

# Apostolatus Maris

The Church in the Maritime World

Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerants, Vatican City



No. 73, 2001/II

## Launching of the AOS in Ukraine!

Ten Greek and Latin rite Catholic priests from parishes, in which are six major ports of Ukraine on the Black Sea and the Azov Sea, attended the Seminar (Odessa, Ilyichevsk, Yuzhny, Kherson, Sevastopol and Berdiansk). The priests of another port-city, Nikolayev, asked to be excused. The whole Odessa team of the Mission to Seafarers (Anglican) participated in a great part of the meeting. In Odessa, a very cosmopolitan city, the common language is still Russian and not Ukrainian.

The logistics had been very well organised by Rev. Fr Roman Popravka, the AOS



**FIRST SEMINAR OF APOSTOLATUS MARIS IN UKRAINE, Odessa 15-18 May 2001**  
under the auspices of H.Em. Cardinal Lubomyr Husar,  
Archbishop Major of LVIV

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personnel and seafarers in *one* single team for each port. The relationship with the former soviet 'Interclubs' for seafarers is often good, and in that case it makes useful collaboration possible and fruitful. Some Clubs wrongly fear that the AOS or the Mission to Seafarers could be a competitor. Ecumenical collaboration is a must for the benefit of Seafarers.

A delegation from Ukraine should attend the AOS European Conference in Southampton (UK) next October, and the XXI° World Congress next year.

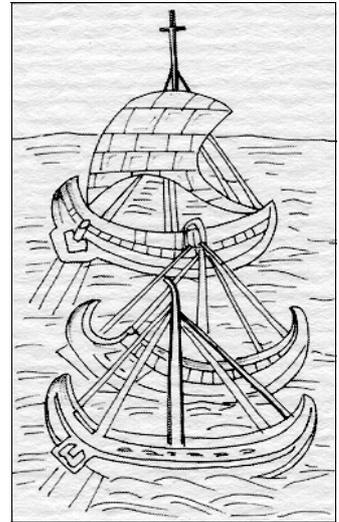
Happy sailing to Stella Maris in Ukraine!

## WHAT IS A 'CHAPLAIN'

*St Martin of Tours was probably the first Chaplain in history. He accompanied the French Army into battle and shared his cloak with a beggar. He tore his cloak in half, giving half to the beggar and keeping the other half himself. Later, the half-cloak which he had kept, was regarded as a sacred relic and looked after by a group of priests who were called 'The Capellane', literally "the Keepers of the Cloak", the cloak being a holy covering. From this, we get our word 'Chaplain', which means 'He who offers the holy covering'. Also, our word for 'chapel' comes from this Italian word.*

*Port Chaplains, in the course of their work, will be called upon to carry out many duties, but above all, the one which we must never forget nor neglect is to care for the poor. It is these seafarers above all that demand our attention. As Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine you did for me" (Mt 25:4). Today, we continue the tradition by offering advice, help, protection and God's presence.*

Sea Sunday 15/07/01



*The three ships represent the local Churches which, towards the same goal, in the sea of life, bring the souls to the port of salvation.*

## Getting to know Brazil !

The Fishermen's Pastoral Council (CPP) is a Brazilian organization close to the Catholic Church structure. Recently, during the celebrations of its 30th anniversary, from 17 to 19 November 2000 in Lagoa Seca Village in Paraíba State, several people recalled various aspects of the history of the movement. Since its beginning, CPP has played an important role in supporting the fishermen of Brazil, and has effectively contributed to several political changes.

According to Bernardo Siry, the present national coordinator of CPP, at the end of the 1960s, when the movement began, it was made up of fishermen, priests, nuns and other supporters. Starting in some of the beaches of Olinda (in the neighborhood of Recife, the capital of Pernambuco State), the movement centered around the work of a Franciscan priest, Alfredo Schnuetgen, a priest whose memory is still alive among many fishermen's groups, notably in the northeastern region of Brazil.

Bernardo Siry nostalgically recollected the initial adventures of Alfredo the priest, who didn't want to be "confined to parishes, but wanted to find the people". During his walks along the Olinda beaches, Alfredo had observed the neglected fishermen, whose lives

were characterized by isolation, distance and subordination to merchants. He began to work in two communities in Olinda. Initially, it was not an easy task to get them to discover their own reality.

Out of the first meetings with the Olinda fishermen was born "Christian Fishmeri", which began to publish an informative bulletin, *O Leme (The Rudder)*. One of the main difficulties the bulletin addressed was the existence of middlemen. Toinho, a fisherman who was part of the early movement, recalled that the middlemen owned the boats and the gear, and they forced the fishermen to sell their products through them. Soon, Alfredo's discussions stimulated interest in an effective organization for fishermen. Groups of fishermen began to form associations within the *colonias* to acquire fishing gear. These groups were the seeds of the future co-operatives.

Those early initiatives soon expanded to the other beaches of Pernambuco and the neighboring States. Literacy groups began to be organized for the fishermen and their families. Meanwhile, *O Leme* was increasing its circulation, while a radio program, *Voice of the Fisherman*, began to attract listeners in the northeast region.

### Autonomous entity

In 1974, *Christian Fishermen* was recognized by the Regional Northeast CNBB (National Conference of Brazilian Bishops) and, in 1976, it was declared a "pastoral of national interest", and named the *Fishermen's Pastoral Council* with headquarters in Recife.

Today, the Council has both religious and lay members. It participates in the religious and cultural occasions of the community, and also in the struggle for the rights of the fishermen.

The profile of the fishermen is no longer that of a bunch of workers subservient to merchants,



the military and politicians. Increasingly, more and more fishermen have been mobilized in a lot of *colonias*, and this has led to a national movement of fishermen.

Today, the role of women is an important part of the Council's work.

(to be continued on page 4)

**The Fishermen's Pastoral Council has effectively contributed to several political changes in Brazil.**

*From an article by Arjan Heinen, Samudra April 2001*

As early as 1974, it supported the organization of *pescadeiras* (fisherwomen), as reported in the early editions of *O Leme*, copies of which were displayed at the 30th anniversary meeting.

At the meeting, Bernardo emphasized the pioneering role of Sister Nilza, who, in the 1970s, began working closely with a group of fisherwomen of Itapissuma, in Pernambuco. It was from Itapissuma that, for the first time in Brazil, a woman became the president of a fishermen's *colônia*.

The president of the fishermen's *colônia* of Remanso, in Bahia State, recalled, "The fishermen didn't know they had somebody who could do something for them." An added disadvantage was the lack of organization.

Today, thanks to the support of the Council and some parishes and dioceses that gave priority

to the cause of the fishermen, four *colônias* in the Sobradinho area are ruled by fishworkers. "Today, a fisherman can sit down and talk with anyone, even with the head of the country," said the president.

The testimony of Divino Alves, another professional leader, was along the same lines: "The fishermen today see themselves as a category of workers, with specific problems. The Fishermen's Pastoral Council began to show fishermen that they are individuals with rights and dignity."

Toinho, president of the *colônia* from Penedo, So Francisco River Region, recalled the initial support from Centro Josue de Castro, as well as the help of a technician from the old official fisheries institute, SUDEPE. Those days, he said, were marked by surveillance by the military regime of Brazil, which was suspicious of any workers' meetings.

As an important consequence of the work initiated by the Council, a fisherman was elected president of the National Fishermen's Confederation. Soon, the fishermen were clamoring to be officially recognized in the country's constitution, egged on by Dario, a fisheries technician who came to Olinda in 1986.

In Brasilia, the country's capital and home to the federal government's headquarters and the National Congress, the fishermen participated in a seminar with deputies and senators who were engaged in the constitutional process.

A team of fishermen's leaders and support technicians took charge of



## GOOD LUCK TIMOTHY!

After four years of loyal and generous service, Mr. **Timothy J. MacGuire** leaves his post as National Director of the Apostleship of the Sea in England and Wales. He has been enroled by the British trade union of maritime officers NUMAST.

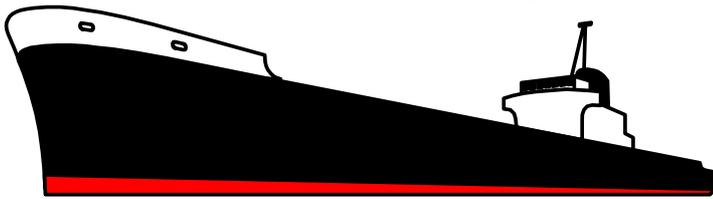
The Pontifical Council, the Apostleship of the Sea International and many AOS teams around the world are grateful to him for his work while in charge of the Liaison officer between AOS and ITF Seafarers' Trust to help them to prepare and to channel their application for support.

Timothy has accepted to continue to do this liaison work until his successor becomes familiar with his office.

A great "thank you" therefore from all of us to Timothy, and God Bless You!

## Seminar “Ports and Airports: Crossroads of Cultures and Faiths”

This very current theme was indicated by the Holy Father John Paul II in the Apostolic Letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte* as one of the cruxes of Catholics’ commitment in the new century. This theme is particularly relevant and important for all those who carry out their daily pastoral activity in contexts that are multi-cultural and inter-religious by nature, such as ports, ships and airports.



The seminar was organized by the Migrantes Office for the Pastoral Care of Maritime and Aviation Workers, in cooperation with the Secretariat for Ecumenism and Inter-Religious Dialogue of the Italian Bishops’ Conference. It aimed at responding to the workers’ needs for clear doctrinal reference points and practical indications for their pastoral ministry.

Judging from the overall satisfaction of the participants, it would seem that the seminar achieved its objectives thanks to reports by: Msgr. Elio Bromuri, a professor of ecumenism at the Theological Institute of Assisi and person in charge of the International

Hospitality Center in Perugia; Msgr. Vittorio Ianari of the Community of Sant’Egidio and person in charge of the Ecumenical and Inter-Religious sector of the Italian Bishops’ Conference; reports from experts of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People on worldwide ecumenical experiences already under way for some time in the areas of maritime and aviation pastoral care;

various testimonies by pastoral workers in centers for hospitality and assistance to seafarers including the person in charge of the German Lutheran mission for seafarers in Genoa, and by port and airport chaplains.

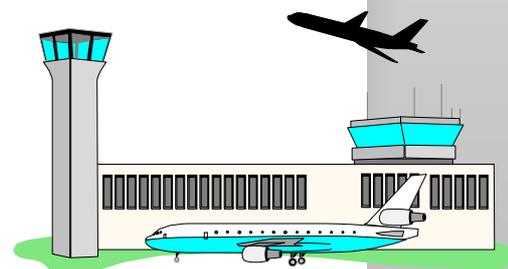
The work of the seminar, which was attended throughout by the President of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, Archbishop Stephen Fumio Hamao, was introduced by the Most Rev. Giuseppe Orlandoni, the Bishop of Senigallia and Secretary of the Commission of the Italian Bishops’ Conference for Migrations.

The work then

proceeded under the guidance of the General Director of Migrants, Msgr. Luigi Petris, and the Director of the Migrantes Office for maritime and aviation pastoral care, Msgr. Costantino Stefanetti, who took advantage of the occasion to bring two current maritime emergencies to the participants’ attention:

- the disgrace of ships sequestered in ports which turns the innocent seafarers aboard into prisoners with additional punishments for months, and sometimes for years;
- the prospect of ship chaplains becoming an “extinct species”.

Regarding the problem of sequestered ships, concrete action was urged to sensitize institutions and public opinion, and this resulted in the approval of a press communiqué. On the other hand, with confidence in greater attention and ecclesial efforts in this regard, the sincere hope was expressed that, despite the crisis in vocations, the age-old tradition of



*Maritime and airport pastoral workers from all over Italy met on Friday and Saturday, April 27-28, 2001 at the Domus S. Marthae in the Vatican for the Seminar “Ports and Airports: Crossroads of Cultures and Faiths”, on the theme of ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue.*

Migranti press, Anno XXIII, n. 19

***Strong declaration of the participants  
to the meeting organised by Migrants, 27-28 April 2001.***

(Migranti Press, Anno XXIII, n. 19)

We chaplains on board, and pastoral workers in Italian ports and airports met in the Domus S. Marthae in Vatican City from April 27-28, 2001 for a study seminar on "Ports and Airports: Crossroads of Cultures and Faiths", organized by the "Migrants" Foundation. We shared our experiences and studied themes in depth related to globalization and the daily life we lead in our places of work which are preeminent crossroads of all peoples and where the "global village" materializes in concrete faces.

Our task is to favor coexistence with our differences, the main road to peace. The seafarers we meet in the Italian ports come from every part of the world. They teach us that before any cultural, religious or ethnic differences, there is our common belonging to humankind.

Unfortunately, we are not only witnesses to the positive aspects of the phenomenon of human mobility. For us, the fact that seafarers aboard 10-15% of the ships in the world fleet work in conditions of slavery is not just something that is written in a recent report of an International Commission. We see it every day on the ships that dock in our ports. We are also witnesses to "international regulations that are not respected, the lack of safety provisions, very long working hours for minimum pay or even no compensation at all, and black lists for seafarers who join labor unions".

The participants in the seminar considered it urgent to draw the attention of public opinion and institutions to some of these extreme situations. In several Italian ports there are ships sequestered for months or even years because of the shipping firms' economic insolvency. Although the crews of these ships have committed no crime, they are forced to stay aboard for port safety reasons. They live in a situation similar to that of prisoners, if not worse, with no pay, no social support and health care, far from their own countries, their families and their children.

We mention one case, which is exemplary but not exhaustive, of the men on the Ukrainian ship "Odessa" that has been sequestered in the port of Naples since 1995\*. For six years the men have been living on the solidarity of a few volunteers. Vladimir Lohorov, the commander of the "Odessa", and the eight members of his crew, from one day to the next, went from being professionals of the sea to derelicts struggling for survival. Other men on other ships in other Italian ports like Genoa, Venice, Ancona, Trieste, Palermo, Augusta, Savona, La Spezia... are living or have lived a similar odyssey.

We are facing an institutional and legislative gap with regard to protection of the seafarer's civil rights, and it is unthinkable that volunteers alone, through emergency interventions, can fill this enormous and deplorable gap for a society that is entering the third millennium!

\*At the time of this Bulletin's publication, the situation in Naples has been fortunately resolved



"Don't be afraid of sinking.  
The Apostleship of the Sea  
will save you"

Cartoon of P. Ignacy Ryndzionek, SDB,  
AOS Odessa, Ukraine

## AOS Sponsors Formation Workshop for Care-givers to Seafarers' Families

It is now readily admitted by many Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) and their Wives that there are special problems affecting their families. Among these problems would be the extra burden for the spouse left at home in shouldering the dual parental roles, children growing up knowing they have a father but he is away most of the time, suspicions regarding marital infidelity, families developing a materialistic mentality promoting a higher standard of living that can only be sustained by income from abroad, and a variety of strains to the relationships among the family members.

Seafarers Wives acknowledge that there are tensions for them and their families at specific points of time: when the spouse first leaves for abroad, while the spouse is away for a long period of time on contract, and upon the return of the spouse who often feels that the family has "passed him/her by".

As a result of these tensions, the returning spouse often tries to "regain" his/her position in the family by being more strict and demanding -- often forgetting that their children have grown up while they were away working.

The workshop participants learned techniques of "attentive listening", helping one

another to discern their own personal "core values", sharing their own "darkest fears" regarding the dangers facing their overseas spouses and facing realistically the problems of managing and budgeting the family income.

Seafarers' wives must not only budget for the needs of themselves and their children. They must also set aside money to cover the cost of the courses now required by the Government and international agencies for their Seafarer spouses to renew their work contract and also to up-grade their position or rank on board.

This workshop training program was partly funded by the donations of high school students during the annual Mission Sunday celebrations in Paris, France. The funds were designated for Christian Leadership and formation programs for Seafarers, their families and Maritime Students. The participants also contributed their counterpart which was the expense of their transportation from their respective homes to Cebu City.

The participants were also briefed on other programs to assist them and their families. Among these are the workshops on techniques for effective "Peer Counseling", Family

Home Retreats and developing an effective prayer life amid the cares and "busy-ness" of our daily lives as adult Christians.

At present in the Philippines, there are permanent-ly established Stella Maris Seafarers' Centers in the Ports of Davao and Cebu, The Ports of Iligan, Cagayan de Oro and Maasin now have assigned Port Chaplains and are developing small Stella Maris Seafarers' Centers.

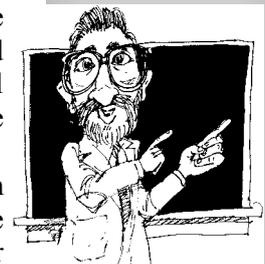
In the Port of Manila, a major project is underway to locate and maintain an International Seafarers' Center. Among the priority services of such a Center would be overnight and short-term accommodations for the tens of thousands of Seafarers who must process their application papers and sign their contracts in Manila.

The Philippines is the largest national supplier of trained Maritime personnel for the shipping fleets of the world. With close to 500,000 registered Filipino Seafarers at present, more than 250,000 of them are under contract and manning commercial shipping throughout the world.

The recent inclusion of the Philippines on the so-called "white list" or listing of countries

*37 Seafarers' Wives met together in the "Living the Gospel" Sisters' Retreat House in Lahug, Cebu on 6-8 April to undergo a Trainers' Training Program. All of the participants had expressed a willingness to be trained in the techniques and practice of "Care-giving for Seafarers' Families".*

**Rev. P. Jack Walsh,  
AOS  
National  
Director in  
the  
Philippines**



## Statement by The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference on The Welfare of Seafarers, May 2001

We, the Catholic Bishops of Australia are deeply edified by the response of the Maritime Industry to the Forum on Seafarers' Welfare held in Melbourne on 22-23 August 2000, sponsored by the Department of Transport and Regional Services and hosted by the Apostleship of the Sea and the Australian Council of the Mission to Seafarers.

We welcome and support the initiative taken by the Governmental and Maritime Industry to develop a National Seafarers' Welfare Advisory Council and Port Welfare Committees throughout Australia.

It is vital that the on-ship environment not put

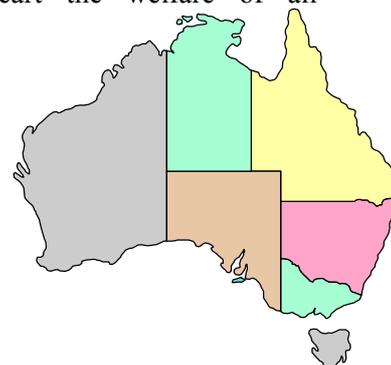
seafarers' lives in unnecessary danger or seafarers in sub-human conditions of life and work.

It is distressing that not all ship-owners and charterers appear to be earnestly seeking to ensure that their ships are safe and their seafarers' conditions worthy of human beings. For example, some "Flags of Convenience" ships continue to operate with impunity, despite their having little regard for human dignity, for our country's laws, and for our environment.

As we commend Australia's maritime safety authority for the stronger line it is taking with regard to such 'ships of shame', ceaseless vigilance and action on the part of all

who must or can assist the needs of seafarers are called for.

The now scheduled development of Port Seafarers' Welfare Committees will not only ensure the support of the work of seafarers' welfare agencies: it will, at each local level, help the efficiency and enhance the reputation of the Australian Maritime Industry and show the world that Australia has deeply at heart the welfare of all



### A New Member of ICMA

#### *Stichting Pastoraat Werkers Overzee* Foundation for pastoral care for Workers Overseas

**History:** The foundation is about 25 years old. Three Dutch-Reformed ministers were working as pastors before **Toon van de Sande**, a Catholic Pastoral Worker was appointed in this ministry by the Bishop of Rotterdam, 1-6-2000.

**Goal:** Pastoral care for all workers on Dutch dredging-ships and construction-projects abroad on an ecumenical Christian base.

**Means:** A pastor is visiting during 100 days a year those ships and projects, offering possibilities of counselling and meditation. He just shares the life on the ship or the projects for 2-3 days. When needed he also offers his care in the Netherlands.

**Financial base:** 5 large world-wide operating Dutch companies and their branch organisation support the foundation for 90%. The costs of travelling and other costs of each trip are paid by the host company.

**Structure:** Each trip is organised in co-operation of the pastor and the P&O department of all companies involved. After each visit a report is made and discussed with the board of the foundation and the P&O managers. Every year a meeting of all the P&O managers, the pastor and the board of the foundation is organised.

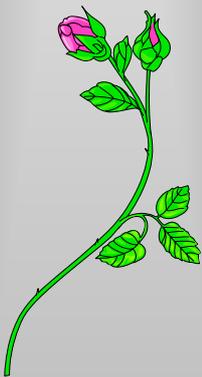
**Special Emphasis:** General short term counselling, post traumatic counselling, cross cultural co-operation and meditation and prayer.

**Extra:** A quarterly magazine for all seafarers and workers abroad named 'Diepgang', in co-operation with the Reformed and AOS workers in The Netherlands.

## “Reconciling Work with Family Life”

*The Spanish Minister of Labor and Social Affairs received petitions from seamen’s wives*

**Josefa Soto Duran, the President of the “Rosa dos Ventos” Association of Fishermen’s Wives, and Mari a Cristina de Castro Garcia, the National Delegate of the Apostleship of the Sea for the Fishing Sector, Coordinator and person in charge of the “FEM” Project, would like to call attention to: “The Reconciliation of Work with Family Life”.**



The factors impeding this are:

1. a dehumanizing structure that is not questioned;
2. grave irregularities that are not controlled and not sanctioned.

### OUR REFLECTION

Through this briefing, the impact that work on the sea makes on fishermen and their families is pointed out.

The problem of materialistic structures, which originates in the power of the firms and is permitted by the administration, is so broad and complex that it is not easy to choose concrete points – which we will nonetheless point out – mindful that the working conditions in fishing are hidden in the silence of the sea, and that the need for urgent social action is not taken into consideration.

### WE CALL FOR SOLUTIONS TO:

#### 1. *The Working Conditions on the Sea*

a) The value of the work: a fair salary; retribution for overtime, holidays and vacations; legal contracts, and the regularization of social security payments.

b) Working conditions: keeping the ships fit to live in and ensuring safety measures on board; rhythms of work, and

means for safety and hygiene.

c) Early retirement: given the fishermen’s deterioration caused by work on the sea and the application of reducing coefficients, retirement is set at 55 years of age. It would be justifiable to calculate this in terms of a period of 25 years of social security payments.

#### 2. *Reconciling Work with Family Life*

Assertion of the family’s right to call for the fisherman’s presence in the home so that he can carry out his function as husband and father.

a) Duration of the fishing shift: the need for relief crews so that the periods at sea will not exceed four months with a corresponding two months at home. Respect four days on land for every fifteen days at sea, and weekends for coastal fishing. Respect pay during days of rest on land as well as during biological pauses that would be intended as compensation for overtime and weekend work that has already been done.

b) Communication with the sea: bring about a reduction in telephone rates keeping in mind that this is the only means of contact with the family during the fisherman’s

long stays at sea.

c) Assistance for children: for food and studies for children under 18 because of the uncertain earnings from fishing.

#### 3. *The Crisis in the Fishing Sector*

The crisis in the fishing sector that our country is going through is well known. This is because it is impossible to have access to fishing areas of third party countries due to difficulties with fishing agreements.

The solutions adopted of creating mixed firms or flying third country flags have brought about a serious lack of protection for the workers with regard to their social security.

A large percentage of these fishermen are covered by emigrants’ insurance with the resulting consequences for their services, or by other special agreements that the seafarers themselves have to formalize.

It is a matter of justice for the government to establish control over the situation of these workers in order to give them social compensation.

We consider that just as the fishing policy favors

*(to be continued on page 10)*

(from page 9)

the firm managers through subsidies from the European Structural Funds for renovation of the fleet, it should also provide aid for the workers who are the poorest and most disadvantaged ones in this situation. The funds would have to be applied through agreements that will protect the workers.

WE WISH TO POINT OUT that the European funds from the IFOP, earmarked

for workers for precise situations, are not being applied because the workers lack information and depend on the firm manager for starting any claims.

WE CONCLUDE BY SAYING:

In order to do justice in the fishing sector, a labor law of the sea is needed since the workers' statute is not applicable to work in fishing. But it will be of

no use if mechanisms to watch over this law are not set up because fishermen run the risk of losing their jobs when they demand their rights from the firm managers.



### **“A Rich Man can, a Poor Man must”**

In his book, *The Art of Loving*, Erich Fromm said, “Those who have capital can buy labor and make it work for the fruitful investment of their capital. Those who have labor can sell it to the capitalists at the going market conditions or go hungry”.

In principle, Fromm highlights the fact that it is within the capitalist's power to set the price of labor according to the going market conditions, and that a worker has to accept them or go hungry.

You do not have to be too bright to see that a capitalist is a step ahead in the game. Moreover, the market conditions have to bring him what he “can” scrape together in order to obtain the rates he presumes to get, without considering at what price the worker “must” sell his labor.

If we shift over to the fishing business, we find that same capitalist setting up the structure of his firm with objectives that yield profits for his free ambition, without considering that the work he buys is supplied by persons. They are workers who have to deprive themselves of their primary needs because of the imperative imposed on them by the capitalist: hard and dangerous work without the required rest, solitude in a difficult cohabitation, distance from their families, indecent living quarters, and the dangers of the sea. And this goes on for months, for a whole lifetime, because this is not a momentary adventure!

Why is this labor so cheap? The profits from fishing can be seen. But these profits would have to be distributed in such a way as to respect the dignity of the persons that produce them by creating a different structural model when the firm's conditions are set down.

Why is this very immoral situation allowed? It is not difficult to guess. When they are far away, in the silence of the sea, they live in slavery, and no one wants to know about this because what happens is not seen, and their voices are not heard. And those on land, society, and those who would be able to no longer tolerate this situation? Some take advantage of the fish, and others talk about fishing licenses, but not about the persons.

Cristina de Castro

*Boga, Revista Internacional de Mujeres de Pescadores, Año 2001, n° 9*

# Ecumenical Charter to Direct Dialogue in Europe

## Landmark Document Approved by Christians

Strasbourg, France, April 23, 2001

The 12-point declaration, "Charta Oecumenica," is an attempt to promote cooperation among the Churches and Christian confessions of Europe in proclaiming the one Gospel, as well as promoting relations with other believers and nonbelievers.

The document was signed Sunday by Cardinal Miloslav Vlk, president of the Council of the European Episcopal Conferences (CCEE), representing Catholics, and by Orthodox Metropolitan Jérémie, president of the Conference of European Churches (CEC). The latter embraces 123 Orthodox Churches and Reformation communities.

The signing was the culmination of the European ecumenical meeting held here from April 19-22. The Ecumenical Charter, which is divided into three fundamental sections, is the result of four years of work, a follow-up to the last meeting of this nature held in Graz, Austria, in 1997.

The charter's introduction states that the document is "a common commitment to dialogue and cooperation. It describes fundamental ecumenical responsibilities, from which follow a number of guidelines and



commitments. It is designed to promote an ecumenical culture of dialogue and co-operation at all levels of church life, and to provide agreed criteria for this. However, it has no magisterial or dogmatic character, nor is it legally binding under church law."

The ecumenical movement continues despite obstacles. The introduction says, "We cannot be content with the present situation. Instead, aware of our guilt and ready to repent, we must strive to overcome divisions still existing among us, so that together we may credibly proclaim the message of the Gospel among all people."

The first section is a common profession of Christians' faith in the "One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church."

The second section, "On the Way Toward the Visible Fellowship of the Churches in Europe," assumes a series of commitments. Given the absence of points of reference and the evident

search for meaning by European people today, the Charter invites Christians to witness to their faith without creating competition among the confessions.

There is firm commitment "to recognize that every person can freely choose his or her religious and church affiliation as a matter of conscience, which means not inducing anyone to convert through moral pressure or material incentive, but also not hindering anyone from entering into conversion of his or her own free will."

As a means to greater rapprochement, the charter states that it is fundamental to "reappraise together the history of the Christian churches, which has been marked by many beneficial experiences but also by schisms, hostilities and even armed conflicts. Human guilt, lack of love, and the frequent abuse of faith and the church for political interests, have severely damaged the credibility of the Christian witness."

The charter calls for concrete defense of minority rights, by eliminating mistakes and prejudices among majority and minority churches.

The quest for unity is proposed, especially through prayer and joint celebrations. It mentions

*(to be continued on page 12)*

*Christians in the Old World, the scene of great schisms, now have a common document to promote dialogue and the quest for full unity while avoiding errors.*

*What about if we replace "Europe" with "sea-world"?*

Zenit News Agency, 24 April 2001

(from page 11)

with regret the churches' inability to participate in the same Eucharist, because of essential differences on this sacred matter. "A particularly painful sign of the divisions among many Christians churches is the lack of eucharistic fellowship," the document says. In fact, in "order to deepen ecumenical fellowship, endeavors to reach a consensus in faith must be continued at all cost," the charter stresses. "Only in this way can church communion be given a theological foundation. There is no alternative to dialogue."

The third section, "Our Common Responsibility in Europe," points out that the current process of integration of the Old World needs a soul.

"We are convinced that the spiritual heritage of Christianity constitutes an empowering source of inspiration and enrichment for Europe," the document explains. "On the basis of the

## PHONE HOME

*Good news for seafarers is the agreement between ITF and GN Comtext and Stratos to provide pre-paid cards for phoning and emailing at discounted rates.*

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*The email facilities are provided by Comtext's Ocean-mail service, and Inmarsat's provider, Stratos. Ocean-mail needs no shipboard or shoreside administration and the shipboard facility required is a class 1 Inmarsat transceiver which can be located in any convenient private place.*

Seaways, April 2001.

***Thanks to the National AOS branches which have already sent their annual contribution (2001) for the promotion and the international coordination of Apostolatus Maris.***

***This is a (discreet) reminder for those who intend to do so but have not yet done it ...***

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ex-libris by P. Ignacy Ryndzionek, AM Odessa, Ukraine

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*Welcome on board, Excellency!*

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Fax 55-13-3234-7398

## INDIA

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Tel +91-22-261-1056

## SINGAPORE *New Port Chaplain*

Fr. Romeo Yu Chang, CICM

## UKRAINE

### GC: Greek Catholic

### RC: Roman Catholic

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