



Allocutio for January 2024
by Rev. Fr. Joseph Moncada, Toronto Senatus Spiritual Director

Based on the Legion of Mary Handbook, Chapter 19, The Meeting And The Member, Section 3. The praesidium must respect the rules, page 117

Each section of this chapter explains an aspect of the respect a legionary should have for his praesidium meeting. In this section, we learn that the respect a member shows to his praesidium by adhering to the rules will proportionately impact the legionary life communicated to him. This means that the greater the respect he shows toward it, the greater the portion of Legion life granted to him; conversely, the less respect he gives it, the smaller the portion of Legion life conferred upon him.

How is the legionary life communicated to him? It is communicated to him naturally through his working of the Legion system and supernaturally through the actual graces granted for his efforts by God, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In the order of nature, he grows in his wise and faithful working of the Legion system, and in the order of grace, he receives the graces and gifts needed to carry it out. Accordingly, it is a dictum that a legionary's respect for his praesidium will be commensurate with the legionary life granted to him.

We observe from personal experience that showing respect to our superiors, demonstrating loyalty to our work colleagues, and valuing our fellow members in organizations or clubs is almost always reciprocated. Respect usually begets respect. The precious mutual respect called for among our praesidium members is assumed into a unique and supernatural reciprocity, which is at work in the praesidium meeting: a reciprocity between human efforts and grace, whereby our efforts to demonstrate loyalty, respect, and esteem for the meeting are, in turn, apportioned back to us by God as needed grace, according to his sovereign design. To be sure, this reciprocal exchange between human effort and grace has a continuous, formative effect, both on you and the fellow members of your praesidium. This follows the principle Our Lord has given to us, namely: 'Give, and it will be given to you...' and 'The measure you give will be the measure you get back' (Luke 6:38).

It is crucial to recognize that the very essence of the Legion spirit lies in its relentless pursuit of excellence, leaving no room for compromise. For the legionary, the praesidium meeting is a training ground and place of exercise for all Christian and human virtues, practiced in obedience to rules ordered toward the support of his fellow members. Thus formed, he carries this same spirit of excellence into his work assignments.

Praesidium rules may seem, to some, to be cold, hard, formalistic, and impersonal; nevertheless, we live together with Jesus, Mary, and Joseph in the Mystical Home of Nazareth, which is permeated with warmth and affection. As a consequence of our deep communion with them, and moved by their love for us, their powerful intercession aids us in growing toward the highest degree of respect for our fellow members and inspires their reciprocal respect toward us. Accordingly, let us respect each other as we would revere Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. Understand that respect for the rules is not an end in and of itself; rather, it facilitates the practice of charity among members and fosters their zeal and love for the Legion's apostolate. Just as every well-ordered, charity-filled Christian family has agreed upon rules to ensure its growth in mutual love, so too, our Legion family has rules to safeguard respect for the praesidium meeting, where members are called to live Legion life joyfully, together with and modelled on the Mystical Home of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. May they be praised forever! ■