

PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE PASTORAL CARE OF MIGRANTS AND ITINERANT PEOPLE



XXIII WORLD CONGRESS OF THE APOSTLESHIP OF THE SEA

(Vatican City, 19th-23rd November 2012)

New Evangelization in the maritime world

(New ways and means to proclaim the Good News)

Final Document

The Apostleship of the Sea (AOS) celebrated in the Synod Hall of the Vatican City its XXIII World Congress from November 19-23, 2012, ninety years since Pope Pius XI approved its First Constitution and gave it his blessing.

Gathered in Christ's name as AOS family, experiencing our social, cultural and national differences, we have witnessed the largest World Congress ever organised with the participation of more than 400 delegates from 70 countries.

This Congress took place at the beginning of the Year of Faith and just after the Synod for the New Evangelisation, a movement of the Church to bring anew the good news to all human beings.

During the Congress the speakers and our discussions have challenged us to find creative responses to recurrent problems and we have been inspired by the encounter with Pope Benedict XVI who renewed our mandate:

"I wish today to renew the ecclesial mandate that places you, in communion with your local Churches, in the front line in the evangelization of so many men and women from different nations who pass through your ports. Be apostles faithful to the mission of proclaiming the Gospel, show the loving face of the Church which also welcomes and makes herself close to this portion of the People of God; respond without hesitation to maritime people who wait for you on board to appease the deep longing of their soul and make them feel active members of the community".

With hearts reconfirmed and having lived this time of fraternal communion we return to our ports around the world to continue our ministry of service.

We ask for the grace of God to help us to:

- Be instruments of the New Evangelization in the maritime world through a journey of personal conversion and formation of the heart, guided by the Social Doctrine of the Church utilising all means and ways of communication, including social media.
- Be effective advocates for the people of the sea in political and legislative forums at international and national levels as we cooperate with social partners to ensure the proper implementation of MLC 2006 and the ratification of ILO 188, without delay.
- Strengthen solidarity between AOS of different nations, sharing resources, best practices and developing expertises in various sectors of the maritime industry, more particularly on fishing.
- Support and sustain the families of seafarers and fishers especially the ones experiencing hardships because of criminalization, abandonment or kidnapping of the their loved ones.
- Develop formation courses to prepare qualified chaplains and volunteers for the ministry and empower seafarers to become apostles of evangelization.
- Prepare the centenary celebration of AOS in October 2020, through a programme of individual and collective renewal.
- Deepen our witness to Christ through effective ecumenical collaboration in the midst of the challenges we face and fostering dialogue in charity with people of all backgrounds, cultures and religions.
- Develop a ministry of presence at all levels in the maritime industry to increase awareness on the importance of seafarers' welfare.

We put our trust in the Blessed Virgin Mary, *Star of the Sea*, to accompany us in this sailing.