

*Inside the Legion of Mary – On Legionary Membership*

## **The Report and Personal Notebook**

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The handbook's guidelines for making a good report are very thorough and if faithfully followed would improve the praesidium meeting immensely. It emphasizes proper preparation as the building block of a good report, comparing the reports to bricks in the edifice of the meeting. At every weekly meeting the legionaries build a sort of Marian shrine made up of themselves as living stones: the prayers said, the spiritual reading, the reports and the discussion on them are all bricks for the shrine built in honor of the Blessed Mother. Legionaries become a living shrine in honor of her when they come together each week. With that in mind, the legionaries will aim to give as perfect a report as possible; it should neither be too long nor too short, should include the location of the assignment, how much time was spent, how many people visited. It is important to include the names of the families or persons contacted, what prayers were said and what advice was given them, and what literature or sacramentals were offered and accepted.

The giving of a report could also be compared to describing a movie of what occurred, noting the environment where the assignment took place and what topics were discussed. It is especially helpful to include any humorous or interesting incidents that might have happened, since these add greatly to the joyous atmosphere envisioned by the Legion for its meetings. (It has been said that every good praesidium meeting will have at least three good laughs!)

Confidentiality is paramount regarding the reports. Sometimes legionaries will encounter sensitive and delicate situations where information is gained about people that could have serious effects if made known. It is required and necessary to give a complete report at the meeting, but it must be remembered that the knowledge learned remains within the confines of the meeting and is not referred to with anyone else. Legionaries are taken into the personal trust of those visited, and once their problems and situations become the concern of the praesidium they must be honored by the rule of confidentiality.

### **The Personal Notebook**

The main reason for the use of a personal notebook is that legionaries are doing the most important work on earth – the salvation of souls. In worldly business, people keep very good records taking care of a passing treasure, while the legionaries are taking care of an eternal treasure: people's souls.

The notebook need not be elaborate – three by five or four by six are probably the best sizes – but it should be substantial enough to last, because it becomes a history of a legionary’s membership. In keeping with the rule of confidentiality the handbook recommends the use of a code when entering information into the notebook, should it accidentally be left for someone to read or perhaps be lost. In it, for example, should there be notes concerning a person’s addiction, someone disliking and no longer going to Church, or a case of domestic abuse, the information would be safe with the use of a personal code such as DA (drug addiction) LC (lousy Catholic!) or WB (wife beater!) It is a good idea to write the report as soon as convenient after the assignment, with the notes in logical order so as not to unnecessarily take up meeting time. Notes of reports should not be on loose sheets of paper since they are not intended to be “handed in.” While the use of the notebook will help to be more disciplined and orderly in the work and at the meeting, and will be a file of unfinished cases for future follow up – as well as aiding in the giving of good reports – the notebook will also become a source of encouragement as the Legion years go by. Browsing through the notebooks in difficult, trying or discouraging times will be a great consolation: to look back on a record of week by week, month by month visits to hospitals, going door-to-door, doing the Pilgrim Virgin Program, and realizing the hundreds and thousands of hours spent in Our Lady’s service cannot but edify and encourage. And those notebooks after 20 or 30 years of persevering membership become not only albums of apostolic memory, but I’m sure in Our Lady’s eyes are actually histories of holiness. At least I hope so, since I still have all my Legion notebooks, even my little ones, from my first assignments when I was ten years old!