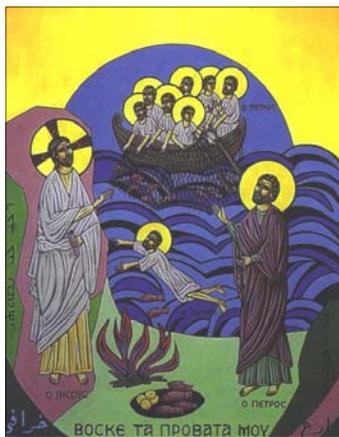




SEA SUNDAY 2009

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THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL ADDRESSES A SPECIAL THANK TO THE PEOPLE OF THE SEA FOR SEA SUNDAY 2009

"While we celebrate Sea Sunday we would like to express our sincere gratitude to the 1,200,000 seafarers of all nationalities on whom we depend for many of our daily needs, and also to fishers, port workers and their families. In this special day the Apostleship of the Sea, faithful to its mission of service and pastoral care of the people of the sea, would like to call for concrete actions that would bring improvements in to the maritime industry".

(On page 2 the full text of the Message)

BENEDICT XVI PROCLAIMS A YEAR FOR PRIESTS

On Friday 19th June 2009, the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Holy Father Benedict XVI proclaimed officially a "Year for Priests" on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the death of Saint John Mary Vianney, the Patron Saint of all parish priests of the world.



"To let oneself be totally won over by Christ! This was the purpose of the whole life of St Paul to whom we have devoted our attention during the Pauline Year which is now drawing to a close – the Pope said -; this was the goal of the entire ministry of the Holy Curé d'Ars, whom we shall invoke in particular during the Year for Priests; may it also be the principal objective for each one of us. In order to be ministers at the service of the Gospel, study and a careful and continuing pastoral and theological formation is of course useful and necessary, but that "knowledge of love" which can only be learned in a "heart to heart" with Christ is even more necessary".

MESSAGE FROM THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL



Maritime industry is one of the most essential activities in our society. Seafarers are responsible for bringing more than 90% of products from one part of the world to another, to satisfy our needs and make our life more comfortable.

Yet, very seldom or not all, do we think about these men and women who often work for months and years on board of vessels moving goods. Many of us had very few opportunities to meet seafarers. Most modern ports are far away from the cities, the mechanization and fast turn around leave crew ship with little time to relax and to come ashore. Maybe this is one of the reasons why we call seafarers the “invisible people”. The romantic notion of a seafarer who would travel to see the world for free is no longer valid, with sea-faring becoming even more difficult than it always has been. Even though the vessels are now fitted with the latest technology to make them more secure and safe, the life of seafarers continues not to be a easy one.

The recent global economic crisis has deeply affected the merchant fleet worldwide, with vessels sent to scrap, others lying at the anchorages in different ports. Crews are fired or abandoned by bankrupt owners and seafarers are willing to accept employment at lower wages and less benefits. Some unscrupulous vessels owners use the flag of convenience to avoid enforcing maritime standards of vessels seaworthiness and safety. Piracy is on the rise on many shipping routes, putting in danger not only the valuable cargo of vessels but more importantly the life of crew members who often suffer lasting psychological effects and leave their families traumatized. Moreover the criminalization of seafarers and the unfair treatment they receive, in the event of maritime accidents, is another hidden danger in their life.

While we celebrate Sea Sunday we would like to express our sincere gratitude to the 1,200,000 seafarers of all nationalities on whom we depend for many of our daily needs, and also to fishers, port

workers and their families. In this special day the Apostleship of the Sea, faithful to its mission of service and pastoral care of the people of the sea, would like to call for concrete actions that would bring improvements in to the maritime industry.

We encourage Governments to recognize the importance and urgency of the *Maritime Labour Convention 2006* and the *Work in Fishing Convention 2007* and to have them ratified so that seafarers and fishers may benefit from them.

We plead for all the seafarers “decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity”.

We condemn piracy and call on the international community to adopt all the necessary measures not only to prevent this happening but also to provide care and support to crew members experiencing such an ordeal.

We call on the respect of the environment and the implementation of legislations to avoid incidents that could put in danger and pollute valuable sea resources.

Moreover we cannot forget the people at sea on board old, rusty and unseaworthy vessels that seek a way to better life by embarking themselves in treacherous and dangerous journeys that could end in tragedy.

We ask Mary “Star of the Sea” to guide and sustain the work of our chaplains and volunteers in their continuous dedication to announce the “Good News to all the creatures” (Mark 16, 15), therefore also to those who are seafarers.

✠ Antonio Maria Vegliò
President

✠ Archbishop Agostino Marchetto
Secretary



AFRICA ATLANTIC SUB-REGIONAL CONFERENCE

(Abidjan, Ivory Coast, 5-6 May 2009)

THE MESSAGE OF THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL

Dear AOS chaplains, volunteers,

As recently appointed President of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, I would like to send you my warm greetings and best wishes of a successful conference.

This Sub-regional meeting is of great importance for all of you who, not without difficulties, have left behind your place of ministry to be together to reflect on the theme: *"The Apostleship of the Sea, today in the seas and ports of West Africa"*.

Meetings like this, at regional and national level, are important and constitute an essential element of our international AOS Work and the driving force of its pastoral care. It is important for us to report, to take into consideration what each one of us has to say, to hear about our difficulties, our successes and our pastoral plans and projects as we do our best to support and develop the maritime apostolate in your region. It is good to feel the solidarity of one another and to know that we are not alone in our sometimes complex, lonely and difficult ministry.

The Pontifical Council sees the importance of the AOS in your vast and difficult region. Since my appointment by the Holy Father, I had the opportunity to know more about the apostolic solicitude of AOS around the world and I realize that even though the circumstances and the priorities are different, we are working together *"to see that the people of the sea are provided abundantly with whatever is required to lead holy lives"* (Motu Proprio, *Stella Maris*, Sec. II Art. II, 2).

About 90% of world trade is by sea, which means that maritime transportation is a major factor of globalization which drives the world economy. Now the economic crisis has affected the maritime world by reducing the international and national movements of vessels, sending many of them to scrap and increasing unemployment among seafarers.

The increase of piracy activities, especially in the Gulf of Aden, has diverted the attention from the

piracy that is affecting the shipping lines in your region and the attacks by militants on oil-rigs and pipelines, that are crippling the developing economy of your area.

The overfishing in your coastal waters, often by large European trawlers and sometimes by "fishing pirates" who trawl without any authorisation, has largely depleted the local fish stocks. This has a direct impact on the rising rate of unemployment and on the ever-increasing flow of West Africans who embark on dangerous journeys to Europe, in search of a better life.

The above mentioned problems are global, but are also local and are affecting your region. You know this reality very well and it is necessary that on reflecting on the actual situation of AOS, today, in West Africa, you will find the answers, that could bring fundamental changes in the life of the people through your pastoral care.

The Pontifical Council follows with great interest the developments of the AOS in your region. There are same encouraging signs: the opening of the new seafarers center in Cotonou (Benin), last year, in July, and this Conference that could be seen as a renewed commitment to bring new enthusiasm into the region.

The XXII AOS World Congress in Gdynia (Poland) invited all of us to be Witnesses of Hope in facing the new challenges that the Church is encountering in the maritime world. Browsing through the conclusion allow me to mention a few:

Meetings like this, at regional and national level, are important and constitute an essential element of our international AOS Work and the driving force of its pastoral care.

Development of AOS

It is necessary to let the Bishops Conference of each country in the region know that: *“The practical implementation of a pastoral outreach to the people of the sea in any region, diocese or port, is the responsibility of the local Church. To ensure this the Apostolic Letter Stella Maris provides for the appointment by the Episcopal Conference of a Bishop Promoter to supervise, foster and promote the AOS”* (Manual, Part I).

Port Chaplains should, occasionally invite their Bishop to celebrate mass for seafarers on board ship or in the fishing port or in the nearest parish and to visit the seafarer center.

Local Churches should feel more and more the call to answer the needs of seafarers and fishers by extending the “borders” of their parishes - so to speak - to include commercial and fishing ports.

Ecumenical cooperation

Pope John Paul II in *Ecclesia in Europa*, No. 54 says: *“The duty of fraternal and committed ecumenical cooperation also emerges as an irrevocable imperative. The future of evangelisation is closely linked to the witness of unity given by all Christ’s followers: “All Christians are called to carry out this mission in accordance with their vocation. The task of evangelisation involves moving towards one another and moving forward together as Christians, and it must begin from within; evangelisation and unity, evangelisation and ecumenism are indissolubly linked”*.

In the maritime world, chaplains and volunteers are expected to be able to work “ecumenically”, and put ecumenism at the heart of pastoral and spiritual life. This implies that chaplains and volunteers are able, conserving their identities, to dialogue with colleagues of other denominations, and are therefore capable of listening to, respecting and sincerely recognising the positive aspects of other people. In places where the ecumenical experience has proved to be successful, the local branch of AOS is encouraged to draw up projects with other Churches and ecclesial Communities, pool resources to implement them and evaluate them together.



Manual for Chaplains and Pastoral Agents

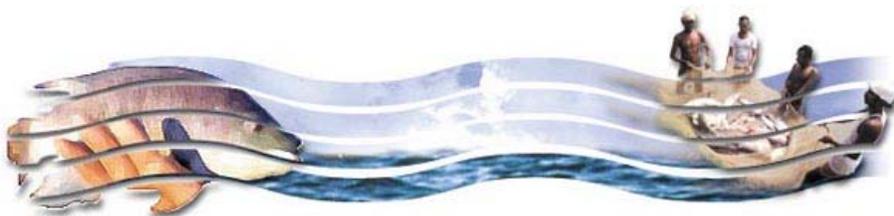
We believe that the Manual which was presented during the XXII AOS World Congress in Gdynia, is an invaluable instrument for the formation of chaplains and volunteers. It was done at cost of big sacrifices for the lot work which was needed. More than before there is an urgent need to create and sustain groups of volunteers who will assist the chaplain and serve as friend, to guide and advocate to the seafarers and fishers who comes to our centers. These people should develop pastoral skills to be able to care and attend to the problems of seafarers and fishers.

The Manual offers guidance in addressing the various issues facing the maritime world today. It has taken in account the latest Church Documents and the most recent legislation on the maritime and fishing sector. It is available in English, French and Spanish and we would like to encourage morally the single region or countries to translate it, all or part of it, in the local languages.

Fishers

Fishers, their families and communities, have traditionally been an important part of AOS pastoral care and ministry. Perhaps it is also the most difficult sector to approach from a pastoral point of view. *“Most of what has been or will be said concerning pastoral care, etc., can be applied to fishers on board international fishing vessels. There are also however matters which deserved to be considered and addressed specifically in ministering to fishers and ministering to them is a challenge because the needs and the situations of fishers and theirs families are very different”* (Manual, Part VII).

In the Regional Coordinators meeting held last February at the of-



fices of our Pontifical Council it was mentioned that available statistics on different aspects of fisheries, if and when submitted to international organization (FAO, ILO, ITF), are scarce, incomplete and of low quality. It was recommended that AOS with his extensive network of Centers around the world and grassroots contacts could be a reliable source of information especially in regard to the welfare of fishers. It was also suggested to make an extra effort to create avenues for single fisher owners to talk among themselves and invite to our Centers and parishes, groups of fishers to share their concerns and get pastorally organized.

Fishers and fishing communities must be empowered through different form of educations to stand up for their rights and advocate for the adoption and implementation of FAO/IMO instruments and especially the latest ILO Work on Fishing Convention (188).



Ship visit

In these days of fast turn around, limited stay of vessels in the port and restriction of ISPS Code, often the crews find difficult to come ashore. They are forced to stay on board and they are usually strangers to the cultures, languages, and people of the ports where they dock. Therefore they are glad to receive the visit of a chaplain or a volunteer from the center. Ship visit is the concrete sign of the pastoral concern the Church has for seafarers and fishers. Without visits the local Church would not exist for them.

Communication

With the technological development especially in the sector of communication, a great number of instruments (internet, e-mail, VOIP, cellular phone, etc.) are commonly available to almost everyone,

to facilitate sharing of information and immediate communication. Unfortunately in spite of these facilities, now a days it seems, that in your region, has become more difficult to keep in touch with one another. Sharing and confronting our ideas, with the knowledge of what happens in the country or in the port next to mine is an essential part of our work as AOS, because we do not work in isolation but as a team, even though in different places.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to H. E. Monsignor Jean Pierre Kutwa, Archbishop of Abidjan, who welcomed you in his Diocese, to Fr. Cyrille Kete, your untiring Regional Coordinator, who with determination has been able to organize this meeting in spite of the many problems encountered, and to Fr. Celestin Ikomba for making your stay comfortable.

From Rome, I will be accompany you with my prayers. I place these days of reflection and sharing under the mantle of Mary, *the Star of the Sea*, that will guide and lead your thoughts and decisions for the benefit of seafarers and fishers.

✠ Antonio Maria Vegliò, President

✠ Archbishop Agostino Marchetto, Secretary

CALENDAR OF REGIONAL MEETINGS

As the cost has become prohibitive, AOS meetings have to be organized whenever feasible back to back with other meetings. The Regional Conferences schedule for 2009 is the following:

East Asia:

July 20-24, Cebu, Philippines

Indian Ocean:

August 2-8, Durban, South Africa

Latin America:

October 25-29, CELAM Meeting for AOS, Lima, Perú

Oceania:

November 13-15, Brisbane, Australia

South Asia:

November 21-24, India

PRESENTED IN GENOA DURING THE NATIONAL CONGRESS OF THE APOSTLESHIP OF THE SEA, THE FIRST RESEARCH REPORT ON: "SEA WORKERS' WELFARE AND THE SERVICES OFFERED BY THE 60 ITALIAN PORTS" (APRIL 3, 2009) *

A PHOTOGRAPH OF THE PEOPLE OF THE SEA

Rev. Giacomo Martino, *National Director Apostleship of the Sea-Italy*

This research is unique in its kind. This is not only because, for once, it talks about men and women instead of infrastructures, but also because of its overall view of seafarers in their activity outside of work. The fact that the people of the sea are in constant movement gives this work a real international character. The sea workers who transit in an Italian port today were in the far-off Americas just a few days before and will reach the Indies soon after. These people are at the center of this study and our daily hospitality activity in the ports.

We are talking about a relatively young people (almost 50% of them are under 35). On a world aver-

*This is a statistical inquiry focused on welcoming the seafarers who transit in the Italian ports every year and making the Italian ports "real friendly ports" in the world panorama of installations that often increase the seafarers' difficulties in living a normal life by making contact with their families and their world of origin difficult. The report, unique in its kind, was made in Genoa at the initiative of the Migrantes Foundation, in collaboration with the Port Authorities, and carried out by the University of Genoa.

age, they have a good education and 60% of them master two or more foreign languages (up to 7 different languages). Their knowledge of other languages is not limited to simple greetings or polite remarks. They need to be able to organize a new route, correct the stability of the hull or repair an electronic apparatus, as well as act quickly in emergencies under the direction of an official who uses terminology that everyone can understand. So seafarers are sufficiently educated, and, at the same time, their experience of living with people of different cultures and origins enables them to learn new cultural horizons from the "living book" which are the *others*.

One fundamental element that is often just alluded to in this flow of numbers and statistics is the real engine of a seafarer's life: his family. In fact, not even 4% of the sea workers are under 21 and thus

embarked at a very young age before forming a family of their own. The rest of the sample is represented by 62% of married or separated seafarers with families of their own. These families are like "orphans" for long months during the absence of one or both parents. In the periods of disembarkation they try to regain the lost affectivity, but they are soon obliged to interrupt it once again for a new embarkation...

In the same way, or rather in a more acute way, it appears difficult to stay up-to-date on the news about one's country. When a seafarer navigates far from his homeland (about 70% of the transits considered on the Italian coasts), he also loses contact with civil, cultural and religious society. A few, brief phone calls are not enough to get even a minimum

amount of useful information and live one's citizenship of origin...An example for everyone to remember is the episode of the two Sri Lankan seafarers who only

learned on February 20, 2007, after reading one of our information bulletins distributed on board, about the enormous tragedy of the tsunami that had occurred two months earlier in their country. These episodes are not rare among people who work on the sea...



Many sea workers intend to continue this activity their whole lives. There is no doubt that compared to the economic potentialities of the salaries they would get in their own countries, life at sea enables them to be better off. On the contrary, those who come from North Africa or South America intend to work in order to get the capital they need to set up an activity on land. If these are the expectations, reality is different. While it is true that the average salary, especially for the seafarers who come from developing countries, appears to be extremely high, it is also true that these people are the most globalized of all, even in a negative sense. This means that living all around the world in contact with economies different from those of their countries of origin induces these savers to spend more. When people born in countries where one survives with the bare essentials come into direct contact with modern consumerism, they develop new needs and new "status symbols" which often put off for many years, with respect to the expectations they had at the start, the fulfillment of their economic plan and thus their definitive disembarkation.

Religiosity in the broadest sense is one of the few firm points of the people of the sea. Almost 84% say that they are religious in some way...Nearly three-quarters of the so-called believers declare they are Christian...Each one's devotion, which is lived in different ways, must find its right recognition if we want to talk about the true welfare of the people of the sea. Only attention to man in his entirety ensures against forms of particularism and sectorialness that only generate partiality...

Despite the great work done on the international level to give ships a flag that will provide a certain reference point for the validity of the contracts and the certainty of receiving a salary or being taken care of and repatriated, all of this is still highly compromised by the flags of convenience or the so-called "shadow flags". This phenomenon generates a further form of precariousness in the seafarers because very often the contracts made under these flags are little more than scrap paper and they are not recognized on the international level. This factor of high fragility, together with the fear of not embarking again, keeps these crews entirely in the hands of the unscrupulous ship owners. Even if some ship owners are recognized as serious people, the choice of a flag of convenience raises a great question mark for the personal future of each member of the crew...

NATIONAL CONGRESS APOSTLESHIP OF THE SEA-ITALY

About seventy delegates from almost every part of Italy attended the Congress. The Archbishop of Genoa, Card. **Angelo Bagnasco**, was present together with the Bishop Promoter, Archbishop **Calogero La Piana**, and Archbishop **Agostino Marchetto**, the Secretary of this Pontifical Council, who brought the greetings from the universal Church. He said, "Regarding the data gathered on the occasion of this research, it is important for the AM and all the other factors that express the port and society to make an in-depth reflection in order to know the seafarers' needs better and respond to them not only by creating more 'personalized' structures, but also by intensifying the effort to give formation to volunteers and officials. They must be linguistically, culturally and religiously prepared to welcome with an open heart the more and more numerous international crews".

Rev. **Hennie LaGrange**, the Secretary General of the ICMA., who was also present at the meeting, stressed the priorities that profoundly impact the lives of the seafarers and their families and on which the maritime ministry should focus: the phenomenon of piracy; firing and abandonment because of the economic recession; the ratification and application of the ILO MLC2006 Convention; the current tendency to criminalize the seafarers.

This research has helped us to understand how the interventions should be different in relation to the ship's typology. The diversity of each port is thus codified in relation to the typologies of ships it intends to welcome. These are the different categories of ships which, apart from the flag of nationality, often have specialized groups by nationality, a unified duration of stops, and ways of handling similar cargo. According to the ship's typology, a different kind of welcome must be planned for the crews. One example for everyone could be the port of Gioia Tauro. It is specialized in the traffic of container ships compared to other port areas destined to General Cargo that carry loose material. In the first case, we will have ships that stop from 7 to 21 hours with cargo movements 24 hours a day with the help of the crew, whereas in the second case we will have much longer stops that can be up to 5/6 days during which the seafarers are used to a minimum. These time pe-

riods and the use or non use of the crew lead respectively, in the first case, to having to solve needs directly through the visit on board, while in the second case hospitality in the centers like Stella Maris has to be used more...



The lack of transportation both within the ports and to reach the cities, together with the great difficulties in communication because of language, are highly invalidating elements even for just having access to buying some medicine. The long processes that have been created in the name of security to impede terror attacks from the ships to the city do not find a corresponding service that makes it possible to satisfy in a few minutes the need for communication with one's family in one's community. Many times the 2/3 hour shore leave for some members of the crew is not even enough to cover the distance from the ship to the city. The procedures for non community members to obtain permissions to go out of the port area are more seriously inadequate, and often, for different, ungrounded reasons, such permissions are not issued...

Lastly, there are some signs that point to new great changes under way starting from a new "people of the sea". They are represented by the Chinese mono-ethnic crews which, as was once the case with crews from the former Soviet Union, get down from the ship in little groups headed by one of them who speaks English. These are the new challenges that also pass through the reciprocal study of new languages and cultures in order to make a real

personal encounter with each one possible. The so-called "economic crisis" has brought the theme of abandoned ships to the forefront. In Italy alone, from December 15, 2008 to January 10, 2009, there were no less than 14 "calls" indicating a possible kidnapping/abandonment of ships and crews by the ship owners. To date, we have about ten situations where their primary needs are supported locally (this often involves giving food, clothing and water) and, through the ITF, when possible, legal assistance to obtain recognition of credit and, repatriation.

This phenomenon requires the harmonized action not only of all the institutional members of the port, but also of all the cities to which the port is closely connected and which receive from the port. Despite the efforts of our centers throughout Italy, until now it has not been possible to cover even 5% of the transits examined by this research. There is no doubt that this data makes us reflect on the need to continue the work begun with the territorial committees for maritime welfare. A series of synergies needs to be built that will allow the welfare workers to have greater impact on the cases of particular need, in addition to providing proportionately shared support for all the others. The port pilot, the first to go on board, can be the first one to point out the need to continue together with all the other subjects from the towboats to the people who moor, to the ship agents, to those from security and the port authorities, and not last of all to our volunteers...Only through everyone's effective and real coordination, including the seafarers who transit in our ports, will they be able to really recognize them as "friendly ports".

INFORMATION

This is the second issue of "Apostolatus Maris Bulletin" that we are sending in electronic format. The feed back after the first issue has been very positive and encouraging.

We thank you for your support and we ask you to send us any information/article you think could be useful for other AOS to know.

Moreover, we request your collaboration to help keep our e-mail addresses updated, by informing us of any changes.

ONE SAME WORD, ONE SAME FAMILY

XXIII National Assembly of the Apostleship of the Sea of Spain



... It is not because someone is born in a maritime environment, or one of his grandfathers, a brother and a brother-in-law have drowned, or because there have always been all sorts of coastal fishing boats (sardine boats, launches, etc.) in his home since his great-great grandparents' time and then deep-sea fishing boats and all kinds of nets. No, it is not for this reason that someone is an expert.

We need to know how to deepen and decipher the signs of the times, as John Paul II advises. We understand that in the evangelizing process an attitude of constant deepening is needed which involves openness to the voice of the Spirit. As one profane writer says, "We always have to keep a window of the soul open because we never know when we will get a call through it".

For Christians, this call is constant and it is found in the Gospel. It is enough to keep our souls open so that the Good News will penetrate them with all its strength ... Prayer is fundamental: it constitutes our umbilical cord with the transcendent world, the world of grace and faith. It is the compass along our way. Without it, it is easy to go astray. We know this from our own and others' experience...

In our NODI (Diocesan News) I read: "Christianity is an experience of faith before it is a message of faith". From those same pages I am copying a note from *Redemp-*

toris Missio (Nos. 42-43) which applies to our evangelizing task: "People today put more trust in witnesses than in teachers, in experience than in teaching, and in life and action than in theories. The witness of a Christian life is the first and irreplaceable form of mission: Christ, whose mission we continue, is the 'witness' *par excellence* (Rv 1:5; 3:14) and the model of all Christian witness". "The evangelical witness which the world finds most appealing is that of concern for people, and of charity toward the poor, the weak and those who suffer. The complete generosity underlying this attitude and these actions stands in marked contrast to human selfishness. It raises precise questions which lead to God and to the Gospel. A com-

tended to his natural environment (the price of Christ's redemption) since God entrusted the continuity of creation to man. This was one of the objectives analyzed and proposed in the Rio Congress (2002): namely, to transform the oceans of refuse into a source of life and wealth. The ecological concept is an eminently Christian idea and it was revealed in Genesis when God entrusted man with the task of giving a name to all the animals and plants in creation and cultivating the land. In short, a general, comprehensive pastoral program has integral man and his environment as its objective. By creating us in his image and likeness, God gave us the mission to cultivate and transform the world so that we would be co-creators with him.

Here we report a synthesis of the opening speech of the Rev. Agustín Romero Lojo, National Director of the Apostleship of the Sea, Spain, at the XXIII National Assembly held in Santa Pola, between the 16th and the 19th April 2009.
Many interesting reflections may be drawn from it for our Apostolate for the People of the Sea.

mitment to peace, justice, human rights and human promotion is also a witness to the Gospel when it is a sign of concern for persons and is directed toward integral human". "The Church is called to bear witness to Christ by taking courageous and prophetic stands in the face of the corruption of political or economic power".

The dignity of the Human Person as God's creature can be ex-

For this reason, one of the fundamental values of our evangelization must take education and the cultivation of ecological values into consideration. Love of God includes love of creation, and what we love we take care of. It is necessary to bring to the surface the hidden, deep love which the man of the sea feels for this element of creation that provides him with food and well-being. This almost

religious sentiment should lead us to make a commitment to respect, study, improve and cultivate the environment. The people of the sea's concept of fishing as extraction or depredation needs to be changed to a concept of being a caretaker and cultivator. We are at a crucial moment in the marine economy similar to the prehistoric happening that changed man from a predator to a farmer.

We need to be attentive to the changes already taking place from extractive fishing to cultivated fishing, in addition to other economic uses of the wealth of our coasts, such as the sale of the marine flora with a projection into branches of the food, cosmetic, and the health-pharmaceutical industries. Therefore, we need to encourage our people of the sea to cooperate and get integrated into this kind of projects in the framework of rules, of course, that will contribute to the enrichment of the coast.

Respect for the environment, care and love of nature, is the only argument to avoid uncontrolled exploitation of the environment which, in the long term, leads us to economic as well as cultural and personal impoverishment as is already happening. Evangelization and faith must strengthen us to combat the excessive ambition to get rich quick at the cost of destroying the environment.

This principle is also valid against the invasion of tourist constructions on the beaches and coasts. We have to defend the laws regarding distance which the municipal authorities have set down to ensure quality tourism that will not destroy nature or transform our oceans into refuse, as the Rio Congress requested.

Ecology is respect, cultivation, study and above all care of that part of the world which God gave to the Christian inhabitants of the coast. The light of the Gospel

needs to be reflected in these activities too. And this evangelization is carried out in solidarity and with the parish rectors of the maritime peoples. From my own experience in the zonal meetings and retreats, I can tell you that this theme arouses great interest because of its complex aspects that include and directly affect the inhabitants of the coastal areas...

... In the past years, the tourist routes of the great transatlantic ships and their stops in the Spanish ports have increased. As a result, the need to take care of the tourists and seafarers from these ships is greater and obliges us to prepare visitors immediately and urgently...We encourage the Delegations in whose ports cruise or containers ships stop to prepare visitors from their collaborators possibly among the ones who know English in order to communicate with the crews of foreign ships...

We have already mentioned this on various occasions and we note it more and more when we meet with the parish rectors from the coast: namely, joy and apostolic hope because of the survival of religious beliefs in the emotional world of the seafarer's soul. The parish is also a seedbed for future professionals who carry out their work with faith and the dignity of children of God. This is something vital at the present moment because of the desertion which the maritime profession has been undergoing for years...

The most outstanding positive point is the presence of the Apostleship of the Sea in the Spanish maritime world: that is, in each and every parish community on the entire coast. We need to fortify this aspect through integral evangelization, as the Pontifical Council encourages us to do. This will consider study and knowledge of the environment for its cultivation and

enrichment, the dignity of the profession, ecological respect, sharing professional experiences with immigrant seafarers, and making known and exalting the typical values of people of the sea: hard-work, solidarity, generosity and religiosity. We also point out...the lack of teams of committed collaborators. Part of evangelization as transmission of the faith is to encourage in generous hearts ... those values of solidarity and generosity in the use of their time. We can most likely get the hoped-for response from that list of candidates.

The mission of our apostolate also brings us to collaborate with the political port institutions in all the projects that favor the seafarers' welfare during their stops in the ports. The Stella Maris centers contribute and will contribute to this objective. We think that this is one of the projects that has given and still gives the greatest service to the people of the sea when they arrive in a port after long days of hard work and long periods of navigation. We are happy to see in some ports this renewed desire to help and collaborate with the port authorities through our Delegations.

I would not wish to conclude without mentioning the great dangers that threaten our seafarers the most: the lack of legal safety on boats with flags of convenience that can leave them abandoned in any port, and pirate vessels, with the possibility of being kidnapped at sea.



SEA RESCUES

A DUTY AND A MATTER OF CONSCIENCE!

Statement of Erika Feller, Assistant High Commissioner - Protection, UNHCR
INTERTANKO Annual Tanker Event, Tokyo, Japan, 14 May 2009 (*Excerpts*)

Rescue at sea is a time-honoured tradition, a fundamental matter of conscience and an international legal responsibility. It is also under serious strain due to factors as diverse as the global economic crisis, the resurgence of piracy, a growth in trans-national crimes like people-smuggling, as well as the not-unrelated re-appearance of xenophobia together with a hardening attitude on the part of governments to irregular immigration of all sorts. The imperative of protecting the tradition of rescue at sea against further erosion in the face of, or in spite of, such a multiplicity of concerns is the subject of my presentation ...

Globalisation has greatly and positively facilitated the legal movement of goods and money around the world. The same cannot be said for movement of people. While there are now many more international transport possibilities, these have been accompanied by a tightening of the rules when it comes to entry into third countries, coupled with a marked growth in the obstacles created to obstruct the progress of the would-be entrants. While this might be understandable in itself, it means for refugees, who have to flee to protect the physical integrity of themselves and their families from persecution, war or gross discrimination, it is becoming harder and harder to find the necessary asylum on

a legal basis. The attitude they confront, which is increasingly narrowing asylum space, is "ok, we sympathise with your plight, but resolve it please in some other country". One clear if un-



toward result of this has been, aside from refoulement or return of refugees back to the danger they have tried to escape, that achieving illegal entry has become big business for people smugglers. This is particularly the case when it comes to sea arrivals.

Boat people are not a new phenomenon. One only needs to cast one's mind back to the '80's and early 90's which witnessed one of the largest scale outflow of people by sea, from the countries in Indo-China. Today the press on any one day is likely to be reporting, in main or side articles depending on the loss of life, the latest arrival of boats and their human cargo to the shores of Yemen, Mauritania or Malta, the islands off Australia, the countries in the South China Sea, or the European islands of Lampedusa in Italy, the Canaries of Spain, or the Greek Is-

lands like Mytilene off the Turkish coast. The problem is that the media visibility of sea arrivals conjures up images out of proportion to their actual numbers in global movements. Even leaving aside mass influxes of refugees, boat arrivals are actually but a small percentage of the overall total of asylum seekers arriving in destination countries ...

Examples are a regular occurrence ... Loss of life is a real and constant threat. The boats are inadequate, the smugglers are unscrupulous, and the individuals are ill-equipped for such a journey. Unfortunately these facts are not a sufficient disincentive to departure; the push factors are stronger than the fears of the journey, meaning that the journeys will be attempted regardless. The push factors are more often than not a complicated mix of refugee and migrant concerns, including war, human rights violations and unsustainable lives at home, which blend with pull factors including reunification with families and the lure of better economic and education possibilities abroad. Quite often the ability and inclination of the coastal states from which boats depart to control these departures is very limited, given long coastlines and the amounts of money changing hands, encouraging local authorities to turn a blind eye. There may also be a certain

sympathy for those seeking a more sustainable life for themselves and their families, or even a sense of "it's not our problem as the people do not want to stay". Either way, there will always be those who will help the migrants and refugees on their way for different reasons but particularly in light of the lucrative financial incentives.

Their rescue is imperative, but far from uncomplicated in itself. The rescuer is most often an official vessel of a coastal state, but may well be also a private commercial vessel ... It is of course abundantly clear that tankers are not provisioned or expertised as rescue ships. The costs of playing that role are many. Delays mean lost revenue. Passengers on board, even for a short period, can be a health and security hazard. Disembarkation of irregular entrants brings ships into a legal interaction with port authorities. The explosion of pirate attacks and the concerns this must give rise to when considering who and how to rescue is a whole other set of issues. These inevitably all weigh heavily in decisions by ships masters about how to respond to boat people situations...

145 States have signed on to the international Refugee Convention, the 1951 Convention, which prevents them from denying entry if this exposes the asylum seekers to risk to life or persecution. The Convention contains a regime of rights and responsibilities which adherents are legally bound to respect for refugees. In addition, basic humanitarianism and the broader the human rights framework which most states today have also adhered to, demands that

for all persons, refugees or not, the right to life be respected and that no-one is treated in a way that is cruel, inhuman or degrading. In short, when it comes to boat arrivals states are obligated under international law, and quite probably under their own laws as well, to respond in a principled way to refugees and others seeking their protection and assistance.

Then, there is another regime of rights and responsibilities which is directly relevant. The rescue of persons in distress at sea is an obligation under international law, quite aside from being a humanitarian necessity, regardless of who the people are, or their reasons for moving. Hence we chose, in the magazine we circulated at this conference, to caption the title page, "Refugees or Migrants - when it matters". Clearly it doesn't matter at the rescue stage. Our understanding is that the integrity of the global search and rescue regime, as governed by the 1974 International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea and the 1979 International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue, must be scrupulously protected, as a responsibility of the international community as a whole. Obviously ships masters have a first duty to assist, triggered at the outset of the rescue and ending when passengers have been disembarked at a place of safety. How this duty is exercised will be influenced by factors such as the safety and well-being of the ship and its crew and the appropriateness of the place of landing, measured against factors such as safety, closeness and the ship's pre-rescue schedule. Here the professional judgment of the ships masters is key. But it is also the

responsibility of States, under international law and as an imperative for the preservation of the time-honoured practice of rescue, to facilitate the rescue in every possible way, including not least through an approach which minimizes the losses and inconvenience to private actors in fulfilling their maritime obligations. Clearly this calls for expedited disembarkation, in the first instance.

UNHCR is not a maritime law entity. We are a refugee



protection agency. However in fulfilment of our protection responsibilities we have found it necessary both to engage with ships masters and coastal and flag states in the maritime law context and, more generally, to advocate for approaches to sea rescues which respect not only refugee law but the fundamentals of maritime law, so that refugees are not doubly jeopardised by being passed by on the high seas. We have hence advocated strongly with our State interlocutors for acceptance and respect of baseline understandings here: that ships masters who undertake rescue operations should not be seen as part of the problem but that their actions in saving the lives of persons in distress should be recognized and supported by states; that a non-state vessel is not an appropriate place to screen and categorize those rescued, or devise solution for them, nor should such a vessel

(to be continued on page 14)

LIVING TOGETHER AS DISCIPLES OF CHRIST SO THE WORLD WILL BE SAVED

FINAL DECLARATION OF THE 2009 NATIONAL MEETING

The Mission of the Sea held its national meeting in La Rochelle on the Feast of the Ascension 2009 on the theme: «**Living together as Disciples of Christ so the world will be saved**». Our role in the Church is to be a sign of God's communion with men and among men by offering our specific grain of salt to the maritime world.

We have targeted the persistence of serious problems which the current crisis intensifies bringing many difficulties into families.

Regarding fishing, we are attentive to a carefully thought out control of fishing which makes it possible to preserve the resource and assure dignified working and living conditions for the fishers and their families.

We are disturbed by the possibility of a transfer of fishing quotas and the reduced place left to fishers in the protected marine ar-

reas. We encourage fishers and their representative organizations to strengthen their effective presence in the professional bodies so that decisions will be made together with them.

As to trade, the laying up of many ships leads to a decrease in jobs and the unemployment of many seafarers. The acts of piracy off the coast of Somalia concern us because they make navigation dangerous and perilous for seafarers, some of whom have been taken hostage, wounded or killed.

In the ports, around the ports of call and where seafarers are received, we see progress in the creation of port welfare commissions, but we regret the slowness with which they are set up. We are concerned about the hospitality houses' financial durability.

We note the united efforts by associations and Churches that work for the seafarers' welfare

PROSPECTS AND COMMITMENTS OF AM INTERNATIONAL AND THE MISSION OF THE SEA

Illegal fishing and a certain iniquity in the fishing agreements between countries of the North and those of the South are regularly denounced, especially by the small-scale fishers of the South. Rules to combat illegal and uncontrolled fishing are set up by the countries of the North (the ones that have the means), but they are contested by the countries of the South which criticize them because they give little consideration to their small-scale fishers.

On the European and French level, the revision of the Common Fish Policy is a major challenge for the fishers' future. The handling of quotas is surely the crucial point. There is talk about creating individual transferable quotas (attributed to vessels and re-sellable). In some countries, such as Canada or the Netherlands, this has led to the disappearance of small-scale fishers to the benefit of large ship owners with great financial means. Canada had to buy back its quotas in order to redistribute them to the small fishers.

Another subject of concern for fishers is the creation of protected marine areas. The idea is to preserve the quality of the coastal ecosystem by limiting—or regulating—some activities there. This concerns all those who use the coast (towns, tourists, fishers...). What restrictions will be imposed on them? A flourishing of marine wind farm projects is noted and considerable achievements have been made or are under way (Netherlands, United Kingdom...).

with the support of the directions of the People of the Sea. We see this as a positive sign.

The Mission of the Sea takes part in hospitality for seafarers from cruise ships, as in Marseilles, and it is starting to be present among their crews and passengers.

Our difficulty continues to be reaching the youngest people in the schools and on board. Some initiatives have been made, such as in Marseilles, Ciboure and Saint Malo, but they need to be intensified.

The professional seafarers from pleasure boats also continue to be a concern, but they can only be reached with the participation of the local Churches.

From the viewpoint of salvation, there is still a long way to go. For us, the maritime world continues to be a world of mission. Changes will only be made by taking into consideration the aspirations and skills of all the actors in the maritime world through a mutually respectful dialogue in partnership with all people of good will and constant concern for the most disadvantaged.

La Rochelle, Sunday, May 24, 2009
Msgr. Philippe Martin, President
Father Guy Pasquier,
National Secretary

(continued from page 12)

be used as a floating detention centre; that the ships master has the right to expect the assistance of coastal states with facilitation of disembarkation and completion of the rescue; that states should not impose a requirement that shipping companies or their insurers cover the repatriation costs of people rescued at sea as a precondition for the disembarkation; that disembarkation procedures should not be governed by immigration control objectives and that the responsibility for finding solution to enable timely disembarkation in a humane manner rests exclusively with States and not with private actors ...

In conclusion, ships masters and the companies they work for are not alone in doing the right thing. Rescue at sea has centuries of tradition and law behind it. Distinctions between refugees or migrants, visa-carrying or illegal entrants do not matter at the point of rescue. The responsibility not to pass people by is however holistic, implicating not only the ships masters, but also the companies for which they work, the flag and coastal states who are party principals in the rescue, and the international community as a whole, including the United Nations agencies such as our own. Only if it is approached as a shared, or collective, responsibility dependent upon all the concerned actors playing committedly their proper role, will it survive not only as a principle, but most important as an actual practice. We can encourage, even facilitate, this responsibility-sharing. But we need you - or rather the refugees need you - to commit wideheartedly to it as well.

The fishers do not control the sale price of their fish. The old auction system lets the buyer set the price. However, it would really be necessary to compensate the loss in the volume of catches by giving them greater value if we still want to have fish and fishers in the near future.

On June 15, 2007, the ILO adopted a Work in Fishing Convention. This Convention sets down new norms aimed at ensuring: improved occupational safety and health and medical care at sea; sufficient rest periods; respect for work agreements, and the same social security protection as other workers. A right to inspect ships and the seafarers' conditions ought to remove sub-standard vessels, but in many countries these controls are not made too frequently because of a lack of qualified personnel or a lack of political will to carry them out.

This is the world in which the international Apostolatus Maris and the Mission of the Sea in France are committed. With regard to the fishing sector, especially small-scale fishing, the local Churches' involvement is essential in order to ensure a presence among the seafarers. All along the coast there is a port in almost every coastal village. The seafarers go out to sea for brief periods and are never far from the Christian communities for long. The seafarers' wives are essential links between the Churches and the men at sea and they play an important role in the Church's presence in the maritime world.

The seafarers in industrial fishing, like their fellow workers in trade, live sequences of being present and absent and this calls for a specific presence. This is the role of the port chaplains.

Philippe Martin

DESPITE THE CRISIS

EUROPEAN CRUISE MARKET CONTINUES TO GROW



Floating hotels that are more and more like vacation villages, a variety of offerings, quality services, trained personnel and ever more accessible means: the cruise market in Europe continues to grow despite the economic crisis and go against the trend of a certain reduction in demand in the tourist sector.

Last June 5th in Genoa, the Archbishop of the city Cardinal Bagnasco “christened” the two newest cruise ships of the Costa company: the “Pacifica” (114,500 tons, 3,780 guests and 1,050 crew members), and the “Luminosa” (92,600 tons for a maximum of 2,826 guests and 921 crew members). It was a unique event that won Costa certification in a new Guinness World Records category: “Most ships inaugurated in one day by one company”. Three more ships will be delivered by 2012.

The MSC Cruises has also decided to strengthen its fleet. After the launch of “Fantasia” last December in Naples, next it will be the twinship “Splendida” ’s



turn, the tenth ship (133,000 gross tonnage, 3,971 guests and 1,332 crew members) whose “christening” is planned for July 12th in Barcelona.

This new generation of vessels also keeps a careful eye on ecology. In fact, the “Luminosa” is equipped for *cold ironing*, a system that enables ships in the wharf to get electric current from land without keeping their motors on, while the “Splendid” will boast the most innovative technological systems to guarantee energy conservation and protect the environment, from *energy saving* to the system for treating sewage and waste water.

So despite the delicate stage we are going through globally, this itinerant model of tourism continues to grow and create considerable allied industries and activities that move money and create jobs. But what are the reasons for this success? They seem to lie in the “standardization” of the product which has been adapted to the changes in the market and succeeded in transforming a traditionally “luxury” product into a mass product with a quality-price ratio that other sections of the tourism sector generally do not have. Moreover, the ships operate 365 days a year and the

companies plan their product a year in advance.

Also for 2009 the trend in Europe continues to be positive, so much so that it can be stated that the cruise segment has the greatest growth rate in the entire tourism sector (approximately 10% in terms of passengers and 32 billion Euros in value, giving work to 311,000 employees).

When passengers get on board, they feel carefree in what we could call a luxurious atmosphere where they are served and pampered by people ready to satisfy their legitimate requests. But who are these men and women who cook, wash, tidy up, iron, welcome and entertain, and who almost no one remembers? And yet, a ship’s crew undoubtedly represents one of the factors in a cruise’s greatest success. In fact, a professional, calm crew not only contributes to making the passengers’ experience positive, but it also favors the ship’s efficient operation. Many young people surely dream of working on the cruise ships, but only a few can imagine what this kind of work really involves: a more or less long apprenticeship on board, rigid discipline, and hard work with a constant smile on one’s lips. Belonging to a crew can also be stressful in the long term: prolonged separation from

one's family, constant cohabitation with people of different cultures and nationalities (on a large ship there can be as many as 50 of them), long working hours and few possibilities to go on land.

For several years the Apostleship of the Sea of different countries has been ensuring an on-going pastoral presence on these ships through its chaplains. They pay attention to the human and religious dimension of crews and passengers by becoming seafarers among seafarers and sharing their "joys and hopes, sorrows and anxieties" (*Gaudium et Spes*, No. 1).

Rev. Luca Centurioni, the head chaplain of the Italian Apostleship of the Sea in this sector, says: "The chaplain's service is to a seafarer's whole person with his more material needs, which are to have some support services (receiving and sending correspondence, safe-keeping money, etc.), and his more spiritual needs (the need to talk to someone about his problems on board or at home, advice regarding personal decisions he has to make, mediation in relations with the other companions on board, the search for God, comfort in loneliness or suffering). The greatest attention is given to understanding each one's needs and reconciling them with the needs of all. In this sense, a chaplain's task is to intuit the needs and hopes of individuals who are so different from one another because of their race, language, culture and religion, and to try to help everyone by working for the good of the whole community on

board. We can gather from this how the crew's welfare is (also) an essential feature for an excellent service because the first resource for offering quality service to the guests is not the ship itself but the excellent service of all the personnel on board".

A ship is like a great floating parish and the chaplain on board is the priest, counselor, guide and animator, a parish rector on a par with his confrere from a parish on land.

EXTENDING RESPONSIBLE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT TO THE OCEAN DEEPS

ON WORLD OCEANS DAY,
FAO RELEASES TECHNICAL
GUIDELINES ON DEEP SEA FISHING



8 June 2009, Rome - On the first-ever UN World Oceans Day FAO has published a set of technical guidelines aimed at helping the fisheries sector reduce its impacts on fragile deep-sea fish species and ecosystems.

The guidelines provide a framework that countries can use, individually and in the context of regional fisheries management organizations, to manage deep sea fisheries (DSF) in high-seas areas outside of national jurisdictions.

Many deepwater fish species grow slowly, reach sexual maturity late, and may not always reproduce every year. As a result they have low resilience to intensive fishing, and recovery from overfishing can take generations.

Stating that all fishing activity in deep sea areas should be "rigorously managed," the guidelines prescribe steps for identifying and protecting vulnerable ocean ecosystems and provide guidance on the sustainable use of marine living resources in deep-sea areas. They also outline ways that information on the location and status of vulnerable marine ecosystems, including vulnerable deep-sea fish stocks, should be improved.

Fishing nations should assess the deep-sea fishing being undertaken by their fleets in order to determine if any significant adverse impacts are involved. Deep sea fishing activity should cease in any area where significant adverse impacts to vulnerable marine ecosystems are taking place and remedial steps have to be taken if these are likely to occur. And where it is determined that DSF can be undertaken responsibly, appropriate fishing methods should be used to reduce impacts such as impacts on non-target species.

Much needed guidance

Because deep sea fishing is a relatively new activity and requires considerable resources in terms of investment and technology, few countries have developed policies and plans specifically related to managing it. "These guidelines provide much-needed guidance on the responsible way to approach deep sea fishing, and are a breakthrough in that they address both environmental and fisheries management concerns in an integrated manner," said Ichiro Nomura, Assistant Director General of FAO's Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

AN ADDITIONAL ILL



Researchers from three US universities, the National Center for Atmospheric Research and the Pacific Halibut International Commission, in a report prepared for the Pew Center, point out that climate change will represent an important challenge for the coastal and marine ecosystems. In that same report...it is predicted that the planet's climate will change more rapidly in the next decades than it has until now. This would give rise to the local, if not the total extinction of some species, and an alteration in the distribution of species in a way that will lead to important changes in their interactions with other species as well as changes in the flow of energy and the recycling of materials within the ecosystem.

The passage of time has just corroborated these predictions which were branded as alarmist on not a few occasions. The fishers are well aware that one of the main consequences of these changes is the movement of species. Fish, mollusks and crustaceans head North in search of colder water because their organisms require specific temperatures or because in their migration they follow the vegetables, plankton and other marine organisms they feed on.

This has already been spoken about in these pages. Let it suffice to point out that in a study done on more than a thousand

species led by the prestigious Canadian researcher Daniel Pauly, scientists have established an average movement by the different species of 45 kilometers per decade towards the North and towards deeper waters. In addition to the loss of commercially important fishing grounds, in the same abandoned areas invasions of species will take place whose effects are difficult to evaluate. It will be more complicated for the species that already live in extreme latitudes, such as some types of lobster or codfish...

According to Luis Valdés, director of the Gijón Oceanographic Institute, it is not unusual to find subtropical species in these waters, which are typical of areas near Cape Verde, at more than 3,500 kilometers. The white tuna, on the other hand, has moved about 120 miles towards the North.

The Spanish Institute of Oceanography has just published the results of the RadProf0209 campaign which ended last February in which records were obtained that detect a very accentuated local warming in waters of the Sea of Galicia and Cantabria. In the first thousand meters of the column of water, the temperature has increased by 0.3° C.

Since samples have been taken at regular intervals during the past years, scientists have been able to explain some proc-

esses in greater detail. They thus explain how the sequence of warm years with cold events in 2005 and 2006 resulted in the injection of heat to intermediate levels of between 300 and 500 meters of depth, or how the meteorological changes in waters at depths of about 2,000 meters vary according to the meteorological changes recorded in their remote region of origin, the Labrador Sea.

Also, the changes taking place at both poles are very worrisome and keep the scientific community on alert given their influence on the planet as a whole. The volume of the ice cap on the poles is decreasing very rapidly. The perennial extension of ice in the Arctic, for example, has decreased by a million square meters in the past two years, while the mantle of ice in the winter is extremely thin. In the Antarctic something similar is occurring.

Eileen Claussen, the President of the Pew Center on Global Climate Change, pointed out that climate change could be the final blow to the already stressed coastal and marine ecosystems. She compared this situation to that of a human being whose immunological system is weakened and whose life could be endangered by a sickness that would not threaten a healthy person. Large scale fishing appears to be

the victim of climate change and the alteration of the ecosystems. At the same time, it collaborates in it and affects the factors that caused the change (through contaminating emissions) and the alteration of the ecosystems (over-fishing and destruction of ecosystems).

According to the last FAO report, the total world fish production reached a new record in 2006 with 143.6 million tons (an increase of 0.6%) of which 92 million came from extractive fishing. That same report stresses that 19% of the main species analyzed are over-exploited and that the actions to tackle over-exploitation have been slow "and only made limited progress in including a preventive approach in fishing".

FAO makes an appeal to the fishing industry and the leaders of the sector in every country to make a greater effort to understand the effects which the climate change will have on world fishing and to get prepared for it.

Industrial fishing is causing a profound imbalance in the marine ecosystems. In fact, many species of great commercial interest have not recovered despite being under a fish moratorium for years. This is the case of cod fish in Newfoundland: its moratorium began in 1992 but it shows no signs of recovery. Attention should also be given to the imbalance caused in the marine ecosystem by the drastic decrease in a species. We have referred to some of these situations on previous occasions, but the crisis that affects the anchovy stock in the Cantabrian Sea is worth mentioning.

PROTECTION OF THE ARTIC

Some see the abundance of mackerel, for example, as a plague because they feed on larvae of many species (including anchovies) and their natural predators have been reduced by over-fishing, such as tuna, white tuna, roe...In addition to the increase in water temperature and the salinity of the coastal waters because of the reduced input from the rivers, the proliferation of jellyfish in the Mediterranean is also due to the decrease in predators like the tuna or the turtle. At the same time, jellyfish feed on larvae of commercially important species thereby hindering or even impeding their recovery.

Some of the endangered species occupy the highest places in the food chain. Hence the concern, for example, for the persecution of one of the great predators, the shark, which leads in many cases to its disappearance, as in the Mediterranean. In view of the real control over this situation, the consequences seem to be important only to ecologists and scientists.

Slowing down industrial fishing by regulating it seems to be one of the fundamental measures to avoid worsening the deterioration of the marine ecosystem. Oceana has been insisting on this for some time and stressing that the irresponsible industrialization of the Arctic could have catastrophic consequences

worldwide since the Arctic plays a critical role in the planet's climatic patterns. In particular, as the area's ice expanse decreases, new hitherto virgin areas are being threatened by industrial fishing activity and the development of new transportation routes. For this reason, they called for an urgent preventive policy from the international community given the importance of that ecosystem.

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council, which depends on the USA, also understood the situation in this way. It decided to impede the expansion of industrial fishing in all of that North American country's waters north of the Strait of Bering. The measure represents one of the greatest preventive actions in the history of fish management which, as Oceana points out, will serve to alleviate the pressure exerted on the oceanic ecosystems by climate change. The protected area is about 518,000 square kilometers. The measure will not affect the traditional, small-scale fishing carried out by the indigenous communities of the area.

This is undoubtedly a very significant action both for the measure itself and for the message it gives about the need to protect the marine ecosystem.

("Mar", n. 480, March 2009, R.G.)





“FREE US OR WE WILL DIE OF PRIVATION”

DRAMATIC APPEAL FROM THE COMMANDEER OF THE “BUCCANEER” IN THE HANDS OF THE PIRATES SINCE LAST APRIL 11TH

A dramatic phone call came from Mario Iarloi, the commander of the *Buccaneer*. The vessel, which belongs to the Micoperi Marien Contractors of Ravenna, is anchored off the coast of Las Qorey, a fishers' village in Puntland, the northern part of the former Italian colony. The living conditions are tragic and the crew of the deep-sea towboat (ten Italians, one Croatian and five Romanians) feels abandoned. Some seafarers are sick; all of them are on the verge of a nervous breakdown. Six of the sixteen seafarers have been brought to land and probably distributed in various villages along the coast to hide them in the event of an unlikely blitz by an Italian SWAT team. It will be more difficult later to retrieve them at the time of their release...

*ABOARD THE BUCCANEER,
THE ITALIAN DEEP-SEA TOWBOAT
KIDNAPPED IN THE WATERS OF THE
GULF OF ADEN OFF THE SOMALI
COASTS WHILE HAULING TWO EMPTY
BARGES.
THERE ARE 16 SEAFARERS.*

«Free us or we will ask them to shoot us – says the commander in despair with a voice that seems broken by tears--. We are getting sick, some are suffering from depression, and some have heart problems but there is no medicine. Some time ago medicine came (one of the members of the crew has cardiac problems. Ed. note), but in this unending story, the medicine is almost finished. I am not a doctor. There are no doctors. I cannot treat people who do not even know what is wrong with them, or should I just treat them by looking them in the face or watch them go crazy? They can no longer talk like reasonable people. Moreover, not even I can reason any more».

Captain Iarloi, age 51, from Ortona, tries to reason: «This situation is absurd and we do not have the strength to go on. Some are losing their minds. There is nothing more to eat, just something to keep the body going. We are getting washed with sea water. We are beyond our forces. Please free us from this situation; otherwise we ourselves will ask them to kill us. Even they (their jailers, Ed. note) are nervous and shoot now and then. It happened today too. A bullet grazed my head. We cannot stand it any more and we want to go home, and we want to go immediately. We spend six hours inside the bridge without air conditioning (In that area the heat is unbearable and the temperature often rises above 40 degrees C. Ed. note) ».

During the phone call, the Captain of the *Buccaneer* (which in English ironically means pirate) recounts that on board there is no more drinkable water (“we drink boiled water”) or food (“we eat rice and the bread the cook makes for us”). He denied that the food was delivered which had been sent with a truck that left from Djibouti (“We haven’t received anything”) and about which there were assurances that it had reached its destination. Regarding the negotiations, the commander said he knew nothing: “They do not inform us about this. If there are no negotiations, tell them to make them and to telephone these people. Let them come to an agreement and do what they must. They should have been doing this for 51 days”.

At this point Iarloi says: “We are fed up staying on this boat. I can’t stand it any more and I will pass over to you the person who is next to me”: that is, the pirate who speaks Italian. A few days ago it was he who assured this newspaper that no negotiations were under way. “These people—he had stated referring to the hostages with some nervousness—want to go back home, but no one has contacted us”.

(*Corriere della Sera*, June 2, 2009, Massimo A. Alberizzi)