



**APOSTOLAT MILITAIRE INTERNATIONAL**  
**the PRESIDENT**

STRENGTHENING CHRISTIAN VALUES WITHIN THE ARMED FORCES WORLDWIDE

MajGen ret. Norbert SINN

Hauptstrasse 41

A - 2263 Dürnkrut

Santiago, 06.09.15

**Opening address Sunday 06, 2015**

**AMI Conference in Santiago de Compostela, Spain 06-11 September 2015**

Your Excellencies,

Distinguished Military Archbishop of Spain, H.E. Juan del Río Martín,

Distinguished Archbishop of Santiago de Compostela, H.E. Julián Barrio Barrio

Distinguished Auxiliary Bishop Jesús Fernández González

General Don Federico de la Puente Sicre and general Miquel Alonso Baquer,

and you all, distinguished delegates from 15 countries, especially and finally you, members of the Spanish delegation,

Comrades and friends,

Ladies and gentlemen!

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 Commandant of the Austrian Military Academy „Maria Theresa“ and now retired. Four 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, Excellency Military Archbishop Río Martín, to hold our annual conference and celebrating at the same time our fiftieth anniversary here in this blessed town and in your country, where AMI was founded fifty years ago, in 1965.

We all feel honoured and are grateful that we can celebrate and work together with our delegates and our Spanish friends here in Santiago de Compostela.

Following the all-over agenda of the last 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 decided, following the challenging developments worldwide, and especially in the Middle East and the Eastern parts of Europe, and I just want to point out the stress and the cruelty of the IS and the African tragedies, triggering a new Völkerwanderung (migration of peoples) to the North, as we all can observe directly, touching even the midst of Europe and the European Union, to deal during this year’s conference with the question of:

**“Gaudium et Spes and the Declaration Nostra Aetate**

**And**

**Fifty years of AMI, the need for interreligious Dialogue for Catholics from a military Point of View”.**

Already now allow me please to express my gratitude to H.E. Military Archbishop del Río Martín, giving us the opportunity to work in Santiago de Compostela and the Hospederia Mayor and all our Spanish friends from the Vicariate General, to be named especially Don Juan Rascon and Don Lorenzo, but also all good friends from the Spanish Lay Catholic military organization. They all did and do an excellent job to make an excellent conference possible. I feel it as a privilege that we are located inside the walls of the Hospederia Mayor Martin Pinario, just a hundred meters away from the Cathedral of Santiago, a marvellous place and setting for our studies, discussions and work.

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.

Allow me still to express my gratitude to His Majesty King Felipe VI for being so kind accepting the presidency of Honour for our conference. We feel and see it as a privilege, not a customary. Even thanks to Minister of Defence, Don Pedro de Morenés y Alvares de Eulate for receiving us, giving us support and sending his Head of Cabinet to address us here.

Having said this, I am very happy and grateful to all of you participating and especially I want to thank you, Archbishop Río Martín, for hosting our conference and the Vicar General Don Panadero, as well as Don Rascon and all others involved in the organization of this conference.

I should like to pass on greetings from the former president of honour Brigadier General Reinhard Kloss, general Karl Maycen and also general König sends his regards.

Now I warmly welcome all 15 delegations present:

AUSTRIA, BELGIUM, CROATIA, GERMANY, GREAT BRITAIN, ITALY, KENYA, LITHUANIA, the NETHERLANDS, PHILIPPINES, POLAND, SLOVAKIA, SLOVENIA, the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA and our marvellous host SPAIN, taking the responsibility for organizing a huge part of our conference.

At the end I like to introduce to you the AMI EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

To my left

Colonel Friedrich AFLENZER, 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, Vice-Secretary General from the Netherlands,

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

Unfortunately our Ecclesiastical Assistant, Dr. Werner FREISTETTER, Military Bishop of Austria got really sick and was not able to come to Spain.

Last but certainly not least, my wife IDA who is accompany me (we have been married since 1973).

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

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

Thank you for your attention.