



FEEL, GO AND HELP: A NARRATIVE REPORT ON THE TYPHOON HAIYAN (YOLANDA)

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Cebu City, Philippines- When I saw the news on TV that a super typhoon would be coming, I just dismissed it as another regular typhoon that would be passing by our place. I was born and grew up in Bantayan Island, Cebu, Philippines, located in the northern part of Cebu province, where typhoon is just a regular phenomenon. Back in my hometown, I said, nothing alarming, nothing to worry about. Or, so I thought. But when the typhoon started to unleash its wrath in the morning of November

8 (Friday), worries and fears started to creep in. I was in Cebu City on that day. I saw roofs being ripped off and flying. I saw empty cans and metals tossed up in the air as if they were just piece of papers. I felt the strong winds every time I went out to check if the Center had not been damaged. I said to myself that something worst must have happened in my place.

And I was right. There were reports that around 50, 000 houses were destroyed in Cebu alone. In Bantayan Island, 80- 90% of the whole town was destroyed. No electricity, no cell phone signals. (Communications via cell phone were slowly put in place two days after the typhoon struck. But not the electricity. Until now people are just using improvised lamps except for a few who could afford to buy generator.) The following day, Saturday, I started to ask for donations from friends and generous people. Thankfully, the response was overwhelming and so off we travelled to Bantayan Island to extend some help. On the way to the island, I saw adults and children putting up help signs. Everything was in chaos. But it was only when I arrived in my hometown that I witnessed the worst: uprooted trees littered on the streets, almost all houses, poultry farms, electric posts were toppled down, boats were destroyed and churches were severely damaged. People

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were wandering around and did not know what to do.

We would have wanted to help everybody but we realized that our practical assistance could be dwarfed by the magnitude of the damage and the huge number of people affected. Due to the limited relief goods we brought along with us, we decided to just focus our distribution in one barangay, bowing that we will try our best to bring more the next time we come back. Relief goods then (food, water, medicine) were distributed to 1, 010 families. This was the first batch of relief goods distribution.

After a week since the distribution, we went back to my hometown for the second batch of relief goods. This time we were able to bring along with us a brand new chain saw (worth Php 54, 520.00) to cut trees littered on the streets and the trees fell on the houses. The money used to purchase the chain saw came from generous people. We entrusted it to the barangay officials after giving them the instruction that it should be used for the welfare of the people. True to our promise, we extended help to another barangay. This time we distributed goods to 1, 720 families plus cash assistance to those who badly need money. Aside from the support of friends and anonymous persons, AOS here in the Philippines also shelled out cash as assistance and also for mobilization. This may not be that big but surely it helps.

In the case of other AOS centers here in the Philippines, practical assistance have been also extended to the typhoon victims. Some are into giving cash assistance coursed through Catholic Social Action. Some are into remarkable assistance given to international partners who extended help to the typhoon victims. The common concrete pastoral actions among the chaplains here are relief goods distribution, giving of cash assistance both from our own pockets and from supporters and friends, and partnership with other partners to expedite the assistance.

Based on my assessment, typhoon victims need the following: housing and construction materials, funds for their fishing boats, food, medicine and clothes. We still have the third batch of relief goods to be distributed. After this, we move to the next level: looking for funds for rebuilding their simple homes and funds for the fishing boats of the fisher folks. Next week we will be going to Samar and Tacloban where thousands have died for assessment and to give aid to the victims. Tomorrow, November 29, 2013, Friday, will be our concert for a cause. Proceeds from this concert will be given to AOS- Philippines and also for the typhoon victims. Pray for its success.

The effect of the typhoon was so devastating that it would take years for people to recover. After the hype brought about by the typhoon, victims may be forgotten, their cry for help may not be heard anymore; their concerns may no longer be given attention. With this lingering concern, I'm hoping that the people may find the last person standing they can turn to in us - the Church. I pray. And hopeful that we continue to feel for the typhoon victims and go to them to help them.

CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED

As it was done for the tsunami that struck the coast of Japan in 2011, the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People has decided to set up a **special fund** with an initial contribution 10,000 (ten thousands) US dollars. The fund will support long-term reconstruction projects, to be realized in cooperation with AOS – Philippines, benefiting the people of the sea in the affected areas when, after the initial weeks of emergency, people will have to return to their “normal” life.

The great family of AOS is showing its closeness and manifesting its solidarity to this people. We express our sincere thanks for their generosity which shows friendship and unity.

In the following page you will find instructions for your donations in US\$ or in Euros. Please be kind enough to inform our office (aosinternational@migrants.va) of any transfer of funds. We would also be grateful if you could share this initiative, giving it all the exposure that you deem fits.

AOS Fund for the Philippines

Remittances in EUROS

Bank: DEUTSCHE BANK

TAUNUSANLAGE 12-21

60262 FRANKFURT

COD.SWIFT: DEUTDEFFXXX

IBAN-Nr.: DE56500700100935424200

Account no.: 935424200

Beneficiary: IOR (Istituto per le Opere di Religione)

00120 Città del Vaticano

Details of payment:

**Pontificio Consiglio Migranti – AOS Fund for the Philippines
account no. 22 52 70 03**

Remittances in US-dollars

BANK: DEUTSCHE BANK TRUST COMPANY AMERICAS

60 Wall Street 1005 New York N.Y.

U.S.A.

COD.SWIFT: BKTRUS33XXX

Account n. : 04023-904

Beneficiary: IOR (Istituto per le Opere di Religione)

00120 Città del Vaticano

COD. SWIFT: IOPRVAVXXXX

Details of payment:

**Pontificio Consiglio Migranti – AOS Fund for the Philippines
account no. 22 52 70 04**

**NB – It is very important to specify the details of payment
in order to make sure that the money
is effectively transferred
to the account of the Pontifical Council.**

NEW APPOINTMENTS

We are happy to announce that **Fr. Bruno Ciceri** has been appointed Chairman of ICMA, effective at the ICMA AGM Meeting in Bucarest, Romania (September 30—October 4, 2013).

The International Christian Maritime Association (ICMA) is a free association of 28 Christian not-for-profit organisations working for the welfare of seafarers. These 28 organisations represent various Christian churches and communities. Each member organisation retains its independence and autonomy. ICMA defines seafarers as people who work in merchant shipping, fishing and on passenger ships. Through its members, ICMA currently represents 526 seafarers' centres and 927 chaplains in 126 countries (www.icma.as).

At the same time, the Pontifical Council has appointed the new **Regional Coordinators**. They will meet in Rome from January 20-24, 2014, in order to plan and coordinate the pastoral care for seafarers, fishers and their families. This year they will focus on how AOS can collaborate more effectively for the benefit of seafarers and better communicate to the Church and the maritime sector the work that chaplains and volunteers worldwide are doing.

We publish the list of the 9 Regional Coordinators:

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Indonesia – Myanmar – Singapore – Vietnam*

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Fr. Dirk Demaeght, national chaplain of the Belgian Fisheries and chaplain of the coastal port Oostende, has been appointed also chaplain of the ports of Nieuwpoort and Zeebrugge. The chaplaincy for Nieuwpoort didn't exist before. We don't have a Stellamaris center in Nieuwpoort and Oostende. The seaman Centre in Zeebrugge is not a Stellamaris center.

BECOMING SHIP VISITOR TO MEET THE WORLD'S SEPARERS

Ship visitors' training program and sending on mission

Lecture given by Msgr. Claude Cesbron

"To welcome brothers, through love of Christ and the Church.

Sent to evangelize in accordance with an ecclesial mandate".

Father Christophe Buirette, the National Chaplain of the Apostleship of the Sea in Senegal, organized a training program in the Saint-Pierre parish of the port of Dakar for the 26 *ship visitors* who were sent on mission on the occasion of the 2013 *Sunday of the Sea* (every week an average of 20 ships are visited).

Msgr. Cesbron, the former Rector of the *Catholic Institute of the West* in France, currently a *Fidei Donum* priest in Dakar, and Director of the *Formation Service* of the Archdiocese of Dakar, gave this lecture at Father Buirette's request.

"To welcome brothers": this title is already an act of faith. It clearly indicates that the one who is welcomed, the other, is a brother. This supposes that we have crossed the *"gate of faith"* and accepted that in Christ, another, any other, regardless of who he may be, is a brother. From the start, we sense the requirement of the Christian faith: to not have towards another, no matter who he may be, anything but one, constant attitude, fraternal love. At the beginning of this intervention, it is right to acknowledge that everyone does not recognize another as a brother and that this does not appear to be self-evident. So I am going to propose three points for your reflection:

1. Welcoming another is a moral action that calls for determination and courage.
2. Christ puts at the heart of a disciple's life, his disciple's, the need to welcome because of the God that he is with the Father and the Holy Spirit.
3. In evangelization, welcome occupies a key place. You are going to receive a mandate for this.

1. Welcoming another is a moral action that calls for determination and courage.

Welcoming another supposes that I consider him an equal to myself, that I give him consideration and respect, that I feel he has no belligerent attitude towards me, and so I can trust him. It seems to me that these few conditions are enough to ascertain that our societies are not built spontaneously on and for welcome. Like ourselves, they undergo many forms of violence: economic, with the growing disparity between the rich and the poor and the real rottenness of the social body which is corruption on all levels; social, with the lack of respect for conventions, those of the law, the road and customs; political, with intimidation, murder and treachery; religious, with the forms of fundamentalism and theocratic ideologies; ethnic, with the ancestral oppositions, tribal hatreds...The great task of the civilizations and cultures has been precisely to contain these forms of violence and direct them in a positive way.

Among societies' constant efforts, the most important one is education and formation: through them a child and a young person transform their energy and violence into useful forces. Learning politeness and respect for others restricts force and the desire for confrontation. Emulation and competition channel even violent energies and direct them towards going beyond self and putting forces in common. Knowledge is the best protec-

tion against prejudice, exclusion, contempt and racism. Most of the time, hatred grows from misunderstanding another and the instinctive fear which it generates. Someone said once that racism begins with odors. A society that neglects education and formation runs the mortal risk of letting the most merciless forms of violence be unleashed in it.

Next, societies and cultures given themselves laws – think of the *Ten Commandments*. This is how they establish a *modus vivendi*: that is, an art of living together where the law of the strongest and everyone for himself are excluded in principle. The greatness of politics consists precisely in channeling the forms of social violence and transforming them into positive forces for the common good: for example, social conflicts, which set one group against another, such as workers and entrepreneurs, are politically directed towards dialogue, negotiation and compromise. A multiparty system allows legitimately different opinions to be expressed, discussed, to take shape in coherent political and social projects and be subject to the verdict of the vote and thus to the citizens' choice. We see this every day: when democracy and the institutions that allow and protect it are weakened, blind force, arbitrariness and, unhappily, terror and terrorism sprout up immediately .

The great empires – Greek, Roman, Mongol, the Holy Roman Germanic Empire, the Ottoman domination and the great African kingdoms - had as their objectives to unify different peoples and to impose, most often by force, a law and common restrictions. In modern times, this desire for unification has become a planetary urgency after the two great catastrophes of the World Wars in the twentieth century. The nations have endowed themselves with a common organization, the United Nations (UN). Its first task was precisely to draw up the universal charter of human rights whose first objective is to remove every human being from arbitrariness and violence by making him a subject of rights. This declaration binds every country member of the UN and becomes in some way a principle for evaluating the quality of its internal democracy. This first text was followed by many others concerning various areas such as labor, trade, health, children, women... This is surely an enormous step forward, even though the UN is painfully lacking in coercive means: all the countries of the world, and we with them, are witnessing powerlessly the systematic massacre of the Syrian people by a bloody dictator.

The continents have also given themselves structures. Europe represents political progress and an objective of the first order after the peoples that comprise it experienced terrible wars throughout the ages. The Organization of African Unity has not fulfilled all of its promises yet if we are to judge by the remarks made in Addis Ababa on the occasion of this structure's fiftieth anniversary. But it exists. In the same way, the alliance that brings together the States of North, Central and South America at least allows the countries long exploited by the United States to make their voices heard and to have a platform for dialogue.

The people of our time that we admire most all wanted to put an end to violence by advocating non-violence and reconciliation. Mahatma Gandhi, Reverend Martin Luther King, General de Gaulle, Chancellor Adenauer and Nelson Mandela are among them. Some paid with their lives for their denunciation of intolerable forms of violence. Their commitment has shown humanity some new ways. They have become reference points. But progress is slow! If we take the African continent alone, blind violence and hatred reappear constantly which kill thousands of innocent women, children and men. This destroys the state structures, administrations, and production and trade circuits and brings along in its funeral cart drugs, prostitution, corruption, the trafficking of children and women, and the destruction of the environment. It would be too depressing to take a look at the other continents.

My objective is surely not to discourage you. I only hope that we will be realists. Welcoming another is not a spontaneous attitude in a human being. It results from a moral choice that calls for determination and courage. This is what I would like to explain in detail now:

© Welcome implies considering another as one's equal. In a first movement that should not be denied, differences of all kinds (race, culture, language, religion, customs...) can appear to be threats. To welcome requires not only going beyond one's differences but appreciating



them as riches of humanity. This is going to call for some efforts: to learn another language, for example, to get familiar with another's cuisine, and to respect customs that may seem strange to us. As a result, we also have the stimulating experience of the relativity of our own culture, food and clothing habits. We learn humility: we are not the center of the world, our culture is not universal. There is surely nothing more educational than to experience being a foreigner somewhere, to live outside one's country and cultural area. In fact, there is a false equality which consists in wanting another to be similar to me. Real equality is accepting another just as he is, with everything that makes up his person.



➤ Welcome is respecting another's humanity and desire to be taken into consideration. One of the basic principles of welcome is that one man equals one man. One of my former teachers at the Catholic Institute of Paris would say to us, *"Love begins with respect"*. Welcome is respect for another. This means that his humanity, even in the complexity of the countless threads that weave it, must be respected. We cannot say to the man or woman we welcome, *"I welcome you, but it would be good for you to change your clothes, language, religion, food habits..."*. Every one of us wants to be considered for what we are. We know how another's outlook can reveal an aspect of ourselves to us that we would not like to face. But it is precisely in this person-to-person encounter that the truth can come out unharmed. Let us remember that love begins with respect.

➤ Welcome is having trust in another. When we welcome someone, our body attitude is a language in itself. We go towards another by reaching out our hand or opening our arms. This means that we go towards him completely unarmed: very concretely, we expose and present our breast to him, the most vulnerable part of the human body because the heart is located there. Through our body we tell him that our intention is peace and a desire to meet. Our outstretched hand, our open arms are already a sign of the trust that we want to show him. Let us be well aware of body language. Gestures can betray our words completely. To trust is to take risks. After all, we are not sure about anything. And if this other was a thief, a liar, a cheater...what do I know? Trust, as we can see, is like circular reasoning, and we make the following bet: trust leads to trust.

➤ To welcome another is to dissipate his fears: will I be received? And how will I be received? Who will I find to give me information and support? In this city, in this country, I do not know anything or anyone, what will I do? If you have ever traveled alone, all of these questions have come into your mind. Landing alone in the airport of a large city of the world and knowing that someone is waiting for you gives you priceless relief. But if you have to go it alone, this takes considerable effort: you are afraid of making a mistake, of not being understood if you do not speak the language, of being robbed by taxi drivers and all the minor airport workers. The man or woman who welcomes you really makes you feel at ease. Here the famous golden rule we find in the Gospel and in many founding documents of other religions and civilizations takes on all its value: *"Do to others whatever you would have them do to you"* (Mt 7:12). If we put ourselves in the place of the one we have to welcome, what words would we like to hear, and what attitudes and services would we like to find? This little exercise is very educational.

➤ To welcome another is to give a chance to harmony, to peace, and to drive away the risks of violence. Welcome calls for welcome. The seafarers you are going to receive will bring witness beyond what they will find here. Maybe they will become the promoters of this same welcome in others ports of the world. And you, on your part, may have the chance to exchange your experiences with other Christians who welcome in other ports of the world. This is really the way to build peace and harmony very concretely.

➤ To welcome another is to choose the relationship and break the isolation and anonymity. We really have the most efficient communication tools of all times – cell phones, television, computers and all the networks we can connect to - but this does not prevent our contemporaries from suffering from loneliness, anonymity and not being taken into consideration...Whether we like it or not, the encounter passes through person-to-person contact. Even if we send out messages in all directions, we tell our correspondents that we hope to meet them soon. A human being is a relational being, a social being in that sense. Naturally, we can say that today seafarers are really lucky because through the electronic means they can communicate with their families and friends

and get information from the whole world. Nonetheless, nothing can replace a human relation, contact, another's eyes and an outstretched hand.

➤ To conclude this brief reflection on welcome, I would like to stress that to be willing to welcome others is a moral choice that calls for courage and determination. It is not a spontaneous attitude, even if some civilizations have developed the culture of hospitality more than others. To welcome is always to overcome fears, prejudices and cliches, all reflexes that can lead to exclusion and violence. These remarks of a more anthropological nature also indicate that we Christians do not have a monopoly on welcome, and thank goodness for that! This observations reinforces the need for you and for the success of your activity to form an alliance with other institutions and groups that are concerned with the welfare of the seafarers passing through the port of Dakar.

2. Christ puts at the heart of a disciple's life, his disciple's, the need to welcome because of the God that he is with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

In the Gospel according to Saint Mark, one account gives the theology of welcome an unsuspected scope. In Chapter 9, verse 30, Jesus is teaching his disciples and announces his arrest, his violent death and resurrection to them . The Evangelist adds: *"But they did not understand the saying, and they were afraid to question him"* (32). Then the small group goes to Capharnaum. Once they are *"inside the house"*, Jesus asks them what they were discussing along the way. The apostles are a little shamefaced because along the way they were discussing who was the greatest among them. It is true that when several men get together, a leader is needed or someone who imposes himself as the leader. The apostles showed by their rather lively discussion that they really did not understand anything when Jesus announced his execution. For them, the Messiah they were waiting for could certainly not resemble a man condemned to death. They were so sure of the Messiah's image that they had in their heads that Jesus' words had no meaning for them.

Jesus' words that follow are fundamental: *"If anyone wishes to be first, he shall be the last of all and the servant of all"*. Often Christ shows that the human ways of counting and classifying are not part of the Spirit of God. So the first shall be the last. The greatest one is the servant of his brothers. The first will be the last.

Moreover, by saying that in God these classifications have no place or meaning, Jesus reveals God's own heart to us. He, the Father's envoy, made himself the last of all and the servant of all. He reveals, in his infinite love, that God becomes the humble servant of his children, men. And as if to illustrate this essential word, Jesus takes a child, puts him in the midst of his apostles and embraces him. In Jesus' time, in Judea and in Galilee (Capharnaum is located in Galilee), as in the rest of the Roman Empire, a child did not have much social importance. Saint Matthew recounts that the disciples rebuffed the children when the people wanted to present them to the Lord (Cf. *Mt 19:13-15*). We should not think that they were evil men! No! They were behaving just like everyone else in that era. Children, so to speak, were of insignificant value. This highlights Jesus' action and words all the more. So after he embraced them, Christ said: *"Whoever receives one child such as this in my name, receives me; and whoever receives me, receives not me but the one who sent me"* (37). Jesus not only presents himself as the last one of all and the servant of all, but he identifies with the littlest one, the one who does not count, the one who is rebuffed. Moreover, to welcome this little one, this child, is to welcome God himself. Therefore, starting from a rather absurd discussion among the apostles, Jesus gives us an essential revelation about God himself.

A little while later, when Jesus announces, for the third time, his passion and resurrection to his disciples, James and John get involved in a nonsensical dialogue about Jesus' words. They claim the right to sit at the right and left of the Lord since they were convinced that Jesus would re-establish the Kingdom of Israel in all its splendor and be the long awaited Messiah-King, the son of David. Let us listen to Jesus' answer to them: *"Whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all. For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many"* (*Mk 10:44-45*). So here we have the Son's mission announced very clear-





ly: to serve and give his life in ransom for many. This mission has its roots in God's own life, in his being. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit live among themselves a love of service, a service of giving, with no calculations. Precisely this love is God's essence and this divine life overflows down to us in the gift which God, through the Son, gives us of his life.

Also, the Lord presents himself to us in the greatest humility. If he appeared as an oriental prince covered with gold and diamonds, he would contradict God's essence. If he rose up as an implacable, all-powerful king, he would deny his act of creation which is to create before him a free, responsible man. He comes in our midst us as a child.

One biblical account has a major place in the Jewish and the Christian faiths: Abraham is a nomad. He pitched his tent among the oak grove of Mamre. It was hot. Three travelers arrive. Abraham bows down before them and offers them hospitality. The old man hesitates: who are they? The text designates these three men several times as *the Lord*. It is then that "*the Lord*" makes the promise of a child to Abraham and Sarah who are both elderly. This makes the old woman laugh. And Isaac, the one who would be born, means, "*God smiles*". This mysterious encounter is commented on by the author of the Letter to the Hebrews: "*Let mutual love continue. Do not neglect hospitality, for through it some have unknowingly entertained angels*" (He 13:1-2).

Jewish and Christian believers know in faith that God does not manifest himself in noise, uproar or thunder. In the Book of Kings, the prophet Elijah goes to meet the Lord because he heard "*a tiny whispering sound*" (Cf. 1 K 19:12). So they become watchmen attentive to God's passage. This is why the Evangelist Saint John also writes as if with great sadness: "*He was in the world, and the world came to be through him, but the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, but his own people did not accept him*" (Jn 1:10-11).

At the end of this quick biblical glance, I invite you to remember two things. God, the God of Jesus Christ, asks people to welcome him. He presents himself to them as a child, a servant, a man nailed to a cross. He comes to *his own*, but people have certain ideas about God in their heads and so they do not recognize him, they reject him and kill him. Jesus will make a very close connection between welcoming God and welcoming others, especially the least ones, the poorest and children. Saint John says that someone who says, "*I love God*" but hates his brother is a liar: that is, he belongs to the devil (Cf. 1 Jn

4:20).

Jesus declared forcefully that there is only one commandment: "*You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind...You shall love your neighbor as yourself*" (Mt 22: 37,39). The tempter constantly tries to make us believe that we can separate love of God from love of neighbor, love of ourselves from love of neighbor and of God. No, in love it all hangs together. The love we have for our brothers attests to the truth of the love we have for God, our Father. If our love for God is real, we can only assess ourselves and bring our love to our brothers. Welcoming another, and in particular a foreigner, is a form of love of neighbor that brings us ever closer to the love of God who came among us as the child of the Virgin Mary and the young man from Nazareth.

3. In evangelization, welcome occupies a key place. You are going to receive a mandate for this.

First of all, I would like to present what I have developed in the second point in another way and then put welcome as a particular moment of evangelization and explain why you receive a mandate to carry out this mission.

3.1. I will borrow the following reflections from the theologian, Father Joseph Moingt: "*The great religious revolution brought about by Jesus is that he opened people to a way of access to God other than the sacred: the profane voice of the relation with one's neighbor, the ethical relation lived as service to others and even self-sacrifice. He became the uni-*

versal savior because he opened this way of access to all men...In other words, to all men, regardless of their religion, Jesus paid with his own life this reversal of values in the religious world: by now love of neighbor passes before worship and the Temple". So fraternal welcome and loving another is in a certain way a proclamation of the living God, the Father of all men. In the Gospel, Jesus endorses the great words of the prophet Hosea: "For it is love that I desire, not sacrifice, and knowledge of God rather than holocausts" (6:6) (Cf. Mt :13). Our welcome reveals something of God's goodness and attention to every one of his children.



3,2. We can place your mission under the patronage of Saint Paul who confronted the sea many times. This is what he writes to the Christians from the town of Ephesus: "Be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving one another as God has forgiven you in Christ...So be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us and handed himself over for us as a sacrificial offering to God for a fragrant aroma" (Eph 4:32; 5:1-2). Here are three instructions for living this ministry of welcome.

Be full of generosity. "Be kind to one another". This means building one's life on the gift of self, without any ulterior motives or limits. You will meet some seafarers that you will never see again, and so all the more reason to love them unselfishly, gratuitously and generously. This generosity lets me accept another into my life because by welcoming him I decide that my life belongs to him. To welcome is to accept to be bothered, to go perhaps where we did not think we would go. I propose that you listen to Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger before he was elected Pope Benedict XVI: "You are not built like an island; you are not a me who relies on himself. But you are built for love and so to give yourself, to renounce and be pruned of yourself. Only if you give yourself, if you lose yourself, as Christ says, you will live". Generosity also calls for discernment. This does not mean saying yes systematically to everything. It passes through dialogue and the extent of our abilities. It is first of all an attitude of openness to others and kindness a priori: in a word, of love.

Be full of tenderness. Saint Paul says: "Have heart". This surely does not mean being sappy. Tenderness is the opposite of hardness. Tenderness is to caress the forehead of a child who is crying rather than ordering him to shut up. Each of us has a fundamental need to feel welcomed, recognized, appreciated and loved. In the look I have for another this tenderness will be perceived. In the Gospel of the recent 11th ordinary Sunday, we saw the look that Jesus gave to the woman who sinned which Simon, his host, condemned. His look is so pure, fine and good that it turns all the women's clumsy actions into acts of love, welcome and respect. In your prayers, you as visitors will ask God often to share the pureness and goodness of his look. And beyond a look, tenderness is found in the "yes" with which I accept someone's request. A yes that is distant or given without the spontaneity of love will not give him assurance and will leave him dissatisfied, frustrated for affection and friendship. In that same encounter, in that woman who did not say a word but spoke through her actions. Jesus recognized her great desire for forgiveness and faith. He gave her the former and confirmed the latter (Cf. Lk 7:36-50).

Avoid anger. "Forgive one another". God asked Jonah to go and visit the inhabitants of the great city of Nineveh to call them to conversion, but he was convinced that he would not succeed. The people of Nineveh, men and beasts, invoked God strongly. "This was greatly displeasing to Jonah, and he became angry" (Jon 4:1). With humor the Lord said to him: "Have you reason to be angry?" (4:4) Any violent reaction by a human being is an expression of fear, insecurity and a lack of recognition. To put oneself in a situation of welcome is to try to banish all fears and doubts from our minds. And the best protection against anger is mutual recognition and trust. The seafarers that you will visit may have some apprehension when they see you arrive. It is up to you to establish this relation of trust and recognition quickly in order to curtail any aggressiveness or withdrawal into self. Through welcome you take part in Jesus' redeeming mission. Through his cross he put hatred to death and destroyed all the spirals of violence that grip humans (Cf. Eph 2:16). Through the resurrection of his

Son, God, our Father, announced to us that death and violence are conquered and will never have the last word. Through welcome we share in this victory.

3.3. In Christian life, to welcome another is to take part in the Church's mission. The Church is based on four pillars: to proclaim the Gospel of Christ, to celebrate the mystery of Christ, to live according to Christ's charity, and to build communion in the Church and among men. All Christians, each in his or her way, are called to live this mission of the Church. Some will be engaged more in proclamation, for example, by taking part in the catechesis of children or in the catechumenate; others will work in the liturgy, and others in the Church's services such as health care, teaching, caritas...But each one through his or her commitment will have to contribute to building communion in the Church and among men. And what about for you, ship visitors?

You will put Christ's charity into practice. In fact, through your attention to the seafarers passing through the port of Dakar, you will be witnesses to the Lord's tenderness for everyone. Everyone has value in God's eyes and the Lord loves him. This is what you will give witness to mainly. But as you can see, nothing prevents you, through your activity, from proclaiming the good news of Christ. Moreover, for these men who cross the seas all year long, your presence alone will be good news. Then, if the docking period allows it, you can celebrate the Lord with them. To welcome with respect and love is an integral part of the Church's mission.

You will implement the Church's mission of communion concretely. Through your welcome of the seafarers, you will proclaim that what God says to his people is peace (Cf. *Ps* 84). You will show that fraternity is possible and that the walls of separation do not reach up to heaven. You will say to these seafarers that they are your brothers because of the Risen Christ. In this way, in a way suited to you, you will build communion in the Church. If some seafarers are Catholic, they will know through you that they are part of God's great family and that in your country they are at home because they are in the house of the Father. You will also build communion among men. You will give witness to the end of all violence because of Christ's cross and you will offer these seafarers a time of fraternity.

Why do you receive an explicit mission? After all, we could say that welcome is really every Christian's duty. Of course. But the Church wanted to show her very special attention to these men who spend their lives on the seas. She created the *Apostleship of the Sea* and invited all the dioceses that have a commercial port on their territory to be concerned with the seafarers that disembark and stay for a few hours or a few days in their city. In this way, a vast network of solidarity, charity and Christian life is formed throughout the ports of the world. You are associated with this apostolate through the mission that you receive. It will be demanding because the arrival of ships will require you to be available. Moreover, as you have noted, the life of a commercial port obeys internal rules regarding security and access on ships. This mission must in some way be accepted by the port authorities of Dakar. In this way, you will enjoy official recognition. This is why the Cardinal Archbishop, through the responsibility he entrusted to Father Christophe Buirette, gives you this Church mission.

Here are some reflections which I hope will help you in carrying out your mission of welcome and visits. I wish you a fruitful ministry and may God bless you!

We had a *very beautiful Christmas celebration* at the maritime parish of the port of Dakar with more than 200 participants (there had not been a Christmas Mass for years). Seafarers came with, for the first time, students from the *National Maritime Training School*! The Mass was at 8:00 pm and they stayed until midnight.

All day on December 24th we held an "Evangelization Day" with all the available *Ship Visitors* who seemed very pleased with this experience. More than half of the *Visitors* are "young professionals" from 28-35 years of age. Now there is a young Senegalese religious priest (OMI) who helps me regularly and seems interested in this apostolate which is new for him, in addition to the six seminarians from three Congregations who are very enthusiastic!

With them, after their training in October and November, we are now 35 *Ship Visitors* who are working every week. Thanks be to God!

P. Christophe Buirette

AOS-GB helps repatriate crew of detained ship

The ship, described by trade union Nautilus as “**one-of-the-worst-examples-of-substandard-shipping**” it had seen, has been detained in the Port of Tyne, UK, since being arrested on 12 November 2013. AoS says it has been providing practical support to the crew of the vessel, and now, all the crew, including 11 Filipino crewmembers who flew home on the afternoon of January 9, have gone back home. Only the ship’s captain and chief engineer remain.

“There were mixed emotions. Obviously, the crew are delighted to be going home to their families but they have yet to receive their outstanding wages,” AOS Tyne port chaplain Paul Atkinson said. He added AOS was also able to secure free passage home for the ship’s Romanian captain, who is expected to be repatriated next week. The Filipino crew were paid for October and November and partially paid for December, as were the Romanian crew members.

Although when the ship arrived in port it had 15 days’ worth of provisions, this only lasted two or three days because of faulty refrigeration equipment. Since then AoS and other port-based agencies have been providing food and drinking water to the crew with the help of the local community, who AoS says have been very supportive. “We will continue to assist the remaining crew in any way we can until all are safely repatriated,” said Mr Atkinson.



AOS Tyne port chaplain Paul Atkinson, who has been assisting the crew of the ‘Donald Duckling’

AOS-GB assists crew of Tilbury detained ship



Deacon Paul Glock with a visiting seafarer at the Tilbury Seafarers’ Center

The distressed Filipino crew of the mv Isis have not been paid their wages over the last few months after the ship’s Greek owner fell into financial problems.

AoS port chaplain Deacon Paul Glock has been visiting the crew and providing them with practical and pastoral support, along with Deacon Joern Hille, the German Seamen’s chaplain.

The vessel was first arrested in Port Arthur, Texas, USA in September, after its owner encountered financial difficulties and was unable to pay the crew. Here the AOS and the Port Arthur International Seafarers’ Center supported the crew and began advocacy to secure their unpaid wages.

The mv Isis then sailed to the Caribbean, and on to the UK where the crew hoped to get paid and get off the ship. It was anchored off Southend from December 15 to January 2 before getting to Thames Refinery at Silvertown, London.

The Maritime and Coastguard Agency then detained the ship for deficiencies and the vessel was then moved to Tilbury for repairs. Meanwhile, the International Transport Workers Federation is helping the crew secure unpaid wages and the expectation is that the crew will be paid before leaving Tilbury.

However, while waiting for a settlement, it is the seafarers and their families who have to bear the brunt of any fallout.

“One crew member has not been paid for four months, and as a result the electricity supply in his family home back in the Philippines has been disconnected,” says Deacon Glock. Deacon Glock handed over Christmas presents to the crew when they visited the seafarers’ centre. The Port of Tilbury, which has a strong tradition of supporting seafarers’ welfare, has given full support to the Apostleship of the Sea and other agencies in supporting the crew of the Isis.

VICTIMS OF HIGH SEA SLAVERY FIND THEMSELVES STRANDED IN CAPE TOWN

On October 13, 2013 I came to Cape Town to do my pastoral year. I was assigned to collaborate with the AOS of Cape Town. Because the majority of the seafarers are Indonesians and Filipinos, I would be expected to do much more for Indonesians seafarers, because I speak the language.

I started working on Tuesday 19 October 2013. I go regularly four times a week, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday.

In the first and second week, I was shocked by very sad stories that I couldn't imagine before. Stories of injustice, not being paid for years, being deceived by the agent in Indonesia, being violated by the captain, being punished, and finally being abandoned by the Company that they work for. I contacted the Indonesian consulate and the ITF and explained this situation.

By the third and fourth week ITF and Indonesian consulate took decision to bring the case to the court and they invited a lawyer, Mr. Alan Goldberg, to help them in this case. In this week, I went almost every day to help with the interpretation between them and the lawyer.

Seven ship boats were abandoned by their captains, after it was discovered that they were practicing illegal fishing. The crew was not paid for two years and was forced to work more forcibly.

In this page we publish the report of Rofinus, Scalabrian seminarian from Indonesia, who was very close to these seafarers also because he acted as an interpreter with the attorney who brought the case to the court of South Africa.

Today, all the seafarers have been repatriated, but without having received the amount due to them.

In the fourth week the seafarers were running out of food and water. In a day Mr. Cassiem (ITF) took the initiative to give them food for lunch and we brought some of them to the house of Mr. Cassiem to cook. The day after, the Indonesian consulate called us up to ask if we could help to provide some food for the seafarers. And at the same time the Scalabrini Community and other people provided some provisions.

On November 25 and 26 we brought some of the seafarers to take shower in our seminary and I was happy to see them relax, instead of staying on the ship in a small room with 10 other persons.

I was really happy when the case was already in the hand of the lawyer and he was going to bring the case to court. But yesterday I was shocked when one of them called me to explain that the people from immigration was there to ask them to leave. I was sad and I didn't agree because it meant that they would return without salary after working more than two years and their case is still in the process. So yesterday afternoon we took some meeting with Indonesian consulate and ITF to talk about this situation.

And this morning Saturday 30 nov. 2013 at 03.00 o'clock a.m. the seafarers phoned me to inform us that the Immigration Officers came to wake them up and to transfer them.

And they have no idea where it was. We couldn't go at that moment and I called Mr. Cassiem (ITF) and he was already there. We have contacted the consulate and they informed us that they were being transferred to Pretoria.



Two of the 75 Indonesian fishermen living on seven rusted Taiwanese-registered fishing boats sit at Cape Town Harbour on November 28, 2013. Picture: AFP PHOTO/RODGER BOSCH

**FAITH, CHARITY AND ECCLESIAL UNITY
IN THE SHIP'S CHAPLAIN'S PASTORAL CARE
OF THE PEOPLE OF THE SEA**

Fr. Emanuele (Pasquale) Iovannella, OFM Conv.,
Ship's Chaplain
Shanghai (China), October 20, 2013

China, South Korea, Japan and Taiwan are countries that we visit weekly. The Church in Asia, although it is young, manifests an exponential maturity of faith and evangelical radicality. Although physically far from the center of Christianity, it is radically inserted into the heart of the universal Church. The Catholic faithful from these countries who live the experience on board the “Costa Atlantica” are not too many numerically, but they are deep-rooted in witness to a daily faith and they take part regularly in the offering of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. Thanks to the great evangelizing task of the local Churches, through their bishops, priests and lay people involved in the ordinary pastoral care in conditions that are not always easy, we can tell that they have deep roots in believed and lived faith.

With admiration I gathered together the stories of a Chinese couple who are over 90. They recounted with passion and clarity the experience of their life of faith in a political and social context adverse to the Catholic faith in China, experiences of suffering caused by the Communist persecution. To live the Catholic faith clandestinely in the acute period of Chinese Communism was a harsh human and spiritual ordeal, like that of the first apostolic community persecuted and marginalized from society and simple human rights only because it was Catholic. With tears in their eyes, they told me how they were forced to hide to not be discovered when they went to take part in the celebration of Holy Mass on Sundays and weekdays, often in private homes. When the Sunday celebration was canceled for security reasons, although the faithful could not be present, they were in spiritual communion with the priest at the time when he celebrated Mass in his home. Notices and announcements about appointments for catechesis, prayer meetings and spiritual meetings were made through expedients: slips of paper with news were put in tea bags. *“Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you (falsely) because of me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven. Thus they persecuted the prophets who were before you” (Mt 5:11-12).*



The Church, “Mother” and “Teacher” of the people of the sea!

Pope Francis, on May 24, 2013, at the Plenary of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, said: *“The Church is mother and her motherly attention is expressed with special tenderness and closeness to those who are obliged to flee their own country and exist between rootlessness*

and integration. This tension destroys people. Christian compassion — this 'suffering with', compassion — is expressed first of all in the commitment to obtain knowledge of the events that force people to leave their homeland, and, where necessary, to give voice to those who cannot manage to make their cry of distress and oppression heard. By doing this you also carry out an important task in sensitizing Christian communities to the multitudes of their brethren scarred by wounds that mark their existence: violence, abuse, the distance from family love, traumatic events, flight from home, uncertainty about the future in refugee camps. These are all dehumanizing elements and must spur every Christian and the whole community to practical concern".

To the participants in the XXIII World Congress of the Apostleship of the Sea held in November in the Vatican, Benedict XVI said: *"Today too the Church sails the seas to bring the Gospel to all the nations and the network of your presence in all the ports of call around the world, your daily visits to ships in port and your brotherly welcome to crews during their layovers — are a visible sign of your affectionate attention to those who cannot receive ordinary pastoral care. This world of the sea, with the continuous migration of people today, must take into account the complex effects of globalization and, unfortunately, must come to grips with situations of injustice, especially when the freedom of a ship's crew to go ashore is restricted, when they are abandoned altogether along with the vessels on which they work, when they risk piracy at sea and the damage of illegal fishing".*

Through the specific pastoral care for the people of the sea and all those involved in peregrination around the world, the Church builds bridges of pastoral solidarity so that the Gospel will be ever more the *"compass that permits the Barque of the Church to put out into the deep in the midst of storms or on calm and peaceful waves, to sail safely and to reach her destination"* (Ibid.).

"A special pastoral care..."

To the Pontifical Council's Plenary Pope Francis launched the following warning: *"And here I would also like to remind you of the attention that every Pastor and Christian community must pay to the journey of faith of Christian refugees and Christians uprooted from their situations by force, as well as of Christian emigrants. These people need special pastoral care that respects their traditions and accompanies them to harmonious integration into the ecclesial situations in which they find themselves. May our Christian communities really be places of hospitality, listening and communion!"*

The activity of the ship's chaplain is a ministerial and ecclesial activity. It is an eloquent concretization of the Church's concern to perpetuate visibly and daily the Lord's presence through the *Eucharistic sacrifice*, the treasure, source and summit of the Church's life and ministerial activity. The ship chaplain's qualified physical presence and action make visible *"in persona Christi"* the Lord and the Church in the midst of the seafarers for the time and theological space they are inside the ship so that the Church, *"the Lord's boat"*, will become a Christian community that accompanies the *people of the sea's* path of life along the routes of the seven seas.

The solicitude of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People on the worldwide level, and of the Apostleship of the Sea on the local level, is a vital sign of the Church's attention to migrants and, specifically, to the people of the sea, in perfect compliance with John Paul II's 1997 Motu Proprio *"Stella Maris"*.

Pax et Bonum!

A « CRUISE TERMINAL » IN MARSEILLE BLESSED BY H.E. MSGR. GEORGES PONTIER

In order to regain the space that was once offered us for the purpose of welcoming seafarers that come on shore during their stopover at Marseilles, the port authorities had commissioned the building of a new terminal, placed at our disposal. It is a little more distant from the moorings most commonly used, and so forces seafarers to travel a much longer distance. We are currently considering how to improve the organization of their transportation to and from the building. With respect to the previous building, the terminal has the advantage of being larger, brand new, and more functional. The computer room is spacious and allows for a larger number of seafarers to contact their families. This was particularly important in the month of December, during which Filipino seafarers were left without any news of their friends and loved ones after the typhoon hit their homeland.

The Marseilles Association for the Welcome of Seafarers (*A.M.A.M. - Associazione Marsigliese per l'Accoglienza dei Marittimi*), founded 20 years ago by the "Mission de la Mer", is responsible for the terminal that welcomed 33,565 seafarers in 2013 alone (in both the new and old terminals). The association is very attentive to the material, social and spiritual needs of seafarers. It has a special solidarity fund, with the scope of assisting seafarers abandoned at port, or those particularly tried due to accident, sickness or other serious problems. Currently, we are trying to establish the direct sponsorship of a welcome center for those Filipinos suffering the effects of last November's typhoon.

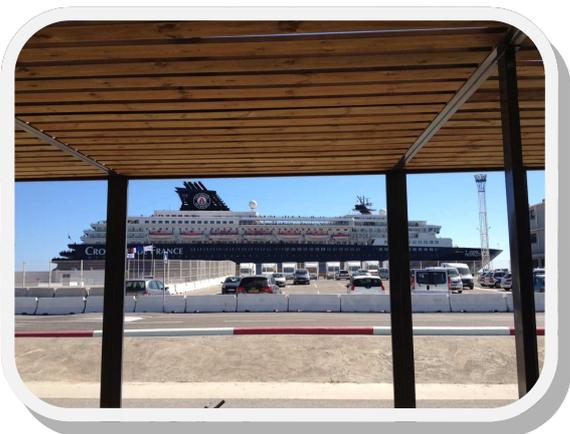
This place of welcome, modestly called a "cruise terminal", was inaugurated on October 28th, 2013, and blessed on December 21st at the request of the *A.M.A.M.* by His Excellency, the Most Rev. Georges Pontier, Archbishop of Marseilles and President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of France. The Archbishop blessed the building in the presence of priests, members of the "Mission de la Mer", port authorities and members of maritime associations, as well as the numerous volunteers of the Association.

The Gospel passage chosen was taken from St. Matthew (chapter 25, verses 31-46): *Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.* Some of the Gospel verses particularly moved the volunteers present: *I was a stranger, and you welcomed me; I was naked, and you clothed me; I was sick, and you visited me.* During the Advent season, during which the Lord invites us to be vigilant, the role of the Association as a "watchman" (through its presence and welcome) was recalled to mind. In this way, [it is through our presence that] we come to hear of the problems of seafarers, and that, for example, we came to discover that the Filipino crew of the "Aidamar" had wished for Christmas day Mass to be celebrated onboard. Also, given that the terminal is under the care of the Apostleship of the Sea, the AOS of Great Britain transmitted the request of the seafarers of the "Queen Elizabeth II" to be able to participate at the Mass in Marseilles, as well. Everything was organized in cooperation with the local "Mission de la Mer", but unfortunately, the ship was rerouted to Barcelona due to bad weather. We immediately informed the AOS there, and a Mass was thus celebrated there for them. In particular, we would like to thank Fr. Percival Redona for having celebrated onboard the "Aidamar", as well as Fr. Michal Bendyk, Pierre Thong and Msgr. Jean-Marc Aveline, who had proposed to offer their services in different languages.

The "Mission de la Mer" offered a commemorative plaque in honor of the blessing, on which the Cross of Camargue is represented. The Cross, which resembles the hull of a ship with mast and sails, represents the three theological virtues: the Cross symbolizes faith, the anchor stands for hope, and the heart signifies love.

The meeting ended with a fraternal banquet, in buffet style, prepared by the *A.M.A.M.* and the "Mission de la Mer", during which everyone was able to express their personal gratitude to the Church of Marseilles (for its engagement and attention to the needs of all seafarers) in the person of its Archbishop, His Excellency, the Most Rev. Georges Pontier.

Deacon Jean-Philippe Rigaud
Coordinator for AOS, Diocese of Marseilles



THE STAR OF THE AOS IS SHINING IN CASABLANCA

Fr. Arnaud de Boissieu

Since February 2013, I have the authorization to visit the seafarers in the port of Casablanca. According to the facts listed below, I do only ships visiting:

- there is a seamen's club in Casablanca since many years (although not so much active for the seafarers); - about 50% of the seafarers are not allowed to go ashore for problem of visa; - many other seafarers have not enough time to go ashore.

So I think that ships visiting is the most important thing to do for the seafarers. I visit only the seafarers aboard the cargoes, although there are many cruise ships calling in the port.

Since last February, I visited already more than 500 ships. Some ships are liners here, so I visit them every week, or every month. I visit 5 or 6 ships a day, 6 days a week. Many ships calling in Casablanca are quite small, trading between Europe and Morocco, calling twice a week in some ports. But small ships means also short stops, and I often meet some seafarers who do not have any possibility to go ashore during their nine months contract.

The aims of the visits aboard are:

- 1: to give to all the seafarers a warm welcome to Casablanca
- 2: to distribute a few information, like a map of the port, some reading material, what is available in the city, etc... (I can find my small map aboard some ships I never visited! The seafarers help each others)
- 3: to invite the seafarers to religious talk or to the prayer, in the city or aboard the ships.
- 4: and of course, I have to do some special work when a crew has some difficulties: ships detained (2 ships this year), seafarers without wages, seafarers waiting their relevers for many months...

There is only one limit to these visits : the bishop of Rabat requested the authorization to visit the Christian seafarers in this country where any kind of proselytism is strictly prohibited. According to this request, I do not visit ships with an obviously Muslim crew like Syrian or Turkish crew.

It is very important to have a small presence of Stella Maris in this kind of country:

- The seafarers are first surprised to find a branch of Stella Maris, then they are so happy and many of them do a link with the worldwide network of Stella Maris. This is a good way to keep our network alive.
- Some seafarers are questioning me whether it is allowed to be Christian here or to pray in this country. Some of them are afraid to call me for a mass on board their vessel. They do not know how many policemen, watchmen, agents or stevedores (all of them know that I am a priest) ask me often if I made a prayer aboard this or this vessel!

At this time, I am alone for this work. It would be good to have a small team to visit more seafarers and when I am not available. And perhaps to have another branch of Stella Maris in other ports of Morocco, like Jorf Lasfar.



SRI launches a Charter for Good Practice

In an important contribution to the legal support of seafarers worldwide, SRI (Seafarers' Rights International) has launched a Charter of Good Practice for the Provision of Legal Services to Seafarers.

"For seafarers, seeking the advice of a lawyer can be one of the most stressful events of their career," says Deirdre Fitzpatrick, Executive Director of SRI. "Not only are they dealing with the effects of the incident that has led them to that point, but they are also pursuing a course of action which too often seems fraught with confusion, difficulties and worries about expense.

"The first hurdle often is to find a reputable lawyer who is knowledgeable about seafarers' rights' issues, and who is willing and able to represent the seafarer at a reasonable cost. "The Charter is a set of professional ethics to bind lawyers working in any jurisdiction around the world, taking into account the particular concerns of seafarers. It provides reassurance that the seafarer client will be treated in a certain way. "As part of our work, we frequently encounter seafarers in need of legal assistance. Whilst we do not recommend one lawyer or law firm over another, we hope it can assist seafarers to have access to a list of lawyers who have signed up to and accepted that they are bound by the principles in the Charter.

"Subscribers to the Charter are lawyers professionally licensed to practice in their respective jurisdictions. We are delighted to say that the response to the Charter so far has been excellent and over 100 lawyers from 50 different law firms across 34 countries worldwide have committed to it.

"SRI will keep the list of subscribing lawyers and law firms under review and we call on other lawyers with relevant expertise to visit our website and to contact us if they wish to subscribe to the Charter. We hope also that other bodies in the industry will work with us to maximise the number of expert lawyers to whom seafarers can have ready access."

Full details of the SRI Charter of Good Practice for the Provision of Legal Services to Seafarers, and subscribing lawyers can be found at http://www.seafarersrights.org/seafarers_subjects/using_lawyers

For further information, please contact: Elaborate Communications
Debra Massey - dmassey@elabor8.co.uk +44(0) 1296 682 356

New directory to help seafarers launched

The 'Port Chaplain Directory 2014' contains the phone numbers and e-mail addresses of the Catholic maritime agency's chaplains in over 260 ports worldwide.

AOS.GB director of development John Green said, "We have chaplains in most of the world's ports, and this year's directory also contains contact details for a good number of ports not previously included such as Jersey and Poole in the UK, La Spezia and the unfortunately now infamous Lampedusa in Italy as well as Naoetsu in Japan and Long Beach and Pascagoula in the USA. The directory also lists, AOS's new Arctic port chaplain in Rankin Inlet, Canada.

The directory is available both online and in hard copy and port authorities or shipping companies wanting copies for their crews should get in contact with the charity.

"Providing up to date and accurate details of all our chaplains will be a valuable resource for both seafarers and many others working in the shipping industry." said Green. "The directory enables our chaplains to provide holistic care for seafarers in port after port worldwide. It proved critical in the aftermath of the recent Typhoon Haiyan, enabling our port chaplains – not least those working on the ground in the Philippines - to quickly provide seafarers with information and contact details of other chaplains around the world.

AOS chaplains provide both practical and spiritual support to seafarers. This ranges from providing transport to shops or a local church to hospital visiting and mediating in disputes over pay and conditions.

Accompanying pic: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/apostleshipofthesea/11237566746/>

A pdf of the directory is at <http://www.apostleshipofthesea.org.uk/sites/default/files/imce/AOS%20International%20Directory%20December2013.pdf>

STELLA MARIS IS “*duc in altum*” FOR THE SEAFARERS

The 50th anniversary of graduating from the Navigational Faculty
of the State Maritime School in Gdynia (1963/64)

It is a comforting sign that after many years seafarers get organized on the basis of the Apostleship of the Sea. They started with the Mass which I celebrated for them in our Gdynia Maritime Church which has become the maritime, spiritual centre for the People of the Sea on the Polish coast. Seafarers from Poland and abroad gathered here. It was a “*duc in altum*” for them. These are the words that blessed John Paul II used introducing the Church into 3rd millennium.



During the Mass they remembered their friends who lost their lives at sea, three captains among them: Eugeniusz Arciszewski – the captain of “Leros Strength”, Leszek Krogulski – the captain of “Kudowa Zdrój” and Marek Umiecki – the captain of “Athenian Venture”. They also prayed for the souls of the late friends who died in different circumstances. Their long list was read during the Mass. They felt the need to pray for those who passed away but also for one another in their mutual prayers.

After the Mass the graduates went for the meeting at the Maritime Academy. Next their wives joined them and they left for the Recreation Centre at Kaszuby where they could enjoy themselves in pleasant company.

They agreed to meet in December for the sharing of the wafer connected with Christmas. They know that Stella Maris is like safe port for them. This way they create community of the People of the Sea. It shows their work, which is not always appreciated to the world. They put their names into the Stella Maris chronicle. There will be more meetings of this type as we have graduates of all the faculties, every year there are their followers. This is the sign of activities of our Apostleship of the Sea to build maritime Stella Maris community.

I would like to add that during the Lenten retreat which I had in a parish church I visited some ill people in their homes. One of the men was captain who told me that his greatest satisfaction was when he brought his crew safely to the port. This is our task to bring seafarers to Stella Maris which is always the home port for the seafarers, quite apart from the time.

Fr. Edward Pracz, C.Ss.R.
AOS National Director, Gdynia, Poland
AOS Regional Coordinator for Europe

Important information

Please take note

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S.E.
Cardinal Vegliò

Vatican City

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KATHOLISCHE SEEMANNSMISSION
DER NATIONALDIREKTOR

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Hamburg, den 30. November 2013

P. Martin Löwenstein SJ

**"Seemannspastor Hans Ansgar Reinhold Förderverein Apostleship of the Sea"
is not recognized by the catholic Church.**

Eminence,

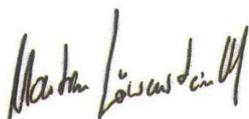
I send you greetings from the Apostelship of the Sea in Hamburg.

Recently we are confronted with the very unpleasant situation that a former lay coworker got under the influence of an elderly person who now acts against the priest and pastoral workers of Stella Maris. This former lay coworker, Mrs Schneeberger, is still in contact with many of the Apostelship around the world and is running a website that claims to represent the catholic Stella Maris Apostelship of the Sea.

Could you please inform all the other AOS chaplains and Centers that "Seemannspastor Hans Ansgar Reinhold Förderverein Apostleship of the Sea" and Mrs. Schneeberger are not working for and are not recognized by the catholic Church. I would greatly appreciate your help.

I wish you and all in your office in Rom a blessed time of expecting our Lord.

Yours in Christ



Martin Löwenstein SJ
National Director Germany

Le silence dans un seamen's club

C'était un soir :

La première vague de 9 marins est arrivée ; sans dire bonsoir, ils se sont rapidement installés près de la cheminée, autour d'une table, dans des fauteuils avec leur ordinateur, leur écouteur et leur micro. Ils n'ont dit que quelques mots entre eux pour la mise en route ; puis plus rien.

Certes, ils devaient parler longuement à leur épouse, s'amuser avec leurs enfants, assister au repas de fête de l'anniversaire de la grand-mère, puis parler à leurs amis.

Mais c'était dans le silence le plus total.

Puis la deuxième vague de 10 marins est arrivée. Très rapidement ils se sont mis à l'autre extrémité du club, du côté des ordinateurs, se sont aussi assis dans des fauteuils autour d'une table avec leur ordinateur, leur écouteur et leur micro. A peine là aussi quelques mots échangés pour s'aider ; puis plus rien. C'était le silence.

Certes ils devaient assister à ce match de basket aux USA, à ce combat de coqs à St Domingue, à ces joutes oratoires aux Philippines, à ce combat de boxe au Mexique...

Ou ils devaient aussi chercher les journaux de leurs pays, s'informer à la recherche d'une meilleure compagnie ou d'un meilleur inspecteur syndical...

Mais dans le silence le plus total.

J'étais dans mon coin et dans le silence, je communiais à leurs joies et leurs peines, leurs espérances et leurs désillusions, leurs combats et leurs victoires.

Le lendemain soir, un marin philippin est venu s'asseoir près de moi avec sa tablette; nous avons à peine échangé un sourire. Plus tard intrigué par son silence, je me penchais vers sa tablette et il fut tout heureux de me présenter son enfant de 3 mois qui dormait. Il avait été obligé de partir avant que sa femme n'accouche, comme beaucoup de marins. Puis je remarquais ensuite le visage de sa femme qui elle aussi dormait avec la tête de son petiot sur sa joue, pour sentir ses moindres réactions.

Certes la veille, ils avaient dû discuter longuement et elle avec son fils devaient être fatigués. (Il était 4 heures du matin là bas lorsque le marin appelait son épouse). Mais elle avait eu la délicatesse de laisser l'ordinateur ouvert.

Tous les deux, nous regardions, sans nous parler, émerveillés : C'est magnifique de voir une jeune maman dormir avec son gosse. Dans leur amour, un enfant était né qui ne cessait de renaître dans ce va et vient d'amour. J'étais emporté au plus profond de moi par cet amour entre tous les trois et je trouvais que pour moi c'était une nouvelle naissance. C'était le silence là bas aux Philippines ; ils dormaient. C'était le silence entre nous ; nous contemplions.

N'est ce pas là une certaine approche de vivre d'une manière intime dans cette vie trinitaire avec Dieu, son Fils et l'Esprit saint qui est l'amour : Dieu, l'amour, qui engendre dans un va et vient d'amour perpétuel l'Autre, les autres ?

Puis l'ordinateur, là bas, s'est éteint, sans doute faute de batterie. Et tous les deux, nous savourions notre bonheur.

Bernard Vincent, marin retraité, diacre.

Novembre 2013

The Haven in Harbour Project

The Prevention and Opposition to Human Trafficking



The National Federation *Stella Maris* has the pleasure of partnering in a very important project, accepted and financed by the European Commission, that is a part of the program "Prevention of and against Crime" (ISEC) - Trafficking in Human Beings.

It is called the "*Haven in Harbour*" project, of which the Federation is a partner along with the *Agorà* Association, the *Idee in Rete* Association of Rome, and the *Centro Studi Migrazioni nel Mediterraneo* of Genova. The project foresees the realization of innovative activities that give the project an experimental and "pilot" character. It is, in fact, the first time that the port is identified not only as a place of transit for seafarers, passengers, port operators and goods, but also a place of transit of potential victims of trafficking for the purposes of sexual and/or labor exploitation.

The project hopes to investigate further a poorly studied phenomenon. The victims of trafficking are actually often those that request political asylum. This is a tactic suggested to potential victims by criminal networks. In this way, in case any inspections are performed, the victims hold a voucher, and can avoid detention at Centers for Identification and Expulsion. However, this method is coercive and one that cannot be evaluated as being instrumental.

The project is therefore to provide, as part of the Territorial Commissions for the recognition of international protection, a competent analysis that is able to present the relevant aspects that relate to either case.

It is important that whoever comes into contact with the victims of trafficking (e.g.: Institutions, law enforcement, social workers, port operators, seafarers, volunteers of *Stella Maris*, etc.) be well prepared and informed with regards to these topics, and to the most appropriate approach to take.

The project, therefore, proposes the implementation of joint, multi- and cross-disciplinary training (initially in the city of Genova, and then later in the cities and ports of Trieste, Bari and Siracusa), which will involve:

- social workers engaged in the reception of asylum seekers and the victims of trafficking;
- representatives of institutional judicial authorities;
- law enforcement;
- port and marine personnel (port authorities, harbormasters, shippers, truck drivers, port operators, ship owners).

The project is to last for a period of span eighteen months, and has the following objectives:

- to develop an adequate formation process;
- to promote and develop a protocol of intervention;
- to engage civil society as a resource and stimulus for the development of new approaches;
- to better the knowledge of mechanisms in the combat against human trafficking.

The project foresees the distribution of informative brochures in different languages in all Italian ports, thanks to the cooperation of the volunteers of *Stella Maris*. Furthermore, a website will be created, and a comprehensive study of the project and its results will be published by the *Centro Studi Medi*.