

December 2023 Allocutio

21 December 2023

Bethlehem- birth in the Lowest Place

Very Rev. Fr. Paul Churchill, Concilium Spiritual Director

We can all get trapped into the ideology of the perfect. And when you belong to a community that wants to proclaim good standards, seek to do all things well, to do the small and ordinary things extraordinarily well (as e.g. Thérèse of Lisieux and Frank Duff), there is a risk of demanding perfection in others, or that everything work out. And then you are not far from being frustrated because plans do not work out or that some person is unreliable. That world in turn can lead to a world of judgementalism, knocking, criticising and ultimately discouraging others and, indeed, maybe yourself as you judge yourself a failure.

One great antidote to all this is to reflect on the story of Our Lord's birth. St. Paul, a self-confessed zealot, commented about Jesus that he humbled himself and became humbler yet. Jesus spoke to all of us about seeking the lowest place. And in his birth he makes an early statement against expecting perfection.

It would appear that the decree requiring Mary and Joseph to head for Bethlehem was not in their original expectations. So we see Joseph, leading the donkey carrying Mary, heading off at perhaps a slower pace than he might normally have done so as not to make the journey harder. End result: they arrive late in town. There is no place for them to stay. But somebody has a stable. At least it will provide privacy. There, in that habitation made for animals, Jesus enters our world. God, through whom all was made, who has come on a mission to the human race, has a less than human place to start, due to a strange combination of events. Far from perfect but very okay with God.

In our new world of modern technology and internet connections and systems that synchronise, that manger reminds us of what is most important. There are two human beings there who love this little lad. His mother holds him close to her breast and feeds him not just the milk of nature but also of the human spirit. That love in her, of a special quality in her due to her being so aligned with the Holy Spirit, feeds him something crucial for any child, namely love. St. Joseph too in his ancillary role loves him, delights in the little lad, and will help him understand in human terms what *Father* means. My experience of life in so many ways and in so many cases has shown me that if a child suffers a deficit of love, gentleness, attention and time, but suffers instead harshness, they may turn out a cruel tyrant or a serial killer or many other expressions of deviancy. You could provide a child from the start with food, toys, money, the best of education, but if it does not receive a warm love of gentle care it will not bear as healthy a fruit as it was made for.

The Bethlehem stable was as backward as you can get for a birth, yet the place chosen by God. He is teaching us a lesson. To make that even clearer the first visitors are dregs in the society of the time: poor shepherds. That they were poor is made plain by the words, "lived in the fields", not in houses. And so the King of Heaven is welcomed, not by the highest echelons, but by the lowest, by rough uncouth sorts, who were despised and looked down on by their society.

God came into the world that was as messy as you can get, into a messy human space, a mother who was found pregnant before she was married, taken on by a man who at first was hesitant about her, messed up in the manner of the birth of her child and also very far from the support of family. But God works in a messy world that at times can be disorganised, imperfect, far from ideal, less than basic standard, but yet procures the best outcome. Lesson for us all!

Mary wants her Legion to be ready to go into the messiest of situations, ones that are riddled with imperfections and to bring the love of God to that world. She wants her Legion to seek out the most lost souls and show them her Son who came for them with his love, and to reassure them of that reality. And lost souls can also include those who have everything perfect, good organisation, pillars of society, but who live in a world they can control, even with no need of God and deep down not the slightest care for anyone else.

And finally that poor soul may be you and me. We must be like that publican who said, “Lord, be merciful to me a sinner”. Or, borrowing from the Beatitudes, “Lord I am poor in spirit”. I can be judgmental about all kinds of people, with my heart ruled by the world driven by anxiety and dark prognostications. Or maybe like the earlier St. Paul who persecuted others, I demand standards that in fact are not in harmony with the true God.

Let us all kneel before the humble manger and say to Jesus, “Lord, I am a poor shepherd. I have notions about myself that need a divine reality check. I judge others without your eyes of mercy. May the circumstances of your humble birth show me your values. May gentle Mary help me see myself as you do. Amen”

REPORTS

DUBLIN SOUTHSIDE CURIAE

Gloriosa Curia

Held an Advent retreat on Saturday, December 9th and have planned a candlelight rosary vigil for Christmas. **A new praesidium has recently been established in National University of Ireland (NUI) Maynooth.** A recruiting drive was held in November.

Mater Ecclesiae Curia

Saturday street contact continues in Blackrock or Dún Laoghaire every week. During Advent, legionaries will cover both areas. Home visitation has resulted in one person returning to the sacrament of reconciliation as well as receiving a regular visit with Holy Communion. **A monthly prayer meeting for Servant of God Frank Duff’s cause is up and running.** The rosary is recited monthly in St. Patrick’s Church, Monkstown ending with the prayer for the beatification of Venerable Edel Quinn. A praesidium distributes twenty copies of Maria Legionis in its area. Legionaries were saddened at the recent death of **Fergus O’Brien RIP who had been a member of the Legion of Mary for over forty (40) years. Fergus had a very special interest in recruiting people for pioneer membership, especially during Lent. Twelve (12) people attended the October Patrician meeting to discuss “The Mass. Why it matters.” There were twenty- five (25) in attendance for the November Patrician meeting which was entitled “Divine Mercy.”**

Annunciata Curia

Held a **function for auxiliary members, which included Mass, and a very interesting talk on the importance of auxiliary membership.** This was followed by refreshments. A total of **thirty (30) attended,** a combination of active and auxiliary members. **Sancta Maria praesidium is ninety-seven (97) years old and carries out an apostolate to women caught up in prostitution.** There are thirty-three (33) names on record and the legionaries visit them in their homes and help them and their families with their spiritual needs. The legionaries recently arranged for a priest to visit one of the women who is now in a nursing home, to hear her confession and anoint her.

Immaculata Curia

Praesidia are visiting local shopping centres with a crib. Contact is made with shoppers. Miraculous Medals and Legion of Mary literature are distributed. A recruiting day was held in November, and was followed up with home visitation. People encountered on street contact are invited to return to confession and are given the times of confessions in local churches. There were Patrician meetings in October and November, with an attendance of twelve: six legionaries and six non-legionaries. **The membership of a praesidium that was highly impacted by Covid has greatly increased in recent times.** Members are working hard to recruit both auxiliary and active members. Works include **weekly home visitation and monthly street contact.** Times of local Masses and confessions are distributed as well as Miraculous Medals and Legion of Mary literature. The

praesidium has begun visitation of a new apartment complex, following discussions with the parish priest, who has given legionaries a letter of welcome for the residents.

Ancilla Domini Curia

Legionaries do **street contact in the Temple Bar area and Thomas Street every week. Many shoppers and tourists frequent these areas especially on Saturdays.** Miraculous Medals and rosary beads are distributed. A public rosary is recited in both locations. The **junior praesidium is working well. They have arts and crafts in a community centre on Wednesdays. It is hoped that in time the juniors will go on to join an adult praesidium.** The annual Mass to commemorate the beginning of the Legion of Mary was held in St. Nicholas of Myra Church in September. There were refreshments in Myra House afterwards. Two buses went to Knock International Eucharistic and Marian Shrine in September for the annual Legion of Mary Pilgrimage. A praesidium does **home visitation in the area beside Whitefriar Street Church.** They have permission from the parish priest to do a recruiting drive there in the new year.

Benedicta Curia

A praesidium's work includes **street contact, visitation of homes, hospital and auxiliary members and journal distribution.** On home visitation an interesting contact was made with a man receiving treatment for cancer. Another praesidium has two Brazilians attending as visitors. Good contacts are made, they look after the Legion of Mary house, place the Frank Duff banner in the front garden and often talk to people getting off the buses that stop directly in front of the house. **A senior praesidium has been welcomed back to St James's Hospital where they meet frail and elderly patients. They encourage the patients, give them Miraculous Medals and journals.** One elderly lady told them she lost her Faith despite giving many years of service to the church, including as a Eucharistic minister. She was concerned about the wars in the world. Although she could do little because of her illness, legionaries told her that the rosary is very powerful in bringing peace. They said that Our Lady of Fatima told us that if people recited the rosary and offered reparation, peace would come to the world. The legionaries encouraged her to pray the rosary every day. She thanked the legionaries. **All praesidia work hard at recruiting,** which is mostly done outside the Legion of Mary house. Twenty-eight (28) recruitment contacts have been made in the last two months. **A junior praesidium has six members.** Two senior members attend their meetings. They have been busy **putting up Frank Duff posters in schools and churches. They help their parents, participate in a block rosary and recruit among their friends.**

IRELAND PROVINCIAL REPORTS

COMITIA

Cloyne Comitium

Visitation of praesidia featured in the minutes. The praesidium in **Mitchelstown** has five members and sixteen auxiliaries. Their apostolate is nursing home visitation and promotion of the Miraculous Medal. During the year they held four Patrician meetings and did **contact work at the annual musical festival.** The main work of the praesidium in Cobh is contact in and around the Cathedral, hospital visitation and special cases. **Four thousand, six hundred and eighty- nine (4,689) Miraculous Medals and prayer leaflets were distributed.**

Cork Comitium

A **successful culture night** was organised with many visitors attending. There were exhibition panels on display and videos playing. Evangelising and recruiting efforts were to the forefront. Many Miraculous Medals were distributed. **A recruiting drive resulted in a new praesidium being set up.** During home visitation a praesidium of six members bring the Fatima Pilgrim Statue, holy water and

Miraculous Medals to the homes. The attached **Queen of Peace Curia** related reports taken from three praesidia with seven, five, and four members. Organising Eucharistic Adoration, street contact, home and Pilgrim Statue visitation is included in the apostolate.

Thurles Comitium

Recruiting during the Novena at Holy Cross Abbey was done by **eighteen (18) legionaries**. As a result of this, three (3) came to a meeting for more information. **Recruiting was also planned for Thurles at the Cathedral** on November 5. **Cashel Curia reported Pilgrim Statue visitation on demand since Covid lockdown**. The statue is taken to **bereaved families**. A successful Curia outing on Sept 19 to Mount Mellaray Abbey with twenty-six (26) legionaries and the Spiritual Director was enjoyed by all. A **praesidium of six members at Holy Cross gave its 35th annual report**. Much help is given in the parish, organising the rosary each day before Mass in November. Miraculous Medals are given to children for First Holy Communion in two schools.

Kerry Comitium

The **Fatima Statue** was welcomed by **fifty- four (54) homes** in a new housing estate and **eight had their homes blessed**. This drew very positive attention at the **Concilium meeting with legionaries expressing interest in how it was carried out, and desire to engage in and see such valuable work replicated**. The **rosary is recited on the 13th of each month from May to October** and many legionaries participated this year. Contact work was done before and after the recitation of the rosary. Legionaries **participated in Maria et Patria projects in Waterford and Tralee**.

CURIAE

Limerick Curia

A **successful four-week extension project** was done in **Limerick University**. The **praesidium membership has increased a lot to its current membership of eleven active legionaries**. The project was suggested by Fr. Michael Smith. A similar project is being planned for another praesidium. The Curia is considering having a Maria et Patria project in Limerick.

Birr Roscrea Curia

The **praesidium in Roscrea** has nine members which includes **five new members**. The principal work is nursing home visitation, delivery of Catholic newspapers, church work, organising Adoration, and many other parish duties. Their annual reunion is planned for January 2024.

Lismore Curia

The numbers of active members of praesidia here is good. At a recent Curia meeting they had a discussion on auxiliary membership. The Curia Audit for 2023 will be presented at the January 2024 meeting.

East Clare Curia

The Curia reported the promotion of the three causes. The **praesidium in Killaloe was delighted to gain a new member from a talk given at a prayer meeting in Medjugorje**. The praesidium in Ennis has ten members.

Ross Curia

A very heartfelt tribute was paid to **Sr. Mary O' Donovan R.I.P.** who died recently. She had given **over fifty-three years of faithful service in the Legion of Mary**. May her soul rest in peace.

Waterford Curia

A **new praesidium** has been set up in **Tramore** with **eight members**. The **local priest who was ordained in August is very supportive of the praesidium as is Bishop Cullinane** who sent a letter

to the Curia. The establishment of a **new praesidium in the Dunmore area is being actively focused on at present.**

EUROPE

SPAIN

Madrid Senatus

Work on the streets with girls in the red light area is done by legionaries in pairs while others at the same time pray before the Blessed Sacrament. A priest is also present while the work is being done. The legionaries speak with the women and girls and give them support and help. There are **four million Spanish speaking immigrants in mainland Spain. Newly arrived are helped, some of whom have been legionaries in their native countries and are now in their new parishes.** Many priests and nuns come from Asia, Africa and South America to do courses in Spain. Most of them have worked with the Legion of Mary at home. **Night contacts are also made on busy city streets at weekends. Many new praesidia have been set up in the Senatus.** Anniversary Mass for the cause of Servant of God Frank Duff was celebrated. **A legionary in the Toledo Comitium is one hundred and one (101) years old and is a legionary for seventy (70) years.**

Bilbao Senatus

The focus of the Senatus has been to maintain attendance at meetings at all levels, the summer sees attendances drop below 50%, especially August. There have been some new recruits among young Catholic immigrants. In September significant refurbishment works commenced on the building used by the Senatus. As a tenant the Senatus will contribute over €9,000 to the cost from its own funds spread over eleven months. The Senatus celebrated its 60th Anniversary on 26th November with a Thanksgiving Mass in St. Nicholas of Bari Church with a good attendance. It was followed by a slide show of the Senatus history and a dinner. The correspondent was invited and attended along with a second Concilium representative. At a meeting with Senatus officers they stressed their main objective for the liturgical year 2023-2024 is extension of the Legion across the Basque Country and the north of Spain.

PORTUGAL

Lisbon Senatus

Pope Francis appointed Dom Rui Manuel Sousa Valerio, S.M.M. as the new Patriarch of Lisbon in August. The Senatus organised the annual Pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima. The **praesidium Nossa Senhora do Sagrado Coracao organises daily support for a sick person who lives alone and transportation of people with walking difficulties to the health centre.** One person received the Sacrament of Reconciliation after sixty (60) years. Curia Nossa Senhora da Paz (Rio do Mouro) have recruited seven (7) new members- who are on probation- as part of extension work. **Curia Santissimo Nome de Maria (Amadora) runs literacy classes. They founded two praesidia, one adult with young people and a junior.**

Porto Regia

Porto Regia recently held its Congress. It supports homeless people and young people at risk. The Regia provides social integration for four Brazilian students and their families. **Two praesidia resumed after the pandemic. Comitium of Braga:** The Fafe Curia continues to do outreach work. Curia Nossa Senhora do Pilar (Povoa do Lenhoso) report seven (7) praesidia with eighty (80) active members. **A legionary couple continue to dedicate themselves to extension work in the Arciprestate of Braga. Famalicao Comitium reports a new praesidium in Sao Simao of**

Junqueira with **seven active** and **sixteen auxiliaries** attached to Curia Nossa Senhora da Misericordia (Rates).

ITALY

Rome Senatus

Attendance at the Senatus meeting is still very low. An attached praesidium reported eight members, two praetorians, five probationers and twenty-six auxiliaries. The **praesidium helped two other praesidia to reorganise**. An attached Curia which had ten praesidia now has forty members in six praesidia. There are **plans to expand**. The pastor in one of the parishes has asked the Senatus to reorganise the praesidium in the parish again. The Legion apostolate includes visits to the sick and housebound. They also help around the parish. The **Spiritual Director, in his allocutiones encourages solid apostolic work assigned by the president of the praesidium**.

MALTA

Malta Regia

Praesidia Reports: The apostolate of a praesidium of seven includes **visitation of families, Catechism classes for six groups of children and the rosary in blocks of flats. Following the family visits, the parents are bringing their children to Mass. The rosary was also recited at the seafront with a very good attendance.** **Curia Reports:** Child of Mary Curia reported three new members recruited. An intermediate praesidium of six do Church services as their apostolate. Legionaries in Hope of the World Curia are in frequent contact with a Syrian and Indian person to help them prepare for the sacraments. From apostolate contacts legionaries influenced one person to **return to the sacraments after fifty-five (55) years.** **Gozo Comitium: Sixteen (16) legionaries took part in a half-day home to home visitation in Valetta Malta.** From one hundred and thirty-three (133) calls, sixty-two (62) families were contacted and encouraged in their faith. **For the Marian manifestation this year people were invited to visit Marsalforn parish church which was open till midnight for adoration, confession and spiritual support.** The Philipinos praesidium has seven members with all officerships filled. Legionaries are now **visiting a non-practising Muslim lady met at a bus stop.** **Peregrinatio Pro Christo:** A project was carried out to **Banbury in Oxford** in July where many homes were visited and good contacts were made.

Countries under the care of Malta Regia

TURKEY

Our Lady of Ephesus Curia has five praesidia attached. For the first few months of 2023 meetings were held almost regularly and the apostolate included promotion of the rosary, visiting the sick in hospital and in the homes, and church cleaning. Home visitation with the Statue of Our Lady is done by two praesidia. **Two retreats** were organised with an attendance of thirty-five (35) and fifty-nine (59). The Acies was held on March 19th. The **officers of the Curia had a meeting with the Apostolic Administrator for Istanbul.**

ALBANIA

Regular reports of the Comitium meetings are being received by the correspondent. **Two copies of the newly printed handbook were recently received at the Concilium.** The praesidium in Durres in

the Diocese of Tirana-Durres has eleven (11) members. The apostolate recorded **visiting the female prison** and assisting the priest in his pastoral duties.

There is **no presence of the Legion of Mary in Greece or Syria.**

AFRICA

GAMBIA

Banjul Curia

All Legion works are progressing well. **Recent communication mentions their difficulty with requests for contributions from other Church groups. All Legion of Mary funds should be used for Legion of Mary activities.**

NIGERIA

Onitsha Regia

Most Council report novenas for Servant of God Frank Duff, Venerable Edel Quinn & Servant of God Alfie Lambe. Other works include helping to prepare people for the sacraments and **encouraging couples to marry in Church.**

Jos Regia

The Regia officers are planning to visit attached councils.

Enugu Senatus

Awknanaw Comitium has many members including **two hundred and forty (240) praetorians, four hundred and nine (409) auxiliary, ninety- eight (98) of whom are adjutorians.** It also has **twelve (12) junior Curiae.** Recently, **fifteen (15) praesidia** were established, and **nineteen (19) legionaries** were ordained to the priesthood.

Ikot Ekpene Regia

Uyo Comitium has five hundred and five (505) members. Their works include **helping sixty-two (62) people prepare for baptism, First Holy Communion and confirmation.** Recently, a **junior praesidium** was established.

Abuja Senatus

The Senatus held a **workshop for officers of the Lafia diocese.** The theme was **“Effective Leadership for Officers in the Legion of Mary.”**The workshop **began with the celebration of Holy Mass on the feast of the Guardian Angels.** The Senatus also plans to **publish the latest edition of the Legion handbook,** which is **currently in process.** They have requested for a **digital copy** of the handbook which will be sent to them as soon as it is available.

Lagos Regia

Lago Regia held its **Annual Planning Meeting in August.** The chosen theme for next year’s programme is **“The Legion System Invariable.”** Efforts are being made to **address poor attendance of attached praesidia at the Regia meeting.** Extension works continue with plans to **establish a school praesidium at Badagary Grammar School in Lagos.** Works reported include

hospital and home visitation, **teaching the catechism and helping to prepare hundreds for the sacraments**. Masses were offered for deceased legionaries in November.

Ibadan Senatus:

No update since the last report.

UGANDA

Uganda Senatus

The **three day National Spiritual Director's Conference held in August was very successful with two hundred fifty (250) in attendance; including priests, religious and eight (8) participants from South Sudan**. In September, **over two thousand (2,000) legionaries attended a pilgrimage to Nkokonjeru, where the Legion of Mary was started in Uganda by Venerable Edel Quinn**. Extension work continues on the islands. **Tororo Comitium helped prepare seven hundred (700) infants for baptism and forty-six (46) Protestants came into the Catholic Church through their work. They plan to open two praesidia in Morikatipe prison.**

SOUTH SUDAN

The **Legion of Mary is active in two of South Sudan's seven Dioceses; Tambura-Yambio and Juba**. In November a **two day congress** was held for legionaries, supported by the **Senatus of Uganda** with approximately two hundred in attendance. A **legionary from Uganda spent three weeks visiting the Legion of Mary in the Diocese of Tamburs-Yambio**. There he found substantial Legion of Mary membership and offered support to organise the members into a more structured system. **Recommendations to support the Legion there, including production of the Handbook and Tesserars in Zande language.**

TANZANIA

Hai Moshi Comitium

Works reported include home and hospital visitation, encouraging couples to marry in Church and preparing adults and children for the sacraments.

Rombo Comitium

The corresponding secretary has moved to Italy and provided a new email address for correspondence. A response from the Comitium is awaited.

Dar-es-Salaam Regia

Two praesidia reports were presented showing solid work being undertaken but membership in praesidia is small. The **Regia is making efforts to restart praesidia that closed during Covid**. **Visitation of attached councils is done monthly**. They are also **organising training courses for officers in distant councils**.

MALAWI

Maula Senatus

Visits to attached councils are done regularly. The **Senatus plans to start Girl Guides and Boy Scout groups as well as overseeing a Conference for young legionaries**. Works reported include **visiting orphans, the sick, elderly, and bereaved**. **Thirty- two (32) marriages were ratified, thirty- four (34) children were prepared for the sacrament of confirmation and twenty-one (21) lapsed Catholics returned to the sacraments**. A youth Curia had initiated the process of establishing a praesidium at the juvenile section of Maula prison where there is already an established senior praesidium. Other works include extension drives, after-care of auxiliaries and Catechism instruction.

Blantyre

Works reported include **visiting the sick, lapsed Christians and counselling cohabiting couples**. Some families have undergone catechism classes and have since resumed their Catholic faith. **Legionaries provide Catechism classes on receiving the Blessed Sacrament and organisation of the cultivation of two farms belonging to sick patients.**

KENYA

Following Covid the **attendance at the Senatus of Kenya meeting has improved. Thirty-four (34) attended the monthly prayers at Venerable Edel Quinn's grave** in August. A praesidium of thirteen (13) active members and twenty-two (22) auxiliaries do home visitation resulting in two returns to the sacraments, two joining the praesidium, and four children in a children's home being baptised. The praesidium also cares for Venerable Edel Quinn's grave. **Umoja Curia** with eighteen attached praesidia and one junior Curia reported **two hundred and seventy-five (275) children prepared for baptism, twenty-seven (27) new members were recruited for Legion of Mary membership, thirty-seven (37) lapsed Catholics returned to the sacraments**. The correspondents meeting is held on a regular basis and visitation of attached councils is organised on an ongoing basis.

ZAMBIA

Lusaka Regia

Legionaries visited **one hundred and fifty (150) prisoners in two prisons sharing the Word of God, praying with the inmates and offering their support while comforting them**. A successful **young adults' Conference led by young legionaries** took place in November. Other works include teaching catechism classes for young children and **helping to prepare candidates for the sacraments**. A **Congress was held in Chawana in October with topics "God and Mary" and "Bringing Mary to the world"** on the agenda. A Mass in Thanksgiving to celebrate the anniversary of the founding of the Legion of Mary also took place in October.

Kasama Regia

No news since the last report.

CANADA, USA AND WEST INDIES

WEST INDIES

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Santo Domingo Senatus took reports from five praesidia, two Curiae and two Comitiae. Works included **six thousand (6,000) visits to the sick and three thousand (3,000) homes were visited**. **Two local legionaries joined Peregrinatio Pro Christo from Arlington Senatus to Banica which resulted in forty (40) people returning to Mass**. Banica now has six (6) praesidia with eighty (80) active members. The **Senatus in Santiago de los Caballeros** took reports from four councils. Works included counselling unmarried couples and Catechesis for the sacraments.

PUERTO RICO

Peurto Rico Senatus have filled officer vacancies. **On home visitation, the importance of prayer, catechesis for children, Church attendance, baptism and sacramental marriage are stressed**. **Homeless people and a womens' refuge are visited. Contact with several Protestants over time resulted in their return to the Catholic Church.**

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

The Trinidad & Tobago Regia reports that Rev. Fr. Peter Aduaka was appointed as their Spiritual Director. They **revived junior praesidia at four schools**. Between July and September, reports were taken from four praesidia, six Curiae including distant Barbados, and two Comitua in Dominica and St. Lucia. **In visiting Guyana they encouraged revival of praesidia and approached three parishes for extension.**

HAITI

Haiti Senatus: Many different Faiths are met during visitation of homes, hospitals and prisons. They accompany priests on sick calls and prepare people for the Sacraments. **In spite of transport problems, visitation of councils and praesidia was undertaken.** They held an **enclosed retreat** in September and a **training course for officers on three consecutive Saturdays.**

USA

Boston Senatus

Rev. Fr. Joseph Linh Nguyen was appointed as Spiritual Director. Recruiting is on the agenda. **Two new praesidia formed; one with five legionaries from Uganda and another with six members in more distant Maine.** The latter organised a **Marian evening with forty (40) people attending.**

San Francisco Senatus

The Senatus now has thirteen (13) directly attached praesidia. **Each praesidium will be assigned a parish for extension.** The annual Senatus Conference had six hundred (600) attending. **A nursing home resident was instructed and received into the Church recently. Senatus fully supports the Archdiocese's objective of a Eucharistic Revival.** The Korean Comitium has seventeen (17) praesidia and six (6) Curiae attached.

Cincinnati Senatus

Extension efforts in the Comitium and Senatus territories resulted in a total of thirty (30) people visiting the first meetings of two new praesidia. A praesidium of six members exhibited a Marian display and presented a slide show on Frank Duff in the Dayton University Chapel in honour of his receiving a Marian Award in that Chapel in 1956.

Arlington Senatus

This Senatus was **visited by the Concilium correspondent in October when they held their first Senatus meeting;** a more detailed report follows.

Philadelphia Senatus

Two praesidia and seven councils, with a total of thirty-one (31) probationary members and eight (8) junior praesidia reported this quarter. They quote **appreciable numbers of auxiliaries, adjutorians and praetorians as prayer support.** A **praesidium of five active members provides three staff members for Maria Legionis.** Fifty-six (56) legionaries attended a **Congress in Norristown Curia.** **In their St. Patrick's Day parade, Harrisburg Comitium provided "Our Lady of Knock" float accompanied by crowd contact apostolate. Legion stands were regularly staffed at several large events throughout the councils.**

Chicago Senatus

Reports were taken from five attached praesidia having between two and eight active members each. **Crowd contact in Millenium Park and Exploratio Dominicalis in Jefferson Park** featured. The **team of sixteen correspondents is a noteworthy support to Senatus in obtaining reports from fourteen distant councils.** Recruitment as well as a full range of apostolates featured in most reports and Legion Congresses for two Curiae. **Peoria Curia, with eight praesidia, promote Eucharistic Revival, First Friday Devotions and First Saturday Devotions and True Devotion to Mary.** The newly acquired Kokoma Comitium reported in October.

Los Angeles Senatus

The annual reunion, Our Lady birthday parties and auxiliary visitation were highlighted. **Frequent recruitment of adjutorians is done among daily Mass goers who just need to undertake the Divine Office.** Annual retreats were mentioned. One Comitium has **twenty- seven (27)** praesidia attached. Their **new Japanese praesidium, Our Lady of Akita, has seven members.**

St. Louis Senatus

Reports were taken from eight praesidia, four Curiae, and two Comitia in Kansas and Pueblo from July to Ocotber. **The eight praesidia have a total of forty-one active members, of whom 17% are praetorians.** A total of **four hundred and eighty-eight (488)** auxiliary members provide further prayer support to a wide variety of apostolates. **Conversion work in Pueblo led to six conversions, three baptisms and fifteen confirmations.** Also, a Curia in Kansas observed **increased Mass attendance due to visitation by the Legion of Mary.**

New York Senatus

Minutes up to May received.

Houston Senatus

A report was provided on their hosting of a **“Holy Spirit Conference”** on 7th.October. A **praesidium in Arizona set up a Catholic information table at a local flea market. Visitation of distant Curiae in El Paso and Rio GrandeValley and Belize was undertaken.** During a Peregrinatio Pro Christo project in Irving, they met the officers of a **new Spanish praesidium of twenty-four (24) members who run a junior praesidium for twenty-three (23) members.**

Miami Regia

Efforts have been made to reconnect with the Orlando Comitium. **Southwest Florida Curia** reported on a **diverse range of apostolates.** In **Broward Curia,** there was the **exemplary dedication of a wheelchair bound legionary who travelled extensively for various Legion of Mary activities. She reflects the spirit of “anything for Jesus and Mary” and for the sanctification of our Legion of Mary members.**

CANADA

Toronto Senatus

Reports were taken from five praesidia, one Regia, four Comitia and six Curiae. They had **one hundred and eighty-two (182) members attend their Legion of Mary Congress.** A **new praesidium was affiliated to Senatus. Columban drives and new praesidia featured for most attached councils in Winnipeg, Hamilton and Scarborough.** The Korean Comitium, with a total of **twenty-nine (29) praesidia for two hundred and twenty- four (224) active members,** is generous to Senatus. Ottawa Regia had **two hundred (200) participate in a Marian procession on 28th April and held a retreat for people with disabilities and for elderly people.**

Vancouver Comitium

A visit was made to **Queen of Apostles Curia, which is active and strong**. A recent **Columban Drive in one parish had eighty-six responses**; eight (8) for active membership, forty-nine (49) for auxiliary, two (2) for junior and twenty-seven (27) undecided. **The event organiser offered help to other Curiae for Columban Drives.**

Montreal Senatus

Seven praesidia and three Curiae provided reports. Five praesidia have a total of forty-four (44) active members (including four praetorians) and six probationary members. A new senior praesidium is being affiliated. Plans are underway for **Peregrinatio Pro Christo in Quebec in May 2024.**

Edmonton Comitium

There are currently nine directly attached praesidia and five attached Curiae. **Legion of Mary growth in Calgary necessitated a divide into a Northside Curia** with thirteen (13) praesidia including three juniors **and a Southside Curia** with fourteen (14) praesidia including two junior and two new senior praesidia.

We express our heartfelt appreciation of the former life-long correspondents with respectively Miami, St. Louis and Trinidad - namely Sr. Marie Dunleavy, Sr. Marie Barry and Sr. Mary O'Sullivan.

Some Handbook Reflections.

As explained below, the extract this month from "Some Handbook Reflections" expands on the extract selected last month, maintaining focus on planning for the coming year:

PLANNING THE YEAR'S PROGRAMME (p.27, 28 in "Some Handbook Reflections")

The following notes are intended as a follow-up to the previous section, with emphasis on the drawing up of a programme for the year so that planning may be more effective. These are offered as suggestions to both praesidia and councils.

PRAESIDIUM: The President might consider having some form of diary in which items discussed at the officers' planning meeting might be entered and to which attention would be drawn at specific times during the year. Some examples:

- (1) The promotion of the True Devotion to Mary over a certain period
- (2) Likewise with praetorian membership and explanation of the Breviary - its value and manner of recitation
- (3): Highlighting the feasts of the Patrons of the Legion as they occur
- (4) Dates for Exploratio Dominicalis, Praesidium Function in September, Auxiliary Rally
- (5) Preparation of the annual report and deadline for the audit of funds
- (6) Parish functions or events to which the praesidium could lend its support and assistance
- (7) Introduction of new works for example, the Patricians; apostolate to young people

(8) Follow-up on works

(9) Dates for certain activities in connection with the works of the praesidium, for example; a Retreat, a Mass for the Sick, a Talk for non-Catholics

(10) Closing dates for the Peregrinatio Pro Christo.

Each praesidium may have its own particular items for inclusion in the year's programme.

COUNCIL: The officers might consider drawing up a programme for the year at their planning meeting and list such things as the following:

(1) Dates of Legion Functions: the Acies, the Annual General Reunion, the Annual Outing, a Retreat, (a Congress)

(2) Praesidia (and councils) to report each month

(3) Praesidia (and councils) to be visited each month

(4) Deadline for audit of funds

(5) Parishes (and Dioceses) to be visited each month on the work of Extension of the Legion

6) Expiry dates of officerships in praesidia and councils.

Each council will probably have various other items for inclusion in the year's programme. It should be of assistance to the members of praesidia and councils to have dates fixed well in advance for Legion functions, etc., however, it should be understood that councils (not just the officers) make the decisions in this regard. It is also desirable that plans drawn up by the officers of a praesidium should be presented and discussed at the praesidium meeting.

Thank you for all you brought to the Legion of Mary this year and we wish you a very blessed Christmas and New Year. We look forward to Christmas 2023 with grateful and joyful hearts, and pray that 2024 be a very fruitful year for the Legion of Mary.
