

LEGION CREATIVITY IN THE SYSTEM WORK AND SPIRIT

Creativity in the System by Edel Peffley

What is the Legion system? How do we learn about it?

The Legion system is the skeleton, the framework of the Legion of Mary. We learn about it:

1. through the Handbook and
2. through what comes to us from the higher Council.

The primary reason for the system is its function in sanctifying us, in giving us holy discipline.

It takes awhile to establish a habit. The Legion routine of saying the Catena prayer daily, attending the weekly Praesidium meeting, the monthly Curia meeting and the yearly Acies will help us to establish good prayer habits and the habit of virtue.

Christian perfection is the underlying motivation of the Legion of Mary. In everything we do, we go one extra step to perfect our actions, our daily work, thereby imitating the perfection of Mary. The Legion system gives us the opportunity to practice perfection.

The Handbook begins with an important statement:

-If past experience is an indication, no branch of the Legion will fail which is worked faithfully according to rule.

The Legion is a system which can be thrown out of balance by suppressing or altering any of its parts. Of it, could the following verse have been written:

*"Pluck one thread, and the web ye mar;
Break but one
Of a thousand keys, and the paining jar
Through all will run." - (Whittier).*

So, if unprepared to work the system exactly as described in these pages, please do not start the Legion at all. In this connection, read carefully Section XVIII: "Legion System Invariable."

Without affiliation to the Legion (through one of its approved Councils), there is no Legionary membership.

If our predecessors in the Legion had not followed the system, we would not have the Legion of Mary today. What is Legion creativity in the system? It is the expression of the Spirit.

When people look at a Praesidium meeting, they should see Our Lady. As the Handbook states: "The Praesidium is a 'Presence' of Mary." Each member of the Praesidium should imitate the virtues of Mary and become more and more like her.

Three areas in which to be creative in the system:

- I. Within the Praesidia Meetings
- II. Outside of the Praesidia Meetings
- III. At the Councils

I. Within the Praesidia Meetings

The meetings should be bright and cheerful, reports should be interesting.

A. Reports - The Praesidium is a "Presence" of Mary. How would Mary give a report? Before we give ours, it would be helpful to look at the statue of Mary and briefly reflect on what she would say and how she would say it. Try to remember anything unusual that happened. Have a complete report without having it be wordy. Have humor in it but nothing artificial. Describe events for those who have not been there, so they can well imagine it.

B. Spiritual Reading - Supplement reading with an article from the Maria Legionis magazine or from Edel Quinn's life story.

C. Discussion - Read the text before coming to the meeting and be ready to discuss it.

II. Outside of the Praesidia Meetings (Reports to the Higher Councils)

Creativity in the system can be expressed especially in the way reports are given by Praesidia (all levels) to the higher Councils, i.e., Praesidia reporting at Curia meetings and Curia reporting at Comitium meetings.

In the past, reports were given as poems, songs, fairy tales, skits, comic strips, court trials, action news reports, traffic reports, weather reports, Academy Awards, etc.

The most important aspects of humorous or creative ways of reporting are to get the information in and to make them as enjoyable as possible.

Reports on Legion functions are other opportunities to be creative within the Legion system.

III. At the Councils (Coordination of Functions)

- A. Acies - Prepare banners according to a given theme to carry in procession.
- B. Annual General Reunion (usually on or close to December 8th). Have creative presentations, have a theme, i.e. Roman Legion party, masquerade party, etc.
- C. Outdoor Function - Softball or other sport event, hiking, pilgrimage, picnic.
- D. A Praesidium Function
- E. The Congress - Diversification of themes, presentation related to the theme, poster contests.

Conclusion:

The Legion is Mary with the system as her body with the work that fleshes it out and with creativity as her spirit.

NOTES FOR CURIA OFFICERS

The Curia is composed of the Spiritual Director and the four officers of each Praesidium in the area. It, in turn, has its own Spiritual Director, who is appointed by the Bishop, and four elected officers - President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer. Meetings are held monthly.

It is recommended that the Curia Executive meet informally each month to prepare the agenda for the next meeting and to have a general discussion on suggestions, problems, difficulties, etc. This will enable the officers to act jointly in initiating discussions at the Curia meetings on matters of vital importance to the Curia.

When prepared, the agenda is typed by the Secretary and a copy mailed to the Spiritual Director and President of each Praesidium at least one week before the next Curia meeting. It is the duty of the President of each Praesidium to read the agenda at the meeting and to notify the other officers of the place and time of the Curia meeting and to insure as far as possible a full attendance of the officers.

A carbon copy of the minutes of each Curia meeting must be mailed by the Secretary regularly each month to its supervising Council. The minutes should be mailed as soon as possible after the meeting and not held until they are approved at the following month's meeting.

This is a vitally important duty and must never be neglected. The Praesidium should frequently inquire of the Secretary if the minutes are being sent regularly. A Curia affiliated with a Senatus or Comitium shall send its minutes to that Council.

OFFICERS OF PRAESIDIA ARE APPOINTED

If an officer of a Praesidium finds it necessary to resign, the resignation should be submitted to the Curia. The President of the Curia will then consult with the Spiritual Director and President of the Praesidium with a view to securing the best qualified candidate for the vacant office. After the candidate is interviewed by the Curia officers and found to be satisfactory, the name of the candidate is then submitted to the Curia (by the Curia President) for formal appointment. The same procedure is also followed on the expiration of the term of office. It is to be noted that attendance at Curia meetings is the first duty of an officer. A candidate who is not free to attend these meetings regularly is not eligible for office.

CURIA OFFICERS ARE ELECTED

The Handbook specifies that Curia officers are elected. In order to secure the most suitable candidate, it is recommended that a Nominating Committee be set up by the Curia. The Nominating Committee might consist of the Curia Spiritual Director, four members of the Curia appointed by the President, and those officers of the Curia who are not eligible for the vacant office. Members of the Curia should be urged to suggest names privately and in writing to the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee, before presenting its nomination to the Curia, should satisfy itself that the candidate is willing to accept the office. If more than one office is vacant, nominations for each office should be made separately. The Nominating Committee has not the exclusive right of presenting nominations; any member of the Curia may do so on the day of election. A month should elapse between the setting up of the Nominating Committee and the election.

FUNDS

As a rule, there is no Secret Bag collection taken at Curia meetings. Praesidia, however, have the important obligation to contribute to the Curia. The Curia will need this fund for incidental expenses, printing, stationery, postage, and also for expenses connected with the Acies and the extension of the Legion. The Curia, likewise, has the duty of contributing to the support of the Concilium, or next highest Council. The Concilium is entirely dependent on its affiliated Councils for funds. There is a danger of the Secret Bag being regarded solely as a fund for the needs of the Praesidium and its members, whereas in fact, it should be regarded as the principal means by which the entire Legion is financed and kept going throughout the world.

REPORTS

Each Praesidium will submit a full written report to the Curia periodically when called upon. This report is read at the Curia meeting by the President or Secretary of the Praesidium and two copies handed to the Curia Secretary for filing. It is suggested that the Praesidium keep a carbon copy for its own records.

When a report is due from distant Praesidia, not regularly represented at Curia meetings, the Secretary of the Curia should write for this report at least one month before it is due.

CARE OF DISTANT PRAESIDIA

These Praesidia should be kept in close contact with the Curia by correspondence. Members of the Curia may be needed to correspond regularly with such Praesidia and keep them informed of Curia developments and to generally assist and advise them.

VISITATION

Each Praesidium should be visited by the Curia at least once a year. This will serve to preserve unity and insure the maintaining of high standards. While in the beginning, this work will be carried out by the Curia Executive, later it may be entrusted to a Committee of the more experienced members of the Curia.

EXTENSION OF THE LEGION

This is the important function of the Curia and should be carried out systematically and continuously. Every parish within the Curia area (and not merely those nearby) should be canvassed. This work should not be limited to a few members of the Curia.

LEGIONARY FUNCTIONS

The principal Legion function is the Acies. This is held on or near the Feast of the Annunciation. It should appear on the agenda at least two months before the scheduled date. It is desirable to have a committee handle the arrangements. A sample Acies program may be secured from the higher Council to which your Curia is affiliated. (See Handbook.)

An enclosed Retreat should be held annually for all active members. Days of Recollection may be arranged for both active and auxiliary members.

The social functions of the Legion are the Annual Picnic and Reunion, which are limited to the active members, and the Praesidium function mentioned in the Handbook.

All Legion functions, whether religious or social, should include the recitation of the Legion Prayers.

DUTIES OF CURIA OFFICERS

DUTIES OF PRESIDENT OF CURIA

1. To preside at the meetings.
2. To see that the agenda is prepared for each meeting.
3. To supervise the other officers in their duties.
4. To check periodically with the Secretary on the regular sending of the Minutes to the Concilium (or next highest Council.)
5. To arrange for visitation of Praesidia.
6. To represent the Curia between meetings.

DUTIES OF VICE-PRESIDENT OF CURIA

1. To preside in the absence of the President.
2. To keep attendance.
3. To keep a record of Praesidium officers, with date of their appointment, and to notify the President of the Curia, a month in advance, of the termination of their terms of office.
4. To keep a list of all Praesidia, with day, time and place of meeting.

DUTIES OF SECRETARY OF CURIA

1. To take the minutes of the Curia meetings and to forward a monthly copy to the Concilium or the next highest Council. Minutes should be full and complete.
2. To prepare and issue the agenda with the President at least one week before the Curia meeting. Copies are to be sent to each Spiritual Director and President.
3. To keep a file for each Praesidium, in which shall be placed, a copy of each report submitted to the Curia and other records of interest. (Names and addresses of Officers, etc.)
4. To read at the Curia meeting all correspondence received and to place it on the Curia file.

DUTIES OF TREASURER OF CURIA

1. To take charge of funds. A bank account shall be kept for all Curia funds. This account should be in the names of the President and Treasurer of the Curia.
2. To keep on-hand adequate Handbooks, Tesserars, etc., to be issued to Praesidia as required.
3. To give statement of funds at each Curia meeting.
4. To make all necessary payments as authorized by the Curia.