

## LEGION OF MARY

### *DRAFT STATUTES*

#### *Preamble*

By virtue of

- a) the foundation of the Legion of Mary in Dublin, Ireland, in 1921, during the Pontificate of Benedict XV and its subsequent approval as an apostolic association of the Catholic faithful, first in its own diocese of origin and subsequently in dioceses worldwide;
- b) the establishment of the Pontifical Council for the Laity following the Second Vatican Council;
- c) the Code of Canon Law, promulgated in 1983, which requires Statutes for all associations of the faithful who seek recognition by the Church.

The Statutes of the Legion of Mary are given in this present document, in coherence with the key moments in the foundation and formation of the Legion of Mary.

A summary of its history in what pertains to its juridical status is as follows:

1. The first branch of the Legion of Mary known as the *Patronage of Our Lady of Mercy* was founded in the Parish of St. Nicholas of Myra, Dublin, Ireland, on the 7<sup>th</sup> September 1921 by the Servant of God Frank Duff with the permission of the Parish Priest, Canon John Flanagan, and under the spiritual direction of Fr. Michael Toher, curate in the same parish.
2. Other branches were formed. In order to co-ordinate and govern these and future branches a governing body known as the Central Council was inaugurated on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> November 1924 under the spiritual direction of Reverend Fr. Michael Creedon curate in St. Nicholas of Myra parish who had succeeded Fr. Michael Toher. The name “Legion of Mary” or *Legio Mariae* was adopted by this body for the association and the Central Council became known as the *Concilium Legionis Mariae*.
3. On 8<sup>th</sup> March 1927, the *Permissu Ordinarii Diocesis Dublinensis* was given for the printing of the prayers to be recited at Legion meetings.

4. On 30<sup>th</sup> September 1928, the first draft of the Legion Handbook was approved by the *Concilium Legionis Mariae* for private circulation among members and submitted for diocesan approval.
5. In an address to legionary pilgrims to Rome in the Holy Year of 1933, His Holiness Pope Pius XI gave his blessing to the Legion of Mary calling it a beautiful and holy work.
6. On 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1935, the Letter of Approval for the Legion of Mary was issued by His Grace Dr. Edward Byrne, Archbishop of Dublin, and on 24<sup>th</sup> March 1935 his *Imprimi Potest* for the printing of the Constitution of the Legion was issued.
7. On 7<sup>th</sup> March 1937, Archbishop Byrne gave his authorisation *Imprimi Potest* for the printing of the first definitive edition of the Legion Handbook.
8. Subsequently, as the Legion spread worldwide, the approval of the Ordinary was sought in every case of a Legion foundation in a new diocese and of the Parish Priest in each new parish. For each new translation of the Legion Handbook, the *Imprimatur* of a local Ordinary was sought before printing.
9. The Legion of Mary has maintained a cordial and filial relationship with the *Pontificium Consilium pro Laicis* since its foundation in 1967 by means of reports, exchanges of correspondence, visits and attendance at Conferences and Congresses organised by the Pontifical Council just as it had previously maintained contact with the Central Office of Catholic Action under Cardinal Francesco Marchetti-Selvaggiani and Mons. Giuseppe (later Cardinal) Pizzardo in earlier times.
10. In a letter dated 2<sup>nd</sup> June 1966 Mons. Angelo Dell'Acqua (later Cardinal) writing on behalf of His Holiness Paul VI gave an assurance that there was no intention on the part of the Holy See to have the Constitutions of the Legion altered in the foreseeable future.

There now follow the Statutes of the Legion of Mary.

## STATUTES

Art. 1.

The Legion of Mary is a private international association of the faithful, with juridical personality according to canons 298-311 and 321-329 of the Code of Canon Law.

### ***A. The Name of the Association: The Legion of Mary***

Art. 2.

The association of Christifideles which bears the name *The Legion of Mary* is the association founded by Frank Duff with others in Dublin on the 7<sup>th</sup> September 1921. By its name is indicated an army of servants, known as *legionaries*, organised after the model of an army, principally that of the army of ancient Rome, under the command of Mary, Queen of Heaven, in the service of her Son, Jesus Christ. Although an army, its object and methods are not of this world but of Mary, the humble one.

### ***B. The Object of the Legion of Mary***

Art. 3.

The object of the Legion of Mary is the glory of God through the holiness of its members, developed by prayer and active co-operation, acting under ecclesiastical guidance, in Mary's and the Church's work of overcoming evil and advancing the reign of Christ. The Legion of Mary, invoking the Holy Spirit, seeks to serve Jesus Christ under the direction of and in union with his Mother, Mary Immaculate, Mediatrix of all Graces, in accordance with the vision of its founder Frank Duff. It is at the disposal of diocesan bishops and parish priests or other competent ecclesiastical authorities for a variety of services they deem suitable for legionaries. The Legion of Mary focuses on spiritual and moral good in souls and so does not have as its object to provide material relief which work is left to other apostolates.

### ***C. The Spiritual Patrimony of the Legion of Mary***

Art. 4.

Apart from the manifold gifts that God has given through Christ to his Church, the Legion of Mary benefits in a particular way from the vision of the founder Frank Duff as expounded in his writings and by his life example. Legionaries also take inspiration from the teachings of St. Louis Marie Grignon de Montfort on the *True Devotion to Our Blessed Lady*, a

doctrine that greatly inspired Frank Duff. The *Handbook* is the fundamental resource for inspiration and practical guidance for all legionaries, while the current statutes provide the canonical framework for the government of the Legion.

Art 5.

In the interpretation and living out in practice of Frank Duff's vision no disposition of heart or active work can be deemed to be authentic unless in full harmony with the teaching of the Catholic Church.

Art. 6.

At a spiritual level the Legion of Mary places itself at the disposal of Mary, Mother of Christ and Queen of Heaven. It exists and works under her inspiration and patronage in the service of Jesus, her Son, and invokes always on its work the help of the Holy Spirit who overshadowed her and by whose power she brought Jesus into the world.

Art. 7.

On the 25<sup>th</sup> March each year, or on some suitable day close to it, all legionaries, unless impeded by a just cause, shall renew their fealty to Mary, Queen of the Legion, in a ceremony called the Acies.

#### ***D. The Relations of Communion and Dependence with Ecclesiastical Authority***

Art. 8.

The Legion of Mary is a visible association of the faithful in the earthly Church (*Lumen Gentium* 8).

Art. 9.

At an institutional level in this world, as an association of the *christifideles*, the Legion of Mary can live and act only within the full communion of the Catholic Church. As an expression of this communion it is formally recognised by the Pontifical Council for the Laity.

Art. 10.

§1. The Legion of Mary will always respect proper ecclesiastical authority.

§2. By proper ecclesiastical authority is meant local Ordinaries according to the meaning of canon 134§1 and those priest-pastors to whom is entrusted the care of communities as mentioned in canons 515§1, 516§1, 517§1 and 539.

§3. In particular Churches (and their equivalents as per canon 368) the Legion of Mary cannot act unless it has the permission of the local Ordinary. It needs the permission of a parish priest/pastor/ moderator before it can work in the parish or quasi-parish unless in a specific case the local Ordinary decrees otherwise.

§4. Normally Legion of Mary structures should coincide with already existing ecclesiastical boundaries. However in the case of larger structures of governance in the Legion of Mary which extend over several dioceses the proper ecclesiastical authority may be the Metropolitan (canon 435) or some other bishop appointed to act on behalf of the constituent bishops.

§5. Individual conferences of Bishops may also appoint a liaison bishop to act on their behalf with the Legion of Mary in their territory.

Art. 11.

The local Ordinary is always to be respected by the officers of the Legion who are to listen to his advice and wishes with great respect.

### ***E. The Structures of Governance of the Legion of Mary***

#### *i) General Principles*

Art. 12.

The fundamental unit of the Legion of Mary is the praesidium.

Art. 13.

The councils of the Legion of Mary shall be the Curia, Comitium, Regia, Senatus, *Concilium Legionis Mariae* and other councils which may be set up with the approval of *Concilium Legionis Mariae*. A primary duty of any council is that of allegiance to its next highest council.

Art. 14.

The government, local and central of the Legion of Mary, shall be carried out by its councils whose duty in their respective spheres shall be to ensure unity, to preserve the original ideals of the Legion of Mary, to guard the integrity of the Legion spirit and rules and practice, and to spread the organisation.

Art. 15.

No praesidium or council shall be instituted without the formal permission of its next highest council or of the *Concilium Legionis Mariae*. The approval of the appropriate ecclesiastical authority in accordance with Art. 10 is also required.

## Art. 16.

Each praesidium and council shall have a priest as Spiritual Director, who shall be appointed by the appropriate ecclesiastical authority in accordance with Art. 10, and shall hold office at the pleasure of that same authority. If freely chosen by a council, he must have this responsibility confirmed by the appropriate ecclesiastical authority. He shall have decisive authority in all moral and religious matters raised at the meetings of the praesidium or council, and he shall have a suspensive veto on all the proceedings, with a view to obtaining the decision of the authority by whom he was appointed. The Spiritual Director ranks as an officer of the praesidium or council, and he shall uphold all due legionary authority.

## Art. 17.

Each praesidium and council shall have also a President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer and, in the case of councils, such other officers as shall be approved as necessary by the next highest council.

The **President**, apart from occupying the chair and conducting the business in a spirit of fraternity, shall ensure that the praesidium or council is firmly attached to the main body of the Legion of Mary by attending the meetings of the next highest council or maintaining close contacts.

The **Vice-President**, who has no automatic right to succeed to a vacant presidency, assists the President in his responsibilities and presides at the meetings which the President does not attend.

The main function of the **Secretary** is to keep the minutes of the meeting. The functions of the **Treasurer** are described below in section J on the temporal goods of the Legion.

## Art. 18.

In respect of each praesidium, officers are appointed by the next highest council; in respect of councils, officers shall be elected to serve for a period of three years and are eligible for re-election to the same respective offices for a further consecutive period of three years (that is a total of six years). A legionary whose term of office has expired must not continue to fulfil the duties of that office. When an officer for any reason whatsoever does not complete a first term of three years, he is to be regarded as having served a period of three years on the date on which he vacates the office. During the unexpired period he is eligible for election to the same office for another period of three years, which will be considered as a second term. If an officer does not complete the full three years of a second term he is to be regarded as having served a period of six years on the date on which he vacates the office.

## Art. 19.

Having completed a second term of office an interval of three years must elapse before a legionary is eligible for election to the same office in the same council. This interval is not required where another officership in the same council or any officership in another council is in question.

## Art. 20.

Every council officer must be an active member of a praesidium and is subject to the Standing Instruction (see Art. 94 below).

## Art.21.

The raising of the status of a council (for example, Curia to Comitium, etc.) shall not affect the terms of office of the existing officers.

## Art. 22.

The officers of a council shall be elected at an ordinary meeting of the council by the members of the council (that is, the officers of any directly affiliated praesidia, the officers of any directly affiliated councils and any elected officers of the council) who are present. Every legionary is eligible for such election. If elected and if not a member of the council he shall become a member *ex officio*. All elections of officers shall be subject to ratification by the next-highest council, but in the meantime the persons elected may discharge the functions of their offices.

## Art. 23.

Notice of the taking of nominations and the holding of an election shall be given to the members, if at all possible, at the meeting prior to that of the election. It is desirable that nominees should be made aware of the duties of the office.

## Art. 24.

It is allowable to comment — with proper restraint — on the suitability of candidates. It is also allowable for the officers of a council, if they are all agreed as to the suitability of a particular candidate, to declare that as a body they recommend that person. But that recommendation must not operate against the nomination of other candidates or against the full form of election.

## Art. 25.

The election shall be made by secret ballot. The manner of such election shall be as follows:

§1. The election for each officership is to be taken separately, and in descending order. Each name put forward must be formally proposed and seconded by a member other than the candidate himself. If only one name be put forward, it is unnecessary to proceed to a ballot, the candidate being deemed elected. If two or more names are duly proposed and seconded, a ballot shall be taken. A voting paper is to be given to each member of the council (including the Spiritual Director) who is present and entitled to vote. Careful attention is to be given to the latter requirement; only members of the council are entitled to vote. When filled up, the papers are to be folded carefully and then collected by the scrutineers. The name of the voter is not to appear on the voting paper.

§2. If the count shows that one candidate has obtained an absolute majority (see canon 119) of the votes, that is, a number greater than those of all the other candidates added together, then that candidate is to be declared elected.

§3. But if no one has secured an absolute majority, the results of the voting are to be read out; then the same candidates are to be re-voted for. Should this second ballot fail to yield an absolute majority to one candidate, then the candidate who has secured the lowest number of votes is to be eliminated and a re-vote taken on the remaining candidates. If this third ballot is also ineffectual, procedure is to be by way of successive eliminations and re-votes until one candidate has secured the necessary absolute majority of the votes.

Art. 26.

The elections must be carried out in strict and proper form, and with due regard to the secrecy of the individual voting paper.

Art.27.

It is necessary that a complete record of the elections, including the names of the proposers and seconders and the number of votes received by each candidate (when there is more than one candidate) be included in the minutes of the meeting. The elections are subject to ratification by the next highest council.

Art. 28.

The representatives of a praesidium or of a council to its next highest council shall be its officers.

Art. 29.

Correspondents in a higher council, appointed by the council, serve the function of fulfilling its functions of superintendence of its distant affiliated councils. The correspondent keeps in regular contact with the



council and from the minutes received monthly prepares a report for presentation to the higher council meeting when required. He attends the higher council meetings and takes part in the proceedings but, unless he is a member of the higher council, he has not the right to vote.

Art. 30.

With the permission of a council, other persons, whether members of the Legion or not, may attend the meetings of that council in the capacity of visitors, but shall not be entitled to vote there. Such persons are bound by the confidentiality of the meeting.

Art. 31. A higher council may combine with its own proper functions the functions of a lower council. A Senatus, for instance, may also act as a Curia.

Art. 32.

Every legionary is entitled to communicate privately with his Curia or with any higher council of the Legion. In dealing with anything thus imparted to it, that council shall act with circumspection and with due respect for the position and rights of any subordinate Legion body.

Art. 33.

The duty of contributing to the funds of its next highest council is imposed on each legionary body.

Art. 34.

Every member should contribute frankly and freely to the discussion of the business and problems of the praesidium or council to which he belongs. Therefore, as a matter of principle, no member is to be passive.

Art. 35.

The keynote of any Legion meeting should be to win over, not to vote down. When differences of opinion are found to exist, those who are obviously in the majority will do well to exhibit a complete patience. If needed, a decision should be postponed to another meeting, and indeed again and again where necessary so as to allow a full and mature consideration. Members should be made acquainted with every angle of the question. All should be encouraged to pray for light. It is not the victory of an opinion which is at stake, but a humble quest for God's will in the matter. Thus it will commonly be found that unanimity has come about.

Art. 36.

Wherever possible, councils of the Legion of Mary should seek to respect already existing ecclesiastical boundaries.

Art. 37.

Those councils which extend beyond the boundaries of one diocese or ecclesiastical region should request one of the bishops in the region to act as its moderator in accordance with the principle enunciated in Art. 10§4. If at all possible, the moderator bishop should be the bishop of the diocese in which the council's offices are located.

ii) *Praesidia and the Councils of the Legion of Mary*

Art. 38.

The basic unit of the Legion of Mary is called a **praesidium**.

Art. 39.

Each praesidium is named after a title of Our Blessed Lady or from one of her privileges or from an event in her life.

Art. 40.

Each praesidium must, either directly or through an approved council, as hereinafter defined, be affiliated to the *Concilium Legionis Mariae*: otherwise there is no Legion membership. It follows that no new praesidium shall be instituted without the formal permission of its Curia, or (failing a convenient Curia) of the next-highest council, or in the ultimate resort, of the Concilium; otherwise there is no Legion membership. The praesidium shall depend directly upon such governing body.

Art. 41.

No praesidium shall be established in any parish without the consent of the parish priest or of the Ordinary in accordance with Art. 10. The parish priest or the Ordinary shall be invited to carry out the inaugural ceremony.

Art. 42.

§1. The praesidium shall hold a meeting every week.

§2. The meeting will be conducted according to the provisions which are outlined here:

i. The members should sit around a table at one end of which a small temporary altar is erected. On a white cloth is placed a statue of the

Immaculate Conception flanked by two vases of flowers and two candlesticks with lighted candles. There should also be set the vexillum.

**ii.** Punctually at the appointed time, the members shall be in their places, and the meeting shall begin.

**iii.** The meeting opens with the invocation and prayer to the Holy Spirit followed by five decades of the rosary.

**iv.** The rosary is immediately followed by Spiritual Reading.

**v.** The minutes of the previous meeting are read and, after approval, are signed by the President.

**vi.** Standing Instruction (see Art. 95). This is to be read out by the President at the first meeting of each month.

**vii.** The treasurer's statement is read out.

**viii.** The work reports of the members are received.

**ix.** Approximately mid-way between the signing of the minutes and the end of the meeting the *Catena Legionis* is recited, all standing.

**x.** The *Allocutio*, a short talk given by the Spiritual Director, should not occupy more than five or six minutes.

**xi.** The taking of the reports and the other business of the meeting is continued.

**xii.** In the meantime a secret bag collection is made, beginning after the *Allocutio*.

**xiii.** When all the business has been transacted the meeting ends with the concluding prayers of the Legion and the priest's blessing.

§3. A more detailed outline for a meeting of a praesidium will be found in the Handbook.

§4. This outline of a meeting can be used also for any council meeting in the Legion of Mary with suitable adjustments.

Art. 43.

The officers should give a report to their praesidia on each meeting of the Curia or next highest council, and thus keep their members in touch with the proceedings of the higher body.

Art. 44.

The Spiritual Director of a praesidium, a priest, is appointed to the office by the parish priest or by the Ordinary, and he holds his office at their pleasure. A Spiritual Director may undertake the direction of more than one praesidium. If the Spiritual Director cannot attend the meetings of the praesidium, he may appoint another priest or a religious, or in special circumstances a qualified legionary (who shall be named the Tribune) to act in his place.

Art. 45.

The officers of the praesidium, other than the Spiritual Director, shall be appointed by the Curia. Should there be no existing Curia, the officers shall be appointed by the next highest governing body (cf. Art. 54 ss.).

Art. 46.

Officers of a praesidium, with the exception of the Spiritual Director, have the obligation to attend all meetings of the Curia or next highest council to which they are subject.

Art. 47.

§1. The appointment of the President should always be given careful consideration.

§2. The revitalisation of a defective praesidium should ordinarily be accomplished through the appointment of a suitable President unless special reasons to the contrary exist.

Art. 48.

When two or more praesidia have been established in any city, town, or district, a governing body termed the **Curia** should be set up. The Curia shall be composed of all the officers (Spiritual Directors included) of the praesidia in its area.

Art. 49.

The Curia shall exercise authority over its praesidia, subject to the Statutes of the Legion. It shall appoint their officers (other than the Spiritual Director), and keep count of their terms of office.

Art. 50.

The Curia will ensure the scrupulous carrying out of the rules by the praesidia and their members. The following shall form important parts of the work of a Curia:

- (a) The education and supervision of the officers in their duties and in the general management of their praesidia.
- (b) The receiving of a report from each praesidium not less frequently than once a year.
- (c) The exchange of experiences.
- (d) The consideration of new works.
- (e) The constant encouragement of high standards.
- (f) The ensuring that every legionary satisfactorily performs the work-obligation.
- (g) The extension of the Legion and the stimulation of praesidia to recruit auxiliaries (cf. Art. 99) including the after-care and organisation of the latter.

## Art. 51.

Legionaries under 18 years of age cannot sit on a Senior Curia, but if deemed advisable by the Curia, a Junior Curia (cf. Art. 93), subject to the Curia, may be set up.

## Art. 52.

The Curia shall cause each praesidium to be visited periodically, if possible twice a year, with a view to encouraging it and seeing that all things are being carried out as they should be. Vigilant watch must be kept by the Curia to ensure that praesidia do not drift into the giving of material relief, which would mark the end of all really useful legionary work. The periodic inspection of Treasurers' statements will help the Curia to discern the beginnings of any incorrect tendency.

## Art. 53.

The Curia shall meet at times and places to be fixed by the Curia itself, with the approval of its next-highest council. Such meetings should, if possible, be held not less frequently than once a month. An agenda for the meeting shall be prepared beforehand by the Secretary in consultation with the President, and circulated to each Spiritual Director and each President previous to the praesidium meeting immediately before the Curia meeting. It shall be the duty of the President to notify the other representatives of the praesidium.

## Art. 54.

§1. Where it is found necessary to confer on a Curia, in addition to its own proper functions, certain powers of superintendence over one or several Curiae, such higher Curia shall be styled more particularly a **Comitium**.

§2. The Comitium is not a new council. It continues to act as a Curia in respect of its own area and to govern directly its own praesidia. In addition it supervises one or more Curiae; the elections of officers of each Curia related to it are subject to ratification by the Comitium. Each Curia and praesidium directly related to a Comitium shall be entitled to full representation on the latter; their officers have the right to vote at election of officers of the Comitium.

§3. A Comitium shall not normally cover an area larger than a diocese.

§4. There may be circumstances however where, for the purposes of good administration, a Comitium could be asked to supervise one or more Curiae in another diocese or dioceses. This must always be done with the approval of the local Ordinaries.

§5. In the case of some large dioceses two or more Comitiae will embrace a number of Curiae in the one diocese.

Art. 55.

The Spiritual Director shall be appointed by the Ordinary of the diocese in which the Curia (or Comitium) functions.

Art. 56.

A council designated by the Concilium to exercise authority over the Legion of Mary in a large region, and ranking next in status to a Senatus, shall be called a **Regia**.

Art. 57.

The *Concilium Legionis Mariae* will decide whether a Regia shall be affiliated directly to the Concilium or to a Senatus.

Art. 58.

When Regia status has been conferred on an existing council, it shall continue to exercise its original functions in addition to its new responsibilities. Membership of the Regia shall consist of:  
(a) the officers of every legionary body directly affiliated to the Regia and  
(b) the members of the council on which Regia status has been conferred.

Art. 59.

The Spiritual Director of a Regia shall be appointed by the bishops of the dioceses through their moderator bishop (cf. Art. 37).

Art. 60.

The elections of officers of directly affiliated councils are subject to ratification by the Regia. These officers have the duty to attend Regia meetings unless circumstances (e.g. distance, etc.) prevent them.

Art. 61.

The Regia should appoint correspondents where necessary. (cf. Art. 29)

Art. 62.

A copy of the minutes of the Regia meetings should be sent to the council to which it is directly affiliated.

Art. 63.

Any proposed change in the composition of the Regia, which would significantly affect the core attendance at the meeting, would require

formal sanction by the Concilium, whether the Regia is affiliated directly to the Concilium or to a Senatus.

Art. 64.

A council designated by the Concilium to exercise authority over the Legion of Mary in a country shall be called a **Senatus**. It must be affiliated directly to the Concilium. In countries where, by reason of size or for other reasons, a single Senatus would not be adequate, two or more Senatus may be approved, each of which shall depend directly on the Concilium and shall exercise authority over the Legion in the area assigned to it by the Concilium.

Art. 65.

When Senatus status has been conferred on an existing council it shall continue to exercise its original functions in addition to its new responsibilities.

Art. 66.

Membership of the Senatus shall consist of: (a) the officers of every legionary body directly affiliated to the Senatus and (b) the members of the council on which Senatus status has been conferred, when such is the case.

Art. 67.

The Spiritual Director of a Senatus shall be appointed by the bishops of the dioceses involved through the moderator bishop (cf. Art 37).

Art. 68.

The elections of officers of directly affiliated councils are subject to ratification by the Senatus. These officers have the duty to attend Senatus meetings unless circumstances (e.g., distance, etc.) prevent them.

Art. 69.

The Senatus should appoint correspondents where necessary (cf. Art. 29).

Art. 70.

A copy of the minutes of the Senatus meetings should be sent to the Concilium.

Art. 71.

Any proposed change in the composition of the Senatus, which would significantly affect the core attendance at the meeting, would require formal sanction by the Concilium.

## Art. 72.

There shall be a central council, which shall be called the **Concilium Legionis Mariae**, or simply called Concilium, in which shall be vested the supreme governing authority of the Legion. To it alone (subject always to the rights of the Ecclesiastical Authority) shall belong the right to make, alter, or interpret rules; to set up or repudiate praesidia and subordinate councils, wherever situated; to determine the policy of the Legion on all points; to decide all disputes and appeals, all membership questions, and all points as to the suitability of works or the manner of carrying them out.

## Art. 73.

The *Concilium Legionis Mariae* meets monthly in Dublin, Ireland.

## Art. 74.

The Concilium may delegate a portion of its functions to its subordinate councils or to individual praesidia, and may at any time alter the amount of such delegation.

## Art. 75.

The Concilium may combine with its own proper functions the functions of a subordinate council or councils.

## Art. 76.

§1. The *Concilium Legionis Mariae* shall consist of the officers of every legionary body which is directly affiliated to the Concilium.

§2. The officers of the senior Curiae of the Archdiocese of Dublin form the core attendance at the meetings of the Concilium. The Concilium reserves the right to vary the representation from the Dublin Curiae.

§3. Regular attendance on the part of the great majority of other legionary bodies is not possible due to distance. It will be the special responsibility of their correspondents (cf. Art. 29) to ensure that their reports and views are presented.

## Art. 77.

The Spiritual Director of the Concilium shall be appointed by the Irish Episcopal Conference through that Conference's President.

## Art. 78.

The elections of the officers to Concilium are carried out in accordance with articles 22-27, with the exception that they are not subject to ratification by a higher council.



Art. 79.

The elections of officers of directly affiliated councils are subject to ratification by the Concilium.

Art. 80.

The Concilium appoints correspondents to fulfill its functions of superintendence of its distant councils (cf. Art. 29 above). The correspondent keeps in regular contact with the council and, from minutes received monthly, prepares a report for presentation to the Concilium meeting when required. He attends the meetings of the Concilium and takes part in the proceedings but, unless he is a member of the Concilium, he has not the right to vote.

Art. 81.

The duly authorised representatives of the Concilium may enter into any legionary area, visit the legionary bodies there, carry on work of a promotional character and generally exercise functions which it is allowable for the Concilium to exercise.

### iii) *Responsibility in the Legion of Mary*

Art. 82.

The overall responsibility for the Legion of Mary lies in the supreme governing body, the *Concilium Legionis Mariae*.

Art. 83.

In a subsidiary manner each council and praesidium is a subject of rights and obligations.

Art. 84.

Officers have primary responsibility for what comes within the remit of their praesidium or council and act only in the name of those bodies unless a higher council including Concilium has given them a special mandate.

Art. 85.

In matters of dispute every effort should be made to resolve the conflict following the Lord's command (Mt 5:25; 18:15ss). If a dispute cannot be easily settled among members recourse can be had to the next-highest council for mediation or arbitration.

Art. 86.

In the matter of a dispute which remains unresolved despite the steps mentioned above, the parties involved or the local Ordinary can ask *Concilium Legionis Mariae* to investigate the matter. *Concilium Legionis Mariae* makes the final decision.

Art. 87.

The praesidium has authority over its members and power to direct their activities while acting as members of the Legion of Mary. The members on their part shall loyally obey the legitimate orders of the praesidium. In the event of any member or members causing harm in the course of properly sanctioned legionary activity by neglect or acting contrary to the orders given, the responsibility to make reparation falls on the person(s) who did the harm with the exception of the cases specified in canon 1281.

Art. 88.

If however the praesidium or council sanctioned a work that in itself was flawed and if that flawed work should cause harm it falls on the body to which the member(s) belong(s) to make reparation. If needs be the next-highest governing body can be consulted as how to best deal with the matter.

Art. 89.

If any member, acting unilaterally or with others but without any approval from the body to which he belongs, uses the name of the Legion of Mary or its auspices to justify any action, he is solely responsible for this action.

Art. 90.

Because legionaries are dedicated to the cause of Christ under Our Lady's command they should strive to keep their hearts focused on the Kingdom of God. While bringing their influence to bear on the temporal order (*Lumen Gentium*, Chapter 4) their work on behalf of the Legion of Mary should not be partisan. No legionary body may allow its influence or premises to be used for any political purposes or to aid any political party.

### ***F. Membership of the Legion of Mary***

Art. 91

§1. To become a member of the Legion of Mary a person must be a Catholic.

§2. Members can be active or auxiliary.

§3. A person who publicly rejects the Catholic faith, or defects from ecclesiastical communion, or who is the object of excommunication, either imposed or declared, cannot be received into the Legion of Mary.

Art. 92.

§1. All candidates for active membership must faithfully practise their faith, must be animated by the desire to fulfil their role in the Church's apostolate through membership of the Legion and be prepared to fulfil each and every duty which active membership requires.

§2. Persons who wish to join the Legion of Mary as active members must apply for membership in a praesidium. Before membership a member must undergo probation in accordance with following norms:

- i) A probationship of at least 3 months and not exceeding 6 months is required to allow the praesidium's President, after careful inquiry, to be satisfied that the person seeking admission fulfils the conditions required.
- ii) When the period of probation is judged to have been satisfactorily completed, the candidate is given at least a week's notice of reception.
- iii) A member is formally admitted when, after taking the Legionary Promise, his or her name is entered on the membership roll of the praesidium. The Legionary Promise (see Handbook) contains in concise form all the essential and fundamental elements of the Legion's spirituality and outlook on the apostolate. The candidate for membership makes the Promise at an ordinary meeting of the praesidium in which he has served his probation. The Promise is addressed to the Holy Spirit and made in the presence of the other members and by it the applicant indicates his willingness to submit to the discipline of the Legion and to undertake a faithful service in its ranks. The candidate's making of the Promise is sealed with the blessing of the Spiritual Director if he is present.
- iv) During probation a legionary can only hold an acting or temporary officership in a senior praesidium. If that officership has not been withdrawn during the probation period, it then becomes full officership, and the time already served counts as part of the three years' term referred to above.

Art. 93.

The age of membership is 18 years of age or over; however a person under 18 years of age can apply to be a member of a junior praesidium.

Art. 94.

The fundamental obligations of active members are to be found in the Standing Instruction. These are:

First, the punctual and regular attendance at the weekly meetings of the praesidium, and the furnishing there of an adequate and audible report on the work done;

Second, the daily recitation of the Catena;

Third, the performance of a substantial active legionary work, in the spirit of faith, and in union with Mary, in such fashion that in those worked for and in one's fellow-members, the Person of our Lord is once again seen and served by Mary, his Mother;

Fourth, absolute respect for the confidential nature of many matters discussed at the meeting or learned in connection with the legionary work.

Art. 95.

Further obligations include promoting good relations between members, recruiting of new members, studying the Handbook, developing their interior lives by prayer, self-denial and frequenting the Sacraments. At meetings the members address each other with the title 'brother' or 'sister'.

Art. 96.

Membership of the Legion of Mary always requires freedom from any pressure. Officers are duty bound to ensure that no person joins or remains a member against their will.

Art. 97.

It is for each member to decide before God whether remaining a member of the Legion of Mary or taking on extra works in it is compatible with other ecclesiastical commitments or duties to other persons.

Art. 98.

Praetorian members are those active members who attend a weekly meeting of the praesidium, carry out an active apostolate under its auspices, recite daily the prayers of the Tessera (the prayer leaflet of the Legion), attend insofar as possible daily Mass with reception of Holy Communion and who pray a substantial part of the Divine Office or another office approved by the Church.

Art. 99.

§1. Auxiliary and adjutorian members do not assume the duties of active membership. Their primary function is to undertake a service of prayer to be placed at Mary's disposal as an unreserved gift to be administered

according to her intentions. They undertake to say daily the prayers of the Tessera.

§2. Adjutorian members add to that, insofar as possible, the attendance at daily Mass with reception of Holy Communion and the praying of a substantial part of the Divine Office or another Office approved by the Church.

Art. 100.

§1. Members of the Orthodox Churches can associate themselves with the Legion of Mary and attend meetings of praesidia and partake in appropriate active works with the approval of the local Parish Priest or Ordinary.

§2. Members of Orthodox Churches may assume the duties attributed to auxiliary members.

§3. Should members of an Orthodox Church establish praesidia based on the Legion system they are not subject to these statutes but solely to the Orthodox hierarchy.

### ***G. Formation of Members***

Art. 101.

Legionaries should follow the trusted ways of the Church: prayer, sacraments, penance, good works and faithfulness to Church Doctrine. In particular they should draw from the benefits of fruitful participation in the Holy Eucharist.

Art. 102.

Members will benefit in their formation from the interaction in meetings of their praesidia and from the apostolic work they undertake.

Art. 103.

The master-apprenticeship method is the normal method to help new members learn the way of the Legion.

Art. 104.

Patrician Meetings, Congresses and other such gatherings also prove beneficial in helping to develop an understanding of the faith of the Church and the work of the Legion of Mary.

### ***H. Works and Activities of the Legion of Mary***

Art. 105.

The primary work of the Legion of Mary is the sanctification of its members. Legionaries know that it is only by means of their hearts and lives being truly formed in the image of Christ can they have any chance of helping Christ transform the world. In this work of their sanctification they look to Mary as their model. With her they ponder the mysteries of her Son (Lk 2:19,33,51), with her they sing the praises of God (Lk 1:46ss), with her they observe the traditions of their faith (Lk 2:21-22, 41-42), they imitate her charity to those in need (Lk 1: 39; Jn 2:3ss), with her they stand in solidarity with the suffering Christ (Jn 19:25), with her they pray in communion with the whole body of the apostles and disciples (Acts 1:14) and inspired by her example they submit to the will of God (Lk 1:38).

Art. 106.

The active works undertaken by legionaries include the following: apostolate in the parish, home visitation, promotion of the enthronement of the Sacred Heart in homes, making the parish census, hospital visitation including visits to psychiatric institutions, work for the most wretched and dejected of the population, works for the young, promoting Catholic literature, making contact with people so as to find opportunities to share the Good News with them, promoting prayer, retreats, promoting the celebration of the sacraments including the Eucharist, promoting adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

Art. 107.

Other forms of work, appropriate to the capacity of individuals and answering specific needs, may also be undertaken provided, following consultation, these have been approved by the local Ordinary or the parish priest.

### ***I. Cessation of Membership***

Art. 108.

Any member may freely choose to leave the Legion of Mary at any time.

Art. 109.

§1. In the case of incompatibility or grave difficulty with the commitments of the Legion of Mary, a member can be expelled, after being given the opportunity to explain and to amend the cause of incompatibility or grave difficulty.

§2. A member who has publicly rejected the Catholic faith, or has defected from ecclesiastical communion, or who is the object of excommunication, either imposed or declared, is to be expelled from the

Legion of Mary if, after being given the opportunity to explain and amend this behaviour, the member persists in his ways.

Art. 110.

In the case of incompatibility or grave difficulty with the commitments of the Legion of Mary a member can be suspended after being given the opportunity to explain and to amend the cause of incompatibility or grave difficulty. Suspension is effective for a maximum of one calendar year after which time the person must either be re-admitted to the Legion of Mary or the procedure for expulsion begun.

Art. 111.

The President of the praesidium, after consultation with the other officers, can proceed to suspension of a member. The President of the praesidium is not accountable to the members of praesidium for such action.

Art. 112.

The Curia or a higher council has authority to suspend or expel a member.

Art. 113.

A member being considered for suspension or for expulsion shall be allowed the help of a legionary to assist in presenting the member's case.

Art. 114.

A suspended member can appeal to the next highest council. This council should ensure that both the member and the authority who carried out the suspension have the opportunity to explain themselves before this council makes its decision. Thereafter, any further appeal within the Legion of Mary must be made directly to the Concilium.

Art. 115.

An expelled member can appeal to the next highest council. This council should ensure that both the member and the authority who carried out the expulsion have the opportunity to explain themselves before this council makes its decision. Thereafter, any further appeal within the Legion of Mary must be made directly to the Concilium.

Art. 116.

§1. A member expelled directly by the *Concilium Legionis Mariae* can only be re-admitted by the *Concilium Legionis Mariae*.

§2 A member expelled for reasons of incompatibility or grave difficulty with the commitments of the Legion of Mary (Art.109§1) may apply for

re-admission as a member subject to a satisfactory probation and remaking of the Promise.

§3. A member expelled for rejection of the Catholic Faith, defection from ecclesiastical communion, or being the object of excommunication, either imposed or declared (Art.109§2) may apply for re-admission on the same conditions after the bond of full communion has been restored.

Art. 117.

No member of a praesidium shall leave it to join another without the consent of the President of the former, and the admission of such person into the latter shall be done in accordance with the Statutes and the rules for the admission of new members, except that the probation and the Promise shall not be required. The said permission, when asked, should not be unreasonably withheld. An appeal in this matter lies to the Curia.

### ***J. Temporal Goods of the Legion***

Art. 118.

The Legion of Mary has the right to acquire, retain, administer and alienate temporal goods (including bank accounts, cash-in-hand and property). This use of goods is regulated by these Statutes.

Art. 119.

All temporal goods of the Legion of Mary belong solely to the Association.

Art. 120.

The sole purpose of the temporal goods of the Legion of Mary is to serve the spiritual ends for which the Legion exists.

Art. 121.

The remembrance of the good housekeeper of Nazareth should inspire all in the management of the funds and other temporal goods of the Legion of Mary.

Art. 122.

The Treasurer shall submit regular statements showing the income and expenditure and the resulting financial position. In the case of a praesidium there shall be a weekly statement; in the case of a council a monthly statement is sufficient.

Art. 123.



The Treasurer shall be responsible for the making and receiving of all payments by and to the praesidium or council, and for the keeping of full and properly written accounts thereof. Treasurers at any level of the Legion of Mary have the obligation to ensure that the funds and other goods of the Legion of Mary are used for the purposes for which the Legion exists. The Treasurer shall retain all relevant paperwork so that a proper audit may be carried out.

Art. 124.

Normal funding of the Legion of Mary will be by way of the contributions of the members through the secret bag collection and by way of bequests or voluntary donations. The secret bag collection shall be made at all meetings of praesidia. It is optional at council meetings. The Treasurer shall see that the secret bag collection is made.

Art. 125.

The Treasurer shall pay money only on the direction of the praesidium or council, and shall lodge funds in hand to the credit of the praesidium or council in such manner as the relevant body may direct.

Art. 126.

Bank Accounts should be in the name of the praesidium/council, i.e. not in the name of individual legionaries.

Art. 127.

Every Treasurer is to bring all relevant matters in respect of the management of the finances and other goods for which he has stewardship to the other officers and his praesidium or council. No Treasurer has authority to act unilaterally in making a decision in respect of how to manage or use the funds of the Legion of Mary.

Art. 128

§1. The Treasurer's books shall be audited annually. The audit should cover all financial areas including bank accounts, cash in hand and property.

§2. Two members of the praesidium or the council (as the case may be), other than the Treasurer, shall be appointed to that duty. The appointment of auditors is to be done by the members of the praesidium or council.

§3. Two auditors from outside the praesidium or council may also be appointed at the discretion of the members.

Art. 129.

Every legionary body shall make a contribution towards the maintenance of its next-highest council. Subject to that and the following provisions, every legionary body has full control over its own funds and exclusive liability for its own debts.

Art. 130.

It is recommended after the needs of the praesidium have been met that whatever surplus funds remain should be sent to the Curia for the general purposes of the Legion.

Art. 131.

All proposals for novel expenditure (or what is called also extraordinary administration) are to be referred by a praesidium to its next highest council so that the latter may judge if anything is involved which might have negative consequences. This principle concerning novel expenditure applies to councils as well.

Art. 132.

The Curia or next highest council may give money grants to a praesidium, but must not assume financial responsibility in respect of any work being carried on by that praesidium. That responsibility rests on the praesidium itself. This principle applies equally in respect of councils.

Art. 133.

No praesidium may call, otherwise than as a favour, upon any other praesidium or upon a higher council for assistance in the collection of funds. The same principle applies in the case of councils seeking similar assistance.

Art. 134.

Any transfer of funds, other than by a praesidium to special projects under its care (e.g. running hostels), shall be a matter for sanction by its Curia. The same principle applies to councils in the matter of the transfer of funds.

Art. 135.

The Spiritual Director shall have no personal financial responsibility for debts which he has not himself advised.

Art. 136.

Local regulations and good practices in any civil authority area may also be used in the management of the goods of the Legion of Mary; likewise Book 5 of the Latin Code of Canon Law may be consulted by councils of

the Legion as sources for suggestions on how to better manage temporal goods of the Legion.

Art. 137.

Any member of the Legion of Mary who steals or abuses the goods of the same Legion of Mary for personal gain or for some other purpose at variance with its object can be suspended or in a more serious case can be expelled.

### ***K. Collaboration with other Bodies in the Church***

Art. 138.

Apart from cooperating with the local Ordinary and parish priest, legionaries may also work in tandem with other persons and bodies in the Church.

Art. 139.

In cooperation with other groups in the common cause of the Church legionaries can undertake tasks that are compatible with the objectives of the Legion of Mary.

### ***L. Changes in the Statutes or Handbook***

Art. 140.

To the *Concilium Legionis Mariae* alone shall belong the right to revise the Statutes and also to amend the Handbook subject to the conditions below.

Art. 141.

All changes to the Statutes should be preceded by a consultation of all bodies directly affiliated to Concilium. These should be notified of the proposed changes and given a reasonable period of time to signify their views on the subject.

Art. 142.

Changes to the Statutes will require a two-thirds majority of members present at a meeting of Concilium consisting of concilium officers, the officers of the Dublin Curiae (art. 76§2) and those officers present from bodies affiliated to Concilium (art. 76§1) provided there is a quorum of fifty. These changes need approval from the Pontifical Council for the Laity before they come into force.

Art. 143.

Changes to the Handbook will require a simple majority of those legionaries present at a meeting of Concilium provided there is a quorum of fifty.

### ***M. Cessation of the Legion of Mary***

Art. 144.

A praesidium or council of the Legion of Mary can cease to exist if the next-highest governing body agrees there is no other possibility.

Art. 145.

A praesidium or council of the Legion can no longer act in a parish after the parish priest and/or Ordinary have withdrawn their support; nor can it act in a particular Church where the local Ordinary withdraws his support.

Art. 146.

A higher council may close down a lower body for a just cause. The council that does so should inform its next highest council saving the right of *Concilium Legionis Mariae* to close down any council.

Art. 147.

Among just causes which might give reason for closing a praesidium are: an insufficient number of members to provide for the filling of officerships or carrying out of the works of the praesidium, the age and health of members leading to an irregular attendance at meetings and the inability to undertake its works, the recognition that by amalgamating praesidia a better response to the needs of the apostolate will be met, the persistence of its members in conflict with Curia or Concilium or who otherwise cause divisions in the ranks of the Legion, a failure to heed and comply with the reasonable requests of the parish priest or Ordinary.

Art. 148.

When a praesidium or council cease to exist for whatever reason, the funds, property and other temporal goods are to be placed under the responsibility of the next highest council. In so doing all concerned must take account of acquired rights and donors' wishes.

Art. 149.

*Concilium Legionis Mariae* can dissolve the Legion of Mary after an absolute majority of the officers of every legionary body directly affiliated to Concilium (art. 76§1) who vote on the proposal to dissolve the Legion of Mary support the proposal. The proposal to dissolve the

Legion of Mary must be communicated to the aforementioned officers who have three months to return their vote. The Pontifical Council for the Laity must be informed of the proposal to dissolve the Legion of Mary and of the ultimate decision.

Art. 150.

The Holy See alone has the right to suppress the Legion of Mary.

Art. 151.

In the event of the dissolving or suppression of the Legion of Mary, if there remain any temporal assets in the territory of a particular Church, the same come under the jurisdiction of the local Ordinary who must take account however of acquired rights and donors' wishes (canon 326§2 CIC 1983).

## INDEX

	Page
Preamble	1
A. The Name of the Association: The Legion of Mary	
B. The Object of the Legion of Mary	
C. The Spiritual Patrimony of the Legion of Mary	
D. The Relations of Communion and Dependence with ecclesiastical Authority	
E. The Structures of Governance of the Legion of Mary	
i) General Principles	
ii) Praesidia and Councils of the Legion of Mary	
iii) Responsibility in the Legion of Mary	
F. Membership of the Legion of Mary	
G. Formation of Members	
H. Works and Activities of the Legion of Mary	
I. Cessation of Membership	
J. Temporal Goods of the Legion	
K. Collaboration with other Bodies in the Church	
L. Changes in the Statutes or Handbook	
M. Cessation of the Legion of Mary	