



WORLD MARITIME DAY

(27th September 2007)

“IMO’s response to current environmental challenges”



IMO’s headquarters, London

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VATICAN RADIO INTERVIEWS ARCHBISHOP AGOSTINO MARCHETTO* ON THE OCCASION OF WORLD MARITIME DAY

Your Excellency, why is this Day celebrated?

The yearly celebration of this Day has become a traditional appointment on the maritime scene. It is proclaimed by the International Maritime Organization to recall the importance of this industry and its contribution to the world economy. The theme chosen this year, *IMO's Response to Current Environmental Challenges*, is an appeal addressed to everyone to intensify efforts to protect and preserve the maritime environment before the damage becomes irreparable.

It has not been long that humanity started to understand the fragility of our planet and the serious repercussions that our actions can have. Many countries, however, are still reluctant to ratify the existing Conventions regarding protection of the maritime environment because this would require on their part large financial investments and expertise, which they do not always have.

Respect for the environment, in any case, presupposes the conviction that we are all "God's stewards in the Creation", and this calls for a personal, collective and international commitment. For the Church, taking care of the Creation is a moral question, as John Paul II's Encyclical *Centesimus Annus* reminds us.

When we speak about respect for the environment, are we also referring to all those who get their livelihood from the sea?

When speaking about respect for the environment, it is important to reaffirm that man is at the center of the Creation. Such respect has no meaning if it does not start with respect for the person who is always the principal actor in the environmental issue. Concern for the environment, in fact, cannot fail to consider the needs of an ever greater population that gets its main source of sustenance from fishing. Therefore, it is important to favor balanced policies that will take environmental factors into consideration for a sustainable and, at the same time, a human standard of the people involved in fishing activities.

Pope Benedict XVI attests that "the environmental deterioration makes particularly unsustainable the existence of the earth's poor" (*Angelus* of August 27, 2006). Because of the love for the poor, we are therefore shocked by crews abandoned in foreign ports, unpaid salaries and abuses, which show the risk, also for the maritime industry, that economic considerations will be put before concern for people's welfare.

* Archbishop Marchetto is the Secretary of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People. AOS International is one of its sectors.

World Maritime Day was celebrated this year on Thursday 27th September and the theme was "The IMO's response to current environmental challenges".

Let us remember that all of us share stewardship of God's creation. We have a responsibility to safeguard the precious maritime environment, which at present is threatened as never before, in order to preserve it for future generations.

The Apostleship of the Sea is very much concerned by the preservation of the maritime environment, and supports every efforts in order to protect and preserve the marine environment before it is too late, and irreversible damage is done.

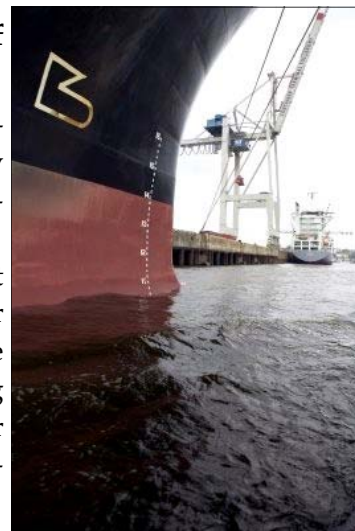
Local AOS must encourage governments, specialized international maritime agencies and organizations to persevere in their search for new strategies to achieve this and in their efforts to reduce the possibility of accidents at sea that lead to the loss of life and environmental damage.

use of the resources for an equitable living standard

What is the Pontifical Council's view and approach to the challenges of the maritime environment?

Unfortunately, globalization has not improved the living and working conditions in the maritime world. Crews spend more and more time on board; they are isolated, stressed and overworked. This is most obvious in the fishing sector.

Our recent AOS World Congress in Gdynia (Poland) stated, for example, that while it is true that there are millions of responsible fishers who deserve all our respect, we cannot ignore the practice of illegal fishing, the use of destructive methods, especially in Africa, by ships from other continents, and overfishing which, in some regions, even risks making fish resources disappear in the near future. I would also mention the all too frequent accidents at sea that have dramatic consequences also for the communities of the accident victims.



Concretely, what can we do as average citizens?

If we consider that more than 90% of world trade is carried out by sea, and if we take its contribution to the world economy into account, it is obvious that our society has a significant debt with regard to seafarers whose work requires a lot of courage, experience, sacrifice and professionalism. For a great part of them, however, there is no corresponding recognition of this.

It is our duty, therefore, to show gratitude, even concretely, solidarity and hospitality, to aid them when necessary, and to pray for them and their families.

Those who live in the industrialized countries have to understand, moreover, that the earth's resources cannot be squandered, and that it is necessary to use them parsimoniously and in a way that is consistent with the common good and for the sake of the future generations.

As reaffirmed at the Gdynia Congress, we want to have the courage to introduce a "Christian humanism of hope" into the maritime world, as witnesses to the Good News of Jesus Christ.



MSGR NOVATUS RUGAMBWA

APPOINTED UNDER SECRETARY AT THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE PASTORAL CARE OF MIGRANTS AND ITINERANT PEOPLE

On the 28th June, Msgr Novatus Rugambwa was appointed Under-Secretary at our Pontifical Council.

He was born on the 8th October 1957 in Tanzania. He received his primary and secondary education in Bukoba Diocese. In 1979, after his obligatory military service he entered the major seminary, and from 1981 to 1984 he studied in Rome at the Pontifical Urban University, obtaining a BA degree in theology. Father Rugambwa was ordained to the priesthood on 6th July 1986 and was incardinated in the diocese of Bukoba, and was subsequently appointed Assistant Parish Priest. From 1987 to 1991, Father Rugambwa was a student at the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy in Rome for courses in the Diplomacy and simultaneously did his doctorate in Canon law at the Pontifical Urban University.

After joining the Diplomatic service of the Holy See, between 1991 and 2007 Msgr Rugambwa served in the following countries: Panama, Congo Brazzaville, Pakistan, New Zealand and Oceania and Indonesia. Msgr Rugambwa speaks Swahili, English, Italian, French and Spanish.

The AOS welcomes the new Under-Secretary, wishing him a fruitful ministry in our midst.

A MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
OF THE INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANI-
ZATION, MR. EFTHIMIOS E. MITROPOULOS, ON
THE OCCASION OF WORLD MARITIME DAY
2007

(Extracts)



There is today, quite rightly, a growing concern for our environment and a genuine fear that, if we do not change our ways right now, the damage we will inflict on our planet will render it incapable of sustaining - for future generations - the economy we have grown accustomed to over the better part of the past two centuries.

... The pressure is mounting for every potential polluter, every user of energy and every conspicuous contributor to climate change and global warming to clean up their act and adopt greener practices.

... Statistics reveal that, of all modes of transport, shipping is the least environmentally damaging when its productive value is taken into consideration ... Moreover, set against land-based industry, shipping is a comparatively minor contributor, overall, to marine pollution from human activities.

While there is no doubt that the shipping industry, and IMO, still have more to do in this respect, there is, nevertheless, an impressive track record of continued environmental awareness, concern, action, response and overall success scored by the Organization and the maritime community and industry, which cannot go unnoticed.

IMO's original mandate was principally concerned with maritime safety. However ... it has, over many years, adopted a wide range of measures to prevent and control pollution caused by ships and to mitigate the effects of any damage that may occur as a result of maritime operations.

The most serious problem at the time IMO began to address environmental issues was the spillage of oil into the seas, either through accidents or poor operating practices. To address these effectively, the Organization [has adopted] in 1973, the **International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships**, now known universally as MARPOL. ... More than 30 years later, albeit much expanded, amended and updated, the MARPOL Convention remains the most important international convention covering the prevention of pollution by ships,

whether from operational or accidental causes.

... According to shipping market analysts, world seaborne trade increased by around 135 per cent between 1985 and 2006 ... Figures reveal that, despite the rare major accident, which can cause a spike in the annual statistics, the overall trend demonstrates a continuing improvement, both in the number of oil spills and quantity of oil spilled each year.

... IMO's [environmental] work led to the adoption, in February 2004, of the **Ballast Water Management Convention** ... Another significant milestone for the protection of the marine environment was reached in March 2006, with the entry into force of the **1996 Protocol to the 1972 Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter**, which represents a major change of approach to the question of how to regulate the use of the sea as a depository for waste materials in that, in essence, dumping is now prohibited, except for materials on an approved list.

Other IMO Conventions deal with issues such as the use of **harmful anti-fouling paint on ships. hulls; preparedness, response and co-operation** in tackling pollution from oil and from hazardous and noxious substances; and the right of States to **intervene on the high seas** to prevent, mitigate or eliminate danger to their coastlines or related interests from pollution following a maritime casualty.

IMO is currently developing a new mandatory instrument. The issue of **ship recycling** has also become a growing concern, not only from the environmental point of view but also with regard to the occupational health and safety of workers in the industry.

... But perhaps the most significant threat to our environment today concerns **atmospheric pollution**. And, once again, although the shipping industry is but a small contributor to the total volume of gas emissions - compared to road vehicles, aviation and public utilities, such as power stations - atmospheric pollution from ships has, nevertheless, been signifi-

cantly reduced in the last decade and IMO continues to work towards further reductions as the evidence mounts and the world becomes more aware and more concerned about the further damage that might be caused if ... we do not address the challenges posed by air pollution, global warming and climate change.

... Whether we like it or not, there is no avoiding the fact that the modern world is utterly dependent on motorized transport systems that run largely on fossil fuels. Moreover, it is also a fact of life that the use of fossil fuels carries an environmental burden. An engine burning fossil fuel will emit a quantity of so-called **greenhouse gases (GHGs)**, principally CO₂, and these emissions are now widely accepted as being significant contributory factors towards global warming and climate change.

... A work plan with a timetable has been

adopted for IMO.s future work on the reduction of GHGs from ships, in which the Organization intends to maintain its leading position, co-operating closely with international shipping and with other relevant UN bodies, to avoid unilateral action either on a global, regional or national level.

IMO has, over the years, adopted a wide range of measures to prevent and control pollution caused by ships and to mitigate the effects of any damage that may occur ... There remain, however, serious concerns at the slow pace of ratification of IMO.s environmental conventions.

... The urgent need to ratify, as soon as possible, not only IMO.s environmental but, indeed, all outstanding Conventions adopted under its auspices, should be promptly recognized by all the parties concerned.

The British and International Sailors Society (BISS) from now on to be named "Sailors' Society"



At an Annual General Meeting held on 12th June 2007, Members passed a Special Resolution giving their assent that the name of the charity be simplified to become Sailors' Society. Therefore, this change will now properly take effect in public from 1st December 2007. In changing the name and title of the Society there will be no change in its objects, purpose or general practice. It intends to maintain its tradition of ministering to seafarers of any denomination, race, creed or culture throughout the world, wherever we are. The new name will, it is hoped, clear away certain misconceptions which arise about our work in ministry, as well as the tendency to abbreviate our earlier name to an unofficial acronym of its initial letters, in which form it meant little to those outside the shipping industry, and is a barrier to our international reach and general fundraising.

The purpose of the name change is to eliminate such confusion. For this reason, and the obvious sensitivity, our new name must never be abbreviated either in spoken word or in writing. The change will also underpin our mission to enrich and enhance seafarers' lives in our overall aim to replace their isolation with belonging and will, it is hoped, help unify all the individual parts of the organisation including our sister societies working in Canada, Southern Africa and New Zealand. It will be accompanied by a refreshed brand identity.

The change will also help to raise our profile, and enable consistency of our identity around the world as we expand our ministry and welfare work for seafarers into ports where there is little or no provision.. We trust and pray that all those who work with us, support us and, most of all, the beneficiaries for whom we work to serve, will embrace this new, positive image which takes the charity forward whilst retaining and reflecting its long heritage and worthy spirit.

R N Adams, General Secretary

NOUVEAUX PROGRAMMES DE DÉVELOPPEMENT DE BIEN-ETRE POUR LE SUD-EST ASIATIQUE

(SINGAPOUR, 13—20 SEPTEMBRE 2007)

Afin d'évaluer les services déjà existants pour le bien-être des marins dans la région du sud-est asiatique et de mettre en place de nouvelles structures là où cela est nécessaire, le ICSW, en collaboration avec ITF-ST a organisé un séminaire sous-régional à Singapour.

Les organisations maritimes gouvernementales, l'ICMA et ses membres, les syndicats ainsi que les employeurs étaient invités.

A cette occasion, une réunion de l'AM et une réunion de l'ICMA ont eu lieu avant la Conférence de l'ICSW. Nous présentons ci-dessous des points forts de ces trois rencontres importantes.

ICMA FAR EAST CHAPLAINS' CONFERENCE

This conference was held from 13 – 14 September 2007, in Singapore. Delegates were welcomed by Rev. Hennie La Grange, the new ICMA General Secretary. The ICMA regional co-ordinator, Fr. Bruno Ciceri was the convenor of the conference. The countries represented were Singapore, Malaysia, Taiwan, Philippines, Hong Kong, Japan, Indonesia, South Korea. There were 4 key note interventions.

1) MLC 2006

Mr. Douglas Stevenson, Director of Policy Advocacy and Law at the Center for Seafarers' Rights at the Seamen's Church Institute of New York, gave three presentations on seafarers' rights with special reference to ILO Convention 186, known as MLC 2006 (Maritime Labour Convention 2006).

Maritime law has existed since ancient times usually with the aim of protecting commerce. Seafarers, as skilled workers engaging in commerce, have at times enjoyed greater protection than land-based ones.

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) creates worldwide standards for workers and the adopted Conventions have force of law in signatory countries when ratified. Uniquely for a United Nations body, it uses a tripartite structure giving voting rights to representatives of governments, employers and trade unions. Non-Governmental Organisations, including ICMA, may contribute to debates, without voting, if Member States agree. The ILO has no supervisory role. Member States are responsible for ratify-

ing and implementing Conventions.

MLC 2006 is a significant achievement as it sets acceptable minimum standards for working on ships. These include employment requirements and conditions; accommodation and facilities; health and social security; and shore-based welfare facilities. ICMA played a significant role, having campaigned continuously for Seafarers' welfare to be included in the convention.

Mr. Stevenson invited delegates to contact the Centre for Seafarers' Rights which offers a free legal service to seafarers and port chaplains.

www.seamenschurch.org

2) Lifeworlds

A presentation was given by Mrs Jenny Lau who runs the Lifeworlds organisation, formerly known as Scripture Gift Mission. The organisation works with various Christian groups, including ICMA, producing literature and multi-media programmes to meet their needs. For seafarers, they have produced a booklet called "Away from home".

www.lifeworlds-global.com

3) ICMA's pastoral mission

This theme was presented by Rev. Hennie La Grange in which he spoke of the balance in respecting the seafarers' own beliefs while testifying to Christ's universal love. Chaplains must immerse themselves in the seafarers' world, understanding the dehumanising effect of living in one's workspace. There followed a lively discussion and exchange of experience.

4) Ship Visiting

A presentation on the ICMA Ship Visiting Handbook was given by Rev. Mervyn Moore, Mission to Seafarers port chaplain in Singapore. Rev. Moore reminded the conference of the importance for the ship visitor to incarnate the care and support of the land based community for the seafarer. Ship visiting is difficult, tiring and demanding, the pastoral agent must be committed, and ready to make sacrifices. He must be ready to offer practical help and to develop counselling and conflict resolutions skill. He shared his own approach to conflict resolution, summed up by this acronym ALL:

Ask questions which cannot be answered by a simple *yes* or *no*. Avoid constant interruptions.

Look at body-language.
Listen attentively

Election of Regional Co-ordinator

Fr Bruno Ciceri was unanimously re-elected as the ICMA Regional Co-ordinator for the Far East region.

AOS MEETING

A meeting was held on the 14th September 2007 for all AOS members participating in the ICMA/ICSW meeting and delegates from the following countries attended the meeting: Malaysia, Taiwan, Philippines, Hong Kong, Japan, Indonesia, South Korea.

The subjects raised and discussed were: the recent AOS World Congress, reports and correspondence: AOS Regional meetings, the AOS Manual, the AOS International Website and the necessity of networking. Those who were not able to attend the Congress were anxious to know more about its conclusions and recommendations and this was a good occasion for sharing. There was a general agreement that more communication and networking were necessary and the usefulness of the website was highlighted

Country reports

In **Thailand**, since the departure of the Maryknoll Chaplains, contact has been rare, this meeting has permitted to meet the new AOS coordinator, Mrs. Apinya Tajit. There are new possibilities in **Vietnam** but the Church there has many other urgent priorities; the Chaplain in **Indonesia** after having participated to the XXII World Congress, has plans to embark on a new development and training programme and to give a new momentum to AOS-Indonesia.. In **Hong Kong** a new AOS chaplain, Fr Valan Arasu Arockiaswamy, has been appointed and has started his apostolate. It was suggested that the Regional Coordinator would visit **Malaysia** after the meeting in order to visit the Episcopal promoter and help extend the AOS there. The new dormitory in **Manila** is proving a success, for administrative reasons (availability of space etc.) the realisation of the second stage of the project (Seafarers Centre, AOS administrative office....) is still in abeyance.

Other General Remarks:

- The majority of the Chaplains and pastoral agents present at the ICMA/ICSW meeting were from AOS, as our organisation is present and active in most of the countries of the region.

- The region has an intense maritime and fishing activity but the Church's presence and involvement in this field are still minimal.
- There is an awareness that many of the AOS personnel are missionaries, but there is an ongoing effort to train and prepare local chaplains and pastoral agents. The transition, however, is not without its difficulties.
- It is important that in each country AOS be structured, and have at least an AOS Episcopal Promoter and an AOS National Director.
- Ecumenical relations among ICMA partners are good and very important from a pastoral point of view.

ICSW SUB-REGIONAL SEMINAR FOR SOUTH-EAST ASIA

Opening addresses

In his opening address the ICSW Chairman Mr Bjorn Lødøen cited the human element as the main cause of maritime accidents. The ICSW, in working for seafarers' welfare, also promotes safer shipping". Mr Jean-Yves Legouas, senior maritime specialist at the ILO, spoke to affirm ILO support for the ICSW. He also called on Singapore to ratify the ILO Conventions relating to seafarers. Archbishop Nicholas Chia, Catholic Archbishop of Singapore, spoke of the isolation in which some pastoral teams work and commended the conference as an opportunity for discussion of a common mission.

The guest of honour at the conference was Mr Lim Swee Say, Minister from the Prime Minister's Office of Singapore. The Minister spoke of the importance of co-operation in the field of seafarers' welfare. He referred to welfare provision for seafarers in Singapore which includes two centres in the port and a new centre planned for this year in the port of Singapore.

Mr Andrew Elliott, Operations Manager of ICSW, spoke on ICSW and its role and on the necessity of sharing expertise across the maritime sector.

The Shipping Industry and Welfare services in South East Asia

This keynote speech was delivered by Captain Derrick Atkinson of BW Shipping, Singapore. Captain Atkinson related how during his thirty years at sea, he had had only four contacts with welfare workers, twice with chaplains and twice with union officials. Surveys in South-East Asia showed that only 18% of seafarers had had contact with welfare workers, in-

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cluding union officials.

When asked what they wanted from welfare services, seafarers named, in order of preference: contact with local welfare workers; local seafarers' centres; transport; communication with the family; shore leave and onboard welfare provision. From welfare workers they wanted confidential counselling, spiritual guid-



ance and non-judgemental listening. Captain Atkinson felt that welfare organisations make a big difference to seafarers by providing reliable transport. They should co-ordinate services and work with ships' agents to meet demand.

Looking to the future, the crews' demographic profile will become more diverse with more seafarers from Vietnam, Thailand, Burma, China and Indonesia. They will expect more electronic communications and have more disposable income. There will be fewer career seafarers, instead many will change career after four or five years. Welfare providers have a role to play in making seafaring a more attractive career. All maritime organisations should collaborate to produce a better standard of living for seafarers.

Following Captain Atkinson's speech, delegates contributed their own comments. There was a call for shipping companies to use their influence, especially in port welfare committees, for better welfare services. There was also a call for owners to intervene with governments when seafarers are branded as terrorists on the basis of nationality or religion. In response to a question on how to improve co-operation between welfare organisations and ship owners, Captain Atkinson said that arranging meetings was an effective means of raising ship owners' awareness of the importance of seafarers' welfare.

Regional presentations

Representatives from each country gave short presentations on seafarers' welfare provision in their areas.

Indonesia

Most ships are in port for less than ten hours. Ship visiting takes place but it is not possible to bring vehicles into port.

Malaysia

The Marine Department of Malaysia, part of the Ministry of Transport, has a legal infrastructure in place for the provision of seafarers' welfare services. AOS is present in five ports and plays an important role which is recognised by the Marine Department.

Philippines

At any given time some 235 – 240,000 Filipino seafarers are at sea. 250 – 400 die at sea each year. Some shipping companies provide welfare services to employees and their families but AOS personnel report a lack of social welfare in the Philippines. In several ports, AOS is the only organisation offering welfare services. As most manning agents are in Manila, there are additional welfare needs among seafarers who spend weeks or months in the city, looking for contracts.

Singapore

Singapore is a major centre for bunkers, supplies and repairs with 1,000 ships in port at any one time. The Singapore Organisation of Seafarers (SOS) provides welfare services. AOS, MtS and GSM and other missions are also present.

Taiwan

Prof Dr Nien-Tsu has been commissioned by Fr. Bruno Ciceri to research seafarers' welfare in Taiwan. In 2000, the Taiwanese government changed for the first time in many years. The previous ruling party had established seafarers' centres in all ports. Now only trade unions, AOS and the Presbyterian Church provide welfare services.

Thailand

Welfare and education services for visiting seafarers and local fishers are provided by AOS, MtS and union-sponsored port welfare workers with some collaboration from the government. There are many Burmese seafarers in exile in Thailand, some of whom entered the country illegally. Targeted welfare services include prison-visiting, HIV treatment and education, and nurseries for Burmese children born in Thailand who have no rights to education or medical treatment.

Vietnam

The Vietnamese fleet is expanding but there are few manning agents. Vietnam cannot as yet be considered a seafarer supply nation.

Seafarers' rights

In the first of the evening sessions, delegates put questions and observations to a panel consisting of Mr Doug Stevenson from the Centre for Seafarers' Rights,

Ms Rebecca Chetwood from the International Shipping Federation, and Mr Shigeru Wada, the ITF Regional Secretary for the Asia Pacific Region. There follows a summary of the main points discussed.

Prophetic Ministry

Mr. Stevenson used this term to refer to work of his organisation, which is part of the Seamen's Church Institute and an ICMA member. In providing free legal assistance, they seek to safeguard the rights of seafarers which may be threatened by responses to current security concerns. The notion of "prophetic justice" was received with interest by several delegates and led to further discussion.

Freedom of association

In the region there are difficulties in claiming the right to freedom of association, i.e. joining a trade union.. Trade union activity is banned in Burma in contravention of ILO Conventions ratified by that country. There have been cases of seafarers being arrested in their home countries after the ITF has won cases on their behalf. There is a programme of assistance for Burmese seafarers in exile.

Ship owners

The poor treatment of seafarers by certain flag states was mentioned, and countries were named. Countries which were mentioned not being members of the ISF (International Shipowners Federation) are therefore beyond the control of this organisation. Mr D Stevenson reminded the delegates that there are very conscientious ship owners and that MLC 2006 would not have been possible without their co-operation.



Newly qualified seafarers / cadets

In the Philippines the so-called "Utility Boys", i.e. newly qualified seafarers seeking contracts, are exploited by manning agencies who oblige them to work without pay, often doing demeaning tasks unrelated

to seafaring. In some countries, seafarers must pay to gain contracts, a practice not unique to the maritime industry despite being prohibited by the ILO. There is a need for co-operation between manning agents and maritime schools. Unfair employment practices should be referred to local ILO offices.

Blacklisting

There is evidence of seafarers being blacklisted by manning agents after receiving help from welfare organisations. Both ICMA and the ISF have produced codes of conduct for manning agents to discourage this practice. The ITF is working to eliminate it and publishes the names of agencies known to circulate black lists. The practice is also outlawed by MLC 2006. Once a country has ratified the Convention, complaints could be made to the local ILO office.

Sharing information

All port chaplains and ship visitors were urged to report cases of abuse of seafarers' rights. It is impossible to act without reliable data. Sharing information, and complaining to appropriate bodies, is an important means of tackling abuse.

Seafarers' families

Dr. Erol Kahveci of SIRC reported that the question "what is the most difficult aspect of life at sea?" most frequently brings the response "family separation". Dangers to family relationships include fears of infidelity, absence of seafarers from important family events, pressure on spouses at home to play dual roles, and difficulties in adapting from the hierarchical structures of life onboard to home life. In addition, the uncertainties inherent in contract work put pressure on family finances.

Delegates from AOS and trade unions cited the importance of social activities for seafarers' spouses and families enabling them to come together for support. It was noted that mobile phone use is very popular, particularly among seafarers' families in the Philippines. Such instantaneous communication can have disadvantages. Seafarers may be informed of crises as they are happening rather than later when they have been resolved. This can cause anxiety for a seafarer who is far from home and unable to intervene. However this should not be used as an excuse for not providing communications facilities.

In cases of death or disappearance of a seafarer, manning agents sometimes try to prevent welfare organisations from becoming involved. Seafarers and their families have a right to know if something happens. However welfare workers should never pass on information without seafarers' consent. For example,

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in the case of a diagnosis of HIV, the time to offer the support is after the seafarer has decided to inform his or her family

Seafarers' health and fitness

Dr. Rob Verbist gave a presentation in which he recalled the World Health Organisation definition of health as encompassing the physical, mental and social. Dr Verbist added that the conference also acknowledged a spiritual dimension to health. Ships are designed for cargo and not for the crew and there are many hazards onboard. However illness among seafarers is more likely to be related to lifestyle and not profession, e.g. heart disease or cancer caused by smoking, poor diet, stress and insufficient exercise.

The S.H.I.P. (Seafarers' Health Information Programme) of the ICSW encourages seafarers to take responsibility for their own health by providing information about healthy living. Topics include food safety, exercise, travel, malaria, excess weight and sexually transmitted diseases. Weight problems are more common among seafarers than land-based workers. However seafarers are at no greater risk of sexually transmitted diseases and should not be stigmatised as such.

Conference then broke into workshops to discuss seafarers' health. Issues raised included the stigma of HIV. Seafarers may not admit to having HIV for fear of losing their jobs. This will limit their access to information and medication. Compulsory HIV testing is a controversial matter. In the Philippines, for example, it is illegal but manning agents have been known to force the matter. Ship owners do need to ascertain if there is a likelihood crew members becoming ill onboard.

Some national health education programmes for seafarers put too much emphasis on HIV, neglecting more common conditions such as cardio-vascular disease, stress and depression and new threats such as "chikungunya". Life onboard may not favour healthy lifestyle choices. Stress and depression are clearly exacerbated by long contracts. Younger seafarers are often willing to accept long contracts in order to earn more money. Shore leave brings a risk of excessive eating and drinking and other immoderate behaviour. Dr Verbist said that the seriousness, although not the frequency, of psychiatric illness among seafarers is increasing with more suicides reported.

There is a need for health issues to be included in the training of welfare workers and agents. The materials produced by S.H.I.P. provide a means of initiating discussions on health issues. There was concern that material should be religiously and culturally ap-

propriate. One delegate commented that eliminating the dismal atmosphere in some seafarers' centres might help combat depression.

Working in a inter-religious environment

Rev. David Potterton of the Sailors' Society addressed the conference on the importance of faith support for seafarers. Maritime chaplains, unlike chaplains in other sectors, meet people in what is both working and living space. They should be properly trained and accredited. Ecumenical and inter-religious co-operation is essential as is co-operation with secular organisations. Church-based welfare workers should have an agreed code of conduct so that they can gain the confidence of ships' masters and port authorities. Inappropriate behaviour should lead to exclusion.

In the workshops there was emphasis on meeting seafarers' needs, rendering service, offering help, being dependable and befriending the lonely. An experienced seafarer from a Muslim family but with a Catholic education, suggested that chaplains when encountering members of other religions "should not identify with specific churches but simply talk of God and how to live well."

It was said that chaplains should be careful not to misrepresent themselves and to clearly identify themselves. There had been cases of organisations, not members of ICMA, claiming to celebrate Mass, a deception which Catholic seafarers found upsetting. Dealing with religious groups which behave inappropriately is a challenge. Some groups attempt to collect money from seafarers or have aggressive conversion policies. Delegates were reminded that the correct term for such groups is "proselytising" and not "evangelical" which has altogether another meaning.

Good relations with port welfare committees would benefit bona fide welfare organisations. Many organisations have well-developed training programmes but a common system of accreditation is desirable. Port authorities should be made aware of the ICMA Code of Conduct. Non-Christian religions should not be excluded. Chaplains need knowledge of other customs and traditions. Where possible and appropriate, ship visitors of other faiths should be included in pastoral teams. One delegate remarked that ships' crews lead the way in multi-cultural co-operation.

Captain Abdul bin Aziz Abdullah, a Muslim seafarer with many years of experience, spoke of the dangers of stereotyping on religious or national grounds. As a Muslim seafarer he appreciated the work of Christian welfare workers and had never felt under pressure to convert. Captain Abdullah reminded the

conference of the importance of networking, passing on information and bringing abuses to light.

Challenges to welfare services

The final presentation of the day was given by Mgr Jacques Harel.

This region is composed—he said—both of highly developed and underdeveloped countries. While being the main supplier of seafarers and fishers for the whole maritime/fishing industry, in certain countries of the region seafarers are unemployed, they have no job security and very low salaries. In many countries the prevailing attitude towards maritime affairs and problems is not humanitarian, in other words the priority is business and not welfare.

The NGOs, Unions and Missions are the main suppliers of welfare, but the financial sustainability of the Centres is a constant difficulty especially that nowadays funding from the ITF is lower than in the past. Welfare organisations are sometimes seen as competitors by local businesses such as taxis and phone card distributors. Mafias operating in ports also pose a threat. In all cases, sensitivity to local context and co-operation with port authorities is vital.

The transition from foreign personnel who often manages the centres to local one can be difficult. The language barrier and lack of English can be a real problem. Another difficulty is the lack of volunteers because of high unemployment and poverty and also because, in some countries, volunteer work is not part of the culture.

The needs of seafarers are increasing with particular demand for pastoral care and counselling. Providing such free services is challenging in areas where there is little awareness of port welfare committees or where seafarers may be considered a privileged workforce because they receive regular wages.

Communication between port chaplains can be difficult. This may be partly due to technical problems but is also a question of mentality. Issues such as the criminalisation of seafarers are too challenging for individual chaplains to tackle alone. There must be networking and co-operation among chaplains and other relevant bodies

In the workshops, delegates discussed the question of resources which may be unevenly distributed or scarce. They shared their experiences and made a plea to the conference to prioritise substandard ships in their ship visiting activities and to privilege assistance to poorer seafarers. To confront the barrier language, exchange programmes between centres were suggested.

Port-based welfare facilities for seafarers, SIRC survey 2007

Dr. Erol Kahveci presented the results of the survey conducted by the Seafarers' International Research Centre. There has been a significant shift compared to earlier surveys with priority given to access to personal counselling and free transport to welfare facilities. Limited time in port means that lower priority is now given to activities such as use of sporting facilities and libraries. Local information is vital. There is a need for outreach in the form of mobile facilities.

Towards regional programmes – solidarity and co-operation in action

Mr. Tom Holmer of the ITF Seafarers' Trust spoke of the importance of regional co-operation and the pooling of resources where welfare provision is unevenly distributed. The Trust relies on local people for information about welfare issues Grants for buildings are still available although at a lower level than in the past. Ship visiting should always be part of welfare programmes. Centres without ship visiting programmes are not viable. Centre twinning and visits from overseas partners encourage co-operation.

Dr Suresh Idnani told the conference that the first task is to sensitise stakeholders. It is important to identify key individuals and organisations and make them aware of the issues. These should include port authorities, shipping and manning agents, clergy and representatives of other religions. Once a national co-ordinating body is in place, a network of port welfare committees can be established.

Conclusions

The conclusions will be set out in the conference document. Mr Bjorn Lødøen reminded delegates to spread the word about the importance of seafarers' welfare services.



Rio de Janeiro Inauguration of the new *Stella Maris*

Father Cesare Ciceri has been named the new chaplain for this port in order to continue the work that has been done for the People of the Sea for more than eight years.

During the afternoon of July 26, 2007, the headquarters of the new **Stella Maris** Center of Rio was inaugurated in a new space granted by the DOCAS Company.

After its remodeling, the purpose of this house is to welcome all the People of the Sea interested in enjoying a comfortable place for rest and recreation that offers facilities for making national and international phone calls, transportation for tourist excursions, and religious, cultural and sports activities.

This space becomes a meeting point for different cultures and nationalities, but what is most important, a place for reflection with God, regardless of the different religions that meet there.

The assigned area has only one floor. It has a main room with air conditioning, TV, radio, a billiard table, the sale of souvenirs, a library and a bar. The second room has computers, table football, a piano and a library. The kitchen is large and a variety of snacks can be enjoyed there. The office has computers that aid the employees' daily work. There is a space in the part behind the house where it is planned to set up sports grounds in the future.

This Center is considered the best in the Region because it is located in a privileged area (inside the port of Rio de Janeiro) which was obtained thanks to the good relations between the Catholic Church, the labor unions, and port and governmental authorities.

Its personnel is trained to welcome anyone who visits the place in the best way possible, to always extend a helping hand to the people who work in the maritime sector and, in particular, to

offer solidarity to the seafarers who, because of their work, have to spend long periods of time far from their families and countries.

We hope this project for which Father Cesare Ciceri is responsible will be a great success, and we are counting on his excellent work and the care he can offer in continuing to spread the work of the Apostleship of the Sea in Rio de Janeiro. His commitment is to keep this Center as an example for the present and future *Stella Maris* Centers or Seafarers' Houses.

Santos

Since the month of April 2007, Father Samuel Fonseca was transferred to administer this Center, one of the most important in Latin America, which receives approximately 40 ships a day. The social and spiritual assistance is of the greatest importance.

On August 2, 2007, Father Fonseca was invited to christen the new tug boat built by the Wilson Son Company which was given the name "Mercurius". It was another demonstration that union among people makes it possible for architectonic works like this one to become a reality, and even more, the act of faith in giving thanks to God for the project accomplished. May he bless the course of this boat and its crew that has to face the challenges at sea.



BIBLICAL MARATHON IN THE FRAMEWORK OF "AMERICA'S CUP"

(40 hours at the service of the Word of God in the "Bible at sea" project)

On the occasion of the "America's Cup", the diocese of Valencia carried out a series of pastoral initiatives—well adapted to the non-denominational environment—in order to respond to the spiritual needs of the participants in this sporting event which brought together "people of the sea" from all over the world.

1°. Eucharistic celebrations in different languages in parishes near the competition areas and the hotels where the sportsmen and visitors were staying. To publicize these celebrations, a folder was distributed in hotels, parishes, bases of the participating boats and the places where those present in Valencia for the event were concentrated.

2°. A "Biblical Marathon" with readings of the Word of God organized by a group of parishes and young people in the areas of the marine district.

3°. An ecumenical celebration in the parish of Santa Maria del Mar, before the start of the final stage in the competition presided by the Auxiliary Bishop of Valencia, Most Rev. Esteban Escudero, the Lutheran minister Rev. Fritz Delp, and the Anglican minister Rev. Paul Needle. A representative of the Spanish Biblical Society also attended the ceremony as well as several Catholic priests. During the celebration, passages were read from the Old and New Testaments regarding the sea and navigation, but also "the moral meaning of the competition and the anxiety about personally overcoming adversities"..

"Anyone who takes the Bible and read its, sets out on the path that leads to the port of the experience of God". These words spoken by Ricardo Lázaro, a professor from the Institute of Religious Sciences of Valencia, reflect the spirit of the initiative, "The Bible at sea", which took place from April 20-22 in the maritime area of Valencia.

This idea of the Spanish Biblical Society and a priest, Miguel Angel Vives, parish rector of the church of the Nativity of Burjassot-Cantereria (in line with the project of interrupted reading of the Bible throughout the year 2000 that took place in Valencia with the slogan, "At the Sound of the Word"), arose on the occasion of the celebration of the America's Cup in our city. This biblical project had three centers of interest: the "Real Club Náutico", the parish of Nuestra Señora de los Ángeles of Cabanyal, and the Maritime Promenade of Malvarrosa.

On Friday, April 20, an exhibition was inaugurated in the Flag Hall of Valencia's "Real Club Náutico" with more than a hundred specimens of the Bible from different eras, including sixteenth century facsimiles and eighteenth century originals, with editions written in languages from the five continents including Japanese, Korean, Filipino and African tribal languages as well as papyrus and parchments. Presented by José Luis Andavert and Juan José Echevarría, the Spanish Biblical Society created an exhibition with



large panels that explained the Bible from its origin down to its relation to the human being, the arts and culture. The biblical exhibition was completed with a selection from the "Women in the Bible" exhibit by the La Salle religious Brother Gildo, and artistic images of biblical landscapes related to the sea—with their corresponding quotations—

which the photographer Manolo Guallart prepared for the occasion. The event was completed with a talk by Ricardo Lázaro from the Institute of Religious Sciences on "The importance of the Word of God in people's lives". In his intervention, Lázaro pointed out the three characteristics that constitute the Word of God for people who believe: reading, reflection and celebration. He also invited the public to be co-protagonists of the biblical accounts and in this way to allow God to communicate with each one through the sacred texts.

Right there, at midnight, the uninterrupted reading of the Bible began for 40 hours. During the Easter period and in a Marian framework, the reading could only begin with the Book of Jonas, "a biblical passage with a valuable message of mercy"—as Miguel Ángel Vives recalled, or as Ricardo Lázaro commented, "an account about the certainty of those who persevere in difficulty that God will save them".

Ten hours later the reading moved to the sea aboard five boats commanded by the sailing ship "El

Capitán Garfio". There the participants completed two hours of reading on the open sea concluding with a common prayer.

After non-stop reading throughout the day, at eight in the evening the parish of Nuestra Señora de los Ángeles of Cabanyal became the protagonist – with the presence of its parish rector José Luis Barrera. In the parish community room, the biblical marathon continued through the night with the participation of anonymous parishioners who had the experience in this unique project of reading the Word of God at unusual hours.

With the dawn on Sunday and the morning light, the reading moved to the Maritime Promenade of Malvarrosa. The last six hours of reading, with magnificent spring weather prevailing, had the participation of sixty volunteers—especially young people—

from the parishes of the Nativity of Nuestra Señora de Burjassot, the Assumption and Saint Maximilian Kolbe of Benimaclet, as well as from the marine area. They all distributed five thousand free copies of the Gospel of Saint Luke to the passersby as they invited them to read the Bible for a few minutes. The Evangelical Christian community of Valencia also took part in the reading.

So this is how 40 continuous hours passed at the service of the Word of God in the "Bible at sea" project. By way of conclusion, a thought from Ricardo Lázaro from the preparatory talk on Friday: "From the Psalms to the Gospels passing through Exodus and the Book of Jonas, in the adventure of a believer who leaves everything to follow Jesus and be his witness, the Bible is an effective instrument, with the help of the breath of the Holy Spirit, for finding God in others".

ILLEGAL FISHING FROM RECREATIONAL BOATS RUINS THE COASTAL FLOAT

The small scale fishers from the Canary Island have been denouncing for some time the unfair competition of the sporting fishers who, in their opinion, are illegally selling their catches to bars and restaurants.

The rules allow sports fishers to make catches for exhibition and as a tourist attraction. These catches can be consumed or given to charitable institutions, but never sold. And this is precisely what the associations from the Canary Islands are denouncing: the catches are being sold to bars and restaurants illegally and ruining the market for the small scale fishers.

In addition to the competition in sales, the fishers are also denouncing that this overfishing has destroyed the fishing grounds. Therefore, when talking about putting a moratorium into action, it is said from the Association of Arguineguin by its major leader José Santana, that what must be done is to increase surveillance. He points out that the sports fishers make their catches with no control at all by the authorities. The professionals, on the contrary, are subject to a control system called "the first sale" through which the Association verifies the size of the catches before they are sold.

The lack of control makes it easier for restaurants and bars to sell fish that cannot be demonstrated where it came from, with the resulting danger for consumers. The situation, especially the one described by the fishers from the southern coast of Tenerife, has been worsening as time passes, a situation which Vicente Rivero, the President of the Provincial Federation of Fishers' Associations of Santa Cruz de Tenerife, describes as "intolerable". Furthermore, the

use of illegal equipment is added to the situation of irregular catches and sales.

As the affected fishers point out, despite all the efforts to get the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fish and Food of the Canary Government to halt this situation, the fishers have moved on to action and given notice of a series of charges, with first and last names, against poachers and against bars and restaurants that buy what they fish.



("Mar", No. 462, July-August 2007, p.68)

NEW LABOUR STANDARDS FOR THE WORLD'S FISHING SECTOR

96th ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION

Innovative new labour standards designed to improve the conditions for roughly 30 million men and women working in the fishing sector worldwide were adopted on the 15th June 2007 at the 96th annual conference of the International Labour Organization (ILO).

The new ILO Convention was adopted by governments, workers and employers delegates at the International Labour Conference by a vote of 437 for, 2 against, with 22 abstentions. The Convention, to be known as The Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No.188), will come into effect when it is ratified by 10 (including eight coastal nations) of the ILO's 180 member States. An accompanying Recommendation (No. 199) was adopted by a vote of 443 for, 0 against, with 19 abstentions.

The new standards contain provisions designed to ensure that workers in the fishing sector:

- improve occupational safety and health and medical care at sea, and that sick or injured fishers receive care ashore;
- have sufficient rest for their health and safety;
- the protection of a work agreement; and
- have the same social security protection as other workers.

Its provisions also are aimed at ensuring that fishing vessels are constructed and maintained so that workers in the sector have living conditions on board that reflect the long periods they often spend at sea.

Fishing is one of the most hazardous occupations. Hazards arise from the power of the sea, the nature of catching and processing fish, and from the sustained and often fatiguing effort necessary in

the face of the unpredictability of finding and harvesting marine resources.

Fishing, whether industrial or small-scale, is facing the forces of globalization, adding that fish that were once locally consumed are now often being processed and shipped to restaurants and consumers half-way around the world. As a result, in some areas fishers have to go farther and farther from the coast to reach marine resources.

The Convention also puts in place a mechanism to ensure compliance with, and enforcement of, its provisions by States and provides that large fishing vessels on extended voyages may be subject to inspections in foreign ports to ensure that the fishers on board do not work under conditions that are

hazardous to their safety and health. This latter provision aims to help remove from the seas vessels with unacceptable working and living conditions, that operate to the detriment of responsible operators.

Recognizing that many countries might not initially have the institutions or infrastructure in place to immediately implement all of its provisions, the Convention provides an innovative legal mechanism that will allow States to progressively implement certain of its provisions.

The next step following the adoption of the Convention by the International Labour Conference is for member States to put the measure to their national authorities for ratification. (ILO News)

Message to the AOS

On the 14th June 2007, the ILO, at its 96th annual conference, has adopted new labour standards for the world's fishing sector.

The Apostleship of the Sea hails this new "Convention and Recommendation concerning Work in the Fishing Sector" as a great sign of hope and congratulates the ILO, his social partners, member States and NGO's for the great level of collaboration showed in drafting and developing this instrument that provides a comprehensive labour protection for fishers.

These new standards contain provisions which are designed to ensure that workers in the fishing sector will enjoy improved occupational safety and health and medical care at sea, sufficient rest, the protection of a work agreement and the same social security protection as land based workers. The Convention, when ratified, will improve the living and working conditions for more than 90 per cent of the world's estimate 41 million fishers.

The Pontifical Council strongly recommends to all to exercise every effort to obtain the early ratification of this new Convention which will make such a difference to the life of so many fishers and their families and communities around the world.

+ Archbishop Agostino Marchetto
Secretary of the PCPCMIP

TRAGEDIES OF THE SEA

A ferry disaster kills at least 58 people in Sierra Leone

The Amunafa, a coastal ferry powered by outboard motors, capsized in bad weather on the night of the 2/3 August. It was carrying around 80 people of which 58 have been reported dead. On that occasion, the Pontifical Council sent the following message of condolences to the Apostolic Nuncio in Freetown

Your Excellency,

On behalf of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, I express my grief and deep sympathy at the news of the loss of the ferry on the night of the 2nd/3rd August.

Our thoughts and prayers are with those who have perished, are still missing and with the injured. We remember especially the grieving families, who will never see their loved ones again in this world and we pray for the success of the rescue operations.

In prayer and solidarity, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,

✠Archbishop Agostino Marchetto
Secretary

A sad tale of a sunken ship off the Tamil Nadu coast

The 12-member crew of a Maldives cargo ship M.V.GERADU EMPIRE, which sank off the Tamil Nadu coast, on October 16, 2007 was rescued by a German ship and brought to Chennai on October 20th, night. They include eight Indians, two Sri Lankans and two Maldivians. The ship was carrying cargo from Tuticorin port to Kulludhufushi in Maldives on October 16, when its engine room began to fill with sea water, while the ship was 36 nautical miles off Kanyakumari.

"A huge crack had developed at the bottom of the 30 plus -year old vessel. The water gushed in and one of our crew members pressed his foot on the crack, hoping to prevent the water getting in. But he pulled out once the water reached his neckline, we tried every thing to stop the water, but nothing worked," said Anand, a crew member from Tuticorin.

"I tried blocking the water by placing sand bags on the crack that had developed. But very soon the water rose to my neck. I could smell death," said 21-year-old Rasheed from Lakshwadeep, one of the crewmembers. Captain Shammem said: "We noticed the water entering at around 11.30 am on October 16. We could not do much to stop the water inflow. Then we dispatched distress messages through the wireless and a German ship, M.V. Scan Brazil responded by 2.20 pm. The rescue operation was completed by 5 pm."

Some of the crew members claimed the emergency position-indicating radio beacon on the ship, meant for sending emergency signals, failed to function when the ship was sinking. There was no emergency generator as well," another member of the crew, now lodged in a city hotel, alleged.

As soon the news was reached to ITF local inspector and AOS, we started working together of the possibilities to accommodate them

at seafarers' welfare center. But the company agency made all the arrangements for the crew to stay comfortably in the hotel, and all of them received wages and compensations.

"We were rescued by a German ship M.V. Scan Brazil and were brought to Chennai port on October 20. Since the time we arrived Chennai, we are thankful to Mr. Sreekumar of ITF, Fr. B. Antony of AOS and Mr. Manoj Joy of Sailors Helpline, for assisting in all possible manner and making arrangement to get in touch with our family and arriving at a settlement with respect to our wages and compensation" said Chief Officer Jayasinghe.



AOS REGIONAL COORDINATORS

NORTH AMERICA & CARIBBEAN

Deacon Albert Dacanay
AOS National Director
24 Senator Blvd
SCARBOROUGH,
Ontario M1J 3M7 (Canada)
Tel +1 (416) 261 5299
Fax +1 (416) 261 9700
Mobile + 1 (416) 220 9748.
adacanay@aos-canada.org

AFRICA INDIAN OCEAN

Mr. Terry Whitfield
AOS National Director
P.O.Box 10543
Marine Parade
4056 DURBAN (South Africa)
Tel +27 (31) 463 3212
Mobile 0829532145
venture@saol.com

WEST AFRICA

Fr. Cyrille Kete
AOS National Director
Cathédrale, BP 348
LOMÉ (Togo)
Tel +228 221 4612
Fax +228 221 0246
cyrille_kete@yahoo.fr

LATIN AMERICA

Fr. Samuel Fonseca, C.S.
AOS National Director
Stella Maris
Avenida Washington Luis 361
11055-001 SANTOS SP (Brazil)
Tel +55 (13) 3234-8910
Fax +55 (13) 3223-7474
Mobile +55 (21) 96052999
samufonto@hotmail.com

EUROPE

Fr. Edward Pracz, C.Ss.R.
AOS National Director
ul Portowa 2
81-350 GDYNIA (Poland)
Tel +48 (58) 620 8741
Fax +48 (58) 620 4266
Mobile +48-0604203527
stellam@wsm.gdynia.pl

SOUTH ASIA

Fr. Xavier Pinto, C.Ss.R.
AOS National Director
Redemptorist Community
876, Alto-Porvorim, GOA 403521
Fr. Xavier Pinto, C.Ss.R.
Tel +91 (832) 2410419
Fax +91
Mobile 9820700123
stellamarisindia@yahoo.com

EAST ASIA

Fr. Romeo Yu Chang, CICM
Church of St. Teresa
2 Bukit Purmei
SINGAPORE 099865
Tel +63 271 8464
Fax +63 271 1175
Mobile +63 9783 5191
yuchangr17@hotmail.com

OCEANIA

Mr. Ted Richardson
AOS National Director
PO Box 90, WYNNUM (Brisbane)
Queensland 4178 (Australia)
Tel +61(7) 3890 2436
mobile 041 919 7096
Fax +61 (7) 3890 2330
aosnat@bigpond.net.au
[//www.stellamaris.asn.au](http://www.stellamaris.asn.au)



**Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care
of Migrants and Itinerant People**

Palazzo San Calisto - Vatican City

Tel. +39-06-6988 7131

Fax +39-06-6988 7111

e-mail: office@migrants.va

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

