

Allocutio Toronto Senatus June 11, 2023

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June 2023, Chapter 18: Order of The Praesidium

Meeting, page 112, #9 begin at the 12th paragraph: "Generally, the work of the Legion is..." and end on page 113.

This section of our Handbook begins with the admittance that our Legion work is usually difficult. Consequently, the praesidium needs to listen to even the smallest details of the works of the reporting legionaries, otherwise it will be hampered in its ability to consider and comment on them and thus may simply forgo the effort to give any meaningful and helpful feedback to the reporting members, which in turn may give them the impression that their work is of little or no value. The relationship between the reporting members and its praesidium is reciprocal such that the reporting members must give minute details of their apostolic efforts for the praesidium to consider and comment on them.

You are in the Legion to do as much good as possible for the kingdom of God. But there are works, which in some respects are naturally repugnant or your personal attitude toward them finds them so. (see Handbook page 112 para. 2.) Do not be shocked by the expression "natural repugnances" because the Handbook is full of candour and exempt from any naïve optimism. There can be a number of reasons for this natural repugnance. For example, you may have an aversion to the prison apostolate because of your fear of criminals housed on mass in detention centres. Or you may be fearful of or shamefaced to do door-to-door and crowd contact works. Perhaps you experience the sights and smells in hospital visitations to be revolting. Your possible repugnance to certain works may be caused by the type of characters you encounter in some of them or you possess a delicate temperament. These and others may be works you would rather not be assigned.

It is our current concern that most of the praesidia of our Senatus Council and attached councils do not do heroic works, which by their very nature are the hardest, yet arguably the most marvellous. For a number of reasons, primary of which are fear, fear of rejection and failure and feelings of being ill-equipped for these tasks, they are not being done. Nevertheless, confront your fears and equip yourselves. I encourage you to obtain permission from your Spiritual Director, and then dive into the deep end of the pool of heroic works waiting for you.

It is for the works that have the greatest degree of natural repugnance built into them, or towards which you in some way have aversion that the greatest need for their performance exists. This is especially true of heroic works for which we should model our apostolic zeal regardless of our fears and aversions after our Lord's. Think of how he the sinless and Righteous One overcame what would have been for others a moral and ritual abhorrence toward tax collectors and prostitutes, a natural revulsion toward lepers, and an antipathy toward sinners of every kind. More so, he conquered and counted as nothing the dangers and threats posed by the Jewish authorities. Despite any repugnance that may have naturally presented itself to works of any kind, the Servants of God, Frank Duff and Alphonsus Lambe, and Venerable Adele

Quinn, in no way feared or despised them but rather eagerly sought and heroically performed them.

The reporting period becomes indispensable for the assertive exercise of legionary discipline which overcomes weaknesses as they reveal themselves in the legionaries and in the performance of their works.

This cooperative disciplinary exercise of the whole praesidium has as its purpose the offering of compelling advice for the reporting members to better accomplish the same works in the future—always accompanied by praise, sympathy, and encouragement.

The report must reveal without ambiguities what the legionary is really doing. Only then can the praesidium exercise a guiding hand over the member's actions in order to stimulate him to excellence and safeguard him from missteps. If the report is not conveyed in an interesting manner, the legionary will likewise be offered uninteresting feedback, inevitably accompanied by deficient direction and inadequate counsel. Neither can he afford this, nor can the Legion allow itself to lose its hold on a him without incurring bad results. Almost unavoidably some other members will imitate the bad example of reporting they hear. This must be prevented at all costs.

How often have legionaries said or heard "that was a good report." Yet we should not settle for "merely good," (Handbook page 112, para. 4) but rather aim high and deliberately attempt to add to the perfect performance of the work a model report to the praesidium. This greatly benefits the training of the other members, both in the doing of the work and in the way of reporting it. Our Legion Handbook sets the standard, not simply at the good but at the great.

The report is like the nerve-centre or principal source of control of the whole meeting designed to cause everyone to commiserate and everything else in the praesidium to react in sympathy and harmony with it, for better or for worse. It is usually the time we give voice to our strongest feelings and convictions or sometimes, sadly and hopefully infrequently, a moment when an uncertain silence may prevail.

Lastly, ask yourself, how would Our Lady make my report? Call her to mind and glance at her statue just before you make your report and she will help you deliver it in her spirit.