

APOSTOLATUS MARIS BULLETIN

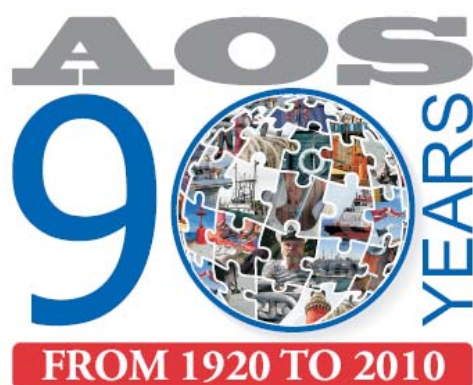
(N. 105, 2010/II)



SEA SUNDAY 2010

SUMMARY:

XIX Plenary Session of the Pontifical Council	3
Notes of a Port Chaplain	7
Regional Conference of North America and Caribbean	10
'Mission de la Mer', National Meeting	12
Piracy	14
Abandoned seafarers	16
Black tide	19



Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care
of Migrants and Itinerant People
Palazzo San Calisto - Vatican City
Tel. +39-06-6988 7131
Fax +39-06-6988 7111
office@migrants.va
www.vatican.va/Roman Curia/Pontifical
Councils ...

Dear chaplains, volunteers, friends
and supporters of the Apostleship of the Sea,

the International Maritime Organization (IMO) has declared the 2010 "Year of the Seafarer" to pay tribute to the 1.5 million seafarers for their unique contribution to the society, and increase awareness on the difficult situations created by nature, but often also by people, in which many of them found themselves, while sailing across the seas of the world.

As seafarers are usually defined as "invisible people", passing quickly through the ports, the annual celebration of Sea Sunday invites the Christian communities to see and recognize them as "real people" who, with their hard work and sacrifices, make our life more comfortable.

The seafarers are workers different from the ones on land, also because we do not see them going to work every day. Their contract requires from them to leave wife, children, family and friends, for a long period of time. They sail from port to port often in isolated places with little time to go ashore before they sail out again. The perimeter of the vessel is the limit of their world, the confine space of the cabin is their home and they share their work with people of different nationalities and religions, often using a "Babel of languages" to communicate. For seafarers loneliness is a constant companion, injustices are frequent. Moreover in these times of economic crisis crews are easily abandoned in foreign ports, pirates attacks are becoming more frequent and when an accident occurs criminalization and detention are sometimes the price they pay on behalf of the vessel owner or the charter.

The technological progress has made many changes on the maritime world improving safety and reliability of the vessels and fast turnaround in port but little has changed on the human needs of seafarers and fishers. These needs are simple, a warm welcome in a foreign country, a van to transport them to the city, a telephone or a computer to connect with their family and loved ones, a priest to celebrate the Holy Mass – if they are Catholic – or bless them, a friend to listen to their stories and problems or a volunteer to visit them in hospital or in jail.

The Apostleship of the Sea was founded by a small group of people in Glasgow on the 4th October 1920, to provide spiritual



and material assistance to “neglected” Catholic seafarers and to provide for their needs. Since then it has grown behind any expectation, and in looking back at its humble beginning, we can see the providential hand of God in the way in which the Apostolate has spread throughout the world.

Providing pastoral care, especially through ship visiting, for seafarers and fishers remains our main concern as it was at the origin of this Apostolate. Therefore, we would like to encourage everyone to continue to support this “Work” hoping that the local Churches will be more and more involved in this pastoral care.

The Apostleship of the Sea, with its network of “Stella Maris” and Centers around the world, is always available to respond to the seafarers’ requests, welcoming them in ‘a home away from home’ and making their life a little easier.

The chaplains and volunteers in many ports of the world are visiting hundreds of vessels, welcoming thousands of seafarers of all religions and nationalities offering counseling, clothing, telephone cards, money and providing ‘a safe and secure port’ in time of crisis and also, last but not least, helping to maintain in

there life the openness towards the transcendental values.

On the international and national level the Apostleship of the Sea also does advocacy work to promote seafarers rights and provide justice for seafarers.

In remembering its 90th Foundation Anniversary and celebrating the Year of the Seafarer, we would like to make an appeal to the States to speed up the ratification of the 2006 Maritime Labor Convention, a fundamental instrument to improve the working and living conditions of seafarers.

Finally everyone on this occasion is invited to pause for a moment and pray for them and their families and recommend to Mary, *Star of the Sea*, the chaplains and volunteers that every day generously walk along piers, climb gang ways and show love and concern for “those who for various reasons live and work in the maritime world”.

✘ Antonio Maria Vegliò, President

✘ Archbishop Agostino Marchetto, Secretary

THE NEW UNDER-SECRETARY OF THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL

On May 6, 2010, the Holy Father Benedict XVI appointed as the new Under-Secretary of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People Father Gabriele Ferdinando Bentoglio, Procurator General and Secretary General of the Congregation of the Missionaries of Saint Charles Borromeo (Scalabrinians). Fr. Bentoglio was born in Trescore Balneario (Bergamo) on March 7, 1962. He obtained a doctorate in Biblical Theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. He carried out pastoral activities in the diocese of London and Arundel-Brighton. He taught Sacred Scripture at the Missionary Institute of London, the Pontifical Urbanian University, and the Scalabrini International Migration Institute in Rome of which he was also the Dean.

His many publications include: “Mio padre era un Arameo errante...” [My father was a wandering Aramaean], “Temi di teologia biblica sulla mobilità umana” [Themes from biblical theology regarding human mobility], “Stranieri e pellegrini davanti a Dio” [Foreigners and pilgrims before God], “Stranieri e pellegrini. Icone bibliche per una pedagogia dell’incontro” [Foreigners and pilgrims. Biblical icons for a pedagogy of the encounter]. Father Bentoglio also collaborates with specialized and pastoral reviews with his articles and book reviews. From 2005 to 2009, he was the person-in-charge of the migrant sector of this Pontifical Council. He returns now to follow the pastoral care for all human mobility. On this occasion, the International Apostleship of the Sea wishes to express its sincere best wishes to him for the fruitfulness of his work.



XIX PLENARY SESSION OF THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL

THE COMMITMENT OF THE APOSTLESHIP OF THE SEA IN THE ACTION OF PROMOTING AND BUILDING AWARENESS OF AND ABOUT THE RIGHTS OF SEASFARERS AND FISHERS BEFORE THE STATES AND INTERNATIONAL BODIES

Intervention of **Deacon Ricardo Rodríguez-Martos Dauer**
Diocesan Delegate, Apostleship of the Sea, Barcelona, Spain



THE INTERNATIONAL MARITIME PANORAMA

We live in a world of globalization, communications and international agreements. All this places us in a context that necessarily makes us look beyond our setting, especially in the maritime context, which is international *par excellence*.

Only few years ago, the ship's flag allowed us to identify the nationality of the ship owner and also of its crew. Nowadays this has radically changed due to the prevalent use of flags of convenience, which do not coincide with the nationality of the ship owner, nor with that of the crew, which is often made up of people from different countries.

On the other hand, we have different interests that converge in the maritime business like - aside from that of the ship owners - the interest of the agencies who hire the crews, of those who charter ships, of the cargo owners, of the insurance companies and the whole complex of public and private organizations in the ports where the ships dock. This brings a great variety of areas of competence and responsibilities that fall on the shoulders of the various parties in the maritime industry.

Aside from all these, the States nevertheless acquire a special importance, acting as the ultimate guarantors for the implementation of international agreements, particularly the State whose flag is flown by the ship and the State of the port where the ship is docked.

Aside from all these, the States nevertheless acquire a special importance, acting as the ultimate guarantors for the implementation of international agreements, particularly the State whose flag is flown by the ship and the State of the port where the ship is docked.

INTERNATIONAL MARITIME CONVENTIONS AND ORGANISATIONS

The XX century has produced a lot of international regulations to protect the security of the maritime industry and the living and working conditions on board ships. In this context, there are two fundamental organizations: the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the International Labor Office (ILO).

In the XX century, the IMO produced very important conventions like: SOLAS (concerning the safety of human life at sea), COLREG (concerning navigation rules to prevent collisions at sea), STCW (on the certification and training of the crew), SAR (search and rescue of persons in distress at sea), MARPOL (on the fight against pollution), etc. and, already at the beginning of the XXI century, the well-known ISPS code, on protection against terrorist acts, as an amendment of the aforementioned SOLAS convention.

To check the implementation of these conventions, instruments like the Port State Control inspectors, who have the duty and the right to inspect ships, whatever may be its flag, and to prevent it from going to sea if it is not complying with some of the abovementioned conventions of the IMO, were created.

On its part, the ILO, throughout the XX century, adopted a significant number of conventions regarding working at sea. Of these, the following stand out: Conventions N. 147 (concerning minimum standards in the conditions of life and work in merchant ships), N. 163 (concerning the obligation of States to ensure adequate welfare facilities and services in its ships and port installations) and N. 166 (concerning the repatriation of seafarers). Finally, in 2006, it adopted the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC), which is a compilation and an updating of all previous ILO Maritime Labour Conventions.

Deacon Ricardo Rodríguez-Martos was not able to take part in the Plenary Session. For this reason, his intervention was read by Fr. Bruno Ciceri, the person-in-charge of the Apostleship of the Sea in the Pontifical Council.

The Port State Control inspectors also have an important and crucial role for the implementation of the ILO conventions, but experience shows that the determination and the severity used in checking the implementation of IMO regulations is higher than the one applied for the ILO regulations.

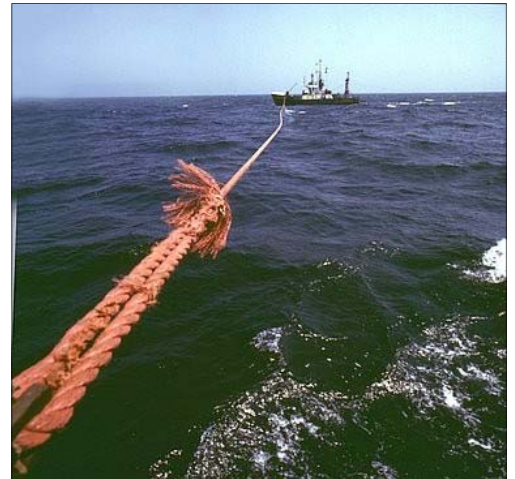
We notice how huge amounts of money are invested for the implementation of the IMO regulations while there is discussion about benefits regarding the welfare of the crews. Every country that ratified ILO Convention 163 should assure that in its ports, seafarers would have a minimum of welfare services at their disposal, like transportation to the city, easy access to telephone and internet access, etc. However, too often this does not happen and in some way, assistance to crews continues to be seen more as a responsibility of the NGO's and not as an obligation of the States.

We have clear examples on the capacity of States to implement rules with regards to issues that are truly of concern from their point of view. Let us take for example the ISPS code against terrorist acts on board ships and in port facilities. The IMO approved it in record time (less than a year) and immediately the States ratified it and put it into practice. Both ship owners and port facilities adopted the appropriate measure and invested significant sums of money to put into practice the new regulation. On the other hand, the problem of abandoned crews continued to have no solution.

In 1999, an IMO/ILO working group was formed in order to deal with this problem. Throughout these years, several meetings were held and some progress was made towards reaching some agreement. However, already 11 years have passed and there is still and continues to be no Convention that would solve the problems deriving from this situation.

In this sense, the previously-mentioned new MLC 2006 convention, which rewrites and updates the past conventions, brings hope considering that it attributes new responsibilities to the Port State Control inspectors, like being able to stop a ship that is not up-to-date in paying the salaries of the crews. Unfortunately, for it to enter into force, this Convention has to be ratified by a minimum of 30 countries, that should represent 33% of the world fleet, and although this last requirement has already been reached, not so with the former. Up to this date, only 9 countries have ratified it, two of which are European: Spain and Norway.

We have to mention fishing separately. It is a sector which has always been marginalized in all senses. International regulation in this case is very much poorer than in the maritime sector. In the XX century, it is possible to highlight various ILO conventions like convention 125, on fishers' competency certificates, ratified only by 10 countries, and convention 126 of the same year, on accommodation of crews (fishers), ratified by 22 countries. In the XXI century, concretely in the year 2007, we have convention no. 188, on decent working conditions, safety and social protection of fishers, but which, up to now, has been ratified only by one country: Bosnia-Herzegovina.



THE ROLE OF THE APOSTLESHIP OF THE SEA IN THIS CONTEXT

The Apostleship of the Sea, as what happens in other sectors of social pastoral care, has to channel its efforts along two basic lines of action:

Direct action, obviously basic, which is caring for the needs of and working to provide welfare to the people of the sea, at the social, labor and spiritual levels. It necessarily requires being physically at the side of those who suffer, and trying to assist them.

Indirect action, complementary to the former, which urges private organizations and local, national and international public institutions to assume their responsibility for the welfare of the people of the sea. This second line of action is fundamental since it is geared to promote the improvement of the life and working conditions of seafarers and fisherms, and thus try to reduce unjust situations that require welfare assistance.

Limiting ourselves to direct action and forgetting the indirect one is in some way falling into omission.

HOW IS INDIRECT ACTION TO BE REALIZED?

It is obvious that the Apostleship of the Sea, as such, has no legal force before the authorities and in many occasions, it will be seen as an institution that must limit itself to the pastoral aspects, which is its characteristic. However, because of its acknowledged involvement in the promotion of the dignity of human labor and by the fact that it covers the welfare inadequacy of the administrations, the Apostleship of the Sea enjoys sufficient moral authority to make itself heard.

“The Apostleship of the Sea enjoys sufficient moral authority to make itself heard”.

A first action must be carried out at the local level. The Apostleship of the Sea must be in constant dialogue with the port authorities and the associations of shipowners and agents, making them aware of the need to offer welfare services to seafarers, and making them understand that this must be seen not as a philanthropic initiative, but as a right of the crews during their stay at the ports. Putting ILO Convention no. 163 on the table would be a good argument for the support of such actions.

It must also be highlighted that the Apostleship of the Sea is carrying out as a substitute what should be done by the administrations as a duty and that, as a consequence, it merits recognition and the provision of economic and operational resources to perform its function.

It is important to insist on the need for the seafarer to enjoy some free time, to be able to communicate with his family during his stay at the port, as well as to be able to receive spiritual assistance, if he requests it.

Port communities, shipowners and governments should appreciate the work of the Apostleship of the sea in this environment; then it will result in greater security and efficiency in the maritime trade.

Regarding the fishing sector of the Apostleship of the Sea, at the local level, it has an important function of carrying out dialogue with the various associations and in supporting the groups of wives who, from land, can make the voice of their husbands heard. We have a clear example in the support that the Apostleship of the Sea in Galicia gave to the Association of Fishermen's Wives “Rosa dos Ventos”, with an important means of communication at its disposal, the BOGA magazine.

At the national level, the Apostleship of the Sea must dialogue with the state institutions in charge of the application of the norms of the International Maritime Organization and the International Labor Office, and try to produce some guidelines such that providing welfare services will not be dependent on the goodwill of the port community, but on a clear national policy.

In the fishing sector, we can cite the support of the Apostleship of the Sea, in Spain, to the National Federation of the Families of the Sea “Aproar”.

At the international level, *Apostolatus Maris*, as a sector of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, can and must have its voice heard and remind the States of the need to watch over the people of the sea and their rights.



In this sense, the organization of world and regional congresses and conferences is an important instrument and an occasion to present the problems of the people of the sea through the mass media.

Here we have to stress the role of the International Christian Maritime Association (ICMA), of which the Apostleship of the Sea is a founder and principal member. ICMA has delegations, both to the IMO and the ILO, that attend their work sessions, make their voice heard, and formulate proposals in defense of the people of the sea.

Finally, worthy of mention is the role of the International Committee on Seafarers Welfare (ICSW), in which the Apostleship of the Sea also takes part through ICMA. This committee carries out a great work of diffusion and promotion of the ILO conventions, particularly ILO 163, and now the MLC 2006.

With respect to this important convention, the Apostleship of the Sea must exert effort in promoting its study and in making it known, for example, through the organization of whole-day meetings of information and dialogue, as a means of encouraging its ratification by the maximum number of countries possible, and thus achieve its full entry into force.

In the fishing sector, and also in the international context, worthy of mention is the support given to the FEM (Familias Europeas de Marineros – *European Seafarers' Families*) project, which unites the forces of the associations of seafarers' wives of France, Germany, Belgium, Finland and Spain, as well as the creation of the International

Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF), a non-governmental organization dedicated to the promotion of some norms of protection for fishing, especially artisan fishing which is greatly unprotected.

Finally, in *Apostolatus Maris* itself, we have to mention the “Committee on Fishing of A.M. International”, created as a result of the XXI Congress of the Apostleship of the Sea, held in Río de Janeiro in 2002, for the promotion of the welfare and dignity of fishers and to achieve a better coordination for their pastoral care, and support and strengthen the communities and organizations of fishers.

CONCLUSIONS

We can conclude by saying that in spite of significant inadequacies in the living and working conditions of the people of the sea, there are important juridical instruments at the international level to fight for a more dignified and humane work on board ships. This obliges us to:

1° Know them: we must be aware of the promulgation of new laws and conventions.

2° Make them known: within one's own Apostleship of the Sea and in the whole milieu where one works.

3° Promote their ratification: through the mass-media or the organization of day meetings and conferences, at times, when possible negotiations with the government of one's own country

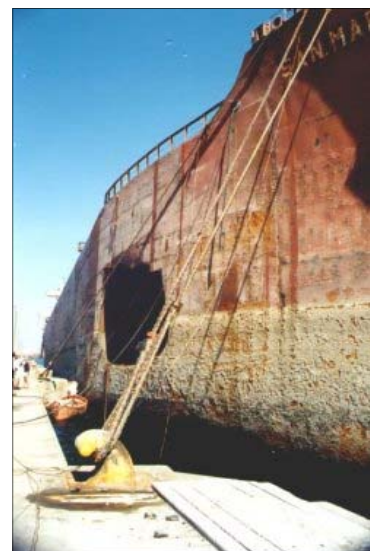
4° Promote their application: reminding and demanding those rights that are legally recognized from all relevant institutions in merchant maritime industry and in the world of fishing. A possible action could be presenting charges before the Port State Control inspectors regarding inadequate living and working conditions on board a ship.

Today, the present means of communications, like for example the internet and e-mail, allow us to be up-to-date regarding new developments and also share experiences with centers in other ports and countries. We cannot ignore such important instruments.

Networking is basic and the Apostleship of the Sea, at all levels, international, regional and national, must promote it. All this should lead us to carry out one of the missions of the Apostleship of the Sea: be the voice of the voiceless.

I would like to end by citing some words of the Easter Message to seafarers from Archbishop Vegliò and Archbishop Marchetto:

“Hope in the Risen Lord invites us to not give up to the injustices present in the maritime world, but to fight them in a Christian way, in solidarity with the victims. In this ‘Year of the Seafarer’, hope becomes greater and more practical in everyone's commitment to struggle for a more safe and just world in which the international Conventions will be ratified and applied for respect of the rights of the seafarers, their families and the environment.”



IN THE PHILIPPINES

ITF PLAQUE OF SUPPORT UNVEILED

April 11, 2010 marked the unveiling of the ITF ‘Plaque of Support’ to the two AOS-Stella Maris Centers, in Metro Manila.

The Centers are located at Mabini cor. Flores Sts., in Ermita, Manila, and at the Pius XII Catholic Center UN Avenue, Paco, Manila. Both are homes for seafarers and their families while they are in Manila.

What started as a dream for AOS-Manila became reality with the support of ITF, the Archdiocese of Manila and many friends. AOS-Manila now provides a home for seafarers and their families. The Centers can house 176 single seafarers and 5 families.



Mr. Roy Paul,
Assistant Administrative Officer
of ITF-ST

NOTES OF A PORT CHAPLAIN

I am a priest involved since 1984 with the Apostleship of the Sea. At the same time, I am the rector of a parish in Augusta. I started working for the Apostleship of the Sea by "chance", and I discovered a world that is completely unknown to the majority of Christians in the parishes and dioceses. Without any "qualifications" except for a long experience among the people of the sea, I am sharing some thoughts developed over years of ministry among seafarers.

1- I am convinced that a specific pastoral care for the people of the sea is necessary because of the peculiarity of the seafarer's life.

A seafarer is a human being, a worker who sometimes chooses his profession freely, but more often than not out of necessity. The romantic idea of an adventuresome seafarer who travels around the world to discover new worlds and adventures is false.

A seafarer is a man and a special worker:

- For many months he lives far from his family and his social and religious environment (even today the contract for seafarers from the Third World and Eastern European Countries lasts on an average between nine to twelve months).

- The ship becomes for him the only setting for work and life.

- He spends his working time, and all the rest of his time, with a few companions he did not choose.

- He is the most atypical of all the migrants [as a matter of fact, he is not a migrant, but an itinerant]: he cannot put down roots anywhere, not even temporarily, so he is always a foreigner or stranger in every port, the object of the locals' instinctive mistrust.

Particularly today, due to globalisation, competition and cost reduction, we can see: an increasing reduction in crew members and a stressful, inhumane job rotation; the signing on of crews often with people of different cultures, religions, nationalities who have great difficulties in communication; the infeasibility of social life on board; the short turnarounds in ports and the decreased opportunities for the seafarer to go ashore; the tightening of counter-terrorism security regulations, which also greatly reduces, if not completely prevents (as in the case of seafarers from some countries suspected of supporting terrorism) the seafarer's opportunity to go ashore, and also for those who do not belong to the ship, to visit seafarers on board (often for seafarers their living conditions are more like prison, even though they are workers and not criminals); the seafarers' forced acceptance, which is accentuated even more today by the serious economic crisis, of harsh, uncertain conditions regarding wages, life and safety on board (especially for the flags of convenience and crews from the Third World Countries).

Moreover, given the extreme complexity of the maritime world and the shipping industry, in which for each vessel a host of subjects and national and international Institutions interact, there is the difficulty for the seafarers, even when they overcome the fear of being blacklisted internationally which will prevent them from finding work in the future, to refer to Regulations and contact Organisms that can protect them effectively and defend their fundamental rights.

This clearly shows that the maritime world is a "distinctive world" which is outside the usual methods of the Church's pastoral action.

2- The Church has responded to the distinctive circumstances and needs of the maritime world through the Work of the Apostleship of the Sea and the establishment of Stella Maris Centres ("your home away from home") in many maritime Countries.

The Work of the *Apostolatus Maris* began in 1920 in Glasgow at the initiative of a group of people. It was immediately favored by the Holy See which approved the first constitutions in 1922. From Glasgow it soon spread in many other maritime countries. In Italy it started in 1932, in Genoa, where it opened the first *Stella Maris* Centre for seafarers.



This concern of the Church has grown over time and was confirmed by the John Paul II's **Motu Proprio Stella Maris** of 31 January 1997.

3 The subject of the maritime pastoral care is the Christian community (maritime dioceses and parishes) and the seafarers themselves, whose awareness must be raised and who must become active members of the community itself.

So far the Apostleship of the Sea has largely been the work of individuals, chaplains and lay people who dedicated themselves, usually with much enthusiasm and a spirit of self-sacrifice, to this form of Apostolate, which is rightly considered extraordinary, because it is outside the ordinary pastoral practice of Christian communities. I do not think, however, that the future of maritime pastoral care can be seen in this direction.

The individual passes but the Church remains! I believe that the work of pioneers and charismatic individuals should result in the empowerment of the Church with regard to the people of the sea.

In this sense, the role is fundamental of *maritime communities*, dioceses and parishes, which have the vocation to be *bridge communities* or *border communities* between the *people of the sea* and the *people of the land* since they are part of both realities (according to the indications given by John Paul II's Motu Proprio, which includes among the people of the sea also those working and living near the sea). These communities must take on the pastoral responsibility for the world of the sea in its various expressions. Depending on the local situation, they must prepare and follow those who go to sea to earn their living, organize their families, and welcome seafarers calling at the ports, etc. The special care for the people of the sea should be part of the ordinary pastoral commitment of the community and become one of the areas in which it expresses itself [with an appropriate pastoral care]. A place at the Eucharistic banquet of the bridge-communities, maritime-communities, must also be set for the seafarers too, to nourish their life of faith and their humanity.

4- We need a national pastoral organism to listen to and give a voice in the Church to the cry for attention that comes from the maritime world.

The world of seafarers is usually unknown probably because of the very nature of maritime labor which takes place at sea, outside the places we are normally familiar with. Even when we are aware that there are commercial ships on which the world's economy and our daily life still depend almost exclusively, they are considered, not only by ship owners, but unfortunately also by public opinion, only a mere means of transportation and not human, traveling communities.

The lack of consideration for seafarers does not involve only the society but also the Christian community.

*of hope, our discour-
the maritime
makes his voice
active presence
their situation ...".*

The lack of consid-
fact, only the soci-
dioceses and par-

awareness of the commitment they have to the *people of the sea*; on the contrary, there is almost a closure regarding the maritime world (it would be very interesting to know why).

For this a national pastoral organism is needed that will take on the Church's interest regarding the *people of the sea*, to listen to the silent cry and appeal of the people of the sea and to prophetically promote in the Christian community, at all levels, concern for the maritime world and coordinate efforts and actions.

The seafarer "feels" this lack of consideration by society towards him very deeply and most often he resigns himself to being cut off from the context of the normal life of others and to remaining in a sort of "limbo" that "suspends" his life during the time he is on board.

How many times have I heard seafarers repeat the same refrain with resignation: "Father, nobody cares about us. We are not of interest to anyone!".

I would like to quote some parts of a letter I received some time ago from an Italian seafarer, a committed Christian and an Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist who has permission to carry it on board:

*"Dear Don Giuseppe, we are in a very bleak pe-
riod. We do not see any light, and although a
Christian by nature is led to be or tries to be man-
agement is great because of what is happening in
world What hurts the most is that nobody
heard... I think that the Church must have an
among seafarers and adopt a clear stand about*



eration for seafarers does not involve, in
ety but also the Christian community. In the
ishes of the sea for the most part there is no

This is presented very clearly in the *Motu Proprio Stella Maris*, especially in Title IV which is dedicated to "*The direction of the Work of the Maritime Apostolate*".

5- The pastoral workers operating in the multinational and multi-ethnic maritime world need national and international "Networks".

The maritime world is by nature a multinational, inter-ethnic and multi-religious world in its bodies and in the people living in it. It is superfluous to say that it is a world in constant mobility, as the ships sail from one port to another, touching different cities and nations.

The Church's pastoral presence in the maritime world cannot ignore this. For this reason, since its origins and until now the *Apostolatus Maris* has had, for the providential configuration given by the universal Pastor, the characteristic of a "Work", an international network, among the pastoral actors operating in the maritime sector. And it is a unique "personality" worldwide with a logo, a motto and a recognizable, reassuring presence everywhere for seafarers of every race, nation and religion. The seafarer knows that he can find always in the *Stella Maris* a sure point of reference and "*his home away from home*".

Indeed, the need was felt to extend the network to collaboration and coordination with other Christian denominations involved in maritime pastoral care (for this the *International Christian Maritime Association* (ICMA) was founded. The Catholic Church is a member of it through the Apostleship of the Sea International, which is part of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People).

This network should be further enhanced at its various levels; otherwise the consistency and effectiveness of the Church's pastoral work for the people of the sea will be invalidated. A parish, but even a diocese, cannot carry out the Apostleship of the Sea unless it is "networked" at the national and international level.

Don Giuseppe Mazzotta
Port chaplain, *Stella Maris* of Augusta

ANGOLA

DAY OF PRAYER FOR THE PEOPLE OF THE SEA

On June 26, 2010, we in the Archdiocese of Luanda celebrated the day of prayer for the People of the Sea.

The event took place in the Chapel of Our Lady of the Sea which belongs to the Saint John the Baptist Parish of Cazanga in Luanda. The event began with the arrival of small-scale fishing communities from the Luanda area followed by Buraco, Ramiro and Mussulo with the presence of the Archdiocesan Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrations of the Archdiocese of Luanda and maritime authorities from the area.

The fishers' gathering was in the form of a procession and the central event was the Eucharist presided by the National Director of the Apostleship of the Sea, Father Juan Carlos Venegas, and concelebrated



by Father Fausto de Carvalho Rosaro, the Episcopal Vicar for Pastoral Care of the Archdiocese of Luanda. On that occasion the Message was made known from the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People regarding the Day of the Sea (Second Sunday of July). At the end of the ceremony, the fishers' boats were blessed and a fraternal lunch was shared with all those present.

Fr. Juan Carlos Venegas Benítez
National Director
Angola and São Tomé

Regional Conference of North America and Caribbean

(11th-14th May 2010, Niagara Falls, USA)

Within the spectacular view of the Niagara Falls from May 11th to 14th, 2010 it was held the AOS bi-annual Regional Conference of North America and Caribbean at the Sheraton Hotel. Around sixty chaplains and volunteers, a good number of them permanent deacons (with their wives), attended the intense and well organized three days meeting.

The Conference started with the Regional Coordinator Deacon Albert Dacanay presenting the outline of the meeting and introducing the special guests, among them Ms. Rose Kearney from Ireland, Mr. Lawrence Whiting from Australia (both AOS-USA members), Fr. Bruno Ciceri from the Pontifical Council and Rev. Lloyd Burghart, Ex. Secretary of the North American Maritime Ministry Association (NAMMA).

The Meeting was officially opened by the prayer of the Administrator of the Diocese of St. Catharines Diocese. Soon after Bishop Robert Harris, the newly appointed AOS Promoter of Canada, welcomed all the participants and gave special recognition (a letter from the Canadian Bishops Conference and one from the Pontifical Council) to Fr. Guy Bouillé for the great work done in establishing the AOS in Canada.

Fr. Bruno Ciceri read the message of the Pontifical Council in which the 90th Anniversary of Foundation of the AOS was remembered together with the proclamation on the part of IMO of "2010: Year of the Seafarer". The issue of the "Cruise Ship Priests Programme" and the election of new AOS-USA officers, were included also in the message.

Then, Deacon Albert introduced the Regional Report presenting the Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Treats (SWOT). The Conference got into business with the first talk done by two dynamic deacons on the Charism on Ministry, with an introduction on the teaching of the Church on Charism.

The following morning was dedicated on how to discern the personal charism and use them to transform and change the ministry. This was done by a simple but efficient questionnaire. The afternoon started with the history of the AOS-USA, seen through the personal

reminscences of Fr. Patout, one of the pioneers of the AOS Apostolate in USA. Fr. Sinclair Oubre followed with the Cruise Ship Priests Programme and the challenges that is facing at the present time, then Sr. Myrna Tordillo did her reflection on the pastoral care within the maritime ministry. The day ended with a stroll down to the pier for the unique experience of a thrilling ride to the bottom of the Falls on board of the Maid of the Midst.

On Thursday the work at the Conference began with the recounting of the personal experience of Mr. D'Souza, former seafarer, and a paper of Mrs. Pajaron (Philippines), who talked about the present status, concerns and challenges of the wives of Filipino seafarers. Bishop John Boissonneau, Aux. Bishop of Toronto, who celebrated the mass before lunch, spoke about the invitations for personal conversion present in *Caritas in Veritate*.

The health issue and the dangers of infectious diseases for seafarers and, to some extent, also for chaplains and volunteers when doing ship visiting, was touched by Mrs. Encarnation, a practicing physician specialized in travel, tropical medicine and HIV. Five points for working ecumenically were spelled out by Bishop Terry Finlay, Bishop Promoter of the Mission to Seafarers (MtS) in North America.

After lunch the meeting continued in separate rooms for the AOS Canada that gathered to share on their ministry, while the AOS-USA discussed the issue of the Cruise Ship Priests Programme and elected a new set of officers reconfirming the leadership of Fr. Sinclair as President.

The last morning of the Conference was occupied by two presentations by chaplains directly involved



in the ministry highlighting the various challenges that AOS is facing in the maritime industry, while trying to respond to the needs of seafarers.

Fr. Terry, of the Scarborough Mission, gave to each participant a poster of "The Golden Rule" and introduced the website of the Scarborough Mission where a lot of interesting and useful materials on interfaith dialogue could be found and used for our ministry among the

Special thanks has to be extended to Deacon Albert Dacanay and his wife Delia for the great effort done to make this Conference a moment of sharing and dialogue among chaplains and volunteers.

increased multi-faith and multi-cultural crews.

The mass at the conclusion of the meeting was celebrated by Fr. Bruno Ciceri.

Then people start leaving to return home, the ones left were treated with a unique tour of the Welland Canal (locks) that allows vessels move from Lake Erie to Lake Ontario raising and lowering it more than 50 meters.

SUMMARY OF PRESENTATIONS

1) **Charisms on Ministry** by Deacon George Newman and Bill McInerney. Deacon George provided an inventory of gifts we have that we could use effectively in Ministry. Everyone was delighted to see how many of the talents and gifts they have can be worked and developed and be effective ministers to the seafarers.

2) **History of AOS / Maritime Ministry in North America & Caribbean** by Fr. Rivers Patout giving an overview of AOS (who we are and what we are) by sharing his 42 years of experience as Port Chaplain and member of the AOS. In conclusion he said, that maritime ministry is the most ecumenical of any aspect of the Catholic Church and that he cannot think of a more satisfying ministry than that of serving seafarers.

3) **Cruise Ship Priests Program** by Fr. Sinclair Oubre who explained the background and history behind the establishment of AOS USA Cruise Ship Priests Program. It was noted that AOS Canada and AOS Australia, rather than establishing similar programs, work cooperatively with AOS USA, sending priests from their countries to serve onboard the Cruise Ship Priests Program. There are currently 605 priests in the program, with 45 coming from Canada and 10 from Australia.

4) **International Website** by Lawrence Whiting who presented an overview of what was coming to the International Website explaining the recent guidelines and how we can all benefit the use of this Website.

5) **Life of a Seafarer** by Mr. Everest D'Souza, a former seafarer. He shared personal experiences, his encounters with people of diverse personalities and culture, his feelings and fear upon reaching foreign soil, his isolation and loneliness in his cabin, his experience on turbulent waters, and his unwavering faith in God.

6) **Challenges on the life of the Seafarers, wife and family** by Dr. Angelita Pajaron presenting her thesis on 'The present status, concerns, and challenges of the wives of overseas seafarers'. Being a seafarer's wife, she shared her experience and analysis on the research surveys which touched on the profile, the present and prevailing needs, problems and concerns and the programs in place for the families of seafarers.

7) **Caritas In Veritate - Basic Principles of Formation as Catholics** by Bishop John Boissonneau, who reflected on the principles of formation as Catholics and our personal conversion by referring to the patron saints of AOS, St. Peter and St. Andrew, both fishermen. He cited that 'only in truth does charity shine forth, only in truth can charity be authentically lived.' Our willingness to accompany and be with the seafarers provides spiritual enthusiasm of people who truly love God.

8) **Port Health - Infectious Disease Prevention** by Dr. Carol Encarnacion-Dacanay who discussed about various health issues in the Port, and sharing preventive measures on infectious diseases that need to be communicated on to seafarers.

9) **Ecumenism and Interfaith Issues** by Bishop Terrence Finlay, who shared personal experiences and his thoughts on the works of Maritime Ministers and the need to have respect to each one's faith. Several points were raised and suggested to be used as guideline by every Port Minister.

10) **Interfaith Issues** by Fr. Teri Gallagher, who gave to all participants a Golden Rule poster which is described in the sacred writing of 13 different faiths. He shared in a very vibrant way the need to respect people of other faith and praised the work AOS is doing being in the forefront and being open to people of all faith.

II) **Training and Development** by Deacon Reggie Seymour who discussed on the training needs of those caring for the seafarers by recounting on the different issues that they encounter: security, health, ship agents, port authorities.

12) **Various Issues** by Fr. Andrew Thavarajasingam, sharing his experience as Port Chaplain in Montreal. He described various problems of seafarers - how they attended to those who got sick and were taken to the hospital; how he attended those who died on board and be present to other crew members; how they warned seafarers and their families on strict rulings regarding drugs, child pornography (on computers/laptops).

Mission de la Mer, National Meeting, Port de Bouc

The 'Mission de la Mer' held its national meeting in Port de Bouc, from the 13th -16th of May 2010. Approximately 80 participants came from all the coasts from Dunkirk to Marseille. They included active and retired Christians, chaplains and deacons involved in fishing, welcoming the seafarers in the ports or in the port services.

We began our session by getting to know the actors of the local and maritime life. So, we welcomed the Congressman and the Commander of GPM Marseille-Fos and a maritime agent. All of us found that we shared the same values: concern for foreign seafarers, welcoming them in spite of the demands of security, and economic development with the necessary growth, which must be carried out in respect for men and nature.

This session had a double objective: a better understanding of our place and our Christian mission in the maritime world and better understanding of its developments.



1) Our place and our Christian mission. The groups reflected on the theme for this year: The Mission: how to share and give an account of our faith in Jesus Christ who makes us live? The list of our activities and ideas is long: the presence and the daily contacts on the docks of the fishing ports, the visits to the ships and welcoming the Seafarers in the Clubs, participation in the Port Welfare Committees and Port Authority Councils... We also have to add all the requests to which we respond through celebrations: Feasts of the sea, World Maritime Day, Christmas for seafarers, blessings of vessels... There are also the statements we make, the latest being the message to the European Community of November 2009 which we made public.

Father Dominique Fontaine, Vicar General of Mission de France, starting from our welcoming practices and our solidarity activities, helped us to understand how they are central for our faith. He developed an expression of an Indian Captain: *My religion is the seafarer's religion*. For the smooth running of a vessel, a captain has to foster the unity of his crew. These words also express the universal humanity beyond the specific beliefs. It is easy for us Christians to connect it to the unity of humankind wanted by God, inhabited by the Spirit, and to the image of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, who gives life in abundance and is the head of the flock. The Word of God, received in the Church, and which lives in us, must be incarnated in us. We cannot keep it for ourselves because it is also destined to others. For us, the others are the seafarers: the Word of God is theirs too because they are waiting for it through us.

H.E. Msgr. Dufour, the new Archbishop of Aix en Provence and Arles, was present in the afternoon. Considering that globalization takes place by sea and realizing that for youth the planet is a global village, he is searching for ways to associate them with the 'Mission de la Mer'.

2) Better understanding of the developments in the maritime world. This was done through two workshops. The one on fishing was guided by Mrs. Elisabeth Tempier who works with the "prud'homies" (Association of Mediterranean Fishers) of Var, and is part of the collective "Fisheries and Development", an association of small-scale fishers around the world. Our questions were about the common fisheries policy defined in Brussels, with quotas, multiple regulations, the reduction of fishing effort and the status of fish resources: Is there still a future for fishers? Can they live tomorrow from the fruit of their work? Will they be associated with decision-making? Mrs. Tempier presented an alternative sustainable fishing; it is not possible to continue with our logic of exploitation depleting the fishing resources. She thinks that this alternative fishing could be controlled and regulated closely by fishers themselves: the same European regulation cannot be applied both in Brittany and in the Mediterranean. We hope that the future in fisheries will match this approach.

The other workshop focused on the seafarers' long-term condition today in view of the crisis. It was led by Mr. Yves Reynaud, ITF Inspector in Marseille. The profession of seafarer is carried out by seafarers 80% of which are from different Third World countries; the Filipinos are the most numerous with 250,000 out of 1.2 million. There are Chinese, Indian, Indonesian, Russians, Ukrainians... The ITF Union signs agreements with shipping companies that use free registration system (flags of convenience). Today 60% of liner vessels are covered. For a deckhand, the basic salary is between 1,300 and 1,600 USD (with overtime). The crisis mainly affects seafarers whose waiting period increases between two contracts. Their contracts are much longer, 9-10 months, and there is pressure on wages (significantly decreased). An increase in abandoned ships was feared but this is not the case.

There is a lot of hope on the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC), adopted in 2006 at the Geneva ILO, which is on the way to ratification by the Member States. France has not done so yet. It is hoped that it will be applied in 2012 so that the rights of seafarers will improve substantially .

The 'Mission de la Mer' is an ecclesial movement. Father Edward Pracz of Gdynia (Poland) was with us, the European Coordinator for the Apostleship of the Sea. H.E. Mgr Renaud De Dinechin, the Auxiliary Bishop of Paris, and member of the SNPMPI (National Service for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and People on the Move), which includes the 'Mission de la Mer', was present on Saturday. He presided at the Mass at Notre Dame de la Garde, assisted by the priests and deacons of the MDM, Father Bouchet, Chaplain of the Basilica, and Father Bernard Fontaine, Director of the SNPMPI. Mary always has a special place in the hearts of seafarers (*Stella Maris*, Star of the Sea, is the title we give her). At the end we gathered at the monument to the missing at sea in the forecourt of the Basilica. We remembered the missing seafarers, but also all the living who are sailing. The solidarity wreath we laid at the foot of the monument was particularly symbolic on that day when we were reminded of the dangers of the sea.

We are concerned about the future of our movement. We strive to establish links with maritime schools. This is done most at the ENMM of Marseilles: there is a Chaplaincy attended by twenty students, as well as young cadet officers with their families. We spent some quality time together and were able to cross-check our stories and sensitivities around the following questions: How we can live as Christians on board a vessel, linked and connected to a Christian community. The sharing was very rich and raised many questions which make the 'Mission de la Mer' reflect on its presence among youth, and on the future of this apostolate with them and for them.

We also pay particular attention to the work of the Port Welfare Committees which are not yet fully organized. They have not understood fully the problem of welcoming seafarers in the ports so that it will be more effective (there is a lack of means) and of better quality.

In conclusion, we experienced a great ecclesial moment. By welcoming the seafarers of all cultures and beliefs the Church's universality is at stake. We invite the Church to open up further beyond the Christian communities and let herself be guided by the Spirit.

Mr. Philippe Martin, President

Father Guy Pasquier, National Secretary

IMO MANILA CONFERENCE SETS 25 JUNE ANNUALLY AS "DAY OF THE SEAFARER"



Member States of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), gathered in Manila, the Philippines, 21-25 June 2010, adopted major revisions to the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (the STCW Convention), and its associated Code

They also adopted a resolution nominating 25 June of each year hereafter as the 'Day of the Seafarer' for the unique contribution made by seafarers from all over the world to international seaborne trade, the world economy and civil society as a whole.

The date chosen was that on which the STCW revisions were adopted and acknowledges their significance for the maritime community and those who serve it on board ships.

The resolution encourages Governments, shipping organizations, companies, shipowners and all other parties concerned to duly and appropriately promote the Day of the Seafarer.

UN SECRETARY GENERAL:

PIRACY MAY BE FIRST INTERNATIONAL CRIME

UNITED NATIONS – May 2010 - "Piracy may be the first international crime," UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said as he reiterated that a "change in strategy is needed" to combat the longstanding issue and bring international cooperation at the forefront. "The figures are alarming", Ban said when he was addressing an informal meeting of the UN General Assembly on international maritime piracy.

According to the IMO, the global figure for 2009 was 406, an increase of 100 from 2008. "By far the largest concentration of attacks have been off the coast of East Africa, where reported incidents increased seven-fold during the four-year period to 2009," Ban said.

In Somalia, international naval patrols have led pirates to increase their activities further into the Indian Ocean, noting it has affected the quality of life there, increased inflation of food prices and interrupted aid deliveries and supplies to the African Union (AU) mission.

Calling for international cooperation, Ban said that "piracy can not be solved only at sea," and said the problem needs to be addressed on land.

"Stability on land would, undoubtedly, improve the situation at sea," Ban said, highlighting the need that piracy suspects have to be brought to justice and "not simply let go, or left to die."

He commended the work of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime in assisting Eastern African countries in strengthening their criminal justice systems to prosecute piracy cases.

"I urge member states, in addition to Kenya and the Seychelles, to take on their fair share of this burden," Ban said. He also noted that piracy can not be addressed without tackling other crimes, such as container security, human trafficking, and smuggling among many. Efforts need to be made to boost Somalia-based solutions, Ban said as he called on the international community to support Somalia's Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and regional authorities of Somaliland and Puntland for their technical cooperation mechanism on counter-piracy.



ITF, together with various maritime organizations in the world, has launched an online petition to gather signatures to urge the Governments to take stronger measures to eradicate the scourge of piracy. The goal is to collect half a million signatures by the 23rd September 2010, the day when World Maritime Day is celebrated.

"This decision – explains the Coordinator for the maritime sector of ITF, Steve Cotton - permits us to create a global campaign to urge all Governments to bridge the gaps between their efforts to combat piracy". The ITF and the ICMA ask all those working in the maritime ministry to sign through the website

www.endpiracynow.org

WHY SOMALIA?

Somalia remains a country torn apart by past wars, with no functioning government or criminal justice system, a desperately poor people with ready access to arms and whose traditional fishing grounds have been depleted. Piracy has become a viable option in some of its lawless regions. Millions of dollars have been paid over to pirates to free hostage ships and crews. And as the ransoms get paid, so the incidences of pirate attacks continue.

The current situation in Somalia combined with the poor condition of many vessels and their crews sailing under flags of convenience – registered in countries that have limited regulations to protect the standard of ships and conditions for

their crew – means that ships travelling in waters through the Gulf of Aden and off the Horn of Africa are vulnerable to pirate attack.

But while sub-standard vessels in poor condition are most at risk, it seems that no ship, large or small, is immune from attack by Somali pirates – whether it is a supertanker or a lone couple in a yacht. Even naval warships have come under attack, such is the desperation of the pirates. (www.ITF.org.uk)



THE SPREAD OF PIRACY

2008 saw an upsurge of attacks on shipping in the Gulf of Aden from pirates operating out of the lawless coastal regions of Somalia. In that year, almost 100 ships were attacked and more than 500 seafarers taken hostage. By 2009, the number of ships attacked had increased to 217, with 47 vessels and 867 crew taken hostage. Following international concern, and United Nations agreement, an international naval force was deployed to patrol a safe transit passage through the Gulf of Aden. That reduced the number of pirate attacks in those waters.

However, the pirates' success in winning large ransom payouts for captured ships and crew spurred them on to spread their area of operation far beyond the Gulf. The last year has seen Somali pirate attacks spread far and wide out into the Indian Ocean – with some incidents more than 1,000 nautical miles from the Somali coast. The message to all seafarers sailing in these waters is to be alert – no ship is too large or too small to escape the threat of pirate attack.

Hundreds still held captive

Somali pirates are continuing their attacks on shipping, although their success rate has been falling with the presence of the international naval force, and greater deployment of anti-piracy measures and manoeuvring by vessels that have come under attack.

The latest report from the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) – based on cases reported to its Piracy Reporting Centre (PRC) – confirmed that the number of successful Somali pirate attacks in the first three months of 2010 had fallen to 35, compared with 102 for the same period of 2009. However, the report also showed that pirate operations were spreading further out into the Indian Ocean – and often nearer the coast of India than that of the Horn of Africa.

In the first quarter of 2010, Somali pirates boarded 26 vessels, fired on 18 and hijacked 11 – taking 194 crew members hostage, of whom 12 were injured.

The current picture is that Somali pirates continue to hold captive about 350 hostages, 14 ships and seven mechanised sailing vessels.

(www.ITF.org.uk)

ISAN- 24-hour phone line

Seafarers who have experienced piracy can call the International Seafarers Assistance Network (ISAN) 24 hours a day for advice and support at +800 732 32737. Go to www.seafarehelp.org for international dialling codes and more details.

"ABANDONED SEAFARERS NEITHER ON LAND, NOR AT SEA ..."

SECOND INTERNATIONAL MEETING FOR THE WELFARE OF THE PEOPLE OF THE SEA
(Rome, 11th May 2010)

A dossier on abandoned crews. Yes, we do not talk any more about ships and rusted hulls forgotten at the docks of the ports around the world but we look at the many men and women who live like "cockroaches" on them and cannot abandon the ship without being charged, at least in our country, with illegal immigration, and losing wages for long months of sacrifice far away from their families.

"In a statement that has gone around the information agencies between 1995 and 2007, 541 vessels were abandoned, according to reports by the IMO and the ILO. However, it is however acknowledged that this figure is only the tip of the iceberg because it takes into account only the official cases reported to the two international organisations".

We talked a lot about this last year when the cases increased almost five times the average of the previous years. The economic crisis is still felt in the world of transportation, and the long wave continues this year where we have already dealt with five cases with serious problems for the crews. But there is another new feature: ITF and the Stella Maris volunteers are no longer the ones on the front line. Local Welfare Committees, coordinated by the National Committee, are gradually beginning to respond in various ways to their mission of welcoming. In one case, the repatriation of seafarers, instead of resorting to the usual Charity Fund of the Catholic Church, was entirely made thanks to funds from the local Committee. In another case, through strong political pressure, the Embassies of the seafarers took the responsibility to repatriate them.

These are small but fundamental changes. They are signs of a movement that is starting to take shape and make concrete the responsibility of welcoming those who are abandoned, those who are not accepted because their situation of indigence and need is not known, a situation which is sometimes absurd and really serious in our "developed" ports. The co-responsibility of the various members of the "maritime cluster" has expanded to the maritime cities with the involvement of their citizens at the political level, and especially the empowerment of individuals who brought a "panettone" for Christmas or fresh vegetables to feed the crews that sometimes have no decent clothes or a bar of soap for washing and even lack drinking water.

The idea of a Dossier on abandoned seafarers in Italian ports has several reasons:

1. To make this phenomenon known more from several points of view starting from the sociological to the economic and legal aspect.



2. From the analysis of the last 20 cases of abandoned ships in Italian ports, last year we also wanted to draw up immediately a picture of the international phenomenon comparing it with the abandonment registered around the world by the ITF. The seafarer is a true sign of the globalised man and the different nationalities of the crews and the flags of the vessels make it easy to understand the similarities in this world-wide phenomenon.

3. Explore the "best practices" with which the different maritime countries address the issue and the solutions to this scourge of the maritime world. The actual feasibility and reporting of other experiences have helped us to "draw up a model" that could be easily proposed in Italy.

4. Highlight the new methodological approaches in a vision that is shared more and more both locally and nationally by the local Welfare Committees.

5. Solicit a government recognition, which the National Welfare Committee has been awaiting for more than 4 years since its formation. The effective role of this tool, which is currently operating on a voluntary basis

by various subjects in the maritime cluster together with the Ministry of Transport and the Ministry of Labour, must give way to an institutional recognition that also makes it really operative in line with the latest maritime welfare conventions of the ILO. By now, this recognition is completely well-deserved and needed without waiting for additional bureaucratic steps together with the ratification of ILO MLC 2006 which recognizes its governmental role for all purposes and intents.

The establishment of an important “working committee” between the Italian Episcopal Conference and the Coast Guard

Among the subjects that have always cooperated in aiding the maritime world both in cases of emergency or through their daily presence for listening and welcoming seafarers in Italian ports, we list the General Command of the Coast Guard and the Catholic Church, in particular, through the *Stella Maris* centers and the Chaplains on board who sign on like real seafarers and live with them during the long months away from their families. In a world that is changing as fast as the shipping world, it is increasingly necessary to build a network in which the various subjects, each one with its independence and professionalism, consider the human being and recognize his original dignity which is often trampled on or obscured by the logic of mere economic gain.

The signature placed on this document by Cardinal Angelo Bagnasco as President of the Italian Episcopal Conference and by Admiral Head Raimondo Pollastrini of the General Command of the Coast Guard in Italy is meant to acknowledge the progress made together in recent years and to lay new foundations for concrete collaboration between the two institutions. In particular, it agrees on the establishment of a “working committee” to “put in place specific operating modes to entertain and strengthen relations and to enhance prospects of cooperation”.

The mobility of the maritime world involves a great vulnerability which the men and women of the Coast Guard are called to defend along with the hundreds of *Stella Maris* volunteers around the world. Let's not forget the role of all the institutions of the maritime cluster that work daily, also through the work of the Welfare Committees for the people of the sea, to welcome the more than 5 million seafarers that stop in our ports. As the old seafarers have taught us who crossed the oceans many times: the sea does not divide; the sea unites.

Rev. Giacomo Martino, National Director, AOS-Italy

(“*StellaMaris*” n. 1-2/2010)

Although we still commonly speak about abandoned “ships”, in recent years, due largely to the work of the IMO and the ILO, it is now clear that at the heart of the problem there are men, the abandoned seafarers, and not the hull of a ship left to rust.



ITF Seafarers

Your port of call online

The ITF website for seafarers now in Chinese, Russian and Spanish!

ITF website for seafarers currently only in English has been launched in Chinese, Russian, and Spanish. This site is now almost a universal online service for all seafarers.

The new language versions of the ITF website for seafarers - www.itfseafarers.org - contains information about health, wages and safety, as well as advice and services, maritime news and discussion forums among crews.

Aside from being user-friendly, the new sites, like the English version, provide access to information in three ways - through a menu, tabs, and the shortcut links. They were designed to guarantee users the same level of speed and service as the English site if they need urgent assistance, are looking for specific information or are newcomers. People who have a slow connection may also opt for a text only version.

NEW ARRIVALS IN THE FAMILY OF THE APOSTLESHIP OF THE SEA

GREAT BRITAIN

Martin Foly is the new National Director since June 1st, 2010. Eamonn Delaney, Chairman of the Trustees, said that "AoS will benefit from the depth of experience Martin has gained in his career so far. He brings fresh ideas and a deep understanding of our aspirations for AoS in the future".



ECUADOR

P. Vicente Macancela is the new port chaplain in Guayaquil.

ANGOLA AND SÃO TOMÉ

Fr. Juan Carlos Venegas Benítez is the new National Director (see article on page 9).

(Address: Apostolado do Mar, P.O.Box 5557, LUANDA, Tel + 244 (924) 100012, juancarlosvenegas58@gmail.com, ceamangola1@yahoo.com.br)

THE PHILIPPINES



Fr. Paulo Prigol, Scalabrinian, is the new port chaplain of Manila.

He replaces Fr. Savino Bernardi, who is now Provincial Superior of the Scalabrinian Fathers.

(Address: Pius XII Catholic Center, 1175 United Nations Ave., Paco, MM. 1002 Manila, P.O. Box 2927, Manila 1099, Tel: +63 (2) 527-0337, Tel/Fax + 63 (2) 527-2638, pauloprigol@yahoo.com)

IMPORTANT ACHIEVEMENT FOR PIERLUIGI FOSCHI

On the 2nd of June, the President of the Italian Republic honored Pier Luigi Foschi with the title of Knight of Labour (Cavaliere del Lavoro) for the successes he obtained in the field of Italian tourism. Born in Milan but Genoese by adoption, since 1997 Foschi has been Managing Director, and since 2000 Chairman of Costa Cruises. "I am especially proud — he commented — for the company and for all those who work here. Because the effort, let us not forget, was and continues to be collective ...".

The President of the Pontifical Council, H.E. Msgr. Antonio Maria Veglio', congratulated the new Knight of Labour for this achievement which attests to his great commitment to making the Costa fleet the first Italian tour operator and the first European cruise company. Archbishop Vegliò also congratulated the company's work force which contributed to achieving this important honor in the Italian industrial world.

The Apostleship of the Sea expresses its best wishes to Dr. Foschi and hopes to continue the fruitful cooperation that sees the presence of A.M. chaplains on board the Costa fleet vessels as welfare officers for the crews.



BLACK TIDE

U.S. Bishops to the fishers' aid

Washington, June 17, 2010. Three hundred thousand dollars: that is the amount donated by the Sub-Committee of the "Catholic Campaign for Human Development" -- the campaign organized by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) -- to aid the communities and dioceses impacted by the environmental disaster caused by the British Petroleum (Bp) oil rig explosion in the Gulf of Mexico. Among other things, the oil spill risks seriously jeopardizing the work of thousands of fishers for years. The black spill has reached the coasts of the United States and Mexico, spread more than three hundred kilometers and forced more than 20% of the waters to be closed to fishing. According to estimates, the fishing industry will lose 21,500 million dollars because of the environmental disaster.

The amount allocated by the episcopate was approved in the framework of the regular contribution of funds to the most disadvantaged communities. In particular, a communique states that the donation "will serve to give a voice to the category of fishers and the communities impacted by the environmental disaster and to support the emergency interventions". The President of the USCCB Sub-Committee, the

Bishop of Biloxi Roger Paul Morin, stressed that "the tragic oil spill has serious human, environmental and economic

The black oil spill caused by the oil rig explosion in the Gulf of Mexico acts like a "cap" over all the marine life and suffocates the algae and other organisms living below the surface. Shellfish, mollusks and fish die because of the great toxicity both of the hydrocarbons and the solvents used for the dispersal. To clean their plumes, birds swallow the oil which causes grave alterations to their internal organs.



costs". As the Church, he added, "we deplore the loss of human lives and we pray for those whose lives are in danger". With this aid, the prelate stressed again that "the Church also offers concrete support to the work that must be carried out to help the communities to remain self-sufficient. This is a powerful sign from the Catholic Campaign for Human Development".

The Archbishop of New Orleans, Gregory Michael Aymond, added his voice to that of the Bishop of Biloxi. He expressed thanks in the name of the faithful of the Archdiocese for "the generosity shown" by the episcopate. The Archbishop explained that "by providing our communities of fishers with the funds to support their efforts to safeguard their work, the Bishops- campaign has acted in such a way that the Church will continue to be a sign of Christ's compassion and hope for the fishers' communities". He thus concluded that the donation "is truly generous and will be used to give hope and

"The ecological problem must be dealt with not only because of the chilling prospects of environmental degradation on the horizon; the real motivation must be the quest for authentic world-wide solidarity inspired by the values of charity, justice and the common good". (Benedict XVI, Message for the celebration of the World Day of Peace, 2010)

stability to these families of workers impacted by the disastrous oil spill".

An appeal to the faithful to support the communities affected by the oil spill was also launched by the promoter of the USCCB Apostleship of the Sea, the Bishop of Savannah John Kevin Boland*. The prelate explained that a coordination is being organized to manage the support interventions better in the various dioceses.

*<http://www.youtube.com/user/usccb#p/p/96DDE9247B03585A/0/cO63wxFuVM0>

(L'Osservatore Romano, Friday June 18, 2010, p. 7)