

*Inside the Legion of Mary – On Legionary Spirit*

## **The Spirit of the Legion**

### **Part Three**

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#### **Her Heavenly Wisdom**

Heavenly wisdom is not merely beautiful thoughts, inspiring words, or considerations of the value of eternal life and the emptiness of earthly things; it is not *earthly* wisdom but *heavenly* wisdom – *wisdom of heaven*: the knowledge of sanctity and the ways of providence, the hidden rules of heaven and how to follow them on earth. Our Lady knows them all for she is the Seat of Wisdom, its source and flow. It is to her all mankind should look for guidance and answers and on whom legionaries must rely in the pursuit of their holiness and their apostolic work. They should pray for her for the virtues needed to grow closer to God and for the guidance necessary for decisions and solutions to situations that frequently arise in meetings, assignments and personal life.

#### **Her Love of God**

The handbook emphasizes that Our Lady's love for God was not merely total affection and dedication but a "*self-sacrificing, courageous*" love. This suggests a martyr's love, one who will give up life itself for love of the Beloved, regardless of the circumstances. We know her history and how she became the Queen of Martyrs. Of course, all legionaries profess a love for God – it's the purpose and motivation of their membership. The Legion has had its self-sacrificing courageous blood-red martyrs, but in imitating her and her divine Son not all legionaries are called to that ultimate proof of love. But proof of love of God and Mary there must be, for that is the principle on which the Legion of Mary is founded. A martyr's death usually happens within a fairly short time, but with most legionaries, as with Our Lady herself, proof of love can take a lifetime, with the daily willing of enduring of the little crosses (and the big ones!) The swallowing of a personal hurt or rejection of one's offered opinion, or a disappointing or upsetting assignment, for example, could be a "martyr-moment" for many a legionary.

#### **Her Faith**

All Christians should consider the imitation of Jesus Christ as their sacred duty and fondest desire. When it comes to faith, however, Jesus cannot be our example because he did not have the virtue of faith, since Faith is the belief in something unseen and Jesus, being God, was never without the Beatific Vision

on earth. Nor can he – being creator of all that is – be our model of Hope because hope is the desire for something one does not possess. But he is our perfect model of Charity. It is Our Blessed Mother who is our model of faith, a faith like no other on earth, greater faith than Abraham, the patriarchs and prophets, far greater faith than Joseph and John the Baptist or the thief on the cross who had the tremendous faith to see in a crucified man the great Lord of Paradise.

A parishioner once asked a priest, “Father pray that I have more faith!” and he agreed to pray for her. A week later she came back complaining: “Father why didn’t you pray for me! I expected more faith and the whole week was a disaster! Everything went wrong and all I could do was trust.” “I did pray for you,” the priest answered, “and that was the answer to your prayer; you already have the faith – God wanted you to exercise it!” As with anything else we want to perfect in life – athletic ability, skill with the piano – growth in virtue must be practiced, must be faithfully exercised to the best of our ability. For legionaries to grow in virtue in imitation of Mary, the practicing of her ten virtues will strengthen the body of the spiritual life and energize the apostolic muscles of the legionary as well.