

Closing speech of the AMI President, General Miguel Alonso Baquer

The end of the AMI General Assembly and Conference 2005 finds our organization with important personal changes in all the 3 directive bodies:

At the end of last year, there has been the change-over from the former Ecclesiastical Assistant Mons. Dr. Luis Martínez Fernández to Mons. Werner Freistetter.

With today's elections, in due course there will be in office a new Presidency and a new General Secretariat.

As President who will soon leave I feel very deeply obliged to express in public to whom I owe the most effective support and service during my presidency

- In the first place I mention Colonel Jürgen Bringmann, the Secretary General of my presidential period, who, furthermore, has been for some 18 years in responsible functions, for instance as president and Secretary general, in AMI directing bodies, nearly as long as Dr. Luis Martínez.
- In the second place I will mention 2 persons in the Executive Committee (EC), Colonel Franz Thiele (15 years in the EC) and Lieutenant Colonel Ralf Wittkamp (9 years in the EC), whose engagement and dedication have always been excellent.
- Finally I would like to thank the Spanish Vice-president Rafael Bittini, who knew to combine that position with the one of a leader of the Spanish delegation.
- I will not fail to congratulate the new leading persons of the AMI for the responsibility they are taking over.

The themes of the 3 General Assemblies and Conferences which preceded the one of Vilnius (2002: El Escorial/Spain; 2003: Celje (Slovenia); 2004: Bratislava (Slovakia), are very significant: "Terrorism", "Construction of Peace", "The Christian family", all 3 themes related to the military sphere.

Our analysis showed that there is a relationship between anti-occidental terrorism and proper occidental nihilism. Terrorism is active, nihilism is mostly passive. Both phenomena appear at the same time, because they have the same roots: Lack of faith, despair and enmity.

Regarding the construction of Peace, we referred principally to the 38 papal letters written by the popes Paul VI and John Paul II on occasion of the celebration of the annual "World Peace Days". Peace is a problem of man's mind, heart and spirit. It can be easily solved if one's mind is clear, if one's heart is tolerant and if the spirit is ready for forgiveness.

Regarding the soldier's family issue, we saw that the Christian family can survive when taking into account two ideas: Family is a "House-church" when cultivating the transmission of faith, hope and charity. A family is a living body as long as it considers its fundament being the grace of a sacrament.

Now we will have to face new situations: Firstly, the steadily increasing new missions for the Armed Forces, and secondly the ecumenical movement among the Catholics which is gaining today new momentum after the initial starting process of the Council.

The recently started pontifical era of Pope Benedict XVI makes me think that there will be reconsidered formulas for the theological contents of the lay apostolate. All Catholics will be called up to take a clear stand in public life – confident in God.

That is my wish at the end of a presidency which has been gently conveyed on me 3 years ago. Personally I will stick further on to that agenda.

Future is in the hand of divine providence, but it depends also from our acceptance of God's will. It is just that what we experienced here with lay people and clerics who received us with our Conference so that were able to celebrate here in Vilnius our 40th anniversary General Assembly.

Thank you very much!