The Legion of Mary – Rochester Comitium
Instructions for Vice-Presidents of Praesidia

1. The first duty of the Vice-President (and all officers) is attendance at the monthly Comitium meeting. Officers of Praesidia form the Comitium and are responsible for the government, growth and development of the Legion in the area. This includes the making of Comitium decisions - motions or disapprovals; also participation on various Comitium committees, i.e. Extension, Visitation, Publicity and Function Committees. Remember that the Praesidium officers are the Comitium. If you are not present, then there is no Comitium and part of Our Lady's work is left undone and there is no time for that because precious souls are involved. The Curia provides the link of communication in the Legion system. It is therefore essential that the Praesidium officers take notes at the Comitium meeting and report back to the Praesidium members on all matters and business considered at the Comitium meetings.

2. Assists the President. The Vice-President presides at the meeting in the absence of the President. Acquaint yourself with the duties of the President. This includes preparing an Allocutio and having one ready for an emergency. It should not be a reading from the Handbook or another source. While a commentary in your own words on a section in the Handbook is ideal, it is permissible to read something you prepared.

3. Takes the attendance at Praesidium meetings. The Vice-President calls and marks the roll book.

4. Maintains membership rolls: Active, Praetorian, Auxiliary, Adjutorian, both Probationary and Permanent.

5. Welcomes new members and introduces them preferably before or after the meeting and tries to make them feel at home. Takes name, address and telephone number. Answers any questions the new member may have.

6. Explains procedure of meeting to new members. The Vice-President gives the new member a Handbook and Tessera and explains the use of a Legion notebook.

a. Kneel for Opening Prayers, including Rosary.
b. Midway stand for recitation of Catena.
c. Secret Bag collection follows Allocutio (explain funds and that it should be a small sacrifice).
d. Kneel for the Concluding Prayers.
e. Late arrivals should kneel and silently recite the Opening Prayers. Explain why.
(It is not done to embarrass the member in any way. But we absolutely cannot do anything without the grace of God. That is why the meeting begins with the prayer to the Holy Spirit, even before we say the Rosary. The Legion realizes the importance of this and does not want the late member to miss out on the grace that they need. That is why the Legion asks the member to kneel and silently recite the Opening Prayer before joining the meeting.)
f. Members who must leave early should notify the President before the meeting. Before leaving, they should kneel and silently recite the Concluding Prayers.
g. In the early stages of membership, assign a few pages of Handbook reading to be reported on the following week.
h. Explain the Standing Instructions.
i. Instruct new member on the daily recitation of the Catena.

7. Enters probationary members on a separate list, showing starting date and the date when they are eligible to take the Promise.

8. About two weeks before the new member is due to take the Promise, advises the President and the Spiritual Director, then advises the member to review the Promise in the Handbook and sets the date that the Promise will be taken.

9. Following the taking of the Promise, transfers the new member to the permanent Active list.

10. Maintains a separate list of probationary Auxiliary members, showing date started and date for follow-up three months later. The Vice-President contacts them by mail at the end of the three month period, advising them that they are eligible for permanent Auxiliary membership. All Auxiliaries should be personally visited regularly where possible, to encourage them and lead them on to possible future Active or Adjutorian membership and to make them realize they are a part of the Legion and to see the importance of their prayers. This can be part of an assignment for a team of Praesidium members. The Vice-President should notify the President so that visits can be assigned. Auxiliaries living outside the parish could be noted on a 3 x5 card, giving the name, address, telephone number and date recruited, and the card given to the Comitium Vice-President to be assigned to the nearest praesidium or council.

11. Contacts absent members (by telephone or mail) and checks on illness. If a new member does not show up the following week, calls them up or visits them; asks whether they were sick, tells them you missed them, etc. If they still don't show up, follows up on them again. It has been found that some of the best Legionaries were obtained after such an effort on the part of the Vice-President.

12. About a month before the date of the Acies, with the help of the other officers and members, sends out letters inviting Auxiliary members to the Acies, giving date, name and address of the Church, starting time and whether a social will follow. This time can also be an occasion for one of the visits which the Praesidium should be making to its Auxiliaries.

13. Assists with the preparation of the Praesidium Annual Report. From the membership rolls, prepares a statement of membership as follows:

a. Number of Active members and number on probation.
b. Number of Auxiliary members and number on probation.
c. Number of Praetorians.
d. Number of Adjutorians, religious and lay.
e. Number of members gained since last report.
f. Number of members lost since last report and reasons (illness, family obligations, etc.)
g. Number of visitors.
h. Number recruited, whether they came to a meeting or not.
i. Percent of member's attendance at Praesidium meeting.
j. Percent of officer's attendance at Praesidium meeting.
k. Percent of officer's attendance at Council meeting.

During the meeting, be aware that you are assisting the President and look out for details that may have been missed. You are free to observe, whereas the President can't be aware of all that is going on, since the President's mind is on conducting the meeting. Be on the look-out for indications of loss of spirit or defects in the Praesidium – for example, partners who may not like to work together.

All of the officers, together with the President, should set a high degree of spirituality and zeal for the members. The Vice-President especially, should work together with the President, much as a father and mother would work together to guide the other members of the family. All the officers should work together as a team. They should meet together a few times a year, apart from the Praesidium meeting, to discuss the problems of the Praesidium and set goals for the coming year and try to find ways to accomplish the goals.

The Legion system is based on the spirituality of St. Louis Marie de Montfort. While the formal Consecration to Our Lady he described is not required from each Legionary, the Legion is built on its spirit. We are rarely asked to risk our life for Christ, but we are daily asked to make little sacrifices for Him and for the souls for whom He suffered (including our own). For officers and members these sacrifices include faithful attendance at, and participation in, Praesidium and Comitium meetings and doing of assignments which we may or may not like. It also includes submission to appropriate authority and learning to not only get along with, but actually love, our fellow members and officers (as they may have to make a substantial sacrifice to get along with and love us). At the same time, it should be remembered that our Blessed Mother is not only Our Lady of Sorrows but also Cause of Our Joy. The officers should make special efforts to guide the others in this area. This can only be done by staying close to Our Lord and Our Lady by frequent (daily, if possible) attendance at Mass and reception of the Sacraments and by prayer. Our Blessed Lord and His Mother will see to it that our Legionary efforts will be fruitful. Remember that your efforts are for Our Lady and she is the one who will ask her Son to reward you, and she cannot be outdone in generosity.