



Catholic Maritime News



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Care for the Seafarer

The following article indicates the significance and importance of care for the seafarer. These events took place in the past 4-5 months in the Port of Savannah, Georgia. The excerpts are from articles published in the Savannah Morning News, written by Russ Bynum and Mary Carr Mayle.

"The crew of the Newland Castellano already had reason to complain, having not been paid for roughly two months when the cargo ship sailed into Savannah to offload a shipment of sugar. Then U.S. Marshals seized the 590-foot ship, forcing it to drop anchor off the Georgia coast and wait out a legal dispute between the vessel's owners and their creditors."

"Nearly four months have passed and 15 crew members remain stuck on board a few miles out to sea, within view of the beach sands of Tybee Island but legally prohibited from setting foot on land because they are foreign nationals with limited visa's." "The crew, all Filipinos except for a Greek engineer and a Romanian electrician."

"Todd Baird, the attorney who represents the vessel's creditors made a number of trips out to the ship to pay the sailors. Baird also brought his parish priest, Father Brett Brannen to the ship several times to say Mass for the predominantly Catholic crew." "It's something the crew has particularly appreciated," Baird said, adding that the seamen have remained in good spirits throughout."

"Now the crew's ordeal is nearing an end. The ship was sold at auction and approved in a court hearing, finally releasing the hold." "The first group of sea-weary sailors is expected to fly out on their way home." "Each man had been offered their old positions by the new owners, but they declined."

Baird said, "I think being a mariner and a sailor, one of the issues you face is being out to sea for a great length of time. But they're happy and ready to go home."

+ J. Kevin Boland

Bishop J. Kevin Boland, Bishop Promoter - AOS



Bishop J. Kevin Boland

Maritime Chaplaincy Ministry and Apostolate

The ministry of the Maritime apostolate is very unique and difficult. The mandate from the Apostleship of the Sea (AOS) manual requires chaplains to put in their time, energy, talents, resources and their experience to care for the Seafarers, thereby, participate in the mission of Jesus Christ himself, in the maritime world. Therefore, the AOS chaplains must be distinguished by their integrity of life, their zeal, their prudence and their knowledge of the maritime world. In fulfilling their mission, the Chaplains make every effort to provide pastoral assistance in Stella Maris centers and in other hospitality centers for maritime personnel.

The duties of the Chaplains require that they welcome seafarers and care for them regardless of culture, language and religion and to provide them with practical assistance. They are present to the seafarers, and seek opportunities to recognize and to share the love of Jesus. Indeed, the chaplains encounter Jesus when they imitate the love of Christ and in their works of charity, they encounter him within themselves and in the people they serve. As stated in the scripture: "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some have entertained angels without knowing it." Hebrews 13:1-2. The chaplain's encounter no matter how brief, is a time to convey to the seafarers that the whole Church reaches out to them in prayer - especially in the difficult aspects of their lives at sea. The chaplains try to make the Seafarers know that they care for them and that they matter because they are members of the body of Christ.

The life of seafarers is hard. The vast majority of their time is spent aboard the ship. They risk their lives to transport people, food and other amenities through the treacherous seas and oceans.

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Sr. Joanna Okereke, HHCI



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Secretariat of Cultural Diversity in the Church
Pastoral Care of Migrants, Refugees & Travelers

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AOS National Office web address has been changed. **If you have linked to us previously using the old www.aos-usa.org address, please remember to change your link to www.usccb.org/aos**

We encourage you to visit our website which has user friendly navigation tools. Check out our interactive map with a list of AOS chaplains and contacts, know about news and events and other relevant information. If you want to know about Mass schedules in parishes around the country, there is even a link to MassTimes.org.

Contact Catholic Maritime News

We welcome your comments, feedback and suggestions.
Tell us what you think by sending an email to aos@uscgb.org.

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Apostleship of the Sea of the United States of America (AOSUSA) is a professional membership association of chaplains/associates, cruise ship priests, mariners, student mariners and affiliate members.

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Maritime Chaplaincy Ministry and Apostolate

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They are isolated and some if not most of them are missing families back home. They miss out on participating at Mass or other Church activities to give thanks and praise to God with their families. They are separated from their families and friends; many are distressed, and weighed down due to loneliness and pressure of work. Many are trapped in the sea and their movements are restricted. They spend months at sea without going ashore, often working in harsh conditions.

However, regardless of these challenges on the way, a chaplain's mission is to offer pastoral care to the Seafarers. They go beyond the boundaries to serve the Seafarers, to pray with them and to celebrate the sacraments. They are available for counseling and spiritual guidance, as well as provide comfort to those hurting or grieving. They encounter the seafarers through "listening, dialogue and solidarity. Through celebration of the sacraments and the Word of God, the chaplaincy team helps seafarers to discover the loving presence of God in all events and circumstance. (*cf. AOS Manual page 10*) They chaplains assist Seafarers, and help bring them hope and encouragement, they accompany and care for their spiritual and social needs. Pope Francis, addressing the AOS Regional Coordinators in Rome said, "Be the voice of those workers who live far from their loved ones and face dangerous and difficult situations." As the chaplains embark in the mission of Jesus Christ, they are called to show God's love to the Seafarers, who in their work play a vital role in the global economy as well as in the global maritime industry

The AOS chaplains participate in the mission of Jesus Christ; that is the mission to bring the Good News that God is love' and that every person is loved by God. In serving the seafarers, the Chaplaincy team offers activities and facilities, charity and advocacy, to meet the practical, spiritual and social needs of the Seafarers. The chaplaincy team seeks to accompany Seafarers, at significant times of the year and at important events in their lives. We therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out more laborers in the vineyard.

Do not miss the golden opportunity for Maritime Ministry Training, February 12 - 24, 2017 in Houston, TX. Scholarship is available for the Roman Catholic chaplains and pastoral team who minister in the U.S.A. through the Apostleship of the Sea (AOS). To apply for scholarship, contact Sr. Joanna Okereke, HHCJ; Assistant Director, Cultural Diversity in the Church/Pastoral Care of Migrants, Refugees and Travelers; United States Conference of Catholic Bishops at 202.541.3359 or jokereke@uscgb.org.

The scholarship application deadline is November 15, 2016. The scholarship is limited and will be granted on a "first-come, first-serve" basis. For additional information, please contact the School Coordinator (Deacon Allan Frederiksen) at deaconallan@comcast.net. Deacon Allan Frederiksen, Coordinator, Houston Maritime Ministry Training Program, Houston International Seafarers' Center. P.O. Box 9506. Houston, TX 77261-9506. Email: deaconallan@comcast.net; Cell Phone: 832.398.0679; Office Telephone: 713-672-0511, Fax: 713-672-2444. Download application @ www.houstonseafarers.com

Sr. Joanna Okereke, HHCJ

Assistant Director, Pastoral Care of Migrants, Refugees, and Travelers (PCMRT)

AOS National Director, Secretariat of Cultural Diversity in the Church

National Maritime Day: Seeing those at Sea

National Maritime Day in the United States was named to recognize the maritime industry and is observed on May 22, the date in 1819 when the American steamship Savannah set sail from Savannah, Georgia on the first ever transoceanic voyage under steam power. In the Presidential Proclamation for National Maritime Day 2016, President Obama noted, "Whether in still or raging waters, Merchant Mariners are fundamental to guaranteeing the delivery of essential goods to far-reaching corners of the globe.

To remember the day, an Observance was held on Monday, May 23 at Maritime Administration headquarters in Washington. This year's ceremony included representatives of all levels of government, industry, labor, and many former mariners. Sr. Joanna Okereke of the Apostleship of the Sea USCCB office gave the opening invocation for the ceremony. In his remarks, Paul "Chip" Jaenichen, the current Maritime Administrator, reminded us that "people" are behind the great ships on the oceans."



National Maritime Day 2016



Sr. Joanna Okereke, HHCJ saying the opening invocation.

In the afternoon, many maritime leaders headed to the National Press Club where NAMEPA held a "Safety at Sea" Seminar. The President of the North American Maritime Ministry Association, Rev. Marsh Drege, was one of the panelists: he mentioned that maritime ministries are so important, for the "see" mariners in ways that many others in the industry or wider society do not. Many seafarers from other countries, but also from the United States, are experiencing challenges. Maritime ministry seeks to work with the larger maritime world to bring that extra encouragement to the lives of the men and women who sail the world's oceans.

Jason Zuidema, Executive Director
North American Maritime Ministry Association



Presentation of the Wreath



Sr. Joanna Okereke, HHCJ saying the benediction



Sr. Anne Obiora, HHCJ, Mr. Jason Zuidema, Rev. Marsh Drege, and Sr. Joanna Okereke, HHCJ

AOS National Office: Pastoral Care Visits to the Ports

As a task of the Church, the decree of Vatican II *Christus Dominus* (No.18) clearly states that maritime pastoral care is the responsibility of the Local church, which must pay particular attention to seafarers (among other itinerants) because they cannot benefit sufficiently from the regular and ordinary pastoral ministry of the parish priest. "Special concern should be shown for those among the faithful who, on account of their way of life, cannot sufficiently make use of the common and ordinary pastoral care of parish priests or are quite cut off from it. Among this group are the majority of migrants, exiles and refugees, seafarers, air-travelers, gypsies, and others of this kind. Suitable pastoral methods should also be promoted to sustain the spiritual life of those who go to other lands for a time for the sake of recreation." (http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651028_christus-dominus_en.html). With suitable methods and through adequate instructions we must cater for the spiritual needs of the faithful.

We set a goal of visiting each ports to walk with the chaplains as they care for the people of the sea and offer hospitality. So far I have visited the following ports:

1. Port of Mobile, Alabama
2. Port of Long Beach, California
3. Port of Los Angeles, California
4. Port of Oakland, California
5. Port of San Francisco, California
6. Port of Miami, Florida,
7. Port of Everglades, Florida
8. Port of Galveston Texas
9. Port of Houston, Texas
10. Port of Port Arthur, Texas

I have productive visits. I have seen what is going on, during our conversations, I have heard their concerns and issues to be addressed. I have learned a lot and we shared our hopes, difficulties, experiences and challenges. The visits have been a source of great satisfaction and my experiences will help inspire other chaplains. Is your Seafarers' center a place where people are welcomed and cared for - 'A home away from home?' "I was a stranger and you welcomed me." Matthew 25:35. While at the Bar Area of California, I visited with Captain Pietro Parravano, fishing captain and a salmon and crab fisherman.

In the words of Pope Francis, I encourage chaplains and volunteers during this Jubilee Year of Mercy, to bring the opportunity of encountering the mercy of God to our brothers and sisters who are seafarers, fishermen, and those whose occupations require them to spend most of the year away from their families, in the high seas, and sometimes facing dangerous situations. Together, let us explore the various issues, build relationships and work together towards the success of building a solid and strong ports. Let us join our prayers through the intercession of Our Lady Stella Maris, for Seafarers and the Apostleship of the Sea ministry, that the Lord will guide and strengthen our work.



Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach

*Sr. Joanna Okereke, HHCJ
and Rev. Freddie Chua*





Half Moon Bay



A Seafarers' Prayer

O God, I ask you to take me into your care and protection along with all those who sail ships.
Make me alert and wise in my duties.

Make me faithful in the time of routine, and prompt to decide and courageous to act in any time of crisis.

Protect me in the dangers and perils of the sea; and even in the storm, grant that there may be peace and calm within my heart.

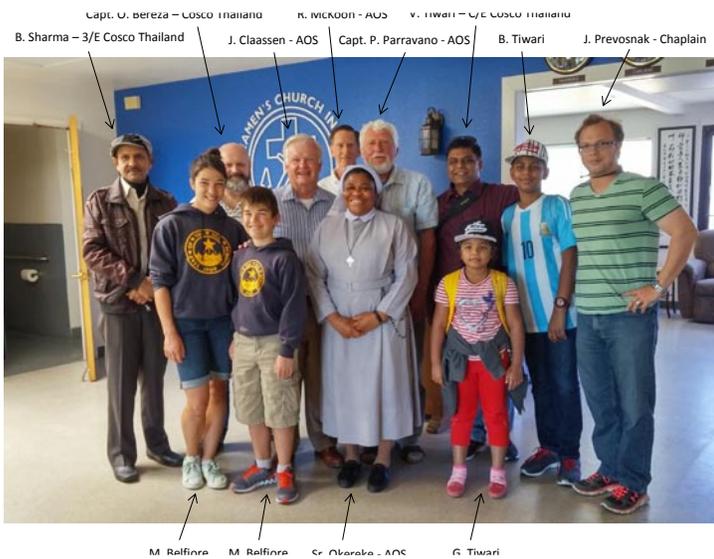
When I am far from home and far from loved ones and far from the country that I know, help me to be quite sure that, wherever I am, I can never drift beyond your love and care.

Take care of my loved ones in the days and weeks and months when I am separated from them, sometimes with half the world between them and me.

Keep me true to them and keep them true to me, and every time that we have to part, bring us together in safety and in loyalty again.

This I ask for your love's sake.

Amen.



Port of Oakland

Ministry to Seafarers Seeks Volunteers

Handmaids of the Holy Child Sister Joanna Okereke pictured with her are students Michael and Marina Belfiore, great-grandchildren of an Italian immigrant fisherman who made his living for many years fishing out of San Francisco.

The national Catholic ministry for people who work on the sea needs volunteers to serve in the Archdiocese of San Francisco – an ideal opportunity to step up to Pope Francis' Year of Mercy call to bring Christ to people on the margins.

That's the message of Sister Joanna Okereke, HHCJ, from the U.S. bishops' conference, who made stops in the archdiocese last month on a tour of maritime ministry services in West Coast port cities.

Sister Joanna is assistant director of the U.S. bishops' Secretariat for Cultural Diversity in the Church, Subcommittee on Pastoral Care of Migrants, Refugees and Travelers. She is the bishops' point person for the Apostleship of the Sea, the professional association of Catholic seafarers and maritime ministers, which provides chaplains at 53 ports in 26 states for mariners, fishermen and their families, and all who work or travel on the world's waterways.

Marine ministry on San Francisco Bay is based at the International Maritime Center at Port of Oakland, which is served by a priest and volunteers from the Diocese of Oakland. Catholic services include Masses, one-to-one ministry for containership crews far from home and family and transportation to and from marine terminals for shopping and other necessities.

"They want Mass," Sister Joanna said. "We get many young ones."

Sister Joanna said financial and volunteer support for the Oakland center is needed and welcome from the Archdiocese of San Francisco, where the Apostleship of the Sea on a Rincon Hill now studded with high-rise housing closed in 1995 after 63 years as a mariners' home away from home.

"We want people to be able to donate, to run the center (and) to show hospitality to a stranger by coming in to volunteer," Sister Joanna said.

Full- or part-time volunteers are needed and assistance will be provided to obtain the necessary security clearance to board ships.



Sister Joanna said half of the world's maritime crews are Catholic, and the Catholic Church is the largest provider of ministry services.

Pietro Parravano, a salmon and crab fisherman in Half Moon Bay and San Mateo County Harbor District Commissioner, said maritime ministry is in keeping with Pope Francis' focus on refugees and others on the margins. "We're a common home," he said.

The annual National Day of Prayer and Remembrance for Mariners and People of the Sea was celebrated May 23. The day is observed in conjunction with National Maritime Day in the United States, which has been celebrated since 1933, to recognize merchant mariners and others in the maritime industry.

"In this Jubilee Year of Mercy declared by Pope Francis, may we bring the opportunity of encountering the mercy of God to our brothers and sisters who are seafarers, fishermen, and those whose occupations require them to spend most of the year away from their families, in the high seas, and sometimes facing dangerous situations," Bishop J. Kevin Boland, retired bishop of Savannah, Georgia, and Apostleship of the Sea promoter, said in a U.S. bishops' news release. "They too are our brothers and sisters with spiritual needs, may we accompany them in their joys and trials in life, so they may also grow in faith and understanding of God's love."

Visit www.usccb.org/aos or email Sister Joanna at jokereke@usccb.org.

By Catholic San Francisco



NAMMA Conference 2016: Examines Social Isolation at Sea

The North American Maritime Ministry Association completed a fantastic annual conference focused on the welfare of seafarers and fishers around the world. Running from August 2-5, 2016 at the scenic Portsmouth Renaissance Waterfront Hotel in Portsmouth, VA, the conference gathered more than 100 representatives from international seafarers' and fishers' welfare agencies to discuss the most critical issues of their work regionally and worldwide. Many Apostleship of the Sea members were present, including Bishop Kevin J. Boland, United States AOS bishop promoter, and international AOS director Fr. Bruno Ciceri.

Rev. Marsh L. Drege, Executive Director of Seafarers' International House and President of NAMMA's Board said, "Social isolation is unfortunately a characteristic part of the lives of seafarers and fishers worldwide. The 2016 NAMMA conference will help chaplains and ship visitors focus even more on the essential goal of being present for those who are alone."

Social isolation is not just the subjective feeling of loneliness, but the objective state of separation from others. Besides the natural separation from others while miles out at sea, participants noted trends such as smaller crews, changes to working hours, increased paperwork, multinational crews and the effects of usage or lack of the Internet. No doubt, an increasing number of scholarly studies note that the various causes of social isolation contribute both to marine incidents and the challenges to seafarer retention experienced throughout the industry as a whole.

Keynote presentations came from: Ian Urbina and Martin Doblmeier. Urbina is a Pulitzer-prize winning New York Times journalist and author of "The Outlaw Ocean" article series. Urbina presented on the challenges to fishers' welfare worldwide. Martin Doblmeier is founder of Journey Films and producer of the recent nationally-televised PBS documentary "Chaplains". Since 1984, Doblmeier has produced and directed more than 30 films focused on religion, faith, and spirituality. Doblmeier presented on the current challenges and opportunities for chaplaincy work across all sectors.

Other program presenters and exhibitors included representatives of the: United States Coast Guard, Chamber of Shipping of America, Seafarers' International Union/International Transport Workers Federation, North American Marine Environment Protection Association, Mission to Seafarers, Sailors' Society, Apostleship of the Sea, Mercy Ships, Center for Seafarers' Rights of the Seamen's Church Institute NY & NJ, Apostleship of the Sea-USA, International Christian Maritime Association, International Seafarers Welfare and Assistance Network, and ITF Seafarers' Trust.

In his opening remarks, NAMMA Executive Director, Dr. Jason Zuidema noted, "By our conference theme, we are not pushing for a return to so-called the good old days in shipping: those good old days might not have seen the widespread social isolation we see today, but no doubt those old days had their fair share of social issues! Our work is not to respond to past challenges, but those of today and the future. What does this general global trend of social isolation - amplified, we might argue, for those at sea - mean for us? How do we respond? What kind of presence might we have for those who live in social isolation at sea?"

The conference featured many different perspectives on the issue, but the most important was that of the conference participants themselves: representing more than 75 different seafarers' welfare agencies, they serve thousands of seafarers on a daily basis. The NAMMA conference helped provide a place for reflection and dialogue on a significant issue of our time.

Jason Zuidema,
Executive
Director, NAMMA
www.namma.org





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UPCOMING EVENTS IN 2016:



SEPTEMBER 29, 2016

Feast Day of Our Lady Star of the Sea

SEPTEMBER 29, 2016

World Maritime Day

Theme: Shipping: Indispensable to the World

<http://www.imo.org/en/About/Events/WorldMaritimeDay/Pages/WMD-2016.aspx>

NOVEMBER 21, 2016

World Fisheries Day

<http://www.wiseoceans.com/event/world-fisheries-day/all/>