

## *Inside the Legion of Mary – On Legionary Membership*

# **The Work Assignment**

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It is at the praesidium meeting that the member receives the grace to do the work assignment. In the Standing Instruction we read the words, “the performance of a *substantial, active, legionary* work.” *Substantial* refers to the time spent on the assignment, the required minimum of two hours (though many legionaries do much more); *active* means some contact with souls, and *legionary* means for a spiritual purpose.

The handbook insists, in the section, *The Performance of the Weekly Work Obligation*, that the work must be definite, assigned by the praesidium and “not something dictated by the pleasure of the individual legionary.” Here is an example of the Legion’s method of spiritual formation: the member is expected to receive the assignment (regardless of personal preference or of a feeling of incapability) in the spirit of humility and obedience. It is Our Lady’s way of assisting the member towards fulfilling the main purpose of Legion membership – personal holiness. Our Lady is to be seen in the person of the president as the official work is assigned. In the acceptance of the assignment the member’s love for her and loyalty to her Legion are expressed.

The handbook points out also that legionaries of Mary are like soldiers, known for their self-sacrifice and dedication, strength, and courage in the face of trial. It comments on *duty*, which sometimes could mean combat or death, or walking the sentry beat, or scrubbing barrack floors. These qualities of the soldier and the dedication to duty should be an example for legionaries of Mary who, when making the legionary Promise, say “I stand before you as her soldier and her child.” The legionary, meditating on these qualities of the soldier and perhaps sensing a lack of them when faced with difficulties, can be encouraged by the handbook’s recommendation that all work should be done in union with Mary: thinking with Mary’s will to serve Jesus and make him known to others. This is the ideal set before each Active member. Making this a practice will make every assignment, regardless of its demands, an opportunity for the legionary to grow in grace and to prove true love for Our Lady. The handbook points out that prayer, as good and necessary as it is, cannot satisfy for the active work. Personal holy hours or devotions, or the rosary said before Mass would not be assigned, nor would they be reported on at the meeting, though the rosary said during nursing home or shut-in visits is of course acceptable. But the handbook also points out that the rules of prayer must be applied to the work. And what are the rules of prayer? There are varied sets of rules of prayer, and probably all of them can be applied to legionary work. One set focuses on *sincerity, attention* and *resolve*. On assignments the legionary should have a *sincere* approach to those visited, making friends of them and paying *attention* to their spiritual and

human needs, and *resolve* to do whatever possible to bring them closer to God by planning future visits.

Another set of rules for prayer includes *faith, humility, confidence in God, acceptance of the Will of God* and *perseverance*. The legionary should pray with humility, and thus work in a humble way, as “an inferior to a superior,” which the handbook recommends. As prayer is offered with faith, so should the work be done in faith – even great faith – expecting miracles if it is Our Lady’s will. Whatever confidence and trust is present in prayer, the legionary should apply when weekly contacts are made, conscious that the work be done in accordance with God’s Will, and that result or outcome of each assignment will be left to his holy Will. And realizing that the salvation and sanctification of souls is the purpose of the work assignment, legionaries should equip themselves with perseverance in prayer and persevering effort in their search for and service to souls.

“The more the work is like a cross, the more it is to be esteemed.” In the movie, “The Passion of the Christ,” Our Lord didn’t just accept the cross – he *embraced* it! Sometimes the assignment can be fearful, discouraging, difficult, or even dangerous. It is then that it be accepted and esteemed for the treasure it is. Saint Louis de Montfort remarks that when a cross is opened up, you find it filled with diamonds! Every cross that’s carried though looking rough and heavy, difficult and painful, when broken open by faith and accepted in love, is filled with diamonds of grace. Legionaries are expected to remember that there is real gold within the wood of the cross, for the more the work is like a cross, the more it is to be cherished and esteemed.