

Excellencies, Generals, Ladies and Gentlemen, dear friends

First off all, good morning. I hope you slept well after this very interesting day in Amsterdam. We started our conference already on saturday with the reports of various delegations and continued with a first cultural part on sunday in Amsterdam. Today you will get all the reports and also a first lecture of one of our experts. So it might become a hard day.

Let me once again thank our host on behalf of all the members of AMI for inviting us and for preparing this conference in such an outstanding manner. Thank you very much again.

I'm delighted that we have been successful in the attempt to increase the number of delegations. So for the first time in an AMI-conference I would like to welcome a delegate from Malawi, LtCol Father Machumbua.

And I'm pleased that Spain is back again within the AMI-Family with such a big delegation.

Having welcomed our new delegation, it is also a great pleasure to welcome new delegates. You all might be aware that two well known delegates retired or ended their engagement. One of these is Mr Fillingham from the AMCF, most of you know him very well.

And I'm very pleased that I'm able to introduce to you his successor.

For the AMCF, I'm welcome Cdr Brian Parker and his wife Jean.

From Nigeria I intended to welcome BG Aina the new Nigerian Chief Chaplain and his delegation but as last year they were too late with their visas.

Beside the already mentioned delegations, it is with great pleasure that I am able to welcome delegations from:

Austria, Belgium, Germany, Great Britain, Kenya (they will arrive on thuesday), The Netherlands, Malawi, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Switzerland.

Lithuania has asked me to greet all delegations as unfortunately they had to postpone their big pilgrimage, so they are not able to take part in our conference and join us here in The Netherlands.

Last but not least I would like to inform you that we are still making every attempt to get Portugal, France, Columbia and Poland to rejoin the family.

Ladies and Gentlemen with this conference the election period of this AMI presidency comes to an end. Three years are over and I think this is reason enough to look back to our goals from the beginning, to measure the goelas

against the things we achieved and also to look forward, so we can decide how we have to deal with the future challenges and who should deal with them.

In preparing my report I read once again through the papers of our conference in Nairobi. There I defined our goals for the next three years, which means until today. Let me please remind you these.

- Fidelity to the concilian idea of a soldier as a servant of security and freedom of the nations for the strengthening of peace.
- We wanted to strengthen our knowledge about Christian basics.
- And we wanted to get in close contact with the Holy See and other International Christian organisations.

So I have to ask myself, looking back, what happened all together and did we reach our goals?

Looking around I see a new generation of delegates. A lot of our founders and old members, like Cyril left us, others are still helping us from the background. But I think the change of generation has been successful.

We made a big step to Africa – once more thanks a lot to Kenya – and this experience we made will influence for sure our future work. It's necessary to see the difference in culture with your own eyes. And we all, at last all the delegates who were able to take part, remember the special African spirit we can't feel in Europe.

We consolidated our financial situation and I'm pleased to be able to inform you that we are writing black numbers. We tried to get more delegations to the conference but to be frank that's very difficult and therefore I think it's a small success that for example Spain is back again and that new countries like Malawi take part for the first time and that we are in close contact with Italy, France and Portugal the Philippines.

- we tried to install working groups which had to act between the conferences but with regard to this point I have to mention we weren't very successful.
- meanwhile we have close contacts to the state secretariat and to *Justitia et Pax* of the Holy See and we were acknowledged as experts by the Holy See and therefore invited as a member of the newly established FORUM. But more about this in the report of our Secretary General. Let me just mention that the well known CICO, which AMI was a full member of for a lot of years, was dissolved.
- We established a website but are still in the beginning and we depend on your cooperation to make it real a success (more about this later).
- We decided and afterwards tried to get the status of a NGO; however this efforts we have not been successful yet. It wasn't possible to get this

status in Austria so we have to start again an attempt in Germany or maybe in the Netherlands.

- We discussed during each conference issues like:
 - * shall we reduce the length of the conference
 - * shall we invite more experts
 - * shall we enlarge the time dedicated to discussion and how can we optimise the output of our conferences.
- A never ending story. In this connection we received the letter from the Military bishop from Great Britain, his Excellency bishop Burns, we spoke about on Saturday. He made a lot of valuable suggestions how to continue and what we should change to improve our output. My hope is that the working group installed will produce the results we asked for.
- Additionally I think that our decision to work no longer with interpreters and to conduct the conference in English was the right one. We saved a lot of money and more importantly a lot of time even if it is sometimes a little bit difficult to find the right words.

To sum up and to compare the results with the goals we had in the beginning of the election period I think, looking back to our overall topic: Strengthening christian values within Armed forces, we have worked in the right way on the concilian idea of a soldier as servant of security and freedom of the nations.

With experts invited we tried to enlarge our knowledge about christian basics and we have nowadays closer contacts to parts of the Holy See as before.

In the area of international contacts we were less successful. This might be caused by bureaucratic obstacles but for sure also by a lack of time and manpower.

So personally I cannot say mission accomplished but I hope that you are with me in my conclusion that we were and still are on the right way with our overall topic: Strengthening christian values within Armed Forces world wide, which will be finished with its this year subtopics: Fight against terror and the influence to christian values – Post-traumatic spirituality and its effects on coping – Ethics and operations.

But we still have to find means and ways to enforce the work between the conferences and we have to give more members, beside of the presidency, a share of the daily work. For example as representatives of AMI in other international organisations or international centres, to promulgate our position and our knowledge as military experts.

Beside of all the topics mentioned, I said it before, the election period of the acting presidency will end with the end of the conference and therefore we will have new elections on Thursday.

As you all know, Austria will finish work in the presidency and we need for sure a new Secretary General and a deputy. So I'm very pleased that the Netherlands, his Excellency bishop Punt declared that the Netherlands will provide a candidate for the Secretary General with Mrs Nelleke Swinkels.

Because we didn't get a new candidate for the Second part of the presidency, the president and his vice presidents, the German military bishop decided to candidate with the old team for a second election period.

Additionally I'm also pleased to be able to inform you that both military bishops together with their candidacy declared to give the necessary financial help, too.

Over the next days we will have time enough to discuss the mentioned topics, the election and the way ahead.

We will have to look for and to decide about a new overall topic for the next at last three years.

In the letter of this Excellency, bishop Burns we can find a lot of good ideas, old ones we discussed in former times but also new ones which are valuable enough to think about, concerning our way ahead.

So I'm sure that we will spent a very fruitful time together and I will pray for good results in the working groups but also in the discussions in the audience.

Thank you very much for your attention.

Kloss Reinhard
President of AMI