseverance.

Courage and Faithfulness

That is why I love the Legion of Mary in a special way. I love it for the courage of the legionaries, for the spirit of the legionaries, and for the faithfulness of the legionaries. Now if I see the Legion at work in the world I can say with truth that it is an instrument of grace.

We should all go out and do everything we can to offer to any of our fellow Christians the opportunity to become legionaries. That means that we must open out to them the many possibilities that the Legion contains. An invitation to join the Legion is an invitation to put our imagination at the service of the Lord. I see in the gospel that we are obliged to love God with all our heart and all our soul and all our mind and all our strength. I like to think that we are bound to love God, too, with all our imagination. I want you to use your imagination just to think about all the possibilities of work that might be done, in a way just like that of our blessed Lady in Cana. There she first of all saw that something was missing. Then very humbly she asked her Son to work His first miracle. So we need a sort of special grace of life, the grace of the imagination to see the needs of the souls just where they are. I pray that you will have that imagination.

...I think the Legion has done wonders of grace all over the world. An even greater apostolate is still to be done. Simply because we are Christians we are bound to be apostles. Very often we just do not know how to go about it. The wonder of the Legion of Mary is that it is a simple school, a simple method of showing simply great faith. The very fact that you are putting Christianity into practice is a very special grace each of you even if you were never to see a single exterior result of what you do. The first result of the Legion of Mary is the interior conversion of the legionaries. The Legion has a grace of conversion for every one of you, for each of your spiritual directors, even for Bishops. They are not excluded. This grace of interior conversion is one which all of us legionaries receive. We should be thankful just because the Lord wishes to use us in His own wise way. I wish to say a word of thanks to you in the name of the Lord

because you have fulfilled your apostolic duty. You have accepted it.

Yours also is a grace to live in union with our blessed Lady. From time to time in these days of stress, and rightly, that Christ is in the center of Christianity. We know that all the time. If we love our blessed Mother so specially, it is because we know she will lead us in a very special way to Christ. We must never be afraid that a sort of division could exist between the Son and the Mother.

The Queen Was Not There

May I just tell you a story of something which happened in my own country a few years ago. The King came to visit my city of Malines. We traveled together through the streets. Crowds were there shouting out, but they were not shouting “Long live the King”, but shouting “Long live the Queen.” The Queen was not there. The King was alone. I remarked to the King that it was rather strange that everyone was shouting “Long live the Queen.” “Yes” he said, “that that happens very often to me. One day a very simple man came to me and said, “King, we are shouting “Long live the Queen.” Because we think it will be a greater joy for you to hear that. I think something like that must be in the heart of our blessed Lord. It is he who is sending the Holy Spirit to the world and it is the Holy spirit who is the origin of the litany of all the blessings in honor of His Mother. “All generations shall call me blessed.” What is the presence of the Holy Spirit, but Christ continuing in us to love His blessed Mother. I ask you to go out into the big world today to bring the joy of Christ to many people.

You are living not only in a foggy world but also in a world of darkness. You have to bring sunshine into that dark world and with sunshine you will bring light and warmth. The world needs light to find its way. So many around us are living without knowing where they came from, what they have to do or where they are going to. We have God’s light. We have to radiate it, to let it shine from us all around us wherever we can. We have to bring to the world the warmth of the love of God... (MARIA LEGIONIS. No 3 of 1967, p 5).