

Allocutio Toronto Senatus Council, February 13, 2022 (Rev.) Joseph Moncada  
Chapter 11 #5 The Weekly Meeting Of The Praesidium, pages 71-72

The Handbook describes the atmosphere of the weekly meeting as supernatural. It is no ordinary gathering of people but one initiated, guided and carried through to its end by the Holy Spirit. We testify that by his unction he divinizes our Legion prayers, and sweetens our fraternity as he makes people who otherwise would have little or nothing naturally in common intimately share in a supernatural mission. As by our baptism we share in Christ's anointing, similarly by our Legion membership everyone brings with him into the praesidium meeting a unique anointing which he shares with others, such that each meeting has a unique anointing upon it ordered to the good of its members, the good of the Legion, and ultimately the good of the Church. I ask you to ponder and treasure this in your heart!

That we may appreciate the value, supremacy, place and power of the weekly praesidium meeting in the Legion system, the Handbook applies three useful metaphors. It is the heart, the power-house, and the treasury of the Legion.

The weekly praesidium meeting of its members is positioned within the Legion life as its heart. From it flows our energies, plans, reflective reports, hopes, fraternal unity and affection by the power of the Holy Spirit, all in the name of Mary, offered to her, and through the purifying power of her Immaculate Heart to the Most Holy Trinity. The five loaves and two fish which we bring to the meeting, so to speak, are multiplied there and then by the Holy Spirit through Mary's intercession as we carry the gifts and graces received into the performance of our weekly assignments. Let us reassure ourselves of this by recalling that we confidently declared in our Legionary promise to the Holy Spirit, "that it is by her, and to whom she pleases, when she pleases, and in the quantity and manner she pleases, that all your gifts and virtues and graces (that is to say the Holy Spirit's) are administered." (Legionary Promise, Handbook p. 90)

The praesidium meeting is the Legion's powerhouse; its generating station, giving legionaries their light and energy: light to better understand the Handbook, to receive insights into the Legion system, to meticulously plan and assess their particular works with all their challenges, achievements, and consolations; light to learn Mary's will as manifested in the Handbook, and to appreciate each other as legionary brothers and sisters. The meeting should never discourage and exhaust its members; it is not designed to do so, rather it should inspire, encourage, console, and leave everyone energized and in good spirits.

The praesidium meeting is the Legion's treasury. We understand this in a material sense. Just as no army marches into battle without munitions and food in its belly, similarly, the Legion army, admittedly a spiritual one, cannot operate unless its material needs are met by its members contributing to its secret bag collection. While each of us is composed of body and soul, the soul with its spiritual needs and the body its material needs, the Legion too has not only spiritual needs but material needs as well, which we cannot overlook but should be met by generous donations to the secret bag by each of us contributing according to his ability.

And the praesidium, while attending to its own needs, will also generously provide for the financial needs of the higher council which carefully governs it.

By taking on the humble attitude counselled by St. Paul: "If anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself," (Gal 6:3) the meeting fulfills the Handbook description as "the great community exercise in where one sits unseen in the midst of others." (Handbook p.71) The Legionary is to avoid self-centeredness and ought to be other-centred, so to speak. We do well to practice the words of St. James: "let every man be quick to hear and slow to speak" (Jas 1:19) without hindering or compromising the participation required of one's office and/or position in the praesidium meeting. Furthermore, the more we humble ourselves, like little children the better able we are to receive the peculiar grace of the work that Our Lord wishes to bestow. The meeting itself is purposely structured to produce the spirit of religious discipline--so sadly lacking today among many Christians--and focus intent and facilitate the practice of the virtues, especially fraternal charity, aimed above all at pleasing God and personal sanctification. By maintaining the integrity of the praesidium meeting, legionaries can confidently expect to achieve their goals as they proceed to their assigned work. Lastly, our personal preferences and likings inevitably come up during the meeting. This is normal and healthy in any family discussion and may prove to be helpful. However, they are of secondary importance and value only if they serve the common interests, needs and objectives of our apostolate, especially the choosing and performance of our works. Personal preferences and likings need to be submitted to the praesidium's discernment. St. Paul tells us, "do not quench the Spirit," (1 Thes 5:19) and St. John counsels us "to test the spirits." (1 John 4:1)

For these and other reasons known to us, we shall regard attendance at the weekly meeting as our first and most sacred duty to the Legion. It is a sacred duty because it derives from our legionary promise to the Holy Spirit. It is a sacred duty because our participation in the Legion apostolate puts our sacred baptismal promises into action. Dear officers, deeply impress upon your fellow members the obligation, reasons and benefits of consistent attendance at the weekly praesidium meeting. By doing so, you will protect your praesidium against a major cause of ineffective work and guard against defection from our Legion ranks.