



APOSTOLAT MILITAIRE INTERNATIONAL
the PRESIDENT

STRENGTHENING CHRISTIAN VALUES WITHIN THE ARMED FORCES WORLDWIDE

Closing address 10.09.15 – Hospedería San Martin Pinarío

Good evening Excellency's, Generals,
dear friends and comrades of AMI,
ladies and gentlemen!

Now our AMI 50 year's conference and general assembly is coming to an end. Today evening we start the next, a "normal", working year – our 51st!

I feel all together we did quite a lot of work.

Thank you:

Delegates for your contributions;

Priests and chaplains present, being with us, listening to our thoughts, celebrating holy messes with us.

What we discussed, were questions of "Gaudium et Spes", in relation to "Nostra Aetate" and, important too, how interreligious dialogue could work. As we had to learn, it is much more difficult than expected and between theory and practice a big difference exists – as every time in life!

We met the Spanish Navy and learned about training, education of Navy Cadets as well as about the attitudes of the responsible officers concerning ethics, moral and how to think about Christian "fé" (faith).

Of course, and not at least, for all of us, being so near to Santiago, who was affecting fostering and encouraging us.

As in the last years we produce a press release to give the public an inside – look about our work. You had already the opportunity to listen to the draft text of it, and after looking through it once again, we will publish it to make true, what we recognized as a necessity: to become visible in the public.

This summer AMI became an NGO with its seat in the Netherlands. We worked on it for several years, already my predecessor tried to realize it, and Nelleke all the time, since she was elected as Secretary General, as a driving force, supported by Jan.

I personally say thank you to all your efforts, thoughts, thinking about possibilities to make the NGO status work.

Now we have the status, and we start discussing and planning, what to do and how to fill it up with life – a new challenge so far.

Of course we will inform the Council for the Laity about the fact and will pose the question what is expected from us.

We are looking forward to the future: We will start a working group concerning the Encyclical “Laudato Sí” and its military implications in reaction to the teaching about just war; and we identified several other aspects to be dealt in the upcoming years.

Two problems left:

First:

I did not get any answer or proposal concerning an experienced and wise priest being our next ecclesiastical assistant – I suppose you unfortunately did not find any in your respective armed forces/Military Diocese. Nevertheless, I hope to be in the situation to present you a candidate after our visit to Rome in November!

Second:

Unfortunately up to now we are homeless in the year 2016, due to the fact, that the USA are not able to organize our conference, as first expected.

I kindly ask our delegations to check at home with their authorities to find a new place. Maybe the Netherlands could show interest on it?

Honestly, I am happy having Croatia, Italy, Slovakia and Lithuania on board. Especially the first three, Marinko and his wife Kristina, Davide, Pavel and Erik, are a new and younger generation, qualified for taking over responsibility in the nearer future in the frame of AMI.

Please, bring my and our all-kindest regards to your Military Bishops!

What remains now is to say:

Thank you to all Spanish Priests, military people and civilians for their outstanding work to make our conference possible. On behalf of our spouses I thank for the wonderful “ladies program” you organized for them. – I know they got a deep inside view in history, architecture, nature and society. I hope they will tell us all about it at home.

I am deeply grateful to His Majesty King Felipe VI, taking the Presidency of Honor on our conference.

I feel obliged to H.E. Minister of Defense, Don Pedro de Morenés y Alvares de Eulate for deciding to support our conference and sending his personal representative Admiral Javier Pery Paredes.

I thank the Chief of Defense Staff, Admiral Fernando García Sanchez, sending Admiral Teodoro Lopez Calderon, Commander Operations, as representative, and I include all other lecturers in my thanks.

I may say Thank you to Archbishop Msgr. Julian Barrio Barrio of Santiago de Compostela and his Auxiliary Bishop Msgr. Jesús Fernandez González for their hospitality in the Cathedral and their friendly mentioning us during the daily Holy Mass.

The Hospedería San Martin Pinario was a perfect setting for our conference, and we received hospitality and even friendship, especially from Ms. Eva Vareles Rodriguez – “Muchas Gracias”!

For me as the president, as for all members, the most important aspect of being here was that we renewed our relationship to Spain. I know, believe me, how exhausting and stressing it is to organizing a conference like this.

I hope and pray that we do not loose connection to you again, Excellency, and all your people we meet.

Please stay with us!

And with these last words, still in the conference room, I declare our 50th General Assembly and conference in Santiago de Compostela closed.

Thank you very much, wishing you all a save journey back home. Be our Lord with all of us!