



A SEAMEN'S EPIPHANY AGAINST THE BACK-DROP OF TERRORIST ATTACKS



"Much like everyone else, I was deeply shocked by the recent terrorist attacks. We did not think it possible in our country. What acts against humanity!

I wrote the following text during this time of Epiphany, after a visit made on January 6 on board an Arab-owned container ship with a very mixed crew. This visit was not extraordinary in any way, as there are many similar situations, but it was symbolic of "living together". This "living together", each of us different from the other, so sought after in our society, has been practiced on ships for ages!"

*Guy Pasquier
Apostleship of the Sea France*

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That Tuesday, 6th January, was a typical morning of visits to seafarers on board ships calling at the port of Le Havre. I boarded three or four ships, each visit lasting as long as the services needed.

On my list of visits was a giant container ship docked at Port 2000, the AIN SNAN, which belongs to the United Arab Shipping Company, based in Kuwait. The officers are from the Middle East, with an Egyptian commander and a Filipino crew. I always introduce myself as a priest, and I wear a special security chasuble (bearing the words: Port Chaplain, AoS, Stella Maris).

I was warmly welcomed by the Second in Command, who was an Iraqi, from Baghdad. I extended my New Year wishes; he replied, speaking of peace for his country and for the world: "This is the most valuable asset for all men", he said. Then, we talked a bit about the delicate situation there and the future of Iraq.

A young officer was there and I asked him where he was

from. He said he was a Palestinian from Bethlehem. While taking me to the crew's quarters, I told him I'd never been to Bethlehem, but it is a place that is holy for Christians, particularly at Christmas time. He responded that he was a Muslim, but his hometown was holy for his religion as well. Then we talked on the situation of the Palestinians: he accused Israel, which he said wants to crush the Palestinian people. We agreed that, despite everything, beyond international politics and the strong support of many countries for Israel, world opinion is now more favourable to the existence of a Palestinian state.

Then the Filipinos came in, the chef and server. The Christmas decor was still in place in the quarters: pine garlands, Merry Christmas banners ... I asked for a glass of water. The young Palestinian officer moved to go back to work, and I said, "God bless you". He thanked me. I drink my glass of water in the company of Indian master engineer who had just stepped in; he prepared himself a coffee. We began to talk: he is from Bombay, and the only Indian on board. This is not a problem though: "I am used to it", he said, "and there is a good atmosphere of conviviality on board and everyone respects each other". The cook brought me a nice little cake covered with hot dark chocolate: it was delicious.

After leaving information on the services at the seamen's club, some magazines (The Sea), the very-well received 2015 calendars and my USB key had been copied to a ship computer (with news from

"Every religion has its dignity, every religion which respects human life, the human person. I cannot mock it".

(Pope Francis to the reporters aboard his flight from Sri Lanka to Manila, Philippines, 15 January 2015).

different countries, prayers and readings for Sundays until Easter, as well as various information on seafarers' rights), I take my leave.

On the gangway, as I was giving back my visitor's badge, I once again take up a discussion with a young quartermaster who I talked to three months earlier in the presence of the young Palestinian officer: we talked about how he lived his Christian faith on board. His answer

struck me: everyone respects one another on board for who they are, but he lives his faith in his cabin.

It was an ordinary visit, like many that I regularly make. This mix of nationalities, cultures, backgrounds and religions, is now typical. The respectful living together of these multinational crews is common. On the sea, globalization is not new. In view of the dramatic events of recent days and the victims caused by these fundamentalists' non-recognition and denial of our common humanity, this witness is there to say that it is not utopian to believe in one human family.

Saturday, 10 January 2015



POPE FRANCIS IN TACLOBAN TO THE VICTIMS OF THE TYPHOON YOLANDA

"I'd like to tell you something close to my heart. When I saw from Rome that catastrophe I had to be here. And on those very days I decided to come here. I am here to be with you".

"I ask government leaders, international agencies, benefactors and people of goodwill not to give up. There is much that remains to be done. Though the headlines have changed, the needs continue".

WORLD FISHERIES DAY MESSAGE

(21th November 2014)

“Fishing is in fact one of the oldest and arduous human activity and it is generally poorly paid or rewarded. The forms of fishing are as many and varied almost as the kind of fish that they catch. Like all seafarers, fishers most of the time are sailing and spend very little time with their family and, on account of their way of life, they are often marginalized and deprived of the ordinary pastoral ministry”.

MANUAL FOR CHAPLAINS AND PASTORAL WORKERS OF THE APOSTLESHIP OF THE SEA, 2008

On the annual celebration of World Fisheries Day, the Apostleship of the Sea (AOS) International would like to draw attention to the fishing sector that provides employment and livelihood for circa 58.3 million people, of which 37 percent are engaged full time.

In this day, I would like to call on all the national and local AOS to renew their commitment to establish a significant presence in fishing ports and develop specific programmes to make fishers and their families an integral part of the local Christian community, giving them the opportunity to express themselves and their needs without being isolated.

Ratification of the Work in Fishing Convention (2007)

Fishing is recognized as one of the most dangerous profession in the world with hundreds of lives lost at sea every year and many more affected by occupational hazards. Fishers can be easily exploited, abused and become victims of trafficking and forced labor, as it has been reported and documented in the mass media.

Once ratified, the Work in Fishing Convention (2007) C 188, adopted at the 96th International Labour Conference of the International Labour Organization (ILO), will be a useful tool, if not to totally eradicate these circumstances at least to improve them by bringing additional protection and benefits. As a matter of fact, the objectives of the Convention are to ensure that all fishers engaged in commercial fishing operations have decent working conditions on board of the fishing vessels with regard to accommodation and food; occupational safety and health protection; medical care and social security.

The Convention will enter into force 12 months after the date on which ten Members, eight of which are coastal States, will ratify it. As of April 17th 2014, the Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No. 188) has been ratified by: Argentina, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Congo, Morocco, and South Africa.

It is necessary that AOS around the world continue to lobby at regional and national level for its ratification. Meetings, seminars or workshops should be organized to present, explain and inform government people, fishers and fishers' organizations on the structure and contents of the Convention and have it ratified. Until this goal is achieved, fishers will continue to be abused, exploited and die at sea.

A new approach to fishing

Our oceans and their resources are under an enormous pressure. A report from the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) indicates that 30 percent of the world's fisheries stocks are currently being overexploited, depleted or are recovering from depletion.

This is caused by a number of factors such as: by-catch of species (marine mammals, seabirds, turtles, etc.) unintentionally caught in fishing gears; discards as part of the catch to be returned to the sea as their marketing is prohibited or not commercially viable. Fishing, especially trawling, also has a direct impact



on the habitat in which it takes place. To all this we have to add the climate changes, the illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, pollution and the use of dynamite and cyanide.

Since time immemorial, fishing has been a source of food for humankind and made major contributions to fishing nations' economies, employing millions of people worldwide and feeding millions more. However, as we have reached a critical point, it is necessary to practice responsible fishing and respecting nature; the risk is that within a limited period of time many coastal communities that are relying on fishing for their subsistence and economy, will lose their source of livelihood. As Pope Francis reminds us: *"This is one of the greatest challenges of our time: changing to a form of development which seeks to respect creation. [...] This is our sin: exploiting the land and not allowing it to give us what it has within it."* (Meeting with the world of labour and industry in the Great Hall of the University of Molise in Campobasso, 5 July)

May the Blessed Virgin, often prayed and invoked with different appellatives by fishers and their families, continue to extend her maternal protection to all the fishing communities and support the AOS Chaplains and volunteers involved in this apostolate.

Antonio Maria Cardinal Vegliò, President

✠ Joseph Kalathiparambil, Secretary



ATTENTION PAID TO TRAFFICKING IN THE FISHING SECTOR

**Speech delivered at the special roundtable,
via digital video conference (DVC),
with Ambassador-at-large Luis CdeBaca to discuss
the global issue of trafficking and the State Department's report
on July 29, 2014 at the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, Vatican City.**

I want to talk about two very quick areas of the economy that we see trafficking in and I just mentioned the fishing sector. We saw this year problems of human trafficking, slavery and abuse in 51 countries. And, not all these are places that one would expect. I think a lot of folks are paying attention to the Thai fishery because of these abuses, because they received so much attention, but we've also seen boat crews enslaved, coming ashore in South Africa. We saw a boat-load of Honduran teenagers in Jamaica; we saw problems even in the Scottish fisheries; we've seen reports of the inland waterways in Northern Europe.

This is a problem that we don't think is getting larger. This is a problem that we think that we are all simply first starting to pay attention to. And it kind of breaks my heart that we've spent 15 years not noticing it. Because the children on Lake Volta in Africa who are enslaved, who have to dive down and clear the nets from those trees that were flooded back when they dammed up the lake, and get caught in the nets and drown. Those children did not simply start getting enslaved in the last 5 years. It's just that the anti-trafficking community, that the world community has only started noticing those children in the last 5 years.

And so I think this is a call to action for all of us and I want to thank the Church, especially Stella Maris for having noticed. For having to call it to our attention, whether it was in Taiwan and other parts in Southeast Asia, but it is very much people of good faith. It's priests, it's nuns, and not just Catholics. It's Anglicans, it's Baptists, people who victims trust.

Luis CdeBaca is an American lawyer who has served as United States Ambassador in the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons from 2009 until November 2014. He was formerly an attorney for the United States Department of Justice, where he was one of the United States' most highly decorated federal prosecutors.



AOS-GREAT BRITAIN LAUNCHES NEW SCHOOLS RESOURCES FOR WORLD FISHERIES DAY

November 21, 2014

AoS director of development John Green said fishermen and fishing continues to provide a vital socio-economic lifeline for many people globally. "These attractive and engaging resources, written by teachers, will capture the reality of the lives of fishermen, individuals who are so important to our way of life but whom we know very little about," he said. The resources were produced in association with Ten Ten Theatre, and are aimed at children in Key Stages 2 and 3. The material provides an insightful and candid look into the lives and work of fishermen and how AoS provides them with practical and pastoral support when needed.

AoS®port chaplain in Blyth, Sunderland and Tyne, Paul Atkinson, is currently supporting two fishermen who were rescued after their trawler sank in the North Sea earlier this month. The men are from the vessel Ocean Way FR 349. The ship's captain lost his life in the incident and two other crew members are still missing, presumed dead.

Besides providing practical and pastoral care to fishermen, AoS has also strongly condemned the growing problem of trafficking and exploitation in fishing. The Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, which coordinates the activities of AoS worldwide, has asked the charity's global network to renew their commitment to establish a significant presence in fishing ports and develop programmes to make fishers and their families an integral part of the local Churches®community. It also urges AoS to petition governments to ratify the Work in Fishing Convention (2007) C 188 which when enforced, will help protect and guard fishers against exploitation, abuse, human trafficking and forced labour.

In a report this month, The Financial Times reported that last year, 3% of forced labour victims came from the fishing industry, though the real numbers could be much higher. The paper said victims most often come from Eastern Europe, Ghana and the Philippines. According to the State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture Report 2014, the sector employs more than 58 million people worldwide. More than 25% of the world's dietary protein is provided by fish and over 100 million metric tons of fish is consumed annually. AoS®new schools resources are available to download for free at www.apostleshipofthesea.org.uk/resources-schools.

GREENPEACE: "STOP OVERFISHING: IT DAMAGES THE SEAS AND SMALL FISHERS"

Over twenty countries from five continents have sounded the alarm against the monster vessels which are responsible for overfishing: they constitute a threat not only to the oceans but also for fishermen and their families. Thousands of activists and citizens stressed that without fish there is no future during Greenpeace's week of action against overfishing. Greenpeace highlighted that "From the Senegalese fishermen holding a banner written 'Overfishing Hurts Us' to those in the Philippines, from the street demonstration in Australia to that in Italian waters by the Tuscan ports of Telamon, Santo Stefano and Marina di Grosseto – they are all witnesses to the decline that is affecting the sea and their livelihoods".



According to the activist organisation, "Today, more than 10% of the world's people depend on fishing as their livelihood. At the same time, recent scientific studies have shown that 90% of world fish stocks are either fully or over-exploited. Therefore, we need to establish limits to fishing and effective rules to ensure the recovery of currently collapsing fish stocks." A few weeks ago, Greenpeace published its report "Monster Boats, the Scourge of the Seas", denouncing twenty mega vessels, which because of their size and fishing methods, are among the most destructive of the European fishing fleet. They overuse the sea's resources, and export overfishing to all the seas and oceans of the world. "In addition to the damage to the sea, the sea beds and fish stocks per se, these monster boats also damage small-scale fishermen who use sustainable fishing methods and represent the vast majority of European fishing fleet" commented Serena Maso, manager of Greenpeace Italy's Sea Campaign. "It is now up to EU policy makers and fisheries ministers to respect the commitments recently agreed under the Reform of the Common Fisheries Policy and ensure the end to overfishing and support fishermen who have a low impact on the environment." 25 November 2014

ABORD THE ANTARTICA, EURONAV OIL TANKER FLYING THE FRENCH FLAG

Stopover in Antifer Oil Terminal of the port of Le Havre on Tuesday 23 September 2014.

Fr. Guy Pasquier, AOS France



At the request of Worms Maritime Services, relaying a call from the ship's commander for a visit from a priest, I went aboard the Antartica, docked at Antifer, in late morning. The crew was very busy loading supplies and foodstuffs; they were also taking on oil from a tanker truck. After going to the bridge, the officer led me to the commander, who explained what was the matter and how I could help.

In fact, I was asked to meet with the Filipino crew to talk with them about the traumatic situation they had experienced on board: they had been at the sinking of a boat of migrants (an estimated 500), which had been rammed by another vessel and sank in two minutes. The commander was asked to remain in the area for 24 hours, in order to pick up any survivors. Three Palestinians from Gaza were rescued. Men were posted fore 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 commander wanted to bring them back to France.

While I was on board, two maritime police came to take the testimony of the commander. After lunch, I started chatting with Filipino sailors that I was able to meet; I talked with eight of them. To each, I asked if they had bad dreams; they all said no. Many could not bear seeing such a scene of misery and turned away: the sight of all those bodies was unbearable for them. They asked: Why did this happen? What is the value of life? They understood that these people were fleeing poverty, war and hunger, to try to find a better life in Europe: I told them it was a vain hope, for our countries are closing our borders.

They know what migration means; for them, it is migration so they can make a living. I talked to the pump man, a man with over 20 years' experience at sea, who had boarded the night before. He told me that his wife wanted to emigrate to Canada and that she is an accountant. He hoped the whole family could settle there: he had three daughters, one studying accounting, the second still in high school and wanted to study science in Manila, and the third was still in elementary school. "I work for the education of my daughters, nine months at sea, and two months ashore" (instead of three because it costs money stay ashore).

One of the first crewmen I saw told me he made the sign of the cross at the sight of all these 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 (3rd year at Le Havre school), who comes to the student chaplaincy. He stayed to talk for a while. He was at the front to identify the bodies and to report their position: "that day was unbearable." We talked about the international situation, especially Syria, Iraq, and the Islamist atrocities against their populations. We talked about religion, and Islam in particular... Why have things gone so downhill? Why were such barbaric things happening over there? And how is this happening all the while that each religion should be preaching peace and understanding among men?

All whom I met were unanimous in saying that having saved lives helped them come to grips with this

ordeal. The commander performed remarkably, and did not try to shirk his responsibilities. From his exchanges with the three rescued Palestinians, he described the role of smugglers, and the deliberate approach of abandoning migrants to their fate by forcing them to change onto a smaller boat; the tragic result was there for all to see. According to him, it was deliberate homicide. The commander hoped that his testimony could be used to bring these traffickers before an international tribunal.

I do not think these experienced sailors will experience insurmountable trauma. Having helped to save three lives has tempered the impact. I do not know if the commander was a Christian, but God bless him for his display of great humanity.

Chronology of events from the newspaper Le Marin, from 19 September 2014

The newspaper « Le Marin » does not mention the role of the oil tanker Antartica in the rescue. However, the action of the crew deserves to be made known.

The sinking of the boat with many migrants took place on 10 September, 300 miles southeast of Malta. According to the testimony of the few survivors, the ship was intentionally sunk by the traffickers themselves, who are outright criminals. The 15m vessel that sank left Damietta (Egypt) with 500 people from Syria, Palestine, Egypt, Sudan on 6 September. Two Palestinian survivors said they had paid 2,000 US dollars for the crossing. The smugglers forced the migrants to change boats three times. It was during the last change that the situation deteriorated, according to the survivors: the migrants resisted boarding the boat, which they thought was too dilapidated. According to testimony of a survivor, the smugglers, who were on a separate boat by that time, rammed the boat holding the migrants, and waited until it sank.

A Panamanian container ship picked up two survivors and left them ashore in Sicily. On 12 September, another merchant vessel rescued nine people and brought them to Crete.



NEW GUIDELINES FOR RESCUE OF MIGRANTS AT SEA

In response to the continuing crisis in the Mediterranean, necessitating commercial ships to rescue tens of thousands of migrants and refugees during 2014, the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS), and ISWAN member, has published new Guidance on Large Scale Rescue Operations at Sea, which can be downloaded free of charge via the ICS website.

ICS Secretary General, Peter Hinchliffe explained: "The shipping industry fully accepts its humanitarian obligation to assist anyone at sea whose vessel is in distress. But the scale of the crisis involving thousands of people attempting to get to Europe in craft that are neither fit for purpose nor seaworthy has raised real concerns about the safety and health of ships' crews that may be involved in rescuing as many as 200 people at a time."

The challenges involved in rescuing large numbers of people and then accommodating them on board ship prior to disembarkation are enormous compared to conventional rescue operations. The ICS Guidelines are therefore intended to help shipping companies prepare for this eventuality, whilst taking full account of the safety and security of the ship should such large scale rescues be necessary. ICS says that experience has shown that advance preparations, and the development of effective procedures supported by regular drills, will prepare Masters and their crews to manage large scale rescue operations safely and successfully.

The issues covered by the ICS Guidelines include the provision of additional Personal Protective Equipment for ship's crew and the safe management and accommodation of large numbers of people on

board with an emphasis on sanitation, hygiene and ship security. The Guidelines also refer to the need for companies to take full account of crew welfare in the aftermath of a large scale rescue. The ICS Guidelines also contain useful references to relevant advice produced by the World Health Organization and the International Maritime Organization.

ICS also emphasises that Masters should not be expected to become involved in decisions about the legal status of the people they have rescued or whether they intend to apply for asylum. "Notwithstanding the shipping industry's legal and humanitarian obligations to rescue people in distress at sea, it remains incumbent on the governments to find a solution to the current crisis which is placing a very difficult burden on ships' crews and the companies that have a duty of care for them." said Mr Hinchliffe, who will be participating at a high-level meeting on the migrants at sea crisis being hosted by the UNHCR in Geneva, in which the IMO Secretary-General will also be taking part.



SRI CONCERNS ABOUT REPORTS OF REDUCED RESOURCES FOR SEARCH AND RESCUE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA

Seafarers' Rights International (SRI) has raised concerns about the implications for masters of the recent reports of the launch of the new EU Frontex operation 'Triton' which will apparently have a reduced budget and focus on border control in place of the Italian 'Mare Nostrum' that is credited with saving more than 150,000 migrants in the Mediterranean.

Deirdre Fitzpatrick, Executive Director of Seafarers' Rights International (SRI) said: "The commendable practice of merchant ships of the world rendering assistance to persons in distress at sea was enshrined in the Safety of Life at Sea Convention (SOLAS Convention) 1914 which was enacted in direct response to the Titanic disaster. Since that time, the SOLAS Convention in its successive forms has obligated masters to provide assistance to distressed persons, irrespective of their nationality or status or the circumstances in which they are found. The obligation is enshrined in the United Nations Law of the Sea Convention 1982, as well as in the international Salvage Convention of 1989."

"This is a serious obligation on masters and under many national laws, the master who fails to render assistance to any person in danger of being lost at sea could face prosecution, and on conviction, a jail sentence. However, a master must be equally cognizant of his duty to protect the lives of his own crew and passengers and not to expose them to risks including risks of infection such as Ebola that may arise when he rescues people at sea."

In his opening address to the Maritime Safety Committee on 17 November 2014, the Secretary General of the IMO said that figures that he had seen suggest that, so far this year, more than 600 merchant ships diverted from their routes to rescue persons at sea. These deviations are detrimental to shipping and are not offset by any realistic prospects of salvage awards.

The obligation of masters to render assistance to persons in danger of being lost at sea can be seen alongside the obligation of governments to ensure that assistance be provided to any person in distress at sea. Under the 1979 International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue governments must "ensure that necessary arrangements are made for the provision of adequate search and rescue services for persons in distress at sea round their coast." Any reduction in search and rescue by governments may increase the number of incidents to which merchant ships have to respond, with consequent burdens and legal responsibilities on masters and crews. Brian Orrell OBE, Chairman of the Advisory Board of SRI said: "The obligation of masters to assist persons in distress at sea is steeped in maritime tradition and legal history. It is therefore of concern if budgets for search and rescue in the Mediterranean are being reduced. This may increase the number of search and rescue missions that masters have to undertake, as well as their risks of criminal prosecution for any perceived failure to attend to persons endangered at sea."



NEW APP FROM SRI PROVIDES A LIFELINE FOR SEAFARERS

Seafarers facing legal problems can now obtain immediate information concerning their rights, wherever they are in the world, with a new app formally launched today by Seafarers' Rights International (SRI) after three months of user testing.

Deirdre Fitzpatrick, Executive Director of SRI said: "Seafarers need tangible support 24/7. There are many good companies and maritime administrations who provide seafarers with assistance and support with regard to their human rights. However where that is not the case, this app will provide a lifeline for seafarers. The app has been designed to operate offline so that seafarers can access information at all times. It is compatible with iPhone, iPad, Android and Blackberry devices.

The app has a unique 'Find a Lawyer' tool which gives immediate access to a database of lawyers around the world who have signed up to the SRI Charter - a statement of good practice in the provision of legal services to seafarers - and who may be able to offer assistance to seafarers facing criminal prosecution."

Brian Orrell OBE, Chairman of the Advisory Board of SRI said: "It is important that the work of SRI gets directly to seafarers. This is why this practical advice is now being made available on an app, and we are also producing on-line education materials free of charge for seafarers to raise their awareness around subjects relevant to their working lives. This education will ensure that seafarers' rights are real and meaningful for them."

AOS BRINGS 'HUMAN FACE OF CHRIST'S LOVE' TO SEAFARERS

Bishop Tom Burns SM, AoS Bishop Promoter for England & Wales, said slavery has reared its head again in new forms at sea, but AoS is a rapid reaction team which responds to raw human need and cries for protection.

"AoS [port] chaplains and [ship visiting] volunteers bring the human face of Christ's love and care into a hopeless situation, to restore Christ's promise that he is with us until the end of time," he said in his homily during the Stella Maris mass for seafarers held in St George's Cathedral in Southwark London on September 25.

After mass, a reception was held to celebrate former AoS chair of trustees Eamonn Delaney receiving the Papal Knighthood. In highlighting AoS' ministry, Bishop Tom recalled an incident at the port of Tilbury last month where 35 migrants - one of whom had died - were found inside a shipping container on board a ferry, the *Norstream*. The crew of the ferry were upset and distressed and AoS responded by holding a Mass on board and conducting a blessing following requests by the crew. Its chaplains also continued to support them through the ordeal. "God has come close to his people. He has spoken to them through Mary, Star of the Sea, and through those in the Apostleship of the Sea who act in the name of Mary," said Bishop Tom.

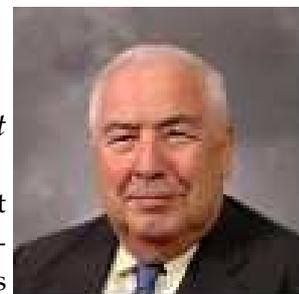
"There can be no doubt that what was done at Tilbury was doing what the Lord tells us in AoS to do. Those refugees did not expect to be met with compassion, love, and the very Spirit of Christ himself. But those 34 migrants immediately recognised it, and so did the crew of the *Norstream*, and so did the police officers, the social services, and the other authorities present.

"Opening those metal container doors opened other spiritual doors too. God had visited his people. And God has blessed AoS and its work of charity and compassion," he added.



REACHING OUT TO OUR MARITIME ACADEMIES

By: Capt. George P. McShea, Jr., AOS-USA President



As part of our mariner membership initiative, we recently visited the Newman Clubs at the US Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point, NY (USMMA), and Texas A&M Maritime at Galveston, TX. I spoke to nine members of the Kings Point Newman Club plus two administrators and the local Monsignor who says Mass for the Midshipmen on October 8th. Turnout was low but it was test week leading up to trimester exams in a couple weeks.

I talked about the challenges of a seagoing life to a Catholic mariner with the absence of our religious formalities like Mass, Confession and the Eucharist, and the many temptations they would face when they went out on their sea year as cadets. I also talked about membership in AOS-USA, and our ministry and mission. We were very well received and we plan to continue our visits throughout the Academic calendar to encourage greater attendance and participation.

The Kings Point Newman Club called us and asked about doing a retreat in November which Fr. Sinclair will celebrate once, and if, we receive approval from Academy leadership. The retreat will, ideally, be a joint event with cadets from the New York State Maritime Academy (SUNY Maritime).

I also spoke with many midshipmen over the next three days at Kings Point as it was Homecoming weekend. Those conversations were more of a mentoring chat with discussions around careers, cadet life, as well as the AOS and AOS-USA.

Fr. Sinclair Oubre, of AOS - Diocese of Beaumont, was able to make contact with Carl Erickson, the director of the Galveston Newman Center at Texas Maritime Academy, earlier in the year while he was attending a meeting of the Ship Operations Cooperative Program seminar at the Texas Maritime Academy in Galveston. Carl took up Fr. Sinclair's offer to come back, and celebrate Mass for the sea cadets and maritime students.

On Sunday evening, October 12, 2014, Fr. Sinclair returned to the Newman Center, and celebrated Mass with Rev. John Stein O.F.M., the Galveston pastor. During the homily, Fr. Sinclair told the students how excited he was to have made contact with them, and how he hoped that he could come back again. He went on to give a brief history of the Apostleship of the Sea, and explained how the Catholic Church recognizes the special needs of the people of the sea, and brings the sacramental life of the Church to them on the waterfront, at the maritime academies, and at sea.

Overall, great first steps in one of our strategies discussed at the Winter Board meeting. We must increase our mariner membership, and starting with cadets and students at all of the Maritime schools will lay a solid foundation as AOS-USA moves forward to strengthen our ministry to all the peoples of the Sea.

WHO IS AND WHAT DOES AOS?

The Apostleship of the Sea is the national organization of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). A bishop serves as the AOS Episcopal Promoter, overseeing the work of the National Director. It is the Director's responsibility to coordinate the individual chaplain's efforts and to assist them in developing their ministries. Additionally, the National Director's office serves as a communication center which produces a newsletter, (Catholic Maritime News in the United States), establishes and maintains rapport with organizations protecting the seafarers' interests, and appeals to the diocese for port chaplains.

WHO IS AND WHAT DOES AOS-USA?

Apostleship of the Sea of the United States of America (AOS-USA) is a membership professional association of Catholic Maritime Ministers, Cruise Ship Priests, Mariners and all those who support the ministry to the People of the Sea. AOS-USA provides mutual support, continuing education, and intercommunication for Catholic Maritime Ministers. AOS-USA labors on behalf of the dignity and human rights of every person in the maritime community. Sensitive to the complex church and social environment of today's world, AOS-USA offers men and women training and formation to prepare for Catholic maritime ministry.

AOS-USA operates the Cruise Ship Priest Program for the pastoral care of cruise ship passengers and crew. We ensure that only valid priests in good standing, who have their Bishop's/Provincial's permission to serve are onboard as Chaplains. They are guided by an Administrative Board regularly elected by the members.

CHRISTIAN LEADERS ON-BOARD

TRAINING PROGRAM

Christian Leaders Onboard Formation Program is one among the services that the Apostleship of the Sea - Manila (AOS-Manila) has long been engaged with. This program aims to prepare seafarers in becoming Prayer Leaders and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion on board ship.

A minimum of two days lectures and workshops are given to the candidates before they will be commissioned and received certificate that will allow them to execute the ministry aboard ship. The Prayer Leaders are trained to animate common prayers like rosaries, novenas, etc. and also to facilitate Bible Sharing. On the other hand, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are given a more intensive training to facilitate Prayer Service together with the reception of Holy Communion. During the course of the program the candidates are made to realize of the value of personal relationship with God in prayer, active participation in the Church liturgy, proper disposition in receiving sacraments, meditation on the word of God, concern for family and the Family of God and sincere service to God and neighbors. At the end of the course the candidates are sent for pastoral exposure where they spend time visiting sick seafarers in the hospital.

AOS-Manila is grateful to all seafarers who have shown interest in this ministry. As of now, a good number of seafarers are undergoing the formation. Yet, there is only but one problem; that sometimes training sessions are interfered by scheduled upgrading course/s of the seafarers. There are also some instances that the candidates are called to be deployed while at the height of the program, and for this matter we decided to create an online correspondence.

Through this program the Church extends its pastoral care to the people of the sea who are somehow deprived of spiritual guidance and nourishment. In this way the Church helps our seafarers to deepen their Christian faith, their commitment to Christ and develop their aptitude for creating and guiding a Christian community on board.

We bless the name of the Lord for giving us such co-workers and we pray that through the Holy Spirit and the maternal intercession of Mary Star of the Sea they will receive the grace they need in their service to the Church on board ship.

RECOGNITION OF PROFESSIONALISM AND COMMITMENT

Raimon Mateu, Diocesan Deacon Delegate, has informed us that on Thursday 18 December, the Diocesan Delegation of AOS, Stella Maris, received an award in recognition of the "Professionalism and Commitment" of volunteers who have provided great service to the human and spiritual needs of people working in different sectors of the merchant marine.

The Association for the Promotion of the Port of Tarragona's (APPORTT) award is meant to recognize the efforts of outstanding individuals, organizations and companies who work in the Port of Tarragona.



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PASSING OF FR. JOHN VAN DEERLIN

Fr. John Van Deerlin died on August 13, 2014, after an unexpected and sudden illness that left all of us shocked. His funeral was held in Oceanside San Diego, California, presided over by Bishop Paul Hinder, Apostolic Vicar of Southern Arabia.

Hereafter a moving testimony by Karl, one of his parishioners on the time when Fr. John was Parish Priest of Doha in Qatar, from 1989-2002.

“Fr. John was different from most men. I’m sure that is evident based on the many stories people are sharing today. From the way he lived his life, one would think he was acutely aware of Martin Luther King Jr comment on Justice: *Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere*. From the poor and over-worked Tamil fishermen to the abused maids with no legal recourse, Father John led a diverse community to work tirelessly to help the least fortunate of our society get through their injustices.

My family was lucky to have him enter our lives when he became the head of the Qatar Parish. As one of the lead altar boys in Doha, I served with Father John in numerous masses over the years before I moved to the US for university. To this day, I remember the Easter Sunday masses held at the American International School main hall – we had 10+ masses, back to back, as Father John spoke in English, Arabic, French in one day to the thousands of Catholics that would attend. Like the other servers, I was tired after serving 5 masses but Father John kept going and did not have the fortune of altar boy shifts. So as a young person, I remember the importance he gave to hard work and persistence and to do it with a level headed, calm and friendly manner. I remember many times the air conditioner didn’t work in the 100+ degree weather, packed body-to-body halls, or if the lights went out and how we used candles and paper fans to keep the masses going. It never once stopped him, not once, as we continued to share God’s word and serve our community.

The AOS International pays tribute to Fr. John Van Deerlin for his dedication and concern for seafarers around the world. John was the AOS Regional Coordinator for Gulf States. We thank him for his courage, compassion and devotion in assisting many seafarers stranded in the ports of United Arab Emirates.

Fr. John was the spark in any room with his warmth and ability to create new initiatives. He came weekly to see my grandmothers (in their 70s and 80s at the time) to give them Holy Communion. We used to look forward to his infectious energy each week. We knew a visit from Father John would mean more laughter in our home as he always had a smile and a joke to tease my grandmothers. His spark and endless energy also created the first Children’s Mass in Qatar. He was able to engage different audiences and encourage us to question the world around us – and to think for ourselves what was right from wrong, rather than being told it. I always wondered: How could a man deal so well with old and young with such ease?

But beyond what seemed like superhuman qualities Father John displayed in different settings, the one quality that always set him apart was his diplomatic skills to maintain peace. He was able to deal with all the different types of Indian ethnic groups (Goans, Malayalees, Tamils, Mangaloreans, and the list goes on) – to any non-Indians, this is a momentous task, ask any Indian politician or Catholic clergyman in the Middle East - while also working with dozens of other nationalities in our parish. In a small country like Qatar, with so many cultural viewpoints, drama always existed. Yet he was able to ebb and flow between it all – making peace when people didn’t understand each other. No matter one’s ethnic background, income class, color of the skin, age, or gender, Father John was fair and respectful to all.

He made you proud to be a Catholic in a country that did not encourage religious freedom. Like so many great community leaders, he didn’t see enemies but potential partners. He was aware of his boundaries and how to push them over time, for he had patience and perseverance on his side. The impressive feat of creating a Catholic Church in Qatar is just one example. I saw firsthand when I visited Qatar five years ago (after being away for more than 10 years) what he enabled the community to achieve. How did this happen? I remember



my parents taking me to underground masses in the 1980s and we had to "hide" our faith. And 20 years later, even after Father John left Qatar, thousands of people were praying openly in a strict Muslim country.

Fr. John, at least to my naïve eyes, portrayed happiness. Because, as Gandhi once said, *Happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony*. This was evident in Father John. He spoke his mind and his actions reflected what he said and thought. In a gentle way, he was able to shake the world he lived in. It impacted a young boy like me and I'm sure it has impacted thousands of others who are not here today. He will be greatly missed.

AOS INTERNATIONAL LOSES A GREAT FRIEND

Paolo Cavanna was "one of the best professionals in Italy", backbone of "Stella Maris" and AOS international, passed away unexpectedly.



He died suddenly, on the evening of October 21st, while he was still working on the computer, after a day visiting ships. Paolo, for many years head of the legal department of Costa Crociere, retired a few years ago and was recognized by friends and colleagues "one of the best professionals in Genoa in the maritime sector". After retiring from Costa Crociere, Cavanna shared his maritime experience by becoming the backbone of the Stella Maris Center of the Apostleship of the Sea in Genoa and a consultant of the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

He was an expert part of the National Committee of Welfare and of the National Federation Stella Maris in matters such as seafarers welfare, abandonment, application of the MLC 2006. Lecturer at the Coast Guard for all the PSC officers.

The Apostleship of the Sea will miss his presence and availability, the friendliness that was obvious from his actions and elegant irony. The thought goes to all those abandoned seafarers that over the years have found in him and in his words, not only solidarity, but competence, perseverance and strong will to take concrete gesture of welcome and help. His example, his words and sincerity will be a light always live in the AOS work, a safe haven to which to aspire, and a beacon guiding us in difficult times.

DRAMATIC EVENTS AT SEA

It was a Sunday like any other during the Christmas season; a Sunday when we enjoy the atmosphere of the occasion and the chance to get together with loved ones. But this Sunday, however, turned into a dark day in the Adriatic Sea. In a freak catastrophic coincidence, there were two tragic accidents at sea on 28 December. The first involved the Italian Norman Atlantic ferry, which caught fire off the coast of Corfu. It was en route from the Greek port of Igoumenitsa to Ancona with 478 people on board, including crew and passengers: On top of this, there was a collision between two merchant ships about two miles from Ravenna. The vessels involved were the Gokbel, flying the Turkish flag, which was entering in the port of Ravenna, and the Lady Aziza, under the colours of Belize, which had just set sail bound for Porto Nogaro.

Five have been confirmed dead and 70 people still unaccounted for in the first incident: In the second, two sailors were killed and four are still missing. Seagoers and sailors, together in the family of "seafarers", as indicated in the Motu Proprio Stella Maris, have once again paid a very high price. The death of these people, for whom we pray, makes us think about how important the work of Stella Maris chaplains and volunteers is: in demonstrating closeness, solidarity and gratitude to the many unseen people that sail the seas of the world, and whom we have privilege of meeting every day in our ports. A heartfelt thought goes to Father Peter Gandolfi, Ravenna's Stella Maris chaplain, who is always at the forefront in helping his seafaring brothers and sisters, together with the volunteers.

In recent years, the port of Ravenna has often been affected by cases of abandoned ships and crews, who are accompanied by the local Stella Maris with dedication and commitment. Today, this port is facing a dramatic moment in its history, and we believe that Stella Maris' proximity and pastoral care of seafarers will once again play a crucial role. "O Mary, Star of the Sea, light of every ocean, guide seafarers across all dark and stormy seas, that they may reach the haven of peace and light prepared in Him who calmed the sea".
(Stellamaris.tv)

SEAFARERS' TRIBUTE TO THE *GOOD MOTHER*

On September 7, seafarers held a very special ceremony in Marseille for the eighth centenary of Our Lady of the Guard. From its very beginnings, the celebration has involved seafarers of all types, from pleasure boat skippers, to missionaries and passengers: all those who venture out to sea set out to climb the Hill of the Guard. This time though, it was the "Virgin" who made the pilgrimage and came down to visit the seafarers.

A NAUTICAL PROCESSION

On Sunday morning in the port of Estaque, the statue of Our Lady of the Guard was loaded onto "The Good Mother", a sailing ship which also carried Bishop Jean-Marc Aveline, Auxiliary Bishop of Marseille. After the blessing of the pilgrims and vessels by Bishop Jacques Bouchet, rector of the Church, the procession started. The procession, led by a pilot boat, was joined by thirty tall ships, maritime police, sea rescue and firefighters.

The "Seamen's Club" Association had distributed to the crews of ships in port a sheet explaining the meaning of the procession that was coming to greet them, inviting them to sound their sirens when it passed. For an hour, the statue sailed through the Port of Marseille, hailing the sailors of all nationalities. Almost all responded, particularly the "El Djazair", an Algerian ferry. The crew of the cruise ship MSC Lyrica ran on deck, waving their arms and crossing themselves!

Mild weather permitted even greater enthusiasm with prayers and songs to the Virgin. We were joined by other vessels entering the harbor, while an increasingly large crowd gathered at the Old Port, the Quay of Brotherhood, as the music of fleet prepared to play a solemn song.

For half an hour, the people there worshipped at the statue. There were many seafarers, their families and members of the Apostleship of the Sea, who joined in a now land-based procession back to the Basilica. The statue was placed in a van and pilgrims boarded two small trains that The Good Mother had organised.

MARY, STAR OF THE SEA

At noon, in the Basilica, Archbishop Jean-Marc Aveline presided Mass which was concelebrated by Bishop Jacques Bouchet and Fr. Percival Redona, Filipino, who is an invaluable element for Marseille's Seafarers' Association Home.

In his homily, Bishop Aveline recalled the important role of seafarers in the construction of the first chapel, but also fishers' key role in organising the first pilgrimages. The Hill of the Guard, important day-mark for the sailors of old, went on to become the place for Mary, Star of the Sea, which leads to her Son. Referring to the conditions of modern navigation, where there is "a concentration of humanity, in all its cultural and religious diversity," he told us how important the services associations provided to seafarers were: the visits to crews, aid of various types, including assistance to live their faith on board ship. Then, inviting us to think of "those in ships who are below deck," he drew from a passage from St. Matthew, Ch. 25: "We could add: I was a sailor and you visited me."

Towards one o'clock on the steps of the



Basilica was a high point of emotion. Seafarers, their families and friends who came to honor Our Lady of the Guard, really felt the presence of Mary herself, who had come down the hill to meet them at their place of work, service and leisure.

When I arrived back to the sacristy, a young lady showed me a "selfie" of her family; she asked me to bless her family because her husband Bruno was on a ship in the Persian Gulf, and she was living on her own awaiting the birth of their first child.

The feast day of Our Lady of the Guard will continue to be a date that counts for our seafaring community in Marseille, as shown by the numerous testimonies, prayers and pictures that come to us from all over. Thank you Bishop Bouchet, for always watching over us from the top of the hill, looking out towards the sea, in the same direction as our Good Mother, the patron of seafarers in Marseille.

*Jean-Philippe Rigaud, deacon
Coordinator of the Mission de la Mer*

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A PRIEST SEEKING OUT SEAFARERS



I am a priest in the diocese of Vannes, and the Diocesan Chaplain for Seafarers. I live near Lorient, in Ploemeur, where I am half of the time. In Lorient's fishing port, there is a chaplaincy for seafarers, the Maison du Port, managed by an Association: "People and the Sea." As delegated by my Bishop, my fundamental job is to go and meet seafarers, especially fishers. These meetings physically take place on the quays of the fishing port, or on home visits (sometimes they live more than 40 km from Lorient itself.) They can even take place at Lorient Airport, embarking for Locquiver in northern Scotland (headquarters of the Scapêche

Company). These meetings are formed by habit: often on Wednesday mornings they are repairing nets, or are preparing to depart at the wharf; in the afternoon, there is the meeting of coastal seafarers from 14:00-16:00. When there is bad weather, many sailors are in port. This is a chance for meetings than cannot to be missed. Walking the docks is an opportunity to see and to be seen: being present and making myself available, watching life as it is lived, and listening to what people have to say... living the freedom of seeking out the other; but it really is an active approach. We have the goal, not of converting the other, but of revealing to her/him that s/he is precious in my eyes and in the eyes of God. "God was made flesh and dwelt among us."

I do not choose the people I meet ... even though it's easier to seek out those whom we know well. There are unfamiliar faces, sailors from everywhere, from Brittany, St Malo, Cotes d'Armor, Concarneau, but also Portugal and Senegal. From the off, I say who I am to those I do not know. I try to get to know the seafarers, learn their names, and call them by their first name. But I often have to quietly take out my list of vessels, locate the names of those on board. It happens over and again. There is always a distance between what we want (remembering their name) and what we are able to do. I would like to be a witness of peace, of concord; but, life at sea is often a life of tension, conflict, including ones that seafarers speak of, those caused by Brussels, which imposes its standards, which fishes with a fine tooth comb, fisheries, nets, vessels, markets... Brussels which takes care of everything except the real people at sea: "at sea, things hit you on the head." "The seafarer's trade is not a vocation. It's a crazy business, but we like it".

It is true that being a chaplain for seafarers means having a life in the open. There is an acceptance and debate in open discussions with seafarers who know nothing about our Church affairs. We swim in an indifference towards the Faith. Even so, we still get requests such as baptisms for their children or questions like: "How can we get married in a church? I do not know my parish priest. Can you perform my marriage? I want you to do it." If you do not go to them, they will not come to us. The meeting with the priest is often the only link with the Church. Thus, there is a need to dedicate the time and patience to open up to the culture of the other. Walk with

them for a bit to bring me closer to them.

Reaching out to the seafarer in his/her sickness: sickness is a key moment of need, when s/he is trying to find her/his way back to the surface; s/he needs to be watched and heard. I'm here on behalf of the Gospel: "I was a sailor and you visited me." Approaching each walk with her/him in sadness and in joy. Reaching out to families of the seafarers who have met misfortune, sharing with them while they await the recovery of the body, or if never found, help in the preparation of the funeral. I was sent to work with seafarers, to a people who are not essentially a Christian group: it was necessary to build bridges, build relationships, to whisper the Gospel; be with, rather than do to; being sent, but not for one's own purposes. Anywhere that is human terrain is fertile land for the Gospel. The sea shapes men, but also shapes the life of a priest who is living out this mission originating from the sea, in the midst of people who have not requested this mission.

Rev. Jean Le Berrigaud

FOR THE GOOD OF THE SEAFARERS

A Regional meeting of AOS national directors and chaplains of the Indian Ocean region

The regional meeting was held from 24th to 28th November 2014. It was the inter-islands, the Thabor seminar in Mauritius.

Six delegates from the Indian's Ocean namely Kenya, Seychelles, Madagascar, South Africa and Rodrigues, as well as eight members of AOS Mauritius were present at this meeting. The meeting was designed to strengthen the network between different countries, but also to work on reports and conventions concerning seafarers and of the fishing communities in the region. This meeting was also organized as a follow up of the world Congress held in the Vatican in 2012, to analyze the conclusion of the Congress and how it has been implemented. An important point emerged: for many years the AOS is the Catholic organization which covers numerous ports of the world, including regional ports and is devoted to provide moral support, social and spiritual care to all the people of the sea, regardless of their faith, their nationality and ethnicity.

The discussion around the Maritime Labor Convention 2006 (MLC 2006) was in the agenda. This Convention ratified by Kenya, South Africa, the Seychelles and Mauritius will enter into force in these countries by July 2015. The Convention will ensure the well-being and health of seafarers working on board of vessels giving them access to facilities and services ashore. The discussions also focused on the countries represented at the meeting and which have not yet ratified the Convention. A commitment was taken to "pressure" their Governments to remedy to that.

The case of sailors and ships abandoned has been also addresses by members. In addition, the members present, took the resolution to work with the respective maritime authorities and in accordance with the laws on all that touches the sailors, such as welfare, the conditions of work and life of those who are on board ships, maltreatment, unpaid wages, issues of repatriation as well as the abandonment of seafarers among others issues.

The meeting further resolved that AOS offices within the region work closely with its Bishop Promoter's office for the promotion of the AOS activities. This meeting has, furthermore, stressed the efforts that must be made to address the challenges faced by the AOS to cater to the fishers in the region such as the poverty, the lack of safety at sea or the lack of leadership, promotion of small projects, environmental challenges and climate change.

In addition to the different shared reflections between the members, the working sessions also saw the presence of many guests and other stakeholders talk about what was the agenda of this conference. These different work sessions have subsequently focuses on future plans around the different themes discussed.

According to Father Jacques Henri David, National Director and Chaplain of the Apostleship of the Sea in Mauritius the purpose of this meeting was to strengthen the bonds between the chaplains. Furthermore, guided by the Reverend Colum Kelly of the AOS of United Kingdom there was a spiritual reflection on the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* of Pope Francis.

This meeting has been an eye opener on the reality of the region. It has been an opportunity to share different problems and learn how each country can solve it and make agreements to collaborate on common issues.

ICMA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ANNOUNCES APPOINTMENT OF GENERAL SECRETARY

At its Executive Committee and Annual General Meeting in Copenhagen on September 20, 2014, ICMA was pleased to announce the appointment of a new General Secretary.

The Very Rev. Richard Kilgour presently ministering as Provost of the Episcopal Cathedral in Aberdeen, Scotland, will begin his service as Secretary General of ICMA in January 2015. Fr. Bruno Ciceri, Chairman of ICMA, welcomed the news as a significant first step for ICMA in implementing its strategic plan over the next four years. On appointment, Rev. Kilgour will bring combined personal experience.

In serving as a British Merchant Navy officer, with a life in ordained ministry and ecumenical mission in major industry. In recent times Mr. Kilgour has been involved in planning seafarers welfare ministry in Scotland with The Mission to Seafarers Scottish Council, and also the governance of the Scottish Episcopal Church at National level. As a Senior churchman in his Cathedral post he has been involved in Scottish--USA links with Aberdeen and organising contributions to the ecumenical life of the churches in the city.

On the prospect of leading ICMA Mr. Kilgour has said, "At a time where challenges to meet the welfare needs of seafarers are continually increasing, the ICMA membership organisations provide welfare services for Seafarers and Fishers at the point of need across the world. As our membership organisations are often the only local agency of human "first response" for those in need, we must continue to share skills, knowledge and resources. We strive to build and grow essential and productive partnerships with welfare agencies for work of common concern for seafarers with particular reference to the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 f.

ICMA is excited that Richard Kilgour will continue to focus our efforts in delivering our mission and vision.



New ICMA Secretary General with ICMA Chairman



KIMBERLY KARLSHOEJ, NEW HEAD OF THE ITF SEAFARERS' TRUST

Kimberly Karlshoej is well known as a founder and, until recently, Director and Programme Officer of The TK Foundation, the Trust named... after her father, J Torben Karlshoej, who founded the Teekay Corporation. She has also worked as a consultant to a number of maritime charities and has been an executive board member of the World Maritime University. In Kimberly's words, "Shipping is a low-profile industry, and to the wider public, seafarers are practically invisible. There is a clear and pressing demand for programmes that can effectively alleviate their unique welfare needs. I am honoured by this appointment, and delighted by the opportunity to take the ITF Seafarers' Trust's important and ambitious work forward."

David Heindel, Chair of The ITF Seafarers' Trust stated: "This job attracted an incredible field of candidates. It is heartening that there are so many skilled and passionate people out there either working in this field, or hoping to. In the end, we chose Kimberly because of her obvious passion for seafarers' welfare and her record at The TK Foundation, which is rightly known for its pioneering work."

Steve Cotton, ITF General Secretary and Trustee of The ITF Seafarers' Trust, added: "We are proud of what the Seafarers' Trust does and I know that we will be prouder still of what it will achieve under Kimberly's highly experienced stewardship."

From Denmark, Kimberly Karlshoej qualified as a nurse and psychologist before helping set up the TK Foundation in 2002.

DAYS OF THE SEAFARER REVEALED

THE NEEDS OF CRUISE SHIP CREWS

"Maritime Journal" Monday, 24 November 2014

During the second week of November, the 27th Annual Days of the Seafarer took place. It was organized by the Port of Barcelona's Seafarers' Solidarity Committee.

Among the events organized as part of this traditional occasion, there was a roundtable entitled "The needs of cruise ship crews in port and on board". It was held in the auditorium of Barcelona's Maritime Museum on 11 November. Adolfo Romagosa, chairman of the Port of Barcelona's Seafarers' Solidarity Committee, moderated the encounter. The conference featured the following contributors: Andrea Tabanera, HR manager of Pullmantur – it is worth noting that in recent years, Pullmantur has developed a crew welfare policy, implemented an ethical code and instituted a HR focal point on aboard each vessel; Josep Maria Bullich, priest, described his experience as a chaplain on cruise ships and his dealings with the crews. He related that many crew members, even non-believers, have a great need to unburden themselves, and need to talk to someone who was not part of the crew. Jerome Dadín, Stella Maris, explained how the crew came to his office on the Adossat Dock in Barcelona to communicate via Internet or telephone with their families and how many of them also took the opportunity to talk about their families or any problems they might have.

Finally, Joan Mas, ITF inspector, highlighted the problems that reach the ITF concerning cruise ships in general: the inconsistency between crews' contracts with recruitment agencies and contracts for their posting to a specific shipping company. He also highlighted the frequent marathon hours that many crew endure and abusive practices such as firing crew just before the end of their probation period and making them pay their ticket back home. The roundtable concluded with a lively discussion with the participation of the general public present. It is worth mentioning that the representative of Pullmantur expressed interest in maintaining this series of debates which, in his opinion, were useful to improve living and working conditions on board cruise ships.



Interfaith Ceremony

The Days of the Seafarer began on November 11 with an interfaith ceremony by participating communities, comprising representatives of Islam, Judaism and Christianity (Multicultural Youth Association Muslim, Jewish Community of Barcelona and Stella Maris) at the headquarters of Stella Maris. During this ceremony, held annually as a sign of the plurality of the Port of Barcelona and solidarity and brotherhood possible between people of different religions, Holy Books were exchanged. Stella Maris presented copies of the New Testament to the Jews and Muslims. The Muslim Association gave two copies of the Koran to the other faith representatives, as the Jewish community did with the Torah.

Soccer tournament

On Saturday, 15 November, the final act of the 27th Annual Days of the Seafarer took place: the traditional soccer tournament. The tournament counted with the participation of teams representing tugboats, fishermen, Barcelona's Faculty of Nautical Studies and Transcoma. The organizers noted that the crew of the "Costa Luminosa" was supposed to compete, but their team was not allowed to leave their ship. The winner of this year's championship was Faculty of Nautical Studies.

FOR THOSE IN PERIL

His name is Volodymyr, a sailor from Crimea, and he is desperate. At sea for the past month aboard a ship with little more than a small television with a broken aerial, his thoughts were for his family caught up in the upheavals of his homeland.

So when Fr Colum Kelly boards the huge vessel carrying Ukrainian coal to fire the power stations of the United Kingdom, the first question put to him by the frantic sailors, to whom as a chaplain for the Apostleship of the Sea (AoS) he is ministering, is: "Internet, please?"

Fr Kelly is based at Immingham in northeast Lincolnshire. A vast and dirty industrial complex, on the southern bank of the Humber estuary, it is the largest cargo port in the country and yet, as Fr Kelly puts it, it is "an invisible world". Here, amid cranes, and mountains of coal and scrap, and the roll-on, roll-off ferries, Fr Kelly lives the Gospel in the raw, welcoming strangers to our shore from around the world.

Hearing the concern of the sailors who had already been berthed for two days without word from their homes, Fr Kelly promises to return with SIM cards and modems, and smiles break out from under the obligatory hard hats worn while in port.

Along with his Anglican Mission to Seafarers counterpart and the Protestant inter-denominational Sailors' Society chaplain, Fr Kelly performs his "ministry of welcome" to everyone, regardless of faith or background, visiting an average of six ships a day. Some 20 vessels dock daily in Immingham, and around 50 across the entire extent of the South Humberside "beat", which includes the east coast ports of Boston, Sutton Bridge and New Holland, where AoS ship-visitor volunteers provide crucial support.

Thinking of the current problems in Ukraine, the AoS chaplain talks of his love for Russian music, saying: "In the Seafarer Centre, I'd play Rachmaninov's Vespers in the chapel, and I'd see the Russian lads in there, their arms folded. And when we redevelop the centre, I'll want something to acknowledge the Russian community: an icon of St Nicholas [patron saint of sailors] perhaps. If the Church is anything, it has to be inclusive."

Fr Kelly talks of redevelopment because on the night of 5 and 6 December last year the greatest tidal surge in 60 years lashed the UK's east coast and flooded the Seafarer Centre. "Over 11,000 seafarers from across the world visited the mission last year. Away from home for up to 12 months, here they could Skype loved ones, pick up a book from the library, or enjoy a beer," he said.

But, following December's storm, this haven has been reduced to an empty shell. Ironically, the surge occurred on the Feast of St Nicholas, the traditional start of the Christmas season, and the centre lost some 1,500 festive boxes filled with toiletries, socks, jerseys and colourful knitted hats, donated for seafarers far from home.

"Most of all, I felt sorry for the sailors who could not get in touch with family on this, their last port of call before Christmas," said Fr Kelly, adding that the flood even destroyed the buses used to take the crew to and from their ships.

Despite the catastrophe, Fr Kelly's work continues, as he explained: "The building may be in ruins but our mission continues. The mission of the Church is not dependent on buildings and I'm happy to be up



THE APOSTLESHIP OF THE SEA'S CENTRE AT THE UK'S BIGGEST CARGO PORT IS IN RUINS AFTER IT WAS ENGULFED BY A GIANT TIDAL SURGE LAST WINTER. BUT THE CHARITY'S VITAL WORK OF WELCOMING SAILORS FROM SOME OF THE WORLD'S POOREST COUNTRIES CONTINUES.

to my knees in coal dust and iron ore, proclaiming the Gospel. Offering comfort and solace is what these people need." He now works from his car, which is stuffed with toiletries and goodies, and with SIM cards and mobile Wi-Fi connections, and the constant journeys to and from the ships has effectively doubled the chaplain's work.

It is just as well that Fr Kelly, absorbed in his vocation, is blessed with uncommon stamina. Seeing him in his orange, high-visibility jacket – which sports the AoS symbol of heart and anchor – it strikes me that he is both an athlete of the heart and, anchor-like in this ever-turning world, reassuringly firm of purpose. "We adapt, whatever the conditions, and the work of bringing something of the love of God into this harsh environment continues," he said.

Echoing Fr Kelly's high-visibility jacket, the AoS brings brightness into maritime lives. The priest says that 60 per cent of the world's seafarers are overwhelmingly Catholic Filipinos, while another great Catholic tranche comes from southern India. "There is a real hunger for the Eucharist and the crews love me to celebrate Mass on board their ship," said Fr Kelly, adding that he wants "nothing fancy" and Mass will invariably be in the mess room: "Where the crew share their food, we'll share the Eucharist as well." At Communion time, he said he will go out on to the deck to distribute the hosts, so that those working or on watch are not left out, sometimes even passing the host through a porthole.

"This is a varied ministry, and you never know what each day will ask," said Fr Kelly, telling stories of taking crews shopping for provisions, or of volunteers baking cakes for sailors who had lost a beloved crew member in a tragic accident, or even of driving an Indian crew to a rural churchyard so they could feel the grass beneath their feet. In sum, he says, in exchange for the cargoes the seafarers bring to the UK, for the good of its citizens, he brings a "cargo of love".

Ten years into his AoS chaplaincy, Fr Kelly speaks of upsetting and exacting vocational demands. "Those are the bully boys; they push the big ships into place," he said, pointing at a couple of tugboats. But then his voice dropped as he added: "There was a terrible tragedy a year ago. A tug's metal cable snapped and wrapped itself around a Chinese guy's neck, killing him on the spot."

After the tragedy, Fr Kelly made sure that the bereaved shipmates could call home and a local supporter from a nearby parish translated the coroner's report into Mandarin, rewriting it in a card and adding "a softer touch in a dreadful situation". On another occasion, the chaplain had himself stayed overnight on-board a ship to comfort a crew that had lost three mates who had suffocated due to a freak starvation of oxygen.

Too many seafarers, from the developing world in particular, are confined and intimated on-board ship; the shipping routes are virtually impossible to police and almost lawless. Sailors can be made into virtual slaves, enduring injustice and indignity and living in dread of blacklisting and the consequent privations for their families back home.

Fr Kelly recounted negotiating for a Filipino crew, explaining: "They looked absolutely horrendous and were exhausted. They had not been paid for four months and had eaten nothing but two bowls of rice a day since leaving Cairo." The crew had dared to write a letter of complaint.

Fortunately this time after negotiation, the resolution was a happy one: wages recouped and a plentiful supply of food onboard. "But you need to understand port life," warned Fr Kelly. In this marginal and murky world, an ill-judged intervention by the chaplain could make life even worse for the seafarers. While the appropriate authorities can and do intervene, the priest needs to be appreciated as "a safe pair of ears". A day after my visit to Immingham, the chaplain emailed me from his spartan quarters above the gutted Seafarer Centre: "The guys from Crimea have been able to contact family and they feel happier, having done so. They are just a bit concerned about the reception they may receive in Murmansk."

During my visit, Fr Kelly had said of the ministry to seafarers: "We can be very proud of what the Church is doing. Of course, this is not for everyone but we have to be there. This is where the Church must be."

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For more information on the AoS, visit: apostleshipofthesea.org.uk
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PILGRIMAGING STRENGTHENS THE APOSTLESHIP OF THE SEA IN THE MINISTRY TO THE PEOPLE OF THE SEA

On September 19th and 20th, 2014 people of the sea were invited by AOS in Poland to participate in the annual Pilgrimage of the People of the Sea to Jasna Góra in Częstochowa, where the miraculous icon of Black Madonna is situated. People of the Sea took part in the pilgrimage, and in a special way seafarers, fishers and their families. Father Edward Pracz, together with the Stella Maris chaplains organized the pilgrimage. The AOS Bishop Promoter Ryszard Kasyna presided over the pilgrimage.

The pilgrimage builds the community of the people of the sea. It unites spiritually those on the land and those at sea. It strengthens in faith. Bishop Promoter said in his homily:

“Dear People of the Sea, who traditionally come for the thirty second time to Jasna Góra, to listen to what Mary tells us, Mother of God and of the man Jesus Christ. Dear Brothers in priesthood, taking care of the people of the sea and their families. Dear Sisters and Brothers, Dear Pilgrims from different parts of Poland present at the Eucharist. My beloved ones, we need, each of us, a lot of effort and time for the human being to become a man of God, to start living, function in the family of Jesus. To become a brother, sister and mother for Jesus. The words of Gospel we heard remind us of that. God demands it from us constantly and He expects it from each of us. He speaks with the mouth of the prophets of the Old Testament, He speaks with the mouth of the Gospel writers, He speaks with the mouth of the Church today.

So we stand My Beloved Ones on the threshold of the house of Our Lady of Częstochowa to form the family of Jesus with Her. We come to Jasna Góra as the faithful people of God, connected with work at sea, seafarers, port workers, shipyard workers, fishers, students of maritime academies, maritime academic teachers, colour guards and also sailors from the Christian school under sails, as priest and chaplains. First of all we come as pilgrims to draw together with Mother of Jesus and our Mother, as once in Cana in Galilee, perhaps not the wedding wine, but God’s blessing and Mother’s warmth. For we desire to be close to Mother, as the human being feels safe when close to mother, he feels well, feels love. But we also wish to draw not only for ourselves, we wish to draw for others, those we somehow carry in our hearts, who also accompany us today. We desire to draw from this place, from Mother’s house, to take this warmth and Motherly love to those who are close to our life at work and at home.”

After the Mass there was a talk entitled: “Health threats during journeys to the regions in which many illnesses occur”. The talk was presented by doctor of medical science Leszek Nahorski from the Institute of Maritime and Tropical Medicine in Gdynia, who made the pilgrims realize how to get ready for the journey to tropical countries.

The Pilgrimage finished with the Way of the Cross on the Jasna Góra Walls. Stella Maris centers from Gdynia, Gdańsk and Szczecin prepared reflections. Here is one of the Way of the Cross reflections: “Station XIV *They took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, following the Jewish burial custom. At the place where he had been crucified there was a garden, and in this garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been buried. Since it was the Jewish Day of Preparation and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there* (John 19,40-42)

The Body of Jesus was buried in the grave. Jesus died and was laid in the grave in waiting for the light of the Resurrection morning. We all go in the direction of death to be born for heaven. Life at sea between the sky and waves is constant sailing to You God.

Make our lives a constant searching for You to reach happily the port of destination. We ask You Jesus to offer Your Kingdom to those whose graves are at the sea bottom. Show them Your Mercy.

We ask You Jesus to give us trust and hope in the fact that after death we will not finish our lives but will live in the glory of heaven. Give us, Jesus, strong faith in that. Jesus I trust You and Your Word! Lord! Whom shall we go to? You have got the Words of eternal life.” Fr. Edward Pracz, the organizer of the Pilgrimage thanked all the people of the sea and invited them to come next year to set into the deep water again, to the spiritual haven at Jasna Góra, to Black Madonna, the Star of the Sea.

Fr. Edward Pracz
AOS Regional Coordinator for Europe

