

Suggestions for a successful Legion of Mary “One Day Congress”

What it Isn't

The **One Day Congress** is not a **Convention** in the American sense of the word. It is not intended to show off the Legion's great number as at Acies. A hotel or other elaborate facility is not a requisite. A school or Church with a cafeteria / lunch room or a large hall for discussions is sufficient. *Please read the Handbook section on the **Congress** in Chapter 30.*

It is not a **Conference** which is a two or three day affair held by the highest Council in an area to highlight an anniversary or the establishment of a Senatus, etc.

It is not a **Seminar** or **Workshop** where members are divided up into small groups for discussion. **At a Congress**, the full body of members should be together for the whole day, especially in the discussion sessions. *Please read the Handbook section on **Patricians** (Chapter 38), especially the paragraphs entitled “**Some Patrician Principles**”. The running of a One Day Congress is based on these principles.*

It is not a **panel** or a **question and answer period** or a **lecture** by experts. The speakers should not be singled out or chosen because it is presumed they have “all the answers.” Ordinary local Legionaries should be asked to give the short opening talks at each session. This is a good opportunity to train members and since these talks are only intended to initiate discussion, the talks should be no more than ten minutes in length. A closing address should be scheduled, however, to be given by a visiting Legionary, a Spiritual Director, or one of the Council officers, etc. Local Spiritual Directors or the Bishop may also be scheduled to speak at the Church service or during the luncheon.

It is not a **Forum** for the speakers of other movements or organizations.

It is not a **discussion of problems** – themes should be positive, idealistic, and spiritual.

What it is

The **One Day Legion Congress** is a day long **discussion** of the **Legion System, Devotions, Works, Principles, and Ideals**. The Congress is divided into three or four sessions with an overall theme and sub-topics which should be definite, related and structured so that discussion and ideas build throughout the day.

Do's and Don'ts

1. If possible, arrange the seating around a small table with the Chairperson, speaker, Spiritual Director and the Legion altar. Don't arrange the seating audience style.

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2. Don't put the speaker table on a stage or elevation. The idea is informal discussion from the body, not from the Chairperson, Spiritual Director, or the speaker.
3. Do train the members to speak out loudly from the body. Don't use a microphone unless necessary.
4. Do ask each person to stand, including the Chairperson, when a contribution is being made. Don't let the members sit when making comments. Applause should be given after each comment or otherwise eliminated altogether, except for times when it comes naturally.
5. Don't let the discussion get off track or let certain members monopolize the discussion time. Do ask for all those who have not yet participated to make a comment.
6. Don't spend a lot of money. Keep the affair as simple and inexpensive as possible, so that every Legionary, regardless of means, can participate fully. Have the luncheon catered so that no Legionaries miss the Congress sessions administering the meal.
7. Do provide a program – a simple folded card, printed on both sides, is adequate. Don't print an elaborate program.
8. Don't offer donations to the Council officers who give a talk nor other Legionaries who participate. A visiting Legionary notable is a different matter and your Spiritual Director can advise you on this. On the other hand, Legionaries who come from another Council and are asked to give a major address should be exempted from the registration and luncheon fees.
9. Do invite “visitors from other areas” as the Handbook says. Don't keep your One Day Congress a secret – invite all the Councils in the area, in adequate time, even if it appears they may not attend.
10. If Legionaries travel from a distance, consider having a special evening the night before the Congress.
11. Do submit your plans and a sample program for your One Day Congress to the next higher Council well in advance. It is the duty of the higher Council to ensure the correct following of the Legion system in your area and the higher Council officers sincerely want to respond to your questions, doubts and suggestions regarding the One Day Congress and will help in any way possible to make your Congress a success.

Like any other official Legion event, the Congress is a tremendous source of spirit, grace and enlightenment, providing it is run according to the Legion system. This communication, plus the two sections of the Handbook referenced above, can help to make your One Day Congress the success it is meant to be!