

Allocutio Senatus Sunday, April 14, 2024 By Reverend Joseph Moncada  
Chapter 19 The Meeting and the Member, Section 8. Duration of the meeting, pages 118-119.

The handbook wisely prescribes that the duration of the praesidium meeting “shall not last longer than an hour and a half.” (Handbook Page 118, Section 8) This is an appropriate length of time, not too long and not too short, to efficiently handle Legion business; the time suited for generating enthusiasm, maintaining interest and sustaining attention. Rare are the attendees of any kind of meeting who say publicly or to themselves that a meeting was too short, while on the contrary members easily sense when a meeting is unduly long.

Members should strictly adhere to not meeting beyond an hour and a half. If the praesidium meetings frequently go beyond the prescribed length, you may find that some members simply will not tolerate it, causing them to drop out of active membership altogether because they cannot nor will not commit to more than the duration time. They should not be considered lacking in zeal or generosity simply because they want to adhere to the handbook requirement. In today’s world, many people follow tight daily schedules filled with work and family commitments and therefore do not have the leisure to linger beyond an hour and a half obligation. Furthermore, consider that many legionaries have more than enough fatiguing meetings at their workplace; the last thing they need is another long and potentially wearisome proceeding. Currently, in developed countries, people are “meeting to death.” Prolonged meetings are almost guaranteed to put off members, probationary members, and recruits. Do not underestimate their discouraging effects on members.

Beware of rushing your proceedings. A hurried meeting which stays within the hour and a half allotted time is in reality a long one crammed into a shorter time space. All of us have experienced listening to a musical recording or watching a video played at high speed; neither is understood nor enjoyed. Legion meetings that proceed rapidly leave no room for reflection, feedback, proper deliberation, and decision-making; they harm the integrity of the meeting; they constrain the Holy Spirit to act, and so make the meeting simply earthly and functional, leaving little room for the graces to penetrate, and little place for Mary’s motherly and queenly action. Just as personal prayers recited in haste dishonour God and Our Lady, rushed meetings in ways fall short of the respect due to our Legion.

A praesidium that cannot adequately conduct all its business within an hour and a half and therefore, as the handbook says, “cuts short” its meeting is a praesidium that simply has too much to do. Its temptation will be to dash through its meeting, and thereby affect its proper functioning. That being the case, a subdivision of the praesidium into a second praesidium should be seriously considered. Even if you are not racing through the meetings, but handling them efficiently, you may still find that business frequently needs to be cut short, then take it as a sign that your praesidium has too much work, and a blessing that you should consider its subdivision into another.

Dear legionaries, wisely follow the handbook by keeping your praesidium meetings to an hour and a half, no more and no less.