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# CHRISTUS VITA VESTRA

*RATIO INSTITUTIONIS*  
OF THE CONGREGATION  
OF THE LEGIONARIES OF CHRIST

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ROME, 2017



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Thy Kingdom Come!

**CONGREGATIO  
LEGIONARIORUM CHRISTI**

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DIRECTOR GENERALIS

Prot. DG-LC 1796-2017

Clas. I.3.27

Rome, May 1, 2017

To the Legionaries of Christ

Dear Fathers and Brothers,

At the beginning of this month dedicated to the Most Holy Virgin Mary, I have the joy of presenting to you the *Ratio Institutionis* of the Legion of Christ, which I have approved *ad experimentum* until the General Chapter of 2020. Through this letter I would like to point out a few prominent aspects of the text, explain some of the decisions that were made, and offer a key for reading it that can help you discover its contents bit by bit.

*1. A text prepared with the help of the Congregation*

The process of preparing this text has been long and, in a way, we have all contributed to it: with our reflections and suggestions during the process of revising the Constitutions, by participating in the preparation for the extraordinary General Chapter of 2014, and through the many consultations made throughout the process of actually writing the document. You can find a detailed explanation of the writing process in annex 3.

*2. Style of the text*

Saint John Paul II described the *Ratio Institutionis* of an institute

of consecrated life as a “formation program inspired by their particular charism, presenting clearly and in all its stages the course to be followed in order to assimilate fully the spirituality of the respective Institute” (*Vita Consecrata*, 68).

The Church gives a great deal of freedom regarding the style and extent of these documents. We saw it convenient to clearly define the identity of a Legionary of Christ and lay out in an attractive and practical way the objectives, means, and characteristics of our traditional pedagogy of formation.

It was also our hope that the *Ratio Institutionis*, by expounding on some elements of doctrine and spirituality, could be a source for prayer and personal reflection. Moreover, we wanted to offer to Legionaries of today and tomorrow a well-developed text—proper to the Congregation—that elaborates on what our Constitutions and secondary documents express synthetically.

### 3. “Christus vita vestra”: synthesis of our formation goal

The *Ratio Institutionis* bears for its title the same words that we read at the entrance of each novitiate: “Christus vita vestra” (*Colossians* 3:4). In these words of Saint Paul, we find both a synthesis of the Legionary identity and our path toward fullness and fruitfulness as followers of Christ—a response to God’s plan for this work of His that He has placed in our hands with trust.

### 4. A path of formation with two important phases

Formation, as understood by the Church today, is a single path of following Christ with two important phases: initial formation and ongoing formation. This *Ratio Institutionis* tries to point out the distinction and link between the two, emphasizing that we are always in formation and that it is during initial formation that we acquire the dispositions to form and let ourselves be formed for our entire lives. Thus, nobody can presume to have “completely brought to life the ‘new creature’ who, in every circumstance of life, reflects the very mind of Christ” (*Vita Consecrata* 69).

In this light, it is important to state clearly that our *Ratio Institutionis* is not aimed primarily at the brothers in formation, nor is it written mainly for the formators. It is meant to be a permanent reference document for every Legionary that presents a path of gradual and continual growth in identification with Christ. It is a text that can help at any stage of our lives as a source of guidance and inspiration, nourishment for prayer, and material for preaching.

On this path, each Legionary is responsible for his own formation. The text thus underlines the importance of each person interiorizing the ideal set before him and forging deep convictions to sustain him throughout his life. It presents the need for self-knowledge and sincere listening to God as the foundation of this process, for it is necessary that each person integrate his personal history and see every circumstance of his life as part of the providence of God.

### 5. *Accompaniment*

The text explains the roles of the different formators, including the spiritual director, in offering personal accompaniment. It also discusses the community as an agent of formation and an essential aspect of religious life. Other means and areas of accompaniment that the *Ratio* touches on are periodic evaluation and self-evaluation, apostolic mentoring, suitable use of psychology, and the apostolic development of each Legionary.

### 6. *The formative itinerary*

The General Chapter asked the general government to define some of the elements of the Legion's formative itinerary (see GCC 2014, 148). After due consultation and analysis, these have been laid out in the *Ratio Institutionis*. Among them are the following:

- So that their initial formation can better help religious meet the formation objectives, we have sought to harmonize the religious itinerary (timing of admission to profession, renewal of

vows and perpetual profession) with the stages of study. Moreover, the order and duration of the stages are organized so as to help them take the step to perpetual profession in a formative environment that favors discernment, accompaniment, and a free, mature, and thoughtful decision before God (see GCC 2014, 149).

- The stage before novitiate is presented, along with the most essential objectives to meet therein. The territories are left sufficient flexibility to determine the methods and format of the stage.
- The discernment and decisions made regarding humanities are presented (see GCC 2014, 156).
- Apostolic internship is considered, before anything else, a stage of integral formation and the criteria for determining its length of two or three years are defined.
- The possibility of studying for a licentiate in philosophy after returning from apostolic internship is maintained.
- Pursuing a licentiate in theology or specializing in some other subject after the first years of priesthood is presented as a normal step in the life of every Legionary.

### *7. Section of norms*

The *Ratio Institutionis* forms part of the Congregation's proper law and thus has a normative character. It expresses how the Legion understands and organizes formation; proposes a way to protect, transmit and develop the Legion's charism; and offers its members the means to live it in the different stages of their lives.

At the end of the *Ratio* is a section of norms that apply and make concrete some of the principles contained in the document. They also give guidelines for preparing Rules of Life for the houses of initial formation.

Naturally, these are not intended to norm the way we live virtue or, much less, our personal growth in holiness. Rather, they are meant to determine and safeguard certain institutional procedures that can help create the formative environment most conducive to the growth and integral development of each Legionary.

#### *8. Other elements of the text*

I would also like to point out a few other important elements:

- The text contains abundant references to Sacred Scripture, the Church's magisterial documents and our Constitutions. We were also able to take into account the *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis*, published by the Congregation for the Clergy on December 8, 2016.
- Special emphasis is placed on issues particularly relevant and important for priestly formation: affective maturity, the impact and development of the digital world, and spiritual discernment.
- In addition to the four traditional dimensions of priestly formation, our *Ratio Institutionis* adds two more that are essential for Legionary formation: formation in living the evangelical counsels, and formation in and for communion.
- The text also includes the General Chapter's guidelines about a Legionary's role within *Regnum Christi* (see GCC 2014, 22-25).

#### *9. A means of advancing the renewal of the Legion*

We have in our hands today the first *Ratio Institutionis* of the Legion of Christ. We must receive it with gratitude, dedicate ourselves to learning it, and seek to assimilate it into our lives. It is born within the context of the profound renewal we are currently living. We have tried to make it something that gathers the riches of our past, and at the same time, helps us continue growing in the areas

that our good Mother, the Church, has pointed out to us. It seeks both to respond to the challenges that those who set out on the path of following Christ in the Legion will face, and to give direction to those who already have many years of experience in religious life and the priesthood.

As often happens with documents of this kind, many of its elements will resonate deeply with us. We may also find certain aspects, expressions or even prudential decisions that, at first, may be difficult to agree with. It seems to me that, beyond specific decisions or formulations, we should not lose sight of what is most important, the heart of the text: the identity of a Legionary of Christ and our mission within the Church. It will fall to the next General Chapter, in 2020, to revise this *Ratio Institutionis* and authorize whatever adjustments it deems necessary in light of our experience in applying it over the next three years.

“In their mission of forming apostles, Christian leaders at the service of the Church, Legionaries make present the mystery of Christ gathering the Apostles around him, revealing to them the love of his heart, forming them, and sending them out to collaborate with him in building up his Kingdom” (CLC 4). For us to be capable of accomplishing our mission as formators of apostles, it is necessary that each of us first form himself and let himself be formed constantly by Christ: our center, standard and example. Thus, our lives will be a sign of the presence of his Kingdom in the world.

Your brother in Christ and the Legion,

EDUARDO ROBLES-GIL, L.C.  
General Director

Annex 1: *Ratio Institutionis*

Annex 2: Some notes on the writing process

## SOME NOTES ON THE WRITING PROCESS

(Annex of Prot. DG-LC 1796-2017)

### Assignment of the General Chapter and Establishment of the Commission

- The extraordinary General Chapter of 2014 asked the new government to prepare a *Ratio Institutionis* for the Congregation (see GCC 2014, 152).
- The general director established the commission on June 10, 2014 (see Prot. D.G. 562-2014), asking it to submit its proposal for the text by the beginning of 2017, which would be approved *ad experimentum* until the ordinary General Chapter of 2020.
- The members of the commission were chosen by the general director. In order to continue building upon the General Chapter's perspective of the renewal needed in Legionary formation (see GCC 2014, 121-153), the majority of those chosen were chapter fathers. The members of the commission represent a wide spectrum of backgrounds, ages and experience in governance, formation and pedagogical programming.
- The members of the commission were Fr. Sylvester Heerman (president), Fr. Juan Carlos Ortega (secretary), Fr. Carlos Villalba, Fr. Florencio Sánchez, Fr. José Enrique Oyarzún, Fr. John Bartunek, Fr. Ignacio Sarre, and Fr. David Abad, who joined the commission later.

### Work of the Commission

- The commission gathered for 11 sessions in Rome to work on the document, each lasting between 4 and 15 days depending on the objectives for each session, for a total of 75 days.

- At the beginning of the process, the members of the commission studied the *Ratio Institutionis* of other congregations and institutes, as well as the main magisterial documents on priestly and religious formation.
- The commission also took into consideration the input given by all Legionaries on topics related to formation throughout the process of revising the Constitutions and in preparation for the extraordinary General Chapter of 2014.
- In January of 2015 the rest of the Congregation was informed of the commission's work program—the guiding principles, main sources of reference, characteristics of the document—and the different means of consulting and participating (see Prot. S.G. 0103-2015).
- In April of 2015, a draft of the first part of the *Ratio Institutionis* was sent to 56 Legionaries from the different territories and 10 external consultants, experts in diverse areas related to formation, for feedback. The draft was accompanied by a questionnaire in order to gather the consultants' impressions on certain concrete themes. It was also distributed to the superiors with the recommendation to have a community discussion on the document.
- The contributions that the commission received were a great help. They were analyzed during the plenary session of July 2015. While they confirmed that the foundational ideas and principles were suitable, the commission determined that it was necessary to change the style of the draft and the emphasis in its approach to the formation objectives. As a result of this consultation, the index was reworked and Fr. David Abad was added as a new member to the commission, in charge of writing the new draft.
- Over the following months, the different chapters of the *Ratio Institutionis* were prepared. The commission worked on and revised outlines of ideas in plenary sessions, which the

writer then turned into a written text. This text was then brought back to the commission for another revision.

- In October of 2015, the general council met with the commission to review the progress of their work and discuss a few themes related to the formative itinerary.
- The second draft was sent to the same consultants on May 27, 2016. It was also sent to different teams at some of our universities (*Anáhuac*, Francisco de Vitoria, *Finis Terrae*). This draft did not contain what is now chapter 6, which was added later.
- This consultation was also very fruitful. The commission studied all of the reflections and suggestions it received (more than 500 pages) in order to continue improving and enriching the text.
- The pontifical assistant, Fr. Gianfranco Ghirlanda, also revised the draft in its different stages.
- From July 10-13, 2016, fifteen Legionaries (most of whom were serving as formators in different stages of formation) met with the commission in Rome to analyze certain aspects of the Legion's formative itinerary and a few of the commission's proposals for it. These sessions were presided over by the general director. The members of the general council also participated.
- The commission had a final plenary session to finish the text in December of 2016.

### **Approval of the Text**

- At the beginning of 2017, the commission submitted its proposed text to the General Government, who closely analyzed and revised it.
- After making the necessary adjustments, the general director, with the consent of his council, approved the document on March 9, 2017 and signed the decree on March 20, 2017, the Solemnity of Saint Joseph.



## ABBREVIATIONS

- AL *Amoris Laetitia*, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, Francis, 2016.
- CCC *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Second Edition, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997.
- CIC *Codex Iuris Canonici (Code of Canon Law)*, 1983.
- DCE *Deus Caritas Est*, Encyclical on Christian Love, Benedict XVI, 2005.
- DVi *Dominum et Vivificantem*, Encyclical on the Holy Spirit in the Life of the Church and the World, John Paul II, 1986.
- EE *Essential Elements in the Church's Teaching on Religious Life. As Applied to Institutes Dedicated to Works of the Apostolate*, Congregation for Religious and for Secular Institutes (SCRIS), 1983.
- EG *Evangelii Gaudium*, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, Francis, 2013.
- EN *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, Apostolic Exhortation, Paul VI, 1975.
- ES *Ecclesiam Suam*, Encyclical on the Church, Paul VI, 1964.
- ET *Evangelica Testificatio*, Apostolic Exhortation, Paul VI, 1971.
- FLC *Fraternal Life in Community*, Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Apostolic Life (CICLSAL), 1994.

- FR *Fides et Ratio*, Encyclical on the relationship between Faith and Reason, John Paul II, 1998.
- GPV *The Gift of the Priestly Vocation, Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis*, Congregation for the Clergy, 2016.
- GS *Gudium et Spes*, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, Second Vatican Council, 1965.
- GUP *Guidelines for the Use of Psychology in the Admission and Formation of Candidates for the Priesthood*, Congregation for Catholic Education, 2008.
- LG *Lumen Gentium*, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Second Vatican Council, 1964.
- MD *Mulieris Dignitatem*, Apostolic Letter, John Paul II, 1998.
- MR *Mutuae Relationes*, Directives for the Mutual Relations Between Bishops and Religious in the Church, Sacred Congregation for Bishops and SCRIS, 1978.
- NW *New Wine in New Wineskins*, The Consecrated Life and its Ongoing Challenges since Vatican II, CICLSAL, 2017.
- OT *Optatam Totius*, Decree on Priestly Training, Second Vatican Council, 1965.
- PC *Perfectae Caritatis*, Decree on the Adaptation and Renewal of Religious Life, Second Vatican Council, 1965.
- PDV *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, John Paul II, 1992.
- PG *Patrologia Graeca*, J.P. Migne.

- PI *Potissimum Institutioni*, Directives on Formation in Religious Institutes, CICLSAL, 1990.
- PL *Patrologia Latina*, J.P. Migne.
- PMDM *The Priest, Minister of Divine Mercy*, Congregation for the Clergy, 2011.
- PO *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, Second Vatican Council, 1965.
- RHP *Religious and Human Promotion*, SCRIS, 1978.
- SaC *Starting Afresh from Christ*, CICLSAL, 2002.
- SAO *The Service of Authority and Obedience*, CICLSAL, 2008.
- SC *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Second Vatican Council, 1963.
- SCa *Sacramentum Caritatis*, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, Benedict XVI, 2007.
- SFS *Circular Letter Concerning Some of the More Urgent Aspects of Spiritual Formation in Seminaries*, Congregation for Catholic Education, 1980.
- SS *Spes Salvi*, Encyclical on Christian Hope, Benedict XVI, 2007.
- VC *Vita Consecrata*, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, John Paul II, 1996.

The citations of valid documents of the proper law are indicated in the text with acronyms; the citations of historical documents at the foot of page.

- CLC *Constitutions of the Congregation of the Legionaries of Christ*, 2014.
- CLC 1994 *Constitutions of the Congregation of the Legionaries of Christ*, 1994.

- CN *Complementary Norms of the Constitutions of the Congregation of the Legionaries of Christ*, 2014.
- ECYD *ECYD Statutes*, 2016.
- GCC *General Chapter Communiqué of the Congregation of the Legionaries of Christ*, 2014.
- GL *Guía de Liturgia y Oración Común*, Congregación de los Legionarios de Cristo, 2017.
- RCS 1988 *Regnum Christi Statutes*, 1988.
- TN *Translator's Note*

# INTRODUCTION

## SIGNIFICANCE AND VALUE OF THE *RATIO INSTITUTIONIS*

*I am the way and the truth and the life.* (John 14:6)

### A. Nature, Purpose and Juridical Value

1. The *Ratio Institutionis* of an institute of consecrated life is “a formation program inspired by their particular charism, presenting clearly and in all its stages the course to be followed in order to assimilate fully the spirituality of the respective institute.”<sup>1</sup> It reifies universal law and the Constitutions in all that pertains to the formation of the members as men consecrated to Christ in the Church.

In light of the identity, life and mission of a Legionary, this *Ratio* expounds the principles and criteria that illuminate and guide the pedagogical process of our formation. It also specifies its objectives, agents and stages, as well as the primary means and aids for carrying it out.

2. Recent writing of the Magisterium on religious life exhorts religious institutes to develop their *Ratios* such that they offer a formation that will enable its members to live the perennial newness of their particular charism. In effect, “the renewal of the consecrated life depends primarily on formation”, which “is linked to the ability to establish a method characterized by spiritual and pedagogical wisdom, which will gradually lead those wishing to consecrate themselves to put on the mind of Christ the Lord.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> VC 68.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid; See PC 18.

The General Chapter of the Legion of Christ held in 2014 asked for the composition of this document, for the purpose of “helping all members of the Congregation to reach the measure of the fullness of Christ (see Ephesians 4:13), according to the charism of *Regnum Christi*.” (GCC 2014, 127)

3. The *Ratio Institutionis*, as part of the proper law of the institute (see CLC 232)<sup>3</sup>, presents content of a diverse nature (theological, spiritual, pedagogical, canonical). It establishes the conditions, formative decisions and processes that should characterize formation throughout the Congregation. Thus, in the area of formation, it is a foundation of unity in the diversity of geographical and cultural atmospheres in which the Legion is present.

The *Ratio* ends by detailing some “norms,” which make concrete some of the operative elements that are especially relevant to the formative process. It also offers common guidelines for preparation of the Rule of Life.

## B. Intended Audience

4. The present document is proposed as a guide to help each Legionary live as fully as possible the plan of God for his life, whether during his preparation for religious profession and holy orders—referred to as “initial formation”—or during the rest of his life and priestly ministry—“ongoing formation”. Therefore, this *Ratio* addresses:

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a. *All Legionary priests*, so that they continue to persevere in their commitment to holiness until their definitive encounter with the Lord who called them to his vineyard; in this way, it is both a reminder and stimulus in their personal life and a guide for creating the community program with their brothers.

b. *Formators*, as a framework for norms and as a source of nourishment and inspiration in their work of instruction.

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<sup>3</sup> See CIC 659; PI 85.

c. *Religions in initial formation*, so that they can have objective parameters against which to measure themselves and their growth, and thus take full advantage of their precious time of preparation for perpetual profession and the priesthood.

d. *Novices*, as a guide for growing in the essential elements of this charism in the Church under the guidance of their novice director, so that they can set their formation and commitment to follow Christ on solid foundations.

### C. Sources

5. Sacred Scripture and the uninterrupted tradition of consecrated life that the Holy Spirit has raised up in the Church from its beginnings are the wellspring of this document.

The norms of the Church and the rich Magisterium of the recent Pontiffs on religious life have been our guide and point of constant reference.<sup>4</sup>

The final source has been elements particular to our charism found in the life of the Congregation and its written references, according to the hermeneutic of continuity and renewal, that is, with the consciousness of the presence of God in our history and with the resolution to deepen our understanding of the gift of God in order to strip it of any transitory elements and incarnate it more faithfully in the today of the Church. In this sense, the more one comprehends a charism, the more one attains to its essence and can thus be flexible enough to adapt it to different times and places. 55-57

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<sup>4</sup> “[T]o develop the *Ratio Institutionis* of the congregation... [t]hey should bear in mind the documents of the Church regarding priestly formation, especially *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, *Vita Consecrata* and the *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis*.” (GCC 2014, 152 §1).

## D. Structure

6. This *Ratio Institutionis* consists of two parts. The first part lays out a synchronic vision of the formation the Legion offers to her men. After establishing formation, one's progressive transformation into Christ, as a process inherent to the life of a Christian, and laying the foundational presuppositions of this growth (Chapter 1), it outlines the identity and mission of the Legionary as a religious and priest, following Christ according to an institutional charism (Chapter 2). The more prominent aspects of the Legion's formative program flow from this outline and unfold as dimensions and objectives intended to develop an understanding of the essentials of a Legionary's life and mission (Chapter 3). The first part ends by describing the characteristics of this process of formation (Chapter 4), its agents (Chapter 5) and the meaning of the means and activities that aid it (Chapter 6).

The second part diachronically describes the formative process as a time when one reaches a moral certainty of his call (Chapter 7) and continues wholeheartedly conforming himself to Christ according to God's plan, both during the initial stages of formation (Chapter 7) and throughout ongoing formation (Chapter 8), each period with its proper goals. Legionaries live this process aware that time is oriented toward eternity and that they have but one life and one chance to live it.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> See CLC 1994, 249.

FIRST PART  
LEGIONARY FORMATION:  
A RESPONSE OF LOVE

*I found him whom my soul loves* (Song of Songs 3:4)



# CHAPTER ONE

## FUNDAMENTALS OF A CHRIST-CENTERED FORMATION

*Until we all attain... to mature manhood,  
to the extent of the full stature of Christ (Ephesians 4:13)*

### A. Human Vocation and Formation

7. The Christian understanding of man is founded on the biblical affirmation that God created him in his “image and likeness” (Genesis 1:26). From this reality man receives his “capacity of having a personal relationship with God, as ‘I’ and ‘you,’ and therefore the capacity of having a covenant.”<sup>6</sup>

8. Being human is both gift and task. The beauty, responsibility, and greatness of man—as well as the drama of human and Christian life—spring from this reality. 295

God has given us a free will that, when firmly united to the divine will, that is the Truth, allows us to attain freedom: “the truth will set you free” (John 8:32). It is not only knowing the truth, but also living the truth that makes us free. 213-218

This *Ratio Institutionis* understands formation as the Legionary’s free and loving response to the call of God that invites us to identify ourselves with him in accordance with the words of Christ: “be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matthew 5:48).

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<sup>6</sup> DVi 34.

9. God created man to “share in the divine nature” (2 Peter 1:4). Although this goal lies beyond the possibilities of our human nature, it is nevertheless the fulfillment of our deepest and most authentic aspirations.

This is why holiness is above all an invitation from God. We do not decide to become saints—God invites us to sanctity: “It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you” (John 15:16).

382-391 10. Formation and spiritual growth are therefore not principally the fruit of man’s work, but of the collaboration between man’s effort and God’s grace: “You have accomplished all we have done” (Isaiah 26:12). All our works have real value in God’s eyes as expressions of our love for him. We can call them ours because of the dignity God has given us, but in the end God bring them all about, inspiring our good thoughts and sustaining us in our good deeds by his grace. This double certainty impels us to intensify our efforts, aware that we are fully responsible before God for the good we do and fail to do. At the same time, it impels us to beg God for his grace, so that he may bring our works from a good beginning to a successful end, even making use of our shortcomings and mistakes in his great design.

## 68, 103, 130 **B. Formation as Transformation into Christ**

11. So that we might fulfill his plans for us as men, God, with ineffable love, gave us his only Son, “Christ Jesus, himself human” (1 Timothy 2:5) and “the image of God” (see 2 Corinthians 4:4), who could say of himself: “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father” (John 14:9).

12. Formation, then, implies collaboration with the work of the Father who, through the Spirit, fashions in us the inner attitudes of the Son.<sup>7</sup> Just like the Twelve, who lived with Christ, a Legionary

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<sup>7</sup> See VC 66; PDV 42.

takes on his formation as a vital, personal and transforming relationship with the Lord, until “we learn how to respond from the heart to Christ’s basic question: ‘Do you love me?’(John 21:15).”<sup>8</sup>

13. Thus, Legionary formation is a process oriented towards configuration with Christ in all dimensions of the person, such as his understanding, will and affectivity. It is a deep transformation, a gradual dying to self and living through Christ, with Christ and in Christ to the point of being able to say with Saint Paul: “yet I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me” (Galatians 2:20). For this reason, it is insufficient to think of formation as a merely external change of behaviors. 339

14. For one called by the Father to be a Legionary of Christ, formation is a process of configuration with the Son according to the Legionary charism he has given to the Church. 51-57 60

“The ongoing configuration to Christ comes about according to the charism and provisions of the institute to which the religious belongs. Each has its own spirit, character, purpose, and tradition, and it is in accordance with these that the religious grow in their union with Christ.”<sup>9</sup>

15. Insofar as it aspires to a living identification with Christ, Legionary formation can never be considered finished, since the ever-deepening assimilation of this identity becomes both a task and a growing lifelong passion. In each new stage of priestly ministry this task takes on an even greater beauty and force than during the initial years of formation, for tasting and seeing “that the Lord is good” (Psalms 34:9) invites us to enter into a relationship with him that is all the more mature and profound with the passing of years. Le- 371-374

### C. Some Premises of Formation

16. Priestly and religious formation in the Legion, as a path of growth towards “the extent of the full stature of Christ” (Ephesians

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<sup>8</sup> PDV 42.

<sup>9</sup> EE 46.

4:13), must take into account the condition of man, the influence of the culture, the life of the Church, and the reception of a particular gift or charism. These premises are the guidelines that allow us to delineate our pedagogical itinerary and adapt it to different circumstances of time and place.

### ***1. A realistic anthropology***

17. In Christian anthropology, it is impossible to understand man apart from his relation to God. Man comes from the loving hands of God and returns to his embrace: “I am the Alpha and the Omega” (Revelation 1:8).

#### *The plan of God and the fall of man*

18. God is man’s final end. Accordingly, all man’s faculties have been created such that through them man can orient and unite himself to God: the intelligence was made to know God through the sensible world and Revelation; the concupiscible appetite to desire and love him; the irascible appetite to fight evil, flee temptation and be zealous for the things of God; the will to embrace his love for us as his children; the memory to remember him and the works of his love; the sentiments and emotions to help us contemplate him in all things. Thus all our faculties and abilities are directed by nature toward possessing God and practicing virtue. For this reason, the Church Fathers said that the virtuous life “conforms to nature.”

19. Original sin shattered this dynamic. Instead of turning to the fatherly face of God, man welcomed the suggestion of the devil who incited him to distrust in the goodness of his Creator. He decided of his own accord to disobey Him and deprive himself of God in his search for happiness.

The decision of our first parents left a burden on man, as well as a tendency toward the disordered use of his faculties, as Saint Paul describes in his letter to the Romans (Romans 1:18-32). Instead of using his intelligence to know God and contemplate created things

in him, man tends to know creation apart from God and remain fixed on appearances alone. His will tends to be enslaved by its likes and whims. Misusing his irascible appetite, man tends to fight whatever opposes the satisfaction of his desires and passions. In the face of temptations and the forces of evil, he directs his aggression against his neighbor, giving in to wrath, rivalry and domination instead of “competing well for the faith” (1 Timothy 6:12) by putting his zeal at the service of greater union with God.

20. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* reminds us that any reflection on human nature that fails to take into account the reality of original sin is futile: “Ignorance of the fact that man has a wounded nature inclined to evil gives rise to serious errors in the areas of education, politics, social action and morals.”<sup>10</sup>

21. It is important to emphasize that man always remains the image of God; original sin did not essentially alter his nature. But he is still inclined to subvert the original, normal and healthy use of his faculties and direct them to unhealthy ends, thus entering into an altered, abnormal state, that is “against nature.”

22. This inborn tendency towards sin, although not a personal sin in itself, easily leads to it. The devil provokes this natural weakness, and with it, a profound fear of death and suffering that the experience of separation from God has left in man, who finds himself at the mercy of the world, the flesh and the devil. It was from this threefold tyranny that Christ came to free us.

“Miserable one that I am! Who will deliver me from this mortal body?” The Christian experience emerges from this interior division, since the man who does not know himself to be wounded does not need a Redeemer: “Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 7:24).”

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<sup>10</sup> CCC 407.

*Christ, Redeemer of Man*

23. Christ, by assuming our human nature and bringing it to obedience to the Father, redeemed us and healed our wound in himself, allowing us to live a new life in line with our dignity as children of God. With his life on earth he gave us a perfect example of what this new life he has given us really means.

170 24. Each person is invited to welcome the redemption wrought by Christ into his own life, heart and conscience through the sacraments, life of prayer and asceticism, which acclimate us to our new life in Christ according to God's commandments. These are the weapons of our spiritual combat, our way of loving in this life. They free us from egoism in all its forms so that the love of God may triumph in us through our self-giving to our brothers and sisters:

“For a monumental struggle against the powers of darkness pervades the whole history of man. The battle was joined from the very origins of the world and will continue until the last day, as the Lord has attested. Caught in this conflict, man is obliged to wrestle constantly if he is to cling to what is good, nor can he achieve his own integrity without great efforts and the help of God's grace.”<sup>11</sup>

25. When contemplating the lives of the saints, we realize that, given the limitations of our nature, the goal of spiritual combat is not to attain perfection in every aspect. The saints were imperfect to the end, and while they lived the virtues heroically, they were not equally outstanding in all of them. Nevertheless, there is one virtue in which God urgently asks us to attain perfection, and from which no one can claim exemption because of character defects or personal limitations: love. “He chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and without blemish before him... in love (Ephesians 1:4).” Love is the core of likeness to God, because “God is love” (1 John 4:8).<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> GS 37.

<sup>12</sup> See VC 93.

26. Christ is present throughout our whole lives, accompanying us with his infinite mercy in our battle to love. He takes upon himself the burden of our sins, freeing us from their weight and giving us new grace to continue the fight to allow his Kingdom to come within us. He brings about our growth to the degree that we remain in the truth; that is, to the degree that we recognize that we are sinners and welcome him as our Redeemer, never tiring of seeking his mercy. 69

## ***2. Attention to cultural influences***

27. Formation that begins from a realistic anthropology must take into account both the positive and negative aspects of the culture in which we have been raised, since this culture conditions our understanding of the world and our assimilation of Christ's message.

28. The values of one's particular national culture will be dealt with in another section.<sup>13</sup> This section will speak about the overarching culture, that is, "those values which are most highly prized today":

"Insofar as they stem from endowments conferred by God on man, these values are exceedingly good. Yet they are often wrenched from their rightful function by the taint in man's heart, and hence stand in need of purification."<sup>14</sup>

29. Formators must constantly strive to grasp anew the situation of the young men entering the houses of formation in order to better respond to their needs. In the words of the Second Vatican Council, it is a matter of "scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel...in a language intelligible to each generation."<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> See Chapter Three, E.

<sup>14</sup> GS 11.

<sup>15</sup> GS 4.

It is clear that, in general, today's world is changing at a faster pace than can be perceived by those who are not in direct contact with young people in their pastoral work:

“The new generation of those called to the ministerial priesthood display different characteristics in comparison to those of their immediate predecessors. In addition, they live in a world which in many respects is new and undergoing rapid and continual evolution. All of this cannot be ignored when it comes to programming and carrying out the various phases of formation for those approaching the ministerial priesthood.”<sup>16</sup>

30. Each Legionary should seek to discover with openness and sincerity, aided by his superiors and brothers, the strengths and weaknesses that his vision of life and personal history have given him. He should try to understand how this reality might either condition or aid his assimilation of the values proper to religious and priestly life that are proposed to his mind, heart and free will.

“It is important for consecrated persons gradually to develop a critical judgment, based on the Gospel, regarding the positive and negative values of their own culture and of the culture in which they will eventually work.”<sup>17</sup>

31. Any attempt to identify the characteristic aspects of the present culture will always result in a somewhat incomplete and arbitrary vision. Nevertheless, recognizing the provisional character of such a task, it is convenient to lay out some of the essential elements that may be helpful for the purposes of this *Ratio*.<sup>18</sup>

### *Spiritual dimension*

32. Anyone entering the novitiate has already had some experience in the spiritual life and is willing to further that experience. He is explicitly affirming that he is seeking God, that he wants to do God's will in his life.

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<sup>16</sup> PDV 3; See GCC 123-124.

<sup>17</sup> VC 67.

<sup>18</sup> These elements are distributed in the four dimensions indicated by the apostolic exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis*.

“Young people today who are attracted by the religious life are not looking for an easy life, indeed, their thirst for the absolute is consuming. But their life of faith is oftentimes based on merely elementary knowledge of doctrine, in sharp contrast to the development of their knowledge of profane subjects.”<sup>19</sup> Given how heavily an insufficient or erroneous spiritual formation can weigh down spiritual growth, it is important that, from the beginning, those entering the Legion are offered a doctrinal foundation that allows them to build a solid knowledge of the Faith and gives them solid points of reference in their journey toward God.

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33. “A one-sided and exasperated stress on freedom contributed to the spread of a culture of individualism throughout the West, thus weakening the ideal of life in common and commitment to community projects.”<sup>20</sup> In modern secular culture, this individualism is expressed through horizontalism: excessive trust in one’s abilities and a widespread tendency toward relativism and subjectivism.

A positive cultural reality is the awakening of an aspiration for authenticity that makes incoherency appear particularly repulsive. This point can be of use in helping others to understand that if they want to remain in the truth in the face of personal weakness, if they truly desire to learn to listen and respond to God, they must begin with the formation of their conscience, “the most secret core and sanctuary of a man. There he is alone with God, Whose voice echoes in his depths.”<sup>21</sup> This is one of the premises for building a solid friendship with Christ and a holy life.

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34. A worldview that judges a person’s worth by what he does and not who he is causes what Pope Francis calls the “throwaway culture.”<sup>22</sup> It drives people to live bogged down in activity without

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<sup>19</sup> *Renovationis Causam*, Instruction on the Renewal of Religious Formation, Congregation for Religious and for Secular Institutes, 1969.4.

<sup>20</sup> FLC 4.

<sup>21</sup> GS 16.

<sup>22</sup> EG 53.

rooting themselves in their identity, to value external achievements more than constant conversion of heart and union with God.

### *Human dimension*

35. Global interconnectedness and the wide array of travel opportunities allow the candidates to bring to religious life numerous and wide-ranging human experiences that enrich their personality and open them to other cultures. Conscious of personal dignity and freedom, young people consider themselves tolerant. This attitude is on the one hand the fruit of positive, well-educated respect for others, but could also come from an underestimation of the value of truth.

707-711 36. Many young people have received their faith, good habits and the support needed to mature in love from their families. Others, however, have been unable to find in their homes of origin the emotional foundation necessary to channel and order their affective world. These deficiencies and wounds, unhealed and possibly undiagnosed, become a burden of suffering that may call for psychological therapy. At the same time, they are an opportunity to open oneself more fully to God's fatherhood and to experience the true love of the Holy Family, in his relationship with Joseph and Mary.

210 37. The atmosphere of hedonism and moral permissiveness reigning in modern culture may lead some to look for experiences of immediate gratification, leading to addictions and a degradation of sexuality, with after-effects of sadness, deception and immaturity. It is necessary to give these negative experiences adequate attention during initial formation, but it is also important to allow God to make use of them to fix in the soul the decision to forge an authentic love of self-giving, for only this love can imbue his life with fulfillment and happiness.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> See PDV 7.

38. The dissemination of gender ideologies in the culture at large can disorient the adolescent by changing his point of reference for growth in sexual identity and passing off seriously dehumanizing behaviors as normal. In light of this reality, during initial formation it is important to offer an authentic education in personhood and love based on a Christian anthropology that integrates the bodily and affective dimensions of the person. 734

39. In a world more deeply conscious of equality, young people live in relation with adults and authority figures more naturally than in the past. They also feel a greater necessity for space to dialogue and assimilate the values these figures propose to them. A latent danger in this is naturalism—it becomes difficult to look beyond a superior’s personal limitations and see in him a legitimate representative of God and an instrument of grace. There can be a temptation to reject a legitimate command unless it is fully understood, or to obey only if the superior is convincing enough.<sup>24</sup>

40. The Church is conscious that “in the prevailing culture, priority is given to the outward, the immediate, the visible, the quick, the superficial and the provisional.”<sup>25</sup>

The culture of the provisional makes it more difficult now than at any other time to conceive of life decisions made once and for all. We are tempted to always keep the door open to other options—leading to a weak sense of identity and a fragile psychological framework. This indecision and struggle when assuming responsibility or definitive commitments can, as a side effect, lengthen the period of adolescence and many of the problems proper to that period for many years. 736,846

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<sup>24</sup> FLC 4: “The Church and religious life were not immune from such questioning of authority, with significant repercussions for community life as well.”

<sup>25</sup> EG 62.

Under the influence of the culture of the immediate, we want instantaneous recompense for our efforts and experience difficulty in patiently and perseveringly sowing seeds of virtue that will yield ripe fruits in due season. The challenge in this field is the formation of the will through an ordered life and through the constant effort and perseverance that formation demands.

The culture of the image accustoms us to remaining on a superficial level of things and passing quickly from one to another, thereby hindering our capacity for thoughtful reflection or for forming deep  
 350 convictions. In addition, new communication technology can affect our capacity to relate with others by accentuating problems of personal insecurity and increasing the division between who we are and who we show ourselves to be.

### *Intellectual dimension*

41. The importance society gives to professional training can be an incentive for striving to acquire a solid intellectual formation directed toward being apostles and formators of apostles.

716-717 It is true, nonetheless, that some educational systems do not provide a general introduction to culture and facilitate excessive specialization to the detriment of a vision of the whole that causes students to uproot themselves from the humanistic cultural tradition that gives a human face to many technical conquests.

42. Young people, at times known as “digital natives,” are accustomed to parallel processing (splitting their attention between several activities simultaneously), information at their fingertips, connectedness, constant activity, intuition and immediate recompense.

All this presents invaluable assets, but also some problems, such as certain difficulties with abstract thought, profound reflection and the ability to distinguish the essential from the non-essential, all of which could be spoken of as “ignorance through an excess of information.”

Thus the humanistic formation and the philosophical-theological studies that the Church asks of her candidates to the priesthood, through the mental rigor and the deepening in human and divine wisdom they promote, take on in our time what could be called a “therapeutic value” for the mind.

“We live in an information-driven society that bombards us indiscriminately with data—all treated as equally important—and which leads to remarkable superficiality in the area of moral discernment. In response, we need to provide an education that teaches critical thinking and encourages the development of mature moral values.”<sup>26</sup>

### *Apostolic dimension*

43. A young man usually experiences the call to give his life to Christ in the Legion through apostolic experiences in Regnum Christi, the parish or other works or movements in the Church. These are moments that leave a profound mark on him, and that help him to discover the beauty of friendship with Christ and joyful self-giving to others. 720

44. In a society so markedly individualistic as our own, a strong sensitivity to human values has also developed, and it is a sign of our times that many young people become involved in activities of social aid, whether on their own initiative or as a requisite of their educational institute or workplace. For this reason, there is a noticeable interest among the candidates in social justice and the well-being of mankind.

45. Activism and horizontalism, both present in the wider culture, can manifest themselves in the tendencies to make projects ends in themselves, to put excessive trust in personal abilities and to lose sight of the Kingdom of Christ as a supernatural reality.

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<sup>26</sup> EG 64.

*The formative response*

334 46. No one can consider himself exempt from the influence of the cultural realities that have been summarized here, for good or for bad. It is important that the formator know how to harness wisely all the potential of those in his care: all the good the Holy Spirit has placed within them, and all the values and richness that that same Spirit has spread into the culture they have grown up in. In other words, in the heart of every person there are authentic desires for goodness and generosity, beyond any sins they may have committed, and only when they begin with these desires can they lay a solid foundation for their formation. Likewise, there are positive values in the culture, and we must make these values our starting points in order to show how Christ brings them to fulfillment. In this way we are able to confront whatever might be erroneous and astray in our worldview.

47. In contrast to the depersonalization of an individualized world, the Legion promotes a culture of encounter: with God, with the formators, with the community and with all people. When these interpersonal relationships are lived with openness and trust, they bring about human and spiritual maturity, help burst the bubble of egoism and create an openness to the experience of mercy, which takes us to the core of our identity and apostolate as Legionaries of Christ (see CLC 9).

392-396 **3. In step with the Church**

48. Religious life is “a divine gift which the Church received from its Lord.”<sup>27</sup> Therefore it belongs to the Church and is oriented totally to her: “Since the Church is the Mystical Body of Christ and the presence of his Kingdom in the world, the Legion of Christ has meaning only within the Church, for the sake of the Church and by reason of the human and supernatural mission of the Church” (CLC 14). She is the “household of God” (1 Timothy 3:15) in which we live.

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<sup>27</sup> LG 43.

49. In his pilgrimage through time, a Legionary has a guiding star, a fixed point of reference: he walks “in step with the Church” under the guidance of Peter. A Legionary does not harbor nostalgia for the Church of yesterday, nor try to live according to what he claims the Church of tomorrow will be. He has the patience to walk peaceably within the Church’s concrete reality, with her great accomplishments as well as her human limitations. He loves her, serves her and trusts in her as the Mother she is: always fruitful through the Spirit’s action, always nurturing us with the sacraments and the Word of God, being herself the universal sacrament of salvation. 263, 303

50. In the heart of the Church, a Legionary does not sit by passively or fight to defend the status quo, but is the driving force behind creative apostolate on the front lines of the New Evangelization. He is extremely versatile: he can live his mission anywhere—forming men and women and launching them as active members of the Church according to the needs of time and place. In this development of the apostolic charism proper to the Institute, a Legionary lives with a profound awareness of his mission within the Church. 79,112 63

#### ***4. In fidelity to a common charism***

51. After looking over man’s condition as a fallen and redeemed creature, reviewing his historical condition, and setting the framework for our self-giving within our enthusiastic and faithful belonging to the Church, the fourth premise to our response to God’s love deals with the gift or charism we have received from him, which we are called to incarnate.<sup>28</sup> 14, 60 365

52. The use of the term “charism” referring to an ecclesial institute is a relatively recent theological development in Church documents on consecrated life. Given that it is a frequently used term

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<sup>28</sup> See GCC 2014, 10; “When the Church approves a form of consecrated life or an Institute, she confirms that in its spiritual and apostolic charism are found all the objective requisites for achieving personal and communal perfection according to the Gospel.” (VC 93).

that lends itself to ambiguity, the first task at hand is to delineate and define its scope in this text.

53. There are four principle elements of an institutional charism:

- a. In the first place, there is an *evangelical element*, an aspect of the life or message of Christ at the center of the founding inspiration for the institute. This is the nucleus of the call to follow Christ in a particular institute and the foremost vocational gift. For this reason it has a particular resonance with its members.
- b. Next, comes an *apostolic mission*. This mission, springing from the evangelical element, consists of the particular type of activity the institute favors in contributing to the evangelizing mission of the Church.
- c. These distinctive experiences of Christ and the mission give place to a *style of life*: a spirituality united to certain salient virtues, which together constitute the way of responding to the call that God uses to configure each member of the institute with Christ.
- d. Last but not least, the charism creates a *sense of belonging* that unites the members of the institute and helps harmonize their personal gifts within the communion of a single charismatic family.

54. Every charism is original, but not because of a singular characteristic or element, since it can add nothing substantially new to what has already been revealed. So, strictly speaking, we cannot ask what is “proper” in an exclusive sense to any institutional charism.

65, 117 The novelty that a charism brings to the Church and to the world lies, like a mosaic, in the synthesis of all its elements. This synthesis creates a spirit of family among the members of the institution, which can be described but not exhaustively defined.

55. “A Legionary is always a member of *Regnum Christi* and wherever he is, *Regnum Christi* is present” (GCC 2014, 32 [The Legion of Christ in RC, 11]). A Legionary shares the same charism with the other members of *Regnum Christi*, living it as a religious and priest, according to his distinctive individuality.<sup>29</sup>

56. The Constitutions provide an understanding of the four aspects of the common charism and how the Legionary incarnates it: 67, 87

a. The *evangelical element* that the charism brings out is the personal experience of the love of Christ who calls us to know him intimately and to share in his mission of building up his Kingdom in the hearts of people and in society (see CLC 2, 3 and 4). The Legionary lives this element within the Movement, as a member of a “clerical religious institute of pontifical right” (CLC 1).

b. The common *apostolic mission* is to form “apostles, Christian leaders at the service of the Church” to collaborate with the Lord “in building up his Kingdom” (CLC 4), which is to “proclaim to all people God’s merciful love and bring them to a redemptive encounter with Christ” (CLC 3, 3°). The specific role a Legionary plays in this mission consists of the “pastoral ministry” stemming from our condition as religious priests (CLC4, 3°).

c. The *Christian style of life*, or spiritual path rooted in the experience of Christ and the mission of evangelization, common to all members of the Movement but lived according to our particular state, is detailed for the Legionary in Chapters 2 and 3 of the Constitutions, which deal respectively with the spirit of the Congregation and the evangelical counsels.

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<sup>29</sup> Some of the references to *Regnum Christi* in the Constitutions (CLC 1, 2°; 16; 112; 130) have not yet been approved by the Holy See given that the definitive canonical configuration of *Regnum Christi* is still to be defined.

292 d. And finally, the *sense of belonging*, or understanding oneself as a member of “a united and organized body” (CLC 3), “a living and active part of this large family” (CLC 16), moves us to foster “*esprit de corps* and oneness of heart” and to promote “communion and cooperation among the various branches of the *Regnum Christi* Movement” (CLC 17).

57. Our charism is a gift of God to the Church, entrusted to the members of the Congregation in order to assimilate, live and transmit it in turn. The Legion recognizes that its founder has been the instrument for the transmission of a charism of divine origin, but cannot hold him up as a master of the spiritual life nor as an example for imitation (GCC 2014, 10-11, 270-275). For each Legionary, this becomes a motivation for humility and faith in God’s divine designs. It moves him to seek out a more intense experience of God’s fatherhood, to rely on the Holy Spirit as the true source of every charismatic gift, and to center himself on Christ as his model and master: “Since the ultimate norm of the religious life is the following of Christ set forth in the Gospels, let this be held by all institutes as the highest rule.”<sup>30</sup>

68, 107

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<sup>30</sup> PC 2; See CLC 235.

## CHAPTER TWO

### IDENTITY OF A LEGIONARY OF CHRIST

*“Who are you? (...)*

*What do you have to say for yourself?” (John 1:22)*

#### A. Vocation and Identity

58. God’s loving gaze is at the origin of every vocation: “With age-old love I have loved you” (Jeremiah 31:3). A Legionary is someone who has discovered with astonishment that from all eternity God “knows him” with the full weight of intimacy that this word bears in Sacred Scripture. So, our whole life is dedicated to “knowing” the God who called us. This task, the noblest that a man can undertake, in a way entails already living heaven on earth: “Now this is eternal life, that they should know you, the only true God, and the one whom you sent, Jesus Christ.” (John 17:3).

59. “Hail, favored one” (Luke 1:28). We have all received the vocation to life. Discovering why fills our existence with light and joy because it allows us to accept God’s wonderful plan for us. This vocation—manifested in time to each person, but eternal in the mind of God—is the revelation of our personal identity.

60. The Legionary charism is then, for whoever is called to embody it, a source of personal identity and arevelation of who God has envisioned him to be from all eternity. A Legionary will truly be himself in the measure that he becomes fully Legionary, and he will be fully Legionary in the measure that he becomes truly himself. 14, 295  
332-338

61. Saint John's Gospel portrays John the Baptist as a man with a clear awareness of his identity and mission: "Who are you?" (John 1:19), they ask him. He reveals through his successive answers that there are many things he is not and only one that he is. The strength and drive for the mission come from clarity about who we are and understanding that there are things, good in themselves, which do not correspond to what God calls us to be or to embody.<sup>31</sup>

Thus, whoever receives a call from God to the Legion can truthfully say, "The Legionary identity is my authentic self; it is what I should and want to be." A successful formation process entails accepting this identity and making it one's own, not merely as formation of external or conformist behaviors, but as growth from within toward personal plenitude.

211 62. Having a clear identity and building our lives upon it—who we are and who God calls us to be—is a source of peace, joy, freedom and decision:

- a. *of peace*, because it unifies us and gives us a positive and true vision of ourselves;
- b. *of joy*, because it shows that God has the confidence to call us and allow us to spend our lives in the greatest mission that can exist: spreading Christ's Kingdom;
- c. *of freedom*, because it frees us from attachments to work, places and relationships, which are not needed as a source of personal identity;

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<sup>31</sup> "...[I]t is necessary to preserve the identity of each institute so securely, that the danger of an ill-defined situation be avoided, lest religious, failing to give due consideration to the particular mode of action proper to their character, become part of the life of the Church in a vague and ambiguous way." (MR 11) "The genericism which reduces religious life to a colorless lowest common denominator leads to wiping out the beauty and fruitfulness of the many and various charisms inspired by the Holy Spirit." (FLC 46).

d. *of decision*, because it both allows us to make free and conscious decisions that express and develop our personal identity and helps us persevere through hardships.

63. A Legionary with a clear identity can be recognized by his profound openness to the Church in all the multiplicity of gifts and charisms that the Holy Spirit gives to his Spouse. The Church, following the image of the psalmist, is the bride led to the king in embroidered apparel, “*in vestibus variegatis*” (Psalm 45:14), that is, with a variety of precious threads woven in a single dress.<sup>32</sup> A Legionary, as a member of the Mystical Body of Christ, gives of himself with simplicity precisely because he is sure of his identity. He appreciates the gifts of others that enrich him and help him grow.

## B. Identity and Charism

52-56

64. “They said to him, ‘Who are you?’” Jesus did not want to answer this question of the Jews with a definition, title or concise description. “Jesus said to them, ‘What I told you from the beginning’” (John 8:25). The entire Gospel, “all that Jesus did and taught” (Acts 1:1), just as the apostles have transmitted it to us, is a revelation of his identity.

“A profound ardor of love to be conformed to Christ in order to give witness to some aspect of His mystery”<sup>33</sup> stands out in every charism that God gives to his Church. Since a Legionary is called to reflect Christ himself, under a particular facet, if he is asked, “Who are you?” he cannot answer with a set formula or sound bite. An authentic charism surpasses any limited definition.

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<sup>32</sup> See *Commentary on Psalm 44: 11*, Cassiodorus: “*Ista est ergo varietas unitatis*,” (PL 70, p 324); and Saint Bernard, speaking about various religious orders, said, “*Laudo enim omnes et diligo, ubivunque pie et iuste vivitur in Ecclesia. Unum ipere teneo, ceteros charitate*” (PL 182, p 903, *Apology to Guillelmus from Saint Theodericus*, Abbot).

<sup>33</sup> MR 51.

54, 106 65. Being a Legionary is a dynamic synthesis of many elements: it means being a man of God, a passionate apostle of Christ, a formator of apostles, a proclaimer and witness of God's merciful love, a well-rounded man, a creative evangelizer, a lively and magnanimous innovator. It means living each day, every act, as a joyful response to God's love experienced personally in an intimate encounter with Christ. It is a way of apostolate—*per Regnum Christi*—with a single aim—*ad Gloriam Dei*. To be a Legionary of Christ is to receive God's call to a religious and priestly life that embraces all this and more. Therefore, a charism is a living reality that is more easily described than defined.

66. The Constitutions are a wellspring or starting point for describing the charism. Following the course of these waters, this document—and not only the present chapter—aims to unpack this Legionary identity from a pedagogical viewpoint.

### C. Essential Traits of Legionary Identity

56 67. Christ gathers his Legionaries around him, reveals to them the love of his heart, forms them and sends them out to collaborate with him in building up his Kingdom (see CLC 4). The Legionary identity has three essential traits:

- a. A passionate *love* for the person of Jesus Christ, the Son of God made man.
- 375 b. A *mission* that possesses him and urges him on, that is, that directs and drives all the acts of his life, and is the same mission that Jesus Christ received from his Father: proclaim the Kingdom of God and form apostles who invite others to enter it.
- c. A religious and priestly *spirituality*, by which he puts himself with a sense of communion at the service of the Church and, in a special way, of the other members of *Regnum Christi*.

**1. First trait: A Legionary loves Christ passionately**

11-15

68. For a Legionary, Christ is everything: “I am the way, the truth and the life” (John 14:6). A Legionary’s way is Christ. We do not follow a pre-determined path. Rather, our path is a living person, the Lord Jesus, and our journey along it is our daily relationship of love with him. A Legionary’s truth is Christ. We do not settle for an intellectual understanding of him, but rather aspire to an experiential knowledge so as to identify totally with him, the perfect man who brings us to our human fullness. A Legionary’s life is Christ: “*Christus vita vestra*” (Colossians 3:4). Our desire is to decrease so that Christ may increase in us (see John 3:30) in such a way that others see in us the Heart of Jesus.

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69. “Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man” (Luke 5:8). An authentic vocation begins with an encounter with Christ the Redeemer, who searches us out in our weakness and saves us. This experience of mercy creates between Christ and his Legionary a bond so strong that “neither death, nor life [...] will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:38-39).

“Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men” (Luke 5:10). Mercy makes us new and entrusts to us “the ministry of reconciliation” (2 Corinthians 5:18), that is, it moves us to “proclaim to all people God’s merciful love and bring them to a redemptive encounter with Christ” (CLC 3).

70. Christ is a Legionary’s center, standard and example (See CLC 8). This has strong implications for our life since it places before us the only one who is absolute. In dialogue with him we learn to give only relative value to structures and methods, which must become the object of proper personal and community discernment.

71. The Kingdom of God can be described as the life of Christ’s Heart that overflows into the heart of his disciples, leading them to obedience to Jesus and to the Father by the working of the

Holy Spirit. The two main currents of our Christ-centered spirituality come together in this experience of the Kingdom: devotion to the Sacred Heart, which puts a Legionary into life-giving, intimate and personal contact with Christ the Redeemer, full of mercy; and devotion to Christ the King, which impels him to proclaim with passion his Kingdom of love, that is, the obedience that makes men free. The first nourishes his interior life; the second inspires and expresses his mission.

72. Through Christ we gain access to the mystery of God's inner life, to the Trinity: "For the one whom God sent speaks the words of God. He does not ration his gift of the Spirit" (John 3:34). Speaking God's words, Jesus reveals to us both the Father and our divine sonship, which trains us in the spiritual fatherhood proper to the priest and teaches us to treat each other as brothers, for we all have the same Father in heaven. Communicating the Spirit to us in an overflowing fashion, Christ gives us an advocate and friend, an outstanding craftsman of holiness who guides us and sculpts in us the traits of the Beloved Son.

73. The Incarnate Son of God came to the world to wed himself to mankind that he might become one flesh with us (see Ephesians 5:31)—that is, that each person might become a member of his Body. The Church is not merely Christ's work; it is one with <sup>112,140</sup>him, and so Legionaries love her as Christ himself. They take her to be their mother whom they love, respect and obey in the persons of the Pope and the shepherds who represent Christ the Head. They take her to be their spouse, giving their life for her, enveloping her with care, defending her and nourishing her with the Word and the sacraments. As Christ "loved the church and handed himself over for her" (Ephesians 5:25), so Legionaries love the members of the Church. In the Church they become fathers of many spiritual children, who they nurture in the faith, bring to vocational plenitude, and lead to eternal life in heaven.

74. Mary is the Mother of the Redeemer, the perfect image of the Church. Christ gave her to us as our Lady of Sorrows at the foot of the cross (see John 19:27), where “in [a] singular way she cooperated [...] in the work of the Savior in giving back supernatural life to souls. Wherefore she is our mother in the order of grace.”<sup>34</sup> 397-400 Experiencing his weakness, inconstancy and credulity in the ways of the spirit, a Legionary knows that letting himself be formed in the school of the Blessed Virgin is the gentle, sure, and certain path to quickly acquire the sentiments of the Heart of Christ (see CLC 15 §1).

75. A Legionary is a passionate apostle of Jesus Christ because he knows the infinite value of each soul, redeemed “not with perishable things like silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ as of a spotless unblemished lamb” (1 Peter 1:18-19).

In his apostolic life he embraces the Legion, “growing in love for it” (CLC16), as a personal gift, his path to heaven lovingly set out by Christ in the Church. “To love one’s vocation is to love the Church, it is to love one’s institute, and to experience the community as one’s own family.”<sup>35</sup>

76. The “five loves” of a Legionary—love for God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit; love for the Blessed Virgin Mary; love for the Church and the Pope; love for all our brothers and sisters; and love for our vocation in the Legion and *Regnum Christi*—are summarized in love for Christ and for what He loves.

## ***2. Second trait: A Legionary participates in Christ’s mission according to the Congregation’s charism***

77. The lives of men and institutions do not develop according to set programs, but according to an intuition of what is good that gives them direction and meaning. A dream, not a program, is at

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<sup>34</sup> LG 61.

<sup>35</sup> FLC 37.

the origin of our mission as Legionaries of Christ. This dream, a plan of God that we are interiorly drawn to, is to save all people and quench their thirst for eternal life: "But the plan of the Lord stands forever, the designs of his heart through all generations [...] to deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive through famine" (Psalm 33:11,19).

The plan God calls us to fulfill is to build up Christ's Kingdom throughout the world: "Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). Legionaries are called to help all people and societies embrace Christ's love by forming "apostles, Christian leaders at the service of the Church" (CLC 4) in all walks of life, socio-economic classes and professions.

78. In his work, a Legionary adopts two outlooks simultaneously. The first is a deep and concrete realism, an awareness of the possibilities and opportunities that God is actually opening to him in the apostolate. The second is the original intuition, which drives him and for which he decided to give his life. Without the first outlook, he runs the risk of empty idealism, and without the second all his goals become merely human objectives—far too logical, small, unworthy of God.

A Legionary should never lose sight of the original intuition, without which his vocation languishes. Any project or step in life, be it great or small, needs to go back to God's dream for *Regnum Christi*, which he has planted in our hearts. Scripture reminds us: "Heed your own heart's counsel" (Sirach 37:13).

395 79. Like all religious institutes of pontifical rite, the Legion has a specific mission to fulfill within the Church, a mission that transcends territorial boundaries. For this reason the Legion cultivates a great love for the Pope, maintaining "a particular bond of communion with the Successor of Peter in his ministry of unity and missionary universality."<sup>36</sup> The Legion carries out this mission in accord

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<sup>36</sup> VC 47.

with the situation of each local Church (see CLC 5) and therefore strives to adapt his work to each concrete reality in communion with the bishop and his brother priests of the diocesan presbyterate.<sup>37</sup>

80. A Legionary fulfills his vocation in communion with and in a spirit of service to his lay and consecrated brothers and sisters in *Regnum Christi*. Together with them, his focus is on bringing Gospel charity to life and on awakening each baptized person to their vocation as an apostle—a missionary disciple.

*Charity as the heart of the mission*

81. Since Christ summarized the Scriptures in the command- 25  
ment of love for God and neighbor (see Matthew 22:36-40), a Le- 154-162  
gionary is deeply convinced that his mission is above all about being  
a witness of God’s love for all people through his words and ac-  
tions. He does this through universal self-giving, down to the small-  
est details; considerate and selfless service; and kindness and sim-  
plicity in his interaction with others. To live charity is to preach  
Christ without speaking.

“In a spirit of service, the *Regnum Christi* Movement reaches out to all men of goodwill and, free from ambition and worldly motives, seeks nothing but to serve and work for Christ and His kingdom by exercising evangelical charity towards all men, especially the poorest and those most deprived of truth and love.<sup>38</sup>

82. Charity does not originate in us; it is the love of the Heart of Jesus. When Christ said he was “meek and humble of heart” (Matthew 11:29), he taught us that only one who humbles himself and can return good for evil would be able to radiate his love for mankind.

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<sup>37</sup> “Each priest, whether diocesan or religious, is united to the other members of this presbyterate on the basis of the sacrament of holy orders and by particular bonds of apostolic charity, ministry and fraternity.” (PDV 17); “The particular Church is the historic space in which a vocation is exercised in the concrete and realizes its apostolic commitment.” (MR 23).

<sup>38</sup> RCS 2007, 6.

83. Thus, we must let Christ love others through us. When a Legionary looks at others, he does not linger on their limitations or the darkness of their sin, but rather sees the Father secretly at work within them. “My Father is at work until now.” This certainty nourishes his dynamism on the apostolate, which is a participation in God’s work: “so I am at work” (John 5:17).

84. Faith gives us the eyes of Christ, enabling us to see the world as the realm where the Father is at work. Such an outlook, illuminated by faith, radiates and transmits hope. Like Christ, a Legionary believes in man and announces the work of the Father with joy when he discovers it in a soul. From this outlook arises a positive attitude before any human situation, no matter how difficult. So it is that speaking well of others, which proceeds from seeing them in the right light, contributes to building an environment in which every person feels encouraged to bring out the best of themselves. We call this attitude *benedicencia*. It counters the flawed vision that sees the works of the evil one—his partial victories—and engenders an outlook that is disillusioned, cynical and paralyzing.

85. A distinctive sign of this genuine Christian spirit in families and environments has always been a deliberate rejection of speaking ill of others, as something incompatible with Christian life: “Do not speak evil of one another, brothers [...] Who then are you to judge your neighbor?” Legionaries want to renew this spirit in the Legion, *Regnum Christi* and the whole Church, leaving the judgment of men to God alone—“There is one lawgiver and judge” (James 4:11-12). They are convinced that this Christian witness will start a revolution of love and make the truth of the Gospel credible to the eyes of many.

570-572 86. This same charity moves Legionaries to be men of evangelical *parrhesia* (Acts 4:31), having the courage and audacity to speak to others with sincerity, face-to-face and not behind their backs. With a deeply humble disposition, free from passions and capable of discerning the proper time and manner, Legionaries are not afraid

to speak frankly to their brothers to help them in their battle with evil. Nor do they refrain from candidness with those responsible for guiding works and institutions, who must direct them according to a growing fidelity to the Gospel. (See GCC 2014, 63, 5° & 6°)

*The formation of apostles—Christian leaders*

87. The aspect of the mystery of Christ that Legionaries are called to incarnate is spelled out in the Constitutions: “In their mission of forming apostles, Christian leaders at the service of the Church, Legionaries make present the mystery of Christ gathering the Apostles around him, revealing to them the love of his heart, forming them and sending them out to collaborate with him in building up his Kingdom” (CLC 4). 56, 67, 256

If a Legionary has the same mission as Christ, the way he carries it out cannot be any different either. Contemplating him in the Gospels, we see that in his public life he poured himself out for others, especially for those most in need: he preached to them, healed them and freed them from the evil one. At the same time, he dedicated a significant amount of his time to forming a certain group of people to be co-workers in his mission: above all, the twelve Apostles, and more broadly, his disciples, both men and women. He sustained both aspects of his apostolic work with prolonged moments of filial prayer before the Father and sealed them by his self-giving on the cross. 313

88. In the same way, Legionaries, as religious and priests, give themselves to all people—especially sinners, those most deprived of light and meaning—through “education; evangelization of the family, of culture and of the media; youth work; clergy formation and the promotion of justice, charity and solidarity with the neediest” (CLC 4, 3°). At the same time, in order to be faithful to their calling, Legionaries should dedicate a substantial part of their ministry to forming people who, as Saint Paul teaches, can in turn teach others: “And what you heard from me through many

witnesses entrust to faithful people who will have the ability to teach others as well” (2 Timothy 2:2). As the Constitutions indicate: “Legionaries should bring others to live out their baptismal calling to the full, fostering the spiritual growth, the integral formation and the apostolic outreach of men and women, including Regnum Christi members, who are called to develop and exercise their leadership at the service of Jesus Christ” (CLC 4, 1°).

89. Whatever their work, Legionaries reject undue haste, the desire for immediate results, and the need to be the protagonist, all of which come from the desire to “go it alone.” On the contrary, they embrace the patience, constancy and purity of intention needed to form those who, as Saint Paul says, desire to put their talents and love for God at the service of the Kingdom, and who can in turn form others. In this way, a Legionary’s effort is multiplied. His leadership is fruitful, never sterile. It is meant to give rise to other leaders. It is servant leadership, a pedestal on which others can grow, develop their talents, and place them at the service of the Kingdom—and in turn become pedestals for others. This leadership is incompatible with any form of clericalism, for lay people also share full responsibility for the apostolate; in their own state of life, they should “[seek] the Kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and by ordering them according to the plan of God”.<sup>39</sup>

320-322 90. To place oneself at the service of these men and women, helping them live “their baptismal calling to the full” (CLC 4, 1°), is an arduous yet thrilling task. There is no greater joy than accompanying a soul as it discovers the risen Christ, who longs to be its Redeemer and pours both soothing oil and stinging wine over its wounds (see Luke 10:34), saving it from the darkness of sin with his Cross.

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<sup>39</sup> LG 31; “The role and task” of the priests “do not replace but promote the baptismal priesthood of the entire People of God, leading it to its full ecclesial realization, priests have a positive and helping relationship to the laity. Priests are there to serve the faith, hope and charity of the laity. They recognize and uphold, as brothers and friends, the dignity of the laity as children of God and help them to exercise fully their specific role in the overall context of the Church's mission.” (PDV 17).

91. Christ said, “I am the light of the Word” (John 8:12). United to Christ, each Christian too becomes a source of light: “You are the light of the world” (Matthew 5:14). Like a lamp on a lampstand, a Christian cannot help but illumine everything around him. This light is expressed uniquely in the individuality of each person and by nature makes them exercise leadership:

“Say not, ‘It is impossible for me to induce others (to become Christians)’—for if you are a Christian, it is impossible but that it should be so. For as the natural properties of things cannot be gainsaid, so it is here: the thing is part of the very nature of the Christian. Do not insult God. To say, that the sun cannot shine, would be to insult Him: to say that a Christian cannot do good, is to insult God, and call Him a liar. For it is easier for the sun not to give heat, nor to shine, than for the Christian not to send forth light: it is easier for the light to be darkness, than for this to be so.”<sup>40</sup>

92. There are many types of leadership. There are spiritual leaders; leaders in thought, in action, in joy and hope, and in service; social leaders; leaders in the arts and entertainment; leaders who sense new paths toward building a better world. What matters is bringing to light and cultivating the seed of leadership that God has sown in each person.

93. Every man and woman who feels called to develop and exercise their leadership at the service of Christ—according to their specific gifts—takes up their Christian commitment in communion with others in the Church who have felt the same call. Like the disciples gathered around the Lord and like the first Christian community, they come together to form themselves according to the Heart of Jesus and radiate their light in the midst of temporal realities so that the grace of God, like leaven, can transform all people, families and society from within.

94. “Likewise, together with them we seek to create and direct Catholic institutions that are truly evangelizing.” (GCC 2014, 174;

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<sup>40</sup> *Homily XX on the Acts of the Apostles*, Saint John Chrysostom, (PG 60, 163-164).

see CLC 4, 2°). Indeed, it is the will of Christ that his Kingdom come not only into the hearts of people but also into human society, “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28: 19). This is the meaning of the battle cry, “Long live Christ the King!”, raised by the 20<sup>th</sup> century martyrs, who did not allow their faith to be confined merely to the realm of conscience.

95. Legionaries live this communal dimension of the Kingdom by fostering social solidarity in every way possible. In their apostolate, they seek to create networks of people of different social backgrounds that help each another by sharing their spiritual and material goods. A Legionary is not held back by any social barrier, for his heart is open to all without exception.

96. Besides forming apostles, the Legion works to evangelize those who occupy a place in the public eye due to their position, means, prestige or cultural influence. If these people—who are models for others, shapers of public opinion, and guides of society—turn their hearts to Christ, they have a higher possibility than others have of positively influencing the world in law, the arts, business, education and culture. For the Legion, these people are an “existential periphery” for evangelization. “Evangelizing social or economic leaders is not always easy, but it is part of our vocation to bring them to Christ and encourage them to know and put into practice the Social Doctrine of the Church, and in so doing to transform social structures in accordance with justice and charity” (GCC 2014, 241).

187 Legionaries working in this field must keep in mind that it requires remarkable spiritual maturity to minister to these people without being captivated by their lifestyle, trusting in merely human means, or losing purity of intention (See CLC 25).

When educated, influential, rich or famous people, as a part of their formation and apostolate, are invited to draw near to those in need—“the poor and the sick, those who are usually despised and

overlooked, ‘those who cannot repay you’ (Luke 14:14)”<sup>41</sup>—they experience a transformation of heart. A Legionary who works in these circles of social prominence and affluence will also benefit a great deal in his consecrated life from a commitment to ministry with the less fortunate.

97. Since priests are especially dear to Christ’s heart and committed to continuing his redemptive work in the world, the Legion seeks to establish works devoted to the formation and perseverance of seminarians and diocesan priests, offering them her spirituality as an aid on their path to holiness.<sup>42</sup> 79

### ***3. Third trait: Legionaries serve the Church and Regnum Christi as religious and priests***

98. A Legionary is always a member of *Regnum Christi*, and wherever he is, *Regnum Christi* is present. (GCC 2014, 32). The particular contribution Legionaries bring to the Movement in its service to the Church derives from their two-fold state as religious and priests. 300

99. As religious, Legionaries consecrate themselves totally to Christ. “The evangelical basis of consecrated life is to be sought in the special relationship which Jesus, in his earthly life, established with some of his disciples. He called them not only to welcome the Kingdom of God into their own lives, but also to put their lives at its service, leaving everything behind and closely imitating his own *way of life*.”<sup>43</sup> Those called by Christ to live in community around him become brothers as they undergo “the daily experience of communion of life, prayer and apostolate”<sup>44</sup> “with one heart and mind” (Acts 4:32). 281

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<sup>41</sup> EG 48.

<sup>42</sup> See CLC 1994, 2.

<sup>43</sup> VC 14.

<sup>44</sup> RHP 24.

- 169 100. A Legionary loves souls and gives himself for them, but as one who has died to the world—“for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God” (Colossians 3:3); and has broken away from its false values: “do not love the world or the things of the world” (1 John 2:15). Only salt that retains its taste can offer something new to the senility of sin (see Matthew 5:13). At the same time, a Legionary is a man of his day who understands his contemporaries and is attentive to the new paths the Holy Spirit opens.<sup>45</sup>
- 170 101. The three evangelical counsels are a gift from God, a special path of transformation into Christ and the specific way for us to be salt of the earth. Even before Legionaries speak or impart formation, the other members of *Regnum Christi* benefit greatly from their witness of fidelity to their religious vocation, which gives “a much-needed incentive towards ever greater fidelity to the Gospel” and “powerful support on their journey towards the heavenly home.”<sup>46</sup>
- 837-839 102. As a member of a clerical institute, a Legionary is also a priest. There is therefore an intimate connection between his spiritual life and the fruitful exercise of his ministry.<sup>47</sup>

“Priests exist and act in order to proclaim the Gospel to the world and to build up the Church in the name and person of Christ the head and shepherd.”<sup>48</sup> Priestly identity is expressed in the service

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<sup>45</sup> See GS 11.

<sup>46</sup> VC 3 *passim*. As a practical reminder, every day when Legionaries put on their habit they can remember their vow of poverty with their cassock according to the words Saint Paul: “if we have food and clothing, we shall be content with that” (1 Timothy 6, 8). They are reminded of their vow of chastity with the white collar, the color of a resurrected life: “at the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage but are like the angels in heaven” (Matthew 22:30). They are reminded of their vow of obedience with the sash with which they are girded, which makes them think of the Jesus’ words to Peter indicating how they would be fully identified with each other: “another will gird you” (John 21:18- RSV).

<sup>47</sup> See PDV 24.

<sup>48</sup> PDV 15.

we are called to carry out for the faithful: the priest is a minister of mercy, gives to men “the bread of God that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world” (John 6:33), and preaches the Word. Given that he communicates the things of God, he can find only his fulfillment if he is truly a “man of God” (2 Timothy 3:17)<sup>49</sup>.

The Eucharist in particular “is the principal and central *raison d’être* of the sacrament of the priesthood, which effectively came into being at the moment of the institution of the Eucharist, and together with it [...] The priest fulfills his principal mission and is manifested in all his fullness when he celebrates the Eucharist.”<sup>50</sup> 482

103. There are many ways of growing closer to the mystery of the priesthood of Christ. A Legionary feels particularly called to welcome this gift as an *alter Christus*, conforming his heart more and more to the Heart of Christ so that He be the one who shines through his poor humanity.<sup>51</sup> As a faithful friend, a Legionary is glad to disappear so that Christ be the center of all hearts: “the one who has the bride is the bridegroom; the best man, who stands and listens to him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom’s voice” (John 3:29). 883 11-15

104. Thus, a Legionary’s apostolic and missionary spirit proceeds from his contemplative spirit, from his long hours at prayer in imitation of Christ. From Jesus’ example, he knows that the work of building the Kingdom in the hearts of men is a supernatural endeavor, done above all by interceding for men before the Father.

105. This mission reaches its perfection in laying down one’s life for others. The priest is called in a special way to be crucified with Christ (see Galatians 2:19): “what takes place on the altar of sacrifice, the priestly heart must make his own.”<sup>52</sup> In the Mass, he comes

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<sup>49</sup> TN: Revised Standard Version.

<sup>50</sup> *Dominicae Cenaе*, Letter, John Paul II, 1980, 2.

<sup>51</sup> “Priests are called to prolong the presence of Christ, the one high priest, embodying his way of life and making him visible in the midst of the flock entrusted to their care.” (PDV 15).

<sup>52</sup> PO 14.

to understand that he is not called to succeed in life, but to give his life—like salt that dissolves as it gives flavor or light that disappears as it shows that Christ is the way (see Matthew 5:13).

“Only from union with Jesus can you draw that spiritual fruitfulness which generates hope in your pastoral ministry. Saint Leo the Great recalls that ‘our participation in the Body and Blood of Christ aspires to nothing other than to become what we receive’. If this is true for every Christian it is especially true for us priests. To become the Eucharist! May precisely this be our constant desire and commitment, so that the offering of the Body and Blood of the Lord which we make on the altar may be accompanied by the sacrifice of our existence.”<sup>53</sup>

#### D. Legionary of Christ: A Particular Style

106. The name “Legionary of Christ,” rather than identifying the particular mission of the institute, points to a particular style that distinguishes its members.

- 68 107. The words “of Christ” underscore that a Legionary is a disciple and friend of the Lord, with whom he knows he is united forever—as the psalm says, “I am yours”(Psalm 199:94). Far from formalism or rigidity, there is a freshness and closeness in his daily contact with Him: “I have called you friends” (John 15:15). In this friendship, cultivated and deepened throughout life, seeking in all things the glory of the Father and the salvation of souls, a Legionary  
61 discovers the uniting and driving principle of his existence.

A Legionary has experienced the love and call of Christ Jesus and has responded by centering his life on him “through a real, personal, manly, and passionate love for him” (CLC 3, 1°), making Christ the standard and example of his life. This personal relationship is the heart and source of our Legionary identity.

Therefore, a Legionary bears the name of his Redeemer with pride—“your name we bear” (Jeremiah 14:9)—and finds comfort in pronouncing his Name. It moves him to give of himself and is a

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<sup>53</sup> *Homily on the Solemnity of Corpus Christi*, Benedict XVI June 11, 2009.

consolation in moments of temptation or suffering.

108. On the other hand, in the word “Legionary” there resounds the echo of Saint Paul’s often-used image of a Christian: “Bear your share of hardship [...] like a good soldier of Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 2:3). Religious life, as a distinguished form of Christian life, has identified itself from its beginnings as *militia Christi*.<sup>54</sup> The Legion of Christ considers itself part of this tradition.

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109. Saint Paul himself affirms that “our struggle is not with flesh and blood but with the principalities, with the powers, with the world rulers of this present darkness, with the evil spirits in the heavens” (Ephesians 6:12) that loathe mankind and draw us into evil, sowing hate and tears in the world. Jesus came into the world “that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil” (Hebrews 2:14). Legionaries share this same mission: to invite people to accept the Kingdom of Christ into their lives and destroy the works of the evil one. That is why we put ourselves under the protection of Saint Michael the Archangel.

24-25

If the enemy is spiritual, the weapons with which we fight him are also spiritual. (see Ephesians 6:13-18)

110. The work of the devil is disobedience—he said, “I will not serve” (Jeremiah 2:20)—and so he attempts to incite in us a spirit, not of a son, but of a slave. The word “Legionary” reminds us of the opposite attitude, prompting a particular love for the virtue and vow of obedience in imitation of Christ’s redemptive obedience: “He humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross” (Philippians 2:8). For just as through the disobedience of one man came the breakdown of the human family, so through the obedience of Christ, the New Man, its reconstruction was begun (see Romans 5:19).

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<sup>54</sup> Religious families “offer their members [...] fraternal association in the militia of Christ” (LG 43).

- 201, 294 111. When we call ourselves Legionaries, we also proclaim our  
 637 willingness to be sent wherever we are needed: “Here I am, send  
 me!” (Isaiah 6:8). “Jesus went around to all the towns and villages  
 [...] proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom” (Matthew 9:35). Dur-  
 ing the years of his public life, Jesus never stopped walking. He  
 sowed his seed wherever he went and never stayed to watch it grow.  
 A Legionary too is a man always on the move, with a missionary  
 spirit diametrically opposed to every form of laziness.
- 50, 303 112. The Constitutions (CLC 14, 1<sup>o</sup>) describe a Legionary’s love  
 for the Church as “passionate.” A Legionary acquires through this  
 love a sixth sense for the needs of the Church and looks for ways  
 to address them, even though he may have little time to spare, for  
 “[love] feels no burden, makes light of labor, desiring to do more  
 than it is able.”<sup>55</sup> This love does not allow a Legionary to sit cross-  
 armed before the sufferings of the Bride of Christ. He suffers from  
 the errors committed by those in the Church and rejoices tremen-  
 dously at the moments of grace that the Lord gives to His people.
- 362 A Legionary has a magnanimous and fighting heart. He gives him-  
 self with passion, desires to do more, wants to go farther. There-  
 fore, attentive to the signs of the times, “making the most of the  
 opportunity” (Ephesians 5:16), he works with zeal and creativity.  
 He seeks out new paths, advances to the front lines of the  
 Church—both pastoral and intellectual—aware that every day of  
 fatigue for the Kingdom is a precious gift from God that will never  
 return and that time is given to us in order to gain eternity. We call  
 108 this attitude “militancy.”<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> *The Imitation of Christ*, III, 5, newly edited by Clare L. Fitzpatrick, Catholic Book Publishing Co., New York, 1993, p 108.

<sup>56</sup> “Our paternal word of greeting and congratulation is now directed to a group of recently ordained priests from the Roman university of the Legionaries of Christ [...] For years you have been preparing yourselves through prayer, study, and meditation for this solemn moment of your definitive self-giving to God and the Church, choosing Jesus as the sole end of your youth and your entire lives. But choosing him under

113. The word “Legionary,” far from any hint of superiority, expresses a sincere desire—born out of love for Christ—to live one’s mission with a spirit of sacrifice and redemptive suffering and to never abandon one’s assigned post. In the daily Celebration of the Eucharist, we learn from Christ what it means to love “to the end” (John 13, 1). 147

Our institutional past is itself a message for the men of our time. We show that although there are wounds in one’s life, Christ can still work wonders with those who trust in his love: “Behold, I make all things new” (Revelation 21:5). 57

114. By virtue of the Congregation’s proper vow (CLC 37) Legionaries live detached from all desires to obtain positions or assignments in the Congregation. They embrace their assignments with a spirit of service, leave them with the same spirit when the time comes to serve in another mission, and live with the peace, joy and fraternity of rank-and-file soldiers.

Indeed, the term “Legionary” implies a strong comradeship. For Legionaries, this is expressed in our *esprit de corps* with our brothers, who are called by Christ to the same mission and with whom we work and pray. Through daily witness of unity in diversity, Legionaries love their brothers to the point of sacrificing anything to assist them and never abandoning them, even when they have fallen.

115. “*Hacer Legión*” is then considering oneself “a living and active part of this large family, contributing his particular gifts to the

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this trait of militancy. You are Legionaries, that is, not passive people that sit back to see what might happen, but rather people that desire to imprint upon things a force and give Christianity an expression that is proper to it, militancy. Legionaries, that is, combatants for the name of Jesus. May God bless you and may God preserve this character in you that desires to be conquering—this word is proud but goes well when referred to Christ; Legionaries to fight and defend, Legionaries to conquer and call the other brothers to this same faith communion with the Lord.” (Paul VI, Audience, January 2, 1974).

mission entrusted to her.” (CLC 16)

116. As a corollary to the identity of a Legionary, we recall the words from the Song of Songs: “Who is this that looks forth like the dawn, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, terrible as an army with banners?” (Song of Songs 6:10).<sup>57</sup> The bride in the Song of Songs is the Church, whose awesome beauty derives from the different vocations and charisms deployed for battle, terrifying to Satan. The Legion, a “united and organized body” (CLC 3) in the heart of *Regnum Christi*, is beautiful as an army in battle array inasmuch as it is faithful to its particular gift, to “the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good” (1 Corinthians 12:7).<sup>58</sup>

117. “Caritas Christi urget nos”—“The love of Christ impels us” (2 Corinthians 5:14). This expression of Saint Paul synthesizes and recalls the traits which are most characteristic of a Legionary: Christ as the center of our interior life, charity as the cohesive strength between us as brothers, the sense of joyful urgency as our style of apostolate.

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<sup>57</sup> TN: Revised Standard Version.

<sup>58</sup> TN: Revised Standard Version.

## CHAPTER THREE

### DIMENSIONS AND OBJECTIVES OF FORMATION

*For in wisdom is a unique, manifold spirit (Wisdom 7:22)*

118. After sketching the identity of a Legionary of Christ, it is now possible to describe the general themes of the formation program that the Legion proposes to its men. The previous chapter presented Legionary identity; this chapter presents the many virtues that identity entails. Growth in these virtues is the path to the fullness of the Legionary vocation.

This chapter is about knowing how to collaborate with God, who works in our souls and calls us to participate freely in the work of becoming like Him as sons in Christ, according to the Legionary vocation we have received from Him.

This work, of which God is the source, happens within an ever-changing world. For this reason, we can lay it out like this: “How can we form priests who are truly able to respond to the demands of our times and are capable of evangelizing the world of today?”<sup>59</sup>

119. The pedagogical tradition of the Church has viewed man’s growth in likeness to God as the formation of virtue, habits of life that accustom us to walking with God and living as his sons. In this *Ratio* we call these virtues “objectives,” not because they are goals that one reaches definitively, but rather because they indicate a horizon of growth. The Legion teaches its men to contemplate the virtues as incarnated in Christ and strive to live them as he did.

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<sup>59</sup> PDV 10.

13, 350 120. Formation—as we have stated—is transformation. It takes place within oneself, in the mind and in the heart, and from there expresses itself in action: “Virtue is a conviction that has become a steadfast inner principle of operation.”<sup>60</sup> Therefore, forming solid virtue requires patient work in three aspects: convictions, attitudes, and behaviors.

a. *Convictions* are the human and supernatural certainties that guide our actions. They also constitute the motives for which a particular way of acting is deemed a personal good, something worth choosing: “Guard your heart, for in it are the sources of life” (Proverbs 4:23).

b. *Attitudes* are habitual dispositions of the heart, awakened and sustained by grace, which incline man to act in line with his convictions.

c. *Behaviors* are the concrete manifestations of one’s convictions and attitudes, and, when put into action, also reinforce them: “The virtuous life thus builds, strengthens, and shapes freedom.”<sup>61</sup>

Some of the objectives (or virtues<sup>62</sup>) also require the acquisition of certain skills and competencies, including preaching, spiritual direction, leading groups and developing emotional intelligence.

353 121. For each objective, this chapter will include certain truths and values which, once interiorized, form convictions; offer motivations to help sustain attitudes; and note certain characteristic behaviors.

122. Every Legionary can count on the help and advice of his formators in turning these objectives into a profoundly personal program, with goals based on his own background, character, and capabilities; a program into which he puts conscious and persevering effort.

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<sup>60</sup> AL 267.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> TN: included for clarity.

123. These virtues, which are presented as the formative objectives of a Legionary, are also the natural testing ground for his vocational discernment. When God calls a man to be a Legionary, he gives him an interior resonance—in his aspirations, expectations, and qualities—with this identity. This attests to his suitability. Therefore, the one whom God calls will perceive the value of these virtues and be able to acquire them. 679-680

124. The second part of this *Ratio* will apply the objectives set out in this chapter more specifically to the various stages of formation.

125. For pedagogical reasons, the formation objectives have been grouped into six dimensions. They begin with the supernatural life of the baptized person, who is called to be totally conformed to Christ (the spiritual dimension<sup>63</sup> and the dimension of the evangelical counsels). These rest on a foundation of human virtues elevated by grace, of constant openness to the truth and to one's fellow men (the human dimension, intellectual dimension, and dimension of communion). The chapter finishes with the apostolic dimension, the aim of all formation. While religious and priestly identity is not treated as its own dimension, it permeates all the others.

"Each of the dimensions of formation is aimed at 'transforming' or 'assimilating' the heart in the image of the heart of Christ."<sup>64</sup>

It is important to note that these dimensions are intimately united and that each one requires the others. They do not merely run parallel to each other, but constantly interact in the person of the Legionary: one person, many facets to form. 340

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<sup>63</sup> The spiritual life must occupy the first place in the program of every consecrated life. See VC 93.

<sup>64</sup> GPV 89.

## A. Spiritual Dimension

126. In his spiritual formation, a Legionary seeks to safeguard and foster the gift of his baptism, which grafted him like a branch to the true Vine, Jesus Christ: “Remain in me, as I remain in you” (John 15:4-5). Thus, he strives daily to clothe himself with the new man, “created in God’s way in righteousness and holiness of truth” (Ephesians 4:24), in accordance with his religious and priestly vocation. In this way, he makes Christ present among men in the humility and poverty of his own person, which the Lord does not disdain to use for this purpose.

127. In his interior life, therefore, a Legionary looks to Christ in order to let himself be transformed into his image. Jesus Christ is the “center, standard, and example” (CLC 8) of our life, since from all eternity “he predestined [us] to be conformed to the image of his Son, so that he might be the firstborn among many brothers” (Romans 8:29). In this “predestination” lies the core of our interior life: to become “another Christ.”

The words of the rite of priestly ordination indicate the path of this special transformation for one called to the priesthood: “Receive the oblation of the holy people, to be offered to God. Understand what you do, imitate what you celebrate, and conform your life to the mystery of the Lord’s cross.”<sup>65</sup> Thus, the relationship between the priesthood and the Eucharist marks the spiritual life of a Legionary:

“The Eucharistic form of the Christian life is seen in a very special way in the priesthood. Priestly spirituality is intrinsically Eucharistic.”<sup>66</sup>

105 128. “When the days for his being taken up were fulfilled, he resolutely determined to journey to Jerusalem” (Luke 9:51). Determination—literally “having one’s face set”<sup>67</sup>—is essential on the

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<sup>65</sup> *Roman Pontifical* 135.

<sup>66</sup> SCa 80.

<sup>67</sup> The literal translation of the verse is, “he set his face to go to Jerusalem”.

path of holiness. A soul conquered by love keeps his eyes fixed on the goal and strains to reach it no matter the cost, fighting against his own sensitivity if necessary. The cross is the test of real love—only one who truly loves Christ will accept whatever pain or suffering for the sake of union with Him. 343-349

“It is most important—all-important, indeed—that they should begin with an earnest and most determined determination not to halt until they reach their goal, whatever may come, whatever may happen to them, however hard they may have to labor, whoever may complain of them, whether they reach their goal or die on the road or have no heart to confront the trials which they meet, whether the very world dissolves before them.”<sup>68</sup>

129. This *Ratio* proposes four objectives in the spiritual dimension of formation: life in Christ as its content, humility as its foundation, charity as its fruit, and participation in the liturgy as the celebration of communion with God and with men.

### ***1. Life in Christ: fostering the gifts received at baptism***

130. “In their personal lives, Legionaries should delve into the richness of their baptismal consecration so that Christ may reign in their lives through their progressive transformation into him” (CLC 11 §1). Baptism uproots us from a merely human existence and transplants us into the eternal life of Christ: “In him was life” (John 1:4). For this reason, we cannot think of ourselves except as *in* Christ and *in* his body, the Church: “Yet I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me” (Galatians 2:20). 13  
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131. If Christ lives in us, we cannot conceive of our interior life with him as if he were just an external model. This conception, only partially true, could degenerate into moralism, frustration at never measuring up to the standard, or an understanding of holiness based on personal merit. Jesus Christ is our model, but at the same time, being present in the soul by his Spirit, he is formed within us (see Galatians 4:19). Life in Christ, therefore, consists in:

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<sup>68</sup> *The Way of Perfection*, Saint Teresa of Jesus, 21, 2.

- a. Embracing God’s work that precedes our own, especially allowing him to touch us in his sacraments;<sup>69</sup>
- b. Guarding his presence through recollection and interior silence, which enable us to live attentive to Him, and in Him to the Father and the Holy Spirit;
- 521 c. Immersing ourselves in his teachings “by daily contact with Sacred Scripture;” (CLC 48)
- d. Allowing Christ to live in us his identity as beloved Son of the Father. We do this by praying, carrying out his will, giving ourselves to others, distancing ourselves from sin, and engaging in spiritual combat, so that it is Christ who manifests Himself in our humanity. “I give you my hands to do your work; I give you my feet to follow your path...”<sup>70</sup>
- 469 132. Interior silence is necessary for savoring life in Christ. A great help to this silence is custody of the eyes and ears, mortifying the urge to hunt for novelty in what we see or hear, for we have the greatest novelty within ourselves. For this reason, interior silence seeks to still the noise of the memory, imagination and sentiments whenever they disturb the soul.
- 527 133. The summit of the spiritual life is habitually living in communion with God in the day-to-day—this is the contemplative spirit to which a Legionary aspires (see CLC 12). Two means are particularly helpful: a deep love for prayer and the constant exercise of the theological virtues to the point of living in a habitual disposition of faith, hope, and love.
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*Pray Always* (Luke 18:1)

- 514 134. “The contemplation of divine realities and assiduous union with God in prayer are the first duties of a religious” (CLC 47 §1). As a consecrated soul in the world, a Legionary lives his relationship

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<sup>69</sup> The sacraments of the Eucharist and Penance will be addressed in 6A 1 and 2.

<sup>70</sup> ECYD, annex 3; ECYD prayer, altered.

with God through a life of prayer leavened with faith, humility, adoration, trust and perseverance; the liturgy; and the reading of Sacred Scripture. The soul that prays and is in contact with the Word of God acquires a type of supernatural instinct which separates it from any worldly mentality and renews its mind “so that it may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect” (Romans 12:2).

135. The Constitutions set forth the principal spiritual practices of Legionaries. Lived “with fervor and deep personal conviction” (CLC 47 §1), each of these practices trains us in some aspect of our relationship with God. Spread throughout the day or at various times of the year, they are like leaven in the dough, which helps “make one’s life a perpetual liturgy” (CLC 53 §1). In one who lives these encounters in a contemplative spirit, the union of wills little by little becomes habitual, extending throughout the day and achieving what Jesus taught: “the necessity to pray always” (Luke 18:1). 923

136. Prayer both requires and brings about purification of the heart—detachment from creatures in order to love them in God and never independently of Him, so as not to place one’s happiness in them. “We pray as we live because we live as we pray.”<sup>71</sup> Deeper prayer requires deeper detachment. God gives himself to the soul that loves Him alone and that loves all people and things in Him. 527

137. Since God alone is holy, the fount of all holiness, all conversion passes through a renewal of the life of prayer. It is not surprising then that a Legionary at different moments of his life feels a new call to prayer and almost a need—like the apostles: “Lord, teach us to pray” (Luke 11:1)—to learn to pray again. 526

The Lord prepares the paths by which he leads each person, who in turn responds to the Lord according to the desires of his heart and his personal expression of prayer, which can take many forms:

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<sup>71</sup> CCC 2725.

blessing and adoration, petition, intercession, thanksgiving and praise.<sup>72</sup> This last is “the form of prayer that recognizes most immediately that God is God.”<sup>73</sup>

138. Christian tradition has retained three principle expressions of prayer: vocal, meditative and contemplative.<sup>74</sup>

Vocal prayer responds to the demand of our nature to express our sentiments with speech, to involve our whole being in this act.

515-525 Meditation seeks God through imagination, thought, emotion and desires in order to “deepen our convictions of faith, prompt the conversion of our heart, and strengthen our will to follow Christ.”<sup>75</sup>

“One cannot always meditate, but one can always enter into inner prayer, independently of the conditions of health, work, or emotional state.”<sup>76</sup> Contemplation—not as a method but as a gift of God to the soul—is a grace that cannot be received except in humility and poverty. Far from being passive, it is the obedience of faith, unconditional acceptance, and loving commitment. It is a gaze that allows itself to be purified and illuminated by the gaze of the Lord. It is the prayer of a child of God, of a forgiven sinner who accepts the love with which he is loved. It is a covenant relationship established by God within our hearts. It allows us to participate in the mystery of the prayer of the Lord.<sup>77</sup>

Through contemplative prayer the Father allows us to be “strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inner self, so that Christ may dwell in our hearts through faith; that we may be rooted and grounded in love” (Ephesians 3:16-17).

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<sup>72</sup> See CCC 2626-2643.

<sup>73</sup> CCC 2639.

<sup>74</sup> See CCC 2699.

<sup>75</sup> CCC 2708.

<sup>76</sup> CCC 2710.

<sup>77</sup> See CCC 2709-2719.

139. When we pray, the majority of the works that God carries out in the soul escape our notice. Therefore, it is important that we remain steadfast in the presence of God, enlivened by the theological virtues, even though on the level of feelings we may pass through periods of dryness or acedia.

*Constantly exercise faith, hope and love*

140. “Legionaries should make the theological virtues the source of their interior life” (CLC 56 §1).<sup>78</sup> In receiving these virtues in baptism as a “good endowment and perfect gift” (James 1:17), we received the capacity to have a relationship with God in Christ. However, as this capacity is comprised of virtues and not gifts of the Spirit, it depends on each baptized person to put it into practice, exercising it with greater or lesser regularity and intensity.

141. *Faith* consists in basing one’s life on God and his self-revelation to us. It allows us to participate in the thought of Christ; that is, it allows us to see and judge reality as he does: through the eyes of the Father. The faith of a Legionary is living, active and luminous. It believes in the eternal love of the Father, who has loved us “before the foundation of the world” (Ephesians 1:4); in the historical love of the Son who, on the cross, “has loved me and given himself up for me” (Galatians 2:20); and in the ever-present love of the Holy Spirit who, even now, pours into our hearts the love of the Father and the Son.

142. *Hope* consists in the confident desire that the awareness of God’s love, coming from faith, stirs up in our hearts. It allows us to have the same attitudes as Christ (see Philippians 2:5). The hope of a Legionary is joyous and unshakeable. Its fruit is not the belief that God will intervene to direct human affairs this way or that, but rather the certainty that, come what may, God will never allow anything to separate us from his love (see Romans 8:39). Hope therefore directs all of our desires to where Jesus awaits us: the Glory of the Father.

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<sup>78</sup> See CCC 1814-1816 (faith); 1817-1821 (hope); 1822-1829 (charity).

143. *Love* consists in being loved by God (see 1 John 4:10) and in living a filial relationship with the Father to give him glory—seeking the concrete good and the eternal salvation of all people. It allows us to participate in the love of Christ: making us love what Christ loves in the way he loves it. The love of a Legionary is ardent and generous. Its fruit is not primarily the works that we carry out—these will necessarily follow—but rather letting oneself be loved by God. This is not always easy, especially regarding those areas of the soul that flee the touch of grace, or those periods of the soul’s history marked by suffering.

144. We could say, then, that faith is simply Christ who *knows* in us; hope, Christ who *desires* in us; and charity, Christ who *loves* in us.

145. The assiduous exercise of the theological virtues opens our soul to the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, which the Constitutions (see CLC 13) invite us to pray for. Exercising these gifts is not up to us, but disposing ourselves to receive them is. These gifts make us aware of and docile to God in a manner beyond our capabilities.

## ***2. Remaining in an attitude of profound humility***

146. “The practice of profound humility” (CLC 56 §1) is the foundation of the interior life. Humility, “walking in truth,”<sup>79</sup> opposes the waywardness sown in man’s heart by original sin that causes him to live in deceit:

“The human being does not trust God. Tempted by the serpent, he harbors the suspicion that in the end, God takes something away from his life, that God is a rival who curtails our freedom and that we will be fully human only when we have cast him aside; in brief, that only in this way can we fully achieve our freedom. The human being lives in the suspicion that God’s love creates a dependence and that he must rid himself of this dependency if he is to be fully himself. [...] We all carry within us a drop of the poison of that way of thinking, illustrated by the images in the Book of Genesis. We call this drop of poison ‘original sin’.”<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> *Interior Castle*, Saint Teresa of Jesus, VI, 10.

<sup>80</sup> *Homily on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception*, Benedict XVI, December 8, 2005.

This drop of poison, when it is not counteracted, creates a barrier that does not allow the soul to experience the love of God; just as oil floats on water without mixing with it, so the proud soul is with God without participating in or becoming one with Him.

147. Pride not only distorts our relationship with God, but also our vision of ourselves and our relationship with others. It leads us to act without admitting our nothingness and to try to appear to be what we are not. All of this becomes a source of constant worry and suffering for us. Christ teaches us that in humility we find rest: “Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves” (Matthew 11:29). A Legionary finds in this verse a call and a personal invitation from Jesus Christ, who, with infinite love, gave us an admirable example of humility in his life and passion: “He humbled himself” (Philippians 2:8).

148. Humility is first lived before ourselves, gratefully recognizing that all the good in us comes from the Father of all goodness: “What do you possess that you have not received? But if you have received it, why are you boasting as if you did not receive it?” (1 Corinthians 4:7). Like Mary, the humble person discovers in the progress and achievements of his life and mission the work of the Almighty, remembering the words of Christ: “When you have done all you have been commanded, say, ‘We are unprofitable servants; we have done what we were obliged to do’” (Luke 17:10). While recognizing his gifts, he also recognizes his failures and limitations, his many sins, his sluggishness in following Christ, his lack of correspondence to grace, all of which move him to place his trust in God, become more detached from himself, and never think of himself as greater than others.

149. Next, humility is lived before others: “regard others as more important than yourself” (Romans 12:10).<sup>81</sup> The humble person is free from the tyranny of his own image, able to be himself and

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<sup>81</sup> TN: New Jerusalem Bible.

sincerely share his experiences. He is truly grateful for all he receives, asks pardon for his errors, values others and knows how to ask for and receive help. Therefore, he fully entrusts himself to the hands of his formators and opens himself to authentic communion with others. Finally, he actively seeks to put others before himself, to serve and not to be served (see Matthew 20:28).

150. Humility is lived above all before God, coming before Him with admiration, gratitude and joy: “We give you thanks for your great glory.” This is what we call “substantial humility.” The soul that savors God in prayer will never be proud. He is not discouraged in adversity, nor boastful in prosperity, but remains in the truth of God’s love for him. He is audacious in his apostolate because he is not held back by fear of ridicule or failure: “About myself I will not boast, except about my weaknesses” (2 Corinthians 12:5).

151. The practice of humility is the only sure path to escape the snares of the tempter, who so easily clouds our mind and twists our reasoning: “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, on your own intelligence rely not” (Proverbs 3:5).

152. A simple and concrete way to live humility is to walk the path of spiritual childhood as urged by Christ: “Amen, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:3).

153. From the good soil of a humble heart sprouts the rare and precious flower of gratitude, through which one sees everything as a gift from God or others. Saint Paul writes, “Be thankful” (Colossians 3:15): a Legionary gives thanks for everything.

### 81-86 **3. Bearing fruit constantly in acts of love**

154. “I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit” (John 15:5). Whoever lives in Christ bears the fruit of charity without counting the cost. “Works of love directed to one’s neighbor are the most perfect external

manifestation of the interior grace of the Spirit.”<sup>82</sup> “For we are his handiwork, created in Christ Jesus for the good works that God has prepared in advance, that we should live in them” (Ephesians 2:10).

155. “Consecrated life manifests the organic unity of the commandment of love, in the inseparable link between love of God and love of neighbor.”<sup>83</sup> Therefore, “the heart of the Legion’s spirit is charity, which entails universal and considerate self-giving to one’s neighbor” (CLC 10). For everyone he encounters, a Legionary strives to be a visible sign of the universal love of God, “who makes his sun rise on the bad and the good, and causes rain to fall on the just and the unjust” (Matthew 5:45). By his Incarnation, Christ has united himself in a certain way to every person,<sup>84</sup> and for this reason to love our brothers and sisters is to love Him.

156. Authentic charity is born from within, from a good heart: “What comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart” (Matthew 15:18).<sup>85</sup> For this reason, a Legionary cultivates goodness of heart, which brings him to grow in his appreciation for everyone, valuing their gifts and excusing their faults and defects.

157. Love overflows from our thoughts into our speech. Speech reveals one’s interior and has the power to injure and kill or give life, light and strength: “The words from a man’s mouth are deep waters.” The great gift of speech acquires its highest dignity when it is placed at the service of the Holy Spirit and becomes a “running brook, the source of wisdom” (Proverbs 18:4). Called to preach the Good News, our tongue can no longer be used for slander: “Does a spring gush forth from the same opening both pure and brackish water?” (James 3:11)

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158. Unless a greater good demands otherwise, a Legionary

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<sup>82</sup> EG 37.

<sup>83</sup> VC 5.

<sup>84</sup> See *Redemptor Hominis*, Encyclical, John Paul II, 1979, 8.

<sup>85</sup> TN: Revised Standard Version.

maintains an attitude of silence before any criticism, taking advantage of whatever is true in it to correct himself, knowing that it is preferable to justify oneself by good works rather than words. “Do not return evil for evil, or insult for insult; but, on the contrary, a blessing” (1 Peter 3:9).

159. Ultimately, a good heart manifests itself in works, especially an active concern for the unity of the Church and *Regnum Christi*, for charity is “the bond of perfection” (Colossians 3:14). Charity is eminently apostolic: “They should allow Christ’s love for mankind to imbue their very selves and seek to have him reign in the hearts of all people” (CLC 11, 2°).

160. A Legionary lives with openness toward others, accepting them as they are in order to seek their good, offering them support as well as sincere and fraternal respect, and striving to encourage and inspire them to fidelity to God. He suffers with those who suffer and rejoices with those who rejoice (see Romans 12:15), overcoming envy, indifference and isolation. He shares authentic friendships without excluding anyone from his universal charity (see GCC 2014, 62).

161. Following the words of Saint Paul: “Conquer evil with good” (Romans 12:21), charity does not allow itself to be held back by evil, but rather wishes to forgive generously, for “if you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will forgive you” (Matthew 6:14). It is also able to ask for forgiveness with simplicity and frankness when it has offended or hurt someone, even if by accident.

162. A creative and self-sacrificing attitude of service (see CLC 10), often hidden, excluding no one from the love of his heart, is the hallmark of a Legionary’s practical living of charity.

#### ***4. Love for and active participation in the liturgy***

163. Redemption is not simply a gift to be received, but a joy to be celebrated. Both take place in the liturgy, the work of Christ the priest and of his Body.<sup>86</sup> In it we are introduced to the riches of the world of grace<sup>87</sup> and we proclaim the glory of God, who has worked wonders of love for us.<sup>88</sup>

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From his participation in the liturgy as “the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed, and from which all her power flows,”<sup>89</sup> a Legionary receives the strength to love. He turns to the liturgy day after day to present the fruits of his life to God with simplicity. In effect, the liturgy is the source of sanctification for the priestly state of a Christian and a priest.

164. Beyond its intrinsic efficacy, the liturgy also has a pedagogical value that is especially relevant for a person consecrated to God because:

- a. Liturgical prayer is the school of Christian prayer.
- b. As the celebration of all God’s revelation, it helps overcome the tendency to subjectivism and spiritual sentimentalism.
- c. As a celebration in community, it helps overcome unhealthy individualism.

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<sup>86</sup> “Every liturgical celebration, because it is an action of Christ the Priest and of his Body, which is the Church, is a sacred action surpassing all others. No other action can equal its efficacy by the same title and to the same degree” (SC 7).

<sup>87</sup> CCC 1076: The Church was made manifest to the world on the day of Pentecost, “Christ manifests, makes present, and communicates his work of salvation through the liturgy of his Church, until he comes (1 Corinthians 11:26).”

<sup>88</sup> PDV 38: “Every liturgical celebration grants us a share in the hour for which Jesus came into the world and toward which he freely and willingly made his way to obedience to the Father’s call”; SCa 35: “The truest beauty is the love of God, who definitely revealed himself to us in the paschal mystery. The beauty of the liturgy is part of this mystery; it is a sublime expression of God’s glory and, in a certain sense, a glimpse of heaven on earth.”

<sup>89</sup> SC 10.

d. It channels and forms the most noble and authentic religious sentiments of the soul that prays.

e. Ultimately, it leads to authentic piety, which is conversation with God and reverent love for his mystery made present and real in our lives.

Therefore, the Constitutions ask that Legionaries, “As nourishment for their spiritual life and apostolic charity, welcome God’s salvific action into their lives through an active, conscious and fervent participation in the liturgy, the primary and indispensable source of genuine Christian spirit” (CLC 49).

915h 165. A Legionary learns to love the liturgy in the house of formation, where it is cared for with love and lived with fervor. The programs of formation should always help the religious in initial formation assimilate and interiorize the spirit of the liturgy, especially in the Eucharistic Celebration, so that they are not simply “strangers or silent spectators. On the contrary, through a good understanding of the rites and prayers they should take part in the sacred action, conscious of what they are doing, with devotion and full collaboration. They should be instructed by God’s word, and be nourished at the table of the Lord’s Body. They should give thanks to God. Offering the immaculate victim, not only through the hands of the priest but also together with him, they should learn 482-485 to offer themselves.”<sup>90</sup>

511-513 166. Beginning in the novitiate, a Legionary becomes familiar with the Liturgy of the Hours and deepens his understanding of its meaning and value. In this way he will live it fruitfully, both in 835 community and personal prayer.

167. A comprehensive education in sacred music forms part of the liturgical formation in the Legion. This includes Gregorian chant and polyphonic music, as well as liturgical hymns.

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<sup>90</sup> SC 48.

168. The liturgy seeks to help the faithful experience God. A Le-gionary priest, as an ordained minister presiding over the celebra-tions, must be an apostle capable of bringing everyone to an en-counter with Christ in the liturgy, fostering their conscious, active and fruitful participation, by:

- a. His own testimony, “so that the witness of their faith helps everyone participate more deeply in it;” (CLC 51, 1)<sup>91</sup>
- b. Becoming familiar with the liturgical books in order to know the pastoral possibilities they offer, live each celebration in harmony with the norms of the Church, and at the same time, adapt it prudently to different times and places;
- c. Organizing events and spiritual activities (such as retreats, spiritual exercises, meetings, courses, and conventions) to teach the faithful to value the liturgy—be it adoration, confession or Liturgy of the Hours, for example—as a manifestation and practice of communion.<sup>92</sup>

The formation of the faithful through liturgical instruction and careful preparation is irreplaceable for fostering this active partici-pation.

## **B. Dimension of the Evangelical Counsels**

169. The values we hold undergo a profound upheaval when we experience Christ—they are no longer those of the world. We begin a new path as disciples of Christ in which the values of the King-dom bring us to live in the world without being of the world.

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<sup>91</sup> SCa 23: “The priest is above all a servant of others, and he must continually work at being a sign pointing to Christ, a docile instrument in the Lord’s hands. This is seen particularly in his humility in leading the liturgical assembly, in obedience to the rite, uniting himself to it in mind and heart, and avoiding anything that might give the impression of an inordinate emphasis on his own personality.”

<sup>92</sup> See CCC 2686.

These new values are expressed in an attitude of freedom from egoism, which transforms love into lust, the use of good things into greed, and free will into self-reference and the worship of one's whims. Living the evangelical counsels is thus a prophetic, countercultural gesture—a rebellion against the idols the world adores, a definitive choice which leaves no one indifferent, which gives hope, inspires generosity and elevates mankind.<sup>93</sup>

170. “Lord, it is good that we are here” (Matthew 17:4)—that is: “How good it is for us to be with you, to devote ourselves to you, to make you the one focus of our lives!”<sup>94</sup> Only one who has experienced the Transfiguration as the apostles did understands this way of living the counsels, which consists in the “kind of life, virgin and poor, that Christ the Lord chose for himself and that the Virgin Mother embraced.”<sup>95</sup> Keeping his gaze fixed on Jesus and Mary, his mother, and relying on them, the Legionary publicly professes the evangelical counsels, binding himself to his Lord and Master through the vows.

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171. The evangelical counsels bring man to the most intimate center of his being, to what is essential in his existence, by leading him to a deep poverty of spirit through “the renunciation of goods that undoubtedly deserve to be highly valued”<sup>96</sup> and stripping him of occupations, securities and human dependencies.

This interior nakedness leads the soul to a very special relationship with Christ, which alone gives it meaning. “This is a deserted place and it is already very late. Dismiss them...” (Mark 6:35-36) said the apostles to Jesus, referring to the crowd; the twelve, however, never left his side. Living the radicality of the counsels is only worth it

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<sup>93</sup> See VC 87 Poverty, Chastity and obedience counteract the three concupiscences which Saint John speaks about: “For all that is in the world, sensual lust, enticement for the eyes, and a pretentious life, is not from the Father but is from the world.” (1 John 2:16).

<sup>94</sup> VC 15.

<sup>95</sup> MR 10.

<sup>96</sup> LG 46.

when we have found in Christ the buried treasure for which a person, “out of joy, goes and sells all that he has and buys that field” (Matthew 13:44).

172. The vows are a privileged expression of our consecrated love, and love always needs to be renewed. For this reason, we devotionally renew our religious profession of the evangelical counsels around the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, the day of consecrated life, and on the Solemnity of our Lady of Sorrows. 692

173. The Constitutions and Complementary Norms adequately describe the behaviors characteristic of living the evangelical counsels. In the following numbers, we will examine in depth the convictions and attitudes underlying these virtues.

### ***1. Chastity: Following Christ, the Chaste One***

174. The reaction of the disciples to the indissolubility of marriage—“If that is the case of a man with a wife, it is better not to marry”—gives Jesus the opportunity to talk about celibacy. The Lord thus unites the revelation of the great dignity of marriage—and its necessity—to the revelation of the value and fruitfulness of chastity lived for love of God. Christ presents chastity as a gift from God whose immense value is hidden from the eyes of many: “Not all can accept this word, but only those to whom that is granted;” while at the same time he reveals its character of voluntary sacrifice and renunciation of our life-giving dimension, depicted realistically by the word “eunuch”: “there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 19:10-12).<sup>97</sup> This choice is “for the sake of the Kingdom,” which is to say, in order to embrace it more fully in our own life, expanding our capacity to love God and all people.

175. In the houses of formation, a Legionary learns consecrated chastity with his mind, embraces it with his will, and assimilates it

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<sup>97</sup> TN: Revised Standard Version.

into his life, always bearing in mind its orientation toward the priestly ministry. Chastity should be presented “without any ambiguities and in a positive fashion”:

“The seminarian should have a sufficient degree of psychological and sexual maturity as well as an assiduous and authentic life of prayer, and he should put himself under the direction of a spiritual father. The spiritual director should help the seminarian so that he himself reaches a mature and free decision, which is built on esteem for priestly friendship and self-discipline, as well as on the acceptance of solitude and on a physically and psychologically sound personal state.”<sup>98</sup>

240 176. To live chastity correctly, which the Church “rightly considers the ‘door’ of the whole consecrated life,”<sup>99</sup> it is necessary to value human love, marriage and physical fatherhood as God-given gifts to mankind. Moreover, it is necessary to allow our hearts to stop and reflect on the gift of celibacy, which makes us discover Christ as the one “whom my soul loves” (see Song of Songs 1:7), makes us delve into the spousal love of Christ for his Church, increases our capacity for surrender and self-giving, creates a real and mysterious fruitfulness, and unleashes the strength of spiritual fatherhood. Only by embracing celibacy as a gift are we able to accept the renunciation it entails.

This renunciation also has a place on the path towards holiness. It presents itself in intimate struggles, which can vary in length and can be of a carnal or spiritual nature. These struggles reappear at different moments of our lives and demand that we have recourse to prayer, to penitence, and to the recollection of our interior and exterior senses, a habit which in our time has become especially relevant due to the invasiveness of new technology.

400 177. The experience of solitude that comes with celibacy is an invitation to intimacy with the Lord and becomes an impulse for

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<sup>98</sup> PDV 50.

<sup>99</sup> VC 32.

maturing in generous and detached love. However, the temptation to avoid the feeling of loneliness<sup>100</sup> by seeking compensations in one area or another is always present. This attitude impedes the development of grace in the soul and the personal maturity of the celibate, since it does not allow Christ to show that He can fill, in an unexpected way, the need to love and be loved that He has placed in our heart.

178. Chastity for the Kingdom of Heaven, free from these false compensations, does not imprison a person in his egoism, but makes him totally available to all through his spiritual fatherhood. It does not leave any bitterness in his soul, but rather enriches his relationships with a special human warmth; it does not kill his drive to give, but increases it to the highest degree:

“Thanks to their consecration they are eminently willing and free to leave everything to leave everything and to go and proclaim the Gospel even to the ends of the earth. They are enterprising and their apostolate is often marked by an originality, by a genius that demands admiration. They are generous: often they are found at the outposts of the mission, and they take the greatest risks for their health and their very lives.”<sup>101</sup>

In this sense, the Second Vatican Council affirms that chastity becomes a “sign and stimulus of love, and a singular source of spiritual fertility in the world.”<sup>102</sup>

179. This gift of God, “fragile and vulnerable because of human weakness,”<sup>103</sup> has to be guarded with particular care and loving concern as it is the vow that expresses our total belonging to Christ through the consecration of our sexual and affective dimension. The Constitutions point out the various means recommended for the faithful living of chastity (see CLC 30). One who practices them with perseverance experiences that this state of life is not only

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<sup>100</sup> TN: The word “*soledad*” in Spanish can mean both solitude (the mere state of being alone), and loneliness (the negative experience of feeling alone).

<sup>101</sup> EN 69.

<sup>102</sup> LG 42.

<sup>103</sup> ET 15.

possible, but even a source of immense happiness, “of authentic personal fulfillment and distinct spiritual fruitfulness” (CLC 28).

180. Incoherence in this vow is often linked to forms of escapism that arise from imbalances, tensions and frustrations. A harmonious life, in which ardent dedication to the mission is united to healthy cultivation of all the dimensions of the person is, on the natural level, very helpful in this area.

- 238 181. Everything that will be said about affective maturity in the human dimension should be applied here, as the natural foundation for living chastity. Affective needs or imbalances that are not recognized or addressed hinder our capacity to receive and give love according to our celibate state. They often result in emotional dependencies, which can develop when a priest does not go beyond the limited group of people who feed his need to be valued.

A religious community, which offers an ideal environment for the growth in love of an affectively mature person, is not by itself capable of fulfilling the needs of those who are socially immature. Here the patient work of each person with his formators is indispensable, work which in some cases can benefit from psychological help.

- 236 The family can also play an important role in a religious’ growth in affective maturity:

“Family bonds are essential for reinforcing healthy self-esteem. It is important for families to be part of the seminary process and priestly life, since they help to reaffirm these and to keep them well grounded in reality.”<sup>104</sup>

182. The custom of some Legionaries of placing their Profession crucifix on their pillow, so as to consecrate—“to leave *undefiled*” (Hebrews 13:4)—the bed on which they sleep, signifies the crucified love with which Christ loves us and with which a Legionary also loves Christ through his vow of chastity.

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<sup>104</sup> AL 203.

## **2. Poverty: Following Christ, the Poor One**

183. The Son of God, “although he was rich, became poor, so that by his poverty we might become rich” (2 Corinthians 8:9). Setting his sight on Christ, the Legionary opts consciously for the poverty of Christ to manifest prophetically to the world that the only true treasure is that which comes from Him.

184. Imitating the example of his Master, a Legionary accepts the many uncertainties proper to poverty in his personal and apostolic life, even before the security that money might offer. This attitude opens him to the providence of the heavenly Father, to whom he entrusts all worry regarding temporal goods. According to the words of Christ, nothing necessary will ever be lacking to him who, detached from all things, dedicates himself exclusively to the interests of the Kingdom: “Do not worry and say ‘What are we to eat?’ or ‘What are we to drink?’ or ‘What are we to wear?’[...] But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides” (Matthew 6:31,33).

185. Our poverty also consists in being subject to “the common 586-588 law of work”<sup>105</sup> (CLC 22 §2), which in Legionary tradition encompasses not only the apostolate, but also work around the house and the duties of every-day life.

186. Everything one receives for the exercise of his ministry is held in common so that the superior, through the administrator, can attend to the needs of all and help the poor as much as possible (see John 13:29). “For if you are partners in what is immortal, how much more in mortal things?”<sup>106</sup> Therefore, seeking “to have everything in common” and “to distribute to each according to [his] need” (see Acts 4:32; 35), a Legionary strives to live a faithful dependence with his superior regarding his use of material goods, giving a report of all his expenses (see CLC 21).

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<sup>105</sup> PC 13.

<sup>106</sup> *Didache*, IV, 8.

“Poverty includes an economic dimension: the possibility of disposing of money as if it were one’s own, either for oneself or for members of one’s family, a lifestyle too different from that of fellow community members and from poverty level of the society within which one is living—these things injure and weaken fraternal life.”<sup>107</sup>

596 187. Lived out of love for and in imitation of Jesus Christ, Legionary poverty entails “giving up willingly even those things which are permitted but are not expedient,”<sup>108</sup> going beyond simply renouncing the superfluous. This vow thus requires a personal and community option for a moderate style of life—both simple and dignified—like that of Christ and his apostles. Each Legionary and each community should discern what this means in the concrete circumstances of their lives, keeping in mind what Pope Saint Paul VI taught:

“If, as is evident, you must take account of the human surroundings in which you live, in order to adapt your life style to them, your poverty cannot be purely and simply a conformity to the manners of those surroundings. Its value as a witness will derive from a generous response to the exigencies of the Gospel, in total fidelity to your vocation.”<sup>109</sup>

The Congregation establishes certain parameters for the living of poverty, in areas such as clothing, home décor, electronic devices, vehicles and the construction of buildings.

188. Poverty entails an affective and effective detachment from material goods, which should be used with authentic freedom of spirit (see CLC 19). Affective detachment is verified when effective detachment, experiencing the inconveniences of the poverty of Christ rather than the comforts and security of material wealth, brings about a supernatural joy rather than causing one to complain. We can see this in Saint Paul: “I know indeed how to live how to live in humble circumstances; I know also how to live with abundance. In every circumstance and in all things I have learned the

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<sup>107</sup> FLC 44.

<sup>108</sup> OT 9.

<sup>109</sup> ET 22.

secret of being well fed and of going hungry, of living in abundance and of being in need” (Philippians 4:12).

189. The spiritual fruits of poverty, indicated in the Constitutions (see CLC 20), can be summed up in profound interior freedom: “Poverty alone ensures that the priest remains available to be sent wherever his work will be most useful and needed, even at the cost of personal sacrifice.”<sup>110</sup>

190. A Legionary knows that he has only one life to live, and so his poverty also entails the wise use of the gift of time, which for him is the Kingdom of Christ (see CLC 23): “Teach us to count our days aright, that we may gain wisdom of heart” (Psalm 90:12). Wasting time on superficial things, abusing the means of social communication, failing to program, or failing to work effectively and intelligently should thus be considered faults against poverty.

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191. Beginning and building up works of apostolate implies managing economic resources that at times can be substantial. One who is in love with Christ, the poor One, and has formed a poor heart, will administer these means as goods of the Church and not as his own, seeking the Glory of God and the salvation of souls while remaining a man detached from all things (see CLC 25).

192. In the houses of formation, a Legionary learns to live poverty through his work for the community, the cleanliness of his room, a sense of economic frugality, sharing a common table, caring for his things, receiving his clothing and supplies from the community, and giving up certain types of entertainment that are not fitting for a religious. To interiorize these habits as expressions of love for Christ, the poor One, it is necessary that each Legionary discover the beauty of freely choosing what most conforms him to Christ, going beyond the mere fulfillment of what obedience demands concerning material goods.

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<sup>110</sup> PDV 30.

### ***3. Obedience: Following Christ, the Obedient One***

193. Christ's call to the apostles, "Follow me" (Matthew 9:9), "Come after me" (Matthew 4:19), implied that they would follow Jesus wherever he decided to go. "Let us go back to Judea," Jesus said to the apostles, despite the valid reasons they gave him in protest. In these moments, which cost them the most and which they understood the least, the apostles had to freely choose once again to follow their Master. Here they showed the full measure of their love for Christ: "So Thomas, called Didymus, said to his fellow disciples, 'Let us also go to die with him'" (John 11:7-16).

194. Christ was able to ask obedience of his disciples because He lived it first with His heavenly Father: "My food is to do the will of the one who sent me" (John 4:34).

"First of all, obedience is an attitude of a son or daughter. It is that particular kind of listening that only a son or daughter can do in listening to his or her parent, because it is enlightened by the certainty that the parent has only good things to say and give to him or her. This is a listening full of the trust that makes a son or daughter accept the parent's will, sure that it will be for his or her own good."<sup>111</sup>

Frequently meditating on and contemplating his example, a Legionary should also practice "supernatural, prompt, joyful, persevering, and heroic obedience, entailing both understanding and execution, equally encompassing all his superiors" (CLC 33 §1).

195. This counsel does not diminish the freedom of one who professes it; much less should it be seen as a crutch for weak or indecisive personalities. On the contrary, in the words of the Sec-

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<sup>111</sup> SAO 5; see VC 91: "By obedience they intend to show their awareness of being children of the Father, as a result of which they wish to take the Father's will as their daily bread (see John 4:34)".

ond Vatican Council, it brings about “freedom fortified by obedience.”<sup>112</sup> That is, it bestows the immeasurable gift of unfailingly directing one’s capacity for decision toward acts of redeeming value. Through obedience freedom grows, is strengthened, and shows its security. Thus, this vow, “far from lowering the dignity of the human person, leads it to maturity by extending the freedom of the sons of God.”<sup>113</sup>

196. Obedience implies recognizing the presence of God in the human instruments who serve Him, as Sacred Scripture shows us throughout all of salvation history. Those who exercise authority because of the mission they have received “represent God when they command according to the Constitutions” (CLC 31, 2<sup>o</sup>)<sup>114</sup> and therefore should strive to facilitate voluntary obedience by their manner and conduct.<sup>115</sup>

A relationship with someone who is an instrument of grace cannot be cold or bureaucratic. Rather, looking beyond his human limitations, it should be marked by the trust and gratitude with which we receive a gift from God: “We ask you, brothers, to respect those who are laboring among you and who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you, and to show esteem for them with special love on account of their work” (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13).<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> LG 43.

<sup>113</sup> PC 14.

<sup>114</sup> See CIC 601.

<sup>115</sup> “Superiors are to exercise their power, received from God through the ministry of the Church, in a spirit of service. Therefore, docile to the will of God in carrying out their duty, they are to govern their subjects as children of God and, promoting their voluntary obedience with reverence for the human person, they are to listen to them willingly and foster their working together for the good of the institute and of the Church, but with the superior’s authority to decide and prescribe what must be done remaining intact” (CIC 618).

<sup>116</sup> See VC 92: “Together they recognize in the one who presides an expression of the fatherhood of God and the exercise of authority received from God, at the service of discernment and communion.”

390 197. In whatever exceeds his scope of decision, be it in community life or the apostolate, a Legionary should responsibly discern in light of the Gospel and the norms before submitting his thoughts to the authority of the superior. The evangelical counsel of obedience presupposes and promotes a spirit of initiative, which can rightly be called “the crown of obedience.” At the same time, every discernment process concerning the external forum, to be authentic, should finish before the superior, with whom a Legionary shares all his hopes, projects, and difficulties, maintaining an attitude of interior openness to whatever he deems best. A Legionary thus lives dependence with God through dependence with whoever takes his place (see CLC 33 §2).

198. In living his obedience, a Legionary should strive to use all the powers of his intellect and will, as well as the gifts God has given him in his personality. His “obedience should never be blind” (CLC 33), that is, mechanical or passive in understanding or execution.

199. As affirmed by Pope Saint Paul VI, “a religious should not easily conclude that there is a contradiction between the judgment of his conscience and that of his superior:”

“The superior’s decisions concern a field in which the calculation of the greater good can vary according to the point of view. To conclude from the fact that a directive seems objectively less good that it is unlawful and contrary to conscience would mean an unrealistic disregard of the obscurity and ambivalence of many human realities.”<sup>117</sup>

200. The act *par excellence* of this evangelical counsel is that of being sent: “As the Father has sent me, so I send you” (John 20:21). A religious’ apostolate “has its source in religious obedience. Therefore, it is distinct in its character from those apostolates proper to the laity.”<sup>118</sup> “Moreover, those who obey have the guarantee of truly

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<sup>117</sup> ET 28.

<sup>118</sup> EE 26.

taking part in the mission, of following the Lord and not pursuing their own desires or wishes.”<sup>119</sup>

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201. God prepares each Legionary throughout his life in a mysterious way, according to the missions that he will be called to carry out in the Church. A Legionary can thus say with the prophet, “He made me a sharpened arrow, in his quiver he hid me” (Isaiah 49:2). Each time a Legionary receives a mission, God Himself aims the arrow he has prepared and releases it. This means that, when he obeys, a Legionary’s work does not depend only on his personal abilities, as it would if he worked on his own initiative. Rather, he has the full power and authority of God Himself, who sent him. Like Saint Paul, a Legionary is “an apostle of Christ Jesus by the command of God” (1 Timothy 1:1).

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202. Thus, living in full union with God by constantly exercising obedience throughout our lives, we will one day be able to embrace the final act of obedience: the call from this world into his presence.

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“With an act of obedience, even if unaware of it, we came to life, accepting that good Will that has preferred our existing to non-existence. We will conclude our journey with another act of obedience that hopefully would be as much as possible conscious and free but above all an expression of abandonment to the good Father who will call us definitively to himself, into his reign of infinite light, where our seeking will have found its conclusion and our eyes will see him in a Sunday without end. Then we will be fully obedient and fulfilled, because we will be saying “yes” forever to that Love that has made us happy with him and in him.”<sup>120</sup>

### C. Human Dimension

203. As a priest and religious, a Legionary is “taken from among men” (Hebrews 5:1). The Legion cares deeply about the human formation of its members because it is aware that Christ, when he became man, took on human nature and raised it to a new height,

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<sup>119</sup> VC 92.

<sup>120</sup> SAO 29.

sanctifying it and bestowing on it a new dignity so that “whoever follows after Christ, the perfect man, becomes himself more of a man.”<sup>121</sup>

204. For this reason, a Legionary should not be satisfied with a specious holiness or pietism that lacks the human virtues that Jesus incarnated. Rather, he should “seek to reflect in himself, as far as possible, the human perfection which shines forth in the incarnate Son of God.”<sup>122</sup>

“The formation of the man must proceed step by step with that of the Christian and the future priest, so that the natural energies are purified and strengthened by prayer, by the grace which comes from frequent reception of Penance and the Eucharist, and by the influence of the supernatural virtues which receive protection and assistance from the natural virtues.”<sup>123</sup>

205. “In response to the summons to put on Christ, the new man, a Legionary should diligently pursue an integral and harmonious human formation, developing the virtues and values that ensure a man of integrity” (CLC 58). Among these are “prudence, sincerity, responsibility, self-discipline, constant concern for justice and charity, fidelity to one’s word, good manners, and moderation and prudence in speech.”<sup>124</sup>

770 This process of maturing aims at the harmonious development of the whole person—the soul with its faculties, the body with its senses, the human psyche whose passions are the “connection between the life of the senses and the life of the mind”<sup>125</sup>—in order

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<sup>121</sup> GS 41.

<sup>122</sup> PDV 43.

<sup>123</sup> *Summi Dei Verbum*, Apostolic Letter, Paul VI, 1963, 40.

<sup>124</sup> CLC 1994, 242. This list of virtues is inspired by OT 11; See PDV 43: “They need to be educated to love the truth, to be loyal, to respect every person, to have a sense of justice, to be true to their word, to be genuinely compassionate, to be men of integrity and, especially, to be balanced in judgment and behavior.”

<sup>125</sup> CCC 1764.

to form priests who are “balanced people, strong and free, capable of bearing the weight of pastoral responsibilities.”<sup>126</sup>

206. Eight objectives are presented in this dimension: two preliminary objectives—self-knowledge and its fruit, interior freedom—followed by four that reflect the cardinal virtues (prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance) and two related to the social life of a Legionary, who is called to be an apostle among men.

### ***1. Persevere in the effort to get to know oneself with realism***

207. The point of departure of all formation is a serene and grateful *self-knowledge*. Knowing oneself implies recognizing that we have come into the world with certain qualities and predispositions, both physical and spiritual, in a determined geographical place, in a certain family and within a specific culture that has embraced us and molded us and, like the air we breathe, become part of us—all without any deliberate choice on our part.

Moreover, relationships, affections, events, occasions, opportunities and obstacles, joys and sufferings have accompanied and marked our existence. While some innate potential has been realized, some of our qualities have not yet flourished, or have only in a limited way. It could be said that the past, as a component of our life, is not only *behind* us but also *within* us.

“In order for this training to be fruitful, it is important that every seminarian be aware of his own life history, and be ready to share it with his formators. This would include especially his experience of childhood and adolescence, the influence that his family and his relatives have influenced on him, his ability to establish mature and well balanced interpersonal relationships, or his lack thereof, and his ability to handle positively moments of solitude.”<sup>127</sup>

208. The examination of conscience, nurturing a healthy introspection, spiritual direction and formation review are means which

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<sup>126</sup> PDV 43.

<sup>127</sup> GPV 94.

help us to know ourselves with realism in the light of God. The Holy Spirit helps us to recognize both that which limits us and the gifts that we can offer to others. Moreover, the principles of “experiential formation” and “formation in relationship,” which will be mentioned later, teach us that we will only be able to reach an authentic understanding of ourselves by interacting with others and through our own human experiences. We must look at ourselves honestly, as in the reflection of a mirror—an effort which requires both humility and courage.

209. Often our greatest qualities and capabilities can also be the greatest dangers and weaknesses of our personality if they are not correctly channeled, above all when they are very pronounced. For example, a keen intelligence can become excessively ironic or sarcastic; a firm will can lead to an imposing or excessively forceful attitude; and a great physical vitality can cause one to fall into activism. Someone that is unmindful of his qualities and the dangers they may pose might end up hurting those around him. Knowing oneself is thus the first step toward being able to make sensible decisions.

210. Serene and joyful *self-acceptance* follows peaceful and grateful self-knowledge. Our human nature has physical, spiritual, affective and moral limits, but it is made in the image and likeness of God. The love that we give and the love that we receive from others are also limited, without ceasing to be authentic love.

In the Scriptures, God constantly invites his people to remember and celebrate what he has done with them as he walked by their side (see Deuteronomy 8:2-5). We have to learn to read our personal history as a story of salvation, as a place where God has allowed us to find him and has begun a friendship with us. Thus, no one should allow his life to become an endless search for compensation or reparation for past faults: grudges, feelings of guilt, or unsatisfied emotional needs.

616 211. When one accepts joyfully who he is and who he is not, when he accepts the past with maturity and faith without denying

or remaining stuck in it, it is possible for him to set out like Abraham into the new land that the Lord shows him (see Genesis 12:1). This is how we should understand *self-improvement*. We cannot live without looking to the future. A Legionary is a man realistically bent on accomplishing his mission in each stage of his life. To do so, he takes advantage of the resources that the human sciences and secular literature have to offer regarding personal improvement.

212. Self-knowledge, self-acceptance, and self-improvement are not static goals that are reached once and for all. Because we are continually in development, they are a constant, lifelong process that becomes very concrete in our attention to interior movements such as emotions, passions, feelings and affections. 313

## ***2. Acting with interior freedom***

213. Knowing oneself, accepting oneself, and improving oneself are three steps in a process by which we come to the joyful possession of the gift that our existence is supposed to be for ourselves and others. This process, constantly repeated throughout our lives, has as its goal the attainment of interior freedom, “which expresses itself in convinced and heartfelt obedience to the ‘truth’ of one’s own being, to the “meaning” of one’s own existence.”<sup>128</sup> 620

214. Living in the truth of one’s being means fighting decidedly to be free before ourselves and others as we follow Christ: 136

a. *Before ourselves*: freedom from complexes, fears, insecurities, or anything that paralyzes; freedom from attachments to environments, places, or things that give us security.

b. *Before others*: freedom from our image; refusing to remain trapped in the opinions of those around us; dropping our masks and being ourselves with simplicity and authenticity; rejoicing in the gifts of others as our own and joyfully offering ourselves to others as we are.

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<sup>128</sup> PDV 44.

346 215. Only a free heart can love fully, and only one who knows that he is loved seeks freedom from whatever impedes his response of love. Interior freedom is both freedom *from* attachments, complexes and personal fears, and freedom *to* make generous, prudent decisions and persevere in them. To attain this freedom, which is self-dominion and governance over our passions, we cannot dispense with Christian asceticism:

“Asceticism, by helping to master and correct the inclinations of human nature wounded by sin, is truly indispensable if consecrated persons are to remain faithful to their own vocation and follow Jesus on the way of the Cross [...] The path to holiness thus involves *the acceptance of spiritual combat*.”<sup>129</sup>

216. Saint Paul presents himself as a model of one who is free before himself and others: “It does not concern me in the least that I be judged by you or any human tribunal; I do not even pass judgment on myself.” This is not the proud attitude of someone who cares nothing for others. Rather, he who has been called humbly submits himself to God who gave him his ministry: “I am not conscious of anything against me, but I do not thereby stand acquitted; the one who judges me is the Lord” (1 Corinthians 4:3-4). Our truth and our freedom are in the Lord.

217. A Legionary that is interiorly free is firm but not rigid, secure but not arrogant, simple but not timid.

218. Certain attitudes can help us to attain this interior freedom. Among them are a healthy ability to laugh at ourselves, not taking ourselves too seriously, letting God be God, and knowing how to leave to Him what belongs to Him.

### ***3. Following a well-formed conscience***

219. “Legionaries should live openly before God and always follow a well-formed conscience” (CLC 57). The conscience of a priest

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<sup>129</sup> VC 38.

is not only a light for his own path, but also for the paths of all the faithful that he shepherds:

“The human maturity of the priest should include especially the formation of his conscience. In order that the candidate may faithfully meet his obligations with regard to God and the Church and wisely guide the consciences of the faithful he should become accustomed to listening to the voice of God, who speaks to him in his heart, and to adhere with love and constancy to his will.”<sup>130</sup>

220. From the beginning of their formation, the young men who come to the Legion should receive proper instruction regarding the role of the moral conscience in the life of man: what it is, how it is formed, and how it can be led astray.<sup>131</sup>

”Need we repeat that conscience on its own is not the arbiter of the moral worth of the actions which it inspires? It must take account of objective norms and, if necessary, reform and rectify itself.”<sup>132</sup>

221. “The lamp of the body is the eye. If your eye is sound, your whole body will be filled with light” (Matthew 6:22). To follow our conscience—well formed in the light of the Gospel, the teachings of the Church, and the duties of our state of life—is to obey a law written in our hearts by God himself, inviting us to seek good and avoid evil. Our conscience thus becomes a place of encounter with God. It enlightens us, helping us know how to act according to the mind of Christ in every situation; accompanies us as we do what it enjoins; and judges our acts as good or bad once we have done them. The joy and peace that we experience when we are faithful to our conscience, though it require great effort, far outweigh any material reward. When out of weakness we fail to follow its commands, a rightly formed conscience does not abandon us. Rather, it helps us to discover our sins and call them by their name, bringing us to a humble confession of our weakness before God—“I have sinned against the Lord” (2 Samuel 12:13)—to an experience of his mercy,

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<sup>130</sup> PDV 44.

<sup>131</sup> See CCC 1776-1802.

<sup>132</sup> ET 28.

and to intimacy with Christ the Redeemer.

222. “But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be in darkness. And if the light in you is darkness, how great will the darkness be” (Matthew 6:23). The denial or playing down of sin in our lives perverts our hearts and can deform our conscience.

One who does not obey the voice of his conscience does not remain in the truth, and his prayer is therefore insincere. While he may fulfill all of the required acts of piety, he fails to look God in the eye—he sits before him without ever encountering him. Without the base of a well-formed conscience and the habit of following it, it is an illusion to think that one is truly a man of discernment.

- 546 223. Among the many ways of growing in fidelity to one’s conscience, some especially important means are the conscience exam, in which we review the day with Christ to see if we have been his faithful witnesses in our thoughts, words, and actions; frequent confession of our sins and voluntary imperfections, which helps keep the soul from falling into bad habits; and guidance and advice in spiritual direction and in dialogue with our superior. The more a religious “tries to listen in conscience to God and his commandments (see Romans 2:15), and is accompanied spiritually, the more their decision will be profoundly free of subjective caprice and accommodation to prevailing social mores.”<sup>133</sup>

#### ***4. Cultivating sincerity and coherence***

224. A Legionary is the same person before everyone he encounters. He is not two-faced, but presents himself directly, plainly, and transparently. He does not fall for the subtle arguments of conscience that lead from good principles to bad conclusions, and considers this twisting of thought an immature and ungodly way of thinking: “For perverse thoughts separate people from God” (Wisdom 1:3). There is a clear progression from his principles to his

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<sup>133</sup> AL 222.

words and actions, and he speaks without hiding any secondary intentions: “Let your ‘Yes’ mean ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No’ mean ‘No.’ Anything more is from the evil one” (Matthew 5:37).

Prudence (see Matthew 10:16), charity (see Ephesians 4:29), and immense respect for the privacy of others (see Proverbs 25:9) should guide his speech.

225. “I tell you, on the day of judgment people will render an account for every careless word they speak” (Matthew 12:36). A Legionary speaks more with his actions than with his words. Like Saint Joseph, he says little and does much.<sup>134</sup>

226. Before God and others, a Legionary strives to be a man of his word. He is faithful to both his big commitments, such as the vows and his mission, and his small ones, such as punctuality and doing his work well.

Realizing that he is bound by just civil laws, he also tries to be an exemplary citizen: “Maintain good conduct among the Gentiles, so that if they speak of you as evildoers, they may observe your good works and glorify God on the day of visitation” (1 Peter 2:12).

### ***5. Strengthening the will through the formation of habits***

227. It is up to our will to put into action what our rightly formed conscience asks of us. Problems and mistakes made in consecrated and priestly life can arise from a poorly formed or confused intelligence, but they can also originate in a weak will. There is always the latent danger that one who does not live as he thinks will end up thinking as he lives.

228. A man without a will is like a leaf or a weather vane, tossing and turning in the wind. Forming our will and giving direction to our actions requires great constancy in our good habits. Persevering

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<sup>134</sup> See CLC 1994, 251.

in what we have started until it is finished (following the principle “a work begun is a work done”<sup>135</sup>); being faithful to a fixed schedule of prayer and study; getting out of bed immediately in the morning; refusing to complain about discomforts, unexpected events, or bad weather; and making small acts of self-denial for others’ sakes are all examples of habits that curb our tendency to systematically seek what is most comfortable.

“The strengthening of the will and the repetition of specific actions are the building blocks of moral conduct; without the conscious, free and valued repetition of certain patterns of good behavior, moral education does not take place. Mere desire, or an attraction to a certain value, is not enough to instill a virtue in the absence of those properly motivated acts.”<sup>136</sup>

229. A Legionary fights a spiritual battle within himself and sustains others in their own spiritual battles. Wherever the mission demands it, he also undertakes works of apostolate to further the Kingdom of Christ, which always brings with it the sufferings of persecution: “From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent are taking it by force” (Matthew 11:12). Once again, Saint Paul shows us by his entire apostolic life that without tenacity and vigor, without being willing to suffer for the name of Christ, we cannot call ourselves apostles: “I will show him what he will have to suffer for my name” (Acts 9:16).

230. A Legionary’s interior, despite the various spirits that move it—joys and consolations, as well as battles, desolations, dryness, and trials—remains anchored to the firm rock of the one who called him: “He remains faithful” (2 Timothy 2:13). He wants to bear witness, by his confidence and serenity before trials, to the treasure that no one can take from him: Christ himself.

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<sup>135</sup> TN: “Obra comenzada, obra terminada”.

<sup>136</sup> AL 266.

## 6. Growing toward affective maturity

231. The affective-sexual aspect of human formation takes on special importance for someone who chooses a life of perfect chastity for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven. We can define maturity in this area as “ordered love:” physical, psychological, and spiritual self-possession that allows us to give ourselves in love. 707

“Christ gives a person two basic certainties: the certainty of being infinitely loved and the certainty of being capable of loving without limits. Nothing except the Cross of Christ can give in a full and definitive way these two certainties and the freedom they bring. Through them, consecrated persons gradually become free from the need to be at the center of everything and to possess the other, and from the fear of giving themselves to their brothers and sisters. They learn rather to love as Christ loved them, with that love which now is poured forth in their hearts, making them capable of forgetting themselves and giving themselves as the Lord did.”<sup>137</sup>

### *Self-possession*

232. Continenence, as a natural virtue, is the prerequisite for chastity, which is the grace of interior sexual integration. By continence, we seek to control our natural tendencies and impulses, because it is not possible to give ourselves without first possessing ourselves. The priestly vocation is “a recognition that the significance of life consists in a free and responsible giving of oneself to others, a willingness to place oneself entirely at the Service of the Gospel and the kingdom of God.”<sup>138</sup> It is only by self-control, a fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:23), that we can bring life and love to others as spiritual fathers and spouses of the Church.

233. We live in a world that “reduces human sexuality to the level of something commonplace, since it interprets and lives it in a reductive and impoverished way by linking it solely with the body and

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<sup>137</sup> FLC 22.

<sup>138</sup> PDV 8.

with selfish pleasure.” Thus, we see the value of education in Christian modesty, which should be lived naturally and without shame.<sup>139</sup> Moreover, religious should receive specific formation in seeing the beauty of chastity as “a virtue that develops a person’s authentic maturity and makes him or her capable of respecting and fostering the ‘nuptial meaning’ of the body.”<sup>140</sup>

234. To reach this level of maturity, we have to take ownership of the gift we have received: we must be able to love Christ like his apostles and share a life of intimacy with him.

“In view of the commitment to celibacy, affective maturity should bring to human relationships of serene friendship and deep brotherliness a strong, lively and personal love for Jesus Christ. A love for Christ, which overflows into a dedication to everyone, is of the greatest importance in developing affective maturity.”<sup>141</sup>

235. On the other hand, we have to remember that “the charism of celibacy, even when it is genuine and has proved itself, leaves one’s affections and instinctive impulses intact.” It is necessary, therefore, to guard the gift of our exclusive love for Christ and his Church even from our own weakness. “A precious help can be given by a suitable education in true friendship, following the image of the bonds of fraternal affection which Christ himself lived on earth (see John 11:5).”<sup>142</sup> This formation in friendship and brotherhood finds its primary—although not exclusive—application in

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<sup>139</sup> See AL 282: “A sexual education that fosters a healthy sense of modesty has immense value, however much some people nowadays consider modesty a relic of a bygone era. Modesty is a natural means whereby we defend our personal privacy and prevent ourselves from being turned into objects to be used.”

<sup>140</sup> *Familiaris Consortio*, Apostolic Exhortation, John Paul II, 1981, 37; John Paul II’s “theology of the body” can be a great means of education in this dimension of formation.

<sup>141</sup> PDV 44.

<sup>142</sup> PDV 44; Fraternal relationships and friendships will be discussed in the section on community life.

one's community and, according to each one's circumstances, in his family.

236. Indeed, it is in the family that healthy affective relationships first develop, "where we learn to live with others despite our differences and to belong to one another."<sup>143</sup> A Legionary should never distance himself from his family. In it, he finds the beginnings of his formation and the very roots of his existence. That said, he should recognize the renunciation and self-giving to the mission that his new condition as a consecrated soul demands. Relations with one's family are healthy when they are grounded in a mature and loving embrace of one's new family: the Congregation and the entire Church.<sup>144</sup>

### *Self-giving*

237. Self-dominion, because it does not go beyond itself, can end in self-centeredness. For this reason, following the example of Christ, the second aspect of affective maturity is self-giving; for "Christ did not live his life for himself but for us."<sup>145</sup>

238. Inasmuch as a religious is in control of himself, he is able to give himself; and inasmuch as he gives himself, he reaches maturity: "When I became a man, I put aside childish things" (1 Corinthians 13:11). Childish desire for affection is like a bottomless pit, unable to be filled, while sacrificial love grows, satisfies, and brings about greater self-dominion the more it is practiced.<sup>146</sup>

239. Two forms of sacrificial love have special importance for a Legionary: self-giving as spouse and as father. 283

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<sup>143</sup> EG 66.

<sup>144</sup> See AL 190.

<sup>145</sup> CCC 519.

<sup>146</sup> "We need to foster affective maturity as the fruit of a love which involves the whole person and which grows inasmuch as the heart clings to God. With our heart centered on Christ, we watch over ourselves (see Matthew 26:41), overcome selfish love (see Romans 7:14-25), and freely give and receive love" (GCC 2014, 138).

240. Christ is the true spouse of the Church: “He handed himself over for her to sanctify her, cleansing her by the bath of water with the word” (Ephesians 5:25-26). When he calls a man to the priesthood, he places so much trust in him that he chooses to exercise his spousal love through him. A Legionary allows himself to be conquered and transformed by the sentiments of Christ for his Church, loving her tenderly, toiling for her, and constantly sacrificing himself for her good.

[The priest], “in virtue of his configuration to Christ, the head and shepherd [...] is called to live out Christ’s spousal love toward the Church, his bride. Therefore, the priest’s life ought to radiate this spousal character, which demands that he be a witness to Christ’s spousal love and thus be capable of loving people with a heart which is new, generous and pure - with genuine self-detachment, with full, constant and faithful dedication and at the same time with a kind of ‘divine jealousy’ (see 2 Corinthian 11:2) and even with a kind of maternal tenderness, capable of bearing ‘the pangs of birth’ until ‘Christ be formed’ in the faithful (see Galatians 4:19).”<sup>147</sup>

A celibate man learns to give himself to the Church by realizing how Christ gave himself for him. He says with Saint Paul, “He has loved me and given himself up for me” (Galatians 2:20).

241. This love bears fruit. The Word of God and the sacraments that he receives from the Church make him a spiritual father who begets supernatural life and helps bring it to its fullness. He wears himself out simply for the joy of seeing his children grow and their relationship with God flourish: “Children ought not to save for their parents, but parents for their children. I will most gladly spend and be utterly spent for your sakes” (2 Corinthians 12: 14-15).

#### *Understanding of and appreciation for women*

811 242. A priest learns spiritual fatherhood through contact with the motherhood of the Church, which is reflected in every woman, especially in a consecrated woman. Sharing a common charism and

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<sup>147</sup> PDV 22.

mission with both men and women *Regnum Christi* gives us a special opportunity to learn to live this relationship maturely.

243. Saint Paul teaches Timothy to treat women with charity and prudence, regarding “older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters with complete purity” (1 Timothy 5:2).<sup>148</sup> “Man and woman are called from the beginning not only to exist ‘side by side’ or ‘together,’ but they are also called to exist mutually ‘one for the other,’”<sup>149</sup> each according to their proper vocation. Thus, while Legionaries should recognize the obstacles to freedom of heart and universal love that can arise from dealings with women, and prudently and decisively work to overcome them by growth in virtue, they should also value the good that women can do in the life and ministry of a priest with their advice and support (see CLC 29). Seen through this lens, “understanding and familiarity with the feminine [...] are beneficial and essential to the human and spiritual formation of the seminarian.”<sup>150</sup> Therefore, the presence and support of a few properly qualified women should be promoted throughout the formation process, such as in teaching roles or collaboration on the apostolate.

### ***7. Being responsible for one’s life and mission***

244. A person is responsible when he holds himself accountable for all that he does. While a Legionary answers to his superiors, brothers, and fellow men for how he carries out his mission and the

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<sup>148</sup> “In order to live as a celibate in a mature and untroubled way it seems particularly important that the priest should develop deep within himself the image of women as sisters. [...] Certainly “woman as sister” represents a specific manifestation of the spiritual beauty of women; but it is at the same time a revelation that they are in a certain sense ‘set apart’. If the priest, with the help of divine grace and under the special protection of Mary, Virgin and Mother, gradually develops such an attitude towards women, he will see his ministry met by a sense of great trust precisely on the part of women whom he regards, in the variety of their ages and life situations, as sisters and mothers”, *Letter to Priests for Holy Thursday*, John Paul II, 1995.

<sup>149</sup> MD 7.

<sup>150</sup> GPV 95.

tasks entrusted to him, above all, he answers to God himself. A responsible man completes his work well.

- 8 245. God is like “a man who, going on a journey, called in his servants and entrusted his possessions to them” (Matthew 25:14). Responsibility is not simply a moral requirement, nor should it be reduced to a duty or a rendering of accounts. It is a characteristic of someone created in the image and likeness of God, who has received life as a gift and task. To help each Legionary carry out this task, the Lord has entrusted him with many talents—life, time (see CLC 23), the vocation, the mission, his own qualities and limits—that he wants him to cultivate, so that they might bear fruit for the Kingdom in him and in the world.

In this sense, responsibility is also a human virtue. It is doing one’s duty in spite of preferences and feelings and regardless of the possibility of being seen or rewarded.

- 369 246. Forming responsible men requires both trusting and accompanying them. Formators should not confuse these attitudes, however, with distancing themselves or being overprotective. The principles of “gradual formation” and “formation based on convictions,” as will be explained later, ask that formators leave appropriate space for each to develop his personal responsibility.

247. This virtue is especially important for Legionaries because they have been called to carry out a mission that entails working closely with others. For this reason, each one should cultivate responsibility from the earliest stages of his formation. A persistent deficiency in this area is evidence enough for the unsuitability of the member to continue in this vocation.

- 190 248. A Legionary is responsible in his use of time because he knows that it belongs to others. He forms habits of diligence and order in his study and work, programming his tasks and following through with them at their appointed time, carefully considering what commitments he can assume with the time at his disposal, and

persevering in those commitments to the end. He also stays in frequent contact with those who have committed any tasks to him, informing them of his progress and seeking guidance when difficulties arise. Passivity, minimalism, informality, failure to recognize faults or mistakes, and blaming them on others are all opposed to the virtue of responsibility.

249. A Legionary is not only “responsible,” but “co-responsible” (CLC 24) with others for the well-being of his team, community, house, territory, and *Regnum Christi* and the whole Church. Like Saint Paul, he shows concern for the whole body and is indifferent to nothing (see 2 Corinthians 11:28-29). Beyond his particular mission, he cares for the whole Legion and *Regnum Christi* family. He is deeply interested in vocations, the economic stability of the houses of formation, community and apostolic meetings, consultations for the appointment of superiors, the preparation for the general chapters, etc. 278

### ***8. Maintaining details of distinction and conduct as an expression of charity***

250. Distinction can be understood as right order in personal presentation. A Legionary values this order primarily because it reflects something of the beauty and goodness of God himself. God expresses his love for man in many ways, not least of which are his respect and consideration for us. When we, as priests and religious, maintain our distinction and well-mannered conduct with others, we allow them to experience this respect and consideration that they deserve as children of God. Thus, these habits of personal presentation, far from distancing us from others, express our great esteem for them. 204

251. Secondly, maintaining our distinction and good conduct reminds us of our dignity: “Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?” (1 Corinthians 3:16). Just as men of faith value and take care of their sacred spaces, we should seek to live our condition as living temples of the Holy

Spirit with dignity.

252. Moreover, as a religious and priest, a Legionary makes Christ present in the world. For this reason, he strives to “mold his human personality in such a way that it becomes a bridge and not an obstacle for others in their meeting with Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of humanity.”<sup>151</sup>

253. Legionary distinction is simple and moderate. It is neither artificial nor sophisticated, but rather a manly expression of his deepest interior values. Nevertheless, because of man’s natural tendency toward what is easiest, cultivating and maintaining this distinction requires constant effort and self-dominion.

254. A few practical applications of these attitudes are:

- a. care for personal appearance and hygiene;
- b. order and cleanliness in personal and community living or working areas;
- c. use of simple but dignified clothing, appropriate for each occasion;
- d. good manners at table, according to local and cultural customs;
- e. a good spirit in sports and games;
- f. keeping a peaceful and friendly countenance, smiling and greeting others, radiating goodness, welcoming and listening to others;
- g. being a humble and courteous gentleman that knows how to interact with people of any culture, age or social status;
- h. proper and dignified self-expression in written or spoken word, avoiding expressions that are inappropriate for a religious

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<sup>151</sup> PDV 43.

(see Ephesians 5:4) or tones of voice that may come across as exaggerated;

i. a moderate tone of voice in laughter and speech; measured gestures; avoiding hastiness, abruptness, or superficiality.

## D. Intellectual Dimension

255. “The intellectual formation of candidates for the priesthood finds its specific justification in the very nature of the ordained ministry, and the challenge of the ‘new evangelization’ to which our Lord is calling the Church on the threshold of the third millennium shows just how important this formation is.”<sup>152</sup>

A priest should be able to give a reason for his hope to whoever asks him (see 1 Peter 3:15), not just so that he can defend the faith, but so that he can start an open dialogue with the world, rooted in the right relationship between faith and reason, in which he can propose the goodness, beauty, rationality, and coherence of the Christian message.

256. Moreover, as a Legionary’s mission is to form “Christian leaders” (CLC 4), men and women of all professional backgrounds, he must be able to dialogue with them, understand their intellectual doubts, and present the message of Christ to them according to their needs. For this reason, in addition to having a deep spiritual life, a Legionary needs to dedicate a significant amount of his time and energy throughout his entire life to acquiring a “solid, deep, and excellent intellectual formation” (CLC 96 §2).

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“A lessened commitment to study can have grave consequences for the apostolate, by giving rise to a sense of marginalization and inferiority, or encouraging superficiality and rash initiatives.”<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> PDV 51.

<sup>153</sup> VC 98.

340 257. Because Christ is “the Wisdom of God” (1 Corinthians 1:24), the quest for and acceptance of true wisdom that we call “intellectual formation” contributes significantly to our growth in holiness. Furthermore, study is also closely bound to growth in human maturity. It helps us to expand our understanding of the fundamental truths of man that Christ revealed in himself.

630 Thus, a Legionary seeks to go beyond simply fulfilling the given curriculum—he desires to develop his intellectual gifts to the height of their potential. This means constant and persevering dedication to a well-planned program of reading, study and reflection. Aware of the continual development of human thought, he strives to further his proficiency in any area related to his mission and to stay up to date with the most current research. A Legionary walks this demanding path with the mission in mind, aware of his responsibility as a witness, not merely of human words, but of the Word of God.

258. The path of studies laid out in the *Ratio Studiorum* should follow both the directives given by the Holy See regarding priestly formation<sup>154</sup> and the formation objectives given in this *Ratio*.

259. There are three objectives for this dimension. The first is the good use of the gift of reason, which allows us to seek and enjoy the truth in order to grow closer to God and communicate it to others as apostles. The second is the formation of a unified vision of the world and of man’s life in God by assimilating and integrating the many things learned throughout priestly formation. The last is an attitude of dialogue, which requires both charity and intellectual humility.

To grow in the virtues that sustain the process of intellectual formation, a Legionary opens himself to the gifts of the Holy Spirit, especially wisdom, understanding, knowledge, and counsel. These gifts enlighten our minds and lead us to deeper union with God.

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<sup>154</sup> See GPV 153-187.

### ***1. Seeking the truth and fostering a passion for communicating it***

260. A Legionary has a profound appreciation for human reason. Open to and oriented toward the mystery of God, our reason is able to receive and assimilate his Revelation and gives us the means and words to announce it to the world. In a culture that wavers between divinizing and despising reason, a Legionary treasures and nurtures his intelligence as a gift of God that allows him to know the truth and to approach the one Truth that is God himself.

We refer here to a reason that recognizes its capabilities and limitations, that possesses a healthy independence, and that opens itself to the gift of faith: “Faith asks that its object be understood with the help of reason; and at the summit of its searching reason acknowledges that it cannot do without what faith presents.”<sup>155</sup> This harmonious relationship between faith and reason begets humility, which protects us from the dangers of both fideism and rationalism.

We refer as well to a reason open to the sensible world, because the senses are vital for knowing and appreciating the truth. We understand “the senses” in their widest meaning, including the memory and imagination in addition to the physical senses. Aesthetic formation should thus also be a part of the intellectual life, for beauty displays the splendor of Truth and strips it of the danger of idealism.

261. One basic attitude that stems from this objective is love for study.<sup>575-576</sup> “Study is an expression of the unquenchable desire for an ever deeper knowledge of God, the source of light and all human truth.” It has many fruits: “it is an incentive to dialogue and coop-

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<sup>155</sup> FR 42.

eration, a training in the capacity for judgment, a stimulus to contemplation and prayer in the constant quest for the presence and activity of God in the complex reality of today's world."<sup>156</sup>

A Legionary should develop a methodology of intellectual work from the first stages of his formation that he can use for the rest of his life: methods of learning, reading and investigating.

Religious should approach their studies with eagerness. One concrete way to do this is to ask and seek to answer the deepest questions of both life itself and contemporary man. Connecting our studies with real life like this helps us to overcome any superficiality or intellectual narcissism. Before we can offer others any answers, we have to understand the doubts at the heart of their questions.

- 441 262. The main areas that a Legionary develops within this objective are:
- a. an attitude of listening and open-mindedness;
  - b. the habit of clear, rigorous, and creative thinking;
  - c. cultivation of the memory and imagination;
  - d. analysis, synthesis, and the ability to see connections;
  - e. the ability to make upright, prudent and balanced judgments without succumbing to cultural modes of thought or getting stuck in one's own way of thinking;
  - f. the ability to identify the root, causes and consequences of problems.
- 49 263. The Magisterium of the Church acts as a guide for both professors and students in the search for truth. It offers indispensable points of reference for developing a correct way of thinking based on the certainties of faith offered to us in Revelation.

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<sup>156</sup> VC 98; See PDV 56: "It is necessary to oppose firmly the tendency to play down the seriousness of studies and the commitment to them."

264. For a Legionary, love for study and apostolic zeal are inseparable. His ability to communicate the message and doctrine of Christianity in a precise, clear, and attractive way is decisive for his mission. For this reason, a Legionary seeks excellence in the art of written and oral communication in both theory and practice: public speaking, teaching, the apostolate of the pen, etc.

A constant effort to acquire a rich, precise, and elegant vocabulary by learning from the literary masters of each language will sharpen his thinking and enhance his ability as a communicator. He should also diligently correct any habits of mental superficiality or laziness which may lead to the use of vague terminology, incorrect grammar or diction, or a lack of reason or depth in conversation.

265. Our preaching is sacred and deserves dedicated time and effort for its preparation. Once we have done our part, however, we must be convinced that our words will not just be “persuasive words of wisdom”, but “a demonstration of spirit and power” (1 Corinthians 2:4).<sup>157</sup>

## ***2. Developing a unified and organic world-view***

266. In their intellectual formation, Legionaries should abide by the Church’s norms regarding priestly formation. During their initial formation, they should complete the studies required for ordination and acquire the knowledge necessary for priestly ministry (see CLC 97 §1).

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Building on a foundation of cultural and humanistic studies, they should become proficient in philosophy, theology, and pastoral studies. When the mission demands it, they should specialize in a specific academic area. Their formation should be serious, imbued with a *sensus Ecclesiae* that helps them read the signs of the times “so that revealed truth can always be more deeply penetrated, better understood and set forth to greater advantage.”<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> See EG 135-159.

<sup>158</sup> GS 44.

267. “Christ became the contemporary of some men and spoke their language.” It is highly recommended that each Legionary take advantage of the different means of understanding contemporary man and speaking his language. In this way he can bring them the Gospel message more believably and understandably.<sup>159</sup> Some examples of these are “sociology, psychology, education, economics and politics, and the science of social communication.”<sup>160</sup>

Seeking to build up the Kingdom of Christ in society, a Legionary also takes a particular interest in the Church’s social doctrine, which “is to be counted among the ‘essential components’ of the ‘new evangelization.’”<sup>161</sup>

268. During his studies, a Legionary should remember how Christ formed the minds of his apostles with his teaching. The Lord showed them in his parables that even the visible world reflects spiritual realities. He revealed to them the unity of all things: everything that exists—both visible and invisible—comes from God and is deeply connected.

269. A Legionary should seek to form a unified and organic intellectual outlook as he assimilates the content of his studies. He should bring each discipline into dialogue with the others in order to pass from the mere accumulation of ideas—knowledge—to a deeper vision of them beyond their external realities—wisdom. He should be aware that overemphasizing any one area of knowledge will only bring him to a partial understanding of the truth and weaken his inner unity.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> See GPV 116.

<sup>160</sup> PDV 52.

<sup>161</sup> PDV 54.

<sup>162</sup> See FR 85; Also GPV 153: “To ensure the adequate intellectual formation of future priests, all disciplines must be taught in such a way as to make their intimate connection stand out clearly, avoiding fragmentation. It is also to be a unified, integral journey, in which each subject is an important ‘tile in the mosaic’ for presenting the mystery of Christ and the Church, and for allowing an authentic Christian vision of Christ and the world to mature.”

### ***3. Bringing knowledge and experiences together in dialogue***

270. Christ is the Truth, not an abstract concept. Therefore, study should not be a collection of diverse and disconnected facts or questions, but rather a quest for the splendor of God's Truth in reality. This means that it is always a process open to dialogue and never just a matter of ideology. In this sense, it is not man that possesses the Truth, but the Truth that seeks and possesses man.

271. Constant, serious and peaceful dialogue—an openness to other points of view that help us to make sense of the complexity of reality—embraces both the human and intellectual dimensions of formation. Reason opens the door to the possibility of a real dialogue with the contemporary world in which we can present the truth and beauty of the faith. 318

272. Learning to dialogue means seeking to understand the experiences and subjective difficulties that move a person to accept or reject an idea. As Pope Saint Paul VI said, dialogue is the new name for charity.<sup>163</sup> Being able to listen to and empathize with others, habitually placing oneself in their shoes and understanding them from their own perspective, is an essential aspect of “emotional intelligence” that each Legionary must develop. 584

273. A Legionary loves the truth so much that he rejoices when he finds it, regardless of where it is discovered or who reveals it. Thus, a central aspect of dialogue is recognizing and appreciating the truth that one finds in his interlocutor's arguments, even if their positions are different.

Seeking opportunities to learn in common, forming study or research groups, and building networks of people with common intellectual interests are all helpful ways of forming a spirit of dialogue. Above all, the goal is to learn to listen, and to confront and verify our own ideas and presuppositions.

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<sup>163</sup> See ES 64.

- 294 274. The ability to dialogue is both a condition and a means for each Legionary to open himself to different cultures. Having members of different nationalities in the communities fosters this attitude and enhances their apostolic efforts (see CLC 6).

One important instrument for being able to dialogue with others is proficiency in certain modern languages, which each Legionary should seek to acquire according to his possibilities and the demands of his mission.

## E. Dimension of Communion

- 362 275. Religious are called to be “experts in communion” in the Church and in the world.

“In fact, in a world frequently very deeply divided and before their brethren in the faith, they give witness to the possibility of a community of goods, of fraternal love, of a program of life and activity which is theirs because they have accepted the call to follow more closely and more freely Christ the Lord.”<sup>164</sup>

276. Every Legionary forms himself to be an “expert in communion,” beginning with the reality at hand, his community. This reality ripples outward to include the whole Congregation, the members of *Regnum Christi* in its diverse vocations, and finally overflows into the life and mission of the Church and the entire human family.

277. Promoting communion and *esprit de corps* is an expression of charity and is therefore at the heart of the Gospel. The communion Legionaries live with their brothers is a work of love, for “with eternal love the Father created us and called us to be his sons, the Holy Spirit through the vows has gathered us together in unity, and Christ has sent us to fight for his Kingdom, giving us the Eucharist as food and Mary as Mother.”<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> RHP 24.

<sup>165</sup> CLC 1994, 256.

God, the source of this fraternal communion, also “calls together all men, scattered and divided by sin, into the unity of his family, the Church”.<sup>166</sup> Legionaries aspire to be instruments in God’s plan of bringing all men to a participation in the communion of the Trinity. Therefore, they give everything to promote communion, for otherwise the coming of the Kingdom of God might be delayed or remain sterile.

278. A Legionary does not act on his own. Rather, he feels responsible for promoting true communion wherever he is, convinced that all form “one body and one Spirit” (Ephesians 4:4) in Christ. He rejects individualism—a dominant trait of our current culture—and welcomes his brothers as gifts, believing them to be “those who are a part of me.”<sup>167</sup>

279. This dimension of formation has three objectives: to form oneself to be a brother in the community; to form oneself to be a member of the Congregation and *Regnum Christi*; and to form oneself to be an instrument of communion in the Church and in the human family.

### ***1. Learning to be a brother among brothers: spirit of community***

280. A religious’ inner circle of relationships is his community. The community, therefore, is the first and most important place in which he lives communion. In this environment, a Legionary should develop the following attitudes:

- a. Living in communion with others through his relationship with God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit;
- b. Living the mission in communion with others, convinced that their witness of unity is already apostolate;
- c. Participating in all community activities with interest;

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<sup>166</sup> CCC 1.

<sup>167</sup> *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, Apostolic Letter, John Paul II, 2001, 43.

- d. Learning to give and receive, contributing who he is with humility and joy;
- e. Knowing how, whenever necessary, to ask for forgiveness and forgive without holding grudges.

281. Community life is not based on a need for organization, nor is it simply a way to facilitate participation and collaboration for the sake of efficiency on the mission. Rather, it is an essential element of religious life. It does not hinder, but empowers our drive for holiness and the apostolate. Community life is not mere uniformity, but a gift of the Spirit that helps us live unity in a diversity of personalities, ages, cultures, and opinions.

“We stay together in community not because we have chosen one another, but because we have been chosen by the Lord;”<sup>168</sup> this is why we are called brothers. Blood brothers are united by virtue of their blood. Religious communities are “born not ‘of the will of the flesh’, nor from personal attraction, nor from human motives, but ‘from God’ (John 1:13), from a divine vocation and a divine attraction”<sup>169</sup>

The same God who brings religious together always nourishes their fraternal communion: “Our relationship with God is the heart of our community life. The Eucharist is therefore the community’s spiritual center.” (GCC 2014, 52).

282. A concrete manifestation of this spirit can be seen when the whole community—together or in turns due to the apostolate—

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<sup>168</sup> FLC 41.

<sup>169</sup> FLC 1. The Code of Canon Law distinguishes two elements of union and of unity among the members of the community:

a. one, the more spiritual: “fraternity” or “fraternal communion,” which arises from hearts animated by charity. It underlines “communion of life” and interpersonal relationships; (CIC 602)

b. the other, more visible: “life in common” or “community life”, which consists of “living in one’s own lawfully constituted religious house” and in “leading a common life” through fidelity to the same norms, taking part in common acts, and collaboration in common services. (CIC 608, 665 §1). (FLC 3).

presents itself before Christ in the Eucharist to offer him the day and to conclude it.

“We value morning offering and night prayers as powerful moments in which Legionaries present themselves before Jesus Christ as a community to offer the work of the day that is beginning, or to thank him for his benefits at the end of the day.” (GCC 2014, 115)

283. Every Legionary forms himself not only to be a spiritual father in the exercise of his ministry, but also a brother for his community members. “Initiation into the hardships and joys of community life takes place in the community itself. Through the fraternal life each one learns to live with those whom God has put at his or her side, accepting their positive traits along with their differences and limitations.”<sup>170</sup>

284. Community life “is to be defined in such a way that it becomes a mutual support for all in fulfilling the vocation of each”<sup>171</sup> and allows the spiritual gifts of each one—character, culture, experiences, talents—to contribute to the common good. This is possible when everyone in the community becomes co-responsible for a common project that includes life and mission. This is the *raison d’être* of the community program. 460

“Within a truly fraternal community, each member has a sense of co-responsibility for the faithfulness of the others; each one contributes to a serene climate of sharing life, of understanding, and of mutual help; each is attentive to the moments of fatigue, suffering, isolation or lack of motivation in others; each offers support to those who are saddened by difficulties and trials.”<sup>172</sup>

285. When we speak of *life* in community, we speak of imitating the life of the apostles gathered around Christ. The community is the place where we live the Gospel together.<sup>173</sup> Charity goes from 459

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<sup>170</sup> VC 67.

<sup>171</sup> CIC 602.

<sup>172</sup> FLC 57.

<sup>173</sup> See Letter from February 6, 2017, Eduardo Robles-Gil, LC.

being a generic goal to a concrete reality with the brothers God gives us. Together with them, we form a true community that prays, lives, and works together. We support one another and hold each other in supernatural esteem, growing together in maturity and holiness as we walk toward the heavenly fatherland.

286. Learning to live as brothers happens in the day to day by sharing one's joys and difficulties; resting and spending time together; listening to one another and conversing maturely with an open mind, willing to learn and cooperate generously in communal tasks in constant openness to others.

Legionaries become "promoters of unity and harmony in the community" (CLC 85, 6°) by bearing the defects and weaknesses of others with love, and being grateful, in turn, for the kindness and patience shown to them; learning to forgive and ask for forgiveness; building up all through their example, judgments and words; and contributing a vision full of hope, joy and positive spirit (see GCC 2014, 63).

All this opposes the tendency to indifference and isolation that may arise in the heart of a consecrated soul if he does not direct the full force of his love—which he possesses through his vows—to others rather than himself. This results in reducing community life to the bare minimum or seeing it as a burden, a mere disciplinary duty.

"A joyless fraternity is one that is dying out; before long, members will be tempted to seek elsewhere what they can no longer find within their own home. A fraternity rich in joy is a genuine gift from above to brothers and sisters who know how to ask for it and to accept one another, committing themselves to fraternal life, trusting in the action of the Spirit."<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> FLC 28.

287. When we speak of *mission* in community, we speak of the spirit of community expressed in collaboration, counsel, prayer, encouragement, and interest in the other's work. "Communion begets communion: essentially it is likened to a mission on behalf of communion."<sup>175</sup> If personal witness is necessary, communal witness is equally indispensable. In a mature community, one can sense the presence of God.

288. Therefore, it is good to be on guard against the temptation of seeing the demands of the apostolate in opposition to the duties of fraternal life with its community activities. Just as a father cannot neglect his family, no matter how heavy his work load, a religious cannot neglect his community:

"For some, 'building community' is felt as an obstacle to mission, almost a waste of time in matters of secondary importance. All must be reminded that fraternal communion, as such, is already an apostolate; in other words, it contributes directly to the work of evangelization. The sign *par excellence* left us by Our Lord is that of lived fraternity: 'By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another' (see John 13:35)."<sup>176</sup>

John Paul II could thus confirm that "the effectiveness of religious life depends on the quality of the fraternal life in common."<sup>177</sup>

"The needs of apostolic service cannot therefore be invoked to accept or to justify defective community life."<sup>178</sup>

289. The desire to build up one's community with enthusiasm and self-giving is complemented by a healthy realism. "The communitarian ideal must not blind us to the fact that every Christian reality is built on human frailty. The 'ideal community' does not yet

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<sup>175</sup> RPH 24; *Cristifideles Laici* 32.

<sup>176</sup> FLC 54.

<sup>177</sup> Speech to the participants of the Plenary Assembly of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, John Paul II, November 20, 1992.

<sup>178</sup> FLC 55.

exist: the perfect communion of the saints is our goal in the heavenly Jerusalem.” Fraternal communion is a formation objective that can never be attained once and for all; it is dynamic. Without relinquishing the recommended practice of fraternal correction (see 570 CLC 42), Legionaries should resolve together the difficulties that are always present. “Communities cannot avoid all conflicts. The unity which they must build is a unity established at the price of reconciliation. Imperfection in communities ought not discourage us.”<sup>179</sup>

290. The fatigue that community life sometimes entails can give the impression that its members end up losing more than they gain. Nevertheless, here the paradox of the Gospel is played out: “Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will preserve it for eternal life.” (John 12:25). Couples learning to live together have to set aside many personal preferences. Through this renunciation, God purifies them of self-centeredness and grants them profound happiness. In the same way, the effort to attain authentic fraternal communion frees us from the tyranny of “I” and gives us indescribable joy. The family atmosphere that every member endeavors to create gives glory to God and fosters the integral growth and apostolic drive of the community. God created man to live in communion with others. When a religious community takes seriously what it is called to be, Christ generously fulfills his promise: “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” (Matthew 18:20).

324 291. In the houses of formation, where there are larger communities, “perseverance teams”—a concept taken from the life of the lay Regnum Christi members—have been very helpful, especially since their size is close to the reality in the houses of apostolate. The teams ordinarily have ten to fifteen members.

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<sup>179</sup> FLC 26.

Teams are more than just organizational units for the functioning of the house. Their essential activities involve the sharing of spiritual goods, fraternal correction, and other aspects of integral formation. The teams are the driving force of fervor and responsibility. They foster interpersonal relationships and mutual understanding; they lead their members to spontaneous, sincere and generous dialogue; they instill *esprit de corps*, a spirit of service, and teach the art of cooperation. Team life is a source of initiative, and of apostolic planning and action—uniting the interior richness and abilities of each member in its shared ideals.

## ***2. Learning to be a member of the Congregation and Regnum Christi: esprit de corps***

292. For *Regnum Christi* and the Legion of Christ to fulfill their mission in the Church, it is necessary that all the branches be united by a spirituality that guides them on their path. From this mission and spirituality comes a particular style that adds to the wealth of charisms in the Church. Whoever takes up this life and work gradually acquires a sense of identity that produces *esprit de corps*.

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### *In the Legion of Christ*

293. When we speak of “style,” we speak of those elements that enrich and are in line with the charism. It is *sensus Legionis*, which allows us to determine what attitudes express this gift from God and what attitudes separate us from it, what builds up *esprit de corps* and what tears it down.

294. An essential trait of this *esprit de corps* is an atmosphere of universality and internationality. The Legion, open to men “from every nation, race, people, and tongue” (Revelation 7:9), desires its communities to be made up of members of different nationalities (see CLC 6, 2°). This facilitates a constant, rich cultural exchange between its members and is a sign that unity in diversity is possible. It requires everyone to cultivate an interest for their brothers’ cultures of origin as well as the culture that receives them—beginning

with the effort to learn to speak the language, the key to entering into the heart of a people.

Whoever enters a missionary congregation like the Legion should always be open to being sent to other countries.

Interacting with brothers from other nations can help us discover and better recognize all that is valuable and good in our own country, as well as its limitations. At the same time, it allows us to overcome prejudice and welcome as an enrichment the original contribution each culture makes. Being aware that Christ calls us to unity—“that they may all be one” (John 17:21)—should help us to attentively avoid nationalistic expressions and cliques divided by countries, so that the attachment toward our own country does not create division among us.<sup>180</sup> Emphasizing national stereotypes can easily hurt others and damage the spirit of family.

58-63 295. A spiritual family has a series of characteristic traits through which one can identify its members. These characteristics neither diminish individual personalities nor depreciate the qualities and traits of each. On the contrary, the communion that comes from being members of the same spiritual family enriches the individuals when they create a dynamic harmony out of their common religious life. Acquiring and sharing this “feeling of family” is a sign of the spiritual maturity of a Legionary. It makes visible in some way what is invisible: it makes a charismatic reality palpable.

296. Certain external elements lived by all also express the internal, spiritual communion we wish to live. Some of these aspects are reflected in the norms, others in traditions. While they are in no way the essence of the spiritual communion we receive from God, due to our reality as both body and soul we should not disregard their

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<sup>180</sup> The Magisterium of the Church is on guard against the danger that “sharing in the legitimate aspirations of one’s own nation or culture could lead to embracing forms of nationalism or accepting customs which instead need to be purified and elevated in the light of the Gospel.” (VC 38).

importance. They are elements that make such family atmosphere tangible.<sup>181</sup> They do not possess a character that is absolute, nor are they the heart of communion, for no external element can replace union of hearts. If some members consciously leave them aside, however, it is easier for individualism to impoverish and damage this interior unity.

Some of these traditions are as follows:

- a. There is value in cultivating a sense of family in the *style of our houses, in the way we dress and present ourselves* that in this case is connected to the vow of poverty. As religious we do not seek to fulfill and express ourselves as a lay person would. Rather we freely opt to express our personality through both interior attitudes and decisions and common exterior elements—schedules, dress code, distinction—that make us identifiable as members of the same congregation. Some of these aspects are determined on the territorial level in order to adapt to the times and places of each region.
- b. The use of *educated and respectful forms of address*—which in many environments have fallen into neglect—elevates human interactions and demonstrates a spirit of cultivation and attentiveness: “Please...”, “Thank you...”, “Excuse me...”, “May I...?”, etc.
- c. The *ordinary way of dealing* with Legionaries, calling them “Father” or “Brother” and avoiding nicknames, can help us see and deal with each other as men consecrated to God, fostering a supernatural outlook. Experience shows, moreover, that this does not detract from brotherly friendship and fraternal spirit. (see GCC 2014, 63)
- d. The tradition of *warmly welcoming brother Legionaries* that pass through our communities makes them feel truly at home when

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<sup>181</sup> “The Church must always seek to make her presence visible in everyday life, especially in contemporary culture, which is often very secularized and yet sensitive to the language of signs.” (VC 25).

they stay at another Legionary house. Any other lay or ecclesiastical person that passes through a Legionary community should also feel this hospitality, so proper to religious life.

e. Frequent *communication of news* among the communities is an expression of spiritual joy—we share the wonders of God that each of us has witnessed.

f. Other *community traditions* of daily life help create a spirit of family in our houses and among all Legionaries.<sup>182</sup>

### *In Regnum Christi*

297. Each Legionary should continually deepen in his knowledge of the different vocations that make up *Regnum Christi* and value their richness and complementarity in the common mission of establishing the Kingdom of God. He is therefore an ardent promoter of communion among the branches.

298. Every apostolate carried out by a Legionary is done in the name of the Legion and *Regnum Christi*: “Whatever may be the works of service by which the word is transmitted, the mission itself is undertaken as a community responsibility. It is to the institute as a whole that the Church commits that sharing in the mission of Christ”<sup>183</sup>. This entails two things:

a. There is no private apostolate: a Legionary carries out the one he receives aware that one day he will pass it on to someone else.

b. The work done by each person is tied to the mission of the community, the locality, the territory, the entire Legion and *Regnum Christi*: it is mission wrought in communion.

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<sup>182</sup> For example, the way we live different liturgical moments of the year: first Fridays, patron saints given at Christmas, the joyful feast of Kings, merienda-cenas and many others.

<sup>183</sup> EE 25; See CIC 675 §3.

299. A Legionary builds up the common mission in his locality with the other members of *Regnum Christi* by integrating the gifts of their different personalities, cultures and ages, while respecting the just autonomy of every person, community or work of apostolate. He knows all too well that, as in community life, the biggest enemy of communion among the members of *Regnum Christi* is individualism; therefore he does not flee from either the joy or weariness of living unity.

In a spiritual family like *Regnum Christi*, the parts can only contribute to the whole if there is openness to the contribution. For this reason, communion in the Movement requires from a Legionary not only a healthy desire to give, but also openness to receive.

300. The contribution of the Legionary within *Regnum Christi* is his priestly and religious identity. Therefore, he collaborates in its mission above all by his spiritual and pastoral work, as a guide and formator, and, whenever needed, in directing works:

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“We invite the Legionaries to value what is proper to us as priests and religious: intercessory prayer, offering our life so that others will receive grace, bearing witness to the goods of the life to come, our community as an essential element of our life and the starting point for carrying out our mission, sacrifice as a priestly act, selfless love for souls, etc. We exercise our spiritual fatherhood specifically in *Regnum Christi* family, dedicating ourselves to preaching, formation, directing souls, administering the sacraments, and establishing or directing its structures together with other members of the Movement.” (GCC 2014 176, 5)

301. Communion passes from conviction to reality when we look for solutions to the difficulties and differences that arise in daily living, accepting others as they are and attempting to understand their point of view.

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Indeed, communion in a family is born and grows when all seek to affirm and defend others rather than themselves, and promote the interests of others rather than their own—as a person, branch, work of apostolate or section. We learn this from the Divine Persons: the Father affirms the Son: “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am

well pleased” (Matthew 3:17) and the Son affirms the Father: “the Father is greater than I” (John 14:28). The Son affirms the Spirit: “it is better for you that I go. For if I do not go, the Advocate will not come to you” (John 16:7) and the Spirit affirms the Son: “He will glorify me, because he will take from what is mine and declare it to you” (John 16:14).

### ***3. Learning to be a builder of communion in the Church and in society: spirit of service***

302. “You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:8). There is another aspect to the testimony of Jesus—to the spirit of communion—that reaches to the ends of the earth and is the horizon that Mother Church (the sacrament of salvation) and the common human family set before us. This aspect of communion is service.

#### *In the Church*

- 49 303. The formative principle of being “in step with the Church” makes us feel a type of warmhearted love for her; a responsibility, as we are part of her; an availability to be sent wherever she needs us most; attentiveness to perceive the beating of her heart and respond to her most urgent needs. That is, it develops in the Legionary what we may call a *sensus Ecclesiae*. The following are some concrete manifestations:

- a. Beyond his immediate work, a Legionary attentively follows the situation of the Church. He feels her joys and sorrows deeply, and intercedes for her at the altar, in the Divine Office, and in personal prayer.
- b. A Legionary is up-to-date on the teachings of the Pope and the bishops and strives to understand and spread them.
- c. Together with the other priests in his diocese, he forms part of the diocesan presbyterate. In a spirit of service, he contributes his charism according to the pastoral needs of the area and

the guidelines of the bishop. Thus, he takes an interest in participating in the gatherings of the diocese for priests and religious.<sup>184</sup>

d. “Within the Church’s life the priest is a man of communion.”<sup>185</sup> Wherever he is, he aspires to promote ecclesial communion, loving all ecclesial realities animated by the Spirit and building up the Church together with them. He bears in his heart Christ’s prayer for the unity of Christians, spoken at the Last Supper.

### *In society*

304. The Church recognizes the longing of the world for communion as a sign of the times:

“People today are often trapped in situations of standardization and loneliness, especially in large urban centers, and they become ever more appreciative of the value of communion. Today this is one of the most eloquent signs and one of the most effective ways of transmitting the Gospel message.”<sup>186</sup>

305. In a world deeply affected by the division of sin and by wounds in need of healing, those who have purified their hearts by building together a peaceful and united religious community are “in [themselves] a sign that bears witness to a higher reality and points to higher aspirations.”<sup>187</sup>

a. In marital difficulties, in tensions between parents and children, and in dehumanized labor relations a Legionary *accompanies those in painful, sinful and unjust situations* in order to help them

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<sup>184</sup> “It is important to recall that a lack of proper consideration for the charism of a religious community serves neither the good of the particular Church nor that of the religious community itself. Only if a religious community has a well-defined charismatic identity can it integrate itself into an ‘overall pastoral program’ without losing its own character. Indeed, only in this way will it enrich the program with its gift.” (FLC 60).

<sup>185</sup> PDV 18.

<sup>186</sup> PDV 43.

<sup>187</sup> FLC 56.

to experience the power of God's mercy. He helps those who have been healed to help others who are in similar situations.

b. In the *more unfortunate strata of society*, a Legionary strives to help people become the protagonists of their own human development by educating them and by making their family and work environments more dignified, so that they may move forward in building a future for themselves and for their children.

c. In societies with socioeconomic instability, a Legionary works with people in diverse conditions. He promotes a culture of encounter and of mutual giving and receiving; in this way, he fosters conversion of hearts and social harmony in every country.

306. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God" (Matthew 5:9). A Legionary desires to make this beatitude his own. Moved by the Holy Spirit, he strives to live communion with his brothers and to become a builder of peace and unity wherever he is.

## F. Apostolic Dimension

375 307. The apostolic dimension closes this chapter on the dimensions of our formation because it, integrates, animates and gives direction and life to the rest,<sup>188</sup> which culminate and bear fruit in the preparation of the apostle who leads others to a transforming encounter with Christ:

"The priest's mission is not extraneous to his consecration or juxtaposed to it, but represents its intrinsic and vital purpose: Consecration is for mission. In this sense, not only consecration but mission as well is under the seal of the Spirit and the influence of his sanctifying power."<sup>189</sup>

308. Evangelization is an act of obedience to the missionary command of Jesus (Matthew 28:19-20): "[Everyone has] a right to

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<sup>188</sup> See GPV 91.

<sup>189</sup> PDV 24.

receive the Gospel. Christians have the duty to proclaim the Gospel without excluding anyone.”<sup>190</sup> “Without cost you have received; without cost you are to give.” (Matthew 10:8). In the words of Pope Benedict XVI, however, the Church does not engage in proselytism; rather, she grows much more by attraction.<sup>191</sup> The dignity of the human person does not allow for proselytism, which seeks by whatever means to impose faith. Attraction is the fruit of witness of life, which precedes any other formal evangelization: “Indeed, more than in external works, the mission consists in making Christ present to the world through personal witness.”<sup>192</sup>

309. Being an apostle is both a privilege and a source of immense joy. This is only so, however, when the apostle does not flee from sacrifice, for redemptive love is crucified love. No one can be an apostle of the Lord if he is not willing to learn to die every day for others. Saint Paul experienced that his dying gave life to his fellow Christians: “So death is at work in us, but life in you.” (2 Corinthians 4: 12) 345

310. A Legionary is always an apostle and should live all relationships and dealings with others as salvific moments, seeking that all, according to their ability at that specific moment of their lives, may take a step forward toward the good which is Christ.

The Lord works through us whenever we give ourselves with simplicity—at times through a simple gaze of faith, a kind word, a silent prayer, an attentive ear or other such gesture suffices, at other moments through an explicit proclamation of the gospel. What is important is that our dealings with others never be limited to a merely horizontal plane. Rather we should always give off “the aroma of Christ” (see 2 Corinthians 2:15).

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<sup>190</sup> EG 15.

<sup>191</sup> See *Homily for the Inauguration of the Fifth General Conference of the Bishops of Latin America and the Caribbean*, Our Lady of Aparecida, May 13, 2007.

<sup>192</sup> VC 72.

“If something should rightly disturb us and trouble our consciences, it is the fact that so many of our brothers and sisters are living without the strength, light and consolation born of friendship with Jesus Christ, without a community of faith to support them, without meaning and a goal in life.”<sup>193</sup>

- 822 311. This dimension has three objectives. The first is to learn the interior attitudes of Christ toward men, which can be summarized in the image of the good shepherd, an image Jesus used to describe himself. After reflecting on these attitudes, we go on to learn about the practical aspects of Legionary apostolate. Finally, we describe the proper style of the Legion’s apostolic work: an enterprising spirit at the service of the new evangelization, a way in which the Church understands her mission in the third millennium.

### ***1. Forming the priestly heart of the good shepherd***

312. The pastoral charity or apostolic zeal of a Legionary priest—which arises from priestly orders, on the foundation of baptism and confirmation—is nourished by intimate contact with the Heart of Christ, above all in the sacrifice of the Mass, the sacrament of penance, and in prayer. When he finds himself tending toward complacency, human respect, discouragement or activism, he offers these weaknesses to the Lord to be purified and asks for the grace of being a true apostle. In his work of evangelization, he finds help and encouragement in his union with the members of the Body of Christ, above all with the Virgin Mary, Saint Paul, the martyrs and the saints.

313. The aim of this objective is to form our hearts’ attitudes towards others and their needs. Since a Legionary is called to be an apostle of the new evangelization—which has three target groups<sup>194</sup>—he should prepare himself for specialized work with each of them:

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<sup>193</sup> EG 49.

<sup>194</sup> See EG 14.

- a. *Those who already live the faith:* “Ordinary pastoral ministry seeks to help believers to grow spiritually so that they can respond to God’s love ever more fully in their lives.”
- b. *The baptized whose lives do not reflect the demands of Baptism:* “The Church, in her maternal concern, tries to help them experience a conversion which will restore the joy of faith to their hearts and inspire a commitment to the Gospel.”
- c. *Those who do not know Jesus Christ or who have always rejected him,* although “many of them are secretly seeking God.”

314. In other words, it is necessary that each Legionary form himself to place his life and apostolate at the service of the evangelizing mission of the Church, which according to each person’s situation, has three essential phases<sup>195</sup>:

- a. Proclaiming Christ in order to kindle faith (“missionary activity”);
- b. Teaching believers to be disciples (“initial catechetical activity”);
- c. Guiding every person and culture toward the fullness of Christian maturity (“pastoral activity”).

315. “My sheep hear my voice” (John 10:27). The Holy Spirit gives the baptized faithful a certain sensitivity to the voice of Christ the Shepherd that allows them to recognize him acting in his servants. It is a voice that is not reproachful, imposing or vain. Rather, just as the Lord’s, it is one of meekness and humility, goodness and compassion, closeness and availability, with an exigency born of love.

A Legionary’s words reflect this priestly heart when souls find in him someone who welcomes rather than judges them, encourages them to trust in God and regain strength for the journey, and gives them the light of Christian formation and apostolate to walk it,

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<sup>195</sup> *Directory for Catechesis*, Congregation for the Clergy, 1997, 49.

helping them to reach full spiritual maturity according to God's time and one's personal freedom:

“showing the beauty and the demands of the Gospel truth, without falling into legalistic or rigorist obsessions. In this way he will know how to offer pathways of faith with little steps, that can more easily be understood and accepted. Hence he will become a sign of mercy and compassion, witnessing to the motherly face of Church which, without diminishing the demands of the Gospel truth, avoids making millstones of them, leading rather with compassion and including all.”<sup>196</sup>

316. In order for the sheep to hear the voice of the shepherd, it is important not only to acquire the attitudes of the Heart of Christ, but also to make sure that we are understood. It is necessary to enter into the language of the people, without imposing our own language. This requires enculturation and attentiveness to each person. The Word became flesh in order to speak to us in our human language.

317. “I know them, and they follow me.” (John 10:27). Those who are baptized but not practicing their faith follow Christ when they encounter Him and discover that he is alive and knows them personally. A Legionary cares for these people by learning and putting on activities that foster spiritual encounters with Christ and that help bring them from merely believing to being disciples.

318. “I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold” (John 10:16). Those who have never followed Christ and who in life “grope as though it were night” (Job 5:14) are always present in a priest's prayer—both before the Lord in the Eucharist and in the liturgy. He offers to all a relationship of sincere friendship: “Furthermore, if we want to be men's pastors, fathers and teachers, we must also behave as their brothers. Dialogue thrives on friendship.”<sup>197</sup> It is this friendship that allows him to proclaim the faith,

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<sup>196</sup> GPV 120.

<sup>197</sup> ES 87.

either implicitly or explicitly, which each one must receive as a gift from God and accept as a personal response to his Creator.

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319. Being a good shepherd means living the ministry as a service, especially in “readiness to allow oneself to be taken up, as it were ‘consumed,’ by the needs and demands of the flock.”<sup>198</sup> In the words of the Apostle, we are “slaves for the sake of Jesus” (2 Corinthians 4:5).

A true apostle, who has been sent to all people, does not allow himself to be sewn up by an exclusive few. Like Jesus, he zealously guards his freedom to care for his flock. He does not enter into relationships that could hinder his freedom to do his duty as a shepherd (see Ezekiel 3:20), no matter what advantage they may offer.

Living in this way, the joy that a Legionary finds in working with those God has sent him to is healthy and valid, a source of human fulfillment.

## ***2. Learning the art of apostolate: forming oneself to be a formator of apostles and a team player***

320. The second objective in this dimension has to do with the learning the practical aspects of Legionary apostolate. This includes both the necessary abilities to be a formator of apostles, Christian leaders, and the concrete ways of doing it, teamwork.

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321. Regarding the formation of apostles, we are able to see the steps to guiding someone to a salvific encounter in the way Christ himself accompanied the disciples at Emmaus. First, he knew how to respectfully enter their lives and concrete situation. He then gave them room to speak freely, to express what they had in their hearts, while he listened attentively. Next, he helped them leave behind their plans and prejudices and understand their lives in light of the Word of God. Once their hearts were burning with hope, Christ

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<sup>198</sup> PDV 28.

revealed himself to them, giving them a spiritual experience in which their eyes of faith were opened. This led them to joyful proclamation to their brothers, that is, participation in the apostolic mission of the Church and re-integration into the group of apostles.

322. There are several skills that a Legionary needs to develop in order to form others. First is the art of spiritual direction: being able to listen to and know the human heart in order to help others be challenged by the Word of God. The personal attention a Legionary gives to each man and woman who wishes to grow in their faith and put their talents at the service of Christ in the Church allows him to teach each one of them the art of prayer. It also allows him to help them discern and envision their apostolic vocation according to their gifts, qualities and personal inspirations.

Second is the ability to prepare and lead spiritual experiences of conversion and growth such as spiritual exercises, missions of evangelization, pilgrimages and retreats. These are experiences in which souls often change their criteria and open themselves to God.

Finally, a Legionary also prepares himself to work with small groups through activities such as “encounters with Christ,” study circles, and formation talks. It is also important to note that works of apostolate—schools, universities and larger apostolates—are platforms for evangelization, but even within these there must be personal encounters, small groups in which all may participate actively. In these groups, in an atmosphere of shared faith and mutual support, commitment is born.

778,791 323. During initial formation a Legionary should receive the  
794 training necessary to carry out his mission. From the beginning, he should become familiar with *Regnum Christi* and ECYD, and be taught the elements of leading groups and activities.

856,859 During theology, he should focus more intensely on preparing himself for his priestly mission and guiding souls—preaching, spiritual direction, administration of the sacraments, and pastoral work with

families for example. He should be taught the basics of administration and of directing institutions.

324. “The mission is not an individual task, but it belongs to all the members of the community, of the locality, of the territory and of the Movement. It is one mission and not simply a sum of apostolates or individual efforts. In this light, the various apostolates have to be considered part of the shared mission.” (GCC 2014, 57).

Formators should foster teamwork, showing that a group of people united by a common ideal and contributing their unique qualities can do much more than the sum of what each one can accomplish on his own. In a team, one’s duties are not carried out merely as a personal goal, but as a commitment of loyalty to help the entire group reach their objective: “Then, each one, aware of his or her responsibility within the community, is moved to grow, not only for self but for the good of all.”<sup>199</sup>

Teamwork implies various abilities: knowing how to speak and communicate clearly and constructively; contributing one’s initiatives with simplicity and supporting the initiatives of others; knowing how to face conflict and different opinions without becoming overly sensitive and together find better solutions; recognizing that one can learn from others; accepting each others’ limitations; and finally, knowing how to responsibly hold others accountable.

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325. At some point during his apostolate, a Legionary will have to direct a group. This means he will have to know himself well in order to integrate the qualities of those he is leading with his own strengths and weaknesses. In addition, he should develop his ability to assume leadership with a spirit of service, fostering the participation and responsibility of everyone, making the decisions he needs to prudently and without fear, involving others and giving them confidence, empowering them and promoting unity.

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<sup>199</sup> PI 27.

### ***3. Developing an enterprising spirit at the service of the new evangelization***

112 326. The third objective refers to our style of doing apostolate, marked by a healthy urgency, a desire to do more and reach more people as an expression of love for Christ, for the Church, and for mankind. Wherever he finds himself, a Legionary feels called to give himself completely to spreading the Kingdom of Christ. This enterprising spirit penetrates his entire apostolic life, although it manifests itself in different ways according to the potential, talents, assignments and opportunities of each one.

327. This objective harmonizes deeply with the core of the new evangelization that, as John Paul II taught, requires a new passion, new methods and new expressions:

“An evangelization new in ardor presupposes a solid faith, an intense pastoral charity, and a strong faith which, under the action of the Spirit, produces a charisma, an uncontainable enthusiasm in the work of announcing the Gospel [...] On the other hand, these new times demand that the Christian message reach the man of today thorough new methods of apostolate and be expressed in accessible language and expressions.”<sup>200</sup>

378 328. “The children of this world are more prudent in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light” (Luke 16:8). In their apostolate Legionaries let these words of the Lord confront and challenge them, shaking them out of modes of working that are routine, inefficient, outdated. They want to offer to Christ work that shows just the contrary: at least the same amount of prudence, audacity and shrewdness that the worldly put into accomplishing their designs. Legionaries do not stop short of putting at the service of the mission all that is humanly within their power. To begin with, they avoid improvisation and order their work according to a concrete plan, including milestones and a timeline. They are not, therefore, “wicked, lazy servants” (Matthew 25:26).

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<sup>200</sup> *Inaugural Address on the Occasion of the 4th General Conference of the Latin American Episcopate*, John Paul II, October 12, 1992, 10, (Translated from the Original Spanish).

Nevertheless, once they have done their part, they entrust the fruits entirely to God.

“In this regard, we would do well to remember what the great champions of apostolic activity have always taught: we need to trust in God as if everything depended on him and, at the same time, work generously as if everything depended on us.”<sup>201</sup>

329. These attitudes characterize an enterprising spirit:
- a. Magnanimity in setting a vision and goals;
  - b. Initiative and creativity in finding solutions to the challenges of evangelization;
  - c. Seeking to address the most pressing needs of the Church;
  - d. An ability to see difficulties and challenges as opportunities instead of giving into routine, disenchantment or discouragement.

This enterprising spirit does not only express itself in the creation of new works of apostolate. Many times what is needed is an improvement in methodology, tools, knowledge or skill. Thus it is not just laziness that is contrary to this spirit, but also impulsive eagerness, fear, skepticism and the need to be the protagonist, which suffocate the movements of the Holy Spirit in the heart of an apostle.<sup>202</sup>

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<sup>201</sup> VC 73.

<sup>202</sup> See EG 78-86.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FORMATION PROCESS

*Blessed be the Lord, my rock, who trains my hands for battle,  
my fingers for war. (Psalm 144:1)*

330. After having defined in broad terms the dimensions and objectives of formation, it is necessary to reflect on how to instill them. Every educational process requires a pedagogy based on principles that can be applied on a case-by-case basis and that generate an experience. Principles and experience generate a “formative wisdom” which is never stationary but always reaching toward greater fidelity to the charisma and a better response to the needs of the members of the congregation.

331. The different characteristics of the formative process complement and shed light on each other: personalized formation requires formation in relationships; formation based on convictions will be fruitful if it is experiential and gradual; integral formation requires that the rest of the characteristics be present.

It is the responsibility of both the formative community and the individual to apply these characteristics and make them concrete in various circumstances.

#### A. Personalized Formation

332. Human nature is not an abstraction but a concrete reality in every individual.<sup>203</sup> Each person has been thought of by God, called

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<sup>203</sup> “*Homo non subsistit, sed hic homo cui convenit ratio personae*” *Commentary on the Sentences*, Saint Thomas Aquinas, I, 5, 1, 3.

by name (see Exodus 33:12) and considered infinitely valuable in the eyes of his Creator. “Personalized”, as a description of formation, expresses above all the love and respect for the individuality of each person that is shared by God, the congregation, the community, and the formators.

333. This word indicates love and respect for the person for his own sake, with his history of successes, failures and wounds. Everyone should persevere in knowing, accepting and overcoming themselves realistically, aware that in God’s wise and loving hands everything we are can form part of the edifice of holiness, humble and unworthy as it might seem (see Romans 8:28).<sup>204</sup>

334. The formation that the Legion offers seeks to educate—in its etymological sense of “drawing out” the best in each person—helping him to fulfill the loving design for which God has created him, revealed Himself to him throughout his life, called him and sent him out. In this way, personalized formation makes each individual more of a “person” by guiding him to his plenitude according to God’s design. This principle is clearer if we view formation from its results: at the end of initial formation, every religious should be fully a Legionary and fully himself. A single existential horizon  
60 unites person and vocation.

335. Indeed, it is proper to a charism, understood as we have described it, to be incarnated in people, precisely because it is not only an ideal but a gift from God. By embracing and assimilating it consciously, those living a charism both enrich themselves personally and enrich the charism by living it out in a unique way. God does not have in mind an “ideal Legionary” but Legionaries with faces and names, an ideal made flesh which embraces the characteristics of each person.

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<sup>204</sup> See GPV 28 “The task of formation is to help the person to integrate the aspects, [qualities and riches, limits and frailties] under the influence of the Holy Spirit, in a journey of faith and of gradual and harmonious maturity.”

336. Personalized formation is the opposite of generic formation, because it does not force the assimilation of some model, but develops each individual based on his own potential, richness, and limitations—in the person and not despite the person.

337. Personalized formation requires the community since a person grows through relationships. The needs of each person and those of the community create a necessary and fruitful tension. “Therefore, a right balance must be found between the formation of the group and that of each person, between the respect for the time envisioned for each phase of formation and its adaptation to the rhythm of each individual.”<sup>205</sup> 363,460

338. Formators, besides offering light to the mind and motives to the will through their preaching and other formative activities, dedicate the greater portion of their time to personal accompaniment. They should seek to know, help and accompany each religious, starting from his motivations and adapting to his pace, but without making concessions to any mediocrity, for true love seeks the fullness of the loved one. The formators, based on their knowledge of each person, must know how to propose necessary adaptations to the formative itinerary and programs.

## B. Integral Formation

339. “It is characteristic of mature love that it calls into play all man’s potentialities; it engages the whole man, so to speak.”<sup>206</sup> Our formation should integrate and develop all our natural and supernatural gifts, all our limitations and all the personal history in the plan of God for each one of us. No aspect of our humanity can remain marginalized in our formative process. This would result in a burden, a source of interior division and dissatisfaction. 205

“Formation should, therefore, have a profound effect on individuals, so that their every attitude and action, at important moments as well as in

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<sup>205</sup> PI 29.

<sup>206</sup> DCE 17.

the ordinary events of life, will show that they belong completely and joyfully to God. [...] Since the very purpose of consecrated life is conformity to the Lord Jesus in his total self-giving, this must also be the principal objective of formation. If this is the purpose of the consecrated life, the manner of preparing for it should include and express the character of wholeness. Formation should involve the whole person, in every aspect of the personality, in behavior and intentions.”<sup>207</sup>

359,376 340. It is also necessary that formation be a harmonious unity of all the different dimensions so that it may contribute to the unity of life.<sup>208</sup> For this reason, an integral formation is also integrating.

It is not enough to develop each dimension independently. On the contrary, these dimensions ought to be developed in a unified way: a spirituality that enriches action,<sup>209</sup> an apostolic zeal permeated by love and mercy, a doctrinal full of wisdom and simplicity, a human formation informed by a sense of mission, a responsibility in ministry combined with a sense of community life.

341. Integral formation is opposed to an unbalanced and disjointed formation. For example, the Legion does not conceive of priests who cultivate their capacity to deal with others, but are not attentive to their intellectual formation, or who possess a great spirit of prayer, but are unpleasant to be around.

421 342. Just as a spiritual director plays an essential role in forming the interior man, so does the prefect of studies in enlivening and developing an intellectual curiosity, and a mentor in introducing one to the apostolate. It falls to the superior to ensure that all the facets of a Legionary’s life grow in harmony, each without detriment to the others.

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<sup>207</sup> VC 65.

<sup>208</sup> PC 18: “This education must blend its elements together harmoniously so that an integrated life on the part of the religious concerned results.”

<sup>209</sup> EG 83.

### C. Formation Motivated by Love

343. As one's spiritual life progresses, he discovers how much God loves him and is moved to embrace that love. "He loved us first" (1 John 4:19). The recurring memory of the gaze of Jesus enkindles in the heart of a Legionary the desire to correspond with a "real, personal, manly and passionate love" (CLC 3, 1°)—our love is a response to his. 58

344. There are two possible ways of manifesting this love:

"The one, that he in every possible way does good to the object of his love; the other, that he is willing, if need be, to endure terrible things for him and suffer pain. Of the two the latter would seem to be a far greater proof of friendship than the former. Yet it was not possible for God since He is incapable of suffering harm. Since He loves man it was possible for Him to confer benefits on him, yet it was not possible at all for the divine nature to suffer blows. While His affection was exceeding great, yet the sign by which He might make it plain was not available."<sup>210</sup>

345. The consecrated person loves Christ in these two ways: by giving himself and all that he possesses and by accepting the reality of suffering in his own life. "If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me" (Luke 9:23). It is this love, this desire to "come after" Christ that leads us to embrace our cross. 105

"From it flow the sense of asceticism and interior discipline, a spirit of sacrifice and self-denial, the acceptance of hard work and of the cross. These are elements of the spiritual life which often prove to be particularly arduous for many candidates for the priesthood who have grown up in relatively comfortable and affluent circumstances and have been made less inclined and open to these very elements by the models of behavior and ideals transmitted by the mass media; but this also happens in countries where the conditions of life are poorer and young people live in more austere situations."<sup>211</sup>

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<sup>210</sup> *The Life in Christ*, Nicholas Cabasilas, translated from the Greek by Carmino J. de Catanzaro, Saint Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1974, p 163.

<sup>211</sup> PDV 48.

- 24 346. Speaking of the cross, Paul VI desired for religious “something of that ‘foolishness’ which Saint Paul wishes we all had, because it alone makes us wise” (see 1 Corinthians 3:18-19). Immediately after this statement, he reflected on the joy which abnegation leaves within us: “Is there not a mysterious relationship between renunciation and joy, between sacrifice and magnanimity, between discipline and spiritual freedom?”<sup>212</sup>

Asceticism is not an agonizing effort to overcome the tendencies of the old man or to earn God’s love. Rather, it should be seen as an overflow of the life of the new man who, in order not to lose his Beloved and to grow in the necessary freedom to respond to that love, “drives his body and trains it” (see 1 Corinthians 9:27). For asceticism to be fruitful, it must be accompanied by the joy of him  
171 who has found a treasure (see Matthew 13:44) and wishes to protect it.

347. A Legionary, as he goes through life, discovers that the mature fruits of his formation and apostolate come not from his talents and qualities, but from embracing God’s will, letting himself be purified through the circumstances of Providence. From here come humility, authentic interior freedom, fruitfulness and the capacity for selfless love.

“The ‘yes’ to love is a source of suffering, because love always requires expropriations of my ‘I’, in which I allow myself to be pruned and wounded. Love simply cannot exist without this painful renunciation of myself.”<sup>213</sup>

348. A formation motivated by love is different from one based on feelings. When fatigue and struggles arrive, feelings become insufficient as the foundation of a vocation to love. It is also opposed to a formation oriented simply towards formal observance of one’s duty and the law.

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<sup>212</sup> ET 29.

<sup>213</sup> SS 38.

349. A concrete application of this formative aspect that superiors should live by is the principle *suaviter in forma, fortiter in re*, taken from the description of divine Wisdom (see Wisdom 8:1). The formator should not take from the religious entrusted to his care the cross that Christ lovingly offers him. For example, he should not diminish or hide from him the demands of his vocation. However, the superior should be for him a reflection of the joy, kindness and meekness of Christ, whose yoke is easy and burden light (see Matthew 11:30). 412

True love understands a person even when they fail. One cannot demand from another without understanding their heart, and neither can one truly understand another without expecting the best from them. Truly challenging someone requires understanding their heart, and truly understanding requires expecting the best from them.

#### **D. Formation Based on Convictions**

350. Human dignity demands that each person “act out of conscious and free choice, as moved and drawn in a personal way from within.”<sup>214</sup> In formation, it is easy to fall into the mistake of wanting to jump immediately to attitudes and behaviors without sufficiently interiorizing the convictions or maturing in the decisions that sustain the process of formation and make it personal. 120

351. Experience shows that in the measure in which someone loves God’s will, is fascinated by it and makes its values his own, he will resolutely embrace this process and persevere in it with internal and external coherence. The convictions of a Legionary cannot remain mere truths: he must value them and want them with all his strength until even his feelings resonate with this longing.

“Doing what is right means more than ‘judging what seems best’ or knowing clearly what needs to be done, as important as this is. Often we prove inconsistent in our own convictions, however firm they may be;

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<sup>214</sup> AL 267.

even when our conscience dictates a clear moral decision, other factors sometimes prove more attractive and powerful. We have to arrive at the point where the good that the intellect grasps can take root in us as a profound affective inclination, as a thirst for the good that outweighs other attractions and helps us to realize that what we consider objectively good is also good ‘for us’ here and now. A good ethical education includes showing a person that it is in his own interest to do what is right. Today, it is less and less effective to demand something that calls for effort and sacrifice, without clearly pointing to the benefits which it can bring.”<sup>215</sup>

352. We root our behaviors in convictions just as Mary did, by “keeping all these things and reflecting on them in [our] heart” (see Luke 2:19). It is necessary to ponder in our hearts the truths that sustain us in life until we are awestruck, captivated and seduced by the goodness and beauty of God, of his Kingdom and of the predilection he had for us by offering us the possibility of being friends of Christ (see John 15:14) and of imitating his life more closely through the evangelical counsels.

353. Formation based on convictions is different from formation based on environment. The latter is a passive process in which the people one is with or the stage of life one is in are the only things that mark its progression: nothing is interiorized. Rather, human as we are, for a value to attract us it is necessary to apply our understanding, will and affectivity daily to perceive more and more the richness of the vision Christ presents to us. Only in this way can the purification of our desires take place—from those of sick men to those of men healed by grace.

354. As we grow in age it is necessary to continue pondering our interior convictions in our hearts and to discover in them new depth, new facets, and new demands.

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<sup>215</sup> AL 265.

355. The formators play a role in forming convictions by enlightening the consciences of those being formed, keeping in mind that “we have been called to form consciences, not to replace them.”<sup>216</sup> For this reason they should remember that in the Legion, instructions should be accompanied by motives and explanations that help the person being formed to understand the value behind the instructions and to embrace what is asked of him with his understanding and will.

### **E. Experiential Formation**

356. Experiential formation is closely linked to formation based on convictions. Many times, it is an experience that forges convictions and allows one to see that a lesson is true and valuable. This principle has a circular character: convictions lead to concrete experiences which, once interiorized, enlighten and strengthen the convictions themselves.

357. The traditional “tests” of religious life are significant experiences that allow religious in formation to see the degree of coherence between how they live and what they profess to be. The challenges of everyday life offer many opportunities for this, such as: humbly letting oneself be accompanied; working on a team; living religious discipline; applying oneself seriously to studies; being available for simple tasks; caring for the sick and the elderly; enduring setbacks without complaint; and mortifying one’s whims and preferences.

Apostolic internship and other moments of apostolate can also be considered “tests”. They are often moments of intense growth where one comes to better understand his capabilities, motivations and limitations.

358. An experience becomes formative when it helps us to grow in our identity as sons of God. Not all experiences are formative. For an experience to bear fruit and become meaningful, we must

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<sup>216</sup> AL 37.

consciously interiorize it—reflecting on it, taking it to prayer, and letting ourselves be formed by it.

A religious in formation should share his experiences with his formator, who accompanies and guides him so that they bear fruit in his soul. The formator should help the religious raise his own questions about them and then encourage him to find his own answers.

212 359. Experiential formation facilitates integral formation. Integral formation calls for the person to form himself in each of his dimensions—not separately but as a harmonious whole. Formation based on experiences that have been reflected on and prayed about brings all the dimensions of the person into play: intelligence, will and affections; convictions, attitudes and behaviors.

360. Experiences add a practical dimension to an otherwise theoretical process. Formation that does not focus on experiences simply passes on principles, tenets and stock phrases without requiring the person to confront the real difficulties of life.

265 We can see the fruits of experiential formation, for example, in our preaching. Everything we experience can inform our preaching, and preaching from experience allows us to speak of Jesus from the heart.

361. The formator should keep in mind that whatever he wishes to teach—such as love for Christ: poor, chaste, and obedient, or love for one’s neighbor—he must present as a value to be interiorized and an experience to be lived. It is not enough, for example, to study Christ’s poverty without also experiencing that poverty. The formator should also accompany the religious, helping him to reflect on and embrace all of life’s lessons—the joyful and the sorrowful, the simple and the transcendent, those of success and those of failure. This habit allows the religious to discern the interior movements caused by his different experiences and to let himself be formed by God through all that he lives. One “experience” that

can be particularly fruitful in the life of a religious is the personal relationship that his superior forms with him. 410-412

## F. Formation in Relationship

362. “Human persons are created in the image of God in order to enjoy personal communion with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and with one another in them.”<sup>217</sup> Since communion is the vocation of all human beings, we cannot understand man except in relation to God and other men. Formation is efficacious in the measure that it focuses on the relationships that bring about communion.<sup>218</sup> 7

- a. *With God* in the intimacy of prayer, the sacraments, the Word of God, the experience of the multifaceted beauty of the Church; and in the events through which God speaks to us and forms us. 11
- b. *With the community* in the experience of belonging and being supported, and in the witness of fraternal love.
- c. *With others*: the people we meet in our work, the saints and the greatest teachers of every era.
- d. *With oneself* by recognizing one’s own talents through contact with others; by acknowledging the richness and limitations stemming from one’s personal, family, and Legionary history; and by understanding that on our own we cannot grow, that we are made to love and be loved.

363. Formation in relationship always involves seeking to encounter others: our formators, the brothers in our community, the people in the apostolate and, above all, God. Indeed, learning is always more meaningful, with a greater impact on our lives, when the focus is on others rather than ourselves.

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<sup>217</sup> *Communion and Stewardship: Human Persons Created in the Image of God*, International Theological Commission, 2004, 4.

<sup>218</sup> GPV 50: “Formation comes about every day through interpersonal relationships,” in exchanging and confronting experiences.

Any dimension of our formation that we don't work at within a formative relationship runs the risk of becoming disembodied and egocentric, and thus, barren.

364. This emphasis also allows formation to be experiential, since it opens us to other perspectives and ways of benefiting from common formative experiences. Indeed, any authentic relationship based on our religious and priestly identity is an opportunity to form ourselves and to let ourselves be formed. Desiring to help and let himself be helped by others, a Legionary learns from everyone he encounters on his path. He knows that he is a gift to others and others are a gift to him.

47 365. Formation in relationship is contrary to individualistic formation, which, by placing all its interest on personal progress, can become self-referential and cause him to use others for his own benefit. It can even lead to attitudes of rivalry and jealousy so contrary to the *esprit de corps* which characterizes the Legion.

274 366. Formators should not limit themselves to teaching how to concretely live out the different aspects of relationships. Rather, they should help the religious discover the value and the beauty of diversity, and that in encountering others, we discover more and more who we are.

A Legionary's relationships with the other members of the Movement—Consecrated Men, Consecrated Women and lay members—as well as his participation in the life of the sections, works and apostolates are important in all stages of formation. Similarly, he should give his relationship with the local Church its due attention.

## G. Gradual Formation

617 367. The Holy Spirit—the love of God poured into the heart of each religious—has a certain way and a certain rhythm with each

person and knows the time each one takes to mature. Thus, formation is gradual: it progressively roots itself in the soul and forges attitudes and behaviors. Formators, as they accompany religious in formation, should verify their continual assimilation of the values of Legionary life.

368. We find an example of the process of gradual formation in the book of Proverbs. At the beginning of formation, a person's dependence on his instructor in the faith is critical: "my son, if you receive my words and treasure my commands..." This arouses interest and an initial openness of soul to grace: "turning your ear to wisdom, inclining your heart to understanding..." A personal desire and an active search for the things of God follows: "yes, if you call for intelligence, and to understanding raise your voice..." On this road he finds a true passion and an ardent desire for Love, a desire such as what worldly men have for the things of this earth: "if you seek her like silver, and like hidden treasures search her out..." The mature fruit of this process is described thus: "Then will you understand the fear of the Lord; the knowledge of God you will find." (Proverbs 2:1-5)

369. Gradual formation allows one to build on rock; it is opposed to a formation without solid foundations (see Matthew 7:27). The gradual reduction of formative interventions over the course of their formation should lead religious to a greater sense of personal responsibility in organizing their daily lives because the desire they have for "knowledge" of and intimacy with the Lord gradually matures in their hearts. For this reason, the rules, while defining the proper discipline and schedule, should reflect this principle.

370. The formator is encouraged to follow the principles of "*hacer hacer*" and "*dejar hacer*." He should trust the religious and give them space to exercise real responsibility, all the while remaining close by to encourage them in triumph and support them in failure. Giving someone the freedom to do something is more important than making sure it is done well at any cost or trying to keep them

from experiencing failure.

Just as God is patient, so should the formator should be as he accompanies each religious in his process of maturing and harmonizes different paces of growth within the community.

## 864-871 **H. Ongoing Formation**

371. Commitment to formation should encompass the entire life of the members of the Congregation; it should not be limited to just the initial stages. Formation is ongoing because “the consecrated person can never claim to have completely brought to life the ‘new creature’ who, in every circumstance of life, reflects the very mind of Christ.”<sup>219</sup>

Thus, we can apply these words of Saint Paul to our path of formation: “It is not that I have already taken hold of it or have already attained perfect maturity, but I continue my pursuit in hope that I may possess it, since I have indeed been taken possession of by Christ Jesus. Brothers, I for my part do not consider myself to have taken possession. Just one thing: forgetting what lies behind but straining forward to what lies ahead, I continue my pursuit toward the goal, the prize of God’s upward calling, in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 3:12-14)

865 372. The opposite of ongoing formation is stagnation, a life of mediocrity. A life not going forward is a life going backward. Another enemy of ongoing formation is stubbornness, entrenching ourselves in our own way of doing things or in a “that’s just the way I am” mentality without allowing ourselves to be questioned by anybody about anything. God never stops seeking to encounter us, to surprise us with his gifts and the unexpected challenges that draw us closer to him.

“No one can be over-confident and live in self-sufficient isolation. At no stage of life can people feel so secure and committed that they do not need to give careful attention to ensuring perseverance in faithfulness;

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<sup>219</sup> VC 69.

just as there is no age at which a person has completely achieved maturity. Initial formation, then, should be closely connected with continuing formation, thereby creating a readiness on everyone's part to let themselves be formed every day of their lives."<sup>220</sup>

373. Thus, a Legionary must let himself be formed by life, for his whole life, in order to be totally conformed to Christ and to embrace, guard and develop the great gift of his vocation until death. This attitude of openness and flexibility—a presupposition of ongoing formation—should be developed and tested from the first stages of initial formation.<sup>221</sup>

374. While ongoing formation should be a personal attitude of each Legionary, the Congregation also offers institutional means for the different stages of life.

## I. Formation for the Mission

375. “The entire formation of a Legionary should have an apostolic orientation and be directed to proclaiming Christ and his message.” (CLC 100) Legionaries should always live “in mission” through their prayer, fraternal life, studies, testimony and apostolic action itself, “so that their whole lives may be penetrated by an apostolic spirit and their apostolic work with contemplation.”<sup>222</sup>

376. The fact that “the mission guides, unifies and determines the formative process” (GCC 2014, 141) means that the different dimensions of formation must be permeated and guided by this sense of mission and directed to this apostolic end. We must not only form ourselves to *do* apostolate, but to *be* passionate apostles of Christ. 307

377. Forming oneself for the mission means becoming capable of forming the men and women of today into disciples and apostles 322

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<sup>220</sup> VC 69.

<sup>221</sup> See GPV 56.

<sup>222</sup> VC 9.

of Christ—helping them to live out the commitments of their baptismal calling to the full, as faithful children of the Church. In the words of the Constitutions, Legionaries care for “the spiritual growth, the integral formation and the apostolic outreach of men and women, including Regnum Christi members, who are called to develop and exercise their leadership at the service of Jesus.” (see CLC 4, 1°)

378. Formation for the mission also requires constant attention to the opportunities that the Holy Spirit opens up to the message of Christ in the world of today, always considering what the men of our time need, with the goal of undertaking “the actions that most contribute in depth and extent to building up the Kingdom of Christ in society and in this way respond to the needs of the universal and local Church.” (CLC 4, 2°)

“Religious are called to discover the methods most suited to the needs of the different social groups and various professional categories, so that the light of Christ will penetrate all sectors of society and the leaven of salvation will transform society from within, fostering the growth of a culture imbued with Gospel values.”<sup>223</sup>

379. If formation is not oriented toward the mission, religious can become apathetic or vain. Saint Paul’s words about knowledge can be applied to any kind of growth, be it human, intellectual or spiritual, that does not seek the good of mankind: “knowledge inflates with pride, but love builds up” (1 Corinthians 8:1).

638 380. One formation principle that superiors can apply here is the discernment of personal gifts. Unleashing the missionary spirit and drive that formation has to offer requires starting with the talents that God has given each religious for the enrichment of the common charism.<sup>224</sup>

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<sup>223</sup> VC 98.

<sup>224</sup> “Individual religious, too, certainly possess personal gifts, which without doubt usually come from the Spirit. They are intended for the enrichment, development and

To this end, and as a means of testing and growth in personal maturity, there should always be opportunities for apostolate in direct contact with people during the initial stages of formation.

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rejuvenation of the life of the institute, in the unity of the community and in giving proof of renewal.” MR 12.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### AGENTS AND INTERMEDIARIES OF FORMATION

*For he commands his angels with regard to you  
to guard you wherever you go. (Psalm 91:11)*

381. A Legionary is not alone on his journey. God, who says, “I will be with you” (Exodus 3:12), is also the main author of the holiness of his chosen ones. “Those he predestined he also called; and those he called he also justified; and those he justified he also glorified” (Romans 8:30). He does this through intermediaries that he himself has instituted, principally the formators, but also the community, the Rule of Life, and the traditions that shape the Legionary way of life and reflect the charism. With the help of these intermediaries, a Legionary strives to unravel the meaning of his life experiences, through which he lets God challenge him.

#### A. God, the Formator Par Excellence

382. “God the Father, through the unceasing gift of Christ and the Spirit, is the educator par excellence of those who consecrate themselves to him.”<sup>225</sup> 10

“Since the initiative for religious consecration is in the call of God, it follows that God himself, working through the Holy Spirit of Jesus, is the first and principal agent in the formation of the religious. He acts through his word and sacraments, through the prayer of the liturgy, the magisterium of the Church and, more immediately, through those who

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<sup>225</sup> VC 66.

are called in obedience to help the formation of their brothers in a more special way.”<sup>226</sup>

- 150 383. “You are indeed Holy, O Lord, the fount of all holiness.”<sup>227</sup> Only he, the Holy One, can sanctify—he imparts to us the grace, gifts and virtues that transform our hearts and make them resemble the heart of Christ.

384. “Your hands made me and fashioned me” (Psalm 119:73). This image from the Psalms illustrates the work of creation and sanctification which God the Father carries out with his “hands:” the Son and the Holy Spirit. “Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand” (Jeremiah 18:6). In this expression we can feel the heartbeat of God’s love for man, and the trust and surrender to his plan which he wishes to inspire in us.<sup>228</sup>

The incarnate Son of God is the model and path of our lives. The Holy Spirit, as the divine craftsman, recreates in each Legionary the traits of the Son in a profoundly unique way.

385. God, the Lord of history, walks alongside us throughout the brief span of our life. For this reason, a constant “remembrance,” discovering God’s presence in our personal history, is key in every stage of formation, as it was for the people of Israel. This implies not just recalling past events, but examining their meaning in light of God’s constant presence in our lives. By discovering how God accompanied us in the past we also discover how he acts in the today of our life.

## 620 B. The Legionary, Responsible for his Formation

386. “God is the one who, for his good purpose, works in you both to desire and to work” (Philemon 2:13). He, who is present

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<sup>226</sup> EE 47.

<sup>227</sup> *Roman Missal*, Eucharistic Prayer II.

<sup>228</sup> “And therefore throughout all time, man, having been molded at the beginning by the hands of God, that is, of the Son and of the Spirit, is made after the image and likeness of God.” *Against Heresies*, Saint Irenaeus of Lyons, 5:28:4 (PG 7bis:1200C).

with his grace, who precedes and accompanies our actions in every good desire, thought and endeavor, does not want to bring anything to its conclusion without our free, generous, mature and responsible collaboration. This principle of personal responsibility and of the primacy of grace is called *self-formation*.

387. For a Legionary, self-formation implies above all else an active search for God's will through spiritual discernment carried out under the guidance of the Holy Spirit:

“This discreet but decisive presence of the Spirit of God demands two fundamental attitudes: humility, which makes one resign oneself to the wisdom of God; and the knowledge and practice of spiritual discernment.”<sup>229</sup>

388. The search for God's will in life's circumstances requires several dispositions:

a. *Theological attentiveness*, in the light of Sacred Scripture, the Constitutions and God's constant providential working in every moment and circumstance.

b. “*Indifference*” to creatures in order to find God in all things and choose the means that best lead us to our end.<sup>230</sup>

c. *Availability* “to be formed by everyday life, by their own community, by their brothers and sisters, by everyday things, ordinary and extraordinary, by prayer and by apostolic fatigue, in joy and in suffering, until the moment of death.”<sup>231</sup>

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d. *Openness*, with humility, maturity and trust to those God has given to accompany, help and guide us.

e. *Trust* in the love and power of God, in all his intermediaries and in oneself. In this way, we will be able to respond with a magnanimous and joyful heart, amidst our own limitations and

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<sup>229</sup> PI 19.

<sup>230</sup> *Spiritual Exercises*, Saint Ignatius of Loyola, 23.

<sup>231</sup> SaC 15.

external difficulties, while we clothe ourselves with Christ day by day.

244 f. *Responsibility*: taking advantage of the challenges of life to deepen in our convictions, affirm our definitive choices and make use of the means at hand.

221 389. Discernment, to be authentic and not merely an excuse to follow one's likes according to premade decisions, requires a well-formed conscience and interior freedom from both disordered attachments and one's own desires—even the holiest ones—in order to sincerely embrace God's will.<sup>232</sup>

212 390. Discerning well and embracing God's will leads to greater consistency between who one is and what one professes to be, and to fidelity and responsibility in fulfilling one's obligations to God, the Church, the Legion and others. This plants in the soul the joy of Christ and bears the seal of the audacity of the Holy Spirit.

391. The Legionary, in his task of forming himself to become a priest of God in the Church, cannot be less generous than the layman who takes on his educational, family or professional commitments with seriousness, responsibility and breadth of vision. With this in mind, he takes ownership of the work of his formation with astuteness, order and method without becoming disheartened by the difficulties.

### C. The Church, Mother and Teacher

48-50 392. A Legionary's whole life, as well as his formation, is lived within the Church, in filial adherence to the teachings and norms of the Magisterium of the Pope and of the Bishops in communion with him (See CLC 14).

393. The Church's work as teacher extends far beyond doctrine and discipline, since it is the whole life of the Church that teaches

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<sup>232</sup> See GPV 43.

with its moments of sadness and grace, with its ordinary and extraordinary events—canonizations, synods, jubilees, special years—with the variety and richness of its rites and charisms, with its new pastoral approaches and the paths which the Holy Spirit opens to her.

394. For this reason, during the first years of formation a Legionary learns to grow in his love for the Church, to feel and act with her, not as a restriction of his possibilities but as a widening of his heart to the breadth of her horizons. “They should learn to take part with a generous heart in the life of the whole Church in accord with what Saint Augustine wrote: “to the extent that one loves the Church of Christ, to that extent does he possess the Holy Spirit.”<sup>233</sup>

395. The Congregation spares no effort to make at least a part of a Legionary’s formation be spent in the city of Rome, in order for them to experience the universality of the Church and live close to the Vicar of Christ (See CLC 206 §2). 79

Time spent in the Eternal City is a wonderful occasion to grow in love for the Pope and in *sensus Ecclesiae*. There we grow in knowledge of the Church’s universality and her situation throughout the world; there we encounter her in the multiplicity of charisms, rites and realities that enrich her; there our eyes are opened to her beauty, the beauty of our Mother, the Church.

396. Formators should constantly promote knowledge and discussion of current themes in the Church throughout the world, fostering Saint Paul’s “*sollicitudo omnium ecclesiarum*” (2 Corinthians 11:28) in the religious’ prayer, study and zeal for their formation. 303

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<sup>233</sup> OT 9; *Treatise on Saint John*, Saint Augustine, 32:8 (PL 35:1646).

## D. The Blessed Virgin Mary, Model and Formator of Consecrated Souls

74 397. Mary is the human “mold of God” in which God’s Son became incarnate.”<sup>234</sup> She is still the instrument that the Holy Spirit uses to cast Christ in men, making them sons in the Son. For this reason, Legionaries often visit her and speak with her. Her virginal and motherly influence, her prayer and her pure gaze help us always be better images of Christ.

494 398. “Among all persons consecrated unreservedly to God, she is the first.”<sup>235</sup> Mary’s whole life is the most perfect image of what it means to consecrate oneself to God. A Legionary feels a deep need for her, the fruitful Virgin that forms fruitful celibate hearts. For this reason she has the singular title of Mother of consecrated souls and priests.

399. Mary is the Mother of the Church because she gave birth to the Church’s Head, the Son of God, and for giving birth a second time, at the foot of the cross, to the Body of Christ. At the first birth, Saint Joseph, a chaste man, was at her side as witness of the first fruits of salvation. At the second, Saint John, the celibate apostle and priest of her Son, was at her side. Mary sees the reflection of these two men in every Legionary and so takes them into her Immaculate heart.

400. In these two births, suffering and the joy of new life were joined. In every consecrated life, though begun with joy, the cross presents itself and along with it the temptation to flee, falling into the sadness of false compensations and sterility. Our Lady of Sorrows encourages us with her example; she leads us as a firm yet kind shepherdess to the cross of Christ. Mary is thus, in the order of grace, the one who transforms a celibate man into a husband and father here at the foot of the cross. There, the renouncement of

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<sup>234</sup> *Sermon on the Assumption of Mary*, Saint Augustine, 208, (PL 39, 2131).

<sup>235</sup> *Redemptionis Donum*, Apostolic Exhortation, John Paul II, 1984, 17.

fatherhood, the sacrifice of *eros*, and the heaviness of loneliness are transformed into the fullness of spiritual fruitfulness, the magnificent burgeoning of the capacity to love and the experience of joyful intimacy with the Lord.

## E. The Formators

### *Profile of a formator*

401. “The spirit of the risen Jesus is made present and active by means of a set of ecclesial mediations. The whole of the religious tradition of the Church attests to the decisive character of the role of educators for the success of the work of formation.”<sup>236</sup> A Legionary does not stand alone before the challenge of his formation. God has placed “more mature brothers and sisters by the side of those whom he calls”<sup>237</sup> as human mediators offering him their example, light and support in responding to their call to holiness, communion and apostolate.

The term “formators” includes those that move in the domain of the conscience (spiritual director, confessor) and those that act in the external forum. Superiors and rectors have an eminently formative role, along with the governing duty of that Canon Law assigns to them. Therefore, every superior is also a formator and is considered as such in this *Ratio*.

402. Being a formator is a demanding and hidden apostolate, at times without many rewards or tangible consolations, yet of immeasurable importance.

403. The Church has grown in the awareness that being a formator “requires on the one hand a certain ‘charism’ which is expressed in gifts of nature and grace and, on the other, certain capacities and

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<sup>236</sup> PI 30.

<sup>237</sup> VC 66.

aptitudes that must be acquired”<sup>238</sup> through specific training and constant updating that provides them with the “needed human, spiritual, pastoral and professional abilities and resources.”<sup>239</sup>

662 Formators should possess at least a basic knowledge of psychology, such as personality and character traits, developmental psychology, and the crises proper to different of stages of life. They should be able to determine which problems require the help of a professional in the field. If they have a degree in psychology, they should carefully avoid helping the same person both as a therapist and as a formator.

404. Legionary formators should be joyful, mature and well-rounded people in whom a young man can see “the beauty of following Christ and the value of the charism by which this is accomplished”<sup>240</sup> and who help each religious live in constantly renewed fidelity to the call of the Spirit.<sup>241</sup> They should be intuitive and welcoming, humble and even-tempered, men of prayer, with the gift of spiritual discernment, who deeply love their Legionary vocation. Formators, even while sincerely seeking Christ, are not flawless, and as such remain engaged in his own ongoing formation.

405. Legionaries called to the ministry of formation should acknowledge it as a deeply priestly vocation in which they exercise in an eminent way the *tria munera Christi: teaching*, since they “should also offer religious solid nourishment, both doctrinal and practical,”<sup>242</sup> *governing* religious in formation “as sons of God” (CLC 36 §2) by aiding them in their spiritual growth, by decision-making and by giving their opinion during the admissions process; *sanctifying*, through the sacraments, the Word of God, intercessory prayer and personal sacrifice for those that have been entrusted to them. Being

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<sup>238</sup> *Directives Concerning the Preparation of Seminary Educators*, Congregation for Catholic Education, 1993, 25.

<sup>239</sup> GPV 49.

<sup>240</sup> VC 66.

<sup>241</sup> See SaC 14.

<sup>242</sup> PI 30.

a formator is a God-given opportunity to grow spiritually and personally through self-giving to others.

*The mission of formation and personal accompaniment*

406. Formation does not consist only in conveying knowledge, but in inspiring others through personal example, by motivating and encouraging them with one's life, "Like an eagle that stirs up its nest" (Deuteronomy 32:11),<sup>243</sup> to seek the heights of holiness and the farthest reaches of apostolate. Therefore, "institutional" means, such as formation review or conferences, are not the only means of formation. Formators form with their very person, by sharing in day-to-day life—in conversations, in the common tasks, on the apostolate—in joys and sufferings, and in the ordinary and extraordinary. They should strive to assimilate the words of Saint Paul: "be imitators of me, as I am of Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1).

407. As mediators, formators place Christ the only Teacher at the center of the formative relationship, not themselves. They should constantly shape the criteria of those in formation in light of Sacred Scripture, Tradition, the Magisterium of the Church, the Constitutions and the signs of the times, while renewing their awareness that the Lord is the protagonist of their work. Their intercessory prayer (see CLC 216 §1, 1°) is essential in helping each religious move forward, especially those who are going through a difficult time or are not entirely open to the action of grace. Finally, they should pray for themselves, begging daily for the virtues of prudence, fortitude and charity that should sustain their work as formators.

408. The formators should follow, in a personalized way, the development of each Legionary, making sure that those under their care achieve the goals of each stage of formation and make objective progress in the practice of the evangelical counsels and other virtues. They value and acknowledge effort and accomplishments,

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<sup>243</sup> TN: Revised Standard Version.

give counsel and respond to any concerns, guide in times of confusion, encourage and strengthen in times of difficulty, opportunely correct, and foster participation, initiative and the collaboration of all. Formators should strive to help each Legionary take ownership of his formation—neither doing everything themselves nor leaving aside their responsibility as formator.

Regular formation review is a fundamental way for formators to offer personalized attention and guide each religious' integral formation, taking stock of the progress and difficulties in the different dimensions of formation, and of the over-all harmony of personal growth.

At the same time, the formators lead the community with a plan of integral formation that they faithfully and creatively put into practice following the principles established in this *Ratio*, making sure that the religious have the necessary human and spiritual support that they need in each stage.<sup>244</sup>

409. The critical mission of the formators can be correctly described as “accompaniment” since it consists in being “companions along the way” of those entrusted to them. They do this through deep and meaningful personal relationships, striving to help each religious integrate his faith with his daily life; find supernatural meaning in ordinary happenings; and discover, accept and embrace the will of God with ever-growing consistency and responsibility. For this accompaniment to be deep and effective, their knowledge of each person should not only include the different aspects of his personality, but all dimensions of his person, including his personal story, his family and his social background.

#### *Traits of the formative relationship*

410. Formators can only adequately accompany those in formation and guide them in their search for God's will if they know

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<sup>244</sup> In houses of apostolate, the community program should include elements of ongoing formation.

each one and let themselves be known by the religious: “I am the good shepherd, and I know mine and mine know me” (John 10:14). The word “knowing” implies, on behalf of the formators, “loving” and “laying down their life,” and on behalf of those in formation, “trusting” and “entrusting oneself to another.”

This process is based on a relationship of mutual trust, and is built day-by-day, like any relationship, through thoughtful gestures, interest in the other, gratitude and deference, talking through misunderstandings and forgiving when needed. This relationship calls not just for natural understanding, but for faith that looks past the limitations of the formator to see the hand of God.

411. The Legion thankfully acknowledges that one of God’s most striking gifts to the Legion is the spirit of trusting closeness that imbues the relationship between formators and those in formation. This relationship is also marked by gratitude, cordiality and mutual respect on the part of those in formation, which shine forth in supernatural deference toward the ones who in some way make God’s fatherly care present to him. This deference is not distant, nor does it inhibit the religious’ ability to speak about his problems, worries, hopes, questions, achievements and joys. 437

Few attitudes are so harmful in preparing for religious and priestly life as seeing a formator only as a supervisor with whom to have a carefully crafted relationship. This is far from the relationship that Christ had with his heavenly Father.

412. The formator should strive to build authentic formative relationships with the religious under his care. Beyond fulfilling certain functions or duties, he is “a man of God, a teacher, a father, a friend and a brother who is able to welcome, listen, understand and above all reach out to a soul in need” (CLC 216 §2). This relationship is solidly rooted in sincere love, which leads him to lay down his life for another without looking for anything in return: “I will lay down my life for the sheep” (John 10:15). Because of this love, a formator also knows how to demand as a father and guide for his 315

brothers. This love also allows him to appreciate the work God is carrying out in each heart in spite of possible weakness and imperfection.

“My sheep hear my voice; I know them, and they follow me” (John 10:27). The Legion understands that formation structures and plans yield the best results when authentic formative relationships are established. The Legion is convinced that we learn to love when we experience love and we are able to respond when the word we hear touches us interiorly.

### **1. Major superiors**

413. Major superiors hold the ultimate responsibility over the formation in the institute. According to their proper competencies, they appoint the superiors, rectors, spiritual directors and other formators; they oversee the houses of formation and apostolate; and they promote the implementation of this *Ratio*.

414. As the ultimate authority in approving admission to vows and holy orders, they rely on reports from those directly involved in the formation of the religious, and maintain the proper detachment that allows for impartial judgment. When needed, they personally interview the religious.

403 415. They are charged with “training suitable directors of formation”<sup>245</sup> both in the medium and long term, so that assignments to these positions are not improvised. They should prepare, as much as possible, spiritual, doctrinal and pedagogical training plans, tailored to each future formator, according to the position that will be entrusted to him.

They should also assure that the local superiors and formators do not get involved in other responsibilities that prevent them from properly fulfilling their main role (CLC 216 §1, 4<sup>o</sup>).

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<sup>245</sup> VC 66.

416. The general director, in person or assisted by one of the general councilors, looks after the formation of Legionaries as one of his priorities (see CLC 148 §2, 1°). During his visits to the territories, he should show particular interest to the houses of formation. 913

417. The territorial director should see the houses of formation as a treasure. Therefore, in addition to making the canonical visitation (see CLC 186 §3) and approving the annual formation programs, he should try to be present often, live with the community when he can, and share his experiences, vision, plans and hopes with the members. Moreover, he should organize territorial gatherings in the houses of formation and encourage the priests to visit and keep in touch with the houses of formation. 914

418. The territorial directors promote ongoing formation initiatives for the priests, and care in a special way for the young priests and interns. 868

419. It is the territorial director's responsibility to make sure that the territory has a safe environments coordinator who oversees periodic safe environment training for all Legionaries, including those who work mainly with adults or in the academic and administrative fields. Providing theoretical and practical training in safe environment behaviors builds an atmosphere of trust between the priest and those he ministers to, and greatly benefits the mission (see CN 13; GCC 2014, 209-211).

## ***2. Rectors, directors of novices and assistants in the houses of formation***

420. The future of the Congregation—the novices and young religious for whom the Lord feels a special love—is entrusted to the rectors and the directors of novices.

421. These priests, working as a team with their assistants, are directly responsible for the formation of the novices and religious.

“Under the rector’s leadership, all the formators, are to form a very closely knit community both in spirit and in activity and they are to constitute among themselves and with the students that kind of family that will answer to the Lord’s prayer ‘that they be one’ (see John 17:11).”<sup>246</sup>

- 14 422. Their mission is to help form religious priests, not in the abstract, but as Legionaries of Christ:

“The work of formation as a whole is the fruit of the collaboration between those responsible for formation and their disciples. If it remains true that the disciple assumes a large part of the responsibility for his or her own formation, still this responsibility can only be exercised within a specific tradition, that of the institute, for which those responsible for formation are the witnesses and immediate exponents.”<sup>247</sup>

- 464 423. The team of formators, especially the director of novices or rector, should exercise leadership and initiative, fostering what most helps the novices and religious and creating a formative environment of excellence which should be constantly maintained and improved. They should keep in mind that “religious in formation should be able to find a spiritual atmosphere, an austerity of life, and an apostolic enthusiasm within their community, which are conducive to their following Christ according to the radicalism of their consecration.”<sup>248</sup>

Aiming for greater unity and incisiveness in the formation, the director of novices and rector should interact closely with the prefect of studies and the spiritual directors. The spiritual directors should keep confidential whatever their directees tell them. The formators, however, may share with the spiritual directors their perspective on the formative process of each religious.

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<sup>246</sup> OT 5.

<sup>247</sup> PI 32.

<sup>248</sup> PI 27.

*a. The director of novices and his assistants*

424. The director of novices stands at the beginning of one's path in the Congregation. Called to exercise special spiritual fatherhood, he combines the functions—in the external forum and the internal non-sacramental forum—of the formators in other stages. It is up to him to wisely introduce the novices to religious life, as a good architect building on each one's particular situation; "the first requirement for this formation is the ability to identify a human and Christian foundation with a particular person. Numerous failures in religious life can, in effect, be attributed to defects that were not perceived, or overcome, in this area."<sup>249</sup> 723

425. The director's work consists of introducing the novices to the interior life, the art of prayer and its methods, teaching them to value and enjoy the things of God, and to the spirit of the Congregation (see CLC 79). He does this personally and with the help of his assistants. Together they encourage the novices to live their day inspired by the fervent desire and firm resolve to know, love and imitate Christ (see CLC 81) in his absolute and unconditional surrender to the will of the Father, in his love for all people to the point of dying for them, in his love for prayer, the cross and sacrifice, in his untiring preaching of the Kingdom of God, and in his love for his Mother, the Blessed Virgin. The team of novitiate formators should imbue its work with the patience of the farmer, who understands that the effort of sowing will bring forth its best fruits in subsequent stages of formation. 728

426. The director should know each novice and help him to know himself. Together they should verify, as much as possible, if the novice will be able with the passing of years to achieve the formation objectives set before him. To attain this, the director should creatively look for personalized means of formation. There will be novices for whom the very life of the novitiate is a test, while others 683-685

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<sup>249</sup> PI 33.

will feel at home in this spiritual environment. Different experiences should be offered, especially those that will most help each novice to verify his desire and ability to live up to all that it means to be a Legionary of Christ.

At the end of the novitiate, the director of novices presents those that he considers suitable and called to Legionary religious life to the territorial director as candidates for profession.

*b. The rector of houses of formation*

361 427. The rectors are responsible for overseeing the integral preparation of the religious, shaping the environment and planning the educational experiences that help each religious achieve the objectives in the different dimensions of formation, according to the challenges of their stage. An important tool in this work is the program of integral formation, which the rectors should make and constantly evaluate together with their teams. They also rely on other means, such as formation review, directives, preaching and conferences, to set the tone of the community. Rectors of houses that include a novitiate should not get involved in the areas of responsibility of the director of novices.

428. It is the duty of the rector to present the religious to the major superiors for admission to renewal of vows, perpetual profession, ministries or orders. Therefore, the rectors should work diligently to help the young men entrusted to them arrive to maturity—understood as the possibility of taking on a responsibility with regard to others—and to holiness of life in agreement with the path along which God calls each one.

429. It is the rector's responsibility to assure that each religious has a spiritual director that he speaks with regularly. The spiritual director should be from among those assigned to the community, or another priest proposed by the religious and approved by the rector (See CLC 59 §2).

430. It is recommended that the rector have some kind of contact with the parents of the Legionaries under his care, to help them, through simple gestures, to live their son's vocation with faith and spiritually become part of the Legion and *Regnum Christi*.

*c. The rector's assistants*

431. The assistants are the rector's collaborators. He entrusts them with the task of closely guiding the formation of a certain group of religious. This collaboration is based on frank and constant communication about everyone that affects the common work. The rector sees the assistants as co-responsible for his mission: he trusts them and delegates to them the functions they need to guide their groups according to their own gifts, ability and creativity, all within a unified formative vision. In their work, the assistants should remain loyally united with the rector and among themselves.

432. The rector can delegate regular formation review with the religious—an indispensable means of personalized integral formation—to the assistants. 408,922

***3. Superiors of houses of apostolate***

433. The superiors are brothers within the communities who for a time exercise the role of fathers: "Here is your brother Simeon who I know is a wise counselor; listen to him always, and he will be a father to you" (1 Maccabees 2:65). While carrying out this role, because of the authority entrusted to them, the superiors are fundamental building blocks of the edifice of the Congregation. They promote a community of apostles united in love of Christ and the Church, in fidelity to their vocation, in prayer, work and rest, all according to the Constitutions and other codes of proper law.

434. As fathers, superiors see striving to build a "community of brothers in Christ, in which God is sought and loved before all

things,”<sup>250</sup> all of which are part of the community program, as their  
 460 specific mission. They should listen to the community before making  
 important decisions and care for each one according to their  
 needs so that there might reign a ready desire for the things of God,  
 apostolic zeal full of drive and initiative, oneness of heart, fraternal  
 collaboration on the apostolate, interest in ongoing formation, and  
 needed rest and exercise.

435. A superior is “a man of God, a teacher, a father, a friend  
 and a brother” (CLC 216 §2). He should help each Legionary take  
 ownership of his growth throughout the years, and of life’s events  
 as occasions to mature in holiness, communion and apostolate. His  
 interaction with the different members of the community will be  
 different according to their stage of life, following the advice of  
 Saint Paul: “Do not rebuke an older man, but appeal to him as a  
 799-800 father. Treat younger men as brothers” (1 Timothy 5:1). They  
 should especially care for religious on internship and priests begin-  
 333 ning their ministry.

The majority of community members of a house of apostolate are  
 in the stage of ongoing formation—they are living the joys and suffer-  
 ings of the apostle of Christ. The challenges that this stage pre-  
 sents to the formator, who is now the local superior, are no less  
 than those of initial formation. For this reason, it is essential that  
 the superior himself keep growing and maturing in his own integral  
 formation.

922,974 436. His work, on the one hand, focuses on the individual mem-  
 bers by sincere interest in them and through formation review with  
 them. There is also, on the other hand, the more hidden and prac-

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<sup>250</sup> CIC 619 “Therefore, they are to nourish the members regularly with the food of the word of God and are to draw them to the celebration of the sacred liturgy. They are to be an example to them in cultivating virtues and in the observance of the laws and traditions of their own institute; they are to meet the personal needs of the members appropriately, solicitously to care for and visit the sick, to correct the restless, to console the faint of heart, and to be patient toward all.”

tical work, equally important, of constantly overseeing the community and house environment in all its details. Just as seeds grow better in rich soil, a Legionary is encouraged to keep maturing in his integral formation when the environment is favorable, though without being determined by it. Building a favorable environment is the responsibility of all, although it pertains by office to the superior. It can be said that the superior occupies in the community the same role as Saint Joseph in the Holy Family.

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437. All should welcome the superiors as a gift from God since they allow us to imitate Christ more perfectly in his dependence on the Father: in a community, “all adhere to the particular mediation exercised by the superior in an obedience of faith.”<sup>251</sup> Along with a spirit of deference and fraternity, the members of a community should pray for charity, humility and fortitude for their superior, who has to carry his own cross while helping carry that of his brothers.

#### ***4. Professors and prefects of studies***

438. “Doctrinal training ought to aim not at a mere communication of knowledge but to a true inner formation of the students.”<sup>252</sup> The professors, by their witness of life and the fulfillment of their responsibility, are true educators. As such, they are to cultivate both the education and the integral priestly formation of each of the students.

In fact, they have noteworthy influence in priestly formation because of the authority that comes from expertise in their field of specialization and from how their ideas, explanations, perspective in classes and examples can touch the minds and hearts of the students.<sup>253</sup>

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<sup>251</sup> PI 26.

<sup>252</sup> OT 17.

<sup>253</sup> Regarding the influence of the professors, “experience teaches that they often have a greater influence on the development of a priest’s personality than other educators” (PDV 67).

439. By constantly delving deeper in philosophy, theology and the problems of man, and through their teaching, every professor is “like the head of a household who brings from his storeroom both the new and the old” (Matthew 13:52). He is posted on the front lines of Legionary apostolate for the formation of his brothers and for the evangelization of culture<sup>254</sup> through his research, classes, publications, participation in conferences, and other endeavors to spread the faith with heartfelt fidelity to the Magisterium of the Church.

To make their influence and ability to do good more impactful, they should receive suitable pedagogical training and strive to stay up-to-date in their teaching methods.

440. Professors should give continuity and organic structure to the religious’ formation, imparting new knowledge based on what the students have already received.

261 441. The professors should seek to achieve the following objectives, in accord with the subject and the stage of formation and taking into account the different methods of study:<sup>255</sup>

- a. Help the religious tease the essence out of large quantities of information, and awaken in themselves a healthy restlessness in their search for truth.
- b. Synthesize intellectual formation.
- c. Ensure clear and solid teaching, directed at deeper knowledge of the mystery of God and his Church, the truths of the Faith

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<sup>254</sup> “It is not oceans or immense distances that challenge the heralds of the Gospel but the boundaries resulting from an erroneous or superficial vision of God and man that stand between faith and human knowledge, faith and modern science, faith and the commitment to justice.” (*Address to the Fathers of the General Congregation of the Society of Jesus*, Benedict XVI, February 21, 2008).

<sup>255</sup> See GPV 186.

and their hierarchy,<sup>256</sup> and the contemporary situation of man and the world.

d. Promote dialogue and sharing among the students, and between the students and professors, using logical and informed arguments.

e. Offer a historical perspective so that the religious can recognize the link between faith and history, in such a way that they learn to express the contents of philosophical and theological formation in the language of their times.

*The prefect of studies in a house of formation*

442. The prefect of studies collaborates with the rector in the intellectual dimension of formation. Therefore, he should possess the abilities required for the role, along with experience in the academic world. He works closely together with the other formators in order to achieve the intellectual objectives proper to each stage of formation.

443. His mission is to accompany the religious in their experience of intellectual work. He strives to be present in the joys and difficulties of studying. He should engage the community in the common mission of deep intellectual formation. In addition, he should periodically meet with the religious to guide them individually or as a group, addressing not only in their study methods and performance, but also their motivations for study. 262

444. The prefect of studies should make it a point to provide the religious with what they need to understand and make judgments on current topics and on the situation of the country in which they live. Activities such as lectures, cineforums and extra readings can help awaken the interest to analyze and interpret world events.

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<sup>256</sup> See CIC 750, 752-754.

630 445. The prefect of studies is of great importance during initial formation. He stokes intellectual curiosity, recommends good reading, promotes extracurricular activities and groups interested in specific topics, broadens horizons and points each one to the areas of intellectual development best suited for his personal gifts, which will deeply mark his future apostolate.

#### 548-554 **5. *Spiritual directors***

446. In the spiritual dimension, the heart of all formation, there is also a guide: the spiritual director. He should be outstanding in piety and wisdom, prudence and thorough doctrinal preparation,<sup>257</sup> a person experienced in the ways of the spirit: “I have often crossed all its plains so I know well the mountains and all its roads” (Tobit 5:10). He also has the privilege of accompanying others along these ways: “I will go with him” (Tobit 5:17). Together with the ability to listen and be empathetic, he should have specific training in spiritual direction.

447. Religious are to fully open their consciences to the spiritual director.<sup>258</sup> They should confide to him the thoughts that stir within them, so he can identify and confirm those that come from God and expose the wiles of the evil one. The spiritual director gives light when discerning God’s will; as a master and teacher of prayer, he awakens and strengthens the desire for prayer; he endeavors to understand the personal rhythm and path by which the Holy Spirit leads the soul to full spiritual maturity. He helps the religious form a right conscience and internalize Christian, religious and priestly values.

448. However, the spiritual director is not the driving force of the interior life. He should not take the place of each one’s personal work and responsibility in any way, but rather strive to help each

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<sup>257</sup> See CCC 2690.

<sup>258</sup> CIC 246 §4.

person stand confidently on his own, in favorable or adverse environments, and draw from inside himself the sense, motivation, and direction for his actions and behaviors. His role has been compared to the role of a guardian angel, as a guide and respectful witness to the free answer each person gives to God's love.

449. It is important that the spiritual director cultivate the art of listening well. This consists in trying to understand the directee's true difficulties from what he tells him; not rushing to give advice but instead helping him to understand himself, correct any erroneous ideas and come to see for himself what he should do. The spiritual director also needs to be very clear in order to uncover the lies of the evil spirit. Many times he will encourage and console, yet in other times he will need to bring the soul to "godly sorrow" which "produces a salutary repentance without regret" (2 Corinthians 7:10).

450. The Spiritual director should not neglect his ongoing study of the spiritual life and Church teaching, in order to have a solid basis for discernment and not be carried away by appearances or impressions. Beyond studying, the spiritual director's own personal decision to be faithful to God's will in every moment, both great and small, allows him to acquire a sixth sense to discover and understand the action of grace in hearts.

451. He should be able to recommend appropriate books for each person and situation, aware how much good reading can do to enlighten the mind and more firmly turn the will to Christ.

452. The spiritual director guides his directees toward a faith-filled relationship with their superiors and a motivated living of religious obedience.

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It is also his responsibility to guide with clarity when he rightly believes that a person should not follow the path of religious and priestly life.

453. The spiritual director, as a member of the team of formators in a house of formation or in a locality or territory, is of great assistance when he is able to identify common difficulties or general trends among the members and convey them prudently so that those in charge of guiding the community or the major superiors can act opportunely.

454. Religious in a house of formation should be able to choose their spiritual director from a group appointed by the major superiors. At least one or two of them should be on the formation team and be primarily dedicated to this ministry. Duty-bound to secrecy, they are not to speak about their directees when they take part in meetings. However, they may express their general views on the topics these meeting deal with.

900 455. During priesthood, one's spiritual director is a real brother that supports and consoles, picks up and encourages, and corrects with kindness. Helping a brother priest in this way to progress along the path of holiness is "among the divine works, the most divine, the most pleasing to Jesus Christ eternal high priest."<sup>259</sup>

When a priest seeks spiritual direction, it is always necessary to bear in mind the fact that his charism and his particular spirituality has as its fulcrum "unity of life" in the exercise of the sacred ministry. This "unity of life", according to the Second Vatican Council, is realized simply by priests in the concrete circumstances of their lives: "Priests can arrive at this only by following the example of Christ our Lord in their ministry. His food was to follow the will of him who had sent him to accomplish his work (PO 14)."<sup>260</sup>

## **6. Confessors**

456. The confessors also are formators within the realm of conscience. They should be men of deep piety, solidly trained in theology and morality, good listeners, knowledgeable of the human heart, prudent, and men of good counsel. They should be able to

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<sup>259</sup> *Discourse to the Parish Priests and Lenten Preachers of Rome*, Pius XII, February 14, 1956.

<sup>260</sup> PMDM 110.

bring souls to sorrow for their sins, to filial love of God, to a sincere desire never to offend him and to unlimited trust in his Fatherly kindness.

457. “The confessor is a shepherd, a father, a master, teacher, a spiritual judge and a physician who diagnoses and cures.”<sup>261</sup> He helps his penitents experience the love of Christ the Savior and fosters a personal encounter with the merciful Father and the Church. His ministry is not rooted in human wisdom, but in the manifestation of the Spirit and in the love of Christ Crucified. Through patient listening, timely words and healing penances he communicates hope and mercy, and helps heal the wounds left by sin. Prayer, study and a willingness to seek counsel and light from more experienced priests are crucial to satisfactorily exercising this ministry.

458. “A priest who hears confessions becomes in many cases ‘a spiritual director.’ He helps people discern the ways of the Lord.”<sup>262</sup> Therefore, when giving advice, the confessor should be one with the Church.

## F. The Community

459. The community is the environment in which initial and on-going formation take place. A Legionary sees in his community the group of apostles gathered together around Christ, the center and reason for life in common. 337,353

460. “Formation depends to a great extent on the quality of this community,”<sup>263</sup> because fraternal life is a shared path to holiness and a means to help each other grow in fervor. Therefore, charity, family spirit and a common quest for holiness should reign in the community (see CLC 38 §2). This is the goal of the community program, which points all the members of the community in 284

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<sup>261</sup> PMDM 59.

<sup>262</sup> SFS 3.

<sup>263</sup> PI 26.

the same direction, not only in action, but above all in being. This program should harmoniously integrate prayer in common with the means that favor union with God, fraternal charity, dedication to the mission, ongoing formation, rest and exercise, upkeep of the house, financial support of the community and common witness of poverty (see. GCC 2014, 75).

281 461. Since it is the way of life that Jesus Christ chose to have with his apostles, the community has value in and of itself and cannot be seen solely as set of formation goals: “This means that a community will be what its members make it, that it has its own requirements, and that before it can be used as a means of formation, it deserves to be lived and loved for what it is in the religious life, as the Church conceives it.”<sup>264</sup>

Therefore, community is not lived in the measure that it offers certain personal benefits. It is the environment that God uses to sculpt its members’ holiness, through self-forgetfulness and the sacrifice of self-giving: “Moreover, it should not be forgotten that the Paschal peace and joy of a community are always the fruit of death to self and the reception of the gift of the Spirit.”<sup>265</sup>

462. Genuine friendship within a community is reaped as a mature fruit of patient sowing—the religious must learn to leave themselves behind by “bearing one another’s burdens” (Galatians 6:2), becoming “all things to all” (1 Corinthians 9:22), asking forgiveness and forgiving “seventy-seven times” (Matthew 18:22), interacting with simplicity and trust and giving witness of joy and fervor.

“The community is formed each day under the action of the Holy Spirit, allowing itself to be judged and converted by the Word of God, purified by penance, constructed by the Eucharist, and vivified by the celebration of the liturgical year. It strengthens its communion by generous mutual assistance and by a continuous exchange of material and spiritual goods,

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<sup>264</sup> Ibid.

<sup>265</sup> Ibid.

in a spirit of poverty and with the help of friendship and dialogue.”<sup>266</sup>

463. Concerning the size of the community, the Church recommends: “It will therefore be good that the young, during the period of formation, reside in formative communities where there should be no lack of the conditions required for a complete formation: spiritual, intellectual, cultural, liturgical, communitarian, and pastoral; conditions which are rarely found together in small communities.”<sup>267</sup> Community life during initial formation prepares for community life in ministry. Sometimes “small communities, instead of offering an easier form of life, prove on the contrary to make greater demand on their members.”<sup>268</sup>

## G. The Formative Environment of the Houses

464. The environment in Legionary houses should favor “silence, union with God, the practice of virtue, study and common life” (CLC 41). This environment is both a means of formation and an expression of religious life, of the formation already acquired. Therefore, Legionaries are called to care for the community environment, making the principles they have received visible in concrete details.

465. Buildings crumble; it is the environment which the members build that makes the house a dearly loved place, a place that leaves its mark on the life of a Legionary.

### *The house of formation*

466. The house of formation, “more than a place, a material space, should be a spiritual place, a way of life, an atmosphere that 587

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<sup>266</sup> PI 27.

<sup>267</sup> Ibid.

<sup>268</sup> ET 40.

fosters and ensures a process of formation.”<sup>269</sup> It is an active, educative community that offers “the possibility of reliving the experience of formation which our Lord provided for the Twelve.”<sup>270</sup> It is completely directed toward the human, spiritual, intellectual and apostolic formation of the religious: in it, everything is formation. In these years, the young religious have a unique opportunity to let themselves be interiorly molded by the Holy Spirit.

467. All should contribute to making the house of formation a real spiritual family, sustained by deep charity and friendship—a place for self-knowledge, vocational discernment and spiritual accompaniment in which all feel loved. It is a place of serious study and learning; a place where initiatives, interests and deep self-giving are born; a place of trust and openness.

919-920 468. The Rule of Life of the houses of formation, through particular norms, regulates community life and specifies the means of formation. The *plan of integral formation* progressively sets out the community goals for all to see; these goals are what give order and consistency to the formation.

### *Silence*

132 469. Legionaries cultivate interior and external silence “as a means to achieve union with God, interior life, peace and serenity of soul, and a profound encounter with themselves.”<sup>271</sup> Silence is indeed “a profound attitude of the soul which seeks everything from God and is entirely turned toward him.”<sup>272</sup>

And so the priest needs to be trained to have a deep intimacy with God. A necessary training in prayer in a context of noise and agitation like that of our society is an education in the deep human meaning and religious

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<sup>269</sup> PDV 42.

<sup>270</sup> PDV 60.

<sup>271</sup> CLC 1994, 235.

<sup>272</sup> SFS 1.

value of silence as the spiritual atmosphere vital for perceiving God's presence and for allowing oneself to be won over by it (see 1 Kings 19:11 ff).<sup>273</sup>

470. The Rule of Life of the houses of formation and of apostolate can set times, places or rooms where all are asked to respect an environment of silence (see CLC 41).

471. An environment of habitual silence—outside the set times for community gathering—should reign especially in the houses of formation. It is in the house of formation where the habits of the interior man are formed: “in a seminary where external silence does not exist, interior silence is also absent.”<sup>274</sup>

472. The Legion lives the religious practice of the “great silence”: silence from the end of the day, consecrated to adoring the Lord, through the night and up to the prayer which marks the beginning of a new day. This interior and external attitude of silence has a character that could be qualified as “spousal”: it is the soul's intimate time with the Lord who calls us to the vineyard at the beginning of the day to listen to his Word and at the end of the day to share with him the joys and hardships of the apostolate. Without these moments of inner renewal—even more necessary in the houses of apostolate—the soul is drained without noticing, prayer becomes dry and the sense of supernatural realities is lost.

### *Style of the houses*

473. Legionary houses have a particular style. This style strives to externally reflect what the Legion desires for the souls of its men. This style, typically devoid of nooks and crannies, is noted for its clean lines and measured beauty, which comes not from excessive add-ons but from its luminosity. The Bible, which the Legionaries kiss when entering and leaving the house, is placed near the door.

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<sup>273</sup> PDV 47.

<sup>274</sup> SFS 1.

The chapel, and in it the tabernacle with the Blessed Sacrament, is at the center of the house.

474. The images at the front of our chapels are a modest portrayal of Calvary: Christ crucified, with his side pierced by a lance, is for us an image of the Sacred Heart who offers his redeeming love to the world.<sup>275</sup> The image of Our Lady to one side of the crucifix represents Our Lady of Sorrows at the foot of the cross. Like Saint John the Evangelist, Legionaries find their place beside her.

475. The gardens are not a superfluous part of our houses. They are a means of rest, renewing our inner equilibrium through contact with God's creation. A grotto to our Lady, which makes her motherly closeness and encouragement present, should always have a place in our gardens.

476. The houses should be noted for their order, good taste and cleanliness. This is a visible expression of attentiveness to detail and of the interior call to perfection that lives in the members of the community.

477. The interior decoration should be distinguished, simple and in agreement with Legionary poverty. This applies to both the common areas and the workspaces and personal rooms.

478. All other objects, even those destined for liturgical use, should express the balance that the Legion wants for its men, marked by simplicity and good taste.

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<sup>275</sup> "Recent times have seen the development of images representing the Sacred Heart of Jesus at the moment of crucifixion which is the highest expression of the love of Christ. The Sacred Heart is Christ crucified, his side pierced by the lance, with blood and water flowing from it (see John 19:34)" *Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy*, 2002, 173.

## CHAPTER SIX

### ACTIVITIES AND GENERAL MEANS

*Keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus,  
the leader and perfecter of faith. (Hebrews 12:2)*

479. Through the formative process, each Legionary journeys toward becoming “the perfect man according to the full measure of Christ” (Ephesians 4:13). But in order to be a perfect man, one must first be a man. In other words, forming ourselves means opening ourselves to God precisely in those ordinary acts that our human nature imposes upon us. Therefore, in the tradition of the Legion, every human action, no matter how humble, is an opportunity for formation—an act of worship and praise to God, a spiritual offering. 203 133

Saint Paul taught this to the first Christians, who were consecrated to God through Baptism, with these words: “I urge you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, your spiritual worship” (Romans 12:1).

480. Since this document is pedagogical, it is fitting to pause briefly to explain the formative opportunities of the activities of our life.

Without taking our eyes off Christ, who gives meaning to all that we do, we carry out these human actions as offerings to God and allow them to shape us through the joys and challenges they present. These actions become, from the noblest to the simplest, opportunities for growth in virtue throughout the different dimensions of formation.

481. In the second section of this chapter we will examine some of the more general means of formation, either those present throughout many ordinary activities, or those that support and complement the harmonious development of the Legionary.

## **A. Activities of Ordinary Life and Their Formative Sense**

### ***1. Expressions of Eucharistic life***

#### *The Celebration of the Eucharist*

105 482. The Eucharist contains “the entire spiritual good of the Church, that is, Christ himself.”<sup>276</sup> Therefore, the Mass is the center of the day, where our human efforts are lifted up to God on the paten, one with Christ’s own offering, giving him perfect glory and taking on eternal value; in turn, overabundant grace descends from God to nurture the soul and give strength for bearing him witness. For this reason, the Eucharist is truly “the fount and apex of the whole Christian life,”<sup>277</sup> where we unite ourselves intimately to Christ through communion in his Body and his Blood.

483. The Celebration of the Eucharist consists of two parts, the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. “There are not in fact two separate ‘tables’, since the one leads to the other, just as the revelation in the sixth chapter of the Gospel according to Saint John goes from the bread of the word to the bread of the Eucharist. The whole of this Gospel is slanted toward the ‘hour’ of Christ to which he feels so drawn; all of the Lord’s teaching is designed to lead to the understanding of the Paschal Mystery.”<sup>278</sup>

484. In the Mass we affect the whole world and pray for the needs of all men, especially those furthest from God and those who

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<sup>276</sup> PO 5.

<sup>277</sup> LG 11.

<sup>278</sup> SFS 2.

suffer most. Those who prepare themselves for the priesthood “should, moreover, be trained to consider the Eucharistic celebration as the essential moment of their day,”<sup>279</sup> and to offer “not only the Host through the hands of the priest, but also themselves together with Him” (CLC 51, 2°).

485. Those entrusted with a liturgical function should prepare themselves not only to fulfill it worthily, but also to live it with heartfelt attention so that it helps them spiritually and helps those present to participate actively in the celebration.

#### *Visits to Jesus in the Eucharist*

486. The tabernacle, which holds the Eucharist, the treasure of the Church, is the place of encounter between Jesus Christ and his Legionaries. “The teacher is here and is asking for you” (John 11:28). The formation houses should always have various smaller chapels besides the main chapel to facilitate these grace-filled encounters. From these moments of intimacy with the Lord spring gratitude, strength in the fight, confidence and joy from being with him. There the living and glorious Lord “instills good morals, forges character, nourishes the virtues, consoles the sorrowful, strengthens the weak, summons to imitation and sanctifies those who draw near to him.” (CLC 52)

487. In the years of initial formation before apostolic internship, religious should have a regular community visit to the Eucharist in which they pray some form of a Christ-centered litany together. These visits help introduce them to this form of vocal prayer and suggest expressions of faith, hope, love, praise and supplication to Christ that they can repeat in their hearts throughout the day. 923

#### *Eucharistic adoration*

488. Legionaries seek “to spend a prolonged time in daily adoration” (CLC 52), a time of contemplation, intimacy and conversation

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<sup>279</sup> PDV 48.

with Christ our friend, present and alive in the Eucharist. On ordinary days, adoration is marked by the desire to be with the Lord and intercede with him for others. On some feasts it has a special sense of thanksgiving. On the first Friday of each month and during the triduum of Carnival, it has the particular sense of reparation.

“The call to holiness is accepted and can be cultivated only *in the silence of adoration* before the infinite transcendence of God: ‘We must confess that we all have need of this silence, filled with the presence of him who is adored’”<sup>280</sup>

### *Eucharistic hour*

489. An especially cherished moment during the week is the hour of Eucharistic adoration—held on Thursday in community, usually at night—spent listening to the Lord’s word and accompanying him spiritually in his agony in Gethsemane: “So you could not keep watch with me for one hour?” (Matthew 26:40).

Religious life is “a spousal covenant with Christ.”<sup>281</sup> The Eucharist Hour is a time to share his lot and experience his sentiments, not leaving him alone in his intercession with the Father for the whole world.

## **2. Penance and conversion of heart**

490. “Baptism is the first and chief sacrament of forgiveness of sins because it unites us with Christ, who died for our sins and rose for our justification (see Romans 4:25), so that we too might walk in newness of life (Romans 6:4).”<sup>282</sup> A Legionary renews his baptismal promises three times a year: publicly during the Easter Vigil and at the end of his spiritual exercises, and privately on the day of his baptism, after a special hour of prayer in thanksgiving to God for so great a gift. On these occasions he holds in his hand his lighted baptismal candle, a symbol of faith: “I am the light of the world; he

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<sup>280</sup> VC 38.

<sup>281</sup> VC 93.

<sup>282</sup> CCC 977.

who follows me does not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” (John 8:12).

491. After baptism, “it is through the sacrament of Penance that the baptized can be reconciled with God and with the Church.”<sup>283</sup> It is an encounter with Christ—who bathes our souls with his redeeming blood—and with his Mystical Body, the Church, which has felt the effects of our sins. This sacrament fosters an attitude of constant conversion of heart, teaches us that without grace we can do nothing, and leaves in the soul an experience of renewal, peace, joy and growing identification with Christ.

For this reason recourse to frequent confession (see CLC 50 §1), “which was introduced into the Church by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is recommended. By it, genuine self-knowledge is increased, Christian humility grows, bad habits are corrected, spiritual neglect and tepidity are resisted, the conscience is purified, the will strengthened, a salutary self-control is attained and grace is increased in virtue of the Sacrament itself.”<sup>284</sup>

492. Since the spiritual fruit of this sacrament depends on the depth of the penitent’s sorrow for his sins, it is important to ask for this grace from the Holy Spirit during our conscience exam, for he is the only one who can convict the world in regard to sin by the experience of mercy: “this ‘conviction’ is the demonstration of the evil of sin, of all sin, in reference to the Cross of Christ.”<sup>285</sup>

493. It is advisable to go to confession with the same priest 456 whenever possible so that we can receive not only forgiveness of our sins, but also personalized help, encouragement and advice. “It is fitting, for an integral formation, that the spiritual director could also be the regular confessor.”<sup>286</sup>

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<sup>283</sup> CCC 980.

<sup>284</sup> *Mystici Corporis Christi*, Encyclical, Pius XII, 1943, 39.

<sup>285</sup> DVi 32.

<sup>286</sup> GPV 107.

### 3. Expressions of Marian devotion

397 494. Conscious of the mission that God entrusted to the Virgin Mary in the history of salvation and in the life of the Church, Legionaries as they follow Christ take her as their Mother and teacher in the spiritual life.

Legionaries recognize that devotion to Mary consists especially in the “imitation of her virtues.”<sup>287</sup> On her part, “the Blessed Virgin Mary shares with them the love which enables them to offer their lives every day for Christ and to cooperate with him in the salvation of the world.”<sup>288</sup>

495. An expression of this filial love is found in stopping before an image of the Blessed Virgin Mary during the day to open one’s heart to her. The Legion suggests asking her in the visit after Night Prayers for the grace of graces: final perseverance in the faith and in one’s vocation.

#### *Rosary*

496. “The Rosary is among the finest and most praiseworthy traditions of Christian contemplation” and as such is an especially valuable way to live with a contemplative yet evangelizing spirit. (see CLC 12)” Developed in the West, it is a typically meditative prayer, corresponding in some way to the ‘prayer of the heart’ or ‘Jesus prayer’ which took root in the soil of the Christian East.”<sup>289</sup>

497. On the basis of the recitation of the Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be, we recall the mysteries of the life, passion, death and resurrection of Christ, seen through the eyes of the Virgin Mary. She instills these mysteries in the hearts of her sons and makes them real in their lives. In this way we allow the Virgin Mother to be the one to form us in the attitudes of the heart of her Son.

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<sup>287</sup> LG 67.

<sup>288</sup> VC 28.

<sup>289</sup> *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, Apostolic Letter, John Paul II, 2002, 5.

498. The Rosary brings peace to the soul, soothes fatigue and disappointments, instills faith and renews trust. Thus, besides being a prayer for a set moment of the day, the Rosary can help elevate the mind to God spontaneously between activities.

499. It is a tradition in the Legion that, on solemnities of the Virgin Mary, whoever is not obliged to pray the Liturgy of the Hours should pray extra decades of the Rosary.

### *Greeting to the Blessed Virgin Mary*

500. Morning, midday and evening establish the time frame of human activity, and thus summon us to pause, hand-in-hand with Mary, to pray the Angelus or Regina Cæli.

“Because of its simple structure, its biblical character [...] and its quasi-liturgical rhythm which sanctifies different moments during the day, and because it reminds us of the Paschal Mystery, [...] the Angelus, despite the passing of centuries, retains an unaltered value and an intact freshness”.<sup>290</sup>

### *Saturday visit*

501. The community gathers every Saturday for a brief moment of prayer at the grotto of Our Lady. In May, a hymn and a short Marian reflection from a member of the community are a traditional part of the visit.

### *Marian pilgrimage*

502. Once a year the community makes a pilgrimage to a shrine or church dedicated to the Blessed Virgin to place their apostolates and needs in her hands, and to ask her to enliven the testimony of their fraternal love.

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<sup>290</sup> *Marialis Cultus*, Apostolic Exhortation, Paul VI, 1971, 41.

#### 4. Liturgical year

163 503. The liturgical year is the development of the mysteries of the life, death and resurrection of Christ that the Church proposes to us throughout the year. It allows us not just to remember, but to live the history of salvation. We truly participate, in the present moment, in those things which God has already done once and for all. It is a path of faith that immerses us in the mystery of salvation.

504. The natural cycle of the year regulates the life of man on earth, and the Church has given this cosmic time a liturgical value. The year as a unit of time, with its constant repetition (*anni circulus*), also has a pedagogical value: the Church wants us to contemplate the different facets of the person and work of the Redeemer as we relive the “liturgical seasons,” and to enjoy more deeply “the infinite riches of Christ” (Ephesians 3:8) as we repeat this cycle again and again.

505. Legionaries, as sons of the Church, live in and with her the mysteries of redemption. Their pilgrimage through time involves a participation in the mysteries of the life and work of Jesus Christ. This journey through the liturgical year, both personal and communal, fosters their fraternal life, spiritual growth and gives them a concrete way to live Christ-centeredness (see CLC 49 §1).

506. Sunday, “the Lord’s day,” (Revelation 1:10) is the foundation and core of the liturgical year, the “original feast day, [...] a day of joy and of freedom from work.”<sup>291</sup>

507. During Christmas, Holy Week and Easter the whole life of the community should revolve around the mysteries being celebrated. In these times, Legionaries, above all in houses of formation, should have the chance to experience the absolute priority of God and to encounter him in the living remembrance of Christ.

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<sup>291</sup> SC 106.

508. “The penitential days and times in the universal Church are every Friday of the whole year and the season of Lent.”<sup>292</sup> A concrete way to live out the penitential aspect of these days and acquire a deeper understanding of the Cross is the practice of the Way of the Cross (see CLC 53, 1, 2<sup>o</sup>). It is a contemplative form of prayer that gazes with the eyes of the soul on the different moments of the Passion so as to engrave in our hearts the immense love of Christ the Redeemer: “Christian prayer loves to follow the way of the cross in the Savior’s steps. The stations from the Praetorium to Golgotha and the tomb trace the way of Jesus, who by his holy Cross has redeemed the world.”<sup>293</sup>

509. “The prayer of the Church venerates and honors the Heart of Jesus just as it invokes his most Holy Name. It adores the incarnate Word and his Heart which, out of love for men, he allowed to be pierced by our sins”<sup>294</sup>. First Fridays in the Legion are dedicated to loving the Heart of Jesus and making reparation for our sins and those of the whole world.

510. The Legion specially emphasizes certain feasts and solemnities because of their relationship with our spirituality: the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Our Lady of Sorrows, Christ the King, and the patrons and special protectors of the Congregation (see CLC 7).

### ***5. Liturgy of the Hours***

511. The Liturgy of the Hours prolongs the Eucharistic Sacrifice throughout the day and extends the graces of the Mass and its fruits to the Mystical Body and to the whole world (see CLC 49 §2). 164

512. The Liturgy of the Hours “celebrated in union with the prayer of the Church, either in community or individually according

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<sup>292</sup> CIC 1250.

<sup>293</sup> CCC 2669.

<sup>294</sup> Ibid.

to the nature of each Institute, expresses the call proper to consecrated persons to raise their hearts in praise and intercession.”<sup>295</sup> Legionaries are called to the active apostolic life, and consequently are not obliged to pray the Liturgy of the Hours in community. However, proper law assigns one of the hours of the Divine Office as a community act of piety (see CN 26).<sup>296</sup> In addition, the members of a community can agree to pray together other liturgical hours.

“The prayer of the Church is nourished by the prayer of the Psalms. The Church receives from God himself these ‘inspired’ words. They are like the ‘mold’ into which she pours human thoughts and feelings. It is the Holy Spirit who through the Psalms suggests words and forms the heart. It was thus that Jesus prayed. His passion bears witness to this. It was thus that Mary prayed, if one accepts the evidence of her ‘magnificat’.”<sup>297</sup>

513. In order to pray the Liturgy of the Hours worthily attentively and devoutly when on one’s own, it is important to give sufficient time, without rushing. It is necessary to be firmly convinced of the immense good brought about by this prayer which unites us to the whole Church and reaches far beyond our limited human actions.

## **6. Mental prayer**

138 514. Prayer is “a vital and personal relationship with the living and true God.”<sup>298</sup> It can be affirmed that Christian life is a continual prayer, an uninterrupted loving conversation between God and his creature. This “great prayer” which is the Christian life needs moments of silence and listening, of exclusive intimacy, in which we experience the primacy of God in our own life and respond with the total gift of self. “But we cannot pray ‘at all times’ if we do not pray at specific times, consciously willing it. These are the special

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<sup>295</sup> VC 95.

<sup>296</sup> See *General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours*, 1971, 26.

<sup>297</sup> SFS 1.

<sup>298</sup> CCC 2558.

times of Christian prayer, both in intensity and duration.”<sup>299</sup>

Despite the inherent excellence of liturgical prayer, “the spiritual life is not limited solely to participation in the liturgy. The Christian is indeed called to pray with his brethren, but he must also enter into his chamber to pray to the Father in secret” (See Matthew 6:6).<sup>300</sup>

515. “O God, you are my God—it is you I seek!” (Psalm 63:2)<sup>301</sup>. Just as night in Sacred Scripture symbolizes the absence of God and the solitude before sin and death, the act of waking early represents the thirst for God. A soul that rises early to pray is a soul in love, a soul that keeps vigil, a soul that ardently desires an encounter alone with Christ, “the daybreak from on high [who visits] us to shine on those who sit in darkness and death’s shadow” (Luke 1:78-79). This morning encounter sets the spiritual and apostolic orientation of a Legionary’s day.

516. The hour of mental prayer, although a profoundly personal endeavor, begins with the community invocation of the Holy Spirit with the *Veni Creator* hymn. Together we ask him to pray in us and come “to the aid of our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought” (Romans 8:26).

517. As baptized Christians, our prayer takes place in union with Christ the Head and with his Mystical Body, the Church. It is essential, therefore, to be aware that prayer is not merely an individual act—we are accompanied by the Blessed Virgin Mary, by the saints, by the members of our spiritual family and by all Christians spread throughout the world. Our encounter with God is joined to the prayers of our brothers, both in heaven and on earth, with whom we are mysteriously united in the Lord.

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<sup>299</sup> CCC 2697.

<sup>300</sup> SC 12.

<sup>301</sup> TN: some Spanish translations use the phrase “for you I wake up early.”

518. The encounter with God also comes from the knowledge and acceptance of oneself before him who “probes me and knows me” (see Psalm 139:1), and thus searches for and embraces me. If we are mindful of our personal situation as we pray, our encounter with God will be an authentic reflection of our interior: our joy or discouragement, progress, temptation, sin, hopes, fears and desires. There should be nothing more authentic and personal in our lives than our encounter with God in prayer.

519. These three actions—invoking the Holy Spirit, opening ourselves to the communion of the saints and embracing the truth about ourselves as God embraces us—introduce us to prayer itself. In addition to the chapel, one’s room is also recommended as a place of prayer, since it is a suitable environment for personal encounter and makes it possible to have a more intense experience of solitude with Christ.

132 520. Above all, prayer presupposes recollection, the recognition of the presence of God, which comes before all our efforts to be attentive to him. Recollection is not mere concentration, but giving the soul time to turn from visible realities to the invisible presence of God.

521. In the novitiate, three proven methods of prayer are chiefly taught: discursive-affective meditation, contemplation, and *lectio divina*. However, a Legionary is not limited to a particular method. By training himself in the different ways of prayer, he should reach, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and with the help of his spiritual director, a prayer that is truly his: “A method is only a guide; the important thing is to advance, with the Holy Spirit, along the one way of prayer: Christ Jesus.”<sup>302</sup>

In any case, prayer begins by listening to God who speaks to us in Scripture, remembering always that through the written Word we encounter the living Word. The Gospels and Psalms are particularly useful for entering into prayer.

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<sup>302</sup> CCC 2707.

522. The gateway to prayer is the encounter with the face of Christ: “Your face, Lord, do I seek!” (Psalm 27:8). When we place ourselves under the gaze of Christ, our prayer is authentic, whether it takes a more intellectual approach (unraveling the teachings of Christ), or a more heartfelt one (relishing his love). When we are no longer before his face, prayer rapidly degenerates into intellectual restlessness or a search for sensible comforts.

523. The soul of mental prayer is faith, hope and love. Prayer, then, does not consist in having sublime thoughts or ardent feelings, but in believing, hoping and loving, as much in dryness as in consolation.

524. Mental prayer, especially at certain moments of our lives, is also a place for discerning God’s will. Moreover, mental prayer and conscience examen are the foundation of discernment as a daily habit.

525. The final minutes of the prayer are given over to examining what has happened within the soul during the time of prayer: What thoughts have left consolation or desolation in their wake, as well as what interior movements of desire or aversion God has stirred up within. Under the light and power of the Holy Spirit the human will conforms to the divine will and engenders decisions that guide life itself. The convictions that sustain our lives are the ones forged in the crucible of prayer.

526. A Legionary’s prayer life develops over many years, precisely because it is a “life.” The ordinary dynamics of this development are simplification and increasing depth: from more discursive to more affective. By this path, he reaches the calm and quiet of the prayer of union. This growth only happens as a work of grace and, by the same token, is not linear. Occasionally one may return to previous stages. It is very important to seek the help of a spiritual director to avoid delusions about the spiritual life. 137

527. Prayer and life are inseparable. Authentic prayer transforms our lives, and a coherent life makes our prayer authentic. This is why prayer “always implies effort”:

“The great figures of prayer of the Old Covenant before Christ, as well as the Mother of God, the saints, and he himself, all teach us this: prayer is a battle. Against whom? Against ourselves and against the wiles of the tempter who does all he can to turn man away from prayer, away from union with God. We pray as we live, because we live as we pray. If we do not want to act habitually according to the Spirit of Christ, neither can we pray habitually in his name. The ‘spiritual battle’ of the Christian’s new life is inseparable from the battle of prayer.”<sup>303</sup>

528. The prayer of an apostle is sometimes marked by fatigue, and there are occasions when the only thing we can do is try to accompany the Lord without being able to articulate our thoughts. This is also prayer, since it is a sincere search for God. There is an infinite distance between this drowsy or distracted prayer and the decision to not pray, the same distance between relying on God in our lives and simply disregarding him.

### ***7. Spiritual reading***

529. Reflective spiritual reading is both bedrock and soil for the interior life and prayer. It provides thoughts, ideas and vocabulary for the spiritual life; nourishes the soul and brings it to understand better the riches of the faith; shows how to incarnate that faith concretely in one’s own life; helps overcome routine; creates a lofty and pure interior atmosphere; inflames the heart with the great ideals of holiness and the apostolate; opens horizons and increases the joy of following Christ. In the history of the Church, good spiritual reading is often the beginning of conversion and not infrequently spurs a soul to holiness.

530. Spiritual reading during initial formation is essential for helping convictions mature and establishing a solid interior life. It

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<sup>303</sup> CCC 2725.

is just as important for ongoing formation. It deepens faith and puts us in contact with spiritual authors who have received the charism from God to “lead the many to justice” (Daniel 12:3).

531. It is important to choose text that are healthy and nourishing for the soul<sup>304</sup>—books that propose a realistic path toward holiness and that increase one’s understanding and love for Christ, the Church, and the priesthood.

532. “Attend to the reading” (1 Timothy 4:13), recommends Saint Paul. Above all, we must read and reread Holy Scripture (see CLC 48) with the help of good commentaries that allow us to understand the text in accord with the Church’s living tradition, reflected primarily in the works of the Church Fathers.<sup>305</sup> Documents from the Church’s Magisterium are recommended, as well as the teachings of the popes and “the great authors of the Church’s spiritual tradition, without being limited to spiritual reading of a modern cast.”<sup>306</sup> Each one can find his own line of spiritual readings with the help of his spiritual director.

533. When reading, it is advisable to pause and make brief notes of any lights received. Reading must not be for the sake of mere curiosity or novelty; it should touch our interior and orient our life. We must be aware that if reading is turned into a disordered passion, it can dull the spirit rather than enlighten it.

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<sup>304</sup> Pope Pius X affirmed that spiritual books are like good friends that “solemnly remind us of our duties and of the prescriptions of legitimate discipline; they arouse the heavenly voices that were stifled in our souls; they rid our resolutions of listlessness; they disturb our deceitful complacency; they show the true nature of less worthy affections to which we have sought to close our eyes; they bring to light the many dangers [...] their voice is never harsh, their advice is never self-seeking, their words are never timid or deceitful.”: *Haerent Animo*, Apostolic Exhortation on priestly sanctity, 1908, 62.

<sup>305</sup> The Fathers of the Church are “classics of Christian culture. They founded and built upon that culture, and it bears the indelible mark of their paternity for ever.” *Instruction on the Study of the Fathers of the Church in the Formation of Priests*, Congregation for Catholic Education, 1989, II, 3, a.

<sup>306</sup> PI 47.

534. In prayer, ideas assimilated in reading sink from the head to the heart and are transformed into sentiments of admiration, gratitude, sorrow for our sins, and a desire to better correspond to the love of God.

On the apostolate, well assimilated spiritual reading becomes a source of spiritual nourishment for the souls we preach to and guide in spiritual direction.

### ***8. Spiritual exercises and retreats***

535. In the Legion, the annual eight-day Ignatian spiritual exercises are done “in accordance with the spirit of the Congregation” (CLC 53 §1, 2°). The Church has recognized in these exercises an inspiration from God aimed at leading the soul to encounter God and self, detaching oneself from sin and living the truth in charity. These exercises are a true crucible of saints and apostles.

836 536. The goal of annual spiritual exercises is to deepen our convictions of faith and apply these convictions to the various circumstances of our lives. For this reason, it is necessary that the exercises be “adjusted to the stages of Legionary life” (CLC 53 §2).

537. The key to ensuring that the annual repetition of spiritual exercises does not become burdensome is not primarily in the brilliance of the preacher, but in the retreatant and his resolve to live his exercises well. Therefore, the preacher should offer brief points and ideas for prayer, which facilitate a personal encounter with the Lord rather than substitute it. All of this should take place in an environment of silence and reflection.

538. Spiritual exercises are a privileged moment to hear and understand what God wants for the “today” of our lives, to become aware of his will and decide to carry it out. The fruit of this spiritual discernment should be engraved on the soul above all, but it is also a helpful reminder to summarize in a written program of life the graces and resolutions received as inspirations.

539. The flame enkindled in the soul over the spiritual exercises is kept burning through the monthly spiritual retreats. Legionaries, called to intense apostolic action in the midst of the world, must keep the Lord as the center of their lives, purifying themselves from worldly attachments and cultivating interior silence. The monthly retreat offers us a break along the way in order to examine the state of our relationship with God, with our brothers, with other people and with regards to the mission entrusted to us. This is achieved through meditation on the word of God, through examen and analysis under God's light of one's personal attitudes and behaviors, and above all, through a renewing personal dialogue with Christ.

540. Legionaries must approach their monthly retreats with the resolve to separate themselves from the world in order to be alone with Christ, determined to make the most of them from the first moment and set aside all ordinary preoccupations so that they may be open to the lights and graces of the Holy Spirit.

541. The schedule for the retreat must include the free time and prayer time necessary to analyze one's spiritual progress in light of his program of life. In this way he will persevere in the commitments he has already made before the Lord and keep moving forward on his spiritual journey. Everything should contribute to making the retreat a powerful time of inner peace in the midst of spiritual combat.

542. The director of the retreat should seek simply to bring everyone into prayer, avoiding long academic preaching or anything else that may hinder the retreatants from living an authentic retreat from the world and having an experience of Jesus Christ.

### ***9. Conscience examen and practical examen***

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543. Conscience examen is a brief encounter with God and with ourselves in an atmosphere of prayer and conversation with Christ. It is a moment of spiritual discernment to rejoice in the good accomplished and to discover with faith and gratitude God's action

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in our lives. In it we also seek to separate ourselves interiorly from wrongs committed and retrace the steps that led us away from God, uniting ourselves more to his will.

544. The course of the day disperses us; the examen reunifies us, according to the prayer of the psalmist: “Teach me, Lord, your way that I may walk in your truth, single-hearted and revering your name” (Psalm 86:11). Only with difficulty will a man of examen be laid low by the temptations, tests and adversities of life.

545. A good way of making the examen follows five steps, which we can remember according to their Latin expressions: *lauda, pete lucem, examina, dole, propone*:

- *Lauda*: Always begin by expressing gratitude to God for his present and past blessings, opening the soul in an atmosphere of trust and praise.
- *Pete lucem*: Pray to the Holy Spirit for the light to see ourselves as he sees us and to overcome the vanity and self-love that blinds us to our true selves (see Matthew 7:3).
- *Examina*: This is the time for the particular examen on a specific virtue or concrete attitude. It is followed by a general examen successively reviewing the activities of the day in order to uncover the light of God and our response of love, imperfection or sin in thought, word, action or omission, paying attention to the intimate attitudes whence they arose. It is also important to become aware of the spontaneous movements that have passed through the heart, going beyond the simple listing of deliberate actions and omissions. A great help in this is recognizing and naming with simplicity our desires and fears, aspirations and troubles so the Lord can enlighten and inspire in us his own attitudes. This central moment of examen takes place within a conversation with the Lord to avoid degenerating into a mere exercise of self-awareness.

- *Dole*: The humble and sincere acknowledgement of our weakness, seen in the light of the gratitude to God with which we began the examen, leads us to sorrow for our sins. The sins of omission should engender especial sorrow in the consecrated soul that lives immersed in grace and in endless proofs of God's love.
- *Propone*: "What shall I do?" (Acts 22:10). Like Saint Paul, Legionaries do not wallow in their wrongdoing, but trusting absolutely in Christ's mercy, look at him and ask what the next step should be. This translates into a specific resolution.

546. The central moment of the examen (*Examina*) can be prayed in a deeper and simpler way by seeing oneself through the gaze of Christ, asking the Lord what good things he has been able to do during the day through his Legionary and what things he would have wanted to do, think or speak through him, but was unable to because of laziness, human respect, pride, resentment, etc.

547. All that has been said concerning the conscience examen is also applicable to the practical examen, which is an accompaniment to a spiritual talk or a standalone practice on days of retreat or spiritual exercises. The practical examen helps us to slow down and delve into an attitude, or in a principle of spirituality, formation or apostolate. Here too it is crucial not to limit oneself to mere analysis: all examen implies certain conversion of heart and a resolution that orients oneself toward a life more like Christ's.

### ***10. Spiritual direction***

548. Each person is responsible for his response to the gifts of life and grace. This responsibility is irreplaceable and nontransferable. It is this firm will to discern and act on God's plan for one's life, united to a humble and realistic self-understanding, that brings one to seek regular spiritual accompaniment, which favors objectivity and truth in our quest for loving faithfulness.

549. Since the beginning of the Church's life, those who felt moved to consecrate themselves totally to Christ have sought out more experienced people who would be able to help them grow in the ways of the spirit and to avoid the snares of the evil one. Historically, it is around these figures that the form of religious life in community has sprung up.

As these communities developed and became more structured, the Church was growing in her conviction that it was good to choose a master in the spiritual life, and that they should occupy a forum distinct from that of governance. In this way superiors could fulfill their duties without the fear that religious close themselves and not share their intimate matters, and might in no circumstance feel deprived of the possibility of opening their souls completely to someone.

550. In the midst of the many interior voices—lights, inspirations, motivations, decisions, temptations, attitudes, imagination—the spiritual director is a voice to trust. Spiritual direction is not a petty exchange of opinions but a formative relationship in which the director and the directee are both attentive to the Holy Spirit. The directee opens not only his soul, but also his conscience<sup>307</sup> to his director with simplicity and supernatural trust, aware that in doing so, he is being honest before God himself. Because of this faith, the religious receives, records and strives to put into practice the counsels of his director.

454 551. All religious, regardless of their age or formation, should freely choose their spiritual director, as the Constitutions indicate (CLC 59).<sup>308</sup>

Religious should seek light from prayer before choosing a spiritual director, since through him God will make himself present to them in a special way. They should not easily switch directors after they have chosen one, but only after verifying over time that it would be

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<sup>307</sup> CIC 246 §4.

<sup>308</sup> See PMDM 110-121, on the spiritual direction priests and religious receive.

helpful and confirming that the spiritual direction is not bearing its proper fruit.

While it is not prohibited to habitually have spiritual direction via videoconference, it is recommended to choose a spiritual director who is close to the directee's place of work, and if possible, who is familiar with the environment in which the directee lives. We need not seek the "ideal" director. Beyond any limited human instrument, we should seek the consolation of God and the certainty of living our lives according to his plan.

552. The content of spiritual direction is:

- a. Above all, the different interior movements: lights and temptations, states of consolation and desolation, etc.;
- b. The ways of prayer and the interior life;
- c. One's integration with his vocation, the evangelical counsels and the virtues according to his present stage and personal needs, as well as community life and apostolic work;
- d. The processes of discernment in matters that imply a response to God, sharing the elements that they have recognized in one way or another.

553. Vocational discernment pertains to the external forum, and thus the Church places such matters in the hands of the superior. The spiritual director makes his contribution in matters of conscience.

554. The director and the directee decide together on the frequency of their meetings. Spiritual direction will only bear fruit if it is a regular accompaniment. Without regularity it degenerates into a string of disjointed spiritual consultations, made simply to receive advice on various topics.

***11. Personal review with the superior***

408,922 555. Personal review, set within the context of a natural, close, day-to-day relationship, is a privileged time for a Legionary to communicate with his superior. This dialogue happens between two persons whose character, age, and experience can be very different. Even so, it takes place in faith, in the context of the vow of obedience, and in the unity brought about by their common vocation. Legionaries “can freely and on their own initiative open their minds,”<sup>309</sup> since it is necessary that they know themselves and let themselves be known by their formators in a sincere and transparent relationship.<sup>310</sup> The superior cannot induce a member to manifest his conscience to him.<sup>311</sup>

556. The superior is responsible before the Church and the Congregation for overseeing the human and spiritual progress of those entrusted to him. He should thus make himself available to them in a way that will strengthen their formative relationship. It falls to each Legionary to ask his superior for personal review (see CLC 60 §1). If he does not, the superior should take the initiative.

557. Personal review addresses anything related to one’s integral formation and his religious, priestly, community and apostolic life according to his current stage of formation. The superior shares in the community member’s joys, encourages him in his difficulties, suggests ways to grow in his integral formation, makes observations about his behavior regarding his own good and the good of the community, offers his experience, and makes sure that he lives with order and balance. A Legionary should be confident enough to speak about any personal, apostolic or community matter that he considers important, that causes him worry, or about which he has a suggestion.

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<sup>309</sup> CIC 630 §5.

<sup>310</sup> See GPV 45.

<sup>311</sup> See CIC 630 §5.

As they get to know each other better, the superior can prudently make the decisions that correspond to his role as mediator of God's will, and make it easier for the Legionary to live his consecrated obedience to Christ in a heartfelt way.

558. It is important to prepare for personal review carefully so that it is as fruitful as possible. The superior can propose specific themes to discuss throughout the year.

559. Religious in the initial stages of formation should update their formator on their spiritual and academic situation, community life, apostolic work and vocational decision. They can also speak about their growth in the human virtues—seemingly trivial and humble but actually foundational—virtues such as sincerity, trustworthiness, goodness of heart, good manners, generosity, the capacity to reflect before making decisions, firmness in carrying them out, serenity in difficult times, trust, constancy in resolutions, and self-mastery.

560. Superiors should especially help priests persevere in their quest for holiness—above all through their growing union with Christ and their efforts at ongoing formation—in order to help them live their religious and priestly consecration faithfully and authentically (see CLC 110, 114).

561. The fruits of personal review with the superior are peace in our religious life, greater integration in community life, and encouragement in ongoing formation. Bringing our personal difficulties to light helps us to see them objectively, and accepting the words of our superior with faith helps us to see in them the workings of grace and a personal gift from God.

## ***12. Apostolic mentoring***

562. Apostolic internship and the first years of priestly ministry are periods of extremely practical formation in which we learn principles that we could never have learned in a classroom. In order to

take full advantage of this type of formation, we must receive proper accompaniment. While the director of apostolate introduces us to our assignment and to the people we will be working with, a mentor offers personal accompaniment with a suitable methodology.

563. This methodology is flexible and based on objectives which both the apostolic mentor and the one being mentored seek to achieve. They can begin by determining the number and subjects of their meetings, and whether or not accompaniment *in situ* is appropriate.

564. Through his closeness and counsel, the mentor helps his Legionary brother to acquire certain skills, such as a method of work, its application to a specific culture, the learning of processes (pedagogical, administrative, secretarial, etc.) and in general, everything that has to do with the art of apostolate. He helps him to understand his own capabilities and limitations in a more objective way so that, according to his talents, he can find the best way to carry out the mission entrusted to him. He can also show him how to harmonize his community and apostolic life. The mentor should encourage his brother to reflect on and pray about his experiences so that he learns from them.

565. The territorial director should make sure that a mentor is assigned to those beginning their internship or first period of ministry in the territory. The superior of the community or director of apostolate may assume this function, as well as any other person with experience in the field to which the Legionary must be introduced.

It is also advisable to rely on a mentor, at least in an informal way, whenever we receive a new mission.

### ***13. Means for sharing spiritual goods***

566. In looking at the dimension of communion, we saw how the Church and the world expect of religious communities a testimony of fraternal life in common that convincingly reflects the Christian ideal (see Romans 12:9-21). To grow in that natural and supernatural brotherhood, it is necessary to share both our material and spiritual goods.

567. The conviction that each person—beginning with oneself—has something unique to offer is the motive for sharing spiritual goods. “To each individual the manifestation of the spirit is given for some benefit” (1 Corinthians 12: 7); each Legionary has received many gifts to bring to our spiritual family in general and to his community in particular. In knowledge of one another these gifts can be exchanged and can enrich others. For this reason, it is very important for each religious to develop the ability to listen with humility, attention and an attitude of trusting openness—knowing others and letting himself be known by them.

568. Given that the sharing of spiritual goods is an essential part of fraternal life in common, it should not just be relegated to scheduled activities. Every occasion in which lights, experiences, desires or knowledge can be communicated is good: informal moments of conversation, hikes, meetings, times of rest, etc.

569. Nonetheless, in the tradition of religious life there are some activities set aside for this very purpose. This *Ratio* limits itself to offering some general observations that shed light on the formative value of these community moments, which occur according to the frequency stipulated by the Rule of Life:

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- a. *Encounter with Christ.* Following the methodology of the Movement, this activity helps the community to listen to the word of God and share the lights that each member receives (in the Gospel reflection), to look at life with eyes enlightened by the wisdom of God (in the case study and discussion), and to

renew their spirit of unity in their religious life and apostolic mission (in the review of commitments).

b. *Spiritual talks and preaching.* When Legionaries preach to their brothers, they have a privileged opportunity not only to teach and move them towards the good, but also to share their own heart and experiences with them: *cor ad cor loquitur*. For Legionaries, preaching to a given group—as important as they may be—is not the same as preaching to their brothers in the Legion. In the light of the intimate connection between them due to their shared vocation, their preaching should reflect and reinforce the deep, mysterious brotherhood that unites them. Thus the tone and content of their preaching, far from being impersonal, bears the richness of one who communicates truths and motivations that will find a common resonance. The talk is followed by a moment of prayer, aided by a practical examen which can be prepared by the preacher. Occasionally, it may be beneficial if a question and answer session or some moments of fraternal exchange follow a conference.

c. *Community reflection over the Constitutions, Regnum Christi Statutes, or other ecclesial or proper documents.* This type of exchange gives Legionaries an opportunity to enrich and enlighten one another. These documents allow them to speak about central themes of their consecration to the Kingdom of God in the Legion.

The Rule of Life of the formation and apostolate houses may propose *other occasional activities for sharing spiritual goods*. It is of primary importance in the houses of apostolate to regularly develop and revise the community program.

#### ***14. Fraternal correction in the spirit of the Gospel***

570. “Fraternal correction in the spirit of the Gospel favors the practice of virtue, spiritual progress and community life” (CLC 42). God has chosen to unite us in the Church as a people and not as isolated individuals. “No one is saved by himself [...] God attracts

us by taking into account the complex interweaving of personal relationships entailed in the life of a human community.”<sup>312</sup> Therefore, to progress on the path of transformation into Christ, it is essential that we live our entire lives open to observations and corrections from the members of our community and from the faithful we serve in our apostolate.

571. Fraternal correction is not meant to eliminate the diversity and complementarity of gifts among us, but rather to contribute to the progress of each individual, of the community, and of the Congregation as a whole. Therefore, corrections should address aspects that are objective and relevant to the well-being and development of the spirit, communion, and mission of the Legion—not merely subjective annoyances or preferences. This is the “criteria of relevance.” 821

This especially refers to defects that weigh on community life or limit the apostolate of a brother Legionary, from externals such as silence, helping in community work, or the way he treats his brothers, to the way he preaches or his interaction with others on the apostolate.

572. For fraternal correction to accomplish its goal:

“The one correcting should proceed with genuine charity, prudence, purity of intention and sensitivity. In this way, he will express only those external aspects that the other can assimilate and change; he will not omit what in conscience he needs to mention, and he will avoid causing hurt or humiliation. The one receiving the correction, for his part, should graciously accept the assistance given and ponder its truth, with the desire of growing in his personal life, humbly and with a grateful heart.” (GCC 2014 78).

573. The three ordinary forms of fraternal correction are explained in the 2014 General Chapter Communiqué (see GCC 2014 77): directives from the superior; exchanges of corrections in com-

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<sup>312</sup> EG 113.

munity or team meetings; and informal, person-to-person corrections. The one correcting should always strive to be positive and edify the other with a fraternal, simple and objective tone.

a. In *directives*, the superior helps his community members to grow in their religious fervor by calling their attention to certain aspects of community life. The superior shares his worries as in a family, and strives to encourage the community to grow together in love for Christ, in their vocation, and in the fulfillment of the mission.

b. Some *team or community meetings* throughout the year are dedicated specifically to fraternal correction. As fraternal correction is an instrument for growing in holiness, not for venting dislikes or grudges, “when a religious believes it necessary to correct another, he should do so with authentic charity and purity of intention. When corrected, a religious should receive the correction with humility and gratitude” (CLC 42).

c. *Personal correction* during initial formation should “ordinarily be made after consulting the superior” (GCC 2014, 77, 3°). Corrections should be made with frankness and nobility—sarcasm and insinuation are not means of correction.

574. It is a profoundly evangelical attitude and behavior to ask for forgiveness if we have committed a fault against someone, or reach out to the brother who has committed an offense.

### **15. Studies and classes**

575. Legionaries dedicate a significant amount of energy to study, a requirement intrinsic to their vocation and mission.

261 576. Study implies:

- a. Learning and personalizing a method of study;
- b. Pursuing interests and answering questions which correspond to the study material;

- c. Motivation: love for the Church, offering up the difficulty of studying for the concrete needs of souls, etc.
- d. Perseverance, dedication, constancy;
- e. Precision, formality, and working with goals.

All this should make study a fruitful and pleasant activity throughout our lives, rather than a painful necessity.

577. In classes and conferences, it is necessary to rise from passive reception of content to active listening and conscious assimilation, all with an attitude of intellectual humility.

578. In study, each religious should strive for excellence according to the gifts he has received. Beyond merely fulfilling the established curriculum, he can make a plan for personal reading in each subject, cultivate some area of pastoral interest, or learn a language—all in agreement with his prefect of studies. A religious in ongoing formation should seek a clear, profound and up-to-date understanding of the trends and developments of ecclesial, spiritual, and pastoral life through his reading and other formative activities. Each one is responsible for setting a high bar for his intellectual formation and seeking the means to reach it.

579. Religious in formation should see their study in terms of communication and mission. Some activities that can help with this, and that also serve as practical exercises, are writing articles and other literary works, learning to adapt what is learned to modern media (the diverse digital platforms, videos, radio, etc.), practicing public speaking and preaching, and academies, which can cover various themes and take different formats.

## ***16. Conversation***

580. Conversations are moments to share with others the fruits of our study, interior life, reflection and experiences. A Legionary seeks to be a man of interesting, deep and pleasant conversation.

581. Dialogue is an art in which we manifest our self-control, personal maturity and good manners. Some guidelines that can help to form this art are:

- a. Choosing conversation topics that are of interest: themes proper to a religious and priest, but also secular themes, seen with the eyes of faith, while avoiding what Saint Paul calls “foolish and ignorant debates, for you know that they breed quarrels. A slave of the Lord should not quarrel” (2 Timothy 2:23-24).
- b. Using a moderate tone of voice, which helps reason prevail over passions.
- c. Making natural eye contact with those we are speaking with.
- d. Listening attentively without interrupting; striving to truly understand what the other wants to say and finding common ground; showing that we are open and willing to learn and search for the truth together. Dialogue is both giving and receiving, teaching and learning.
- e. Letting others speak after expressing our point of view, in order to avoid monopolizing the conversation or obliging others to listen for a long time without giving them the opportunity to contribute.
- f. Interrupting only when necessary, courteously, and being sure to apologize.

582. As a person consecrated to preach a “good word” (see Psalm 45:2), everything a Legionary says in public or private has a greater potential for both good and bad than what other men say. Therefore, as Saint Paul tells us: “No foul language should come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for needed edification, that it may impart grace to those who hear” (Ephesians 4:29).

583. Everything that makes us more human makes us better reflections of Christ, the true man. While the world today promotes impulsiveness, the Legion encourages prudent spontaneity.

Legionaries should avoid gestures that can be perceived as invasive or inappropriate, use rich and precise vocabulary—especially because language is so often degraded—and know how to “correct with kindness” (2 Timothy 2:25) when dealing with attitudes of wounded pride. In short, they should make themselves accessible in a natural way to persons of all ages and conditions.

### ***17. Meetings***

584. Meetings are a means of building communion and establishing collaboration in the diverse areas of a Legionary’s life: formation, fraternal life, apostolate and practical organization of activities. Every meeting is an opportunity to exercise faith in Christ’s action and presence, for as he promised: “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matthew 18:20).

585. Meetings should not be multiplied beyond necessity. Although there are many types of meetings, each with different goals and forms of participation, the following are some general guidelines which can help everyone form themselves in this art:

- a. Unless the meeting is casual or informal, it is important to have an agenda which includes the goals, themes and length of the meeting. This allows everyone to arrive to the meeting with a clear idea of what will be discussed, thereby avoiding both digressions and waste of time.
- b. Out of a sense of formality and respect for others, in addition to arriving punctually, all those summoned should prepare for the meeting by studying and reflecting on the themes that will be discussed and considering solutions, so that their contributions may be concise, precise and substantial.
- c. Participation in meetings requires the exercise of certain virtues such as serenity, poise and self-control. The proper development of any meeting depends on the desire of each participant to listen to and understand the others, not just to express

and defend his own point of view. This maturity allows him to argue without ridiculing others' ideas; to be open to changing his position based on their arguments; to inquire, and not only to propose; and to allow the moderator to do his job.

301 d. Discrepancies should not be feared. They help to understand a theme from various points of view. Indeed, when important themes are discussed, differences of opinion will very likely arise. Legionaries should avoid desiring to be right at any cost; giving into their passions and losing their temper; holding themselves back because of fear or human respect; and holding onto resentment when they see their own views are not accepted.

e. At the end of the meeting the moderator summarizes what has been discussed and the conclusions or agreements reached. If the meetings are recurring, at the beginning of the next session the participants should approve the minutes of the previous one.

### **18. Work around the house**

192 586. Manual labor is an aspect of Christ's life that we are called to imitate. Work helps us to understand those who earn their daily sustenance by the fatigue of physical labor and is an important element of formation and the Legionary way of life. It builds character, develops a capacity for practical reflection, checks our inclinations towards comfort, and helps us live evangelical poverty with greater authenticity.

Doing our work well—and the responsibility it requires—has great formative value and shows us what we are capable of in our apostolic work.

587. Legionaries should consider their house their own. In addition to personally maintaining the cleanliness and order of his own room, he should participate with a spirit of responsibility, diligence and initiative in preserving the tidiness and decorum of common areas, in order to keep the house dignified and welcoming.

588. Legionaries are encouraged to live in the presence of God during work periods (for example, by making spiritual communions or repeating some prayer or phrase in their hearts). They should offer their work to God, praying that he give strength and comfort to the sick or elderly who need to work for their living. In this way, housework also becomes a school of union with God amidst activity.

### **19. Rest**

589. A healthy tiredness is something holy for a soul consecrated to God. It is the fatigue of one who has worked to lead men to experience the love of Christ. A Legionary feels joy in ending his day exhausted from giving himself fully to the mission he has received from God. 112

590. Being apostles implies spending ourselves for the souls entrusted to us: “I will most gladly spend and be utterly spent for your sakes. If I love you more, am I to be loved less?” (2 Corinthians 12:15). Nonetheless a Legionary may sometimes feel excessive fatigue that is not wanted by God.<sup>313</sup> This can happen when he confronts his work in the wrong way, not recognizing his proper place as a “co-worker of God in the gospel of Christ” (1 Thessalonians 3:2). Not accepting the need for rest could be a sign of mixed motivations in his work, such as seeing himself as the protagonist.

591. Given that rest is a necessary means of maintaining physical and emotional health, it enters fully into the scope of integral formation: “All should feel responsible for their own rest and for helping the others to rest” (GCC 2014, 76). It is important to know oneself and receive help from one’s superior in order to understand the proper methods and times for rest.

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<sup>313</sup> EG 82: “As a result, work becomes more tiring than necessary, even leading at times to illness. Far from a content and happy tiredness, this is a tense, burdensome, dissatisfying and, in the end, unbearable fatigue.”

592. A Legionary should view these pauses in his work, taken to renew his strength, as times of rest, not idleness. He should give priority to forms of rest that help him develop other facets and dimensions of his person: contact with nature, gardening, conversation, reading, sports, music, or painting. The best form of rest is “diversion”<sup>314</sup> in its etymological sense of a change of direction—often the body rests as the spirit works and the spirit rests as the body works.

593. However, as a man of faith, a Legionary knows that rest and enjoyment are not the purpose of life. “Our citizenship is in heaven” (Philippians 3:20): Earth is not the goal of our lives. In this sense we can say that a Legionary saves his vacation for heaven. This Christian vision should be instilled in Legionaries from the initial stages of their formation, conscious that the world follows the opposite criteria and considers rest, understood as the search for pleasure and comfort, the true goal of life.

594. Moments of rest should not contradict, but favor religious life (the evangelical counsels, interior life, and fraternal life). They also can and should serve as opportunities for personal growth in virtue and for mutual edification and enrichment. For this reason community rest often includes occasions for group activities—sports, games, hikes—that can be lived together and demand real interaction.

“Legionaries should be mindful of the fact that the community needs their presence in the activities of fellowship and relaxation (Sunday as the “day of the Lord”, the community day of rest, weekend getaways, vacations, playing together, etc.). Likewise, if they need to, they should look for some personal rest, overcoming possible individualistic attitudes and checking with their superior how they go about it.” (GCC 2014, 76)

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<sup>314</sup> TN: In Spanish: “divertirse” can be understood both as “to have fun” and “to change directions.” La mejor forma de descansar es “divertirse”, en el sentido etimológico de “cambiar de dirección”

595. Just as God “rested on the seventh day from all the work he had undertaken” (Genesis 2: 2) to contemplate his creation, a Legionary lives Sunday as a day marked by the joy of the Resurrection, gratitude for his vocation, and the yearning for heaven.

596. “Christian spirituality proposes a growth marked by moderation and the capacity to be happy with little.”<sup>315</sup> A Legionary should learn how to rest with simple things because the source of his joy is in his heart. 187

### *Games*

597. In both sports and table games, a Legionary should compete in a healthy manner, participating with interest, enthusiasm and joviality in order to relax and help others relax. He should remember as well that a gentleman plays honestly and fairly, is humble in both victory and defeat.

598. As much as possible, all religious and priests should play sports or do other outdoor exercise with some frequency. In team sports, each one should call his own fouls or accept the decisions of the referee if there is one.

599. In games it is necessary to govern one’s reactions and emotions reasonably and not allow oneself to be overcome by bad attitudes, discouragement or over-excitement. The self-control required to play without being dominated by passion is expressed in the saying: “at table and at play a man gives himself away.”

### *Hikes, rest weekends and vacations*

600. For religious, the goal of moments of community life—hikes, weekends and vacations—is to deepen the relationships between one another, regain energy and renew their fervor in their interior life, enjoying God’s presence in creation and the times for prayer without the pressure of other activities.

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<sup>315</sup> *Laudato Si'*, Encyclical, Francis, 2015, 222.

601. These moments of relaxation offer more frequent opportunities for religious to cultivate a creative charity that seeks to help others rest, keeping “in mind the words of the Lord Jesus who himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive’” (Acts 20:35).

602. These activities should be carried out in accord with one’s religious identity, be it in the choice of location, personal presentation, or the spirit with which they are lived.

## **20. Meals**

603. All our food has sprouted, grown and ripened by the power of God, who seeks to provide us with nourishment. That is why we bless the food before our meals.

604. We demonstrate self-control while eating—a testimony of our interior richness—through our good etiquette and attentiveness to the needs of those around us.

605. In formation houses, there is normally a reading during meals to encourage the habit of reflection and the desire to enrich oneself with cultural and spiritual knowledge:

- a. During *lunch*: books on Church history, history in general, or culture; biographies of great persons; essays or articles; the meal ends with the saint of the day.
- b. During *dinner*: texts on spirituality, from the Magisterium and from the lives of the saints, in order to recollect the spirit at the end of the day.

606. In order to foster a family atmosphere and give opportunities to spend time together around the table, there may be conversation at lunch or dinner according to the predefined moments in the Rule of Life of each house.

607. It is a true sign of poverty to receive the food served to the community with gratitude.

608. It is recommended to never leave the table without having offered a small sacrifice to God.

609. At the end of the meal, Legionaries give thanks to God for all his gifts and pray for the deceased, that they may participate in the eternal banquet of heaven. It is a praiseworthy tradition to prolong this thanksgiving in a short visit to Christ in the Eucharist. After meals eaten outside of the house, this moment is replaced by a reading from the Gospels followed by some moments of silent reflection.

## **B. General Means of Formation**

### ***1. Religious discipline***

610. Any charism, as we have already considered, consists of a spirituality, a common life, an apostolic mission, and a particular way of life. When the Church approves “a charismatic program that is a religious institute, the Church guarantees that the inspiration that animates it and the norms that regulate it can provide a path for seeking God and holiness.”<sup>316</sup>

611. Indeed, religious families offer to their members the benefit of “a proven doctrine of acquiring perfection,”<sup>317</sup> as stated in Vatican Council II.

“And since this perfection consists in advancing ever further in the love of God and of our brethren, it is necessary to understand this doctrine in a very concrete way, that is as a doctrine of life that must be effectively lived.” “Everyone can see how much the fraternal setting of an ordered existence with freely undertaken discipline of life helps you to attain union with God.”<sup>318</sup>

612. One must not fall into the danger that Pope Saint Paul VI so wisely used to warn against: “An excessive desire for flexibility

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<sup>316</sup> SAO 9.

<sup>317</sup> LG 43.

<sup>318</sup> ET 37 & 34.

and creative spontaneity can in fact give rise to accusations of rigidity directed against that minimum of regularity in activities which community life and personal maturity ordinarily require.”<sup>319</sup> Therefore, by embracing common rules, it is important to realize that “community that is not mystical has no soul, but community that is not ascetic has no body. ‘Synergy’ between the gift of God and personal commitment is required for building an incarnated communion.”<sup>320</sup>

613. The norms, schedules, and traditions of the Congregation thus “become means of mediating the will of the Lord: human mediation but still authoritative, imperfect but at the same time binding, the starting point from which each day begins, and also for moving forward in a generous and creative impulse towards that sanctity which God ‘wills’ for every consecrated person.”<sup>321</sup> In other words, a Legionary interiorizes the values that the norms contain. He expresses his identity through them, without falling into legalism: “Let us not forget that every human institution is prone to become set in its ways and is threatened by formalism. It is continually necessary to revitalize external forms with this interior driving force, without which these external forms would very quickly become an excessive burden.”<sup>322</sup>

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<sup>319</sup> ET 32.

<sup>320</sup> FLC 23.

<sup>321</sup> SAO 9; see EE 34: “The visibility of this witness involves the foregoing of standards of comfort and convenience that would otherwise be legitimate. It requires a restraint on forms of relaxation and entertainment. To ensure this public witness, religious willingly accept a pattern of life that is not permissive but largely laid down for them.

They wear a religious garb that distinguishes them as consecrated persons, and they have a place of residence which is properly established by their institute in accordance with common law and their own constitutions.

Such matters as travel and social contacts are in accord with the spirit and character of their institute and with religious obedience. These provisions alone do not ensure the desired public witness to the joy, hope, and love of Jesus Christ, but they offer important means to it, and it is certain that religious witness is not given without them.”

<sup>322</sup> ET 12.

614. For Legionaries, religious discipline has three objectives: “to give witness to their consecration, foster fraternal life in common and grow in their love for God” (CLC 40).

A mature religious lives out this discipline by “making his own the norms and living them faithfully and maturely under the guidance of his superiors” (see CLC 40). “If ever they are negligent, they should strive to amend their ways and accept correction and penances with faith and humility” (CLC 93, 5°).

615. The love of Christ is the supreme Rule of Life of a religious (see CLC 235).

## ***2. Periodic evaluation of formation***

### *Nature and purpose*

616. Formation is a continuous and gradual process of growth. Periodic evaluations throughout this process are a pedagogical resource that allows a religious to see his situation objectively, discover the areas in which he can improve, and gain the wisdom to use the means at his disposal.

The habit of self-evaluation is very helpful as we strive for excellence (*semper altius*) in the different activities of our lives and the different dimensions of our formation.

617. Formation for religious life and the priesthood is not merely human or professional training, but above all a work of the Holy Spirit in a man identifying himself more and more with Christ. Therefore, the criteria of evaluation cannot be the same as those of secular institutions, nor can the “results” be measured in the same way. Moreover, just as formation is personalized, so also evaluation—each one grows at his own pace. 367

618. The Legion should also point out certain attitudes and behaviors as indicators that a real transformation is taking place and that the religious is making the most of his talents.

The main criteria of evaluation in Legionary formation are laid out in universal and proper law. The formation objectives this *Ratio* presents in the different dimensions are the touchstone of formation, both initial and ongoing.

619. Beyond just its results, the act of evaluation is itself a highly formative activity for a Legionary. Thus the methods of evaluation should also be employed with this pedagogical end in mind.

*Those responsible for the evaluation*

620. Each Legionary is the protagonist of his own formation.<sup>323</sup> This conviction gives him the resolve to know, accept, and overcome himself under the sure light of reason, faith, and the certainty of God's unique love for every individual. Through examination and spiritual discernment, a Legionary becomes aware of his talents and limitations, his response to the love of God, his achievements and his shortcomings.

621. Although this personal evaluation is crucial, it is not enough. It is necessary to have external means to maintain a more objective view of oneself. The formators play an important role in forming this view. Honest dialogue with them helps a Legionary understand himself better, and creates an environment of trust and truth in which the superiors can offer suggestions to help him face his concrete situation.<sup>324</sup>

622. The formators are responsible for judging the progress of those entrusted to their care. They must do this with the spirit of Christ the Good Shepherd, taking advantage of every means possible, and bringing every case to prayer until they see with clarity and reach inner certainty about the situation.

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<sup>323</sup> See GPV 130: "Each seminarian is the protagonist of his own formation."

<sup>324</sup> "The seminarian is required to be docile, to review his own life constantly and to be open to fraternal correction, so as to respond ever more fully to the workings of grace." (GPV 58).

623. One means of evaluation is the personal report prepared by the formators in the name of Mother Church, made with the sincere love, “coherence and objectivity,”<sup>325</sup> respect, delicacy, and confidentiality that each person deserves. 408

In these reports, the formator should give an overview of the religious’ current state in all areas, taking into account the progress he has made during the time in which the formator has accompanied him. To make this a formative moment, it is good to ask the religious to give his own view of himself and include it in the report. In special circumstances, such as before perpetual profession and diaconate ordination, it is also useful to gather the impression of the community by asking some brothers to give their opinion with honesty and charity. However, it must be clear that the report comes from the superior and the judgment is made by him alone.

The spiritual director also participates in this process, formulating his own evaluation which he communicates directly to the religious, who then makes it known to the superior.

#### *Evaluation in initial formation*

624. The milestones of initial formation—first profession, renewal of vows, perpetual profession, ministries, Holy Orders—are special moments of evaluation in confirming one’s initial discernment and reviewing his progress.

Before beginning a new stage or commitment in life, each religious should deepen in his self-knowledge to acquire a clear consciousness of his present state. Before requesting admission, he must examine whether he complies with the requirements stated in Canon

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<sup>325</sup> GPV 58.

Law<sup>326</sup> and the Constitutions,<sup>327</sup> and whether he has reached the expected goals of his stage of formation. It is he who must primarily give a positive judgment of himself and present himself to the superiors as a suitable candidate for admission.

The superior, after listening to his council and bringing the matter to prayer, must come to a judgment based on the opinion developed throughout his formative relationship with the religious. He must then deliver this judgment to the appropriate major superior. If he sees shortcomings that might call later admissions into doubt, he should communicate them clearly to the religious at the right moment, without avoiding this duty of charity.

Moments of transition in consecrated life are special opportunities for a religious to place himself before God, hear his voice afresh, and renew the commitment which God has inspired in him. It would be an impoverishment for a religious to see these steps as mere formalities or obstacles to overcome.

689 625. Until perpetual profession, the evaluation focuses on the suitability of the candidate and his readiness to take on the commitments of life in the Legion. During immediate preparation for Holy Orders, it must be verified that he is acquiring the maturity and virtue necessary to embrace this gift and to exercise his ministry with true self-giving to others.

626. This evaluation does not restrict itself to the moments preceding admission. At the end of each stage during the first period of temporal vows the religious makes a written evaluation of his progress in formation and presents this to his spiritual director and formators, who in turn give their assessment and recommendations.

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<sup>326</sup> Canon Law (CIC 1029) states these requirements in order to receive Holy Orders: integral faith, right intention, necessary knowledge, good reputation, integral morality and tested virtue, and the necessary physical and psychological health.

<sup>327</sup> The Constitutions lay down the requirements from proper law for the admission to novitiate (CLC 66), temporary profession (CLC 85), perpetual profession (CLC 93), ministries (CLC 106), and Holy Orders (CLC 107).

627. During apostolic internship, the religious does a written self-evaluation at the end of each year, asks his mentor for his input, and discusses it with his spiritual director and superior, who gives this analysis to the major superiors. A religious ending apostolic internship should recognize the benefits he has gained from this experience and the deficiencies it has brought to light, asking his director of apostolate for his opinion.

628. After internship, the annual evaluation is done in light of upcoming admission to the ministries, perpetual profession, and Holy Orders. During years in which a religious is not applying for a particular admission, he should follow the guidelines laid down in previous numbers.

629. A change of community is another occasion for evaluation. The superior of the previous community writes a report to help the next superior continue the accompaniment of the religious.

630. There should also be academic evaluations during the stages of initial formation dedicated to study. When religious receive their grades, it is advisable to talk with them about their academic performance, helping them maintain purity of intention. Still, academic evaluation goes beyond grades. The prefect of studies and his team should help each Legionary in formation to reach his full intellectual potential.

#### *Evaluation in ongoing formation*

631. After ordination, evaluations can help priests to keep their fervor and their resolve to seek holiness throughout the different stages of their lives.

632. During the first three years of priesthood, the evaluation is done in the same way as for those in apostolic internship: each priest should do a written evaluation of himself at the end of the year and discuss it with his spiritual director, superior, and his mentor and director of apostolate (in the areas that concern them).

After this period, it is recommended that each priest continue this practice, for his own good above all. He should assess the progress made in his ongoing formation and ministry, and speak about it with his spiritual director and superior. He can also mention it in his yearly formation review with the territorial director.

633. At the end of a Legionary's assignment, the superior, having spoken with him and considered his judgment, presents to the territorial director any reasons for or against his reappointment.

634. When a priest switches communities, the old superior must write a report to help the new superior continue the accompaniment of the priest.

### ***3. Legionary apostolic development***

635. "Apostolic Development" is the process of discerning the field of apostolate<sup>328</sup> that a Legionary wants to focus on and the type of mission that he will be assigned to. This discernment happens throughout a Legionary's life and becomes concrete in determined moments, following certain principles.

#### *General principles*

636. The first principle of apostolic development is incorporation into the mission of the Congregation and *Regnum Christi*. A Legionary prepares himself for the mission of "forming apostles, Christian leaders at the service of the Church" (CLC 4).

111,201 637. The second principle is obedience. For his whole life, a Legionary considers himself a "rank and file soldier" and lives as such. The Constitutions lay out the Legionary ideal of motivated obedience, "combining in an attitude of simplicity both dependence and

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<sup>328</sup> The areas of apostolates are determined by the general director. These areas can be very general: youth and family ministry, vocational promotion, Legionary formation, the academics, administration, secretariat, directorship in educational institutions, or others that might be determined in the future.

responsible initiative” (CLC 33 §2). They also encourage him to put “all the powers of [his] intellect and will, as well as the gifts of nature and grace” (CLC 34), at the service of obedience.

The process of apostolic development and the moment when he receives his mission are special opportunities for a Legionary to live the spirit of obedience that he has promised to God, a spirit that is “supernatural, prompt, joyful, persevering and heroic” (CLC 33 §1). Superiors, on their part, should foster in the religious “both the dynamism of personal initiative and sacrificial obedience” (CLC 36).

Legionaries, seeking to identify with Christ who came “to serve and to give his life” (Mark 10:45), should try to fulfill the “oblative” sense of their religious consecration. They should give themselves to their mission as part of the total self-giving they promised on the day of their profession.

638. The third principle is the integration of one’s personal talents with his particular mission. The Constitutions ask that major superiors, “when assigning religious to any office, position or responsibility, should take into account the good of the religious and of the congregation” (CLC 128).

Superiors should look for the best possible way to combine the gifts and talents that each religious has received from God with the apostolic necessities of the Legion and of *Regnum Christi*. Through sincere dialogue, they should get to know each religious—not only in his spiritual and apostolic life, but also his personality and psychology—in order to discern and make proper decisions.

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#### *The process of apostolic development*

639. To better accomplish the mission and use the talents and experience of each Legionary to the full, religious should have:

- a. Detailed formation in the knowledge and abilities they will need for their specific mission, as described in the general formation objectives and the objectives of each stage.

- b. Tools to help them understand their personalities and strengths, foster their talents for the mission and allow them to develop the skills that this requires.
- c. A personalized training plan, when necessary, for both his short and long term development.
- d. Introductory programs for every new mission, along with means of evaluation.

640. Before beginning internship, a religious, with the help of his formators, evaluates how he has assimilated the objectives of the apostolic dimension as described in general and in each stage of formation.

The rector, after consulting the religious about his preferences and expectations for internship, proposes his assignment to the general director. The religious, with the assistance of his formators, proposes the skills he is going to develop during this stage.

641. During internship, the religious is accompanied on his assigned mission by a mentor, who introduces him to life on the apostolate and helps him program and evaluate his work. He exposes the religious to the personal and apostolic experiences that will foster his desired skills.

642. At the end of internship, the religious, with the help of his superior and mentor, should evaluate his progress and present a plan of growth for the next stage of formation.

643. The process of assigning the religious to a mission takes place during the third year of theology. This entails:

- a. An interview with the religious;
- b. The rector's judgment, after having heard the opinion of the formators;

c. The first apostolic assignment, which pertains to the general director. These assignments can complement previous experiences with new ones, or confirm an orientation toward a certain apostolic field. It should also help to solidify the religious' priestly identity.

644. From their first assignment, and in dialogue with their superiors, young priests should outline a formation program, looking ahead to their apostolic development. This can take various forms depending on the necessities and priorities of the Legion and the Movement, and on the desires and abilities of each person. This program helps the priest to channel his energy, gives unity and depth to his ongoing formation, and fosters openness and a desire for integral formation.

In general, it is recommended that the religious wait until this moment to make such a program, since the exercise of the ministry gives him a better perspective and wider horizons.

However, those who will be assigned to the field of university teaching should begin this path of formation earlier, as it requires more intense specialization and a doctoral degree.

645. Every Legionary should receive at least one licentiate, generally in theology. If the religious did not obtain it before or immediately after ordination, he should pursue it between three and nine years after ordination, having received approval from the general director.

646. Once the priest has concluded his licentiate, the general director can assign him to a specific apostolic field. The territorial director should ask permission from the general director if he wishes to change that assignment.

#### ***4. Recourse to professional psychology***

647. When she finishes discerning the vocation and suitability of candidates for the priestly ministry, the Church seeks to “safeguard

the good of her own mission and, at the same time, the good of the candidates.”<sup>329</sup> Both of these goods must be sought simultaneously.

648. The priestly ministry “requires certain abilities as well as moral and theological virtues, which are supported by a human and psychological—and particularly affective—equilibrium, so as to allow the subject to be adequately predisposed for giving of himself in the celibate life.”<sup>330</sup> Psychology can offer help, which is in some cases necessary, in the formation of the candidates, as well as support that “must be integrated within the context of the candidate’s entire formation.”<sup>331</sup>

*Specific goals in diverse circumstances*

649. The Legion welcomes these guidelines and appreciates psychology as a useful asset in the diverse circumstances and needs of its members. It has three different goals:

- a. Evaluation: to analyze the long-term suitability of the candidates;
- b. Formation: for self-knowledge and personal growth (non-therapeutic psychology);
- c. Therapy: when it is convenient or necessary during initial formation or in ministry.

*Evaluative goal*

650. One draws on psychology for evaluation above all before admittance to the novitiate, an important step both for the person entering and for the religious family. It helps to “better know the character and the personality of the candidates.”<sup>332</sup> Sometimes the

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<sup>329</sup> GUP 1.

<sup>330</sup> GUP 2.

<sup>331</sup> GUP 6.

<sup>332</sup> GPV 192.

young man has not attained sufficient self-knowledge, and cannot offer the candidacy director an analysis of certain basic elements. For this reason, all candidates should verify that they meet the requirements of physical and psychological health (a psycho-medical personality, ability and aptitudes test), in order to base their decisions on objective facts.<sup>333</sup>

651. Later on in initial formation or during ministry, a religious may need a new evaluation to clarify certain aspects of his personality and verify if further help is needed.

*Formative goal*

652. Legionaries can also consult professionals to gain deeper self-knowledge and better integrate the different aspects of their person with their consecration. 211

One motive to seek or recommend psychological help is a notable difficulty with one of the normal requirements for religious life in the Legion, such as:

- a. Serene and open interaction with the community (complexes, fears, shyness, harsh judgments, obsessive desire for the spotlight);
- b. Natural relationships with superiors (almost insurmountable difficulty being sincere with them and letting oneself be known by them);
- c. The fulfillment of personal duties and the ability to take on responsibilities;
- d. Healthy affective and emotional maturity (certain mental blocks or a considerable distance between their actual and mental age);

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<sup>333</sup> See GPV 193: "In any case, it is appropriate to obtain a psychological evaluation, both at the time of admission to the seminary, and subsequently, when it seems useful to the formators."

- e. The ability to recognize and accept any of these difficulties.

653. In houses of formation, religious should receive conferences according to their needs on topics of integral human growth: freedom and responsibility; intelligence, will, and emotions; human love and affective maturity; addictions; etc.

*Therapeutic goal*

654. There are different issues that can make it necessary to consult psychologists for therapeutic purposes. Some of these are:

- a. Traumatic experiences which require therapy to be adequately overcome;
- b. Serious difficulties controlling sexual impulses;
- c. Doubts about one's sexual orientation;
- d. Suicidal thoughts and tendencies;
- e. Strong tendencies to depression or anxiety;
- f. Incipient or deep-rooted addictions;
- g. Changes in behavior or somatic problems that are not clearly diagnosed (which can be physiological, neurological, endocrinological or psychological).

655. Recourse to specialists in this field should not be prolonged unnecessarily. It should be integrated with the growth in one's spiritual and religious life, and accompanied by both spiritual director and superior, who help the religious in a natural, close and interested way. During therapy of whatever kind, the religious should maintain an ordinary active life, except for rare occasions.

*Respect for the person*

656. According to the instructions of the Holy See,<sup>334</sup> respect for a person's freedom and discretion in the use of private information

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<sup>334</sup> GUP 12.

are basic principles in the psychological assistance of candidates for the priesthood. It is necessary to remember the following:

- a. The need for “the candidate’s previous, explicit, informed and free consent” before any interview or test.<sup>335</sup> The candidates have the right to be informed of the nature, goal, confidentiality, use, and safekeeping of information.
- b. The responsibility to respect the good name of the person and the right to protect one’s privacy.<sup>336</sup>

657. Therefore, recourse to psychologists is subject to the following guidelines:

- a. Every religious should feel that he is free to ask his superior for professional psychological help. On his part, the superior should analyze together with the religious the best way to go about seeking this help;
- b. In certain circumstances, the superiors may invite someone to consider this option. If the religious “should refuse to undergo a psychological consultation, the formators will not force his will in any way. Instead, they will prudently proceed in the work of discernment with the knowledge they already have.”<sup>337</sup> In any case, the superiors should not admit anyone to profession without positive conviction of their suitability. In the case of priests, their ministry can be restricted or even prohibited if there are doubts about whether they meet the minimum requirements for its healthy exercise;
- c. The relationship between the religious and the psychologist is, by its nature, strictly confidential and private. For the psychologist to share the information related to the help that the

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<sup>335</sup> GUP 5, which cites: Directives on Formation in Religious Institutes, Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, 1969, 11 §3.

<sup>336</sup> See CIC 220.

<sup>337</sup> GUP 12.

religious receives with superiors or others, and for this information to be kept in his formation file, the religious must give his explicit written consent;

d. When the religious has given his consent, for his privacy and good name to remain permanently protected, the professional opinion expressed by the psychologist should only be accessible to those responsible for his formation, with the strict prohibition from using it for any purpose other than vocational discernment or personal formation.

658. The primary interest in seeking psychological help is the overall good of the religious; what matters is that the process benefit him. An agreement should be reached with the therapist regarding the objective of the sessions and how the results will be conveyed to the religious.

659. The written report given to the religious by the psychologist should be formulated in such a way that he can understand and assimilate it as a help for his personal growth and as a tool to know himself better and mature, overcome limitations, strengthen and develop talents, grow in interior harmony, and assume his personal and irreplaceable responsibility in the present and looking to the future.

660. One way to bring the superior or formator into this process, that is, if the religious gives his consent, is to share with him the results of the evaluation and the progress of the therapy. It can also be helpful to have occasional conversations between the three so that together, each one in his role and within his limits, can contribute to the growth of the religious.<sup>338</sup>

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<sup>338</sup> These encounters contribute to creating a mutual sympathy and communion of sentiments between the patient, therapist and formator, and to reaching an agreement over the goals of the therapeutic intervention and over the requirements of the process.

*Criteria for the selection of psychologists*

661. Given that the psychological and spiritual good of a religious are at stake, it is prudent not to rush the selection of a psychologist. When in doubt, the opinion of competent persons should be sought.

Some aspects which should be pondered carefully when choosing a psychologist are:

- a. Whether they have a good knowledge of the faith, base their work on sound anthropology and share the Christian view of sexuality; whether they have sufficient knowledge of religious and priestly life, with its values, challenges and dynamics (especially those which derive from obedience, chastity and community life);
- b. Whether it is clear to them that their function is not to determine if the person has a true vocation or is suitable, but rather to help him to know himself, offering elements that will aid personal discernment;
- c. Whether the therapy facilitates the integration of the human and supernatural dimensions, seeking to enable a fuller and deeper exercise of freedom.

It is helpful for the territorial director and the rector of a house of formation to keep a list of psychologists who meet these requirements.

*Preparation of formators*

662. The Congregation is charged with making sure that the formators, who should accompany the religious in their vocational discernment, are sufficiently trained in this field,<sup>339</sup> especially through adequate psychological and pedagogical knowledge.

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<sup>339</sup> See GUP 3.

### ***5. Formation for the digital world***

663. When we speak of “means of social communication” we do not only refer to certain technologically advanced tools, but to the new, constantly evolving environment created by these tools. “The new digital technologies are, indeed, bringing about fundamental shifts in patterns of communication and human relationships.”<sup>340</sup> The digital culture that springs from this environment is a fact in our lives and is, therefore, an unavoidable factor in the formation and evangelizing mission of the priest:

“There are new ‘places’ through which many are moving daily, ‘digital peripheries’ which should not be deprived of the possibility of an authentic culture of encounter in the name of Jesus.”<sup>341</sup> “The digital environment is not a parallel or purely virtual world, but is part of the daily experience of many people, especially the young.”<sup>342</sup>

664. The Magisterium of the Church sees this fact in a positive light and values its potential as a vehicle for solidarity and collaboration, for exchange and learning, for access to sources of information and freedom of expression. It is a public plaza “from which the pastors of the future cannot remain aloof, either during their formation or their future ministry.”<sup>343</sup>

#### *Help offered by the media*

665. A Legionary forms himself in this area by combining appropriate use of media with “sound theological insights ... reflecting a strong priestly spirituality grounded in constant dialogue with the Lord,”<sup>344</sup> since a priest finds the face of Christ in others through the media.

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<sup>340</sup> *Message for the 43<sup>rd</sup> World Communications Day*, Benedict XVI, 2009.

<sup>341</sup> GPV 98.

<sup>342</sup> *Message for the 47<sup>th</sup> World Communications Day*, Benedict XVI, 2013.

<sup>343</sup> GPV 97.

<sup>344</sup> *Message for the 44<sup>th</sup> World Communications Day*, Benedict XVI, 2010.

“When messages and information are plentiful, silence becomes essential if we are to distinguish what is important from what is insignificant or secondary. Deeper reflection helps us to discover the links between events that at first sight seem unconnected, to make evaluations, to analyze messages; this makes it possible to share thoughtful and relevant opinions, giving rise to an authentic body of shared knowledge.”<sup>345</sup>

666. The digital world can favor a healthy atmosphere of fraternal life and community spirit:

“In a world like this, media can help us to feel closer to one another, creating a sense of the unity of the human family which can in turn inspire solidarity and serious efforts to ensure a more dignified life for all. Good communication helps us to grow closer, to know one another better and ultimately, to grow in unity.”<sup>346</sup>

667. The media therefore becomes a remarkable means of proclaiming Christ (see CLC 46). “‘You will be my witnesses [...] to the ends of the earth’ (see Acts 1:8). Modern day reality obliges us to think about these words of Jesus in a new way, because ‘the ends of the earth’ have expanded through the mass media and social networks.”<sup>347</sup>

### *Criteria for use*

668. From an ethical point of view, the use of the digital media is governed by objective moral principles, particularly those that highlight the dignity of the person and safeguard the common good.<sup>348</sup> Some recommendations are:

a. *The criterion of identity*: A Legionary courageously uses this digital culture to preach love according to his identity and transformation into Christ;

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<sup>345</sup> *Message for the 46<sup>th</sup> World Communications Day*, Benedict XVI, 2012.

<sup>346</sup> *Message for the 48<sup>th</sup> World Communications Day*, Francis, 2014.

<sup>347</sup> GPV 97.

<sup>348</sup> See *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 416.

- b. *The criteria of truth, charity, and good reputation:* Everything he writes or shares should bring others to truth and charity, especially when others' reputations are at stake;
- c. *The criterion of mission:* As a tool for formation, information, bringing people together, etc., the digital media can be a great resource, but should not replace the other duties of ordained ministry, such as the celebration of the sacraments and spiritual direction;
- d. *The criterion of sobriety:* This consists in giving priority to times of intimacy with God, such as prayer, community activities or the great silence. Furthermore, when a Legionary abstains totally from the media (during spiritual exercises, retreats, or other voluntary moments), he experiences the positive effect of this abstinence on his interior life, and thus returns to ordinary use of the media with greater freedom, able to make appropriate decisions about them.<sup>349</sup>
- e. *The criterion of communion:* the media should be put at the service of communion within the Legion and *Regnum Christi* because they foster the relationships, encounters, and dialogue that allow for the sharing of spiritual goods.

669. An essential element of a religious' education in this area is understanding and accepting that as a Legionary, his presence on social networks is never merely personal—he always represents the Legion, *Regnum Christi*, and ultimately, the Church.

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<sup>349</sup> VC 99: "Consecrated persons are called to offer their specific witness regarding the relative nature of all created realities. In this way they help people to use the media wisely and in accordance with God's plan, but also to free themselves from an obsessive interest in 'the form of this world which is passing away' (1 Corinthians 7:31)."

*Possible risks and ways to avoid them*

670. Each Legionary should assume personal responsibility for his use of the digital media and “pay prudent attention to the inevitable risks that come from frequenting the digital world, including various forms of addiction.”<sup>350</sup> Some pitfalls could be:

- a. Distraction and waste of time;
- b. The need to always live “online,” which can become a real addiction;
- c. The cultivation and preference of “virtual relationships” over personal ones;
- d. Inordinate desire for appreciation and recognition from others or followers, which can sometimes compromise his identity or mission;
- e. Naïve acceptance and spreading of information without verifying its truth;
- f. Allowing oneself to be invaded by digital media to the point of losing one’s taste for silence and simple contact with God in the soul;
- g. Abuse of digital media in order to escape from reality in moments of fatigue, suffering or tension, thus offending God and one’s personal dignity.

671. Some of these dangers can be prevented and confronted best by personal accompaniment. It is highly recommended to offer programs that give religious the support of people they trust, by sharing with them records of their internet use (time spent online, websites visited, etc.). The consciousness that one is not alone online is very helpful—it allows the aforementioned challenges to become opportunities to grow as brothers who love and support

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<sup>350</sup> GPV 99.

one another in their fidelity to the Lord. Religious in initial formation who use these programs should tell their superior who they have chosen to support them in this area.

672. Formators should be trained in this area in order to understand the possibilities that the digital world has in the life of a religious. They should foster open dialogue in the community about the challenges and opportunities the means of communication offer for the mission and the Church.

*Guidelines for the initial stages of formation*

- 42 673. The life of one called to a mission begins in the desert, following the example of Jesus (Mark 1:12-13) and Saint Paul (Galatians 1:15-18). In the novitiate, the stage that lays the foundation for the rest of formation, novices should have an experience of total detachment from social networks and very limited use of the internet, and speak with their director about the opportunities and fruits of this experience. The internet continues to be available in the novitiate; it is the novices who take on this experience of abstinence on their own accord.
- 765 After novitiate, the formators should accompany the religious in their gradual reintroduction to the use of digital media. They should learn how to use it according to their religious and apostolic identity, with the interior freedom to set it aside when it stops helping them or even gets in their way. This requires specific formation—primarily from the formators, but also from experts in media usage. The use of digital media and time spent on it should be discussed in formation review.

SECOND PART  
STAGES OF FORMATION:  
PERSEVERING IN LOVE

*I held him and would not let him go. (Song of Songs 3:4)*

385 674. The crossing of the Israelites from Egypt to the Promised Land is an image of human life as a journey with God toward its fullness in heaven. Trust in God is essential on this journey, for he never fails his sons even though he allows tests in order to strengthen their faith, “so as to test you by affliction, to know what was in your heart: to keep his commandments, or not” (Deuteronomy 8:2).

675. The Legion offers its members a formative itinerary, adaptable to the needs of the person and of the times, that is based on the pedagogical tradition of the Church and the Congregation. It is made up of different stages and points out in general terms the characteristics of each. It institutionalizes the formation process, while at the same time leaving space for the adaptation and flexibility that each person requires.

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The stages of this journey, through continuous and gradual accompaniment, seek to harmonize and integrate the personal growth of each Legionary with his religious and priestly vocation, following the requirements established by the Church and the Congregation.

624-625 676. Perpetual profession is a definitive moment in the life of a religious, and therefore determines, in a certain sense, the objectives of the first stages of initial formation. Furthermore, because a Legionary is called to the priesthood, preparation for Holy Orders and for the exercise of his ministry is present from the beginning of formation and intensifies in the stage of theology.

765 677. Studies are an important aspect of initial formation and mark the natural progression of the stages. Nonetheless, they are not the only aspect of the personal itinerary—formation is not assured merely by the passage of time or the succession of years or stages.<sup>351</sup>

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<sup>351</sup> “The attainment of formation objectives should not necessarily be tied to the time spent in the seminary and especially not to the studies completed. That is to say, one should not arrive ‘automatically’ at the priesthood merely by reason of having followed a series of pre-established stages in chronological order and set out beforehand, independently of the actual progress that has been achieved in overall integral maturity. Rather, ordination is the goal of a genuinely completed spiritual journey, that has gradually helped the seminarian to become aware of the call he has received and the characteristics that pertain to priestly identity, allowing him to reach the necessary human, Christian and priestly maturity.” GPV 58; see GPV 118.



## CHAPTER SEVEN

### THE PROCESS OF VOCATIONAL DISCERNMENT

*What shall I do, Lord? (Acts 22:10)*<sup>352</sup>

678. “Jesus ‘went up into the hills, and called to him those whom he desired; and they came to him’ (Mark 3:13). On the one hand, we have the completely free decision of Jesus; on the other, the ‘coming’ of the Twelve, their ‘following’ Jesus. [...] The absolute primacy of grace in vocation is most perfectly proclaimed in the words of Jesus: ‘You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide’” (John 15:16).<sup>353</sup> 58

679. This *Ratio* does not claim to develop a systematic vocational theology. Church teaching on the matter emphasizes right intention and suitability.<sup>354</sup> Thus the Church begins with the presupposition that desire and capability are sufficient conditions to consider a possible vocation.

A young man’s experience of an intimate relationship with Christ reveals his *desire*: his longing to belong totally to him, his inner drive to work for the salvation of mankind, his attraction to fraternal life, or other similar interior movements. Often, at the beginning of this journey, these good motives are tangled with others that are less pure: an attraction to a human exemplar, an idealized concept of the priesthood, a desire to be in the spotlight, etc. Over time, God will purify these lesser motives.

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<sup>352</sup> TN: Revised Standard Version.

<sup>353</sup> PDV 36.

<sup>354</sup> See CIC 241 §1; 597.

His *capability* is verified both by the absence of impediments and by the possession of certain necessary qualities. These are found in the Code of Canon Law<sup>355</sup> and in the Constitutions<sup>356</sup> as objective points of reference by which young men and their formators can  
648 discern the presence of a Legionary vocation.

680. We use the word *discernment* because prudent judgment is necessary in matters of vocation. In this process, we evaluate whether the traits<sup>357</sup> the Constitutions speak of are sufficiently present in the candidate, while keeping in mind that he is also going to undergo a long process of interior growth. This process is different for each person: for some, the conviction of their call is obvious from the start, while for others this moral certainty comes only after a long, painful journey. For this reason, personal, attentive, supernatural and fatherly accompaniment are crucial in every stage of formation.

681. For a young man to participate in the candidacy, he must show signs of a possible call from God. The purpose of this stage is an initial verification of these signs through the experience of life as a candidate. The program and activities of the candidacy must  
694 take this purpose into account, incorporating some elements of religious life in the Legion.

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<sup>355</sup> For admission to an institute of religious life, besides the required age, universal law calls for the health, suitable character, and sufficient qualities of maturity to embrace the life of the institute (see CIC 642); the factors for invalid admission are found in Canon 643, among them, not having completed 17 years of age. In addition, the requirements for admission to the seminary should be taken into account, admitting “those who are judged qualified to dedicate themselves permanently to the sacred ministries”, considering their “human, moral, spiritual, and intellectual qualities, their physical and psychic health, and their correct intention.” (CIC 241)

<sup>356</sup> Admission to the novitiate (CLC 66), to religious profession (CLC 85), to perpetual profession (CLC 93), to the ministries (CLC 106) and to holy orders (CLC 107).

<sup>357</sup> the intellectual ability for the university studies required for ordination; a strong and steadfast will; prudence in making commitments; and determination, courage and constancy in keeping them; integrity, a balanced psychology and good health; discretion, affability, good social skills, sincerity and loyalty;

682. If the young man feels the stirrings of a possible call throughout the candidacy, and if the initial verification sufficiently shows that he possesses the qualities described in the Constitutions and does not have any apparent impediments, the candidate may enter the novitiate. Special consideration should be given to his generosity and his willingness to live the spirit and community life of the Congregation and carry out its apostolate (CLC 66 §2, 5°). Finally, the requisites indicated for admission to later stages should be present in some way from the beginning. 698

The novitiate requires at least a modicum of serenity, positive spirit and interior freedom to allow oneself to be formed in a new way of life with docility. If one has persistent doubts during candidacy, he should evaluate with his formator whether it would be most helpful to continue discerning outside the Legion or to take on this new experience.

683. The novitiate is the period of vocational discernment par excellence. The director of novices has the dual task of helping the novice in his formation and in the deep examination of his calling to and aptitude for religious and priestly life in the Congregation. This entails reviewing his personal history with him, including the mark left by his upbringing, within his family and outside it; his God-given attraction to this path; and his desires, hopes and fears.

The director of novices has a particular grace of state in helping the novice and the Congregation by shedding light on his possible call to the Legion, or in helping him to embrace and respond to the voice of God guiding him to another path, for a vocation must be founded on the solid ground that gives assurance for the future.

684. For the novice to profess temporal vows, neither he nor the director can harbor any serious doubts about the vocation. If the novice is still wavering, it is not recommended that he profess. If it is the formators who doubt his suitability, the director can petition the territorial director to prolong his novitiate for six more

months,<sup>358</sup> although in principle two years should be enough to evaluate his suitability.

685. In theory, the novice's intention in professing temporal vows should be to embrace Legionary life "*ad vitam*." He should be firmly resolved to serve God, respond to the divine call, renew his vows and make his perpetual profession in the Congregation (See CLC 85, §1), for "while still retaining its probationary character by the fact that it is temporary, the profession of first vows makes the young religious share in the consecration proper to the religious state."<sup>359</sup>

686. The period of temporal vows exists primarily for the purpose of forming the men God has called into Legionaries. It is a precious time for the religious to pursue "their own human and spiritual growth through the courageous execution of their responsibilities."<sup>360</sup> There may be moments of doubt or uncertainty, but these can become opportunities to strengthen his fundamental option of life. These years, however, should not be characterized by a continuous questioning of God's call to the Legion, which would paralyze formation, but by a gradual confirmation, which goes hand-in-hand with growth in maturity.

687. Nevertheless, during these years, unanticipated physical or psychological complications may come to light. Also, it may have been unclear in novitiate whether certain problems would be solved with time and formation, and these problems may be accentuated during these years. These and other factors that may arise can lead

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<sup>358</sup> See *CIC* 653 § 2; *CLC* 76.

<sup>359</sup> PI 56; see *La Vida Consagrada en la Iglesia*, Velasio de Paolis, BAC, Madrid 2011: "Permanence is a constituent element of the consecration, which is a consecration of one's life and very person. No consecration could be given if the profession of the evangelical councils were solely temporal, for a set time, for such would not be a consecration of one's life and person with all that (consecration) entails, including duration through time."

<sup>360</sup> PI 59.

to a healthy questioning of the discernment that took place in previous stages and may even make the renewal of vows unadvisable. In this case, it is a matter of discerning if God wants to lead the religious to follow Christ in another state of life.

688. In this process it is crucial to distinguish between normal difficulties or periods of purification (which are always present in one way or another) and problems whose significance and depth call for a rethinking of the vocational question. There is a subjective difficulty distinguishing the two, such that a religious could confuse his totally normal difficulties and problems with doubts about if he is really following the right path. The spiritual director and the superior will be of great help in pointing out this difference.

689. The process of vocational discernment must end at some point. By the time of perpetual profession, both the religious and the Congregation should believe that all the experiences, formation and trials have confirmed the discernment that led to the first profession. 625,847

This step demands signs of growth and increasing depth. The Constitutions list the requirements for perpetual profession, among them: fully embracing the spirit of the Congregation, having a solid interior life, seeking to avoid even small defects, and being exemplary in exercising virtue and living out the Constitutions and norms (see CLC 93). Should a religious show a clear and habitual lack of commitment and responsibility in carrying out his duties (for example, studies or other assignments), the superiors should seriously consider whether or not to admit him.

Because of this, verifying the suitability for perpetual profession must be above all a positive confirmation and not the mere fulfillment of some minimal requirements or the absence of impediments. As well, because the Legion is a clerical institute, “composed of priests and candidates for the priesthood” (CLC 1), admission to perpetual profession cannot be given if doubts remain about aptitude for the priesthood.

624 690. While the superiors carry the great responsibility of presenting candidates to the Church for vows and holy orders, each candidate also carries the personal responsibility of presenting himself to his superiors to request admission to profession. Each religious evaluates himself before God and makes his own judgment, which he then places in the hands of his superiors.

691. After perpetual profession, a religious should not seek permission for departure from the Congregation except for the gravest of causes considered before the Lord.<sup>361</sup>

692. Every new day has to be a new 'yes' to Christ. With holy fear we must recognize that the free will we have received from God opens to us the possibility of following a path that sees our love grow cold, and that, in time, turns our 'yes' into a 'no.' This cannot possibly be called vocational discernment.

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<sup>361</sup> See CIC 691 §1.

# CHAPTER EIGHT

## INITIAL FORMATION

*Now get up and go into the city  
and you will be told what you must do. (Acts 9: 6)*

### A. Before Novitiate

#### 1. *Description and purpose*

693. The Constitutions clearly indicate the principle aim of this stage of formation: to help the candidates “make an informed, firm and free decision about entering the Legion” (CLC 65). Furthermore, this time also helps the young men and formators see where they stand regarding the requirements for admission to the Congregation (CLC 66).

694. Also according to Constitutions (CLC 64), this stage has two possible paths or forms. The first is the apostolic school,<sup>362</sup> whose purpose is “to assist the human and Christian growth of adolescents, who manifest the seeds of a vocation to the ministerial priesthood”<sup>363</sup> in an environment adapted to their age and of true inner freedom (CLC 61). The second is a period of vocational accompaniment and formation, especially through *Regnum Christi*. Both these paths end with a formal period of transition from lay life to the novitiate called candidacy, that can take on different forms according to the needs of each territory.

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<sup>362</sup> Since the students of the apostolic schools are not yet strictly speaking Legionaries, the *Ratio Institutionis* leaves to other documents everything relating to the formation program of the apostolic schools. The essential elements of such programs can be found in the Constitutions (see CLC 61-63).

<sup>363</sup> GPV 18.

695. Young men with vocational interest come from a variety of backgrounds and pasts. The accompaniment prior to candidacy and the experience of candidacy itself should help the Legion to get to know the aspirant, his family and his social environment, and to sufficiently ascertain his right attitudes. The challenge of this stage is to help the young men acquire the attitudes necessary to enter the novitiate, to “adequately leave behind worldly lifestyle and habits” (CLC 35, 3°), and build a satisfactory foundation of human, spiritual and vocational maturity so that the novitiate be a time of abundant grace and growth. Since the young man who enters novitiate is not completely formed, but rather starts out on a path of formation, few but appropriate requirements are asked.

696. As for the students of the apostolic schools, the formators’ job is to know and accompany the young men in these maturing years so they can make a firm decision regarding their next step in life, either entering the novitiate or choosing another path (see CLC 63 §1, 2°).

650 697. However, both the formators and those being formed should not be naive in thinking that the novitiate can solve all unresolved problems and address all shortcomings. Mere willingness is not enough. Therefore, candidates that have not yet reached the minimal maturity needed to undertake novitiate fruitfully should not be admitted right away. There are signs that indicate it is better to wait, for example, undergoing psychological therapy or needing to undergo it, showing signs of immaturity, or not having acquired the personal freedom needed to consecrate one’s life to God consciously and freely.

698. The candidates that meet the requirements, show signs of an authentic call, and desire to follow it, but are not yet ready for novitiate, should be personally accompanied. Such accompaniment is generally built on a committed participation in the life of *Regnum Christi*, in its sections and apostolates, even possibly as a *Regnum Christi* missionary, respecting the identity and requirements of the missionary program.

## ***2. Specific objectives and means***

### *Spiritual dimension*

699. A young man interested in the vocation already has a spiritual life at least in some initial way, hence his vocational interest. Everything that can help him grow spiritually will also contribute to helping him prepare for novitiate. The vocational accompaniment before candidacy should help the aspirant develop his spiritual life.

700. First, the candidates need to have had a real, personal experience of God in order to see religion as something much greater and more beautiful than the sum of a few pious acts and moral rules. A vital and personal encounter with Christ is what attracts a young man to Him and gives him meaning in life.

701. Second, it is important that the candidate be ready to take his first steps in mental prayer, as well as in those habits of life without which this prayer cannot come about. He must have a certain ability to reflect; a desire for moments of silence and recollection—being able to occasionally “unplug,” to leave the noise of the world in order to listen to God—; and a sacramental life, all of which are foundational for living a life open to God’s grace.

The candidates need not possess a deep interior life or solid habits of prayer before entering novitiate, although this may happen in some cases. Yet it is important that they be initially acquainted with the things of God and freely opt for them. In this way, the novitiate will give continuity to this experience, favoring the harmonious growth of the person.

In the case of one who has recently undergone a conversion, a reasonable time of consolidation is needed before entering the novitiate so as not to confuse this religious experience with a calling to religious life.

702. Apostolic activities (missions, works of mercy, etc.) and spiritual activities (retreats, pilgrimages, spiritual exercises, etc.) will undoubtedly help awaken and nourish this vital experience of God.

703. Finally, since entering the novitiate also requires a generous openness to live the spirit of the Congregation, the formation in these previous stages should reveal or incite an attraction and appreciation for the Legion's particular style of priesthood. Therefore, it is important to present in a general way the "the nature of religious and priestly life" (CLC 65, 1°) and "the life, spirit and apostolate of the Congregation and *Regnum Christi*" (CLC 65, 2°). The contact that the candidate has with Legionaries and members of *Regnum Christi* will give him the opportunity to verify if the spirit, mission and lifestyle of the Legion attract him.

- 63 704. The spirit of the Legion should always be presented within the wider reality of the local and universal Church and the richness of charisms the Church contains.

There may be some whose gifts and ways of being are such as to be advised to follow another path within the Church, since it would be hard for them to work in the Legion's apostolates:

"The practical question is: do God's gifts in this person [...] make for unity and deepen communion? If they do, they can be welcomed. If they do not, then no matter how good the gifts may seem to be in themselves [...] they are not for this particular institute. [...] Nor is it wise to tolerate widely divergent lines of development which do not have a strong foundation of unity in the institute itself."<sup>364</sup>

#### *Dimension of the evangelical counsels*

705. During this stage, the vows should be presented, along with the values and demands they encompass. If, during this period, a young man shows exceptional difficulties in the initial detachment that poverty entails or the spirit of docility required in religious life, they must be addressed clearly.

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<sup>364</sup> EE 22; see MR 12.

706. Regarding chastity, the ability to live celibacy with peace and joy should be evaluated. Again, it is not about having attained complete affective maturity, but about possessing a certain stability and wellbeing in this area as a base for religious chastity and priestly celibacy.

707. As the Catechism affirms, “Sexuality affects all aspects of the human person in the unity of his body and soul. It especially concerns affectivity, the capacity to love and to procreate, and in a more general way the aptitude for forming bonds of communion with others.”<sup>365</sup> Therefore, formators in this stage should especially tend to the affectivity of the candidates, in particular those who show some dysfunction or come from families with particular wounds in the area of love. It is possible to address these issues throughout the process of initial formation, possibly with psychological counseling, but before novitiate there should be at least an awareness of the problem—when there is one—and a willingness to confront it. If it is clear that an aspirant needs therapy, it is preferable that he have it before entering novitiate. His suitability can be reevaluated after his treatment.

708. As part of getting to know the aspirant during this stage, it is important to have a frank and open conversation with him about any experiences he may have had in this area.<sup>366</sup> This helps his formators determine the young man’s suitability for religious life in the Legion in a number of ways. It reveals how much he knows himself, his attitude toward confronting his life as it is, his desire to live in the truth, his ability to trust in his formator, and his level of psychosexual development. If, for example, an aspirant did not realize that these facts were important, or did not consider them important, it can be concluded that he is still not ready to live novitiate well.

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<sup>365</sup> CCC 2332.

<sup>366</sup> See GPV 200.

709. Those who have gone through a period of sexual disorder in their lives should not enter religious life immediately after a strong experience of conversion. It is important that, before the time of candidacy, he prove that he is able to live continently as a layman for an extended time. In a similar way, those who have severe and deeply rooted addictions should overcome them before embarking on the path of religious life.

710. Regarding homosexual tendencies, the Legion follows the indications given by the Holy See:

“The Church, while profoundly respecting the person in question, cannot admit to the seminary or to the holy orders those who practice homosexuality, present deep-seated homosexual tendencies or support the so-called ‘gay culture’.

“Such persons, in fact, find themselves in a situation that gravely hinders them from relating correctly to men and women. One must in no way overlook the negative consequences that can derive from the ordination of persons with deep-seated homosexual tendencies.

“Different, however, would be the case in which one were dealing with homosexual tendencies that were only the expression of a transitory problem—for example, that of an adolescence not yet superseded. Nevertheless, such tendencies must be clearly overcome at least three years before ordination to the diaconate.”<sup>367</sup>

711. Any evidence of inappropriate behavior with minors as an adult immediately eliminates any possibility of entering religious life. On the other hand, when someone has suffered an abuse there should be a case-by-case evaluation with the help of an expert.

### *Human dimension*

712. Many of the Constitutions’ requirements for admission to the novitiate have to do with having a sufficient human maturity. “a candidate should have or be able to develop the following traits:

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<sup>367</sup> *Instruction Concerning the Criteria for the Discernment of Vocations with Regard to Person with Homosexual Tendencies in View of their Admission to the Seminary and to Holy Orders*, Congregation for Catholic Education, 2005, 2; see GPV 199-200.

[...] strong and steadfast will; prudence in making commitments; and determination, courage and constancy in keeping them; integrity, a balanced psychology and good health; discretion, affability, good social skills, sincerity and loyalty” (CLC 66).

It is easy to identify these virtues when they are fully developed. When this is not the case, however, it is important to test in concrete situations both the willingness and the ability to acquire the virtues. The candidate should also show himself capable of self-denial and self-giving.

713. Some young men have received a good human formation from their family, schooling and social environment. Nevertheless, today’s culture generally does not foster in young people an appreciation for certain values. Consequently, the stage before novitiate should offer basic human formation that equips the young man with more inner resources as he follows Christ and embraces his vocation.

714. As a minimum requirement for human maturity, a young man who wants to enter novitiate should have a sufficiently developed sense of responsibility to fulfill his duties without having to be watched over. A capacity for truthful self-knowledge and the ability to open up to one’s formator in order to be helped by him are also indispensable elements of human maturity. 207,244

Additionally, it is important that the young man have, at least to a certain degree, an upright conscience, a strong will, steadiness of spirit, and openness toward others.

### *Intellectual dimension*

715. First of all, in order to enter the novitiate the candidate must have finished high school and be capable of pursuing the university-level priestly studies that the Legionary vocation demands. His school grades and a professional evaluation of his intellectual ability will give an accurate enough idea of this capacity.

716. Besides being orthodox in his faith, the candidate should also show or be able to develop a certain intellectual curiosity: desiring to learn, study, and expand one's knowledge, united to an ability to think and reason. Some may possess this quality naturally, while others need moments of encounter, interchange and conversation in order to provoke this interest.

256 717. Starting from the novitiate, the candidates have to be open to take on a path of solid, deep, and excellent intellectual formation as demanded by a Legionary's mission.

718. Classes during candidacy are a good opportunity to verify and strengthen these objectives. An atmosphere that fosters substantial, thought-provoking and enriching conversations throughout the day can also be very helpful.

#### *Dimension of communion*

719. Concerning community life, these prior stages should provide a basic understanding of the lifestyle of religious and priestly life in the Legion. Spirituality class can be a good setting to shed light on this theme. Some contact with a Legionary community of apostolate or house of formation before candidacy can also help in this area. The experience of community and brotherhood that the candidate will have in this stage is already in itself a practical introduction to Legionary community life.

#### *Apostolic dimension*

720. In order to live novitiate well, it is indispensable that the young man show an appreciation for the evangelizing mission of the Church and an inclination to service. Formators should verify the presence, even if it is only preliminary, of this interest and desire that God sows the heart.

In addition, as previously mentioned, it is important that the candidate have some contact with the apostolic work of *Regnum Christi*, if he has not had it already. This experience will serve as part of his apostolic formation and help him in his vocational discernment.

## **B. Novitiate: *Christus Vita Vestra***

### ***1. Description and purpose***

721. The novitiate is the formation period that is most decisive in the life of a Legionary. The entire formation path outlined in this *Ratio*, with all its different objectives, as has its beginning and foundation in the novitiate.

722. Novitiate is about cleansing and leveling the ground of the soul and setting solid foundations for the life to come. In the words of the prophets, we can say that the Holy Spirit works in the soul of the novice “to uproot and to tear down” his sin and spiritual worldliness; “to destroy and to demolish” his egoism; and “to build and to plant” (Jeremiah 1:10) a new mentality in Christ, a belonging to God, to the Church and to his new religious family. This work is often accompanied by special consolations from God, but also marked by fatigue, which anyone who undertakes a good work experiences.

For this reason, one of the novices greatest challenges is to work with patience and perseverance. Without rushing or having exaggerated expectations, they should set their eyes on Christ, knowing that the formation process will sustain and illumine their vocational discernment, which is “their first duty before God and the Church” (CLC 83 §1).

723. The novice director plays a decisive role in this process. As the spiritual father and guide of the novitiate community, he “is in charge of the formation of the novices, so that it is illicit for anyone else to interfere in the governance of the novitiate. The director of

novices has the important responsibility of accompanying the novices in their vocation discernment and initiating them into religious life in the Congregation” (CLC 77 §1). To be a novice director requires participating in the life of the novitiate in its entirety, not just giving spiritual direction and the daily explanation of the spirit of the Congregation. Therefore, it is necessary that the number of novices in the director’s care is not so large that it hinders his close and integral accompaniment of the novices. The instructor also accompanies and seeks to involve each novice’s family, helping them support the novice and give him the space he needs in this time of formation.

724. Novitiate is characterized by an environment of recollection and ordinariness, which are necessary to begin a life of total consecration to the Lord and for serious vocational discernment. For this reason, it is helpful that the novitiate house be located in a place that favors a peaceful environment of dedication to prayer and familiarity with the Word of God, but that also offers occasions for apostolate and contact with *Regnum Christi* and the local Church.

## ***2. Specific objectives and means***

### *Spiritual dimension*

683 725. The first objective that the Constitutions point out for this stage is that “novices should discern, delve into and develop their vocation” (CLC 71). In order to confirm God’s call, it is necessary first of all that they grow in self-knowledge and in knowledge of the nature of Legionary religious life. They should also learn about the Legion’s place within *Regnum Christi*.

746 726. In order to get to know Legionary religious life the novitiate offers a concrete experience of community and a daily explanation of the spirit of the Congregation and of *Regnum Christi*. This explanation is a unique opportunity in which the novice director can develop a profound and enlightening discourse on religious life in the Church and the Legion’s charism.

These explanations should not be carried out in the manner of academic lectures, nor should they be reduced to practical instructions. The novice director should both illumine their intellects and consciences with the light of faith, and give directives that are useful and attractive for their hearts and wills. The Legion is not only a reality to be understood, but also a family to be loved.

727. In order to grow in self-knowledge, novices rely on an environment of silence and recollection, intense dedication to prayer, and frequent dialogue with the director and assistant. Indeed, all the experiences of novitiate life can help him know himself. With these means, every novice can gradually learn to read his past and present life—with all his experiences and influences, both positive and negative—through the lens of God’s merciful love and providence. 107,944

728. The second objective that the Legion proposes to the novices is that they “forge a personal and passionate love for Jesus Christ” (CLC 71), which consists in knowing him deeply: his virtues and all that he loves most. At the entrance to the novitiate, we find in summarized form the reason for our desire to be a Legionary and the goal of the entire formation program that the Legion offers its men: *Christus vita vestra* (Colossians 3:4). Novices thus “live their day inspired by the fervent desire and firm resolve to configure themselves to Jesus Christ—knowing, loving and imitating him—especially by means of Eucharistic life” (CLC 81, 1°): 107 130

- a. They beg the Holy Spirit to grant them an experiential knowledge of Jesus Christ.
- b. They place themselves with trust in the school of Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows, so that she may guide them with gentleness to the Heart of her Son.
- c. They carefully study and meditate on the Gospels as disciples of the Word of God, giving special attention to the Gospel according to Saint John, who having contemplated in love the mystery and Heart of Jesus Christ, expresses the way in which a Legionary desires to know his Lord.

d. They study the Constitutions as an application of the Gospel teachings for their lives.

945 729. The novice director is a master who initiates the novices into liturgical life, introduces them to the meaning of the practices of spiritual life, and teaches them the art of mental prayer as “a dialogue that becomes a sharing in the filial conversation between Jesus and the Father.”<sup>368</sup>

521 While learning to pray, “there should be no fear of issuing rules, of humbly adopting a method and of putting the method into practice.”<sup>369</sup> In the Legion, three methods of proven worth are taught: meditation and contemplation, from the tradition of spiritual exercises, and *Lectio Divina*, which originated in the monastic tradition.<sup>370</sup> The Church’s wisdom offers some advice for beginning or consolidating a life of prayer:

“One must turn to the Gospel and constantly recall the goal: ‘to search for Christ,’ ‘to wait on him alone,’ ‘not thinking a beautiful idea is necessarily a good result,’ ‘learning the limits of one’s knowledge,’ ‘deepening rather than widening one’s experience.’”<sup>371</sup>

488 730. A form of prayer that deeply marks the spiritual experience of the novitiate is adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. The Christ-centeredness proper to this stage—which consists of entering the desert to be with Christ—becomes tangible in adoration. The important thing is to *be* with him: to get to know him, enjoy his presence, and share with him everything that is learned and lived in classes, spiritual direction, readings, tasks and apostolate. In this time we also become mediators of the needs of mankind and pray for the fruitfulness of those in the Church dedicated to apostolate.

136,345 731. Prayer life, in order to be authentic, must be accompanied by a path of detachment not only from sin, but also from good

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<sup>368</sup> PDV 47.

<sup>369</sup> SFS 1.

<sup>370</sup> *Verbum Domini*, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, Benedict XVI, 2010, 86-87.

<sup>371</sup> SFS 1.

things for the sake of following Christ. This asceticism is based on our contemplation of the crucifix as a school of virtue. Gazing on Christ crucified, the novices find the strength to be stripped of the old man and to put on the Lord Jesus (See Romans 13:14), especially in his love for the Father and in his self-giving to mankind. In the novitiate, one does not seek a theoretical knowledge of Christ, but one that is vital and experiential.

*Dimension of the evangelical counsels*

732. In the novitiate, the aspiring religious are introduced to the life of following of Christ—chaste, poor and obedient—so that they know what it entails and can choose it with full awareness out of love for Christ. The Constitutions indicate “acquiring the habits proper to religious life” (CLC 71) as an objective for the novices.

733. Regarding obedience, in which we aspire to imitate Christ 194  
in his relationship with the Father, the novices strive to achieve a supernatural relationship with the superiors—for example, by trusting them and by embracing the assigned tasks, fulfilling them whole-heartedly.

734. Regarding chastity, in which we imitate the chaste heart of 176  
Christ that allowed him to love all people, the novices strive to develop their interior life as the joy of belonging to Christ and the promise of great spiritual fruitfulness. For this reason, they must patiently learn to recollect their senses, memory and imagination. Voluntary abstinence from the means of communication also has 673,946  
an aspect of interior purification.

In order to purify erroneous ideas or negative experiences and help 38  
them understand the positive value of affectivity, the Christian vision of sexuality, and how religious life is a path of fullness in love, specific formation on these matters should be offered to the novices.

184 735. Regarding poverty, moderation and a spirit of detachment should be interiorized as a personal choice in the following of Christ, who himself chose to live in poverty for reasons beyond mere externals.

685 736. The novitiate concludes with the first profession of the evangelical counsels, a moment that is ardently longed for. This profession expresses the longing to belong to Christ more fully and completely, to love Him with an exclusive love and to consecrate his life fully to His Kingdom.

### *Human dimension*

737. In the human dimension, three habits are proposed that particularly aid vocational discernment and a life of consecration to God through the profession of the evangelical counsels: emotional balance, sincerity and responsibility.

738. Emotional balance is foundational for making mature and definitive decisions. The novitiate provides a suitable environment to attain the correct hierarchy of faculties through a “serene integration of the emotional strengths under the control of faith, reason, the will and love.”<sup>372</sup> It may be that some novices are still prey to strong bouts of sentimentality. This objective will require them to work particularly on growing in self-knowledge and their capacity for self-denial. This will help create more space for their interior freedom and generosity.

228 The novice should actively undertake, with awareness and understanding, the formation path laid out before him. He should embrace ordinary life, the schedule, a more limited contact with the ephemeral as regards social media and entertainment, and the wise balance between physical labor, intellectual work, spiritual activities, contact with nature and sport. The routine of novitiate is the cruci-

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<sup>372</sup> CLC 1994, 240.

ble that purifies him and helps him develop a will capable of collaborating with God's grace.

Emotional balance requires recognizing one's own feelings in order to guide them under the direction of the intellect and will, so that these prevail over mere instinct. The novice must learn to read, value and integrate his feelings into his spiritual, community and apostolic life, working towards full affective maturity. 212

739. The novice, in order to discern his vocation and begin his journey of formation, needs first of all to be sincere with God and himself. Since he cannot do this on his own, sincerity with the novice director, who will be able to fulfill his task "only if the novices are entirely and freely open in his regard,"<sup>373</sup> is of special importance. 224

Growth in sincerity implies, among other things, opening one's interior without fear of being judged. The novice should not be afraid of being himself and expressing how he is doing—his successes and weaknesses, his lights and doubts. A merciful, kind and patient manner towards the novice on the formators' part facilitates growth in the virtue of sincerity.

740. A third important habit of human formation is responsibility and dependability in one's duties, without the need for supervision. This behavior flows from the previous attitude of sincerity. Whoever has not developed the level of responsibility needed to assume his new commitments from within should not make his religious profession. 245

Two things can foster the development of responsibility during this period. First, there are the many opportunities to exercise freedom by fulfilling one's responsibilities out of love. Even though the novitiate has a more detailed schedule than other stages, novices need space to assume their duties responsibly and make prudent decisions by their own choice and initiative. Doing their duties should

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<sup>373</sup> PI 52.

not just be the result of external influence or simple routine. Religious dependence should be lived in a way that promotes responsibility in the novice and teaches him to seek the highest good.

355 The second aid to growing in responsibility is constant interiorization of principles, which happens when the novice actively seeks the natural and supernatural purpose of everything he does and strives consciously to make this purpose his own. The formation team must be very attentive to explain, as many times as necessary, the reasons behind the activities and other formative elements of novitiate life in order to help the novices live them with purpose.

741. The emphasis on sincerity, emotional balance and responsibility does not mean that the other aspects of human formation (such as the spirit of work, initiative, distinction, etc.) are not important for the novice. However, without a verifiable development of these three virtues, one cannot approach first profession confident of having made a mature vocational discernment, nor will he be able to take proper advantage of the next stage of formation.

357 742. According to the pedagogical principle of experiential formation, the formators should help the novices verify their assimilation of what they have been taught. The very life of the novitiate offers many occasions for this “testing,” which is not something extraordinary, but which happens in the challenges of daily life regarding poverty, obedience, availability to carry out unpleasant tasks, and self-giving to others.

743. The month of work has this positive aspect of “testing.” The ordinary routine of life is changed in order to verify in an environment different from the novitiate how well the novice has assimilated his identity and formation, his ability to maintain union with God in a work environment, and his integral growth as a man.

There are two main formats for the month of work. The first is arduous physical labor. The second, service to people in need,

which adds an important value to those already mentioned: formation of a priestly heart. It is suggested to alternate between these experiences, taking advantage of the two years of novitiate.

### *Intellectual dimension*

744. Classes and studies during the novitiate are oriented towards growth in knowledge of Christ; Christian doctrine and spirituality; and religious life in the Legion, setting a solid foundation for the edifice of integral formation.

745. A substantial introduction to Sacred Scripture cannot be lacking, nor one or more courses about the four parts of the Catechism: 32

- a. The Profession of Faith
- b. The Celebration of the Christian
- c. The Life in Christ
- d. Christian Prayer

746. The daily explanation of the spirit of the Congregation is a means of great value in helping the novices assimilate “affectively and effectively the spirit and discipline of the Congregation” (CLC 71). During this period the novice should also become familiar with the Constitutions (see CLC 83, 3°) and other normative texts of the Congregation, as well as the history of the Legion and *Regnum Christi*.

747. Contact with authors of classic and contemporary spirituality of proven solidity, and an introduction to both the theology of the priesthood and of religious life and to the documents of the Second Vatican Council and the recent Pontifical Magisterium form part of the intellectual formation proper to this period.

748. Novices should take advantage of this time to form good study habits, if they do not already have them, and to fill any gaps

in their spelling, grammar and syntax within their native language. They should also study the basic notions of the classical languages—especially liturgical Latin—and Spanish, for those who do not know it.

749. These courses are an integral part of novitiate formation and should be given with the rigor and depth proper for university-level students. The novices must realize from the start that intellectual formation in the Legion is taken seriously; it is not something secondary or peripheral.

#### *Dimension of communion*

281 750. The novices learn in a preliminary way to understand, value and live fraternal life in common (see CLC 83, 4<sup>o</sup>), not merely settling for being present at community activities, but seeking to perceive and enjoy the richness of this dimension as a constitutive element of religious life.

751. Novices should form the habit of cultivating authentic fraternal relationships and a spirit of service, which implies being available and offering oneself for work or tasks. The novitiate is the school of selfless giving.

Secondly, novices should cultivate a healthy universality in order to welcome everybody as a brother in Christ.

324 Lastly, there should be opportunities for working in team under the direction of a leader. This allows novices to learn teamwork and to practice dialogue, collaboration, giving-way, joining-in and accepting diverging opinions. In order to obtain these fruits, it is best not to resort too regularly to the principle of authority, so that the group itself resolves its differences.

*Apostolic dimension*

752. Although the other dimensions of formation seemingly receive more attention during novitiate, apostolic formation is present throughout. It permeates and orients the life of the novices, who seek to “understand and assimilate that their Christian and Legionary vocation is in essence to be apostles of God’s Kingdom” (CLC 81, 2°). 375

753. Apostolic formation in the novitiate is centered on identification with the Heart of Christ, so as to grow in love for his Kingdom, the Church and all people. The novice thus focusses on the core of apostolic zeal: charity and the desire to collaborate with the Lord in building up his Kingdom. Two expressions of this desire are a spirit of intercession for the needs of others and an interest in getting to know the specific apostolate of *Regnum Christi*. 312

754. Since Legionary life has an active and apostolic character by nature, novices need to foster and mature their apostolic zeal in occasions foreseen in the Rule of Life, principally through catechesis and works of mercy. They should receive adequate preparation for these activities and should not be charged with tasks for which they are probably not prepared, for example, giving spiritual direction. Formators should help them reflect in order to assimilate the spiritual and life lessons that these experiences offer. Thus, the novices’ apostolic commitments should be properly integrated with and given their proper place within the other objectives of this stage. 358

## **C. Humanities and Beginning of Religious Life**

### ***1. Description and purpose***

755. After two years of novitiate, a Legionary advances to a stage marked by a more intense dedication to study. He devotes a great part of his time and energy to this undertaking in order to acquire solid bases of general culture that enrich his understanding of the

world and of man, whom he will serve as a “minister of Christ Jesus” (Romans 15:16).

756. In the novitiate, a Legionary verifies his call to a life consecrated to the Lord and responds with generosity. In this new stage he must face all that his response entails, looking to accept and  
212 shoulder his personal reality just as it is—a consequence of his own sensitivity as well as of his familial and educational experiences—and integrate it with his identity as a religious.

The decision to live a life following the Lord is so radical that tensions inevitably flare up between our spontaneous reactions and tendencies and the ideal that we embraced. Certain attitudes, ideals and decisions, which up to now were taken for granted, may all of a sudden be felt as foreign or imposed. The young man should face this situation serenely so as to accept and take upon himself the  
62,215 traits of his personality and ensure that the life choices he makes are truly his own. In this way, he can build his identity as a religious with clarity, freedom and peace.

The formators should be especially close and attentive during these years, facilitating deep openness of heart with their trustworthiness, and patiently accompany them in this slow process.<sup>374</sup>

367 757. The formative process lived in the novitiate should be given continuity in the humanities. This implies that the religious deepen his experience of the spiritual life, strengthen his sense of belonging to the Legion, and continue uprooting the disordered affections

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<sup>374</sup>“During the process of formation for the ministerial priesthood, the seminarian is a ‘mystery to himself’, in which two aspects of his humanity, that need to be integrated, are intertwined and exist side by side. On the one hand he is characterized by gifts and talents that have been molded by grace; on the other he is marked by his limits and fragility. The task of formation is to help the person to integrate these aspects, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, in a journey of faith and gradual and harmonious maturity, avoiding fragmentation polarization, excesses, superficiality or partiality. The time of formation for priestly ministry is a period of testing, maturing and discernment by both the seminarian and the house of formation.” (GPV 28).

that hamper his growth, all while enjoying the first fruits of his formation.

758. The move out of the novitiate house to this new stage is a sign of the gradual progression toward a formative environment that retains elements of the prior stage, but that also adds a new focus: the nature and intensity of the studies, as well as a new dynamic of community life that allows more room for organizing one's time, which can lead the young religious to take an even greater ownership of all that he has learned. All this helps him to make the vocation his own in a way that is ever more real, convinced and joyful.

## ***2. Specific objectives and means***

### *Spiritual dimension*

759. In this stage a religious steps from the simplicity of novitiate life to an intense dedication to studies—a step which in some cases can lead to a certain dryness or apathy in the spiritual life. This is a time to learn to encounter God in the interior life, in the community, and in responsible and serious dedication to study, which allows us to draw near to the mystery of God and man.

760. One's style of prayer itself can undergo an almost imperceptible change from his prayer during novitiate. The religious needs to be open to new experiences and, without any shame, allow God into the aspects of his interior world that he now sees need to be integrated with his calling.

He should keep deepening in the truths of faith and in the profound motives that sustain his vocation. Moments such as spiritual exercises or monthly retreats can be occasions of intense renewal of love. 352

761. The formators—the rector and his assistant, as well as the new figure of the spiritual director—are of great help in this spiritual growth.

*Dimension of the evangelical counsels*

- 170 762. Taking the first steps into religious life is a crucial time to root oneself and deepen in the meaning and reasons for the evangelical counsels. Indeed, we can sense superficiality in one who reduces the counsels to absence of difficulties or to a formalistic fulfillment, without relating them to his following of Christ. For example, complaining about inconveniences or actively seeking the nicest clothes or newest technology is evidence of a lack of conscious ownership of the vow of poverty. A religious' relationship with his formators, talks and conferences on living the counsels, and constant renewal of his fundamental life choice at every opportunity are a great help to consciously making this lifestyle his own.
- 177 763. Regarding the vow of chastity, it is important in this period that the formators be close to the young religious so that the new circumstances of this stage become occasions for greater self-knowledge and that they live their affective world in peace. For some, there is a danger of falling into a certain self-absorption amid intellectual pursuits, which can give rise to difficulties in this field.

*Human dimension*

- 369 764. With the help of their formators, religious should make a personal program that allows them to dedicate the best part of the day to encountering the Lord and to responsibly organize and manage their academic and apostolic activities. Regarding this point, the formators seek to help the Legionary learn to manage his time, make decisions based on his religious identity, and grow in the responsible use of his freedom.
765. This is also the appropriate time, after the renunciation freely embraced in novitiate, to begin using the means of social communication again, no longer as men of the world but as consecrated religious, which implies adopting a new mentality. The section on "formation for the digital world" offers some guidelines.
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766. Coming into contact, or at least greater closeness, with one's prior milieu—friendships, social life, family—is an opportunity for the religious to continue learning to see his life, past and present, from the vantage point of the identity that comes from the call of Christ.

*Intellectual dimension*

767. The stage of humanities marks the beginning of a Legionary's time of study. Through their studies, Legionaries are personally enriched and prepared for the mission. These studies are aimed at understanding the heritage of truth, beauty and goodness handed down to us as an inheritance and as an answer to the principal existential questions of mankind. Literature and the arts answer these questions more intuitively than philosophy. They are deeply intertwined in each age and culture as they reveal, from differing points of view, man's reflection about himself, God, and the world around him. These studies, far from remaining disembodied abstractions, must be oriented toward the mission. 256

768. Called to be a bridge between God and man, a Legionary in humanities dedicates himself wholeheartedly to understanding *man* after having laid the foundations of his knowledge of *God* in novitiate. The Church "realizes that it is truly linked with mankind and its history by the deepest of bonds."<sup>375</sup> Humanities studies are an opportunity to understand better the heart of man as expressed through historical events, literary and artistic works, and so forth. In addition, these studies serve to enrich his personality with all that is truly human: 261

"Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things' (Philippians 4:8). It is interesting to note that Paul, precisely in these profoundly human qualities, presents himself as a model to his faithful, for he goes

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<sup>375</sup> GS 1.

on to say: 'What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, do' (Philippians.4:9).<sup>376</sup>

769. The humanities program should foster contact with authors, ancient and modern, who have conveyed the highest of human ideals, giving rise to the development of thought and Christian humanism. For this reason, the program must include the study of the works of classical Greek, Latin and Christian authors.

The importance of Greek and Latin, in addition to developing the mental and verbal skills that their study provides, stems from the fact that through them religious gain access to the above-mentioned classical authors, to the original text of the New Testament, and to various traditional Church writings.

203 770. A Legionary also personally benefits from his studies by arriving at a more harmonious maturity in his personality: the logical rigor of his intelligence; his capacity to analyze problems; the correct hierarchy of his values; the development of his imagination; the education of his sensitivity, affections and emotions; the balance and order of his faculties, passions and life as a whole; his contemplation of beauty in nature and in artistic and musical works.

All these benefits become instruments for transmitting the message of salvation, foster the religious' ability to listen to and understand persons or cultures that he encounters, and allow for a better understanding of world events.

264 The art of oral and written communication, in which a Legionary shows special interest in view of his mission, requires forming propriety, simplicity and elegance in speech; a rich vocabulary; and proper reading skills.

771. The method of teaching should kindle in the religious a love for truth and beauty; a profound understanding of man with all his inner complexity, potential and limitations; a humble respect and

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<sup>376</sup> PDV 43.

appreciation for the exceptional achievements of each age and culture; and finally, a desire for an ongoing education to profit from the invaluable heritage of Christian culture.

772. Humanities studies should be university level studies and should seek academic excellence, even if in the end it is not feasible that the religious receive a degree for them. The material and content of the program should be planned in line with the philosophical studies that lie ahead for them; indeed, man's existential questions and longings are the substrata of humanities just as they are of philosophy.

773. Some complementary subjects that can now be proposed in view of the mission are: introduction to cinematic arts, to contemporary music, or to the diverse means of communication, giving particular attention to presence on social networks, blogs, and the like.

774. The prefect of studies and those who assist him are tasked in every stage of formation with the mission of helping the religious have a fruitful experience of his studies, fully and harmoniously achieving the objectives of the stage.

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#### *Dimension of communion*

775. The usually larger community size and the demands of studies can limit the interactions and mutual support that the novitiate community naturally provided. It is helpful to recall frequently that fraternal life is an essential element of religious life, not an appendix or simple means. It is up to each religious to be on guard against tendencies towards isolation and formalism. They should strive to grow in their charity and zeal, beginning with the brothers on their own perseverance team.

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294 776. This period is a good opportunity to get to know brothers that come from different countries and cultures, making an effort to be welcoming to all and to form a family spirit that transcends language, race and nationalities.

*Apostolic dimension*

777. A Legionary should see his studies—which take up a large part of his time during the initial stages of formation—as his primary apostolate. A Legionary’s intellectual formation is in itself a magnificent service to souls since it prepares him to offer them the message of the Gospel and empowers him to understand and analyze their problems. The Legion has always taught her men to offer their dedication to study for the redemption of all people, making their desks altars on which they offer themselves.

376 778. Besides valuing study as apostolate, in this stage there are some activities specific to apostolic formation:

a. In the first place, it will help them to have contact and to collaborate with other Legionaries and members of the other branches of *Regnum Christi*, who can enrich the young religious with their apostolic expertise.

b. Each religious should have an apostolic responsibility which, given their academic commitments, should not absorb too much time and energy. It is important that a formator accompany the religious in these experiences so that they achieve their formative purpose.

c. Occasionally a religious may participate in a longer apostolic mission, such as evangelization missions, summer camps and so forth. Generally, they should not be the one in charge but should work under the direction of more experienced Legionaries or *Regnum Christi* members.

322-323 d. To form the skills proper to Legionary apostolate, the formators should organize presentations, courses and conferences on *Regnum Christi* and ECYD.

## D. Philosophy and Consolidation of Religious Life

### 1. *Description and purpose*

779. A religious' growth in maturity is a continual process. It is an education "in the truth of his being, in freedom and in self-control."<sup>377</sup> Thus, the objectives proper to the stage of philosophy are the same as those given for the stage of humanities, with the specifications indicated below.

780. "A crucial stage of intellectual formation is the study of philosophy, which leads to a deeper understanding and interpretation of the person, and of the person's freedom and relationships with the world and with God."<sup>378</sup> After studying art and literature, the time comes to approach some of the same humanistic themes from a logical-rational point of view. This, in turn, prepares the way for the study of theology and the discovery of the mysteries of God and of man seen in the light of Christ. 255

Some seemingly abstract philosophical ideas, such as truth, have a great impact on the life of man. The certainty of truth is "the only firm basis for a total giving of oneself to Jesus and to the Church."<sup>379</sup> 270

781. The study of philosophy helps its students to develop a "love of rigorously searching for the truth and of maintaining and demonstrating it, together with an honest recognition of the limits of human knowledge." From a pastoral perspective, it fosters "careful attention to the necessary connection between philosophy and the true problems of life."<sup>380</sup> 829

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<sup>377</sup> GPV 63.

<sup>378</sup> PDV 52.

<sup>379</sup> PDV 52: "It is not difficult to see that some very specific questions, such as that concerning the priest's identity and his apostolic and missionary commitment, are closely linked to the question about the nature of truth, which is anything but an abstract question: If we are not certain about the truth, how can we put our whole life on the line, how can we have the strength to challenge others' way of living?"

<sup>380</sup> OT 15; see GPV 164.

## ***2. Specific objectives and means***

### *Spiritual dimension*

480 782. In order to mature in their identity as religious and aspirants to the priesthood, Legionaries in this stage of formation should deepen their understanding of being “disciples” who seek Christ in the Scriptures, the Eucharist, and the cross, and who learn to make decisions based on love in order to follow their Master and Lord.<sup>381</sup>

783. Philosophical studies strengthen the logical workings of the mind and cultivate the ability to think critically by examining affirmations and calling them into question. This can lead some to question even the truths that they had built their lives upon, and may also result in a weakening of the affective faculties in favor of those more logical. Thus, it becomes necessary to continue developing a warm and friendly relationship with Christ and with those that he loves: communion with God the Father and Mary our Mother that is full of affection and the details of love. Prayer should also help to develop the affections of a son of God and a friend of Christ.

784. To support our growth as disciples and to sustain the affective dimension of our interior life, it is good that those in philosophy, at moments considered opportune, be taught to read the Bible in search of wisdom.

### *Dimension of the evangelical counsels*

171 785. This stage should strengthen the will to follow Christ through continual contemplation of his life. For some it may be a time of tranquility and peaceful growth in their vocational choice. Others may experience difficulties related to the development of their rational faculties, perhaps in living supernatural obedience or in integrating their affectivity.

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<sup>381</sup> See GPV 61-62.

With regard to chastity, one may experience “spikes” of affectivity and sentimental crises. The path to peace and objectivity is to break out of the confines of one’s own self: opening up to the formators, seeking encounters with others, and participating enthusiastically in community life. 238

### *Human dimension*

786. Growth in human maturity should continue in this stage of formation, which will manifest itself in various ways: trustworthiness and the right use of freedom, the forging of deep convictions, and being able to make prudent decisions. It can be helpful to offer resources and conferences that promote deeper self-knowledge and integral growth. 369

Philosophical studies and entrance into the university, “the ‘house’ where one seeks the truth,”<sup>382</sup> should give the religious the ability to make thoughtful and mature judgments. Moreover, they should encourage personal responsibility and professionalism and provide opportunities to develop a network of relationships.

787. As is true for every vocation, committed love is subject to the test of time. Love must be renewed constantly by doing the small things with a big heart, and remaining faithful to one’s own conscience (getting up in the morning, dedication to duties, using study time responsibly, etc.). 357

### *Intellectual dimension*

788. Philosophical formation is a fundamental and indispensable element of priestly formation, especially in function of theological studies.<sup>383</sup> Throughout this period it is important to develop a mature understanding of the divine gift of reason, which should not close in on itself, but remain open to the mysteries that transcend it. 260

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<sup>382</sup> *Address to Young University Professors*, Benedict XVI, El Escorial, August 19, 2011.

<sup>383</sup> See FR 62.

789. Without detracting from the habits and fruits of humanities studies, philosophy places emphasis on reflection, clear and rigorous thinking, the ability to analyze and synthesize, and making balanced judgments. Philosophical formation should heighten dialectic abilities such as listening, reasoning, engaging in dialogue, building arguments, and defending the truth when necessary.

790. “Among the materials to be studied in the area of philosophy, systematic philosophy should be given particular importance, for it leads to a sound and coherent knowledge of man, of the world and of God, providing a wide synthesis of thought and expression.”<sup>384</sup>

The attention given in philosophy to timeless authors such as Saint Thomas Aquinas helps to open the mind to an organic vision of reality, instills confidence in the mind’s ability to seek the truth, and presents different models of the harmonious relationship between faith and reason. “Reason is God’s great gift to man [...] Reason and faith need one another in order to fulfil their true nature and their mission.”<sup>385</sup>

271 Because Legionaries should be prepared to dialogue with the men of their day, it is important for them to pay special attention to the most influential currents of contemporary thought, to the progress of modern science, and to the link between philosophy and the real problems of man’s life.

To facilitate the study of philosophical subjects, students should learn a specific ‘philosophical methodology.’<sup>386</sup>

791. A Legionary’s apostolic formation requires a basic understanding of a few complementary subjects, especially pedagogy and psychology. Familiarity with these subjects enhances his ability to

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<sup>384</sup> GPV 159.

<sup>385</sup> SS 23.

<sup>386</sup> See GPV 159.

“know the human soul, in all its richness, in order to facilitate the formulation of calm and balanced judgments regarding people and situations,”<sup>387</sup> preparing him to give personal accompaniment to others. Throughout the years of philosophy, it is also important to continue learning the art of written and oral communication. 264

### *Dimension of communion*

792. Studies can greatly enrich fraternal life, which in turn can be a great help to one’s intellectual formation. Study groups provide opportunities to learn together and to support those who are struggling. Study material can offer great topics of conversation for community activities. However, temptations to individualism and competition can emerge when we discover our intellectual talents and abilities, becoming a danger to healthy fraternal life. 286

793. The length of this stage of formation and the intensity of relationships during this time foster the development of friendships between religious. These friendships should be based on free acts of gratitude, self-giving, and forgiveness. 235

### *Apostolic dimension*

794. What was said about apostolic formation during the stage of humanities also applies here. A Legionary should arrive to apostolic internship after philosophy with his heart aflame with apostolic zeal and deeply identified with the mission of *Regnum Christi*. During this time, therefore, they should continue familiarizing themselves with the Movement and ECYD, taking advantage of the different means and occasions available to experience them more directly. Looking ahead to internship, they should receive instruction in forming, leading, and inspiring others. 322-323

Growth in interior maturity and specialized formation in the realm of thought allow for a more profound encounter with the human

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<sup>387</sup> GPV 163.

heart through personal dialogue. Religious in philosophy should allow the problems and difficulties of those they guide, especially the youth, to challenge and touch their own hearts. Additionally, all they have learned about the art of communication can be put into practice in catechesis, group activities, or other ways of transmitting the faith.

- 305b 795. Contact with those most in need can be a healthy source of affective balance for those whose intense dedication to study may have led to a lack of concern for others.

## E. Integral Formation During Internship

### 1. *Description and purpose*

- 211 796. This period of formation is the moment for the Legionary to put into practice all the formation has received, as well as a time of profound human enrichment in which the religious should grow in “apostolic zeal, militancy, responsibility, integrity and teamwork” (CLC 104).

- 287 797. First of all, the transition to a house and a community of apostolate<sup>388</sup> after some years in a house of formation allows the religious to see the ordinary environment of the majority of Legionary priests. In a house of apostolate, religious life and community activities are organized around the mission; the community is smaller, with members of different ages; and the rhythm of life is noticeably different.

798. The apostolate itself is an art learned little by little. It fosters a closer and existential knowledge of the world, of man, of the Legion and *Regnum Christi*. In other words, the apostolate allows us to open our eyes with realism to the integral truth of our personal and Legionary mission and identity. The young religious has great ideals

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<sup>388</sup> Or to the formation team in an apostolic school or other center of formation, whose members form relationships similar to those present in a community of apostolate.

and probably wants to bring them about quickly, becoming an expert right away and bearing abundant visible fruits. He must learn to walk the long path of human success and failures—for with God there is no failure when love has been sown—that will help him to mature as a man, a religious and an apostle, and live with deeper theological virtues. 310

799. The superior should closely accompany the religious on internship, reach out to them, help them grow in their Legionary life, and warn them against errors. He should sustain them in the fight against expressions of personal insecurity, which can appear during the experience of transition and even lead to defensive closed attitudes. The closeness of the superior can contribute to the transformation of these attitudes, helping the religious on internship to discover the particular way in which they can carry out the task entrusted to them, in accord with their abilities and without comparing themselves with others, which will make them grow in healthy self-confidence.

800. The superiors and directors of apostolate should be conscious of the fact that the religious is on internship in order to continue forming himself. Having excessive duties or the ultimate responsibility in his apostolate can put him in situations that overcome him, give him an incorrect idea of Legionary apostolate, and not be helpful for his formation. On the other hand, if he is not given sufficient responsibility, he will not mature as a man and will experience real successes and failures, which provide, in one way or another, decisive lessons for the integral formation of an apostle. Retreats, spiritual exercises, and the community's weekly spiritual activity should take into account the needs of the religious on internship. 963

## 2. Specific objectives and means

### *Spiritual dimension*

801. The community of apostolate is a favorable opportunity for greater human maturity, manifested in healthy autonomy and spiritual vigor, for there is less external support than there was in the house of formation. With the help of the superior, the religious learns to plan his life so that there is space for prayer, spiritual reading and other formation activities organized in the territory.

- 132 802. The temptation to activism is the temptation to lose sight of the primacy of grace in one's sanctity and apostolate: "Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain who build. Unless the Lord guard the city, in vain does the guard keep watch" (Psalm 127:1).

In this stage a religious learns in a very concrete way, how to integrate his interior life with his active life, making the former the source of the latter. The spiritual director can help the religious to learn which method and type of prayer helps him the most, and can suggest the means to maintain his interior silence—the attitude of listening to God—in the midst of intense activity. It will take humility on the part of the religious to recognize and admit the difficulties, fights and falls which may occur, but this humility will allow the religious to integrate these moments not as ruptures in the path of religious life, but as opportunities for growth and learning.

- 148  
139 803. In his prayer, the religious on internship has to continue to form a supernatural view of the reality, trying to find God in everything in order to grow in trust in His grace and in abandonment to the Providence of God.

Institutes involved in one or other form of the apostolate must therefore foster a *solid spirituality of action*, seeing God in all things and all things in God.<sup>389</sup>

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<sup>389</sup> VC 74.

804. A religious in this stage usually dedicates much of his time to preaching and preparing his preaching. This should help him realize that he is a bearer of the Word of God for others, a realization which will in turn be a constant stimulus for his personal, daily and transforming contact with Scripture. 264

805. Apostolic internship is also a privileged opportunity to practice discerning and choosing what most leads to the ultimate goal, the Kingdom of the love of Christ, in each situation. The religious should learn to go beyond mere external fulfillment and to reconcile the apparent conflicts of values that occur frequently in the active life, for example, between apostolic mission and common life, between efficiency and obedience, etc. 197

806. Because he will come in contact more frequently with the sins of people or certain environments, he must grow in his spirit of vigilance and examen. Besides spiritual direction, regular confession acquires special importance for the religious in this stage. Because of his experiences, the temptation can arise to postpone the sacrament of penance, which is what allows the religious to exhort others to “allow themselves to be reconciled to God” (see 2 Corinthians 5:20). However, the religious who learns to live by the mercy of God gives his apostolate the light of authenticity. Frequent confession fosters the irreplaceable dependence on God’s grace which activism and “efficiency at all costs” tend to erode. 491

*Dimension of the evangelical counsels*

807. Apostolic internship offers new circumstances to “learn to live the evangelical counsels in the world without being of the world.” (CLC 104) The structure of the house of formation helps the religious to live obedience to a Rule of Life and dependence with his superior about the use of material goods and time. There are also less opportunities of contact with women, which allows him to express his celibacy. These circumstances change in a house of apostolate, where, in a certain sense, the religious on internship discovers his identity anew. 100

- 169 Interior growth will occur if, in the midst of his intense dedication to the apostolate, the Legionary on internship fosters the desire and practical determination to follow the evangelical counsels as a privileged way to consecrate himself intimately to God, conform himself to Christ and build his Kingdom (see CLC 18). On the contrary, it can happen that a religious is so enthusiastic about what he does that he places the practice of the counsels in second place, putting the “doing” before the “being.” It is recommended, therefore, that in this period he read and reflect on the documents of the Magisterium on religious life as a help to strengthen his identity.
- 214 808. This stage is an opportunity to strengthen the relationship between himself, a religious and future priest, and the secular world; to live his vocation with joy and freedom of spirit; and to give witness before the laity of his identity and of the excellence of the values of consecrated life. In his contact with the lives of so many people, he must learn to value and promote the beauty of the lay vocation its mission in the world.
- 195 809. Internship offers various ways for a Legionary to grow in obedience: cordial and responsible dependence with his superior about fraternal and disciplinary life, and with his director of apostolate about his apostolic work. Living this dependence maturely entails that the religious continually informs his superior of his work, the difficulties he is encountering, his suggestions for improvement of the house or the apostolate, initiatives in his field of apostolate, and the social commitments that he wants to make.
- 111 Availability is another aspect of the Legionary spirit that is both manifested and formed in this stage, because it is his first “deployment” to a certain place and mission. After this deployment, the Legionary will continue to grow and mature in availability through his ordinary life as a religious: by offering himself and supporting others, by accepting changes even though it may imply sacrifice and the renunciation of his preferences, by opening himself to a new community and new superiors, by collaborating with the laity, etc.

810. Regarding the spirit of poverty, the religious on internship should realize that he has many means at his disposal (money, gadgets, gifts, a car, different ways to rest, etc.) offered by the communities, works of apostolate, and people he works with, and that there is a real risk of using them without any discernment. He should bring up this theme in dialogue with his superior and spiritual director, to keep himself from thinking of any material thing as a given for his mission. The religious on internship has to keep learning to use things with a detached spirit of religious poverty. 187

As well, by seeing firsthand how the world searches for comfort and novelty, the young religious will be able to choose even more consciously and personally the moderation and simplicity of Christ. In this way his heart will grow in freedom and spiritual joy.

811. More frequent contact with women in this period can help him form his affective maturity, and learn to interact with them as a celibate man and as an apostle. It will help to recognize and bring to their truth in Christ the natural affections that arise in his interior, without suppressing them. Humility and prudence will bring him to recognize his own weakness as he searches for recollection of the senses and peace of soul. 242

812. The religious on internship should be open to sincere friendships, even with those who seem far from the message of Christ. Through this human relationship, he will be able to share his most valuable possession: faith. All his friendships are friendships in Christ, expressions of a love that is not selfish, exclusive, or closed to other relationships. 319

### *Human dimension*

813. This period is helpful for the religious's human formation, because it forces him to make internal options and exterior choices based on faith and personal conviction. These range from sincerity with his superior, responsible use of time, and fidelity in his religious and apostolic commitments to religious discipline, 351

Legionary distinction and flexibility in changing or unforeseen circumstances.

814. The sensation of being overwhelmed by responsibilities and to-do lists, whether as a part of his work or undertaken on his own initiative, can lead to a temptation to activism.

248 Through frequent dialogue, the superior will have to help the religious clearly define his responsibilities. This will help his work to be demanding yet serene, with a healthy balance between apostolate, fraternal life, prayer life and necessary rest with his brothers. In this dialogue, the young religious learns to set his priorities with personal discipline and truly apostolic criteria. In this way, he will not let life pass him by without leaving his mark of passion and zeal upon it.

366 815. Another important objective is cultivating the ability to interact with others, because on the apostolate he will encounter all types of people. With all purity of intention, he will have to develop his natural gifts through his religious identity.

### *Intellectual dimension*

256 816. Apostolic internship gives the religious a chance to see more clearly the connection between their humanistic and philosophical studies and the actual life of man. The great discoveries in these fields of study are not divorced from real life, but rather arise from and shed light upon it. Thus, everything that they have studied—assuming they have truly understood it and not just memorized it—becomes a deep pool of resources from which they can constantly draw in the face life's many problems and situations.

For example, well-organized apostolate requires planning and evaluation, which involves the basic intellectual abilities of analysis, synthesis, and relating ideas. Working in teams provides opportunities to put into practice the arts of dialogue and written and oral communication. Guiding people in their personal growth and in their

relationship with Christ requires us to cultivate reflection and empathy.

817. Personal study during apostolic internship should be primarily dedicated to books, manuals, and conferences related to the religious' specific field of apostolate, as well as the thorough preparation of classes, formation conferences, or preaching.

This stage of formation offers the religious the opportunity to take greater interest in the happenings of the world and to engage in enriching conversations with persons more experienced and informed than themselves. They should also make sure to keep and foster a wide cultural interest.

818. Religious on internship should keep developing their capacity for deep and peaceful reflection, in order to assimilate and integrate their experiences.

#### *Dimension of communion*

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819. The small and heterogeneous community of a house of apostolate differs from that of the novitiate or the centers of humanities and philosophy. In some cases, this change can cause a feeling of loneliness in the young religious.

820. To confront this difficulty, it is necessary for the religious to grow into his identity as a consecrated apostle through his contact with the more experienced Legionaries of his community. Forming healthy friendships that are not just formal or functional with the members of his community will also be of great help.

Priests should welcome religious on internship and treat them with great respect and as true brothers. They should try to get to know them and allow themselves to be known by them. The religious should recognize that they share in this fraternal life as younger brothers, and foster attitudes of respect and docility. At the same time, they should cultivate a sense of real belonging and participation.

289 821. Experiencing the limitations of the community and its individual members can help the religious on internship develop a positive and constructive attitude—valuing the good in others, seeking to support them for the good of the community, and forming his priestly heart whenever he sees the defects of his older brothers. However, it can also lead him to form a negative attitude—sharply criticizing, seeking comfort, or forgetting that it is up to each person to live his vocation to the full before God and not man, with the “gifts that differ according to the grace given to us” (Romans 12:6).

*Apostolic dimension*

- 562 822. Apostolic internship is a time for religious to be introduced to and familiarized with the Congregation’s apostolate, aware that only when they are ordained priests will they be able to live it in its fullness.
- 87,321 At the end of his internship a religious should have assimilated through practice the Legion’s apostolic principles and criteria (see CLC 104), and should have a clear, though not exhaustive idea of what it means to form apostles and be a spiritual father in *Regnum Christi* (see CLC 4 and 27 §3). This experience will allow him to move forward in his vocation with enthusiasm.
823. The religious’ ability to adapt himself to the apostolic situation of the locality he is sent to is also tested during internship. He may have to assume institutional responsibilities and work within structures that are outside of his control. In this regard, he experiences what so many others do when they begin a new job—he makes his contribution while accepting the limitations of what he can do.
- 81 824. In some cases, religious may assume a responsibility that requires them to direct others and make decisions in a way they did not experience in a house of formation. This should be seen as an opportunity to grow in respect and a spirit of service for others. There can be a temptation for the religious to have an exaggerated

sense of self-importance, to think that he is “somebody.” It can be helpful for him to review his attitudes in this regard during his conscience examen and spiritual direction.

825. Another objective of apostolic internship is for the religious 149  
to grow in his awareness of his personal talents and weaknesses, and in appreciation for the talents of others. Nobody can do everything—each person needs to discover what and how much he can do himself, and learn from and work with others. Authentic humility before our brothers and the souls we serve guarantees fruitfulness. A religious’ relationship with his director of apostolate will be a great help—the director should teach him to report regularly about his assigned tasks and to receive instructions and corrections with a good attitude.

Thus, it is important that religious in this stage grow in their ability 299,324  
to work in teams—with other Legionaries, consecrated, or laity. They should grow in *esprit de corps*, generously supporting others’ initiatives while never being afraid to express their opinion. Participating sincerely, responsibly, respectfully and openly in programming meetings can help them learn the art of listening; live fully aware of the fact that the Legion and Movement form a single body at the service of the Church and the world; and experience the reality that, united in charity, we have a much greater capacity for good.

## **F. Theology as an Immediate Preparation for Priesthood**

### ***1. Description and purpose***

826. The return to the house of formation and its markedly academic rhythm, after having spent several years on the apostolate, is for some a long-awaited moment and for others one of trial. In general, the religious experience: 347

- a. loss upon leaving persons they have loved and felt loved by;
- b. renunciation, in some cases, of a style of life which gave

them greater autonomy and more means than are customary in a house of formation;

c. a return to greater solitude, since there is now less contact with people outside the community and more space for silence, study, reflection and prayer.

211 827. These experiences can lead to an inner disorientation that the religious should transform into a moment of growth so as to continue incarnating the truth in his life. Returning to an atmosphere with less stimuli and fewer chances to be in the spotlight makes it necessary to live with profound convictions. During internship God had sowed seeds of grace: now is the time to cultivate the ground in order that the good seed bear much fruit.

Some may finish internship with important unanswered questions, which may have left serious oversights in their formation or deep wounds. This is the moment for the religious to let God heal what needs to be healed and to renew his option for Christ seriously and firmly.

In addition, the greater self-knowledge he gained on apostolic internship should serve as a springboard to get the most out of this final period of initial formation, strengthening his weak points with an eye to his future ministry.

828. For some religious, the experience of the house of formation feels like being forced into a rigid frame, which provokes irritability and complaints. Helped by their formators and brothers, they should discover that God is inviting them to see this situation as an opportunity to grow in self-knowledge and to freely embrace all that their Legionary vocation implies.

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780 829. Upon returning from internship, there is the option of immediately beginning theology or first studying a licentiate in philosophy. The latter is an opportunity to begin preparation for an area of apostolic work that calls for a deeper philosophical preparation (university chaplaincy, higher education, the diffusion of ideas, etc.).

This higher education can cultivate more mature thought, bring about familiarity with the ideological conflicts of modernity and postmodernity, and lay a deeper foundation for theology.

## ***2. Specific objectives and means***

830. The religious returning from internship are often in different places regarding their practice of virtue and progress in the objectives of formation. For this reason, the formation of this stage “must be based on a personal pedagogy and not limited to just one solution for all values, spiritualities, times, styles, and ways.”<sup>390</sup> The following paragraphs will attempt to identify the dynamics and opportunities most fitting to this stage, but do not pretend to be exhaustive nor exclusive since at this point the religious must refer to the integral whole of Legionary formation objectives. 367

### *Spiritual dimension*

831. According to the principle of experiential formation, upon returning from apostolic internship the religious should reflect in prayer on what he has experienced, on the action of God in his life, and on his personal strengths and weaknesses. The means present in the house of formation should help the religious to ponder the merciful and formative action of God, and so to reap its fruits.

832. The religious who perseveres through long years of generous fidelity to prayer will reap the fruits: he will serenely and joyfully possess certain habits and a *connaturalitas* with the things of God such that the whole of his interior life rings with a more personal tone. The distinguishing marks of this process are the search and even need for more personal acts of love, for greater sacrifice and intimacy with God, for a deeply rooted exercise of the theological virtues, for a more joyful acceptance of personal weakness and fragility, and for fuller trust and confirmation in God’s grace. In these circumstances, the study of theology (and therefore a more sound 134

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<sup>390</sup> NW 16.

knowledge of the faith) will have positive repercussions in his growth towards maturity and the fully developed life of ministry. However, there may be some religious who need to reconquer good habits and build a solid relationship with God that goes beyond mere external fulfillment.

- 137 833. In this stage, the religious' mental prayer may begin to simplify and shift toward contemplation, and alternating feelings of consolation and darkness. It would seem that God is working more directly in the soul, and the religious may feel disoriented upon being less occupied by ideas. The spiritual director is indispensable in helping the religious pass through this change and distinguishing it from laziness.

This period of theological studies and its increased contact with Sacred Scripture should enrich the religious' life of prayer. He should take care that all his thinking about the faith does not fill his prayer with considerations, practically transforming it into another study period.

- 104,488 834. Eucharistic adoration in its varying forms is a ready and ever-present support for religious in formation. They will avail themselves of its power in proportion to their desire to grow in love for Christ "in order to give themselves zealously for the salvation of souls and in order to live according to the Gospel rule of self-denial (CLC 105)." If he experiences in himself the fruits of adoration, the Legionary will become a priest who ardently promotes Eucharistic devotion wherever he works.

- 164 835. The religious' time of theology is especially suitable for deepening in his appreciation for the Liturgy of the Hours, both because of his greater knowledge of Sacred Scripture, patristics, the liturgy and ecclesiology and because of his experience of its personal and community celebration.

Likewise, more frequent contact with the Fathers of the Church, theologians and great masters of the spiritual life should enrich the formation of the Legionary.

836. The month-long spiritual exercises usually occur during the summer following the first year of theology. They are an important means of growth the Legion offers as an immediate preparation for perpetual profession (see CLC 54), wherein one leaves behind the bustle of everyday life to seek an intense spiritual experience, immersing himself in solitude in order to be alone with God. The month-long spiritual exercises are a privileged school of prayer and discernment, examen and familiarity with the Word of God. For this reason, they are an exceptional time for him to integrate his life, in all its successes and failures, with a vision of faith, and to ratify his life choice, so that he is capable of facing the future with new maturity. 538,931

“This gaze progressively conformed to Christ thus learns detachment from externals, from the tumult of the senses, from all that keeps man from that freedom which allows him to be grasped by the Spirit.”<sup>391</sup>

837. The pedagogy of the Church has marked the path towards Holy Orders with the two ministries of lector and acolyte. These signal the two loves of the future priest: the Word of God and the Eucharist, which open Jesus’ heart (see CLC 11) more fully to the religious. By nourishing himself with them daily, he becomes more capable of giving them as food for God’s faithful. During this stage, the Legionary should participate in the Celebration of the Eucharist conscious that he will soon ascend the altar himself. 102,966

a. The lectors should read at community mass more frequently, especially on Sundays and feast days. They should meditate on the readings and proclaim the Word of God with dignity such that it strikes those present with all its force.

b. The acolytes should help prepare the altar and purify the

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<sup>391</sup> *Oriente Lumen*, Apostolic Letter, John Paul II, 1995, 12.

sacred vessels. They may also help distribute communion when ordained ministers are absent. They should frequently adore Christ in the Eucharist, becoming good servants of the Church's treasure for the sake of their brothers.

968 838. The Church wants those preparing for the priesthood to live first as deacons, to teach them that service is essential to the ordained ministry. Through the imposition of the hands by the bishop, the deacon is consecrated to "serve in the *diaconia* of liturgy, word, and charity."<sup>392</sup> He fulfils this mission of service especially when he prays the Liturgy of the Hours in the name of the Church, be it personally, in community or on the apostolate; when he collaborates with the priests at the altar and the pulpit; and when he carries out acts of charity.

105,872 839. During the diaconate the Legionary should become familiar with pastoral ministry, preparing for priestly ordination with a prayerful spirit rooted in his relationship with Christ. It will be helpful for him to meditate on the rite of ordination, with all its prayers and liturgical gestures, because this rite synthesizes and expresses the deep meaning of the sacrament of orders in the Church.<sup>393</sup>

*Dimension of the evangelical councils*

171,359 840. Theology can be compared to a second novitiate, wherein the religious reexamines the meaning of the evangelical councils and makes them his own, at a more mature age and with greater experience.

188 841. Regarding the vow of poverty, recognizing the material goods that the apostolate has and will afford provides a concrete opportunity for the Legionary to personally discern between what is necessary and what is superfluous for a consecrated religious, seeking to follow Christ's example more consciously.

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<sup>392</sup> CCC 875.

<sup>393</sup> See GPV 77.

842. Regarding the vow of obedience, his accumulated experience, together with the affirmation of his personality and the recognition that every superior has human limitations, will prepare the way for a deeper vision of faith, which seeks identification with the attitude of a son before his heavenly Father. Faith reveals God's presence in his representatives in the Legion and the Church and attests to the redemptive value of "the full surrender of their will (CLC 31)." 195

843. Regarding the vow of chastity, the religious becomes aware of how the Holy Spirit has brought about a deeper sense of spiritual fatherhood in his heart. He also finds that he is capable of giving his life for the Church, discovering within himself spontaneous signs of authentic love for her. In this light, he can accept and learn from the momentary difficulties and other experiences of internship. 178

Formation of the mind goes hand-in-hand with this process of maturing. There should be courses on theology of the body and conferences on such themes as the psychological differences between men and women.

844. Maturity in living the vows should be verified in spiritual direction and personal review with the superior, looking ahead to perpetual profession. This verification should be based on the observation of concrete attitudes and behaviors. 689

845. As perpetual profession draws near, adequate preparation is crucial. Indispensable to this preparation are union with God, grateful remembrance of his gifts, consideration of the value of the evangelical counsels, and reflection on the spirit of the Congregation in the Constitutions. More frequent spiritual direction will help the religious take this important step with maturity, humility, and love. Special talks and retreats can be organized for those approaching perpetual profession. 931

846. Perpetual profession is “the indissoluble bond of the union of Christ and His bride, the Church.”<sup>394</sup> It is a great feast day for the community and should be celebrated with all due solemnity, since it reflects heaven’s joy over a definitive commitment of love ratified before the Church, accompanied by the prayers of all.

847. Perpetual profession is not the end of the road, but the confirmation of an option for Christ and the form of life he chose to live with his apostles. It opens wide horizons to which poverty, chastity, and obedience may unfurl their sails in the soul of the professed and in the life of the Church, according to the grace of the Spirit.

### *Human dimension*

209 848. In human formation too, the return to the house of formation is an opportunity to identify what the tests of life has revealed. The human virtues may have grown stronger, but on the other hand, habits of self-mastery or of even temperament may have receded, imperceptibly giving way to sensuality or laziness. Every religious examine himself in dialogue with the Lord and his superiors identifying the aspects of his human personality that still need to be polished as he approaches perpetual profession and priestly ministry.

147 849. A common temptation in this stage is a kind of pride that can rear its head after an internship distinguished by great advances and personal satisfactions. The religious affected by this temptation may already feel qualified for priestly ministry, as if he had nothing more to learn. This attitude closes the mind and heart to the opportunities present in the house of formation, manifesting itself in attitudes that range from hypercritical to cynical. From the superior, this situation requires great patience and the ability to listen. For the religious, the key is growth in humility—detachment from himself and simple trust in his formators.

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<sup>394</sup> LG 44.

850. Making his perpetual profession implies that the religious has shown the maturity needed to take on definitive commitments. Maturity always leads to authentic interior freedom with its human manifestations: serene self-acceptance, recognition of one's self-centered tendencies in order to fight them, a healthy sense of humor, teamwork, and the ability to value others. 215

*Intellectual dimension*

851. A basic objective of this stage is a clear understanding of the relevance of theological studies in the religious' integral formation. Coupled with a commitment to depth in their theological preparation, this objective constitutes a fundamental phase of intellectual formation, since "through study, especially the study of theology, the future priest assents to the word of God, grows in his spiritual life and prepares himself to fulfill his pastoral ministry."<sup>395</sup> 260

852. It is up to each religious to give his theological studies their due importance—desiring, in light of his experiences of the apostolate and upcoming ordination, to possess "a complete and unified vision of the truths which God has revealed in Jesus Christ and of the Church's experience of faith."<sup>396</sup> 777

853. There can be certain temptations during this stage that the religious may need to overcome. First among these is the failure to live the present moment, either because he misses his apostolate from internship or because—thinking that he is sufficiently prepared—he wants to begin his priestly ministry immediately. Another temptation is to see his studies as an isolated reality, failing to connect them to his interior life, human formation or preparation for the mission.

854. Depth, seriousness and a spirit of *semper altius* should thus characterize both the religious' theological studies and the way the 261

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<sup>395</sup> PDV 51; see GPV 165.

<sup>396</sup> PDV 54; see GPV 165.

formators—especially the professors—present them. They should approach their studies in view of their mission as evangelists, which Pope Paul VI considered the Church’s deepest the identity:

“Evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize, that is to say, in order to preach and teach, to be the channel of the gift of grace, to reconcile sinners with God, and to perpetuate Christ’s sacrifice in the Mass, which is the memorial of His death and glorious resurrection.”<sup>397</sup>

- 884 855. The study of Sacred Scripture is the soul of theology<sup>398</sup> and should inspire every theological discipline. Biblical formation should thus be given its due importance, with the opportunity given for learning or consolidating the biblical languages of Hebrew and Greek.<sup>399</sup>

The teaching of dogmatic, sacramental, moral and pastoral theology, as well as the sacred liturgy, the Code of Canon Law, ecclesiastical history and any other disciplines should follow the most recent guidelines of the Holy See for the preparation of future priests.<sup>400</sup>

- 375 856. During these years of study, the theological curriculum should be supplemented by formation for those things that directly pertain to the sacred ministry. This preparation should include the *ars celebrandi*<sup>401</sup>, sacred preaching,<sup>402</sup> the pastoral administration of the sacraments (especially confession), the administration of goods, and popular devotion.

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<sup>397</sup> EN 14.

<sup>398</sup> See DV 24.

<sup>399</sup> See GPV 166.

<sup>400</sup> See GPV 165-175.

<sup>401</sup> GPV 177: “It will be appropriate, in particular, to study the *ars celebrandi*, to teach the seminarians how to participate fruitfully in the sacred mysteries, and how to celebrate the liturgy practically, with respect for, and fidelity to, the liturgical books.”

<sup>402</sup> GPV 177: “Special attention is to be given to the homily, since it is ‘the touchstone for judging a pastor’s closeness and ability to communicate to his people.’ The particular usefulness of such a preparation will be revealed in other areas of ministry, such as liturgical preaching and catechesis, which are ongoing duties for priests in the work of promoting the growth of the communities entrusted to them.”

Each Legionary should also dedicate special attention to his preparation for giving spiritual direction and spiritual exercises.

### *Dimension of communion*

857. The challenge in this dimension lies in creating an authentic experience of community, in which each one puts forth the best of himself in service to others. A temptation for theologians can be for each one to live his life without regard for those around him. It is necessary to form an attitude of openness to others, not seeking mere external conformity, but profound and mature dialogue with one's brothers. This dialogue allows each religious, on the basis of his priestly character, to integrate more fully into the Legionary family. 281

The friendships formed during these years become a lifelong treasure. Groups and perseverance teams foster solid relationships, but no structure or formator can take the place of personal commitment to building up brotherly charity. 462

### *Apostolic dimension*

858. The years of preparation immediately preceding ordination and priestly ministry are a time to identify more and more with Christ, "in order to give themselves zealously for the salvation of souls (CLC 105)." Forging a priestly heart and identifying with the mission of the Legion and *Regnum Christi* should characterize the theologian's apostolic formation. 376

Theological studies constitute the principal apostolate of this stage. Thus, apostolic activities should be properly reconciled with one's academic responsibilities. An atmosphere of interest in studies should reign in the community—as is fitting for those eagerly preparing themselves for a mission like the priesthood.

859. In order for the religious to deepen in their knowledge of *Regnum Christi*, it can be useful to invite members of the various 322

branches to give presentations or conferences on their life or apostolate, and thus open the way for reflection and dialogue on the mission of *Regnum Christi* in the Church.

Religious should also be offered some elements of human formation so that each one can continue growing as a person and enhancing his capacity for apostolic leadership and teamwork.

860. Pastoral care of families is one of the priorities of the Church's work of evangelization and a primary field of apostolate for Legionaries (see CLC 4, 3°; GCC 2014, 176 §7, 1°). Therefore each Legionary should receive a wide interdisciplinary formation on dating and marriage that is not just limited to doctrine.<sup>403</sup> In this way they can confront the needs of the faithful in this area, which demands from priests an authentic pastoral spirit and true competence.<sup>404</sup>

861. Each religious should propose to his formators the apostolic activities that will most help him build up his strengths or strengthen his weaknesses, in light of his past apostolic experiences and future ministry. Ideally, apostolate should be a challenge, a source of deep motivation, and a horizon toward which his apostolic life draws ever nearer.

- 105 862. The public commitment to the Church he made in his perpetual profession and his upcoming ordination should incite him to generous self-giving to others and to deepen in his attitudes of acceptance, service, and joyful belonging to the Church. Renunciation is integral to the life of a religious and priest: he no longer belongs to himself but is consecrated to serve the people of God, and therefore can seek nothing in his ministry of personal advantage, self-affirmation or self-fulfillment, but only service to others.

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<sup>403</sup> See AL 203.

<sup>404</sup> See *Directives on Forming Seminarians for Ministry to Marriage and Family*, Congregation for Catholic Education, 1995, 2.

863. In these years it is important that the religious face any tension that results from discovering his gifts, talents and interests through frank dialogue with his superior, while always looking towards a future specialization or particular area of apostolic work. He should always remain available for and obedient to the apostolic demands of the Legion and the challenges of the world

636-638



## CHAPTER NINE

### ONGOING FORMATION

*Remain faithful until death,  
and I will give you the crown of life. (Revelation 2:10)*

#### A. General Guidelines for Ongoing Formation

371-374

864. “Attend to yourself” (1 Timothy 4:16), Saint Paul tells his disciple Timothy. Self-giving to others should not be an excuse for a priest to disregard his fundamental duty towards himself, the fulfillment of which largely determines the good he does.

Thus, “it is the priest himself, the individual priest, who is the person primarily responsible in the Church for ongoing formation. Truly each priest has the duty, rooted in the sacrament of Holy Orders, to be faithful to the gift God has given him and to respond to the call for daily conversion which comes with the gift itself.”<sup>405</sup> The priest allows himself to be sustained by the gift of God, knowing that “the sacrament of Orders...ensures that the priest can count on all the actual graces he needs, whenever they are necessary and useful for the worthy and perfect exercise of the ministry he has received.”<sup>406</sup>

865. Formation is ongoing because our response to the vocation is ongoing. It is not just something that happened in the past: God continues to call us every day. We cannot lose our ability to be surprised, to be docile and to learn. We can never tire of beginning

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<sup>405</sup> PDV 79.

<sup>406</sup> PDV 70.

anew, for “love is never ‘finished’ and complete; throughout life, it changes and matures, and thus remains faithful to itself.”<sup>407</sup>

347 Thus, we should consider the words of Christ: “My Father is at work until now, so I am at work” (John 5:17) as applying not only to the world, but also—and primarily—to ourselves. He never stops working to make us more like him through all that he does and allows in our lives. Ongoing formation is above all the disposition of letting ourselves be formed by life, the humble and generous willingness to “be touched, educated, provoked, and enlightened by life and by history,”<sup>408</sup> to die over and over in order to rise to new life with Christ.

388 This permanent availability to the will of God “implies a continuous conversion of heart, the capacity to see one’s life and its events in the light of faith and, above all, of pastoral charity, by way of a total gift of self to the Church, according to the design of God.”<sup>409</sup>

866. Between initial and ongoing formation, there is both continuity and discontinuity. On the one hand, there is an “intrinsic link between formation before ordination to the priesthood and formation after ordination,” and so “long-term preparation for ongoing formation should take place in the major seminary.” On the other hand, “ongoing formation is not a repetition of the formation acquired in the seminary,” but rather “involves relatively new content and especially methods [...] but without sharp breaks in continuity.”<sup>410</sup>

After his ordination, a Legionary seeks—in a more personal way and in light of everything he has received—the means to continue on his path of growth. The Legion offers certain formation opportunities, but it falls to each one to give continuity and constant

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<sup>407</sup> DCE 17.

<sup>408</sup> NW 35.

<sup>409</sup> GPV 56.

<sup>410</sup> PDV 71.

freshness to his own integral formation.

867. Ongoing formation takes place in every dimension of a consecrated person's life.<sup>411</sup>

a. *Life in the Spirit.* A vast horizon of holiness—especially in love—lies open to a Legionary, for “the priestly vocation is essentially a call to holiness in the form which derives from the sacrament of orders. Holiness is intimacy with God.”<sup>412</sup> 131

God is greater than anything we can ever conceive of: “Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God!” (Romans 11:33). Thus, prayer, because it also is life in the Spirit, is not some monotonous repetition of an activity, but a path filled with passion, a quest for the face of God. It requires a personal decision on our part, for “experience teaches that in prayer one cannot live off past gains.”<sup>413</sup> 137

Thus we live with an attitude of “unceasing conversion, wherein obedience is the source of true freedom, chastity expresses the yearning of a heart unsatisfied by any finite love, and poverty nourishes that hunger and thirst for justice which God has promised to satisfy (see Matthew 5:6).”<sup>414</sup> 171

b. *The human and fraternal dimension.* “The capacity to cultivate and live deep priestly friendships proves to be a source of serenity and joy in the exercise of the ministry... Priestly fraternity is an expression of the law of charity and, far from being little more than a mere sentiment, becomes for priests an existential remembrance of Christ and apostolic witness of ecclesial communion.”<sup>415</sup> 235

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<sup>411</sup> This number follows the layout for ongoing formation proposed in VC 71.

<sup>412</sup> PDV 33.

<sup>413</sup> PDV 72.

<sup>414</sup> VC 36.

<sup>415</sup> *Directory for the Ministry and Life of Priests*, Congregation for the Clergy, 2013, 37.

- 400 A priest, living a life of solitude, is paradoxically a man highly sensitive to the needs and sufferings of his brothers and of all men. “It should be added that a certain type of solitude is a necessary element in ongoing formation [...] those unable to have a positive experience of their own solitude are incapable of genuine and fraternal fellowship.”<sup>416</sup>
- 312 c. *The apostolic dimension.* Faced with “an excessive loss of energy in their ever-increasing pastoral activities [and with] the difficulties of contemporary culture and society,”<sup>417</sup> pastoral charity should unify a priest’s life, inflame his zeal and spur him on to seek new ways and methods of doing apostolate.
- This dimension unifies all the others: “Only by directing every moment and every one of his acts toward the fundamental choice to ‘give his life for the flock’ can the priest guarantee this unity which is vital and indispensable for his harmony and spiritual balance.”<sup>418</sup>
- 255 d. *The intellectual and cultural dimension.* In today’s ever-changing world, a Legionary tries to stay up-to-date with the situation of the world and the Church, above all in the country he is working in. This helps him understand the main apostolic challenges, the problems that afflict both believers and man in general; identify the ideological tendencies that most influence social, political, and personal life; discover new opportunities for the apostolate God gives us; and constantly look for the most effective way to adequately and convincingly present the inexhaustible richness of the Christian message to our contemporaries. “In fact, it is often through historical events that we discern God’s hidden call to work according to his plan by active and effective involvement in the events of our time.”<sup>419</sup>

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<sup>416</sup> PDV 74.

<sup>417</sup> PDV 3.

<sup>418</sup> PDV 23.

<sup>419</sup> VC 73.

e. *The charismatic dimension.* “Ongoing formation includes delving deeper into their personal and common vocation through an ever increasing knowledge of the Legion’s mission and spirit” (CLC 114 §2). This delving deeper fosters growth in unity and prevents us from becoming sidetracked. It gives our lives meaning and a direction harmonious with the call of God. 335

868. What we want is a real culture of ongoing formation, which requires “concrete forms, for individuals and communities, that make pedagogical practices a real journey of growth in creative fidelity with significant and lasting outcomes in concrete life.”<sup>420</sup>

To this end the Legion as an institution offers several opportunities such as retreats and spiritual exercises, weekly meetings in community, and study weeks. Each community and territory should foster a spirit of constant growth in its members, with means corresponding to their needs and opportunities. They can also take advantage of the wide range of formative activities organized by other Church institutions: conferences, courses, graduate programs, occasional spiritual exercises, etc.

869. Institutional means are not enough. Personal, ordinary means are also needed. Each Legionary assumes full responsibility for his ongoing formation.

In this regard, priests should be fully aware of the great benefit that constant cultivation of their intellectual formation offers to their perseverance and priestly fervor. Through frequent reading or study—which place the person of Jesus, knowledge of the spiritual life, and the problems of man continually before his eyes—a priest nourishes his intimacy with God, grows in the joy of his self-offering, and confirms his experiences in ministry, transforming them into wisdom. Called by their office to dedicate themselves to the

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<sup>420</sup> NW 35.

ministry of the word, priests “must hold fast to the Sacred Scriptures through diligent sacred reading and careful study [...] so that none of them will become ‘an empty preacher of the word of God  
265 outwardly, who is not a listener to it inwardly.’”<sup>421</sup>

870. Ongoing formation gives unity to all of life, with all its joys and victories, crises and difficulties. These moments become opportunities for growth when they are lived with a heart open to receiving help from others.

871. Given the nature of ongoing formation, the description of the stages in this period does not follow the same structure as in the stages of initial formation. Rather, it simply highlights their most important characteristics and challenges and offers a few concrete recommendations.

## **B. Ordination and the First Years of Priesthood**

872. “Our priestly life and activity continue the life and activity of Christ himself. Here lies our identity, our true dignity, the source of our joy, the very basis of our life.”<sup>422</sup> For a young priest, ordination is the crowning moment of a long process of personal formation. The time has come for him to put all that he has learned and lived into practice, to dive deeper into the Legion and to assume greater responsibilities within it.

376 873. The beginnings of priestly life are often marked by personal and priestly bliss, experienced in the celebration of the Eucharist, Confession and the other sacraments, in being able to work closely with souls, in feeling that he, with his creativity and initiative, is being called upon to confront the many and various challenges of the apostolate—working to announce the Kingdom of God and feeling part of the apostolic mission of the Congregation.

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<sup>421</sup> *Dei Verbum*, Dogmatic Constitution, Vatican Council II, 1965, 25. The quotation is from *Sermon*, Saint Augustine, 179, 1 (PL 38, 966).

<sup>422</sup> PDV 18.

A priest is allowed to enter the depths of the human heart, above all through Confession and spiritual direction. This novelty, proper to the priestly experience, raises new challenges and opportunities for a Legionary's integral formation. Embraced as such, it helps him avoid the danger of falling into a certain formative "inertia" after leaving the more structured path of formation—with its concrete, explicit goals and milestones.

874. The Congregation helps its recently ordained priests enter into the apostolate by providing them with a mentor:

“In the consecrated life the first years of full involvement in the apostolate are a critical stage, marked by the passage from a supervised life to a situation of full responsibility for one's work. It is important that young consecrated persons be supported and accompanied by a brother or sister who helps them to live to the full the freshness of their love and enthusiasm for Christ.”<sup>423</sup>

875. The challenge for a priest in his first years after ordination is to meld his entire existence with the new identity he has received: to think, speak, see, judge like a priest: to be a priest with his whole person. 103,127

The Holy Spirit develops in his heart a spousal love for the Church, by which he realizes that his priesthood is not his own. Rather, by his priesthood, he belongs to the people of God and should tend to the needs of others. By his concrete priestly mission, he knows he is united to the entire Church in her mission:

“The spiritual gift which priests received at their ordination prepares them not for any limited or narrow mission but for the widest scope of the universal mission of salvation ‘to the end of the earth’ (Acts 1:8). For every priestly ministry shares in the universality of the mission entrusted by Christ to his apostles.”<sup>424</sup>

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<sup>423</sup> VC 70.

<sup>424</sup> PDV 32.

The same Spirit also develops the priest's spiritual fatherhood, his ability to beget children in the Faith. This fatherhood is expressed in his care for those entrusted to him, in the effort to help them grow into the fullness of their vocations.

- 632 876. A few attitudes that can be helpful for young priests are humility and purity of intention—allowing themselves to be guided and helped—appreciation for community life, and a correct hierarchy of values that places God and the mission above all else.

Intense activity, sustained by the energy of youth and by an intense, sincere love for Christ and souls, can conceal a hint of vanity and desire for attention. We can lose sight of the fact that we are only instruments. The appearance of security is often united to a hidden  
105 fear of failure, but we must remember that God “does not fail because he finds ever new ways to reach people.”<sup>425</sup>

A young priest has to be humble enough to admit that he doesn't know everything, and to approach his older brothers with simplicity. Aware of his need for points of reference and priestly examples, he should seek their advice and learn from their experience.<sup>426</sup>

- 376 877. In his community, a priest should find and offer fraternity and support, friendship and dialogue, as together they develop their community plan. He should treasure his community and offer it the time and attention it deserves. Overvaluing apostolic work or seeking appreciation outside the community can cause him to undervalue community life, which is a gift of God and a means of perseverance and sanctification. He should not forget that, in addition to being a priest, he is also a religious.

- 376 878. During this time, a priest forms his hierarchy of values, developing a rhythm of life that integrates his spiritual life, fraternal life, apostolate, and rest. Spiritual direction, dialogue with his superior, friendships with his brothers, and frequent confession are also needed:

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<sup>425</sup> *Homily to the Swiss Bishops*, Benedict XVI, November 7, 2006.

<sup>426</sup> See. GPV 83 about the availability to listen to priests with more experiences.

“The quality and fervor of a priest’s spiritual and pastoral life depend, just like his lay and religious brothers and sisters, on his conscious and assiduous personal practice of the sacrament of penance. [...] If a priest were no longer to go to confession or properly confess his sins, his priestly being and his priestly action would feel its effects very soon and this would also be noticed by the community of which he was the pastor.”<sup>427</sup>

It is possible for a priest to overfill his agenda and calendar, losing his appreciation for quiet moments of intimacy with God, active intellectual life, and fraternal life with his brothers.

879. Open and frequent dialogue with both his superior and director of apostolate is important for clearly defining his mission. This will help him dedicate his time and energy to the specific work the Legion has given him. To this end, he has to learn to say “no” to apostolic opportunities that might hinder him from doing the work obedience demands of him. The superior should trust him and give him space, while at the same time remaining close and fatherly with him, always ready to intervene firmly if necessary. This is the moment for a young priest to experience the deep meaning of apostolic obedience. 200

880. In his dealings with women, he should learn to be a father and a brother, and to always act with a priestly heart without ambiguity or naiveté. Transparency with both his spiritual director and superior is very important: he should never think that he is safe or invulnerable because of his formation. 243

881. Those who continue their studies immediately after ordination should see this stage as linked to their mission as Legionaries and to their future apostolic work. It is recommended that they have opportunities for powerful, non-academic apostolic experiences that will help them assimilate their priestly identity through pastoral ministry.

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<sup>427</sup> *Reconciliatio et Paenitentia*, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, John Paul II, 1984, 31; TN: The first part of this quote appears in the Latin, but not in the English edition of the exhortation.

## C. Priests in Their Forties

### *1. Important characteristics and challenges*

882. Saint Paul exhorted Timothy: “Do not neglect the gift you have” (1 Timothy 4:14; see 2 Timothy 1:6). It is necessary to return often to the gift received from God: “Meditate on what you celebrate,” the Church tells priests in the rite of ordination. These words offer him a privileged means of protection from routine, keeping him from getting used to the graces that pass constantly through his hands.

103 883. The priest, bound to Christ by the sacrament of Orders, repeats the Lord’s ministerial actions for the good of the faithful. This bond “tends by its very nature to become as extensive and profound as possible, affecting one’s way of thinking, feeling and life itself: in other words, creating a series of moral and spiritual ‘dispositions’ which correspond to the ministerial actions performed by the priest.”<sup>428</sup> These words of John Paul II summarize the essence of priestly spirituality.

884. In his ongoing formation, a priest should cultivate a growing love for and knowledge of Sacred Scripture:

“The priest himself ought first of all to develop a great personal familiarity with the word of God. [...] He needs to approach the word with a docile and prayerful heart so that it may deeply penetrate his thoughts and feelings and bring about a new outlook in him ‘the mind of Christ’ (1 Corinthians 2:16)—such that his words and his choices and attitudes may become ever more a reflection, a proclamation and a witness to the Gospel.”<sup>429</sup>

267 885. To further his identification with Christ, each priest should find his own way of growing in his intellectual formation according to his possibilities and interests. Among other things, he can seek a

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<sup>428</sup> PDV 25.

<sup>429</sup> PDV 26.

degree or title by enrolling in officially organized courses, participate in remote courses, or follow a program of reading related to his apostolate or integral formation.

886. Configuration to Christ sometimes means experiencing the cross of Christ. When, for example, we receive a new assignment, it can be very difficult to leave the people and circumstances we are used to for new ones. This situation, which can be a moment of disappointment and rebellion, instead becomes one of trust and love, as the rite of ordination suggests, “Conform your life to the mystery of the Lord’s Cross.”

887. Nor should we be surprised that the cross comes to us in small battles to be faithful to Christ, in many different areas of our lives: 357

“It should be remembered what sacrifices conjugal fidelity involves. Surely priestly fidelity can demand no less. This would be quite paradoxical. A priest simply is not permitted to see, hear, say or experience everything he feels inclined toward. A seminary must train future priests to enable them, in their inner liberty, to bear sacrifices and to accept personal discipline both intelligently and loyally.”<sup>430</sup>

888. In this period of life, some may begin to feel the effects of wounds that they have never wanted to or been able to deal with. Pope Francis described this situation in reference to family life:

“Were everyone mature and normal, crises would be less frequent or less painful. Yet the fact is that only in their forties do some people achieve a maturity that should have come at the end of adolescence. Some love with the selfish, capricious and self-centered love of a child [...] Others love with an adolescent love marked by hostility, bitter criticism and the need to blame others; caught up in their own emotions and fantasies, such persons expect others to fill their emptiness and to satisfy their every desire.

“Unresolved issues need to be dealt with and a process of liberation must take place. [...] This involves recognizing a need for healing, insistent

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<sup>430</sup> SFS 3.

prayer for the grace to forgive and be forgiven, a willingness to accept help, and the determination not to give up but to keep trying. A sincere self-examination will make it possible to see how one's own shortcomings and immaturity affect the [marital] relationship.<sup>431</sup>

- 212 889. Men in their forties sometimes experience certain interior crises. This period of life is thus a delicate and important time of transition that everyone lives differently. People can experience these crises with varying degrees of intensity, or might not experience them at all. Some traits, however, are fairly common.

Routine in work can lead to a sort of existential boredom and re-thinking of life. A priest can get the impression that he has not lived up to the expectations he had of himself, and feel a certain disappointment at the scarcity of his apostolic fruits. There can be a real identity crisis, with symptoms of comfort-seeking, acceptance of mediocrity, new forms of unchecked activism, or, in extreme cases, a hidden double life. An interior emptiness can develop that a priest might try to fill with a variety of compensations, such as the use of money, problems with authority, disordered affections, or different forms of flight from reality. In these moments, there is a great danger of abandoning the path begun so many years before.<sup>432</sup>

890. However, if he remains close to and opens his soul to his spiritual director and superior, if he refrains from seeking novelty, if he perseveres in the practices of the spiritual life—while prudently making adjustments according to his needs—the priest will begin to see this as a moment of great purification of his self-offering. Some even see it as a second response to Christ in which they finally begin to give him everything. In humble simplicity, they offer him the vanity that was present at the beginning of their ministry;

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<sup>431</sup> AL 239-240.

<sup>432</sup> People, regardless of their vocation, often experience a moment of readjustment around the middle of their lives. The Church confirms that the majority of priests that leave the priesthood do so around the age of forty. For those who do not deeply assimilate their theological formation in a balanced way, the tensions of a midlife crisis can deepen their doctrinal misunderstandings and lead to open disagreement with the teachings of the Magisterium.

their pride; their desire to be better than others; and their very life, aware that they are nothing and that by pure mercy that they have been called to serve him. What follows is a life of growing interior freedom and a new experience of gratitude and joy.

“For at this time, after refining certain features of the personality, the gift of self is made to God more genuinely and with greater generosity; it extends to others with greater serenity and wisdom, as well as with greater simplicity and richness of grace. This is the gift and experience of spiritual fatherhood.”<sup>433</sup>

## ***2. Spiritual renewal***

891. At certain points along his path, a priest needs more intense 354  
dedication to and more adequate means for his spiritual renewal—  
moments to put everything else aside and give priority to being with  
God in prayer, sharing in fraternal life, growing in his dedication as  
a consecrated person and restoring his strength for the mission en-  
trusted to him (see CLC 115).

The time of renewal should help him recognize and understand the 385  
natural changes of human life (physical, physiological, emotional)  
and the work of God in his own. It should help him integrate the  
human, spiritual, and apostolic experiences of his years of priest-  
hood in order to promote his continued growth in personal ma-  
turity.

892. The main form of renewal that the Legion offers is a period 978  
in a community established for this purpose and dedicated exclu-  
sively to it. There is a short period of about two months, or a longer  
period of about six months. The longer period of renewal seeks to  
respond more deeply to the needs of those confronting the difficult  
transition described earlier, commonly experienced around the mid-  
dle of life. In this moment, it is well worth it to dedicate an extended  
amount of time to encounters with God and oneself in order to  
“persevere in running the race that lies before us while keeping our

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<sup>433</sup> VC 70.

eyes fixed on Jesus, the leader and perfecter of faith” (Hebrews 12:2).

836 893. The period of studies for licentiate or specialization can also be considered a type of renewal if it is done in a community set aside for this purpose. Month-long spiritual exercises are a type of renewal as well (see CN 36).

894. Each Legionary is responsible for his own fidelity to the Lord and should, with the help of his spiritual director and superior, find and propose whatever will most help him have an authentic and profound renewal.

It is recommended that he have his first renewal after ten years of priestly life and another some years later.

#### **D. Years of Maturity**

895. A vocation to religious life in the Legion of Christ is, from beginning to end, a vocation to love. Love expands the heart, purges self-centeredness, and impels us to apostolic action while placing our trust in God rather than our own securities.

“There is a youthfulness of spirit which lasts through time; it arises from the fact that at every stage of life a person seeks and finds a new task to fulfil, a particular way of being, of serving and of loving.”<sup>434</sup>

150 896. In his years of maturity, a priest’s active life and apostolic witness reach their peak. He acquires a certain balance among the different aspects of his personality. It is normal in this phase for him to undertake projects for the community, Regnum Christi, or the Church with great simplicity, practicality and wisdom. After years of experience and growth in maturity, he can contribute greatly to building up the Kingdom by preaching retreats and spiritual exercises, giving conferences, or writing. All of this nourishes his desire to give praise to God.

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<sup>434</sup> VC 70.

897. Still, “at whatever point the soul finds itself or whatever its level of perfection in virtue, it may have falls.”<sup>435</sup> These falls, though, do not at all diminish the person’s holiness if he repents and continues to seek God. The temptations a priest can suffer during these years might take on a variety of faces, such as sickness, mourning, difficult community relationships, new and dramatic emotional experiences such as loneliness or falling in love, a surprising moral failure, profound darkness or dryness prayer. All of these can be meaningful, however, if they are lived with God:

“Faith always remains something of a cross; it retains a certain obscurity which does not detract from the firmness of its assent. Some things are understood and appreciated only from the standpoint of this assent, which is a sister to love.”<sup>436</sup>

A certain dissatisfaction with one’s apostolic work can also arise. It is important to “not confuse the completeness of their dedication with the degree of good results.” The cross frees us from many human securities, so this moment of life “is the time to search for what is essential.”<sup>437</sup>

898. A frequent temptation for a priest in his fifties can be to give way little by little to individualism or comfort-seeking. One manifestation of this is avoidance of whatever might bother him or involve him in activities. In these situations, it can be difficult to propose changes of apostolate, house or country.

899. Older age, however, also allows a priest to draw from a wealth of experience when confronting his difficulties. Building on experiences of God and his fidelity, of the maternal love of the Church and the Legion, and of growth in authentic self-knowledge can help him attain a new and profound balance and set out again on the path of holiness.

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<sup>435</sup> *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, V, Origen, 10, PG 14, 1053A.

<sup>436</sup> EG 42.

<sup>437</sup> VC 70.

455 900. It is also important to remember that we do not make progress alone, even in adulthood. In this stage, the accompaniment of both superior and spiritual director is still essential. Every Legionary should seek and heed objective points of view about the new challenges he faces in all the dimensions of his life, about his personal development and about his apostolic performance.

901. Adults prefer to be taught by life-experience rather than by theory. The presence of other priests of the same age with whom they can dialogue and share spiritual goods is important. Therefore, it is good to encourage gatherings for priests of this age in each territory.

902. Legionaries in this stage are, in the normal course of life, those most capable of serving in positions of responsibility or authority. This is an opportunity to continue growing in spiritual fatherhood and human maturity. Availability to assume these roles when asked by the Legion is a concrete expression of the spirit of a “rank-and-file soldier.”

## **E. Years of Old Age**

903. This period of life, characterized by impoverishment of human strength, is our final experience on the path of reproducing the mystery of the Kingdom of God within us. Its fruits, therefore, go far beyond what we can or cannot do humanly, for God greatly surpasses every human expectation. During this time we can relive the events of our lives with new depth, seeing them through the lens of faith, hope and love for God; we can experience the reality that “everything is grace;” we can bear witness before men that “the world in its present form is passing away” (1 Corinthians 7:31) and that “God is faithful” (1 Corinthians 1:9).

904. Attentive discernment by each priest and by the Congregation is necessary to avoid two possible dangers: considering himself elderly and limiting himself before the proper time, or, on the other

hand, not recognizing when it is time to freely leave his responsibilities in the hands of others and support them by his advice rather than his work.

905. The challenge of this period of life as regards ongoing formation and growth in holiness is accepting one's personal limitations. Human strength, capabilities and energy diminish with time, even if the person does not suffer from any specific illness. An elderly Legionary can no longer do as much, nor work with the same energy as he did before. Uniting himself in a new way to Christ crucified by accepting this reality, with all its implications for his fraternal, apostolic and spiritual life, allows him to continue living with humility, joy and a spirit of service. Thus, his maturity as a man, religious and priest is brought to fulfillment: "Through suffering those surrounded by the mystery of Christ's Redemption become mature enough to enter this Kingdom."<sup>438</sup>

906. This stage of life lends itself to a special serenity and abandonment to God. Priests should be wary of the possible temptation to pessimism towards themselves, others or the work they have done. They should cultivate a generous capacity for forgiveness and reconciliation with the wounds inflicted by life. These years become a new novitiate, a time of preparation for death and the definitive entry into eternal life:

"The gradual withdrawal from activity, sometimes caused by sickness or forced immobility, can be a very formative experience. Often a time of suffering, advanced age nonetheless offers to elderly consecrated persons the chance to be transformed by the Paschal experience, by being configured to the Crucified Christ who fulfills the Father's will in all things and abandons himself into the Father's hands, even to the surrendering of his spirit to him. This configuration represents a new way of living one's consecration, which is not tied to effectiveness in carrying out administrative responsibilities or apostolic work."<sup>439</sup>

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<sup>438</sup> *Salvifici Doloris*, Apostolic letter, John Paul II, 1984, 21.

<sup>439</sup> VC 70.

907. In addition to offering up their sufferings, elderly Legionaries can offer a great contribution to their younger brothers. An older priest, with many years of experience in priestly ministry, has the mission of warmly welcoming those just beginning their own missions. He builds them up by his fidelity to the Constitutions, shares with them his advice and apostolic experience, and encourages them by word and example to fully develop their personalities and qualities—according to the spirit of the Legion and the Movement—through the work entrusted to them.

“More than in any activity, the apostolate consists in the witness of one’s own complete dedication to the Lord’s saving will, a dedication nourished by the practice of prayer and of penance. The elderly are called in many ways to live out their vocation: by persevering prayer, by patient acceptance of their condition, and by their readiness to serve as spiritual directors, confessors or mentors in prayer.”<sup>440</sup>

908. The characteristic virtue of elderly priests should be generosity: giving themselves to others even though respect or fear of bothering sometimes keeps others from offering them their own help. Knowing how to humbly and simply share their wisdom with others can be a great help to elderly priests. Additionally, they should not isolate themselves, but cultivate an interest in the lives and stories of others.

909. “All religious should treat elderly Legionaries with great appreciation and gratitude” (CLC 117). The presence of elderly Legionaries in communities and houses of apostolate is a formative opportunity for everyone. Their extensive experience, wisdom acquired throughout a long and persevering religious life, and even their physical and mental weakness—realities touched by Divine Providence—should be embraced and valued by all.

910. Old age is often accompanied by longer periods of sickness. Visiting the sick is a corporal work of mercy and a great act of personal and community charity: “whatever you did for one of these

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<sup>440</sup> VC 43.

least brothers of mine, you did for me” (Matthew 25:40).

911. Communities and territories should keep the desires and needs of elderly Legionaries in mind when organizing retreats, spiritual exercises, courses, or other formative activities.

912. Special care should be given to protecting the moment of each Legionary’s personal “Easter,” the climax of his consecrated life, the consummation of his self-offering and his definitive abandonment into the arms of the Father. Legionaries do not shun death, as contemporary culture does. They embrace it as an experience that gives wisdom to the heart, an experience that shows the world what it means for a man who once gave his life to Christ and his Kingdom to enter into eternal life. 202

“When the moment finally comes for uniting oneself to the supreme hour of the Lord’s Passion, the consecrated person knows that the Father is now bringing to completion the mysterious process of formation which began many years before. Death will then be awaited and prepared for as the supreme act of love and self-offering.”<sup>441</sup>

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<sup>441</sup> VC 70.



# NORMS

## A. Norms for the Superiors and Formators

913. The general director: 416
- a. Oversees formation in the territories and makes sure that it is in accordance with this *Ratio* and the indications of the General Chapters.
  - b. Makes sure that the “Rules of Life” and formation programs of the houses of formation are in agreement with each other, so that there is a harmonious progression from stage to stage. 919-920
  - c. Promotes the development and implementation of the institutional plan for the formation of formators. 415
  - d. Ensures that programs for ongoing formation are carried out in the territories. 418
  - e. Offers spiritual renewal to priests, approves the Rule of Life, appoints directors, and makes sure they are trained. 892
914. The territorial director, in addition to what pertains to him in admissions as laid out in the Constitutions, attends to the following duties regarding the formation of Legionaries. He can delegate the ones that do not require the opinion or consent of his council. 417-419
- a. According to the Constitutions, he appoints, with the consent of his council, rectors of the houses of formation (See CLC 213 § 1) and directors of novices (See CLC 78 § 1), having obtained prior approval from the general director. He appoints superiors of the houses of apostolate (See CLC 214 § 1) and councils of both apostolate and formation houses (See CLC 218 § 1). 414

- b. According to the Complementary Norms, he appoints, with the consent of his council, vice rectors (having obtained prior approval from the general director), assistants, spiritual directors, prefects of studies, confessors, professors, secretaries, and administrators of the houses of formation (See NC 45).
- 415 c. He supervises, directs and attentively accompanies the superiors (See CLC 185, 1°), making sure that they avoid getting involved in responsibilities and activities that prevent them from fulfilling their duty (See CLC 216, 4°).
- 403,415 d. He encourages the formation of superiors and spiritual directors.
- 417 e. He stays close to the communities and their members in order to listen to them and encourage them, especially through canonical visitations (See CLC 185, 2°, and 186).
- 413 f. He promotes the implementation of this *Ratio* in the territory.
- 919-920 g. He approves, with the consent of his council, the Rule of Life and formation program of each community of initial formation, and makes sure that they are applied and promoted.
- 913b h. He oversees the implementation of a program of ongoing formation for his territory, with the help of his council and the territorial prefect of studies.
- 418,868 i. He meets with each priest for formation review at least once a year (See NC 27 § 3).
- 974 j. He looks after the younger priests attentively and assigns an apostolic mentor to those beginning their ministry in his territory.
- 565,735, 874 k. He cares for the formation of the brothers on internship and assigns them an apostolic mentor.

- l. He interviews novices and religious before admitting them to religious profession or renewal of vows, and before presenting to the general director those who request admission to perpetual profession or Holy Orders. 435,565, 959-962
- m. He appoints a candidacy director and one or more vocation directors in the territory to coordinate and push forward vocational promotion. 941
- n. He appoints a safe environment coordinator to help him manage the periodic training of all Legionaries in this field. 939
- o. He reports to the general director with the determined frequency on the initial and ongoing formation of the Legionaries in his territory in light of the territorial program. 419
915. The rector of a house of formation and the superior of a house of apostolate (in what concerns him), besides what is established in the Constitutions:
- a. Ensures the application of the approved Rule of Life for the community as an ordinary means of formation. 919
- b. Provides and applies, together with the formation team, the community formation program, and, when it seems best, proposes improvements and updates to the territorial director; the superior of the house of apostolate encourages the fulfillment, implementation and revision of the community program. 427,920
- c. Prepares the personal reports of the brothers punctually and presents them to the territorial director with his opinion on their suitability for admissions, when this is the case; when a member changes communities, he also writes a report to help to help the new superior continue his accompaniment. 428
- d. Devotes special attention to the formation team, with whom he must maintain constant communication and attain authentic communion. 421

- 916c,922 e. Has regular personal review with the members of his community to get to know them personally, and in this way be able to accompany them in their integral formation, to prepare their reports, to present them to the major superiors in the various admissions, and, when it is the case, to propose their mission assignments.
- 429 f. Makes sure that each brother in initial formation goes frequently to one of the designated spiritual directors, and gives his approval if someone proposes to have spiritual direction with another Legionary priest (See CLC 59, 2°).
- g. Establishes the community calendar, ensuring coordination with other communities in the same house, if there are any.
- 165 h. Designates a priest as prefect of the chapel to give the liturgy the attention and care that it deserves (See GL 24-26); when different communities live together in the same house, the superior does this in agreement with other rectors.
- i. In communities of initial formation, puts a priest in charge of apostolic formation, with the mission of maintaining communication with those responsible for the apostolates and seeking the accompaniment and evaluation of the religious.
- j. Prepares a regular report for the territorial director on the state of the community and the progress made in the formation objectives of the formation program or the community plan, involving his council in the preparation of the report.
916. Assistants:
- a. Are priests appointed by the territorial director, with the consent of his council, for a period of three years.
- 431 b. Have the mission of personally accompanying each religious in their care and guiding the group entrusted to them. They work in close communication and dependence with the

rector, whom they assist in preparing the reports of the members of their group; they have the habitual faculties that the Rule of Life of the community establishes.

c. Regularly have personal review with the religious in their group if this is established in the Rule of Life or the rector delegates this to them. 432,922

d. Foster family spirit within their group as well as integration with the rest of the community, and collaborate generously in the general needs of the house.

917. Spiritual directors in houses of formation:

a. Are Legionary priests appointed by the territorial director, with the consent of his council, for a period of three years.

b. Ordinarily form part of the formation team when they dedicate their time predominantly to this ministry. 454

c. Participate in some meetings for programming and evaluating the progress of the community. 432,454

918. It is the responsibility of the prefect of studies to organize the personal accompaniment of each religious in the dimension of intellectual formation and to carry out an annual evaluation of the objectives reached in this field. 443,630

## **B. General Norms for Initial Formation**

919. Each community of initial formation should be governed by its own Rule of Life approved by the territorial director with the consent of his council. The Rule of Life should contain the elements of discipline proper to the community, the regular schedules and some normative applications for fraternal life, the use of the media, poverty, dealings with families and other aspects, always remembering that it is not advisable to multiply norms without need (see CIC 587 § 3). 468

- 427,468 920. Each community of initial formation should also have a formation program or a formative itinerary.<sup>442</sup> This should be a plan—two, three or four-year, depending on the length of the stage<sup>443</sup>—that leads the formators and the community to concretely and creatively implement this *Ratio* while trying to deal with these objectives and themes in an organic, gradual and systematic way. The program is developed by the rector with the help of the formation team and his council, and is approved by the territorial director. It must include the frequency and the method of formative activities.
- 431 921. In order to foster personalized attention and fraternal life, communities of initial formation are organized in groups when their size allows for or requires them to be. The group, entrusted to the more direct and closer accompaniment of the assistant, is the constant and common point of reference for formation and fraternal life. A group, which can be divided into several teams, ordinarily should not contain more than thirty brothers.
- 555-561 922. Review with the formators takes on special importance during initial formation since religious need to receive suitable accompaniment.<sup>444</sup> Religious should ask for and have review with the following frequency:
- a. Every fifteen days during the first year of religious life.
  - b. At least once a month during the rest of the initial formation.
- 432 c. While they usually have review with their assistant, they should go to their rector at least every three months so that he

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<sup>442</sup> See GPV 10.

<sup>443</sup> Two years for novitiate and two years for humanities; three years for theology; and four years for a program that combines one year of humanities with three of philosophy.

<sup>444</sup> “In the process of formation, it is necessary that the seminarian should know himself and let himself be known, relating to the formators with sincerity and transparency. Personal accompaniment, which has *docibilitas* to the Holy Spirit as its goal, is an indispensable means of formation.” (GPV 45); “Conversations with formators should be regular and frequent.” (GPV 46).

can get to know them personally; during the stage of humanities, they should go at least every two months.

923. Besides what is established in the Constitutions concerning spiritual practices (CLC 53), the following is specified: 135

a. The Rule of Life of the community sets the ordinary times for morning offering, mental prayer, the Celebration of the Eucharist, midday prayers and midday hymn, and Night Prayers.

b. During novitiate and the stages of humanities and philosophy:

1. Conscience examen is held daily at midday and during Night Prayers;

2. There is daily spiritual reading or a spiritual talk for fifteen minutes;

3. The Stations of the Cross are prayed personally every Friday to accompany our Lord.

4. During a Eucharistic visit, the litanies or Invocations of the Lord Jesus are prayed in community. 487

c. Starting from apostolic internship, religious are to follow what is established in the Rule of Life for houses of apostolate for their spiritual practices, while continuing daily spiritual reading.

924. Devotional renewal of vows takes place on February 2 and September 15, or around these feast days. This is preceded by a full-day retreat, a triduum, or some other equivalent spiritual activity. 172

925. At the end of each academic year, religious evaluate themselves on their integral formation and discuss this with their formators. When there are admission processes, they replace this self-evaluation. 626-627

- 657,661 926. The superior should provide access to professional help in psychology to the religious who ask for it. The choice of these experts should be made carefully and prudently.<sup>445</sup>
- 656-657 927. When the superior proposes recourse to professional help in psychology, the one concerned must give his prior, explicit, informed and free consent. Only with his written consent can the information related to his psychological accompaniment be accessible to the formators and filed.
- 419 928. In order to pay due attention to the protection of minors and the creation of safe environment, religious must receive formation in this area. They should be familiar with and receive the *Code of Conduct* of their territory.
929. The superiors should ensure that the workload and organizational responsibilities involved in the maintenance, decorum and logistics of the house are not excessive and do not undermine the integral formation of the novices and religious.

### ***Norms for the processes of admission***

- 686 930. The duration of the periods of temporal vows is determined with the intention of harmonizing them with the stages of formation and the accompaniment of the formators, in order to foster integral formation and vocational discernment. Therefore, ordinarily:
- a. All novices make their religious profession for two years.
  - b. Those who do two years of humanities make their first renewal of vows for three years (which coincide with the duration of the stage of philosophy); those who do one year of humanities renew their vows for two years.

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<sup>445</sup> See GPV 192.

- c. Before leaving for apostolic internship, religious renew their vows for four years.

Extraordinarily, and at the judgment of their superiors, religious can renew their vows for a different duration of time, but in such a way that the total period of temporal vows does not exceed nine years.<sup>446</sup>

931. The process of admission to perpetual profession ordinarily takes place after religious have lived in a house of formation for at least a year after internship, and after having done their month-long spiritual exercises (See GCC 2014, 149). 689,844

932. The rector must let the community know the institutional calendar for admissions at the beginning of the course, indicating the dates when the corresponding requests must be handed in, and the dates for the celebrations of profession of vows, ministries and ordinations.

933. The request for admission is a signed, handwritten letter in which the person manifests that he is making a free and conscious request and indicates his motives for making it. The letter is delivered to the immediate superior who, after having listened to his council, delivers it to the major superior together with his report and opinion on the suitability of the candidate.

934. The report is the responsibility of the superior, who can be aided with information given by the assistant, the prefect of studies, or the religious himself. The report must have the handwritten signature of the superior and follow the prescribed form. The superior makes the content of the report a topic of dialogue with the religious. 623

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<sup>446</sup> See CIC 657 §2.

## C. Specific Norms for the Stages of Initial Formation

### *Norms for preparatory stages*

935. The territorial director, with the consent of his council, is responsible for approving the Rule of Life for the candidacy and for defining its ordinary duration, which should not be less than two months. He should also determine the method by which the students from apostolic schools, once they have finished their pre-university studies, do the candidacy.

<sup>650,656,</sup> 936. Before entering the novitiate, candidates are recommended  
<sup>657</sup> to do a psychological exam to help verify their suitability. With the written consent of the candidate (or of his parents if he is a minor), the results of the exam are sent to the territorial director, who is responsible for admitting the candidate to the novitiate. If he is admitted, a copy of the report is sent to the director of novices and put in the novice's formation file.

937. The requirements for admission to candidacy are:

- a. Recommendation by a Legionary of Christ;
- b. The reception of sufficient previous vocational accompaniment in the judgment of the candidacy director;
- c. Knowledge by some Legionary of the candidate's family and environment;
- d. The candidate's submission of a written request to show his desire to participate, as well as the submission of the required documents;
- e. The candidate's willingness to live the Rule of Life of the candidacy.

938. The vocational director presents a pastoral plan and a plan for vocational promotion to the territorial director, with the goal of achieving the objectives of the preparatory stages.

939. The candidacy director is appointed by the territorial director with the consent of his council. His tasks are:

- a. To admit young men to candidacy, draw up a program for this stage, direct its development, and give his judgement concerning each candidate's admission to the novitiate.
- b. To ensure the accompaniment of those who are not admitted to the novitiate but could be eligible with better preparation.

940. At the conclusion of the candidacy, both the candidacy director and novice director interview each candidate and present their opinions to the territorial director.

941. The territorial director, personally or through a delegate, interviews each candidate to get to know his personality better; to verify his maturity according to his age, his intention and his inclination to life in the Legion; and to ensure the absence of impediments (See CLC 67). Mindful of the requirements indicated in the Constitutions (See CLC 66), after listening to his council, he admits the candidates that he sees fit to the novitiate (See CLC 68).

### ***Norms for the novitiate***

942. The novitiate should be a formative community in which the novices do not live habitually in common with Legionaries of other stages, except for their formators. This does not exclude occasional intercommunity gatherings.

943. The director must count on at least one other Legionary's help in the formation work, for the roles of assistant and prefect of studies. In some cases, the director himself can assume the role of the prefect of studies.

944. The novices should have, besides spiritual direction with the director (See CLC 59, 1°), complementary guidance with the assistant every two or three weeks on topics of human and apostolic formation.

923 945. Besides the spiritual practices mentioned in the Constitutions and what is set in the general norms for initial formation, novices should have: daily evening prayer for half an hour in community; half an hour of adoration in front of the Blessed Sacrament solemnly exposed (if possible, in shifts throughout the day); a Eucharistic hour at midnight on the eve of the first Fridays of each month (prolonged throughout the night in shifts); and a full-day retreat every month.

734 946. Novices are recommended to have an experience of the “desert” in their use of internet and email, renouncing social networks with personal conviction and using the internet and email only when necessary and following their Rule of Life.

947. The following norms are specified with regard to dealings with families during the novitiate:

- a. Novices can receive a visit from their families after nine months of novitiate for three days.
- b. They can visit their families for three or four days in their second year. Novices from other geographical zones (See CN 23 §1), instead of having an ordinary visit, can receive a longer visit from their families.
- c. The family visit can be made, at the judgement of the director, for extraordinary events in the family.
- d. Given that the novitiate is a time of recollection and silence, novices call home once every two months.

746 948. Novices should receive a detailed explanation of the Legionary Constitutions, and an introduction to the *Regnum Christi* General Statutes and the ECYD Statutes.

738 949. Ordinarily, novices should have time every day for exercise or sports in community, and a hike every fifteen days as a means of

rest, fraternal life, physical exercise and cultivation of love for nature.

950. Every year, novices should dedicate a month to physical labor or service to those in need. 743

951. After arriving to the novitiate, each novice should review all of his belongings with a formator and hand in what is not strictly necessary during novitiate. If he leaves the novitiate later on, these will be returned to him. 735

952. Novices should change their cubicles or rooms various times throughout the year as a means of training themselves in detachment and availability.

953. The novitiate community must be made up of at least six novices in order for there to be an adequate formative dynamic. If a novitiate does not meet this number, the territorial director can propose to the general director to transfer the novices to another novitiate.

In this case, an extended candidacy program can be instituted that would allow for a deeper mutual understanding between the candidate and the Legion before the candidate enters the novitiate in another country. In this way, the candidacy can be a means of vocational promotion in the country where it takes place.

954. During this initial stage, seeking the condition most favorable for vocational discernment and the introduction to religious life must be a priority. Therefore:

- a. The novitiate is ordinarily done in the territory of origin.<sup>447</sup>
- b. When there is no novitiate in the territory of origin, the territorial director proposes to the general director which novitiate to assign the candidates to.

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<sup>447</sup> See PI 47.

c. The general director can assign a few novices from other territories to smaller novitiates, as long as they are willing to do so and it has been verified that they have the right profile: a good knowledge of the Legion before entering, adequate human maturity, solidity in their vocation and certain ease in adapting to another culture and learning the language. The family situations of these brothers should be taken into consideration, especially when dealing with families that cannot afford to visit the novitiate.

### ***Norms for the stage of humanities***

955. In order to ensure formative accompaniment, two possible models are set up for this stage: a two-year program in a house specifically dedicated to these studies, or a one-year program in which the brothers form part of a community of philosophy.

956. At the proposal of the territorial director, the general director can exempt a religious from studying humanities.

### ***Norms for the stage of philosophy***

957. The general prefect of studies should ensure that the necessary harmony and complementarity is achieved between the studies of humanities and of philosophy.

640 958. During the third year of philosophy, the religious, with the help of his formators, should make a personal evaluation of his apostolic formation and put together a plan for the formation of his abilities. In light of this, the rector, after consulting the religious about his inclinations and expectations before apostolic internship, proposes to the general director his mission assignment.

### ***Norms for apostolic internship***

959. Aided by the suggestion of the territorial director, the general director determines which communities and areas of apostolate

the religious can be assigned to for apostolic internship, considering the following criteria:

- a. The communities should be strong, with a superior capable of accompanying those he is forming in this stage; as far as possible, there should be three or more religious on internship together.
- b. They should be assigned to an apostolic work that involves direct contact with people; they should have real responsibility but appropriate to their age and experience—ordinarily not the ultimate responsibility over a work or section; they should be accompanied by a mentor and have an opportunity to work in a team with other Legionaries and members of other branches of the Movement; and their apostolic work should not require that they spend the majority of their time outside of the community.

960. The length of apostolic internship is two to three years. At the proposal of the territorial director, the general director approves the third year, considering what would be best for the religious' formation and his preparation for and admission to perpetual profession (See GCC 2014, 149).

961. The territorial director, having listened to the rector of philosophy, assigns the religious appointed to his territory to a community and entrusts them an apostolic work. He can change this assignment afterwards respecting the aforementioned criteria, and asking for the opinion of the rector of the previous stage.

962. The territorial director should assign a mentor to each brother on internship and ensure that the religious have an adequate introduction to apostolic internship. Furthermore, he should organize formative meetings for religious on apostolic internship (week-ends, get-togethers, retreats, conferences, etc.).

- 435 963. The superior of the community of the religious on internship, in order to accompany him well, should get to know his expectations, help him set his integral formation objectives, have personal dialogue with him every month, keep in touch with the religious' director of apostolate and mentor and offer him his observations in the annual evaluation.

### ***Norms for the stage of theology***

- 829 964. Toward the end of apostolic internship, the religious proposes to his superiors whether to start theology or to study a licentiate in philosophy, giving the reasons for his choice. The general director is responsible of approving this proposal.

965. The religious who study a licentiate in philosophy are part of the theology community.

- 837 966. Ordinarily, the ministry of lector is conferred towards the end of the first year of theology and the ministry of acolyte during the second year of theology, according to the date set in the community calendar.

In addition to the six-month gap prescribed by the Universal law between the acolyte and the diaconate (See CIC 1035 §2), ordinarily there should be a gap of at least six months between the ministries of lector and acolyte.

- 643 967. During the third year of theology, the rector should consult the religious on his inclinations and expectations regarding the first apostolic assignment as a priest. He should then give his opinion to the general director in preparation for the assignment to a territory.

The territorial director is responsible for the assignment to a community and apostolic work, for which he will take into account the opinion of the rector of theology.

968. “Nonetheless, at least the times canonically established between reception of the diaconate and of the presbyterate must be respected,”<sup>448</sup> that is, at least six months. 838

## **D. Norms for Ongoing Formation**

### *Norms for the first years of priesthood*

969. The newly ordained priest should be assigned a ministry and a community that will give him a positive ministerial experience.

970. The territorial director assigns the priest, upon reaching his first destination, to a mentor. This mentor will introduce him to and accompany him on his new mission, helping him in his transition to the ministerial life. 656,874

971. During the first three years after their diaconate ordination, Legionaries must do a written self-evaluation at the end of each year and go over it in dialogue with his superior. 632

972. Ordinarily, every Legionary should get a license degree in a sacred science. Whoever has not done it before ordination will have the opportunity to study it after three, six or at most nine years of ministry. These studies must be approved by the general director. 645

973. These studies are normally done in a community of other priests who are studying so that this period can also be an time for spiritual renewal. 893

### *General norms for priests*

974. The priests should have a personal review with their superior a few times a year and with the territorial director at least once a year.

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<sup>448</sup> GPV 76; See CIC 1031 §1 and 1032 §2.

- 631 975. It is recommended that the priests to do an annual self-evaluation and make it a topic of dialogue with their superiors.
- 633 976. At the end of the period assigned to a Legionary for his work, the superior, after speaking with him and considering his opinion, tells the territorial director any reasons in favor or against him being renewed.
- 634 977. When a priest moves to a different community, the superior must prepare a report to give continuity to the accompaniment by the new superior.
- 892 978. In preparation for his spiritual renewal, the Legion proposes a period dedicated exclusively to this purpose in a community dedicated to it, under the guidance of a director. He has the option of a shorter time, around two months, or of a more prolonged one of about one semester.

Through the Kingdom of Christ to the Glory of God

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- *Constitutions of the Congregation of the Legionaries of Christ, 1994.*
- *Complementary Norms of the Constitutions of the Congregation of the Legionaries of Christ, 2014.*
- *ECYD Statutes, 2016.*
- *General Chapter Communiqué of the Congregation of the Legionaries of Christ, 2014.*
- *Guía de Liturgia y Oración Común, Congregación de los Legionarios de Cristo, 2017.*
- *Regnum Christi Statutes, 1988.*



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*Unless specified with a Translator's Note, the New American Bible, Revised Edition, (NABRE), approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has been used*

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*Dependence on the superiors*: 186, **197**, 437, 740, 809

**Ongoing Formation** (*v. Priestly renewal, Holiness: of the priests*): 4, **371-374**, 404, 435, 530, 560, 561, 631, **864-871**, 884, 905 (N: 913d, 914h, 974-978)

*In the intellectual formation*: 256, 578, **867d**, **869**, 881, 885

**Patrons and Protectors:** 36, 109, 225, 399, 436, 474, 728c

*Saint Paul*: 88, 108, 117, 161, 188, 201, 216, 229, 240, 243, 309, 371, 396, 479, 545e, 882

**Perpetual Profession** (*v. Evangelical Counsels*): **170**, 624, 625, **676**, **689-691**, 836, **844-848**, **850**, 862 (N: 914l, 931, 960)

*Devotional renewal of vows*: **172** (N: 924)

**Pope:** **49**, 73, 76, **79**, 303, **392**, **395**, 532

**Poverty** (*v. Austerity, Detachment, Time*): **183-192**, 296a, 477, 586, 705, 762

*And fraternal life*: **186**, 460, 607

*Service to the needy*: 88, 95, **96**, 186, 743, 795 (N: 950)

**Prayer** (*v. Sacred Scripture*): **134-139**, **514-528**, **729-731**, 759, 760, 784, **802**, 803, 831-833, 867a

**Preaching** (*v. Communicating the messages of Christ, Sacred Scripture: and Preaching*): 120, **265**, 323, **360**, 537, 542, **569b**, 582, **667**, **804**, 838, 856, **869**

**Priesthood** (*v. Holiness: of the priests, Ongoing formation*): **102-105**, **127**, 232, **240**, **255**, 617, 631, 676, **689**, 703, 747, 862, 864, 883 (N: 974-978)

*First years of priesthood*: 632, **872-881** (N: 969-973)

**Priestly Renewal**: **891-894** (N: 913e, 973, 978)

**Proper Vow**: 114

**Purification** (*v. Cross, Detachment*): 28, **136**, 204, **230**, 312, **347**, 491, 539, **674**, **688**, 734, 738, **742**, **890**

**Reason** (*v. Faith: and reason, Intellectual formation*): 255, **259-261**, 271, 738, **788**, **790**

**Regnum Christi** (*v. Forming apostles*): **56b**, 81, **87-97**, 287, **292**, **324**

*A Legionary in Regnum Christi*: **55**, **56**, 78, **80**, 88, **98**, 101, 242, **249**, **298**, **300**, 636, 725

*Communion in Regnum Christi*: **55**, **56**, **80**, 89, **249**, 276, 292, **297-301**, **324**, 362, **366**, 825

**Religious Profession** (*v. Evangelical counsels*) **170**, 182, 624, **684-686**, **690**, **736**, 741 (N: 914l, 930)

**Responsibility** (*v. Freedom: and responsibility*): 10, 40, **244-249**, **369**, 586, 652c, 670, 689, **690**, 714, **740**, **800**, 814, **824**

*Co-responsibility*: 89, **249**, **278**, **284**, 291, **324**, **325**

*In one's formation*: **386-391**, **548**, 578, **620**, **864**, 869, **894**

**Rule of Life** (*v. Discipline*): 3, 369, 381, **468**, 470, 471, 569, 606, 754 (N: 913b, 914g, 915, 916, **919**, 923, 935, 946)

**Sacraments** (in general): 24, 49, 73, **131a**, 204, **241**, 362a, 382, 405, 655

*At the service of the faithful:* 300, **312**, 668c, 856, 873

**Sacred Scripture:** **131c**, 388a, 473, 569a, 724, 728, 745, 782, **784**

*And preaching:* 265, **804**, **869**

*In prayer life:* 134, **521**, **532**, 539, 833, 836

*In theology studies and priesthood:* 835, **837**, 851, **855**, **884**

**Sacrifice** (*v. Cross*): **105**, **113**, 174, 189, 425, 461, **479**, 608, 809, **887**

*Asceticism:* **24**, **215**, **345**, **346**, **357**, 612, **731**, 738

*Penance:* 176, 457, 488, **508**, 614

**Safe Environment** (preventing abuses): 419, 914n, 928

**Self-Knowledge:** **207-213**, 325, 426, 564, 567, 591, **620**, **624**, 650, 652e, 659, 714, 725, 763, 786, **825**, 827

*Integrating one's own history:* **30**, 36, 57, 113, **207**, **210**, **211**, **333**, 339, **385**, 683, 708, **727**, **756**, 766, 831, 888, **906**

**Sexuality** (*v. Affectivity, Chastity*): **37**, **38**, 175, **179**, **231-233**, 654, **707-710**, **734**

**Silence:** **131 b**, **132**, **464**, **469-472**, 488, 537, **665**, 668 d, **670 f**, 701, **727**, **802**, 826 c

*Recollection:* 176, **520**, **724**, **734**, 811

**Sin:** **19-22**, **26**, **69**, 131d, **146**, 148, **221-223**, 490-493, 509, **545d**, 722, 731, 806

**Spiritual Direction:** 208, 223, 429, **446-455**, **548-554**, 723, 806, 824, 844, 878, 900 (N: 915f)

*Ministry:* 322, 323, 534, 668c, 856, 873, 907

**Spiritual Practices:** 135, 729, 890 (N: 923)*Eucharistic hour:* **489***In the novitiate:* (N: 945)*Invocations or litanies to Jesus Christ:* **609***Morning offering and Night Prayers:* **282***Retreats:* **539-542**, 547, 668d, 760, 868*Rosary:* 496-499*Spiritual exercises:* **535-538**, 547, 668d, 760, **836**, 868*Spiritual reading:* 451, **529-534**, 807*Spiritual talk and practical examen:* **547, 569b***Way of the Cross:* **508****Superiors** (*v. Formators, Dialogue*): 39, 186, **196**, 197, 199, **401**, 452, 549, 553, **573a**, 591, 614, 842, **879**, 880, 890, 894, 900*General director:* **416**, 640, 643, 645, 646 (N: 913, 914, 953, 954, 956, 958, 959, 960, 964, 967, 972)*In the use of psychology:* **655-657, 660***In apostolic development,* **637-646, 863***Major superiors:* **413-419**, 433, **638**, 661, **690***Superiors of the house of apostolate:* **433-437, 799-801**, 807, 809, **814***Territorial director:* **417-419**, 426, **565**, 632, 633, 646, 661, **684** (N: 914-917, 919, 920, 935, 936, 938-941, 953, 954, 956, 959-962, 967, 970, 974, 976)**Theological Virtues** (*v. Faith, Hope, Charity*): **133**, 139, **140-145**, 388a, 487, **523**, 674, 798, 832, 903**Time:** 4c, 6, **112, 190, 248**, 256, 265, 288, **504**, 513, 591, 670 a, **764, 877, 879**

**Vocational Discernment:** 123, 467, 624, 647, 661, 662, **678-692**, 720, 930

*In the novitiate:* **683-685**, 722-724, 737, 739, 954

*Psychological help:* **647**, 657, 661, 662

*Role of the formators:* **553**, 657, 662



