



## How the Legion of Mary Has Impacted Me

While being a member of the Legion of Mary is primarily a ministerial apostolate, focused on helping others, membership also brings with it untold graces and benefits to its members.

When I was first approached about joining the Legion of Mary, I was anxious and hesitant to say the least. I had a strong desire in my heart to be a soldier of our Lady but because of injuries, I struggle with emotional distress. I was diagnosed with complex Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Dissociative Identity Disorder. Because of this, I have had difficulty reconciling my faith with my psychological sufferings. It often didn't make sense to me that I suffered from flashbacks and intense emotional dysregulation while my faith encouraged me to be strong and loving as Jesus was. Forming close relationships has always been a struggle because I am terrified of intimacy and closeness. I was confirmed in 2016 and in 2019, I spent two years at a Catholic religious community. Here, I developed a firm formation and love for my faith. Still, I struggled greatly with anxiety and emotional distress. While I was practicing my faith strongly, I was having difficulty in loving others with the caritas and agape love that Gospel asks. Last year, I finally took the leap and offered my service to our Lady as a member of the Legion of Mary at St. Clement parish. In October of last year, I took my promises.

Being a member of the Legion of Mary has strengthened dramatically my profound love for Mary and the Saints. I learned to love Mary when I spent these two years at the Catholic religious community. Here, I learned of God's and His mother's profound love for me through the fraternity within the community and the chaste bonds, which it fostered. For me, God's love had to be reinforced by human love for me to really comprehend it. While I



was here, I was constantly praying novenas and the rosary daily. I worked, prayed and recreated with other brothers and sisters and religious and had the opportunity to become formed in love.

When I left this community, I experienced a bit of a miracle. Almost all of the physical and behavioral symptoms of my trauma had been healed. The flashbacks ceased. The intense emotions calmed. And slowly, I was learning to accept love and to offer love to others. But, the anxiety persisted. Part of my disability is that I experience severe tremors because my nervous system is hurt. This is a disorder known as clonus. While this symptom was calmed after leaving, it returned a while after.

By joining the Legion of Mary, I have been benefited in many ways. In addition to striving to provide loving charity and care for others in ministry, being a member has helped me to get the focus off of myself and onto other people. It has helped me to make friends and get out of my comfort zone, to branch out and speak to my brothers and sisters in the church. It has helped me to learn to love myself, others and my Catholic faith. It has helped me, even if I am having a particularly difficult day, to break out of my comfort and commit to an act of loving discipline. Paramount to all of these reasons, I have had the unique privilege of getting to know and spend time with some really remarkable people. And in so doing, training me to be a saint myself through learning to love and through penance.

Over time, week by week, I am learning to love, slowly and surely. I am learning to become a saint. Even my tremoring has become increasingly bearable and lessened as I continue to commit to our Lady.

So, we would like to invite you all, who are reading this, to St. Clement for Mass. And we would like to invite you to consider joining the Legion of Mary!



The Legion of Mary has two arms. First of all, there is the active membership where we are able to perform these acts. There is also the auxiliary arm. The auxiliary arm is given the great responsibility of praying for the active members.

Even if you not able to commit to the active work as a member in the field, auxiliary members are truly the backbone of the Legion of Mary.

May God and His Mother bless all of you!

Jonathan Wamback