



Best, March 2012

To the Catholic Military Bishops,

To the Members and Friends of the Apostolat Militaire International (AMI)  
(by e-mail)

Your Eminence, Your Excellency, Most Reverend Military Bishop,  
Ladies and Gentlemen, dear Members and Friends of AMI,

This year's General Assembly and Conference of the Apostolat Militaire International (AMI) was held at the Sulo Riviera Hotel, Manila, Philippines from September 11 till 16, 2011.

Attached you will find the summary of the Annual General Assembly.

For documentation of this Annual General Assembly all topics, presentations and also a collection of photos are attached on the conference DVD. All delegates got one copy after the conference. If you would like to have a copy please contact me and I will send you one.

You will find all documentation also at our website:

[www.apostolatmilitaireinternational.com](http://www.apostolatmilitaireinternational.com)

*Best wishes - Yours in our Lord sincerely*

Nelleke Swinkels – van de Vorst  
AMI Secretary General



## **Apostolat Militaire International (AMI)**

Nelleke Swinkels – van de Vorst  
AMI Secretary General  
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### **Summary of the „General Assembly and Conference 2011 at the Sulo Riviera Hotel, Manila, Philippines September 11 – 16, 2011**



**Sulo Riviera Hotel, Manila, Philippines**



**Warm welcome for our president at the airport, by our host LGen Oscar Rabena**



**AMI Delegates gathered in Manila, Philippines**

**Annual General Assembly in Manila, Philippines**  
**from September 11 till 16, 2001**



**Organizing Committee at work**

The Annual General Assembly 2011 was conducted in Manila, Philippines. We kindly thank our hosts from the Philippines for their shown exemplary hospitality and their more than excellent organization of our conference. Our special gratitude deserves Military Bishop Leopoldo Tumalak and LtGen Oscar Rabena who were excellent hosts during our stay in the Philippines. Not only was general Rabena an excellent host, he established the preconditions to conduct our conference in Manila with a well-organised performance and the necessary financial support. During the whole time of preparation we enjoyed a very constructive, busy and fruitful cooperation between the organizing team of the Philippines and the AMI Executive Committee. Our special gratitude has to go to Col Ricardo Milan and his team, initiators and pioneers of the project “AMI-General Assembly 2011 in Manila”. I want to point out that we were deeply impressed and excited about the warm welcome, the special hospitality and organization and also the wonderful arrangement of the supporting programme of this conference.

At the same moment we also need to honour Bishops’ Vicar and Ecclesiastical Assistant of AMI, Mons. Dr. Werner Freistetter, for a splendid preparation of the Liturgy and all other members of the Philippine organizing team for their support on this matter.

On Sunday September 11 in the afternoon the Conference started with a welcome address by the Military Bishop Most Rev Leopoldo Tumulak and Lieutenant General Oscar H. Rabena, AFP Chairman of AMI Ph Executive Committee followed by a welcome address by the President of AMI, Brigadier General Reinhard Kloss, followed by the introduction and presentation of the delegates.



**Bishop Leopoldo Tumulak**



**LtGen Oscar H. Rabena**



**BGen Reinhard Kloss**

Afterwards, in the Manansala B Hall from the Sulo Hotel everything was prepared to conduct the Opening Pontifical Service by His Eminence Gaudencio Borbon Cardinal Rosales, Archbishop of Manila.



**His Eminence Gaudencio Borbon Cardinal Rosales, Archbishop of Manila**



For documentation of this Annual General Assembly all topics, presentations and also a collection of photos is attached, as every year on the Conference DVD, that was already available at the end of our conference and handed over to all delegates. I am very grateful for the hard labour of Col Guillermo Molina and his team, who did an outstanding job.

You will find all documentation of the AMI Conference in the Philippines also at our website: [www.apostolatmilitaireinternational.com](http://www.apostolatmilitaireinternational.com).

## **Summary 2011**

For the summary of contents subsequent information has to be mentioned:  
The Annual General Assembly 2011 was highlighted with this years topic:

**“A graceful past renewing towards a peaceful future”**

### **Monday 11-09-12**

We started on Monday morning, like every year, with the annual reports given by the President, the Secretary General, our Liaison officer and a presentation of our Ecclesiastical assistant Mons. Dr. Werner Freistetters.

*Our president, Brigadier General Reinhard Kloss, expressed that this years conference will be memorable for him because 2011 is his last year to serve as President of AMI. After the 2011 Conference, there will be a new presidency that will bring new perspectives and ideas. For this years conference AMI shall tackling three important topics that would inspire discussion on the values and the priorities of the Christian soldiers. First is the Dialogue of life between chaplains, soldiers and their families; second is the fidelity of the soldiers to their families, which must be brought to light due to experiences of prolonged separations between soldiers and their families; and third is on ecumenism, interfaith and the relationship among the different denominations, a topic that assumes greater relevance in times of conflict and the need for international understanding and harmony.*

*BGen Kloss expressed the hope that the participants would draw solutions to common problems as gleaned from European, African and Asian perspectives. AMI delegates, he said, have a golden opportunity to learn from each other even as they further enrich their common bonds as members of AMI. In the end he wished all the delegates and participants the best of their discussions and Conference experience in the Philippines.*

*The Secretary General of AMI, Mrs. Nelleke Swinkels - van de Vorst presented to the plenary the various activities of the AMI from the 2010 AMI Conference and General Assembly which was held in Germany to the series of meetings with the Organizing Committee in preparation for the 2011 AMI Conference in Manila, Philippines.*

*Col Michael Jedlicka pointed it out his activities as an AMI's liaison officer and last but not least the presentation of Mons Werner Freistetter. His presentation was divided into two parts. The first part discussed "Terrorism as Ethical Challenge: Human Dignity and Human Rights", from a pastoral letter from the German Bishops issued a few years ago. The second part consisted of his reflections on Christian hope, derived from texts from Pope Benedict XVI.*



**Bgen Reinhard Kloss, AMI President**



**Mrs. Nelleke Swinkels-van de Vorst, Secgen**



**Col Michael Jedlicka**



**Mons Werner Freistetter**

## **Lectures and presentations**

The presentations were well-prepared and carried out with enormous engagement.

First of all Military Bishop Leopoldo Tumalak introduced to us the Conference Topic "A graceful past renewing towards a peaceful future", 25 years Military Ordinariat of the Philippines.

He told us about the first diocesan Synod, held in July 2011 and compared the preparation of the synod with the walk from Jerusalem to Emmaus.

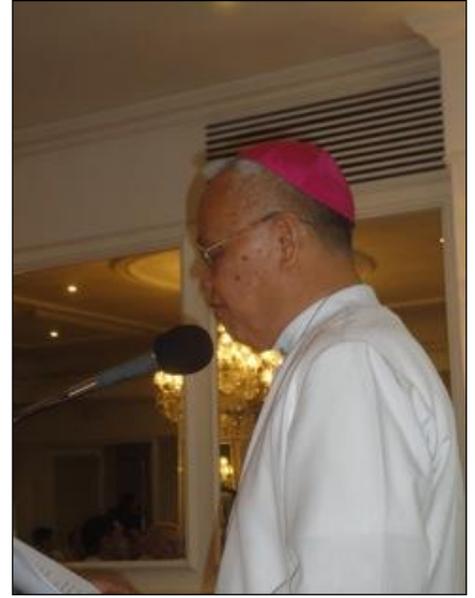
Bishop Tumulak: "There were questions of the relevance of a synod or its timeliness. There were hands holding us back and which made us for a time hesitate. But yet we walked on and as we did, somehow, we heard His voice from the reality that daily confronted us: WALK FORWARD, REFORM, RENEW; "ECCLESIA SEMPER REFORMANDA EST."

We heard a challenge we could turn our back from. It was a challenge that kept our hearts burning till the Synod preparation, the surveys, meetings and debates, writing and editing, and consultations were done.

We have become a Church ready to be sent, as it is ready to be reformed. We are a church ready to leave the old home of Emmaus and go back to the New Jerusalem, in peaceful journeying to the future.

Let the words of the Virgin Mary be ours also as we follow the direction the Spirit who has given us this convention:

"I AM THE SERVANT OF THE LORD. BE IT DONE TO ME ACCORDING TO YOUR WORD." (LK 1:38)."



**Bishop Leopoldo Tumulak**

**Lecture A:** Dialogue of life between chaplains, soldiers and their families by Rev Fr. Felix Ferrer, STHD, SVD from an Asian perspective.



**Rev Fr. Felix Ferrer, STHD, SVD**

Rev Fr Felix Ferrer's lecture touched on the concept of the Dialogue of Life and its general application. He began by mentioning the acronym DIALOGUE of LIFE - which should mean Delve Into A Lot Of Great Unity Efforts or Feel Lost in Fearful End!

He situated the Dialogue of Life in the Asian context, which, in demographic terms contains 2/3 of the world's population and home to various cultures. Providing an operational definition, Father Ferrer broke the Dialogue of Life into the following main points:

- 1) Dialogue is a manner of acting, an attitude, a spirit, which guides one's conduct.
- 2) Every Christian is called to live dialogue, whether as part of majority or minority.
- 3) Every Christian ought to bring the gospel in any environment he lives and works in.

*In conclusion, father Ferrer gave meaning on the acronym DIALOGUE OF LIFE by associating its component parts with corresponding meanings:*

*Delve Into – Involvement*

*A Lot of – Quantity*

*Great Unity Efforts – Quality*

*Or Feel Lost – Consequence*

*In Fearful End – Finality*

**Lecture B:** Dialogue of life between chaplains, soldiers and their families by Major General Norbert Sinn, from a European perspective.

*Major General Norbert Sinn’s lecture advanced some insights about the European perspective in how chaplains relate to soldiers and their families. He discussed factors and developments in the European society that affect soldiers and families.*

*Demographics (low birth rate, in the face of which Europe needs immigration but at the risk of absorbing immigrants and coping, in particular, with immigrants from Islamic countries); economic problems; and issues of identity and family relationships that has an impact on the armed forces*



**Major General Norbert Sinn**

*(affected by decline of moral values; and widespread permissiveness in European societies); and also socio-political differences in European countries (i.e. Northern & Southern Europe; Western & Eastern Europe).*

### **Working groups**

After every lecture working groups were discussing the topics and presented their output in the plenary session.





After the working sessions we celebrated Holy Mass in Shrine of St. Therese of the Child Jesus, parish of Bishop Tumalak.

The Philippine Air Force hosted a wonderful dinner with cultural program on Monday evening.

### **Tuesday 11-09-13**

On Tuesday morning we went for Holy Mass to St Ignatius Chapel and afterwards there were several courtesy calls on the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and of the Secretary of National Defence. In the afternoon we continued the program with the following lectures.

**Lecture C:** Dialogue of life between chaplains, soldiers and their families by Very Rev Fr Charles C. Iroegbu from an African perspective.



**Rev Fr Charles C. Iroegbu**

*LCol Very Rev Fr Charles C. Iroegbu provided an African perspective on the dialogue between chaplains, soldiers and their families. The African, whose worldview comprises of the Spiritual, Animate and Inanimate beings, is conscious of the influence of each category of these beings in the universe. In other words to be an African is to be in a religious world where everything in the world is created by God. The cultural values of Africa include a sense of respect for authority, the sacredness of life, a sense of hospitality even to outsiders. In addition, the family and community live as one or as an extended family that also extends to nations in Africa and the whole continent it self. As for African Cosmology, God created and rules a universe consisting of the unborn, the living and the ancestors. This is complemented with Christian cosmology where how a person lives his life on earth will determine whether he will go to heaven or hell. In effect, the earth serves a connecting link and determining factor.*

*To summarize, for effective dialogue, the values, missions and responsibilities of chaplains should be carefully noted. For his part, the chaplain must live up to challenges by diligent and faithful exercise of his vocation, cultivating an attitude of closeness to the local Ordinary and the Presbyterian, and recognize this dialogue of life between chaplains, soldiers and families from an African perspective therefore reflects on some of the aspects of religious obligations, responsibilities as well as benefits and rights of the Military personnel, families and chaplains as they play their constitutional role as children of God in the Military. The soldiers, chaplains and their families adhering to the values of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity and personal courage embody this.*

**Lecture D: Family Sanctity: Fidelity of Soldiers to their Family by Police Director General Enrique Bulan (Ret)**



**Police Director General Enrique Bulan (Ret)**



**mrs. Bulan**

*Police Director (Ret.) Enrique Bulan's lecture Fidelity of Soldiers to their Family provided a perspective on Filipino military families and how they have evolved. He argued that the family of a Filipino soldier could be described as extended (including in-laws and even pets), characterized by the priority of the Service to that of family relations and where the wife is expected to take care of the home when the former is on deployment. Majority of Filipino soldiers come from poor families, had to work early in life, disciplined, industrious, motivated to have better life. Unfortunately they are subjected to physical and psychological abuse and he brings this to his own family. Then drawing on his personal experiences, he enumerated the stages of relationship between the Serviceman and his family.*

*Mrs. Bulan added that as a military spouse, she did not have time to be lonely by keeping busy by managing the home. She also emphasized the importance of faith in God to cope up with long separations during General Bulan's deployments. Likewise, she added that the synergy of her and General Bulan's family values made her an undemanding wife. Last but not the least was the company she kept which also hold faith in God as a common value.*

After the lectures, like on Monday, we had working groups to discuss the conference topics and presentations with the output of the working sessions. The Commanding General of the Philippine Army hosted the dinner on Tuesday night. And again the military personnel carried out the entertainment. Not only military personal, also our own liaison officer, showed himself as an outstanding singer and performer. And so did also Fr. Patrick J. Dolan.



**Col Michael Jedlicka**



**BGen Fr. Patrick Dolan**

### **Wednesday 11-09-14**

In the morning Fr. Charles Iroegbu celebrated Mass with all delegates. After Mass and breakfast there was a beautiful cultural spouses program organised by the organizing committee of the Philippines, of course there was some time for having lunch and to do some shopping!



The delegates however had another day of work to do.

**Lecture E:** Ecumenism interfaith, the relationship among the different denominations by Rev Fr. Benigno Beltran STHD, SVD from an Asian perspective.

*The Philippines is a predominantly Catholic country yet it promotes respect for other religions and cultures within its multi-ethnic society. In this connection, Rev Fr. Benigno Beltran's presentation on ecumenism, inter faith, the relationship among the different denominations embodies this idea.*



*As a starting point, Fr. Beltran made a number of comparisons between Westerners and Asians. In his view, the former are more definition and detail-oriented. Westerners are also more prone to create or change situations rather than adapt to these. Third they are very adherents to scientific or rational based logic. Fourth Westerners are more wired for independence and individualism.*

**Rev Fr. Benigno Beltran STHD, SVD**

**Lecture F:** Ecumenism inter faith, the relationship among the different denominations by Fr. Patrick J. Dolan, Chaplain, Brigadier General of the Army National Guard from an American perspective

*BGen Patrick J. Dolan's talk "Multi-Denominational Chaplaincy in the Military of the USA" provides an American perspective on how Catholic chaplains work with counterparts from other faiths within the US military. He made mention of the two types of Churches; churches that focus on the Individual; and churches that focus on the Message.*

*The founding document of the United States, its declaration of independence which proclaims that all men are created equal and endowed by their creator with inalienable rights life, liberty pursuit of happiness has implication in the recognition of inherent dignity of the individual citizen/soldier. In this connection, the Chaplain's duty is to connect the military member with God, so the emphasis is not on the chaplain but on the individual (soldier, sailor, airman). In Genera Dolan's and other US chaplain's cases, they can therefore serve someone not from their own religion.*

After the lectures, we worked in the working groups and in the afternoon, like every year, there were some Miscellaneous topics of interest of AMI that needs to take care of:

- + Financial Report 2010
- + audit report, discharge of the treasurer and of the AMI Secretary General
- + date, place and topics of the AMI Conference 2012, Belgium delegation
- + election of a new presidency and Secretary General
- + closing addresses by the President of AMI

As last year Herman Vriesema, as deputy of the Secretary General, gave us his financial report of the year 2009. He did this again in an outstanding and very humorous way. The Executive Committee was unanimously discharged by all eligible to vote delegates. Lt Col Michael Jedlicka (Austria) and Lt Col Andreas Preuss (Germany) again volunteered to take the responsibility as auditors. All eligible to vote delegates have unanimously agreed for this decision.

Before the election of a new Presidency, Major General Norbert Sinn took over the microphone to thank President Kloss for his hard work for AMI and appointed BGen Kloss honorary president of AMI and handed over a present to remember his period as an AMI President. Afterwards the General Assembly, all-eligible to vote delegates, elected Major General Norbert Sinn of Austria as the new President of AMI for the following three years.

After the closing address by BGen Kloss we went for dinner hosted by the Flag Officer in Command of the Philippine Navy, in the harbor of Manila.



## Services

During the week, as you could read we held services in the morning and in the evening as well. The first Chancellor of the Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines, Fr. Pinter Gabor, conducted the closing Pontifical Service on Thursday morning.

The Liturgy was splendidly prepared and carried out by all the available Excellencies priests and deacon Chief Chaplain of the Dutch Armed Forces, Col Jan van Lieverloo.



## Thursday 11-09-15

After the closing Pontifical Service all delegates departed for a cultural tour through Manila, which ended at the Sula Hotel for a splendid closing dinner and cultural night. Overwhelmed by the outstanding hospitality of our hosts all delegates left Manila after the morning service and Godspeed blessing on Friday morning. It was a very memorable AMI General Assembly and Conference 2011 in the Philippines.



### **Preparations for the conference**

All delegations are kindly requested to prepare for this conference:  
A presentation on the conference topic:

#### **“A graceful past renewing towards a peaceful future”**

in which, from their countries point of view, they describe the current situation and existing problems and also suggest possible solutions and a brief summary in writing for the discussion and the minutes. We asked the delegations to use the following structure for their contributions:

1. Very short information on the actual structure of the (lay) organisation;
2. Up to three important activities carried out during the report period to strengthen Christian values;
3. Up to three important activities planned for the forthcoming year
4. Problems that should be discussed within AMI forums and for which AMI might provide support;
5. Most important: What can we do to improve our lay activities within the Armed Forces and how can we advise and support others in their activities in this context?

The AMI Executive Committee has the opinion that exchange of information is of utmost importance in order to harmonise national activities and develop new initiatives within Armed Forces worldwide.

All reports and contributions were prepared in English, because the conference language at our General Assembly and Conference is English.

### **Conference 2012**

At the end of our Conference in Manila, a member of the Belgium delegation LCol Erwin Vilain invited AMI, also on behalf of Vicar General en Chief Chaplain Mgr. Johan van den Eeckhout, to come to Belgium for the next General Assembly and Conference. It will take place in Retie, Belgium between September 9 and September 14 2012.