

## **AMI Working Group 1 Summary**

### **Moderator BGen Father Patrick Dolan**

#### **A) Laudato SI and migrants:**

Mercy is the respect for human persons, but it is limited by a Nation's ability.

Peter Van Uhm: Mercy in military life is "what makes you tick" or deepest values, or moral compass. We agree that we should develop that moral compass in our young military.

- We have been desensitized to human suffering after seeing so much on TV
- Young military could be sent to "handle" refugee issues, like their attacking trucks in France, and the CPL or PVT needs to act with dignity and respect despite difficulties.
- Does some MIL ignore secondary effects of military acts (sacred places destroyed)?

3 types of refugees:

1. Temporary, who need safety, help rebuilding their lives so they can return (// Marshall Plan), but there is a cost factor, and some who come for schooling don't want to return home.
2. Permanent residents: Add to a culture, but accept the new language, laws, and structure of the country. (// Chinatowns in every US city), but there is a shadow side of enough jobs for all.
3. Those who demand that the new country change to their ways. This is an invasion, not refugees, and can be resisted as invasions of Europe (Huns, Mongols, Golden Horde, Ottoman) as saboteurs would be.

Real mercy for refugees means healing back at the root causes—but how?

- Develop good civil leaders with term limits to reduce corruption.
- In Somalia, get UN backing and African Union to get good people there, and help before a leadership vacuum happens.
- Disagreement about whether some situations are hopeless (young boys in Boko Haram).
- Strengthen Christian children to resist indoctrination, and learn to understand other cultures and religions (rather than condemn outright). For example, in Islam, power is the highest form of holiness, so "sharing power in democracy" sounds like "evil".

[Discussion of Colors of Spirituality as used in international diplomacy ensued.]

#### **B) Future of AMI**

As an NGO, AMI could interact with the Vatican, UN, or other groups (PMI, specific countries or bishops, etc.) Agree with group 2 that we advocate only through better info (from lay MIL inside MIL orgs) and that we focus on Vatican rather than UN now.

However, AMI can directly assist individuals through social media (though this needs a dedicated [paid] communication group).

#### **Internal communication:**

Better contact during the year to share "best practices" & develop these.

### **External communication:**

“Rebrand” our image and our approach to bishops, Vatican, associations, etc. as a “lay association.” within the MIL, using lay-to-lay invitations (like a pocket-card Berlin Decl. to give young soldiers the “excuse they need to behave better” when being pressured to do wrong).

### **Methods:**

- E-mail, Facebook and twitter, website with links to stronger info, seasonal encouragements (like 12 days of Christmas, etc.) which individual countries could take turns submitting.
- Pray for other groups (Jews at Yom Kippur, Muslims during Ramadan, etc.) collectively and send them a note.
- Acquire an “app” for AMI and have it be linked to our e-mail and FB postings.
- Christmas card sent to more than delegates, monthly updates of events, prayer requests.
- Advocacy to nations, because we can be listened to more easily than those nations can hear the Vatican (we are lay to lay) or another nation (rivalry, “who are they to tell me what to do?”). This is the excuse to “behave as good Catholics” that some might need to counteract other influences.
- Prophetic stance to bishops who may never have been in the MIL.
- Plan something special for young military at “world youth day” cooperating with the host country in such planning.
- We agree with having an AMI banner at PMI in Lourdes.

### **How to focus on the Vatican:**

(If at the UN at all, go through the Vat. Obs. Office)

1. Visit the Vatican NGO coordinator
2. What are their expectations or any challenges?
3. Visit Vatican officials (laity & Family, Justice and peace, etc.) before our next general assembly & invite them to one of our meals at the combined conference in Rome. [As these offices are getting new “lay” directors for the first time, they might be especially receptive to such a welcoming invitation.]
4. Get help from the Italian Military Ordinariat & other bishops
5. Ask Ital Mil Ord. to help introduce us to the right people in the Vatican
6. Ask bishops to put our press release (and a link to our social media) in their local publications (they can translate them easily into their own languages).

### **Staffing and Funding:**

Group 1 agrees that all this work is too much for a volunteer, so hiring someone even part-time to make such coordinations (especially on social media) will require some fund-raising. Approaching the “network” of retired military who are devoutly Catholic and asking them to contribute not to AMI but to the things AMI is doing (adding the moral dimension to Military training, such as providing the pocket card [and introductions to it through chaplains, etc.] to give young military the excuse to do what is right) might be a way to raise funds to pay for the extra outreach work.