

Toronto Senatus Allocutio April 16, 2023.

by Father Joseph Moncada

April 2023, chapter 18: Order Of The Praesidium Meeting, page 110, #9 Reports of the members are received....through to the end of the sixth paragraph: "...a vital element in the health of the praesidium."

While reports are to be delivered verbally, I recommend that if you read them do so with meaning in your voice and a natural sound in your speech. Avoid the extremes on the one hand, of a monotone or robotic manner, and on the other hand, an overly affected delivery. We rarely hear a report read in an affected manner, but it is not unusual to hear a report read in a monotone or robotic way, which has the effect of creating disinterest in listeners. Glance frequently at the faces of your listeners. Are they looking at you? Do they look like their minds are somewhere else? Do the expressions on their faces communicate their engagement? So when you read your report, aim to make it easy for the listening ears of our council members. Understand that anything that is written on paper is meant for the eyes, but read it in a way that intends it for the ears. Remember this: the written word is for the eye but the spoken word is for the ear.

When you publicly deliver your report, you need not read it word for word but rather referred to it as you communicate its contents. Indeed, if you wish, let it act as a safety net for your memory so that there is no danger of omitting any of its important contents.

Deliver your report in a voice loud enough to reach everyone in the room. From this, it follows that it's a good practice to assess the size of the room and where people are seated in it. Pronounce your words clearly. Do not mumble. Speak your words in articulate sentences. Be as explicit as possible in your words, so that no one is left wondering about your meaning. Let your pace be neither quick nor slow. The human mind processes, neither very well. If English is your second language, and perhaps recently acquired and therefore struggle with its pronunciation and the meaning of words, be assured that your brother and sister legionaries appreciate your efforts to verbally deliver your report in English, and we commend your attempt to go beyond any possible personal embarrassment to yourself.

As the disciples came back from their mission of proclamation, healing, and exorcism to make an enthusiastic report to the Lord, so may your reports be delivered with the candour, energy and quiet intensity, that communicates you have something vital to say and have done beautiful works for Our Lord and Our Lady.

The Handbook tells us that the absence of a report, if unexplained, gives the impression that legionaries have neglected their duty either to do their works or even if they have done them, have failed to report them. These hurt the morale of the legionaries present at the meeting. Why is the report missing? Why were not the works done? To use military language, why is this Council or Presidium missing in action? Without valid reasons given, this neglect of duty can depress the other legionaries and have a subtle but real weakening effect on the Legion. I will echo the words of the handbook: it "constitutes a bad example for every member." The Legion has a history of a high level of accountability. Thanks be to God.

Nonetheless, members, especially executive members, should do everything to maintain this, and root out and correct at the first sign the beginnings of a culture of excuses which sucks the life out of discipline. The Legion and Our Lady deserve our best stewardship.

Here's something in the handbook that may seem difficult to accept: "The President must refuse to accept reports which require an effort to hear." No matter what the reason or reasons are for a report to be difficult to hear, it does not rise to the level of our Legion standard. If a report cannot be heard by the body, it cannot be understood by the body. If it cannot be heard by the body, consider it, not delivered to the body. It's as simple as that. It's unacceptable. Think of oral reports delivered by employees in businesses and corporations to their employers and coworkers. There is an expectation that they be given intelligently and articulately. If these standards exist in secular settings, how much more should they exist in a religious organisation, such as our Legion which makes its offering to God?

The handbook reminds us, dear presidents, that you are to set the tone for all the members of your councils. So my words today are directed to all of you, but especially the presidents. I have not overstated the case. If I sound insistent, understand that I take my insistence from the handbook itself, which states, "The members must insist on all, including the president, speaking out.

So, when we make our reports, we are not acting in a perfunctory manner, that is to say, a routine, mechanical and superficial way, but rather cherish the opportunity to enrich your brother and sister listeners, who desire to share in your joys and victories, delight in your wisdom, learn from your expertise and strategies, sympathise with your struggles, and comfort you in your sadnesses. Be grateful that God gave you the opportunities to serve Him and Our Lady and to sanctify yourselves by your works, and the very task of reporting them.