



THE LEGION OF MARY

The Legion of Mary (Latin: Legio Mariae) is an International Association of practicing members of the Catholic Church, who serve the church on a voluntary basis. It was founded in Dublin, Ireland on 7th September 1921 at Myra House, Ireland as a Roman Catholic Marian Movement by a layman – Brother Frank Duff, who was born in Dublin, Ireland on 7th June 1889. At the age of 24 he joined the Society of St Vincent de Paul and had a great sensitivity for the poor and underprivileged of the society. Brother Frank Duff along with a group of catholic women and Rev Fr Micheal Toher, Dublin Archdiocese formed the first Praesidium of the Legion of Mary on 7th September 1921, and until his death in November 7th 1980. He guided the Legion of Mary worldwide and gave us a Handbook for the Church to reflect on which is almost entirely his composition.

Today, between the active and auxiliary (Praying) members, there are 10 million members worldwide, making it the largest apostolic organisation of lay people in the Catholic Church. The essential aim is the sanctification of its members through prayer, the Sacraments and devotion to Mary.

The object of the Legion of Mary is the glory of God through the holiness of its members by prayer and active co-operation in Mary's and the church work, the salvation of souls as its final end and purpose, seeing and serving Christ in the sick, dying, destitute, homeless, less fortunate, prisoners etc. are vital parts of the legionary, who seek opportunities to do service for the needy.

Chennai / Madras: The Legion of Mary was founded in Madras / Chennai by Mrs McKenzie Smith, whose husband was a COE (Church of England - non Catholic) and later on embraced the catholic faith. Sr. Smith along with some devote men and women started the first Praesidium in the year 1931 on the 25th of March at the School for The Deaf and Dumb, Little Flower Convent, under the title of Mary Immaculate Conception Praesidium.

The Legion of Mary in St Sebastian Church, Madhavaram was inaugurated on the 22nd of February 1994. It was a day to celebrate as it happened to be the birthday of Rev Fr Valarin OFM, the Parish Priest and Spiritual Director. The Praesidium was named as "Queen Of Peace". The weekly meetings were held on Sunday morning after the English Mass at 8 AM, The Spiritual Director, Rev Fr. Valarin OFM; President Brother Raphael, Vice President, Sr G Meko, Secretary Bro James Chandy and Treasurer, Bro Hankins (Tony) along with 12 members. From then on the Legion of Mary was serving our Parish.

Handbook: In the handbook, which is the composition to help the Legionaries to understand the Legion System better, The duties of the Officer Bearers and the way the meeting should be conducted. There are some rules that should be followed ex. Standing Instructions (which should be read on the 1st Saturdays of every month) and four functions – The Acies; The Annual General Reunion, An Outdoor Function and The Praesidium Function. The setting of The Legion Alter, The Vexillum Legionis. The Tessera - a leaflet, containing the Prayers of the Legion and bearing a reproduction of the Legion Picture, which is issued to every member, active and auxiliary. The Catena is the Song of Mary and has to be recited daily. The concluding prayer is a reflection, we understand each line as to why we are called to be a legionary.

We are 18 members i.e. active & auxiliary and our Spiritual Director, Rev Fr. Chinnappa Reddy. Office Bearers, President – Sr. Geraldine Fernandez; Vice President – Sr. Rosalind Kumar; Secretary – Sr. Alma Eustace and Treasurer – Sr. Susan Patterson. Our weekly meetings are on Saturdays at 4PM, where prayer is intermingled with reports and discussion. We participate in the spiritual and social welfare through the visitation of families, the sick both in their homes and in hospitals and through collaboration in every apostolic and missionary undertaking sponsored by our Parish. We teach catechism, also prepare children for their First Holy Communion, and help in collecting The Mass offerings for the feast and other occasions. We also take part in the Crowning of Our Blessed Mother and celebrating the feast of The Holy Rosary. Apart from these activities we visit the homes and recite The Rosary, the Consecration & Enthronement of The Sacred Heart in the homes. For the past one year we have started the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary on the First Saturdays of every month at 1030am, we recite the Canticle of Mary, Praise & Worship, Surrender, Intercessory Prayers and Adoration.

On the 22nd of February 2019 we celebrated the Silver Jubilee (1994 – 2019) of The Queen of Peace Praesidium of The Legion of Mary, St Sebastian Church, Madhavaram under the guidance, support and encouragement of our Parish Priest Rev Fr Simon A, our then Spiritual Director Rev Fr Shalim, all the other Priests, and all those who were the instrument of the Legion of Mary.

We continue to pray and thank our Blessed Lord and His Mother Mary, to keep us safe and give us good health for many more years so that we can serve beneath the standard of Mary for the poor and less fortunate of our society.

Thank You,

Yours in our Lady's Service:
Sr. Geraldine Fernandez
President