

**PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE PASTORAL CARE OF
MIGRANTS AND ITINERANT PEOPLE**

2014 Christmas Message

Dear People of the Sea,

Once again the feast of Christmas is here, a moment of grace and joy that some of you will spend with the family, while many others will be far away from the loved ones, perhaps at sea or in distant and unknown ports.

In this time, the economic crisis still do not guarantee a secure and long-lasting employment, and the threat of piracy in various ways and forms, remains persistent. In this moment in which, despite the Conventions and the international law, not always the rights to a secure and decent job is assured, and many other situations of injustice make your life and that of your families challenging, I want to extend to all of you this message for Christmas.

The Son of God became one of us to share our hopes and concerns. Let us pause for a moment in front of the crib. Let us look at the Baby Jesus in the manger, with open arms to welcome in his Love each one of us, with our fragilities, without boundaries and discrimination.

It is the same Love that chaplains and volunteers of the Apostleship of the Sea are trying every day to spread in many ports around the world with ships visit and the service at the *Stella Maris* Centers. A Love that is transformed in support for the abandoned and forgotten crews in foreign ports by ship's owners, that restores dignity to the work and fatigue of the people of the sea, that does justice to prevail over injustice and grow into welcoming for all, regardless of nationality, race and believe.

I wish that, through the intercession of Mary *Star of the Sea*, the Love of the Lord Jesus who comes this Christmas can reach all seafarers, fishers and their families wherever they are, and offer them Consolation, Hope and Courage for a renewed and redeemed world.

In the joy of the Nativity, I bless you all with great affection in the Lord.

Antonio Maria Card. Vegliò
President

✠ Joseph Kalathiparambil
Secretary