



## THE STANDING INSTRUCTION

(The following is for you to become familiar with so you will be able to give a brief explanation when guests are present.)

*"Legionary duty requires from each Legionary: First, the punctual and regular attendance at the weekly meetings of the praesidium, and the furnishing there of an adequate and audible report on the work done;"*

**Punctual** - the meeting has a set time for starting and should begin at that time, regardless of who may not be present. If a member is late, they should kneel and recite the prayers of the tessera which they have missed (excluding the rosary). The Handbook emphasizes that persistent latecoming or early departure cannot be permitted under any circumstances. The meeting lasts no longer than an hour and a half "from the appointed time of starting," and should close automatically at that time, even though for some reason it did not start promptly and whether or not all the business has been transacted. The rule of punctuality also applies to the appointment with our partner to do our assignments.

**Regular Attendance** - even though sin would not be involved, the obligation of attending the weekly meeting can be compared to the obligation of attending Sunday Mass, and we should think of this when we are tempted to excuse ourselves. Ordinarily there are just four valid reasons for missing a meeting: personal illness, a serious family obligation, annual vacation, unavoidable work. If a person knows in advance that they will regularly have to miss one or more meetings a month, they are not eligible for membership. A member who has to miss a meeting should call the President or another officer and submit their excuse; otherwise they are marked absent. Three unexcused absences is considered valid reason for dropping a member from the roll. The Vice President contacts them after each absence. An absent member is not given work for that week unless they express a desire to take an assignment

**Praesidium** - the name given to a parish unit of the Legion; it is a Roman word which means a special detachment of an army doing a specific work. The Legion of Mary is modeled on the old Roman Legion, which was so famous for loyalty, courage, perseverance and endurance, and as Legionaries of Mary we should develop and supernaturalize these qualities.

**An Adequate Report** - means a complete report of what happened on the assignment, including a brief summary of the Legionary's conversation, approach, method and spirit in which the work was done, and the reaction of those visited. The praesidium cannot control a work about which it is not informed fully. Although work is done in pairs or groups and never singly, each Legionary has the obligation to give a full report and should prepare their report before the meeting. Each member should have a notebook for this purpose.

**Audible** - the reports are addressed to the president but should be heard by all in the room. Anything said at the praesidium meeting should be said for the benefit of all. Private conversations or unnecessary comments are a mark of disrespect toward the praesidium.

*Second, the daily recitation of the Catena;*

**Catena** - is the prayer on the third page of the tessera, composed mainly of the Magnificat. It is a Latin word meaning "chain," and it binds together all Legionaries, active and auxiliary, throughout the world. It can be a reminder of the Legionaries in chains in Communist countries, to whom we perhaps owe the grace of our own membership. The tessera is a token of membership and is given only to active or auxiliary members.

*"Third, the performance of a substantial active Legionary work, in the spirit of faith, and in union with Mary, in such fashion that in those worked for and in one's fellow members, the Person of Our Lord is once again seen and served by Mary, His Mother."*

**Substantial** - means a minimum of two hours a week; **Active** - means a work involving contact with people; **Legionary** - means for a spiritual and apostolic purpose. Money and material relief are never given. **In a Spirit of Faith** - not looking for results, but believing that good will be accomplished even though we may feel incapable of fulfilling it. **In Union with Mary** - being so closely united with Mary that it is really she who is seeing and serving Christ in those we work for and in our fellow members. We are Mary's means of action in the world today; she must use us to express her love for her Son.

*"Fourth, the preservation of an absolute secrecy in regard to any matter learned discussed at the meeting or learned in connection with the Legionary work."*

It is permissible to describe the agenda of the meeting or speak generally of the type of work we do, but the praesidium meeting is a closed meeting and whatever goes on there is confidential. With regard to the work we may not mention names or divulge any information, even to our families. Potential members who visit the praesidium are also expected to keep this rule.