

**Legion of Mary
at
St Mary Help of Christians Catholic Church Parish**

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What is the Legion of Mary

Founded in Dublin, Ireland in 1921, the Legion of Mary is now a world wide organization of Catholic men and women who place themselves under the banner of Mary, Queen of the Legion. The object of the Legion of Mary is the glory of GOD through the holiness of its members developed by prayer and active co-operation, under ecclesiastical guidance, in Mary's and the Churches work of crushing the head of the serpent and advancing the reign of Christ.

Subject to the approval of the international Concilium, and to the restrictions specified in the official handbook of the Legion, the Legion of Mary is at the disposal of the bishop of the diocese and the parish priest for any and every form of social service and Catholic action which these authorities may deem suitable to the legionaries and useful for the welfare of the Church. Legionaries will never engage in any of these services whatsoever in a parish without the sanction of the parish priest or the Ordinary.

The Legion setting follows the Roman Army whose members were called Legionaries. The local/parish unit of the Legion is the Praesidium. A set or more of Praesidium form the Curia and so on. The international headquarters, Concilium, governs the worldwide organization from Dublin, Ireland. The Commander of this Army is Mother Mary herself who wishes to see all her children closer to her Son. Her Legionaries bring the Good News to all they meet.

We are fortunate here at St. Mary's, because of our size and diversity to have three separate Praesidiums:

- Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception
President: John Merrick 803-649-0306

- Mary Mother of the Eucharist
President: Ivy Monahon 803-649-4157

- Madre Amorosa
President: Lupe Cortes 803-295-6348

The Works of the Legion

The Legion sees as its priority the spiritual and social welfare of each individual. Our members participate in the life of the Parish through collaboration in various apostolic and missionary undertakings sponsored by the parish and assigned to us by our Pastor. The specific works assigned to our three Praesidia are:

Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception Praesidium

Hospital visits to sick Catholic patients. We pray with them, provide religious material and those separately deputized as Extra-Ordinary Eucharistic Ministers can provide Communion. We also assist another ministry, when requested at nursing home masses.

(Being an Extra-Ordinary Eucharistic Minister is not a prerequisite to joining the Legion)

Mary Mother of the Eucharist Praesidium

Visit newcomers to the parish. Promote prayer and the rosary through Pilgrim Virgin visits. Coordination of Perpetual Adoration and home visits.

Madre Amorosa Praesidium

Home visits, promote prayer and rosary through Pilgrim Virgin visits, visit the sick, prepare people for the Sacraments, help Priest organize special devotions, feasts and retreats for the Spanish community.

Every legionary is required to carry out a weekly apostolic work in the spirit of faith and in union with Mary, and in the daily recitation of the Catena (the Magnificat, prayers of the Legion).

Membership Categories

Membership in the Legion is open to all Catholic men and women who lead edifying lives and are animated by the Legion spirit or at least desire to foster that spirit in themselves and are willing to fulfill the required duties. Active members must be at least eighteen years old. A junior praesidium, however, can be organized under a senior Legionary for those between ten and eighteen with duties befitting their abilities.

Auxiliary membership in the Legion of Mary is open to priests, religious and laity who are unable to assume the duties of active membership. Auxiliary members do not undertake the active apostolate of weekly meetings and weekly assignments. As the praying wing of the Legion, Auxiliaries recite daily specific Legion prayers including the Rosary.

Membership in the Legion of Mary also offers opportunities for those seeking to advance their spiritual interior life. The spiritual formation of legionaries at the praesidium level greatly helps in the development of their holiness.

Weekly Meetings

Active members are required to meet weekly to pray, to report on, and receive our weekly work assignments. Our meetings last for no more than 1-1/2 hours. All matters discussed at our meetings or in connection with the work that is of a confidential nature must be maintained confidential and may not be divulged outside the Legion.

The meeting of our three Praesidia are as follows:

- Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception Praesidium meets at St. Mary School Library each Wednesday starting at 6:15 PM.
- Mary Mother of the Eucharist Praesidium meets at Smith Hall each Tuesday starting at 3:45 PM
- Madre Amorosa Praesidium meets at Smith Hall each Monday starting at 6:00 PM. This meeting is in Spanish.

Please contact any of the three Presidents for any additional information and please feel free to join us at any of our Praesidium meetings to learn more about the Legion of Mary. We welcome you to join us.

Annually and as close as possible to March 25, the feast of the Annunciation, active and auxiliary Legionaires assemble in a sacred and solemn religious ceremony called the Acies to renew individually and collectively their consecration to the Blessed Virgin. This assembly recalls Mary's complete dedication to the Holy Spirit during that momentous visit of the Archangel Gabriel when the fate of mankind hung in the balance and awaited Mary's free acceptance. This impressive rite reminds every Legionary of his or her duty of surrendering to continue her mission of crushing the serpent's head. Our event is usually held in Columbia, SC.

Pope John Paul II Address to Italian Legionaires
October 30, 1982

“Yours is an eminently Marian spirituality, not only because the Legion glories in carrying Mary’s name as its unfurled banner, but above all because it bases its methods of spirituality and apostolate on the dynamic principle of union with Mary on the truth of the intimate participation of the Virgin Mary in the plan of salvation. In other words, you intend to render your service to every person who is the image of Christ, with the spirit and the solicitude of Mary.”

The material presented here is the responsibility of Mike DiSilvestro. Any errors and/or suggested additions or deletions should be directed to Mike at (803) 648-3844 or by E-mail at disilves@bellsouth.net