

# APOSTOLATUS MARIS BULLETIN



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## POPE FRANCIS PRAYS FOR SEAFARERS AND FISHERMEN ON SEA SUNDAY



**"Today is 'Sea Sunday', in support of the pastoral care of seafarers. I encourage seafarers and fishermen in their work, which is often difficult and risky, as well as the chaplains and the volunteers in their valuable service. May Mary, *Star of the Sea*, watch over you!"**

10<sup>th</sup> JULY 2016

### IN THIS ISSUE ....

Sea Sunday Message	1
AOS Oceania Regional Conference & AOS Regional Coordinators Meeting	6
Symposium on Migration by Sea	10
SOS Méditerranée and Aquarius	14
National Session of the 'Mission de la Mer', France	23

**Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People**  
Palazzo San Calisto - Vatican City  
Tel. +39-06-6988 7131  
Fax +39-06-6988 7111  
AOSinternational@migrants.va

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

## MESSAGE FOR SEA SUNDAY

Dear friends,

Seated comfortably on the sofa in our living room, we find it difficult to understand how much our daily life is depending on the maritime industry and the sea. If we look around in the places where we live and work, we realize that most of the furniture and IT equipment we are using have been transported by ships, our clothes were shipped in containers from the other side of the world and the fruits we eat were delivered by refrigerated ships from another country while tankers are transporting oil and petrol for our cars. Without seaborne trade the import and export of goods and finished products would not be possible.

Even when we decide to enjoy and relax by going in a cruise we do not think that thousands of seafarers are working hard to make sure that everything will run smoothly and we will have a comfortable vacation.

Furthermore in the recent humanitarian emergency in the Mediterranean Sea the crews of merchant vessels have been in the front

line to intervene and rescuing thousands of people trying to sail to Europe on board of overcrowded and unseaworthy vessels, inflatable rafts.

Almost 1.200.000 seafarers of every nationality (many of them from developing countries) on board of 50,000 merchant ships are transporting almost 90% of every kind of cargo. The unforgiving forces of the open sea and of the oceans expose ships to significant risk, and the seafarers are “risking their life” more than one way.

The physical life of the seafarers is at risk because aside from the hazards of the forces of the nature, piracy and armed robbery, shifting from one area to another and constantly evolving and adapting to new situations, continue to be a major threat to the security of the crew. Their psychological well-being is at risk when after having been at sea for days or weeks they are denied shore leave and prevented to leave the vessel.

The family life of the seafarers is in danger because their contracts force them to stay away from their families and loved ones for many months and often for several years on a row. Children are growing up without a fatherly figure while all the family’s responsibilities are on the shoulders of the mother.

The human and working dignity of the seafarers is at risk when they are exploited with long working hours and their wages are delayed for months or in cases of abandonments not paid at all. Criminalization of seafarers is a serious concern especially considering that in recent years a number of previously considered lawful seafaring activities have been criminalized particularly in relation to incidents such as shipwrecks, pollution, etc.

Encouraged by Pope Francis who called the chaplains and volunteers of the Apostleship of the Sea to “*be the voice of those workers who live far from their loved ones and face dangerous and difficult situations*”, as Apostleship of the Sea we stand at the side of seafarers to reiterate that their human and labor rights must be respected and protected.

We would like also to call on Governments and competent maritime authorities to strengthening the implementation of the ILO Maritime Labor Convention (MLC) 2006, especially the Regulation 4.4 whose purpose is: *To ensure that seafarers working on board a ship have access to shore-based facilities and services to secure their health and well-being.*

Finally, on this occasion of the annual celebration of Sea Sunday we would like to remind to all Christian communities and to each individual how important and essential are the seafarer profession and the shipping industry for our daily life. We would like to call on the bishops, especially the ones of maritime Dioceses to establish and support the Maritime Apostolate as “*a visible sign of your affectionate attention to those who cannot receive ordinary pastoral care.*”

While expressing our gratitude to the seafarers for their work, we entrust them and their families to the maternal protection of Mary, *Stella Maris*.



Cardinal Antonio Maria Vegliò  
President



✠ Joseph Kalathiparambil  
Secretary

1) FRANCIS, *General Audience*, 22 January 2014

2) BENEDICT XVI, *Address to the participants in the XXIII AOS World Congress*, 23 November 2012

# AUSTRALIA, PARISHES CALLED TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE VITAL ROLE OF SEAFARERS IN THE YEAR OF MERCY

Sr. Mary Leahy, published July 5, 2016, [mnnews.today](http://mnnews.today)

On Sea Sunday 10 July, Catholic parishes throughout Australia will acknowledge the vital role of over 130,000 Seafarers who transit through Australia's 25 ports while working at sea and the associated, dedicated port chaplains and volunteers. The parish support will be generated through a collection based on the annual, national Sea Sunday appeal.

Last year approximately 20,000 vessels visited Australia. Many of these received support from 15 Apostleship of the Sea Port Chaplains and over 164 Apostleship of the Sea volunteers. In the past twelve months, support was provided to 276 Seafarers who were hospitalised in Australia as a result of a medical emergency or an injury from a vessel at sea. These seafarers are isolated when admitted to hospital and remote from family. The Apostleship of the Sea (AOS) reconnects these sick or injured seafarers with family and continues to support them until discharged, ensuring personal needs are met where possible.

The AOS is the pontifical body with specific pastoral care responsibility for Seafarers - people who work at sea. Seafarers are those on board merchant ships or fishing vessels, and all who for whatever reason have undertaken a voyage by ship.

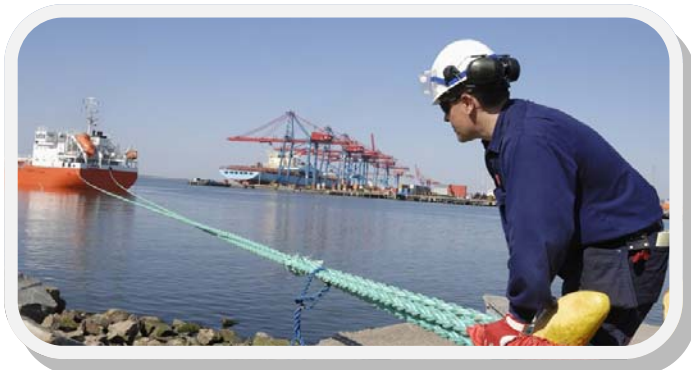
As a Catholic ministry, Seafarers can attend various AOS centres in seaports around Australia and are provided with a range of pastoral care services appropriate to their needs from practical support to providing sacramental ministry. The work of the laity as AOS volunteers in the ports is an important aspect of this ministry.

Pope Francis in 2014 called on those who work for the wellbeing of seafarers and the families to *"be the voice of those workers who live far from their loved ones and face dangerous and difficult situations."*

Sea Sunday came to prominence when the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference approved a national annual appeal to support the ministry back in the 1970's. On Sunday 10 July all dioceses, even those in-land that do not have a commercial seaport, are encouraged to support this collection because all of Australia benefits from the labours of seafarers through the use and enjoyment of goods imported as a result of their labours. Parishes are also asked to keep seafarers and their families in their prayers.

The Australian Catholic Bishops Promoter for the AOS, Bishop Bosco Puthur said, 'It is incumbent on the Catholic community in Australia, united as the Body of Christ, to accept responsibility for the pastoral care of the Apostleship of the Sea workers. I call on every parish to share in the financial costs of pastorally supporting the Seafarers and volunteers by contributing in some way to the national collection on Sunday 10 July. I extend my sincere gratitude to all who have donated and supported the national Sea Sunday appeal in the past. Without this support, the care and provision of pastoral services to Seafarers would not be possible.'

Bishop Puthur also acknowledged the service of the Apostleship of the Sea volunteers and he especially thanked Peter Owens, outgoing National Director of the Apostleship of the Sea. 'Peter has supported ports and port chaplains and has maintained contact with many related organisations. Peter has also raised awareness of the pastoral needs of seafarers who visit Australia. A new National Director will be appointed following careful consideration of the ongoing and changing needs of this ministry.'



## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- With almost 90 per cent of trade being transported by sea, the maritime industry plays a vital role in the world economy.
- Amongst other services, the AOS looks after Seafarers who are abandoned in port and those who are sick or injured through accidents.
- AOS volunteers give witness to their faith in working with this charitable ministry.
- The Apostleship of the Sea began under the name of the Apostolate of Prayer formed originally in Glasgow, Scotland on 31 July 1891.
- The Australian Chapter commenced in 1902 with Fr Patrick May of St Francis Church, Melbourne, known as St Augustine's Conference for Seafarers, made up of twelve young men.
- In 1922, Pope Pius XI approved the first constitution of the movement known as the Apostleship of the Sea.
- Some of the modern challenges facing Seafarers and this industry include: piracy and its impact on Seafarers and their families, Catholic formation for AOS volunteers and Catholic port Chaplains, workplace accidents, the changing face of the international shipping industry, smaller crews due to mechanisation and other developments, shortening turnaround times for container ships.
- Workers being increasingly recruited from developing countries where wages are low.

## PRAYER FOR SEA SUNDAY

Inspired by the Message from the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People

*by Fr. Francesco Dell'Orco, parish priest of the Stella Maris of Bisceglie, Italy*

### ***O Lord, Providing Father and Creator of Heaven, Earth and the Sea!***

On this Sea Sunday, we wish to thank you, for you bless the hard work of seafarers. We recognize the necessity of the maritime profession and industry for our everyday life. With the humble and hardworking commitment of these people, we would never be able to relax and rejuvenate during our time on cruise ships; we would not have much of the furniture, informational materials, clothing, fruit and gasoline that we have today.

### ***O Lord Jesus Christ, Divine Helmsman!***

Look with predilection on the crews of merchant ships that come to rescue You, who are present in those migrant hoping to reach Europe on board boats or inflatable dinghies, crammed to capacity and not seaworthy. Bless those, our brothers, who - at the bottom of the Mediterranean Sea - await your light, your forgiveness and eternal rest.

### ***O Holy Spirit, who hovers over the waters!***

Enlighten and strengthen seafarers; protect them from the relentless forces of the Sea that place their ships at considerable risk; protect them from pirates and from armed robbery.

### ***O Blessed Virgin Mary, Star of the Sea and symbol of the maternal face of God!***

In your Immaculate Heart, keep the families of seafarers, who these men must leave behind on shore.

### ***O Sign of the Father's closeness!***

Keep watch particularly over the wives of seafarers, who are called to fulfil the role of both mother and father to their children. Intercede for them before your Divine Son; request for them a *great heart* in order to be able to accept all familial responsibilities; a *joyful heart* to rejoice in the success of her husband; an *affectionate heart* capable of understanding him and ready to speak kind words of tenderness to him, despite hardship and drama; a *bold heart* that will not succumb to the trail of loneliness that, at times, may last months or even years.

### ***Symbol of the Son's Mercy!***

Assist sea chaplains and volunteers to be a visible sign of the Lord's concern and the solicitude of His Church towards those who cannot make use of ordinary pastoral care. Assist them to be the voice of those workers who live faraway from their loved ones and who must face dangerous and difficult situations. Assist them to be the voice, calling for respect and for the protection of their human and professional rights.

### ***Symbol of the fertility of the Spirit and Advocate of seafarers!***

Urge the competent maritime authorities and those who govern, so that they may guarantee access to the necessary structures and services on shore for seafarers in service on board, so as to safeguard their health and wellbeing.

### ***Saint Francis of Paolo, Patron Saint of Seafarers!***

Pray for seafarers, especially when their human and professional dignity is threatened by those who wish to exploit them at work, or by those who withhold their wages for months at a time or, in the case of abandonment, by those unwilling to pay them at all.

**To you, o Father**, who guides us among the hardships of this world to the Your eternal Port; through your Son, Jesus Christ, who is at the helm of the boat of Peter; in the power of the Holy Spirit, Divine Breath; all glory, honour and praise now and for ever. Amen. Alleluia!



# AOS SOUTH ASIA REGIONAL CONFERENCE

Cochin, India, 17<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> May 2016

MESSAGE OF THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL

Dear Bishops, chaplains, volunteers and AOS members,

I understand the problems and challenges for Fr. Johnson Chirammel to organize such a meeting which gathers together chaplains and volunteers coming from a few countries that politically, socially and culturally are similar but at the same time so different. Conscious of these difficulties, as President of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People I would like to send to all of you my sincere greetings and best wishes for a fruitful Regional Conference focusing on the South Asian Fishing Sector.



Fr. Johnson Chirammel

Fisheries play an important role on the economy of your region and on the livelihood of millions of people who rely on the sea for their sustenance. India being the birth place of several international fishing organizations advocating for the rights of fishers has been on the lead to provide pastoral care to those who are often called the “forgotten seafarers”.

*“Oceans not only contain the bulk of our planet’s water supply, but also most of the immense variety of living creatures, many of them still unknown to us and threatened for various reasons. What is more, 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. (Laudato Si n. 40)*

Pope Francis calls our attention on the destruction that we are rendering to the environment. Fishers are the first ones to suffer from the destruction of the coastal shore with the construction of luxury resorts, the annihilation of the mangroves breeding ground for fish and the pollution of rivers and sea. Following the appeal of Pope Francis, the Apostleship of the Sea in your Region should cooperate closely with government agencies and non-governmental organizations to protect and preserve for future generations the natural resources with which the Lord has gifted your nations.

Fishers sometimes must be educated not to be greedy and to exploit the fishing resources by using non-conventional methods of fishing. The Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing is a practice that cannot be tolerated and sustainable fishing should be supported also with the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries adopted twenty years ago by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Conference.

Speaking about fishers in your region, we cannot forget the many fishers who for various reasons are arrested and detained even for long periods in a foreign country. While we understand the right of each nation to protect its territory and to arrest fishers who are poaching in national territorial waters, we hope that while in detention they be treated humanely and the process of repatriation be facilitated to reunite them as soon as possible with their loved ones. AOS should provide particular care and support for their families.

I would like to invite you to take into consideration the International Labor Organization (ILO) Work on Fishing Convention (188). Once ratified and implemented, it will bring protection to more than 90 per cent of the world’s fishers including also the self-employed and those paid on the basis of a share of the catch.

Fishers are often isolated and unable to express their needs. As AOS you work at the grassroots levels to empower the fishers communities to be vocal about their rights and the need to protect the oceans from the exploitation of few.

My sincere gratitude goes to Fr. Chirammel, the Regional Coordinator, and to the qualified speakers who with their presentations will stimulate your reflection and motivate your dedication and service to the fishers and their families. I accompany you with my prayers and ask God, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, *the Star of the Sea*, to guide and lead your thoughts and decisions for the benefit of the fishers and their families.

Antonio Maria Card. Vegliò, President

✠ Joseph Kalathiparambil, Secretary

# AOS OCEANIA REGIONAL CONFERENCE & AOS REGIONAL COORDINATORS MEETING

6<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> March 2016

Mary MacKillop Place, North Sydney

by Sr. Mary Leahy, RSJ  
AOS Regional Coordinator for Oceania

*We are but travellers here...*

*Saint Mary MacKillop  
1842-1909*

Last March we were but travellers at Mary MacKillop Place where we reflected on the AOS ministry in Oceania and made some concrete steps to take it forward.

One of these steps was to form a regional executive committee to facilitate the sharing of resources to better assist those in the region who at this time have no AOS presence.

This executive will aim to focus on a collaborative response to the needs of other parts of the region, for example Samoa, Fiji, PNG, Kiribati.

- The executive committee will also evaluate resources in Australia and New Zealand and plan to better share these resources so seafarers and fishers are served in these poorer areas of our region.
- This regional executive for Oceania will work closely with the current AOS Executive in New Zealand and the future AOS Executive in Australia. A steering committee to establish the new AOS Executive in Australia has been formed and is currently working towards this. This steering committee is being chaired by Bishop Bosco, AOS Australia Episcopal Promoter, and consists of representatives from throughout Australia.



## OCEANIA REGIONAL CONFERENCE

The conference was attended by up to 50 delegates including the Pontifical Council, Regional Coordinators and delegates from Australia and New Zealand. This input challenged us to look at who else within the maritime world we need to consider in our mission – “who else is on the boat”?

The course of the Meeting was greatly facilitated by Sister Jan Barnett, RSJ, who – in a very incisive and astute manner – was able to actively involve all of the delegates through questions, working groups, and the sharing of thoughts and results. The scheme of the meeting gave all an opportunity to freely express their thoughts and observations regarding the ministry of the Apostleship of the Sea in both Australia and New Zealand.

The participants were invited to turn their attention to challenges of a global nature within the maritime world, as well as to those that require a response at the regional level.

The regional meeting was enriched by the lectures of: Mr. Allan Schwartz, General Manager of Ship Safety of the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA), who addressed several issues related to safety at sea and to the Maritime Labour Convention of 2016; Mr. Dean Summer, Coordinator for the ITF and representative of the Australian Maritime Syndicate, who underlined the meaning and importance of the work done by the *Apostolatus Maris* on the Australian continent; Fr. Bruno Ciceri, who spoke of human trafficking in the fishing industry; and Sister Mary Anne Loughry, RSM, who intervened with a lecture regarding forced migration and trafficking of human beings in the maritime world.

## REGIONAL COORDINATORS MEETING

The Regional conference closed on the Thursday and the Regional Coordinators meeting continued on the Friday to Sunday. This conference was attended by the Pontifical Council, seven Regional Coordinators and the National Directors from the UK and New Zealand.

Input sessions were given on ecumenism, on trafficking and forced migration within the maritime world, and the process for submitting grant applications.

The new Stella Maris Seafarers app was endorsed and the coordinators agreed to promote it to seafarer's across their areas.

The Regional Coordinators discussed how they could best function as a global mission of the Church, and discussed the Motu Proprio with a view to discern its application in the changing reality of our ministry.

A sub-committee has been set up to further explore these two areas. This consists of Fr. Jeff Drane, Mr. Martin Foley, Karen Parsons and Fr. Celestine Ikomba.

These are some of the highlights of the week. It was a full programme, we worked hard but also managed some social interaction including a community BBQ in the beautiful grounds at Mary MacKillop Place, a four hour Sydney Harbour cruise which showed off Sydney at its very best, and a cocktail reception at the Australian National Maritime Museum. We were also lucky to celebrate International Women's Day with a special liturgy concelebrated by Acting Archbishop of Sydney Bishop Terry Brady, AOS Bishop Promoter Bishop Bosco Puthur and Bishop Joseph Kalathiparambil, Secretary of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care for Migrants and Itinerant People as well as local and global clergy.

Mary MacKillop Place provided the perfect venue for this conference. Their facilities and staff helped ensure a successful and enjoyable week for all. The use of the Chapel provided delegates an opportunity to visit St Mary MacKillops tomb and participate in daily liturgies which I am sure was a highlight for many.

The evaluations showed us that the conference was an overwhelming success; particular mention was made of benefit of having the facilitator to guide us through such an ambitious programme.

Thanks to all who participated and made this important conference so successful and I hope that the networks and friendships which have been made assist us all in our care of seafarers and fishers.

Fr Noel Connolly in his input at the conference "Pope Francis Theology of Mission and the Church of, for and with the poor", challenged us particularly as a region to reach out to the poor of Oceania in terms of our AOS ministry.

Pope Francis elaborates on this in his Apostolic Exhortation 2013: *"I prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security. I do not want a Church concerned with being at the centre and then ends by being caught up in a web of obsessions and procedures. If something should rightly disturb us and trouble our consciences, it is the fact that so many of our brothers and sisters are living without the strength, light and consolation born of friendship with Jesus Christ, without a community of faith to support them, without meaning and a goal in life. More than by fear of going astray, my hope is that we will be moved by the fear of remaining shut up within structures which give us a false sense of security, within rules which make us harsh judges, within habits which make us feel safe, while at our door people are starving and Jesus does not tire of saying to us: 'Give them something to eat' (Mk 6:37)." (Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (November 2013), #49)*

My personal thanks to each and every one for their generous contributions and constructive comments



Left to right: Sr. Jan Barnett, RSJ, Fr. Jeff Drane and Bishop Bosco Puthur



which ensured the success of the conference. To those who worked so closely with me and the Pontifical Council in the preparation and lead up to the conference my heartfelt thanks. It was a team effort and further confirms the need for collaboration within the region.

Special thanks to Cardinal Antonio Maria Vegliò, Bishop Joseph Kalathiparambil and Fr. Bruno Ciceri from the Pontifical Council, who supported us to hold this important conference in the southern hemisphere. It was a privilege and an honour.

## MORE ON THE AOS REGIONAL COORDINATORS MEETING

On Thursday, March 8<sup>th</sup>, the Regional Coordinators met with all of the delegates participating in the regional meeting for Oceania. The working group reflections began from the question: *What are the issues of greatest concern for seafarers, fishermen and port workers in the region of the world that you come from?*

Fr. Ciceri gave a panoramic view of various information regarding different maritime organization with whom the *Apostolatus Maris* collaborates: organizations such as ICMA, ITF-ST, ISWAN, MPHRP, and others.

Sister Giovanni Farquar, RSJ, Director of the Commission for Ecumenical and Interreligious Relation of the Archdiocese of Sydney, invited us to reflect on the reason why working together ecumenically is so important today. Sister Mary Anne Loughry, RSM, then, once again proposed the theme of forced migration and the trafficking of human beings in the maritime world.



In a video conference from London, Mr. John Green, Director of Fundraising for the Apostleship of the Sea – Great Britain, presented the twinning project between the pastoral centres of Great Britain and South Africa. He also spoke of a new emailing system that will be introduced at the international level, after having been gradually put into use by the Regional Coordinators and National Directors. Everyone approved and appreciated the new “Stella Maris app”, which will be available to chaplains, volunteer and seafarers in the near future.

It is worth noting that, thanks to various activities organized, the two meetings also served the purpose of making known to various social/maritime realities the valuable work done by the Apostleship of the Sea in the region. They also served in reinforcing the spirit of friendship and solidarity between chaplains and volunteers of both countries, and the relations between the Regional Coordinators present.

The liturgical celebrations, presided over by the Representative of the Archbishop of Sydney, His Excellency Bishop Bosco Puter, and by His Excellency Bishop Joseph Kalathiparambil in the Chapel next to the grave of Mary MacKillop, the first Australian Saint, motivated and strengthened the spirit of service of all the participants.

A special thank you goes out to Sister Mary and her team of colleagues, who for months worked long and hard to organize these two meetings and who, according to the evaluation of all present, unanimously achieved a great success.



## AOS REGIONAL COORDINATORS MEETING

### WELCOMING ADDRESS

H.E. Msgr. Joseph Kalathiparambil  
Secretary, Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care  
of Migrants and Itinerant People

My dear chaplains and volunteers from Australia and New Zealand,

I am bringing the greetings of H.E. Cardinal Antonio Maria Vegliò, President of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People which, according to the Apostolic Letter, *Motu Proprio, Stella Maris* of Pope John Paul II, is responsible for the overall direction of the Work of the Maritime Apostolate.

Though it was a long flight to come here “down under”, I am glad to meet all of you representing the AOS members of the Oceania Region which, aside from Australia and New Zealand, includes also Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and other Pacific Ocean Islands.

The Pontifical Council requires the Regional Coordinators to organize every two years a Conference where all the AOS members of the region get together, breaking down the barriers of national boundaries, to discuss how to develop a comprehensive regional ministry and respond to the challenges of a global maritime industry. The Oceania Regional Conference and the Regional Coordinators Meeting here in Sydney is a unique occasion for you to feel part of the greater family of AOS International. Furthermore, having decided to hold it “down under” is a clear expression of the great support that the Pontifical Council would like to manifest for the pastoral work done by all of you in this part of the world. We must recognize that your Seafarers Centers, some of which are in remote areas, are playing a vital and strategic role in providing spiritual and material assistance to many crews.

However, there is another reason why it is important for us to be here. We would like to express our solidarity to the Australian seafarers who are struggling to maintain their jobs. We are aware that in the past few months there was a move to deregulate the Australian shipping industry and changing the Australia’s Coastal Trading Act, placing at risk thousands of domestic jobs in the maritime sector. While we agree that in Australian’s waters it is necessary to deliver more affordable freight costs and greater choice between shipping companies, it is also crucial that this should not happen by using flag of convenience vessels and employing foreign seafarers who are often underpaid and exploited.



We should be aware that we are having our Conference at the shrine of the first Australian saint, Sr. Mary MacKillop. Throughout her life, Mary met with opposition from people outside the Church and even from some of those within it. In the most difficult of times she consistently refused to attack those who wrongly accused her and undermined her work, but continued in the way she believed God was calling her and was always ready to forgive those who wronged her. For us in the maritime world, she stands as an example of great courage and trust in her living out of God's loving and compassionate care of those in need.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Sr. Mary Leahy and to her team of volunteers who in the past few months have worked tirelessly overcoming difficulties to make this Conference a memorable and successful one.

# WORLD MARITIME UNIVERSITY

## Symposium on Migration by Sea

MALMÖ, SWEDEN, 26 – 27 April, 2016

The World Maritime University (WMU), in partnership with the University of Genoa (UNIGE), held a Symposium on "Migration by Sea" in Malmö, Sweden on 26-27 April 2016.

It was attended by about 200 people, including students and professors from the WMU (representing about 40 nationalities), specialists in various maritime disciplines, shipping companies, representatives of governmental institutions of the countries that are at the forefront of rescue and in the reception of migrants (Italy, Greece and Turkey), international organizations such as UNHCR, IOM, NATO, Frontex, Italian Coast Guard and a number of NGOs. This broad range of qualified people, with their various inputs, sparked a very interesting debate and an in-depth exchange of ideas, not only during the Symposium but also after sessions.

The Symposium, with its packed agenda, comprised five sessions: Assessment of Migration by Sea; Human Rights in Relation to Migration; Migrants and Human Trafficking by Sea; Migration by Sea: Safety and Security Aspects; The International Law Related to Liability and Insurance.

The speakers highlighted the complexity of migration not only during the sea crossings, but from the moment in which the migrant begins their journey. It was pointed out that the intertwining of many problems (social, political, religious, economic, legislative, etc.) and the involvement of various "actors" (migrants, governments, ship owners, traffickers, organized crime, etc.) make the identification of solutions difficult, nearly impossible.

Nevertheless, a number of issues emerged on which some consensus was reached, such as the need for greater cooperation and exchange of information between all the different stakeholders involved in this phenomenon, which has been called of biblical proportions. Another theme was that the international community needs to do more both in economic terms but also in the area of SAR (search and rescue) operations, to reduce the dependence on the merchant marine, which up to now has assisted in saving 1 out of every 5 migrants. Also highlighted was the need to provide for the physical and psychological welfare of the crews involved in SAR operations.

By all accounts, the Symposium, the first of its kind organized by WMU, was a success. Feedback received regarding the input by the representative of the Pontifical Council, Fr. Bruno Ciceri, indicated that it was appreciated. However, of much greater value was the public recognition of the presence of a dicastery of the Roman Curia which, as said Dr. Cleopatria Dumbia, President of WMU, "... is doing a tremendous job in the field of migration".

### PRESENTATION OF FR. BRUNO CICERI

#### Note:

*I am aware that using the word "migrants" to define all kinds of people trying to cross the sea into Europe is very restrictive. I should clearly distinguish them in refugees, asylum seekers, economic migrants, trafficked people, etc. However, in my presentation, for all the practical reasons, I use the term "migrants" to define all the people who are rescued at sea. Once they are rescued and properly identified we can start defining more clearly their status.*



Migrants using sea routes to search for better life or to escape situations of persecution or war is not a new phenomenon. At the end of the 1970's we had boat people from Vietnam, but it was a different period (nations were still willing to accept migrants especially the ones caused by the Vietnam War) and



most of all it was in a reduced scale compared with what is happening now in the Mediterranean Sea.

In 1991 with the Albanian crisis, in a few months thousands and thousands of migrants were crossing the Adriatic Sea with any kind of boats in order to reach Italy. The most famous one, was the M/V Vlorë arriving at the port of Bari with more than 20,000 migrants on board.

During the Roman times the Mediterranean Sea was called “Mare nostrum” in Latin, “Our Sea”, because on a commercial and military level it was completely under their control. Throughout history things have radically changed and today it is impossible to call it again “Mare nostrum” (the waters of the Mediterranean Sea touch 23 countries). In October 2013 “Mare Nostrum” was the name given to the Italian military operation in the Mediterranean Sea to face the humanitarian emergency created by the great influx of migrants.

Since early 1990, the Mediterranean Sea has been used by migrants as a privileged route to land on the coasts of Italy and try to enter in Europe. According to the statistics of the Italian Coast Guard during the last 23 years around 640.000 people have been rescued in the waters of the Mediterranean. In the last two years Italy has rescued more migrants than in the previous 23 years (in the period from 1991-2013: 313,600 migrants (49%) and in the period 2014-2015: 326,400 migrants (51%)). The numbers and nationalities of migrants have varied depending on where humanitarian crisis were exploding.

In 2015 the number of people crossing the Mediterranean Sea slightly decreased because of the opening of the new Eastern Mediterranean route, but considering the political decisions recently made by the EU with Greece and Turkey and the continuous instability of a several countries in Africa, for sure the number of migrants arriving by sea to Italy will increase significantly. Unless a political solution will be found for a number of difficult situations in Africa, what we could describe as the biggest search and rescue operation of all times might continue for many years more.

I would like to concentrate my attention on the burden placed on crews of merchant vessels crossing the Mediterranean Sea, by involving them in large scale search and rescue operations.

The Maritime Rescue Coordination Center (MRCC), the Italian national authority responsible for search and rescue, often calls in merchant vessels to divert their route to respond to a distress call coming from a boat with migrants in difficulties. In 2014, 882 vessels were diverted to assist and rescue around 42,000 migrants and in 2015, 492 vessels did the same for 16,000 migrants.

Masamichi Morooka, Chairman of the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS), at their 2015 Annual Meeting in Rotterdam said: *“It is simply not acceptable that merchant ships are still being routinely called upon by Rescue Co-ordination Centres to assist with the majority of rescue operations currently taking place, having already assisted with the rescue of more than 50,000 people since the crisis started to escalate last year. Apart from the fact that commercial ships are wholly unsuitable for rescuing hundreds of people at a time, the Search and Rescue obligations that exist under international law were never created with the current situation in mind.”*

We are all aware that a container vessel with its vertical walls is not the most practical one to rescue hundreds of migrants in a rubber boat or a small craft and a fully loaded tank is not the best place where to accommodate large groups of migrants rescued from the sea.

The International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) and InterManager in partnership with other maritime stockholders, in order to respond to this inevitable situation of emergency and provide some guidelines for seafarers that in spite of all find themselves in this risky situation, have published two booklets which are a guide for ship owners and captains to ensure the safety and security of crews who may be involved in the res-





cue of a large number of people at sea, as well as that of people who save:

- Rescue at Sea. A guide to principles and practice as applied to refugees and migrants.
- Large Scale Rescue Operations at Sea. Guidance on Ensuring the Safety and Security of Seafarers and Rescued Persons.
- Best Management Practices For Large Scale Rescue Operations at Sea

These booklets are very useful and well done. Looking at the contents you can see that they are trying to cover all the different aspects of the search and rescue operation. There are detailed guidelines on how to prepare the vessels for the rescue, how to guarantee the personal safety and the security of the ship together with the management of people rescued and how to clean the vessel properly once the migrants are disembarked. However, in regard to mental and physical welfare of the seafarers, I found only a few lines.

In this regard I would like to share with you the experience of Fr. Guy Pasquier, chaplain of the Apostleship of the Sea at Le Havre, France.



### Chronology of events:

September 10, 2014 - 300 miles off the South Eastern coast of Malta, a vessel carrying hundreds of migrants sunk. According to the survivors, the boat was intentionally sunk by the traffickers. A Panamanian container rescued 2 survivors and brought them to Sicily. Another merchant vessel rescued 9 people and brought them to Crete. While the Antartica, flying the French flag, rescued three Palestinians and continued to Le Havre. To be noted that the newspaper in reporting the news didn't mentioned at all the role of the crew in the rescue

and the tremendous psychological impact that such experience had on their life.

At Le Havre the chaplain of the Apostleship of the Sea (AOS), Fr. Guy Pasquier went on board at the request of the Commander.

### The chaplain's story:

*"At the request of the agent, relaying on a call from the Master for a visit from a priest, I went aboard the Antartica, late in the morning of September 23<sup>rd</sup>. The crew was very busy loading supplies and foodstuffs; they were also taking oil from a truck. After going to the bridge, the officer led me to the Master, who explained what was the matter and how I could help. I was asked to meet with the crew and to talk with them about the traumatic experience they had: they had been at the scene of the sinking of a boat with an estimated 500 migrants on board, which had been rammed by another vessel and sank in two minutes. The Master was asked to remain in the area for 24 hours, in order to pick up any survivors. Three Palestinians from Gaza were rescued.*

*Crew were posted on watch to indicate where bodies were floating. More than 300 were picked up and photos taken. The three Palestinian survivors were treated on board: they were exhausted after being long hours hanging onto what was left of the boat with other people who did not make it; they left them ashore in Malta, even though the Master wanted to bring them back to France. While I was on board, two maritime police came to take the testimony of the Master. After lunch, I started chatting with the Filipino crews that I was able to meet; I talked with eight of them (...).*

*The sight of all those bodies was unbearable for them. Many could not bear seeing such a scene of misery and turned away. They asked: Why did this happen? What is the value of life?*

*One of the crew told me he made the sign of the cross at the sight of all those corpses, and prayed for all the victims. The mess man said he could not contemplate the thought that there were babies among the victims: "I have a two-year old; I thought about him constantly." I saw a young French officer cadet (3<sup>rd</sup> year at Le Havre school), and talk for a while. He was on watch to identify the bodies and to report their position he told me: "That day was unbearable (...)"*

*The Master performed remarkably, and did not try to shirk his responsibilities, hoping that his testimony could be*

*used to bring these traffickers before an international tribunal. (...) I do not know if the Master was a Christian, but God bless him for his display of great humanity."*

### Conclusions:

- We all know that seafarers are professionally trained and qualified in search and rescue operations, but there is no school or training that can prepare them to handle the rescue of a large number of people. This situation leads to physical and psychological stress which must be recognized and managed by the ship owner putting in place all the necessary measures to ensure that the crews rests and recovers his physical strength before continuing to operate the vessel in safety.
- The psychological impact of such an experience in the mind of the crews is very high. Sometimes these rescue operations, for several causes outside the control of the Master and his crew, turn into disasters with many migrants who drown one step away from salvation under the eyes of shocked seafarers. Being witness to these events causes deep emotional turmoil, feelings of guilt and inadequacy for not being able to save them. For these reasons, after having disembarked the migrants and guaranteed the safety of the ship, it is necessary to offer to the crew the possibility to freely express emotions, feelings, frustrations and fears experienced during what could have been a traumatic experience. Furthermore, it is indispensable, also to monitor the seafarers for long term and unforeseen mental and psychological effects that could affect their professional and human life. In many ports there are Seafarers Centers with chaplains and volunteers (many of whom have received professional training) who are always available to provide assistance and support to any seafarer who request it.
- It is of vital importance to seek for a political solution for the situations of war, violence, terrorism and poverty affecting the nations where these migrants come from. In the meantime it is essential for the international community to immediately increase the economic and material resources for a better and more effective search and rescue operations, in order to reduce the reliance on the commercial shipping, that will continue when it is needed to fulfil its duty of rescuing people at sea alongside the Coast Guards and the Navy.
- The work carried out by the crews of merchant vessels in these circumstances is unique and important, but at a political and social level it has not yet received the recognition it deserves. For this reason I would like to share with you the appeal made by Cardinal Antonio Maria Vegliò, President of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, in the 2015 Message for Sea Sunday in which he says: *"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"*.

**REVD CANON STEPHEN MILLER, MISSION TO SEAFARERS REGIONAL DIRECTOR EAST ASIA, HAS WON THE COVETED INDIVIDUAL DR DIERK LINDEMANN WELFARE PERSONALITY OF THE YEAR AWARD FROM ISWAN AND DEDICATED IT TO THE MEMORY OF FR. JOHN VAN DEERLIN**

On receiving the award Stephen paid homage to the world's seafarers: "It was a great honour to receive the Seafarer Welfare Personality Award of the year 2016. Most of us who work with seafarers each day appreciate the sacrifice that each crew member makes, in leaving family and friends for many months at sea, sometimes with long periods of no communication with home. All this to bring us the essentials we need to live our lives as we would wish.

I would like to thank all at ISWAN and those who nominated me, and I would like to dedicate the Award to the memory of Fr. John Van Deerlin, a Catholic priest and dear friend, who I worked with closely in Dubai for many years, who served the migrant community and in particular seafarers, who sadly died two years ago," he concluded.



# SOS MEDITERRANEE'S VESSEL, THE AQUARIUS, CONTINUES ITS RESCUE OPERATIONS

SOS MEDITERRANEE is an association founded in 2015 by a group of European citizens, determined to act against the tragedy of repeated sinking of vessels carrying refugees and migrants on the Mediterranean Sea (there were 3,771 deaths in 2015, making it the most dangerous migratory route in the world). The association is apolitical and has one mission: to save lives at sea.

Thanks to an exceptional mobilization of European civil society, SOS MEDITERRANEE chartered a 77-metre vessel, the Aquarius. Rescue operations began in late February, off the Libyan coast. The onboard medical partner is Médecins du Monde (Doctors of the World). It costs 11,000 euros a day to finance the rental of the ship, crew, fuel, and all equipment necessary to accommodate refugees on board. The association calls for support and mobilization from all actors of civil society: individuals, NGOs, foundations, philanthropists, companies and public authorities to give it the means to continue its operations until the end of the year.

[www.sosmediterranee.fr](http://www.sosmediterranee.fr)



## THERE ARE 3 ASSOCIATIONS IN EUROPE

- SOS MEDITERRANEE Germany, created in May 2015 in Berlin, chaired by Captain Klaus Vogel
- SOS MEDITERRANEE France, created in June 2015 in Marseille, chaired by Francis Vallat
- SOS MEDITERRANEE Italy, created in February 2016 in Palermo, chaired by Valeria Calandra

The Aquarius is a "ship for assistance at sea", built in 1977. Initially harboured in the Baltic, it measures 77 meters long and 12 meters wide and has two lifeboats. Its cruising speed is around 13 knots and it is equipped to face any kind of weather. The vessel has four decks and has large covered areas. In fact, the Aquarius can accommodate 250 passengers on a "cruise" and up to 500 in an emergency. Furthermore, it has a sick bay where patients can be treated for diseases, bodily trauma, childbirth, psychological care and even undergo minor surgery.

The Aquarius is docked in Sicily in the port of Trapani. It carries out missions of three straight weeks at sea and returns to port to refuel and rotate personnel. During operations, the Aquarius is positioned on the high seas off southern Italy. It sails in international waters close to the areas from which distress calls are frequently heard, off the Libyan coast.

Operations are conducted according to international maritime law, in full coordination with the Maritime Rescue Coordination Center (MRCC), based in Rome. This rescue coordination center (the equivalent of the French CROSS) reports the boats in distress and gives instructions on how bring survivors to port:

### OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSOCIATION

- To witness the realities and the human face of migration
- To save lives
- To protect and accompany

depending on the case, they are brought ashore in Italy by the Aquarius, or transferred aboard another vessel tasked with bringing survivors to port – in order to ensure the presence of Aquarius' rescue capacities on these waters.



**Twenty-four hours of continuous operations - a night rescue – an unprecedented influx – 5,000 migrants in distress at sea rescued, including 653 taken aboard the Aquarius.**

It began as an “ordinary” day. At 6:52, Aquarius was patrolling the waters off the Libyan coast when it received a call from Rome asking the vessel to sail east. At 8:30, there is another alert for two “potential targets” on the open sea, two dinghies in distress. In reality, there are three. Two of them are in range of Italian Navy vessels, but at 11:45, Aquarius spots a third dark grey Zodiac rubber boat, which is taking on water and being tossed on dangerously high waves. Despite this, the rescue is carried out in time and without incident.

The SOS MEDITERRANEE crew picked up 132 migrants, including 14 women, 31 children, including 28 unaccompanied minors. The youngest is ten. All are exhausted, some crying, others very weak, and they collapse on the deck of the Aquarius. Most are from sub-Saharan Africa (primarily Guinea-Conakry, Ivory Coast, Mali). They had spent between 3 days and 2 weeks waiting in a shed on the coast, fed only once a day before being awakened that night and taken blindfolded to a Tripoli beach where they were embarked at 2:00 am.

Hours later, Aquarius received a new alert for a difficult vessel that cannot be located. In fact, that day, there had been at least five boats sinking in the same area. Night falls without any sign of Zodiac in distress. In the darkness, the chances of finding a rubber dinghy are virtually nil. On board, the crew was on the watch with binoculars and using spotlights to illuminate the pitch-black sea, with the aid of a new moon. At 1:30 am, the sea was empty. All indications are that the boat has sunk. Suddenly, the lookouts spied a shape in the water. With his binoculars, the chief lookout saw an arm and a hand hailing him. The Zodiac was there, among the waves. It had been at sea for 24 hours but it was still afloat. The rescue began in unprecedented conditions in the dark, without landmarks. If any migrant were to fall into the sea, they would have become immediately invisible, and been lost at sea.



If panic took over the boat’s occupants, it would have been a disaster. Rescuers found women and their babies huddled in the middle of the dinghy. The others were motionless, dazed by the extreme fatigue. On this “Boat No. 5”, there were 126 people, saved in the nick of time. Before dawn, around 4:13, there was another operation: this time, the Italian Navy began to transfer the 395 migrants rescued in first two dinghies to the Aquarius. Despite the high seas, the transfer operation went off without incident.

The deck of the Aquarius was at that point fully packed with 653 exhausted but safe migrants. They were provided various kinds of assistance, treated for shock and by the MSF medical team. Then, the SOS MEDITERRANEE ship immediately set course for to the port of Messina in Sicily, where the survivors would be taken into the care of the Italian authorities.

A night rescue at sea, the transfer of several hundred people at one go, with a record number of migrants on board, these twenty four hours marked the heaviest day since the beginning of SOS MEDITERRANEE’s operations in the Mediterranean. It was a day that served as confirmation of the increasing flow of migrants at sea. On Thursday, 23 June, about 5,000 migrants were rescued in the Mediterranean in over forty operations. And the body of a victim was found on one of the dinghies. At the end of its four-month campaign at sea, 2,895 persons were aided by teams aboard the Aquarius. Those helped were composed of 1,769 men, women and children rescued from vessels in distress and 1,126 welcomed aboard after transfer from another rescue operation. Let us not forget that more than 10,000 migrants have died in the Mediterranean trying to reach Europe since 2014, including more than 2,800 since the beginning of 2016.

## FAO, HISTORIC GLOBAL AGREEMENT AGAINST ILLEGAL FISHING

ROME, 6 JUNE 2016 – An historic, international agreement against illegal fishing. Yesterday, on the day in which the United Nations celebrated the environment and the protection of all species, the agreement came into force, becoming legally binding for the 29 countries that have adhered to it.

We are speaking of the Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (PSMA) – adopted as a treaty of the FAO in 2009 after many years of negotiation – which is the first binding international treaty that deals specifically with illegal fishing. The threshold for the commencement of the treaty – with the official adherence of at least 25 countries – was surpassed last month, triggering the countdown of 30 days until its entry into force. “It is a great step towards the goal of attaining a sustainable fishing industry that can contribute to the nutrition of the entire planet,” said the Director General of FAO, Mr. Graziano da Silva. “We commend those countries which have already signed the treaty and which will begin to put it into practice as of today, while we invite Governments that have not yet done so to join us in the collective effort to eliminate illegal fishing and to safeguard the future of our fishing resources.”

Currently, the signatories of the PSMA are: Australia, Barbados, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, the European Union (as an Organization member), Gabon, Guinea, Guyana, Iceland, Mauritius, Mozambique, Myanmar, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Palau, the Republic of Korea, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Seychelles, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Thailand, Tonga, the United States of America, Uruguay and Vanuatu. The FAO has been informed that, soon, new formal signatories will be added to this list.

### Reinforce ports against illegal fishing.

The signatories of the treaty are obliged to enforce a series of measures in the management of ports under their jurisdiction, which would identify cases of illegal fishing, impede that the catch resulting from such fishing be brought ashore and traded, and assure that information regarding boats that break the law are shared internationally. This comprises, among other things, that the foreign fishing ships that intend to port must request permission in advance, providing detailed information regarding their identity, their activity and the load of fish they have on board. Docking will only be possible in ports specifically designated and equipped for the effective verification. Vessels presumed to have engaged in illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing may be denied access to the port entirely, or receive permission to enter solely for monitor-



ing purposes, without the possibility of unloading their catch, refuelling, or other restrictions. The ships, which will be permitted to enter into port, may be subject to checks carried out according to a set of common standards. They will be asked to prove possession of the necessary fishing licenses from the country whose flag they bear, and to have obtained the necessary permits from the countries in whose waters they have been operating. If not, or if the controls were to identify cases of illegal fishing, these boats will be banned from any further use of the port, and will be reported as violators. If a vessel is denied access, or if the checks reveal any problems, the parties must communicate this information to the country under whose flag the ship is registered, and must inform the other Signatories of the Treaty, as well as the Directors of the Ports of neighbouring countries.

### The first of its kind.

Operations without proper authorization, fishing for protected species, the use of banned fishing gear, or non-compliance with the quotas imposed are among the most common activities of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. Such practices not only undermine efforts to manage maritime fishing in a responsible manner, they damage the sector's productivity and, in many cases, encourage its ruin. Although there are solutions to fight illegal fishing at sea, these methods are often very expensive and - particularly for developing countries - can be difficult to implement, given the vastness of ocean territory that they are required to monitor, and the costs of acquiring the necessary technology. As a result, the Port State measures are one of the most efficient ways - and among the cheapest - to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. The Agreement, now in force, gives the international community a valuable tool for advancing the agenda of the Sustainable Development Goals for 2030, which include an explicit objective regarding the conservation and sustainable use of Oceans, and a precise sub-target regarding illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

Maria Novella Topi



# AOS INTERNATIONAL VISITS M/V OCEANA CREW

H.E. Msgr. Joseph Kalathiparambil, Secretary of the Pontifical Council, together with a delegation of the AOS International and Rev. Roger Stone, Chaplain of the port of Southampton, *home port* of the ship, visited the crew of P&O Cruises MV Oceana, on Tuesday 17 May 2016 when it docked in Civitavecchia, near Rome.

At the beginning of the visit, Bishop Joseph Kalathiparambil was introduced to Capitain Christopher Bourne and part of his crew. A large number of the officers and crew then joined the Bishop in the ship's Footlights theatre for Mass; with many of them coming from Catholic countries, this was a particularly poignant moment for them.

The Mass was celebrated in honour of Mary, Star of the Sea, and Bishop Joseph urged the crew to follow her example of a life completely dedicated to serving the Lord by doing His will.

After Mass, Bishop Joseph distributed rosaries, prayer booklets and Year of Mercy prayer cards to the crew and had lunch with them in the crew mess..

Rev. Stone said this visit underlined the Catholic Church's unique care for seafarers, through its network of port chaplains around the world and those that sail on cruise ships. He said that the collaboration between the cruise industry and the Apostleship of the Sea is greatly valued by crew, who know the chaplain is someone they can turn to for pastoral, emotional and spiritual support.

## HOMILY PRONOUNCED BY BISHOP JOSEPH KALATHIPARAMBIL

In the Catholic Church the Blessed Virgin Mary has been given different names. She is called the Mother of God, the Immaculate Conception, and I am sure that in your countries you have shrines dedicated to Her with a specific title. For us people of the sea, as stated in the preamble of the Apostolic Letter *Motu Proprio* on the Maritime Apostolate: *"Stella Maris" ("Star of the Sea") has long been the favourite title by which people of the sea have called on her in whose protection they have always trusted: the Blessed Virgin Mary."*

For this reason we have chosen the Eucharistic celebration in honor of Mary, *Star of the Sea*, and I would like to invoke upon each one of you and all your family members wherever they are, the blessing and protection of our Mother Mary, the *"Star of the Sea"*.

Mary is the Star that brings light in the darkest moments of our life.

Mary is the Star at which we should look for direction when we are lost and we do not know where we are going.

Mary is the Star that brings consolation and strength when we feel alone and abandoned.

Mary is the star that brings good news, joy and happiness every time we ask for her intercession with trust and confidence.

Mary is the example of the Christian life that we are called to imitate, a life completely dedicated to serve the Lord by doing His will.

First, Mary is an example of obedience. In the Gospel that we just read, the Archangel Gabriel appeared to Mary announcing that she had found favor with God and that she was chosen to be the mother of Jesus the Messiah. Her simple and humble response was, *"Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word."*

### Special Crew Mass


We are honoured to welcome Bishop Joseph Kalathiparambil and his delegation to Oceana for an extra-special crew Mass.

Bishop Joseph is visiting us directly from the Vatican by arrangement with the Pontifical Council and we do hope that you can attend on this special occasion.

10.30am - Tuesday 17 May  
(Civitavecchia)

Footlights Theatre (Deck 7)

After the service, Bishop Joseph will be visiting the Crew Mess where you will have the opportunity to meet him





Throughout her life Mary lived in obedience to God. She faithfully obeyed Him at home with her parents Joachim and Anna, in her community in Nazareth, at the Temple in Jerusalem listening to the prophecy of Simeon, at the foot of the Cross, at the empty tomb, at the Ascension of the Lord, and in the Upper Room at Pentecost. For Mary it was not always easy to always obey to God, for sure she had doubts and fears but her response was the same, *"May it be done to me according to your word."*

*In your life on board, many are the occasions in which you could disobey the commandments of the Lord and the promises of faithfulness that you have made to your spouse. When you feel weak and vulnerable invoke Mary, Star of the Sea, and ask her intercession to overcome temptations.*

Second, in Mary we find an example of forgiveness. Mary was a mother who chose to forgive rather than hate. She saw Jesus her Son persecuted, unjustly tried and executed. We can only imagine the suffering that Mary underwent watching Jesus to suffer and die on the Cross. Yet we never see Mary losing faith, seeking revenge or harboring hostility against the people that kill her Son, in the middle of her pain and grief, she recognized God's divine plan at work.

*I am sure that in your life there many reasons for which you are seeking revenge or harboring hostility towards people that have hurt you. Often we say that: we forgive but we do not forget. In this special Jubilee Year of Mercy while we receive the forgiveness from the Lord for all our short comings let us learn to forgive and forget the people that have done something wrong against us. Free your heart from hatred, fill it with love as Mary did!*

Third, in Mary, we find an example of prayer. When she was confused and she could not understand what was happening in her life, the Gospel tells us that: *"Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart."* It means that Mary reflected on it and through prayers she asked guidance from the Lord. Mary was also praying with the Apostles on the day of Pentecost when they received the Holy Spirit.

*It is true that your daily schedule is very hectic and at the end of the day sometimes you are really tired and it is difficult to find time to pray. Non the less it is important that you will find a few minutes every day to be alone with God and present to Him your worries and troubles. Only with prayers you can overcome trials and difficulties and your life will be inspired and guided by the Lord.*

Your presence on board as crew is not a casual one, you have a mission. Christ has called all of you to bring His message of love, forgiveness and reconciliation to the world, this cruise ship is a small representation of the "world" with people coming from all walks of life, with different faiths and beliefs. Through your example of obedience to God, forgiveness for all and prayer you will become witnesses of Christ a Mary was.

I have a final request, we are in the month of May, the month traditionally dedicated to the Blessed Virgin. I would like to invite all of you to take up the commitment, during these remaining days of May, to recite at least a decade of the Rosary asking Mary *Star of the Sea*, to protect and bless all the people at sea.



# AS GDYNIA IN SOLIDARITY WITH RUSSIAN SEAFARERS

The Russian vessels found themselves in a difficult situation. Russian shipowner went bankrupt. The seafarers learnt about this when they were out at sea. Their ships were at anchor in Gdynia roads. Surely they were not aware that they had to stay there about two and half months. Lack of information about prospects were generating nervous situation both among the crew on board and among their families without proper management caused several problems. Beginning from: wages payment delays, provision and freshwater supply without repatriation. Such insecure situation affected seafarers.

The ships were taken over by the bank. The seafarers were not able to go ashore due to visa problems. In this situation I contacted the immi-

gration and urged them to allow the seafarers to go ashore due to health reasons. So, I took them to Stella Maris for treatment by a doctor. Prof. Andrzej Kotłowski, the chairman of the Polish Society of Maritime Tropical and Travel Medicine examined them on Stella Maris request. We, AoS in Gdynia invited the seafarers to visit Stella Maris.

Eight times we offered them lunch, gave pocket money, souvenirs. We also took them to the shopping centre Riviera, some of them to the barber's and for bowling as well.

One evening stormy weather made their return to the ships impossible so they returned to Stella Maris again. Due to stormy weather conditions we placed them in the hotel. With the help of AoS and ITF the crew members were paid and repatriated: Vyritsa, on 6th June, 2016; Zarechensk, on 13th June, 2016; Braschaat, on 20th June, 2016.

The seafarers showed gratitude for our help. One of them said: "Poland and Russia - friendship for ever" and the other added "why all this political propaganda on TV when we experienced so much heartfelt efforts".

We also got a lot of thanks from the crew. They said that the name Stella Maris became closer to their hearts. Here I quote what ITF Inspector wrote: "Special thanks to Father Edward Pracz - European Coordinator "Apostleship of the Sea". After nearly three months of being held at anchorage, for many seafarers tension became high. In order to avoid dangerous situation, and prevent seafarers from risk to their health and safety, I urgently contacted Father Edward Pracz - European Coordinator "Apostleship of the Sea", who was immediately ready to take care and host seafarers in Stella Maris Centre in Gdynia - regardless of the time of day. In coordination with agent and subject to safe manning requirements, shore leave have been arranged by tug on rotation basis. Additionally Father Edward arranged consultation with physician (Russian speaker) for necessary prescription and medicine, if needed".

I also attach the thank you note sent by the captain of m/v Vyritsa.



Капитан и экипаж теплохода "VYRITSA", работавшего под флагом Бельгии, благодарят инспектора ITF порта Гдыня господина GRZEGORZ DALEKI и Father EDWARD PRACZ - European Coordinator of the "Apostleship of the Sea" за помощь и поддержку, оказанные в трудное для экипажа время - в период стоянки на рейде порта Гдыня при смене судовладельца и доброту и гостеприимство, когда судно было ошвартовано у причала.

Надеемся на вашу поддержку и в дальнейшей нашей работе и желаем вам развития вашей нелегкой, но очень нужной работы по помощи морякам и распространения вашей благородной деятельности во всех портах мира, на всех морях и континентах!

06.06.2016



Капитан т/х "VYRITSA"

Евгений ЛЕВЫЙ



English translation below:

*„The captain and the crew of the m/s Vyritsa, flying under the Belgian flag, express their gratitude to the ITF Inspector in Gdynia, Mr Grzegorz Daleki and to Father Edward Pracz - the European Apostleship of the Sea Coordinator for their assistance and support shown to the crew in the difficult time of stay in the roads of the Gdynia port, during the change of the shipowner and for their kindness and hospitality when the ship was at the quay.*

*We count on your support also in our farther work and we wish you fruitful though not easy work but so necessary in the field of assistance to the seafarers and extending of your noble activities to all the ports of the world, on all the seas and continents.*

June 6th, 2016

Captain of the m/s "Vyritsa"

The report was written by Father Edward Pracz, AoS Regional Coordinator for Europe

## **WORLD DAY OF THE SEAFARER: "THE MV BENITA HELPED MAKE SEAFARERS MORE VISIBLE" ACCORDING TO JACQUES DAVID**

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The World Day of the Seafarer was celebrated with a Mass organized by the Apostleship of the Sea, at St Leon's School in Grand Gaube. The organisation's chaplain, Father Jacques David, observed that the MV Benita shipwreck at Bouchon served to raise the visibility of seafarers, who usually pass unseen to the public eye.

The Mass was attended by the Deputy Prime Minister Xavier-Luc Duval, Fisheries Minister, Prem Koonjoo, Environment Minister, Alain Wong and the Trade and Industry Minister, Ashit Gungah. It benefited from the presence of seafarers from a variety of nationalities, including those serving on the MV Benita, who were mostly from the Philippines. On this occasion, the captain of MV Benita thanked all those who had welcomed him and his sailors to Mauritius.



In his homily, Fr Jacques David highlighted that the Apostolate of the Sea's role is to welcome seafarers regardless of nationality, religion and gender. "Like the Good Samaritan, we consider all seafarers our neighbours," he says. The Apostleship of the Sea is a body of the Catholic Church under the responsibility of the Diocese of Port-Louis and part of an international network headquartered in the Vatican in Rome.

It offers seafarers a range of services, including hospitality, listening and spiritual care.

David Jacques was pleased that Mauritius has ratified the 2006 Maritime Labour Convention, which gives the Mauritian authorities the responsibility for protecting all seafarers arriving in Port-Louis. This agreement covers seafarers' living conditions on board vessels, working conditions, welfare and social support for their families. David Jacques announced the organisation of an international conference aimed at addressing the situation of seafarers who are also fishers in the near future. "In Mauritius, we consider them all seafarers", he explained.

Fr Jacques also referred to the situation of fishers on the island. Registered with the competent authorities, they are very aware of their responsibilities in terms of environmental protection and preservation of marine life because it is their livelihood. This is why the majority of Mauritian fishermen are respectful of laws and regulations approved by the Mauritian authorities. "But what about those who are not fishers but are engaged in fishing activities without complying with the relevant regulations.

Yesterday's Mass was also the occasion to pray for all Mauritian seafarers who had been lost at sea during the past year. "The sea is our friend, but it can also be our enemy," said the chaplain of the Apostleship of the Sea.

More than one million men and women are exercising a sea-bound profession on over 100,000 vessels sailing the world's oceans. Around 90% of goods traded internationally are transported by sea.



# THE SEAFARERS JUBILEE: ENVIRONMENT AND SOLIDARITY

Taranto, Italy, 24 June 2016

On the morning of 24 June, the Seafarers' Jubilee commenced with the tossing of a bouquet of flowers from the pier of Vasto in memory of all those lost at sea, especially for the migrants who have lost their lives during crossings, fleeing lands ravaged by war and poverty. The date was chosen to take advantage of the proximity of World Refugee Day promoted by the United Nations (20 July).



The ceremony took place thanks to the collaboration of the harbour authorities which provided a patrol boat for the occasion. The vessel carried Marisa Metrangolo, director of the Apostleship of the Sea-Stella Maris, its chaplain, Father Massimo Caramia, and the new harbour master, Captain Claudio Durante.

The bouquet of flowers tossed into the sea produced strong feeling in the crowd which continued with the deployment of a honour guard of officers under the command of the harbour master. In the late afternoon, we came to the high moment of the Seafarers' Jubilee, organized by the Apostleship of the Sea-Stella Maris. Day in, day out, the Apostleship of the Sea-Stella Maris is engaged in welcoming seafarers to the various ports around the world, and had decided to take the occasion of the celebration of this special Jubilee year, to highlight its work and sacrifices of many people who spend most of their lives on ships to entire diocesan community.

The event also fell close to the sixth centenary of the birth of St. Francis of Paola, the patron saint of mariners, solemnly celebrated in Taranto over the previous few days. The starting point for the procession of civil and military seafarers was in the atrium of the Archdiocesan offices. Led by the banner of the Stella Maris and a few fishermen of the Egidio D'Ippolito Cooperative who held a large tank containing rows of mussels, the pilgrims prayed together with Fr. Massimo Caramia, the port chaplain, over the short distance to the cathedral. Then, the procession entered through the Holy Door into the church, the interior of which had been decorated with crab traps and fishing nets, welcomed by hymns sung by the Taranto old city centre's choir directed by Maestro Giovanni Gigante. Once the procession settled into the Church, the Mass commenced, presided over by Bishop Filippo Santoro with his secretary Fr Andrea Mortato, the parish priest, Fr Emanuele Ferro, the Xaverian missionary, Fr Pierluigi Feletti, and Fr Massimo Caramia. Firstly, Monsignor Santoro welcomed the military authorities representing the Harbour Authorities, the Navy's Southern Command, Mariscuola Command, Second Division Command and the Finance Police.

In his homily, the Archbishop focused on the need to better protect the environmental wealth made available to humanity by Our Lord, including the sea. The latter, he said, must be freed from any source of pollution to return it fully to being a source of well-being and work for many families whose lives depend on it. The sea, continued Msgr. Filippo Santoro, must also be seen as an instrument of peace and a factor for growth and dialogue among all peoples as well as the for proclamation of Jesus our Lord. The Archbishop then highlighted the great work of the Harbour Authorities who tirelessly strive to rescue refugees risking dangerous sea crossings every day, which are not always successful. He reserved special praise for the city's great tradition of hospitality, which has made every resource available in order to mitigate the pain of these our brothers. During the offertory, the mussel farmers brought to the altar long strings of mussels and seeds, so that, with the blessing of the Lord, the latter would bear abundant fruit and enable their families to live in

dignity. To conclude the celebration, the Archbishop thanked those present for participating in yet another important event in the Jubilee Year.

A special salute went to the Director of the Apostleship of the Sea-Stella Maris, who outlined the activities of support to the crews of ships that dock at the port. Marisa Metrangolo said, "The principal mission of the Apostleship of the Sea is to reach out to seafarers without any expectations, without trying to 'convert' anyone, but rather providing a welcome that attempts to come close to the gratuity of God, who speaks to man without asking anything in return."

## **STELLA MARIS BARCELONA CHOSEN "SEAFARERS' CENTRE OF THE YEAR 2016"**

This award, together with that for the best port, for the best shipping company and for the person of the year, is convened by the International Seafarers Welfare and Assistance Network (Iswan), with financial support from ITF Seafarers Trust and the sponsorship of Inmarsat and Crewtoo. The honours are awarded on the basis of voting by seafarers internationally. The awards are meant to give recognition to those individuals and organizations who have offered seafarers the highest quality of services and facilities.

The awards were first held in 2010, and already on that occasion Stella Maris Barcelona was nominated and the Port of Barcelona won port of the year.

This year, the finalists for the award of best centre were: Seafarers' Mission in Busan (South Korea); Stella Maris of Mackay-Hay Point (Australia); Port Arthur International Seafarers Center (USA); Seafarers Mission, Townsville (Australia); Seafarers Mission Victoria (Australia) and Stella Maris Barcelona (Spain). This time, Stella Maris Barcelona came out the winner.

The award was presented in the city of Manila (Philippines) on 24 June by the Secretary General of the International Maritime Organization, Mr. Kitack Lim, in a ceremony attended by some 300 people representing seafarers, representatives of transport companies, trade unions and welfare organizations.



### **STELLA MARIS BARCELONA: JUBILEE DOOR FOR THE SEAFARER**

During a conversation with the Archbishop of Barcelona, Msgr. Juan José Omella, the Delegation of the Apostleship of the Sea related to him of the way that prisoners and the sick were granted special conditions to access the Jubilee Year of Mercy. They suggested that, in the same way, it would be very good if seafarers might also benefit from conditions adapted to their special living circumstances.

The Archbishop was sensitive to this reality, and welcomed the proposal and authorized that sailors could obtain the Jubilee Indulgence by entering the Stella Maris chapel by following the necessary sacraments and rites.

Stella Maris Barcelona distributes leaflets in English and Spanish to seafarers, which informs them about the Jubilee Indulgence and contains Pope Francis' Jubilee Prayer. The authorization of the Archbishop and the Jubilee Proclamation are on the door of the chapel; on the altar, people can see the Holy Father's Prayer for the Jubilee Year.

Ricardo R. Martos, Diocesan Delegation of the Pastoral Care for Seafarers, Barcelona

# NATIONAL SESSION OF THE 'MISSION DE LA MER'

Issy les Moulineaux, France, 5-6 May 2016

## *Solidary with Seafarers and Witnesses of Hope*

**Final Adopted Text**

Meeting in national session on this year's theme of "Solidary with Seafarers and Witnesses of Hope" in Issy les Moulineaux, France, 5-6 May 2016, the representatives of the Apostleship of the Sea reflected on how it approaches and lives out its mission, through its presence in ports and engagement with all seafarers.

We are used to viewing the sea, through its preservation, as a common good for humanity, and though its multinational crews involved in trade and fishing, as a laboratory for globalization. Father Elvis Elengabeka, a Congolese Spiritan and able interpreter of this mission, introduced us to another dimension: the sea opens up the Gospel to the world, by making everyone human, regardless of culture, origin



or religion, a brother to encounter and love; by reminding us that for God there is no prerequisite to love. The sea is also a space opening us to hope: by challenging the sea, the seafarer is facing his fragility, and God, in the likeness of Jesus, comes to meet him

and reveals his power of Salvation: this experience has a significance for every man.

### **SOLIDARY WITH FISHERS**

The situation of fishermen has improved somewhat, due to better prices for fish and lower fuel costs. But their number continues to decrease. The artisanal model is on the decline and tends to be limited to coastal fishing. Industrial scale fishing is dominant, and countries manage their quotas based on their interests. Fishers say they are being kept away from decision-making fora.

**We are witnesses of hope...** We see efforts by the profession to adapt to multiple constraints, to better target fish species, and to set up young fishers by enabling access to major financial aid. We witness the reception given by crews to Portuguese, Polish or Senegalese seafarers, and assistance provided for their integration locally. We congratulate the recognition of the ecological approach to resource protection in youth training. We welcome the release of the movie "Oceans, the voice of the invisible", to which the Mission of the Sea contributed: the voice of fishers is heard, demanding to be treated like human beings, against the power of the world of finance and the threat of privatization of the seas and oceans.

### **SOLIDARY WITH MERCHANT SEAFARERS**

In our ports, stopovers for ships are short, and the work of seamen on board is demanding, relentless and stressful. Also, coming ashore, shore leave is a need for sailors. But for many, it is limited, because there is little time, or by the remoteness of reception facilities or inadequate opening hours. Communications with family and loved ones, when you are separated from them for many months, is a great need of sailors, which is only partly satisfied by easier access to Internet on board.

**We are witnesses of hope...** The Maritime Labour Convention (MLC 2006) has strengthened the rights of seafarers. The on board complaint procedure has made things easier for them. It has also enhanced the monitoring of the lives and work of seafarers. Multinational crews are common, and we as visitors are of-



ten impressed by the quality of their life together, even though they come from countries with very different cultural and religious backgrounds.

## APPEALS AND CHALLENGES FOR OUR MISSION

The sea is becoming a coveted space in search of new sources of energy. As illustrated by the film mentioned above, "grabbing" seas for private purposes is a real threat to the populations whose lives depend on it. We insist that the sea remains a common good for all of humanity. Pope Francis' encyclical "Laudato si" should inspire us to work on these environmental issues and to convince us that all of our futures revolve around the sea.

The presence of the Mission of the Sea is not ensured in all fishing ports. The gaps could be filled by coastal parishes. It is therefore important to approach the dioceses to ensure an ongoing presence.

The Mission of the Sea participates in welcoming seafarers to seamen's clubs. We join in the appeals of associations who are requesting continued funding of this service. We are convinced of the need for visits to seafarers on board vessels, including to the minority who are able to come ashore. These visits to all seafarers without distinction and without proselytizing, are intended to help them, listen to them, enable them to assert their rights if necessary, and to provide specific ways for Christian seafarers to live out their faith on board ship. This belief compels us to continue this service.

Our future depends on building links with dioceses in order to together fulfil our mission in the maritime world. Our responsibility is committed to strengthen and expand our local teams to other maritime professions beyond those at sea and to re-establish ties with merchant marine academies.

Our contribution, whether as retirees or active members of the maritime world, in touch with the families of seafarers, is to listen to everyone and to make their voices heard, so that the sea is not forgotten, including by the Church. We have to take our rightful place.

National Chaplain

President

National Secretary

## A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE ON THE SEA

### Presentation of Fr. Elvis Elengabeka

I would like to highlight the paradox around the sea in the Bible. According to Psalm 146, the sea is a creature of God, "He is the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them" (verse 6). In the book of the Apocalypse, the sea disappeared: "Then I saw "a new heaven and a new earth,"[a] for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea' (Rev 21,1).

The sea in the Bible represents hostility; it is the residence of the forces of evil. In the Gospel of Mark (5:1-20), Jesus performed an exorcism on a man with an impure spirit in the land of the Geresenes, on the other side of the lake; the released demons invested a herd of pigs who rushed into the sea and drowned. Paul adds the danger of the sea to the list of everything he had endured: "three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea" (2 Cor 11:25).



**Why does the sea carry such hope despite its turbulence?** This is the question I will try to answer.

The sea represents a wide variety of experiences. The crossing of the Red Sea by the Hebrews fleeing from slavery in Egypt translated the liberation brought by Yahweh. The Sea of Galilee, or Lake Tiberius, is the essential place for the ministry of Jesus in Galilee, his healings, his speeches, his miracles, his disci-

ples' calls; it is the place that reflects all the newness brought by Jesus. The spread of the Gospel, Paul and his companions, was done through the Mediterranean Sea: it conveyed the message of Christianity from the Jewish world to the rest of the globe. In Revelations, which turns out to be the book which has the most references to the sea, the sea is seen arising as a vile beast, to be overcome by Christ.

**Re-reading these three episodes to answer the question: why is the sea a factor of hope?**

- The storm abated;
- The miraculous catch;
- Jesus walking on water.

**1-The calming of the storm**, common to the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke.

There is a storm and a sea in tumult. The disciples are restless, frightened, anxious, seeing their end near. Jesus is there sleeping in the stern. Jesus' presence means that even on sea voyages, God accompanies men. Despite his presence, the sea remains turbulent and dangerous. It remains a place where we experience human frailty. This episode highlights what is the human adventure, from drowning when the man is left on his own and salvation when he relies on God. It highlights Jesus' identity; the Son of Man is master of the sea and wind. The danger is real on our journey through life, but it is not insurmountable when we face it in the company of one who is master of the sea.

**2-The miraculous catch**, narrated by the four evangelists. For three of them, the episode is put before the Resurrection, yet for John it comes after.

In Luke, the miraculous catch follows appeals from the four disciples and the lake's fishers. They fished all night in vain: after a night of futile effort, there is reason to be desperate. Jesus tells them to cast their nets again. His word is effective, because the catch is productive and fruitful beyond what is imaginable and possible: the nets break! This text is a spiritual movement, coming from the confidence placed in the word of Jesus. It is not a waste of time working at sea. The seafarer has an expertise of which he is proud. This expertise, accompanied by the words of Jesus, and the faith shown by the disciples in him, produce the miracle, and foreshadow the pastoral fruitfulness of these disciples on his behalf. Peter recognizes the Lord in him, the title given to the risen Christ in the early communities.

**3 - Jesus walking on water (Mark 6:45-52).**

The boat is in the midst of the sea at night and the disciples are exhausted from rowing against a headwind. Jesus came to them, walking on the water. In their anguish and trouble, they thought that he was a ghost, and cried out in fear. His words reassured them: "Do not be afraid, it is I." Again, the sea becomes part of his true identity. He is the salvation that seeks out men. The sea is the place where the true identity of Jesus is recognised.

**Conclusion.**

Whenever Jesus is mentioned at sea in the Gospels, there is always danger about: the storm, the stormy sea, the vessel being tossed by the wind, the disciples panicking... Jesus appears to save them from the danger, and he manifests his identity. The sea is the content within which the human person is revealed in all his fragility, and where God is manifested in his saving effectiveness. The sea is a place that gives hope.

For the disciples of Jesus, the sea is also the place of their vocation: "Come with me, and I will make you fishers of men." Fishing is to take the fish from the sea onto the boat, bring them ashore and to serve as food for men.

Also, the sea is a place of danger to human life; but, being in the vessel with Jesus is to be saved. There is an analogy with our pastoral action: for the believer, faith in Jesus our saviour takes him from a place where his life is at risk to a place where he is saved.

(Notes taken by Guy Pasquier)