

Apostolatus Maris

The Church in the Maritime World

Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People



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WORLD MARITIME DAY



Next Thursday (29th September) will be World Maritime Day.
I take this opportunity to send my cordial greetings,
accompanied by my prayers,
to all those who work on the sea.

(Benedict XVI, Angelus of the 25th September 2005)

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WORLD MARITIME DAY 2005

« INTERNATIONAL SHIPPING: CARRIER OF WORLD TRADE»

Seafarers today

On World Maritime Day, it is important to celebrate not only the vital contribution that ships and shipping make to the prosperity and well-being of us all but also the men and women who take on the onerous task of operating them.

The worldwide population of seafarers serving on internationally trading merchant ships today is estimated to be in the order of 400,000 officers and 825,000 ratings. The OECD countries (North America, Western Europe, Japan etc.) remain the most important source for officers although growing numbers of officers are now recruited from other Far-Eastern countries and from Eastern Europe.

As far as ratings are concerned they are, in the majority, recruited from developing countries, especially the Far East. The Philippines alone provides almost 20% of the global maritime workforce. China and India are also significant maritime labour supply nations, with many seafarers from these countries enjoying employment opportunities on foreign flag ships operated by international shipping companies.

Given the enormous responsibility those in command have both for the very lives of those they carry on passenger ships, and those who serve with them and for the environment, not to mention the commercial success of the enterprise in which they are engaged, it requires a very special kind of person to take up the challenge of a seafaring career - especially these days when ships, because of their capacity to carry passengers in their thousands and cargoes in hundreds of thousands of tons, have the potential to cause enormous loss of life or environmental catastrophes of unimaginable dimensions.

The sea can be an unforgiving environment and, over the centuries, its rigours have encouraged seafarers to build a tradition of selfless endeavour and of high regard for others, particularly those who find themselves in difficulty or distress. It is a tradition that persists today - indeed, IMO is to establish a special award for courage at sea, to recognize those who, at the risk of losing their own life, commit acts of extreme bravery to rescue persons in distress at sea or to prevent catastrophic pollution of the environment thus exhibiting virtues of self sacrifice in line with the highest traditions at sea and the humanitarian aspect of shipping.

In 2005, we have also witnessed the humanitarian aspect of shipping at work in the tremendous response of the maritime community and industries, both in kind and in direct financial terms, to last year's dreadful Boxing Day tsunami tragedy in the Indian Ocean.



Mr. Efthimios Mitropoulos
Secretary General of O.M.I.

(Excerpts from the background paper of OMI on the occasion of World Maritime Day 2005)

SEAFARERS TO BE TREATED IN A FAIR AND HUMANE WAY

Vatican Radio interviews Archbishop Marchetto, 22nd September 2005
on the occasion of the **World Maritime Day**



Archbishop Agostino Marchetto, Secretary of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, has given the following interview in which he underlined the contribution offered by the Church, through the Apostleship of the Sea, to promote the cause of the weakest and most defenceless. The seafarers are part of them.

1) Why this Day?

A. Every year, the IMO (International Maritime Organisation) encourages maritime nations and communities to celebrate - usually during the month of September - a Day dedicated to considering problems and achievements in the maritime sector. In this way, the aim is to help meet various requisites and focus attention on, for example, the importance of maritime transport and safety at sea, on respect for the environment and on the seafarers themselves. The theme chosen this year - "International Shipping - Carrier of World Trade" - seeks to publicise the important contribution made by the maritime sector and by the fishing industry to international trade and the world economy.

2) How important is this contribution?

A. Today, more than 90% of international trade still takes place by sea. In fact, this activity involves more than 90,000 vessels (of varying tonnage) and 1,250,000 seafarers. In the context of globalisation, this industry must perhaps be considered as

the most globalised and international of them all. In an ever more liberal and profit-based economic environment, the industry is being forced to economise at all levels, including that of personnel. Making the industry work calls for great professional commitment, courage and sacrifice by seafarers; yet they feel that their contribution to the world economy is not sufficiently recognised, nor adequately compensated. World Maritime Day aims to correct this shortcoming by recognising the great contribution seafarers make to our well-being and, in some way, to thank them.

3) What hopes are there for a better future?

A. One hopeful signal is the fact that, for some years now, the maritime industry - encouraged by international agencies (OMI, ILO, etc.) and by ecclesial Associations (I am thinking of the Apostleship of the Sea and of the ecumenical ICMA) - has become increasingly aware that, in order to safeguard human rights and to create better working conditions, all legislation and decisions must consider the human element as a priority. On this subject we have also, unfortunately, noted an increase in cases where seafarers are criminalised following accidents at sea. While upholding full respect for the laws of individual countries, we ask that seafarers be treated in a fair and humane way.

Finally, we support the ILO initiative to consolidate 60 existing maritime conventions, bringing them together into a single juridical instrument. This project will be discussed once more during the ILO international conference in Geneva in 2006, and this time we hope for positive results.

4) And what is the Church's contribution?

A. Through its international network, the Apostleship of the Sea, an "ad hoc" Association, is present in practically all the major ports of the world, with a chaplain, or a welcome centre, or lay volunteers. Commitment to pastoral care is put into effect above all at grassroots level and consists of personal contacts and services, the celebration and administration of the Sacraments, shipboard visits, a presence in the ports, on oil rigs, etc. And I would like to recall that this sector also concerns itself with fishermen, passengers and crew of cruise ships, and with coastal cabotage. Because of the deep link between evangelisation and human promotion, we also seek to exercise an influence, through the work of the pontifical Representatives, on United Nations agencies and, in collaboration with other Christian organisations, on international legislation in order to promote the cause of the weakest and most defenceless. The seafarers are part

NEW ORLEANS DROWNED, BUT THE GULF FISHERMEN WERE HAMMERED

by Rev. Sinclair Oubre, President of AOS-USA

On behalf of all of us in the Apostleship of the Sea of the United States of America, I want to thank you for your prayers and concern. This has been a difficult time for our brothers and sisters of the sea in the states of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama. For many of them, their experience is the same as that of the fishermen in the Indian Ocean after the Tsunami. They have lost their boats, their docks, their packing houses, and also their homes.

Many of these fishermen were shrimpers. This industry has been tremendously depressed for the last four years. The Gulf of Mexico shrimping community has been beaten down by depressed shrimp prices because of dumping of farm raised shrimp on the U.S. market, doubling of fuel prices and rising insurance premiums. Many families were heavily indebted with mortgages on their homes and their boats.

Now that Hurricane Katrina has devastated the coastal regions of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama, where the majority of the Gulf of Mexico fishermen lived, there is real concern that this was the final blow for many families. Now they have also lost their livelihood forever.



Much concern is beginning to grow in the Catholic social justice community regarding the redevelopment of the areas along the Gulf Coast. In ports like Biloxi and Gulfport, Mississippi, there were already tensions between the fishing community and the expanding demands of the international port, and the waterfront location of casinos. Now that much of this area has been wiped flat by the tidal surge, will the fishermen have a voice in the redevelopment of the waterfront?

This will also be the case in many areas of Louisiana, where traditional fishing villages have existed for decades, if not centuries. Their waterfront property now becomes a valuable commodity for real estate developers who envision new waterfront resorts. It will be incumbent

on the Apostleship of the Sea to proclaim our Catholic Social Teaching, and continually remind those making decisions what our U.S. Bishops wrote in their 1986 Pastoral Letter on Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy:

“Every perspective on economic life that is human, moral, and Christian must be shaped by three questions: What does the economy do for people? What does it do to people? And how do people participate in it? The economy is a human reality: men and women working together to develop and care for the whole of God's creation. All this work must serve the material and spiritual well-being of people. It influences what people hope for themselves and their loved ones. It affects the way they act together in society. It influences their very faith in God.”

In light of Hurricane Katrina, these three questions can be specifically restated for the fishing community as:

1. What will the redevelopment do for the fishermen and their families?
2. What will the redevelopment do to the fishermen and their families?
3. How will the fishermen and their families participate in these decisions?

It is only in keeping the human person, and in this case the fishermen and their families, at the center of redevelopment decisions that justice will rise out of this tragedy. However, if only the cold hard laws of the market place reign, then there will be a second hurricane, and this one will wipe the fishermen and their families off the Gulf Coast.

HURRICANE KATRINA

CARDINAL HAMAQ AND ARCHBISHOP MARCHETTO APPEAL FOR AOS SOLIDARITY

Dear Regional Coordinators and National Directors,

In the wake of the hurricane Katrina, our Pontifical Council has expressed its solidarity to all those affected by this catastrophe and also its concern regarding the whereabouts and safety of our brothers and sisters involved in chaplaincy as pastoral workers and as staff. Even today, however, the situation remains very difficult for those living in the affected areas.

The information received so far confirms that all AOS Chaplains, personnel and their family, as well as those of our kindred societies, are safe although many of them have suffered harrowing experiences and are now evacuees. We also know that eleven Gulf Coast seafarers' centres have been damaged or destroyed, and that the status of others is still unknown.

We have received requests from our members around the world generously asking what they can do to convey their friendship and support and participate in the ongoing relief work. After contacting AOS-USA, it has been suggested that in the short term, those wishing to help can make contributions on-line, to the St. Vincent de Paul Society at their website www.svdpusa.org.

Our thoughts and prayers remain with all those who live in these devastated areas or who have been evacuated elsewhere, and with the emergency services and volunteers who are trying to cope with this terrible situation. I encourage each of us to express generously our solidarity and friendship.

As I invoke the motherly intercession of Mary "Star of the Sea" on their behalf, I remain

Yours sincerely in Christ

Cardinal Stephen Fumio Hamao, President

Archbishop Agostino Marchetto, Secretary

SOME STORIES FROM THE GULF OF MEXICO FISHING COMMUNITY

From Pietro Parravano, Board Member of AOS-USA:

"I have finally been able to communicate with a few of the fishermen on the Bayous, south of New Orleans. They have left the area and are living in other places with relatives and friends. One fisherman was able to return to his boat. He had been so worried that the bilge pumps were not able to keep up with the amount of water that was brought on by the flooding. What he found on his boat and his brother's boat, which was docked next door, is absolutely an incredible story. The two boats had served as a welcomed shelter for twelve fellow fishermen and families and five dogs. They used their generator for lights and used the stove for cooking. Also, they found food that was stored in freezers on other fishing vessels.

Another story that my friend said was that on the Violet Canal, there were 35 boats that were docked. A fisherman was stranded on an overpass and when the waters receded he waded onto the boats and maneuvered them so that they would not be stuck on the levy. Only 2-3 boats of the 35 boats were lost because of the efforts of one person!

Unfortunately, the news from the coastal communities east of New Orleans has not been so encouraging. There are communities that are wiped out and many people are still missing".

(to be continued on page 6)

Shrimpers Face an Uncertain Future, September 2, 2005:

"The farmers of the Gulf of Mexico - the tough-skinned sun-burnt shrimpers - picked a sheltered waterway here to make a furious last stand against Hurricane Katrina aboard their boats. An uncounted number of their bodies lay in the murky bayou Friday.

Those who survived may never recover from the catastrophe. "We fought the hurricane for 16 hours straight," said Danny Ross, who lost a 50-foot boat, the Captain A.J. "It's gone. I don't even know where it's at. The only thing left is the anchor."

From Alabama to Louisiana, fishermen lost their boats, homes, docks, boat slips, and in some cases, their lives, in the storm.

How many fisherman were killed riding it out on their vessels is still unknown. Also unknown is whether one of the country's oldest fleets will be able to recover. The frightful damage on the shrimp industry was evident Friday on the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway in Biloxi, where large and small shrimp boats took shelter during the storm. As far as the eye can see, wrecked vessels littered the canal.

Some big ones, 100 feet long, were jacked up with their sterns hoisted over the top of the canal's

bank. Overturned boats floated in slicks of fuel, their skimmers ghostly arms beneath the murky water. A few were at the bottom of the waterway.

No bodies have been pulled from the water, but shrimpers said they thought about a dozen of their colleagues drowned trying to ride out the storm. Boats broke loose, swirled down the bayou then smashed together, survivors said. One vessel, the "Santa Maria," had 10 boats bucking and straining against its side. The captain kept his engines roaring for hours to keep the flotilla from taking him under. Men screamed and cursed as boats collided, overturned and went down. One boy, on his first outing ever as a deck hand, reportedly made it to safety by jumping from sunken boat to sunken boat as the storm raged.

"Very, very bad," a Vietnamese shrimper, Hai Hong Ta, said in broken English. "100 percent. My boat down." Like so many others on the bayou, he also lost his home on shore.

Recalling the chaos, the shrimpers on the canal shook their

From *National Fisherman*, August 6, 2005:

"On Monday, Susan Baker sat on a wooden piling next to the bayou, a grounded shrimp boat looming over her shoulder. It was fortunate that the boat her husband worked on was floating safely nearby, because her family is now living on it. The water "was whitecapping in my living room," Baker said disgustedly.

Baker is not sure if her family will be able to live in the house again after all the water damage. She thinks it will be hard for the people of Bayou La Batre, a town of about 2,500, to rebuild. But they won't leave, she said. Their families have been here for generations, and living off the sea is the only life they know. "It's a hard, hard living," she said. "But it's a good living."

Minh Le thinks shrimping was a good living six or seven years ago, but not now. He's an engineer who lives in Memphis, Tenn., most of the time. But he rode out Katrina on the Capt. Christopher, one of two shrimp boats with freezers that he owns here. Both boats survived the storm.

Minh Le got into shrimping when he tried to keep a friend's business from going under and ended up managing day-to-day operations. Now he's just trying to keep a handful of people employed until he can pay off the boats. "The economy has already pretty much killed the industry," he said.

Many of the town's residents work in the seafood processing plants that handle everything from fish to shrimp to blue crab. But the storm heavily damaged or destroyed most of those facilities, too. Some plants process frozen shrimp. Others handle seafood that will be transported and sold fresh. But every boat and plant is intertwined in this community, and the chain is broken. "Without us, the shrimpers can't unload," said Charles Kraver, whose family owns two local processing plants. "And without them, we can't process shrimp."

Shrimper Thurman Seaman is grimly trying to figure a way out of this mess. His home was destroyed, but his two boats survived. Still, he doesn't know what he'll do with the shrimp if his crews catch any. "Fresh shrimp can't wait to be processed," he said.

heads. One smoked his last cigar. At least, some were better off than the people on shore, who have no electricity, no showers and no TV. Many had on-board generators, living on wrecked boats like they would anyway, with showers and electricity...."

« STELLA MARIS » MASS

The Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments has approved, through a Decree, the application of Bishop Tom Burns for the Feast of Stella Maris—recommended by our Pontifical Council—to be observed within the jurisdiction of both the Bishopric of the Forces of Great Britain and of the Apostleship of the Sea of the same country. The Congregation has approved also the choice of texts for the Mass and Divine Office, together with their translations.

The Feast is to be observed on the final Thursday of September each year, to coincide with World Maritime Day, when the Holy Father gives a message of encouragement and greetings to the seafarers. It is the mind of the Congregation that if the date of the international day should change, then observance of the feast, being tied to it, can also move without any further intervention of the same Congregation.

Those who are interested in celebrating the Feast of Stella Maris on that date must send their request to our Pontifical Council. Each request must be accompanied by the proposed translations into the national language of the texts of the Mass of the Blessed Virgin Mary Stella Maris and Divine Office (see find below the approved readings).

Liturgy of the Word

1st Reading	Wisdom 14, 1-7 <i>“You have established a steady path through the waves”</i>
Responsorial Salm	Ps 106, 2-3; 4-5; 6-7; 8-9. R/. Trust in the Lord, for his mercy endures for ever.
Alleluia	Numbers 24, 17 A star shall come out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel.
Gospel	Luke 1, 26-38 <i>“Behold, you will conceive and bear a son”.</i>

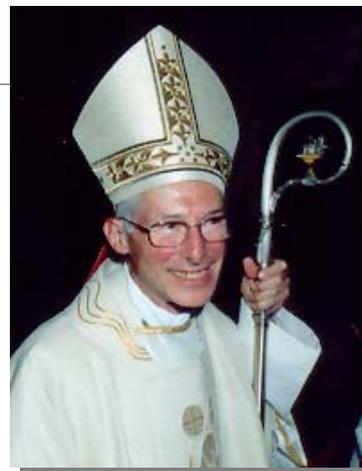
THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL BECOMES APOSTOLIC NUNCIO IN BENIN AND TOGO

On the 24th August 2005 the Holy Father has appointed Fr. **Michael Blume**, SVD, Apostolic Nuncio in Benin and Togo. Fr. Blume was ordained Tit. Archbishop of Alessano on the 30th September, by the Secretary of State, Card. Angelo Sodano.

Archbishop Blume was born 58 years ago in South Bend, Indiana, U.S.A. He has been Under-Secretary of the Pontifical Council from 2000, having been previously responsible for the Refugee Sector from 1995.

Archbishop Blume served as the Secretary General of the Society of the Divine Word (1990-1994), was a missionary in Ghana from 1974-1990, where he spent eight years teaching theology at the regional seminary in Cape Coast and served two terms as Provincial Superior of the Divine Word Missionaries in Ghana, Togo and Benin (1983-1990). Archbishop Blume holds a licentiate in fundamental theology from the Gregorian University.

The AOS, while regretting the departure of Fr. Blume, who has been of great support to the maritime ministry along these years, assures him of its prayers and wishes him a fruitful apostolate in his new responsibilities.



AOS REGIONAL CONFERENCE NORTH AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Progreso (Yucatan), Mexico, 24-26 May 2005

Our Centers: vision and vocation

We have found a desire for a new vision. We must open our Centers to all and be prepared to serving all: foreign seafarers, as well as national fishers and seafarers and the local community. Chaplains must work with and welcome the local talents in the community, and encourage them to serve all of our fishers and seafarers. Our Centers and our ministry will only be successful when they are community based. But then we must reach out beyond the local community.

It is justified to place an emphasis on the local population and to look after local communities of fishermen, port workers and ship workers, but ship visiting is also important. This is why we recommend that a team of volunteers under the guidance of the National Director and of Sr Rachele Marando be constituted to do “systematic and regular” ship visiting. In this connection a vehicle however would help.

There is a scarcity of clergy in the Seafarers Centers, but the numbers of volunteers and involvement of the laity has greatly increased.

There is a growing awareness in the entire region to be responsible stewards of the earth. There is an active process going on, of volunteers trying to respond to that. We are all struggling with the same realities of threats to our ecology. Holistic approaches must be taken to truly solve problems of ecology, etc.

Organisation

In Mexico there is no AOS Bishop Promoter. Thus, AOS now falls under the general direction of the Migrants’ Commission of this Bishops’ Conference. We recommend, in accordance with Apostolic Letter *Motu Proprio* on the Maritime

Apostolate of the 31st January 1997, that a Bishop Promoter be appointed in each country of the Region. Also when the Bishop’s Conference appoints a National Director, it is imperative that they be given a budget with which to work. Without this, any effort is greatly restricted.

In the USA, we must appeal to the governments’ sense of responsibility and let them know we are a “faith-based” initiative and we should qualify for Government’s subsidy. Wherever the AOS has strong links with the local Church, it tends to prosper. The necessity of a strong link between AOS and the Church was thus emphasized.

Fishing Issues

We must become truly aware of fishing issues. International Treaties of the U.S., as well as ILO and FAO activities, must be studied. We must endeavor to make our voices heard when these discussions take place. International conventions must be supported and promoted by every possible means. The fishing industry in our region is being decimated by pollution and by tourism. The general practices in petroleum exploration, shipping and the cruise industry pose a large threat to ecology and to the fishing industry. We must help to diversify the fishing community into other economic sectors of the maritime community and of the larger community, for example eco-tourism. This problem must be taken very seriously by the “AOS International Fishing Committee” as the negative effects on the lives of ordinary people are grave.

AOS encourages fishermen training which emphasizes the improvement of fishing methods and fish handling so as to improve the quality and

market price of the product.

The work being done by the Progreso Stella Maris Center is of great interest and particularly appreciated, its commitment to the families of fishers and its engagement in community development is noteworthy.

Cruise Ships

This region of the world is the most active in the cruise industry. It brings many benefits, yet many negative effects as well. We must call upon the Cruise Ship Priests and local AOS Chaplains to work cooperatively together.

We have been informed by our members from the USA about a possible change in regulations related to seafarer penalty wages and pay deductions, which would affect foreign seafarers on cruise ships and their families. We are very concerned by this news.

Training and Formation

People do not understand the way international welfare works in the maritime world. (The acronyms, etc...). There is a need for English courses both for the volunteers, the seafarers and fishers alike.

The point regarding availability of scholarships to the Houston school should be raised with ICMA so that AOS chaplains also can benefit from them through ICMA.

Fishing and seafaring communities depend a great deal upon women. They have a primordial role, they must be given formation and support.

Reports:

Caribbean – We had no reports. However, the Catholic Church has been asked to support new initiatives for the maritime ministry

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there. In principle we recommend that initiatives, especially if they are truly ecumenical, be encouraged.

Canada – Currently restructuring with great success.

USA – Big success in AOS USA Cruise Ship Priest Program

Mexico-Progreso – Community based AOS Center is very successful. Excellent interaction between many facets of the community (government, business, university, adult education, religious, etc.). This should be considered a model in many ways. There have been some initiatives to extend AOS into the rest of the country (Mexico) but with little success thus far.

Goals for AOS in North America and the Caribbean:

1. To send Port Chaplains to attend a two-week Port Chaplaincy training in (Apostleship of the Sea) Houston, Texas.

2. To hold regularly AOS National and Regional Conferences. To ensure that a regional conference be held before the AOS World Congress in 2007.
3. The National Directors shall conduct regular visits to their ports.
4. To develop and/or increase the circulation of AOS National newsletters or magazines.
5. To provide greater awareness by Church leaders concerning the ministry activities development.
6. To support and encourage each country to celebrate Sea Sunday.
7. To encourage AOS chaplains and volunteers to participate in continuing education through industry publications, and call upon national AOS organizations to organize national training programs.
8. To encourage and support the “AOS International Website”

Challenges for AOS in North America and the Caribbean:

1. The need for an appropriate

budget to cover the basic needs of the ministry on the National, local and regional levels.

2. In the Caribbean, the Catholic Church’s attention has been requested in order to foster Maritime Ministry there.

3. To continually expand community support to the local AOS mission.

4. To have an on-going AOS presence in international and national ecological problems (the international dimension assumed by ICMA).

5. To follow attentively the evolution of the possible change in regulations related to seafarer penalty wages and pay deductions.

Conclusion

We wish to commend and thank AOS Mexico, its National Director and its devoted team of pastoral agents and volunteers for a very good conference and for the superb organization and welcome they gave us.



Some of the participants after the Mass, presided over by Archbishop Carlos E. Berlie, of Yucatán

AOS INDIAN OCEAN REGIONAL MEETING

(Port-Louis, Mauritius, 5-7 July 2005)

At the end of last year, some countries in your region were sorely tried by the tsunami, and I am thinking in particular of the Maldives, the Seychelles and some bordering countries of Eastern Africa. I would like to reassure you all of our solidarity and sympathy.

This is also the occasion for me to remind your region that you are not alone in this apostolate. You are a member of an international network of more than 100 centers and chaplaincies of the Apostleship of the Sea around the world. This work is coordinated by the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People of which I am the President, Archbishop A. Marchetto is the Secretary (whom you know), and Msgr. Jacques Harel and Mrs. Farina are Officials. We also have a great ecumenical tradition that is encouraged and favored by the ICMA of which we are a founding and active member. I am also happy about the good ecumenical relations that exist in the countries of your region.

The Holy Father Benedict XVI takes great interest in our work and the situation of itinerant people, including seafarers, fishers and their families. Recently, on June 5th at the Angelus, the new Pope said this:

“I turn my thoughts to those who are far from their homeland and also often from their family, and I hope that on their way they will always meet friendly faces and welcoming hearts that can sustain them in the difficulties of daily life”.

Seafarers and fishers, as we

know, are people who carry out essential, difficult and often unrecognized work far from their families and their countries over long periods of time. To be received by a fraternal community is one of the best ways to support, encourage and thank them for the work they do which is so necessary for the prosperity of our countries and

I would like to say a special word of congratulations and encouragement to Mr. Jean Vacher for his dedication and commitment to serving the maritime community which sees a dream come true today. In the Indian Ocean and even beyond, he has been a pioneer and a source of inspiration for maritime pastoral care. He has encouraged ecumenical cooperation, and during all three years, he has been a reference point for everyone: coordination of the maritime apostolate in this region of the world largely rested on him.

the well-being of our peoples.

When a seafarer or fisher arrives at the Center tired after a long voyage, welcome him as Saint Benedict recommended to his own to do with a stranger: “Welcome the stranger like Christ himself”.

Welcome and hospitality are among the most perfect forms of charity, as Pope John Paul II told us a few months before his death.

This is why it is important to maintain enthusiasm and dynamism in pastoral commitment. This new center, like all the other centers, will develop and keep its reason for being to the extent that you will be capable of maintaining your dynamism, ability to mobilize and compassion. A chaplain or a pastoral worker in the Apostleship of the Sea is not a public servant who should remain neutral and detached; on the contrary, he has to “act out of love and compassion”. This will enable us to make a Christian reading of the “signs of

the times”, respond with charity to the appeals of our brothers and sisters and never abandon them.

For a seafarers’ center to develop and respond to real needs, and thus to carry out its work effectively, it has to be well integrated into the local context. Concretely, this means keeping up fraternal and apostolic relations with

your dioceses, the parishes near the port and on the seaside, becoming integrated into the overall pastoral care, and maintaining ecumenical relations with the other churches and ecclesial communities. You should also keep up good relations with the port, labor-union and governmental authorities, and with the surrounding people.

I am aware that this center of Roches-Bois grew out of the exemplary synergy between the Church, the Municipality, the Government and the labor unions through the ITF-Seafarers Trust, and I am pleased about this.

This naturally implies an ability for mutual listening, dialogue and adaptability in order to respond to the real or felt needs of the maritime community and their families. This also implies putting things up for question frequently and the ability to postpone personal plans and projects.

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Another priority, especially when one is about to embark on a new and great voyage, is to “make sure of one’s crew”: in other words, to spare no effort or sacrifice to create a solid, loyal and effective team. “A divided kingdom cannot stand”. Without a team a Center does not work, or it will be a place of rivalries, divisions and all kinds of “arguments”.

This is why the persons in charge should know how to:

- Depend on the employees and volunteers, delegating responsibilities to them while accompanying and encouraging them.
- Allot time for formation.
- Never favor exclusion but always communication and unity.

In turn, each one will have to:

- Make time for God and have a personal and authentic spiritual life.
- Accept to serve before being served or serving oneself.
- Practice kindness and trust rather than being suspicious and condemning.
- See in each one not an enemy but a brother.
- Above all, maintain the ability to forgive mutually and to make reconciliation.

Traditionally, the seafarers’ centers around the work are also places where the rights of seafarers, fishers and their families are defended. Moreover, around the world, more precisely in New York, London and Barcelona, there are three centers sponsored by the Churches that specialize in defending the seafarers’ rights. Last June 16th, while receiving seven Ambassadors, Pope Benedict XVI said this to them: “Our heart cannot be at peace while we see our brothers and sisters suffering from lack of food, work, a home or the other fundamental goods”.

Alas, we know that the seafarers and fishers are facing all kinds

of difficulties and dangers, and that they are the first ones to suffer the negative effects of internationalization. They are courageously facing the lack of safety, exploitation and savage abandonment; they are often marginalized and subjected to administrative harassment; moreover, we have recently witnessed the “growing criminalization” of this fine profession.

This is why it is our duty to raise our voices and be the voice of the voiceless, of all those who do not know where to turn in order to find a solution. It is our duty to do this by calling on the partners in the maritime world and also the public authorities when the dignity of the human person and his rights are not respected. In doing this we contribute to the development of this sector and its long-term prosperity for justice and dialogue, which are the basis and guarantee of social cohesion that make real and lasting progress possible.

This prophetic mission of a Christian, which is also called his duty of **advocacy**, is clearly expressed by John Paul II in his letter to the French Bishops dated February 11, 2005: “Likewise, in the name of their faith, Christians, personally or in associations, must be able to speak in public to express their opinions and manifest their convictions, thereby making their own contribution to the democratic debates, challenging the State and their fellow citizens on their responsibilities as men and women, especially in the field of fundamental human rights and respect for human dignity, for the progress of humanity but not at any price, for justice and

equity, as well as for the protection of our planet. These are some of the areas that involve the future of the individual and of humanity and the responsibility of each generation”.

This essential pastoral activity is part of the prophetic mission of the Church. But the “advocacy” of the Apostleship of the Sea will not be credible unless it is based on a commitment to the base itself to ensure that we are listening and



From left to right:
H.E.Msgr Piat, Cardinals Hamao and Margeot

informed about the real problems, and that our action to help build people’s awareness concerns and helps them to take on their responsibilities themselves.

I would like to conclude by congratulating and thanking all those who have made possible and worked for this fine achievement on behalf of all the seafarers and foreign or local fishers that will attend this magnificent center. You are a country and a region with a maritime vocation, and your Exclusive Economic Zone is one of the largest in the world. I hope that this center will help you to remain turned towards the sea and remind you that your future lies there.

In declaring this Conference open, through the intercession of Mary, the “Stella Maris”, I invoke God’s blessing on all of you, on this Center and its personnel, on your region, on your apostolic and professional commitment, and on all of your families.

SOME HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MEETING

The venue of this Regional Meeting was the new Seafarer's Centre in Port-Louis, Mauritius. The meeting was presided by H E Cardinal Hamao and were also present the Bishop Promoter HE Mgr Aubry and the Bishop of Port-Louis HE Mgr Piat. There were also representatives from Seychelles, La Reunion, Madagascar, Rodrigues, South Africa, Kenya and Tanzania. Fr. Ciceri, AOS/ICMA Coordinator for the East Far East Region and Ms Homden from AOS-UK also participated as resource persons. Unfortunately, Msgr. Jacques Harel was retained in Rome for a surgical operation with a good final result.

This new International Centre was an ideal place for the meeting with new accommodations, meeting rooms, and other facilities. It was also the occasion for Cardinal Hamao to bless the new Chapel dedicated to Mary Star of the Sea.

The main problems which have emerged from the country reports concern communications: Telephone, fax email connections are expensive in the region and, in some countries, not always reliable. Language: English or French? As

the two languages are widely used, this can constitute a difficulty during meetings and for planning of meetings and training. Finances: are scarce although essential for travelling and for the running and developing of the individual centres and the region.

Also some countries in the region still do not have a Bishop Promoter or a National Director. The representatives of some countries are changed without



The new Stella Maris Centre in Port Louis

consultation before having the possibility to become really acquainted with the AOS mission and contributing to it. Church support does exist almost everywhere and the dedicated and generous volunteers are a chance for the AOS. Thanks to the help from ITF the existing facilities have been upgraded or are in the

process of being so.

Networking in the region with all main stakeholders in the maritime sectors (shipping companies, agents), NGOs and other religious denominations through ecumenism is a real opportunity to develop the pastoral work, but unfortunately there is not enough money available for this cooperation.

Since the creation of the ICMA region of Southern Africa, the islands, since they are not included in this new region are anxious to know to which region they belong.

There are great hopes that the AOS International Website will provide new opportunities and open new avenues to regional and international cooperation.

International cooperation such as twinning of centres and volunteer exchange are opportunities that have been often mentioned but which now must be seriously considered. In spite of the weaknesses which have been noted, there was general consensus that AOS in the region is well integrated within the local Churches, it enjoys the respect of the maritime community and of the authorities alike. Many of its activities have undoubtedly contributed to the material and spiritual welfare of the seafarers, fishers and their families.

AOS Commitment to Fishing Communities

(Islands of the South –West Indian Ocean)

In general fishers in the region suffer from a lack of tools, means and licences. Licences are awarded to business people and not to the fishers themselves. There are international agreements with other governments, especially with the EU, but fishers are often unaware of these. They need a voice at home and abroad. The government is giving some help but not enough. Artisanal fishers are of the poorest people in some of the richest fishing regions.

Madagascar - Industrial trawlers do not respect the reserved fishing zones and enter the territory of traditional fishers and cause trouble. The fishers are not organised. A commission is needed to empower fishers and inform them of their rights. Malgache fishers need and want development but feel helpless.

Seychelles - Often boats belong to small businessmen and not to fishers themselves; fishers and never governments and authorities, are blamed for depletion of stocks; throwing by-catches into the sea causes problems; fishers are an ageing population, as young people are not interested in the profession; unlike seafarers, they tend not to be organised. There is little overseas market for Seychellois fish as Europeans complain of high levels of mercury but this does not stop them buying up fishing rights and fishing themselves.

Mauritius - Maximum sustainable yield has already been reached. A mother boat carries about 20 dories and

(to be continued on page 16)

WHY DOES THE CHURCH NEED DEACONS?

by Fr. Roger Aguetaz*

The II Vatican Council, which wanted to renew the permanent diaconate, reminds us that the Church must be a servant and poor. Jesus said, "I have not come to be served but to serve". Now, the deacons are there to remind us that there is no place in the Church for domination and power, and that each one of us must be a witness to Jesus the servant. They are there to tell the Church that all responsibility is a service, and that no community exists for its own sake, but for the Lord and the people to be served. It is for this reason that the Bishop associates deacons with his mission by giving them the Sacrament of Orders. Then they receive from the Holy Spirit the gift of placing themselves definitively in the service of the Gospel and the Mission of the Church.

Deacons exercise their ministry in many ways:

1. By living the service of charity among the disadvantaged of all kinds, they get the grace to locate them, welcome them, meet them and make a commitment so that their rights will be recognized. They also receive the grace to remind the Church and collective action bodies about the dignity of every poor person, the Face of Jesus Christ.

2. Through a missionary presence in the areas of poverty, disbelief, and in the key sectors of a changing world, they are called to be evangelizers and to awaken evangelizers in the disadvantaged environments or on the margin of the Church.

3. Through proclamation of the Word of God and through welcome and preparation for the Sacraments, they bring the concerns regarding Jesus Christ's encounter with the persons and groups that are far from the Church.

One of the characteristics of the

diaconate is to be a Sacrament of God's humility and hence to be a discreet and poor minister. This is not like a ministry where one presides, like the ministry of priests that preside at the Eucharist, Reconciliation, in the parishes and the Church communities. The principal mission of the diaconate is to recall the urgent need to convert to Jesus Christ's Spirit of service. This is why the Church hopes that deacons will be preferably married men who are well inserted into their living and working environments and committed to serving people, especially the disadvantaged.

Well then, what is the difference between deacons and committed lay persons who also have this concern? Deacons do not have an exclusive right to service. Indeed, every baptized person must be a sign of Christ the Servant. What does Ordination add?

The deacon's ordination is part of the Sacrament of Orders.

In all areas of the Church's life, this dialectical relation exists between everyone and some.

Let us take an example: all Chris-

tians are responsible for education in the faith. Some are catechists not to allow the whole of believers to discharge their responsibility on them, but on the contrary to allow everyone to carry out his/her mission of educators in the faith accordingly. In the same way, deacons are servants in order to allow all Christians to become servants.

As the Sacrament of Christ the Servant, God gives the Church deacons so that the People of God will become a People of servants and give the world the meaning and taste for service in the family, at work, in social and political life, to enable those who lack the means for life, love and respect to be recognized in their dignity, and to testify that the Good News of Jesus Christ is lived today.

* *Father Roger Aguetaz was in charge of the diaconate on the parish level for many years. He gave his reflections to the review, "Catho 47" of the Church of Agen, France.*

Pilgrimage to Holy Island

Around three hundred pilgrims from all parts of the north east region of Great Britain attended a special Mass in the church of Our Lady the Virgin on Holy Island (G.B.) on the afternoon of Saturday 2nd July. The Mass was the culmination of a day of prayer and reflection by workers, volunteers and supporters of the AOS who came together to pray for seafarers and the work of the missions who serve them.

Monsignor Ronnie Brown, a Trustee with the AOS G.B. led the Mass which was concelebrated by Fr T. Murphy (Cowpen, Blyth), Fr J. Angus (Hylton Castle), Fr M. Cairns (Blackhall) and Fr Charles, who is studying in Rome but is presently on attachment at St Bede's, South Shields. The Mass had been preceded earlier by 'Celtic Prayer on the Beach' with music and readings which this year was held in glorious sunshine.

The AOS led pilgrimage to Holy Island was one of three being held nationally, the others being at Aylsford and Quarr Abbey, Isle of Wight.



Pilgrims join in "Celtic Prayer" alongside the beach on Holy Island

A SEAFARERS' CENTER IN MANILA:

A dream soon to be realized, by Fr. Savino Bernardi, AOS-Manila Director

Once in a lifetime a chance comes to fulfill a dream considered of great importance. This chance has come as a providential and unexpected gift as some space was made available to the Apostleship of the Sea. This has raised once again the hope for a Seafarers' Center in Manila.

For several years, the AOS has endeavored to realize a Center for Seafarers in Manila, obviously teaming with Filipino seafarers in every street and specially gathering by the hundred at T.M. Kalaw Street, Ermita, every day. Manila hosts 350 Manning Agencies, all related government offices and most of the maritime services. Manila is the manning capital of the world where most of the half million registered Filipino seafarers come to seek employment, to undergo training or to prepare for their deployment. In 2004, 230,000 seafarers, or 25% of world crew power, spent some time in Manila. Unfortunately, Manila is lacking in proper facilities for them, as the



daily crowd under the trees in T.M. Kalaw Street is a witness to. Furthermore, 10-20 ships arriving every day in Manila ports bring a crew contingent of 200-400 seafarers also in need of AOS attention.

But the prohibitive cost of the land and building in Manila have frustrated any plan to provide such a Center. In the last six years any attempt has found the door shut.

However, God's providence opened another one. Nuestra Señora de Guia Parish, Ermita, in agreement with the Archdiocese of Manila, has recently offered an opportunity to fulfill the dream of a much needed Seafarers' Center in this City like the several others similar Centers in the major ports of the world. The Parish has offered a suitable space for the purpose, centrally located in Mabini cor. Flores Sts., Ermita: a precious opportunity that will not come twice.

Thus, the AOS Project of a Seafarers Center will soon begin and will develop its services in stages, as more finances will become avail-

The rapid increase of Filipino seafarers over the last 20 years makes the Philippines the main supplier of international seafarers in the world (25%).

able. To start, urgent services for our seafarers will be provided: an affordable place to sleep, a resting and recreational place, consultation and guidance or simply a "place of welcome". In a second stage, more facilities will be provided as progressively more space will become available. Thus, Manila will also be able to have a Center for Seafarers with complete services like the "Stella Maris" Centers already well known to Filipino seafarers around the world.

Generous contributions will help AOS realize it as we ask benefactors to become "partners" in this project and thus provide a welcoming place to seafarers in Manila, a place they can call their "home".

For further information or clarification, you may contact the AOS at (02) 527 2638 or 527 0337. Or you may wish to e-mail us at: aosmla@info.com.ph

Rev. Roland Doriol, S.J., Chaplain of Cebu, writes on Hong Kong.

I have resumed my activities in Cebu reinvigorated after three months of visits to the seafarers in the Hong Kong harbor, an immense, multicolored and multilingual "parish"!

We have a launch that takes us from ship to ship for the time it takes to find some familiar faces again or get to know them for the short time that they are given in the harbor. With phone cards, newspapers and a bit of dialogue

or recognition, the "Stella Maris" calling card generally gets a good reception. We are recognized rather quickly as a valuable help in the ports

around the world, and Hong Kong is always the first of its kind...It will soon find itself dethroned in the coming years by Shanghai.

I had a seminarian for a 15-day training period so that he could discover this reality: the reality on the waves and on board, and the reality of the domestic workers that fill the streets on Sundays as well as the churches...They come to animate the three Masses that I preside at the Mariners' Club ...More than 300 people are present at every Mass...We are obliged to limit the number for safety reasons.

It seems to me to be a good turning point when seminarians are exposed rather early to different realities and other kinds of ministry and pastoral care, even if briefly during their vacations or training periods.

BOATING ON A HIGH LEVEL

by Bernard Vincent, Deacon in Port-de-Bouc, France

Mission of the Sea, Liaison Bulletin No. 6, July 2005

During the last General Assembly of the Mission of the Sea, I was led to request that when the MS speaks about seafarers, it would not only mention fishing and trade, but also (as the Maritime Affairs do) professional recreational boating. I do not know if I was understood.

To one of my friends who was astonished by my position, I responded in a rather simplistic and mercantile way:

“What should I say to a recreational boating professional who would point out to me that the fees he pays to the National Institute for Disabled Seafarers are used toward the pension I get every month?” Isn’t he a seafarer too? In 2004 the ENIM statistical service counted 300 seafarers of this kind. We cannot ignore them. Moreover, at a time when seafarers risk being unemployed with the arrival of the RIF, and in an era when maritime tourism is developing, the Mission of the Sea cannot be absent from this world of recreational boating which can offer jobs.

Angel Llorente (Dunkirk)



In the port of Marseilles, three yachts were left without a sailor. A custodian told me that they just left for other ports for the summer where the clientele is very rich. He added that the main ports in the Mediterranean for this kind of luxurious boating are Antibes and Monaco.

ANTIBES

If our small boating ports in the gulf of Fos are teeming with ships, it is the same in these great marinas (I have never seen this!) because of the very luxurious yachts. The whole of Antibes seems to converge on this immense port, especially the old city.

I walked with my overshoes on the wharfs and was able to get back to the harbor master’s office of this port. According to the land technicians and the controller of potable water, there are very few French sailors because of their statutes and their salaries.

Sometimes French tourist agencies and rental agencies for sailboats and yachts take a captain with his French AB, but this would be on the small yachts. Even on the small and mid-tonnage vessels the foreign owners have the whole crew flown in, for example the English and the people from Qatar.

If I met very few French sailors on the wharf, on the other hand, on the mid-size and more important yachts I found a lot of foreign sailors. Among the officers there were Bulgarians, and on the crews there were Indians and Filipinos. On the very important yachts there were 13 sailors with 2 Filipinos. To my great surprise, I was received very well by these sailors who were training in the marina where they never stopped polish-

ing and re-polishing these luxurious monsters. (You have to take off your shoes to get on these ships just like in a mosque!).

I had the impression that the Indians had something to tell me and considered me a bit like a life preserver when I gave them the phone numbers of our seamen’s clubs.

The port commander allowed me to refine this approach a little:

During the 3 or 4 summer months there are supposedly 300-400 sailors of whom 10% are French. Afterwards, 70% of them leave and only about 10 ships keep their crews the whole year through, surely the large yachts, such as the ones with the Filipinos with their 9-month contract.

At the harbor master’s office there are uniformed men just like at the Port of Bouc, and so they are enrolled in the navy.

Given the reception I got, I would go back there to bring them some newspapers such as the “Balita” of Venice and the Indian newspaper of Genoa. But my priority would go to those who are at the bottom of the ladder: the Indians, the Filipinos, and the people from Qatar, and for the officers, the Bulgarians, without neglecting the French, if the occasion should arise.

This is just a first approach. In the few contacts I had with these sailors, I sensed a certain kind of solitude on these very luxurious ships. All this extravagance splashes us everywhere. Personally, I was a little bothered by it... (I might point out, among other things, that the sailors I met were not as well dressed as those on the cargo ships and tankers, even in their work uniforms!).

HARVEST TIME AT THE OBLATE MARITIME ACADEMY



by Fr. Charlie Burrows, O.M.I. (Cilicap, Central Java, Indonesia)

February 17th, 2005 was the day chosen by the committee to hold their annual graduation ceremony where +/- 150 cadets received their degrees and were graduated as fully fledged ships engineers and nautical scientists to take their place on the ships of the world and navigate the seven seas, carrying people and cargo to "the four corners of the world (even though the world is round).

Cadets, proud parents, happy girlfriends, staff and guests gathered in the, as yet unfinished, main hall of the Academy for the occasion. Guests were received with smart salutes from the cadet guard of honor graduating cadets (90% of whom are Islam's) marched smartly in under on archway of swords 1 cutlasses and the cadets choir led the singing and provided all appropriate music.

Speeches were given by the admiral of the navy reminiscing on

his days at sea and warning of the dangers of unnamed diseases, easily caught in places like Bangkok etc. etc- The proud director of the Academy exhorted the graduates to be ambassadors of good will and positive assessments of our fine institute. The Bishop, as senior advisor to the institute, exhorted the graduates to be men and women (there are a few) of strong moral fibre and a credit to nation and institute -throughout the speech being flanked by his able lieutenant (ME - As head of the Academy Foundation). The head of the education department for Central Java gave the main speech, surprised that Cilacap could produce something of quality, and sang the praises of all involved suggesting our status be raised to an' "Institute of Higher Learning".

One of the academy staff gave an erudite lecture on the importance of "reading", positively received by all and assessed by the head of the dept. of education. Then came the awaited moment when the cadets, flanked by their

The Church's commitment to the maritime world takes many forms. This is a report from the Port Chaplain in Central Java. He is also Head of an Academy foundation that turns out approximately 150 maritime graduates annually.

proud parents, marched forward to received their degrees, graduation medal and a graduation ring!!! - the significance of which, still unknown. Long serving staff members were given various awards and a snack was provided to all present (limited finances did not allow more substantial refreshments). Official ceremonies having been completed, honoured guests took their leave and happy graduates and present cadets continued their celebrations with song and dance.

The Catholic graduates took part in the Saturday evening mass with their special thanksgiving intentions and provided the singing and music for some. Thus one more graduation was successfully completed.

(Continued from page 12)

about 60 fishers in all. In the past 13 mother vessels were in operation, now they have been reduced to 5. The catch is frozen and brought to the mainland where it is sold on the local market, not exported. There is an experimental aquaculture station which is not much developed. Port Louis is endeavouring to position itself as a "seafood hub" encouraging processing in the port.

Rodrigues - Octopus fishing is destructive to the coral reefs but the bad weather allowance attracts practitioners, mainly women. Seaweed farming might provide alternative work for these women.

Recommendations

AOS must remain committed to Fishing Communities in the Indian Ocean

In this region the lack of communications represent a weakness, in each area there is maybe only one contact with few resources. There is a high turnover of clergy and local Churches are not always responsive as they have many priorities and lack resources.

It has been suggested that training should be provided not only to fishers but also to their families. Before doing something at the regional level, pilot projects should be initiated at national level first, and then starting from these local experiences, a regional training programme could be set up.

A **Seafarers' Advocacy and Rights Centre**, specialising in fishing issues such as those that exist in New-York, London and Barcelona for seafarers is an urgent necessity.

**Fr. Jean
Boutry
R.I.P.**

Fr. Jean Boutry has left us at the age of 86 after a very trying illness. He was the first Mission of the Sea chaplain in Dunkirk and began a great task of welcoming seafarers. His funeral took place on September 14, 2005. He has left a trail of hope that will make the missionary impetus go on. The International Apostleship of the Sea offers its sympathy and prayers to all those affected by this loss.

AM World Directory

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(new address)

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BELGIUM

(new National Director)

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AOS Belgium has a new National Director

The Belgian Bishops appointed Fr. **André Quintelier** as AOS National Director in Belgium.

There was a vacancy in fact because his predecessor, Fr. Geert Bamelis, chaplain in Antwerp, returned to his diocese upon request of his Bishop and became parish priest in Bredene. From now on, Fr. Quintelier will be the contact person for AOS in Belgium.

He was ordained during the short pontificate of John Paul I, on the 23rd September 1978. He will combine this assignment with his previous tasks of AOS-chaplain in Gent and chaplain of the Christian Labor Movement in one of the regions in his diocese. Fr. André has been for more than 13 years an AOS chaplain.

We take this opportunity to thank Fr. **Geert Bamelis** for all the years that he has devoted himself to the people of the sea and wish Fr. André Quintelier every success and God's blessing in his new responsibilities.



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