

Maria Legionis





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FR. BEDE MC GREGOR O.P.

Father Bede McGregor O.P. former Spiritual Director of Concilium Legionis Mariae passed away on Monday 25th November 2024.

He was truly devoted to Our Lady and he faithfully served as the Spiritual Director of the Concilium Legionis Mariae for nearly 20 years.

His various lectures, monthly talks and allocutiones were inspiring to the millions of legionaries around the world.

We pray that Our Lady will welcome her devoted soldier and child into eternal life and his heavenly reward in the company of Our Lord, God the Father, The Holy Spirit, the Angels and the Saints.

May he Rest in Peace.



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Interview with Concilium President for Maria Legionis

Conducted by The Editor



Q1. Brother Declan, as Concilium President, what are your responsibilities?

My main function is to work with the other Concilium officers as a team in guiding the legion ship through the various difficulties and challenges that arrive at the offices on a regular basis. In addition, we need to plan ahead and try to set goals to mobilise the legionaries who are on the ground. As the handbook says: we must motivate and mobilise until the helpers are sufficient. Each Concilium officer has individual responsibility for certain functions, so that needs to be encouraged and supported.

Q2. When did you first join the legion of Mary, and what inspired you to do so?

I joined about 27 years ago.

The purpose was to give something back to God for the many blessings I had received at that stage of my

life. I had just got married and there was a real desire to do something in thanksgiving to God and Mary for all I had received. It's a long time ago ... so it's hard to remember!

Q3. Briefly, how has membership of the Legion of Mary changed your life?

My legion meeting was on a Wednesday night ... so I missed every Irish international game; I played five-a-side soccer on a Wednesday night and that died a death also!

I think the words fulfilment and peace spring to mind. In that 27-year period I did a little for Our Lady and that gives me some peace. A little done and a lot more to do.

If I had not joined, I would not have some peace of purpose; and my fulfilment regarding the purpose in life would be substantially reduced. So, I think I am more at peace.

Q4. What challenges are currently facing the Legion of Mary- both nationally and internationally?

There are various challenges across the board. In the West, secularism and materialism mean people are time poor and so busy that faith isn't needed as happiness can be bought in the Pope Benedict "pleasure shop." The intellectual and sophisticated way of life dominated by media keeps God out of the lives of people.

In other parts of the world there is more time and less money; accordingly, need for God is absolutely real and a raw faith is active. However, the poverty of life and heavy burdens can mean it's hard to remain faithful.

Q5. How do you think the Legion of Mary should respond to increasing secularism?

The answer is Mary. After the "pleasure shop" experience, people are left burnt. Mary is their mother so the Legion can introduce them to the reality that they have a spiritual mother who cares more for them than their earthly mother does.

She wants them in heaven with her and her son Jesus. That's the battle of life. So, the Legion can respond to increasing secularism with full faith that their mother is actively guiding them away from the false promises and to the realisation that they are loved into their very existence with a purpose in life that is not simple

secular consumption or existential purposelessness.

Q6. How do you think the Legion of Mary should counteract any erroneous views of the Legion held by some in society.

The answer is Mary. The more people see of our devotion to Mary in a real way, the more they will change whatever views they might have. If they have erroneous views, we can't really change them but if we work our own system courageously and focus on our own individual membership, that will be a leaven to lift standards and hopefully eliminate erroneous views.

The simpleness and humility of the Legion will overcome all as we are faithful to the system created by Frank Duff.

Q7. Are you optimistic on the future strength of the Legion of Mary – both nationally and internationally?

I'm very optimistic as we have the virtues of faith hope and charity. Hope for the future in increasing secularism influences is an interesting proposition. Without God and his plan for humanity, one might be a little sceptical. However, I think if we apply the Legion system and seek proper standards of apostolic activity for two hours every week with appropriate follow up, then we can rest on Mary's intercession and power.

However, if that is not done, then I would not be as optimistic as graces will not be sought for or received.

So, the choice is ours, what the future holds. Every member's job is to motivate fellow members so they will in turn motivate their contacts in the same way.

So, the question is how many this week have you motivated to come closer to the church as part of the mystical body?

Q8. *In the early years, Frank Duff involved the Legion of Mary with the moral and social issues of the day. Do you think the Legion of Mary should do likewise today?*

Frank Duff focused on Mary as Mother as opposed to certain social and moral issues. These issues are still important, and depending on the area and country respectively it might warrant Legion involvement.

However, Frank Duff had the eyes on Mary on these issues and tried to bring her and her Son Jesus into the mix. That still is the position. Again, political issues are kept away as part of this Legion system; so that has to be preserved.

The closing of the 'red light' district in Monto was 100 years ago this month, so that spirit of Mary mothering her lost children needs to be to the forefront of our minds.

Q9. *What would you say to a prospective member contemplating joining the Legion of Mary?*

Think of Cardinal John Henry Newman's quote that we all have a job to do in this life, but we don't know what it is. However, we will be told what it is in the next life. If we don't do the job, then nobody else will do it ... it just won't be done.

So, if you are not doing anything for the mystical body or apostolic activity to build the Body of Christ that all Catholics are obliged to do, are you missing out? Are you being misguided in your purpose of life?

If you are asking the question what is my purpose in life? ... then you are at a very important crossroads... you need to make the right decision.

Maybe it is to become a legionary of Mary!

You will not be found wanting ... you will receive great graces and peace of soul ... Our Lady needs your help.



Q10. *What ideas have you for making the Legion of Mary better known among the general population?*

Greater support for the Maria Legionis magazine will be a start in 2025! Different parts of the world have different issues.

Amongst the general population in Dublin and Ireland, "Shadows on the Wall" socials, Men's conferences and Mary Days have been good moments of encounter for those outside the Legion who have come to find out more about the role of Mary in their lives.

The DEUS/YOUNG ADULT committee have been good at targeting the 18–40-year-old age group with conferences, social nights, games nights, ski trips, etc. For other age groups we had AFRICA Day to welcome the new Irish and Call to Arms Dublin days and Ireland days to mobilise our legionaries on the ground - not just the officers. Patricians' meetings are also a great vehicle for this purpose.

Q11. *do you think that the creation of junior praesidia in parishes, schools and colleges are the way forward for the Legion of Mary in Ireland?*

Why not? surely everyone needs to know we have a heavenly mother who gives fulfilment and purpose to your life...all young people need to know

that they are created in the image and likeness of God, and that social media will not provide the answers to the deeper questions.

Q12. *Finally, is there any further observation or comment you wish to make?*

Work the system. Recruit and follow up. The system is very important. The spirit and outlook are vitally important. We need new soldiers, or the work won't be done.

We need to make contacts and follow them up. The personal contact allows the electricity between two souls to move. But the offer of a follow up meeting/ discussion/ coffee / social is all needed. They might not become Legion members, but they will have become closer to Mary, and it allows faith discussion to start and grow.

On the other hand, if there is no follow up, then it would all end abruptly. Sometimes a contact is very fleeting but on other occasions there is a need for further contact. On those other occasions are we prepared to do so and accompany our brothers and sisters ... that's the question... if we put more effort into the follow up, then Our Lady will bring greater graces to the contacts.





Joseph Gabbett

By Una Connolly



While life in parts of Dublin in the late 1800s and early 1900s had many attractions for talented young men it was also a city that reeked of poverty and terrible housing overcrowding. Unemployment was huge and to compound the problem, wages were generally paid in the pub, so men often started drinking before they got home.

Following a minor famine in 1878 – soup kitchens were set up by evangelical Protestants. It was a soft gruel made from coarse-Indian meal and was dished out to poverty-stricken people who were required to renounce their Catholic religion in order to receive it. This practice was known as ‘souponism.’

As a young man, Frank Duff described himself as a very ordinary Catholic. He wouldn’t miss Mass on Sunday, but he felt no other obligation. He said: “If you asked me if I had devotion to Our Lady I would have said yes, but I know nothing about her and I

couldn’t have answered a question as to why one should pray to her.”

He joined the St. Vincent de Paul Society in 1913, having previously refused the invitation, but when a workmate whom he admired very much invited him to join he did so. Through that he came in touch with abject poverty for the first time and through that he also met Joseph or Joe Gabbett.

Frank joined the Conference attached to the Carmelite Church in Whitefriar St. and early in 1914 the Conference received a letter from another Conference saying that proselytising was being carried out at a place known as 6 Whitefriar St. The following Sunday Frank and another Vincent de Paul member went along to see what was going on. It was a cold Sunday

morning and Frank described what he saw: “the most awful-looking crowd of poor creatures that one could imagine. In those days of alarming poverty these were the ultimate in the way of misery.”



While they were there, a woman approached Frank and said: “if you want to know what is happening you should talk to Mr. Gabbett: indicating a tall man, wearing a large bushy beard, standing nearby.

Joe Gabbett was a Limerick man, a former Guardsman in the British Army, craftsman shoemaker and a recovering alcoholic. From Gabbett, Frank Duff learned what it was to be apostolic. He told him that he was planning to set up an institution in opposition to the proselytising one. He had rented a stable at 9 Cheater’s Lane and Frank and all the members of his Conference joined him. Every Saturday night the stable was cleaned out and every Sunday morning tea was brewed in a large copper urn and piles of bread was cut and buttered. This was available to everybody without reference to religion. Gabbett had already gathered a few men to help him and a number of girls who worked in the nearby Jacobs Factory, who collected a penny a week from their fellow workers to help towards the cost. He called these girls the Guild of the Immaculate Conception.

Frank became very friendly with Gabbett and would often visit him in his workshop at night when Gabbett would talk away about God and Mary.



Frank would sit there listening to his insights. He said: “I was truly a disciple at his feet, and he certainly fired me with the whole business.”

Gabbett could read but could only write his name, but Frank was happy to be apprenticed to him in apostleship. Gabbett had joined the Pioneer Total Abstinence Association and Frank commented that it was Gabbett sporting the pin that concentrated his thoughts on the Pioneer Association. He was captivated because he had never met anybody like him. At that time a dapper young man would not be seen wearing a religious emblem. Gabbett also wore and promoted the Brown Scapular.

Gabbett showed Frank what it was to be apostolic. Together they began other activities in the coach house, including instructing children on the sacraments. Frank ran a class for boys and men, and some of the women helpers gave classes for girls.

Around this time Gabbett purchased a statue of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception with a penny subscription from girls who were customers in his shoemaker’s shop. With it he set up an altar in the room where the classes were held. In due course an exact replica of this statue was used on the altar at the first meeting of the Legion of Mary.

It has not been established if it was the same one that is now in a display case in Concilium.

Gabbett led Frank into another work: visiting soldiers suffering from venereal disease in an isolation hospital in Portobello Barracks. There were about 200 men there, one third Protestant, one third Catholic and one third Non-Conformist. One day a Protestant man named Pope, a lay assistant to the Protestant Chaplain in the barracks, called to Gabbett in his workshop to tell him that the Protestant soldiers had a Chaplain, the Non-Conformists had a Chaplain but Fr. O'Loughlin, the priest from Rathmines Parish who was assigned as Chaplain to the Catholics, had such demanding duties that he could pay little attention to these men. The non-conformists began proselytising among the Catholics who were receptive because of their grievance on being neglected by their own pastors. Pope was unhappy about this, and having heard about Gabbett's activities, sought him out and told him the situation. Gabbett dropped his work immediately and went to the barracks. Being an old soldier, he was given access. He found great resentment among the Catholics who hadn't seen a representative of their religion since the time they were admitted to the hospital. He reported

this back to Fr. O'Loughlin, who immediately appointed him as lay assistant and that entitled him to wear a uniform. He then got permission from the commanding officer to hold a Sunday Service. He brought the little statue of the Immaculate Conception into the barracks and announced that a Catholic Service would take place the following Sunday morning. That Sunday he had set up a little altar using that same statue. He started with a hymn, followed by the Rosary, then a discourse and concluded with another hymn. Frank Duff commented: "a feature of the proceedings was Gabbett's discourse: rough, unpolished but oh! so effective. He possessed the secret of successful preaching, patent sincerity and making himself completely understood." Later he said about Gabbett: "he was fearless, he was resourceful, he had a magic gift for handling people." About 20 people turned up the first Sunday. By degrees the number rose to about 70 and Fr. O'Loughlin began to visit on the eve of the First Friday to hear confessions in the hospital while next day he distributed Holy Communion. Gabbett gradually extended his work of visitation to the general barracks and he and Frank Duff got permission from the Regimental Sergeant to extend their Sunday services to all who wished to attend.



*"he was fearless, he was resourceful,
he had a magic gift for handling people"*



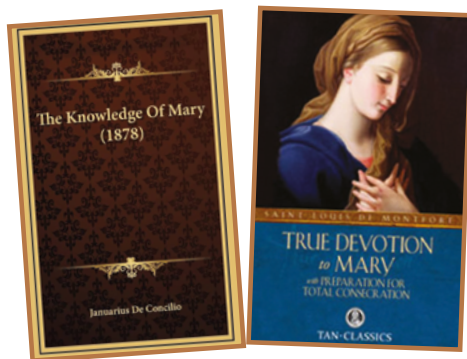
Pope, the Protestant who had been the catalyst for the work, played the organ. Gabbett persisted in the various works until Easter 1916. Then, outraged by the Rising which he regarded as shocking at a time when England was at war, he re-joined the British army - even though he was beyond the age for active service.

He was sent to Aldershot where he was appointed master bootmaker. He shut down Cheater's Lane abruptly and left all his equipment and statues to Frank Duff who brought them to Myra House. That is how the statue of the Immaculate Conception was available for the first Legion meeting.



In 1920 he was decommissioned. When he came back to Dublin he had started drinking again. In the days before alcoholism was seen as an illness, the Cistercian Abbey at Mount Mellerey operated a version of treatment that was sometimes successful, so Frank gladly accompanied his friend Joe there in the hope of some success. Frank told the story that while they sat waiting to meet the Lord Abbot, they wondered how they should address him, neither of them having previously

met an Abbot. Gabbett considered momentarily and said: "I'll say: Abbot, I'm Gabbett." On the first night there, Frank was offered a book to read, but he asked for one on the theology of the Blessed Virgin. He was given Concilio's Knowledge of Mary.



Now Frank had made very many attempts at reading De Montfort's True Devotion to Mary but had failed to grasp it. This book was the key that opened De Montfort for Frank Duff. He was so exhilarated that he worked late into the night copying all that he could of the contents. Here again was another instance, although an accidental one, of Gabbett's influence on Frank Duff and on the Legion because from then on Frank immersed himself in the True Devotion and its ideals are visible in the Handbook.

We must recognise that we owe a huge debt of gratitude to Joe Gabbett, and we should pray for him in thanksgiving for this humble man of faith and courage whom we can safely say had a definite influence on Frank Duff and by extension on the Legion of Mary.



PPC to Ukraine

INTRODUCTION

I am grateful to God for having given me the opportunity to minister, in a small way, to those caught up in the maelstrom of war. My psychological training, both in my military and medical careers, have equipped me to address both military personnel and civilians in distress.

A growth in faith in God, in goodness and in truth. This is what I found during my Legionary Mission Peregrinatio Pro Christo (PPC) in a Ukrainian town for two years during the summers of 2023 and 2024.

This is not to say that every single Ukrainian I met had such faith. But I would say that the vast majority who have stayed, or returned, to defend their motherland, do have such faith.



By Peter Micallef-Eynaoud

The local Catholic bishop confirmed that the virtues of faith, hope and charity are in greater evidence. The bishop leads by example, on his knees before the Blessed Sacrament, his invocation to both Our Lady, to steady the nation, and to St Michael the Archangel, to lead it in battle.

Death and destruction are no stranger to that land. Most families around the country have been visited by death and many towns have been visited by destruction.

MY FIRST VISIT

On August 4th, 2023, a small team of six (three Austrians, two Germans and one Maltese – myself) had reached our destination in Ukraine late in the evening. As we entered the town we were greeted by the siren's wail. Our minibus driver drove on unperturbed.

The frontier crossing, Moldova to Ukraine, took time. Photography is forbidden. Vehicles are filed through at walking pace to holding bays for police, then customs control, first through the Moldovan border then through the Ukrainian border.

In Ukraine, on driving in and, particularly, on driving out, one will come across roadblocks and check points both police and military. One need always to carry identification documents. It is all very understandable.

Our Ukrainian legionary hosts at the Benedictine nunnery gave us a great welcome. Their hospitality is very generous, almost overwhelming. In a lively babble of Ukrainian, of which I understood 'nowt', I heard my name called out and was grabbed by the arm by Natalya and pulled to the refectory where I looked upon a long table overflowing with food. The land is very fertile and rich in minerals.

The next day, following Holy Mass, breakfast and a team meeting followed. This detailed our planned apostolate work: morning and afternoon 'work' sessions were of two to three hours' duration.

We would walk the streets in pairs, encountering people, advising, praying with and consoling those who receive us.

We were told that the percentage of Catholics in Ukraine is around 20%, of which 18% are Greek-Catholic The remainder are Orthodox Christians. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church has broken away from the Russian Orthodox Church.

All legionaries' families have been touched by the war that is relevant all over their land. All have been touched

by privation and destruction. Many have been visited by death.

In the squares and in the park I found the people quite open to conversation. The young, generally, are curious and keen to be in contact with someone from the 'West.' They are eager to practice their English and learn from where I came.

More than once, I have been thanked for coming "from so far." At times, Ukrainian youngsters did not react to "dobre ranok!" (Ukrainian for 'good morning') from my Ukrainian colleague but did respond to "Good morning" from me.

Our Catholic faith equips us well to deal with such situations. The Miraculous Medal, nearly always accepted, gives comfort and strength. Youth would thank us and, more often than not, will wear it round the neck.



Soldiers, in and out of uniform, abounded, courting or with a family in tow. It was so uplifting for me to see young people hand-in-hand, or young families with multiple children. They have life and they will live their life; they have hope and they will build for the future.

There were many heart-warming experiences. On one occasion, my Ukrainian 'legionary sister' and I went up to a family with young children. The father was in a combat suit. I kicked off and addressed him directly in English.

"Are you a captain," I asked. This tall man looked at me intently and answered: "Yes! How do you know?"

I explained that I recognised his badge of rank and that I was an officer.

I then exhorted him to pray for his wife and children when away on duty and I turned to her and told her to pray for him. When this was translated, she nodded, saying: "Tak!" (Yes) and they hugged one another.

Before parting, we presented Miraculous Medals to all and explained their meaning.

An abiding impression of the PPC was of young children and young families holding hands and of welcoming faces, an openness to God and matters spiritual.

I saw clean streets and orderliness, no vandalism, graffiti or garbage, no dogs

and no 'bloated', modern cars but rickety buses.

Another is the strength of character. Our Ukrainian 'legionary sisters' are admirable: young to middle-aged. Their men are at the front line, but they are strong, stoic women who keep things running in their hometown.

On another occasion, two young women said emphatically that they have not left their country in order to complete their training in nursing. Another young woman told us she was at medical school.

I found a strong belief in Ukraine's moral ascendancy and an anticipation of the rebuilding of a morally clean Ukraine. To all, we emphasised the power of prayer and devotion to the Miraculous Medal. Peace can be achieved only by God's grace.

We left with the firm belief that Ukraine has a future! Most Ukrainians believe in their nation's victory, though it may take long in coming.

OUR RETURN IN 2024

I was able to return to Ukraine last August 2024 even though I am obliged to use a walking stick. So, stick and all, I was enrolled on last year's PPC team to Ukraine and joined the same members but two. The two Germans were replaced by one German-fluent Irishman.

We were met by the same large number of Ukrainian legionaries, with great joy and appreciation that we had returned to be with them.

I seem to have detected a certain numbness to the death and destruction that is their plight.

One day, accompanied by a Ukrainian legionary who was, like me a former military officer, we stopped a woman with a very downcast expression on her face. My 'legionary brother' encouraged her to lay her woes at the feet of Our Lady.

The lady burst into tears. Between sobs she told him that she had just received news that her son had been killed in action. Anatoli's leadership skills kicked in, and consoled her that her son had died practicing the virtue of 'caritas': for the love of, and in defense of, his mother and his country. The lady smiled. This touched me. She accepted the Miraculous Medal, and we spoke about our mission.

"Where is God in this horrible war?" This is the question I put to a gravely injured Ukrainian soldier. "Tyt!" (pronounced 'toot') he answered, without missing a beat and indicated his chest.

Another soldier had escaped bleeding to death when a bullet had missed his carotid artery by a centimeter or so. The left side of his neck was flayed. This soldier stepped forward and declared: "God saved me!"

A woman tending lovingly to her mangled soldier husband gave vent to raw emotion and rage. She pointed out that the war was forced upon them.

Fr. Mateusz Adamski, vice rector of Redemptorist Mater Seminary, in Ukraine, said: "This has been a time of grace in which we have been able really to touch the living God. Our homeland is in heaven, it is not here.



Pray for Ukraine and pray that there will be a stop to this war. We are to heed Our Lady's warnings and conform to her instruction.

OBITUARY

Fr. Bede McGregor O.P.



Legionaries are saddened with the passing from this life of Fr. Bede McGregor O.P. For sixteen years (2004-2020) Fr. Bede was the Spiritual Director of the Legion of Mary Concilium. His monthly allocutiones were eagerly anticipated by legionaries. Invariably they were profound, thought-provoking and memorable.

Given hereunder is an account of his life and work by Fr. John Cunningham O.P. Provincial Archivist.

Fr. Bede (Michael Joseph) McGregor, O.P., was born at 71 Camborne Avenue, Ealing, Middlesex, England, on 16 February 1937. He received his early education in England and his secondary education in Dominican-run Newbridge College, Co. Kildare.

On 14 September 1955 Fr. Bede received the habit of the Order of Preachers at St. Mary's Priory, Cork, where he made his first profession a year later on 15 September 1956.

After a year of philosophical studies at St. Mary's Priory, Cork, he was assigned to St. Mary's Priory, Tallaght. There he studied philosophy for a further two years and began his study

of theology in the House of Studies. He was ordained to the priesthood at Holy Cross College, Clonliffe Road, Dublin, on 8 July 1962 by John Charles McQuaid, C.S.Sp., Archbishop of Dublin. In that same year he was assigned to the Convent of SS Xystus and Clement, Rome, where he obtained the Lectorate and Doctorate in Sacred Theology at the University of St. Thomas Aquinas, submitting a thesis entitled 'A Thomistic Study of Christian Optimism.'



St. Mary's Priory, Cork

He was then assigned to the Irish Dominican mission in India. In addition to lecturing on the history of philosophy, natural theology, dogmatic, moral, and ascetical theology, and missiology, Fr. Bede was also for a time editor of *In Christo*, one of the leading Catholic periodicals in India.



In 1971 an international theological conference was held at Nagpur to commemorate the nineteenth centenary of the martyrdom of St. Thomas the Apostle, to whom an ancient tradition traces the origin of Christianity in India. Convoked to discuss the future of evangelisation and dialogue in India, Fr. Bede was very much to the fore in its organisation. In that same year, he obtained the degree of Master of Arts in Indian Philosophy from Nagpur University. Before the end of the year, he had enrolled for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy and set out to examine the relevance of religions to the missionary task of the Church.



St. Mary's Priory, Tallaght

In 1974 Fr. Bede was assigned to St. Mary's Priory, Tallaght, and appointed Professor of Missionary Studies at St. Patrick's College,

Maynooth. Initially involving a class each week for students in the first year of theology, Fr. Bede soon realised the introduction of a Diploma in Mission Studies, and in 1977 he published a commentary on *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, an apostolic exhortation of Pope St. Paul VI, in a special issue of *Doctrine and Life*.

On a different note, Fr. Bede was invited in 1994 to participate in the recording of Gregorian Chant from Maynooth. The same year saw the publication of papers from conferences held at St. Patrick's College and edited by Fr. Bede and Fr. Thomas Norris of the Diocese of Ossory, *The Beauty of Christ: An Introduction to the Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar* and *The Formation Journey of the Priest: Exploring Pastores Dabo Vobis*.

Much to his delight, the Maynooth Mission Outreach was inaugurated in 1995 to raise missionary awareness and to arrange for students to engage in missionary work. Two years later, in 1997, he was appointed by the Holy See to assist with the apostolic visitation of the ecclesiastical faculties and major seminaries and institutes of priestly formation of India and, in 1998, he was nominated a peritus for the Special Assembly for Asia of the Synod of Bishops.

Fr. Bede was also required to devote time and energy to the cause of the Servant of God Frank Duff, for in 1996 he had been appointed vice postulator of the cause and he remained an advocate of the cause for the rest of his life.



member of the Commission for Theology.

In 2004, at the behest of the Conference, he was appointed Spiritual Director of the Concilium of the Legion of Mary, a role he would fill until age and ill health prompted his resignation in 2020. In addition to moral and theological counsel, Fr. Bede provided an allocutio to the Concilium on a monthly basis. The contents of these spiritual conferences were featured in the bulletin of the Concilium and appeared occasionally in the *Maria Legionis* Magazine and on the Legion's website. Indeed, the high regard for his spiritual guidance led to 'Talks to Legionaries,' a publication translated into French and published in 2012 as *Recueil des Allocutions du Concilium Legionis Mariae*.

Much as he appreciated the importance of the chronology of the life of Frank Duff, Fr. Bede was more anxious to discover, for the benefit of the Legion of Mary and for the whole Church, 'the story of his very soul.'

Upon his retirement from St. Patrick's College in 2002, Fr. Bede returned permanently to his house of assignation, St Mary's Priory, Tallaght, and was soon appointed promoter of the Apostolate of the Rosary. Fr. Bede was also engaged to teach philosophy in the National University of Ireland and served as a



Fr. Bede at Oxford

During his years in Dundalk he managed to combine his involvement in St. Malachy's Infants' School, Boys' School, and Girls' School with his role as a lecturer in Christology in the adult religious education programme in the Archdiocese of Armagh, membership of its senate of priests and college of consultors, and the role of spiritual director of the Redemptoris Mater Archdiocesan Missionary Seminary at De La Salle Terrace, Dundalk. In a similar way, his retirement from the role of spiritual director of the Concilium of the Legion of Mary in 2020 allowed him to devote his attention to the Præsidium of Our Lady of the Listening Heart which he himself had founded in Dundalk.

When Fr. Bede observed the diamond jubilee of his ordination to the



priesthood in 2022, his years had started to make themselves felt and ill health had begun to intrude upon his life and his need of care required his transfer from the priory to St. Oliver Plunkett Hospital,

Dundalk, where he went to his eternal reward on 25 November 2024. On 28 November, Fr. John Harris, Prior Provincial, offered the Mass of Christian Burial at which assisted Seán Baptist Cardinal Brady, Archbishop Emeritus of Armagh, Michael Router, Auxiliary Bishop of Armagh, and John McAreavey, Bishop Emeritus of Dromore. The final commendation having been pronounced by the cardinal, the cortège proceeded to St. Patrick's Cemetery, Dowdallshill, Dundalk, where the remains of Fr. Bede were interred in the Order's plot. *Requiescat in pace.*



Legionaries worldwide mourn the death of Pope Francis

*Heavenly Father we lift our hearts
in prayer for your faithful servant
Pope Francis who now returns to
you, his creator, shepherd and
eternal father. Lord in this sacred
moment we pause in silence to
honour and remember his life.*

Allocutio

Given to Concilium on
16th February 2025

By Fr. Paul Churchill
Spiritual Director

Some encyclical letters of Popes are hard going. But I have no hesitation in recommending Pope Francis' latest encyclical letter *Dilexit Nos*.

There is a depth to this letter about the love in the heart of God for us all, even the most lost soul, an encouraging message for all of us sinners. Certainly, there are a few paragraphs that require thinking but with its rich use of scriptural texts and its many quotes from so many saints on the love in the heart of God it lifts the heart and inspires to make that love known.

In the first chapter the Pope focuses on the human heart, something so many don't stop to consider. The heart refers to the centre of each person, from where thoughts and feelings come, where good and evil grow, our co-ordinating centre. It is the source of our courage and nobility; it can also be the centre of abuse and cruelty, such that we can call some people heartless. Two people in love, their hearts beat faster; when we are let down, we can



speak of our hearts *sinking*; when speaking very personally we talk of “speaking from our hearts.” This side of us, with its capacity to spread great good or absolute misery is forgotten by the world. No artificial intelligence or algorithm or data systems are up to dealing with it. It is only by turning to the person of Jesus, represented by his heart, that we can get what the deep desires of our hearts seek: to be loved and to return a love we never knew was possible. We need to regain our hearts, something only possible with Jesus.

The second, third and fourth chapters of the document are rich in quotes from scripture and saints about the love in the heart of God, brought to us in human form by Jesus, with his pierced heart, the human symbol of that love. These chapters are to be prayed more than read. It feels like God speaking to our hearts, he whom we have pierced by our sins. We should all seek to feel what St. Paul did, “He loved me and gave his life for me” (Gal 2:20).

The document goes through saint after saint who tries to plummet the deep meaning of his wounded heart: Augustine, Bernard, Bonaventure, Catherine of Siena, Francis de Sales just to mention some. But I want to quote a few to you for your benefit. So, to start with St. Margaret Mary: "This is the heart that so loved human beings that it has spared nothing, even to emptying and consuming itself in order to show them his love." "He asked me for my heart, which I asked him to take, which he did and then placed myself in his own adorable heart, from which he made me see mine like a little atom consumed in the fiery furnace of his own." She once saw him open his robe showing her his loving and lovable heart such that she could see he loved us to the utmost and yet sadly received just ingratitude and indifference.

I am struck also by the words of Claude de la Colombière, that Jesus, betrayed by his friends, treated dismally by those who arrested him, never showed the slightest hatred or indignation. "I present myself anew to this heart, free of anger, free of bitterness, filled instead with genuine compassion towards its enemies."

That understanding compassion is there for you and me!



Therese of Lisieux wrote: "I need a heart burning with tenderness, who will be my support forever, who loves everything in me, even my weakness."

"Ever since I have been given the grace to understand also the love of the heart of Jesus, I admit that it has expelled all fear from my heart. The remembrance of my faults humbles me ... but speaks to me of mercy and love even more." "If I had committed all possible crimes, I would always have the same confidence; I feel that this whole multitude of offences would be like a drop of water thrown into a fiery furnace." St. Therese's view is simple: to have complete confidence and trust in the love, understanding and compassion in the heart of Jesus for us, not based on any merits of ours but based on his delight in us and his seeking to draw us to love him.

It is by coming to that love that we are changed into his love, not that we earn his love by any works we do. To quote St. Vincent de Paul: "God asks primarily for our heart - our heart - and that is what counts."

How is it that a man who has no wealth will have greater merit than someone who has great possessions that he gives up?

THERESE OF LISIEUX

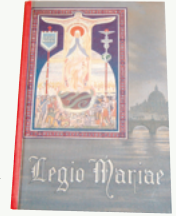
Because the one who has nothing does it with greater love; and that is what God especially wants.” God is trying to win our love and by that conquering of us with love we come to join him in loving his brothers and sisters. That is the message from Chapter 5 of this work.

The symbol of the heart is just that, a symbol. But it is the symbol across all time, in the pagan world and in the Christian world, that speaks of the centre of the person. Behind the symbol lies the person who is yearning for love and capable of giving great love. In Christ it is the eternal Son reflecting to us the love that the Father has for us all.

The world may be ignoring the deep truth of the human heart. It is this failure that leads to the many moral and spiritual illnesses in the world which causes people to be cold, indifferent and indeed heartless and to inflict awful wounds on others and

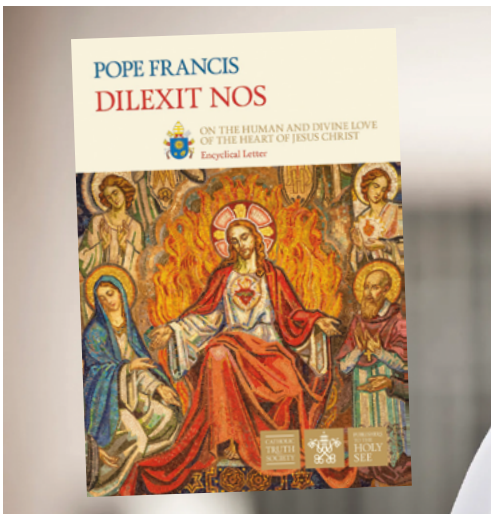
themselves.

Frank Duff had one simple strategy, befriend people first, show them you love them and care for them. That way you open a door to bring the healing value of the Gospel to their hearts (see e.g. Handbook Ch 39,2).



The Pope makes one reference to Our Lady, that she pondered all these things in her heart. Let us her children and servants in the Legion, join her by pondering the depth of God’s message to us in our hearts and let our hearts be changed by that divine love that heals us of everything.

I have tried in my inadequate way to convey something of this treasure from our dear brother Francis to us. When we look particularly on him whom our sins have pierced, let us take it up and pray it. Don’t read it, pray it. With Our Lady ponder it!



SENATUS OF OUR LADY QUEEN OF NIGERIA

By Rev. Fr. John Raphael Anaebio



The following article is an extract from the Senatus workshop conducted on 25 January 2025

THE IDENTITY OF THE LEGIONARY

To comprehend better the true identity of a legionary person, we must first understand our roles and duties. Ordinarily, the term 'Legion' was commonly used to describe the group of the ancient Roman Armies who fought battles against the Roman enemies in defense of the empire and for the benefit of the Roman people. However, the term was later adopted by the founding father of the Legion Frank Duff to describe the Catholic movement of lay apostolate who defend the Catholic faith and continue to propagate the mysteries of human salvation through prayers and works of charity and the exercise of the corporal works of mercy in order to win souls to Christ through the devotion to his blessed mother the

Virgin Mary. To accomplish this, the identity of every legionary and Catholic is therefore founded on our faith in the true God, His Son our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, his blessed Mother, Mary ever Virgin, the Church of Christ and, the doctrines, creed and faith of the Mother Church.

As legionaries, our Catholic identity is based on a life of total submission and service to God and his blessed mother in collaboration with the Holy Spirit expressing deep faith in the doctrines of the church as is expressed in the creed. Every legionary is a believer who imitated the virtues of the blessed mother, her purity, her holiness and who expresses perfect openness to the divine plan of human salvation.

As legionaries, we are called to be living testimonies to God's love, to invite people to live for Christ and transform their culture each day as a joyful response to God's invitation and witnesses of God's merciful love and to be active and creative evangelizers of the Marian spirituality.

As legionaries we are also a group of practicing Catholics who are dedicated to building up the Church of God and are dedicated to devotion to Mary as the Mother of the Church as we are also called to perform apostolic work, such as visiting the sick, establishing contact with non-Catholics, practice of the corporal works of mercy and spiritual works of mercy, models of love and hospitality, perfect propagation of the gospel message, regular acts of prayers and worship to God for the church, non-believers, conversion of sinners and also for the departed souls.

These are the true marks of a legionary for it is by these holy and spiritual filled gestures - that the gospel of Christ is best proclaimed to the world as Jesus tells us in Matthew 7:21 "not all who say to me Lord, Lord will enter the Kingdom of God but only the one who does the will of my Father.

THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE LEGIONARY

The spirituality of the Legion is centered on three main aspects of human reality in relation to God and his blessed mother and the world.



1. LOVE FOR CHRIST: for every legionary, this is a personal experience in which the love of the individual is strongly attached to the person of Christ through the sacraments. The legionary spirituality therefore teaches that the legionary should seek to know Christ more intimately and love him in a passionate way by embracing him as their model of holiness. Their spirituality is Christ-centered with a particular emphasis on keeping faithfully the commands of our Lord and driving after a life of selfless sacrifice and total commitment to the sacred will. For this reason, Jesus encouraged his disciples when he told them that "If you love me then you must keep my commandments" (Jn. 14:15). Therefore, our true love for God must best be expressed in the faithful observance of his laws and commandments and intimate relationships with his son Jesus Christ.

2. LOVE FOR MARY: the legionary's love and affection for the blessed mother is seen as arising from the imitation of Christ. For how can one claim to love Christ and hate his blessed mother? In the Legion, Our Lady is venerated both as Mother of the Church and mother of the individual legionary's vocation. Legionaries consecrate their spiritual and apostolic lives to her care, and seek to take on her virtues of faith, hope, charity, obedience to the will of God, humility, and cooperation with God's plan of redemption, justice and salvation. The legionary spirituality not only involves these but also aims at deepening and sustaining the intimate love and veneration of the blessed mother in the heart of all men with the aim of reconciling fallen humanity back to the Father through special devotion and expression of deep affectionate and sacrificial love to the blessed mother.

3. LOVE FOR SOULS: this is best defined in the Legion as an ardent desire to spread Christ's kingdom in the world. For out of the legionary's love for the human

person, she must strive to see that no soul is lost and that fallen humanity is reconciled to God. For this reason, the legionary must faithfully carry out corporal works of mercies which are works of sacrifice and service aimed at showing deep love and charity to people who have fallen short of the divine presence both spiritually, materially and otherwise. Legionaries must focus on helping the greatest number of souls to know and love Christ. In legionary theology, time is a gift given by God which he wants to maximise perfectly the work of spreading the Gospel, help to reconcile straying humanity back to God and to plant into the heart of men and women the love of God and the Virgin Mary.

With these perfectly achieved, our spirituality to God in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, his blessed mother and for the entire human family is not only restored but also better sustained and our legionary apostolate is best accomplished to the glory of God through the Virgin Mary.



THE DUTIES OF THE LEGIONARY IN CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA

In a bid to foster and to sustain the legionary spirit, the duties of legionaries are best expressed in the active display of faith in God, the blessed mother, the Church, her doctrines and teachings and in our relationship with one another. A legionary who is devoid of any of these, is in truth not living in conformity with the true spirit of the blessed mother and is in fact not a legionary because to be a legionary, one must first be a Catholic and to be a Catholic means to be faithful to these principles and tenets of the faith.

There has been a great drift in our Catholic identity as many have totally lost the core values of the Catholic faith, the four marks of the church which are: her oneness, her holiness, the church as Catholic and the apostolic nature and spirit of the church are no longer regarded, and our members no longer value the sacraments. Many receive the sacraments mainly just to fulfill the Christian or Catholic obligation. This explains why after the reception is done, the life of the recipient remains the same if not worse. Catholics abandoned the special days of the church as solemnities and feast days in favour of visiting other churches based on invitations by friends and for pleasure purposes. As legionaries, it is our duty to call back victims of these experiences to return to the Lord in the ideal Catholic way and in the spirit of the Blessed Virgin Mary.



In a more practical sense, the Legion of Mary today suffers great decline in the sense of the weakness that invades us as Christians and Catholics of today's generation. The burning zeal and passion for the legionary work of service suffers greatly; Marian homes are in total division and disunity and lack sincere love. Greed and infidelity in Catholic marriages has blinded the eyes of many. The true notion of love has now been replaced with selfish human cravings and erotic desires.

Men no longer go into marriages out of sincere love and desire for unity and companionship but out of the deep-rooted desires for sexual pleasure and fulfillment of cultural and societal expectations. On the other hand, women no longer go into marriage out of genuine love and respect for their husbands but many now consider marriage as a means of fleeing from the hunger caused by poverty the selfish cravings for financial and material needs.



The rosary which should be our weapon of spiritual defense has now become an object of fashion for the young and a thing of less interest for the old. The virtues of the Blessed Virgin which should be the helmet of our devotion to the Lord through Mary have now been totally abandoned in pursuit of rising cravings for desperate spiritual benefits. Pentecostal practices now encourage Christians to incline themselves to God alone as surest blessings and answers to prayers are now guaranteed through God alone and never through the blessed mother as her intercessory role in human salvation has forever been forgotten and buried in the pit of discarded history. The blessed mother Mary is now being neglected and ignored and regarded never as a tool for human salvation but as an object of spiritual ridicule. But then, how can one love our Lord Jesus Christ and hate his mother? This is impossible because by disregarding his blessed mother we

forget the fact that Mariology is the basis for Christology in that we cannot talk of our Lord without putting emphasis on the role of his blessed mother.

Within the spirit of pentecostalism, prosperity Gospel has taken the place of true spirituality and the place of the cross which our Lord Jesus gave us as an authentic path to true discipleship is now considered a sign of God's punishment for sins. Ignoring the admonitions of our Lord as is evident in Matthew 16:24 "Then Jesus said to his disciples: "whoever wants to be my disciple must first deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Matt.16:24). In other words, true discipleship is based on the life of sacrifice and self-restraint because in the cross alone is our salvation (in cruce salus). Although many despise the Cross and consider it a curse from God, yet human salvation was made possible only through the sacrifice on the Cross.

Presentation of Our Blessed Lady in the Temple

(Presented by her Parents Joachim and Anne)

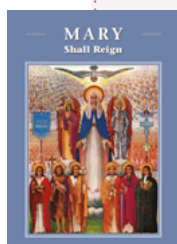
By Michael Walsh



It is the tradition in the Catholic Church that the Blessed Virgin Mary was presented by her parents, St. Joachim and St. Anne, to the Temple in Jerusalem at an early age in thanksgiving for God's gift of Mary's birth, and also to consecrate their only daughter to the Lord. (The Presentation of girls was traditionally on their third birthday, and for the infant boys on the 40th day after birth.)

Founder of the Legion of Mary, Frank Duff in his book: 'Mary Shall Reign' (Ch. 12, Page 150) wrote: "She (Mary) was educated in the precincts of the Temple. She was there from three years of age. This meant that she received an education at the very height of that imparted to the women of her time."

Little could Mary have realised at her own Presentation in the Temple that this event would eventually be celebrated liturgically throughout the world. Nor could she have imagined that a time would come when she would be presenting her son Jesus in the Temple with her husband Joseph.



Details of the early-centuries celebration of Mary's Presentation in the Temple are limited, but it is believed that many leading Church Figures informally commemorated the Feast, including St. Germanus of Auxerre, (378-448), a western Roman clergyman, Bishop of Autissiodorum in Late Antique Gaul).

An official commemoration of Mary's Presentation linked with the sixth-century dedication of the *Basilica Sanctae Mariae Ubi Nata Est*, later called the 'Church of Saint Anne' in Jerusalem. The original church at this location, built in the fifth century, was a Marian Basilica erected on the spot known as the Shepherd's Pool, one of the places traditionally considered to have been the home of Mary's parents, Joachim and Anne. Two other alternative accounts of the location designate a house near the Sheep Gate in Jerusalem, and a residence in Nazareth. In Rome, the Feast began to be celebrated informally towards the end of the 7th century, brought there by Eastern monks.



St. John Damascene, (675-749) was among the many early Church Fathers reputed to have celebrated the Feast of Mary's

Presentation. He was an Arab Christian monk, priest, hymnographer, and apologist, born and raised in Damascus. Tradition places his death at his monastery, Mar Saba, near Jerusalem on 4 December AD 749. He was declared a Doctor of the Church by Pope Leo X in 1519.

In the 11th Century, the first recorded celebration of Mary's Presentation in the Temple within the Byzantine Catholic Church took place.

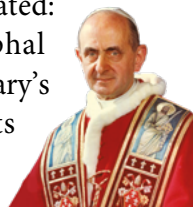
In 1373, the Feast of Mary's Presentation was formally celebrated in Avignon, France. One century later, in 1472, The Feast of was universally introduced into the Catholic Church by Pope Sixtus IV (1471-1484). The Feast was temporarily removed from the calendar by Pope Pius V, but Pope Sixtus V re-established it in 1585.

In her book: 'The Life of the Blessed Virgin Mary': From the 'Visions of Ven. Anne Catherine Emmerich', (1774-1824), Anne describes Mary being brought to the Temple at the tender age of three by Joachim and Anne. There, Mary attended the priests and levites in the sacred ministry of the temple along with other consecrated virgins for several years until her betrothal to Joseph. It was there that she, as well,

continued to receive her education from older temple women.

In 1974, Pope Paul VI wrote about this Feast of Mary's Presentation in his encyclical *Marialis Cultus*. In this encyclical the Pope stated:

"Despite its apocryphal content, the Feast of Mary's Presentation presents lofty and exemplary values and carries on



the venerable traditions having their origins in the Eastern Churches." The '*Marialis Cultus*' encyclical is an Apostolic Exhortation by Pope Paul VI issued "For the Right Ordering and Development of Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary," which outlines the various ways in which Mary is honoured in the Catholic Church. He reflects on the relationship between Mary and the Church, stating that "as a result of her outstanding virtues (including perfect faith, charity, and unity with Jesus), Mary is not only an example for the whole Church in the exercise of divine worship but is also, clearly, a teacher of the spiritual life for individual Christians. Mary's role as our teacher is especially true for those who strive to live the lifestyle of True Devotion to Mary, as outlined by St. Louis de Montfort."

The Feast of Mary's Presentation is celebrated annually on 21st November, in thanksgiving for God's gift of Mary's birth and consecration to the Lord as she was presented in the Temple by her parents, Joachim and Anne.

The Role of the Legion of Mary Correspondent

By Patrick Dixon

INTRODUCTION

The Catholic Church has a long-standing tradition of communication through letters, from the apostles' epistles in the New Testament to papal encyclicals that guide the faithful. The Legion of Mary continues this tradition through its correspondents, who serve a vital role in maintaining unity, disseminating information, and fostering spiritual growth among members.

THE ROLE OF THE CORRESPONDENT

The correspondent system is fundamental in strengthening the connection between the Concilium and its affiliated councils.

Much like St. Paul's letters, which encouraged and guided early Christian communities, a Legion correspondent provides direction and motivation. As emphasized in the Handbook, correspondents offer spiritual support, encouragement, and guidance, helping legionaries remain steadfast in their apostolic mission.

The correspondent also ensures consistency by upholding the standards and guidelines set out in the Handbook. The correspondent's role is crucial in maintaining organisational integrity

and ensuring that all Legion units adhere to the statutes of the Legion of Mary.

In the same way that the early Church preserved letters for instruction and historical continuity, the Legion correspondent meticulously documents minutes and correspondence for future reference and inspiration. This diligent record keeping helps maintain a legacy of knowledge and continuity within the Legion.

Furthermore, the correspondent fosters unity among Legion members and councils, ensuring everyone remains connected and informed. By sharing updates, directives, and encouragement, they contribute to the spiritual growth of members, equipping them to carry out apostolic work with greater zeal and coordination.

CONCLUSION

The role of the correspondent is deeply rooted in the Church's tradition of letter-writing and organised communication. Their work, as outlined in the Handbook, strengthens the Legion by promoting clarity, unity, and enthusiasm in the apostolic mission. By supporting the evangelization efforts of the Church, the correspondent helps spread the faith and nurture spiritual growth among the laity. In carrying out this mission with dedication and faith, the correspondent continues the legacy of the Apostles and Church Fathers, bringing Christ to the world through their service.



A New Praesidium in Scotland



By Marie McGuire

I am a member of the praesidium of 'Our Lady, Seat of Wisdom'. We are a part of St. Columba's parish community, in Viewpark, which is in the Diocese of Motherwell, in Scotland.

We are ten in number. Our parish priest and spiritual director is Fr. Gerard Bogan. We are a new praesidium, just one year old. At the start everything seemed daunting: what to do, how to do it. But we knew that with Our Lady's help we would not be left to flounder. She did not let us down. She never does. She sent some wonderful and well-established legionaries from nearby conferences who took us by the hand. They showed us what to do and the way to do it, and they helped give us the confidence to walk on our own. Our diocesan president, Br. Frank, was great. He took a long time helping us to settle-in to being a praesidium. With him, and our fellow legionaries from nearby praesidia, we began to grow in confidence.

Our regular work is visiting some parishioners at home and also local care homes. We enjoy this very much. We have also done some other things.

One of our members, Br. Andy, constructed a bier on which to carry a statue of Our Lady. This is what we have used in processions. Where we live is a built-up area, with our church building sitting on a busy street; we have held our rosary processions and the Stations of the Cross around our grounds so that we could also be a public sign of prayer for our neighbours. We think of ourselves as evangelising with Our Lady. We are being sent out to announce the Good News which is the Gospel. In our prayer and work we feel that we are like apostles being accompanied by Our Lady.

During Advent we were encouraged to hear about other praesidia who took out Nativity cribs into public places. We decided that we could do something like that. Our church is near to our local school. On selected days during Advent, we took our crib to the edge of the church car park, so that it was right next to the busy pavement. The time of day we chose was near the end of the school day. This meant that we were able to speak to the parents and grandparents on their way to collecting the children from school.

After they had collected the children, they would come our way again. This time the children would stop to look at the crib. Sometimes with the people who stopped we were able to offer a prayer or just have a chat. It is all the work of evangelisation.

Through our attendance at the Curia meetings, we came to learn about the Peregrinatio pro Christo (PPC). At this early stage that is maybe beyond us. However, we were intrigued by the idea. So, we are planning our own small extension work here in our parish. We would like to be Holy Year Pilgrims of Hope when we visit the

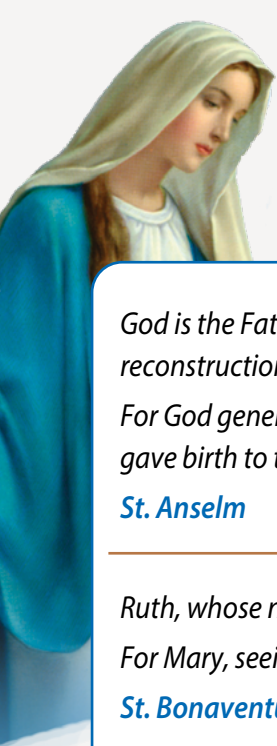
homes of our neighbourhood — all the homes, not just the Catholic ones.

We like being part of the Legion of Mary and being the praesidium of Our Lady, Seat of Wisdom. However, we are very well aware of our newness and that there are many legionaries who have spent lifetimes doing the work of the Legion. So if we sound really enthusiastic about being the Legion, we know that we have a huge amount still to learn. With Our Lady's help and also the help of our fellow legionaries we are confident that we will be able to do it.

Rosary Rally in Kerala, India

The South Comitium members of the Latin Arch Diocese Trivandrum, Kerala, India, conducted the annual Rosary Rally on 27 October 2024 with the participation of nearly 6000 Legionaries and parishioners from all over Trivandrum and neighbouring state of Tamil Nadu. The offering of the Concelebrated Mass, where the Latin Archbishop of Trivandrum Most Rev. Dr. Thomas J. Netto was the Principal Celebrant with nearly 30 Priests from the Diocese. The Concelebrated Mass was celebrated in St. Thomas Church, Valiya Veli, Trivandrum. Almost 300 Religious Sisters from various congregations took part. A group of 60 children dressed as Immaculate Conception of Blessed Virgin Mary was also another highlight of the Rosary Rally.





Praises of Mary



God is the Father of the world's construction, and Mary is the Mother of its reconstruction.

For God generated the One through Whom everything has been made. And Mary gave birth to the One through Whose work all things have been saved.

St. Anselm

Ruth, whose name means "seeing and hastening," was a figure of Mary.

For Mary, seeing our miseries, mercifully hastens to help us!

St. Bonaventure

Living in Mary means to love Mary with all our hearts.

It means to love Mary so much that we are able to live as if we truly inhabited her Immaculate Heart.

St. Louis Grignion de Montfort

Our Lord Jesus Christ has obtained for us a magnificent treasure of graces.

But in the Divine Plan, not one particle comes to us without the mediation of Mary.

Pope Leo XIII

I am sure you do not want to experience any refusal on God's part toward you.

Then do not offer Him anything – neither good works nor prayers – without entrusting them into the hands of Mary.

St. Bernard

The name of Mary refreshes her devoted clients.

It is music to their ears, honey in their mouths, and joy for their hearts.

St. Anthony of Padua





WEST INDIES

Dominican Republic: **Santo Domingo Senatus** held a beautiful celebration for the 103rd anniversary of the Legion of Mary which was the 75th anniversary of the Legion of Mary in the country. A Comitium in **Santiago de los Caballeros Senatus** reported visitation and catechesis of cohabiting couples resulted in 18 sacramental marriages, and two couples joined the Legion of Mary. Conversion of two people from a sect was also reported.

Haiti: The Senatus reported home, hospital, and prison visitation and preparing people for the sacraments. Priests are accompanied on sick calls and on street contact. Senatus looks forward to its 75th anniversary in 2025 and plans a number of events.

Puerto Rico: The Senatus highlighted a True Devotion to the Nation type apostolate to members of the community to ensure road repairs, street lighting and garbage collection are maintained. There is prayerful outreach to people of other Faiths, to residents of a Women's Refuge and to drug addicts.

EUROPE

Albania: Many praesidia consist of approximately ten members each. Reports from three praesidia show the works include visitation of the sick at home and sick people with disabilities, and participating in all Church activities in the parish which are organised by the parish priest who is also Spiritual Director of the three praesidia.

Belgium: **Brussels Senatus** reported on a day of evangelisation. Many people, including several Moslems, were offered the Miraculous Medal and usually accepted it. A workshop

was held on the mission of the Legion of Mary. It was a great success, with many admitting they were unaware of the work of the Legion and said they were inspired by the works being carried out.

Cyprus: There are two praesidia in Nicosia. Each has recruited new members. Mediatrix of All Graces praesidium celebrated their 33rd Anniversary in October, and more recently Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception praesidium in Limassol, celebrated their 27th Anniversary with Mass before the Legion of Mary meeting which was followed by lunch and entertainment.

England: **Birmingham Senatus** reported a new praesidium was set up in Wolverhampton Curia. Home and hospital visitation are carried out in Coventry Curia. Bristol Curia reported good street contact work in the city centre. Hospital visitation and helping at the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) sessions are reported from Leicester Curia. In **Liverpool Senatus** works reported included home visitation, and visitation of nursing homes, sick and housebound. Book barrow and crowd contact were carried out also. A praesidium in **Brentwood Regia** held a retreat for auxiliaries at which there was an attendance of 41. In West Middlesex Curia, Nursing home visitation is carried out. The Miraculous Medal features in all works. All praesidia in Brent and Harrow Curia engage in home visitation. A recruiting drive organised by one praesidium yielded two new members. Works in the Central London Curia include home visitation, visitation of nursing homes, and visitation of the sick and housebound. A lady returned to the

sacraments as a result of having the Pilgrim Statue in her home.

Finland: Stella Maris praesidium has eight full and two probationary members and a Spiritual Director. Crowd contact is carried out at the Metro, and Miraculous Medals are distributed to those met there. The Frank Duff Video was shown after Mass, with 20 attending, and a meaningful discussion taking place.

Germany: Frankfurt Senatus reported that during promotion of the Legion of Mary after Sunday Mass in Frankfurt many people showed an interest and accepted the Miraculous Medal. Works in Munich Regia include street apostolate, nursing home visitation and assisting with the sacraments. Works in Friburg Comitium include care of disabled children, car park apostolate and transporting people to Mass. The book barrow is placed in front of the Cathedral in Birnau. The Korean Curia has eleven praesidia.

Greece: A visit was made to Thessaloniki by two Maltese legionaries and a Spiritual Director from September 13-16. They attended the praesidium meeting which has five members and a Spiritual Director. The praesidium had stopped functioning during Covid and restarted in February 2024. Giannitsa was also visited. The parish priest was met and agreed to have a praesidium in his parish. The praesidium in Thessaloniki will make follow-up visits to Giannitsa.

Italy: The Senatus of Rome has eight Curiae in the city of Rome, and five Comitium and five Curiae in the provinces. There are two praesidia on the border with Austria, both of which are affiliated to the Senatus of Austria. A Curia with seven praesidia, 56 members, including ten probationary members, and 224 auxiliaries carries out home visitation,

teaches Italian to foreigners and organised a special Rosary in a local park for the feast of the Immaculate Conception with a very good attendance.

Kazakhstan: The Curia currently has five praesidia attached totalling 33 members and 56 auxiliaries. The correspondent, assisted by a priest fluent in Russian, visited the Curia for two weeks. The Curia and all praesidium meetings were visited. Two Spiritual Directors and 19 legionaries attended the Curia meeting. The main works are supporting the priest in the parish and bringing Holy Communion to the sick and house-bound. The visitors met Archbishop Peta, and Auxiliary Bishop Schneider who were very supportive of the Legion of Mary.

Malta: A Curia with eight praesidia reported all legionaries engage in home visitation. The Filipino praesidium on the Island of Gozo has thirteen members. The legionaries are undertaking a very good apostolate.

Netherlands: Amsterdam Regia reported one praesidium engages in street contact mainly, and encourages people who have lapsed to return to the sacraments. Two praesidia have *Patricians* groups. The Cape Verde Curia in Rotterdam is following up on the praesidium they helped to establish in Paris. They have visited it.

Portugal: A Comitium in Cascais has reactivated a praesidium. It helps with the regularisation of immigrant documents. The Comitium in Portela held a gathering for auxiliary members, at which a video about the life of Frank Duff was shown. The Curia of Fundão engaged in evangelisation in the streets.

Russia: There are two praesidia in Siberia. Works are mainly accompanying the priest on pastoral visits, visitation of the elderly,

care of children and helping with parish correspondence.

Scotland: The Curia in Motherwell reported the Rosary is prayed in the schools, and pupils ask many questions. Christmas crib contact was carried out also.

Spain: Some members in **Bilbao Senatus** have recorded talks about the Legion on the local Radio Maria and Antenna 3 Television. Nursing home visitation continues, as well as outreach to inmates within the prison system. Among other works Legionaries also engage in visits to ageing priests in their care facilities. A two-day Conference for officers of the Councils attached to the **Madrid Senatus** was held in October. Approximately 90 legionaries attended. A high percentage of attendees were South Americans. It was lovely to see present so many couples, and husbands and wives who met through the Legion of Mary. The main themes were Legion Spirituality, praesidia and Councils being used to form legionaries, and new horizons which include extension of the Legion. An international Peregrinatio Pro Christo team of eleven legionaries from Spain, Brazil and Ireland had a very successful project in Reus, a city in northern Spain, during the month of November.

Sweden: Br. and Sr. Kirsten visited from September 9-23. They visited one Curia with nine praesidia. Home visitation and street contact are amongst the works being carried out. The new Polish-speaking praesidium with eight members was visited. They had a meeting with Cardinal Anders who gave them a great welcome and was delighted to hear of the progress of the Legion of Mary

AFRICA

Benin: The **Cotonou Regia** celebrated the 70th Anniversary of the Legion of Mary in Benin

in October. All reports showed marriage validations, families reconciled, adults and children baptised, many returns to the sacraments and Sunday Mass. Contact is made with Protestants, Muslims and Pagans. There have been approximately 100 new recruits since the last report.

Burkina Faso: The Comitium hosted a national meeting in the capital Ougadougou of Spiritual Directors from the three Archdioceses and many Dioceses. Legionaries also attended. The security situation and many other matters were discussed as many parish churches are closed due to danger to parishioners.

Democratic Republic of Congo:

Senatus of Bukavu: Members took part in two Pilgrimages, one to the Sanctuary of Lukandula, and the other to Notre Dame des Douleurs. Many praesidia are losing members because of illness and displacement of population, provoked by conflict in the areas around the Regiae of Goma, Shabunda, and the Comitium of Uvira. **Senatus of Kinshasa:** Their Archbishop encouraged membership of the Legion of Mary among the young as the Legion is a force to moralise the youth. They request prayers as the Congo is a war-torn country. Works include visits to hospitals, prisons and families, and promoting marriages and baptisms. **Senatus of Kisangani:** 136 young women were helped to abandon prostitution. 165 youths were helped to stop smoking cannabis. 675 families who were victims of flooding were helped. 237 people returned to the sacrament of reconciliation, and 175 young people were brought to the sacraments of baptism and confirmation.

Gabon: The Cotonou Regia in Benin caretake Gabon with two Comitias with over 1,500 members. Thirty legionaries from Gabon attended the 70th Anniversary in Benin.

Guinea: The Comitium has six Curiae and seven praesidia with over 1,000 active members. Hospitals, prisons and orphanages are visited and catechism is taught.

Ivory Coast: Abidjan Senatus: Works include visitation of hospitals, prisons, teaching Catechism, house visitation and as a result many families have been reunited, couples married, lapsed returned to Mass and the sacraments. New members were recruited in health centres, hairdressers, sewing workshops, schools, restaurants, shops and on street contact and door to door visitation. Recruitment of young people happens mainly through interesting and innovative programs which give them roles of responsibility.

Malawi: Works undertaken in **Blantyre Senatus** include visiting patients in hospitals, teaching Catechism to young catechumens, and counselling cohabiting couples, encouraging them to have Church marriages. Legionaries also prayed with bereaved families and visited lapsed Christians, helping many return to regular Church attendance. **Maula Senatus** reported two new Curiae and one junior praesidium were established. Works include visits to the sick at home and in hospital and connecting them with priests for the sacraments, teaching Catechism, visits to cohabiting families and lapsed Catholics, assisting the elderly with their chores and cleaning the church.

Mauritius: Among many activities in the Regia, legionaries of the Comitium of Port Louis prayed Rosaries with the Pilgrim Statue of Our Lady with groups of different communities in the parishes.

Nigeria: Abuja Senatus reported 130 legionaries participated in a five-day project in Idah. 1,621 homes were visited. There

were cases of irregular marriages to be regularised. Also contacted were Muslims and Traditionalists considering conversion to the Catholic faith, catechumens interested in receiving baptism and practicing Catholics who indicated interest in the Legion of Mary. In **Enugu Senatus** a Comitium in Asata recently established two senior praesidia and one junior Curia. Another Comitium saw 97 adults received into the Catholic Church and 23 marriages were blessed. **Senatus of Ibadan** established two new Comitia, six Curiae and 38 praesidia and 11 junior praesidia. Legionaries helped prepare 2,691 for First Holy Communion, 1,421 for baptism, and 1,171 for confirmation. 248 adults underwent the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) and 12 children were received for the Rite of Christian Initiation of Children (RCIC). Two prison inmates received First Holy Communion and two were baptised. 235 marriages were rectified, 69 non-practicing Catholics returned to the faith and one Traditionalist converted to the Catholic Faith. *Patricians* meetings are held monthly with large participation. A Comitium attached to **Ikot Ekpene Regia** reported 21 new members made their Legion Promise; 35 new members were recruited; two catechumens were baptised; and four candidates received the sacrament of confirmation; one junior praesidium was established; and one junior praesidium and two senior praesidia were revived. Works undertaken in **Lagos Regia** include home and hospital visitation, care of children at Mass, teaching Catechism, crowd contact, visiting brothels, and helping to prepare many candidates for the sacraments. A Curia in **Onitsha Regia** helped prepare 171 candidates for First Holy Communion and 29 catechumens were prepared for baptism and 25 couples were helped to marry in the Church.

Rwanda: In the **Senatus of Kigali** works include home, hospital, and prison visitation as well as making contact with lapsed Catholics. Visitation of Auxiliary members is also undertaken. One new Curia was set up. There is a high number of junior praesidia in schools.

Senegal: Lomé Senatus caretake Senegal with a Comitium in Dakar which has 18 adult praesidia and one junior praesidium directly attached and six Curiae. New praesidia have been set up. Works include home and hospital visitation and catechesis.

South Sudan: In October, legionaries from the Senatus of Uganda, returned to Yambio to celebrate the opening of the Yambio Comitium, the first Comitium in South Sudan and two legionaries completed a two week visit to Juba Archdiocese.

Tanzania: Works undertaken in Hai Moshi Comitium include home and hospital visitation, contact with youths, some of whom are using drugs, encouraging couples to marry in Church and preparing adults and children for the Sacraments.

Togo: Works reported to **Lomé Senatus** include home, hospital, and prison visitation and visiting businesses, markets as well as street contact and contact on the beach. Auxiliaries are visited. All Curiae mentioned have juniors. Many Exploratio Dominicalis and weekend evangelisation projects resulted in new praesidia, Curiae and one new Comitium. They have many catechumens, conversions and abortions prevented. Congresses were held.

Uganda: Senatus of Uganda: Works undertaken include helping hundreds of lapsed Catholics back to the sacraments. 480 children were prepared for baptism. A Comitium reports visiting 8,753 homes and

5,346 patients in hospital and 14 couples received the sacrament of matrimony. Legionaries continue their evangelising work on Kisima islands.

Zambia: Lusaka Regia Changes to the revised edition of the Legion handbook are being translated and will be included in the Nyanja Handbook. Young Legionaries organised a successful Young Adults Conference in November. Works reported include visiting a hospital for people who are suffering from leprosy, praying with the sick at home and in hospitals, teaching and praying the Rosary in small Christian Communities, along with visiting cohabiting couples and encouraging them to have Church marriages. Throughout the month of October legionaries led the rosary in many parishes and gave talks on the importance of reciting the Rosary. A talk on the life of Frank Duff was given at a Mass for men in the Archdiocese of Lusaka.

ASIA

Armenia: One praesidium visits homes, shops, hairdressers, etc. and invite people to return to Mass and the sacraments. A praesidium in Yerevan runs a men's prayer group with six on average attending, some of whom are being encouraged to return to practice.

Hong Kong: One praesidium organised an Auxiliary Rally for its 129 auxiliary members. Another praesidium, based at the airport, facilitates the scheduling of meetings for the lunch times of its members, and the works assigned can be carried out during the members' lunch times also.

Lebanon: This country has suffered greatly due to war. They hope to resume Comitium meetings soon. They continued to visit the sick and isolated bringing them to hospital and retirement homes. They organised

events for children on the feast of St. Barbara.

Malaysia: Councils in **Kuala Lumpur Regia** showed a wide- ranging apostolate such as home and hospital visitation, including contact with non-Catholics. Some members are catechists. In East Malaysia, Kuching Comitium, Masses held to commemorate Frank Duff and Alfie Lambe were well-attended, and 600 attended a family day. Kota Kinabalu Comitium had 74 at a youth camp. The two campus praesidia at the university conduct talks and discussions and teach English to domestic workers. Junior praesidia work within their schools.

Pakistan: Karachi Comitium has 400 active and 200 auxiliary members. Enthronement of the Sacred Heart in homes and hospital visitation are carried out.

Singapore: Works reported included contact in parks and markets. The four Mandarin City Curiae held a May Procession which was attended by 350 people.

Sri Lanka: The Senatus has 12 Comitia attached. Lanka Comitium has 4,985 senior, and 1,090 junior members. 350 homes were consecrated to the Sacred Heart. 570 children and 530 adults were prepared for the sacraments. 100 people who had lapsed returned to practice. Thousands take part in Rosary rallies that are organised.

Taiwan: The **Taiwan Senatus** reported the death of Monsignor Simon Wang, their Spiritual Director up to 2018 at 99 years of age. R.I.P. A praesidium attached to Mother of Grace Curia in Yilan has started a prison ministry and hopes to establish two new praesidia in the coming months.

Thailand: A large variety and quantity of works include evangelisation in villages, carrying out Exploratio Dominicalis, leading people to be baptised, helping returns to

the Faith of some lapsed and lukewarm people, teaching Thai classes and helping the Daughters of Charity Sisters in their pastoral works, organisation of activities for the elderly, transporting the sick to see doctors, working with junior legionaries, organising Congresses, teaching catechism, leading people towards regularisation of their marriages, and facilitating Enthronement of the Sacred Heart in 83 families.

Vietnam: In Hanoi the Legion exists in 154 of 198 parishes. Works include arranging baptisms of children and adults, helping the lapsed to return, encouraging Church marriages and helping to prevent abortions. The Senatus has a total of 70,000 senior and 10,689 junior members and 415,885 auxiliary and adjutorian members.

NORTH AMERICA

USA: Many reports to **Arlington Senatus** grade their works in the order of the 3C's: conversion, consolation and conservation. One praesidium visited a sick member very regularly during his final hours and attended his funeral. This kindness inspired the man's daughter and son to subsequently join the Legion of Mary. The Providence Comitium attached to **Boston Senatus** reported home visitation to 1,922 homes. The fruits included conversion of a Baptist, the prevention of abortion and the guidance of a person to confession. Hartford Comitium had two converts and they restarted a prison praesidium for 15 prisoners. A praesidium attached to **Chicago Senatus** continues crowd contact in Millennium Park. Kokomo Comitium, Indiana, carried out extension at a High School. Sioux Falls Curia held a Rosary Crusade and a Eucharistic Procession. A Curia in Illinois had 29 attend a new *Patricians* meeting. They organised and held two drives to recruit people to sign up for Perpetual

Adoration. Gallup Comitium, attached to **Houston Senatus** honoured the crowning of Our Lady on the Navajo reservation on May 12. Another praesidium in New Mexico distributed over 7,000 rosaries with literature. Houston Spanish-speaking Comitium hosted their first Mariology Conference which included Consecration to Jesus through Mary. Dallas Comitium reported on a Spanish-speaking Curia opening new praesidia in Garland, in Rowlett and in The Colony, and a junior praesidium at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Frequent Columban drives and an increase of large numbers of probationary members featured in reports to **Los Angeles Senatus**. Many of the attached councils are hosting Congresses. A team of twelve legionaries carried out a Peregrinatio Pro Christo in Hawaii in September. Prison visits, baptisms and returns to the Church are prominent in reports to **Philadelphia Senatus**. Also, extension and recruiting are high on their agenda. Rosaries are regularly prayed in nursing homes and graveyards. Hosting Legion of Mary Stands at festivals and crowd contact at a youth bonfire facilitated distribution of Rosaries, Miraculous Medals, and details of praesidia meeting locations and times. In **San Francisco Senatus** home visitation, Enthronement of the Sacred Heart in homes and arranging reception of the sacraments of reconciliation and the Eucharist for the housebound through the endeavours of 'Call and Care' in the parish was reported by a praesidium in Novato. In Monterey Curia, a praesidium assisted their parish priest to run a 33-Day Consecration to Jesus through Mary, distribution of Miraculous Medals and enrolment in the Brown Scapular for 500 parishioners, both English and Spanish-speaking. In **St. Louis Senatus**, a Curia in Tulsa, Oklahoma, noted many Enthronements of the

Sacred Heart, many returns to the Sacraments and Holy Mass as a result of home visitation, evangelisation and Catechism. In Colorado, Pueblo Comitium formed a new praesidium of nine members and plan a juniors also.

Miami Regia received reports from one directly attached praesidium, one Comitium and eight Curiae. Three of the Curiae have juniors attached. The distant Bahamas Curia, with nine praesidia do a full range of Legion works and give talks on the Legion to other parish ministries.

Canada: In **Montreal Senatus** works include circulation of Pilgrim Virgin Statue and religious literature, and bringing elderly people to a monthly Mass. Extension is ongoing in two parishes. The praesidium of eleven members in Sherbrooke had 350 visitors to the church due to crowd contact promotion of a 'Night Light Adoration' event. Extension efforts in the **Toronto Senatus** show new praesidia being formed with four, eight, and eighteen members. Likewise attached Councils attempt extension and an attached Curia reopened a dormant praesidium with help from a priest. **Edmonton Comitium** reported a Legion of Mary Congress had 56 attendees. A praesidium used crowd contact method to do two Exploratio Dominicalis projects. An attached Curia held a junior Retreat for 44 juniors. It included Mass, Confession, Adoration, games, talks, and testimonies. **Vancouver Comitium** A Columban Drive in August recruited five active and eight auxiliary members. Encouraging a homebound lady to pray the Rosary resulted in the reconciliation of herself and her estranged daughter after eighteen years apart. An attached Curia reported on teaching the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) programme which resulted in the baptism of six people.



Our Lady Help of Christians PRAY FOR US



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