

## AMI General Assembly 2014

The annual general assembly of the Apostolate Militaire International (AMI) took place in the period from 09/21/14 to 26/09/14 in a conference center near the city of MODRA, an hour's drive north-east from BRATISLAVA on the slopes of the Small Carpathians.

The thematic starting point for this conference was the parent AMI motto for the period 2012 - 2014 with the title "The Christian Soldier In The Service Of Just Peace. To Live Authentically According To The Word Of God And To Spread The Gospel". Resting on this topic the emphasis of lectures, discussions and working groups was in the range of the Jubilee Year 2014. Considering the outbreak of the First World War one hundred years ago, the ethical and moral challenges for the future have been examined. The so-called "Cold War" was just as much the focus of historical analysis, as the exposition of an African and Hispanic perspective of the current political situation and future problem areas associated. Of course, the delegates ventilated the current critical developments, such as the efforts of the Islamist Jihadist-Salafist terrorist organization "Islamic State" (IS) with the aim to fight for the forcible establishment of a caliphate.

At the special request of our host His Excellency the Military Bishop of Slovakia, František Rábek, the first Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Francis **“Evangelii Gaudium; On The Proclamation Of The Gospel In Today's World”** has been analyzed and the “AMI-Family” proceeded to work out how far this Papal message can be considered as an inspiration and as an ethical and moral challenge for Christian soldiers.

Connected to the comprehensive output of this year's AMI conference I want to express my deep thankfulness to Father Dolan for his outstanding summary “Evangelii Gaudium For Military In Light Of the Centenary Of World War One”. You will find it as an attachment on our AMI homepage.

As you know, we celebrate our golden AMI jubilee in 2015. I am charged with the creation of a jubilee anniversary edition. Like the elaboration of Father Dolan you will find the table of contents of our jubilee documentation as an attachment. We have asked all AMI member countries to send us a contribution about the subject matter "development, current state and challenges for the Christianity in their armed forces" and if possible an individual prayer dedicated to the soldiers until our AMI General Assembly 2014 in Slovakia. General Major Sinn gave us some additional specifying remarks for this required contribution:

- Deeply rooted in Christian Catholic values - what role does Christianity (Catholicism) play in your Armed Forces?
- Are Christian Catholic values a fundament of (political) acting?
- Are Catholics accepted and does Christianity still form an integral part of military acting?
- Current situation of the lay people and of the military chaplaincy in your country.
- Challenges for the future of the lay people and of the military chaplaincy in your country and especially – if applicable – challenges for the future of the Catholic military lay organisations in your country.
- Your contribution should not be longer than two pages. We are looking forward to your input.

**PLEASE. We need your editorial until December 2014!**

As you know from our last conference in Slovenia, we have decided to start a social project and to collect money for the construction of a "Military Chapel" in Gambia. Our friend from Gambia, Fr Joseph Carl Gomez, asked AMI for a helping hand. The estimated costs are about 800.000 dalasi, that's about 18.000 Euro. The Austrian Association of Catholic Soldiers (AKS) has already initiated a successful fund-raising campaign. We kindly ask our AMI member- and associated countries to support our project too. **Deadline for the transfer of the donations will be December 2014.**

Austria was elected unanimously by open ballot for the AMI Presidency and the Netherlands were elected unanimously by open ballot for the AMI Secretariat General. Major General Norbert Sinn of Austria will assume again the Presidency of AMI for the following three years. At his side are the new Vice President Lieutenant Colonel MA Friedrich Aflenzer and Staff Master Sergeant Markus Stromberger. The team of the Netherlands consists of the Secretary General Nelleke Swinkels van de Vorst, Deputy Secretary General Dr. Ian van Lieverloo and the Treasurer Adjutant ret. Herman Vriesema

We are thankful that Slovakia offered to be the host of our conference in 2014. Our special gratitude has do go to His Excellency Bishop Rábek, who is the initiator of the project "AMI Conference Slovakia 2014". At the same time we also need to honour his team for the exemplary hospitality and the excellent organization of our conference.

Spain will organize the upcoming AMI Jubilee General Assembly. It will take part in **Santiago de Compostela** between September 6th and 11th in 2015.

At the end of our Conference in Modra, a member of the delegation of Gambia, Fr Joseph Carl Gomez invited AMI to come to Gambia for the General Assembly and Conference in 2016.

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