

LEGION OF MARY: INSTRUCTIONS FOR ALL PRAESIDIUM OFFICERS

ATTENDANCE AT CURIA OR COMITIUM MEETING



The most important duty of an officer is to attend the Council Meeting once a month. Anyone who is unable or unwilling to attend the Comitium (or Curia) Meeting is not eligible for an office and cannot be appointed. This is because the officers are the Council. The Spiritual Director and four officers of each Praesidium make up the Comitium (or Curia) body, just as the active members make up the Praesidium body. The handbook says that zeal in other aspects will not compensate for failure to attend the Council Meeting.

Officers are appointed by the Council to supervise the Praesidium in their parish. (The Handbook states that the Council, not the Praesidium, appoints the officers.) You are not sent by your Praesidium to represent it at the Council Meeting. It is the other way around; there are five members of the Council present at your **Praesidium every week**. Comitium (or Curia) attendance is an individual obligation, not a collective one. If three officers, for some reason, cannot make the Council Meeting during a given month, the fourth officer still has the same obligation to attend. If you should ever find that you are without a ride to the Council Meeting, call one of the Council officers who will arrange a ride for you with an officer from a nearby Praesidium.

Praesidium officers are a team - a unit. They should be familiar with the duties of each other; everything is not up to the President. Each officer has the responsibility of preserving and developing the Legion spirit and system. The more each officer knows, the better will be the teamwork. Officers should develop a "Legion Mind", learn the Legion inside and out. Duties of the officers are found on pages 209 to 220 in the handbook, and these should be read in connection with your appointment - not just the duties of your particular office, but all four offices.

Officers should get along well together and act as one before the Praesidium. The President is never interrupted or contradicted openly at the Meeting, unless it is something that can be tactfully brought to the Presidents attention. Differences of opinion among officers can usually be settled privately.

It is most important that Officers' Meetings be held periodically to discuss any differences or problems in the Praesidium, new works, etc. The Council officers will always be available if you have anything you would like them to help you with. An officer who feels the Praesidium is drifting into careless ways or loss of spirit should feel free to discuss this with the other members. If unsuccessful, the officers should discuss it with the Council officers or Council Spiritual Director. This is not being uncharitable; each officer has the responsibility to the Legion to do all possible to ensure its well-being. It would be uncharitable not to speak!

Officers should be diligent in observing the rules and developing spirit. Members will usually be a step beneath the officers in spirit and dedication. If officers are working for **perfection**, the members will be good; if officers are content with only being **good**, the members will be **indifferent**; if the officers are **indifferent**, there won't be any members! "There are no bad soldiers, only bad officers." Members will never rise above the standard of spirit and work set for them by the officers. The term of office is three years. If the Legion promise has not been taken, the office becomes permanent after the Promise is taken. Let the Vice-President of the Council know when it is taken so that the Council can ratify the new officer. When a member makes their Promise, it is a good idea to have light refreshments after the meeting, to celebrate their reception into the Legion. **Junior Legionaries do not take the Promise.**

When officers cannot attend their Praesidium Meeting, it is most important that they get the records of their office to the Meeting. A report of the Council Meeting is to be given at the Praesidium Meeting the following week. The President has the responsibility of seeing that this is included on the agenda, and is not substituted for the Handbook discussion or some other point. The Council Meeting should be divided up by the four officers in advance and notes taken during the Meeting on the section assigned. This makes for an interesting and complete report, without important omissions and unnecessary duplication.

At the Council Meeting you should obligate yourself to participate in the discussions, or to ask questions and make comments to the body. The same Legionary courage that you use on your weekly work will be enough to get you on your feet. The Council Meeting is what you make it. Before or after the Council Meeting, make it a point to speak to someone you don't know, and mention in your report at the Praesidium who you met.

LEGION OF MARY: DUTIES OF THE PRESIDENT



1. Attend the Council Meeting.
2. Furnish the Praesidium with a report of the Council Meeting.
3. Conduct the Praesidium Meeting:
 - a. Start and end **on time**; An hour and a half **limit**.
 - b. Give an Allocutio in the absence of the Spiritual Director; always have an Allocutio prepared in advance, for emergency. It should be a commentary on the Handbook and should not be read.
 - c. Prepare the worksheet before the Meeting, **including assignments**. This avoids confusion and waste of time at the meeting. The priest **supplies** the work; the President **assigns** it. Try to see the Spiritual Director once a week or so about work for the Praesidium. File cards for follow up cases should be kept and assigned regularly.
 - d. Call for reports. Train member to give interesting, audible reports, which are moderate in length and yet complete. (Never say: "Do you have anything to add?" when asking for a report. If a report is incomplete, you might draw the member out by asking "What did you say to the people you visited?") Every member is called on for a report, even though you may know they didn't do work that week. If a member was unable to do work they should give an excuse to the Praesidium. A member should not be interrupted while giving their report. Reports on work done in pairs are shared by both partners. After the complete report has been given, ask for discussion on the report. This is the time to question and comment on the reports. Do not permit irrelevant discussion to creep in. Keep the meeting moving.
 - e. See that each member is performing at least two hours of active, apostolic work each week. Assign more work than the pair can handle in two hours. Make sure members contact you if they can't work that week or have to miss a Meeting. Arrange for another partner if needed.
 - f. Try to create a joyful atmosphere in the Praesidium. Don't speak more than necessary. If a question comes up, ask the Praesidium what they think of it before handling it yourself.
 - g. Explain Praetorian membership at least twice a year. (See Handbook, page 189)
 - h. Instruct and supervise the other Officers in the performance of their duties and the keeping of their records. Show the Vice President how to prepare the worksheet in case you ever have to miss a Meeting.
 - ★ i. Set an example of spirituality and zeal to your fellow members, but not to the degree that you are doing work that others could be doing. Delegate jobs to members; i.e. setting up the altar, etc.
4. Presidents should remember they have the "**grace of state**". Even though they may feel they cannot handle the job, the Presidency itself carries graces with it. You are sitting in for Our Lady. She never lets anyone down. Never hesitate to speak better than you are. If we weren't able ourselves, we should still encourage others.
5. Consult the Council Officers privately if you feel the Praesidium is in trouble. Don't wait too long to do this. Council Officers have experience with many Praesidia and their problems; a problem you are struggling with for weeks may have been solved years ago in another group, and just a few words with the Council Officers might save you a lot of heartaches. On the other hand, you should be able to tackle most of your own problems.

LEGION OF MARY: DUTIES OF THE SECRETARY



1. Attend the Council Meeting. You have the same responsibility to safeguard the Legion system and develop it as do the other Officers.
2. Keep accurate minutes, typed or written in ink.
3. "Shout" the minutes! You set the tone of the Meeting.
4. Handle correspondence.
5. Furnish higher Councils with any reports needed: Annual Report; Bishop's Report, etc. All Officers should work together on the Annual or Semi-Annual Report; call an Officers' Meeting for this.
6. Keep a weekly summary of work at the end of your minutes or on the sheets provided, broken down into the categories of work and the number of call and contacts; for example:

<u>Shut-ins/Sick at Home:</u>	10 attempts (to visit), 5 visits, 12 contacts (people spoken with)
<u>Census/Door to Door:</u>	45 attempts (to visit), 25 visits, 37 contacts (people spoken with)
<u>Nursing Home Visitation:</u>	15 visits (of different rooms), 18 contacts (people spoken with)
7. Minutes are confidential and should be kept where no one will have access to them.
8. Minutes should not be too long, but a good summary of reports should be given, since this is the permanent record of the Praesidium. Names and addresses should be included in the minutes, but you needn't read the addresses the following week.

LEGION OF MARY: DUTIES OF THE TREASURER

1. Attend the Council Meeting. You have the same responsibility to safeguard the Legion system and develop it as do the other Officers.
2. Pass the secret bag **automatically**, as unobtrusively as possible, immediately after the Allocutio. Don't wait for the President to have to announce that the bag is to be passed. Each person puts their hand in the bag whether they are contributing or not.
3. Give the Treasurer's Report at the meeting including: a) Previous week's balance, b) Last week's secret bag money received, c) List expenses and monies spent, and d) The ending balance. The current week's secret bag money is never counted during the meeting.
4. You are in charge of keeping enough Legion supplies on hand for the Praesidium to use in its work, such as some extra handbooks, Tesseras, Active and Auxiliary leaflets, etc. These can be purchased at the Council Meeting, or from other sources, at the direction of the Praesidium. These supplies should be organized before the Meeting so that they are available to the members. See that **fresh flowers** for the altar are either brought each week by one of the members or purchased from the secret bag. Periodically explain the importance of the secret bag.
5. Secret bag funds may not be used for gifts, social functions for the members, or Maria Legionis Magazine, nor for the Masses, other than the November Mass for all deceased Legionaries, or for an Active Member. The job of Treasurer is not insignificant.