



SEA SUNDAY 2014



Dear brothers and sisters,

Today we celebrate Sea Sunday. I turn my thoughts to seafarers, fishermen and their families.

I urge Christian communities, particularly the coastal ones, to be attentive and sensitive towards them. I call on the chaplains and volunteers of the Apostleship of the Sea to continue with their com-

mitment to the pastoral care of these brothers and sisters.

I entrust all, especially those who are in trouble and away from home, to the maternal protection of Mary, Star of the Sea."

(Pope Francis, Angelus, 13 July 2014)

IN THIS ISSUE

1st Congress for the Pastoral Care of Human Mobility	6
"Invisible" chaplains for "invisible" seafarers"	9
God's love for all his children	11
Last of the sea nomads	13
MV Albedo hostages released	19

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MESSAGE OF THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR SEA SUNDAY 2014

Throughout the history of mankind, the sea was the place where routes of explorers and adventurers intersected, and where battles determined the rise and fall of many nations. But it is, above all, a privileged place for exchange of goods and global trade. Actually, over 90% of merchandises worldwide are transported by nearly 100,000 ships, that unrelenting, are sailing from one end of the world to the other, run by a workforce of approximately 1.2 million seafarers of all races, nationalities and religions.

During this Sea Sunday, we are invited to become aware of the hardships and difficulties that seafarers face daily and of the valuable service provided by the Apostleship of the Sea in being Church who bears witness of the Lord's mercy and tenderness in order to preach the Gospel in the ports of the whole world.

Due to a number of factors related to their profession, seafarers are invisible to us and to our society. As we celebrate Sea Sunday, I wish to invite every Christian to look around and realize how many of the objects we use in our daily lives have come to us through the hard and laborious work of seafarers.

If we observe their lives carefully, we immediately realize that they are certainly not as romantic and adventurous as sometimes is shown in films and novels.

The life of seafarers is difficult and dangerous. In addition to having to face the rage and power of nature, that often prevails even upon the most modern and technologically advanced ships (according to the International Maritime Organization [IMO] in 2012, more than 1,000 seafarers have died as a result of shipwrecks, maritime collisions, etc.), we should not forget the risk of piracy, which is never defeated it but is transformed in new and different ways and is manifested in many maritime routes, and also the danger of criminalization and abandonment without wages, food and protection in foreign ports.

The sea, the ship and the port are the universe of life of seafarers. A ship is economically viable only when sailing and, therefore, must continually sail from one port to another. The *mechanization* of cargo-handling operations has reduced the time of berthing and the free time of crew members, while security measures have restricted the opportunities to go ashore.

Seafarers do not choose their companions of journey. Each crew is a microcosm of people from different nationalities, cultures and religions, forced to live together in the limited area of a ship for the duration of the contract, without any interest in common, communicating with an idiom that often is not theirs.

For seafarers loneliness and isolation are traveling companions. By its nature, the work of seafarers bring them to be away, even for long periods, from their family environment. For the crews is not always easy to have access to the numerous technologies (telephone, wi-fi, etc.) for contacting family and friends. In most cases, children are born and grow up without their presence, thus increasing the sense of loneliness and isolation that accompanies their life.

The Church, in her maternal concern, for over ninety years has been providing her pastoral care to the people of the sea throughout the *Work of the Apostleship of the Sea*.

Every year thousands of seafarers are welcomed in ports, at the *Stella Maris* Centers, distinctive places where seafarers are warmly received, can relax away from the ship and contact family members using different means of communication made available to them.

The volunteers daily visit seafarers on ships, in hospitals and those who are abandoned in foreign ports, ensuring a word of consolation but also concrete support when needed.

The chaplains are always available to offer spiritual assistance (celebration of the Eucharist, ecumenical prayers, etc.) to seafarers of all nationalities who are in need, especially in times of difficulty and crisis.

Finally, the Apostleship of the Sea gives voice to those who often have no voice, denouncing abuses and injustices, defending the rights of the people of the sea and asking to the maritime industry and to the individual governments to respect international Conventions.

While, during this Sea Sunday, we express our gratitude to all those who work in the maritime industry, with a trusting heart we ask Mary, *Star of the Sea* to guide, enlighten and protect the sailing of the whole people of the sea and support the members of the Apostleship of the Sea in their pastoral ministry.

Antonio Maria Cardinal Vegliò, President

✠ Joseph Kalathiparambil, Secretary

ACROSS THE SEA WE ARE ALL ONE FAMILY

On April 2 of this year, there was a large earthquake under the ocean off the coast of Chile. The next day, a tsunami from that country reached Japan. The event made us aware that even countries across the sea are neighbours because the tsunami occurred despite Chile and Japan being separated by more than 15,000 kilometres of ocean. On the other hand, the debris and radiation, which flowed into the sea because of the tsunami generated from the Great East Japan Earthquake, floated across the Pacific Ocean, reached the West Coast of America, and is now the source of a big problem. Thinking about this makes us all realize that almost all the countries of the world are linked even those across the sea.



When I thought about how that tsunami from Chile reached Japan, I also could not help but wonder whether the countless boats that encountered the tsunami along the way were safe. Where depths of the sea is very great, tidal waves can travel at speeds which are comparable to that of a jet going in excess of 500 kilometres an hour. That caused me to worry about whether or not there had been boats on the Pacific Ocean that were in the path of the tsunami and had disappeared or what effects the tsunami may have had on the people who were fishing.

In today's world, our concepts and perspectives have to be global, but it is not enough simply to "think on a global scale". Our perspectives, "toward everyone, no matter where, must be based on the perspective of the changeless Gospel". In other words, they must be "universal". Since God loves all human beings, our perspective too, must include everyone. No one can be considered beyond our concern.

One seafarers leave port, they enter upon the great ocean and are beyond anyone's field of vision. Even while being sustainers of a substantial part of the world economy, if they were to meet with some great difficulties somewhere, the only people, almost without exception, who would worry about them and pray for them, are their loving families. I think that if before God we are all truly one family, then we should constantly keep them in mind, watch over them, and continually pray for their safety. To express these thoughts concretely in some small way, there are people who visit ships when they come into port. Through their visits all of us become linked to the seafarers who enter the ports of Japan.

I ask you in some way to pray for seafarers and, both spiritually and through donations, that you support the activities of the people who visit those ships.

"May God always protect all those who work at sea, and after their work is done, may they always return safely to their families".

July 13, 2014

✠ Matsuura Goro, Aux. Bishop of Osaka
Chairperson, Catholic Commission of Japan
for Refugees, Migrants and People on the Move



To the men and women of the sea on the feast of our patron, our Lady the Virgin of Mount Carmel

***«Apostleship of the Sea:
committed to the joy of evangelizing»***

Message of the AOS Bishop Promoter of Spain

Dear brothers and sisters, this day of the Feast of our Patron, Our Lady of Mount Carmel, is a call to witness our faith with joyful celebration in all our ports and parishes on the sea. It is an age-old tradition handed down to us by our elders, one of the most heartfelt fruits of a faith that has become our fishing villages' culture for many years. I therefore invite all men and women of the sea in all our parishes and fishing villages to renew their firm commitment to the festive celebration of our Mother and Patron, Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

All of us have indelible memories of how we celebrated this feast day when we were kids, when our parents and grandparents held our hands as they brought us down to the celebrations. Those memories have not only accompanied us throughout our lives, but have often been an irreplaceable support in the difficult moments of our faith and our life. When we relive those memories at the celebration of the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel each year, our faith becomes an ever more essential part of our life as the years go by. Therefore, for us, men and women of the sea, the call that Pope Francis makes for us to be witnesses of the joy of the Gospel is an invitation to keep the devotion to our Patron alive, as a treasure of joyful protection and loving affection in which our parents raised us.

An indispensable task of our Christian life is the transmission of faith, especially to our children and youth. That transmission of faith must take place throughout life and based on our life. Transmitting the faith among ourselves, people of the sea, is part of our lives, and we have to do it based on our customs and devotions, starting from our way of life and our most ingrained convictions. Therefore, educating our children and youth in the care and devotion to our patron, Our Lady of Mount Carmel, is the most authentic way we have for transmitting our faith.

The transmission of the faith was the focus of the National Assembly of the Apostleship of the Sea, which had the theme: "To be bearers of your Word of Life and Love to seafarers and revitalize the faith"; celebrated on Isla Cristina last October. It was a beautiful meeting of the diocesan delegates of the Apostleship of the Sea in Spain. We were welcomed with great affection by our brothers of the Diocese of Huelva in the heart of the great fishing village of Isla Cristina. At that meeting, we observed with gratitude the Apostleship of the Sea's immense work and commitment with seafaring families in Spain. These were very important days for growth of this ministry, which also benefitted from the presence of two delegates from the Pontifical Council of Rome.

It was very important to celebrate this National Assembly in Huelva because this Diocese is a fundamental point of reference for the history and life of the Apostleship of the Sea in Spain. There, we were able to once again confirm the importance of faith in the lives of men and women of the sea, in our moments of joy and in despair. What was especially memorable for all of us was the fraternal welcome that we received from all the people of Isla Cristina. They showed us the profound soul of a great seafaring people, wrought by work and faith. We returned from there strengthened in our mission to be apostles of Jesus Christ among the people of the sea.

On this celebration of the Feast of our Patron, I would call on you to pray our departed souls, especially those who were taken from us by the sea this year. In various communications, I have already shared with you this immense pain and I have asked you to remain firm in hope. On the Feast of Our Lady, we remember our faith in a future resurrection for those brothers who have already departed for the House of Our Father.

Let us also pray for all those families who are going through difficult times, whether in health, at work, or any of life's other challenges.

I entrust all of your lives to the heart of our Mother, Our Lady of Carmen, to bless you and respond to your needs. We pray to her, to help us to have the generosity to open our hearts to her Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and in this way be able to listen and respond to the call Pope Francis makes to us with such force and such faith: to be witnesses of the joy of the Gospel.

With my blessing and all my fraternal affection,

✠ Luis Quinteiro Fiuza, *Bishop of Tui-Vigo*
Bishop Promoter of the Apostleship of the Sea, Spain

16 July 2014

SEA SUNDAY CELEBRATED IN THE WORLD

Please send us photos and reports on how you have celebrated Sea Sunday in your country.

Brazil, Rio Grande



Many are those who work at sea and face great difficulties in order to give their families the opportunity to live with dignity. Volunteers concerned with the welfare of these people, visit and welcome seafarers, port workers, truckers and fishers. A very important ministry to value life, where exists only concern for profit.

As we celebrate Sea Sunday we pay tribute to the importance of the people of the sea and of those who care for them, hoping to get more and more volunteers in this so significant sector for humankind, since 90% of goods are transported by sea.

Therefore, we express gratitude for all the people and institutions which are committed to the welfare of seafarers!

Mauritius: from the AOS National Director

On July 13, a Mass was celebrated at the Centre Marie Lorraine Guerrel, Poste de Flacq, Mauritius. The celebration coincided with the 150th anniversary of St Maurice Parish. Sea Sunday was an opportunity for the AOS members to reassert their identity and their mission. We welcomed that the ILO Maritime Labour Convention (MLC 2006), which came into force in August 2013, was ratified by Mauritius on May 30, 2014. It is a big step forward as the MLC protects the rights of all seafarers who arrive in Port-Louis.

It should be emphasized that the Convention includes the repatriation of abandoned seafarers. We have long fought to ensure that the repatriation of the crew abandoned be a priority. We had the experience of abandoned seafarers in Port-Louis, who have waited long for their wages and repatriation.



This year, we will present an award to some fishers who have contributed to the profession and to the welfare of fishers with their long experience and their commitment to the fishing community. In this 150th anniversary of Saint Maurice Parish in Poste de Flacq, the AOS wants to make a contribution to the social dialogue between the users of the sea.

Thailand, Sriracha

Sea Sunday 2014 celebrated at Panatnicom Church by Father Soodjen Fonruang, Director of the Apostleship of the Sea in Sriracha, Chanthaburi Diocese, Thailand.



1st Congress for the Pastoral Care of Human Mobility

Panama City, Republic of Panama

12 – 16 May 2014

The Apostleship of the Sea in Latin America Between History, Reality and Future

Fr. Bruno Ciceri

Apostleship of the Sea International

Before sharing the history of the origins of the Apostleship of the Sea, its development, what it is today and the challenges it must face in the future, I have the pleasure of conveying to you the cordial greetings of the President of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, Cardinal Antonio Maria Vegliò, who expresses to all of you here present his wishes for a fruitful meeting, under the protection of Mary, *Star of the Sea*.

OUR HISTORY

Since the 19th century, there were several church-related organizations that provided occasional assistance to seafarers. However, we have to wait until October 4th, 1920, when in Glasgow, Scotland, inspired by the intuition of a group of lay people (Peter F. Anson - a convert from the Anglican Church -

Arthur Gannon and Brother Daniel Shields, SJ), the foundations were laid for what would later be known as the Apostleship of the Sea (AOS).

The objective of the AOS, as it was described in the first Constitution, was to "*promote the spiritual, moral and social development of the seafarers,*" meanwhile the motto of the Apostolate, in the same words of Peter F. Anson, was to "*reveal Christ to those who sail aboard ships, and who work in deep water, in order to lead them to a deeper knowledge of Christ and of his Church.*" The logo was an anchor entwined with a life saver, with the Sacred Heart of Jesus at the center.

From 12 to 16 May the 1st Congress on the Pastoral Care of Human Mobility organised by CELAM, was held in Panama.

It was attended by 130 delegates, representing 22 Episcopal Conferences, working in the pastoral care of migrants and itinerants, as well as in the Apostleship of the Sea and the pastoral care of tourism.

The Pontifical Council was represented by the two priests in charge of the sector for migration and AOS.

The first Constitutions were approved by the Holy See on April 17th, 1922, with a letter signed by the then the Secretary of State, Cardinal Gasparri, expressing "*the approval and encouragement*" of Pope Pius XI, "*in the certainty that such a noble idea, backed by the zeal of competent secular priests and religious, would span the coasts of both hemispheres.*"

Over the years, the succeeding Popes have recognized a pastoral and ecclesial significance of this Organization, originally founded as secular and independent. In 1997, with the Apostolic Letter *Motu Proprio Stella Maris*, the Holy Pope John Paul II placed this Apostolate under the "*overall direction*" of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, giving a specific field of action, and equipping it with the faculties and appropriate tools for a fruitful work among the people of the sea.

From that humble beginning, and through the ups and downs, the AOS has grown to become an in-

ternational ministry with a large number of chaplains and volunteers who provide material and spiritual assistance to seafarers, fishers and their families every day, in the many ports around the world.

THE MARITIME WORLD TODAY: TRADE AND FISHING

Worldwide, over 90% of goods are transported by approximately 100,000 ships that, day and night, are criss-crossing oceans, seas and rivers. These ships are managed by a workforce of about 1.2 million seafarers of all races, nationalities and religions. Despite the considerable advances in technology that has built bigger and high-tech vessels, we must not forget that the crews are forced to live for several months away from their families, often denied permission to go ashore, at times abandoned in foreign ports, running the risk of being criminalized and imprisoned, and finally that they place their life at risk not only to the forces of nature (typhoons, storms, etc.) but also to the threats of hijacking from pirates. Last August, with confidence, we welcomed the entry into force of the International Convention on Maritime Labour (MLC, 2006), but it is necessary that we commit ourselves to its implementation.

Fishing in many countries is a remarkably important sector of economy and employment. According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), in 2010, the fishing and aquaculture provided livelihood for about 54.8 million people. Asia accounts for about 87%, followed by Africa with more than 7%, Latin America and the Caribbean together reach 3.6%. Fishing in all its forms, from arti-



sanal to industrial, is considered the most dangerous profession in the world. The long hours of work and the environmental difficulties are often the cause of a high number of deaths and accidents with permanent disabilities as consequences. Unfortunately, a large number of fishing vessels are operating illegally and often migrant workers are trafficked and end up in forced labor. Because of an excessive exploitation of the fisheries resources and the exhaustion of fish stocks, we run the risk that, most likely, in a not too distant future, this industry will enter into a deep crisis with dramatic consequences for many fishing communities.

THE APOSTLESHIP OF THE SEA

AOS is responsible for ensuring a real and qualified presence in this maritime world in order to bear witness the Church's concern for all those people who, because of their work and physical distance, can not benefit from the ordinary pastoral care of a parish.

The concrete realization of the pastoral care of seafarers in every region, diocese or port, is the responsibility of the local Church. To ensure this, the Motu Proprio *Stella Maris* establishes the appointment of an Episcopal Promoter by the relevant Bishops' Conference in order to encourage and promote the AOS (*Stella Maris* IX, 1) in its territory. In turn, the Episcopal Promoter chooses a National Director. It is then up to the Bishop to determine the most suitable forms of maritime ministry and to appoint, in consultation with the National Director, chaplains in his diocese. To coordinate the maritime apostolate in a region made up of several nations, the Pontifical Council appoints a Regional Coordinator.

Instrumental in the implementation of a AOS program in Latin America and in the Caribbean, is the role of CELAM, which "is an ecclesial body of communion and collaboration with the local churches that are in Latin America and the Caribbean. [CELAM] always serves in dialogue with the current historical contexts, that despite being challenging, are also promising." (CELAM, Plan Global y Programas 2011-2015).

AOS IN LATIN AMERICA

All of the nations that make up Latin America, except Bolivia and Paraguay, have access to the sea. Some of these countries have ports that play a vital role in the economy and development of the Latin American continent. Others, such as Panama with its canal (which has now been doubled), may have a significant impact on navigation routes, on the development of ports and on the scheme of distribution of goods not only for Latin America but for the whole world.

In this continent, AOS has a tradition rooted in places that have a long and rich history of service to the people of the sea. But in recent years, while some of the positions of this apostolate have grown, others, for lack of priests, funds and also the sensitivity of the local Church, seem to have lost their meaning and role of key service for the crews of ships arriving in the port.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

As we are preparing for the celebration of the centenary to be held in 2020, we realize that if we want to keep in pace with the times and respond appropriately to the needs of the people of the sea, it necessary that AOS renews itself by being present in ports to proclaim the Gospel through new means and methods. As for Latin America, the CELAM, following the points of *Programa 54: Apostolado del Mar para la Vida y la Comuni3n*, should awaken within the local Church a pastoral reflection on the different positions of the maritime apostolate and, considering the economic and political choices of governments that sway navigation routes, create and develop new ports by making daring choices, such as closing obsolete centers and opening of new ones so that future needs of the people of the sea could be answered.

The dioceses and parishes closest to the oceans should be called to a new ordinary pastoral commitment towards the people of the sea. The future of maritime pastoral care can not be the responsibility of individuals, priests or lay people, but should engage the whole parish community (which in this way becomes missionary) through the adoption of the territory of the port, transforming it into a bridge community between the reality of the sea and the one of the land.

Lastly, the laity (that in the Latin American Church are already a large force) will be more involved in serving and responding innovatively to the needs of seafarers. Currently, with the decreasing number of priests and religious working in the ministry, the AOS must return to its origins and involve more lay people with specific skills (managers, lawyers, consultants, drivers, etc.). The commitment of AOS will be to provide specific and qualified training for this particular ministry. In this context, the *Manual for Chaplains and Pastoral Workers Apostleship of the Sea* is a valuable tool for the initial training of volunteers.

The Latin American continent has a great potential to develop a global maritime pastoral ministry, but if it wants to be effective and appropriate to the new developments, it is necessary to collaborate with the social partners in the maritime world (governments, trade unions, shipowners, agents of immigration, etc.). But this is true all the more for us, now present at this meeting and representing the AOS, for it is essential that we work in a network fostering collaboration through communication, dialogue, exchange of information and mutual assistance. Only then will our efforts turn into a commitment of the Universal Church to the service of the people of the sea.

We entrust AOS, and its future in Latin America, to the Blessed Virgin Mary, *Stella Maris*, and pray that we can continue to be a beacon of hope in the maritime world and a safe harbor for seafarers, fishers and their families.



“INVISIBLE” CHAPLAINS FOR “INVISIBLE” SEAFARERS

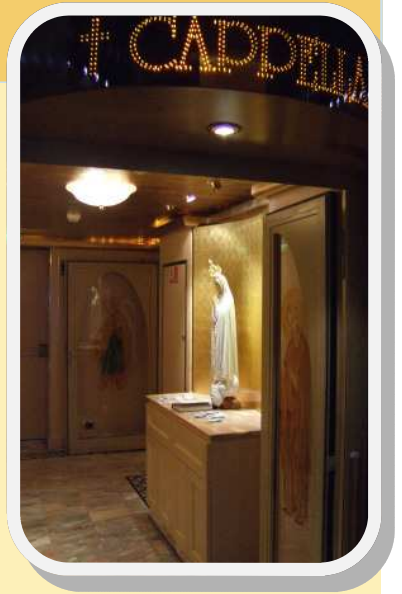
NO MORE CHAPLAINS ON BOARD THE COSTA CRUISES

With deep regret, we announce that after over 70 years, the collaboration between AOS Italy and the Costa Cruises regarding the presence of chaplains on board its ships came to an end.

With the chaplains on board, who were responsible for the welfare of the crew, the Costa Company had always shown a special consideration for its workers. A chaplain, in fact, is not only a priest who says Mass every day, but he is a seafarer who carries out his ministry of spiritual, human and social assistance for all those who are on board, whatever their nationality or religion.

Until now the chaplain shared everything of the life of the crew. He was a point of reference for them being available for personal encounters, distributing books and videos in various languages, planning cultural and sports activities, providing internet services, safekeeping their money, distributing the mail, visiting them in their places of work, protecting their labor rights and also celebrating the Eucharist and organizing moments of prayer, as we read in the following testimony.

The person who gives this testimony, meanwhile on a cruise for fun and entertainment, was able to experience how the presence of a chaplain on a cruise ship becomes an instrument to form a small Church at sea, where passengers and crew encounter the Lord.



IF YOU WANT ... YOU CAN FIND THE LORD IN THE MIDDLE OF THE OCEAN

I left for a Cruise with the sole desire of taking a vacation. My objective was complete rest, but also to have fun together with friends with whom I could share peace, the sun and the spectacular Caribbean locations. We began the long journey after a nine hour plus flight that took us to the stunning places of the Caribbean on board the beautiful Costa Mediteranea, where we found luxury, elegance, kindness, courtesy and genuine hospitality on the part of the whole crew. For a fortnight, this ship was our home; more so, our country, our Church, and thus, our fantastic world. Even though for many of us it wasn't the first time onboard a Costa Cruise, we always had a doubt of whether or not we took everything, and I mean absolutely everything. On board, you could find a life full of joy, more than you can imagine! I experienced how my expectations of happiness were no match for the pleasure that the cruise in reality gave me. Is it definitely true that Costa Cruise offers you greater contentment than you could expect. All

this is great: it's exactly what you are looking for in a memorable vacation.

The next day was Saturday. In the morning, we were sailing and would arrive at the Barbados Island early afternoon. With a quick glance at "Today", the daily bulletin of life on board, we found that the Vigil Mass is at 10:00am, so we decided to go. Costa Cruises is the only company that, in addition to all the countless comforts, offers religious services and pastoral care. On their ships, you can find beautiful chapels, where those who wish to do so, may go for a moment of silent prayer to nourish both heart and body in peace. This is one of the distinctive characteristics of Costa Cruises, the conviction that the true welfare of a person is the achievement of balance between body and soul. And that is why I always choose this Company.

After a quick check of the map of the ship in order to unravel the maze of bridges, staircases, panoramic lifts, famous names given to various bars, lounges

etc., etc., we were given a lovely surprise: like children, we were amazed by the lights, the beauty and the sense of peace that we discovered on the ship. We found both the beautiful chapel and the Isolabella Hall, where on Saturday and Sunday the Holy Mass would be celebrated. We arrived on time at the Hall, which was already full of faithful. We met the chaplain on board, Fr. Emmanuel Iovannella, a Conventual Franciscan Friar (OFM Conv), and the Holy Mass was celebrated in Italian, with the readings in French, English and German. Everyone had a leaflet with the Liturgy of the Word in 5 languages and the Rite of the Mass in eight. At the end, Fr. Emmanuel greeted everyone and announced the upcoming events, highlighting the daily celebration of Holy Mass, and above all, the Holy Mass with the Renewal of Wedding Vows. On March 30th, the day the celebration of the Renewal of Vows was planned, more than 200 people were gathered in the large Isolabella Hall, of which there were seventy couples who wished to renew the Sacrament of Marriage in the beautiful and solemn liturgy.

But there was another uncommon event for those who wanted to participate, which pleasantly surprised us all. On Tuesday night at 11:30 PM, a Rosary was to be said in the chapel during a prayer service and, on Friday evening at the same time, a Eucharistic Adoration. It seemed so incredible, and yet my friend and I looked at each other in silence and said: LET'S GO! The same program was repeated the following week. How good it was to experience the Church that accompanies us on the cruise ship. It is, in fact, in the nature of the Church to journey along-



side humankind whenever and wherever the human experience takes us. Two moments that I will never forget were: when we arrived in the Chapel a few minutes before 23.30 the evening of the Eucharistic Adoration, we found around forty passengers already there, with a dozen crew members: Indians,

Filipinos, Peruvians and Italians. How wonderful! As we were all on our knees in front of Jesus, solemnly exposed in the Blessed Sacrament; the Indians boys were barefoot, with angelic faces and eyes despite being tired from a long day's work. But their eyes were like real pearls, shining with faith. What a lesson of life! Who would have thought – I certainly could not believe it – but it's all amazingly true: on the Costa Cruises fleet, there is no gap in the daily liturgy of faith of the Church. The ship becomes an extraordinary parish that sails to find brothers and sisters in every part of the world, united by the same faith. All this was fantastic, and it was precious to be a part of it.

Fr. Emmanuel led us in prayer, and was able to touch our hearts. We experienced the beauty of the heart sailing on the infinite Ocean of faith. I will try to share a small part of it, with the notes that I made of what he said: *"It surprises us a little,"* he said, *"to be here on a cruise ship praying. We are here in this chapel to have fun with our heart; our special performer is Jesus Himself, living and true, who is 'with' and 'for' us always, wherever we go, 'so that your joy may be complete'. We are the Church, assembled to express and live in communion and unity with all our brothers and sisters throughout the world. Here and now, we are present in the Cenacle (the Upper Room), where we are seen and touched by grace, so that our existence may be filled with peace and the fascination of being with God. This is the true peace! What better time than this: faraway from countless daily chores, far from work and commitment, we are here to listen the loud cry of the silence of the Lord. Jesus speaks to our hearts more than we are capable of ourselves; our presence here is a chance to entrust the people that we love to Him. We are here to learn how to navigate the ocean of our life, to row with faith and love, to arrive at the safe harbour of God's mercy, guided by the compass of faith, happy to navigate on the Ocean of the Mercy of God."*

Fr. Emmanuel suggested to us to reflect on the Gospel passage that says, "Lord, give us always this bread." What can I say? Wherever you are and if you just want it, the Lord gives us the Bread of true joy! Yes, even in the middle of the ocean, this all can become a reality. With Costa Crociere, there is really no place far from God. It is also a reason, for which the Costa ships are also a pleasure. "So that your joy may be complete."

Mariagrazia Rossi

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**THIS WITNESS WAS WRITTEN ON APRIL 4,
2014, BEFORE THE CONTRACT WITH COSTA
CRUISES WAS TERMINATED**

GOD'S LOVE FOR ALL HIS CHILDREN

A Father's love makes us all brothers

When I think back and reflect on it, I cannot understand why Christians, children of God and redeemed by the love of Jesus Christ (Benedict XVI's Encyclical *Spe Salvi*, 26), are persecuted by our own people, who do not value Christianity, who do not believe, or who do not try to seek out this truth, which protects us all humans. And we cannot understand how to love God if we do not love his children, our brothers.



Do not know the story? Do not believe it?

What is the serious crime that we have committed to make enemies who pursue us throughout our lives?

We need to try and “brainwash” these harmful minds with the love that Jesus Christ showed us, sacrificing his life for us all. And we must wonder: do these, our brothers, not feel touched by this, or do they feel self-conscious about not being able to reach out or receive this gift of love?

Let's consider what this Love entails. Man is freed by love and feels saved when he feels this love. From then on, his subsequent behavior moves him to engage in this common experience with his brothers and his happiness is derived from this activity that gives meaning to life. (John Paul II Encyclical *Redemptor hominis*, 10).

This life, redeemed by the love of Jesus Christ, entails charitable and social action, but this action is not enough if it does not express the love for our brother. What do we need to convey it?

And we keep asking ourselves: how is it that we, God's children – as we all are - are not able to make ourselves visible with the light of a love that we try to reveal to those who ignore it, so that they see that the light shines for them as well?

It's hard to feel guilty, even when we fail in this transmission, because -if we do it with the dignity of children of God - the strength of our message carries the love of our Father who sees us and loves us all equally.

Our brothers killed in their multitudes, even recently, will be resting with the Father. But, why are those who killed them not able to understand this madness? Is it that minds are easily manipulated when the heart is insensitive?

What do we need to know, what do we need to understand, so that all of the human family perceives the values of His true message and the wealth that it brings to each of us equally?

GOD, THE FATHER OF ALL CREATION, GUIDE US WITH YOUR LIGHT!

Cristina de Castro Garcia, Vigo, Spain

Passing of Fr. Rivers A. Patout and of Msgr. Johannes Bieler

The AOS International pays tribute to Fr. Patout and to Msgr. Bieler for their dedication and concern for seafarers around the world. They have climbed countless gangways in their ministry to the people of the sea. We thank them for their wisdom, compassion and devotion in bringing fellowship from the shores, out onto the waters of their ports.

Fr. Rivers Aristide Patout III died Monday morning, June 2, 2014 in Houston, TX, for a brain tumor. He was born on April 2, 1938 in Galveston, TX. Fr. Patout was a founding member of the Houston International Seafarers Center and the full-time chaplain at the Port of Houston in 1972, a position he retained until his death.

In addition, he served in several parishes in the Diocese of Galveston-Houston. Rivers became the pastor of St. Alphonsus in 1994, during which time, the parish membership increased in size and became a more dedicated, family community with the addition of a new two-story educational building.

Some of his other ministerial activities included the Diocesan Director of Ministry to Seafarers, a Director of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston's AOS, past president of NAMMA, board member of ICMA, and member of the Diocesan Commission for Ecumenism.



Msgr. **Johannes Bieler** died in a car accident on Friday July 4, 2014. From 1977 to 2004 he was the port chaplain in Bremen and ports along the river Weser. His ministry lasted many years, so many seafarers from different countries have benefitted from it. He was priest for the German navy for 8 years, parish priest on the island of "Wangerooge" and chaplain for police department in Bremen until 1986.

He was a devoted priest and published materials to encourage the seafarers in leading spiritual life and following Jesus Christ. Among others he prepared the prayer book entitled "Lord is my Pilot" especially for Philippino crew in which he included many prayers bringing seafarers comfort in various life situations. He organized the Stella Maris Seamens' Mission in Bremen in different ways, i.e. from a small seamen hotel up to the mobile units "Speedy - I" and

"Speedy - II" visiting the ships with a camper close to the gangways.

The AOS family loses two pioneers. Fr. Patout and Msgr. Bieler were well know in the maritime world having served for many years the cause of seafarers. Their dedication and commitment were very much appreciated by this Pontifical Council.

They will be missed not only by the AOS family but also by the many seafarers that they encountered on board of vessels or in the Stella Maris centres.

With their humble and gentle attitude, they were always available to offer pastoral care to seafarers and their families, regardless of their religious beliefs.

Now that they are climbing the last "gangway", we entrust them to God and assure their communities and families of our prayers and sincere condolences.

Last of the sea nomads

by Johnny Langenheim on July 14, 2014

Diana Botutihe was born at sea. She has spent her entire life — 50 odd years — living on boats that are typically just five metres long and one-and-a-half metres wide. She visits land only to trade fish for staples like rice and water, and her boat is filled with the accoutrements of everyday living — jerry cans, blackened stockpots, plastic utensils, a kerosene lamp, and even a couple of pot plants.

Diana is one of the world's last true marine nomads — a member of the Bajau ethnic group, a Malay people who have lived at sea for centuries, plying a tract of ocean between the Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia.

When I first set out with photographer James Morgan in search of the nomadic Bajau, we weren't even sure they still existed. Over the last few decades, controversial government programmes have forced most of them to settle on land, or in stilt villages at the water's edge. We knew of settled communities in the volatile islands of the southern Philippines, around the popular resort area of Semporna in Malaysian Borneo, and further south on the Indonesian island of Sulawesi. And then a friend in Bali told us of a stilt village called Torosiaje in North Sulawesi, which immediately caught our imagination.

Unlike its many counterparts, Torosiaje lies a full kilometre out to sea, in the newly formed Gorontalo province of northern Sulawesi. It took us two flights from Bali, the second on a rickety twin-engined Fokker, and a seven-hour bus ride to reach the area, then a final boat ride out to this remote settlement, where we discovered a community divided. While some Bajau remained in the austere concrete bungalows provided by the government (still officially a part of Torosiaje Village), others had been reluctant to give up the ocean and had built a home in the shallow bay nearby — simple wooden houses connected by a network of walkways and jetties. And a few, we were told, still clung to the old way of life, spending months at a time on their tiny boats and returning to the village only for important occasions — weddings, funerals, Ramadan.

The origins of the Bajau diaspora are not entirely clear. Linguistic evidence seems to trace the ethnic group back to the 9th century in what is now the southern Philippines. As regional trade prospered under the wealthy Malay sultanates from the 15th century onwards, Bajau groups are thought to have migrated south in ever-larger numbers.

The Bajau themselves have a different way of explaining their dispersal, however. Legend tells of a princess from Johor, Malaysia, who was washed away in a flash flood. Her grief-stricken father ordered his subjects to depart the kingdom, returning only when they'd found his daughter. They've been wandering ever since.

Over generations, the Bajau adapted to their maritime environment, and though marginalised (so often the lot of the nomad), their knowledge was revered by the region's powerful sultans, who counted on them to establish and protect new trade routes. Some are highly skilled freedivers, plunging to depths of 30m and more to hunt pelagic fish or search for pearls and sea cucumbers — a delicacy among the Bajau and a commodity they have traded for hundreds of years.

Since diving is an everyday activity, the Bajau deliberately rupture their eardrums at an early age. "You bleed from your ears and nose and you have to spend a week lying down because of the dizziness," said Imran Lahassan, our guide in Torosiaje. "But after that, you can dive without pain." Unsurprisingly, most of the older Bajau are hard of hearing. A 40-year old with skin like mahogany and pale green eyes, Imran's home was in Torosiaje Darat, the land-based part of the village. But like all Bajau, much of his life had been spent at sea. He told us about the original



Ibu Diana Botutihe is one of the few remaining people in the world to have lived her entire life at sea, visiting land only intermittently and as a matter of necessity in order to trade fish for rice, water, and other staples. Here she is pictured on her boat in Sulawesi, Indonesia. Photo: [James Morgan](#)

Bajau, who continued to live on their *lepa lepa* — narrow, high-prowed vessels that are highly prized amongst the region's coastal populations.

"They come back to the village maybe every six months," he explained.

We set off to find them, Imran's nephew steering us expertly through the shallows, while Imran sat perched in the prow inspecting his handmade spear guns, or *pana*. Every man seemed to possess one or more of these, which they fashioned from boat timber, tyre rubber, and scrap metal. What their weapons lack in range and accuracy, the Bajau more than make up for in skill, as we were to witness.

We found what we were looking for just two hours out from Torosiaje, in the late afternoon; a cluster of boats sheltering in the lee of a small island beside a mangrove forest where the water was calm. By far the most talkative among them was Ane Kasim, who lived on her boat with her son, Ramdan, a boy of about 15 who was as silent as his mother was voluble. She told us that her husband had died, that she could not even afford a rudimentary engine for her boat, and that she would have to row her way back to Torosiaje when the time came. But when I asked her if she'd prefer to live in a house in the village, she shook her head emphatically. "I love being at sea...fishing, rowing... just feeling everything — the cold, the heat."

As dusk settled, the boats slowly converged and small fires were lit in the sterns. One man grilled crustaceans while another boiled a stew of sea cucumber; we were handed plastic mugs of lukewarm coffee and Ane sang folk songs, her plaintive keen the only sound to be heard other than the lapping of the water on the sides of the boats. They slept under the stars, curled on the wooden slats of their vessels with tarpaulins at the ready should it rain.

The next day, we encountered Moen Lanke harvesting clams with a tyre iron. He was sporting woollen gloves and the handmade wooden goggles fitted with glass that are ubiquitous among the Bajau and which are good to 30m and more. Weighted with the heavy tool, he didn't dive so much as walk down the coral outcrops, taking slow motion strides like some sort of cartoon spaceman. And he'd stay down there for a minute and more, digging the coral away to get at the shellfish. It wasn't quite the image we'd nurtured of the freediving Bajau, but a striking one nevertheless.

Later, we saw some more conventional freediving. Siding Salihing, apparently a noted diver among the Torosiaje community, went deeper than we could follow, disappearing into the blue to return triumphant with a stuck octopus, which he proceeded to drape theatrically round his neck.

What we were witnessing was foraging — these people were subsisting on whatever they could harvest from the reefs, occasionally selling their meagre catch at local markets. Their lifestyle seemed to be driven as much by economic necessity as by the vital connection they had



Jatmin, an octopus specialist, carries his freshly speared catch back to his boat in the shallow waters off the coast of Sulawesi, Indonesia. Photo: [James Morgan](#)

The Indonesian government has made a concerted effort to move the traditionally nomadic Bajau into settled communities on land. In Torosiaje, many Bajau left their government-provided homes and built this stilt village 1km out to sea. Basic amenities are scarce, however, and the poorest claim that government promises of help have been hollow, leading them to return to the old nomadic way of life at sea.

with the natural surroundings. Times had clearly changed.

"I used to be able to cast my net for 100sqm and fill it with fish," Bada Epus, a fisherman from the nearby village of Lemito, told us. He gestured to his net. "This is one square kilometre and I barely catch anything." Reclining in the back of his boat was his brother, Taha Epus. "He can't walk," Bada Epus told me abruptly. "He got cramp. But he can still dive well."

By cramp, he's referring to decompression sickness, or the bends. These days, those Bajau that can afford it dive using compressors. An onboard engine pumps air through a common garden hose so divers can go deeper for longer — 40m and more. Unaware of the need to restrict their exposure to

pressure, countless Bajau have ended up crippled or killed by deadly nitrogen bubbles in their bloodstream.

The practice continues, however, because it's lucrative — especially when potassium cyanide is involved. Cyanide fishing was first introduced in the Philippines by Hong Kong fishing boats looking for reef species like grouper and Napoleon wrasse to satisfy the rising demand for live fish among Chinese seafood restaurants. It quickly spread throughout the Coral Triangle — a bioregion that encompasses much of the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, Papua

New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, and Timor L’Este. The Coral Triangle is an underwater Amazon — home to the planet’s greatest diversity of marine species, including 76% of all known corals and more than 3,000 species of fish. Cyanide is by far the most efficient way of capturing predator reef species alive — divers use plastic bottles to puff poisonous clouds at target species, stunning them and damaging the coral habitat in the process. Today, the live fish industry is worth upwards of US\$800 million a year, according to research by WWF.

Compressor diving, often in conjunction with cyanide fishing, remains a common practice amongst the Bajau Laut despite being unsustainable, illegal, and highly dangerous. Young Bajau men, and often children, will routinely dive to depths of 60 metres with air pumped down to them through a hose pipe and a regulator. With no knowledge of the dangers inherent in diving to such depths, they often ascend far too quickly, resulting in nitrogen buildup and the bends. Compressor diving is one of the main causes of unnatural death amongst the Bajau communities.

And when it comes to destructive fishing practices, the Bajau have been some of the worst offenders, enthusiastically adopting both dynamite and cyanide. Torosiaje used to be flanked by teeming reefs; now there are only wastelands of broken coral, a legacy of years of dynamite and cyanide fishing. It’s a common story throughout the Coral Triangle — communities destroying the environment that sustains them, driven by voracious global markets.

Back in Torosiaje village, we are introduced to Sansang Pasangre, the resident *dukun*, or healer. He explains to us that the ocean is filled with *penghuni lautan* — *djinn*, or spirits, that can be called upon if their names are known. “They enter our bodies and speak through us, giving us knowledge and advice. There are only 10 people in the village who can do this, though,” he explains. The Bajau’s beliefs mean that when at sea, a complex system of taboos govern their behaviour, since every reef, tide, and current is thought of as a living entity. The disconnect is a glaring one: How does this sacred regard for the ocean tally with the destructive fishing that is so rife among the Bajau?

The truth was, our vision of the Bajau before we encountered them had been a romantic one, as though we expected them to occupy some rarefied space, traveling migratory routes, the natural stewards of their ocean environment. Decades ago perhaps. But the nomadic Bajau we met were desperately poor and marginalized; many felt betrayed by the Indonesian government, which they claimed had failed to provide promised support in terms of subsidies. “Look, my boat has no teeth, just like me,” says Fajar Botutihe, Diana’s husband. He gestures at a section of his boat where the wood has rotted, grinning to reveal blackened stumps, probably the legacy of a lifetime chewing *pinang* — the mildly narcotic nut that Malay peoples commonly combine with betel leaves. He may be laughing, but his boat is in a sorry state and he hasn’t got the Rp.12 million (US\$1,300) to buy a new one. We’re on a tiny island; Fajar’s boat has been pulled ashore and he has lit a fire beneath the keel to kill parasites and algae.

From what we witnessed, the integrity of the Bajau belief system had been diluted as their mode of living had changed, with socioeconomic concerns superseding the cultural cohesion that would have been a prerequisite of their traditional nomadic lifestyle.

Traditional Bajau cosmology is a syncretism of animism and Sunni Islam, with a rich oral tradition of epic songs known as *ikiko* — sung in its entirety, an *ikiko* can take as long as two days to complete and is a deeply emotional experience for the community. These songs used to be an integral bind, performed at all major ceremonies. We found one old man still able to sing the *ikiko*, though he needed frequent rests. His grandson looked on anxiously. “It makes him sad,” he explains. “He’s remembering.”

The future of the Bajau remains uncertain. Cultural dissipation looks likely to continue, as they contend with a modern world of nation states that has little room for wanderers. Still, conservation charities like WWF and Conservation International are helping create marine management programmes that encourage sustainability through no-fish zones and a return to artisanal fishing methods. It is often Bajau that socialise such programmes to local communities, communicating key messages at a grassroots level. There are also efforts underway to increase the benefits from burgeoning tourism, particularly in Semporna. If nothing else, such grassroots programmes demonstrate that the Bajau’s reverence and knowledge of their marine environment could so easily be used to conserve rather than destroy.



In addition to the nets and lines traditionally used for fishing, the Bajau use a handmade “pana” for spearing their catch. Photo: [James Morgan](#)

AOS-GB LAUNCHES EMERGENCY FUND FOR SEAFARERS

The maritime emergency fund aims to provide fast and modest cash grants to seafarers in difficulties



The dedicated fund is designed to respond to emergency financial or welfare requests from seafarers or their families in less than 24 hours, taking the immediate pressure off stressful situations. "Most seafarers and fishermen enjoy good living and working conditions but there can be circumstances when crew are not paid, cannot access communications to speak to family and loved ones and even lack food, water and heating," AOS Great Britain National Director Martin Foley said during the launch of the fund on board the HQS Wellington in London on June 19.

"AOS is often called upon to provide emergency support in what quickly becomes a very stressful and difficult situation for crew and their families, many of whom depend on remittances to pay for basics back home. Resolving these problems can take months so quick cash grants can really help. Our port chaplains are uniquely placed to judge whether a modest grant will alleviate a crew member's situation without compromising efforts to resolve the underlying problem," he said.

Father Bruno Ciceri of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, which coordinates the activities of AOS worldwide, congratulated AOS GB on this initiative. "The emergency fund is a practical example of how of the Church and AOS is responding to the immediate needs of those in difficulty and crisis."

Foley explained that when a need is identified, AOS' port chaplains will contact either the National Director, (or, depending on the sum involved, the chair of the AOS Great Britain finance committee) to authorise the grant. "Payment will then be made directly either to the chaplain, the seafarer or his family. This short chain will ensure payments are made quickly and without unnecessary bureaucracy. Experience tells us that Individual payments will be hundreds, rather than thousands of pounds."

Foley stressed the fund would not duplicate other existing sources of help for seafarers and fishermen.

"Regular reports of grants made will be submitted to the AOS trustees' finance committee, who at the end of each year will have the discretion to transfer any surplus to AOS' general charitable funds for seafarers' welfare. This is to avoid the accumulation of funds year on year." To donate to the fund contact John Green, Director of Development on 020 7012 8607 or 07505653801 or email johnngreen@apostleshipofthesea.org.uk

The following case studies illustrate the need for the Maritime Emergency Fund:

Seafarers family crippled by debt caused by unpaid wages

For much of 2013, the 'Independent' was stranded in Shoreham port with all crew having left (without payment), save the Master and one seafarer who remained onboard. This seafarer hadn't been paid for five months, leaving his wife and children in the Ukraine without income. They were surviving by borrowing and running up credit card bills. The lack of wages and increased borrowing to sustain the family's income during this period was a significant cause of stress for both the seafarer and his family.

In addition to providing practical support to the Master and the seafarer, AOS made a one-off emergency grant to the seafarer of US\$1,000 (the average Ukrainian salary being US\$300 per month).

There was no other fund that could provide emergency support to this seafarer as existing funds would not give cash directly to a seafarer even where vetted by a charity engaged in the case, such as AOS.

Fishermen - emergency funds for food & communications

On the 27 March 2013 AOS Seychelles was contacted to assist 27 Malagasy crew from two vessels that had

been apprehended for alleged illegal fishing. The two skippers and one chief engineer were charged with illegal fishing in Seychelles waters. The 24 crew members were not been charged with any offence but remained on the fishing vessels as prohibited immigrants. The Acting Superintendent requested AOS Seychelles to intervene and assist the stranded crews. As well as emotional support AOS provided basics such as food.

However, AOS in the Seychelles had little funds to purchase food, phone or SIM cards or to help with purchase of airline tickets and organise the crew's travel documentation.

There was no emergency fund that could support all these crew with immediate assistance as they were classed as fishermen rather than seafarers.

AOS-GB WELCOMES NEW PROTOCOL ON FORCED LABOUR

AOS-GB supports the recent adoption of a new Protocol aimed at boosting efforts to tackle modern forms of forced labour.

The legally binding Protocol was adopted by the International Labour Organization (ILO) on June 11 and is seen as a firm commitment from governments, employers and unions to eradicate contemporary forms of slavery. While most seafarers and fishermen enjoy good living and working conditions, there are some, in particular migrant workers, who remain in danger of being exploited and abused as a result of globalisation and labour shortages.

AOS national director Martin Foley said seafarers and fishermen deserved decent and safe working conditions. *"Seafarers and fishermen work in one of the most dangerous environments and yet all too often governments and authorities turn a blind eye to the appalling conditions many are forced to endure." "We've read about the brutal treatment of workers in Thailand linked to seafood production. Sadly such appalling conditions are not confined to Thailand,"* said Foley.

Caritas Internationalis whose work is to serve migrant communities and promote social justice for migrants also submitted a statement during the Forced Labour Committee of the 103rd International Labour Conference in which the Protocol was adopted. Part of the statement refers to the plight of seafarers and fishermen. It reads; *"We would like to highlight the situation of seafarers and fishers, who are often migrants. They are invisible and because of the nature of their work easily become victims of exploitation and abuse." "Their working environment makes it difficult for them to seek help and protection in situation of need. Though in the maritime sector there are specific laws and conventions, sometimes it is difficult to implement them."*

The human trafficking issue is a priority for the Church

*From the Message of Pope Francis
on the occasion of the 103rd Session of the Conference of the ILO*

"Another grave and related issue confronting our world is that of mass migration: the sheer numbers of men and women forced to seek work away from their homelands is a cause for concern. Despite their hopes for a better future, they frequently encounter mistrust and exclusion, to say nothing of experiencing tragedies and disasters. Having made such sacrifices, these men and women often fail to find dignified work and fall victim to a certain 'globalization of indifference'.

Their situation exposes them to further dangers such as the horror of human trafficking, forced labour and enslavement. It is unacceptable that, in our world, slave labour has become common coin. This cannot continue! Human trafficking is a scourge, a crime against the whole of humanity. It is time to join forces and work together to free its victims and to eradicate this crime that affects all of us, from individual families to the worldwide community. It is also time to reinforce existing forms of cooperation and to establish new avenues for expanding solidarity."

Mission de la Mer - 2014 National Session - Rezé (44)

Final declaration

This year's National Meeting, held in Rezé (44) on 29 and 30 May 2014, focused on the theme "The Maritime Experience of Encounter". In its sessions, the Apostleship of the Sea reflected on the way it lives out the experience of encounter, dialogue, and sharing in the maritime world, trying to put into practice its policy guidelines: "The Apostleship of the Sea helps us to meet French or foreign sailors, since Christ sends His Church to all His creatures. At the Apostleship of the Sea, you can experience the brotherhood between peoples, languages and religions, as was promised to those who welcome the kingdom of God."

Ports, fishing, trade, and the economic activity they generate, are places of encounter between land-based people and seafarers. The Apostleship of the Sea has taken the measure of this challenge and of the challenge to embrace all forms of work associated with ports, in coordination with the dioceses.

ENCOUNTERING SEAFARERS, MEANS BEING AWARE OF EVERYTHING THAT AFFECTS THEIR LIVES

This requires us to be in close contact with seafarers and their families. Many members of the Apostleship of the Sea are involved in welcoming seafarers into port. The stopovers are short and sailors are very busy. Coming ashore is difficult; visiting sailors aboard is essential to provide them services, listen to them, and help Christians to live their faith on board. We must continue to strengthen this pastoral approach.

Out fishing, on the dock, in the fish market, are meeting places where we can share in the lives of fishermen, who still ply their trade in difficult and often dangerous conditions. We hear that it is sometimes difficult to make a living: fishing is limited, and the price of fish is low, not allowing a fair return on their work. The future of the profession seems at risk. Yet even if the fleet is aging, youth continue to come to fill the ranks and believe in the future. In many ports, the Apostleship of the Sea remains in contact with fishermen and maritime schools. Where it is not present, we have to keep in touch with the world of fishermen through the parishes and dioceses.

ENCOUNTERING SEAFARERS, IT ALSO MEANS BEING CONCERNED ABOUT THEIR FUTURE

In the Apostleship of the Sea, we observe that the fishermen are largely responsible people. We support their demand that their views must be taken into account in the face of lobbying environmentalist NGOs. We recommend that questionable measures (zero emissions, total ban on driftnets, etc.) aimed at greater ecological and economic efficiency are not taken. The Apostleship of the Sea believes in the ability of seafaring communities to take charge of their destiny and respect the biodiversity of the seas and the fish that inhabit them.

In the area of trade, with the Maritime Labour Convention 2006 (MLC) now in force, the rights of seafarers have been strengthened. We reiterate the importance for sailors to go ashore, to be hosted in homes, to receive visits on board, so that their human and spiritual needs can be met. Also, we join the host of marine associations in their request for continued funding of this home, to improve services provided to seafarers.

THE SEA IS A CRUCIAL ECONOMIC ISSUE

The sea is beginning to be exploited as a new source of energy. In some places it has become a source of conflict. We must make every effort so that it continues to be a "nourishing" sea for all the people who depend on it for their survival. This calls for fair international agreements in order to preserve and respect this "common good of humanity", wherever it may be.

National secretary: Guy Pasquier

President: Philippe Martin



MV ALBEDO HOSTAGES RELEASED

MPHRP (The Maritime Piracy Humanitarian Response Programme) has welcomed the release and safe return of the remaining crew from the MV Albedo.

Commenting on their arrival into Kenya on 7 June 2014 MPHRP chair, Peter Swift, said, “After 1288 days in captivity we are delighted for them and their families after the terrible ordeal and hardship that they have suffered. At the same time our thoughts are also with the family of the Indian seafarer who died in captivity and the families of the four Sri Lankan seafarers who are reported as missing after the vessel sank in July 2013.”

“The generous support of MPHRP’s partners and friends, together with the extensive groundwork and cooperation of the UNODC (the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime) and others, helped to facilitate the release of the 7 Bangladeshi, 2 Sri Lankan, 1 Indian and 1 Iranian crew members after they had been abandoned by the owner and with no direct support forthcoming from other parties. The efforts of all those involved in securing their release and safe return are greatly appreciated.”

MPHRP Acting Programme Director, Hennie La Grange, said, “For more than three years MPHRP has been supporting the families of the crew with regular contact and visits, has organised a series of combined and individual counselling sessions in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and India, and has been providing, together with its partners, financial assistance to help with tuition fees, medicines and other living costs. “

MPHRP’s South Asia Regional Director, Chirag Bahri, flew to Nairobi and met the crew shortly after their release, providing support in getting the crew new clothes, shoes, travel luggage, decent food and a trip to the hairdressers. Counselling and phone calls to their families were also arranged. The UNODC was also able to arrange to take the crew on a picnic to the National Park one afternoon. The Maritime Piracy Humanitarian Response Fund (MPHRF), which is operated by MPHRP, covered a lot of these costs which were approximately US\$500 per sea-farer. MPHRF has also been paying monthly allowances to the families of the crewmembers. The seafarer in the family is often the sole breadwinner, so without his monthly wage coming in, families often struggle to pay for basic amenities such as rent, education, healthcare and food.

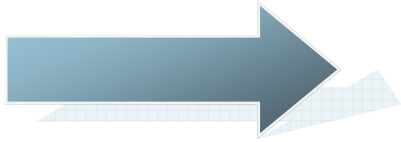
Both the crew and their families have endured nearly four years of suffering since the vessel was hijacked on 26 November 2010 with 23 crewmembers on board. Their plight became more critical when the vessel sank on 7 July 2013, causing the pirates to move the hostages ashore for the remainder of their captivity. Although no longer held by pirates, the crewmembers’ saga is far from over. Following the protracted period of captivity, these seafarers and their families are likely to require ongoing medical care and treatment. During the captivity the MPHRF has supported the families, and would like to continue supporting them, but we can only do that if we get your support and the funds to do so. The amounts of funds needed are in comparison very small: \$7000 can support a seafarer and his family for one year, \$3000 of which can help a family pay the rent and utility bills, \$2000 can pay the school fees for a child to keep up their education and \$2000 can provide medical and counseling care.

Since returning home, MPHRP South Asia has organised counselling and reassurance sessions for the Sri Lankan, Bangladeshi and Indian seafarers in their home locations. Professional psychologists have been sought to provide this with separate sessions being held for individuals, seafarers only, wives only, families and the entire group.



Together in Nairobi: the released crew with MPHRP Regional Director for South Asia, Chirag Bahri, the UNODC team and Sri Lankan High Commission delegates.

(MPHRP Newsletter, special edition June 2014)



IMPORTANT NEWS FROM ITF-ST

ITF-ST is proud and excited to announce that the new grant application form is online. With the new form ITF-ST has tried to obtain more information on how applicants intend to spend the funds making sure that the intended project is sustainable.

From now on, applicants will only be able to apply online. ITF-ST will not accept paper applications any more.

To apply just go to its website www.seafarerstrust.org and choose the tab "how to apply". This section will take you through the process. The online application can be saved at any time, giving applicants the chance to retrieve it at their leisure.

Please read the online instructions before commencing to complete the online application.

If you need support to fill in the online application, please contact Trust@itf.org.uk

We would like to remind you that any grant applications, BEFORE being presented to international funding agencies (ITF-ST, TK Foundation, etc.), should be sent to the Pontifical Council in Rome for evaluation and issuing of a letter of endorsement and support of the project.

The letter of endorsement and support from the Pontifical Council is essential to fulfill the requirements requested by these agencies for the approval of the grant.

HOT OFF THE PRESS

Karen Parsons, the port chaplain of Galveston, for more than 30 years has climbed gang ways of all kind of ships and greeted a countless number of crew members at the Galveston Seafarers Center. She has being the steady and comforting presence of a Church which "goes forth" in the docks with "the doors" of her heart always open to welcome seafarers of any nationality.

Karen, with her dedicated service reaches out to the "load of humanity" that comes together with the cargo of the ships docking at the port. In the midst of a fast turnaround of vessels and limited time in port, she is always available *to slow down, to see and listen* to the seafarers. They tell their personal stories together with the one of their families, they share their worries and dreams for the future, for them she is a mother, a sister but also a friend, a confident, to whom open their hearts and in exchange they receive advices, encouragement, support and prayers. Now, Karen has compiled all these stories and the letters that have exchanged through the years in a book.

To get copies of the book, please contact the author: kmp1103@yahoo.com

