

Allocutio

With hand in Mary's trust God's grace in the face of your weakness

Fr. Paul Churchill, Concilium Spiritual Director

"Simon, Simon, listen, Satan demanded to have you so that he might sift you like wheat" (Lk 22:31). Is it any wonder that Satan would attack Simon Peter? Here is the Apostle who is the first Pope. Here is the leader of that people who have the task of growing God's Kingdom. Peter must be sifted and destroyed by Satan.

St. Mary Magdalene has a similar story though from a different angle. She is described her as a woman from whom the Lord cast out seven demons. Truly the devil had tried to sift her. But she will be the first reported witness to the Resurrection and become, as Pope Francis says, "Apostle to the Apostles". No wonder the devil tried to sift her.

Another woman of note is Teresa of Avila who led the reform of the Carmelites. In her early years as a nun the devil tempted her to give up praying under the guise that it was the humble thing to do because of her sins. Until she saw the deceit of it and turned back to deep prayer and the rest is history.

Any person or group who are carrying out the work of the Kingdom can expect to be sifted. And if they work with the woman of Genesis they are bound to be attacked by Satan to undo them. As dedicated legionaries who serve Mary you can expect attacks in many forms. And maybe you all can say, "Yes I have this flaw, this bad habit I keep falling into." "I have this addiction that pulls me down." But apart from your habitual flaws, which may indeed be your version of St. Paul's thorn in the flesh to keep you from becoming pride, it is possible for a soul to come under dreadful temptation. So I offer a few thoughts to help you through such spiritual combats.

Firstly God is always on your side even were you to fall badly. Jesus did not reject or discard Peter despite his complete capitulation. He gave him a mission long before his fall and immediately after it. Remember how earlier Peter had said, "Depart from me for I am a sinful man". But the Lord replied, "Henceforth you will be catching men!" Basically, no matter what the sin, no matter how often our faith or morals seems to fail, God never gives up on us. It is interesting how, just before Peter's complete collapse, Jesus addresses him, not as Peter, but like a mother who calls her child by his first name, saying, "Simon, Simon". God calls us all kindly and encouragingly by our personal name, even before we fall and after we fall.

Remember the object of the devil is to get us to doubt God, to be discouraged. Getting us to sin is only a means to an end. He wants to completely break our bond with God. He wants us, like Adam, to hide ourselves from God. He wants us, as he did initially so successfully with Teresa of Avila, to give up praying. But what we must do, no matter what our sin, is to come immediately to him like little children who have fallen and cut ourselves to ask help with our wounds. And we can come because God loves us just as a father loves a small child and has no desire to harm it but to help it.

Secondly we must get it into our heads that the Order we belong to in the Church is, as St Bernard says, *The Order of Sinners!* We so easily can be like that Pharisee at the top of the Temple who says, "Lord, I am thankful I am not like those other dreadful people I read and hear about in the media." And then the world today prefers to blot out the concept of sin while man's inhumanity to man screams out at us. Like St. Philip Neri and others we need to say, since we are no different in nature, "There but for the grace of God go I". And strange as it may sound, a big fall, while it reminds us that we have no cause to boast, can be turned to gain great graces.

The pharisees addressed the man born blind as a "sinner through and through". In that they spoke a great truth about us all, sinners through and through. "Oh Father, I know I have my faults but I'm not that bad!". Right so, up with you to that row with that pharisee in the Temple. I ask if we have some deep serious sins we never even think of like: a) are you ruled by what people think of you than how God sees you? b) do you look on some as objects of contempt and hate or indifference instead of trying to see them through the eyes of Our Heavenly Father? And be wary of that dreadful sin of pride which the devil uses to topple us all. We must all stand with that public sinner at the back of the Temple who said, "God be merciful to me a sinner". Let us borrow these words from blind Bartimaeus, "Jesus son of David, be merciful to me a sinner", or from Peter, "Depart from me for I am a sinful man".

Those last words lead me to my next point. Peter said those words because he was feeling bad about himself. But what God in fact wants us all to do, whether truly virtuous, or caught in the struggle of sinful weeds, or collapsed in faith and

morals, is to come to him no matter what. Don't depart. Keep coming to God. He is our hope. He is not going to abandon us. He can work for our souls what we cannot do for ourselves. Without him we can do nothing, but with him all is possible. "Come close to God and he will come close go you" (Jas 4:8). Let us never forget those words, "Where sin abounds there even more is God's grace!" (Rm 5:20).

And my final point. Go to God with Mary. She is the sinless one, the Refuge of sinners. Put your hands in hers. Let her bring you to God and speak on your behalf. "Here is your humble servant who is mired in sin. He truly wants to be good, to do your will, to be a channel of your grace. He hears the challenge of the Cross and would love to live it but recoils. Believe you me, having been there, I understand him. Can you help him and give him the grace he needs to become a better person, to become what you want him to be?" O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to you. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us who have recourse to you. Refuge of sinners, pray for us.

REPORTS

DUBLIN NORTHSIDE CURIAE

Veneranda Curia

Déantar gnó Praesidium Muire, Máthair Dé trí Ghaeilge. Tugtar cuireadh ón Praesidium do chách teacht le chéile ag an gcruinniú aon oíche Céadaoin ar bith ag leathuair tar éis a seacht in Áras Veneranda, 13 Sráid Geraldine, Baile Phib. Bí leo fiú muna bhfuil Gaeilge líofa agat. [Praesidium Muire, Máthair Dé (Mary, Mother of God) works through the medium of the Irish language. The praesidium invites all to come together at the meeting any Wednesday night at half past seven at Áras Veneranda, 13 Geraldine St, Phibsboro. Join them even if you don't have fluent Irish]. Works include managing the accounts of Maria Legionis. Following an outreach in Ballygall parish where over 2000 (two thousand) homes were visited, a praesidium has been re-established with three (3) new members. The parish priest Fr. Joseph Ryan has thanked all legionaries who assisted in the project, adding "Your support, not only in distributing the invitation cards but bringing an invite to many back into life in the church community can only bring graces back into Ballygall."

Presentata Curia

A praesidium organises a retreat every year on Good Friday. Originally aimed at those in the bar trade, it now draws participants from all walks of life. Other works include Pilgrim Statue visitation, street contact and volunteering in the Morning Star hostel. A new praesidium gave its first report. Members keep the newly refurbished Presentata hall clean and tidy. The praesidium had organised eight (8) Traditional Irish Music nights which have been very well attended. Members also do nursing home visitation. A member is receiving instruction in the Catholic Faith and is looking forward to being received into the Catholic Church in September. Another praesidium's works include home visitation, crowd contact, hostel work and visitation of business premises. They have produced and distribute a flyer containing times of Masses, confessions and other parish activities. They have also assisted a praesidium in a neighbouring Curia with visitation of a flats complex in their area. The titles of the last two Patricians were "Divine Mercy" and "Sacred Heart of Jesus". Attendance was nineteen (19) and eight (8) respectively. Annual summer Barbecue was held in the Morning Star on July 14th. A Congress is being planned for November.

Exaltata Curia

A praesidium's works include Pilgrim Virgin Statue Visitation. Approximately thirty (30) homes accepted the statue since the last report. The praesidium also organised two Marian Processions: one in February in honour of Our Lady of Lourdes and one in May in honour of Our Lady of Fatima. Public Rosaries are recited at various locations in the parish in May and October. In addition, there is a weekly Rosary at Our Lady of Fatima Grotto between May and October. Legionaries regularly visit a former member who is in a nursing home. Another praesidium's main work is volunteering in the Regina Coeli Hostel, dealing with the spiritual and temporal welfare of the residents. The work involves cleaning, cooking, serving meals, laundry, lock-up, and front desk duties. Members are on a roster to prepare Sunday tea every fifth week and staff the hostel from 5 pm -9.30 pm. While on duty, sisters take the opportunity to talk with residents, encourage them in their faith and assist them in accessing help for issues such as drug and alcohol abuse, medical care, housing, and careers. Members have a Bible/Prayer meeting with the residents every Tuesday and recite the Rosary with them and discuss the following Sunday's Gospel. Another member is instructing one of the residents each week in preparation for the sacraments. The Curia supported outreaches in Corduff and Ballygall. The Frank Duff prayer is recited hourly during weekly Exposition in Huntstown Church. All Deus et Patria activities are mentioned at Curia. Login details for Mary's Channel of Grace are included in the Curia meeting agenda.

Bethlehem Curia

There have been twenty (20) visitors during the last year but none took on membership. Works include weekly street contact in the city centre where many homeless people are encountered. Contact is made with both Legion hostels but it is not always possible to get a bed. Miraculous Medals are distributed and people are invited to join or return to the Catholic Faith. Members also operate a book stand outside the Legion House on Mountjoy Square and also volunteer in the Morning Star hostel. A Frank Duff prayer group meets quarterly and has an average attendance of ten (10). Hymns are sung and petitions are read and the Frank Duff prayer is recited by all.

Consolata Curia

A praesidium's works include home and nursing home visitation, statue visitation, visitation to the schools and enrolment in the Brown Scapular. Legionaries met a Hindu family and gave them a picture of Our Lady of India with the Hail Mary on it in English and Hindi. Legionaries explained the meaning of the town's name: Swords from the word SORD meaning 'the town of pure water' to a Somali Muslim man. The Chinese takeaways and restaurants were visited. Sacramentals were offered and accepted by some. All Legion of Mary notices are printed in the parish newsletter and legionaries deliver the newsletters to local homes. Another praesidium set up a forum for auxiliaries to share information, and have also written to them by post enclosing a Tessera, leaflets and a Miraculous Medal. Members persuaded ten (10) people to go to confessions last Christmas. Other works include street and beach contact, and visitation to a care home. A member recently became a correspondent for Brazil. Members also support the nightly Legion prayers and Rosary on Mary's Channel of Grace. Curia held a Congress in May entitled Lead Us Forth United With Mary Our Mother. On Saturday 13th July all Curia praesidia attended Mass and Adoration together and recited the Legion prayers to pray for new members. The annual Faith 'N' Fun summer project for children aged six to eleven (6-11) years- old will take place during July and August. A paper on the life of Edel Quinn was read at the monthly Frank Duff meeting. Seven (7) legionaries attended. Recent Patricians' titles were What can the Lay Faithful learn from Frank Duff's approach to Evangelisation and What does God want from his people today.

Porta Coeli Curia

A praesidium now has four (4) members after a long-standing member recently passed away. We pray for the repose of the soul of this faithful legionary. Works include home visitation in the parish of the Curia and also in a neighbouring parish in an effort to revive the Legion there. Plaques of the Sacred Heart were given to families and sixty- four (64) homes were consecrated to the Sacred Heart. Rosary and other leaflets were distributed on this work. The weekly book barrow outside a shopping centre is well received. Miraculous Medals and Legion literature are distributed. The praesidium has recommenced the Night Fever apostolate. The legionaries go to various roads near the church with trays of candles, offering one to each person they meet. Several of those met, visited the church to light a candle and pray for special intentions, and some said they had not been inside a church for many years. The excellent response surprised both the legionaries and the priest. Another praesidium visits a nursing home and also auxiliary members, who are pleased to receive copies of Maria Legionis.

IRISH PROVINCIAL REPORTS

COMITIA:

Raphoe Comitium: Good efforts at recruiting continue to be made including recruiting at Masses in Ardaghey and The Rosses where legionaries have arranged a meeting with the priest. Three (3) pairs of legionaries from the second presidium established in Letterkenny visited two hundred and ninety- two (292) homes where two hundred and ten (210) Miraculous Medals as well as newsletters from the Cathedral were distributed. A book barrow is set up in the shopping centre in Letterkenny for two hours on Thursdays and Friday. Both Creeslough and Falcarragh praesidia have weakened due to retiring members.

Dromore Comitium: Home visitation has started in Newry. The legionaries were well received and offered Miraculous Medals and Rosaries. The Legion banner was carried in the Corpus Christi Procession in Newry. St Joseph's High School in Newry was visited on May 1st where the DVD on the Miraculous Medal was shown and one hundred (100) Miraculous Medals were distributed. A Rosary was also prayed in the Oratory during the month of May. A public Rosary for men was held in Dungannon on May 4th.

Down and Conor Comitium: Recruitment is still heavily promoted with three hundred and sixty one (361) contacts made and detailed in the minutes. The Matt Fradd event was a good event to demonstrate the Spirit of the Legion in Belfast. The extension committee meets monthly where extension and recruiting is very much promoted. An Exploratio Dominicalis is planned for the parish of Saint Malachy. Plans are in place for the Jubilee Year and the Rosary festival will take place again in October. The attached Down Curia reported the Newcastle praesidium with active members doing very good Legion work including home visitation. Five schools were visited.

Navan Comitium: The visitation of the attached praesidia was reported. Works include home and hospital visitation. Crowd contact is also done. The president urged all members to ask at least one person each week to join the Legion and to follow-up with contact and phone calls. A praesidium of six (6) members reported an increase in membership on their previous report. The correspondent suggested that the praesidium try to have one pair of legionaries on home

visitation each week. Assumpta Curia in Navan has five (5) senior praesidia and one (1) junior praesidium of eleven (11) members. The Acies was well attended. The junior members offered a Spiritual Bouquet to Our Lady on the occasion.

Derry Comitium: The Acies was held on March 21st in Longtower Church. The apostolate of a praesidium with (4) four male and two (2) female legionaries in Longtower parish includes home visitation where family prayer is encouraged, Pilgrim Statue visitation and recitation of the Rosary in two schools. The Miraculous Medal is offered to all met. Recruiting efforts resulted in two (2) new members for one (1) praesidium and one (1) member for another praesidium.

CURIAE

Kilmore Curia recently started a new praesidium in Belturbet. A former member of the praesidium was ordained to the priesthood and the Curia is hoping to have him back as a priest. Street contact was done in Ballyjamesduff. Most people were happy to talk and accept Miraculous Medals and literature.

Clonmacnoise Curia recently celebrated its 600th meeting and organised a visit to Concilium meeting and a tour of Frank Duff's house. During the month of May the Rosary was recited at the Grotto at Crossan Church with an average of twelve (12) each evening. The legionaries visited Mount Temple school where Miraculous Medals were given to the First Holy Communion class.

Armagh Curia

The legionaries had a stall at the "Feel good information morning" on June 15th. Senior and junior legionaries lead a Corpus Christi procession on June 2nd to St. Patricks Cathedral. The First Holy Communion children were there in great numbers. The Crowning Ceremony of the Statue of Our Lady took place with forty (40) in attendance, and included senior and junior legionaries who led the Rosary.

Drogheda Curia

The legionaries are in contact regularly with auxiliary members. There are many Maria Legionis subscribers. The apostolate reported on was hospital, nursing home and street contact. The Rosary is recited at the statue of Our Lady in the grounds of Our Lady's Hospital on the feast of the Assumption. Public Rosaries are also organised in housing estates where houses are visited beforehand with a drop in leaflet of time and place.

Leitrim Curia

The curia is trying to get the Slovakian praesidium restarted. A book barrow weekend is planned for St. Mel's Cathedral. Two classes in one school were visited where gift packs were given to each pupil. A praesidium that closed during Covid has restarted.

Clogher Curia

Two (2) praesidia reports were presented at the April and May meetings. With six (6) members in each of the two (2) praesidia the works includes visitation of the sick and housebound, nursing homes, the bereaved, promotion of auxiliary membership and other parish activities. The praesidium in Eskra planned to visit the local primary school monthly. This was warmly welcomed by the principal.

Dundalk Curia has six (6) active members and the attached Kilsaran praesidium has three (3) members. There is one (1) adjutorian and thirty-nine (39) auxiliaries. The works being done are book barrow with Catholic literature, home visitation to the elderly, Miraculous Medals and Legion literature distributed.

ASIA

PHILIPPINES

Western Visayas Senatus. Six (6) comitia and four (4) curiae are covered in this report.

Cabatuan Comitium facilitated the conversion of a Seventh Day Adventist family to the Catholic Faith. They now regularly attend Sunday Mass.

Tigbauan Comitium assisted in the Church wedding of a couple of mixed religion who had already had a civil marriage ceremony after Catechism and the Baptism of the husband into the Catholic Faith. In addition to this, two (2) inmates and two (2) minors also received the sacraments in prison.

Leon Comitium assisted a sick person to confess and receive the Eucharist, and the person subsequently recovered.

Guimaras Comitium: After multiple visitations to thirteen couples who had been living together, two (2) of the couples were baptised into the Catholic Faith, four (4) of the couples received the sacrament of confirmation, and all thirteen couples were married in the Catholic Church. Other reports include the assisting in facilitating the reception of the sacraments for people who were sick and terminally ill, people suffering from cancer, and depression. A fifteen (15) year-old with a brain tumour was assisted to receive the sacraments leading to a temporary recovery and happiness before she passed away.

Cebu Senatus. Councils and praesidia are visited and outreach is made to zones as yet without the Legion of Mary.

Dumaguete Regia has eight (8) comitia, four (4) curiae and eighteen (18) praesidia. Apostolic work includes home and jail visitation, crowd contact and marriage validation. Maomawan Curia has sixteen (16) praesidia and one (1) junior curia with seven (7) praesidia. Home visitation and teaching Catechism in schools was also reported.

Maasin Regia has twelve (12) comitia, six (6) curiae and six (6) attached praesidia. Membership is comprised of five thousand, eight hundred and fifty (5,850) active legionaries, two hundred and ten (210) probationers and one thousand, six hundred and eight (1,608) juniors. Prison and home visitation is carried out. San Remegio Curia has nine (9) senior and five (5) junior praesidia. Complete healing took place for an active member after prayers were offered for his recovery. Other reports include the Baptism of two (2) youths and returns to the sacraments.

Bicolandia Senatus.

The Rosary is taught in four (4) city jails.

Nabua Comitium has three (3) curiae and some dormant praesidia have been re-started. Works include home visitation and Enthronement of the Sacred Heart.

Carceres Comitium has seven (7) praesidia and eight (8) curiae attached which comprises three hundred and forty- eight (348) seniors, eighty (80) juniors and ninety (90) praetorians.

Libmanan Comitium teach Catechism to elementary pupils, recruit for early baptism and facilitate for marriage validations.

NORTHERN PHILIPPINES (MANILLA)

The Legion of Mary is present in five (5) of the six (6) parishes in a curia in the Archdiocese of Manila. There are fifteen (15) senior and one (1) junior praesidia. A new praesidium has also been set up. Works included four (4) households, and seven (7) teachers, and two (2) persons receiving the sacrament of confession with the efforts of the legionaries. Visitation of one hundred and forty- six (146) families resulted in the validation of five (5) marriages, two (2) baptisms, two (2) people receiving the sacrament of confirmation and four (4) people receiving the sacrament of the sick. There is difficulty in recruiting younger senior members due to work and study schedules. Challenges exist also in forming junior praesidia as the young people opt to join youth groups instead.

Cabantuan Comitium held training for officers. Membership comprises twenty- two (22) active legionaries, and eight (8) auxiliary members. One (1) junior praesidium was established as was one (1) senior praesidium. Home visitation through the block Rosaries resulted in the conversion of five (5) born-again Christians.

Comitia of Imus and Silang cover ninety- one (91) parishes, with the Legion of Mary present in seventy (70) of these. A curia organised a parents' night with the objective of gathering them, showing them what their children do in the Legion and finally to assure them that their children are safe in the Legion.

Metro Manila Comitium covers thirty (30) parishes with the Legion of Mary present in all of them. Sixty-five (65) new members have been recruited. Catechetical instruction has been given to eighty-seven (87) adults and one hundred and forty-eight (148) children, three (3) conversions and twenty-two (22) jail visitations have also happened as a result of efforts of the legionaries here.

Mindanao Senatus

Several curiae report apostolic work such as home visitation, sick and hospital visitation, jail apostolate, block rosary, Catechesis, promotion of marriage validation, baptism and confirmation. In Rayna sa Mga Angeles Curia, praesidia are concentrating on promotion of the sacraments especially encouraging couples who are living together to receive the sacrament of marriage. Thirty-five (35) have been baptised and confirmed and forty (40) couples have received the sacrament of marriage. A legionary was invited to catechise on local radio and she did Our Lady and the Legion proud. Many prayers for the success of legionary endeavours and for healing from sickness have been answered.

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland Senatus

Plans are in place to visit attached councils of Tonga, American and Western Samoa towards the end of the year. A new praesidium with sixteen (16) members has been established.

Christchurch English curia has nine (9) senior and two (2) junior praesidia. Holy Communion is brought to the sick and housebound. Visitation is carried out, and transport to Mass is provided. Juniors are altar servers, and share Faith with friends. Bible study and handbook study are carried out also.

A Korean curia with six (6) praesidia of forty- nine (49) members undertakes works of consolation mostly.

AUSTRALIA

Melbourne Senatus

Many praesidia have started Frank Duff prayer groups following the encouragement of the correspondent to do so. They were advised to open those Frank Duff prayer group meetings to non- legionaries also. Enthusiastic legionaries have begun a new book barrow apostolate on the steps of the Legion of Mary house and great contacts are being made through this.

Dandenong Curia consists of eight (8) senior praesidia of fifty-five (55) members, and one (1) junior praesidium of five (5) members. Intensive recruitment drives have resulted in ten (10) new members being recruited in Keysborough. A congress is planned for August.

Noumea Comitium in New Caladonia has eight (8) local curiae and one (1) curia on Wallis Island. Four (4) of the directly attached praesidia are local, and seven (7) are on the islands. Visits are made to retired priests and Catechism is taught in the tribes and villages. Legionaries continue with their apostolate in preparing the children and adults for the sacraments on Belep Island, though a priest is not appointed to minister full-time to the island at present, and hence priestly ministry to the people there is currently less regular.

SOUTH AMERICA

CHILE

Senatus of Santiago, Chile:

Many immigrants are becoming active legionaries; their work is usually with their own communities, many of whom have just arrived in Chile. Some praesidia have changed their meeting times from morning to evening in an effort to gain active members. A parish praesidium, which includes two married couples in its membership, trains altar boys. Another praesidium invites their auxiliary members to visit the meeting to encourage them to become active members. A short history of the founding of the Legion is being written which will help legionaries to remember their roots.

BOLIVIA

La Paz Senatus:

One work is the distribution of bottles of Holy Water with the Legion of Mary name written on them. The meaning and use of Holy Water is explained. Now Servant of God Alfie Lambe started the Legion of Mary in Bolivia and special remembrance was given to his birthday. Legion work is done in Spanish and in two local dialects. The Rosary is promoted as people are asked to pray for their country which is going through difficult times.

COLOMBIA

Senatus of Bogota:

Four (4) praesidia, three (3) curiae, five (5) comitia, and six (6) regiae reported. The senatus offers monthly training on various aspects such as extension and handbook study. They report two (2) new praesidia have been established and five (5) more are in formation. Highlights include: workshops focusing on development of skills, and spiritual formation for autistic and blind adults. This has resulted in improvement in their behaviour and in their personal and family lives. Other works include apostolates on different radio stations; outreach to homeless people, outreach to those detained in police stations, to people who come to the parishes every month to receive food and to unmarried couples. In one (1) parish, they performed a collective marriage ceremony.

A comitium prepared one hundred (100) people for the Consecration to Our Lady, while a curia prepared another consecration with children and their families. Also mentioned are street contact, prison visitation and an outreach to the bereaved, a Film Night, recital of the Holy Rosary every 13th of the month in different police stations, Catechesis for children, young people and adults, a homework club for children, pre-junior groups for small children, and Enthronement of the Sacred Heart. They report that the rosaries in parks have become gatherings of families and allow for the recruitment of active and auxiliary members. Many use the Columban recruitment method. Some regiae announce that they lost their young members, because they got used to virtual meetings during the pandemic and do not want to return to attending in person.

Senatus of Medellín:

The senatus is comprised of five thousand, five hundred and ninety-seven (5,597) active members, one thousand, two hundred (1,200) praetorians, four thousand, eight hundred and ninety-three (4,893) auxiliaries, four hundred and eighty-nine (489) adjutorians: four (4) juniors and twelve (12) pre-juniors. In this period, three (3) regiae reported: one with three (3) comitia, fourteen (14) curiae, eight (8) senior and four (4) junior praesidia and twelve (12) pre-junior groups. They all show a great commitment to parish and formation activities. They provide Catechesis for children, adults and prisoners. This has resulted in good results, such as the three (3) baptisms and eight (8) marriages which took place on 8th August 2023. They teach devotion to Our Lady and distribute Rosaries made by legionaries so that those contacted can practice praying it. During home visitation they learn about the health issues as well as spiritual needs of those visited, and they accompany the priests to administer the sacraments. Some brothers do heroic work with alcoholics and drug addicts. They carry out Peregrinatio Pro Christo (PPC), Exploratio Dominicalis and missions in villages.

PERU

Senatus of Lima:

In this period three (3) praesidia, six (6) Curiae, and five (5) comitia reported. There are three hundred and ten (310) probationary legionaries. Works include visitation of homes and sick people in homes and hospitals, street contact, dissemination of materials, Catechesis of children, young people and adults, Enthronement of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary, Frank Duff Prayer Groups, and evangelisation in two police stations. They visit homes in an area where crime and illegal commerce predominate. They visit a youth rehabilitation centre for drug addicts, alcoholics, or those with behavioural problems. They also visit two prisons. They are extending in two (2) chapels and continue to work to recover praesidia lost in the pandemic.

URUGUAY

Senatus of Montevideo:

Five (5) praesidia and one (1) curia reported. There are seven (7) probationary members. The works include: visitation of nursing homes, hospitals and palliative patients, street contact, outreach to young people, visits to families, book barrow, and street work with people in difficult situations. On May 4th they celebrated the feasts of St. Philip and St.

James, informing all the people who came to the beautiful Legion of Mary stand about it. The annual audit of the treasury has been carried out. This senatus encouraged all the councils to hold congresses.

PARAGUAY

Senatus of Asuncion:

Attendance at curiae meetings in March and April was over eighty percent (80%+). A comitium in San Lorenzo set up nine (9) senior and three (3) junior praesidia. A former junior legionary joined the seminary recently. A senior legionary celebrated fifty (50) years membership in May. A curia in Carapeguia does apostolic work with unmarried couples; a couple who had been together for forty-two (42) years confessed, received Holy Communion and were married recently.

Concilium visit to Monaghan

Br. Phelim Lally, Sr. Miriam Mc Kane, Br. Patrick Dixon and Br. Dónal Fallon, along with Br. Robert Bradley from Deus et Patria paid a visit to Monaghan to mark the conclusion of a series of visits to individual curiae. Representatives from five (5) curiae (Dundalk, Armagh, Dromore, Clogher & Kilmore) from the North East attended St. Joseph's Pastoral Centre where the programme included talks (practical & spiritual), personal testimony from younger members who are very committed to working for Our Lady, a question and answers session, videos, street & home contact experience. All enjoyed, and very much appreciated the food that was made available also. The outdoor work proved surprisingly easy and enjoyable for the less experienced legionaries present. An informal atmosphere prevailed throughout the day, adding to learning and enjoyment. This was the first post-Newbridge initiative to support Curiae clusters around the country who feel they need it. Please pray for the current plans for a visit to another destination.

Frank Duff Summer School. Dublin, Ireland, June 2024

The Frank Duff Summer School was a new initiative this year. It was held on five weekends, beginning with the annual Frank Duff event in Glasnevin on June 9th, followed by three Saturdays where the writings of Frank Duff were discussed, and it finished with a Mary Day on July 7th.

Mary Day

The Mary Day was entitled Behold Your Mother, and was attended by ninety-five (95) people. There was good representation from Dublin curiae. Some non-legionaries attended also.

Excellent presentations were given by a variety of speakers. Fr. Terrence Crotty O.P. opened the day with his talk entitled As an Army Set in Battle Array - Mary in the Gospels. Br. Mark McDonagh delivered a talk on Why we should call Mary our Mother. Fr. Adrian Crowley provided Suggestions for the Spiritual Life and Fr. Paul Churchill concluded the talks with Why Mary Matters.

Mary Day concluded with Holy Mass celebrated by Most Reverend Paul Dempsey, newly appointed Auxiliary Bishop of Dublin. Confessions were available before Mass also.

The programme for the day was very varied. It included inputs from legionaries on panels and from the floor. Handbook discussion where attendees were divided into groups to consider a paragraph from chapter five Bringing Mary to the World was another aspect of the day.

Catholic chat about Frank Duff and our Blessed Mother from Sr. Síle Ní Chochláin, former President of The Legion of Mary, and a legionary who knew Frank Duff and another legionary who didn't was a very insightful and novel segment of the day also.

Sr. Áine Blake gave a detailed presentation about Deus et Patria.

An excellent video on the recent visit to Rome and commentary on this was most captivating and awe-inspiring.

Testimonies from new members on why they joined the Legion of Mary were energetic, refreshing and deeply moving, delineating how new members were drawn and led to the Legion of Mary.

The Bonnington Hotel was a very suitable venue with beautiful conference rooms and restaurant, and very helpful staff.

All attendees enjoyed the day and stayed until the end of Mary Day.

Peregrinatio Pro Christo (PPC) Concilium Report

We now have volunteers for the eight (8) teams requested by the various parish priests in England and Scotland.

One of the requested projects was cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances and the priest asked to have the project deferred to mid-September. A second project also had to be cancelled, but fortunately another project was acquired by one of the organisers in England. Accommodation has yet to be finalised, please pray for a successful outcome.

This year there has been an increase in volunteers from the United Kingdom (UK), a number of whom are first-timers. We have had feedback from two of the projects with very good results. Some of the members on one of the teams told of legionaries who had not previously carried out home to home visitation being so grateful for the experience and going back to their own praesidia determined to put it into practice. They learned how to record cases and write up notes, etc. The parish council thanked the team for rejuvenating their parish.

A team which returned from Manchester said that it was truly an amazing week of Our Lady at work. Hopefully the good work will continue and enable the Legion to be restarted in the parish.

Please keep all projects in your prayers. Thank you.

'Fan the Spark' Conference for Young Adults (18-40)

Date: Saturday August 24

Time: 9.30 am-5.30 pm

Venue: Legion of Mary, De Montfort House, Morning Star Avenue, Brunswick St., Dublin 7. D 07 VA03

Cost: €15.

The day will include:

Talks on art, Faith, tour of Frank Duff House, Mass, Adoration and more.

To book visit www.eventbrite.ie or contact deusetpatria@gmail.com.

Please

a) keep this day in your prayers

b) encourage 18- 40 year-olds to attend this great day

c) promote this day to others who will encourage 18- 40 year olds to attend.

Thank you.

Rome 2024.

Last month's bulletin spoke of the hopes of more coverage in this month's bulletin on the historical invitation and visit of Br. Declan Lawlor, President of Concilium Legionis Mariae and Sr. Miriam Mc Kane, Secretary of Concilium Legionis Mariae to the Vatican in June 2024. We are delighted and very grateful to both of them for the following which we gladly share with you:

Report to Concilium of Sr. Miriam Mc Kane, Secretary of Concilium Legionis Mariae following attendance at the International Meeting for Lay Associations in Rome, 13th June 2024.

The Legion of Mary was invited to attend the Meeting of the Moderators of Associations of the Faithful, Ecclesial Movements and New Communities in St Peter's Basilica on 13th June 2024 with Pope Francis. President of the Legion of Mary, Declan Lawlor and Secretary to Concilium, Miriam McKane were hugely honoured to represent the Legion's 4 million members throughout the world.

They met with Cardinal Farrell, originally from Dublin who holds the most important position of "Camerlengo", meaning only he can act on behalf of the Holy Father in the event of untimely death or resignation. He is also Prefect of the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life. We were greatly humbled when the Dicastery asked us to say the Prayers of the Faithful in St Peter's Basilica, of which there were only 4 – 2 in Spanish, then 2 in English both read by our own Mr Lawlor.

It was then time for his Holiness, Pope Francis to address the Conference on the Challenge of Synodality for the Mission. Pope Francis expressed the hope that Synodality will endure as a permanent way of working within the Church and highlighted 3 Synodal Virtues which will help us on our journey.

1. Thinking as God thinks – In Mk 8:31 Peter opposes God's plan by rejecting the announcement of His Passion and Death. Jesus tells him 'You are setting your mind not on divine things, but on human things' In working for the Church we must ask ourselves 'What does God want from me? and is what I think truly aligned with the thought of God?

2. Avoiding Exclusiveness – Mk9:31 refers to John's objection to a man who cast out demons in Jesus' name but was not part of the group. Jesus tells him, 'Whoever is not against us is for us'. We must avoid the temptation of becoming a closed circle, but like the Apostles 'Go out to the whole world and proclaim the Good News.

3. Achieving Humility – In Mk 8:33 John and James ask for positions of honour next to Jesus. Jesus reminds them that true greatness lies not in being served, but in serving all. Living Synodality is impossible without humility.

Following his talk, Pope Francis gave us his Papal Blessing. We then had the rare privilege to meet his Holiness individually. Declan gave him a Spanish Legion of Mary handbook and hoped to get a photo for all Legion members worldwide. The Pope asked in English, 'Is it for me? Declan said it was. 'Many thanks for that' he replied. It was a very moving moment for us both on behalf of the Legion of Mary.

In his Introduction to the conference, Cardinal Kevin Farrell spoke of the importance to embrace the reasons for the Synod. The purpose is not to introduce pastoral change, rather it is a way for the people of God to journey together. This is not novel, but rather a continuation of ideas expressed in the Lumen Gentium document of Vatican. It is important to engage in dialogue in order to plan our Apostolic Mission together.

Lay theologian, Rafael Luciani gave his Presentation on How to be Ecclesial and Missionary at the same time. Mission is the purpose of Synodality. One Church is dying and another is being born. We are asked to give witness to the Kingdom and co-operate in its coming.

This was followed by a Presentation by Elisa Lisiero, a Dicastery Official, who invited us to reflect on Synodality, as we experience it in Lay organisations within the Church. She said that Synodality is not an end in itself, but a journey, and we do not reach the goal one by one but in pairs. There then followed a Question and Answer session which facilitated interaction among the 175 organisations represented at the Conference.

In conclusion, Cardinal Farrell stressed the importance of Lay Associations within the Church. He gave thanks and recognition for what the Laity are doing and said that we do not fully appreciate the importance of our work. He asked - 'Where would the Church be today without you? He hoped we understood that His Holiness went out of his way to come to this event.

In considering the question of how to pass the Faith from one generation to the next, Cardinal Farrell endorsed Simplicity and Personal Contact as the main components of evangelisation. He told of his diocese in Texas which had one and a half million Catholics and 70 Priests. What could Priests do? They tried building mega churches for 10,000 people, but that was not successful. There was still no interaction between people and priests. This is where Lay Associations play a very important role. In order to be successful as Church, Bishops must be in communication with Leaders of Lay Movements. Lay Movements in turn need consensus and to incorporate their plans in the Diocese.

Looking back 2,000 years ago, the Church was made up of small communities who didn't have a structure. How did they change so many corrupt souls? They did it by the way they cared, loved and dealt with each other. Early Christians brought the Faith and spoke about Jesus Christ. There is nothing more important than One to One Communication. What changes us is contact with other people who live the Gospel. It is about contact with others one person at a time.

On the day following the Conference, we visited the crypt of St Peter's where Pope St John XXIII's body is entombed. St John XXIII said "The Legion of Mary presents the true face of the Catholic Church". It was a great honour for us to pray for all Legion members at this most holy of pilgrimage sites. We finished the day off by saying the Rosary at the statue of our patron saint, St Louis De Montfort, (1673-1716). We sincerely thank the Dicastery for this invitation. It was a most special day, one we will hold dear in our hearts forever. With full hearts we continue to serve God under the banner of Mary.

The following talk was first delivered at Mary Day, July 7th 2024 at the Bonnington hotel, Dublin 9 by Br. Declan Lawlor, President of Concilium Legionis Mariae following attendance at the International Meeting for Lay Associations in Rome, 13th June 2024.

'Giving an Egg and Getting an Ox in return'



When we were in Rome, Cardinal Farrell said that Pope Francis wanted to thank the Lay movements for their work in Evangelisation and that is why he remained so long with us a few weeks ago. Each member can be confidently assured that the legion work done is endorsed by the Pope and the Mystical body of Christ is in operation.

However, Cardinal Farrell frankly said that without the lay movements there would be almost no evangelisation. In his Diocese in Dallas, he had 1.5 million people with 75 priests and 4 retired Nuns. He honestly admitted that a poor job was done in Evangelisation.

They built 10,000 seater churches and that was a bad idea. Interestingly, he said that the church would only be built up by 'personal contacts' and simple events. Very Legion-like.

For me to hear what the Pope Francis spoke about Synodal Values such as the need to be

(1) Thinking with God

(2) Avoiding Exclusiveness and

(3) Achieving Humility

was very similar to Frank Duff essays and writings from the Handbook.

For then to hear an emphasis on personal contact and simple events as a way of building the Church was very informative. Again very Frank Duff but also at another level open admittance that things are not good.

There was very strong endorsement of the Legion of Mary in the visit to the Vatican. It started with the President of the Legion of Mary reciting the Prayers of the Faithful at the special Mass in St. Peter's as requested by the Vatican Dicasteryto the Pope's comments in his speech to Lay movements and Cardinal Farrell's 'personal contacts' comments and then the President and Secretary meeting the Pope and presenting him with the Legion of Mary Handbook....

Can it be said that the Holy Spirit was encouraging the Legion members to keep fighting the spiritual battle with greater intensity in 2024?

Ireland 1974

50 years ago Frank duff wrote an essay called **The Faith the Nation principals of survival**....5 years before 1979 Pope's visit, where he was very critical of the Irish scene.

He said '*drinking was a deluge and crime was on the increase*' with little or no respect for law and order.

He said we were delivering no better than '*respectable paganism*' and we would be doing so much better if our '*religion was real*'. He felt that the Irish had a '*mechanical goodness*' about them but he felt there was no real depth of faith. In this essay he spoke about the French situation two hundred (200) years previously where the mask slipped and revealed under the surface a hatred for religion. Could the same happen in Ireland he asked?

He prophetically queried in 1974 was Ireland on a '*similar slippery slope*' where the vast majority of people could walk away in the future?

You might correctly ask why am I raising this stuff?

Firstly, it illustrates the prophetic insights and outlook that Brother Duff had when religion was supposedly at its height but secondly he saw storm clouds gathering in 1974 and under the surface that things were not good. He wasn't interested in back-slapping and societal narratives keeping things on track. He wanted to see real efforts of evangelisation for the Love of Christ as he specifically requested, not because the neighbours would approve. He says that our model of church was really for a simpler time. A rural area or town with a church in a rural setting with little outside influences. Respect for family respect for church etc. was standard.

However, he said that the *'wolves and robbers would come in the future'* and all the sheep would be scattered. The sheep would *'not be tough enough'* to withstand the religious challenges they will have to face. Their religion needed to be real if the sheep were going to withstand the attacks.

He also said that there would be so much anti- Catholic propaganda in the future that the *'future man would have to be inoculated from the modern germs'*.

Frank Duff understood the importance of religion for peace of mind and peace of soul. He could foresee the mental health problems into the future as religion was so seldomly practiced.

Summary

So in accordance with our baptismal duty it is clear the lay people all over the World need to be active in their faith. The stark admission of Cardinal Farrell regarding Evangelisation suggests a business in serious decline or a team in relegation zones constantly.

So how are we going to improve this situation, as we have a duty to do so?

I'm going to bring you back to what Br Duff said about *'toughening up the sheep or inoculation from the modern germs'*... In order that we don't individually fall down that slippery slope or alternatively that we can crawl back to the top.

So what do we do?

One suggestion is that you become a privileged soldier of Mary in the Legion of Mary. As Frank says the *'legion is not about giving but it's about getting'*. We give Our Lady *'an Egg and she gives us an Ox in return'*.

The handbook says *'Our Lord needs our help to carry out his work of sanctification and salvation'* but he needs our help. For those who are in the legion, I suggest you try harder to receive more Grace that is available in these turbulent times. The Legion system and the Sacraments working together hand in glove is how we survive the open air prison of prevailing narratives or undermining sneers. This is the Ox that you receive in return.

This is vitally important as the legion system set out in the handbook, is our roadmap to get us to Heaven.

This is also how you become toughened up or inoculated from the modern germs.

The legion membership bestows us Grace as we live out our baptismal calling and apostolic duty. There is also the much needed Fraternity or Fellowship that is needed badly in these times and gives us like-minded people on the pilgrimage of life.

We know Our Lady has appeared in Guadalupe, Lourdes, Fatima and Knock. She as a Mother is calling all of her children back to her son, Jesus. She is also asking her children to help her and move into action to work for the Mystical Body. She is the Woman in the Book of Genesis standing on the serpent's head but she still needs our help to evangelise the world.

So reflecting on the Rome comments and the Irish slippery slope:

.... we can see the absolute non-negotiable need for the laity or the legion to get out into the highways and byways ...talk to people...make contacts follow them up put an event onthat is really a thrilling adventure that every lay person needs to be involved in as you were each made for this.

Once we empty ourselves and put ourselves into the work, Our Lady and the Holy Spirit will use us for their purposes. There has never been a better time to devote ourselves to Our Lord and Our Lady.... They need apostles

If you don't at least try and give Her the egg, how can you expect to get the ox in return?

Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.

Blessed art thou amongst women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death.

Amen.

Some Handbook Reflections

The extract, this month is **Study of the Handbook** (p.2,3).....

Chapter 33, Section 10, of the handbook deals with the importance of studying the handbook. The section opens with the following "It is imperative that every member should study the handbook thoroughly. It is the official exposition of the Legion. It contains in briefest possible compass what it is important that every properly equipped legionary should know of the principles, the laws, the methods and the spirit of the organisation". We cannot say we know the Legion of Mary if we do not know the handbook. This means we need to study it every week. This section continues - "Members - and in particular officers - who do not know the handbook cannot possibly work the system properly; while, on the other hand, increased knowledge will always bring increased efficiency".

How much more we can know about the splendour of the Eucharist, the wonders of the Mystical Body and the treasures of the True Devotion to Mary if we study it. Many of the difficulties about Government of the Legion would be solved if the relevant section was read carefully. Duties of officers are well explained; are they read often?

The ideas of the handbook are not obscure - "This has been proved by the fact that countless legionaries, ordinary and even simple people, have completely grasped those ideas and have made them food and fibre for their lives".

In addition to the wealth of material carried over from previous editions, the current edition (1993) of the Handbook contains the up-to-date Church teaching, up to date scripture quotations and new material. Even very young legionaries should be given a copy. Here the senior legionaries play a very important role in helping these young people to understand the beauty of the handbook. If we all resolve to study it better, Mary's army of legionaries will be better equipped to do great things for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.