

## Allocutio

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Spiritual Director to the Legion of Mary

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### *The Legion and Meetings*

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Today we celebrate the 1000<sup>th</sup> meeting of Concilium Legionis Mariae or more simply Concilium. Concilium is the supreme governing authority of the world wide Legion. It is Our Lady's instrument for guiding and serving, encouraging and affirming the world wide Legion and when necessary, correcting and cajoling legionaries to a greater fidelity to the spirit of the Legion, to a truer devotion to Mary and a more authentic apostolic life. It would be impossible to count all the graces and learning experiences that Our Lady has given to Concilium and through it to the whole Legion world and indeed beyond it too. So today and always we thank God and Mary, the Mother of God for their loving Providence in regard to the Legion and renew our Legion Promise to continue to strive to be saints and lay apostles for the salvation of souls. We remember and pray for all our Legion members who have gone before us marked with the sign of faith and special devotion to Mary. The great history of their example inspires us for the future. It is wonderful that the Holy See should send us words of congratulations and encouragement to mark this significant milestone in our Legion history. The Legion thanks the Holy See for its gracious words and we hope that we can continue to live up to the expectations the Church puts before us.

Meetings play an indispensable part in the life of the Legion at every level. Perhaps today is a good time to take a look at our meetings as an important tool of our commitment to evangelisation. It is by fidelity to our meetings that we grow in the spirit of the Legion. They are one of the most powerful means of faith formation and holiness of life. Faithful participation in our meetings can be the sign and instrument of a heroic devotion to Mary and her maternity of souls.

Let me just list some of the factors that make up our meetings and make them hubs of the lay apostolate.

- **We pray together:** At the beginning of every meeting, in the middle and the end we pray in the presence of Mary and with her invoke the help of the Holy Spirit. It must at all costs be a Cenacle experience as in the first Pentecost. 'All these were persevering with one mind in prayer, with the women and Mary, the Mother of Jesus, and with his brethren' (Acts 1:14). It is imperative to strive to put our hearts gently but firmly into our Legion prayers and avoid any merely routine or mechanical repetition of them. It is our prayer life that is the soul of our apostolate.
- **We plan together:** We try together to discern the best possible way we can serve the purposes of Our Lady and the Church in our particular situations. We try to meet the most urgent, the deepest and most demanding needs of the parish or diocese or area in

which we are located. We are always casting our eyes and heart with Mary over the world in which we live.

- **We act together:** The Legion must never become simply a talk shop. We must not only think and plan with Mary but we must act with her and through her to implement what we have planned to do in her name. The only way to really become apostles is to actually and regularly engage in the apostolate. This is true for all members of the Legion and especially those who hold office in the higher councils of the Legion. The Legion is not for lone rangers or people who only want to work on their own. It is essentially a team effort, not simply doing our own thing but doing what the Legion has put before us at whatever level we are working at.
- **We report together:** Accountability is a key work in every Legion apostolate. We report back to our fellow legionaries our experience of Legion work. Thus we help to form each other and encourage and support each other. This is one of the great learning experiences of the Legion.

**The fundamental spirit of every Legion meeting:** Legionaries come from many different backgrounds, different opinions and convictions on so many political and social issues and on so many other topics, different temperaments and culture, different gifts and limitations but they also have many things in common. They all share the one Catholic Faith and a joyful commitment to the Magisterium of the Church. They all seek to love and serve Mary to the best of their abilities knowing that this is the most effective way of attaining a deep, personal relationship with the three persons of the Holy Trinity. But in my opinion what must certainly characterise the ethos of every Legion meeting, if it be truly a Legion meeting, is the explicit effort to always love and serve Our Lord in our fellow legionaries with the heart and mind of Mary. This is the spirit of our apostolate and it must be learned first in and through our Legion meetings. It is this spirit that will enable us to fruitfully and joyfully face the next thousand meetings of Concilium despite all the inevitable tensions, difficult decisions and sometimes pain that are part and parcel of every human family including our own great Legion family. Let us all once more thank God and Our Lady for the gift of our Legion membership and for the graces that come to us from our Legion meetings. Amen.

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