

Apostolatus Maris

The Church in the Maritime World

Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People



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*Why do you seek the living one among the
dead? (Lc 24, 5)*

Inside...

| | |
|---|--------|
| Card. Hamao addresses Regional Coordinators | Page 2 |
| AOS International Fishing Committee Meeting—Archbishop Marchetto's opening Speech | 4 |
| We have forgotten that the sea exists | 6 |
| AOS Regional Reports | 7 |

Cardinal Hamao addresses Regional Coordinators

(Rome, 31st January—1st February 2005)

I wish to extend a warm welcome to all of you, who have come to our Pontifical Council for this meeting of the Regional Coordinators. I hope that you had the time to rest from your long voyages and that although we have a full agenda you will also have the opportunity to enjoy these few days in Rome.



We all realize the importance of this annual meeting of the AOS for our worldwide organization; the regions are vast and you are geographically far from one another and from the Pontifical Council, this is why as the psalmist says it is *“good and pleasant when brothers [meet] together in unity”* (Ps 133). It is good to feel the solidarity towards one another and to know that we are not alone in our sometime complex and difficult ministry. For us, at the Pontifical Council, it is important to hear and to take into consideration what you have to say, to hear about your difficulties, your successes and your pastoral plans as you do your best to support and develop the apostolate in your regions. For you, Regional Coordinators, it is important to become always more aware of the catholicity of the Church, of its universality, as you exercise your coordinating responsibilities and take part in the policy making and planning of our organization and international network. There are moments in which our dialogue is even more important in case of

disasters or natural calamities, demanding a deep analysis to take decisions and to show special solidarity with our people. Unfortunately, this is the case. We will discuss intensely this

care they need.

Also as you know, the discussions for an international AOS website have been ongoing. Constantly to respond to the pastoral needs of the maritime and fishing communities we shall need a constant flow of reliable and comprehensive information, so that we can develop a global way of planning our own pastoral care.

“Our meeting this year takes a particular significance as it is being held in the aftermath of this terrible disaster which has stuck so many communities in the Indian Ocean. Our hearts and prayers go to all these families and populations. I would like to put on record here our feelings of deep sadness. I shall ask you particularly to forward to the Regions affected our deepest sympathy and the assurance of our continued prayers”.

matter during the Fishing Committee Meeting.

You have been appointed by the Pontifical Council to assist us in implementing the norms set up by the Holy Father in the Apostolic Letter *“Stella Maris”*. One of your main responsibilities is therefore to report on the maritime apostolate in the countries of your region. To that effect you have received this time new guidelines and a report form; we hope that they have been a help to you, and not more of a burden. We believe that more systematic and uniform reporting will give us the necessary information that is indispensable if we want to keep abreast of changes in the maritime sector and provide to the seafarers, fishers and other categories linked with us, in the Sector of the Sea, the pastoral

In this connection I would like to mention another feature of our meeting. This afternoon we shall have a delegation from AOS England & Wales, which will address us. As you may know we have been discussing with them, who have generously offered to help for the implementation of a project regarding the website. Also lay pastoral agents and volunteers play an ever more important role in our mission, hence the necessity of finding additional finances; the AOS E&W delegation will share with us on their recent experience in this field and on the vision of the AOS in that country.

Although situations and circumstances differ greatly from one region to another, sometimes even from one port to another, it is important that as a

Catholic organization, AOS develops a common vision, that we agree “mutatis mutandis” on a common approach and that we work in solidarity to achieve these aims. In order to realize this, the regional meetings and the World Congress play an important role provided they are carefully prepared and respond to the needs of our chaplains, pastoral agents and volunteers. You will discuss the calendar of regional meetings and their agenda. Our last World Congress in Rio is deemed by many to have been a successful Conference, one of the reasons being that its theme responded to the interrogations and expectations of many. Our next Congress will be in 2007; we must now already start the planning and reflection that will ensure another successful conference.

On the last day we shall hold our “AOS International Fishing Committee”. The founding of this Committee is an outcome of the Rio Congress, it has been welcome and there are many expectations that have already been expressed from many quarters. Last year you supported its establishment and this year you will be asked to suggest ways and means that could help the Committee go forward and achieve the objectives that were set out at the “Ad hoc Committee” in 2003. The Secretary of our Council, Archbishop Agostino Marchetto, will develop this subject further on Wednesday.

I invoke the Holy Spirit on all of us, so that our deliberations may be open and fraternal and that we be granted a fruitful meeting so we can be ever more faithful to our call. Our

specificity is that our commitment to the maritime world is a pastoral one and we are committed to preach the Good News of Jesus Christ to the Maritime World in all its facts. We may often be discussing material and practical things; this is not surprising as the Good News is directed towards the whole man as the Holy Father reminded us at the audience he granted to our Council on 18th May last year, on the occasion of the General Assembly: “Love and welcome are the first and most effective forms of evangelization”.

I shall follow your three day work with much interest, and I shall try to be present as far as my agenda permits. I have now great pleasure in declaring this meeting open.

“Why look among the dead for someone who is alive?”

(Luke 24:5)

During these forty days of Lent, our ascent towards Easter was sustained by prayer, sharing and reconciliation. Now the Risen Christ gives his disciples an appointment in Galilee and we are going to meet by the lake.

There the Risen Lord invites each one of us to be a witness to hope, to give witness to this conviction that fills us that God is on our side to love, and that we are all called to rise again with him.

In fact, Christ’s Resurrection reveals to us that there is no darkness, no suffering or death that cannot be healed and enlightened by the light of Easter. Suffering, injustice and even death will not have the last word.

So let us share this Easter joy with our brothers and sisters. By following the Risen Jesus and walking in his footsteps, we too will become light and signs of hope.



Cardinal Stephen Fumio Hamao
President

+ Archbishop Agostino Marchetto
Secretary

AOS International Fishing Committee Meeting

(Rome, 2nd February 2005)



Archbishop Agostino Marchetto (right) with Bishop Tom Burns, who was leading the delegation of AOS England & Wales

Opening speech of Archbishop Marchetto

major source of food and that literally tens of millions of families earn a scanty livelihood by fishing. Recently, like in all sectors of the world economy, globalization has brought about in general profound changes in the life, culture and working conditions of the fishing communities. The changes may not be all bad and there has been an increased international awareness and publicity on the lot of fishers, especially the traditional ones in the developing world, but the great majority of fishers remain the poorest of the poor, with no social recognition, status or security.

The main reason why we are involved in this work is pastoral of course; our aim is to be the presence and solicitude of the Church in their midst. Our approach being pastoral, the Ad Hoc Committee in 2003, rightly observed that we must not duplicate what is already being done by Governments, UN Agencies and NGOs, and that advancement of the technical and socio-economic issues of fishermen must be complemented by pastoral care and empowerment of the fisher folk and that we should concentrate our efforts on this latter task. The priority of AOS remains of course the improvement of the life of fishers and their families, but not by transfer and development of technology, which is not its specific role but through the education and empowerment of its local and national leaders and the development of pastoral and specifically religious programs.

Although the AOS International Fishing Committee has still to better define its own pastoral and specific approach we cannot and do not want to work in isolation, and in our planning we must always take this into consideration.

We have cooperated in the past with all initiatives that can contribute to the progress of the fishing communities, and we must continue to do so. In this connection you may remember the recommendation of the Rio World Congress in 2002, namely the “full and timely implementation of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries” (Rio Final Document). And when we held the “feasibility meeting” in December 2003 the ILO, FAO and ICSF were invited, and we took into consideration their opinion and heeded their advice. Through ICMA as its member, AOS had a say in the elaboration of the comprehensive ILO convention covering fishing vessels. ICMA added its voice to the others and has asked that this convention should not only revise the existing conventions and recommendations but also include new elements such as occupational health, social issues and enforcement. Of the new measures A specific role in this has also the Holy See.

Fr Bruno Ciceri who was part of the ICMA delegation has kindly accepted to give us later a brief report and his comments, and we thank him in advance for that.

The agenda today is fairly extensive and also enlarged – as I said – and therefore I would like to highlight only two of the items:

Funding is the last item on the agenda but one of the more important. Finances for regional or international initiatives, but also at grassroots level. We know that you need finances to reach out to different communities of fishermen, as this involves travelling and other expenses. I know of a recent ex-

(to be continued on page 5)

Welcome to the 2nd AOS International Fishing Committee! This is an important meeting as our International Committee has yet to find its “cruising speed” and its specific identity. We hope that today’s reflection and sharing will help us better focus on the vast task ahead of us and to recommit ourselves to the cause of the fishing communities around the world, especially taking into consideration the recent disasters in Asia which affected in particular the fishermen. This will be therefore an unexpected and terrible item of our agenda.

While it is true that the AOS International Fishing Committee is an integral part of the AOS International network and maritime apostolate and that it cannot be a separate entity or independent organization, it has however its own specific objectives that have been set by the Rio World Conference and the Ad Hoc Committee. After one year’s existence we must now reflect on whether we are meeting these goals or how we can meet them better. During this meeting we must try as well to evaluate the capacity of regions and individual countries to be involved in the work of the Fishing Committee.

We are all aware that this sector of the maritime economy has been from time immemorial a

(continued from page 4)

perience in Rodriguez Island, in the Indian Ocean, where one lay pastoral agent working fulltime for the Church has been able to start and animate a local fishermen's association and, by doing so, help to give recognition and a sense of purpose to hundreds of families, as well as new hope and "self-esteem". This would never have been possible without the financial help of a European Episcopal Conference. We all know that the same kind of initiatives can happen elsewhere but we lack the personnel and the material resources. In the question of funding we must also consider the opportunity and the means to show concretely to our brothers and sisters of Asia our solidarity and affection.

Information:

We do not have any systematic data regarding fishers' communities from the regions; maybe this could be our first effort. If we can get some information we could try to formulate plans and projects. So far, however, it seems nobody has answered our circular requesting feedbacks on the latest ILO Fishing Document in preparation of the meeting of June 2005.

Our project to set up an AOS International Website will hopefully help us fill this gap because one section will be destined to fishing. Therefore we need to have a better overview of national fishing industries, existing associations or unions and evaluation of their work. We need to know more about the situation in each region and country regarding: social protection and security, existing local laws/regulations, etc. Eventually all this information will have to come from you and the National Directors through your reports, may be with the help of some volunteers. Naturally – as it was said – we will submit our proposal to the national AOS.

In conclusion I would like to add, on a more spiritual note, that our mission is to discern "the signs of the times" and to give witness to the values of the Kingdom in the fishing communities. When the followers of John the Baptist came to enquire whether he was truly the expected Messiah, Jesus replied: "*The blind are now able to see, the lame can walk. People with leprosy are being healed and the deaf can hear. The dead are raised to life and the poor are hearing the good news*" (Mt 11,4-5).

The situations and the methods might be different to-day, but we are all sent, so that the poor may hear the good news; this is the vast mission field, which is confided to us, and it makes us feel inadequate. The Church had even more humble beginnings, and yet through the ages it has brought the Good News of Jesus to almost every corner of the world. This was done through courage, perseverance and above all an innate conviction that the disciple is not alone, that it is "God's Mission", and that He is with him and accompanies him always and everywhere. Today we have taken the relay, and we are called to continue this mission and with the help of God. This is what we are setting out to achieve in the fishing sector.

It will be a "crowded day". I declare the 2nd Meeting of the AOS International Committee open, and I wish you all a good and fruitful day's work.

After the tsunami, FAO hopes for responsible reconstruction that will protect the fishers' rights

The reconstruction of the fishing sector in the areas struck by the December 26th tsunami, which caused no less than 300,000 deaths, must come about in a responsible way and be centered on the people's real needs. This is what emerged from a recent meeting at FAO attended by many high-ranking ministerial functionaries together with the 121 Ministers.

In the Declaration adopted on that occasion, it is stated that the primary objective of the reconstruction must be to put the fishers in a position to resume earning their livelihood in an autonomous way, in addition to providing a protection system against future natural disasters and other environmental threats. The Ministers stressed the need to protect the rights of fishers and all those who work in the sector, and to assure access to the fishing areas and resources, particularly for small-scale, subsistence level fishers. The FAO meeting also made it possible for the Ministers to express their opinion that it is essential to improve the efficiency, sustainability and regulation of fishing. Agreement was also expressed to cooperate so that reconstruction will not end up producing an excessive fishing level capacity with respect to what the available marine resources can sustain.

(Cf. O.R., March 17, 2005).

We have forgotten that the sea exists

Reflection by Mgr Pierre Molères

We have forgotten that the sea has its own life. Many lived without the sea, far away from it, as if its life did not concern them, as if it did not exist. Many others reduced it to its shores and beaches, its sunshine and water sports, its cruise ships and heavenly settings. In their own way they revived the Greek myth of the bewitching sirens, half-women half fish, and especially the ancient myth of paradise on the enchanted islands. But the sea is one of the matrixes of the universe; it is a laboratory of life and energy; it is an abyssal expanse that connects as much as it separates; its abysses abound with frightening monsters and fascinating riches. By associating with it, studying it and taking advantage of it, they surely thought they had dominated and possessed it.

They had almost forgotten its uncontrollable power. Very few knew about the laws that rule or upset it. Many were unaware that the largest number of labor accidents takes place in the maritime professions and that today the sea, a place of adventures, is still a great place for shipwrecks and discoveries. And so many people joyfully left behind the cold in Europe to reach the sea by plane bound for dreamlike islands somewhere in Asia to spend Christmas like summer vacationers.

Following the seaquake that devastated the coasts of Southeast Asia on December 26, 2004, Most Rev. Pierre Molères, the Bishop of Bayonne and President of the Episcopal Committee for the Mission of the Sea, proposes a reflection on the sea and world citizenship to us (*La Documentation Catholique*, February 20, 2005, No. 2330).

Suddenly, however, this enchantress went through a metamorphosis and turned into a giant crater of death, a mad spinning top whose whirling round lifted up liquid barricades from fifteen to forty meters in height advancing at a speed of 500-700 kilometers per hour and destroying everything under their rough blows. In a few hours there was chaos and ruin, despair and death in seven Southeast Asian countries. No, we cannot forget the sea, its fantastic

reality, and its immense powers of life and death.

We cannot forget the maritime realities that are part of our universe like the air and the land. We cannot forget the persons and groups that live from the sea, the jobs it creates, and the people who depend on it and suffer or benefit from it. We cannot forget even more the greed, the plunder and the wars of which it has been and still is the issue and the theater. We cannot forget the attraction it exerts, the treasures it gives up to navigators, fishers, experts, sports lovers and the sick; the culture it generates, the values of encounter, respect and solidarity it elicits, the vocations it makes grow, and the presentiment of God that it awakens.

As a matter of fact, the sea is entrusted to us. As a gift of God as well as a shipyard of action, it is offered to us with its strengths and weaknesses, to us who can harm it, to us who can pollute and even kill it. This both nourishing and man-eating sea is given to us by the Creator who, according to the Bible, made it a place of purification and human liberation, a paschal place of struggle and salvation, of confrontation and divine revelation, of passage and connection. What happened to Noah, Moses, Jesus and Paul is now part of the human saga and the history of salvation.

Precisely today it is good to note that the killer waves of the Indian tsunamis are making room for other waves that are rising up everywhere: the waves of fraternal aid with solidarity of humanity that is leaving courageously to help those who have lost everything, especially the simple fishers of the Asian coasts, but also all the hounded wanderers, like the boat people, in the camps or on the roads of exile around the world who survive without hope. It seems there has been a turning point because after this dramatic situation, the advent of international solidarity has been indicated.

In John Paul II's message for the first of the year, he launched the idea of worldwide citizenship to educate everyone to the unity of their common destiny by using "a universal grammar of charity" at the service of the most disadvantaged peoples. Now is the time to spread this message and raise ourselves up to this level of human awareness. It is no longer the time of paradisiacal islands or privileged cocoons. We have to become citizens of the world through information, attention to events and persons, open minds and hearts, respect for the different cultures and our environment, and our participation in world development. So we reduce the sea to a place of trade or a vacation industry. Some lived as if it did not exist, as if they did not benefit from it in one way or another. In the Church's pastoral care it has often been the same. The coastal dioceses know this that make efforts not to turn their backs to the sea in order to integrate the maritime dimension into their usual concerns. The recent events have shown us the power of this constitutive element of the universe, the challenges it poses to us, the possibilities it offers us and the gift of God that it continues to be.

We had forgotten this. It is up to us to act together, to take the sea into consideration with realism and solidarity, and to treat this gift with the reverence it deserves, like every reality from which life springs forth.

Africa Indian Ocean Region

by Mr. Jean Vacher

South Africa

This economic giant—that surely has many social problems—deserves special attention in the area of the pastoral care of the people of the sea. However, the Apostolatus Maris in this country is going through some difficult moments.

Comores

In the Comores, the local Church's lack of means and resources has not made it possible for the AM to get off the ground. However, we have contacts through the Episcopal Commission of the Islands of the Indian Ocean. Special attention will have to be given in the future to fishers from this country.

Kenya

In Kenya, several meetings with the local representatives of the Church have made it possible to put forth the need to work in common with our counterparts from "Missions to Seafarers". At present, there are great prospects for developing AM's activity in Kenya. However, more means are needed, especially personnel, and more ecumenical collaboration.

Madagascar

Madagascar has been able to recover after the heavy economic and political problems that affected it. This refound stability has allowed AM to develop some new orientations and projects. The National Director, in connection with the diocesan Committees and the devoted team of volunteers in the four corners of the country, has been working tirelessly and carrying out many projects at the same time. With the help of regional organizations, AM in Madagascar is called to develop even more.

Recognition and aid from the State is of primary importance in developing sources of revenue for AM's

activities.

Republic of Mauritius

The Island of Mauritius

The activities are many and they require everyone's efforts. We are going to launch a recruitment campaign to find some new volunteers,

nami, and some fishers lost their boats.

Mozambique

The efforts to develop AM have met with many problems. The appointment of a new promoter Bishop gives us hope for the future.

Within our region, there is definitively the specific characteristic that gives us two realities between the islands of the Indian Ocean and the countries of continental Africa: two ways of working in the Church, with the authorities and with the partners in our mission. ICMA has just created a new region with South Africa and Mozambique. Has the time come for us to think about this too?

In order to go further in our pastoral care, our actions and projects, the local resources are not sufficient. On this level some international organizations are helping us. For our region, however, it is well to note that the IOSEA project (ICSW and IFT-ST) comes to an end in March 2005. This implies a reorganization of our requests for aid and financing. It will be necessary to canvass other partners and possible sources of financing.

especially in the context of opening up a new International Seafarers Center in Port-Louis.

In view of the climactic changes, the economic and tourist development that is often made to the detriment of the fishers, and the new information from international trade, the community of fishers and seafarers needs to be reorganized. AM on the Island of Mauritius has pursued its efforts in the direction of the seafarers and local fishers in order to help them to unite and reflect together on their future and to prepare for it. The relations with the local Church are good as are ecumenical relations. Openness to other religions is also important in our country with its religious and cultural riches.

Rodrigues

A dynamic AM team has been set up and is working in close cooperation with the Bishop of Rodrigues to develop a pastoral care of the people of the sea. Soon Rodrigues will also be provided with a hospitality center. Otherwise, it is good to note that Rodrigues has suffered the effects of the December 2004 tsu-

La Réunion

The work done on the island of La Réunion continues, and the arrival of many volunteers to support the person in charge of the Seafarers' Hospitality Center has been beneficial for the pastoral care. Regular visits to the seafarers in the port are made and particular attention is given to those whose ships have been stopped for inspection because they were fishing illegally in French territorial waters. Attention will also have to be given this year to the project to build a new hospitality center.

Seychelles

Some official contacts have been made with the country's authorities for the project to build a hospitality center. In the Seychelles, the fishers in particular have suffered from the effects of the tsunami. A regular pastoral task is carried out among the fishers.

Tanzania

The activities of the AM have still not been re-launched.

Central and South American Regional Report

by Fr. Samuel Torres Fonseca, C.S.

This is one of the largest AOS Regions. It has two oceans (Atlantic and Pacific), a lot of ports, and new ones opening! According to recent statistics, we can see how these countries are developing. The economy is changing the situation and hence our methods of pastoral care. In this immense region AOS presence is still to be desired.

Argentina - Buenos Aires

This port, despite reduced movements, continues being the number one port of Argentina and the fifth in importance in Latin America. During 2004 there were 1812 ships, of which 812 were from overseas. This number is increasing. The average time in port is, however, less than 24 hours. The annual average movement of passengers amounts to 580,000. There is a special terminal for the important traffic of cruise ships, with 80,000 passengers last year. The « Stella Maris Centre », which was founded in 1880, is still very active and renders many services to the local and foreign seafarers.

Uruguay – Montevideo

Fr. Aloys Knecek is the new full time chaplain. The centre was abandoned for a long time and now is being restored. It has eight bedrooms, table tennis, snooker, dancing, television, telephone, Internet, souvenirs and a cafeteria. It is open every day. Holy Mass is again being celebrated. The port of Montevideo is becoming very outdated and serves only as a fishing port. Fishing vessels come for bunkering and for the change of crews. Most of the activities have shifted to Nueva Palmira Port, which is about 200 km west of Montevideo, on the Uruguay River. From this port all products leave for Argentina, Paraguay, Brazil and Bolivia.



Chile – Valparaiso

Valparaiso is one of the most important and busy ports of Chile. The Archdiocese has already given a house which will soon attend to seafarers, fishers and their families. The Catholic Church through INCAMI has in mind to start projects for seafarers in ten other ports.

Brazil—Santos

The port of Santos is one of the most active of Latin America. It exports and imports 25% of the goods of Brazil. The Stella Maris offers social and religious services from Monday to Sunday. **The social services are:** ship visiting, internet, international telephone, transportation, books, post service, newspapers, tourism, sports, ping pong, football, basket ball, etc. **The Religious service are:** Masses on board, blessings, confessions, ecumenical service, sick visits and others. There is a full time chaplain, one secretary and three volunteers. Also there is a full time Lutheran chaplain. Ecumenical relations with Lutherans are good.

Brazil—Rio de Janeiro

The port of Rio has 20 km of extension and receives over 1,700 ships per year. To welcome seafarers and all those who pass by this port, the Catholic Church, through the Missionaries of Saint Charles, has assigned a full time chaplain. Also there are four full time employees and four volunteers. The Stella Maris offers religious and social services, such as ship visiting, sport facilities, tourist information, city tours, transportation, Internet, International telephone; books and newspapers in different languages; souvenirs, money exchange, post office, etc. The religious services are holy mass on board or on the port premises. We also have spiritual and psychological counseling and visits to the sick. Relations with the seafarers' union, an affiliate of ITF, are very good.

Colombia—Cartagena

The port of Cartagena is an important port, where an AOS Center was opened in 2002. The center is offering social and religious services to seafarers, fishers and their families. (Transportation, Internet, International TV, telephone, cafeteria, restaurant, library, human resources, lodging and games). The center also offers to the seafarers courses in technical English.

Colombia—Buenaventura

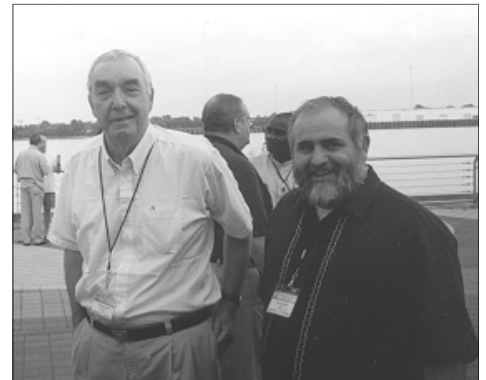
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East-South-East Asia Region

by Fr. Bruno Ciceri, c.s.

Some countries (Philippines, Thailand, Japan, Hong Kong) have good structures (AOS only or ecumenical) and a substantial number of people (chaplains and volunteers) involved in the ministry. Other countries, such as Singapore, Korea and Taiwan, are struggling to get things going. In some countries language could be a hindrance to get local clergy and volunteers.

In Indonesia there are ecumenical structures but it seems there are difficulties for use by the AOS chaplains. There is only one chaplain appointed in spite some of the local clergy attending SMT in the past. For Malaysia, Burma and Vietnam there is little information.



We must underline the lack of volunteers and of adequate financial support for centers and formation programs. The formation program for maritime students in the Philippines however could be “exported and adapted” in other countries, and there is an increasing number of local clergy involved in the ministry also with families.

Fishing activities in the region differ greatly in forms and ways:

1. Japan’s highly industrialized fishing industry does not have many problems, and generally their rights are protected.
2. Thailand has a lot of small scale fishermen but also a lot of foreign vessels, mostly Taiwanese, employing Filipino and Burmese fishermen.
3. Taiwan has a huge number of fishing vessels going around the world and employing foreign crews (Filipinos, Indonesians, Vietnamese and Mainland Chinese), who have a lot of problems.
4. Singapore is an entry port, together with Davao, for illegally recruited fishers.

Cruise ships:

After the SARS epidemic, activities in Singapore and Hong Kong have been scaled down. In Hong Kong basically, there are “cruises to nowhere(!)”; a regular Mass is celebrated on board the vessel on a weekly basis.

AOS activities in the ports:

- The situation in the region varies a lot; in some ports we have full time chaplains and volunteers, in others we have part time chaplains and in others a priest who, among many other responsibilities, is also a port chaplain. Of course this greatly affects how the ministry (ship visiting, Mass on board, etc.) is done. Except for the Philippines and Japan, in all other countries we do not have a substantial number of local clergy involved in the ministry.
- As far as structures and vehicles are concerned, I believe that our region is quite well equipped either with our own or by sharing ecumenical structures. The main problem is how to maintain the existing structures financially, now that the fast turn around of seafarers and the proliferation of cellular phones and cards has dramatically reduced the source of income of centres.
- Cooperation and relations with the different agencies (port and shipping authorities/unions, other Christian denominations, etc.) working within the ports vary a lot. There are different situations varying from full cooperation to distrust/indifference.
- Communication with all the new information technology should help a lot and not be a problem, but in reality it can be a big problem as questionnaires and correspondence are not answered.

Countries in the region:

Philippines, Thailand, Taiwan, Korea, Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Burma, Vietnam.

South Asia Regional Report

by Fr. Xavier Pinto, C.Ss.R.

This Report is presented in the shadow of the **Tsunami disaster of 26th December 2004**. The colossal loss to the fishing communities in this region cannot be recounted in words. The trauma of those left behind is something we will have to grapple with for many years to come. Building up their lives from scratch and getting them back to their business and livelihood will be another major challenge.

The devastating **“tsunami”** that struck the entire south Asian Region, on the 26th of Dec. 2004, is now common knowledge. The impact in Sri Lanka, India and Bangladesh is felt most on the economy of the small fish workers. Tuticorin harbour was shut down. Among the more than 150,000 feared dead, more than 70% are either fishermen disappeared in the ocean or their families, just washed away from their homes and from the fishing communities. The rest are believed to be tourists and pilgrims.

BANGLADESH

The AOS is in its first stages with direct activity only in the **Chittagong Port** by the AOS Chaplain Gianvitto Nitti who tries to go and **visit the crews on the vessels once a month**. The presence of Bengali vessels and Bengali crews is increasing. There are also a good number of Chinese and Indian crews, and also from surrounding countries. This may be because these people are paid less. **The Filipino crews are fewer and consequently Christians are less**. When I go to the port, I do not run quickly from one ship to another, but I give time to them to speak. Sometimes only one person, usually a captain or chief engineer, occupies all my time so that I have no time left for other ships. Sometimes they have serious problems and my presence provides them with someone with whom they can share. This year I visited only twenty (20) vessels, and I have celebrated the Mass only once on board.

Fishing has been the tradition for several years. Cox's Bazaar is a town of about 35,000 people in a sub-district of 250,000 people. In the town the majority of the people are Muslims (80%). The rest are Hindu (15%), Buddhist (4%) and a small number of Christians (300 in total). The majority of the people are fishermen. Fr. P. Benoit, CSC, who works in the Bishops House, has been a constant contact of the AOS at Regional Level. He attended the previous Regional Meeting in Mumbai and also was instrumental in organizing an **information workshop** conducted for the Diocese in Sept. 2003.

There are not many monetary resources available for the AOS in Chittagong. Space is however available, but the Chaplain is hesitant to begin anything more than ship visiting lest he is unable to sustain it in a healthy way. He relies on a few parishioners to go visiting ships with him.

INDIA has a total of 12 major Ports. These are, starting from the West Gujarat-**Kandla** (free port), Maharashtra-**Mumbai & Nhavasheva** (no chaplain), Gao-**Murmagoa**, Karnataka-**Mangalore**, Kerala- **Cochin**, Tamil Nadu-**Tuticorin & Chennai**, Andhra Pradesh-**Vishakapatnam**, Orissa- **Paradip**, West Bengal- **Kidderpore** and Haldia (no chaplain).

The **6,000 km coast line of India** affords different terrain to each harbour/port. Cargo is of different kinds – the variables in the world **from bulk to container-**. Goa has a mid-stream harbour for the transportation of iron and manganese ore. The extent of this kind of cargo can be gauged when we know that **per day 1,000 truck loads** of ore are transported from as far away as Karnataka state to Goa (a distance of 150 km.) to be loaded onto barges that head for Japan. Mumbai has a midstream harbour for the transportation and conveyance of gas, crude and other oils. This is a high security area, and no one can venture into it. **Work Conditions** in most of the harbours are not up to the mark as yet, though all harbours boast of **high technology** for loading/unloading. Especially in the fourmonth long monsoon season, workers on the dock have a harrowing experience prone **to dangers of injury and death**. In **Haldia-West Bengal**: the Jesuits are present here, but in a private capacity with no mandate as chaplains, hence no overview of the AOS.



(Continued from page 10)

PAKISTAN

The port of Karachi has a chaplain. Conditions are not always easy. The only way to conduct our apostolate on board is through others who work in the port as regular employees and double up as AOS volunteers.

SRI LANKA

Fr. Cystus, the chaplain, has a vast experience with fishing communities in Sri Lanka and is involved at various levels together with credit societies and others in their welfare and well-being.

Due to paucity of funds there has been no further headway in the “Stella Maris International Center” that was inaugurated by H.E. Stephen Fumio Hamao in March 2003. Plans however are in the making especially with the ITF promises of funding the communications setups in the year 2005.

The tsunami throws up new and big challenges for Sri Lanka. AOS and its partners of the World Forum of Fisher People are heavily involved in Galle and Matara for the rehabilitation of fishing communities.

ANALYSIS FOR THE REGION

Our Strengths:

1. The **hard working nature** of each chaplain in the Region.
2. **Lay people** are ever ready to collaborate in any venture that is floated by the chaplains.
3. **Partners of the AOS** in the fishing communities are staunch supporters especially through the National Fish Workers Forum India and the World Forum of Fisher People.
4. The release of **fishermen prisoners** is being done in a consistent way.

Our Weaknesses:

1. Each chaplain’s energies are stretched to the limit.
2. Getting a **pass to visit the ports** is getting next to impossible.
3. Information about changes and transfer of chaplains is slow in arriving at the AOS regional office.
4. The pastoral care the **fishing communities** and their concerns is yet to dawn on most of the chaplains. This paradigm shift is yet to be made.
5. The bottom line is **funding** that is not available.

The Opportunities:

The ITF/ICSW combined have decided to host the next International ICSW meeting in Chennai, India May 6-12th 2005.

The Threats:

Terrorism in India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka have hampered a lot of the apostolate.

In the name of “new rules and new regulations” many facilities are denied to our chaplains, and there seems to be no way out of this impasse.

KEY DEVELOPMENT PLANS:

1. **Tsunami Victims:** Rehabilitation is going to take up much time. This will be done in collaboration with the diocese of Kottar, with the National Fish Workers Forum and local grass-root people from the fishing communities themselves.
2. **A start up project** presented in 2001 has been in progress. This project is for the whole of south Asia, and ITF seems favorable to the idea.

United Arab Emirates

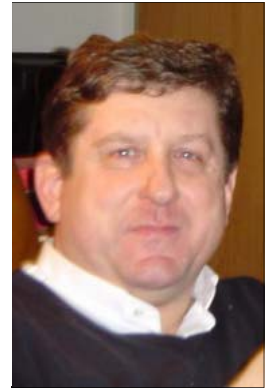
The South Asia Regional Coordinator is, at the moment, also the ad interim coordinator for the Gulf States.

He did a promotion visit there from September 23rd to 30th 2004. On September 27th all the 19 priests of the UAE together with the Auxiliary Bishop Paul Hinder, ofm cap., were present.

In Fujairah a smaller meeting was held to explore the possibilities of setting up the AOS in the port city there. The meeting and information was well received.

European Regional Report

by Fr. Edward Pacz, C.Ss.R.



The two, Western and Eastern, lungs of Europe are breathing in different rhythms of our pastoral mission: while the Western part works at a rather stable pace, the Eastern part undergoes turbulence full of opportunities and threats. This year's major political developments: access of some Central European countries to the European Union and changes on Ukraine have brought some new challenges to be faced.

I. Strengths

Our Personnel

- . In some ports committed volunteers, also experienced people working at the centres. Qualified and trained AOS members.
- . Presence of chaplains in ports and different maritime celebrations. Strong clergy support in some areas. Presence of Filipino priests can greatly enhance effectiveness with Filipino crews
- . Ecumenical chaplains
- . Sailing chaplains
- . Organised ship visiting and hospital visiting.
- . In all major ports and many other ports Seafarers Centres are available and opened to all.
- . Infrastructure, transport & communication facilities are generally good or acceptable
- . Religious and maritime events for the seafarers: retreats, Masses, ecumenical celebrations, funerals and memorial services, blessing of ships, pilgrimages, spiritual formation for volunteers and AOS members, Sea Sunday.
- . Awareness of AOS: AOS is present in many ports and cooperates with local churches and many maritime organisations.
- . Co-operation with port authorities, associations, agents and unions, maritime schools
- . At international level: Good

cooperation between some countries of the region

II. Weaknesses

- Personnel. Lack of full time working personnel in many countries.
- . Lack of available priests/chaplains to celebrate Mass and the Sacraments.
 - . Not enough volunteers .The turnover in personnel is high.
 - . Ecumenical cooperation can be difficult in some areas. Some volunteers do not possess sufficient knowledge of the English language which is essential.
 - . In some small ports ship visiting is either irregular or inexistent
 - . Equipment: Lack of equipment, vehicles, finances (growing costs of transport). IT facilities not good enough
 - . Cooperation
 - . Partnership with some organisations is not always possible, the “non-religious approach” is sometimes an obstacle to improve good cooperation.
 - . Relationships with parishes/dioceses/ecumenical partners can be difficult. There can be

problems mainly due to lack of understanding, which makes full cooperation difficult.

- . On the international level there is bad communication (e.g. no up to date addresses).
- . Lack of communication and cooperation between Eastern and Western Europe.

III. Opportunities

- . New volunteers, e.g. from maritime schools, pensioners, maritime parishes
- . Training sessions for those who want to volunteer/work for the benefit of the People of the Sea,
- . New developments, e.g. AOS . Sports Centre
- . Communication
- . Develop ecumenical links and relations with shipyards, students of Maritime Academy, etc
- . Collaboration of Seafarers' Centres with Port authorities, Unions, Shipbrokers and other maritime partners.
- . New Eucharistic ministers, Bible study groups and prayer groups on board ships.
- . Growth of cruise ships' ministry
- . More and more seafarers from India and China.

IV. Threats

- . The new Security Code (Isps). Security within the ports is becoming ever stricter.
- . Negative attitude of authorities and society towards Church involvement in “maritime Welfare”.
- . ILO Convention not ratified by many European countries.
- . Danger of loss of AOS identity.



North American Regional Report

by Fr. Lorenzo Jimenez Mex

UNITED STATES

All the information about the 58 ports of the Atlantic, Pacific, and Gulf Coast, together with the list of chaplains, chaplaincies and the activities of the Apostleship in each port, are available and can be accessed at www.aos-usa.org

There is an extensive network of Stella Maris Centers. The personnel involved and financial resources seem adequate at the moment.

The Bishop Promoter plays an important role by being the voice of the seafarers and AOS at the Bishops' Conference level. The fishing ports are an important part of AOS Ministry, e.g. in the "Port of Palacios", Texas, the AOS chaplain is ministering primarily to Vietnamese Fishermen.

The AOS in the USA has developed into a membership organization named "The Apostleship of the Sea of the USA". (AOS-USA) It has over 800 dues paying members, and includes, pastoral associates, mariners, student mariners, or affiliates, of whom 650 members are cruise ship chaplains. An annual conference is held for all the AOS-USA members.

CANADA

The AOS Canada is basically in its development stage. The initial thrust has been the rebuilding of the AOS structure - the appointment of port chaplains specially on major ports, the establishment of a good communication system - the *Morning Star* magazine and the AOS Canada website-, and the reporting system, all of which have been achieved. In fact, almost all the newly appointed chaplains will be

attending the Houston Port Chaplaincy Training in February 2005.

We are still a long way from being a strong and visible organization in this country. The recent appointment of a very supportive Episcopal Promoter, in Bishop Veillette, is a great hope to make this ministry a priority in every diocese that has a port in Canada.

There is a great need to provide vehicles and computers for chaplains to use in their ministries. There are still a number of active ports that needs chaplains. There is still a lot of work to be done on fishing, cruise ships, coastal and yachting activities which are present in almost all ports in Canada. What I envision as difficulties ahead are the lack of resources (both national and local level) and the maritime ministry not being a pastoral priority.

MEXICO

Progreso City & Port is at the moment the third port in importance in the Gulf of Mexico, and by its size and movement it represents the 6th of the Mexican coasts. Last year it welcomed 802 ships. There is an average of 118 cruises cruise ships each year.

Fishing Activities: there are five thousand families of fishers, who earn less than US \$ 7.00 daily per family. Each loading ship (general cargo and bulk) remains an average of one to three days in port and has an average of 15 to 30 crew on board.

The AOS, in the first 20 months of work in the region, has initiated projects mainly in the port of Progreso, Yucatán, and among small fishing populations that belong to the same

area. A network of organizations and voluntary people representing different private institutions,

The region comprises:

Canada, United States of America, Mexico, Caribbean Islands.

and also from the public sector, is being coordinated by a representative from the Marist University of Mérida, Yucatán México. This initiative has begun to generate its first fruits in three ports of this region of Mexico: Progreso, Chelém and Chuburná. The general supervision of activities remains under the one of the National Director of Apostleship of the Sea in the region.

At the moment a coordinating committee for the adequate management of the AOS, is coordinated by the Regional Director, Rev. Lorenzo Mex Jiménez, and is supported by the people in charge of the main organizations of volunteers who coordinate the job and project activities in the "Center Stella Maris", AOS headquarters in Progreso.

Relations of the AOS with government and maritime authorities and with city and state organizations are good. AOS does not own a vehicle, and all resources are provided by the parish.

Analysis for the region

Strengths

- AOS's approach, self-help and empowerment has won wide approval. The Centre has initiated 2000 actions that have benefited the people and families.

- Good relations with authorities, the maritime sector and civil society is very positive. The authorities

(to be continued on page 14)

ties and the local Catholic Church support and good ecumenical relations have helped considerably.

- The service to fishermen and seafarers. Our goal is education, to promote the welfare specially of the fishermen and their families.
- Strong support to the Stella Maris Centre.
- Our goal is to make the entire community aware of the needs of seafarers and fishers.
- AOS is now a reality in the ports where there are chaplains and volunteers working with simplicity, happiness and generosity. There are few priests available but many lay people only waiting for invitation and an opportunity to collaborate.

Weaknesses

- The absence of a more flexible and effective organizational infrastructure.
- The lack of regular financial resources.

- The lack of significant pastoral attention towards the personnel of cruise ships.
- The lack of vehicles and of international communications.
- There is only one Stella Maris center.
- Little ecumenical cooperation.
- The AOS is not a pastoral priority for many maritime dioceses.

Opportunities

- To take advantage of good relations with organizations, authorities and volunteers.
- To reinforce relations with international organisations.

Threats

- The lack of time of chaplains as they have many other responsibilities.

Conclusions

Our main social and welfare activities are as follows:

- Courses of primary and secondary schooling for adults.
- Computer workshops for begin-

ners.

- Courses of "Survival at sea" to obtain the "sea licence"
- Courses of basic tourist English.
- Consultancy services for self-help and development projects.
- Pastry workshops for ladies.
- Courses in handcraft and personal improvement for women.
- Legal consultant's office and legal services at low cost.
- Consulting services and promotion of people marginalized and forgotten by development plans.

Projects in the medium and long term

- Better ship visiting.
- Organise or recommend places of entertainment and recreation for visiting seafarers.
- Setting up of an emergency fund.

Atlantic Africa Region

by Fr. Cyrille Kete

Countries in the region: Mauritania, Republic of Cape Verde, Senegal, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast), Ghana, Togo, Benin, Nigeria, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, São Tomé and Príncipe, Gabon, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola, Namibia

TOGO

Lomé

The number of ships per year averages 1100. In the port, near the mineral berth there is also a small fishing quay, but all the fishing boats and activities are concentrated in the fishing port. There are 2 or 3 cruise ships yearly, and every month we have 3-4 ferries. There are a dozen volunteers, and we operate from the "Foyer des Marins", which is owned by the Presbyterian Church. Mass is celebrated there.

The Catholic Church has a large plot of land which could serve as a maritime parish and as a place of residence for a chaplain, a church and an AOS office and drop-in centre. But so far no finance is available.

Ecumenical and inter-religious cooperation presents no problem. Each Sea Sunday, we have an ecumenical celebration.

Lack of transport (minibus), especially on Sundays and a "hangar" which could be used to help for meetings and liturgical celebrations.

The National Seafarers Welfare Committee is a big help and might solve our main difficulty, which is that we receive absolutely no subsidies from the taxes that are levied in the port.



From left to right: Fr. Cyrille Kete and Fr. Lorenzo Jimenex Mex

Oceania Regional Report

by Mr. Ted Richardson

With the exception of Australia and New Zealand, there are no other Bishop Promoters, or National Directors in the Region, and I have no record of any activities regarding pastoral care of seafarers currently in any other countries.

There are thousands of ports. Most of the island nations have fishing ports and cruise shipping. Cruise ships normally anchor off the islands and passengers are ferried ashore.

Countries in the Region are:

Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Timor, Nauru, New Caledonia, Samoa, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Cook Islands, American Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Norfolk Island, Lord Howe Island, Pitcairn Island, Fiji, Tonga, Tokelau, and Cocos Islands.

In Lae, Papua New Guinea, the Seafarers Centre is functioning again and is visited by many foreign seafarers. From August to September 2004, 117 vessels called at the port and 137 seafarers visited the centre.

In the more developed nations of Australia and New Zealand, the deep harbour ports allow for more substantial shipping. New Zealand also has a good number of fishing vessels, including international trawlers working the Sub Antarctic. Most capital cities in Australia and New Zealand have cruise ship operations.

There are several large cruising yacht clubs in the region. In Australia, there would be in the vicinity of over 50,000 yachts. New Zealand's yachting fleet numbers over 50,000.

Cruise ship activities are seasonal. In the northern hemisphere's winter, many of the cruise companies choose to use the routes of South America, Australia, N. Zealand and Africa during our summer, and visit many of the island nations in our region. The number of cruise ships calling into various ports can vary from 20 to over 100 per year.

As Australia and New Zealand are both island nations, 95% of product from these countries travel by ship. Many smaller freighters transport cargo to the Pacific islands, and inter island transfer of cargo is also prevalent. Most Island nations can handle ships up to 5,000 tonnes. Bulk cargo exports in Australia mostly go out of north of Perth, Western Australia and on the Eastern Coast, from Gladstone, Mackay in Queensland, and Newcastle in New South Wales.

New Zealand has a large trade in timber products and live sheep to the Middle East. Both countries rely heavily on shipping imports and exports for their economy.

There are now thirteen (13) Port Welfare Committees around the coast of Australia and more in the development stage. All of these PWCs have AOS representation locally and at national level, there are three representatives from the Apostleship of the Sea. New Zealand has had a Merchant Navy Welfare Board for many years, and they are looking at adopting the new Australian model.



Oceania Regional Conference

Later this year, in October, it is proposed to hold a combined national meeting with the regional meeting for Oceania; a representative from each of the island nations in this region will be invited to participate in the Regional Conference and a Training Course for New "Chaplains" and Ship Visitors.

This is envisaged to be a "train the trainer" type of course, where those who attend will be able to take back to their respective Nations the tools necessary to develop a pastoral care and support team. This, in itself, will build awareness and a closer network of our Oceania ministry to seafarers.

International Survey

One of the greatest problems that we face, is understanding the changing needs of seafarers. We often think we know what they want, but fail to ask them. I would strongly recommend that we develop through every region and every national director, a survey, which can be done online. Seafarers who visit the centres can fill out the survey form and enter the information onto an international database, where our ministry can accurately predict the needs of our seafaring family.

(Continued from page 15)

Strengths (In Australia)

- ❖ More recognition by the maritime industry and their willingness to get involved.
- ❖ The continuing development of Port Welfare Committees
- ❖ The introduction of the Eastern Rite Catholic clergy to the ministry.

Weaknesses

- ❖ The lack of chaplains.
- ❖ Complacency by the committees and an overall frustration from not being able to recruit volunteers to this work.
- ❖ Some centres have a focus on viability, rather than ministry, and this, in itself, creates an atmosphere that is not conducive to ecumenical co-operation or comforting for seafarers. It is then difficult for volunteers to want to work in this situation.

Opportunities

- ❖ More involvement with other Churches.
- ❖ A larger focus on industry chaplaincy rather than seafarers' port chaplain
- ❖ Lobbying governments for financial support for existing seafarers' centres and developing new centres

Threats

- ❖ The most immediate threat to seafarers and our centers is the lack of diversified financial resources. The "Sea Sunday" appeal to fund the ministry of the Church is not encouraged everywhere.
- ❖ The drop off of young people in the ministry.
- ❖ The lack of chaplains to visit and counsel seafarers. This does not mean that lay people cannot do the job, but there is obviously a heightened sense of comfort when seafarers are greeted by a priest, who is wearing a Roman collar or a sister, who is clearly identified as a religious. In these cases, not only do the seafarers respond more, but the entire port industry in Australia wants them badly.

(Continued from page 8)

The port of Buenaventura is on the Pacific coast. It receives over 60,000 seafarers per year from different nationalities. There is already a Port Welfare Committee and a project for a Stella Maris Centre in the second semester of 2005 as the ITF has approved a grand application for this new center.

Venezuela- Puerto Cabello

Puerto Cabello is one of the major ports on the Venezuelan coast providing facilities for the handling of general cargoes, containers, bulk cargoes and chemical, 2,948 vessels are handled annually. There is a Seafarers Centre of the AOS.

Panama

Panama has one of the most important ports of Central America. There is not yet a "Stella Maris", but the chaplain is already working with the Port Welfare Committee and the ITF has approved a grant application for a minibus. The Church authorities are also searching for suitable premises for a centre.

Costa Rica-Port Limón

Costa Rica has other ports but Port Limón is the more important. There is a part time chaplain. With the help of ITF very soon a new center will be inaugurated.

Guatemala. There is a project, with the help of the dioceses, to start a new center in this country.

Difficulties

Communication between Stella Maris Centers in our Region is very difficult. Most of the ports have financial difficulties due to the ongoing financial crisis in the region, this delays and hinders new projects and initiatives. The privatization of the ports terminals, makes it difficult for chaplains to go on board ships. More awareness of the AOS by local dioceses and local Churches is needed. Not much is being done by AOS for fishers

Priorities

Contacts with ship agencies, local unions, Episcopal Conferences, Dioceses, parishes. Work ecumenically and walk with ITF and ICSW. Training of new chaplains and volunteers for social and religious activities. Visit those ports which are in development. Establish regional communication network. Reach out to fishers and their families. Establish port visits and two weeks ports training - to start soon. Creation of Port Welfare Committees and National Welfare Committees Second

AM World Directory

GERMANY

(new address)

BREMEN

Speicher XI—Abteilung 7

28217 Bremen

Phone: +49-421-394789

Fax +49-421-3989718

StellaMaris.Bremen@t-online.de

Mort de Soeur Odile



**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

e-mail: office@migrants.va

[www.vatican.va/Roman Curia/Pontifical Councils ...](http://www.vatican.va/Roman_Curia/Pontifical_Councils...)

