



Allocutio for February 2025
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*Based on the Handbook, Chapter 19, The Meeting And The Member,
Section 19. Work of each one a concern of all, page 123*

Work of each one a concern of all

This section of the Handbook counsels the legionary to be concerned about the work of his fellow praesidium members. This is to be understood, in light of the whole Handbook, as no ordinary concern, but one which rises to the level of solicitude, which is a fortified concern. So your concern for their work is, in fact, solicitude for their work. For this allocutio, I will use the word concern in this heightened sense.

The praesidium meeting begins with everyone equally participating in the Legion prayers. Your equal participation and recognition of it is intended to be carried into the meeting's business, adhering to the principle that the work of each legionary is the concern of all. Your attention to the details of the members' reports indicates your regard for them and interest in their work. Do not underestimate the significant impact your attention to each item of business has on your praesidium; it immediately affects your praesidium and extends to its council and, in a sense, reverberates throughout the worldwide Legion of Mary. Since this is typically undetected, it can be undervalued.

Make an effort to actively engage in your fellow legionaries' reports by what the Handbook calls paying "a spiritual visit to every person or place recounted as having been the subject of the work" (p.123). You can best do this by using your imagination to reconstruct the work in your mind, according to when and where the work took place and by employing your judgment to respectfully evaluate it from every angle, according to Legion standards, criteria, objectives and spirit.

Take a genuine interest in your fellow legionary's work, so that it is not seen as solely personal or insignificant. Similarly, since your words and actions affect everyone in the praesidium, they must also be regarded as a shared concern. In a real sense, the work of one is the responsibility of all, as almost every task is ultimately beneficial or detrimental to the praesidium. Just as a structure's stability depends on the integrity of each brick, so too does a praesidium's strength rely on the diligence and commitment of every member. What one legionary builds, his fellow praesidium members must uphold. Each one plays a role in shaping the good of his praesidium.

I will elaborate on the proceedings. The principle that "the work of each one is the concern of all" carries several practical consequences. First, it fosters mutual responsibility, ensuring that no

one remains indifferent to the work of another. Everyone has a stake in making sure tasks are carried out effectively. This fosters accountability, as legionnaires not only contribute their efforts but also support and encourage one another to uphold high standards. Such a mindset promotes collaboration, recognizing that teamwork and shared expertise produce better outcomes than isolated labour.

This principle calls for supporting those legionaries struggling with their work so that they receive the mentorship, resources, or encouragement they need to succeed. A thriving praesidium depends on its members acknowledging their interdependence and working together for the common good. Lastly, responsibility demands that if someone's work harms the praesidium, it is the duty of all to address the issue and seek solutions. Only by embracing this shared concern can a praesidium flourish, ensuring that no task is neglected and no member is left out.

"The work of each one a concern of all" serves as a guiding principle within the Legion of Mary, underscoring the importance of individual and collective responsibility and mutual support among you. By embracing this principle, you can increase your competence, cultivate a strong sense of fellowship, enhance your apostolic efforts, improve your praesidium and ultimately fulfill your mission to serve Mary, God and the Church. May the concern of all be for one, and the concern of one be for all! ■

Addendum

Let your concern for the members of your praesidium be motivated by charity to counter various personal obstacles to concern. Guard against self-absorption and egoism, which often compel one to focus excessively on one's desires, ambitions, and struggles, thereby diminishing concern for others. Pride can further create a sense of superiority, resulting in indifference toward legionaries in need. Apathy often caused by a hardened heart or desensitization to the suffering of others, can lead to a habitual lack of empathy. Fear and anxiety also play a role, as concerns about rejection can prevent one from engaging with others. Additionally, life is filled with distractions and busyness, which may consume one's attention and energy, causing one to overlook or neglect others. The Toronto Senatus Council with its attached councils and praesidia is multi-ethnic and multicultural. So be respectful of social and cultural differences. Ensure that they do not lead to prejudice and discrimination based on race, class, or sex, which would create division rather than unity. Lastly, a legionary who carries emotional and psychological burdens, such as trauma, depression, or exhaustion, may find it difficult to extend concern to others, as a wounded heart often turns inward rather than outward. Overcoming these obstacles requires conscious effort, prayer, self-examination, deliberate acts of charity, humility, patience, and generosity, which help break down these barriers and open one's heart to others.