



THE LEGION OF MARY

THE WORKS OF THE LEGION

Its stated mission is for active members to serve God under the banner of Mary by the corporal and spiritual works of Mercy, as mentioned in Chapter 33 of the Legion of Mary Handbook

1. APOSTOLATE IN THE PARISH

Some of the ways in which the legionaries may help the growth of a true community spirit are as follows:

- (a) Visitation of the homes of the people. (see No. 2);
- (b) Conducting para-liturgical services on Sundays and holidays of obligation in places where there is no priest available to celebrate Mass;
- (c) Conducting religious instruction classes;
- (d) Visitation and care of the handicapped, the sick and the old, including, when necessary, making arrangements for a visit of the priest;
- (e) Recitation of the rosary at wakes and funerals;
- (f) Promotion of Catholic Associations and Parish Societies, including Church Confraternities or Sodalties, where they exist, by recruiting new members and encouraging existing members to persevere;
- (g) Collaboration in every apostolic and missionary undertaking sponsored by the parish and so help to bring every soul in some manner into the protective network of the Church, thus securing the safety alike of the individual and the community.

There are certain other parochial works which, though important, would not satisfy, except in special cases, the work obligation for senior legionaries. Among these works are: Altar Society work, the keeping of the church clean and beautiful, stewarding at Church services, Mass serving, etc. Where necessary, the legionaries could organise and superintend the performance of these duties, which would be a source of blessing to the persons undertaking them. The legionaries could then make the more difficult, direct approaches to souls.

"I desire, like the Mother of Grace, to work for God. I desire to co-operate by my labours and sacrifices towards my own salvation and that of the whole world, as the Holy Scripture says of the Machabees, who in the holy enthusiasm of their courage, 'did not care to save themselves alone, but undertook to save the greatest possible number of their brethren'." (Gratry: Month of May)

2. VISITATION OF THE HOMES OF THE PEOPLE

Though not its initial venture, **the visitation of the homes has been traditionally the preferred work of the Legion**, its special occupation everywhere and its avenue of greatest good. It is a characteristic of the Legion.

Through this visitation, personal contact can be made with a great many people and the Church's concern for every person and every family can be shown. *"The Church's pastoral concern will not be limited only to the Christian families closest at hand; it will extend its horizons in harmony with the Heart of Christ, and will show itself to be even more lively for families in general and for those families in particular which are in difficult or irregular situations. For all of them the Church will have a word of truth, goodness, understanding, hope and deep sympathy with their sometimes tragic difficulties. To all of them she will offer her disinterested help so that they can come closer to that model of a family which the Creator intended from 'the beginning' and which Christ has renewed with his redeeming grace."* (FC 65)

The praesidium must think out its methods of approach to the homes. Obviously, the legionaries have to introduce themselves and to explain why they are there. Visitation for the Enthronement of the Sacred Heart in the homes, for the making of the Parish Census and the dissemination of Catholic literature described in the following pages, are among some of the ways in which approach to the homes may be undertaken.

Not only Catholics who are living the Christian life but all can be brought within the sphere of the legionary apostolate through the visitation of the homes. Contact can be made with non-Catholics and non-Christians, and with Catholics who are estranged from the Church. Attention will be given also to those in irregular marriage situations as referred to above, to those in need of instruction, to the lonely and the infirm. Every home should be viewed from the angle of rendering service.

The legionary visitation will be marked by humility and simplicity. People may have incorrect ideas concerning the visitation, expecting to be lectured in a superior way. On the contrary, legionaries should aim initially at listening instead of talking. Having listened patiently and respectfully, they will have won the right to be heard.

"One cannot fail to stress the evangelizing action of the family in the evangelizing apostolate of the laity. At different moments in the Church's history and also in the Second Vatican Council, the family has well deserved the beautiful name of 'domestic Church'. This means that there should be found in every Christian family the various aspects of the entire Church. Furthermore, the family, like the Church, ought to be a

place where the Gospel is transmitted and from which the Gospel radiates. In a family which is conscious of this mission, all the members evangelize and are evangelized. The parents not only communicate the Gospel to their children, but from their children they can themselves receive the same Gospel as deeply lived by them. And such a family becomes the evangelizer of many other families, and of the neighbourhood of which it forms part. Families resulting from a mixed marriage also have the duty of proclaiming Christ to the children in the fullness of the consequences of a common Baptism; they have moreover the difficult task of becoming builders of unity." (EN 71)

3. ENTHRONEMENT OF THE SACRED HEART IN THE HOMES

It will be found that the propagation of the devotion of the Enthronement of the Sacred Heart in the home provides a specially favourable introduction and avenue to the friendship of families.

The ideals and the methods which are to characterise that approach are considered in detail in chp 39, Cardinal Points of the Legion Apostolate. Therein, it is sufficiently stressed that as far as possible no home should be passed over, and that in each home loving and persevering effort is to be directed towards the inducing of each person, young and old without exception, to ascend at least one step in the spiritual life. Those detailed to this work may take to themselves in fulness the Twelve Promises of the Sacred Heart. Even the tenth: "I will give to the priests the grace to touch the most hardened hearts," belongs in a measure to those who go as the priest's representatives. Specially encouraged by this thought, the legionaries will go with perfect confidence to grapple with the cases branded "hopeless."

The Enthronement visitation forms the most fruitful of all introductions, striking the right note of simple piety from the very commencement, facilitating acquaintance and hence repeated visits, and rendering easy the development of the Legion apostolate. As it is the mission of Mary to bring about the reign of Jesus, so there is a special appropriateness (which should attract the special graces of the Holy Spirit) in the Legion of Mary propagating the Enthronement of the Sacred Heart.

"Loving the family means being able to appreciate its values and capabilities, fostering them always. Loving the family means identifying the dangers and the evils that menace it, in order to overcome them. Loving the family means endeavouring to create for it an environment favourable for its development. The modern Christian family is often tempted to be discouraged and is distressed at the growth of its difficulties; it is an eminent form of love to give it back its reasons for confidence in

itself, in the riches that it possesses by nature and grace, and in the mission that God has entrusted to it. 'Yes indeed, the families of today must be called back to their original position. They must follow Christ'. (AAS 72 (1980), 791)" (FC 86)

4. THE MAKING OF THE PARISH CENSUS

This work provides an excellent way of getting in touch with the Catholics who need attention or who have drifted into the category of lapsed, that is, those who have lost all association with the Church. Going in the name of the priest, visitation should if possible be from door to door. It is taken as a matter of course by the persons visited that particulars as to religion should be asked, and as a rule they are cheerfully given. Included in what is learned is much that will form subject for long-continued effort on the part of Priest and legionaries.

But discovery is only the preliminary, and the easiest, step. To restore to the fold each one of those so found must be regarded as being in a measure a trusteeship conferred upon the Legion by God - one to be entered upon with joy and pursued with invincible spirit. Let not the Legion, through any cause in its own power, fail in the fulfilment of that trust, no matter how long-drawn-out the battle, how arduous the labours, how great the rebuffs, how hardened the cases, how hopeless the prospect. In addition, it is repeated that not merely the indifferent, but all, shall be the subject of an affectionate attention. *"We have in the Church's field of apostolic endeavour an official mission a providential mode of action, a special weapon of our own. It is that we go to souls not only in the name of Mary and under the auspices of Mary, but also and above all, that we labour with all our might to fill those souls with childlike love for her."* (Petit Traité de Marialogie Marianiste)

5. VISITATION OF HOSPITALS, INCLUDING PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITALS

The visitation of a hospital for the poor was the first work the Legion ever undertook and for a while it did no other. It teemed with blessings for the infant organisation, and the Legion desires that this work will ever be attended to by its praesidia. The following, written in those early days, exemplifies the spirit which must always characterise it:-

"Then a name was called and a member began her report. It concerned the visitation of a hospital. It was brief, yet showed great intimacy with the patients. She admitted with some confusion that the patients knew the names of all her brothers and sisters. She is succeeded by her co-visitor. Evidently work is done in pairs. It occurs to me that apart from there being apostolic example for this, the practice prevents procrastination in the making of the weekly visitation.

"Report follows report. In some wards there is something new and there is an extended account, but most reports are short. Many are amusing, many touching, and all are beautiful in the obvious realisation shown of Whom it is that is visited in the patient. There is evidence of it in every report. Why, many people would not do for their own flesh and blood what is here recounted as done, simply and naturally, for the least elements in our population. The exquisite care and tenderness of the visits are supplemented by the performance of many commissions - the writing of letters, the looking up of the neglectful friends or relatives, the running of errands. It is plain that nothing is too disagreeable or too trifling to look after.

"One letter from a patient to her visitors was read out at the meeting. A phrase from it ran: 'Since you came into my life.' It rang of the cheap novelette, and all laughed. But later I thought back to a lonely person in a hospital bed to whom those words meant a great deal, and the thought filled me with emotion. I reflected, too, that though said of one, it could apply to all. Thus wonderful is the power of association which can bring together many persons into one room and thence send them out on angelic missions into the lives of thousands who have dropped out of the recollection of the outside world." (Father Michael Creedon, first Spiritual Director of Concilium Legionis Mariae.)

Legionary visitation should be used to educate the patients to a true conception of their sufferings, that they may bear them in the proper spirit. They must be persuaded that what they regard as so intolerable is in reality a moulding to the likeness of Christ, and as such a great favour. "No greater favour," says St. Teresa of Avila, "can His majesty bestow on us than to give us a life such as was led by His beloved Son." It is not difficult to bring home to people this aspect of suffering which, when once

grasped, deprives it of half its sting. They should be helped to realise the greatness of the spiritual treasures which they can acquire, by repeating often to them the exclamation of St. Peter of Alcantara to one who had long endured a most painful illness with admirable patience:—"O happy patient, God has shown me how great a glory you have merited by your illness. You have merited more than others can gain by prayer, fasting, vigils, scourging, and other penitential works."

It is desirable that the spending of these spiritual treasures should possess a variety which is lacking in the earning of them. Moreover, a gathering for self will not exercise so potent an appeal. So the legionary will unfold the idea of the apostleship of suffering. The patients should be taught to busy themselves in the spiritual affairs of the world, offering the treasures of their sufferings for its myriad needs, and conducting a campaign whose force must be irresistible because it is at once prayer and penance. "Such hands, raised to God," cries Bossuet, "break through more battalions than those that strike." It will aid towards perseverance if the patients feel a personal interest in what they are praying for. So it is important that particular needs and works (notably the legionary's own) be singled out and described to them.

Auxiliary membership must be an early objective, and then the adjutorian degree. Groups of these members could be formed who would then recruit others. In every other way, too, the patients should be encouraged to help each other. But if those degrees of membership are practicable, why not active membership. Many psychiatric hospitals have praesidia composed of patients. To have such in the institution is to set at work there a potent leaven. Those legionaries have abundant time to spend on their activities amongst the other patients, and can raise themselves to a high pitch of holiness. The value of their Legion membership - on its lesser level as a therapeutic or healing force - to themselves has been so evident as to be everywhere recognised by the medical staffs of those places.

This new view of life opened up to them, the patients, some of whom had touched the depths of misery in the thought of being so useless and a burden, will taste the supreme joy of feeling that they are of use to God. The Communion of Saints must necessarily operate intensively as between the legionaries and those they visit, that is in the way of an advantageous interchange of burdens and benefits. May we not suppose that the sick are paying on behalf of the legionaries some portion of the debt of suffering which is due by every mortal man; but which, if borne by every man himself, would leave the whole world sick; so that some are given the privilege of bearing more than their share in order that the work of the world may be carried on.

And what is the legionary able to give in this invisible transaction? What else but a share in his apostolate - the sick person being unable (and sometimes unready) to fulfil that portion of his Christian obligation. Thereby each one would be delightfully

benefited at the expense of the other. Yet it is not a mere matter of evenly balanced exchange. For the gain of each far outweighs his loss by virtue of the Christian principle that to give brings back one hundredfold. (see section 20, chapter 39, Cardinal Points of the Legion Apostolate)

" 'I am Christ's wheat,' said St. Ignatius of Antioch, 'and that I may be made into bread worthy of God, I must needs be ground by the teeth of lions.' Never doubt that the best of crosses, the safest, the most divine is always that one which Jesus Himself ordains without consulting us. Increase your faith in this doctrine so dear to saints cast in the mould of Nazareth. Adore, bless and praise God in all the contradictions and trials which come directly from His Hand and, conquering the repugnance of your nature, say with all your heart, 'Fiat,' or still better, 'Magnificat!'" (Mateo Crawley-Boevey)

6. WORK FOR THE MOST WRETCHED AND DEJECTED OF THE POPULATION

This will involve the visitation of their haunts; and of lodging-houses, hostels and jails; and it may be, the conducting of hostels staffed by legionaries, resident and outdoor. As soon as the Legion in any centre is in possession of members of sufficient experience and calibre, this work for the least of the least ones of Christ is to be undertaken. Too often it is to be found neglected, with consequent reproach to the Catholic name.

There should be no depths to which the Legion will not penetrate in its search for the lost sheep of the House of Israel. False fears will be the first obstacle. But false or founded, someone must do this work. If capable and trained legionaries, safeguarded by their prayerful and disciplined system, cannot essay it, then no one can. Till the Legion in any centre can say with truth that its members know personally, and are in touch in some way with each and every individual member of the degraded classes, its work must be regarded as being still in a stage of incomplete development, and efforts in this direction must be intensified. No searcher after the rare and precious things of the earth must pursue his heart's desire more earnestly than the legionary pressing after these unfortunates of the world. His search may be their only chance of life eternal. Frequently they are so inaccessible to good influences that prison represents for them a blessing in disguise.

Moreover, the outlook of a campaigning soldier must be brought to bear on this work. Obvious inconveniences will face the legionaries. Perhaps to the 'slings and arrows' of outrageous words, worse things may be added. The 'rifle-fire' of blows or the 'artillery' of injuries may be turned upon them. Such things may humiliate and pain, but they must not intimidate; they should hardly even disconcert. Here lies the test of the

solidity of the soldierly professions which have so often passed through the mind of the legionary and have so many times been uttered by him. He has spoken of a warfare. He has talked of seeking for the worst of people; now that he has found them, it would be inconsistent of him to complain. Why should it cause surprise to see that the bad behave badly, and that the worst act vilely. In short, in every circumstance of special difficulty, or in face of danger, the legionary should remind himself: "A war is on"! This phrase that nerves a war-ridden people to sacrifice, should steel the legionary in his warfare for souls and hold him to his work when most others would desist.

If there is any reality in the talk of precious and eternal souls, there must be readiness to pay a price of some sort for them. What price, and by whom paid? The answer is that if ever lay persons are to be asked to face a risk, who are they to be - if not those who are striving to be worthy of the title of Legionaries of Mary? If ever great sacrifices are to be required from lay Catholics, from whom - if not from those who have so deliberately, so solemnly enlisted in the service of her who stood on Calvary? Surely they will not fail, if called upon!

But leadership may fail, through a mistaken solicitude for those led. Therefore, Spiritual Directors and all officers are exhorted to set up standards which have some slight relation to those of the Colosseum. This word may ring unreal in these calculating days. But the Colosseum was a calculation too: the calculation of many lovely people - no more strong, no more weak than legionaries of Mary - who said to themselves: "What price shall a man give for a soul?" The Colosseum only summarises in a word what many words go to say in chapter 4 on Legionary Service, and that chp is not intended to express mere sentiment.

Work for the derelict or abandoned classes will always be a difficult, long-drawn-out one. Its keynote must be a supreme patience. A type is being dealt with which will only rise after many fallings. If discipline be put first in dealing with them, nothing will be accomplished. In a short time the rigid system will have lost all the subjects it was constituted to treat, and will have as patients those who least require treatment. Therefore, the work must proceed upon the principle of values reversed, that is, it shall concern itself especially with those whom even the optimist would term utterly hopeless cases, and whose warped minds and initial insensibility to appeal would seem to justify this description. The vile, the malevolent, the naturally hateful, the rejects and black-listed of other societies and people, the refuse of cities, shall all be determinedly persevered with in spite of rebuffs, utter ingratitude, and apparent failure. Of these a considerable proportion will form a life-long task. Obviously such a work, carried on according to such ideas, calls for heroic qualities and a purely supernatural vision. The compensation for toil so great will lie in the seeing of the objects of that toil eventually die in the friendship of God. Then what joy to have cooperated with *"Him who from the mire, in patient length of days, Elaborated into*

life a people to His praise!"

(Cardinal Newman: Dream of Gerontius.)

This particular activity has been considered at length because it really concerns the whole spirit of the Legion. In addition, it holds, amongst services done to the Church, a key position. For it constitutes a special assertion of the Catholic principle that even the lowest of human beings hold in relation to us a position which is independent of their value or agreeableness to us: that in them Christ is to be seen, revered, loved.

The proof of the reality of this love is that it be manifested in circumstances which test it. That vital test consists in loving those whom mere human nature bids one not to love. Here is the acid-test of the true and the false love for humanity. It is a pivot of faith, a crucial-point of Christianity, for without the Catholic ideal this sort of love simply cannot exist. The very notion would be fantastic, if divorced from the root which gives it meaning and life. If humanity for its own sake is to be the gospel, then everything must be judged from the angle of its apparent utility to humanity. Something which would admittedly be valueless to humanity must logically, under such systems, be viewed just as sin would be viewed in the Christian dispensation, that is as something to be eliminated at any cost.

Those who give self-sacrificing demonstrations of true Christian love in its highest forms, do a supreme service to the Church.

"It is hard, you say, to put up with the evil-doer. But just for that very reason you should devote yourself lovingly to him. Your set purpose must be to wean him from his sinful ways and to lead him on to virtue. But you retort that he does not mind what you say, nor follow your advice. How are you so sure of this? Have you appealed to him and tried to win him round? You reply that you have often reasoned with him. But how often? Frequently, you say, time and time again. And do you look on that as often? Why, even if you had to continue for a whole lifetime, you should neither relax your efforts nor abandon hope. Do you not see the way in which God Himself keeps on appealing to us through His Prophets, through His Apostles, through His Evangelists? And with what result? Is our conduct all it should be? Do we set ourselves to obey Him in all things? Alas such is far from being the case. Yet in spite of that, He never ceases to pursue us with His pleadings. And why? It is because there is nothing so precious as a soul. 'For what doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul.' (Mt 16:26)" (St. John Chrysostom)

7. WORKS FOR THE YOUNG

"Children are certainly the object of the Lord Jesus' tender and generous love. To them he gave his blessing, and, even more, to them he promised the Kingdom of heaven. (cf. Mt 19:13-15; Mk 10:14) In particular Jesus exalted the active role that little ones have in the Kingdom of God. They are the eloquent symbol and exalted image of those moral and spiritual conditions that are essential for entering into the Kingdom of God and for living the logic of total confidence in the Lord: 'Truly I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the Kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child, he is the greatest in the Kingdom of heaven'. (Mt 18:3-5; cf Lk 9:48)" (CL 47)

If the preservation of the young in faith and innocence can be assured, how glorious the future! Then, like a giant refreshed, the Church could throw itself into its mission of converting the pagan world, and make short work of it. As it is, the great bulk of its effort is absorbed by the painful treatment of internal sores.

Furthermore, it is easier to preserve than later on to restore. The Legion will attend to both, for both are vital. But certainly it should not neglect the easier work of the two - that of preservation. Many children can be saved from disaster for the trouble it will later take to remake one debased adult. Some aspects of the problem are as follows:-

(a) Children's Mass attendance. A bishop, delivering a programme of work to legionaries, placed as the item of first importance the conducting of a Sunday Mass Crusade amongst children. Mass-missing by children he held to be one of the chief sources of all later trouble. A Sunday morning visitation of the homes of children (whose names should be ascertained from school rolls, etc.) will be found to be of sovereign efficacy. Incidentally, it is to be borne in mind that children are seldom bad of themselves. Where they are found to be exempting themselves from this elementary Catholic requirement, it can be taken as certain that they are the victims of parental indifference and bad example, and the Legion apostolate should proceed mindful of this additional evil. In the case of children, more even than in other directions, a spasmodic or short-term visitation will accomplish little or nothing.

(b) Visitation of the homes of children. In connection with the visitation of children in their own homes, stress is laid upon an important consideration. It is that an entry to families which otherwise would be, for various reasons, inaccessible to religious workers, may readily be secured when the stated purpose is the approaching of the children of that family. For it is a fact, springing from the natural relation of parent to child, that zeal for the child is above zeal for self. Ordinary parents have regard for the interests of their child even when they are forgetful of their own. The hardest heart softens somewhat at the thought of its own child. Persons may be dead to religion

themselves, but deep-rooted impulses bid them not to wish their children the same fate, and instinctive joy is felt at seeing the movements of grace in their children. As a consequence, one who would repulse rudely and even violently those who seek to approach him directly on a spiritual mission, will tolerate the same workers when their mission is to his children. Competent legionaries, once admitted to the home, will know how to make all the members of that family feel the radiation of their apostolate. A sincere interest in the children will usually make a favourable impression on the parents. This can be skilfully utilised to cultivate in them the seed of the supernatural so that, as the children had been the key to their parents' home, likewise they will prove to be the key to their parents' hearts and eventually to their souls.

(c) Teaching Christian Doctrine to children. This supremely valuable work should be supplemented by the visitation of the homes of the children whose attendance is not satisfactory, or generally for the purpose of manifesting personal interest in the children, and of getting in touch with the other members of the families. Incidentally, the Legion can serve the purpose of a local branch of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine. See appendix 8.

The following instance shows the efficacy of the application of the Legion system to the Sunday Catechism classes in a populous parish. Despite earnest efforts of the Priests, including appeals from the pulpit, the average attendance of children had fallen to fifty. At this stage a praesidium was formed which added to the work of teaching, the visitation of the homes of the children. A year's work was sufficient to bring the average attendance at the classes to 600. And this surprising figure does not take count of the spiritual benefits conferred on innumerable careless relatives of the children.

In all works, the legionary watchword should be "How would Mary view and treat these, her children?" In this work, even more than in others, that thought should be vivid. There is a natural tendency towards impatience with the children. But a worse fault would lie in the imparting to the instruction of a mere businesslike and secular tone, in such a way that these classes would only be regarded by the children as additional hours of school. If this comes to pass, nine-tenths of the harvest will be left unreaped. So once again consider: "How would the Mother of Jesus instruct those children, in each one of whom she sees her own Beloved?"

In teaching the young, memorisation and audio-visual aids play an important role. Special care is needed in selecting catechetical material which fully conforms to the Church's teaching. A partial indulgence is granted to the person who teaches Christian doctrine also to the person who receives such instruction (EI20.)

(d) The non-Catholic or State school. The life of the child who is not attending a Catholic school is one continual crisis, and it may be hard to prevent it developing in

later years into one of the problems. Such measures of remedy as have been approved by the ecclesiastical authorities of each place will be taken up by the Legion and applied with all its might.

(e) Sodality for the young. For children who have been at good schools, the crisis comes at school-leaving age. They are then emancipated from school with its sound influences, its protective restraints, its minute safeguards. Sometimes they were entirely dependent upon that support by reason of the fact that their homes did not provide religious or controlling influences. There is the further complication that the withdrawal of these things occurs about the age of greatest moral difficulty, and unfortunately, too, when those young people have ceased to be children without becoming adults. Naturally, appropriate provision for that twilight stage is difficult, and accordingly is frequently lacking. Then, when that transition period passes, and the adult safeguarding system opens its arms to them, it usually does so unavailingly. The perilous charms of liberty have been tasted. Therefore, the supervision which was maintained in school must in some measure be carried on when those children leave.

A method which is recommended is that of forming, under the auspices of the Legion, Juvenile Sodalities, or at least special juvenile sections in the ordinary Sodalities. Before the children are due to leave school, those in authority will see that the names of such children are supplied to the legionaries. The latter will then call to their homes to make their acquaintance and to persuade them to join the Sodality. The children, who cannot be induced to join, should be made the subject of special visitation, as also those who attend irregularly. Each legionary would be allocated a certain number of the young Sodality members, for whom he or she will be held responsible. Before each Sodality meeting, those members will be called upon to remind them of their duty to attend. An Annual Retreat (enclosed, if possible) and an annual entertainment should form part of the system. There is no better way, in fact there is no other definite way, of ensuring a regular frequentation of the Sacraments by the young during the post-school period.

The case of young people discharged from Juvenile Detention Centres or Orphanages requires special attention in the above direction. Sometimes they are without parents altogether; sometimes they are the victims of bad parents.

(f) The conducting of children's clubs, Boy Scout and Girl Guide Troops, J.O.C. units, Sewing Classes, branches of the Holy Childhood, etc. Probably these would be carried on rather as the employment of the work-obligation of part of the membership of a praesidium than as the whole work of a praesidium. But it would be quite in order that a praesidium should devote itself solely to some special work, such as those mentioned. In this case, however, it must be understood that a distinct praesidium meeting shall be held and carried out fully according to rule. It will not supply the place of the meeting if, as has been suggested, the members are gathered together, as

an item of the evening's Special Work, for the purpose of reciting the prayers, reading the minutes, and rushing through a few reports. Possibly in this manner the essentials of a meeting might be conformed to, but a reading of chp 11 on the Scheme of the Legion will show how little of the spirit of the rules is reflected in such an expedient.

It is the desire of the Legion that during each session of a Special Work which is under the control of the Legion, the Legion prayers should be recited at the opening, intermediate, and concluding stages. If it is not possible to include the rosary, at least the remainder of the tessera prayers should be said.

(g) A Legionary youth formula. It would seem to be necessary to propose some guiding principles to legionaries who are running Clubs or Youth groups. Usually the methods being followed depend entirely on the individuals in charge of such groups, so that wide diversity of system prevails, ranging from a daily to a weekly session, and from pure amusement or pure technical instruction to pure religion. Obviously these variants will work out to very different results, not always for the best. For instance, unmixed amusement represents dubious training for the young, even on the supposition that it 'keeps them out of trouble'. "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy" - runs the well-known saying. But this has been wittily complemented by another one which is still more true: "All play and no work makes Jack a mere toy."

The praesidium system has shown itself to be a standard which is suited to all types of people and works. Is it possible similarly to devise a simple standard system for applying generally to youth?

Experiments have suggested that a scheme on the following lines will operate satisfactorily, and praesidia in charge of Youth Groups are urged to make trial of it:- Maximum age 21, no minimum age; age-segregation desirable. Every member must attend a regular weekly session. If a group meets more frequently than once a week, these rules are optional in their application to the additional meetings.

Each member to say daily the Catena Legionis. At the weekly session the Legion altar shall be erected, either on a table as in the case of the praesidium meeting, or apart, or raised up for the purpose of safety. At each session the Legion prayers, inclusive of the rosary, shall be said, divided up as at a praesidium meeting.

The total length of the session shall not be less than one hour and a half, but may exceed that time. Not less than half an hour shall be devoted to business and instructional purposes. The remainder of the time may, if desired be applied to recreation. By "business" is meant the conduct of the affairs which would naturally arise out of the running of certain groups, for example, football or other sports clubs, etc. By "instructional" is meant any sort of training or educational influence, religious or secular, which is brought to bear. Each member to receive Holy Communion not less frequently than once a month. Members should be stimulated towards auxiliary

membership of the Legion, and the notion of service of one's neighbour and of the community should be instilled into their minds.

"It would be easy to dwell upon the many lessons of the extraordinarily active life of St. John Bosco. I select only one, because of its extreme and lasting importance, namely, his view of the relations which should exist between teachers and taught, superiors and subjects, masters and pupils, in school, or college, or seminary. He rightly held in extreme abhorrence the spirit of aloofness, of keeping at a distance, of exaggerated dignity which, sometimes on principle, sometimes from thoughtlessness, at times from pure selfishness, makes superiors and masters almost inaccessible to those whose training and formation God has entrusted to them. St. John Bosco never forgot the words: 'Have they made thee ruler? Be not lifted up; be among them as one of them: have care of them.' (Sir 32)" (Cardinal Bourne)

8. THE BOOK-BARROW

Legionaries might conduct a Book-barrow or a portable bookstall in a public place, preferably in or near some busy street. Experience has shown the immense value of this as a legionary work. There is no more efficacious way of carrying on a comprehensive apostolate directed to the good, the mediocre, and the bad, or of bringing the Church to the notice of the unthinking many. Therefore the Legion earnestly desires that in every large centre there should be at least one of these. It should be made so as to afford the greatest possible display of titles. It should be stocked with an abundant supply of inexpensive religious publications. Legionaries would form the staff.

Besides those whose primary purpose is to look through the stock with a view to purchase, almost every type of person will be drawn towards this. Catholics desirous to talk with their co-religionists; the thoughtless and the indifferent, killing time or led by curiosity; the mildly-interested who are not of the Church, and who would be reluctant to place themselves more directly in touch with it. All these will enter into conversation with the gentle and sympathetic legionaries in charge, who should be trained to look upon the enquiries and purchases as so many openings for the establishment of friendly contact. The latter will be utilised to lead on all of those encountered to a higher plane of thought and action. Catholics would be induced to join "something Catholic." Non-Catholics would be helped towards an understanding of the Church. One person will leave determined to undertake daily Mass and Holy Communion; another to become a legionary, active - or auxiliary, or a Patrician; a third to make his peace with God; another bearing in his heart the seeds of conversion to the Church. Visitors to town will be interested in the Legion (which otherwise they might not see), and may be induced to start it in their own places.

Legionaries are encouraged, however, not to wait passively for people to come to them at the Barrow. They should not hesitate to approach people in the vicinity, not necessarily for the purpose of selling more literature, but in order to establish a contact, which can be used as described in the preceding paragraph.

It should be unnecessary to remind legionaries that the persevering following up of the introductions and friendships initiated is a necessary part of the whole work.

The proposal to start such a work will always elicit the objection that exceptionally well-versed Catholics would be required to do it, and are not available. It is true that special knowledge of Catholic Doctrine would be most useful. But the lack of this need not deter legionaries from starting. For the personal appeal will be the great consideration. As Cardinal Newman says: "Persons influence us, voices melt us, looks subdue us, deeds inflame us. Many a man will live and die upon a dogma: no man will be a martyr for a conclusion." In a word, earnestness and sweetness are more important than deep knowledge. The latter is inclined to lure those who possess it into deep water and tortuous channels which lead nowhere, whereas a candid confession of one's weakness: 'I do not know, but I can find out', will keep a discussion on bedrock.

It will be found that the vast bulk of the difficulties which are voiced spring from a great ignorance, and that the ordinary legionary is well able to deal with them. Less simple points will be brought to the praesidium or to the Spiritual Director.

Attacks on the Church on the score of evil-doing, persecution, and lack of zeal could be argued indefinitely, and hopelessly confuse the issue. An element of truth may underlie some charges, and thus add complication to confusion. To satisfy the hostile critic on these and all other minor points of dispute is completely impossible, even if great erudition is enlisted in the task. The course to be taken by the legionary must be that of persistently reducing the discussion to its very simplest elements: that of insisting that God must have left to the world a message - what men call a religion: that such religion, being God's voice, absolutely must be one, clear, consistent, unerring, and must claim divine authority. These characteristics are to be found only in the Catholic Church. There is no other body or system which even claims to possess them. Outside the Church, there is only contradiction and confusion, so that, as Cardinal Newman crushingly puts it: "Either the Catholic religion is verily the coming of the unseen world into this, or that there is nothing positive, nothing dogmatic whither we are going."

There must be a true Church. There can be only one true Church. Where is it, if it is not the Catholic Church? Like blows, ever directed to one spot, this simple line of approach to the Truth has over-whelming effect. Its force is manifest to the simple. It is unanswerable in the heart of the more learned, though he may continue to talk of the sins of the Church. Remind such a one briefly but gently that he proves too much. His objections tell at least as much against any other religious system as they do against the Church. If he proves the Church to be false by proving that Churchmen did

wrong, then he has only succeeded in proving that there is no true religion in the world.

The day has gone when a Protestant would claim that his own particular sect had a monopoly of the truth. Nowadays he would more modestly contend that all Churches possess a portion or facet of the truth. But a portion is not enough. That claim is equivalent to an assertion that there is no known truth and no way of finding it. For if a Church has certain doctrines that are true and therefore others that are untrue, what means are there of recognising which is which; when we pick, we may take the ones that are untrue! Therefore the church which says of its doctrines: "Some of these are true", is no help, no guide for the way. It has left you exactly where you were without it.

So, let it be repeated until the logic penetrates: There can be but one true Church; which must not contradict itself, which must possess the whole truth; and which must be able to tell the difference between what is true and what is false.

"The world can find no helper more powerful than thee. It has its apostles, prophets, martyrs, confessors, virgins, good helpers to whom I pray. But thou my Queen, art higher than all these intercessors. That which they can all do with thee, thou alone canst do without them. And why ? Because thou art the Mother of Our Saviour. If thou art silent, no one will pray, no one will come to help us. If thou prayest, all will pray, all will help." (St. Anselm: Oratio Eccl.)

9. CROWD CONTACT

Apostleship views bringing the full riches of the Church to every person. The basis of this work must be the individual and persevering touch of one warm soul on another soul, what we call by the technical name of "contact". In the measure that personal "contact" weakens so does real influence. According as people become a crowd they tend to escape from us. We may allow the crowd to keep us from the person. These crowds are made up of individuals, each one representing a priceless soul. Each member of that crowd has his or her private life but much of their time is spent in crowds, of one kind or another - in the street or gathered together in any place. We have to turn those crowds into individuals and thus enable us to establish contact with their souls. How must Our Blessed Lady look on those crowds. She is the Mother of each individual soul comprised in them. She must be in anguish at their necessities, and her heart must yearn for someone to help her in her work of mothering them.

The value of a book-barrow in a public place has been already shown, however, a comprehensive apostolate to the crowd can be carried out as a separate work. An

approach to people with a polite request to speak with them on the subject of the Faith can lead to fruitful contacts. This approach can be made on the streets, in parks, in public houses, in the vicinity of railway and bus stations and in other public places where people gather. Experience has shown that such an approach is generally well-received. Legionaries engaged on this work must remember that their speech and their manner are their instruments of contact. Therefore, they should be unassuming and deferential. In discussion they should avoid any word which suggests that they are battling with the other person, or anything that sounds like a preaching at them, or a laying down of the law, or anything showing superiority. They should believe most firmly that Mary Queen of Apostles gives weight to their weakest word and that she is almost infinitely anxious to make their apostolate fruitful.

10. MISSION TO THE CATHOLIC DOMESTIC WORKER

This can be carried out as part of visitation work or as a special work in itself. Only too often placed in households indifferent or hostile to the faith, viewed as mere machines, isolated, frequently migrants or immigrants with no friends, and reduced to forming chance acquaintanceships full of the possibilities of disaster, Catholic domestic workers are in need of special care and support. Making contact with them forms an apostolate of a notable kind.

To them, the regular visits of legionaries solicitous for their welfare, will come as rays of light. Generally the object will be to bring them into membership of Catholic societies or clubs, into suitable friendships, and perhaps, in many cases into legionary membership itself. This work will help to direct many on new and happier paths, leading on to safety and holiness.

"At first sight we might certainly have anticipated that much state and dignity would have been allotted to God's great Mother during some portion, at least, of her life upon the earth. How different was the reality as arranged by the Providence of God. We find Mary in her poor dwelling discharging such humble duties as sweeping the floor, washing the linen, cooking the food, going to and from the well with a pitcher on her head, engaged in that kind of work which we, in face of the example set by Jesus, Mary and Joseph, venture to call menial. Mary's hands were doubtlessly reddened and hardened by toil; she was often weary and overworked; hers were the anxieties of a working man's wife." (Vassall-Phillips: The Mother of Christ)

11. WORK FOR ARMED SERVICES PERSONNEL AND PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

The circumstances of these people's lives incline them to neglect of religion and expose them to many pitfalls. Therefore, an apostolate among them is doubly desirable.

(a) As access to military establishments may not always be easy to civilians, effective work for soldiers may require the setting up of praesidia composed of soldiers. This has already been done in many places with signal success.

(b) Work for seamen will call for the visitation of ships and the provision of various facilities on shore. Praesidia undertaking this work should affiliate with the recognized international society, the Apostolatus Maris, which has branch-headquarters in the majority of maritime countries.

(c) The legionaries must exhibit meticulous respect for military and marine discipline. Their actions must never run counter to regulations or traditions. In fact, they must aspire to earn for their apostolate the unreserved admission that it uplifts the personnel in every way and represents an unmixed asset to those services, and more than an asset - a positive necessity.

(d) Travelling people, gypsies and circus personnel are among people on the move who should be brought within the sphere of the legionary apostolate. Migrants and refugees should also be part of that apostolate.

"Among the great changes taking place in the contemporary world, migration has produced a new phenomenon: non-Christians are becoming very numerous in traditionally Christian countries, creating fresh opportunities for contacts and cultural exchanges, and calling the Church to hospitality, dialogue, assistance and in a word, fraternity. Among migrants, refugees occupy a very special place and deserve the greatest attention. Today, there are many millions of refugees in the world and their number is constantly increasing. They have fled from conditions of political oppression and inhuman misery, from famine and drought of catastrophic proportions. The Church must make them part of her overall apostolic concern." (RM 37)

12. THE DISSEMINATION OF CATHOLIC LITERATURE

The lives of countless people, like St. Augustine of Hippo and St. Ignatius of Loyola, illustrate how reading of influential books, recommended to them by people, whose judgment they respected, proved to be instrumental in leading them to higher things. The dissemination of Catholic literature affords great opportunities for apostolic contacts with a wide variety of people, with whom matters of the Catholic Faith can be easily brought up. Without on-going religious adult education, people living in a secularized world are greatly disadvantaged. The Church teaches them one world and they live in another. The voice of the secularized world speaks louder than that of the Church. The imbalance must be corrected. The Christian's mandate is to win the secularized world for Christ. This demands that we have the right values and attitudes - the Christian ones.

Without underestimating other kinds of communication, serious reading, that is, reading to learn, is a very rich and influential source of ideas. A little reading done regularly is much more helpful than a lot of reading done occasionally when one feels like it. There is a real problem of getting people to read religious books. Their interest must be aroused and if interest is not to evaporate, reading material must be easily available. Here is an opening for apostolic Catholics. As well as religious books and booklets, there are Catholic newspapers and magazines, whose purpose is to

- (1) give a reasoned synthesis of current affairs and a thought-out evaluation of them;
- (2) act as a necessary corrective to distorted views or calculated silences;
- (3) review and give guidelines on current media offerings;
- (4) develop a healthy pride and concerned interest in the affairs of the Universal Church, and
- (5) cultivate a taste for reading of a more lasting relevance. In addition to the printed word, audio-visual material plays a valuable role in handing on the Faith.

Before using any kind of material touching religion, it is always important to confirm from trustworthy sources that it fully agrees with the Church's teaching. Self-styled Catholic publications should be deserving of the name. *"It is not names that give confidence in things, but things that give confidence in names."* (St. John Chrysostom)

Among the tried and tested means of disseminating Catholic literature are the following:

1. House to house canvassing for subscribers;
2. Delivery of newspapers or periodicals to homes;
3. Staffing of Church kiosks and bookshops;
4. Staffing of a book-barrow or portable bookstall in public places;
5. Use of the Patricians to recommend follow-up reading material.

Book displays and their stands should be attractive and well maintained. In advertising the Catholic Church slipshod methods are not good enough. During visitation for the purpose of disseminating Catholic literature, legionaries will try to pursue an apostolate directed towards the influencing of every member of the family.

"Mary is the inseparable companion of Jesus. Everywhere and always the Mother is beside her Son. Therefore, what binds us to God, what places us in possession of the things of Heaven is-not Christ alone, but that Blessed pair- the Woman and her Seed. Hence, to separate Mary from Jesus in religious worship is to destroy the order established by God Himself." (Terrien: La Mère des Hommes)

13. PROMOTING THE PRACTICE OF DAILY MASS AND DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

"Every day, as is desirable, and in the greatest possible numbers, the faithful must take an active part in the sacrifice of the Mass, avail themselves of the pure, holy refreshment of Holy Communion and make a suitable thanksgiving in return for this great gift of Christ the Lord. Here are words they should keep in mind: 'Jesus Christ and the Church desire all Christ's faithful to approach the sacred banquet every day. The basis of this desire is that they should be united to God by the sacrament and draw strength from it to restrain lust, to wash away the slight faults of daily occurrence and to take precautions against the more serious sins to which human frailty is liable. (AAS 38 (1905), 401) More is required. Liturgical laws prescribe that the Blessed Sacrament be kept in churches with the greatest honour and in the most distinguished position. The faithful should not fail to pay it an occasional visit. Such a visit is a proof of gratitude, a pledge of love, an observance of the adoration due to Christ the Lord present in the Blessed Sacrament.'" (MF 66) Probably this will be carried on less as a work in itself than as one to be kept in mind and assiduously pursued as part and parcel of every legionary activity. See chapter 8: The Legionary and the Eucharist.

"We see how the Eucharist, sacrifice and sacrament, sums up in the abundance of its richness all that the Cross offered to God and procured for men. It is the Blood of Calvary and the dew of heaven at one and the same time: the Blood that cries for mercy, and the vivifying dew that raises up the drooping plant. It is the price paid for us, and the blessing brought to us. It is life and the price of life. The Cross was not worth more, nor the Supper, nor the two together, and all of it endures, and all of it is fraught with the hopes of humanity. For these reasons the Mass is well called the Mystery of Faith; not only because the whole Christian dogma - which is the dogma of our ruin in Adam and of our restoration in Jesus Christ - is summed up in it, but

also and chiefly, because the drama, the heroic action by which was accomplished that sublime uplifting of humanity and superabundant compensation for our former losses, continues in our midst by means of it. And it is not a repetition by way of a mere symbol, but actually realises in our midst what was accomplished by Christ Himself." (De la Taille: The Mystery of Faith)

14. THE RECRUITING AND AFTER-CARE OF AUXILIARIES

Every praesidium which has a sense of appreciation of the power of prayer will strive to possess a well-filled roll of auxiliary members. It is the duty of each legionary to gain auxiliaries and to try to keep in touch with them. Consider the generosity of these auxiliaries who have given up to the Legion part of the precious breathings of their souls. What possibilities of sanctity are in them! The Legion is under infinite debt to them. That debt it can beautifully repay by leading those auxiliaries on to perfection. Active members and auxiliaries, both are children of the Legion. The active members are the elder children, and the Mother of the Legion, as in every family, will look to them to help her with the younger ones. She will not merely supervise that help. She will make it effective, so that in the "aftercare" of auxiliary by active legionary lie wonderful things for both of them. In the soul of the auxiliary rises a great edifice of sanctity; and for the active legionary there is the builder's reward. This work for the auxiliaries is so full of possibilities that it seems to call for the specialised attention of some highly spiritual members of the praesidium, who will pursue it in the spirit of the "elder children".

"I think it is evident that in these days of awful sin and hatred of God, Our Blessed Lord wants to gather round him a legion of chosen souls who will be devoted, heart and soul, to him and his interests; and upon whom he may always count for help and consolation; souls who will not ask 'How much must I do ?' but rather 'How much can I do for his love?': a legion of souls who will give and will not count the cost, whose only pain will be that they cannot do more, and give more, and suffer more for him who has done so much for them: in a word, souls who are not as the rest of men, and who may be fools, perhaps in the eyes of the world; for their watch-word is sacrifice and not self-comfort." (Father William Doyle: Life by Msgr. Alfred O'Rahilly)

"Then the legion of little souls, victims of merciful Love, will become as numerous 'as the stars of heaven and the sands of the seashore'. It will be terrible to Satan; it will help the Blessed Virgin to crush his proud head completely." (St. Thérèse of Lisieux)

15. WORK FOR THE MISSIONS

Concern for the missions is an integral part of a truly Christian life. It comprises prayer, material support and the fostering of missionary vocations, in accordance with each one's circumstances. Legionaries might, for example, run a branch of the Holy Childhood and surround themselves with a host of children whom they will inspire with love for the missions. Or again, they might gather about them a group of those unsuited for full Legion membership and (perhaps organise them on the basis of the auxiliary degree of Legion membership) set them to sew, make vestments, etc. Here are three works done in one - (a) the legionary sanctifies himself; (b) he sets many others to sanctify themselves; (c) the work of the missions is helped in a practical way. In connection with this work, it is specially necessary to stress two points which, however, apply generally:

(a) No praesidium is to be turned into a mere collecting agency for any purpose whatsoever.

(b) The superintendence and regulation of persons engaged in sewing would be a satisfactory employment of work obligation. But the work of sewing, by itself, is not deemed to represent a substantial active work for a senior legionary except in very special circumstances, such as, for instance actual physical disability.

"The four societies - Propagation of the Faith, St. Peter the Apostle, Holy Childhood and the Missionary Union have the common purpose of fostering a universal missionary spirit among the People of God." (RM 84)

16. PROMOTING RETREATS

Having personally experienced the benefit of a Retreat, legionaries should organise for them, spread abroad the idea of them, and where they are not yet established, aim to have this done.

This is the recommendation of His Holiness Pope Pius XI, in the Encyclical quoted below, to those "companies of pious lay people who have ambition to serve the Apostolic Hierarchy by the works of Catholic Action. In these sacred Retreats they will see clearly the value of souls and be inflamed with the desire of helping them; likewise, they will learn the ardent spirit of the apostolate, its diligence, its deed of daring."

The emphasis laid by that great Pope on the forming of apostles is to be noted. Sometimes that purpose is not served; apostles do not emerge. In that case the utility of those Retreats is to be doubted. Legionaries need not be deterred from trying to cast abroad the benefits of a Retreat by reason of the fact that there is no possibility of

providing sleeping accommodation. Practical experience has proved that a form of Retreat, with manifest fruits, can be accomplished in a single day from morning to night: indeed, there is no other way of bringing the system to the masses. Almost any sort of premises with some grounds attached can be converted to this use for a day, and the expense of providing a few simple meals will not be great.

"The Divine Master himself was wont to invite his apostles to the friendly silence of retreat: 'Come apart into a desert place, and rest a little.' (Mk 5:31) When he left this earth of sorrows to go to heaven, he willed that these same apostles and his disciples should be polished and perfected in the upper chamber at Jerusalem. There for the space of ten days 'persevering with one mind in prayer' (Acts 1:14), they were made worthy to receive the Holy Spirit: surely a memorable retreat, which first foreshadowed the Spiritual Exercises; from which the Church came forth endowed with virtue and perpetual strength; and in which, in presence of the Virgin Mary Mother of God, and aided by her patronage, those also were instituted whom we may rightly call the precursors of Catholic Action." (MN)

17. PIONEER TOTAL ABSTINENCE ASSOCIATION OF THE SACRED HEART

An admirable activity for a praesidium would unquestionably be the recruiting of members for this Association. The primary aim of the Association is the glory of God through the promotion of sobriety and temperance; its chief means of attaining this aim are prayer and self-sacrifice. Members are inspired by their personal love of Christ

- (a) to be independent of alcohol in order to do good; (b) to make reparation for the sins of self-indulgence, including their own sins;
- (c) to win, through prayer and self-sacrifice, grace and help for those who drink excessively and for those who suffer as a result of excessive drinking.

The main obligations of members are:

- (1) to abstain for life from all alcoholic drink;
- (2) to recite the Heroic Offering (prayer) twice daily;
- (3) to wear the emblem publicly. The Heroic Offering is as follows:

For your greater glory and consolation, O Sacred Heart of Jesus,

For your sake to give good example, to practise self-denial,

To make reparation to you for the sins of intemperance and for the conversion of excessive drinkers,

I will abstain for life from all intoxicating drinks.

An arrangement exists:

- (1) whereby a praesidium may, with the approval of the Central Director of the

Pioneer Association, be constituted a Pioneer Centre;

(2) that in areas where a Centre of the Association is already established a praesidium would be permitted, subject to the consent of the existing Centre being obtained, to attach itself to that Centre for the purpose of promoting and recruiting for the Association. (see appendix 9.

18. OTHER DUTIES ACCORDING TO THE NEEDS OF EACH PLACE

Legionaries will employ any other means of achieving the objects of the Legion which local circumstances may suggest, and which may be approved by the governing authority of the Legion, conformity with ecclesiastical authority being always understood. Once again it is insisted that the outlook on possible works should be one of enterprise and courage.

Each deed of heroism done under the Catholic flag has an effect, which may be styled electrifying, upon the modes of thought of that place. All, even the irreligious, are startled into a new seriousness towards religion. Those new standards will modify the way of living of the entire population.

" 'Be not afraid,' said Jesus. So let us put away fear. We want no timid ones among us. If ever there is need to repeat those words of Christ: 'Be not afraid,' it is unquestionably in relation to the apostolate. For fear unfits the mind for action and deprives us of the power to judge truly. So-I say it again-fear must be put far from us-fear of every kind save one alone: that kind I would wish to teach you: it is the fear of God. Possessing it, you will not fear men nor the spirits of this world. And as for prudence, it must be such as Holy Scripture defines it and does not tire in recalling: the prudence of the sons of God, the prudence of the spirit. It must not be - it is not - the prudence of the flesh - weak, lazy, stupid, selfish, miserable." (Discourse of Pope Pius XI: 17th May, 1931)

The Legion of Mary also does other activities as assigned by spiritual advisors