



## SEA SUNDAY MESSAGE

12th July 2015



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To transport goods and products around the world, the global economy deeply rely on the maritime industry supported by a workforce of around 1.2 million seafarers, who at sea and in the oceans frequently facing the strong and powerful forces of nature, are managing ships of any kind and dimension.

As ports are built far away from the cities and because of the fast turnaround in loading and unloading the cargo, the crews sailing the ships are like “invisible” people. As individuals we do not acknowledge the importance and the benefits that the maritime profession brings to our life and we become aware of their work and sacrifices only when disasters strike.

In spite of the technological development that makes life on board more comfortable and easier communicating with their loved ones, the seafarers are forced to spend long months in a restricted space, away from their families. Restrictive and unjust regulations often limit the shore leave when in port and the continuous threat of piracy in many sea routes add stress while sailing. We are still confident that the ratification and coming into force of the Maritime Labor Convention 2006 by a growing number of countries, accompanied by effective inspections by flag States will result in a tangible improvement of the labor and working conditions on board of all ships.

The present day with the situation of war, violence and political instability in several countries, a new phenomenon has been affecting the shipping industry. Since last year, alongside with the coast guards and the naval forces of Italy, Malta and European Union, the merchant vessels transiting in the Mediterranean Sea have been actively involved in what is the daily occurrence of rescuing thousands and thousands of migrants trying to reach mainly the coasts of Italy in any kind of overcrowded and substandard crafts.

Since time immemorial seafarers have fulfilled the obligation to rescue people in distress at sea under any conditions. However, as it has been stressed by other maritime organizations, for the merchant vessels rescuing migrants at sea remain a health, safety and security risk for seafarers’. Commercial ships are designed to transport goods (containers, oil, gas, etc.) and all the facilities (accommodation, kitchen, bathroom, lavatories, etc.) are custom-made for the limited number of crew members on board. For these reasons merchant vessels are not

equipped to provide assistance to a large number of migrants.

Seafarers are professionally qualified in their work and trained to handle a number of emergency situations but rescuing hundreds of men, women and children acting frantically while trying to reach the safety of the ship, is something that no training course in maritime school has prepared them for. Furthermore, the physical effort in doing everything is conceivable to rescue as many persons as possible and sometimes the view of numerous lifeless bodies floating on the sea, are a traumatic experience which leaves the crews exhausted and psychologically distressed needing specific psychological and spiritual support.

On Sea Sunday as Catholic Church we would like to express our appreciation to the seafarers in general for their fundamental contribution to the international trade. This year in particular, we would like to recognize the great humanitarian effort done by the crews of merchant vessels that without hesitation, sometimes risking their own life, have engaged in many rescuing operations saving thousands of migrants lives.

Our gratitude goes also to all the chaplains and volunteers of the Apostleship of the Sea for their daily commitment in serving the people of the sea; their presence in the docks is the sign of the Church in their midst and shows the compassionate and merciful face of Christ.

In conclusion, while we are appealing to the governments in Europe and in the countries of origin of migration flows, as well as to the international organizations to cooperate in searching for a durable and definite political solution to the instability in those countries, we would like also to call for more resources to be committed not only for search and rescue missions but also to prevent the trafficking and exploitation of persons escaping from a condition of conflict and poverty.

Antonio Maria Cardinal Vegliò, President

✠ Joseph Kalathiparambil, Secretary

1. To see the complete list of countries please check:

[http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:11300:3816127284372413:::P11300\\_INSTRUMENT\\_SORT:1](http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:11300:3816127284372413:::P11300_INSTRUMENT_SORT:1)

2. More than 43 percent of those travelled across the Mediterranean in 2014 were *prima facie* refugees. According to Frontex, Syrians and Eritreans accounted for 46% of the 170.000 people who reached Italy by boat in 2014. Other large numbers came from Sudan, Afghanistan or Iraq (*Amnesty International*, April 2015)

3. Only in 2014 about 800 merchant ships rescued around 40,000 migrants.

## "LAUDATO SI"

### *The Encyclical Letter of the Pope on the environment*

The second encyclical of Pope Francis "Laudato sí" *on care for our common home* was presented on June 18th in the Vatican: a document of almost two hundred pages divided in six chapters. The main concern of the text is the protection and preservation of our common house. It is a call to responsibility based on the task that God has given each human being to create and preserve the Creation. In the Encyclical, there are several references to the sea and to the oceans, to the exploitation of their resources and to their *governance*. The following quotations from the encyclical text invite us to reflect on the role that we have, as AOS, not only in improving the welfare of the life of seafarers but also in the preservation of the sea and oceans.

40. Marine life in rivers, lakes, seas and oceans, which feeds a great part of the world's population, is affected by uncontrolled fishing, leading to a drastic depletion of certain species. Selective forms of fishing which discard much of what they collect continue unabated. Particularly threatened are marine organisms which we tend to overlook, like some forms of plankton; they represent a significant element in the ocean food chain, and species used for our food ultimately depend on them. 48. The depletion of fishing reserves especially hurts small fishing communities without the means to replace those resources.

174. Let us also mention the system of governance of the oceans. International and regional conventions do exist, but fragmentation and the lack of strict mechanisms of regulation, control and penalization end up undermining these efforts. The growing problem of marine waste and the protection of the open seas represent particular challenges. What is needed, in effect, is an agreement on systems of governance for the whole range of so-called "global commons".



## THE REGIONS OF THE APOSTLESHIP OF THE SEA MEET IN MARSEILLE

This year, the regular meeting of the Regional Coordinators was held outside the Vatican. The French experience and more specifically that of the Marseille AOS - of reflection on themes such as ecumenism, interreligious dialogue, the chaplaincy at merchant marine academies and the permanent diaconate in particular - led us to choose Marseilles for this meeting.

The start of proceedings was set for March 22 with the opening Mass at the Church of St. Ferréol, at the port. But as you know, the Lord works in mysterious ways. On March 18, there was the attack on the Bardo Museum in Tunis, in which 24 people were killed. The victims were mostly passengers on the MSC Splendida and Costa Fascinosa. The day before our departure, Costa requested spiritual accompaniment on the ship due to dock in the port of Marseille on Saturday, March 21, the day of our arrival in France. So, as soon as the Vatican delegation (composed by H.E. Msgr. Joseph Kalathiparambil, Secretary, Fr. Bruno Ciceri and Antonella Farina) arrived in Marseille, they boarded the vessel to celebrate the Eucharist, which was presided over by Msgr. Kalathiparambil and concelebrated by 3 priests with the presence of deacon Jean-Philippe Rigaud, port chaplain. Words cannot describe the passion and contemplation generated by this celebration, attended by many people, including passengers and crew members. On the occasion, the President of Costa Crociere, Neil Palomba, was reminded of the importance of the permanent presence of the chaplain on board, which was unfortunately abolished in 2014.

The experience aboard the Costa Fascinosa was the real beginning of our work and confirmed to everyone the true meaning of our apostolate.

On Sunday, March 22, there was Holy Mass with the young people of the diocese at St. Ferrol, presided over by Mgr. Jean-Marc Aveline, Auxiliary Bishop and Bishop Promoter of AOS, and concelebrated by Msgr. Joseph Kalathiparambil with all the priests present. It was a beautiful, deeply-felt celebration, which was followed by a time of sharing among the local faithful and guests from the four corners of the earth.

After the opening address by Msgr. Kalathiparambil at the beautiful "Mistral" Diocesan Centre on Monday, 23 March, the local team introduced us to the reality of Marseille's maritime mission activities: at the National Marine Institute, the shelters of Marseille, Port de Bouc and Fos, the Marine Fraternities for young couples, etc.

In addition to the presentation of reports from the various regions, a range of topics were addressed and discussed, including: "Dialogue with Islam" with Sister Colette Hamza, head of the department for relations with Islam at the Catholic Institute for the Mediterranean (ICM), "The Evolution of Ecumenism from Vatican II to the Present", by Rémi Caucanas, Director of ICM (you will find their two contributions on the Pontifical Council's site: [www.pcmigrants.org](http://www.pcmigrants.org)); "New Challenges for Ecumenical Work" by the new





General Secretary of ICMA, Rev. Richard Kilgour; "The Hoarding of the Oceans", with Alain le Sann, Secretary General of the Fishing & Development Collective of Lorient, France; "A Deacon and his Wife at the Service of the Apostleship of the Sea", by Marie-Agnès and Jean-Philippe Rigaud; "The Sea and the ITF," presented by Luca Tommasi, Project Director of the ITF (International Transport Workers Federation); "Development, Financing and Communications", by John Green, director of development of the AOS in the UK; "CCFD's Sea Group", with Henriette Daoud, Member of the Board of Directors of the Comité Catholique contre la Faim et pour le Développement (CCFD - Catholic Committee Against Hunger and for Development).

The port of Marseille extends over two dioceses, Marseille and Aix en Provence. The presence of young people in the Apostolate of the Sea is a very encouraging sign. The chaplaincy of the academy and its outreach to young couples through the Fraternities inject dynamism and enthusiasm into this local ministry. The Coordinators were very happy meeting with the students of national merchant marine academy (ENSM) in Montredon before the closing Mass. This allowed us to better understand what these young seafarers expect from us.

It's now up to us to answer the question asked by students of Marseille during the last World Congress in Rome in 2012: to organize an international meeting of merchant marine academy students, who are the future of the AOS.

There were also some more relaxed moments. We visited the Abbey of Saint-Victor, expertly guided by Fr. Philippe Rast; the centre for cruise ship crews, with Gérard Pelen, President of the AMAM (Association of Sailors' Homes of Marseille, who provided us with a minibus) and FNAAM (National Federation of Associations of Sailors' Homes), Dominique Gavalda, Vice-President and Marc Feuillebois, Director of the AMAM.

We visited the port and the harbourmaster's office with Commander Amaury de Maupeou, Commander of GPMM (Grand Seaport of Marseille). Msgr. Jacques Bouchet introduced us to Our Lady of the Guard; we prayed at the monument to those lost at sea, and Fr. Pierre Brunet welcomed us at the Archbishop's House (the Archbishop and the Auxiliary were in Lourdes for the meeting of the Episcopal Conference). From the 31st floor of the CMA-CGM Tower (CMA-CGM is a major container shipping company based in Marseille), we were able to cast our eyes over Marseille and its port.

"The meeting was very positive. The regional coordinators went home enthused by what they had experienced. From the initial contacts for the preparation of the meeting until our arrival, we worked like a family. We were all impressed by this good partnership that provided us with the opportunity to give new impetus to the Apostleship of the Sea," said Msgr. Joseph. Meeting the local communities has been motivating, and we achieved our aim of injecting further dynamism into the teams that hosted us, in order to provide the best possible service to seafarers and their families.

As they themselves have said, "the world of the Apostleship of the Sea came to visit us. It is a great grace and it is important to benefit from the stimulus that you have given us. "

We thank H.E. Msgr. Jean-Marc Aveline for the reception given on behalf of the Archbishop, Msgr. Georges Pontier, and which was much appreciated by the participants.

Thanks to René, Yves and Didier who never left us alone, despite their commitments, in a great show of dedication and discretion.

Thanks to Adrienne who did the translation during the entire time, often in difficult circumstances. Thanks to Isabelle and Yves, who organized the evening in Montredon, and to the young people who prepared the Mass, to all the volunteers who gave their time to this service.

Thanks to all the people, priests and lay people we met and who helped us in practice and in prayer, so that our meeting could take place in the best and most productive way possible.

# HOMILY FOR THE VICTIMS OF THE TERRORISTIC ATTACK AT THE BARDO NATIONAL MUSEUM

(Marseille, 22 March 2015)

(H.E. Mgr Joseph Kalathiparambil,  
Secretary of the Pontifical Council)

*When the Costa Fascinosa started its cruise, no one among the passengers and crews could have imagined that what was planned as a week of rest and relaxation it would be remembered as a week of fear and terror.*

*What was a cultural excursion in a museum was transformed in a journey with 22 victims and many more injured.*

*It is difficult for us to understand the logic behind these terrorists' attacks, impossible to comprehend why it is necessary to kill and destroy everything, in order to bring forward certain principles. We feel insecure, scared. Seems that there is no place where we could be safe and no one can be trusted.*

*Many are the questions in our minds in the face of so much violence, but for sure we must not respond with more violence.*

*That's why we gathered to celebrate the Eucharist, the greatest manifestation of the love of Jesus that gave his life for our salvation and to defeat evil and sin.*

*During this mass, we entrust to the Lord the souls of all the persons that have died during this terrorist attack; we remember the people that were injured and wish them a fast recovery; we pray the Lord to give to all of us, after these dramatic days, give us courage and strength to face this difficult time; and finally through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary we invoke from the Lord the gift of peace and tolerance among nations.*

*We must realize that:*

- goodness is stronger than evil;
- love is stronger than hate;
- light is stronger than darkness;
- life is stronger than death;
- victory is ours through God who loves us.



## IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Vega is a German company/group of companies that owns a number of ships that trade all round the world. Most of the crew are from the Philippines.

In recent months the company has not paid - or has delayed - salary to officers and crew on board. Delays have been as long as 4 months. This causes considerable hardship for their families at home. In Australia in September 2014 Vega Auriga was detained for repeated breaches relating to seafarer welfare and maintenance of the ship. The Australian Maritime Safety Authority banned the ship from entering any Australian ports for three months. Other Vega ships have been detained in other ports: for example, Vega Pollux was detained in Southampton in 2014. Apart from being a breach of Maritime Labour Convention 2006, non-payment of salary raises serious pastoral issues, with crew on board suffering stress.

If a Vega ship comes to a port in your area, perhaps you could make it a priority to visit the crew and offer pastoral support to them. If their salary has not been paid, you may wish to contact Port State Control and/or ITF.

# AOS REGIONAL COORDINATORS MEETING

(Marseille, France, March 23 – 26, 2015)

Revd. Richard Kilgour  
ICMA Secretary General

## *'ICMA: new challenges for an ecumenical work'*

A ship is ready to go to sea and the pilot is on board. The command goes out to let go fore and aft. The ship moves slowly but surely out of the harbour into the channel and the pilot disembarks. The course is set and each goes about his/her duty on board the vessel, she is on passage. The ship proceeds safely by God's grace and all arrive at the destination to load or unload the cargo.

My personal experience of the life and culture at sea as an apprentice navigating officer in the 1970's in social theoretical terms it exposed me to a new 'world view' a way of seeing and shaping our existence within a given context. Each of us for our world view, we might often rely where we are upon family, community or even faith for reference. A world view for the seafarer's perspective was what Paul Hiebert offered in his perspective 'World Views and Nomads of the Sea' in *'The Way of the Sea' The Changing Shape of Mission in the Seafaring World'* Roald Kverndal (whom we learn recently died aged 94 – he had generously sent me copies of his books on my appointment to this new work as General Secretary of ICMA) . It was remarked there about 'sociological factors that impact the world-view' of seafarers. *That is the world aboard ship that they construct, inhabit, and maintain, a world that often actually differs a lot from the world constructed for them by their national, cultural or home identity, or their organised religious life – the life of a parish, or a congregation somewhere on dry land. At sea (Hiebert suggests) that the nomadic life, the temporary way of living in the present, with recourse to self-reliance, being cast amongst a melting pot of people, the seafarer unwittingly becomes something of a 'cultural broker' amongst all the variously distinct qualities of the world view(s) shaped by the life lived at sea. Add to this the challenging forces at play in particular to shipboard life - that of risk, loneliness, isolation, on the one hand and, the collaborative kind of culture of say tolerance (living in close quarters to each other) on the other.*



Marko Ivan Rupnik, Refettorio del Pontificio Collegio Francese, Roma

For me the life at sea was life that crossed cultural boundaries by the simple arrival in a foreign port, but also took me into domestic worlds which were inhabited with me amongst the crew depending on the kind of trading the ship was engaged with - either with Hong Kong Chinese crew, or mainly Scottish crew. Cultures as different as east and west.

For myself on leaving school to go to sea I became the third generation of family seafarers after my grandfather and my father's brother to go to sea. We share the common bond of serving in the British Merchant Navy going back at least 100 years since when my grandfather and his brother first became seafarers. My grandfather was torpedoed twice in the 1st World war. In our family setting amongst the seafarers the rivalry or regular expressions of difference between deck and engine room ran very deep. Ironically my grandfather became an engineer and his brother a master mariner. The upstairs downstairs divide, or boundary could be simply drawn by the appearance of the deck officer with uniform/epaulettes gold braid, and the engineer rigged in a boiler suit for work in the engine room. Out of that there emerged in my experience either a good humoured rivalry or stressful tension between classes of professionalism. I suspect the working life of multipurpose crews today has somewhat blurred the distinctions between deck/engine room but you can see what I am getting at.

The possibility for internal conflict which I have caricatured never seemed to affect the overall aim of getting from A to B. A voyage can be a successful affair and turn around and shore leave and all the rest of it a happy time. We can eat and relax together, get the navigation done, keep the engine turning, shift the cargo

and all the rest of it.

So starting with my experience at sea itself, or experience of the cultural life of seagoing people is probably as good a place to start getting a feel for the new challenges for an ecumenical work from where we are in ICMA. What I have to say today is something of the same about ecumenism. It is a good place to start because for me in my experience ecumenism is often simply put as the church succeeding in its unity with diversity - that is the catch phrase that we seem to hear the most. The richest sense of unity is where we celebrate openly the diversity which has shaped us, holding our integrity, our identity, purpose and direction which for centuries has brought us here in the church, in the world. In practice the unravelling of the 'unity with diversity' theme can become complicated. The accentuating or declaring of the differences between traditions or denominations or confessions only too often serves to reinforce what separates us in what we do, and can often become a comfort zone for maintaining our own convictions and identity, over and against (out of all respect) the place and standpoint of the other. The downside of accentuating difference can be isolationism, the ghetto, sectarianism, and guilt, these things all become an antithesis of unity itself.

Going back as 1969 with roots of early conferences preceding ICMA being fully formed, the ICMA was shaped out of the emerging arrangements which included the WCC in 50's and 60's. At that time when ICMA was first thought of (1969) the ecumenical work was to come together and be agreed on the matters of common concern about ministry, seafarers and their needs, and their families. This work of ecumenism was about recognising the traditions and the traditional work with seafarers and fishers done by church bodies, denominations variously for their people, their national group or others (and which had been done in one way or another in some cases for over 100 years).

The other week in London I met the Finnish Seamen's Mission General Secretary as he came to retirement after 30yrs in the work including many years serving with ICMA at the level of the executive especially in the 1990's, and he happened to comment about our ecumenism - that we were the only international organisation where all the churches became fully members including the Roman Catholic Church. This then lead to the ICMA code of conduct an ecumenical instrument of our common purpose together.

### *An ecumenical work in the Missio Dei*

Central, fundamental and ecumenical in the engagement with seafarers has been the objective to fulfil the *Missio Dei*: In these terms the radical challenge of our ecumenical work has always had to do with human dignity. So for us ultimately ecumenical work has to do with human dignity. The dignity of the institutions which are called churches, as much as the dignity of the suffering seafarer and the liberation of oppressed people and their families. There is no monopoly on humanitarian work. We cannot say (we are more humanitarian than you) - oh you are a secular group surely you cannot be as effective as us. The dignity of the church will suffer if we cannot be united in our Mission, our Christian work.

Historically the ministry in ports and harbours, visiting ships we have had an ecumenical work to do. By definition the ecumenical work is (in all our unity and diversity) going about Christian work. There is indeed a challenge where ecumenical Christian work is suffering or failing, where who we are, or what we do is getting in the way of our life for others. Christian work realised in ecumenical work as the *Missio Dei* as being where God fully intends us and the church to be fully realised, and is where we (together) need to be fully and essentially engaged and at work. None of this can take us away from the need to express that through our own traditions authentically in our vocation, sacramentally, and in word and deed in the lives of those we encounter, the other (essentially) calls us. The call to full humanity calls us.

The mission of the 'Spirit' is the consequence and succession of the mission of the 'Son'. (Galatians 4. 4,6). The promise of the power of the Spirit is closely related to mission in Acts 1.8. The essential missionary purpose of God is the sending of the Son and the sending of the Holy Spirit. Overall mission is a God centred matter. It is brought into being and put into place by God. Yes it is put into place by God. We do not say to ourselves - I need to get mission organised this way or that way. The familiar phrases are - "mission is about finding out what God is doing in the world and to join in", or "The Church of God does not have a mission - The God of mission has a Church"!

Christ's ultimate universal authority does not rely upon the 'extension of his regime' - it is already universal and complete! Here are some points that follow:

- Mission is central to defining God, not an 'extra' it is the reason for being the church
- Mission is not the consequence of a command (e.g. to go) but is the fullest expression of the Divine Love
- Mission is for disciples who follow him as he goes ahead of us in the world and we come to his mission there
- Acts of service, sacrifice and so forth are not the means of mission, rather these acts of service are witness to the present reality of the Kingdom. We are not e.g. to heal in order to convert, but to heal because it is an overflowing of the Love of God for mankind and a sign of the present reality – or the reality God makes present.
- This is witness not to point to itself (the church) but always to the present reality of Christ.

But as I continue to reflect on my seagoing career as a reference point. At sea of course our differences can set boundaries and shape our roles and distinctive contributions and ways of becoming a ship's company together. Unity in diversity in the maritime world on board a ship is simply that we are 'all in the same boat' – there is no going our separate ways against the common purpose of making a safe passage together. On the ship at sea we can argue, have our common rivalry even get into arguments over politics, football and all the rest of it. But, at the end of the day our paymaster feeds us and keeps us and we maintain our families, our loved ones. In ecumenical terms Rev Dr Jason Zuidema – Executive Director NAMMA recently said that ICMA does (for Christian Maritime organisations and ministry) what we cannot do by ourselves. And what our collective, shared or ecumenical achievements have been; include, effective seafarers ministry, sharing of resources (meaning for training, formation in this specialist ministry) and providing critical and prophetic voice, organising the work.

### *New ecumenical work*

With reference to this principle I would like to turn to the specific title of our talk - *the challenge for new ecumenical work together*. Like the seagoing way of things it is about how we can be in the same boat together, and that work is in the work of seafarer's welfare. How best, how efficiently we can work together. What is the world view of Christian Welfare Work/workers?? The response the direction and the objectives need to be shaped by understanding the world view that we are faced with, the world which is 'seafarer's welfare'.

I would like to look at a very practical area of concern for today. I believe in the fast changing terms of the global shipping industry; where we actually need to look for the challenge of new ecumenical work together is with regard to the relevant parts of the Maritime Labour Convention 2006. In MLC 2006 (we see realised the hopes and expectations of those who have participated in the work of shaping the convention over the years including ICMA delegation) My view for positioning ICMA and the member organisations is that the challenge presented to us is very clear we are together being called to be stakeholders in seafarer's welfare provision within the wider influence of states and harbour authorities and agencies and so forth. That is ecumenical work. It is this work we are certainly people of faith sharing in responding to human need, we are becoming partners, stakeholders at work with all kinds of services and agencies in this work together. Once we were an organisation here or there looking for sharing resources to be ecumenical, to be more effective for seafarers. Increasingly our role and existence in serving others will depend on our ability to work together as a primary principle. It is a foundational principle of the kind of topic we are reviewing herein MLC 2006.

The operative phrase is ecumenical work, has to be ecumenical work. It is what we do/work together that we cannot do as well by ourselves. For ecumenical work read practical, grass roots engagement that has been typical of organisations and churches seeking to share a common task namely in serving the seafarer and families. 'Unity in diversity', to 'doing together what we cannot do apart', we put ourselves here in a whole area of the ecumenical project which has never been primary and theoretical an –ism ecumenism, the derived teaching, the idea or the concept of being in ecumenical relations at one level or another doctrinally or otherwise. The work I mentioned at the outset is of getting the ship where it needs to be, that is the work. ICMA will always **work** best at doing what we cannot do on our own in the practical, material, spiritual purposes of attending to seafarer welfare. This is and has been and is our ecumenical *raison d'être*. To deliver on MLC2006 we cannot afford to be an agency here or there with our own personal agendas. Like being aboard ship the people involved may hold different political, ideological views, be from opposite ends of the earth. They have not the time, the energy, opportunity or the inclination to pause for some idea of which theory is better, or what differ-



ences in equipment will affect our performance. We in the church like those who gathered together over the years to discuss and respond to common needs and concerns of seafarers have work to do. So my proposal, my instinct for channelling our ecumenical purpose and our contribution, our challenge, our new ecumenical work is for me; that we urgently organise and participate actively and fully play our part to implement MLC 2006. The main reference is at Reg. 4.4 but that extends into further 'standards' and 'guidelines'

#### ***Regulation 4.4 – Access to shore-based welfare facilities***

*Purpose: To ensure that seafarers working on board a ship have access to shore-based facilities and services to secure their health and well-being*

***A challenge: a principle for our ecumenical task : “You are a light for all the world”.***

The MLC puts the practical delivery of the 'access to shore based facilities to secure their health and wellbeing' into motivating a broad response not known before. Because of the intention and direction and purpose of MLC the work we can begin to do as a feature of our common task is to broaden the base of our ecumenical work. This work for me, for the church, for us, **is** literally about how we are seen by the seafarer, the participating agencies, organisations and change makers – owners, states, ports and harbour authorities, PWC. It is actually increasingly vital for MLC 2006. The section that we refer to is painted in the broadest brush strokes.(maybe pause here to take a look at aspects of the whole section and references to 'guidance' etc..) The success of MLC for seafarers from the beginning, the formation, and ratification of the Convention is in the implementation. The challenges of the MLC are to be realised as new ways of collaborating – partnerships with organisation otherwise not used to, or comfortable with providing for or serving seafarers' welfare from port/flag states to PWC. The 'broad brush' of the MLC requires a broad base. Broad based activity begins from below. That requires our new challenge to be entirely and utterly focussed together ecumenically. With highest regard to our ecumenical principles, we cannot afford to be seen to be separating ourselves out from each other or from the agencies involved. In ports and local contact with seafarers we are working from 'below' it is our natural, or traditional modus operandi for Mission and transformation. In the Church the work from below, is always about liberation. Our ecumenical objective in **our new ecumenical work** is about the liberation of 'seafarer ministry' to ultimately engage fully for the end of serving the other. This liberation is a Christological truth at the heart of all we do. We can 'be a light for all the world, not hidden under the meal tub, but set up high that all may see our good works and give glory to the father'.



A quote I have come to return to again and again in coming to my work and role in ICMA is about Mission and the Church in the following terms set-out by John G Davies writing in the 1960's: "as long as the church keeps to itself, it will have little reason to expect trouble in the world...the world can safely leave it to itself. If it concentrates upon the so-called religious side of man's being and neglects the whole man, it will cause but slight disturbance and avoid suffering. But once it is recognised that the Church is to participate in mission and that this mission is to the world, then troubling and suffering (unsurprisingly) will come and the form of the servant will be revealed.....The church gives itself, following its Lord, for others")

There are plenty of eventful voyages to make. The ship making a landfall picks up the landmarks, makes for the fairway buoy, takes on the pilot and makes for port. Those paying off or going home feel a sense of a job complete, the surge of a certain thrill of reuniting with home, family and friends. Those with a few hours to spare in port will hope for some contact with home, time to spend ashore and then back to work.

We have work to do and new challenges for ecumenical work will continue to confront us.

May our work take us together where 'God is doing in us an ecumenical work' in as far as we participate in Christ's mission 'becoming man', and this way maintain the possibility of becoming fully human. This is not where we aim to be, or where our goal is in our ministry to seafarers, for seafarers, and from seafarers. It is, on reflection, where we essentially begin, it is our motivating force, our vocation, our ecumenical work always. This work goes beyond words and deeds, and expresses itself in a quality of life which essentially the Church, as it gives itself following its Lord for others.

# The Final Frontier: the Ocean Grab

by Alain Le Sann

Revue Mouvements, 25<sup>th</sup> November 2014

The grab of agricultural land has been the subject of widespread attention and criticism. It also concerns the coastal lands and results in the marginalization of many fishing communities, deprived of their land-based livelihood; but the phenomenon affects more and more marine species, both along the coast and on high seas. The extent of the problem of the ocean grab was presented to the public in a report released at the Congress of WFFP (World Forum of Fishers Peoples') in September 2014, in South Africa. The report prepared by a network of researchers gathered in the Transnational Institute, Masifundise and Afrika Kontakt, a Danish NGO. The magnitude and reality of this phenomenon have been concealed by the media barrage over the depletion of marine resources and overfishing which serve as an excuse to justify the privatization movement, and " *Even though there is a basis consensus that fish stocks worldwide are under a great deal of stress and still growing pressure from human activity, 'universalising' the overexploitation of fish blurs the reality that the deterioration of some stocks is often species-, context- and actor-specific.* " " *Barriers to food security and restoration of fish stocks and conservation of nature are argued to be universally dwindling stocks due to overfishing and lack of or insufficient property rights in fisheries*".

**We publish an article by Alain Le Sann of the Collectif Pêche & Développement (Fishing & Development Collective of Lorient, France), about a phenomenon that is too little known: the grabbing of fishing areas by the interests of the countries in the North.**

The report defines "ocean grab" as: "the capturing of control by powerful economic actors of crucial decision-making around fisheries, including the power to decide how and for what purposes marine resources are used, conserved and managed now and in the future. As a result, these powerful actors, whose main concern is making profit, are steadily gaining control of both the fisheries' resources and the benefits of their use". Written by and for fishers' organizations, the report focuses its analysis of grabbing on the issue of fisheries resources. This phenomenon of privatization has been underway for several decades in many developed countries, but it is accelerating and becoming widespread with the push from the Global Partnership for Oceans, launched in 2012 by the World Bank on the occasion of Rio +20. This partnership promotes fisheries policy reform based on blindly belief in market solutions, both for the management of fishery resources and the implementation of conservation policies. In the end, artisanal fishers find themselves thus deprived of access to fisheries resources as well as to markets. This process takes several different forms. Generally, fishing rights are imposed on them and they have to buy them. Then, there is the creation of reserves and Marine Protected Areas, for the "conservation" of nature. Fishing communities are faced with the impossibility of accessing shorelines that have been privatized for the benefit of tourist resorts, industrial or aquaculture enterprises. In many developing countries, coastal fishers are deprived of resources by foreign or domestic industrial fleets, which favor foreign markets. Finally, marine areas are also sought-after for new activities like excavation/mining (sands and minerals), wind farms, and offshore hydrocarbon exploitation. The belief of the privatization promoters is based on the idea that maximum profit coming from fishing will ensure profits for investors and at the same time as conserving the resources. Maximum income in fact means limiting fishing effort, with less fishers, whom can be better controlled in order to benefit from the most abundant resources. It is therefore not to achieve the maximum natural exploitation or maximum employment.

The purpose of the financialization of fishery resources is to attract private investment, closely



Alain Le Sann with Fr. Romeo Yu Chang, of Singapore

linked with big business interested in the "blue bonds" that will allow to compensate for environmental damages in other areas or sectors. This financialization is not only for the fishing industry. The promoters of the World Partnership for Oceans have developed a program called "50 in 10", which also covers coastal artisanal fishing. In a seminar organized in November 2012, the issues raised were the following:

1. *How to make the transition between Territorial Use Rights for benthic species are entrusted to fishers (TURF) and reserves associated with transferable quotas for stocks of more complex, coastal fish?*
2. *How to introduce private capital, and not only philanthropic resources, into financing coastal fisheries where profits are lower, widely distributed and where trade is managed collectively, for ex-*

*ample, by cooperatives?*

3. *How to attract more private capital into incentivised opportunities for pre-purchase contracts, even before fishing, or systems for the concentration of purchases that are the most powerful stimulus for change?*

## **Ocean Grab is favored by myths**

For the authors, ocean grab is being justified by a number of myths that are repeated constantly by the mass media. First of all, "restoring globally depleted stocks caused by overfishing" and the "tragedy of the commons" linked to the absence of property rights on fishery resources. Overfishing is nothing new, but it is not widespread. It affects about one third of stocks and in a great number of industrialized countries it has been greatly reduced, as in Europe for several years (already). As for the tragedy of the commons goods, the tragedy actually regards the areas of free access. Traditional fishing areas can be poorly managed, but they are rarely of free access. The question is merely to adapt systems management without, however, necessarily resorting to privatization.



The promotion of Marine Protected Areas is presented as a miraculous solution and aims to exclude wholly or partially local fishers, often by combining the forces with support for conservation and restoration of nature. MPA's and reserves actually bring very significant costs for monitoring and management that must be funded, when Governments do not have the capacity to do it. As a result, Brazil has signed a financing agreement with the World Bank and the company Petrobras to create a national network of Marine Protected Areas extending over 120,000 km<sup>2</sup>. The total cost amounts to 117 million US dollars, mainly funded by the World Bank under the Global Environment Fund (GEF), and by the oil company Petrobras. The reserves are effective as biodiversity conservation tools, but the example of land reserves shows that this is not enough to curb the process of biodiversity loss. Their utility for fisheries management is far from being applied generally. For their part, fishers have created reserves called 'cantonments' long ago. The MPA's can therefore be useful for fishing, provided that fishing is not transferred to other areas and that these areas are based on the knowledge and practice of fishers. The example of the complete ban on fishing gear such as drift nets, showed that the transfer of fishing to other areas and the use of other gear had catastrophic effects on resources. The ban on drift nets for tuna fishing in the Bay of Biscay (France) and elsewhere has had the effect of keeping the fishing vessels in the same area of the bay all year around, while the months spent chasing tuna (away from the Bay) relieved the pressure on Continental Shelf fishing. Only some ships continued tuna fishing with pelagic trawls.



Another myth concerns the responsible certification by private organizations such as the MSC (Marine Stewardship Council), which monopolizes the certification of sustainable fishing products. It is a very expensive certification that controls access to the markets of industrialized countries. The MSC was initiated by Unilever and WWF and it corresponds to the interests of the fishing industry and large retailer that supports it (Walmart). However, for the small fishers of the South, this is clearly a threat to their access to markets, as it does not suit the activities of artisanal fisheries, which are extremely diversified. In general, an approach to fisheries management based on the demands of the distribution chain and consumers and subject to the dictates of some NGOs is debatable. Fishing is not manufacturing, but rather harvesting, and depends entirely on the environment and on the reproduction of resources. Management must be achieved with this approach. While it may be possible to partially localize fishing, it is impossible to predict on a day-to-day basis what species will be caught in the nets. Calling for a total boycott of certain species leads to rejected fish and waste of resources, severely penalizing fishers who often have no responsibility for this situation. Media calls for the total boycott of certain species are often in contradiction with the actual state of resources available, given the different situations of the stocks concerned. It is unreal to ask consumers to differentiate between cod from the North Sea (stocks of which are in poor condition) and Norwegian cod, the stocks of which are overabundant.



## Ocean Grab's main Actors

*"Governments, regional and international governmental institutions, international environmental organisations, major corporations, and philanthropic foundations are among the key actors who are pushing for market-based reforms and policies that ultimately allow for ocean grabbing to take place".*

All these actors are associated, more or less directly, with the World Partnership for Oceans. The report more precisely indicts: *"a few large-scale wealthy philanthropic foundations are increasingly forming partnerships with international environmental organisations in order to address oceans and fisheries issues. The Gordon & Betty Moore Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, Walton Family Foundation (the Walton family is the owner of Walmart), and Bloomberg Foundation in partnership with the World Wide Fund for Nature, Conservation International and Environmental Defense Fund, to name a few, embrace and fund projects premised upon market-based approaches to fisheries management and environmental conservation".*

These foundations and big environmental NGOs are generally based in the United States and intervene increasingly in countries of the South, adopting a new language talking about community rights, which ill conceals their policy of regulating and monitoring fishing communities. These actors are increasingly present in Europe. They turned up in a resounding and robust way during the negotiations on Common Fisheries Policy reform, thanks to generous funding from the Pew and Oak Foundations. More recently, we have seen the Environmental Defense Fund, one of the environmental NGO most engaged in privatization policy in the United States, invest widely in Europe. Today it is one of the great promoters for the implementation of the World Partnership for Oceans Program. This environmental NGO promotes the privatization of access rights, as well as the stock market investment in fishing stocks, promising investors yields of 5-15% per annum. It is associated with the powerful organization of Scottish producers, the SWFPA (Scottish White Fish Producers' Association), which is actively involved in the World Partnership for Oceans' 50 in 10 Program.

## What are the alternatives?

In terms of developing alternatives, you have to strike at the roots of the phenomenon of the ocean grab: "the takeover of marine, coastal and inland fisheries resources by large-scale capital interests



that then determine policies, laws and practices". We also need to move beyond the "privatize or die" approach that often comes with the catastrophic reports generalizing overfishing. We must stop promoting economic and purely environmentalist approaches and treat small-scale fisheries, first and foremost, as a matter of human rights. Through the protection of collective access rights, we must ensure that the "governance and management of these rights is the responsibility of the fishing communities together with governmental institutions". This allows for the prioritisation of access, use and control of fishery resources for small-scale fishers on which their livelihoods depend. It promotes local economic development and should allow for greater participation of women in decision-making. "Half of the people involved in small-scale fisheries are women. Women play a vital role in all areas of small-scale fishing, including pre- and postharvest activities, aquaculture and inland fishing". This policy is based on two recent FAO guidelines, "Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security" and the "Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication". Success also depends on political will and the engagement of social movements to demand the implementation of these Directives by Member States.



### A hard-hitting document, with limits

The report provides a clear overview on the phenomenon of ocean grab. However, we can point out a few limitations and gaps mainly related to the approach adopted, mainly that of predominantly coastal artisanal fishing. This limit appears from the definition of the grabbing of the seas, presented as the work of "powerful actors whose main concern is to generate profit." While indispensable and prevailing, by highlighting the economic aspect alone, the report neglects other influential factors in the exclusion of fishers. The objectives of the Foundations and the large environmental NGOs pushing for the establishment of vast no-fishing marine areas, are not primarily economic but ideological and environmental. Their ideal is the "Wilderness", an untouched natural environment from which we must exclude fishers, as is particularly the case with regard to Pew. Some NGOs, such as WWF and the Conservation International, claim to involve indigenous and local communities in the management of the reserves and the Marine Protected Areas, but in reality this is rarely the case; rather, it is to place communities under their protection to serve the objectives of NGO. If they need the funding of large companies for their survival, profit is not their goal. Nor should we overlook geopolitical factors. Large reserves are also mechanisms for the geopolitical control of the oceans as shown with the creation of the Chagos Marine Protected Area, which serves to protect the American base of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean. The recent interest shown by John Kerry and Barack Obama for the large reserves in the Pacific is undoubtedly linked to the determination to counteract the Chinese



pressure in that area. Behind this new battle of the Pacific, based on the "soft power" of the foundations, looms the rising concern of access to rare minerals and sands, which are indispensable for new technologies. Ifremer and CNRS have highlighted the serious risks associated with the exploitation of these resources. The Canadian company Nautilus Minerals is currently engaged in these activities. This should avoid the Chinese monopoly on rare earths. Large foundations and environmental NGOs do not call into question the exploitation of these resources. Thus the Global Ocean Commission, established under the auspices of Pew, considers that "undersea mining, under the control of the ISA (International Seabed Authority) can help development because of profit-sharing measures". These organizations, with funding from large companies, are engaged in a logic of sharing out lots of the oceans, preserving areas that they consider essential, while

letting companies exploit other areas that are of interest to them. Beyond fishing, new marine activities (tourism, energy, rare minerals and sands) represent the highest economic stakes. For these powerful interests, getting rid of a few thousands fishers is only an insignificant economic and social cost and allows them to keep things under their control.

Finally, in terms of protecting artisanal fishers, the report relies on the FAO Voluntary Guidelines. These documents are indeed valuable tools to ensure the future of these fishers, but we should not overestimate their role. Without strong social pressure, their implementation will remain limited, as seen with many other international regulations whose application relies on the willingness of the States, without any kind of enforcement. In addition, the report focuses on the role of the World Partnership for Oceans and on the engagement of international organizations in the privatization program. FAO is involved in this and thus it seems a bit schizophrenic. While some FAO representatives have campaigned for the adoption of the guidelines in support of artisanal fishing, others participate in planning seminars for the privatization of access to fishery resources. During the "50 in 10" Seminar of November 2012, a representative of FAO noted *"the need for a major education campaign to combat fear and the initial rejection of rights-based management of fisheries."* According to him, *"the representatives of the fishers need to be more receptive to the ideas of management based on fishing rights, especially those working to combat poverty, those who are concerned about the trend towards concentration that occurs at times when this type of management is implemented"*.



Under these conditions, artisanal fishers must depend on themselves above all to secure their future, on their organizational capacity and on the support of social movements. The best example of success is the South African fishers who have succeeded in getting their fishing rights recognised. They conducted their struggle through their organization, Coastal Links, and with the support of the NGO, Masifundise, which participated in the drafting of the report. This document provides tools to understand the challenges that need to be faced for all artisanal fishers. It should also enable the creation of networks between those fighting ocean grab and those working against land grabbing. Nevertheless, the report highlights the ambiguous role played by some several environmental organizations whose objectives are frequently presented as favorable to artisanal fishers, but which actually lean towards monitoring fishers in order to prioritize purely environmentalist aims.

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1. On the occasion of the constituent assembly of the World Forum of Fishers in Loctudy (France), in October 2000, a split has created to two global forum of artisanal fishers, the WFF and WFFP. Both forums however find themselves increasingly sharing common positions.

2. *L'accaparement des mers (ocean grab)*. TNI, Masifundise et Afrika Kontakt, September 2014, 56 p.

3. *Op. cit.*

4. *50% in 10 years*, Design Workshop Proceedings, Vancouver, BC, 7-8 November 2012, 43p. This program aims to restore 50% of fish stocks in 10 years

5. <http://www.worldbank.org/projects/P128968/marine-protected-areas-project?lang=en&tab=overview>

6. <http://cape-cffa.squarespace.com/new-blog/2014/9/12/corporatised-ngos-say-maximum-profit-saves-fisheries>

7. EDF, The Prince's Charles Charities, *50 in 10, Towards investment in sustainable fisheries*, 2014, 86p

8. The newsletter Yemaya ICSF gives many examples of this mobilization of women in fishing communities. cf <http://wif.icsf.net/>

9. Wilfried Huismann, *Pandaleaks, the dark side of the WWF*, ed Nordbook, Bremen, 2014, 260 p.

10. [www.cnrs.fr/fr/pdf/inee/SyntheseESCo/index.html](http://www.cnrs.fr/fr/pdf/inee/SyntheseESCo/index.html) IFREMER, CNRS, Environmental impacts of the exploitation of deep sea mineral resources. June 2014.

11. Nautilus specify on its website: "Plans to launch Nautilus additional projects on our extensive properties across the Western Pacific."

12. *From 50% in 10 years*, Design Workshop Proceedings, Vancouver, BC, 7-8 November 2012, 43p.

## LA PÊCHE AUSSI SE MONDIALISE

La situation des marins pêcheurs est et reste très préoccupante. Ils sont confrontés à plusieurs facteurs qui pèsent lourd sur leur moral et leur capacité de survie. Les relèves générationnelles en sont rendues difficiles.

Les décisions prises par l'Union européenne sont bien loin des réalités du terrain et prennent peu en compte leur parole. Certains groupes environnementalistes voudraient en faire les responsables de tous les maux ; moins il y aura de pêcheurs, mieux les poissons se porteront.

La suppression des Comités locaux leur a fait perdre des lieux de dialogues et de réflexion de proximité. Les Organisations de producteurs ont une approche essentiellement économique des problèmes. Elles sont contrôlées par les plus gros armateurs et laissent peu de place aux petits artisans.

Les termes employés sont eux-mêmes extrêmement réducteurs. On imagine une division claire entre artisans et industriels, les premiers se livrant à une activité côtière quand les autres vont au large. La réalité est bien plus complexe et des navires de pêche hauturière sont la propriété de pêcheurs artisans quand des navires de pêche côtière le sont de véritables groupes industriels. Quant au critère de longueur du navire pour différencier industriels et artisans, il est complètement illusoire.

Depuis longtemps les pêcheurs font des efforts pour pratiquer une pêche responsable et l'Europe est reconnue comme étant en pointe dans ce processus. Les pêcheurs et les scientifiques constatent une régénération des stocks. Ceci est un bon signe quand on estime qu'il faudra nourrir 2 milliards d'êtres humains supplémentaires d'ici 2050. Même si l'essentiel de la croissance de la production viendra de l'aquaculture, il reste de la place pour une pêche raisonnée. La pêche produit actuellement 93 millions de tonnes par an et assure une disponibilité moyenne de 10 kg de poisson par an et par habitant de la planète. De son côté, l'aquaculture produit 65 millions de tonnes et la disponibilité totale moyenne annuelle par habitant est de 17,5 kg. Viennent s'ajouter les autres produits halieutiques en particulier les coquillages.

Soulignons aussi que l'aquaculture n'est pas sans poser de sérieux problèmes écologiques comme les mises à mal de mangroves (élevage de crevettes en Equateur) ou les pollutions de zones côtières entières (élevage du saumon au Chili). Se pose aussi le problème de la fourniture de fourrage qui repose pour l'essentiel sur une importante pêche minotière, autant de poisson soustrait à l'alimentation humaine.

La régénération des stocks ne se fait pas uniquement par le contrôle de l'effort de pêche mais aussi par la qualité des écosystèmes marins. On sait les effets néfastes des déversements massifs de produits phytosanitaires liés à l'agriculture intensive sur l'état des eaux côtières, voir le cas des pertuis charentais, par exemple. La qualité de l'eau est extrêmement importante puisqu'elle facilite la reproduction en favorisant le développement des planctons (phyto puis zoo), bases de la chaîne alimentaire. La situation de certaines bandes côtières est à ce sujet alarmante et touche en premier lieu l'ostréiculture et la mytiliculture qui sont les premières activités affectées par la qualité de l'eau et les premiers témoins de leur dégradation. Ces pollutions gagnent ensuite le large. Les changements climatiques ont aussi leur part de responsabilité puisque l'on constate une augmentation de l'acidité de l'eau qui, elle aussi, participe à la dégradation des écosystèmes.

Au niveau mondial, il reste à lutter contre la pêche illégale et/ou non contrôlée. Ceci ne peut





être que le fait d'états capables d'assurer une police des mers fondée sur les accords internationaux solides.

La Convention sur le travail à la pêche est en cours de ratification. Même si ce processus est lent, on s'approche du moment où existera un outil législatif international. Un nombre important de marins, venant essentiellement du Sud Est asiatique sont employés sur des navires de pêche dans des conditions proches de l'esclavage, y compris dans les eaux européennes où, en Ecosse et en Espagne, des pêcheurs migrants sont purement et simplement exploités comme cela a été montré par des campagnes d'ITF ou de l'Apostolat de la Mer au Royaume Uni. On peut citer aussi les conditions des pêcheurs Birmans, Laotiens ou Cambodgiens sur des navires de pêche Thaïlandais ou Taïwanais entre autres. On sait que de véritables mutineries se sont produites sur certains bateaux avec mort d'hommes tellement les conditions de vies y sont dures.

L'internationalisation des équipages touche aussi nos réalités françaises puisque dans plusieurs ports des marins venus « d'ailleurs » travaillent avec les pêcheurs locaux et s'intègrent à la vie locale. Par ce biais nous sommes à nouveau amenés à ouvrir nos yeux aux dimensions d'un monde qui, si nous n'allons pas à lui, vient à nous.

Philippe Martin

## ARCHBISHOP PETER SMITH BLESSES NEW SHEERNESS SEAFARERS' CENTRE

Archbishop of Southwark, the Most Reverend Peter Smith has launched and blessed a newly-refurbished centre for seafarers at the port of Sheerness in Kent.

The facility is a sanctuary where visiting seafarers can spend quiet time in prayer, use the WiFi service to contact their families back home or relax with a game of pool.

Archbishop Smith said, "The centre is a great service to seafarers who are all welcomed here. It is a service the church provides and it has been blessed over the years by God's grace. We ask God's blessing for the future work of this centre."

Archbishop Smith who is also Vice President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales said his grandfather on his father's side was a shipwright in Bristol, so the sea ran in his family's genes.

"The ministry of AoS is great work and it's done quietly," he added at the opening ceremony held yesterday.

The restoration of the seafarers centre was made possible by a £4,130 grant by the Merchant Navy Welfare Board (MNWB). Each year about 5,000 ships visit ports in the Medway, which includes Sheerness Docks, with about 80,000 seafarers on board.

MNWB chairman Bob Jones who was also present at the launch said, "We are delighted to support Stella Maris (AoS) in the work you do for seafarers' welfare both in UK and around the world."

AoS' port chaplain for Kent and Medway, Deacon Paul Glock said, "The Apostleship of the Sea is about not taking seafarers for granted, but making them feel welcome and appreciated and this is their little home." Paul and his team of ship visiting volunteers go on board ships to visit seafarers in Chatham, Dover Port, Gillingham Pier, Rochester, Sheerness Docks and Whitstable Harbour. These ports are all in Southwark archdiocese.

Many of the seafarers arriving at Sheerness and those other ports are Catholic, originating from countries such as Philippines, Poland and India.

Using the centre, AoS is able to provide them with pastoral and practical care. It is equipped with faith resources like scripture booklets and prayer cards. The centre offers them a space to speak to Deacon Paul, who provides a listening ear.

On rare occasions when ships are in port long enough the centre is also used as a meeting point for seafarers who wish to be taken to Mass. It also offers amenities for them to communicate with family by internet or phone and space to relax before moving on to their next port of call.

7th May 2015





## DOES THE LORD WORK IN MYSTERIOUS WAYS? YOU BE THE JUDGE.



A few weeks ago, a seafarer was medivacked off a ship. He was medically diagnosed with the late stages of leukaemia. His outcome is uncertain. A shipping company brought his wife, Divine, out from the Philippines to help build his spirits.

Our pastoral care team has spent a great deal of time working with Divine and her husband Armando at the Royal Brisbane Hospital.

Rosie Jones, a Filipino staff member of the Apostleship of the Sea, was the primary person helping Divine with her hospital visits and with her emotional needs.

Early last week, Divine lost her father-in-law, Armando's father, who passed away back in the Philippines, adding to the trauma that the family was going through.

Fr. John Spiteri OFM cap went to the hospital to anoint Armando, as his condition worsened and he was placed in ICU.

At the same time this was happening, our Rosie was heading back to the Philippines for a ten day break with her husband and son and to re-unite with her own family.

On Friday, 5<sup>th</sup> February 2015, Rosie phoned our Brisbane office from the Philippines to say that she had arrived safely and was waiting in Manilla Airport for her flight to Mindanao, some two hours later. If you have ever been to Manilla Airport, there are thousands of people swarming through the terminal, catching planes to various destinations and it is one of the busiest airports in the world.

I suggested to Rosie that she go and have a cup of coffee to fill in the time before her flight.

A mere thirty minutes later, Rosie called again but this time she was in tears. I asked what was wrong? Had they cancelled the flight? Had she lost her luggage? All sorts of problems raced through my mind.

Then she told me her story. While she was having her coffee, a young Filipino woman sat down beside her and asked. "Have you come in from abroad or are you just waiting for a plane to go home?"

Rosie replied, "I have just flown in from Australia."

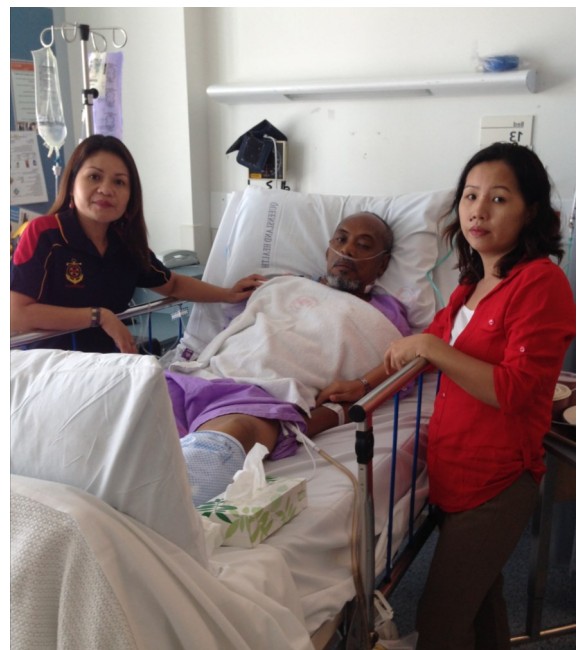
The young lady said, "From where?" Rosie told her, "Brisbane." And the young girl said, "I have a brother in Brisbane."

The conversation went on and it turned out that this young lady was the sister of Armando. She knew he was in hospital and that his wife had gone to Australia to be with him but did not know much about what had happened to him.

Rosie had photographs in her phone of both Armando and his wife and was able to show her. Rosie got her phone number and texted her all of the photos, so that she could show the rest of the family at the father's funeral.

Our pastoral care does not usually reach out quite this well. It needs the help of the Holy Spirit, to put us in the right place at the right time. So when I say that God works in mysterious ways and you look at the many tens of thousands of people passing through a major airport at that particular time on that day, the fact that you come together with a family member of a very ill seafarer, what other explanation could you possibly come up with?

If you are going to say sheer luck, the odds would have to be in the trillions to one.



Left to Right: Divine, Armando and our pastoral worker, Rosie Jones

# **“TEACHER, DO YOU NOT CARE THAT WE ARE PERISHING?”**

(Mark 4:38)



*On that day, as evening drew on, he said to them, “Let us cross to the other side.” Leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat just as he was. And other boats were with him. A violent squall came up and waves were breaking over the boat, so that it was already filling up. Jesus was in the stern, asleep on a cushion. They woke him and said to him, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?” He woke up, rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Quiet! Be still!” The wind ceased and there was great calm. Then he asked them, “Why are you terrified? Do you not yet have faith?” They were filled with great awe and said to one another.*

*Who then is this whom even wind and sea obey?”*

(Mark 4:35-41)

Jesus with his disciples sets to sail, a storm breaks out, the boat is filled with water, but Jesus, is at sleep. The disciples are afraid to do the crossing, they should never have set to sail. The frightened disciples call Jesus and cry out, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?” He wakes up. He is there as promised and silences the wind and bring back peace in the hearts of the sailors. (Matt. 28:20). Jesus recounts the exodus and realizes it in the prophecy announced by Psalm: “In their distress they cried to the Lord, who brought them out of their peril; He hushed the storm to silence, the waves of the sea were stilled. (Psalm 107: 28-30).

**“BECAUSE THEY ROB THE WEAK, AND THE NEEDY GROAN,  
I WILL NOW ARISE,” SAYS THE LORD;  
“I WILL GRANT SAFETY TO WHOEVER LONGS FOR IT.” (Psalm 12:6)**

The echo of the cry of the disciples of Jesus, frightened by the violent storm of the sea, resound in our present days, we hear it again in its tragedy, in yet another disaster at sea, the one of the Sicilian Channel, where more than 700 immigrants died during the night of 19<sup>th</sup> April 2015. The sea in this case was not violent for the adverse forces of nature but were troubled waters by the hostile force, by the frightening and credulous indifference of the world community towards the phenomenon of clandestine immigration.

Massive and epochal phenomenon, thousands of people are forced to flee their countries to cross to "the other side", that of salvation, to escape a life of poverty, violence, exploitation and death. The shipwreck in the Sicilian Channel is the worst tragedy at sea after the II World War. From the beginning of 2015 over 1600 is the estimates death toll, in less than four months the number of victims is almost half compared to 3500 determined from October 2013 to November 2014 during the Operation "Mare Nostrum". One million refugees, says the Senior Prosecutor of Palermo, are waiting to reach Europe from the Libyan coast.

Even the President of the Italian Republic, Sergio Mattarella, used strong words while referring to the sinking

last Saturday night the 19<sup>th</sup>. *"We are facing appalling tragedies: human traffickers who cause massacres of innocents. We feel this ripping wound. It is our duty, of Europe, of the whole international community to do more to prevent these massacres."* Libera - Associations, names and numbers against mafias" commented the tragedy with a statement: *"They are dead that should weigh on the consciences of all. They should make us say stop, stop to the traffickers of death, stop to the merchants of illusions, stop to who use deaths for propaganda, stop to those looking for shortcuts with laws that deny rights, fueling illegality and desperation."*

### ***"Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?"***

Today the answer to this dramatic question is in the heartfelt words of Pope Francis, who challenges the International Community to take responsibility to eradicate every spiral of death, using all means. The Holy Father indicates the main road: social justice and universal brotherhood to erase all forms of suffering and death. At the Regina Caeli, on Sunday, 19<sup>th</sup> April, 2015, in St. Peter's Square, Pope Francis has raised an urgent appeal after another, terrible tragedy of migrants in the Channel of Sicily: *"I express my deepest sorrow in the face of this tragedy and I assure my thoughts and prayers to those still missing and to their families. I address an urgent appeal that the international community will act with decision and promptness to avoid any similar tragedy from happening again. These are men and women like us, our brothers and sisters seeking a better life, starving, persecuted, wounded exploited, victims of war; they are seeking a better life. They were seeking happiness."* Facing the new challenges of today, such as migration, by putting ourselves at the service of life and the dignity of the person.

### ***"United in order to act together"***

Pope Francis indicates a safe path, the necessary means and strategy to ensure to the world peace and healthy coexistence, where every brother will recognize friend and tenant of the same house: the world: *"Jesus is accompanies us. We cannot do it alone. In facing the pressure of events and trends, we will never manage to find the right path alone, and should we find it, we would not have enough strength to persevere, to face the climb and the unexpected obstacles. And this is where the Lord Jesus' invitation comes in: "If you would... follow me". He invites us in order to accompany us on the journey, not to exploit us, not to make slaves of us, but to free us "*

Cardinal Antonio Maria Vegliò, president of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, used strong and pressing words: *"We let ourselves be distressed by the numbers but behind every migrant who died at sea, or arriving exhausted on our shores, there is a face, a family, a story: there are pregnant mothers, minors left alone, young fathers. We are all responsible for this tragedy, no one can afford to look at the problem from the outside without being involved. "*

The American newspaper "Times" in an editorial titled "The duty of Europe", asked all the nations of Europe to support and finance the reforms that the EU is preparing to launch *"Without a coherent policy and insufficient funds, lives will be put at unnecessary risk and the humanitarian values that underpin Europe will be meaningless."* Federica Mogherini, head of European diplomacy spoke clearly of sharing the burden and sharing the responsibility for this drama. The journalist Salvatore Falco of "Euronews" said: *"In 2014 Mare Nostrum has been replaced by Triton which is not a rescue mission. Its main purpose is monitoring and controlling the borders and the teams remain within the limit of thirty miles from the Italian coast. Mare Nostrum cost over 9 million Euros per month, while Triton has a monthly budget of less than 3 million euro."* Aspasia Papadopoulou, Senior Policy Officer "European Council for Refugees and Exiles", interviewed by "Euronews" after the news of the new tragedy of the Sicilian Channel said, bluntly: *"I think what we saw this weekend will happen more and more. It is really urgent to create new mechanism for rescues at sea. This is not complicated arrangements, if there is a real political will shared by 28 Member States and supported by Frontex. It could act quickly in the Mediterranean, for example to welcome arriving migrants. At the same time there are also other additional measures: such as the relocation of refugees or the granting of humanitarian visas. Which could be used to ensure to persons in danger to arrive in Europe legally, without having to resort to illegal immigration. A Syrian family in Beirut, or an Eritrean in Tunis today have very little chance to enter Europe legally. For this the options that we have to use it all. "*

Is of these hours the news from the extraordinary session of the European Community, the special fund for Triton for 2015 it has been triplicated: 109 million euro, a positive signal of the increase awareness of the 28 EU Member States. The hope is that Italy will not be left alone in this enormous humanitarian operation, but there is finally an international political will, so that the problem of illegal immigration is eradicated. The words of the Holy Father Francis hopefully soon be negated: *"We are a society that has forgotten the experience of crying, we fell into the globalization of indifference."*



## LEGAL AID FOR SEAFARERS

**Vigo, 24 February 2015.-** The President of the Port Authority of Vigo, Ignacio López-Chaves, praised the work done by the "Rosa dos Ventos" Seafarers' Wives Association of Galicia. This association is a non-profit organization dedicated to defending the rights of seafarers and has run its services from an office near the fishing port offered by the Port Authority since 1991.

In addition, Lopez-Chaves also referred to the work of the Apostleship of the Sea, which represents the Church in the maritime world. Through its Stella Maris centers, AOS is in a daily struggle for the respect of seafarers' human dignity both in the workplace and at home.

Today, these two organizations signed a partnership agreement with the law firm Balms Abogados Consultores, which aims to provide free legal aid to seafarers in defense of their rights.

This agreement establishes the procedures for cooperation between Rosa dos Ventos, the AOS and the law firm for the provision of legal aid.

Through the agreement, Balms will provide free legal aid to seafarers linked to Rosa dos Ventos and AOS who are in need of this service.

This support will encourage and support more training and information for seafarers regarding labor and

social legislation concerning the maritime sector. It will also provide information to the partners on issues arising or serious concerns that may affect the maritime world, as well as any kind of regulation or project in relation to the

**Balms law firm will provide legal services to seafarers. It will encourage and support the promotion of more training and information for seafarers regarding legislation. It shall report on matters affecting the maritime world, as well as any kind of regulation or project relating to the sector.**

sector.

For Lopez-Chaves, this is "an important step" for fishing, which is a sector "of vital importance", whose workers have "a very tough job without social protection or a dimension of justice".

In this regard, the port officer praised the "efforts" of both organizations, which were represented by the Deputy Diocesan AOS delegate and Stella Maris Director, Maria del Carmen Grobas, and the coordinator of National and International Relations "Rosa dos Ventos" Seafarers' Wives Association, Maria Cristina de Castro, as well as the partner of "Balms Abogados Consultores" Antonio Heir, showing that "with hard work, a lot can be achieved."



**Rev. Fr. Ramón Camaño Pacín is the new National of the Apostleship of the Sea in Spain.**

He pledged the full support of his institution to both groups in order to raise awareness on the needs of seafarers and their consequences on family and social life, due to their prolonged periods at sea.

### CONGRATULATIONS!

On February 10th Fr. Edward Pracz, AOS National Director for Poland and Regional Coordinator for Europe, received the Haller's Ring, during the celebration of the 95th anniversary of the return of Poland to the Baltic Sea. On that day in 1920 the Polish general Józef Haller made a vow throwing platinum ring into the sea to mark the fact.

After 95 years, this highest reward was given to Fr. Pracz by the Maritime and River League due to all the outstanding activities he has done for the People of the Sea for many years.





# HOW THAILAND BECAME ASIA'S HUB FOR HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Author: Laura Villadiego, Bangkok

**It is estimated that tens of thousands of people each year are victims of the human trafficking networks in Thailand. This is the story of one of them, 'kidnapped' on a fishing boat**

Samat Senasuk has not seen his family in the last six years, since he was recruited onto a fishing boat. Most of this time, he has been there against his will. Senasuk explains: "First, they said it was only for two years. But then they extended the contract all the time, without asking whether I agreed or giving me vacation. When I refused to continue working for them, they threw me off the boat without paying the six years' wages they owed me."



**Inside the boat where Rohingya migrants lived for three months in Langkawi (Reuters).**

The economic crisis of 2008 did away with his job as a security guard in an office building in Bangkok, capital of Thailand. Then, a broker, as they call them in English, an agent who sells people to the country's flourishing trafficking networks, promised him another job as a watchman. However, the building that he was supposed to guard was floating and the tasks he was asked to perform were harder than he had been told, a story told by the fingers he has broken pulling up fishing nets.

For years, Thailand has been identified as one of Asia's main hubs for human trafficking. There are no exact figures, but the United States State Department, which produces a detailed annual report on global human trafficking, estimates that there are at least tens of thousands of people who are victims each year. In fact, last year, the country received the worst possible rating in the last report by the US government for being "a source, destination and transit country for men, women and children subjected to forced labour and sex trafficking."

The European Union has also denounced the practice in this country and a few weeks ago gave a



**A group of Rohingyas and Bangladeshi immigrants after reaching Lhoksukon, Indonesia (Reuters).**

"yellow card" to Thailand for the violation of human rights and international law in the fishing industry. The fishing industry is one of the main customers of these networks, along with prostitution, construction and domestic service. This "yellow card" is a warning before imposing sanctions on European imports of fishery products from Thailand, which could seriously harm the world's third largest exporter of seafood.

The military government - in power since last year's coup - said it was already taking steps to deal with this

phenomenon. Nevertheless, over the last few days, the discovery of several mass graves in southern Thailand - presumably containing illegal immigrants held by traffickers awaiting ransom from their families, has put their good words into question.

## A Slave's Life

United Nations defines trafficking as "the transport of persons [...] using force or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or position of vulnerability [...] with the aim of exploiting ". Here is Senasuk's story. Originally from Isaan, a poor region in northeastern Thailand, Senasuk finally agreed to be recruited onto the boat "because it promised to pay me very well."

The generous salary promised turned out to be 3,000 baht per month (80 euros), a third of the legal minimum wage in Thailand. The money was also held by the company until the end of a never-ending contract. "They deceive you. You are told nothing about the working conditions. They dupe you by promising big money," said Patima Tungpuchayakul, manager Labour Rights Promotion Network Foundation (LPN), one of the main organizations against trafficking in Thailand.

On his meager salary, Senasuk also had to deduct the fee that the agent had sold him was taking, about 25,000 baht (665 euros). Add this to the beatings the captain gave him and the few hours of sleep - often no more than four hours a day - after endless days of collecting fish. Today, he is waiting in Mahachai, a port city near Bangkok, for the Ministry of Labour to finish reviewing his case. He hopes to collect the wages owed him – he has obtained a part of this already - and to go home to his family some six years later.

Senasuk's story is not unique. Most victims speak of endless working hours, constant beatings and confiscated passports. Unlike Senasuk, most of those trafficked are not Thai, but come from poorer countries such as Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos. Soe Kyi is one of them. Like Senasuk, Soe Kyi was left wide eyed by a broker, who came to his house in southern Myanmar with a promise of a dream job. He also finished in a floating prison, working between 16 and 20 hours a day and with little food. Nevertheless, his hell was shorter, lasting only five months. "There was a time when I had no strength to work and the employer decided to get rid of me," he says. The captain put him ashore but without paying the five months' salary he was owed.



## A history of slavery

Slavery and trafficking have existed for centuries in Thailand. Slavery was, in fact, legal until 1905, when King Rama V officially abolished it and slaves were freed. Many of them were women who had been bought and sexually exploited legally. However, the new law changed little in reality and most ended up in brothels, which were legal at that time and until 1960. The bustle of soldiers in the region during the Second World War and during the Vietnam War fuelled brothels and along with them, human trafficking networks.

Trafficking onto fishing boats, however, is a more recent phenomenon and, according to a report by the International Organization for Migration, began in the late 90s when a typhoon sank over 200 ships with all hands. More than 450 people died and 600 disappeared. After the tragedy, Thais refused to return to work on fishing boats and the industry had to search neighbouring countries, especially Myanmar and Cambodia, for crews. Today, numerous reports and studies published by various NGOs, but



also international organizations such as the International Labour Organization, describe the industry as a huge trafficking network that uses the lack of controls on ships operating in international waters to conduct forced labour and prevent their workers from abandoning their posts.

Trafficking to rural areas was exposed after the recent discovery of mass graves in southern Thailand. The remains of several of these camps were recently found in the jungle in the south. Living in flimsy bamboo shacks, trafficked people were held captive until their families paid a ransom. Many were Bangladeshi, but the main victims are Rohingyas, an ethnic minority in Myanmar who professes Islam. The government of the former Burma denies the Rohingya citizenship, claiming they are foreign immigrants. In 2012, tensions with the Buddhist majority arose in western Myanmar, where the minority is concentrated, and many have since decided to flee in order to survive.

"These camps have existed for three or four years, since the Thai government developed a policy that was supposed to help the Rohingya boats arriving on Thai shores," said Phil Robertson, Deputy Asia Director at Human Rights Watch. According to Robertson, the ships were to be initially redirected to Malaysia, after giving them supplies. "Quickly, several local officials, along with the police and other security forces, realized that it was more profitable to cooperate with the trafficking networks that ferry the Rohingyas," he continues. Often ransoms go up to \$ 2,000, three times the price of a worker sold to a ship or a factory. Nevertheless, a large number of those who cannot pay ransom end up as slaves in Thai industry, according to research by Reuters in 2013.

Corruption has been one of the main factors fuelling trafficking. Just days after finding mass graves and camps, the mayor of one of the nearby villages and his assistant were arrested and at least 50 police officers were suspended for their alleged connection with trafficking networks. Existing legislation, with the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2008 as the main instrument, contains many loopholes that are exploited by brokers.

"There is a legal problem in Thailand. First, the criteria to determine who is a trafficked person are not standardized and often the victim is accused of being guilty for his/her situation," says Patima Tungpuchayakul, of the LPN. "Actually, they want to hide the number of victims from the US, in order to improve its rating [in the State Department Report of trafficking]. Also [in the fishing industry], the law defends the employer, not the crew," continues the activist. In this case, Thai law allows workers to enlist on a boat fishing in international waters without a passport, as long as they have a document called a "Sailor's Log", which are often counterfeited by fishing companies.

While national and international pressure has led to the Government of Thailand to announce quick

action, boats with illegal immigrants, many asylum seekers continue to arrive on the coasts of Southeast Asia. The urgency is such that Thailand, Myanmar and Malaysia have organised a meeting between later this month to discuss how to jointly combat human trafficking. Nevertheless, Malaysia and Indonesia remain firm in their policy of returning ships to sea. Thailand, meanwhile, continues to make promises that have been heard before and will probably not achieve the military government's main objective: to avoid being listed as one of the countries not fighting human trafficking in the new US State Department Report, published next June.  
El Confidencial, 14.05.2015



**Immigrants, supposedly of the Rohingyas, crammed into a boat after being rescued from boats after fleeing Myanmar. (Reuters)**