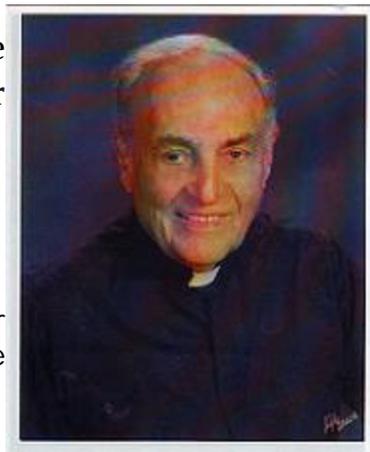


Acies 2009

Annual Acies Ceremony 2009

Fr. Soulliere
Spritual Director



Homily by Fr. Richard Soulliere

Today, we welcome all of the active and auxiliary members to our Acies for the year, 2009. We especially welcome those who are present at an Acies for the first time.

The Acies is the great annual, solemn expression of our union with and our dependency on, Mary. Today, we renew our fidelity and consecration to her and we ask from her, her blessing and the strength to combat Satan and forces of evil for another year.

Our presence here is extremely important. the Handbook states that those legionaries who should and are able to be here but are not, "have little or none of the spirit of the Legion" and their "membership is not an asset to the Legion."

Today, I would like to point out to you "How Blessed We Are To Belong To The Legion Of Mary".

First, as has been said many times, Mary chose us to be members of her Legion! This means that we have value, we are wanted, we are important - there is something that she wants us to do. We have been picked our from the crowd. How blessed we are!

For a moment, let us look at our spiritual life before we entered the Legion and what it is now. Before we entered the Legion, I am sure that most of us were what you call "good" Catholics. We went to Mass and received Communion almost every Sunday; we said our morning prayers and whenever our parish has a mission or something special, we tried to attend; we made the nine First Fridays and the five First Saturdays once and we went to confession every three - four months. Then we joined the Legion of Mary. And now we try to go to Mass and Communion every day. We still say our morning prayers but now, we also say at least five decades of the Rosary each day and, many of us additionally say an Office, for example, "The Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary" or "The Office of the Immaculate Conception." Some of us even say the "Priest's Office," the "Breviary." Since we joined the Legion, we have also made the nine First Fridays and five First Saturdays again and we continue to make them. Why? Because they obligate us to go to confession at least once per month! Our Lord says, "we must become perfect as our Heavenly Father is Perfect" and Scripture tells us "that the just man sins seven times a day." Frequent confession is a major step on the road to perfection. Since we entered the Legion, we have developed a more intense love for the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit - and Mary.

We have also become acutely aware of God's plan of salvation and the role we must adhere to. How blessed we are to be in the Legion of Mary!

Something else: Since we joined the Legion, life has taken on a new meaning. We now have a zest and enthusiasm that we never had before. Why? Because we now have a mission to save souls!

In our apostolic work: visiting hospitals, nursing homes, setting up book barrows, making door-to-door contacts, we meet a lot of new people. And what goes through our minds, when we begin talking to them? We wonder if they are in a state of grace. Are they in a valid marriage? Are their children baptized? How long since their last confession? And, every time we find a deficiency, we try to remedy it! Like getting a priest to a nursing home or hospital to hear someone's confession, give communion, the sacrament of the sick. Or maybe, you gave them a rosary, a leaflet at the door, or talked with them. The rule is that, "if you save a soul, you have saved your own". But, you have gone far beyond that! You have been instrumental in saving many souls and it is probably only at death that the great number will be shown to you! How blessed we are to belong to the Legion of Mary!

Something else: Since you joined the Legion, you have developed a new network of friends! Who are your closest friends? They are generally the members of your praesidium. You have the same interests, the same goals. You engage in apostolic work with them, go on retreats with them and go on Legion outings with them. They are not fair weather friends -- here today and gone tomorrow. But you can trust them and enjoy them. And when the going gets tough, they are right at your side. How blessed we are to belong to the Legion of Mary!

Something else: When you entered the Legion, you began to practice a devotion, known as "The True Devotion to Mary," as set forth by [St. Louis Marie de Montfort](#) in his book by the same name.

Simply stated, it is that you try to become a slave of Mary, in order to become a slave of Her Son, Jesus Christ. Thus, you try to do all things with her, through her, in her and for her. But some of us here might say, "How can this be? I have heard of this devotion but I have never read this book.

Let me tell you how this has happened. [Frank Duff](#) is the author of the Handbook and he has tried to incorporate into its pages, everything applicable that he learned from reading de Montfort's book. Thus, the Handbook is a spiritual book, and not simply a book of rules. And so, at your weekly praesidium meeting, monthly council meetings or every time you read a passage from the Handbook - you did not realize it, but you were being transformed. How blessed we are to be in the Legion of Mary!

Something else: All of us have problems - at home, at work, on the street. Since our entry into the Legion, we have turned to Mary for help. When we are afflicted, she consoles us; When our minds are filled with anxieties, doubts and darkness, she quietly enlightens us. In a word, we have learned to put implicit trust in the little prayer: "Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary that never was it known that anyone who fled to your protection, implored your help or sought your intercession was left unaided." How blessed we are to be in the Legion of Mary!

And then, we come to the end of the road. We have reached the bottom of the downhill slope - the final page of the book of our life has been turned - in a word, death overtakes us. What benefits do we not have? If we are an active member of a praesidium, a Mass will be said for us. The Legion prayers, including five mysteries of the Rosary will be said at the wake services, at the cemetery, and by your praesidium members many times in between. Every November your praesidium will have a Mass said for all the deceased legionaries. There are more than 100 praesidia in Dade and Broward counties, here in Florida. This is a relatively small area. With this in mind, I would estimate there must be more than 20,000 praesidia throughout the world. Just think, once you are deceased, there will be at least 20,000 masses, each mass of infinite value, being offered for you, every November, throughout the world!

Also everytime the closing prayers of the Legion are said, "that the battle of life over, our Legion may reassemble without the loss of anyone, in the kingdom of Your love and glory" - that is a prayer for you - you are included. Additionally, since you entered the Legion, you have been saying at least five mysteries of the Rosary each day. That is fifty Hail Marys recited. That is fifty times a day, you have been imploring Mary "to pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen." What you are also saying is, "pray for me, a sinner, now and at the hour of our death. Amen," fifty times a day. Can she ignore those pleas? Absolutely not! How blessed we are to be in the Legion of Mary!

I would like to close by pointing out that:

You would never have attained such a profound prayer life that you now have, if you were not in the Legion of Mary!

You would never have accomplished the apostolic work, the saving of so many souls, if you were not in the Legion of Mary! and,

You would never have reached the personal sanctity that you now possess, if you were not in the Legion of Mary!

How blessed we are to be in the Legion of Mary!

The final conclusion should also be:

Never, never, never leave the Legion of Mary!