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

Summary: Provide leadership; preserve the Legion system and adhere to the Handbook; cultivate the spirit of fraternity by exhibiting the deepest affection for each and every one of the members; set a high level of spirituality and humility; provide varied, interesting and challenging works *(with the input, assistance and approval of the Spiritual Director and/or parish priest);* efficiently and with great kindness conduct the Praesidium meeting *(lasting no longer than 1-1/2 hours)* speaking as little as possible, steering a middle course between extremes, remembering our Lord's words "Whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave"; assure that each member make an adequate and audible report on their work assignment; maintain a safe, comfortable and non-threatening meeting environment: assure a neat and clean altar possessing all the appropriate altar equipment *(all members should be responsible and cooperate in this).*

1. The first duty of the President *(and all officers)* is attendance at the monthly Comitium *(Council)* 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 Comitium 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. The President reads the Comitium Agenda *(Comitium Agenda Notice*) to the Praesidium members at the Praesidium meeting prior to the Comitium meeting, then sees to it that highlights from the Comitium meeting are discussed at the Praesidium meeting following the Comitium meeting.

3. The President consults with the Praesidium Treasurer and other officers and members prior to the Comitium meeting, on how much to contribute to the Comitium. Note: after anticipated Praesidium expenses i.e. mailing Acies invitations, paying stipend for November Mass for deceased Legionaries, purchasing supplies and necessary literature and sacramentals for apostolic work, the treasury balance should normally not exceed $50.00.

4. The President gives the Allocutio in the absence of the Spiritual Director or may assign this to other members in advance. The President should have one prepared at all times for

use in an emergency. The Allocutio should be on some aspect of the Legion system. It should not be a reading from the Handbook or another source. While a commentary in your own words on the section of the Handbook that was used for the Spiritual Reading at that meeting is ideal, it is permissible to read something you prepared.

5. The President prepares the weekly worksheet prior to each Praesidium meeting. The worksheet should show assignments made to each team at the previous meeting so that reports can be called for, and have the next week's work assignments prepared. Although the work is supplied and/or approved by the Spiritual Director, the President assigns it. Be sure that reports are given so that all can hear. Make sure that both partners of each team give an adequate report. Provide time for discussion or questions on each report. We learn from each other - both from successes and mistakes. This is an important part of the formation of the members. Make sure that past work is followed up on. It should be noted that the President must satisfy the two hours work obligation himself (or herself).

6. The President assigns work of maintaining the Praesidium as necessary, i.e. altar equipment upkeep, purchase of flowers, preparation of Acies invitations, etc.

7. The President reads the Standing Instructions (following the minutes) at the first meeting of each month and when guests *(other than Comitium visitors)* are present.

8. The President prepares the Praesidium Annual Report together with the other officers.

9. The President explains the various degrees of membership at least semi-annually, i.e. Active, Praetorian, Auxiliary and Adjutorian - for clergy, religious and laypersons.

10. The President advises the Treasurer of any supplies to be purchased from the Comitium or otherwise.

11. The President arranges for the Annual Praesidium Function to be held on or near the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lady, September 8th. Praesidia may combine for this function (see Handbook).

12. The President follows up and encourages other officers to fulfill their duties. The President should speak as little as possible at Praesidium meetings. He/she should make corrections where necessary in a gentle manner. He/she should cultivate the spirit of fraternity among the members and make sure that the work of each Legionary is being done: **a)** in the right spirit **b)** along the right lines **c)** so that all possible good is achieved **d)** old work is from time to time returned upon **e)** in an enterprising spirit - new ground is broken from time to time **f)** each member is doing 2 hours of active apostolic work weekly.

13. The President must try to secure from each member a degree of effort and self-sacrifice. Do not ask for little (that is what you will get).

14. The President must prepare assignments carefully - each Legionary's eternity (including the President's) is being shaped, in part, by his Legion membership - see the Handbook.

15. If you have difficulties do not hesitate to ask the Comitium for help.

16. The President *(and the other officers)* should set a high degree of spirituality and zeal to the members. 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 those goals.

17. 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. The President should at least mention it from time to time and try to be sure that the Praesidium is conducted along the proper lines.

18. 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 the 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 President 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, reception of the Sacraments and 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.