

Mary's Notebook

December 2006

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Issue 8

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Annual General Reunion December 10th.

The Annual General Reunion for the Tidewater Curia will be on December 10th at 3:00pm at St. Gregory's.

Acies March 25th

Tidewater Curia will hold its Acies at St. Gregory's on March 25, 2007. Attendance is required for active members; auxiliaries are also invited.

Sample President's Worksheet Attached

In this special issue of Mary's Notebook, we've attached a sample President's worksheet. The President's worksheet is to be filled out before each meeting by the president. [Cont. p. 8]

Faith Focus: Penance

Those who approach the sacrament of Penance obtain pardon from God's mercy for the offense committed against Him, and are, at the same time, reconciled with the Church which they have wounded by their sins and which by charity, by example, and by prayer labors for their conversion.

- It is called the sacrament of conversion because it makes sacramentally present Jesus' call to conversion, the first step in returning to the Father from whom one has strayed by sin.
- It is called the sacrament of Penance, since it consecrates the Christian sinner's personal and ecclesial steps of conversion, penance, and satisfaction.
- It is called the sacrament of confession, since the disclosure or confession of sins to a priest is an essential element of this sacrament. In a profound sense it is also a "confession"—acknowledgment and praise—of the holiness of God and of his mercy toward sinful man.
- It is called the sacrament of forgiveness, since by the priest's sacramental absolution God grants the penitent pardon and peace.
- It is called the sacrament of Reconciliation, because it imparts to the sinner the love of God who reconciles: "Be reconciled to God." He who lives by God's merciful love is ready to respond to the Lord's call: "Go; first be reconciled to your brother." [Cont. p. 4]

News and Events

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Annual General Reunion Dec. 10th

The Annual General Reunion for the Tidewater Curia will be on December 10th at 3:00pm at St. Gregory's. All active members are encouraged to attend.

The Annual General Reunion is being held on the date we celebrate the Immaculate Conception. It is mainly a social evening; however, the full Legion prayers will be said, divided into three parts as at a meeting.

The event should in no way be considered formal; the object of the Annual General Reunion is to make all those present know each other better.

Acies March 25th

Tidewater Curia will hold its Acies at St. Gregory's on March 25, 2007. Attendance is required for active members; auxiliaries are also invited.

Praesidia are encouraged to develop plans to ensure that auxiliaries are invited and welcomed to attend. Likewise, it is important to note that all spiritual directors are welcome and that we very much would like them to attend, as well.

Extending as Far as the Eye Can 'Sea'

Saint Matthew's in Virginia Beach is starting a Junior Legion of Mary. The Junior Legion of Mary is open to practicing Catholics under age 18, who have received Holy Communion, and are able to recite the Legion prayers. Anyone who is interested in this group should contact the extension coordinator at extension@legionofmarytidewater.com for more information.

Star of the Sea Catholic Church in Virginia Beach, Virginia is starting an Adult Legion of Mary. This group will be open to practicing Catholic adults ages 18+. Anyone interested in this group should contact the extension coordinator at extension@legionofmarytidewater.com for more information.

If you are in the Tidewater, Virginia area and are interested in bringing the Legion of Mary to your parish, the extension coordinator can help you. We do need the approval and support of the parish priest. Contact the extension coordinator.

Marian Holy Days

- December 8th –Immaculate Conception
- December 12th –Our Lady of Guadalupe

Handbook Study

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Fourth Part of the Standing Instruction

A deeper look at the fourth part of the Standing Instruction:

Text of fourth part of standing instruction:

"Legionary duty requires from each legionary: ...Fourth, absolute respect for the confidential nature of many matters discussed at the meeting or learned in connection with the legionary work:" (Handbook 18:7)

The contents of the fourth part of the Standing Instruction, quoted above, are dealt with particularly in section 20, chapter 19, and section 4, chapter 33, of the handbook. The following are some extracts from the handbook:

Confidentiality of paramount importance.

The Standing Instruction, read to the members month after month, should bring home to them the all important place of confidentiality in the Legion's scheme of things. Lack of courage in a soldier is accounted shameful, but treachery is infinitely worse. It is treachery to the Legion to repeat outside matters of a confidential nature, learned or discussed at the praesidium meeting. At the same time, there must be reason in all things. Sometimes overzealous people may urge that in the interests of charity legionaries should withhold from the praesidium all names and reports which involve neglect of religion. In this apparently plausible suggestion there is an error, and a threat to the Legion's life, as the praesidium could not function satisfactorily under such conditions." (19:20)

"Inviolable confidence must be preserved by the legionaries in regard to what they hear at their meetings or in the course of their work. This knowledge comes to them because they are legionaries, and it would be an intolerable treachery

to the Legion for them to divulge it. Reports must, of course, be made to the praesidium meeting, but even here there must be circumspection. This question is more fully discussed in section 20, chapter 19, The Meeting and the Member." (33:4)

In dealing with the question of reports to the praesidium meeting, section 20, chapter 19, says among other things: "The unit of action and knowledge and charity is neither the individual member nor the pair of co-visitors. The praesidium is that unit, and the detail of all ordinary cases is due to that unit. If the reports are withheld, the unit becomes ineffective. Under the plea of charity real interests of charity are prejudiced." To remove from members the obligation to furnish adequate reports is also to remove that sense of minute control which means so much in the Legion system. No effective advice or guidance or criticism can be given so that the essential idea of the praesidium is frustrated. The education and safeguarding of the members, which are based on the reports, are rendered impossible. Unless the members' weekly reports are adequately detailed to enable the minute control already referred to, indiscretions will almost certainly occur, with perhaps, detriment to the Legion.- "Strangest of all, the bond of confidentiality itself becomes loosened. For the guarantee of legionary confidentiality (so wonderfully honored at present) is the praesidium grip upon the member. If this grip is weakened, the bond of confidentiality weakens with it. In a word, the praesidium is not only the unit of charity and confidentiality, but also their mainstay."

"It is recognized of course that an occasional extreme case may be encountered in which the circumstances will suggest an absolute privacy. Recourse should at once be had to the Spiritual Director (or, if he be unavailable, to some other competent adviser) who will decide the point."

Divine Mysteries

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Confession (Cont. from p.1).

The apostle John also says: "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." And the Lord himself taught us to pray: "Forgive us our trespasses," linking our forgiveness of one another's offenses to the forgiveness of our sins that God will grant us.

Christ's call to conversion continues to resound in the lives of Christians. This second conversion is an uninterrupted task for the whole Church who, "clasping sinners to her bosom, [is] at once holy and always in need of purification, [and] follows constantly the path of penance and renewal. "This endeavor of conversion is not just a human work. It is the movement of a "contrite heart," drawn and moved by grace to respond to the merciful love of God who loved us first.

St. Ambrose says of the two conversions that, in the Church, "there are water and tears: the water of Baptism and the tears of repentance."

Jesus' call to conversion and penance, like that of the prophets before him, does not aim first at outward works, "sackcloth and ashes," fasting and mortification, but at the conversion of the heart, interior conversion. Without this, such penances remain sterile and false; however, interior conversion urges expression in visible signs, gestures and works of penance.

Interior repentance is a radical reorientation of our whole life, a return, a conversion to God with all our heart, an end of sin, a turning away from evil, with repugnance toward the evil actions we have committed. At the same time it entails the desire and resolution to change

one's life, with hope in God's mercy and trust in the help of His grace. This conversion of heart is accompanied by a salutary pain and sadness, which the Fathers called *animi cruciatus* (affliction of spirit) and *compunctio cordis* (repentance of heart).

The interior penance of the Christian can be expressed in many and various ways. Scripture and the Fathers insist above all on three forms, fasting, prayer, and almsgiving, which express conversion in relation to oneself, to God, and to others. Alongside the radical purification brought about by Baptism or martyrdom they cite as means of obtaining forgiveness of sins: efforts at reconciliation with one's neighbor, tears of repentance, concern for the salvation of one's neighbor, the intercession of the saints, and the practice of charity "which covers a multitude of sins."

Conversion is accomplished in daily life by gestures of reconciliation, concern for the poor, the exercise and defense of justice and right, by the admission of faults to one's brethren, fraternal correction, revision of life, examination of conscience, spiritual direction, acceptance of suffering, endurance of persecution for the sake of righteousness. Taking up one's cross each day and following Jesus is the surest way of penance.

Reading Sacred Scripture, praying the Liturgy of the Hours and the Our Father—every sincere act of worship or devotion revives the spirit of conversion and repentance within us and contributes to the forgiveness of our sins.

The seasons and days of penance in the course of the liturgical year (Lent, and each Friday in memory of the death of the

Lord) are intense moments of the Church's penitential practice.

The process of conversion and repentance was described by Jesus in the parable of the prodigal son, the center of which is the merciful father: the fascination of illusory freedom, the abandonment of the father's house; the extreme misery in which the son finds himself after squandering his fortune; his deep humiliation at finding himself obliged to feed swine, and still worse, at wanting to feed on the husks the pigs ate; his reflection on all he has lost; his repentance and decision to declare himself guilty before his father; the journey back; the father's generous welcome; the father's joy—all these are characteristic of the process of conversion. The beautiful robe, the ring, and the festive banquet are symbols of that new life—pure, worthy, and joyful—of anyone who returns to God and to the bosom of his family, which is the Church. Only the heart of Christ who knows the depths of his Father's love could reveal to us the abyss of his mercy in so simple and beautiful a way.

Christ has entrusted the exercise of the power of absolution to the apostolic ministry, which he charged with the "ministry of reconciliation." The apostle is sent out "on behalf of Christ" with "God making his appeal" through him and pleading: "Be reconciled to God."

In imparting to his apostles his own power to forgive sins the Lord also gives them the authority to reconcile sinners with the Church. This ecclesial dimension of their task is expressed most notably in Christ's solemn words to Simon Peter: "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." "The office of binding and loosing which was given to Peter was also assigned to the college of the apostles united to its head."

The words bind and loose mean: whomever you exclude from your communion, will be excluded from communion with God; whomever you receive anew into your communion, God will welcome back into his. Reconciliation with the Church is inseparable from reconciliation with God.

The Fathers of the Church present this sacrament as "the second plank [of salvation] after the shipwreck which is the loss of grace."

Penance requires the sinner to endure all things willingly, be contrite of heart, confess with the lips, and practice complete humility and fruitful satisfaction.

Among the penitent's acts contrition occupies first place. Contrition is "sorrow of the soul and detestation for the sin committed, together with the resolution not to sin again."

When it arises from a love by which God is loved above all else, contrition is called "perfect" (contrition of charity). Such contrition remits venial sins; it also obtains forgiveness of mortal sins if it includes the firm resolution to have recourse to sacramental confession as soon as possible.

The contrition called "imperfect" (or "attrition") is also a gift of God, a prompting of the Holy Spirit. It is born of the consideration of sin's ugliness or the fear of eternal damnation and the other penalties threatening the sinner (contrition of fear). Such a stirring of conscience can initiate an interior process, which, under the prompting of grace, will be brought to completion by sacramental absolution. By itself however, imperfect contrition cannot obtain the forgiveness of grave sins, but it disposes one to obtain forgiveness in the sacrament of Penance.

The reception of this sacrament ought to be prepared for by an examination of conscience made in the light of the Word

of God. The passages best suited to this can be found in the Ten Commandments, the moral catechesis of the Gospels and the apostolic Letters, such as the Sermon on the Mount and the apostolic teachings.

Confession to a priest is an essential part of the sacrament of Penance: "All mortal sins of which penitents after a diligent self-examination are conscious must be recounted by them in confession, even if they are most secret and have been committed against the last two precepts of the Decalogue; for these sins sometimes wound the soul more grievously and are more dangerous than those which are committed openly."

When Christ's faithful strive to confess all the sins that they can remember, they undoubtedly place all of them before the divine mercy for pardon. But those who fail to do so and knowingly withhold some, place nothing before the divine goodness for remission through the mediation of the priest, "for if the sick person is too ashamed to show his wound to the doctor, the medicine cannot heal what it does not know."

Anyone who is aware of having committed a mortal sin must not receive Holy Communion, even if he experiences deep contrition, without having first received sacramental absolution, unless he has a grave reason for receiving Communion and there is no possibility of going to confession.

Without being strictly necessary, confession of everyday faults (venial sins) is nevertheless strongly recommended by the Church. Indeed the regular confession of our venial sins helps us form our conscience, fight against evil tendencies, let ourselves be healed by Christ and progress in the life of the Spirit. By receiving more frequently through this sacrament the gift of the Father's mercy,

we are spurred to be merciful as he is merciful.

Absolution takes away sin, but it does not remedy all the disorders sin has caused. Raised up from sin, the sinner must still recover his full spiritual health by doing something more to make amends for the sin: he must "make satisfaction for" or "expiate" his sins. This satisfaction is also called "penance."

Priests must encourage the faithful to come to the sacrament of Penance and must make themselves available to celebrate this sacrament each time Christians reasonably ask for it. In danger of death any priest, even if deprived of faculties for hearing confessions, can absolve from every sin and excommunication.

Given the delicacy and greatness of this ministry and the respect due to persons, the Church declares that every priest who hears confessions is bound under very severe penalties to keep absolute secrecy regarding the sins that his penitents have confessed to him. He can make no use of knowledge that confession gives him about penitents' lives.

"An indulgence is a remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven, which the faithful Christian who is duly disposed gains under certain prescribed conditions through the action of the Church which, as the minister of redemption, dispenses and applies with authority the treasury of the satisfactions of Christ and the saints."

Individual, integral confession and absolution remain the only ordinary way for the faithful to reconcile themselves with God and the Church, unless physical or moral impossibility excuses from this kind of confession.

Article is a summary of the Catechism of the Catholic Church

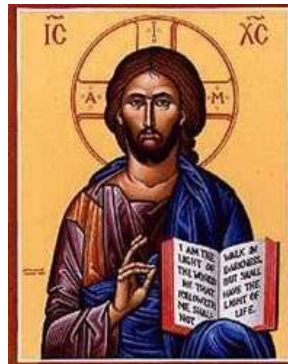
Legion Spirit

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A Year Full of Pictures



President's Worksheet

On the next page is an example President's worksheet. Praesidia presidents are required to have one prepared and filled out before each meeting.

[Name] PRAESIDIUM, LEGION OF MARY



1. The _____ meeting of [NAME] Praesidium on _____ (date).
2. **Opening Prayers** and the **Holy Rosary** started at _____
3. **The Spiritual Reading:** from the Handbook, page(s): _____
4. 1st meeting of the month: **Standing Instructions:** Page 109.
5. **The Minutes** of the previous meeting are read, approved and signed. Ask for additions/corrections.
6. **Vice President's Report**
 - The **Roll Call** is taken by the Vice President. _____ present _____ absent _____ excused
 - **Auxiliary Membership Report:** There are _____ Auxiliary Members, of these _____ are on probation and _____ are Adjutorian Members.
 - **Membership Recruiting Attempts:** _____ contacts made.
7. **Treasurer's Report:** Prev. Bal: _____ SB: _____ Expenditures (list): _____ Current Bal.: _____
8. **Reports on work done:** Ask for questions or comments from the praesidium after each report or team.
Sr./Br. _____
Sr./Br. _____
Sr./Br. _____
Sr./Br. _____
Sr./Br. _____
Sr./Br. _____
9. **Catena Legiones:** (recited 45 minutes into the meeting)
10. **The Allocutio:** This is immediately followed by **the Secret Bag** with no interruption of business.
11. **Work Assignments:**
Sr./Br: _____ Work: _____
Sr./Br: _____ Work: _____
Sr./Br: _____ Work: _____
Sr./Br: _____ Work: _____
Sr./Br: _____ Work: _____
Sr./Br: _____ Work: _____
12. **Other Business:** (Start with report of council meeting when appropriate) _____

Concluding Prayers said at _____.

Special Excerpt

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The Special Relationship the Orthodox [Handbook Excerpt]

If you open up your Handbook, and turn to the second page, it will list the copy write date as 1993. However the official, edition is the 2005 edition, which includes the text below, "The Special Relationship With Our Sister Churches of the Orthodox Tradition." It is important to note that the text talks both about the Orthodox Christians, as well as about Eastern Catholics. Latin Catholics have a particular duty to be especially aware of and familiar with the traditions of the East, both to help unify Christians, and so that they can understand the roots and origins of their own traditions and customs.

The work of bringing the message of Jesus Christ to every person, which, in the words of Pope Paul VI, is the "essential function of the Church" (EN:14), is closely linked to that other great commitment of the Church which is the promotion of reconciliation and unity among Christians. We recall here the prayer of our Lord at the Last Supper, "May they all be one. Father may they be one in Us, as You are in Me and I am in You, so that the world may believe it was You who sent Me." (Jn. 17:21).

In the wake of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) Christian Unity is one of the great priorities of the Catholic Church in these times, for as the same Council points out "the division among Christians openly contradicts the will of Christ, scandalizes the world, and damages that most holy cause, the preaching of the gospel to every creature". (UR:1).

In the context of the above the following quotation from Pope John Paul II Apostolic Letter "Orientale Lumen" written as an aid to restoring unity with all Christians of the East is of the greatest importance:

"Since in fact, we believe that the venerable and ancient tradition of the Eastern Churches is an integral part of the heritage of Christ's Church, the first need for Catholics is to be familiar with that tradition, so as to be nourished by it and to encourage the process of unity in the best way possible for each.

Our Eastern Catholic brothers and sisters are very conscious of being the living bearers of this tradition, together with our Orthodox brothers and sisters. The members of the Catholic Church of the Latin tradition must also be fully acquainted with this treasure and thus feel, with the Pope, a passionate longing that the full manifestation of the Church's catholicity be restored to the Church and to the world, expressed not by a single tradition, and still less by one community in opposition to the other; and that we too may all be granted a full taste of the divinely revealed and undivided heritage of the universal Church which is preserved and grows in the life of the Churches of the East as in those of the West. (No I)."

Further on the Holy Father speaking of the Orthodox Churches, says: "A particularly close link already binds us to them. We have almost everything in common; and above all, we have in common the true longing for unity. (No.3).'

These Orthodox Churches are truly our Sister Churches, we must promote in every way possible reconciliation and unity between us according to the mind of Christ and in keeping with the guidelines of the document "Unitatis Redintegratio" of the Second Vatican Council.

In the succeeding sections of this chapter, what is said in reference to the conversion of those who are not Catholics does not apply to our brothers and sisters of the Orthodox Churches.