

Summary of Working Group 2

Moderator Prof. dr. Fred van Iersel

Question 1

A serious concern for our military today is the handling of refugees charitably – all while protecting them from any embedded terrorists and also protecting the nation from any such threat. Does your nation or its neighbors have any “best practices” for doing this in a truly Christ like way.

Question 2

AMI recently achieved NGO status and seeks to use that status to help our military members be more faithful to God. What difference does that new status – while remaining essentially the same organization with the same goals – make to your country or its neighbors?

Session 1 – Question 1

The issue of acting mercifully towards refugees can be broken down into 3 levels at which members of AMI can make a credible difference in this situation.

- Individual action
- Military (organization) action
- National/International action

Individual – It is imperative that all individuals engaged in any actions within the humanitarian sphere are trained appropriately. Suitable moral and ethical training and guidance, as well as practical training in dealing with traumatized individuals should be mandatory.

Military – Commanders should allow a suitable level of “mission command” throughout the chain of command, allowing individuals to make moral and ethical command decisions within the parameters of their overarching orders. This allows individuals to act with compassion and mercy in a moral and ethical manner, instead of having an intransigent dogmatic approach to a human crisis.

National/International – Fear within society is the greatest motivation for anti refugee sentiment and national attitude. Individuals who have seen the refugee crisis on a face to face level can witness to the human suffering within their own countries, giving a tangible human face and feelings to refugees and dispelling the fear within their own society.

The crisis has been caused by instability in distant countries; the current refugee crisis is therefore a symptom of a greater illness in those countries. Only by treating the illness can be hoped to cure the symptoms we are experiencing. At an international level it is imperative that a just, clear and common systematic approach is adopted across all nations to cure the illness and to treat the symptoms.

Session 2 – Question 2

This session was recorded on the flip chart, which Marcus has a photo of, however the salient points are as follows.

- AMI as an NGO should only work directly with the Vatican and not directly to other international organizations. This would ensure that no conflict of interests would occur for members within their own Nations.
- AMI would offer advice or opinions to the Vatican on relevant subjects, acting as a Subject Matter Expert, influencing the “War and Peace debate” while remaining politically impartial.
- AMI should also be engaging with other Vatican registered NGOs in appropriate areas and make further connections, build links with other Christian organizations within this field.
- AMI in the future may also wish to act as a conduit for Catholic moral and ethical education for its members, providing shared resources, best practices and materials, thus supporting Catholics within the military in a practical way.
- AMI should also take a greater and more prominent role in the annual military pilgrimage to Lourdes.

To enable AMI to fulfill its role as an NGO it should now begin to formalize its working strategy, improving its communications internally and externally and setting itself SMART goals for the completion of these goals.

- Internal use of modern communications systems is necessary to continue work and debate within AMI, between conferences.
- Externally, by a media package to make AMI and its role wider known in the Vatican, Ordinariate, Bishopric and Military sphere.

To achieve this, AMI should appoint a Media and Communications officer who is responsible for the creation of a Communications plan, and a team to implement this.

Designated national representatives who will act as AMI ambassadors and will remain in the roll long term allowing continuity. Also for the format of the Annual General Assembly and Conference to be changed, with the Conference as the informal discussion phase and the Assembly as the formal voting phase.

AMI should look to further sources of funding to finance its work and again this should be delegated to a finance officer for the organization.

Session 2 – Question 1

In this session we discussed the points raised in the first session and sought to formalize them into a form useful for the annual press release as follows.

Inspired by Laudato Si, we the Catholic members of AMI are convinced that, whenever Military Forces are employed by Nation States in a humanitarian crisis, it is imperative that leaders at all levels ensure they provide and demonstrate sound moral leadership.

A precondition for this is the provision by Nation States, of adequate education and training to their personnel in just, right and compassionate attitudes, actions and decision-making.

In support of this education we recommend to you the pastoral letter "Date Una Carezza" of Italian Military Arch Bishop Santo Marciano, which was inspired by Laudato Si.