



World Maritime Day 2006



“Next Thursday is World Maritime Day and I would like to invite all of you to pray for the men and women involved in seafaring, and for their families.

I thank the Lord for the work of the Apostleship of the Sea, which for many years has offered human and spiritual support to those who live this difficult and challenging way of life.

I welcome particularly the recent initiatives taken by the International Maritime Organization to contribute to the fight against poverty and hunger.

May Our Lady, Star of the Sea, look down in love upon seafarers and their families and upon all those who care for their human and spiritual needs”.

(Castel Gandolfo, *Angelus* 24th September 2006)

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WORLD MARITIME DAY 2006

“Technical Co-operation: IMO’s Response to the 2005 World Summit”

World Maritime Day, sponsored by the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), Agency of the United Nations, falls this year on Thursday 28 September. IMO’s theme for the day is: “Technical Co-operation: IMO’s Response to the 2005 World Summit.”

The Millennium Declaration of 2000 established eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which UN member states committed to realise by 2015. In 2005, there was a follow-up conference (the World Summit) which reaffirmed the MGDs and called for further action to meet them. The MDGs pursue the quest for a peaceful, secure and poverty-free world and emphasize the need to focus sustainable development efforts which can improve the lives of people, especially the poor.

There were no specific goals set for maritime transport, but for the IMO Secretary General, Mr Efthimios Mitropoulos, it is clear that maritime activity makes a vital contribution to meeting at least five of the MDGs – particularly the goal of eradicating poverty and hunger. Developing world Countries have a vital need for maritime transport, and their port facilities are major national resources.

Poverty is often caused by the non-existence or lack of maritime activity and/or resource capacity. By fostering capacity-building in the maritime sector, and providing adequate training, IMO’s technical co-operation activities aid the effectiveness and efficiency of maritime transport and, thereby, the economies of developing world countries.

Every year IMO celebrates World Maritime Day. The exact date is left to individual Governments but is usually celebrated during the last week in September.

The day is used to focus attention on the importance of shipping safety, maritime security and the marine environment and to emphasize a particular aspect of IMO's work.

The IMO released a message from Secretary General Efthimios Mitropoulos discussing the theme of World Maritime Day 2006. As explained in the accompanying Background Paper, the event is intended to lend support to the 2005 World Summit and its eight goals: (1) eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; (2) achieve universal primary education; (3) promote gender equality and empower women; (4) reduce child mortality; (5) improve maternal health; (6) combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases; (7) ensure environmental sustainability; and (8) develop a global partnership for development, with targets for aid, trade and debt relief (8/31/06).

FROM THE MESSAGE OF SECRETARY GENERAL



“Maritime activity has a key role to play in the eradication of **extreme poverty and hunger**. It already provides an important source of income and employment for many developing countries, through such activities as the registration of ships, the supply of sea-going manpower and ship recycling, as well as shipowning and operating, shipbuilding and repair and port services, among others. But, seen in a wider context, shipping has an even more important role to play. Sea transport remains by far the most cost-effective way to move goods and raw materials *en masse* around the world, and the vast majority of global trade is carried in ships”.

AOS EUROPEAN REGIONAL MEETING

(Rocca di Papa, Rome, 17th-21st September 2006)

The President of the Pontifical Council, **Cardinal Renato Raffaele Martino**, opened the European Regional Conference in Rocca di Papa on the theme: *“Solidarity with the people of the sea as witnesses to hope through the proclamation of the Word, the Liturgy and Diaconia”*.

During the work of the Conference, several pastoral themes were dealt with ranging from the families to the fishers and the seafarers on cargo and cruise ships. Each category requires a different pastoral, psychological and human approach. In addition, the approximately eighty participants from all over Europe brought experiences and reflections on the maritime world on the Continent.

It is my great pleasure to welcome you all to Rome, the See of the Pope, Successor of Peter the Fisherman. Since my appointment as President of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral care of Migrants and Itinerant People, it is the first occasion that I have to address an assembly of the AOS and I am glad of the opportunity to do so today.

The sea is no stranger to me, as I told members of the Pontifical Council at our first meeting, I grew up in Salerno, on the Mediterranean Sea, which is the home to a lively and active fishing community. My experience of people of the sea is that they are generous by nature. Their work is really arduous, but this is compensated by a great comradeship, solidarity and generosity.

I congratulate Fr Pracz, the Regional Coordinator and the group of National Directors, who have succeeded in organizing this meeting. I understand that the choice of Rome for the venue, was motivated by your desire to meet our new Pope Benedict XVI and to manifest to him your filial devotion. I hope that the general audience on

Opening address by Cardinal RENATO RAFFAELE MARTINO

Wednesday and the visit to St Peter’s will be for you all a memorable experience that you will bring back with you to your ports and communities. The Holy Father is aware of the situation of the pastoral care for human mobility and he has repeatedly encouraged us to sustain itinerant people in their difficulties. On the 15th May 2006, to the participants in the Plenary Assembly of our Pontifical Council he thanked and encouraged us in these terms: “I willingly welcome this occasion to thank you for what you do in favour of an organic and efficient pastoral service for migrants and itinerant people, putting your time, your competency and your experience at this service. May it escape no one that this is a significant frontier in the new evangelization in the current globalized world. I encourage you to pursue your work with renewed zeal”.

You are here for the AOS Regional Conference for Europe. Regional meetings are an essential part of our organisation, as we want all our chaplains, ship visitors and volunteers to shape together a common vision, respecting the legitimate differences, to learn to cooperate and work together as a team and as a network. Your region is vast, it goes from the Atlantic to the Urals, it comprises the Mediterranean Sea, the Black Sea, the North Sea and the Baltic (to name but a few). Chaplains, pastoral agents, ship visitors and volunteers can be isolated from each other, meetings and conferences provide a unique, and sometimes rare, occasion for them to discuss together their pastoral engagement and concerns. Conse-

quently the regional structure, coordinated by a Regional Coordinator, is of the utmost importance for the development and sustaining of the AOS and deserves all your support. During this meeting, I recommend that you take the time to get to know each other, taking advantage of every opportunity to share, to listen with empathy to each other’s difficulties, experiences and projects. In this era of globalization we cannot work in isolation but we must work as a network, there is no other alternative if we want our ministry and our witnessing to be relevant and effective.

All AOS Regions have many things in common, especially the commitment to serve the People of the Sea; but perhaps those regions where there are a majority of OECD countries, are more privileged from certain points of view. A case in point is, of course, your Region, which includes many of the richest countries with vibrant economies and among the largest ports in the world and a long tradition of service and pastoral care. We remember, as well, that the first branch of the Apostleship of the Sea was launched in Glasgow more than 107 years ago. I am glad to be able to say that Europe has remained faithful to that great tradition and that today the European



Fr. Pracz, Card. Martino, Bishop Burns, Msgr. Harel

coast is dotted with seafarers centres, which are beacons and safe havens to all seafarers who come to your ports, thanks to the commitment of the chaplains, pastoral workers, volunteers and benefactors. Even recently, your region has initiated, with other regions, many worthwhile and important projects as cruise ships ministry, new training courses and reflections on AOS spirituality. In the ecumenical field you have opened new roads and showed the way in many aspects. AOS International is also indebted to you for your support and active presence in an ecumenical dimension at the ILO, IMO and ITF. Worthy of note are also the many overtures that you have had towards the Eastern European countries (namely Russia and the Ukraine) that are slowly emerging and are struggling to catch up with their more favoured neighbours. I know that you are conscious of this and that many of you have been active and have invested much resources and efforts, with the help of our ICMA colleagues, to re-establish the maritime apostolate there.

Privileges mean responsibility and an obligation to contribute to those who are less advantaged. Europe's contribution to the rest of the world is very important and the Europeans have a responsibility towards the rest of humanity. Speaking of Europe in an interview to international media on August 5, Pope Benedict XVI said: All the bishops from different parts of the world say: We still need Europe, even if Europe is only a part of a greater whole... We [Europeans] still carry the responsibility that comes from our experiences, from the science and technology that was developed here, from our liturgical experience, traditions, the ecumenical experiences we have accumulated. All this is very important for the other continents too."

This does not mean that everything is perfect and that you do not have your own difficulties. I am aware that presently one of your

great concerns is the situation of the fishing industry in Europe, as I wrote in the Sea Sunday Message.

Europe, however, is not the only region facing problems. There are also other regions, confronted with great difficulties with catastrophes (tsunami), wars, violence, epidemics, scarcity of material means, lack of communication and infrastructure. There have been many calls for solidarity and for the need to intensify our efforts in favour of these poorer or more remote areas, where there is no or little pastoral care. This year for example a delegation of Bishops from the Democratic Republic of the Congo visited our Pontifical Council and among other things, they expressed their helplessness and distress regarding the lack of any pastoral planning for the thousands of people and com-



munities living and working and sometimes dying on the rivers and lakes in their country. In the past you have always responded generously to appeals for help; in 2005, thanks to your generous contributions, which have gone directly to the victims, AOS Chaplains and pastoral workers have been able to contribute significantly to the relief of the tsunami victims and some of the work there is still on going.

Your apostolate is neither a simple nor an easy one; maritime ministry is realised in chaplaincies in the work place, and you are faced daily with situations and issues that demand a firm commitment also to the principles of justice and fair play. Responding to these situations or helping people or communities in need, certainly does not mean establishing relations of dependence or a culture of receiving,

but, on the contrary, building bridges of solidarity and compassion, never forgetting that the very heart of the Church's social doctrine and of every social action is constituted by the following principles: the dignity of the human person, the common good, subsidiarity and solidarity, which are fundamental guidelines to us (Cf. Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, p. 91).

The constant challenge, however, of providing to the many and varied practical needs of seafarers may sometimes appear to be monopolising all your time and activities. The Holy Father's Encyclical letter "Deus Caritas Est" (DCE), reminds us how important it is for the Church's charitable activity to maintain its specificity and not to become just another form of social assistance among many others.

We acknowledge the need and primary importance of professional competence and good organisation, but it is not of itself sufficient. In our apostolate, we are dealing with human beings, and human beings always need something more than technically proper care. They need humanity and heart-

felt concern. The Pope goes on to say that all those who are engaged in charitable activities and services must be distinguished by the fact that they do not merely meet the needs of the moment but they dedicate themselves to others with heartfelt concern, enabling them to experience the richness of their humanity ... "Consequently, in addition to their necessary professional training, charity workers need a 'formation of the heart': they need to be led to that encounter with God in Christ which awakens their love and opens their spirits to others" (Cf. DCE, 31).

Last month the Holy Father has again insisted on this idea, and quoting St Bernard of Clairvaux, he emphasized that we have to guard ourselves against the dangers of excessive activity, because too many concerns can often lead to hardness of

heart and suffering of the spirit. He added that people should put time aside for prayer and contemplation.

That brings us to our World Congress and the need to do our utmost so that it will be a time of reflection, prayer and sharing that will lift our spirits and renew our apostolic zeal. The aim of this Regional meeting this week, is also to prepare AOS Europe's participation to our Congress in 2007. This one will be pastoral; of course pastoral care is holistic, it ranges from material help and advocacy to more spiritual or religious aspects such as sacramental ministry and Christian formation and counseling. It will be a collective and community exercise, which—it is hoped—will give AOS the occasion to better understand its vocation and the necessary means to exercise the proper pastoral care to the people it serves. In these times of difficulties, crises and sometimes of doubts, it will also

be a time to revive the hope, which is ours, as followers of Christ and witnesses of His Good News and Grace. We shall do so by interrogating ourselves on our ongoing commitment to the threefold responsibilities which constitutes the essence of all our pastoral work:

- The place of the proclamation of the Word of God in AOS;
- The celebration of the sacraments as the source and “raison d'être” of our pastoral care;
- The service, “diakonia”, to all but especially to the poorest.

All this, I have noted, is reflected in the program of these next three days, which is rich and varied. It should enable you to have a good conference and to plan your contribution that will help make our next World Congress a resounding success, which will carry our organization over the next five years.

To conclude I would like to invoke our Patron, Mary the “Stella Maris”, quoting from these beautiful lines of the Holy Fathers' address to the pilgrims at *Angelus* at Castel

Gandolfo on the 20th August. It seems as if these words, borrowed from maritime terminology, had been written especially for the AOS: “In one of his famous discourses, St Bernard compares Mary to the Star that navigators seek so as not to lose their course: ‘Whoever you are who perceive yourself during this mortal existence to be drifting in treacherous waters at the mercy of the winds and the waves rather than walking on firm ground, turn your eyes not away from the splendour of this guiding star, unless you wish to be submerged by the storm!... Look at the star, call upon Mary.... With her for a guide, you will never go astray; ...under her protection, you have nothing to fear; if she walks before you, you will not grow weary; if she shows you favour you will reach the goal’ “.

I wish you all a fruitful meeting, to “reach the goal”, and a pleasant stay in the eternal City, as I now declare open this conference.

REPORT OF THE MEETING

1. There were more than 67 participants and the Countries represented were: Poland, Italy, Great Britain, Ireland, France, Spain, Belgium, The Netherlands, Croatia, Malta, The Ukraine and Germany. The Greek delegate at the last minute was prevented from coming. The Portuguese sent their apologies.

There were two Bishop Promoters present during the whole conference, Their Excellencies Archbishop Tadeusz Gocłowski of Poland and Bishop Tom Burns of Great-Britain. HE Bishop Lino Belotti, Bishop Promoter for Italy, paid a visit and addressed the conference on Tuesday afternoon.

2. The Conference was declared open by H.E. Cardinal Renato Raffaele Martino, President of the PCPCMIP, who in his speech underlined the importance of solidarity, the Social Doctrine of the Church and the formation of the heart.

In addition, he recommended that each AOS Chaplaincy be acquainted with the “Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church”, to respond the many challenges facing us in the maritime world today. Confronted with tragedies and exploitation, AOS must build bridges. We respect people because they are children of God. Jesus came to save and redeem humanity, the social Doctrine of the Church is a practical approach to share that salvation with others.

3. On Monday the theological background of the meeting was developed by Fr Christophe Roucou, of the “Mission de France”: Christians are witnesses of hope sometimes “against all hope” (Rom 4.18). They are as pilgrims on the road to Emmaus, sharing with others



The Stella Maris” icon blessed by Pope Benedictus XVI

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the difficulties and concerns for the future. To hope is “an act of faith in the future” it is not optimism as opposed to pessimism. Christian hope is rooted in Christ (1Tim 1: 1), who has risen from the dead. Although Hope has an eschatological dimension, it is also a virtue for today. We witness hope not only with words but also in “act”, let us not forget that God has committed Himself not only in Words but also by sending us Jesus, His Son.

4. Some highlights of the country Reports.:

► AOS-Malta: There is no centre and the apostolate there revolves mainly around ship visiting and eucharistic celebrations on board. The Chaplain is fully engaged (more on page 13).

► AOS-Ukraine: The Apostolate there faces great financial difficulties, the chaplain has no means of transport, no centre and relies heavily on the cooperation with Missions to Seafarers (Anglican) to carry out his ministry. They also have a link with Rev. Olexander Kenez, of the Ukrainian Seafarers mission of Melbourne, Australia. They have a website.

► AOS-Germany: Although there is no “National AOS” at the moment, the work of “Stella Maris Germany “ is still going on in Bremen, Brake and Hamburg. After a difficult time, things are settling down and it is hoped that for the World Congress, but certainly in two years time, the situation will go back to normal.

► AOS-Great Britain: With the recruitment of three Chaplains/ship visitors in Scotland, AOS has taken a new departure there.

► AOS-Croatia: There are no centres but there are 8 chaplains active in the ports and with fishers. There have not been many contacts with the AOS International, they should be encouraged to participate to the World Congress next year.

► AOS-Netherlands: The new Seafarers Centre in Rotterdam is a great success in spite of the many obstacles that they have encountered so far.

► AOS-Italy: Their efforts to start Port Welfare Committees in the Italian ports have been very successful. The Admiral-in-Charge of Italian coastguards, who was invited to address the assembly, announced that a general pass to allow AOS-Italy to access the port facilities in Italy has been approved.

► “Mission de la Mer”-France, AOS-Spain and AOS-Portugal: There had been a fruitful collaboration between France, Spain and Portugal on Fishing issues. The Spanish AOS National Director has agreed to improve contacts with other countries and AOS-International.

► AOS-Belgium: Is composed of a majority of lay people, hence “their daily pastoral practice consists more of diaconal work than specifically sacramental ministry.”

5. New ILO Convention 2006, by Com. York: The new maritime convention is a sign of hope. It is the 4th pillar of quality shipping together with Solas, STCW and Marpol, which are all mandatory instruments. This new convention is dedicated entirely to seafarers' welfare. This convention will have enormous repercussions for the ports and governments, since when it will be ratified by at least 30 countries representing 33% of world tonnage, it will become an international law. Even countries which have not ratified will be bound by it and there will be no more hiding places for bad shipping.

6 Onboard Christian communities by Fr. Luca Centurioni: As the onboard community is not a stable one, it has constantly to be convoked. This is done by the chaplain, but if there is none onboard then a leader must be found. The community then is both the object and subject of the 3 functions of: sanctifying, teaching and leading (priestly, prophetic and kingly functions).

7. The AOS International website was presented to the conference. They all expressed their satisfaction and hopes for the future. Mgr J. Harel, on behalf of Archbishop Marchetto, had a meeting with AOS-Great Britain to clarify some matters concerning the website.

8. Workshops

- AOS has a good public image and is trusted by seafarers;
- Every single member of the port chaplaincy is important, they are all irreplaceable and bear witness in their own way;
- Sharing is important. So is a clear identity and visibility;
- Finding onboard leaders is a priority;
- Training and support are essential to build a strong and motivated AOS;
- Ecumenism is a corner stone of our Organization.

9. Conclusions:

- The theme has allowed good discussions and sharing, we must learn from this experience in view of the World Congress. The delegates were of opinion that the Congress speakers should address concretely the pastoral problems and must already have some link with the maritime apostolate.
- Many have confided their anxiety that the personnel and volunteers of AOS are getting old and replacement poses a problem.
- There are many lay people in AOS, they must be properly recognised and supported.
- The papal audience has done a lot to comfort and encourage AOS-Europe.

AOS LATIN-AMERICAN REGIONAL MEETING

Bogotá, 18-22 October, 2006

Address by Archbishop AGOSTINO MARCHETTO

From the 18th to the 21st October 2006, the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People organised, in collaboration with CELAM, the II Regional Meeting of the Apostleship of the Sea in Latin America.

Participants from 14 countries analysed the pastoral situation of seafarers and fishers. They also discussed the consolidation of the AOS regional network and their participation in the next World Congress in Poland in 2007.

H.E. Archbishop Agostino Marchetto had planned initially to participate in the meeting. Subsequently this having not been possible, his address was read at the opening session by Msgr. Jacques Harel.

Your Excellencies,
Reverend Fathers and Sisters,
Dear Chaplains and Ship Visitors,
Dear Participants,

I am very happy that Msgr. Jacques Harel is with you for this Second Regional Meeting of Bishop Promoters, National Directors and Chaplains, which is being held under the auspices of our Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People and CELAM. I intended myself to be present but it was not possible, therefore I send you my cordial greetings and those of our President, Cardinal Renato Raffaele Martino

I congratulate Fr. Samuel Fonseca, the Regional Coordinator, Sr. Isabel Arantes of CELAM

and the group of National Directors, who have succeeded in organizing this meeting. This is a great and important time since Regional gatherings are an essential part of our organisation. It is an occasion for all chaplains, ship visitors and volunteers to shape together a common vision, respecting the legitimate differences, and to learn to work together, to depend on each other as a team and as a network.

Chaplains, pastoral agents, ship visitors and volunteers can be geographically isolated from each other, thus meetings and conferences provide a unique, and sometimes rare, occasion for them to discuss together their pastoral engagement and concerns. Consequently the regional structure, animated by a Regional Coordinator, appointed by the Pontifical Council and in communion with AOS International, is of the utmost importance for the development and sustaining of the AOS and deserves all your support.

Your mission field is vast, it goes from the Antarctica to Central America, and stretches from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific. Many of your Nations have a great maritime tradition and rely on the sea for their development and to obtain all what is needed for the daily needs of their population. You have also some of the biggest fishing fleets in the world and countless artisanal and small-scale fishermen.

Since the World Congress in Rio, your AOS Region has made important steps ahead. At that time AOS was dormant or inexistent in many parts of Latin America, but today it is a vibrant

and dynamic Organisation. The AOS network has been greatly expanded, and there are now Centres and Chaplains in 11 countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Peru, Ecuador, Uruguay, Venezuela, Honduras and Panama), and many others are in preparation. This has been made possible because each one of you has worked very hard and is strongly motivated.

It would be fitting however to say a special word of thanks to the Regional Coordinator, Fr. Fonseca, to the Bishop promoters and to CELAM for their work support and encouragements. I have been told that all this has been made possible thanks to the excellent relations that you enjoy with the ITF and especially with Captain Antonio Fritz and his devoted team of collaborators. The four-year ICSW Regional Development Programme, headed by Captain Ysmael Garcia, is a source of great hope for you.

One of the aims of your conference is to open the way to our XXII World Congress which will be held next year in Gdynia, Poland. You are here therefore also to prepare your contribution to



the World Congress in 2007, which will have to respond to this question: How we can be witnesses of hope to seafarers and to the other categories of people object-subject of our pastoral care? And how we can enable them, on their part, to be witnesses of hope?

I think you shall do so by reflecting and sharing on the three-fold responsibilities which constitutes the essence of all our pastoral work, that is:

- The proclamation of the Word of God in AOS;
- The celebration of the sacred mysteries, of the sacraments as the source and “raison d’être” of our pastoral care;
- The “diakonia”, service, to all but especially to the poorest.

Our effort is that each Latin-

American Country where AOS is active be represented in Poland, so that your voice and concerns may be heard and you may contribute in shaping up AOS world’s vision and outreach for the coming years.

I would like to conclude by quoting an extract from Cardinal Martino’s speech to the AOS European Conference which was held, near Rome, on September last:

“The constant challenge, however, of providing to the many and varied practical needs of seafarers may sometimes appear to be monopolising all your time and activities. The Holy Father’s Encyclical letter “Deus Caritas Est” (DCE), reminds us how important it is for the Church's charitable activity to maintain its specificity and not to become just another form of so-

cial assistance among many others. We acknowledge the need and primary importance of professional competence and good organisation, but it is not of itself sufficient. In our apostolate, we are dealing with human beings, and human beings always need something more than technically proper care. They need humanity and heartfelt concern... The Pope goes on to say that ‘*Consequently, in addition to their necessary professional training, charity workers need a ‘formation of the heart’: they need to be led to that encounter with God in Christ which awakens their love and opens their spirits to others*’ (DCE, 31)”.

I wish you all a good meeting, invoking the blessings of Our Lord Jesus Christ through the intercession of his Blessed Mother, the “Stella Maris”, on your work and deliberations.

FINAL DOCUMENT

“DUC IN ALTUM”
Lc. 5,4

Convened by the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People and by the Human Mobility Section of CELAM, we, the representatives of the Apostleship of the Sea from 14 countries and Bishops’ Conferences of Latin America and the Caribbean, have met with the objective to “bring together the Workers in the Pastoral Care of the Sea of Latin America and the Caribbean in order to offer elements that will contribute to the Fifth General Conference of the Episcopate, and the XXII World Congress of the Apostleship of the Sea, which will take place in Gdynia, Poland” next year (from June 24-29, 2007).



The Pastoral Care of the Sea has its origin in a very concrete place and time: on the bank of Lake Gennesaret at the very beginning of Our Lord Jesus Christ’s ministry, with a group of fishers: a boat and some nets (Mt 18:22), a call, a response, a mission, some receivers, a very concrete reality, a culture that was taken on and redeemed. Our Lord Jesus Christ accompanied his disciples in their boats and calmed the storm (Mt 8:23), walked on the sea (Mt 14:25), preached about a boat of fishers (Lk 5:3), then he said to the fishers: “Put out into deep water” (Lk 5:4) and helped them to fish (Lk 5:6). The Church, faithful to the one who sends her and to those to whom

she is sent, by imitating the example of Jesus of Nazareth, promotes in the seven seas that all seafarers and fishers “may have life and have it to the full” (Jn 10:10).

The message of His Excellency Archbishop Agostino Marchetto, the Secretary of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, was particularly appropriate and enlightening for this meeting: “...the regional meetings constitute an essential part of our Organization. This is an opportunity for all the chaplains, visitors on boats and volunteers to draw up a common program together, in respect for the legitimate differences, and to learn to work together, to ‘learn’ from one another like a team and a network”.

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In the presentation of the different realities of our traditional and industrial fishers and merchant seafarers we observe:

- A complex human and pastoral reality;
- The men and women fishers of rivers, lakes and inland waters are not included in the work of the pastoral care of the peoples of the sea;
- The need for a kind of team work that will involve: governmental institutions, Churches, NGOs and all those who promote the welfare of the people of the sea;
- Little knowledge about the Apostleship of the Sea within the ecclesial structures;
- Volunteering is only at the beginning stage;
- Lack of knowledge and insufficient legislation for the defense of the rights of the people of the sea and a lack of promotion of social security;
- Use of fishers for drug traffic and the trafficking and trade of people;
- Imposition of environmentalist policies that threaten the rights of seniority and the vital needs mainly of traditional fishers;
- Reconversion of fishing and displacement of the communities because of tourist mega-projects;
- Non-recognition of the culture of men and women fishers;
- The danger of ships with flags and ports of convenience that pave the way for the violation of the human and labor rights of the seafarers; -Weakening of the psychic system of marine workers exposed to structural, systematic and symbolic violence.

The Church, which also describes herself as a pilgrim, sees herself reflected in the peoples of the sea. For this reason she must dedicate special pastoral attention to those who have chosen human mobility as a lifestyle.

To this idea of a Church heading towards the house of the Father should be joined the dimension of hope that must illuminate all our action as the People of God in pastoral service.

In recalling with gratitude and joy Pope John Paul II's Apostolic Letter "Stella Maris" (Star of the Sea) of January 31, 1997, which points out the importance and urgent need for attention to fishers, seafarers and their families so that they will "have life and have it to the full" (Jn 10:10), we propose:

- To promote and strengthen the work of the Apostleship of the Sea in Latin America and the Caribbean in the context of the Fifth Conference;
- To set up in each country a national structure of the Apostleship of the Sea composed of a Bishop Promoter, a National Director and Chaplains;
- To guarantee the continuity of the ministry in favor of the People of the Sea by appointing persons in charge on all levels;
- To stress the role of the laity as co-responsible for the pastoral care of the sea;
- To promote the celebration of the "Sunday of the Sea" and annual meetings on the national level;
- To favor the training of workers in the pastoral care of the sea;
- To promote the welfare and respect for the dignity of fishers and their families through the bodies of the Holy See and CELAM, in collaboration with the Organizations of the United Nations, FAO, ILO, ITF, ICSW, with ICMA and other international bodies connected with the welfare of the people of the sea;
- To have solidarity with the fishers' organizations and set up local, regional and national committees for fishing;
- To recognize, define, make known and defend the rights of fishers, as well as access to resources;
- Active participation by the Apostleship of the Sea of Latin America in the XXII World Congress in Poland next year.

In concluding this meeting, we invoke the protection of the Virgin Mary, "Stella Maris", and we reaffirm our commitment as "*Disciples and Missionaries of Jesus Christ so that our seafarers and fishers with their families will have life in Him*".

Good wind and good sea!

BLESSING OF THE “STELLA MARIS” DORMITORY IN MANILA

On Sunday, 30 July 2006, the *Stella Maris*’ Dormitory for Seafarers has been solemnly blessed by the Cardinal of Manila, His Eminence Gaudencio Rosales. About 150 people attended the blessing, including the resident seafarers who offered their labor of love in the previous days to have the place well prepared for the event.

Among the guests, were representatives from Government and maritime organizations, members of various NGOs, friends of the Apostleship of the Sea and the priests of Nuestra Señora de Guía Parish, Ermita, with the President of the Parish Council together with several of its members.

Their participation was significant because the *Stella Maris* Dormitory occupies the entire 4th floor (400 square meters) of a Parish building. The space was granted to the ministry of the Apostleship of the Sea, realizing the presence of several thousands of seafarers every day milling around the area of Ermita. The Apostleship of the Sea was blessed by this generous offer of the Parish and of the Archdiocese because the place is located very close to the main Port of Manila, at the very center of the City and closed to many Manning Agencies deploying thousands of seafarers every year: “They are all around us”, said Fr. Savino Bernardi, CS., Director of the ministry to seafarers.

The seafarers who now reside at the dormitory expressed their praise and happiness because they found the dormitory very convenient, comfortable and affordable. The facilities of the new dormitory were opened in early June

and very soon it reached its full capacity of 90 bed-spaces and two rooms for couples. The fact that the dormitory is on the 4th floor of the building is no deterrent to seafarers seeking accommodation there. “It is like on a ship”, they



Card. Rosales and Fr. Bernardi

say, “where we have to climb up and down the stairs many times a day and it keeps us fit”. After climbing the stairs, a large Icon of Our Lady Star of the Sea, donated by the Apostleship of the Sea in UK, welcomes them to the dormitory. On the roof-top, the garden terrace with ample covered area offers them clean air and a relaxing place away from the noise and the hustle and bustle of the street.

Fr. Savino is happy to see the realization and blessing of the dormitory as the first stage of a Center for Seafarers in Manila which is long overdue. Once the full project of the Center will be completed, the Apostleship of the Sea will be able to operate from one building and offer its many services to the seafaring community for their spiritual, social and personal needs, including recrea-

tion and rest.

To have a Center for Seafarers in Manila, as there are more than 300 of them in the major ports throughout the world, has been the dream of Fr. Savino ever since he began his ministry for the seafarers in Manila, ten years ago, but costs and a suitable place have been the major obstacles.

The offer of the Archdiocese of Manila has provided the providential answer. It is ironic, in fact, that 250,000 Filipino seafarers working on board in the international shipping could benefit of so many Centers throughout the world, while here in Manila they have nowhere to go. The 1st stage of the dormitory for seafarers has been accomplished mostly through alternative resources from abroad, but not yet through the assistance of the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF), based in UK, which usually provides a substantial amount for this purpose. Fr. Savino still hopes to receive assistance from ITF for the realization of the 2nd stage of the project: a well furnished and welcoming Center for Seafarers here in Manila.

At the blessing of the dormitory, His Eminence Cardinal G. Rosales expressed his appreciation for this 1st stage realization as he saw how the space the Archdiocese offered was so efficiently renovated to accommodate many of the provincial seafarers who undoubtedly have a hard time during their prolonged staying in Manila. Already more than 300 have found a welcoming home here at the *Stella Maris* Center.

THE USCCB COMMITTEE ON MIGRATION WRITES TO US CONGRESS

Dear Chairman Young:

While we do not have a position on the bill as a whole, I write on behalf of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) in support of Section 307 of H.R. 5681, the Coast Guard Reauthorization Act of 2006.

One of the ministries performed by the Catholic Church is pastoral outreach to seafarers who may not have access to pastoral services aboard vessels. These men and women live at sea for long periods of time, away from family, friends, and their communities and are in need of pastoral and spiritual support.

Since September 11, 2001, U.S. and foreign seafarers have been denied shore leave in U.S. ports and facilities. In addition, maritime ministers and maritime labor officials and seafarer welfare agents have been denied access into facilities and onto vessels. This situation has occurred despite the institution of security procedures to ensure they have appropriate documentation and are not a security threat to the United States. In fact, many seafarers who desire shore leave have been forced to use expensive jitney services, costing

Bishop Gerald Barnes, Chairman of the USCCB Committee on Migration, wrote to Chairman of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure in support of the Section 307 of H.R. 5681, the Coast Guard Reauthorization Act of 2006.

In his letter, Bishop Barnes also expresses the committee's concern over the cruise line industry's initiative to remove the seafarer penalty wage. AOS International is very appreciative of this effort by Bishop Barnes and MRS.

them significant fees.

Section 307 of H.R. 5681 would require that each facility security plan governing U.S. ports and facilities implement a system for permitting seaman assigned to a vessel at that facility "to depart the vessel through the facility in a timely manner at no cost to the individual."

We believe Section 307 is needed to ensure that the rights of seafarers, who perform important tasks for our nation and economy, are given access to shore leave, which they need in order to reconnect with family, friends, and their community. To continue to deny them this access undercuts their human dignity.

I ask that you support this section of H.R. 5681 and include it in any final bill enacted by Congress.

We also take note of efforts by

some in the cruise line industry to remove protections offered to U.S. and foreign seafarers through the seafarer penalty wage. We are very concerned with anything that weakens the protections that seafarers have in receiving their wages. We believe that a weakened seafarer wage scheme will make it possible for more unscrupulous operators to avoid their obligations, and exploit mariners from developing countries. We ask that you oppose any amendments which would attempt to weaken these important protections.

Thank you for your consideration of our views. Sincerely,

Most Reverend Gerald R. Barnes
Bishop of San Bernardino
Chairman, USCCB

NO TIME TO GO ASHORE

As a seafarer, going ashore is not only a right, but a necessity. In fact, it is more and more difficult, even not possible. There are many and various reasons. When a ship calls at a port, and if it is for a short time, everybody is very busy, from the captain to the ordinary seafarer, by his duty: loading/unloading operations, watch keeping, engine works, various controls and visits, stores, and so on. No time to go ashore: first of all, duty. **Going ashore is getting more and more complicated.** In USA for example, if you don't have a special visa, you are neither authorized to go ashore, nor to go down the gangway for a little walk. You could be a dangerous terrorist. What about you, if you are injured, or sick? It is excessive and abnormal. Not possible to go ashore: first of all, security.

ISPS regulations are strict. It leads to many limitations on board. For the ship visitors, it is very complicated to go on board ship (you have to go through many gates, you need badges to get to the terminals) and meet the seafarers: they are working, or resting. Not possible to go ashore: too much complicated.

The consequences are serious. We are more and more told by the seafarers that their ship is like a jail, during the four, six months or more of their contracts. You need time for relaxation or an open discussion and meeting with anybody of your choice, to eliminate the pressure, to contact your families, to feel free and a normal human being, not a zombie!

I am a priest and also a seafarer. I speak from my own experience, and this is my opinion. **The new terminals are like fortresses, inhuman, without any facilities for the seafarers:** not even a free phone box. It is the responsibility of the port authorities to provide the best conditions of welcome of the seafarers. Priority, it is normal, is given to the ships and their shipment. But a ship is nothing without his crew and his dedication to the good running and working of the whole.

Please, take the seafarers into consideration as much as goods at least.

Fr. Guy Pasquier, seafarer priest, 19th August 2006

CONSTRUCTION FINALLY BEGINS FOR SEAFARERS' CENTER IN PORT ARTHUR

The sound of construction crews hammering is a delight to many ears in Port Arthur. After groundbreaking in 2005 and unforeseeable delays, including Hurricane Rita, the first phase of construction for the Port Arthur International Seafarers' Center is nearing completion.

The outer shell for the new center, located at the intersection of Procter Street and Houston Avenue in downtown Port Arthur, should be finished within two-and-a-half months, according to the contractor G & G Enterprises.

The construction site is that of the Kansas City Southern Train Depot, which was demolished more than 30 years ago. The center will incorporate the former depot in its design and structure, made possible through Bert Lamson Designs, and the location has brought joy to native Port Arthurans.

"It's neat. I was born and raised in Port Arthur. It's seeing history. I researched and took a look at history and realized, 'oh, yeah. That's the train I rode to Beaumont!' " said engineer Bert Lamson. "This is the first time to have our own facility, and at the same time, it will re-establish the cornerstone of how Port Arthur was built," said Father Sinclair Oubre, Diocesan Director of Apostleship of the Sea.

Colin Garrett, of G & G Enterprises, said his company usually builds large shopping centers but is excited about this project. "It's a nice departure to be on a project with historical value."

Father Oubre said the new center will be a safe and hospitable place for the more than 23,000 seafarers who come to Southeast Texas.

Seafarers and the community will be able to enjoy many modern features. "There will be bunk beds for overnight guests, a game room with pool tables, a TV, and a dry

goods store, offices, a kitchen, and a chapel. Also there will be a banquet room for 200 people that can be leased out to the public for company meetings," Lamson said.

"We know Port Arthur has a love for the old depot. It's a unique way to grab the attention and get the focus of seafarers. It's a win-win for us," said Doreen Badeaux, president of the PAISC Board of Directors.

Phase Two will begin the construction of the interior of the center, but will require the community's support to complete. About \$60,000 would be needed in order to start the process, and a total of \$250,000 would be needed to complete the center.

"This is the kick-start of fundraising for the second phase of the project," Badeaux said. "If we're able to raise the rest of the funding for Phase II before Phase I finishes, construction will continue straight through to completion and we can begin using the facility. Otherwise, we'll have to stop construction after the shell is complete, and wait to finish the inside when the funding comes in."

Learn more about the Port Arthur International Seafarers' Center at <http://paisc.blogspot.com/>.

By Jennifer Steen, August 25, 2006
issue of "East Texas Catholic"



AN OCEAN OF PRAYER

To pray to the rhythm of navigation and life on a sailboat: this is the proposal of the "Réseau Jeunesse Ignatien" (RJI, a network of young people inspired by Saint Ignatius of Loyola) in collaboration with the French pastoral care of youth.

The RJI promotes different initiatives to help youth "discover" Jesus. The objective of the experience on a sailboat is not to discover the marine environment but rather, in the solitude of the sea, far from frenetic life, to invite young people to come closer to Christ's message. Day after day, they learn to share a limited space with eight people, to divide up the chores equally, and to support one another in an atmosphere of friendship and serenity among the whole crew.

Particular expertise is not necessary to sail, but the skills of everyone in the group will be used. In any event, the participants are members of the crew who have boarded as seafarers, and so everyone performs the maneuvers and services on board. Everyone is aware of the difficulties of life on a boat: that is, not only the limited space, but also the rapid changes in the atmospheric conditions, the effects of the winds and the tides.

To find out more, consult the Internet site

www.vicenmer.org.

From "Avvenire",
August 24, 2006

THE APOSTLESHIP OF THE SEA IN MALTA

The AOS in Malta was founded by Fr. Joseph Scalpello, OFM, in 1961 and since then it is run by the Franciscans together with a substantial help from other religious orders, especially the Jesuits who have been helping in this field for the last 14 years.

The main activity is the ship-visiting twice a week by 9 lay volunteers every Saturday and Sunday and on the eve of feasts of obligation. Several ships come to the Malta Dry Docks for repairs, others load and discharge cargo in the Freeport and in several other locations. AOS members go on board ships and meet with seafarers of different nationalities and different religious beliefs. They evangelize and distribute good literature like bibles in a variety of languages. CDs and Cassettes are also distributed to Catholics and non-Catholics alike. For the most part this is made possible thanks to Mgr. Philip Calleja, the delegate of the Archbishop and Fr. Alfred Vella, the National Director of the Emigrants Commission whose financial support enables us to cover the expenses incurred.

In Malta we do not have a seafarers' centre, but still we do our utmost through personal contact to furnish help to seafarers. Nowadays seafarers' life has become very fast especially for those serving on container-ships where the turnover between discharging and loading-is very short. One practical thing we do is, when asked, to provide international phone-cards to the crew. This service is very much in demand and highly appreciated .

Our primary aim however is to provide spiritual welfare to Catholic seafarers. We often organise Holy Mass on board ships and by God's grace the attendance is very numerous. On several occasions we are told by the seafarers that it was the first time that they had the Eucharist celebrated on board or that they had been without Mass for several months. Since a year ago we have arranged for Eucharist to be provided also on Saturday evening and the difference this has made can be seen in comparing the number of Masses celebrated in 2004 and those in 2005. The volunteers also visit seafarers in hospital.

The Port Chaplain and Assistant Port Chaplain meet together with the members every two months for the formation and instruction of the members and once a year, on the feast of our Lady of Joy at ta' Liesse church, all members renew their commitment in this apostolate. In December 2004 all members and the Port-Chaplains had the unique opportunity to meet Archbishop Agostino Marchetto, Secretary of the Pontifical Council who came to Malta to present the document "*Erga migrantes caritas Christi*". He insisted on what the late Pope John Paul II often used to insist on, the social, human and religious problems of itinerants and the defence of their human rights.

In Malta, every 15th of August, we celebrate the Commemoration of the Santa Maria Convoy (Operation Pedestal[1942]) This is an ecumenical service where the seafarers who lost their lives in this convoy are remembered. Prayers are said by the port Chaplain and representatives of the Anglican and Scottish Church. For the occasion many VIP and ex-servicemen are invited. This year at the suggestion of Mr. Simon Cusens, and with the help of Mgr. Philip Calleja, AOS invited Mr. Allan Shaw, one of the only two living survivors of the M.V. Ohio which entered in Grand Harbour in August 1942 and marked the turning point of the blockade of Malta. Besides having Liesse Church as Headquarters, this year, on the 28 of July an old and historic chapel which forms part of the complex of Pinto wharf, now reconstituted as The Valletta Waterfront [VISET], was inaugurated and for this occasion the Prime Minister and other high officials were invited . The chapel is situated very close to where Cruse liners berth. It is our intention to celebrate holy Mass in this place when liners are in port.

While we are gathered here for this occasion I feel it is quite appropriate, in conclusion, to finish by a prayer to the Blessed Virgin Mary, Star of the Sea. Star of the Sea, mother of the Holy Church, enlighten and strengthen all priests and laymen who propagate among seafarers the love of your divine Son by filling their hearts with a dedicated and lively devotion to their apostolate.

O Mary, Star of the Sea keep all Seafarers under your care. O Maria Kewba tal-Bahar Hares i1-Babbara.

Fr. Paul Attard, O.F.M.
Port Chaplain

Fr. Steno De Raffaele, S.J.
Assistant Port Chaplain

Mr Louis Cassar
Chairperson



“APROAR”

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF FAMILIES OF THE SEA OF SPAIN

(The Federation includes three associations:

“As de Guía” of Malaga, “El Ancla” of Almería, and “Rosa dos Ventos” of Galicia)

The **principal purpose** of the “APROAR” Federation is to defend the families of the sea. Its main services are:

- ▶ Raising society’s awareness about the need to consider the situations derived from the long days at sea of the professionals in this sector.
- ▶ Legal defense of the seafarers affected by some kind of problem: working conditions, occupational health, legal security, abandonment, failure to pay salaries and other problems of life on board.
- ▶ Fostering the professional formation of professionals of the sea, their families and associates in the entire Spanish state.
- ▶ Increasing the possibility of carrying out studies and social inquiries regarding the family situation of professionals of the sea, collaborating with the Spanish and/or European public administrations in compiling data that may be of interest for them and for the defense of the families of the sea.
- ▶ To help, guide and promote the members of families who due to their special circumstances (retirement, handicap, accidents or other circumstances related to the profession and not), require the social and/or legal services of the Federation.
- ▶ To help the women from the sector of the sea with their specific problems, promoting meetings between bodies of the same kind from the whole of Europe and the rest of the world.

“A workshop on the Fishing Industry”

During the European Regional Conference of Rocca di Papa, a special workshop was held to discuss fishing topics, the discussions centred on the European norms concerning all fishing fleets in our countries. Delegates from France and Spain were in agreement that all fishers had in common the following apprehensions in relation to: fishing quotas, catch control, the price of fuel and the general feeling of frustration of crews who feel that politicians are not looking after their interests. Industrial fishing is being abandoned in favour of coastal and artisanal fishing. More and more foreign workers are being recruited to work in France and Spain.

In this difficult ambience, we can highlight, however, some positive points, common to all our countries that might indicate some hope for the future.

There is a new mentality regarding unregulated fishing, new bio-fuels are being researched, in Spain psychological aid and counselling are being increasingly offered to the wives and family of fishers.

- ▶ To help elderly people from the sector of the sea because of the special circumstances they face when they return to regular life on land.

Relations with the public administrations:

- ▶ To be a valid interlocutor before the Spanish, European and international public administrations in order to make the value of the family in the fishing sector respected.
- ▶ To be the voice of families before any public and/or private body that requests its participation.
- ▶ To take part in Spanish, European and international platforms in which aspects related to fish and merchant legislation are discussed.
- ▶ To urge the public administration to address the need for specialized attention to this group.

“APROAR” begins this action with the hope of achieving the respect that is due to the peoples of the sea.

Cristina de Castro Garcia, Coordinator of “Rosa dos Ventos”



Brussels makes new proposals to eliminate overfishing

The Commission of the European Union has made a proposal to the State Members called “application of the sustainability of fishing in the EU through the maximum sustainable yield” through which it intends to respond to the problems of overfishing that currently affect a good part of the community fishing grounds as well as the rest of the world. This proposal presented before the summer of 2006 should be discussed in the coming months with the Member States as a whole, as well as with the Regional Advisory Councils on fishing, some of which have already begun to work.

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PAKISTAN



H.E. Msgr. Simeon A Pereira, Archbishop Emeritus of Karachi and former Bishop Promoter of the AOS, died in Karachi on August 22, 2006, at the age of 78.

The PCPCMIP joins the AOS South Asia Region in paying tribute to a great Bishop Promoter (from 1994 till his retirement in 2002) who never left a stone unturned to keep the AOS going in Pakistan. Hurdles were many in a major Islamic state. He was convinced and encouraged his chaplains to have a pastoral heart towards visiting seafarers. Regarding the seafarers of Indian origin whom his chaplains could not visit on board he always said:

“Pray for them and their families”.

Having sailed the difficult oceans of life, may Bishop Simeon reach the safe and eternal shores of Heaven. R.I.P.



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