

Dear Norbert,

First of all I want to congratulate you with you becoming honorary President of AMI on the 1 of January 2018.

I am really very happy with that. It will create an even more intense solidarity with all of us.

I am standing here with mixed feelings.

On the one hand I am very happy that AMI has a new president, and of course I am proud of the fact that The Netherlands will take over in the person of Vice Admiral Matthieu Borsboom.

I am sure that he will work for AMI with the same enthusiasm as you always did.

On the other hand, I am sad that you are going to resign as an AMI President. Six years we worked very closely together and it feels like an eye blink or like yesterday.

We first met in Vilnius, Lithuania 2005, for both our first General Assembly and Annual Conference and first acquaintance with Apostolat Militaire International. At the time as delegates in our respectively delegations. I remembered us singing songs in the bar of the barracks.

Under the umbrella of the theme: "The Christian Soldier in the Service of Just Peace. "To live authentically according to the Word of God and to spread the gospel" we discussed many interesting topics, with inspiring people giving us great lectures on the topic and many sub topics we brought on in the last 6 years.

We could not work of course without the support of the whole presidency. The first three years with your vice presidents Michael Jedlicka and Markus Stromberger. The last three years Fritz Aflenzer took over the responsibility's of Michael. And of course my deputies Jan van Lieverloo and Herman Vriesema, our treasurer.

As already said by Milan Pregelj, characteristic for you is your great concern about the Roman Catholic Church and all people serving within it, without being dogmatic personally.

You have the right diplomatic and sensitive feeling for what can be achieved. You are approachable en friendly to all people whatever rank or position. And another important quality are your skills to mediate and to keep unity between the orthodox ways and the innovative trends within the church, in the different countries involved in AMI. And last but not least you are a great photographer. Most of the pictures in our booklets and on our website are the ones you made!

But I know also the other side.

Your big concern to keep AMI together, your sleepless nights and the stress you encountered to find solutions for problems that could arise suddenly, such as not having found a host for future conferences.

I know that you send innumerable letters to people all over the world. Send them jubilee books and DVD's, try to convince them that AMI is an important body with knowledge of the armed forces and military life.

The only thing you could not get hold of it was CELAM, the South American Bishops Conference, although official member of AMI, to send delegates from South America to the AMI Conferences. But last year Don Porri from Argentina was with us to give a lecture. I know you tried over and over again. We will keep our hope high!

After the first of January there will be time for a lot of other things you can do without stress, together with Ida, your children and grand children. She is for more than 40 years your wife and your pillar of support. We shared a lot of lovely moments together during our visits to Austria, Rome and all the places we have been for the good cause that is called AMI. Thank you both for your friendship that will continue also after the first of January 2018.

For me it was a great honor and a tremendous pleasure to work together for the Apostolat Militaire International.

Although we had sometimes, different point of views, how things should be done, but after talking we always reached a full agreement of what to do.

And yes I can be very direct and dominant!

Let me come to an end because we will work together another 3 months.

The 31<sup>st</sup> December at 24.00 hours I will call you to wish you and Ida all the best for 2018, realizing that there is a great new Presidency that will take over our work!

Let us now express our deep gratitude with a farewell present.

The Statue "Under the dome of the Cathedral", shall remind you on your time as an AMI president.

"Two angel figures, one with two feet on the ground,

One already with one leg loose,

On the way up to the Highest.

Their eyes meet under a safe spot,

The dome of the Cathedral.

