



APOSTOLAT MILITAIRE INTERNATIONAL
the PRESIDENT

STRENGTHENING CHRISTIAN VALUES WITHIN THE ARMED FORCES WORLDWIDE

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Your Excellency's distinguished Nuncio in the Slovak Republic and Generals, Padre Giulio Cerchiatti, who is the head of the office for the coordination of the military ordinariates, your Excellency Bishop Biro, and you, dear delegates from five continents, especially and finally you, your Excellency Military Bishop Monsignor Frantisek Rabek!

Allow me to introduce myself, as some delegates are part of our AMI-family for the first time.

My name is MajGen Norbert Sinn, until November 2013 Commander of the Austrian Military Academy „Maria Theresa“ and now retired. Three years ago Austria was elected for AMI Presidency and since then we have the honour to serve as Presidency.

One year ago we received your invitation, Bishop Rabek, to hold this year's conference in your beautiful country and all of us are grateful for this.

In fact it was at the end of our conference in CELJE/Slovenia and please allow me once again to say thank you to General Vicar Joze PLUT and his military chaplain Milan PREGELJ, who took the responsibility for the organization of that conference. We did not only work hard and intensely, but visited some special areas including Ljubljana, making us familiar with that lovely, proud and important country in the midst of Europe.

Following the agenda of the last three years

„The Christian Soldier in the Service of Just Peace – to live authentically according to the Word of God and to spread the Gospel“,

we discussed the question: what will be important in the coming year? Of course there are always quite a lot of problems to be discussed, but very soon the questions surfaced: What are the results of the Great War? What is remaining? And, what did we learn within this period of one hundred years? This brought us to the general Theme of this year:

„Hundred Years after the Great War and the moral and ethical Challenges of the Future“,

And, we added the second part of our conference theme, a topic given to us by our Holy Father by his encyclical (exhortation)

„Evangelii Gaudium as an Inspiration for the Military“

- I feel that a strong relationship exists between these two complementary parts.

I will come back to it tomorrow morning.

Today it is a great pleasure to welcome all of you here in this hotel, and I thank you, Excellency Bishop Rabek, and all persons involved in the organization of our conference and also the Minister of Defence, Dr. Martin GLVAČ and the Chief of Defence Staff, LtGen Milan MAXIM for their kind support.

I also would like to express my gratitude to all lecturers cooperating and addressing us. We are happy having you with us.

I am convinced that at the end of the conference we will have elaborated forward-looking results.

Having said this I am very happy and grateful to all of you participating and especially I want to thank you, Bishop Rabek, for hosting our conference and Luboslav FARKAS, who essentially supported the organisation.

Now I warmly welcome all delegations present:

AUSTRIA, AUSTRALIA for the first time, we are fond of your participation!, BELGIUM, unfortunately BRASIL had to cancel its participation, CROATIA, GAMBIA, GERMANY, KENYA, the NETHERLANDS, PHILIPPINES, SLOVENIA, SPAIN who will host our next year's conference, the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA and the AMI EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, which I'd like to introduce to you now:

To my left

Colonel Michael JEDLICKA, Vice President from Austria
WO II Markus STROMBERGER, Second Vice President from Austria,

To my right

Ms. Nelleke SWINKELS-VAN DE VORST, Secretary General from the Netherlands,

Jan van LIEVERLOO, Deputy Secretary General from the Netherlands,

Herman VRIESEMA, Treasurer, from the Netherlands, accompanied by his wife ANS,

Episcopal Vicar Werner FREISTETTER, our Ecclesiastical Assistant, from Austria.

Last but certainly not least, I am accompanied by my wife IDA (we have been married since 1973).

Unfortunately Brian and Jean PARKER from Great Britain are this time not with us. We have them in mind hoping to welcome them next year again.

At the end of my opening address it is my great pleasure to give you the kindest regards of the Austrian Military Bishop Christian WERNER. He is a personal friend of my family and he fully supports AMI and the Austrian presidency. Unfortunately, because of reasons of health, he is not able to attend this conference but he assured me he is praying for the success of our conference.

And so I formally declare this year's Apostolat Militaire International Conference open.

May our Lord bless us and give us will and strength.

Thank you for your attention.