

Apostolatus Maris

The Church in the Maritime World

Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People



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(Master of Santa Verdana, The Virgin and the Child with eight Angels, Avignon)

He is the one who calms the tempests of our lives
and brings us His peace.

He is the Prince of Peace

(from the Christmas Message for AOS)

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CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FOR THE APOSTLESHIP OF THE SEA

Dear Members of the Apostleship of the Sea,

Christmas and the New Year are approaching and we are nearing the end of a very eventful year. It has been marked by natural disasters of devastating magnitude: the tsunami, cyclones and earthquakes, which have destroyed entire communities. On the positive side we can safely say that these disasters have been matched by unprecedented generosity and mobilisation of the rest of the world to help the affected populations.

Then the whole world grieved with us the passing away of Pope John-Paul II, succeeded by our new Pope Benedict XVI, who was elected on the 19th April.

Therefore, during this year, there has been times of joys and grief, successes and failures and like a boat we have sometimes been tossed around on very rough seas which may have threatened our security and make us even doubt that we could reach safely our next port of call.

Confronted with the turmoil of our lives there are three possible attitudes:

- Confronted to all the misery and injustices, somebody gives up or concludes that God is absent, or does not exist;
- Others are anxious, angry and impatient for God to intervene directly, as if miraculously, in their lives;
- Then there are those who never give up, never lose hope. They know that there is a positive side to every difficulty or trial. They believe that “Christ give them the strength to face everything” (Ph 4:13). It is a question of philosophy and theology of history, for humankind and every one of us.

That is, in spite of the appearances, even when He seems to be absent, if we examine carefully our lives, we shall see signs of his continuous presence, proofs that Jesus is always guiding us towards the port of salvation. He is the one who calms the tempests of our lives and brings us His peace. He is the Prince of Peace. Is it not Leo the Great who wrote that Christmas is the birth of peace?

As Christians, St Paul tells us: “Don’t worry about anything, but pray about everything.....offer your prayers and requests to God.....God will bless you with peace...and this peace will control the way you think and feel” (Ph 4:6-7) . What St Paul is telling us is that the fact that we trust in God does not mean that there will be no more tempests, or worries, or trials in our lives but that faith and trust in Jesus, the Prince of Peace, will give us an inner peace and serenity that nobody and nothing will be able to take away from us.

In this time of Christmas, let us all prepare ourselves to welcome the Lord and “ Let us all rejoice in the Lord, for our Saviour is born to the world. True peace has descended from heaven”.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Cardinal Stephen Fumio Hamao
President

+ Archbishop Agostino Marchetto
Secretary



Buon Natale e Felice Anno Nuovo

Joyeux Noël et Bonne Année

Frohe Weihnacht und ein Gutes Neues Jahr

Felices Pascuas y Prospero Año Nuevo

Feliz Natal e Bom Ano Novo

Błogosławionych Świąt i szczęśliwego Nowego Roku

Zalig Kerstfeest en een gezegend Nieuwjaar

Malygayang pasko at manigong bagong taon

AOS AUSTRALIA AND OCEANIA CONFERENCE

by Ted Richardson, AOS Regional Coordinator for Oceania

In late October (21-23), the Australian National Office hosted a combined meeting of the Australian Ports and Regional Centres of Oceania, in Brisbane, Queensland. This report will highlight some of the key points of our meeting.

Throughout Australia & New Zealand where there are Stella Maris Centres, seafarers are well catered for. Many of the Ports have introduced new technology including internet, web cam and phone services and are very active in pastoral care. Although there are sufficient numbers of volunteers at present, it is becoming increasingly more difficult to recruit new members to the Apostolate and this is starting to have an effect on the high level of pastoral care that is, at present, working well.

The Bishops' Conference of Australia and New Zealand support the ministry, but little is known about seafarers' welfare at Parish level and the "Sea Sunday" Appeal continues to decrease year by year. New members and our community awareness are our primary focus areas for this Apostolate in the future.

Having had the opportunity to hear from four Keynote Speakers, Msgr. Jacques Harel, Fr. Xavier Pinto, Fr. Bruno Ciceri, and Fr. John Chalmers, gave great insight to our members. Fr. Pinto, Regional Coordinator of South Asia, gave insight into the Tsunami in his area and the ministry throughout his Region. Fr Bruno Ciceri, Regional Coordinator of East Asia, excited our members with his work with the United Nations on fisher-workers under the umbrella of ICMA. Msgr. Jacques Harel provided an international focus on the work of the Apostolate as a "global" community and the preparations for the next World Congress. He was also available to speak to individual Centres and help provide solutions to the many problems that they encounter in their ministry. Fr John Chalmers, Director of Centacare Pastoral Ministries for the Archdiocese of Brisbane and Lecturer at the Australian Catholic University for Seminarians and Pastoral Leaders, brought the focus of pastoral care and our role in supporting the human family within and outside our Church.

We often underestimate what we do and the effect we have on those around us. National and Regional Meetings such as this, gives us the opportunity to not only minister to our seafaring fraternity, but to network and communicate with each other in our Church. We should never feel isolated or alone in our ports, but see ourselves as seafarers do, as part of the Church family, and a network of Christ's servants.



The Oceania Region is a very multi cultural diverse area of the world, with 40% of our population throughout Oceania having migrated to this region or their parents or grandparents have migrated here from all nations of the world. It is an important statistic that is often lost and it is equally important that we recognise the diversity and history of the members of the Apostolate in this region, as we work with seafarers who have a multi national and multi denominational base.

For copies of the Keynote talks, email: aosnat@bigpond.net.au

A COMMENT ON MARY “STAR OF THE SEA” IN “ECCLESIA IN OCEANIA”

by Bishop Ray Benjamin, Bishop Emeritus of Townsville, Australia

It was a great privilege for me, as an Australian Bishop, to take part in the Special Assembly of the Synod of Bishops for Oceania in Rome, November/December 1998.

The scope of the Assembly was as vast as the Oceania Region itself (one third of the earth’s surface) seeking to “see more clearly how the Lord Jesus is encountering the many peoples of Oceania in their lands and on their many islands”. (‘Ecclesia in Oceania’ 3, Pope John-Paul II).

The Bishops and other participants had the opportunity to share with one another and with the Holy Father, the many and varied pastoral situations, distinctive to our region, within which we were carrying out our Catholic apostolate.

Almost all attention was paid to the People of God “in their lands and on their many islands.” I recall a brief plea on behalf of seafarers in my own English Language group, and wondered, at the time, whether other groups had done the same. Surely seafarers have a special claim to be called “People of Oceania”, because they live and work, and struggle on the ocean itself. Our best information is that, on any one day, one and a half million of them are traveling the seaways of our region! They could almost be termed “a floating Oceania nation” in their own right.

The Apostolic Exhortation finally appeared in November 2001. In its pages, the Holy Father expressed high praise for many of the pastoral initiatives of the Oceania Church. Near the end of Chapter three, the Holy Father adds one short sentence: “since the nations of Oceania are dependent on the oceans and seas, the Synod Fathers also voiced concern for seafarers, who often work under severe conditions and endure many hardships.”

It was gratifying to find, on the very last page of the Apostolic Exhortation, a very lovely Prayer for the safety of Oceania Seafarers, addressed to “Mary, Star of the Sea, light of every ocean and mistress of the deep.” The Holy Father’s prayer has touched the hearts of all involved in this Apostolate and is widely used as a regular part of our Meeting and Conference prayers.

O Stella Maris, light of every ocean
and mistress of the deep,
guide the peoples of Oceania
across all dark and stormy seas,
that they may reach the haven of peace and light
prepared in Him who calmed the sea.
Keep all your children safe from harm
for the waves are high and we are far from home.
As we set forth upon the oceans of the world,
and cross the deserts of our time,
show us, O Mary, the fruit of your womb,
for without your Son we are lost.
Pray that we will never fail on life's journey,
that in heart and mind, in word and deed,
in days of turmoil and in days of calm,
we will always look to Christ and say,
"Who is this that even wind and sea obey him?"



Our Lady Star of the Sea, guide us.

*From the Apostolic Exhortation Ecclesia In Oceania
given on 22 November 2001 by His Holiness Pope John Paul II*

SOUTH ASIA REGIONAL CONFERENCES

There were a series of meetings in Chennai, India, from the 11th to the 21st November, namely: the ICMA Regional Training Session (Nov 11-13) and the ICSW Regional Seminar (Nov 14-16). The AOS Regional Meeting (Nov 17-21) was held subsequently at another venue. Below we give you some highlights of these three meetings.

ICMA Training session

This session consisted in the ICMA Crisis Preparedness Programme. It is a course with practical applications and discussion groups on disaster / crisis interventions and the role of Chaplains in these contexts. This course, which is currently being offered by ICMA to its members has been organized with a view to preparing the “chaplains” to care more professionally for people in crisis situations, to better manage the pastoral response to disasters or crisis that occur in the lives of seafarers. A group of 40-50 persons, made up of port personnel, union members, ship owners and manning agents, and around 25 “chaplains” of all Christian denominations, followed the programme, which was well appreciated.

The animators of these sessions, all ICMA members, included specialists in psychology, crisis management and pre-crisis planning.

ICSW Regional Seminar

The ICSW has, in cooperation with the AOS (India) and other maritime agencies, organised a sub-regional seminar addressing seafarers’ welfare in the Indian Sub-Continental Region (India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh). The event was held in Chennai from 14 to 16 November 2005 and welcomed more than 100 participants. The seminar, which was the first of its kind to be held in India and the fifth in the world, was sponsored by the International Transport Workers’ Federation Seafarers’ Trust.

The primary objectives of the seminar were:

- a) to promote seafarers’ welfare;
- b) to assess the level and efficiency of the current work;
- c) to encourage organisations from this sub-region to consider programmes strengthening the links with organisations outside the sub-region;
- d) to improve and strengthen the welfare work structure & services to seafarers in this sub-region.

The main decision of the Seminar was to constitute a Regional Welfare Committee made up of 2 representatives of each of the 4 countries represented, whose role



would be to develop a list of projects for the sub-region, with emphasis on communication, training and the promotion and practical implementation of ILO instruments on seafarers welfare. Dr Suresh Idnani, the Indian representative, has accepted to act as convener and coordinator of this committee, with other representatives from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.

It was understood that this committee would have solely an advisory and coordinating role and will have no authority over centres and organisations.

In its conclusions the Seminar emphasised the necessity for:

- regional cooperation and network-

ing between the different providers of seafarers’ welfare;

- inter-religious dialogue and cooperation since accusations of proselytism constitute one of the main obstacle to welfare work;

- upgrading the infrastructures and facilities available;

- welfare and pastoral providers, while complying with ISPS code, to have access to port areas and ships.

This type of conference has proved very significant in other parts of the world and they have been useful instruments for raising awareness of the work of NGOs and various religious organisation in the field of maritime welfare.

They have also allowed better cooperation and networking between the various agencies (Religious, Unions, Ship owners and Governments). In addition, more and more the ITF Seafarers Trust, which is the main funding agency in this sector, is channelling funds through the “Regional Welfare Committees” (see above) and favours projects which fit in with the overall programme for the region which is decided by the “Committees”. It is therefore important that AOS and all other welfare agencies participate and be part of it.

AOS South Asia Regional Meeting

Due to late apologies, bad weather, parish feasts and visa refusal, there were only 25 participants instead of the expected 31.

The Conference was formally opened by the Archbishop of Chennai Mgr A.M. Chinappa, in the presence of the Episcopal Promoter Bishop Joshua Mar Ignathios, who also participated in the ICSW Seminar and remained until the end of the AOS conference

There are 15 major ports in South Asia and most of them have a chaplain, although few are full-time.

(to be continued on page 6)

(continued from page 5)

Many of the chaplains are new to this ministry and it was their first participation to an AOS meeting.

They take their role seriously and do their best in sometimes very difficult circumstances. The main difficulties are:

- problems, sometimes impossibility, to have access to port areas and aboard ships;
- no financial base and little possibilities for fundraising;
- no infrastructure, transport or buildings;
- difficulty of communication, IT equipment etc.;
- accusations of proselytism and conversion (the environment is not always friendly and is sometimes dangerous, because of religious intolerance and local mafias, who consider all welfare work as unfair competition);
- they work in isolation, little contact with union officials and ecumenical overtures are not always

easy;

- due to many pastoral priorities, there is little stability in the appointments of chaplains.

On the positive side however, in many dioceses AOS receives good support from the Bishops and local parishes and communities.

The chaplains have all responded very generously to the Tsunami disaster and are still heavily involved in relief work, namely in Cochin, Chennai, Sri Lanka and at the regional level through Fr X. Pinto, the AOS Regional Coordinator.

Some of the chaplains have taken interesting initiatives regarding fishers, hospitals, and ferry passengers. In the port of Kolkata, for example, the chaplain runs a dormitory for Andaman Islands people who wait for months on end to secure a passage to their islands.

The various AOS Chaplains are determined to remain in contact

and it has been decided to circulate a newsletter to all the chaplains of the region.

Also for the first time the Gulf States were "represented" in the AOS Regional Conference. This symbolic presence is very encouraging for the future development of the AOS in the Gulf.

CONCLUSION

The 3 meetings were an excellent opportunity to offer information and training to the "chaplains". The conferences have certainly allowed them to establish new contacts and given them new possibilities of networking. It is hoped that the ICSW/ITF-ST Seminar will improve the local infrastructures and give a new impetus to



NEWS FROM THE ILO

In his inaugural address at the ICSW Regional Seminar in Chennai on the 14th November 2005, Mr. Jean-Yves Legouas, Senior Maritime Specialist ILO Geneva, shared important news from the ILO with the participants. Mr Legouas started by quoting Mr. J. Somavia, Director General of the ILO, who describes the primary goal of the ILO in one sentence: "It is to promote opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work, in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity".

He added that Seafarers' Welfare is an integral and fundamental part of the ILO Decent Work agenda and the ILO maritime team has undertaken a number of important issues that will produce interesting developments in the near or medium future for the welfare of seafarers. Then Mr Legouas gave details of the ILO's agenda for 2006: "An International Maritime Labour Conference will be held in February 2006, which should approve the Consolidated Maritime Labour Convention, an instrument that will virtually encompass the totality of the existing Maritime Labour Conventions, as well as introduce means of upgrading it rapidly, taking into account the accelerated pace of technological developments in the industry, as well as to ensure an efficient implementation ... Another field of activity for the ILO has been the revision of the convention N' 108, about seafarers identity documents, in June 2003 the ILO has adopted Convention N 985, which has come into force in February 2005 ... The Fishing Convention, which was unsuccessfully proposed for adoption in June this year, and which will have a considerable impact on fishers, will be represented for adoption in 2007."

Commenting the new proposed Consolidated Maritime Labour Convention, Mr. J Y Legouas reminded the participants of its salient features:

- It takes into account all maritime Conventions;
- It has replaced about 60 instruments with one instrument;
- The strong incentive for seafarers is, once the convention is ratified, Port State Control will implement it. The convention is likely to become mandatory;
- It will provide for amendments on yearly basis.

Should these conventions be adopted, ratified and properly implemented, seafarers and fishers around the world can look ahead for better days.

WESTERN EUROPE / UK & IRELAND ICMA REGIONAL CONFERENCE

Dunkerque, France, 10-13 October 2005

CONCLUSION

This regional conference of ICMA met in session between Monday 10th - Thursday 13th October. The Theme was “Living in a world of contradictions: a challenge to maritime missions”.

Maritime ministry practitioners from 27 ports in 12 countries met to share experiences and information, to encourage best practice in the care of seafarers and to more fully identify the conditions that impact upon the seafarers' welfare. ICMA seeks to uphold the dignity of seafarers by caring for their spiritual, moral and physical well-being.

The conference expressed its concern as to how local port authorities and terminal operators misinterpret and overzealously implement the new security measures required by the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code, a convention of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), the specialist agency of the United Nations. Seafarers should not be regarded as potential terrorists but as possible targets and victims of such threats.

The conference sought to build on the good relationships between the port chaplains and

port authorities together with all concerned to ensure that visiting seafarers are welcomed and affirmed.

The conference sought to support seafarers when the circumstances of their shipboard life increases stress and fatigue and emphasises the need for rest and relaxation. The requirements of the ISPS Code impose additional burden with no extra personal to share the work. It acknowledged that fatigue is becoming a major problem that affects the safety of the ship and all on board. It believes that there should be opportunities for times of refreshment and encourages ship owners and operators to provide for this as part of their duty of care for their seafarers.

The conference responded positively to the request of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) to receive reports on instances of the restriction and denial of shore leave and reaffirmed its commitment to play its part as an NGO with observer status in supporting the IMO.

The Conference observed and applauded the efforts of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) to bring into being a Consolidated Maritime Convention that will update many of the existing international instruments regarding the conditions of em-

ployment for seafarers. It encouraged ship owners and maritime unions to fully cooperate with the ILO to realise this significant goal.

The conference gave thanks to God for the world's seafarers. We recognise that they forego the benefits of their home life to bring us the comforts of ours. We know the importance to seafarers of communications with their loved ones and seek to make provisions for this along with the fraternal welcome. We pray that we will continue to extend to them, on your behalf, God's love and care.

Coming from many different organisations, we are united in our purpose and rejoice that we speak with one voice on the issues of seafarers' welfare. This was the occasion to reinforce our network and remind the shipping industry that the human element is their most precious asset and their most valuable.



THE FAO MAKES FISHING IN THE MEDITERRANEAN HARDER

A first measure agreed upon by the GFCM was to prohibit fishing with dredgers and trawling nets at depths greater than 1,000 meters in accordance with FAO's philosophy in favor of developing responsible fisheries to protect the more fragile marine ecosystems where the growth of the species is much slower, and where serious threats of destruction exist that can have very negative repercussions on the development of the whole food chain. Along this same line, the policy of the Mediterranean countries is supported which requires trawling nets to have a minimum opening of 40 mm at the end that allows the young to escape in order to preserve the sustainability of the fishing grounds.

The Commission agreed to establish a centralized record of all fishing vessels more than 50 meters long that are authorized to fish in each of the countries. The vessels not found in this record cannot operate in the waters of the Mediterranean basin under the GFCM's authority, and they can be penalized in accordance with the laws of each country.

The Commission also decided to set some new mechanisms in motion to increase the controls over the number of red tuna currently destined for aquaculture in the so-called fattening farms that are widespread along the coasts of several countries including Spain. The agreement takes into consideration the development of greater controls over the minimum size of the fish that can be caught and destined to such farms, and a minimum weight of not less than 10 kilos. Through the whole series of measures adopted, the GFCM aims at avoiding the destruction of the fishing grounds in the area and

achieving their recovery in view of the serious drop in catches. According to the data handled by this organization, the catches in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea at this time amount to 1.5 million tons a year compared to 700,000 in

species in deeper waters like hake, young hake and red mullet represent almost 40%. For the GFCM leaders, the situation of red tuna is particularly delicate given the over-exploitation to which it has been subjected because of the demand

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM), affiliated with the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization, FAO, agreed at its last meeting to put into action a series of more restrictive measures for fishing in the Mediterranean. The decision was adopted in view of the downward turn in catches in the area due to problems of overexploitation, as well as the use of destructive fishing nets. The objective is to safeguard the marine ecosystem and reduce the catches. The agreement was adopted by the 24 countries that make up the organization which includes all the coastal States as well as others with significant interests in the area, such as Japan where an important part of its market is fed by a series of species fished in these fishing grounds.

the 50s, but far from the 2 million tons caught in the 80s.

According to these studies, the catches of different species of fish



reached their peak at the end of the 80s and in the 90s, but later fell very significantly, such as in the case of hake. At this time, the catches of small fish like anchovies and sardines represent almost half of everything fished, while other

and the high prices paid by third countries outside of the EU such as Japan or the United States.

In the past years, the catches have gone from nearly 40,000 to only 22,000 tons. The processes for fattening tunas are a cause for concern for the GFCM both because of what this implies in terms of pressure on the fishing grounds at the time of the catches, the repercussions of the farms on the coasts, and, above all, in view of the lack of reliable figures regarding the importance of this activity.

It is estimated that the number of fish caught for fattening in the farms is not known precisely, which results in the development of illegal fisheries for fattening them especially in Croatia, Malta, Spain and Turkey. The current production of these farms is about 25,000 tons compared to 10,000 tons just five years ago.

(Mar No. 441
September 2005, p. 20)

THE RETURN OF THE PIRATES

Seafarers life is wrought with risks. Nowadays it has become even more dangerous with an unprecedented recrudescence of acts of piracy around the world. Once Indonesian waters were the capital of piracy, but at present the Somali coast has become a close competitor.

The International Maritime Bureau has reported a dramatic increase in the number of serious attacks off Somalia. Vessels are being attacked within 90 miles off the coast by pirates. Since 15 March 2005, there have been 23 attacks off the coast of Somalia. Once the vessels have been boarded, they are taken close in-shore and the pirates demand a ransom for the return of the vessel and the crew. The ransom demands are in the region of US\$50,000 to US\$ 100,000.

On the 18 October 2005, a distress signal was received from the MV Panagia, informing the authorities and owners that the vessel, with a crew of 22 Ukrainian seafarers on board, was in the hands of pirates off the Somali Coast and that they were being kept as hostages.

The Reverend Olexander Kenez, Greek Catholic Chaplain in the Port of Melbourne, Australia, informed the Pontifical Council of the dramatic situation of the seafarers asking for its support in an international campaign for the release of the seafarers.

Cardinal Stephen F. Hamao, President of the Pontifical Council, and Archbishop Agostino Marchetto, Secretary of the same Dicastery, wrote the following letter condemning piracy and supporting the campaign:



Reverend and dear Father Kenez.

I have learned with great sadness the news that pirates boarded a ship and that 22 Ukrainian seafarers are being kept as hostages off the coast of Somalia and that currently they are being held to ransom. We can imagine the anguish and sufferings of these seafarers and their families. Our thoughts and prayers are with them and I want to assure you of our solidarity.

There has been recently an unprecedented increase in the number of attacks in the region you mentioned in your communiqué. This appalling and unacceptable phenomenon is totally unworthy of man and we urge the authorities concerned to take the necessary measures so that order and security may be restored.

We encourage you in your campaign to help the defenseless victims of this act of piracy and pray that sanity and dialogue will prevail and that the seafarers can be freed and return safely to their family.

Yours sincerely in Christ

Cardinal Stephen Fumio Hamao
President

+ Archbishop Agostino Marchetto
Secretary

Consequently, we were informed by Rev. Kenez of the happy outcome and of the release of the MV Panagia crew. In his message, he expressed his gratitude in the following terms:

“I wished to express my thanks for your part in their release. I am sure that your letter had a significant part in the positive outcome”.

However, sadly at the time of writing, pirates in Somalia are still holding three fishing boats and 46 crew members.

MARITIME TRANSPORT AND CHINA

World maritime transport has been boosted by China's development. Sometimes there has even been talk of a lack of ships. We asked the Nantes Observatory on the rights of seamen if the expansion of maritime traffic and the increase in the number of freights benefit seafarers.

Professor Jacques Marcadon explains, "Following the opening of China and its entry into the WTO in 2001, Chinese maritime transport has been booming for the past three or four years. This has resulted in a growth rate in port traffic unknown anywhere else in the world. The port of Shanghai increased by 31% between 2002 and 2003 and the port of Hong Kong by 29% (for containers, the traffic in Hong Kong, the world's first port, represents approximately 25 times that of Marseilles!).

As of January 1, 2004, the fleet of the People's Republic of China was in 10th place worldwide and Hong Kong's was in 8th place. Both of them together put China in

third place in the world before Greece and after Panama and Liberia.

So the demand for maritime transport is very great in China, and this calls for specialized personnel, especially seafarers. The Chinese domestic fleet employs about 230,000 sailors, international ocean voyages employ about 100,000, and about 35,000 more work under third-party flags (according to estimates that appeared in the Anglo-Saxon press). Like other Asian coun-



tries (The Philippines, India, etc.), China is going to count more and more as a country that provides labor.

Since the obstacle of the English language is a problem, efforts are now being made in the maritime formation centers. The nearly 80 Chinese maritime Institutes and schools aim at achieving a standard of formation compatible with the international requirements...which is not achieved from one day to the next".

What influence does this development have on the seafarers' conditions? Professor Patrick Chaumette answers as follows: "Recently, Lloyds indicated the tendencies to develop naval construction in China, a slow growth of the Chinese merchant fleet, but also a certain lack of Chinese sailors. Their salaries increased by 34% in 2004. Obviously the starting point is rather low. But the idea that there is a reserve army of Chinese sailors that have come away from their farm work to replace the Filipinos at a lower price in the world fleet is surely a figment of the imagination".

(Les Amis des Marins, Marseilles/Port de Bouc, No. 1, June 2005)

AOS appoints chaplaincy teams in Scotland

The ministry of AOS to seafarers who arrive at Scottish ports has been reinvigorated with the appointment of a comprehensive chaplaincy team. Port Chaplains have been appointed to Aberdeen and the East Coast Ports, the Firth of Forth Ports Area, and the Clyde & West Coast Port Area. The appointments follow the coming together of AOS (Scotland) and AOS (England & Wales) in June to form one organisation for Great Britain.

The new Chaplains will be building on a fine tradition of pastoral care for seafarers in Scotland, where Bishop Peter Moran of Aberdeen is the AOS Bishop Promoter. AOS was originally founded in Scotland in 1922, and it is from this beginning that AOS has now spread throughout the world.

More than 10,000 merchant ships visit Scotland each year, bringing with them 100,000 seafarers. The new Chaplains will be charged with providing them with pastoral care and practical support, establishing a network of volunteer ship visitors, enlisting the support of parish communities and collaborating with colleagues of other Churches and ecclesial communities.

Their key goals will include seeking to be a sign of Christ's presence in the seafarer's world, promoting and upholding their human rights and dignity, listening to their concerns, and offering 'hospitality' by providing a welcome within a seafarers' centre or simply facilitating transport to local facilities and amenities.



Ecumenical Covenant "the dawn of a new collaborative era" for Christian maritime groups

The Christian Ecumenical Covenant for Maritime Ministry in the UK and Eire was signed today (25 October) in a ceremony held at St Columba's Church of Scotland in London by the Apostleship of the Sea (Catholic), the British & International Sailors' Society - BISS (interdenominational), and the Mission to Seafarers (Anglican).

Commodore Chris York, National Director of the Apostleship of the Sea (Great Britain), said: "The signing of this Covenant is a radical, groundbreaking step, and the dawn of a new, collaborative era in our care for seafarers. For the first time,



the Christian maritime societies are coming together in an unbreakable partnership to respond more effectively to the needs of seafarers. We are announcing to the entire maritime industry that we are united in Christ, and that the days of division and suspicion are well and truly over".

"Ninety-five percent of all the goods we use and consume every day are brought to us by ship, but the conditions of seafarers are often hidden from us. Away from homes and family for a year at a time, they often suffer loneliness, depression, dangerous working conditions, low wages and exploitation. However, as Partners in Mission, we are saying to them loud and clear that we are

alongside them in their work. Seafarers themselves are the most valuable "commodity" in the maritime industry and, by recognising and promoting their human dignity, we work towards the wellbeing of the industry as a whole."

The Covenant deals with the day-to-day ministry of the three maritime welfare societies in ports up and down the British Isles, where port chaplains and volunteers from each of the three Christian societies provide pastoral care and practical support for seafarers visiting our shores. Ecumenical collaboration is already a reality in most ports, but the newly signed covenant commits the societies to re-dedicate themselves to foster closer communication, avoid duplication, respect the denominational traditions of seafarers and encourage professional collaboration.

The document recognises that the three societies "have much to offer and receive from one another in the rich diversity of our traditions" and explores the implications of their common calling to care for seafarers regardless of nationality or creed. It also stipulates that effective ecumenical collaboration is conducted in an atmosphere of mutual respect for each others' traditions. Accordingly, it commits ecumenical chaplaincy teams to "share in the pastoral care of seafarers... whilst allowing for individual seafarers to receive ministry of his or her choice" and to "acknowledge the particular service each chaplain brings to seafarers of their own denomination".

Commodore Chris York added: "Together, in the name of Christ, we provide vital assistance to seafarers who may be many miles from home, and I am delighted that this aspect of the Church's outreach is now a shining model of ecumenism working effectively in practice."

Day of Remembrance and Prayer for Mariners

WASHINGTON (CNS) -- In a voice vote Nov. 14 the U.S. bishops declared May 22 of each year as a Day of Remembrance and Prayer for Mariners and People of the Sea. The date coincides with the annual National Maritime Day celebrated by the U.S. government for the past 62 years. The recommendation was presented to the bishops by the Committee on Migration after the Maritime Administration of the U.S. Department of Transportation contacted the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops to encourage prayers for mariners on the annual federal observance. National Maritime Day was established in 1933 to honor "the courage, vision and achievements" of those who serve in the U.S. Merchant Marine, according to the Transportation Department.

(from "Catholic News Service")

This decision has happened thanks to the efforts of
Bishop Promoter, Most Rev. Curtis Guillory,
AOS National Director Rev. Fr. John A. Jamnicky,
and AOS USA President Fr. Sinclair Oubre.

THE SAGA OF MV MAWASHI AL GASSEEM IN ADELAIDE, AUSTRALIA

MV Mawashi Al Gasseem is an ageing livestock carrier, having been converted from a tanker in 1985/6. For the last 20 years she has traded to Jeddah from South American and Australian ports. Her normal complement is 70, although at this time this is reduced to 69 as 1 man has been repatriated on compassionate grounds. When loaded with livestock she carries an additional Australian stockman and a Veterinary Officer.

From OFFICERS and CREW of MV MAWASHI AL GASSEEM
To Fr. BRIAN ANGUS, RICHARD LLOYD,
GRAHAM CAREY and BETH & BARRY EARTHEY
Thank you very much for giving moral support,
spiritual support and helping us in the time of
our needs.

MABUHAY PO KAYO!

to STELLA MARIS and STAFF and SUPPORTERS
from CAPT. ROMAN B. ALCANTARA JR.

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| C/O Juanito P. Dilla | 2/O Vicente H. delRosario | 2/O Ireneo Pindo Arico |
| 3/O Rufino Luis P. LasPitas | R/O James Navel Louis | C/E Mohammad A. Hoda |
| 2/E Eulalio B. Juan | 3/E Melvin Z. Quezon | 3/E Christopher M. Castillo |
| 4/E Jose Jerry U. Andaya | Sylect JoseValerio G. Joler | Sr/Elect. Vicente A. Patara Jr. |
| FTR Teodoro P. Avonce | FTR Michael Sanjay Daszua | FTR. Nery Y. Tigres |
| FTR. Joel P. Bal-ut | FTR. Kewal Singh | FTR. Joseph J.P. Pathayapurakal |
| FTR. Vasco Felix Mascarenhas | FTR. Romeo O. Galias | FTR. Dante C. Camongol |
| FTR. Marvin C. Chauier | FTR. Glenn R. Fernandez | BSN. Hipolito T. Galang |
| M/B. Lorenzo R. Sumawang | Al/B. Ramil D. Jint | M/B. Celesto A. Padillo |
| M/B. Ferdinand C. Plata | Al/B. Felipe C. Jaramaz Jr. | OS. Leomar S. Francisco |
| OS. Eb R. Batiancla | OS. Zacarias O. Maru | OS. Jose Brenan R. Bacolod |
| OS. Amiel Armando U. Macaraog | OS. Diego B. Chavez Jr. | OS. Rene P. Sandido |
| OS. Guillerio N. Ducay | OS. Fernando S. Bacolod | OS. Ronnie S. Erbite |
| OS. Vicente U. Ato | OS. Narciso A. Gundan | OS. Arnold P. Mangubat |
| OS. Tito P. Villaceran | OS. Epraim R. Orbeta | OS. Ruel O. Talara |
| OS. Jose Popto M. Pacifico | OS. Ricardo B. Lasala Jr. | OS. Cecilio M. Dalope |
| OS. Richard E. Retirado | OS. Adonis A. Atabianco | OS. Frederick E. Sewitte |
| OS. Rhoel A. Herbillia | OS. Johnny B. Naingue Jr. | OS. Antonio A. Medalla |
| OS. Carlito E. Arriola | OS. Bismark N. Roman | M/M. Edgar S. dela Pena |
| M/M. George A. Opsy | M/M. Renato C. Banayo | WPR. Meynard M. Himaya |
| WPR. Demacrito H. delRosario II | WPR. Larry R. Tagayo | C/Coak. Roberto C. Fabiana |
| 2/Coak. Darren L. Ornejo | MESS/M. Rosmar A. Dimaymay | MESS/M. Rony T. Cabanilla |
| MESS/M. Jeseffon B. Usigo | MESS/M. Sofronio B. Napales | |

A letter of gratitude from the Captain and the crew of MV Mawashi al Gasseem

This vessel arrived at anchor off Adelaide, South Australia, on 23rd March 2005, where she remained until 8th July. On this day, in response to an application from the O.W Bunker Trading Company Pty Ltd of Denmark regarding bunkers not paid for, the Federal Court of Australia directed that the ship be arrested. Accordingly the Admiralty Marshal Ms Julie House boarded the ship at anchor, attached the Notice of Arrest to the vessel and ordered her to be brought into port. This was a blessing for the crew. for after 108

days at anchor, the ship was low on fuel and food. Moreover they were now able to go ashore and visitors were able to visit the ship.

From this moment on, the AOS, the ITF, the local Philippino Community and the local Parish Churches and Community took this ship and her crew under their collective wings and did an enormous amount of work in welcoming the crew, in trying to alleviate conditions on board and improving morale by way of transport to Mass and offering Mass on board, by

providing BBQs, picnics, bus trips, legal representation, counselling, interpreters, and in some cases use of private homes. Phone cards, magazines, a TV [to replace a broken one] and food were donated. All these men became part of our community - more, they became our dear and valued friends - and I am sure that they were able to relax and appreciate what was offered. We provided havens away from the uncertainty, insecurity, frustration and monotony of their shipboard existence.

Over the next three months more Court hearings took place, and the decision was made that, due to little or no response from the Owners, the ship was to be sold and all debts paid from the money received for the vessel. On October 18th all bidding ceased. On October 19th it was announced that only one of the bids had passed the Appraised Value for the ship. The Court also heard that another claim had been filed. this one by the Bank of Kuwait for the sum of \$32 million. The next hearing has been arranged for 9th November, so there will be no change in the on-board situation before then. In the interim, negotia-

tions will take place between the successful bidder and the Federal Court regarding handover and replacement of the current crew with a fresh one.

What were the crew doing all this time? On a ship 32 years old there is plenty of rust, so the crew spent every day chipping, scraping, hammering. It's noisy, dirty and cold work, but the crew stuck at it day

MV Mawashi Al Gasseem has been released. She left the South Australian port on 23 November following its court-enforced sale to a Jordanian owner and an agreement that will see its mainly-Filipino crew receive backpay estimated at more than A\$700,00 (\$511,000).

Lloyd's Register—Fairplay web links

after day after day ... How demoralising it must have been for them, doing this hard work, knowing that they were not being paid for it, knowing that their families were going without, knowing that their homes were threatened by the banks, that illness plagued their loved ones - the helplessness of it all.

Because the normal manning was far above the safety manning level, the Court directed that all those surplus to the safety manning were to be repatriated as soon as possible. At the time of writing, 34 crew had been selected to be sent home, and this to take place on October 12th. Because the sale was not yet concluded, these men would be repatriated home with no money, but with an assurance that all monies due would be paid as soon as possible after the sale is concluded.

This is not an ideal way for a seafarer to return home - empty-handed - so recently serious efforts have gone into fund raising. We hope to raise enough money to be able to give each man at least \$ 100. The problem is that on arrival home, the seafarer will be an extra mouth to feed, but no extra money to feed

(to be continued on page 13)

(continued from page 12)

him. This can only exacerbate the financial problems at home until wages arrive.

The remaining crew, 35 of them, are uncertain of their future. More will be known after the sale details and the intentions of the buyer are known. It does seem that neither the first group nor those remaining on board will receive any money before late December. Let us hope that Christmas will be a time of Joy and Celebration for them.

I cannot praise too highly the character of all those on board. From the Master, Captain Roman Alcantara Jr., to the lowest rank, we have received nothing but friend-

ship, courtesy and gratitude for our efforts, and all done with a generosity and warmth which belied the stress under which they all lived and worked. To them, I dips me lid! May God Bless each and every one of them and their families. May their time at sea never have another episode such as they have suffered here. The Apostleship of the Sea wishes to acknowledge the contributions made by the following: the O.W. Bunker and Trading firm which at the direction of the Federal Court, had the responsibility for providing food, fuel, ship's provisions and stores, and medical needs.

The Company is also paying for travel and incidental expenses to

repatriate crew members: the ITF and Maritime Union of Australia, for their support, legal representation, and ongoing arrangements to cover those in difficulty until their wages are paid. The Federal Court of Australia and its Officers, who have always acted with the welfare of the crew as their major concern; the local community and churches and the Filipino community, for their prayers, financial support, and the way they took these men to their hearts and gave their lives some meaning again.

To all those involved, our sincere thanks. May God bless you in all you do.

AOS team Adelaide



Publication of the BIMCO/ISF Manpower 2005 Update

This report (the fourth) is the result of over a year's work by BIMCO/ISF and the Institute of Employment Research at Warwick University, collecting data from maritime administrations and shipping companies to build up a comprehensive picture of the global situation regarding the availability of seafarers for the world's merchant fleet.

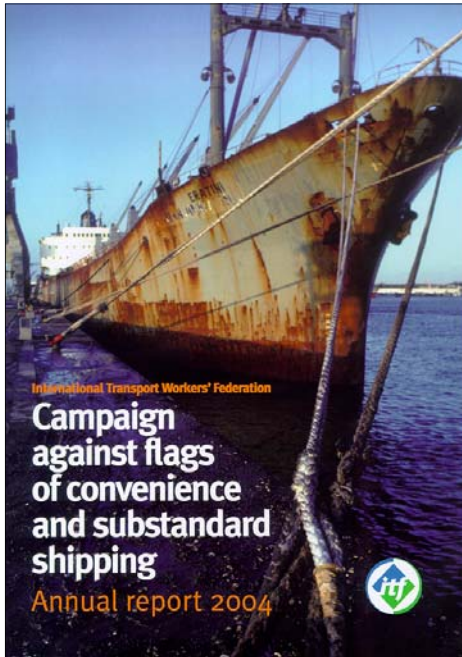
The worldwide supply of seafarers is estimated at: 466,000 officers and 586,000 ratings. The Update thus reveals a continuing shortage of qualified officers, of around 10,000, or 2% of the total workforce, and a significant surplus of ratings. Key issues arising from the report include: the continuing supply shift from OECD to the Far East, South-Asia and Eastern Europe; an increasing overall demand for seafarers, with particular pressure on certain grades and ship types; ageing OECD senior officers and a lack of replacement from elsewhere; the need to increase training and recruitment and to reduce wastage.

In summary, BIMCO and ISF conclude: "there is a modest shortage of officers worldwide and a continuing surplus of ratings. While the shortfall of officers is smaller than forecast in 2000, certain sectors of the industry have experienced severe shortages, and the continuing growth of the world fleet, combined with work pressures on crews, indicate that demand for qualified seafarers will continue to increase over the next decade. This demand will only be met if the increase in levels of recruitment and training is maintained and if wastage rates are reduced".

(BIMCO/ISF,
02 December 2005)



PUBLICATION OF THE ITF 2004 CAMPAIGN RESULTS AGAINST FLAGS OF CONVENIENCE



The ITF Campaign against flags of convenience and substandard shipping, which was formally launched at the World Congress in Oslo, Norway, in 1948, continues to be a valuable instrument in the fight against this phenomenon. It consists of two elements:

- a political campaign aimed at establishing, through international governmental agreement, a real link between the flag a ship waves and the nationality or residence of the owners, the agents and the seafarers, and thus at entirely eliminating the system of flags of convenience;
- an industrial campaign aimed at ensuring that the seafarers working on board these ships, regardless of their nationality, will be protected from exploitation by the ship owners.

The factors at the basis of the development of flags of convenience are: an overly burdensome, or even a non-existent fiscal regime, low registration taxes, and “exemption” from labor and safety laws so as to economize on costs in order to be competitive on the market. For this reason, half of the world tonnage of the merchant fleet is registered outside the country of origin.

There are currently twenty-nine flags of convenience classified by the ITF:

“Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bermuda (UK), Bolivia, Burma/Myanmar, Cambodia, Cayman Islands (UK), Comoros, Cyprus, Equatorial Guinea, German International Ship Register (GIS), Gibraltar (UK), Honduras, Jamaica, Lebanon, Liberia, Malta, Marshall Islands (USA), Mauritius, Mongolia, Netherlands Antilles, Panama, Sao Tomé and Príncipe, Sri Lanka, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Tonga, Vanuatu”.

For the most part, these are developing countries that lack both the means and the will to equip themselves with an effective control system, and all the more so if the resources exploited are not their own.

“We are perfectly aware that not all the ships flying flags of convenience are sub-standard, and that not all the sub-standard ships use flags of convenience. However, we are convinced that this system allows operators to avoid the regulations that could create problems. But for a merchant fleet of quality, flags of quality are needed.

A flag of quality tries to observe international law.

A flag of quality is capable of carrying out effective sanctions against the owner.

A flag of quality has a legislature that works adequately.

A flag of quality has a well qualified maritime administration.

A flag of quality invests in the formation of the seafarers aboard the ships.

A flag of quality operates within a culture of public service.

Lastly, a flag of quality cannot be a *business*” (David Cockroft, Intervention at “Mare Forum 99”).

The ITF campaign has evolved considerably since its beginning, but the ITF’s determination remains constant to act so that seafarers will receive “decent” salaries, enjoy safe working conditions, and have their labor rights recognized.

The “ITF Flag of Convenience (FOC) Campaign Report 2004” can be requested from the ITF Information and Policy Department, Fax: +44 (20) 7357 7871 or by e-mail: orders@itf.org.uk

NEWS IN BRIEF

MADAGASCAR

The World Day of the Sea was officially celebrated in Madagascar. Through the efforts of the ECAR-Apostleship of the Sea of Madagascar over several years, the Malagasy Administration is now aware that it too must get involved in this celebration.

The Malagasy Ministry of Transportation has thus decided to make this Day official which is celebrated in the Port of Toamasina. The AM was present to make sure there was an “exhibition” on the life of the people of the sea.

The Malagasy AM continues its crossing in time against winds and tides. Sister Odile’s death is still an open wound that deeply saddens us. However, things are going forward: the expansion of the Seafarers’ House has made it possible to set up a “restaurant” worthy of the people of the sea; a cyber service is also offered in the adjoining room with a 24-hour Internet connection that makes it a little easier for the seafarers to communicate and for the others to get informed better.

Felix Randrianasoavina

MALAYSIA, Port Klang

Magdalen Cross is a volunteer of the Apostleship of the Sea in Port Klang. She accompanies the chaplain (when possible) when Eucharistic celebration is celebrated on board ships and cruise ships (these days are not frequent since anchor time is very short).

Among the pastoral activities are listed:

- distribution to seafarers on board of the diocese newsletter, Herald, and the Shalom
- as & when there are seamen in port, they bring them to the parish for Eucharistic celebration after which, a fellowship is held at the Stella Maris Centre.
- contact with the other AOS centres in the region (Singapore, Thailand, Philippines, Taiwan, India)
- update the parish on the activities of the AoOS
- visit the seamen's family

FRANCE

On Thursday, December 1st, the Association of the Friends of Seafarers in Port de Bouc celebrated the 20th anniversary of the house and the 200,000th seafarer welcomed there.

We send them our congratulations for the work accomplished and for all these years of service to seafarers

ITALY

On November 26, 2005, in the offices of the Mib School of Management in Trieste, the *International Master in Tourism Leisure Award 2005* was given to Dr. **Pier Luigi Foschi** for his outstanding professional merits.

Our congratulations go to Dr. Foschi, who is the President and Vice-Administrator of Costa Cruises.

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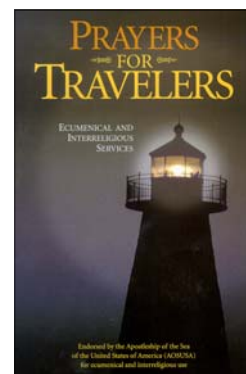
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AM World Directory



PERU

(new port chaplain)

LIMA

Fr. Alcides Salinas Soda, C.S.
migrantes@iglesiaticolica.org.pe

IRELAND

(new National Director)

Fr. Padraig O'Neil, OFM Cap.
3 Beresford Place, **DUBLIN 1**
Tel +353-1-874 9061 Fax +353-1-821 2782



USA

(new address)

PORT CANAVERAL

720 Mullet Road, Suite N
Cape Canaveral, FL 32920

SPAIN

(new address)

SANTA CRUZ DE TENERIFE (Canary Islands)

Puerto Ciudad, Local ID
Cp 38001 smaristenerife@terra.es

PHILIPPINES

(new address)

BATANGAS CITY, Philippines 4200

Basilica Parish Convent
Fr. Joselin C. Gonda
frjcgonda@yahoo.com



SENEGAL

(new chaplain)

DAKAR

Paroisse St. Pierre du Port, B.P. 50733 R.P.
Abbé Edouard SARR

MALAYSIA

(new address)

PORT KLANG

Church of St. Anne, Jalan Tengku Badar, 42000 Port Klang
Selangor Darul Ehsan
Songbird072000@yahoo.com

New addresses

ICMA Secretariat

On November 17th, the ICMA Secretariat in Rotterdam has been closed. The new address is:

Herald House, Lambs Passage/Bunhill Row, London EC1Y 8TQ

(Tel. +44 20 7256 9216)

icma@bt.connect.com

NAMMA Secretariat (as of January 1, 2006)

13-159 Canboro Road, Fonthill, ON L0S 1E5 (Canada)

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Rev. Lloyd Burghart

Interim Executive Secretary



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