

Notes Presentation Secretary General 2012

Excellencies, generals, ladies and gentlemen, dear Friends of AMI

Thank you Mr. President. You already told a lot about our common activities, so my dear friends, you will hear some topics twice.

Dia 2

As AMI Secretary General it is my pleasure to welcome you again at this year's AMI General Assembly and Conference here in Retie, in Belgium.

As you all know the AMI Secretary General is responsible for showing our General Assembly what has happened since our last gathering in the Philippines. You already know my favorite slogan "A picture paints a thousand words". So please don't expect a great essay here today. More a small overview and information on developments, activities, subjects discussed and concerning the future of the military Apostolate in our Armed Forces.

Dia 3:

In my summary of the Conference in Manila I already thanked our hosts. But I would express once again our Philippine friends, again present here today, for their shown exemplary hospitality and their excellent organization of the conference 2011. It was a great experience and talking for myself. My first experience in Asia was overwhelming.

We all think it is a pity that Bishop Tumalak could not be here today due to the illness of his brother. Let us pray for him and his bother and I hope that you will give him my regards together with three liturgical kisses.

Dia 4:

Our annual General Assembly last year in Manila was very successful thanks to our hosts, who did a wonderful job. I said it before. This picture, made at the Base of the Philippine Air Force and hosted by general Rabena, you received all as a Christmas card. Not only did I send it to you but also to several for AMI important stakeholders.

Dia 5:

Military Bishop Christian Werner of Austria establishes the Institute for Religion and Peace in 1997, in order to promote the scientific discussion of current security-political changes in light of the Christian social science.

Chancellor of the Austrian Military Ordinariate is Episcopal Vicar Msgr. Dr. Werner Freistetter, well known within AMI.

Dia 6 en dia 7

I had the opportunity to visit the annual Enquête in Vienna. I was really very happy that our Episcopal Vicar and ecclesiastical Assistant of AMI, Monsignor Freistetter, gave me the opportunity to give a short briefing about the Apostolat Militaire International to all the bishops gathered in Vienna that week. It was a beautiful experience and opportunity for your secretary general to be in their company. The Bishops were very interested

and I really do hope that some of them will send delegates over to our Conference.

Dia 8 en dia 9

The last day of the Enquete we visited the Abbey Heiligenkreuz and the Pontifical Theological Academy Benedict XVI in Heiligenkreuz. It was a wonderful experience. The surroundings of the Abbey are so peaceful and quiet.

We had a solemn Vesper together in the church of the Abbey and of course a lovely dinner afterwards where the new Presidency of AMI already could speak about the overall topic for the next 3 years:

The Christian Soldier in the Service of Just Peace.

“To live authentically according to the Word of God and to spread the gospel”.

Of course we discussed the topic of our Conference in Belgium:

Commemoration: “Powerful past, powerful present, challenging future”

It was also the opportunity for our new President to meet with the Chief Chaplain of Belgium, Vicar General Johan van den Eeckhout and discuss the opportunity to come to Belgium for our General Assembly and Annual Conference.

Dia 10

November 8 2011 the GKS, Gemeinschaft Katholischer Soldaten, a German Lay organization, represented here by the German Delegation, celebrated their 50th anniversary with a seminar and dinner party in Fulda. Of course we were there to congratulate them and to celebrate this joyful event together.

Dia 11

LtCol Jedlička and LtCol Preuss again volunteered to take the responsibility as auditors. So there was a little reunion in Cologne to do the cash audit together with Herman. Later this week we will get a report of Herman and the auditors about the financial situation of AMI.

This will be the last time that LtCol Jedlička did the cash audit because since January 1 of this year he is the new Vice President of AMI.

Luckily our Belgium delegate Mia De Vriese will take his place next year and will take her responsibility as auditor together with Andreas.

Dia 12

Unfortunately I could not join them because at that day there was a farewell reception of our deacon and my deputy Jan van Lieverloo in Oirschot. I had to organize this event so was not able to go to Cologne. The new Presidency however joined us after they celebrate the international Holy Mass of the Military in the Dome of Cologne for the solemn Vesper in Saint Peter's Church in Oirschot and afterwards for a drink at the Barracks. Jan said goodbye to the Army but is now working as Chief of Chaplains at the Ministry of Security and Justice.

Dia 13

On Friday 13 we visited the Belgium Organizing Committee of the Conference 2013 in Retie and looked at the Conference Venue here in Retie. We discussed the content of our conference and although the superstition that 13 is an unlucky number, I think we managed to develop a well-balanced program for this week.

Dia 14

The new AMI President Norbert Sinn together with the former one Reinhard Kloss, Vice president Michael Jedlička, Mgr Werner Freistetter, Jan van Lieverloo and I paid a visit to Mgr. Wells of the State Secretariat at the Vatican.

This yearly visit is to inform the current Assessor for General Affairs of the Secretariat of State, about all the activities of AMI.

It was also an opportunity for the new Presidency to meet Mgr. Wells and Reinhard Kloss could say goodbye and thank Mgr Wells for the support of the Vatican during the last years.

Of course we discussed again the NGO Status of AMI.

As I told you last year we asked the approval of the Dutch Bishop's Conference for the modified statutes of Apostolat Militaire International (AMI).

Up to now, AMI has operated on the basis of canon law only. Recently, however, the Holy See has requested AMI to pursue recognition as an international Catholic NGO. This status requires that AMI enjoy legal status according to civil law. In order to comply with the request of the Holy See,

AMI has decided to make use of the possibilities of the Dutch legal system, which recognises approved ecclesiastical bodies in civil law.

However in May 2011 the Dutch bishops' conference turned down AMI's request for legal recognition in the Netherlands. It turned out that the (civil) lawyer we had consulted had completely overlooked the difficulties that arise from the status of AMI as an international organisation. This affects AMI's status in canon law. So where are we now? We discussed the topic last year in Vienna and decided to ask advice to Mgr. Clemens of the Pontifical Council of the Laity how to proceed now.

So this year in Rome we had a good conversation with the undersecretary of the Pontifical Council of the Laity, Mgr. Delgado Galindo. We told him about our statutes and also that we never had an answer after our request in 2007. He told us that he would take care of the matter and contact us as soon as he has studied the adjusted Statutes. It seems to be necessary to get a new approval of the Pontifical Council of the Laity. A decree pointing out that we are a private organization of the faithful.

According to Mgr. Wells it should be only a formality for the Dutch Bishops then to recognize us as an ecclesiastical body. Let's see again what happens.

Mgr Wells asked us also to get in contact with organizations of pastoral care in prisons, and the federation of Catholic families. So we are very glad to welcome here today the Secretary General of the International Commission Catholic Prison Pastoral Care, Mr. Gerard Loman.

Dia 15

As every year we went after our meeting with Mgr. Wells to the little private balcony where we could make some pictures and had a beautiful view over St Peters Square.

Dia 16

Ida Sinn and Katja Jedlička accompanied their husbands to Rome. Katja is an art historian and she made with us a guided tour in the Sistine Chapel after our meeting in the Vatican. Michael asked Fermina Alvarez to give us the possibility to visit the Vatican Museums and the Sistine Chapel and to use the entrance near her office, so no cue for us. After our visit at the Vatican Museum we enjoyed Rome. It was a lovely weekend. It is really a pleasure and no punishment to be Secretary General of AMI! I told you that already before.

Dia 17

We are now up to date with our address database. Nevertheless I will ask you again, like every year, please let us know if anything is changing concerning your address, e-mail or phone number. And as every year I will kindly ask you one of these days to look seriously at our list of delegates and put your name and address on it if it isn't already there.

Dia 18

Since Manila we have a new Facebook page. It is open for everybody who has a Facebook account to like us and to share news with us.

Christian Sinn, son of our President and Michael Jedlička did a marvellous job to build a new AMI Homepage. Our Liason officer will tel you al about it in his report later this morning.

Dia 19

Every year many of us are coming to Lourdes. The International Military Pilgrimage (IMP) started in 1958 when the French Armed Forces invited the German military to join them in Lourdes as a gesture of post-war reconciliation.

Since then the pilgrimage has grown and this year 34 different countries making up over 20.000 military men and women represented military pilgrims.

Dia 20

The Military Pilgrimage to Lourdes has developed as an annual meeting place for our "AMI-FAMILY". It was great to be part of the camaraderie shared between all the nations and the friends of AMI. Friday Evening we met several of them in the hotel La Solitude. Simple to meet again, enjoy each other's company and have a few drinks together. You are already invited to come to Lourdes next year!

Dia 21

Thanks to the president of the Dutch Organisation of the Pilgrimage to Lourdes, our AMI delegate Frank Marcus I could join him to the reception given by the French Army Bishop Mgr. Ravel. We met several important

people, like Archbishop Timothy Broglio of the USA and good friend of our Father Dolan and prince Albert and Princess Charlene of Monaco.

Dia 22

During my holiday in Austria in July I had a meeting with General Sinn and Colonel Jedlička to talk about the latest state of the preparations for the AMI General Assembly in Belgium. The meeting took place at the office of the General in the Theresian Military Academy- an educational institution, where the Austrian Armed Forces train their officers. While we were working my husband Maarten got a private tour in the Academy.

Dia 23

My gratitude goes most certainly to the Vicar General of Belgium Johan van den Eeckhout. Thanks to him and the cooperation with the whole Belgium Organization Team we must have a most wonderful time here in Retie. And of course to Paul van Uffelen, husband of Padre Annie Walscharts.

Most of the time he was my point of contact with whom I had a lot of e-mail contact about, travel schedules, meals, rooms and visa problems.

Thank you so much Paul.

Dia 24

Of course I want to thank our hosts from Belgium for their shown exemplary hospitality and their excellent organization of our conference here in Retie.

Let's have a wonderful Conference! Thank you very much for your attention!