



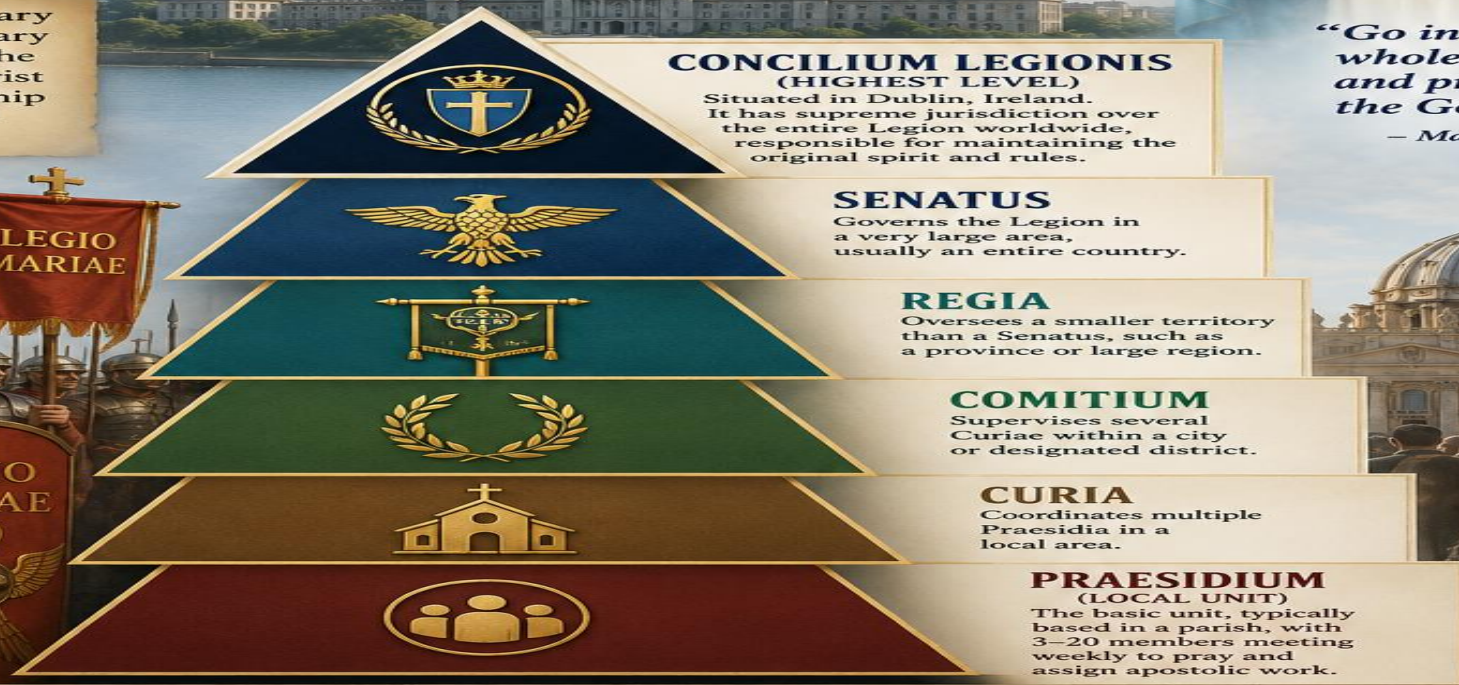
# THE GOVERNMENT OF THE LEGION OF MARY

*A Hierarchical System for Worldwide Spiritual Service under the guidance of Ecclesiastical Authority*



*“Go into the whole world and proclaim the Gospel.”  
— Mark 16:15*

The Legion of Mary is an army of Mary in battle under the command of Christ and the generalship of the Blessed Virgin Mary.



**TOTUS TUUS THROUGH MARY TO JESUS**  
To be apostles with Mary. To lead souls to Christ.  
To bring Christ to the world through Mary.

# THE LEGION OF MARY IS AN ARMY OF MARY

“The legionaries hope to render themselves worthy of their great heavenly Queen by their

- loyalty
- their virtues
- and their courage



The Legion of Mary is therefore organised on the model of an army, principally on that of the army of ancient Rome, the terminology of which is adopted also. But the army and the arms of legionaries of Mary are not of this world. “(HB p. 9)

# The Mystical Home of Nazareth



Poor it was, and its furniture far from elaborate. Yet it must have been most beautiful. For among the wives and mothers of all time, this one was unique, gifted with exquisite taste and refinement which could not but show themselves in every item of her home. Each simple detail must somehow have possessed a loveliness, each common thing a charm. For she loved – as only she could love – all those things because of him who made them and who now made human use of them. She cared them and cleaned them and polished them and tried to make them nice, for they had to be quite perfect in their way. We may be certain that there was not one jarring note in all that domicile.” HB p. 129

# PURPOSE OF THE LEGION'S GOVERNMENT

*The Legion of Mary exists to be a disciplined army of Mary for the greater glory of God and the salvation of souls.*



**LEGIO MARIAE**  
TO JESUS THROUGH MARY



**PRESERVE THE SPIRIT AND SPIRITUALITY OF THE LEGION**

Keep the Legion faithful to its original spirit, charism, and devotion to Mary.



**MAINTAIN UNITY AND UNIFORMITY THROUGHOUT THE WORLD**

Ensure harmony and one Legion in spirit, purpose, and practice everywhere.



**ENSURE OBEDIENCE TO THE CHURCH AND LEGITIMATE AUTHORITY**

Remain in full communion with the Church and respect legitimate ecclesiastical authority.



**CONTROL THE KINDS OF APOSTOLIC WORKS RENDERED BY ITS ACTIVE MEMBERS**

Ensure apostolic works are in line with the mission of the Church and the Legion.



**PROTECT THE INTEGRITY OF THE LEGION SYSTEM IN PARTICULAR ITS RULES AND PRAYERS**

Safeguard the Legion Handbook, prayers, and traditions from change or dilution.



**ENCOURAGE DISCIPLINE, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND PERSEVERANCE IN MEMBERS**

Form members to be faithful, responsible, and steadfast in their commitment.



**ENSURE ITS GROWTH AND EXPANSION**

Promote the extension of the Legion to reach more souls for Christ through Mary.



**RECRUIT AND ATTRACT COMMITTED AND LOYAL MEMBERS**

Invite and form men and women who are generous, faithful, and loyal to the Legion and the Church.



*"We are many, but we are one."  
Under Mary, in the Church, for Christ.*

## **The Legion of Mary and Its Relationship with the Church**

- **The Legion of Mary is a visible group of Catholics serving the Church.**
- **It always works in full unity with the Catholic Church.**
- **It is officially recognized by Church authority.**
- **It respects and obeys the Pope and local bishops.**
- **Its structure follows parish and diocesan boundaries.**
- **Members listen to and follow the guidance of their local bishop.**

# GOVERNMENT PROTECTS **UNITY** AND **MISSION**

Without order, creation falls into disorder and fragmentation because of sin. The effects of sin include: **rebellion, pride, individualism, confusion and disobedience.**

The government of the Legion combats these tendencies spiritually by forming members in:

- obedience
- humility
- accountability
- perseverance
- communion.

The Legion Handbook insists that apostolic work must be done in the spirit of Mary with respect to authority and discipline.

# **OBEDIENCE** IS THE FOUNDATION OF SYSTEM OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE LEGION

Modern culture often views authority negatively. But Catholic spirituality distinguishes: tyranny from legitimate authority, domination from ordered service.

In the Legion:

- obedience is meant to sanctify,
- authority is meant to serve,
- leadership is meant to imitate Christ washing the feet of His disciples.

The Legion's government is therefore not intended to suppress initiative, but to harmonize individual gifts toward a common supernatural mission,

# **SPIRITUALITY** OF THE SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT OF THE LEGION OF MARY

The Legion's government is not merely administrative. It is meant to be:

- An instrument of humility which leads to holiness
- A school of obedience and loyalty to authority
- A protection against individualism and doctrinal errors
- A means of apostolic unity under Mary – A lively faith
- The HB strongly emphasizes that obedience in the Legion is not blind servility, but cooperation in charity and mission. The Legion sees orderly government as reflecting:
  - The harmony of the Mystical Body of Christ – a 'healthy and living body'
  - The order of the heavenly kingdom which is the salvation of souls
  - Mary's maternal guidance over the apostolate and her battle against evil

# The Principal Components of the Legion Government

- Fidelity to the Church and Ecclesiastical Authority
- Invariable System – Its Rules and Policies and Preservation of the Legion System
- Organizational Structure – Praesidia and Councils
- Duties of Praesidia and Council Officers
- Control of the Work of the Praesidia
- Performance of Apostolic Works
- Membership Requirements (*Catholics faithful to Magisterial Teachings*)

## THE PRAESIDIUM

The Praesidium is the basic unit in the Legion Organization. No praesidium or council may be established without formal permission from the next higher council or from the Concilium Legionis Mariae, together with approval from the appropriate ecclesiastical authority. The praesidium has authority over all its members and power to control their activities. The members on their part shall loyally obey all the legitimate orders of the praesidium.<sup>4</sup> Each praesidium must, either directly or through an approved council, as hereinafter defined, be affiliated to the Concilium Legionis. Otherwise, there is no Legion membership. (HB p.84)

# Praesidium Officers – **Appointed** by the Curia (Comitium or Senatus)

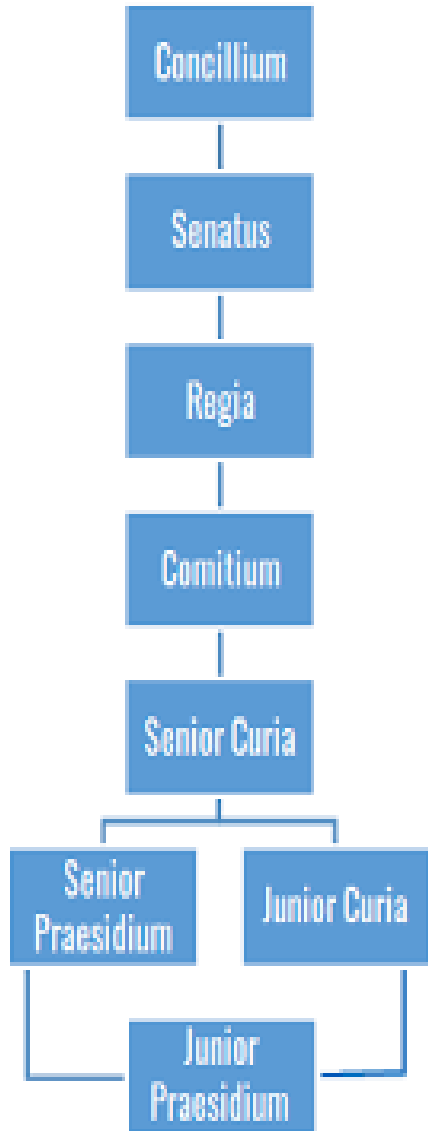
## No Election at the Praesidium Level

Each praesidium and council shall have a President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer.

Praesidium officers are appointed by  
the curia at a regular meeting.

# THE LEGION COUNCILS

The councils of the Legion of Mary are the **Curia, Comitium, Regia, Senatus, Concilium Legionis Mariae**, and any other councils established with the approval of the Concilium Legionis Mariae. A primary duty of every council is loyalty to the next higher council. The Legion of Mary is governed through its councils. Within their respective spheres, they are responsible for preserving unity, safeguarding the Legion's original ideals, protecting the spirit, rules, and practices set out in the official Handbook, and promoting the growth of the organization.



# THE COUNCILS

**The Curia** is the governing body of two or more praesidia in a parish or diocese. It is composed of all officers of the praesidia in that area. Legionaries under 18 years of age may not sit on a Senior Curia. If the Curia considers it advisable, it may establish a Junior Curia.

**The Comitium** governs one or more curiae within an area no larger than a diocese.

**The Regia** governs a large region with several curiae and comitia and is directly affiliated either to the Senatus or to the Concilium Legionis Mariae.

**The Senatus** governs a large region with several curiae and comitia and is directly affiliated to the Concilium Legionis Mariae.

# THE CONCILIUM LEGIONIS (DUBLIN, IRELAND)



Frank showing an African Legionary the original Legion Altar in Concilium

Concilium Legionis Mariae is the central council of the Legion of Mary and holds the Legion's supreme governing authority. Subject to the rights of ecclesiastical authority, it alone may make, alter, or interpret rules; establish or suppress praesidia and subordinate councils wherever they are located; determine Legion policy on all matters; decide disputes and appeals; settle membership questions; and judge the suitability of works and the manner in which they are carried out.

## **SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR**

Each council shall have a priest as Spiritual Director, appointed by the appropriate ecclesiastical authority, and he serves at that authority's pleasure. Each council shall have a priest as Spiritual Director, who shall be appointed by the appropriate ecclesiastical authority, and shall hold office at the pleasure of that same authority. He shall have decisive authority in all moral and religious matters raised at the meetings of the council, and he shall have a suspensive veto on all the proceedings, with a view to obtaining the decisions of the authority by whom he was appointed. (HB p. 152)

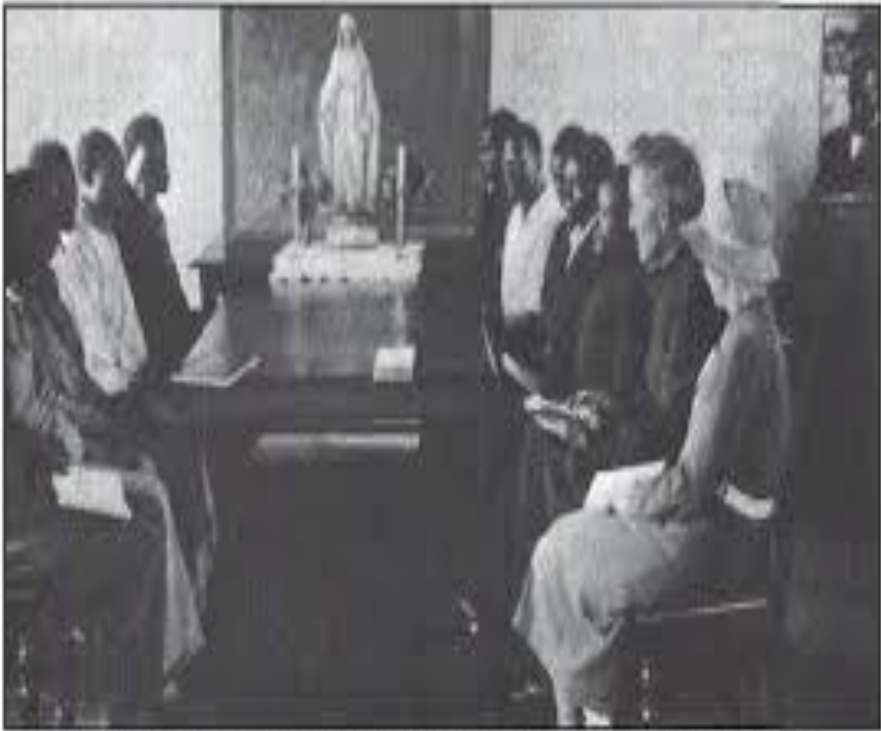
# ON THE SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR'S SUSPENSIVE VETO

(Not to be Abused)

“This right is a necessary weapon; but, like any such weapon, must be used with great discretion and cautiously lest it become an engine of destruction, not of protection. In an association well-constructed and well guided, it will **NEVER BE** necessary to use it.” (Civardi: A Manual of Catholic Action) (HB p.86)

# BASIC DUTIES OF PRESIDENT

The President leads the meeting and ensures that the praesidium remains closely connected to the next higher council through attendance at council meetings. Other duties include preparing the President's worksheet in advance, receiving members' reports, giving the Allocutio when the Spiritual Director is absent, encouraging suggestions for improving apostolic work, and maintaining a cordial and humble presence.



Edel visiting a native praesidium (basic Legion of Mary group)

# THE BASIC DUTIES OF A VICE PRESIDENT

The Vice President presides in the President's absence, oversees membership, ensures that probationary members make the Promise at the proper time, and maintains a register of active and auxiliary members. He also ensures that prayers for deceased members are not neglected, visits sick members, and encourages other members to recruit and stay in contact with auxiliaries, especially adjutorian members.

## **THE BASIC DUTIES OF SECRETARY**

The Secretary's main duty is to prepare and keep the minutes of every meeting, attend curia meetings, provide information required by the curia promptly, and handle the praesidium's correspondence. The President may delegate parts of these duties to other members of the praesidium.

## THE BASIC DUTIES OF TREASURER

The Treasurer attends curia meetings and is responsible for making and receiving payments on behalf of the praesidium. He also ensures that the secret bag collection is taken at every meeting and may disburse money only at the direction of the praesidium

# FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF HIGHER COUNCIL

Every legionary body shall contribute to the support of its higher council. Contributions should not be limited to percentages or bare minimums. Any surplus funds remaining after the needs of the praesidium have been met should be sent to the curia for the general purposes of the Legion. Proposals for significant expenditures may be referred to the higher council.

# **ELECTION OF COUNCIL OFFICERS**

Council officers are elected at an ordinary council meeting attended by officers of directly affiliated praesidia and councils, together with officers of the governing council. Officers serve a three-year term and may be re-elected for one additional three-year term. Council officers are elected by secret ballot. Every nominee must be formally proposed and seconded. If only one name is proposed, no ballot is required. If two or three names are properly proposed and seconded, a ballot must be taken. Each council member present, including the Spiritual Director, should receive a ballot paper. Only members present may vote.