

June 2016 – REPORT ON THE VISIT TO THE CONCILIUM

Concilium comments on Legion meetings and related chapters in the handbook

Comments to the Legion of Mary in Hong Kong by the Concilium		Related chapters in the Legion Handbook	Remarks by HK Comitium
Legion Prayer	Spiritual Director is responsible to lead all the Legion prayers (including the rosary without meditation)	<p>Ch.18 #4 There follow five decades of rosary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ There follow five decades of the rosary, of which the Spiritual Director shall initiate the first, third, and fifth, and the members the second and fourth. <p>Ch.23 The Prayers Invariable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The prayers of the Legion are to be regarded as invariable. Even in the invocations, no alteration or addition is to be made, either in respect of national, local, or particular saints, or where such alteration or addition would be a debatable matter. ➤ This is a demand for sacrifice, but the demand only follows on a sacrifice which is one of the greatest of its kind, as will readily be conceded by those who know the land from which these Constitutions have come, and who understand the unique place in its affections held by its National Apostle. ➤ It is true that the toleration of special invocations would not in itself be a large departure from common usage. Yet therein is contained the germ of a divergence in system, and the Legion dreads even that germ. 	If Spiritual Director needs to assign the President or a designated member to take up this responsibility, the praesidium could co-operate with him.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Again, the soul of the Legion is shown forth in its prayers, and it is fitting that the latter, by a uniformity most exact, shall typify — in whatever language they may in time be said — the complete unity of mind, heart, rule and practice, to which the Legion exhorts all who may anywhere serve beneath its standard. 	
Spiritual Reading	Spiritual Director could choose any reading materials, but the Legion handbook is the first priority.	<p>Ch.18 #5 Spiritual reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The rosary is immediately followed by Spiritual Reading, to be given by the Spiritual Director (or in his absence by the President). Its duration should be limited to about five minutes. The choice of spiritual reading is free, but it is strongly recommended that, at least during the early years of a praesidium, the reading be taken from the handbook in order to familiarise the members with its contents, and to stimulate them to study it seriously. 	
Allocutio	<p>Commentary upon the Handbook is the first priority of the allocutio given by Spiritual Director. However, in case of Spiritual Directors are inexperienced with the Legion, or do not give allocutio with relevance to, elaborating or bringing reflections on the Handbook, praesidium/ curia presidents can always complement by highlighting</p>	<p>Ch. 18 #11 The Allocutio</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ When the members resume their seats, a short talk shall be given by the Spiritual Director. Except in special circumstances, this should take the shape of a commentary upon the handbook with the object of eventually making the members completely familiar with every point contained therein. The allocutio will be greatly appreciated, and it will play an all-important part in the development of the members. Responsibility for the latter exists, and it would be an injustice both to them and to the Legion not to draw out all their possibilities. To do this it is essential that they be given a perfect knowledge of their organisation. The study of the 	If there is a need for the President or a designated member to give the allocutio, advice or assistance should be

	<p>the spirit of the Handbook to members when receiving work reports, having Handbook study and Legion functions during weekly meetings or curia meetings.</p>	<p>handbook will greatly help towards this end, but must not be considered to be a substitute for the allocutio. Legionaries will believe that they have studied the handbook when they have read it attentively two or three times. But even ten or twenty readings would not bring the degree of knowledge which the Legion desires. This will only be imparted by a systematic verbal explanation and expansion of the handbook week after week, year after year, until the members have become completely familiarised with every idea it contains.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ In the event of the absence of the Spiritual Director, the commentary should be made by the President or by any member designated by the President. It is stressed that a mere reading from the handbook or any other document does not suffice for the allocutio. ➤ The allocutio should not occupy more than five or six minutes. ➤ The difference between the praesidium where the allocutio has been thoroughly done, and the praesidium where it has been badly done, will be precisely the difference between a trained and an untrained army. <p>Ch. 34 #1 Spiritual Director</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Immediately after the recitation of the Catena, a short talk, preferably by way of commentary on the handbook (see section 11, The Allocutio, chapter 18, Order of the Praesidium Meeting) should be given by the Spiritual Director. In the event of his absence, this duty devolves upon the President. 	<p>sought from the Spiritual Director in advance.</p>
Handbook	Handbook study plays an important	Ch. 33 #10 Study of the Handbook	

Study	<p>role in the Legion meeting. It is vital for all praesidia to study the Handbook page by page every week and to share among the legionaries in the meeting. The understanding of the Handbook is a must for the spiritual development of every legionary.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ It is imperative that every member should study the handbook thoroughly. It is the official exposition of the Legion. It contains in briefest possible compass what it is important that every properly equipped legionary should know of the principles, the laws, the methods and the spirit of the organisation. Members — and in particular officers — who do not know the handbook cannot possibly work the system properly; while, on the other hand, increased knowledge will always bring increased efficiency. The unusual feature will be presented of interest growing with time, and quality with quantity. ➤ Actually, they must be reasonably comprehended if the apostolate is to be properly fulfilled, for they are only the common principles, that is to say, the very life of apostleship. Without a sufficient understanding of those principles, the apostolate would be deprived of its true meaning — its spiritual roots, and would not have the right to be called Christian at all. The difference between the Christian apostolate and a vague campaign of “doing good” is as the distance between heaven and earth. ➤ Therefore, the apostolic ideas of the handbook must be absorbed, and the praesidium must play the part of teacher. This process will be accomplished through the spiritual reading, through the Allocutio, and by stimulating the legionaries in a systematic reading and study of the handbook. Knowledge must not remain theoretical. Each item of the active work must be linked to its appropriate doctrine and thus given spiritual significance. ➤ In addition, it has a catechism value. It affords a simple, comprehensive presentation of the Catholic religion, conformed to the legislation of the 	
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		<p>Second Vatican Council.</p> <p>Appendix 10 Study of the Faith</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Study could advantageously be carried on by some or all of the members of a praesidium as an addition to their other work. ➤ The very first book to be studied should be the Legion handbook. Indeed, it is the essential duty for the legionary. For, unless the Legion system is properly understood, it cannot be successfully applied to the work of study or to any type of work. ➤ A definite portion of the meeting — possibly part of the time following the Allocutio — should be earmarked for the consideration of this work. ➤ At each meeting, the members must individually report on their week's work. In their reports they may bring forward any difficulty which has been encountered in the course of the week's reading. Members, however, should be discouraged from lightly bringing forward difficulties of a kind which could be solved by a little additional effort on their part. ➤ Self-help and individual effort on the part of the members should be encouraged as much as possible. Care should be exercised that the discussions do not err into unnecessary or undesirable channels, and that points too deep or in any way misleading or irrelevant are not pursued. In all these matters, the chief reliance of the praesidium will, of course, be the Spiritual Director. ➤ It is stressed that the work-obligation of each member can only be discharged by the performance of a substantial active weekly task. It may not be satisfied, not even in part, by study. 	
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Work Hours	<p>As per the Handbook, the different requirement of work hours for a senior and a junior member is clearly stated. However, it is not necessary to be recorded in the minutes of the Legion meeting and praesidium annual report.</p> <p>Legionaries should always focus on the spirituality of Legion work rather than the calculation of hours. Thus, members need not combine work hours of several assignments in a week or compensate work hours in the following week if one cannot comply with the minimum requirements (one hour for the juniors). Likewise, due to the special circumstances of Filipino members and school junior praesidium members in Hong Kong, it is understandable and acceptable that they may not satisfy the basic requirement of hours of assignment.</p>	<p>Ch. 33 #2 Performance of weekly obligation</p> <p>➤ This work should be “substantial,” that is, the legionary should spend a couple of hours a week at it. But legionaries should not thus mathematically restrict themselves. A large proportion of legionaries far exceed that minimum, going on to the gift of several days in the week. Many are found who give every day. The work must represent some definite active duty assigned by the praesidium, not something dictated by the pleasure of the individual legionary. Prayers or other spiritual exercises, however considerable, do not satisfy this obligation, or even supply in part the place of active work.</p>	

<p>Spirit of Legion Work</p>	<p>Legionaries should focus on the attitude and spirit of Legion work. They should report and record the content of their assignments, their spiritual experience and their continuous transformation in faith through the weekly Legion work.</p>	<p>Ch. 33 #2 Performance of weekly obligation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The work is but prayer in another form, and the rules of prayer must be applied to it. No work will persist for long without that supernatural framework. Either a duty will be easy, in which case it will become monotonous; or if interesting, it will most probably be difficult and marked by rebuffs and seeming failure. In either event, human considerations will quickly urge its abandonment. Instead, the legionary must be trained to look through the mists of human sentiments, which obscure every work, for its true outline which is the supernatural. The more that work is like a cross, the more it is to be esteemed. ➤ The legionary is a soldier, and duty should not be a less virile thing to the legionary than it is to the soldiers of earthly causes. Everything that is noble and self-sacrificing and chivalrous and strong in the soldierly character should be found at its height in the true legionary of Mary, and of course reflected in that legionary's work. ➤ Soldierly duty may variously mean death, or the monotony of a sentry beat, or the scrubbing of a barrack-floor. But in each case, duty alone is looked to, not what that duty comprises. In all circumstances is found the same fidelity, and defeat or victory do not affect duty. No less solid must be the legionary's conception of duty; no less thorough its application to each item of work, the most insignificant as well as the most difficult. ➤ The legionary work is to be done in closest union with Mary. But, in addition, it must be regarded as an essential aim of that work to instil into those who are the object of it a knowledge of Mary and a true love of her, which will cause those souls to undertake some form of service of her. An 	
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<p>Legion report</p>	<p>It is not necessary to record work hours in praesidium annual report. Members should focus on the attitude and spirit of Legion work. They should report and record the content of their assignments, their spiritual experience, their continuous transformation in faith and their encounter with God through the weekly Legion work rather than all sorts of figures, categories of assignments and time record.</p>	<p>Ch. 18 # 9 Reports of the members are received.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The praesidium should not take the non-performance of the legionary duty as a matter of course. When members have been validly prevented from performing their work, they should (if possible) furnish some explanation. The absence of a report, if unexplained, conveys the impression that neglect of duty is in question and constitutes a bad example for every member. ➤ The report, and all discussion upon it, must be delivered in a tone of voice which will reach every part of the room. ➤ In its own way the report is as important to the meeting as the prayers. They supplement each other. Both elements are necessary to a praesidium meeting. ➤ The report connects the work with the praesidium and therefore it must be a clear presentation of the doings of the member — in a sense as vivid as the picture on a cinema screen — such as will enable the other members 	

		<p>mentally to engage in that work, to judge it, to comment on it, to learn from it. Accordingly, the report must show what has been attempted and achieved, and in what spirit; the time spent; the methods used; what has not been gained and the persons who have not been touched.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The meeting should be bright and cheerful. Therefore, the reports should be such as will interest as well as inform the meeting. It is impossible to believe that the praesidium is healthy if the meeting is deadly dull, and undoubtedly it will repel young members. ➤ Some classes of work are so full of variety that it is easy to make a good report. Other works do not offer the same possibilities, so that each unusual feature, however small, should be remembered for mention in the report. ➤ The report must not be too long; nor too brief; above all, it must not be a routine phrase. Failure in these directions not only shows that the member is neglecting his duty but also that the other members are assisting him in that neglect. This strikes at the whole legionary idea of the supervision of the work. The praesidium cannot supervise a work unless it is fully informed about it <p>Ch.18 #7 Standing instruction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 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; ➤ 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 	
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		<p>and in one's fellow-members, the Person of our Lord is once again seen and served by Mary, his Mother;</p> <p>Ch. 33 #3 Furnishing at the meeting a verbal report of the work done</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ This is a very important duty, and one of the chief exercises which help to sustain interest in the work of the Legion. It is for this latter purpose as much as for the supplying of information to the meeting that the report is intended. A good test of the efficiency of the legionary is the care given to the preparing of the report, and the manner of presenting it. Each report is a brick in the edifice of the meeting, and the integrity of the latter depends upon the perfection of the reports. Each report missing or defective is a blow at the meeting, which is the source of life. ➤ An important part of the training of the member should lie in the learning of the methods of other members, as disclosed through their reports, and in the hearing of the comments which one's own reports elicit from experienced legionaries. It follows that if a report gives only meagre information, it cannot be the means of helping either the member who makes it or those who listen to it. 	
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Other comments by the Concilium to the Legion of Mary Hong Kong on administration matters

1. The Role of Senior Curia to Junior Curia

- Senior curiae should play the role of companion in supervising and leading junior curiae. They should neither impose an authoritarian role or micro-manage the junior curia.

2. Senior Legionaries leading Junior Praesidium

- Although it is stated in the Handbook that two senior legionaries should be the officers in a junior praesidium (One should take the role of president, the other one should also be an officer with a view to providing for the absence of the President, and for the possibilities of expansion, Ch. 14 #22 and Ch36 #3, Legion Handbook). However, it is always flexible for a junior praesidium to have more assistance in case of the vacancy of Spiritual Director, a qualified legionary named as Tribune could be assigned to the junior praesidium for spiritual formation (Tribune, Ch. 14#9, Legion Handbook).
- The Concilium officers reminded again that it should be flexible in leading a Junior praesidium instead of being rigid.

3. School Praesidium

- In case of having difficulties in maintaining weekly meeting during school holidays, it is acceptable and understandable that meetings will be compelled to adjourn during the period.
- Concilium officers understand and accept that it is nearly unlikely for a senior legionary to join the meeting of a school praesidium as a member or an officer. Again, it is flexible as long as there is a more mature junior member who understands the spirit of the Legion and is capable of leading the meeting as president or officer.

4. Probationers among Active Members

Once the probation starts, the probationer should be assigned for substantial Legion work weekly to experience the real Legion life. Handbook study is essential to all members; no one could treat it as fulfilment of one's substantial Legion work. (Appendix 10, Study of the Faith, Legion Handbook)