

PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE PASTORAL CARE  
OF MIGRANTS AND ITINERANT PEOPLE

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# People of the Sea

**Co-workers with God in Creation**

Vatican City 1998

PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE PASTORAL CARE  
OF MIGRANTS AND ITINERANT PEOPLE

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# People of the Sea

## Co-workers with God in Creation

Proceedings of the XX World Congress

**Apostolatus Maris**

October 19-25, 1997 — Davao, Philippines



**WE THANK**

Most Rev. Fernando R. Capalla, Archbishop of Davao  
H.E. Fidel V. Ramos, President of the Philippines  
Apostolatus Maris Philippines  
Pontifical Society for the Propagation of the Faith  
Italian Episcopal Conference  
Salford Trust, UK  
CCFD, France  
OCIC, Rome  
CAFOD, UK  
MISEREOR, Germany  
DEVELOPMENT & PEACE, Canada  
Solidarité Missionnaire, France  
Apostolatus Maris Germany - Belgium - Japan - Norway - UK  
and many others...

for their financial and moral contribution  
to the success of the XX World Congress of Apostolatus Maris

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## FOREWORD

I am especially happy to present today the Proceedings of the XXth World Congress of the Apostolatus Maris which took place in the Philippines, in Davao, from October 19-25, 1997, under the auspices of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People<sup>(1)</sup>.

The vitality of a movement like Apostolatus Maris, which originated more than 75 years ago, could be counted on to bring together for a week of work and prayer 300 participants from 54 countries of all the continents, half of whom were lay persons accompanied by bishops, priests, deacons, men and women religious. I was also able to rely on its wisdom to foster a fruitful reflection which based on past experience, and in the light of the Gospel, let a vision and resolutions emerge which will be a source of hope and inspiration for the People of the Sea and all those who are, or would like to be involved in the evangelization of the Maritime World.

The atmosphere was created from Sunday afternoon, October 19, by the warm welcome given to the participants which was officially expressed on Monday morning by Mr. Fidel V. Ramos, the President of the Philippines. His speech confirmed the conviction in everyone's heart that Davao had been a good choice for the venue of this Congress.

I sincerely invite you to read and re-read in the pages that follow the authoritative papers, reports, presentations, testimonies, homilies and documents which have been included in this book published in three languages: French, English and Spanish. It constitutes some of the most useful documentation for those who wish to know more about the maritime apostolate. The readers are invited to complete their information on this subject with the No. 74 issue of the Review, *People on the Move*, published by this Pontifical Council in September 1997. In

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(1) The XX World Congress of Apostolatus Maris was called and directed by the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant Peoples. Its success is due in great part to the intense work done by the chaplains and people of the AOS of the host country. At the Congress, which took place at Davao in the Philippines from the 19th to the 25th October 1997, there participated one Cardinal, 15 Bishops, 81 priests, 10 deacons, 15 religious men and women, and more than 150 lay people coming from 54 maritime countries and all continents.

Cfr. Francesco Gioia, "La vera identità del Popolo di Dio che vive sul mare l'esperienza di fede", *L'Osservatore Romano*, 15 October 1997; Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant Peoples, editor, *Apostolatus Maris Bulletin*, nn. 59, 60; *People on the Move*, special issue on the maritime apostolate, September 1997, n. 74.



it you will find the complete text, with a first commentary, of His Holiness Pope John Paul II's Apostolic Letter *Motu Proprio Stella Maris* which was the principal reference point for this Congress.

As I said in my farewell to the Congress participants, this was the third, and will be the last World Congress that I have convened during my Presidency of this Pontifical Council. I will always share the ideals that animate *Apostolatus Maris* in its peaceful and courageous struggle for a better future for the People of the Sea. May we remain united in prayer and in love, and may the Spirit of the Almighty Lord, through the intercession of Mary, the Star of the Sea, guide us all, together with all the People of the Sea, to the Port of Eternity.

H.E. Cardinal Giovanni CHELI

24 February 1998



## MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE JOHN PAUL II

SECRETARIAT OF STATE

N. 419.306

FROM THE VATICAN, September 30, 1997

Your Excellency,

The Holy Father was pleased to have been informed of the Twentieth World Congress of the Apostolate of the Sea organized by the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People and to be held at Davao in the Philippines from October 19-25, 1997 on the theme: "People of the Sea, Co-Workers with God in Creation". He asks you kindly to convey to the participants his cordial good wishes and the assurance of his prayers, as they discuss the various ways in which they may more fruitfully "facilitate the pastoral care of seafarers, both at sea and in ports, in the particular Churches" (*Pastor Bonus*, 150 § 2). His Holiness hopes that this World Congress, centered on the presence of God in his work of Creation, will inspire a renewal of the apostolic commitment of all the members of the Apostolate of the Sea.

The international community's growing awareness of issues affecting the maritime world offers signs for hope. At the same time, however, the world's oceans continue to be exploited indiscriminately, and the working and living conditions of many seafarers and their families remain extremely difficult. In the face of this situation, the Church proclaims that social and economic development has a moral and ethical character which must include respect for every human being and for the entire natural world. In fact, when economic freedom is separated from moral considerations, it "loses its necessary relationship to the human person and ends up by alienating and oppressing him" (*Centesimus Annus*, 39). The Gospel demands from everyone, individually and collectively, the courage to adopt a new lifestyle in making practical choices on the personal, social and international levels based on a correct scale of values: "the primacy of being over having, of the person over things" (*Evangelium Vitae*, 98).

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The Most Reverend Giovanni Cheli  
President of the Pontifical Council  
for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People  
Vatican City

Those whose work takes them to sea often have great respect for the majesty of Creation and the power of God. As the Psalmist writes: "Some went down to the sea in ships, doing business on the great waters; they saw the deeds of the Lord, his wondrous works in the deep" (Ps 107:23). The Holy Father prays that Almighty God will grant all those involved in the Apostolate of the Sea the foresight, courage, strength and grace needed to defend and foster the dignity of the human person and to respect the integrity and beauty of the created world.

Entrusting to the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Star of the Sea, all those taking part in the Congress, together with their families, co-workers and those whom they serve on the seas and oceans, His Holiness cordially imparts the requested Apostolic Blessing.

With every good wish, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Angelo Card. Sodano  
Secretary of State

The international community's growing awareness of issues affecting the maritime world offers great hope. At the same time, however, the world's oceans continue to be exploited unsustainably and the existing and developing conditions of many seafarers and their families remain extremely difficult in the face of this situation. The Church promotes that social and economic development has a moral and ethical character which must include respect for every human being and for the entire natural world. In fact, when economic freedom is separated from moral considerations, it loses its necessary relationship to the human person and ends up by alienating and oppressing him. (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 239) The Gospel demands from everyone individually and collectively the courage to adopt a new life-style in building peaceful relations on the personal, social and international levels based on a correct scale of values: the priority of being over having, of the person over things. (Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, 238)



# WELCOME FROM THE PRESIDENT

*His Excellency Fidel V. RAMOS  
President of the Republic of the Philippines*

## Introduction

On behalf of our government and the Filipino people, let me, first of all, extend our warmest greetings to you all, especially to those who are visiting the Philippines for the first time. I am sure your stay in Davao will give you the opportunity to experience the beauty and grandeur of our land and seascapes as well as the opportunity to sample firsthand our world renowned Philippine hospitality and sea food. As we say here, "fish be with you!"

Our commendations go to the Apostleship of the Sea (AOS)-Philippines of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) for hosting the 20th World Congress of the Apostolatus Maris, or Apostleship of the Sea. Over the past 100 years, no other organization devoted to matters of the sea or the maritime industry has been meeting regularly to consult, evaluate and act on maritime matters in the light of the Gospel.

Ten years ago in 1987, your World Congress held in Mombasa was convened to promote the dignity of the seafarer and his work. And you are all well aware of what a difficult undertaking this is and that many obstacles need to be overcome before we can say that the rights and dignity of seafarers are acknowledged and respected.

In 1992, your World Congress in Houston reflected on the calling of the people of the sea to "live as Christians on board ship" and how to express their faith in those situations at sea where there is no other church but themselves. Sometimes, one finds oneself to be the only Christian on board and perhaps feels very lonely and alone. In such situations, it is good to recall the words often quoted by the 19th-century English churchman and scholar John Henry Cardinal Newman that "one is never less alone than when alone".

## What it means to be God's co-worker

In this 20th World Congress gathered here in Davao, you have selected the theme, "People of the Sea: God's Co-workers in Creation." It is indeed a most appropriate reminder to us all in the light of the widespread degradation of nature, God's creation, that is going on all over the world. You do well to focus our attention on the maritime world today.



As Christians, we believe that in the very beginning, God entrusted to the human race the task "to subdue the earth and master it" (*Genesis* 1:28). This means not to destroy the earth but to take good care of it. We need to reflect on the fact that we have received this good earth from the Lord of Creation as a gift and as a responsibility. We are not to be only stewards and caretakers of the earth. Our task is to be good and faithful stewards and caretakers of mother nature.

Seafarers are especially responsible for and should play a leading role in ensuring that our seas are properly preserved and protected. We in the Philippines, who are an island people and for whom the seas provide a livelihood — whether as fisherfolk, boat operators, ship workers or sportsmen; whether Christians, Muslims or indigenous peoples — owe a lot to the sea and should therefore be especially concerned about the care and maintenance of our maritime environment.

If I may paraphrase a favorite Filipino "idol", Pope John Paul II: "God created human beings and endowed them with intelligence and free will so that we human beings could collaborate and cooperate with him in giving life and improving it through our work, our study, science and art".

God gave all of us minds so that we could study the world, discover its hidden potentials, use it to serve the needs of the human race and to improve and develop it so that every human being can live in dignity. If we look upon work in this way, then it is very clear that all work, no matter how humble or unnoticed, is indeed noble. In this sense, our daily work makes us co-workers with God.

## **The Work of the AOS**

The Apostleship of the Sea should not underestimate its influence and should not be discouraged in the face of difficulties in bringing about this vision of work. Every good undertaking is bound to encounter difficulties and obstacles.

You have a network of more than 95 seafarer-centers known as Stella Maris seafarer centers worldwide with about 400 full-time staff workers servicing seafarers around the world. In many ports, Catholic, Anglican and other denominations work together and share facilities — here we have ecumenism in action. These centers are usually called "mariners clubs".

You have indeed a fairly extensive global network. You have the vision, a noble vision, and we can never overestimate the power of a vision to motivate and inspire people to action.

This is the task entrusted to you: to promote the welfare of the seafarer, to remind them of their dignity, of the nobility of their work.

## The AOS in the Philippines

Here in the Philippines, the AOS has been an active partner of both the government and private sectors in striving to build up a quality local maritime industry, a very important contributor to our national life. It is to me a source of joy that the church, the government, people's organizations and the private sector have come together, cooperated and collaborated to show our solidarity with our seafarers and their families. Such cooperation and teamwork also shows our strength as a nation.

It would be hard to find an ocean-going vessel without a Filipino seaman on board. As a nation, the Philippines has more seafarers than any other country. Filipinos account for two out of three seamen from Asia or 68 percent. Worldwide, one out of five seamen, or 22 percent, comes from the Philippines. These are not insignificant numbers.

Seafarers make a most important contribution to the Philippine economy. They remit almost a billion US dollars annually to their families. These remittances strengthen our foreign-exchange position and expand our investment resources.

The supply of seafarers is also a very important growth component of our services sector to the world, considering the extent of the shortage of well-qualified seafarers in shipping worldwide. More and more ship owners or manning agents are coming to this country in search of qualified seamen.

It is our government's policy to ensure that we get a sizable share of this growing global market. We have to rise to the challenge of upgrading the standard of maritime education in this country. We have to ensure that our young people who choose a career at sea receive first-class professional training and a preparation for work that will equip them to compete internationally. They must be equipped to work in the most technically advanced vessels.

The Philippines has more than 100 seafarers schools, but most of these need to update their instruction and training equipment. The government has already taken many bold steps to correct the entire educational system, including partnering with the private sector. But, much more needs to be done. We are working closely with other sectors to evaluate and strengthen our maritime industry. We are exploring every means possible to enhance our nation's standing in the international maritime community.

## Closing

The AOS is a valuable ally in this effort by helping to ensure that our seamen are given all possible means of support. By facilitating contacts with their families, you strengthen their solidarity and Christian values. With your worldwide network in major ports, you



have gone out of your way to offer our seaman a home away from home, and sustain them in their hazardous work and moments of crises.

The AOS centers are usually the first stop of Filipino seafarers in an unknown place to gain a friend, exchange money, have a beer, eat a meal, call home, and relax in a wholesome environment.

## Conclusion

I would like to thank you, the delegates from around the world, on behalf of the 350,000-plus Filipino seafarers who are the largest group making use of your counsel and your centers worldwide.

May you of the AOS always have — in the language of seafarers — fair winds and following seas and fish always be with you!

*Mabuhay!*



## OPENING ADDRESS

*H.E. Archbishop Giovanni CHELI  
President of the Pontifical Council for  
the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant Peoples*

### Introduction

Here we are on the first day of work of this World Congress marking the twentieth stage in the history of the Apostolatus Maris which was blessed for the first time by Pope Pius XI in 1922, 75 years ago.

This is the second Congress held in Asia (there was one in Hong Kong in 1977), and the third one which I have had the pleasure of celebrating with you as President of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant Peoples after Mombasa in Kenya in 1987, and Houston, Texas, in 1992.

I thank Archbishop Capalla today for having made concretely possible our choice of the Philippines as the venue of the Twentieth Congress here in Davao, the "Queen City of the Southern Philippines, where the grass is always green..."

I would like to greet cordially each one of you who have come from the four corners of the world to participate in this Congress. I am happy to count on the registration list 111 lay members of Apostolatus Maris, 10 women religious, 5 men religious, 10 deacons, 81 priests and 20 bishops. Among the guests who have graciously joined us, I would like to mention in particular the President and the Secretary General of the International Christian Maritime Association (ICMA), as well as the members of its Executive Committee. I also greet the representatives and observers from other national or international bodies who have honored us by attending this Congress.

At each Congress, a progress report is made in order to decide on the course to be taken and satisfaction is expressed about what has been accomplished. After renewing our Christian commitment to the service to the maritime world, we will seek the right compass-bearing for our movement. This is what I invite all of you to do today.

In my presentation, I will begin by stressing the importance of the Holy Father's Letter entitled "Stella Maris" which we welcomed joyfully earlier this year. Afterwards I will go back to what has been accomplished by Apostolatus Maris since Houston, and I will conclude with some observations about the Congress which is opening today.

### 1. The Apostolic Letter "Stella Maris"

This Twentieth Congress in 1997 cannot in fact take place without referring to a valuable document which marks a new period in the

history of the Apostleship of the Sea. I am speaking about the *Motu Proprio* Letter of His Holiness Pope John Paul II entitled "*Stella Maris*" dealing with the maritime apostolate, which was signed by the Pope last January 31<sup>st</sup>.

This is the first time that a Supreme Pontiff has addressed the Universal Church specifically on the theme of the maritime apostolate. Allow me to recall some dates over the past 75 years following Pope Pius XI's blessing on the Apostolatus Maris in 1922:

- 1942 - Pope Pius XII receives in Rome the Executive Committee of the Apostolatus Maris International Concilium (AMIC - founded in 1934);

- 1952 - The same Pope Pius XII creates the International General Secretariat for the direction of the Apostleship of the Sea (SGIAM) under the protection of the Sacred Consistorial Congregation.

- 1970 - Pope Paul VI institutes the Pontifical Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrants: all the secretariats dealing with the pastoral care of the various categories of persons in the vast world of human mobility—including seafarers—are joined together in this new Department of the Roman Curia.

- 1988 - Pope John Paul II transforms this Commission into the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People and entrusts it with the mission of "*promoting in the [particular] Churches the pastoral care of seafarers, both at sea and in port, especially through the Apostleship of the Sea, of which it has the overall direction*" (*Pastor Bonus*, art. 150, §2).

It is now 1997. The Letter is addressed to the Universal Church, but it is addressed in a special way to us who are gathered here in Davao. Here in fact there are Christian lay persons, seafarers or members of port communities engaged in the work of Apostolatus Maris throughout the world. The National Directors are here as well as the chaplains and animators of national organizations and local teams of Apostolatus Maris. Lastly, the persons in charge of the particular Churches are here in the person of the bishops of maritime dioceses chosen by the Episcopal Conferences to promote the maritime apostolate in their countries.

We know that the Holy Father is especially counting on us when, on the threshold of the third millennium, he relaunches the evangelization of the maritime world in this way; he means to emphasize each one's respective roles and responsibilities and encourage all to put this maritime apostolate into action.

First the Pope addresses the Catholic people of the sea themselves. They are invited to use all their creative freedom—without any "canonical" limitations other than the usual framework for associations of the faithful in the Church—in order to contribute, on the basis of Gospel principles, to building in solidarity an ever more just and



fraternal maritime world. The Holy Father explicitly recalls that the Christian people of the sea are primarily the activists and not only the beneficiaries of the maritime apostolate. The people of the sea are called upon to join the diocesan or national associations of the Apostolatus Maris. The Pope then describes the function of the chaplains, bishops, Episcopal Conferences and even the Pontifical Council with their corresponding duties, including support for people and associations in the maritime world.

The maritime apostolate is indeed part of the effort of the "new evangelization" begun by the Church under his impulse, and the Apostolatus Maris is the privileged instrument for this in the maritime world. I will leave the task of completing this presentation of the Letter "Stella Maris" to Prof. Baura, and I am counting on your work groups to study its meaning in depth. I will certainly come back to it again at the end of the Congress.

## 2. The period 1992-1997

Now please allow me to take a brief step backward in order to evaluate the work done during the past five years regarding one point or another.

2.1 First I would like to say that the Houston Congress in 1992 has helped the Apostolatus Maris to go forward principally on two fronts: on the one hand, it has made it possible for us to deepen our reflection on the way in which seafarers and fishers live, or have difficulties in "living on board in a Christian way" - which, moreover, was the theme of the Houston Congress; on the other hand, it has allowed us to go forward by making some concrete proposals regarding the *means* which Apostolatus Maris should offer to seafarers so that when they are at sea, they can not only live their faith in the secret of their hearts, but also know how to celebrate this faith in a living Christian community on board, and be able to do so.

The results are there: the activity reports of AM in many countries prove this to us (in particular from the Philippines, Great Britain, France, Italy, the USA—but not all the reports reach Rome). More and more Catholic seafarers are making efforts to participate in a Christian community on board their ship if it exists, to building it up if it does not, and to be its leaders as well. One of the most visible fruits of these efforts is the regular celebration of a Sunday service on board, which is often ecumenical. Only God knows what less visible fruits there have been: barriers that disappear, peaceful resolution of conflicts, better fellowship, greater solidarity in efforts and trials, fruits of "life" for all.

I would like to emphasize here that the Holy Father thought about these communities on board in his Letter by mentioning the role of extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist in the maritime world, in order to facilitate access to the Bread of Life for the greatest possible number



of seafarers.

2.2 Let us take another criterion: let us go on to the organizational level of the AM international network where two other developments have taken place.

2.2.1 At the end of 1995, I threw a bottle into the sea with a letter addressed to the promoter bishops of AM in each country, with a copy to the National Directors and a list of countries and figures. After consultation with the AM Regional Coordinators meeting in Rome, I had in fact decided to invite the national Apostolatus Maris to revive a tradition which had been lost in 1970. Until that time, the Permanent Office of Apostolatus Maris depended on the national contributions for providing its budget and thus for contributing to the promotion and international coordination of the Apostolatus Maris. Your response has been very encouraging. Where the national Apostolatus Maris still does not have its own funds, the Episcopal Conference of the country sends this contribution. For 1996, 27 countries have sent a total of \$18,400 US; in 1997 — and the year is not over yet — 18 countries have already sent a total of nearly \$10,000 US. There is certainly a great effort yet to be made.

In this regard, I would like to give you at first one limited objective which is already a considerable one: namely, that these contributions should manage to cover the expenses of a meeting once a year of the AM Regional Coordinators, as well as the annual fee to ICMA. The fee to the International Christian Maritime Association will express in a very concrete way everyone's desire in AM to work in ecumenical collaboration with our brethren from the other Christian Churches serving the maritime world. And you all understand how important the yearly meeting of the Regional Coordinators is in providing a service of unity and coordination necessary for Apostolatus Maris. This objective was almost reached in 1996. I hope it will be reached in 1997.

2.2.2 I would like to stress two other criteria regarding the greater vitality of the international AM network after Houston.

The first can be seen in the response received from the national AM's regarding participation in the Regional Meetings in preparation for this Congress in Davao. In the eighteen months which preceded Houston, only four Regions had held a Regional Conference: Europe, North America, Africa-Indian Ocean, the Far East. In less than two years, nine regions have been able to hold a regional Conference in preparation for the Davao Congress. Europe began with a meeting in Gdynia at the end of 1995; then in 1996 there were the meetings in Mahajunga for Africa-Indian Ocean, followed by Santos for South America, Baltimore for North America, Brisbane for Oceania, and Lomé for Africa-Atlantic Coast. In 1997, there were meetings in Phuket for the Far East, and in Chennai (Madras) for Southern Asia.

Many of you have participated in these regional meetings in order

to have a first approach to the theme of this Congress, taking into consideration the context of the Apostolatus Maris' situation and the maritime world in your Region. We will surely have news about these meetings in the reports which the Regional Coordinators will present to us tomorrow and after tomorrow.

The second criterion is this: in 1992, 40 countries were represented in Houston; here in Davao we have more than 50.

### 3. The Theme of the Congress

In the Apostolatus Maris Congresses, the Magisterium of the Church is taken into consideration and light is sought in the Church's theological and social doctrine. You will remember the references to the Encyclical *Christifideles Laici* on the apostolate of the laity when we spoke about "Christian Life on Board", the theme of the Houston Congress. Ten years ago in Mombasa, the Encyclical *Laborem Exercens* on labor shed light on our research regarding the dignity of maritime work.

In order to study the theme of our Congress, I invite Apostolatus Maris this year to make special reference to Pope John Paul II's Encyclical *Centesimus Annus* which was published in 1991. It contains the whole social teaching of the Church taken up again and up-dated on the occasion of the hundredth anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*. The Pope shares his reflections in it, particularly on the new conditions brought about by the globalization of the market economy and the greater dangers to the environment. Let me quote the very words of the Pope:

"Instead of carrying out his role as cooperator with God in the work of Creation, man sets himself up in place of God and thus ends up provoking a rebellion on the part of nature which is more tyrannized than governed by him" (n. 37). "In addition to the irrational destruction of the natural environment, we must also mention the more serious destruction of the human environment, something which is by no means receiving the attention it deserves" (n. 38). "The defense of the common goods such as the natural and human environment cannot be safeguarded simply by market forces" (n. 39). "The Church has no model to present...Her social teaching recognizes the positive value of the market and of enterprise, but at the same time it points out that these need to be oriented to the common good" (n. 43).

Globalization of the economy, risks for the environment—both human and natural: these are indeed two factors which cruelly affect the people of the sea, that branch of the human family of "cooperators with God in the Creation", and the maritime world in general.

This observation was taken up at the meeting of the Coordinators of the Apostolatus Maris from the different Regions of the world together with several bishops of maritime dioceses and experts who



met in Rome from February 8-9, 1995 at the invitation of the Pontifical Council. We were merely following the tradition whereby a meeting of this kind is held midway between the two world Congresses, that is, two and a half years after Houston. After evaluating the results of the preceding Congress, it was then a matter of deciding on the host country, proposing the apostolic objective of the next Congress and translating it into a theme for action which would be: "The People of the Sea: Co-Workers with God in Creation".

Regarding the theme of the Congress, the departure point of the reflection was twofold:

1. The sufferings caused by the human and ecological costs of market economy excesses on the fishing and merchant maritime world are unbearable, first of all for the people of the sea.
2. The conviction that the members of the maritime community living and working in this environment have a special relationship with the Sea-Creation and thus particular rights, but also a particular responsibility toward it.

This special relationship of seafarers, fishers, their families and all the people of the sea with the maritime environment makes them the first ones to see that there is something going wrong and that they are among the victims, if not the first victims, of this state of affairs. At this time, the proliferation of "green" parties can be observed, groups dedicated to the defense of whales, the virgin forest, etc., or to stop the chemical or radioactive pollution of the rivers and oceans. All this is positive on the whole, although one may sometimes ask if such and such a group does not secretly obey some economic or political interests...The development of a kind of pantheism (God=Nature) can also be seen and a pseudo-liturgy has grown up around adoration of the Mother Earth. Could this be the explanation for the rather recent phenomenon of attraction to Buddhism in the West, or the quasi-philosophical religion of the "New Age" which fascinates persons whose Christian convictions have grown shaky?

Some might think that the Church's attention today — and that of AM at its Twentieth Congress — to the future of Planet Earth is perhaps only an unconscious reaction in order to be fashionable, to be up-to-date, to make up for losses, or to be "politically correct". Could it be the fear of losing members if one does not appear, especially to the young generations, as being intensely concerned about the damage being inflicted on the earth and the oceans which they are going to inherit?

Certainly not. The origin of the Church's interest and concern (the community of believers and Magisterium) for the Earth and its future lies in that wonderful theological poem in the first chapter of Scripture in the book of Genesis. What does it tell us? It tells us that the Cosmos in its immensity and our planet with its lands, seas and everything

living on it, plants, animals and naturally humanity, have their origin in a Generous and Loving God. It says that the planet and everything it contains is for humanity: it is a home for everyone, whatever their differences and cultures may be. We are created in the image of God, and in his likeness, with the faculty to learn and to wonder, and the freedom to choose to grow in love (and the world with us). Our use of the land and seas and everything they contain always remains in the context of a response to God's invitation to cooperate in his Creation. This is not a right to use and abuse without any restraint or discipline. We must thus ask ourselves the question: What should be done and what then is our responsibility, as individuals, as the Church, as the Apostleship of the Sea? But let us go from principles to the concrete way in which the problem will be dealt with during the Congress.

The *first day* of the Congress ought to help us, thanks to Father John Leydon and Msgr. Jacyr, to share a healthy and Christian vision of Creation and some criteria for correct stewardship in solidarity with and respect for the environment. We must refer to such a vision, at the risk of letting ourselves become outraged or blindly sentimental, in order to base action by Apostolatus Maris on objective motivations founded on Gospel values.

On the *second day* the people of the sea will have the floor, first with the results of a survey conducted by Professor Luis Morales, a Chilean sociologist whom some of you know very well, on the culture of the people of the sea. On *Wednesday* we will examine the negative consequences of modern exploitation, as they threaten the people of the sea and the environment. On *Thursday* we will take time to breathe a little and to admire and enjoy God's Creation away from the Congress Hall. On *Friday* there will be time to present some recent initiatives which show that things are beginning to move. After being enriched by everything we have heard, and enlightened by the synthesis of the work groups, our attention will focus on future prospects. Then it will be time to prepare the conclusions of the Congress in its final document, a message to the people of the sea and a press release.

## Conclusion

But we have still not reached that point and have a week's work before us which will happily be interspersed with some good times that Father Jack Walsh and the Local Committee have prepared for us. I hope that you will enjoy the good times and in looking forward to them, let us get down TO WORK.



## PEOPLE OF THE SEA GOD'S CO-WORKERS IN CREATION

Fr. John LEYDON  
Colomban Missionary, Manila

Warm greetings to all of you. It is a great honor for me to address such an important gathering of delegations of Apostolatus Maris organizations representing sailors, fishers, port personnel, associations of seafarer's families, port communities, staff of Seafarers' Centers and Chaplains.

It is also very exciting for me to be asked to say something about the topic: People of the Sea: God's Co-Workers in Creation. For some years now I have been speaking on the topic of Creation — a topic which has received very little attention, theologically or spiritually, for 400 years but which is once more flooding our consciousness, evoking an awe and wonder that we have not experienced since the time of St. Thomas Aquinas. His Holiness Pope John Paul II referred to this phenomenon in his groundbreaking message for World Peace Day in 1990:

Moreover, a new ECOLOGICAL AWARENESS is beginning to emerge which, rather than being downplayed, ought to be encouraged to develop into concrete programs and initiatives.

I hope that my presentation will be some kind of taste of this 'new ecological awareness' as applied to the topic of the conference. The topic, I believe, has a specific focus: the vocation of the Christian in the Maritime World. It poses the question: What are we called to do at the present time? Or more accurately: Who are we called to be in the great community of life and elements that make up this marvelous planet of ours with its vast oceans? As Father Tronche has pointed out we will try to explore in this conference:

The Christian understanding of Creation and respect for the Environment — a vocation which sees Christians as participating in the vocation of Christ, a vocation to defeat that which divides, that which opposes, that which destroys, that which kills; a vocation to offer welcome, solidarity, justice, love and growth summed up in the words of Christ describing His own calling: *"I have come that they may have life and have it to the full"*.

In the course of this presentation I would like to deal with the following topics:

The *ecological crisis* as the context in which we are called to live out our Christian vocation as Maritime people.

*Reflection on the sacredness of creation* using the new awareness of creation as an on-going process as revealed to us in the form of 'The New Story' leading hopefully to an awakening of our sense of connectedness to the seas and oceans and all of life; some insights into the challenges in terms of programs and initiatives that this evokes for us.

## The ecological crisis

The issue that all of Humankind has to face today is the ecological crisis. We all know that such a crisis exists; however, can we reach some consensus on the extent and seriousness of the situation? Let's start with a story:

In 1741, a Russian ship became stranded on Bering Island, and the sailors discovered mammoth beasts known as Stellar's sea cows, grazing the seagrasses offshore. The gentle behemoths were unafraid, making them easy prey for the hungry sailors. The men found the sea cow's meat and fat delectable, and lived off it until they reached safety and reported their good fortune. Other ships soon sought out the region to stock up on food — until the last Stellar's sea cow was killed in 1768, a mere 27 years after the animal was discovered.

The case of Stellar's sea cow is a dramatic example of the impact that we, humans, can have on the fate of other species with whom we share the planet.

The issue of bio-diversity is a good window on the current ecological crisis. In 1600 the background rate of extinction of species was one per million per year — there's an estimated ten million species on Earth — so the rate was about one a month. The rate, in 1997, has deteriorated to such an extent that a species is now disappearing, forever, once every 20 minutes! By the end of this century the planet will have lost up to 20% of its species and 25% by the year 2005.

The Philippines, host to our conference, is, unfortunately, leading the field in this respect. E. O. Wilson, one of the foremost biologists in the world today, has this to say about our local situation: *"This island nation is on the verge of a full-scale bio-diversity collapse"*. On a global scale we are destroying species at 25,000 times the rate of renewal.

The loss of bio-diversity is due mainly to the destruction of forests and threatening activities to the oceans. These set in motion another chain of events: the loss of topsoil, the death of corral reefs, the destruction of watersheds, desertification.

Add to this: damage to the ozone layer and the greenhouse effect; the dumping of chemical wastes into the life systems of the planet and we can see that we have a crisis of major proportions. In fact, we are talking about a crisis of *Life* and its continuation on planet Earth.

This is a 'hard saying' — that the ecological crisis is about whether life will continue on the planet or not. We find it hard to face up to such a tragic situation. But the evidence is overwhelming. In November



1992 the Union of Concerned Scientists released a document called *World Scientists' warning to humanity*. In it they stated:

Human beings and the natural world are on a collision course. Human activities inflict harsh and often irreversible damage on the environment and on critical resources. If not checked, many of our current practices put at serious risk the future that we wish for human society and the plant and animal kingdoms, and may so alter the living world that it will be unable to sustain life in the manner that we know. Fundamental changes are urgent if we are to avoid the collision our present course will bring about...

We, the undersigned, senior members of the world's scientific community, hereby warn all humanity of what lies ahead. A great change is required in our stewardship of the earth and the life on it if vast human misery is to be avoided and our global home on this planet is not to be irretrievably mutilated.

This statement about the impending destruction of our world was virtually ignored by the media. This happened despite the fact that the statement was signed by 2,500 eminent scientists including more than 100 Nobel Prize winners. This retreat into denial is a further indication of how serious our situation is.

The Philippine bishops made a parallel statement from a pastoral point of view in their letter of 1989, "*What is Happening to Our Beautiful Land?*"

We know that a nuclear war would turn the whole earth into a fireball and render the planet inhospitable to life. We tend to forget that the constant cumulative destruction of life-forms and different habitats will, in the long term, have the same effect. Faced with these challenges, where the future of life is at stake, Christian men and women are called to take a stand on the side of life.

So I believe that Philippine bishops provide us with a focus of what this conference hopes to achieve: as Christian men and women, to "take a stand on the side of life". Encouraging our organizations and personnel to take a "stand for life" is the context in which this convention is taking place.

Future generations, if they survive, will look back at our times and ask: "Were there any voices there that proclaimed the truth in that time of crisis?"; "Did anyone take a stand for life"? The religious traditions of the world, including our own Christian faith will also be judged. The question will be asked: "Did the Christian tradition have anything to say? Did it supply any wisdom in the form of insights to understand what was happening and did it offer any vision that would provide a break-through during the crisis?".

### **Reasons for the destruction**

Why are we behaving in such a self-destructive way? This is a key question. There are many answers to this question. In his 1990 address

the Holy Father speaks of a "*profound moral crisis*" which we are currently experiencing of which "the destruction of the environment is only one troubling aspect". He points out other aspects of this moral crisis: indiscriminate application of advances in science and technology and a lack of respect for life which characterizes the modern mentality.

He also points to the way we run our economic system: capitalism, which promotes consumerism and structural poverty. He points to basic principles to which we must adhere in addressing the problem: "*respect for the harmony found in the universe — a 'cosmos' endowed with its own integrity, its own internal, dynamic balance*". I would like, in this presentation, to expand on some of these points, particularly from the point of view of the 'new ecological awareness' to which the Holy Father has referred: looking at some of the reasons why we are behaving the way we do and also on some signs of hope related to the principle of the integrity of creation.

The approach I take believes that our current crisis is the result of *technological civilization* which is currently the dominant mode of human existence on the planet. This civilization brings with it a *vision* of what the world is; and who the human is. The world is not seen as integral but is reduced to a "collection of objects" — human beings, especially the poor, are also treated as objects — sometimes the urban poor are handled exactly in the same way as garbage! What we need is a new vision — of creation as integral — a single, unfinished act; and all of creation as "a communion of subjects". I'd like to briefly deal with the origin of this technological civilization and its flawed vision.

### Origin and vision of the technological civilization

Out of Europe of the Middle Ages comes the technological civilization. This culture was based on the discovery and harnessing of the forces of Nature: gravity, electro-magnetic and nuclear. The technological culture named these forces, developed the mathematics to measure them and the technology to use them. We are all familiar with the story of Isaac Newton watching the apple falling from the tree and naming the law of gravity. What's really involved here is that he developed a new form of mathematics — differential calculus — to measure moving objects and the knowledge to control gravity. From this came the machine to replace movements done by muscle power — either human or animal. Here is born a new civilization — the techno-industrial. Over the next few hundred years the process of measuring forces was extended to the area of chemistry, electronics, intelligence and life itself with the discovery of DNA. The culture spread from Europe through colonialism but eventually became the dominant world culture, now eagerly adopted by practically all peoples and dominating all other cultures throughout the world. It has created, we are told, the global village — some suggest the global slum would be a more accurate description.



The development of the culture is facilitated and accompanied by a corresponding world-view or vision. This world-view looks at the Universe as a big machine.

It is totally rational and the rational is valued as the only road to knowledge. Previous cultures and their wisdom are dismissed as superstitious myth. Ironically, the culture is driven and empowered by its own myth — the Myth of Progress. The myth is unrecognized as a myth and therefore all the more powerful. Yet it evokes tremendous energy and commitment from all who come under its spell. Few of us have been spared from the enchantment of this myth. It drives us to go to the ends of the earth in pursuit of commerce or even evangelization. It promises us the creation of a technological wonderland. Unfortunately, the reality that is coming into being is not a wonderland but a wasteland. What is needed is a vision of a different civilization and this can only come about if we have a new vision of reality. Let me again quote the Philippine bishops:

"We will not be successful in our efforts to develop a new attitude towards the natural world unless we are sustained and nourished by a new vision. This vision must blossom forth from our understanding of the world as God intends it to be. We can know the shape of this world by looking at how God originally fashioned our world and laid it out before us".

This is what I would like to do in this presentation: to give you some sense of this 'NEW VISION' which the bishops propose as the source of a new attitude to the natural world. I hope to do this by looking at how 'God originally fashioned our world' — that is by taking into account the findings of science — but science with a difference — from a religious point of view.

### **A new vision of creation**

The Holy Father offered an apology to Galileo for the way the Church, through the Inquisition, treated him. This is an event of tremendous significance. It marks the end of a long and bitter separation between religion and science which has lasted 400 years.

As the technological civilization emerged a great divorce took place between religion and science. For some time the Church tried to control the outpouring of knowledge that the scientific revolution was producing. After awhile it realized that it was a losing proposition. Then there was a kind of a 'stand off'. Both religion and science retreated into their own worlds — to the detriment of both: science and technology continued to develop with hardly any moral restraint and without any input from the wisdom of religious tradition of the civilization. Religion also suffered grievously: we have had hardly any new theological reflection on creation for the past 400 hundred years, hardly any reflection on the role of the Spirit until quite recently.

All this changes with the new reconciliation. My wish is that we are about to enter into a new era of creative dialogue between science and religion which offers the possibility of a return to the last great age of cosmology — the time of Thomas Aquinas who put together his great Summa based on a creative marriage of the philosophy and science of the pagan Aristotle and the Christian Vision.

This is a great task that will occupy professional theologians for years to come. But I would like, more like an artist — a story-teller — to sketch what is coming about. I would like to tell the story of the sea and oceans. I invite you to listen to this story as a religious story even though the content is made up of empirical scientific data. The form is religious — it is told with a view to evoke awe and wonder, a sense of the sacred and provide an insight into what is 'our place in the great scheme of things'.

### The new story

The story of our oceans begins a long time before they actually came into existence. The origin of the Universe as told to us by science starts with the primordial flaring forth of energy — known as the Big Bang — around 15 thousand million years ago (15 billion). Everything in existence at this moment was contained in a potential state in that great outpouring. The story continues with cooling of the fireball and the first atoms — simple ones like hydrogen and helium but with them comes the force of gravity which forms billions of galaxies containing billions of stars. Ten thousand million years ago (ten billion) a star in our galaxy 'went supernova' bursting with the brightness of a million stars. In the heart of events like this are created all the elements that make up our table of elements — oxygen, calcium, carbon and all the rest. This cloud of elements floated around for another 5 thousand million years (5 billion) and then 5 billion years ago it coalesced into thousands of second-generation stars — one of which was/is our star — the Sun. When our Sun ignited it threw the heavy elements into space which formed disks and eventually planets including the third planet — our home — Earth.

Earth proved to be a very special planet. At first the heavy elements sank to the bottom and the lighter ones formed a red hot surface — heated further by constant bombardment of meteorites. But eventually it cooled and stabilized; molten at the center, with a thin crust made up of tectonic plates allowing matter and gases to emerge to the surface and the surface itself to be recycled in the very heart of the furnace. It maintained a molten center, a hard, unstable surface, an atmosphere and oceans!

Ten billion years after the Big Bang the first oceans formed when Earth cooled and the gasses condensed as water. They were shallow and rich in carbon. They were full of chemical activity with basic elements forming all kinds of molecules and combinations and being



bombarded by electric storms of great intensity. Out of this chemical mix comes LIFE — the first cell with a membrane and DNA coding, able to reproduce itself through cloning and to recycle many elements biologically.

The age of the Earth is around 4.8 billion years (actually 4.5), so I like to tell it as a 24 hour story where each hour represents 200 million years. It's a story that is only half finished so there is another 24 hours left. That might sound short but in this scheme we — Cro-Magnons — have only been around for 2 seconds.

Earth forms at midnight and after five hours of frantic activity the first cell is born. It is the PROKARYOTE. It finds itself in a wonderful environment and begins to propagate and in the process recreate the oceans themselves. By 6 a.m. the carbon is almost all used up and we have the first ecological crisis. Then a stupendous breakthrough takes place. The prokaryote learns to 'eat the sun', a process known as photosynthesis, a form of which we embody in seeing. I can see you and vice versa because our retinas can catch photons of light, traveling at the speed of light and translate them into images.

The prokaryote survives and thrives on its new source of energy. It begins to work on the chemical composition of the planet. Releasing oxygen into the air which transforms the rocks and creates the atmosphere. The prokaryote works from 6 a.m. right up to midnight and beyond to 2 a.m. until the atmosphere is finished — two thousand million years ago.

Earth's atmosphere reached 21% oxygen, the ozone layer was completed. Both have been maintained for 2,000 million years and have only come under serious attack in the last 400 years. But the prokaryote becomes a victim of its own success. The oxygen begins to attack it and it looks like the whole process will come to an end. If the prokaryote had died off, the atmosphere would have heated up and the oceans would have disappeared. Life would have ceased on planet earth.

But another amazing break through occurs. Different types of prokaryote learn to fuse and form EUKARYOTES. One part of the cell has the capacity to absorb oxygen in the form of aerobic respiration. The oxygen revolution takes place! The root of the word eukaryote is the same as that of eucharist — or communion. It is interesting to reflect on that at this conference where we are trying to identify and counteract 'that which divides'. It is also interesting that in our current crisis the Holy Father calls for "A NEW SOLIDARITY". What form of new solidarity is creation calling forth in this our current crisis?

The story of creation continues as a series of breakthroughs, in communion or new forms of solidarity. At 7 p.m. or 1,000 million years ago a new crisis occurs. The carbon and the sun are no longer adequate. So creation comes up with another unprecedented breakthrough: life

begins to eat life — a process known as heterotrophy. The oceans are again transformed by a new richness of diversity. This is further multiplied by the creation of sexual reproduction. The pace of creation is becoming so intensive that another phenomenon comes into being in order to deal with the explosion — death.

When we talk about these creative breakthroughs, we're not talking about God intervening from the outside in the process — in other words — about a transcendent God. We are talking about a sacred and mysterious activity at the heart of the process — an immanent God. In fact the distinction between immanence and transcendence breaks down and merges in this space-time developmental universe that science presents. The immanence and transcendence fuse into a miraculous grace-filled process. There is much work to be done by theologians to spell out the presence of Christ and the identification of Christ with this process, as Paul says *"in Him all things were created... through Him and for Him"* (Col.1:16). From our religious point of view we are returning to a world that is absolutely full of miracle and mystery. But let us return to the story.

The oceans are teeming with biological activity and at 9 p.m. the next breakthrough occurs: multi-cellular life. Life now begins to come together in communities of up to 50,000 cells: jellyfish, sponges, snails, worms, and with the worm, the first brain cell.

Life goes through four stages when particular forms of life have hegemony: Invertebrates, Vertebrates, Reptiles (with the famous dinosaurs), and Mammals. Many of the changes of regime happen because of major catastrophes like meteorites hitting the planet. Sometimes up to 90% of the species is wiped out but with millions of years of recovery a new regime is established.

There are great moments in the story of life: the time that Life leaves the sea and goes on to land. Plants take root, learn to stand up, followed by insects. Soil is created, forests grow and covered over, waiting for 400 million years to be uncovered by industrial civilization. With the vertebrates the senses develop. Imagine the day that the first eye opened! Up to this point the wonders of creation had not been seen! But we now know that it actually happened around 400 million years ago.

The first invertebrates to invade the land were amphibians. An amphibian with five spikes on its gills was among them. Hence our five fingers! Life has existed in the seas for almost 90% of its history. We left the sea, first as amphibians, but then developed skin to carry the sea within us as we moved around. To quote one author:

To ease the transition to these totally different surroundings, (from sea to dry land) animals invented a most ingenious trick. They took their former environment with them for their young. To this day the



animal womb simulates the wetness, buoyancy, and salinity of the ancient marine environment. Moreover, the salt concentrations in the mammal blood and other bodily fluids are remarkably similar to those in the oceans. We came out of the ocean more than 400 million years ago, but we never completely left the seawater behind. We still find it in our blood, sweat and tears.

Today we are becoming aware of the crucial role of the oceans in creation. The marine environment constitutes roughly 90 percent of the world's habitat. Here we find organisms from bacteria to great blue whales. A delicate chain is maintained on which all life and conditions for life depend. For example, copepods are minute crustaceans that eat phytoplankton and are thought to be the most numerous animals in the ocean. They fill a critical link between oceans' primary producers and the rest of the food chain. If ecological conditions change so that they can no longer perform their function or they disappear, there would be unimaginable effects on all of life on the planet.

All life as we know it came from the oceans. The air that we breathe was initially created by billions of years of labor of humble bacteria which the oceans contained. The biosphere is sustained by the activities of the ocean. Oceanic currents even out the temperature of the planet by absorbing heat near the equator and releasing it as they approach the poles. Any change in this system upsets the weather patterns as we are well aware of, at the present moment in the Philippines, with the El Niño phenomenon bringing drought to the farmers; while in the Southern Americas the phenomenon is causing floods. Oceans produce one third to a half of the global oxygen supply in a process known as the biological pump. The ocean 'breathes' in carbon dioxide where 90 percent of the carbon is transformed into simple sugars which are recycled in the food web. The other 10 percent drops to the bottom of the ocean where it is stored for 1,000 years before currents bring it back to the surface. Oceans contain more than 20 times as much carbon as all the world's forests and all terrestrial biomass combined. Meanwhile we humans pump 7 billion tons of carbon into the global cycle each year through burning fossil fuels, an activity which we celebrate by calling it 'progress and development' and which gets rewarded by rising prices on the stock markets.

The new vision that I am trying to evoke here is based on some key insights: One, that the ocean is not just an environment in which life exists: the ocean is biological — alive! — created and sustained by biological realities. Secondly, the oceans are not separate from us — in fact, we are the oceans come to a new level of existence.

This vision of the integrity of creation counteracts a vision which sees the oceans as separate from us — 'a vision that divides'. In the old vision the oceans are reduced to a big toilet bowl for dumping all our wastes. But let us return to the next breakthrough in our story.

## The reign of the Mammals and the emergence of the Human

With the coming to power of the Mammals just before 11:45 p.m. the stage is set for the next breakthrough in creation: the emergence of the Human. Human-like activity has been around for just over one minute (four million years). Two seconds before midnight our species appears (over 100,000 years ago). Two fiftieths of a second — culture appears (10,000 years ago). Five thousand years ago the Human moved into the classical civilization mode. One thousand of a second ago (400 years ago) the technological civilization was unleashed on the planet.

What was all of this like from the point of view of the ocean? The ocean must have felt the increase in carbon with the control of fire by humans — about one million years ago, five seconds, five seconds on our clock. Then it must have noted the decrease in oxygen that happened with the clearing of forests that came with farming ten thousand years ago. With the coming of the Classical civilizations, did it also feel the further loss of forests for warships and the massive burning that took place in the battles between the great civilizations? Did it notice the coming of new technology in fishing, sailing and commerce?

It must surely have noticed the impact that technological civilization brought with it, 400 years ago (a mere thousandth of a second on our 24 hour clock!). The billions of tons of carbon that have to be absorbed each year because of energy generation. The toxic chemicals — run-off from agriculture and human waste which have diminished the capacity for life on the continental shelves; the destruction of species-rich coral reefs, mangrove swamps and wetlands to make way for real estate developers, the loss of 80 million tons of fish yearly for human consumption, the decline of the magnificent whales. The noxious gasses that poison the atmosphere, the hundreds of thousands of tons of chemical waste poured into her, the radioactive materials dumped into her womb, mutilating the genetic coding that originates there, the nuclear explosions that boil her and all life in their vicinity, the transfer of species through transportation of ballast water which dramatically alters coastal ecosystems.

Fr. Thomas Berry, a Passionist priest, eloquently describes our current impact on the planet while placing it in a historical context:

When the agricultural civilizations began some ten thousand years ago, the human disturbance of the natural world was begun in a serious way...but the damage was sustainable. In our times, however, human cunning has mastered the deep mysteries of the earth at a level far beyond the capacities of earlier peoples. We can break the mountains apart; we can drain the rivers and flood the valleys. We can turn the most luxuriant forests into throw-away paper products. We can tear apart the great grass cover of the land and pour toxic chemicals into the soil and pesticides into the fields until the soil is dead and blows away in the wind. We can pollute the air with acids, the rivers



with sewage, the seas with oil - all in a kind of intoxicification with our power for devastation at an order of magnitude beyond all reckoning. We can invent computers capable of processing ten million calculations per second. And why? To increase the volume and the speed with which we move natural resources through the consumer economy to the junk pile or the waste heap. Our managerial skills are measured by the competence manifested in accelerating this process. If in these activities the topography of the planet is damaged, if the environment is made inhospitable for a multitude of living species, then so be it. We are, supposedly, creating a technological wonderworld.

### The new vision

Hopefully the ocean is also beginning to experience the effect of the new vision that is flooding our consciousness at this point in history — a vision about reality itself and of the place of the human in the great scheme of things.

I wonder, does the ocean at some level detect the changes that are taking place: the rise in numbers of some endangered species, particularly whales and seals, due to the efforts of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) and other groups; the lessening by 60% of oil pollution due to the efforts of the International Maritime Organization (IMO); the lessening of dumping of highly toxic and radioactive materials since the London Dumping Conventions of 1972 and 1983; the rise of fish stocks due to the fishery agreements of Agenda 21 Earth Summit — or just due to collapse of the industry in certain areas of the world; the various efforts at coastal zone management and the protection of the maritime environment from landbased activities.

At a deeper level I wonder, does the ocean sense the great psychic change that is taking place in the soul of its most illustrious product — the human: changes in ways of perceiving the relationship between the human and the sea; new understanding about the integrity of creation and the awesome role of the ocean in maintaining the life processes of Mother Earth; a new awakening to the sacredness of all of creation and of the role of the human within that web as celebrator and worshiper of the awesome Mystery that is creation; the human becoming aware of its duty as protector, and enhancer of all that makes up the web of life; the human undergoing a conversion from being 'the pest' to being the 'mind and heart of all of creation'.

There are many activities being undertaken by institutions, groups and individuals with varying degrees of insight and wisdom. But at the bottom of it all is the re-awakening of the human from the trance induced by the technological mode of existence. The past 400 years has been a momentous period in the history of creation. Perhaps we should try and grasp what exactly the period has been.

For me, the metaphor of 'adolescence' provides us with some

insight into what has happened. The technological era was a period when Nature revealed her most intimate secrets to our species. Nature is the great inventor; all human technology is merely a copying of that which was first invented by her. The power given over to us can be compared to the hormones that flood our bodies when we reach the stage of adolescence. New powers are made available to us — and for the responsible exercise of these powers we need the wisdom of our elders. Just as adolescents today try to make sense of their confusion without the benefit of the wisdom of their elders — so also did our species try to make it through this turbulent phase without the benefit of its religious traditions. And so we find ourselves facing a catastrophe, the magnitude of which we can hardly grasp.

Of course, all the fault does not lie with the adolescents. Elders have a responsibility to listen and try to understand what the youngsters are saying and even learn from them. This can be a very challenging thing. As a friend of mine said about her young-adult daughter:

*"I love her, and I feel I know her, but in the last year there are words and ideas coming out of her and I have no idea where they are coming from".* Just as there are times of estrangement between the generations and times of reconciliation, perhaps we are living at the time of the end of estrangement and the beginning of a period of reconciliation.

### Consequences

So what are we to do? From the framework that I have presented the task is at once very difficult and yet very simple. It is very difficult to walk up to a whole culture and civilization and say, "You've got it all wrong!". There is a tremendous amount of work to be done in changing thinking, altering ingrained patterns of behavior, dismantling dysfunctional institutions and re-creating new ones that are more in harmony with the dynamics of the planet. We might be tempted to give up saying, "The task is too great, it will take too much work". But work is not difficult when there is inspiration — in fact, even difficult work becomes a joy when it is inspired by a vision of a higher good.

And here is the good news. The reconciliation between science and religion can be the basis for a new inspiration for the human species in the present crisis of the planet. There is a new insight dawning on more and more of us about the sacredness of creation and a redefinition of our role within it. This is unleashing an energy and commitment among us to work for the restoration of our planet. This is the 'new ecological awareness' which the Holy Father says needs to be encouraged.

What we are talking about here is a basic change on the level of vision. A flash of insight that the allurements of so-called 'progress and development' is false and that we are called to a new vision of integrity



and intimacy with all beings which satisfies our soul at a very fundamental level.

What is happening is something like what happened on the road to Damascus — a flash of insight which wipes out former patterns of behavior and inspires us to work with tremendous energy at the task that is presented to us. At this point, it's the poets and the mystics that are having the insights. Fortunately, both mystics and poets are found among religious, politicians, astronauts, physicists — and people of the sea. We've got to deal with the changes that are needed on the level of vision: this means honoring the imagination and our intuition. The Holy Father talks about the need to develop the '*aesthetic value of creation*' —how '*contact with nature has a deep restorative power*'. My elder sister once asked me what is it that the sea does to her. When she wants to feel restored she goes and watches and listens to the sea.

There's a poem which I think captures this. I would like to share it with you. It's by Mary Oliver — coming out of, and reacting to the ethos of New England where modern civilization, with its stress on the will and power, has taken deep roots. It's entitled "You Do Not Have to be Good".

*You do not have to be good.*

*You do not have to walk on your knees for a hundred miles through the desert, repenting.*

*You only have to let the soft animal of your body love what it loves.*

*Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.*

*Meanwhile the world goes on.*

*Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain are moving across the landscapes,*

*over the prairies and the deep trees, the mountains and the rivers.*

*Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,  
are heading home again.*

*Whoever you are, no matter how lonely, the world offers itself to your imagination, calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting- over and over announcing your place in the family of things.*

I'm not familiar with the programs of AM. But I'm sure there is some catechetics and teaching. I suppose there is also some activity around taking stands on certain issues that relate to the sea. What if the Apostolate of the Sea had as its mission the awakening of all its members to the sacredness of the ocean. Theologically what we are talking about here is the rediscovery of Nature as a *Revelatory Event!* What about designing a whole catechetical program around the revelatory nature of the ocean and how we are to behave in the light of this. To again quote the Holy Father: "*An education in ecological responsibility is urgent*".

The crisis which we face is unprecedented. It is so great that we could easily 'go under', i.e., be overtaken by despair. But we are not alone. We are members of the great family of creation — with a noble

and special calling. We are the fruit of a long story of a labor of love. Through us, particularly through the incarnate Christ, the great fireball is transformed into Love. Love of one another, particularly those who are most denied the dignity that is their due; love of all creatures — both great and small, and love of the awesome processes of creation which mirror forth the awesome and beautiful Mystery whom we call God. At this point in the history of our awareness we are being called to grasp the wonder of the integrity of creation — our oneness with all that is. It is a return to the spirit of Saint Francis whom the Holy Father has named as our patron in this great task.

*"In 1979, I proclaimed Saint Francis of Assisi as the heavenly patron of those who promote ecology. He offers Christians an example of genuine and deep respect for the integrity of creation. As a friend of the poor who was loved by God's creatures, Saint Francis invited all of creation — animals, plants, natural forces, even Brother Sun and Sister Moon — to give honor and praise to the Lord. The poor man of Assisi gives us striking witness that when we are at peace with God we are better able to devote ourselves to building up that peace with all creation which is inseparable from peace among all peoples".*

It is my hope that the inspiration of Saint Francis will help us to keep ever alive a sense of "fraternity" with all those good and beautiful things which Almighty God has created. And may he remind us of our serious obligation to respect and watch over them with care, in light of that greater and higher fraternity that exists within the human family.

May God bless us all with the spirit of Francis.

Thank you.



## THE MAN OF THE SEA AND JESUS: "IT IS THE LORD!"

"You made heaven, earth and the sea"

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*Objective:* to relate the man of the sea to the project of Jesus.

A man of the sea understands seafarers, fishers, and their families: a complex world, a world of conflicts and different interests. By a curious coincidence, Jesus was also a man of the sea. He chose Capernaum as the departure point for his mission, a little city located on the shore of Lake Tiberias. Its inhabitants lived basically from fishing. Jesus adopted that city because it was Peter's native town. He made many voyages by boat marked by miracles and teachings.

The fact that Jesus chose the Tiberias Sea or Lake Gennesaret to begin his mission calls for our attention. It is striking to think that God was present in that moment of history while other persons were carrying out other activities "on the land", in Jerusalem, the priests...in the whole world, the Roman Empire.

In order to make this connection between the man of the sea and Jesus, let us take a passage from the Gospel that tells us about the Risen Jesus' appearance on the shore of Lake Tiberias.

### **The meeting with the Risen One (John 21:1-14)**

"Later on, Jesus showed himself again to the disciples. It was by the Sea of Tiberias, and it happened like this: Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee and two more of his disciples were together. Simon Peter said, 'I'm going fishing.' They replied, 'We'll come with you.' They went out and got into the boat but caught nothing that night.

It was light by now and there stood Jesus on the shore, though the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus. Jesus called out, 'Have you caught anything, friends?' And when they answered, 'No,' he said, 'Throw the net out to starboard and you'll find something.' So they dropped the net, and there were so many fish that they could not haul it in. The disciple Jesus loved said to Peter, 'It is the Lord.' At these words 'It is the Lord,' Simon Peter, who had practically nothing on, wrapped his cloak around him and jumped into the water. The other disciples came on in the boat, towing the net and the fish; they were only about a hundred yards from land.

As soon as they came ashore they saw that there was some bread there, and a charcoal fire with fish cooking on it. Jesus said, 'Bring some of the fish you have just caught.' Simon Peter went aboard and dragged the net to the shore, full of big fish, one hundred and fifty-three of them; and in spite of there being so many the net was not broken. Jesus said to them, 'Come and have breakfast.' None of the disciples was bold enough to ask, 'Who are you?'; they knew quite well it was the Lord. Jesus then stepped forward, took the bread and gave it to them, and the same with the fish. This was the third time that Jesus showed himself to the disciples after rising from the dead."

## Interpretation

The shore of the Sea of Tiberias - This reference to the place is important for us. Just as he had chosen the Sea of Tiberias to begin his mission, now Jesus returns there to confirm his disciples.

- \* Lake Tiberias - Although it is rather small, being 21 kms. long , 12 kms. wide and located at 212 meters below sea level, it is one of the most photographed lakes in the world. It is a lake with an abundance of fish: let us remember the images of fish and fishermen which Jesus used. It is a lake filled with magic because its entire surroundings are marked by Jesus' presence. Still today one town is called Migdol, or Magdala; another center is called Kefarnahum, that is, Capernaum. In Hebrew, the lake is called Kinneret (which comes from Kinnor = harp, guitar).
- \* Let us go back in time and recall some texts that relive Jesus' activity on the shore of the lake. This was the place chosen by Jesus to begin his mission.
- \* Mt. 4:12-16: "Hearing that John had been arrested he went back to Galilee, and leaving Nazareth he went and settled in Capernaum, a lakeside town on the borders of Zebulun and Naphtali. In this way the prophecy of Isaiah was to be fulfilled: 'Land of Zebulun! Land of Naphtali! Way of the sea on the far side of Jordan, Galilee of the nations! The people that lived in darkness has seen a great light...'. Jesus' missionary position is assured by his situating himself on the border. The path to the sea was there, the passageway to the sea; and the sea is the passageway to the world. Every port is a center of cosmopolitanism for good or evil (darkness); Jesus places himself there like a light in the darkness.
- \* In the world of the multicultural, multiracial, multireligious frontier of the sea, rivers and lakes, will we know how to discover the Lord's presence?
- \* In this "missionary" environment,  
     "From that moment Jesus began his preaching with the message,  
     'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand'" (Mt. 4:17).  
     Here preaching the Kingdom begins.



It was on the shore of the Lake that Jesus called his apostles:

- \* *Mt. 4:18-22*: "As he was walking by the Sea of Galilee he saw two brothers, Simon, who was called Peter, and his brother Andrew; they were making a cast in the lake with their net, for they were fishermen. And he said to them, 'Follow me and I will make you fishers of men'. And they left their nets at once and followed him. Going on from there he saw another pair of brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John; they were in their boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. At once, leaving the boat and their father, they followed him". Jesus calls the fishermen to be "fishers of men". Perhaps because they live in a "cosmopolitan" region they may have greater openness to the Kingdom of God and his mission. What He says and does on the lake has value for the whole of humanity. But the people of the sea must give thanks that everything took place there.

Again, on the shore of the lake, Jesus began his mission of preaching:

- \* *Mk. 4:1ss*: "Again he began to teach by the lakeside, but such a huge crowd gathered around him that he got into a boat on the lake and sat there. The people were all along the shore, at the water's edge. He taught them many things in parables, and in the course of his teaching he said to them, 'Listen! Imagine a sower going out to sow. Now it happened that, as he sowed, some of the seed fell on the edge of the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some seed fell on rocky ground where it found little soil and sprang up straightaway, because there was no depth of earth; and when the sun came up it was scorched and, not having any roots, it withered away. Some seed fell into thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it produced no crop. And some seeds fell into rich soil and, growing tall and strong, produced crop; and yielded thirty, sixty, even a hundredfold'. A maritime scene with an agricultural message, different from the sea. This message is directed to the multitude that comes from the fields and the cities.

Once again Lake Gennesaret is not just a landscape or a backdrop but the "place" that welcomes the multitude. It is the road for persons, merchandise and new ideas.

- \* Simon Peter and some of Jesus' apostles were together. The experience of Jesus keeps them united, even after the tragedy of Calvary. They were fishermen. They were carrying out a group activity. Peter is the one who takes the initiative: "I'm going fishing". And the others follow him. Alone they do not catch anything. The wonder... The respectful and kind dialogue... The order... The fish.
- \* It is the Lord". This exclamation of the apostle John was the fruit of his intuition. It means that it is the Kyrios, the Anointed One, the

Risen Jesus, the Jesus of the Faith. It is the one who gives the Spirit, the one who gives meaning to all things. The apostles had already experienced other miraculous fishing during Jesus' whole historical life. He had calmed the storm (cf. *Mk.* 4:35-41; *Mt.* 8:23ss); he had walked on the waters (*Mt.* 14:22), showing he was able to dominate the sea, a place of danger for fishermen, especially in that period.

In repeating the miracle of the fish, Jesus is recognized as the one who gives continuity to their mission after returning from the dead. He is not a ghost.

- \* "Now the dawn will come" - a dawn of other times, of new times.
- \* On hearing the words, "It is the Lord", Simon Peter put on his clothes and threw himself into the sea. John had the intuition; Peter followed John's intuition in his own impulsive way. He loved the Lord. In this way he manifested his love and anxiousness to see him. The other disciples came with the boat and the full nets.
- \* "They saw a charcoal fire with fish cooking on it" - Jesus prepared the morning meal for all of them. A very significant breakfast.
- \* "Bring some of the fish you have just caught" - Jesus wants to share with them and he wants the collaboration of all of them for his project. He wants good will with all people and among all people.
- \* "Come and eat" - it is in the common meal that the re-encounter with the Risen One takes place. They are reconfirmed in the faith and in joy.
- \* "None of the disciples was bold enough to ask, 'Who are you?; they knew quite well it was the Lord". Reconfirmed faith gives the certainty that the man who appears at dawn, on the shore of the lake and repeats the experience of the miracle of the fish, is the Lord. It is the "Lord", the one who gives meaning to everything. He came from the Father. He did the will of the Father. Through his death he freed us from our sins, evil, selfishness and our lack of love. The Father raised him up, confirming his love for him. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right of God the Father. Together with Him he sent the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, who reminds us of all things.

At the same time, He is with the apostles and with men and women every day until the end of time, when there will be the consummation and the Kingdom will be handed over by Him to the Father, and God will be everything in everyone.

- \* "Jesus then stepped forward, took the bread and gave it to them, and the same with the fish" - this is very similar to the Eucharist. It is the summit of the encounter with this mysterious person whom they recognize as "The Lord". The meal is the most beautiful part of



the meeting. It is the outcome of the whole process of search and approach, as if it were the catechesis, the reading and meditation on the Word that precede the celebration. To the extent that this process attains its end, to the extent that "The Lord" is recognized, the invitation comes, "Come and eat". This is the culminating moment, as if it were the anticipation of the definitive meeting in heaven.

## Messages

We are representatives and witnesses of a form of human mobility which includes seafarers and fisherfolk. In crossing the oceans and seas of the world, seafarers present a reality which we are always trying to understand in our meetings such as this one. Those dedicated to fishing also experience mobility. Together with these professionals, we also have their families. The Church tries to be present in this reality. For this purpose, she seeks her inspiration in Jesus, the Risen One, the Lord. By placing ourselves before this "Lord" and starting from the search of the disciples, on the shore of Lake Gennesaret, we would like to point out four messages:

### *1) Nature and its defense, ecology as the theology of creation*

On the lakeshore, Jesus appeared and was recognized as "the Lord", that is, the reference point in relation to one's own environment. It is certain that there he had calmed the storm, walked on the water and now he has just performed one more miracle of the fish. He is also the Lord of creation.

"The creation is the work of the Word of God and the presence of the Spirit who, from all eternity, has watched over everything that was created (Gn. 1-2). This was God's first covenant with us. When a human being is called to enter into this covenant of love, human sin denies and affects this relationship with God and with the whole creation" (DSD, 169).

There is a grave ecological crisis in cities, in the devastation of the forests, seas, rivers and lakes. We are witnesses to this crisis. In the face of this, the Bishops in Santo Domingo stated:

"Development plans must be subordinated to ethical criteria. An ecological ethic presupposes the abandonment of a utilitarian and individualistic morality. It postulates acceptance of the principle of the universal destination of the goods of creation and the promotion of justice and solidarity as indispensable values" (DSD, *Ibid.*).

They propose as a solution:

- to re-educate about the value of life and the interdependency of the various ecosystems
- to cultivate a spirituality that will regain the sense of God who is

always present in nature. Christ took on everything that was created. "Everything is from Him, by Him and for Him".

- to value dialogue and resist wealth and waste
- to learn from the poor to live in solidarity and sharing.

The Theology of Creation was considered the basis for solving the problems of the people of the sea in the intervention by Father J. Balicki at the European Conference on the Apostleship of the Sea (Gdynia, Poland, October 1995). He said: "The problem presented to the people of the sea is derived from the fact that the maritime world is always more exposed to the excesses of the market economy and to an extreme, exasperated competition both of the merchant marine and of fishing".

He feels that the problem lies in our way of thinking and behaving more than in its being an economic problem. To quote Thomas Berry:

"The Universe is made up of subjects with which it is necessary to enter into communion and not by objects to be exploited. Everything has its voice: the sun shines, the flowers open, the birds sing, the trees grow, the fish swim in the sea. Humanity responds to the universe with respect and admiration moved before this majesty. In the first stages of human development, this was a great liturgy.

Our primordial spontaneity has diminished. We are becoming to some extent withdrawn into ourselves. We no longer listen to the voices. The universe and the natural world no longer move us. We are moved by domination over nature which brings violent transformations. The idea has been growing in us that everything that remains in the natural state is wasted and that things are made sacred through use.

We use absurd reasoning in economics and try to increase the gross national product...although it is absolutely clear that the first law of economy ought to be preservation of the integral economy of the planet".

At the beginning of his talk, the author suggests that we set our glance on Jesus Christ the Saviour, the cosmic Christ: "In the beginning was the Word: the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things came to be, not one thing had its being but through him" (Jn. 1:1-3). Later he says: "The word was made flesh, he lived among us" (Jn. 1:14). Therefore, God is not only transcendent to the world, he is also immanent. Knowing Creation should also lead us to knowing Christ, and knowing Christ would help us to understand nature. This indicates the need for a code of ethics for the correct use of things. The author concludes by saying that we must learn to live in the world as "as an integral part of creation, subjects among subjects and not lords over things." We cannot exist without the land, water, air, vegetation, the oceans...If all this does not function well, we too will not function. We cannot have persons in good health on a sick planet".



"An error in our understanding of creation is surely going to give rise to an error in our understanding of God" (St. Thomas Aquinas).

### **It is the Lord of our human destinies and he created us for fraternity**

He is the reference point for every man and woman for their destiny on earth and also in heaven. All human reality and history get meaning in God. Based on his arrival in our midst, we go on to see:

- The person as a bearer of human DIGNITY.
- LIFE, as something that must be promoted and defended in a radical way.
- The social and political COEXISTENCE of persons.
- SOLIDARITY as an expression of fraternal love.
- The FAMILY which originated as God's original dream in the relationship between a man and a woman.
- WORK as having priority over capital.
- HUMAN RIGHTS on the national and international level.

### **He is the Lord of ultimate destiny and he created us for communion**

He brings together his disciples with Him and sends them to true communion with the Father in the Holy Spirit. His prayer leads:

- To have faith in Him as the Risen One
- To enter into the Kingdom
- To come together in the Church
- To listen to his Word
- To love him in the poor and little ones
- To listen to the Word of God and put it into practice
- To celebrate the Eucharist

"Do this in memory of me".

"Come and eat".

### **He sent them on the MISSION**

"Go and preach the Gospel to all nations", in order to proclaim the Kingdom. Today there is a great call to evangelization, especially for enlivening the faith of baptized persons who have drifted away.

The people of the sea and fisherfolk have a special opportunity to evangelize all people, especially seafarers who are in contact with countless nationalities, cultures and beliefs.

In the spirit of the Risen One, it is necessary to evangelize:

1. In SERVICE
2. In DIALOGUE
3. In WITNESS to unity, listening to, and celebrating the Word; all this will result in
4. PROCLAMATION of Jesus Christ, "the Lord".

### **Paths Towards the Third Millennium with the Jubilee**

- \* By preparing the 2000<sup>th</sup> year of Christ's Nativity
- \* By analyzing one's own behavior.

- 1997: Jesus Christ, Faith, Baptism, civil rights, the search for salvation in Christ and in religions.
- 1998: The Holy Spirit, Hope, the Trinity, social rights, the diversity of paths in the search for salvation.
- 1999: God the Father, charity, reconciliation, economic rights, the one human family.
- 2000: Glorification of the Trinity, celebration of the Jubilee, remission of the international debt.



## THE CHURCH AND THE MARITIME WORLD: THE *MOTU PROPRIO* "STELLA MARIS"\*

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Seventy years have passed since the First Congress of the Apostleship of the Sea was held in Normandy. Many circumstances have changed since then. Not only is the place where the Twentieth International Congress is being held different, as well as the number and countries of origin of the participants, but the ecclesial and canonical conditions in which the apostleship of the sea is found are also very different. At that time, in 1927, from a strictly canonical viewpoint, the apostleship of the sea was nothing more than an association with simple statutes blessed by Pope Pius XI who expressed the hope that the association's activity would spread throughout the two hemispheres. Now, with regard to the Church's legislation, there is a new *Motu Proprio*. It begins with the words "Stella Maris" which are so significant for Christians who work on the sea. It is entirely dedicated to the Church's activity in the maritime world. It is fitting that this Congress should begin with a reflection on that new papal document in order to help guide its work along the path marked out by the one, who as Peter's successor, is at the helm of the Boat which must be navigated throughout the sea of the world. I would like to express my gratitude to H.E. Archbishop Giovanni Cheli for the confidence which the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People has had in me by inviting me to present some aspects of the new canonical legislation on the Apostleship of the Sea.

It is not my intention to analyze the text of the *Motu Proprio* "Stella Maris" in detail. This would require much more time than I have at my disposal. My intention is to call attention only to some important points that inspire the new legislation.

### Some General Characteristics of the *Motu Proprio* "Stella Maris"

The *Motu Proprio* "Stella Maris" is a law given directly by the Roman Pontiff which regulates the different canonical aspects of the Church's activity in the maritime world. Until now, the Popes had dealt

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\* In Appendix.

with the apostleship of the sea together with other related themes. In 1952, Pius XII promulgated the Apostolic Constitution *Exsul Familia* in which the *Opus Apostolatus Maris* was dealt with in the context of the pastoral problems that arise around the phenomena of human mobility. There are some other references to the pastoral care of seafaring people in more general texts: e.g., in the *Code of Canon Law*, seafarers' chaplains are explicitly mentioned (cc. 566 § 2 and 568). The Holy See had also issued some norms addressed specifically to the apostleship of the sea (the *Laws* of 1957, the Decree of 1977); their author, however, was not directly the Pope but a Department of the Roman Curia. Now, on the contrary, for the first time, there is a law given directly by the Roman Pontiff, the supreme lawmaker of the Church, dedicated specifically to the apostleship of the sea.

It is natural for the question to come up first of all as to why it was necessary to promulgate a new law on the apostleship of the sea. The reason is principally to up-date the normative context which has existed up until now. After the 1977 Decree mentioned earlier, the *Code of Canon Law* was promulgated in 1983 (with many implications also for the area of the apostleship of the sea), and in 1988, the Apostolic Constitution *Pastor Bonus*. The latter created the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People and gave it the task, among other things, of promoting "in the particular churches concern for seamen, both those who are at sea and those in ports, principally through the Apostleship of the Sea, whose high direction it exercises" (art. 150, §2). It then became necessary to see how this new Pontifical Council would exercise the function entrusted to it in the context of the 1983 Code. Of course, the Pontifical Council could not give itself its own norm because, among other reasons, it was, so to speak, the interested party. The only competent authority was precisely the Roman Pontiff who is the one who holds legislative power in the universal Church.

There is no doubt that the publication of this *Motu Proprio* shows the Pope's concern to make the new evangelization reach the maritime world. Now, there would be no sense in thinking that this document reflects privileged attention to the people of the sea to the detriment of the interest which the Church must pay to the other faithful. The Church has always considered seafarers and their families as one category (among others) of the faithful who because of the particular circumstances in which they live, require special pastoral assistance. For example, the Second Vatican Council had stated the following: "Special concern should be shown for those members of the faithful who, on account of their way of life are not adequately cared for by the ordinary ministry of the parochial clergy or are entirely deprived of it. These include the many migrants, exiles and refugees, seafarers and airmen, itinerants and others of this kind" (Decree *Christus Dominus*, n. 18). Therefore, the fact that the Roman Pontiff has now wished to give a specific law for the people of the sea obviously does not preclude other



actions in the future by the Roman Pontiff addressed to the pastoral care of some of the other categories mentioned.

In any case, there is no doubt that having a law that regulates only this sector appears very advantageous, even if only for purposes of clarity. Let us look then at the main points on which the new legislative framework is set. Before doing so, however, one observation should be made in order to avoid any misunderstandings. Here we are not dealing with a magisterial document but with a law of the Church. As such, it does not presume to describe the reality it regulates (in this case, the apostleship of the sea), nor to exhort that certain apostolic or charitable activities be carried out. Its purpose is to indicate the right rules according to which the apostleship of the sea should be carried out, in the same way that it offers criteria for resolving the juridical problems that may arise in the maritime ecclesial area. The juridical facet of the apostleship of the sea—like that of any other reality—is real, but partial. This means that it would be naive (and methodically incorrect) to presume to understand the reality of the Church present in the maritime world by reading the *Motu Proprio* we are now examining. The reality of the apostleship of the sea is, and must be, richer than what is stated therein.

But let us go into the analysis of the *Motu Proprio* "Stella Maris" without any further delay and let us begin precisely with the first article that deals with the nature of the Apostleship of the Sea.

### Definition of the Apostleship of the Sea

The 1977 Decree stated that the apostleship of the sea is a particular activity through which the Church's maternal concern is expressed, organized and developed for seafarers and sea-travellers who cannot take advantage of the usual services of pastoral care (art. 1). Therefore, the aspect was stressed which had been present from the beginning of the apostleship of the sea, the aspect which principally occupies the Church's (canonical) attention: namely, the pastoral aspect, the service which the hierarchical priesthood lends to the faithful, i.e., administering the sacraments and preaching the Word of God in an environment which seems difficult to reach through the Church's ordinary pastoral care exercised by the parish priests.

This vision, while substantially correct, had the shortcoming of leaving the activity which the faithful laity carry out in the dark (especially in this area of the apostleship of the sea which came about precisely through the activity of the laity). For this reason, the *Motu Proprio* "Stella Maris" now gives a more complete definition: it is the organization which promotes the specific pastoral care of the people of the sea (up until here it is the same as it was in 1977) and which seeks to support the work of the faithful called to give witness by their Christian life in this sphere. In this way it is made clear that this action by the Church on behalf of people living in the maritime world is

carried out through the pastoral activity of the chaplains who are hierarchically organized, and through the apostolic dedication of the faithful who are in this environment. In brief, the Apostleship of the Sea is one sector of the Church's activity (thus of the Hierarchy and of the simple faithful) which is carried out in the maritime world and which, because of its particular characteristics, is subject to a specific norm (the *Motu Proprio* "Stella Maris").

We thus come to a key point in the new legislation on the apostleship of the sea which, strictly speaking, is a key point of the Church's essence. I am referring to the interaction of the ministerial priesthood of the chaplains and the exercise of the common priesthood of all the faithful.

### Chaplains and Lay Persons in the Apostleship of the Sea

From a brief glance at the *Motu Proprio*, it might seem that little importance is given to the role of the laity. We have already seen that one brief Title, no. II, is dedicated to the people of the sea (in order to make some distinctions which serve to indicate the different spiritual graces they can earn), while it seems that the whole norm is centered on the figure of the chaplains (Title III) and their organization (Title IV). First, it must be said that the fact is revealing of the Pope's mind that he speaks first about the people of the sea, then about the chaplains and, lastly, about the direction of the apostleship of the sea (thus inverting the order which the 1977 Decree followed). Second, it should be noted that when it speaks about the people of the sea, "Stella Maris" immediately stresses the importance given to the action of the laity when it sets down that the chaplains have the obligation to provide the means necessary for the laity to lead a holy life and the duty to recognize and promote the mission which the laity carry out in the Church and in the maritime world (art. II, § 2). Above all, however, the remark we made at the beginning should be kept in mind: a juridical norm only deals with those aspects which require juridical regulation, i.e., it is concerned with regulating a reality not describing it. And it appears that the presence and action of the chaplains require greater canonical regulation than that of the laity without implying that this has any comparative weight.

No one in fact is raising any doubts about the importance of the laity's action in the maritime world, or in any other sphere of the Church. As the Second Vatican Council recalled, by the fact that they have received Baptism, the faithful participate in Christ's priesthood; they have the common priesthood by virtue of which they "should present themselves as a sacrifice, living, holy and pleasing to God (cf. *Rom.* 12:1). They should everywhere on earth bear witness to Christ and give an answer to everyone who asks a reason for the hope of an eternal life which is theirs" (*Lumen Gentium*, 10).



In the case of the apostleship of the sea, moreover, it cannot be forgotten that it grew up as a private initiative of the faithful and only later was taken on by the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Nonetheless, the absolute need for priests is unquestionable in order to carry out completely the ends which the apostleship of the sea has always sought. In fact, at the First Congress in 1927, it was stated that the definitive goal of the apostleship of the sea was to have a sufficient number of priests. This has been a constant desire expressed in the International Congresses and in other places. This should not be surprising if we consider that the apostleship of the sea seeks not only to carry out some charitable and apostolic works, but also the integral evangelization of the maritime world which implies preaching the Word of God and administering the sacraments by priests. Basically, in the apostleship of the sea, since it has to do with the Church's presence in a specific sphere, the same occurs as in any other part of the Church: the common priesthood of the faithful is necessary in order to bring Christ to the most remote corners, and this activity must be enlivened by the presence and ministry of the ordained priest. As no. 10 mentioned earlier of *Lumen Gentium* states, "though they differ essentially and not only in degree, the common priesthood of the faithful and the ministerial or hierarchical priesthood are none the less ordered one to another; each in its own proper way shares in the one priesthood of Christ. The ministerial priest, by the sacred power that he has, forms and rules the priestly people; in the person of Christ he effects the eucharistic sacrifice and offers it to God in the name of all the people. The faithful indeed, by virtue of their royal priesthood, participate in the offering of the Eucharist. They exercise that priesthood, too, by the reception of the sacraments, prayer and thanksgiving, the witness of a holy life, abnegation and active charity".

In a word, it is not possible to place the presence of lay persons and chaplains in dialectical terms, nor is there a question of the greater or lesser importance of one or the other. The evangelization of the maritime world will be the result of the cooperation of the work carried out by the faithful dedicated generously to giving Christian witness among the people of the sea and developing the activities that tend to improve the material and spiritual conditions of the life of maritime peoples, together with the activity of the priest who administers the sacraments and preaches the Word of God with the authority that is proper to him. Both thus collaborate, each in its own specific way, in the apostleship of the sea.

Since both the common priesthood of the faithful and the ministerial priesthood of the chaplains are necessary, both have to develop their own functions without usurping those of the other. There are some functions which only the priest can exercise, such as the celebration of some sacraments. Others, on the contrary, although they pertain to the priest, can be exercised by the laity as substitutes. In the

same way, there are tasks characteristic of the laity which priests can carry out in a subsidiary way. In the area of the apostleship of the sea, the need to carry out these functions of substitution occurs more frequently than in other sectors and this is brought together in the new norm. For example, the presence of lay persons can be very useful who can act as extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist on ships where there is no chaplain; or the work can be very effective which is carried out by the collaborators of the Apostleship of the Sea (who help the chaplain and substitute him in the functions which do not require the exercise of the ministerial priesthood and can help the national director, according to articles VIII §1 and IX §2 of "Stella Maris"). In the same way, the charitable work which some chaplains have done in the maritime world to aid the material conditions of the life of the people of the sea has been praiseworthy. Now, precisely because these substitutions come up more frequently in the apostleship of the sea, it is especially important not to fall into the danger that really exists in the whole Church: namely, that of inverting the terms and presenting the function of substitute as an ideal, of what is extraordinary as being usual, with the result of clericalizing the lay person and laicizing the priest.

When priests are lacking, the laity can (*only partially*) substitute them, but this is not the ideal. The ideal is to have priests so that the whole sacramental Christian life can be developed. And precisely because there are few priests the chaplain should limit himself to exercising his ministerial priesthood and let the lay persons exercise the other functions. Here too the classical definition of justice should be applied: to each his own.

In this sense, it could be very appropriate to separate the chaplain's functions from those of the person responsible for the "Stella Maris" centers. Moreover, it is becoming necessary to find a formula so that in places where there is a faithful man or woman, not an ordained priest, at the head of the Catholic apostleship of the sea, he or she can represent it before organizations of other religious denominations without being called a chaplain; a chaplain is only the priest who has the functions and faculties assigned by the ecclesiastical law.

### The Presence and Activity of the Chaplains of the Apostleship of the Sea

The evangelization of the people of the sea, like any evangelization that intends to be complete, requires the exercise of the ministerial priesthood.

In this case, however, the need is special because it is a question of bringing the Christian message and the sacraments to those who because of the particular circumstances of their life, find it difficult or impossible to enjoy the usual pastoral care of the parishes. This means carrying out a particular priestly task and, for this reason, as the *Motu Proprio* requests, the chaplain must have the appropriate qualities: he



should know the maritime world well and the particular features of the ministry in that environment; he should be distinctive for his integrity of life, zeal, prudence, and have a good knowledge of languages, enjoy good health and, as far as possible, hold this pastoral responsibility in a stable way (art. 10).

The new legislation endows the chaplain with some special faculties. Although they in themselves do not constitute anything new, they now seem connected to the ecclesiastical office he exercises. Of course, these are not unmotivated privileges but rather facilitations which the legislator grants so that the chaplain can carry out his ministry better.

The norm in § 2, art. V is significant which sets down that the chaplain's faculties are cumulative with those of the parish priest and that consequently there should be coordination between the parish priest and the chaplain. This is the most important point of all particular pastoral activities. This does not mean ecclesial segregation of the faithful living in the maritime world but offering them a particular pastoral assistance through an especially suitable priest who is the chaplain of the apostleship of the sea. Maritime people continue to be normal faithful and, as such, can continue to have recourse to the parishes with the other faithful of their territory.

In any case, it is in regard to the chaplains that most of the canonical problems arise. While the activity of the faithful laity depends to a great extent on their own initiative, the ministry of the chaplains pertains to the hierarchical priesthood and so a series of questions come up: What authority appoints them? How are they supported? On whom do they depend in their ministry?, and all the other subjects that refer to the ecclesiastical regime of priests. For this reason, it is not strange that the part of the *Motu Proprio* dedicated to the direction of the apostleship of the sea should refer above all to the way of regulating the chaplains.

### **The Direction of the Apostleship of the Sea**

The directional structure foreseen in the new legislation is analogous to the one set down in the 1977 Decree which comes in turn from the Apostolic Constitution *Exsul Familia* of 1952. The *Motu Proprio* did not intend to innovate but simply to regulate what already existed, to give perhaps some finishing touches and adapt it to the new canonical context. As in 1977, the desire can be noted to respect the local Ordinaries' authority but, at the same time, it seeks to give a certain unity of direction on the national level through the national director and the bishop promoter. It should be said in any case that in the present norm, the aspect of unity of direction seems to be strengthened, as can be seen in the fact that the possibility has been dropped of having an episcopal commission in charge of the apostleship of the sea in order to favor the personal responsibility of the

bishop promoter instead. In brief, this has to do with a special organization, which existed in part before the promulgation of the new *Motu Proprio*, that seeks to harmonize the principles of respect for the local authority with the greatest possible effectiveness of the pastoral care given and with national and regional coordination. Naturally, envisaging this special organization does not exclude the possibility, if the circumstances exist in some nations or regions, of organizing the apostleship of the sea with the instruments which the Church's common law offers today for carrying out particular pastoral activities.

There is no doubt that one improvement introduced by "Stella Maris" is its clarification of the competencies of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Assistance of Migrants and Itinerant Peoples in such a way that it will be able to exercise the "high direction" of the Apostleship of the Sea. Among the competencies which the *Motu Proprio* attributes to the Pontifical Council, I would now like to draw attention to one which seems to me of greatest importance, especially in this Congress. I am referring to no. 3 of the first paragraph of article XIII: the Council has the competency to exercise the functions proper to the Apostolic See regarding associations, with respect to other associations encompassed by the Apostleship of the Sea.

The apostleship of the sea arose as an association and for some years there was an international coordinating body (the AMIC). The canonical norm regulates principally the presence and activity of the chaplains (because this is the aspect which requires a more detailed legislative regulation); however, the work done by lay persons and the activities traditionally carried out in the "Stella Maris" Centers which do not refer to the ministerial priesthood should not be left on the margin. Without detracting from the importance of the work which each faithful can carry out individually among the people of the sea by their witness of Christian life, it is logical that the other activities of the apostleship of the ship should be channeled into associations. As the founders wished (because it seemed better suited to reality in this way), the canonical associations with the name "apostleship of the sea" or other similar ones, should have the objectives of favoring the Christian life of the people of the sea and be organized by countries (so that in each one of them the most suitable way of governing the association will be found, the patrimonial situation will be adapted to the legal requirements of the country, etc.). However, it can be very useful to create an international federation of these national associations which would coordinate the associative activities universally and represent the Catholic apostleship of the sea in the ICMA. This would mean basically recreating—if it seems appropriate—something similar to the former AMIC. It would not be the personification of the "Apostleship of the Sea", but only one element of it: the international federation of the associations operating in the area of the apostleship of the sea. Only the "high direction" of this federation (in respect of its legitimate autonomy) would correspond to the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral



Assistance to Migrants and Itinerant People: i.e., everything within the Holy See's competency regarding associations (approving the statutes and guaranteeing that the activity of the association is within the ecclesiastical discipline). On the other hand, it is not up to the Apostolic See to coordinate the activities which can, and should remain in the sphere of the autonomy of the faithful (considered individually or in associations). Now the appropriate legal framework exists (the *Motu Proprio* "Stella Maris") for acting in this way.

To summarize, we now have the appropriate legal instrument for promoting a new evangelization of the maritime world, both individually and as associations, on the part of the laity and through the activity of the chaplains. It seems clear that this was the Roman Pontiff's intention in promulgating the "Stella Maris" on the threshold of the Third Millennium. The law, however, does not make evangelization. This is the task of the daily activity of the faithful in the maritime environment who now have the explicit support of the Apostolic See (and of the whole Church) and, as always, the protection of the One whom they prefer to invoke as the "Star of the Sea".

# THE MARITIME CULTURE OF THE PEOPLE OF THE SEA

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## 1. General precedents

At the express request of His Excellency Giovanni Cheli, President of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, the Apostleship of the Sea has considered it important to carry out a sociological study on the conditions in which the culture of the people of the sea, seafarers and fisherfolk, appears. These people are part of the human communities to whom the Apostleship dedicates its efforts and attention throughout the world, especially in the Stella Maris Centres and in the programmes of pastoral care of fishermen.

The main objective of this study is to learn about the principal manifestations and specific tendencies which give the communities of people of the sea a source of identity and differentiation. As a whole, these manifestations constitute a maritime culture which should be taken into serious consideration by the persons in charge of the pastoral care of seamen and fishermen in general, and by the Apostleship of the Sea in particular, by seeking new pastoral guidelines based on recognition of this culture.

The study has taken information drawn from other sources into consideration, visits to the Apostleship of the Sea centres, studies done in different countries, and in particular an international survey sent to 180 persons in charge of Stella Maris centers or Seafarers' Clubs around the world, with four documents to be answered directly by the persons in charge or the people of the sea in the areas where the Centres are located. The study is of an exploratory nature and it may open some doors to knowledge about this culture in its many expressions and forms of working and community life. These call for better knowledge about the thought and behavioural structure of the people of the sea and the specific characteristics of their culture.

The study was carried out under the responsibility of the author, a sociologist, with a doctorate from the Catholic University of Louvain, Belgium, who wrote a dissertation on marine cultures. He has worked as a professor in the Universities of Chile and Mexico, a researcher of the National Institute of Research on Biotic Resources of Mexico, consultant of international organizations, adviser of the National Confederation of Artisanal Fishermen of Chile, and member of the International Collective Support of Fishworkers, ICSF.



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## **2. The life of the people of the sea**

### *a) Who are the people of the sea?*

The people of the sea in this case are persons who work as seafarers on merchant ships, fishing ships of different sizes, or as artisanal fishworkers in the coastal fishing of seas, lakes or rivers. It also refers to those who work in complementary tasks, in ports and maritime and coastal installations, and to the families of fisherfolk who help in the work.

### *b) How many are there and from where?*

The number of persons working directly in maritime activities or people of the sea has been estimated by some specialized agencies and in publications of a professional nature. It is calculated that there are approximately 1.2 million persons around the world working directly in the merchant marine, of whom 825,000 are seafarers and 409,000 are officials. Filipinos represent approximately 250,000, 20% of the total, followed by Indonesia, Turkey and China, each with 80,000 seafarers. 39% come from the East and 32% from OECD countries. With regard to the total number of fishers, it is estimated that there are 500,000 industrial fishers working on middle or large size ships. Artisanal fishers, according to government census and FAO information, are estimated at 13 million persons, although it is thought that an equal number of persons work without licences on small boats and directly on the sea coasts or shores and on rivers and lakes throughout the whole world. Their numerical presence is very important in Asia, Africa and America and their work is the basis of many family or local subsistence economies (ITF, 1997; FAO, 1997).

### *c) Some general tendencies*

The principal tendencies of change in the working conditions of the world merchant marine are related to the design, construction and operations of more and more automated ships which operate with modular systems of containers and a great reduction of personnel on board. This unemployment could grow to the extent that new, stricter norms will come into force regarding formation and the issuing of seaworthiness licences in accordance with a convention of the International Maritime Organization. It is estimated that in 1996 there were 219,000 crew members or seafarers who will not have work in the

coming years while, on the other hand, there is a world deficit of approximately 18,000 officers.

*d) The case of the open registration of merchant ships*

The system of open registration for licensing merchant ships, called "flags of convenience", has created special conditions of exploitation and insecurity among the workers of the international merchant marine. The rights of the workers or their labor union organizations are not recognized; the difficulties in communication also increase because on board one and the same ship are persons of very different nationalities, languages and cultures. It is estimated that almost one third of seafarers sail on ships with open systems. In first place there are the ships of Panama, with 104,000 seafarers, almost all of whom are not Panamanian; next comes China, which employs 87,800 seafarers of Chinese nationality and then Japan, that employs 75,800 persons. This is a total of 267,800 persons, 27% of all seafarers (ITF, 1996).

*e) Impact of technological change*

The evolution of technology has been decisive in the cultural impact and changes among the people of the sea, especially in the systems of navigation, in the technology of transportation, particularly the modular systems or "containers" which have resulted in shorter stays in the ports, the reduction of personnel on board and more extensive periods of voyage. On the other hand, in industrial fishing the ships' capacity for extraction and storage has been increased, the feasibility of longer distances has grown, and the work-days seem increasingly long and hard, without always enjoying good lodging conditions and stay on board. In artisanal fishing, important changes have been noted in the motorization of ships, in the manufacture of more solid fishing materials, especially the contribution of nylon to making nets and trawls, refrigeration and ice on board, communications, probing teams, etc.

*f) The people of the sea and the liberal economy*

The impact produced by the change in the world economy and the international organization of trade in maritime and fishing activity has been enormous. Free trade has brought along with it the opening of markets of transportation, communications and products derived from the natural resources of the aquatic environment in general and of the sea in particular. The system of open registration, for example, has enormously affected the organization and conditions of maritime work. The search for, and extraction of marine resources on the high seas has spurred many countries and companies toward a real war in the fishing campaigns and in the contracting of crew members in dreadful living and working conditions. The fishing communities of the whole world, especially in the developing countries, have encountered buyers of fish



products with international trade objectives. The traditional culture of all these communities has been affected by the new production and commercialization systems and by the different behaviour of the recent arrivals (ICSF, 1992).

### 3. Regarding the concept of culture

The definition of culture is a complex theme since it concerns a reality that is present in the whole of social life like a cloud of steam which everyone sees but when they try to catch it, it escapes from their hands. From an outside viewpoint, it is a whole series of objects, symbols and visible behaviors which give a human community its identity and make it possible for its members to recognize one another, communicate with and understand one another. However, it also includes a very broad and hidden series of values, beliefs, norms and commitments which are not directly observable but which can be distilled from the way in which the persons explain and justify what they do. More profoundly, there is a whole series of suppositions, consensus, ideologies and cosmovisions which are the foundation that makes rapid understanding possible among the members of a community. (FICHTER, 1964; LEVY STRAUSS, 1958).

The studies on the culture of a people or a community can have many forms of approach, according to the interests of the researchers and their own perspective of analysis. In the case of the culture of the people of the sea, the choice was made to use different methods which make it possible both to grasp the elements constituting the ways of life and the expressions of the lived culture, and to submit these to a progressive analysis which guides the research toward recognizing the common elements of that culture and an understanding of their meaning.

Culture is a strictly technical term from the social sciences which is used in a non-technical sense. It is said that a person is cultured in the sense of being refined and with good manners who distinguishes and uses the stable and best things in life. Psychologically it is a fact that every normal member of a society is cultured since he or she goes through a process of socialization. From childhood these persons adapt to the guidelines of socially accepted behavior, they live in the midst of social relations, in groups, in the whole society. Culture is made by the human being and it can be said that everything he or she does is part of the culture. A human being by nature is a social, productive and creative animal. Persons in group life have behavior systems, they use institutions and they possess a culture. The culture also includes their artifacts, everything which they have made for whatever purpose. The elements of the material culture are significant symbols of human conduct; the culture can be interpreted on the basis of the kinds of objects which the society uses and values. They can also be called vehicles of human behavior; they bear a great part of the physical

burden of the social functions. They are instruments which the people use in order to carry out their forms of behavior. They are products of the individuals in the society which has invented and made them in order to respond to its social needs. The culture in itself is a basis for social solidarity. The people of a society act together in order to achieve valid social objectives. From a comparative viewpoint, culture serves as a "factory trade-mark" for distinguishing one society from another. This is the predominating factor in the constitution and shaping of the social personality which is a product of the culture.

#### 4. The culture of the people of the sea

The culture of the people of the sea appears distinct from the culture of communities who inhabit the land, in relation to the "floating" life of those who sail the seas. It must also be said that this culture has different expressions when dealing with merchant marines, seafarers on fishing vessels or artisanal fisherfolk. It could also be said that military seafarers seem to have some common cultural characteristics with the people of the sea which come from the fact that they work on the sea, although their culture is usually shaped principally by the culture of an organization of a military nature.

Work in the marine environment (or aquatic in general, since the people who work on lakes and rivers are also considered) brings along special characteristics which act in shaping the cultural traits of the life of the persons who work there (MORALES, 1994).

- a) They have a close and permanent relationship with the ocean or with the aquatic environment, with its variation and movements of a physical and chemical nature, whether they be currents, temperatures, waves, depths or different climates, or relations with the different species and living populations they handle or capture, which require a special level of adaptation and preparation not common to those found on the land;
- b) They live in a continuing state of alert and risk which makes them develop special psychological and cultural mechanisms of survival in this environment, and conditions them toward attitudes of great dynamism, vivacity and capacity for innovation and adaptation to change.
- c) During their working activity, for long periods of time they are usually far from their families and social life in general, without keeping regular contacts with them, with intermittent relations that lead them to maintaining close bonds of solidarity and communication with their working companions on the ship with whom an intense and temporary community is created;
- d) They develop and practice a particular system of apprenticeship and transmission of knowledge and know-how which is based principally on lived experience which acts as the almost exclusive source



of appropriating that know-how, and very particular cultural forms of exchange and confidence which make them closed, distrustful and individualistic with regard to the outside environment of the uninitiated.

- e) Their lifestyle, especially in the case of artisanal fishermen, is marked by a particular sense of freedom which comes from the nature of their work, since they must assume, from one moment to the next, responsibilities and decisions in which their life is at stake; therefore, their "lifestyle" is usually not compatible with structured lifestyles in other working contexts and in other communities;
- f) The floating and itinerant life of permanent displacement throughout the world or great regions lets them experience other cultures with customs, symbols, beliefs and different forms of living. This usually creates a great cultural and religious relativism in them, although they maintain the cultural or religious reference points of their communities or countries of origin;
- g) The global perception of the whole of their life experiences is usually expressed in a particular vision of the world, or cosmovision, which integrates the knowledge derived from their individual and collective experiences, their traditions, myths, legends and outside information. This cosmovision is very profound and the source of their identity, the meaning of their behavior and their cultural expressions can be found in it (LABOURIE, 1994).

## 5. General hypothetical context

The general hypotheses that guided the study are shaped by the following statements which synthesize them. On the other hand, many of the statements and conclusions of the studies consulted and the data obtained in this study have guided the survey:

1. The vocation of the people of the sea is expressed in a high degree of satisfaction in their work. This satisfaction is part of a culture which has priorities that are not necessarily material. They are especially guided by the desire to support the family, a taste for adventure, knowledge of the world, and an attraction to a life of movement and change.
2. The harsh, material working conditions do not necessarily result in attitudes contrary to continuing the life of a seafarer or fisher. These conditions are overcome by their interest in values of a family nature or in a taste for adventure, with an important compensating factor being the alternating of rest and recreation in the family.
3. The change in the technical conditions of navigation and in fishing have affected the change in attitudes in the vocational structure of the people of the sea, especially in the merchant marines, in inverse proportion to their age, going from a culture centred on more non-

material values of attachment to duty and tradition, to a culture centred on values of a more instrumental and material nature.

4. The technological change in the systems of merchant transport have led to longer stays on board, without getting off in ports, causing changes in the systems of life on board, with fewer crew members, greater isolation and more work which is compensated by better pay and a greater availability of means of communications and diversion on board.
5. The changes in the systems of registering the nationality of ships and the generalization of the system of open registration have led to a greater diversity of nationalities, languages, cultural and religious references of the crew members. This has caused negative situations in communication and human relations since the normal tendency of crew members is to openly accept other crew members but with greater preference for those of the same nationality.
6. The work is evaluated principally according to principles of authority and organization given the particular character of the conditions on board in which the order is hierarchical, even when ideological or religious discrepancies may exist.
7. Human relations on board are primarily considered as a need for harmony in relation to the work, or a need that goes beyond personal choices; therefore, efforts are made not to offend crew members since the period on board is relatively short and changes set in when they return to the family.
8. The family and family life are part of an image with a positive reference point during the period at sea; it is the reason why they work, and efforts are made to nourish this image; however, it is also a source of conflict during the return and the rest period and so this image acts as a value of an utopian nature which one believes in and hopes for, but which does not necessarily always have a positive, concrete correspondence in reality.
9. The perception of political life by crew members and fishermen tends to be very negative in relation to their leaders' lack of concern about their elementary needs.
10. The origin of life and the world is considered by the majority as a creation by God and, for a minority, as a product of evolution; this is a cultural value which goes beyond religious affiliation and degrees of religious participation.
11. The source of cultural identity of the people of the sea is found, on the one hand, in their experience of working on the sea which is strongly conditioned by the maritime environment; on the other, it is found in the temporary break and their re-entry into the living and working systems on the land.
12. In the merchant marine, the experiences of embarkment and work have a longer duration with longer breaks and they are subject to



brusque changes of climate, cultural environments and significant distances; this does not occur in artisanal fishing and at times in industrial fishing which are characterized by a daily or weekly rhythm.

13. Artisanal fisherfolk have their own source of identity which is related to the type of fishing they carry out, whether it be extraction, collection or hunting, or some types of cultivation in which they acquire knowledge through an irreplaceable personal practice and constant dialectical interaction with their community and environment.

The culture of the people of the sea is marked by apparently contradictory values which give shape to an attitude and a particular behavior that is usually expressed in the following crises or tensions of a cultural nature:

- a) from a great sense of community to an extreme individualism;
- b) from a great sense of freedom to acceptance of rigorous discipline since the tradition of maritime life is very hierarchical and concentrates the decision-making power in the captains;
- c) from a great attachment to family values to their relatively easy abandonment when they get off in the ports;
- d) from a very profound faith to a generalized agnosticism; especially the experiences of extreme danger to life that lead to profound discoveries, over and above taboos and superstitions, which act as factors contiguous to the values of the faith and official beliefs.

## 6. General results and cultural tendencies

The analysis of the surveys and the study of the testimonies make it possible to discover some prevailing cultural tendencies:

### 6.1. *Maritime work as a source of cultural identity*

Work is the basis and principal source of the identity of the maritime culture. There are two themes which open the door to more detailed knowledge about the attitudes and opinions of the people of the sea on this theme: the vocation of the people of the sea and the degrees of satisfaction with their work which they declare. The study makes it possible to observe one similar tendency among those who wish to return to work on the sea and those who do not, as an expression of a vocation for this work. From this it appears that the deep reason for the vocation does not lie principally in a personal choice but rather in a family tradition, in not having other work alternatives or in a kind of destiny.

There are positive reasons of a personal nature, such as the vocation, the desire to know the world, connection with ancestors and heredity, or of a negative personal nature, such as separation and distance from the family or from one's children, sickness and accident,

problems of physical adaptation, isolation and loneliness, slavery and lack of freedom, slight respect for personal intimacy. There are also positive reasons of a family nature, such as the reunion with the family as something that is always good. Other reasons refer to life on board, with positive aspects such as the comfort on board some ships, good food, having a contract on a new ship, a peaceful and incomparable job, and negative reasons such as facing the sea and its storms, living in unjust conditions, hard work and long stays on board, poor lodging, risk of accidents and imperfections, lack of labor security. The reasons linked to human relations are maintaining good relations with other members, the possibility of making friends, lack of solidarity in life on board, etc. Lastly, there are reasons of an economic nature such as obtaining better pay, higher salaries, feeding the family, scarcity of resources, no alternatives of work in the area.

The negative reasons mentioned most to explain the choice of work are harshness due to the long stays on the sea, separation and distance from the family, poor conditions for rest and lodging; the positive reasons are providing education to their children and feeding the family, and because it is a vocation to be a seaman.

#### *6.2. Levels of work satisfaction*

The levels of satisfaction are important among the merchant seamen, the industrial fishermen and the artisanal fishermen. Most of the Catholics state that they are very satisfied. Persons over 50 years of age state that they are less satisfied than those of 30. In the same way, a tendency is revealed according to their civil status: the majority of married men state that they are more satisfied than the unmarried men.

#### *6.3. Values in work life*

The values mentioned as being important in work life are first those regarding the law and morality, then working conditions and lastly individual values. However, as a second priority, the values of an individual and monetary nature are followed by the law and morality. Other aspects refer to the principles and norms which the persons interviewed state as being important in work. Among the values referring to the law and morality in general, for example, human rights, work code, maritime code, desire to work, correctness, justice, harmony, sincerity, doing one's best, obedience, honesty, love for work and tolerance are mentioned. Among the values referring to life on board and organization, the following are cited: responsibility, discipline, vigilance, companionship, punctuality, efficiency, loyalty to the superior, communication, knowing how to lead, control, knowing the work, maintaining standards. The values regarding group life on board and in work include, for example, know-how, professional awareness, safety, mutual respect and understanding, stability, unity among seafarers, cooperation, knowing how to work in the artisanal fishery, cold blood, availability and diligence, cleanliness and hygiene,



knowledge of the sea, confidence, and the right to entertainment are mentioned.

The values of an individual nature are, in general, profit, earning one's bread, having good food, good salaries. The values of family life are, for example, supporting the family, seeing the family and the home. In their direct expression, great importance is attributed to safety on board, to responsibility and, on a lesser scale, to love for one's work and to having knowledge related to the work.

From the viewpoint of values, regarding the *raison d'être* of this work, the first priority was to feed the family, to be happy as the second priority, to grow as persons, to earn money and, with lesser priority, to develop the world and enrich the owners. From this viewpoint, the family has a broad preference as a value.

#### *6.4. Technological and social changes*

The technological changes felt most are the automation of ships and ports, the use of position and orientation instruments, communications, and new materials for fishing. The technological changes have resulted in improved living and working conditions which are manifested in greater convenience, more rest, adequate hours, better food, but this is also accompanied in other cases and sectors, such as in industrial fishing, with greater piling-on of work and more demanding hours during the voyages. There are changes of a political nature and in the international economy such as fishing agreements, European norms, international treaties, the liberalization of markets, and systems of flags of convenience which have seriously affected working and living conditions on board.

The evolution of technology has been one of the most decisive points in some of the cultural changes among the people of the sea, especially in the navigation systems, in the technology of transport, particularly containers and modules, communications, which have resulted in shorter stays in the ports, the reduction in crew-size and more extensive sailing periods. On the other hand, in industrial fishing, the extracting and storage capacity of the ships has increased, the feasibility of long distances has grown, and the work days seem longer and harder, without always enjoying good conditions of lodging and stay on board. In artisanal fishing, important changes have been noted in the motorization of boats, the manufacture of more solid fishing materials, especially the use of nylon in making nets and trawls, refrigeration and ice on board, communications, probing teams, etc.

These changes are not perceived by everyone in the same way: there is one significant group which did not answer and those who did value in the first place the technological changes, secondly, the changes in living and working conditions, and in third place, organizational management. The technological changes which are felt most are the automation of ships and ports, the use of position and orientation instruments, communications, new materials for fishing.

The changes in living and working conditions are manifested in greater comfort, rest, hours, better food, but this is also accompanied in other cases and sectors, such as industrial fishing, with greater piling-up of work and more demanding hours during the campaigns.

#### *6.5. Changes in life and organization on board*

The organizational management on board also reveals changes, especially in the reduction of personnel, demands for efficiency, controls in diets and quantities of food. Navigational conditions require respect for authority, even if for other cultural reasons, the persons are not very attached to discipline. On the other hand, there is a tendency to avoid conflicts with companions since camaraderie and friendship are ways of avoiding the loneliness and segregated life which seafarers lead. One fisherman from Senegal stated that on the high seas, the captain or owner is always right, even if he makes mistakes. On the land, it is possible to discuss and correct, but never on the sea, because life depends on his leadership.

#### *6.6. Labor and employer relations*

The labor relations among the people of the sea are different for the merchant marine and artisanal fishing, but in both respect for discipline, authority and command seem important which is decisive in the conditions of navigation.

When consulted regarding a conflict between an officer and a seafarer, the answers were divided: 45% said no one was right, and 28% said the officer was right. The reasons cited were the advisability and interest in maintaining human relations with their companions through method and procedure, not compromise. Primarily the merchant seafarers said that the official was right, followed by the industrial fishers and, on a lesser scale, the artisanal fishers. In these attitudes, there is an implicit cultural wisdom because navigating conditions require respect for authority, even if the persons, for other cultural reasons, are not attached to discipline. On the other hand, there is a tendency to avoid conflicts with the companions since camaraderie and friendship are ways of avoiding the loneliness and segregated life which seafarers lead.

#### *6.7. Problems of the environment and resources*

Regarding the environment and pollution, the majority of persons interviewed consider the situation very serious but reparable, although a second and important reference is made to a situation of irreparable gravity in the case of the marine environment. The principal sources of contamination detected come from the boats themselves that clean their tanks, holds and bilges in the sea, or from the oil spilling from collisions of tankers, from chemical and industrial waste and from the presence of trawlers in nearby waters that destroy the schools of fish used by the artisanal fishermen.



Fishers and fishworkers live in the coastal regions of the whole world; they work with the living aquatic resources and understand at close range the negative impact of activities that originate both on the land and in the sea. For this reason, the relationship between development and the environment is one of their principal concerns. It can be said that fishing is one of the most disadvantaged social and productive sectors and that the concern the fisherfolk show for their principal source of life comes from a genuine fear for the fish resources. The dangers which threaten those resources could also endanger the very existence of these workers, especially the ones who live on the shores of rivers, lakes and seas of the poor countries. Alarming discoveries about the sea's state of health call for our attention at the same time that the idea is being discarded that the sea has an "infinite" capacity to receive and recycle trash and waste. They are fighting against destructive fishing practices such as indiscriminate trawling and fishing with nets or rims, methods practiced by industrial capital in search of greater profits at the cost of the sustainability of the basic resource. Action is being taken to avoid the depletion of their natural, traditional resources which are being attacked by fleets with very destructive modern technologies. Moreover, there is a series of other facts based on activities on the land that contribute directly or indirectly toward damaging the coasts and contaminating the waters of rivers, lakes and oceans. In the background, there is a "civilization" which is not concerned about the sustainability of the ecosystems and their resources, and which exhausts or destroys them to benefit the interests of investors, traders or social or political pressure groups.

The strategies of response have been guided by the organizations of fishworkers in alliance with other groups or organizations. The identity of the groups of fishworkers, their reasons for fighting and the definition of their enemies have been clarified progressively on the basis of the struggles for the defense of the aquatic environment and its resources. They have not just become temporary pressure groups but real social movements for cultural or economic change.

#### *6.8. Mistrust of governments*

The majority expressed an attitude of mistrust and doubt with regard to governments and public administrations as to care and attention to seamen, especially in the merchant marine. The lack of interest is felt principally in the reduced existence and functioning of systems for protecting their health, labour security and old age pensions. Despite the fact that in some Western countries there are highly developed systems of protection, on the worldwide level a series of proven irregularities in the protection of seafarers and fishers have been recorded and documented by labor union organizations, private agencies and non-governmental bodies in many countries and on many occasions.

Many of these irregularities, mistreatment and threats to the rights of seafarers and fishers have their origin in the changes in property

systems and the adoption of flags of convenience which are derived from governmental responsibilities toward an undefined area or no man's land; this is the perception and opinion of the persons interviewed. The seafarers from fishing fleets in some Asian countries have suffered enormously because of their governments' lack of concern over the maltreatment and abandonment which seafarers have endured from shipowners, and this has contributed to the seamen's mistrust. (ICSE, Amudra, 1990).

#### *6.9. Maritime culture and family life*

Family life and remembering their children are very important reference points which they keep as values on board. The majority considers the family as a call from God and a personal choice and, to a lesser extent, a social obligation. Family life is appreciated as the best recreation on land. The principal conflicts upon returning home are not necessarily with the family. This cultural value acts as a reference point which ought to be deepened because it is the reason for the moral strength of the persons who have to endure this type of work, even though it can also create illusions which crumble in reality.

Emotional life is one of the themes that are difficult to study in depth, especially regarding relations of a couple or "sentimental relations" in different ports and places of work. 40% answer that "a love in every port" is something that usually happens, but 30% think that this is false.

#### *6.10. Recreation*

Recreation is becoming one of the themes in which a whole series of situations of greater hardship can be clearly seen in life on board, especially in the case of the merchant seafarers. For them, reading appears to be one of their preferred diversions on board, which could be a kind of compensation mechanism that makes it possible for them to be in touch with the outside world. On the other hand, diversions such as TV, radio and conversing with friends are recreational diversions recognized by the crew.

The situation is different when they return to land. In that case, family life and seeing friends again are the most important diversions, although sports, night life or the bar are also mentioned. It is important to point out the place which is given, as part of the maritime culture of the people of the sea, to conversation and exchanges with other seafarers and fishers during periods of rest and relaxation. In many cases, this contact acts as a means of information about their life-situations and the informal evaluation which is made of them, especially after critical events in life on the sea (storms, accidents, etc.).

#### *6.11. Beliefs and oasis in the ports*

Beliefs constitute the underlying pattern of a culture and they support an important part of the vision of the world or cosmovision of



the people of the sea. Although a considerable percentage of Christians or Catholics were interviewed in this study, it is not enough to accept their declarations of belonging to one denomination or another. The inner network of their thinking must be understood, which is derived from their special relationship with the marine environment and its changes and turbulence (a situation which is not lived by the world of land), and with the risks that this permanent relationship implies. The majority believes that God is at the origin of creation and nature. The experience of risking death at sea is a widely generalized experience and their reflections are directed toward a general acceptance that there is something transcendent beyond what appears as immediate. The answers show a reflection on the meaning of a seafarer's life, which is considered precious, and the need to put the means into action which make it possible to save it. However, the importance of faith in the Creator is also recognized, in his Word, in prayer, in salvation, in the family, in loved ones and in love for life.

The testimonies of priests who have sailed with seafarers show examples of religious life and beliefs of the people of the sea associated with each one's cultural origins and religious denomination, especially on long voyages when liturgical ceremonies are requested as a reason for union and encounter. In these cases the decisive importance of personal testimony has been shown which has apparently been made possible by an education in the faith and a religious approach. (DORIOL, Roland; *Lettre inter groupes*, 266, 1996).

Many studies observe that seafarers and people of the sea have a very special behaviour regarding beliefs and religion. There are areas of great consent regarding the faith and others which are frankly anticlerical, or which do not accept directly the person of Jesus as the Savior, despite the fact that they recognize the existence of an Absolute Being who governs the world. (HUG, Louis: 1993; CHAUSSADE, Jean: 1989).

It is also important to recognize that beliefs and religious faith are enveloped in a cloud of superstitions, myths and legends which are associated in every culture with interpretations of the phenomena and omens of destiny or of curses. From a sociological viewpoint, it is only necessary to observe these cloudy areas and seek their sources of inspiration which are usually very rich from the cultural viewpoint, and particularly as unconscious, historical elements of a cosmovision proper to the people of the sea, conditioned by the climates, ethnic ancestries and traditions of each community of seafarers or fisherfolk. These are all new challenges for those who can continue to investigate the themes mentioned here. (CETMA, Paris). Lastly, the importance should be pointed out which is given to hospitality in the centres for seafarers and fishers, especially the Stella Maris Centres, which are valued by those who have visited them. They appreciate very much the availability of telephones and the possibility of communicating

with their families, and also the fact that they can meet a priest, have access to the sacraments and meet people who can tell them about the country. Hence the Centres can be called real oases in the desert of the life of the seafarer.

## **7. Elements for a maritime culture of the people of the sea**

### *7.1. In their relations with nature and the aquatic environment*

The maritime culture has an important place in the people of the sea's relations with nature and the aquatic environment. In this a very decisive role is played by the learning acquired through personal experience and the contributions of oral traditions. On this same point the importance for seafarers and fishers should be recognized of a culture of risk, of respect for the conditions of nature which can even cause fear and terror and which can be expressed symbolically through myths, taboos and superstitions, or by orienting themselves toward very deep faith and religious convictions. It should also be pointed out that there is a fisher's logic, which is close to a hunter's logic, and that this is very different from the logic of a farmer; it defines their differing work and cultural differences between them too. The cultural conflicts due to the non-recognition of this different logic can make important projects fail. (MORALES, 1978).

### *7.2. Values for creating stability in a life of change*

Maritime work takes place in an atmosphere of constant movement and continuous change. This gives rise to the need for a series of very strict values and norms which ensure stability during the voyage and the attainment of objectives: namely, reaching the port, overcoming the continuing crises related to machines, storms and dangers at sea. This type of professional life has more demands than the normal jobs on land with their own routines.

### *7.3. Human relations for overcoming loneliness*

Maritime work creates the conditions for establishing very intense human relations in which, on the one hand, a great development of one's cultural personality is at stake and, at the same time, in which identifying cultural traits of each group of work are manifested, shaped by the identities of the individuals. One team of crew members can do the same job as another team, but the group's identity which develops in the relations during the period at sea, can vary.

### *7.4 Beliefs that give foundation to an identity*

Relations with the family, expressions of the faith, myths and legends make up a very important chapter for a sociology of maritime culture. In this whole series of references, a world of intangible culture is found in which the people of the sea project their vision of the maritime, terrestrial and supra-maritime spheres. It can be a source of



moral strength for overcoming their crises; it can be an explanation for the causes and origins of the forces of nature with which they have to live at close range; it can be an approach to a deep faith received from the family or their communities; it is a justification for an existing order on board and it is required because of organizational needs.

## 8. Final conclusions

The conclusions listed below should guide a subsequent definition of the cultural forms of the people of the sea:

8.1. The culture lived by the people of the sea in general has its source of identity and conscious or unconscious reference point in the maritime work. This has as a principal element a very particular relationship with nature in general, and with the marine and aquatic environment in particular. This relationship is the source of proper and specific values which do not appear in the communities of people who work on the land. These values are the following:

- Respect and recognition of the forces of nature and their phenomena which usually generate a great sense of transcendence.
- Willingness and ability to face the risks of life at sea which generate a particular culture of facing dangers.
- Love for adventure and knowledge about other cultures and forms of living which generate a way of thinking openly and not in a local way.
- Great capacity to adapt to change and to mobility which is expressed in a distancing from the routine and conditions of daily life on the land.

8.2. Because of its conditions of survival in a floating, risky and isolated environment, maritime work should be organized through strong dependence on teams which require a commander with great authority and decision-making ability and a great interaction among the members who must carry out their tasks with great effort, accuracy and vigilance. This working life gives rise to particular relations among the crew members around which some very particular values appear, in particular:

- Openness to community life and work as part of a team which fosters a culture of solidarity that is more specific and stronger than in normal life on land.
- Acceptance of the commander's authority in the exercise of working life and navigation, which creates attitudes of discipline and order proper to this culture.
- Very personalized individualism in the life of solitude and introspection during the days of sailing and work which shapes cultural personalities that are reserved in their judgments; learning is the fruit of practical experience and the transmission of

knowledge is only a baggage of references that are not determined by transmitted certainties.

8.3. The life of the people of the sea is permanently crossed by value conflicts that put their loyalties and cultural references into play and which tend to be resolved or justified in their own vision of the world conditioned by the type of maritime work done. The areas of these value conflicts are:

- Family loyalties vs. expectations of sea life in the ports;
- Prevailing forms of logic in relation to the natural production systems, especially in the case of transitions from fishing and collecting to forms of cultivation;
- Religious values and traditions from denominations of family origin vs. unknown religious value references;
- Know-how acquired through personal experience vs. know-how originating in science and transmitted in scholastic systems;
- Personal loyalties towards bosses or commanders on board vs. loyalties towards working teams or working companions.

8.4. The people of the sea develop and transmit a particular vision of the world and the universe in relation to their work experience, their acquired knowledge and their personal relations with nature and with other persons. This vision is structured on the basis of the following value references:

- A particular sense of frontiers and limits which are not necessarily those of the people of the sea and can be found in qualitative and non-material aspects, and which gives them a broad sense of freedom and adventure.
- A strong need to count on others in the same maritime activity which engenders a special culture of solidarity of survival.
- The values of family and emotional life are nourished and re-fed with a utopian vision not permeated by the difficulties of everyday life, which generates a possible source of shock and conflict;
- A sense of transcendence and recognition of Something absolute over and above particular expressions of religion, although recourse is made to them on some occasions.
- A great sense of life's transience and its stages accompanied by a temporary territoriality with regard to the small spaces and shelters on the ships and in the fishing communities.

## 9. Recommendations

The Apostleship of the Sea should be prepared to develop a broad network using the new communications technologies in order to take advantage of the immense opportunities which they present for the dissemination and presence of the Gospel message among the mass of



maritime workers and people of the sea spread out over the surface of the planet on its seas, lakes and rivers. In this way, the message can be present instantaneously and everywhere, in all those places where the sufferings, anxieties and hopes of seamen and fishermen may require it as a source of support and salvation.

In order to make this recommendation effective, the priority activities should be oriented toward emphasizing the following points:

- Knowing better and enriching the meaning which the people of the sea give to their work life, especially in its special forms of relation with nature and with other persons on board and in the fishing groups.
- Reinforcing the expressions of transcendence and their meaning in the life of risk to which the persons who work as people of the sea are exposed.
- Giving greater expression to the values of a community nature and those which help the people of the sea to have a greater openness toward global communications.
- Fostering, in an on-going way, through a great pastoral effort, the personal introspection experienced in the atmosphere of loneliness and isolation of sea life.
- Carrying out activities and programs which will transform the Stella Maris Centres into nuclei of pastoral outreach, communication and defence of the human, labour and civil rights of the people of the sea, especially of merchant seafarers, industrial and artisanal fishermen. For this purpose, communication technology should be used, especially electronic mail and communication networks, in the Apostleship of the Sea Centres, in the contacts with chaplaincies and in the hundreds of meeting points in addition to the 80 official centers of the Apostleship of the Sea, in order to give greater support to the commitment to serve the seafarers and people of the sea.
- Taking on the challenges posed by the globalization of the world which, on the one hand, makes instant communications and an almost continuous presence possible between persons distant from each other, and, on the other, which creates serious problems at work and job uncertainty. For these reasons, it is important for the Apostleship of the Sea Centres to plan formation activities carefully in view of possible transfer of seafarers to new jobs when waves of unemployment are foreseen; this should take into consideration the cultural values of the people of the sea and seek their application to areas related to activities complementary to maritime life, such as local tourism, education, transformation and commercialization of aquatic resources, and others which should arise from an appropriate interpretation of the real situations of each area and each culture.
- Supporting and consolidating the networks between the people of the sea who sail and work in the maritime and fishing worlds, and

the centers which see to the welfare of seafarers and fishers around the world, by taking advantage of the existing facilities and going beyond the existing models. Efforts must be made not only to take care of lodging, communication and entertainment needs; activities and programs should also be carried out which will help the people of the sea to recognize better their own values and their deepest needs regarding faith, family, their understanding of society, and the contributions which they, as people of the sea, can make in society. The struggle for the defence of the human and labour rights of the people of the sea can be a priority line of action for some Centres where these needs are perceived. However, efforts must also be made to gather up the wealth to be found in a seafarer's and fisher's life, their sense of transcendence, solidarity, respect for nature and their ability to face risks in order to integrate them into modern society which has a deep need for these values.

## 10. Epilogue

Before concluding this presentation, I would like to address you and all those who live and work with the people of the sea, seafarers and fishers of the whole planet. I would like to ask, sincerely and humbly, your forgiveness for having entered into the profound essence of your lives with my questions and questionnaires, that life which each of us has, and has won through suffering, loneliness, misunderstanding and effort. You have the right to respect for this intimacy and we have the duty not to offend that right.

For this reason, over and above the inquiries and research, I would like to tell you that in our era, you are actors and witnesses of the great changes and happenings that have occurred in these years and that you, through your experience and life, preserve the history of humanity in its unceasing development. You have been actors of the great processes of the internationalization of trade, the encounter of cultures, the interaction of persons and peoples. You are the class that conserves the testimonies, the histories, the myths and legends of the seas as well as their ghosts, storms and twilights. But you also keep the perceptions of earthly transcendence and the testimonies of those who survive disasters in order to tell us that beyond every small anxiety and immediate desire, there is an Absolute.



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## EAST ASIAN REGIONAL REPORT

Fr. Jack WALSH, MM  
Regional Coordinator

We are happy to inform all of you that, in reviewing our East Asia Region and events of this past year, we can see *a definite pattern of new and old* blending together much like the "old" and "new" of St. Matthew's Gospel.

Up until this past 11 July, the economies of East Asia Nations were considered on a so-called "upswing". There was evidence of growth, new-found wealth, investment opportunities, and promising development—if not for everyone, at least, for enough people to give strong indicators that "the situation was improving".

Many of the areas where our AOS Centres are located are considered among the "Tiger Economies" of Asia or, at least, "developing Tiger economies". *The growth of the maritime industry showed positive signs*: trade magazines refer to the 21st Century as "the age of the Pacific Rim countries"; the Asian Maritime fleets were modernized at an average of about 16% in the past 3-5 years as against only 3% for the countries of the north during the same period. Asian Seafarers are clearly taking a position of dominance with Filipinos comprising almost 1/3 of the 1.2 million documented Seafarers of the world. There are increasing numbers of Chinese, Burmese, Indian, Sri Lankan and Bangladeshi Seafarers competing with those from North America and Europe.

The move is towards more computerization and cost cutting priorities by ship-owners. This is putting more and more pressure on "supplier nations" to upgrade their Maritime Education and Training facilities. Both *China and the Philippines* seem to be among the nations now talking serious steps to respond to this challenge.

Unfortunately, since 11 July, much uncertainty has developed on the economic level in many of the countries in this Region. Monetary values have changed drastically with most of the local currencies "under attack" by speculators, calls for devaluation, investors re-considering their portfolios and moving their funds to non-Asian stock markets. *All of this has an affect on the maritime industry.*

But what about us who serve the increasing number of Asian Seafarers through our ministry in the Apostleship of the Sea? This is where, I believe, we see evidence of the "old" and the "new". Many of our present Stella Maris Centres were built at the time when the majority of Seafarers were from the nations of the first world—in a



sense, representing the "old". Do Asian Seafarers feel "at home" in them?

How are they being affected by changing political, economic and maritime situations: has the flow of maritime traffic passed them by or made them somewhat outmoded?

We look with pride on the continuing service of what I dare to refer to as our "old-timers"—those among us who have borne the heat and burden of the day and ARE STILL WORKING AT IT AND ADJUSTING TO THE "NEW". We have *Joseph Nijssen, CICM*, in Hong Kong still braving the tidal currents and wind-blown waves of Hong Kong Bay — granted with a relatively new and stronger launch. For him the "old" will soon literally come down around his ears as plans are being made to demolish the long-time Mariners' Club in favor of a newer, more modern and larger Club within a commercial center or office complex in the same location.

Fr. Nijssen insists that it is "business as usual" despite recent political changes in the former Crown Colony. He continues his service with the help of a very involved Executive Committee, volunteers and local co-workers.

For AOS-Japan, there is also evidence of the "old" and the "new"—Fr. *Michael Renou and Raymond Desrochers*, both fresh from "home leave", continue in their respective ecumenical Seafarers' Centres in Kobe and Yokohama. While it is well known that Kobe has greatly recovered from the devastation of the earthquake, there is evidence that much of the shipping traffic has moved over to the Osaka side of the bay.

This reality would have an effect on the activities at the present Centre as does the increasing number of bars, entertainment centres and eateries now situated in the port area. These are operated by Japanese businessmen but managed by their wives from other Asian countries, offering "home-style cooking", etc. to Seafarers. Fr. *John Nairai*, while accepting the fact that his new parish assignment limits his involvement with Seafarers, still manages to be of service. He maintains the service of at least one Social Worker who does ship visitation and arranges for Fr. John to visit those ships/Seafarers requesting his services, especially on weekends.

As for the "new", at least one Religious, Sr. *Nora Sirois*, is now getting increasingly involved with Seafarers in her local port area. Fr. *Michael* reports that there are maybe as many as 10-12 parish priests in port areas making themselves available for service to Seafarers, especially for liturgical services on board. Though not strictly speaking carrying on AOS programs in their respective areas, they are maintaining contact with Seafarers that otherwise would not be available.

In Korea, Fr. *Raymond Sabio, MSC*, continues his service to Seafarers in the Port of *Inchon*. He works out of an office supplied by the

Diocese and has built up over the years an extensive program of good will with port and maritime union officials which complement his ship visitations and Liturgical Services on board.

To the south, there is evidence of the "new", with the appointment of *Fr. Chang Ahn, MSC to AOS-Pusan*. Fr. Chang has already recruited religious and lay volunteers to assist him. Hopefully, his attendance at the recent World Congress helps him in planning his program despite the decreasing number of Koreans working on board.

Among the "new" is the appointment of *Scalabrini Father Bruno Ciceri and Brother Ray Ponge to AOS-Koah-siung, Southern Taiwan*. Though still very much occupied with Taiwanese language studies, they are working hard to continue the active program set up by their predecessor, *Fr. Gilberto Orioli, PIME*. Aside from the *Stella Maris Centre*, which keeps them busy thanks to the hundreds of thousands of fisherfolk operating in and around the Port of Kaoh-siung. A large percentage of these are illegally recruited Filipinos.

In *AOS-Thailand*, "long-timer" *Fr. Tom Pesaresi, MM*, has bidden farewell to his co-worker, Mike Parker and Family, in the ecumenical Seafarers' Centre, while welcoming several "new" co-workers who assist him in the extensive AOS program for Seafarers and Fisherfolk. Diocesan Priest, *Fr. Chat*, has been appointed to the AOS program. He has taken over the Seafarers' Center in Bangkok freeing up Tom to give time to developing the 4 new "hostel-type" Centers dedicated to the service of fisherfolk.

Fr. Tom is assisted by the "new", *Fr. Gregory*, who is considered an "apprentice" preparing to return home to Myanmar to take up Ministry to Seafarers.

Meanwhile in Myanmar, *Fr. Justin*, also a Diocesan Priest, has been appointed to establish the AOS program in spite of government restrictions. He was able to obtain official permission to participate in the World Congress even though there was a delay in obtaining authorizations and clearances. The appointments of Fr. Gregory and Fr. Justin are hopeful signs for the future of *AOS-Myanmar*.

In Malaysia, *AOS-Port of Kelang* has become a reality thanks to the efforts of *Fr. Eugene Benedict*, a Diocesan Priest who has organized his port area parish into a "virtual" Seafarers' Center — another expression of the "new" in our East Asia Region. His program of ships visitations and hospitality to Seafarers has been made possible thanks to the many parish volunteers who consider these activities as being "part of our Christian Community activities...".

In Singapore, while there is still no official appointment of a Chaplain for AOS, *Fr. Andy Altemorada, CICM*, has been able to assist and offer limited services to Seafarers from his position as Assistant



Pastor in a local parish. It was most encouraging that Fr. Andy was able to participate in the World Congress. At least, there is some AOS contact in the busy port of Singapore.

About one hour's motor launch ride away from Singapore is another evidence of the "new" in AOS-East Asia. Diocesan Priest, *Fr. Iwan*, has been appointed to establish AOS in the busy port of *Batam, Indonesia*. While present for the Far East Asia Chaplains' conference in *Phuket* earlier this year, he was unable to participate in the World Congress. However, he does maintain contact with the rest of us via E-mail.

There have been some changes in *AOS-Philippines*. Fr. Roland Doriol, SJ, in *AOS-Port in Cebu*, continues his ministry in spite of another 7-months' tour on board spanning the latter part of 1996 and the beginning of this year. Again, as in the past, Fr. Roland was "covered" by another retired Seafarer-Priest, Fr. Jacques Brosset, from the *Marseilles* Diocese who comes to *Cebu* while Roland is away.

Fr. Roland has added a third container van to the *Stella Maris* Centre — symbolic of expanding his ministry to Seafarers' families and ever-more Maritime Schools in *Cebu* and the surrounding islands. He was able to recruit 14 Maritime Students as participants to the World Congress sponsored by their respective School Administrations.

In the Port of *Manila*, Fr. Savino Bernardi continues his efforts to build a strong foundation of financial and personnel support for AOS. He and his energetic co-workers — both lay and religious — have designed a seminar/workshop "module" on Seafarers' Rights and orientation to the realities of modern-day Seafarers' lives.

They are also engaged in a program to build awareness of the AOS program and hopefully to recruit more volunteer co-workers by contacting local parishes especially those in the port area. They target opportunities to speak about AOS and their needs at the Sunday Masses in the parishes in and around the Port Area. Aside from sharing in the preparatory tasks for the World Congress, Fr. Savino and his co-workers have worked hard to coordinate the various activities connected with the annual celebration of National Seafarers' Day in mid-August.

In the *Port of Davao*, a four-level program continues and even expands, thanks to additional personnel who have transferred to AOS from our former Apostolate to Industrial Workers (now turned over to the local parishes and Archdiocese Social Action Center). Our priority program of service to Seafarers — Filipino and Foreign — domestic or inter-island and international — has expanded thanks to the help of about 35 Maritime Students who join in daily ship visitations and evening "hospitality service" at our *Mary Star of the Sea* Centre.

Our Seafarers' Family Association continues with a rather energetic program of mutual help, especially in hospital visitations and

financial aid when a Seafarer's Family suffers serious sickness and/or death. They have also undertaken a program of Seminars to help Seafarers' Families maintain their active membership in their respective local parishes, to develop skills for income generating projects, as well as to update themselves re: Seafarers' Rights, Government benefits, insurance, etc which are now available to them. On their own, they have undertaken what seems to be a most successful fund-raising campaign to cover the expenses of a "souvenir brochure" for distribution to the World Congress Delegates.

A major breakthrough has been made with the Maritime Department of the Archdiocesan Holy Cross of Davao College. Following the Workshop on Seafarers' Rights presented by the team from the AOS *National Office* in December 1996, there were offers of ongoing cooperation. This was followed up and brought to fruition by our co-workers, Brother Jude Conniff, MM, and Eduardo Lucena.

As mentioned above, 35 students help us with ship visitation and service at our Seafarers' Centre in addition to organizing a special Choir to introduce the theme song for the World Congress and assist with the Liturgical Celebrations.

Finally, we have been able to continue limited assistance to groups and individuals within the Port Community: Liturgies for Government Maritime Agencies such as Port Management and Customs, AIDS Education, Skills Training, as well as the use of our Centre during "off-hours" for community-related programs.

In the AOS *National Office*, the overriding consideration has been the preparations for the World Congress. There has been a division of labor among all of us assigned full-time along with our lay and Religious co-workers to cover the many details of the Congress. Most of these details have been presented in a separate report.

There have been many changes in the National Office: the former National Director, Fr. Carlos Oda, CS, is now the Director of Formation for his Scalabrini Community. The "turn-over" was made in mid-December '96 at the first-ever Maritime Community Christmas Party in Manila when Bishop Balce introduced me to the participants as the new National Director.

This year has also brought planned and unplanned changes: our Episcopal Promoter, Bishop Sofio Balce, has been under medical attention since June and just recently offered his resignation from AOS activity. We now await the appointment of a new Episcopal Promoter by the CBCP/Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines.

Meanwhile, despite many other activities, Bishop Ramon Arguelles, Chair-Person of the ECMI/Episcopal Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, has generously served as "Acting Episcopal Promoter" until a new appointment is made — another indication of the "new".



Another change has been the recent assignment of Sr. Muruja Padre Juan, MSSC, to the Scalabrini Sisters Motherhouse in Rome. We thank Sr. Maru for all the energy and creativity she has brought to AOS-Philippines and wish her continued good health and much success in her new assignment.

As we finalized preparations for the World Congress, we were blessed with the assignment of the Diocesan Priest, *Fr. Columbus Villamil*, by Archbishop Jesus Tuguib as the *AOS Chaplain for the Port of Cagayan de Oro* in Northern Mindanao. It is fitting to know that Fr. Columbus is the first Filipino Diocesan Priest assigned as a Port Chaplain.

Finally, we are grateful for the cooperation we have received from all *AOS Centers and Personnel throughout the East Asia Region*. We are especially appreciative of the increasing interest in assisting one another in the various needs which arise.

One area is the general agreement to implement the sharing of resources especially as regards financial resources among "those who have" and "those who have not". The ways and means have yet to be finalized - but, at least, the issue has been raised and is being talked about.

Another "new" item is the decision among our AOS members to promote ways and means of developing a centre - or centres - in Asia to specialize in assisting Seafarers in dealing with the increasing physical, legal, psychological and spiritual problems arising from their work on board.

We are all pleased with the interest of ICMA and ITF in the same concerns. I think we would all agree that we can look forward to challenging times as we approach the Third Millennium.

## SOUTH ASIAN REGIONAL REPORT

*Fr. Rethinam V. MATHIAS*  
*Regional Coordinator*

The people of the Sea in the South Asian Region consists of those who come ashore as sailors in the ports of South Asian countries like Colombo, Karachi, Mumbai, Calcutta, Chennai, Cochin etc. Besides these, there are millions of people in the coastal area of this vast region whose life and relation is determined by the Sea. For example, India has twelve million fish workers who live by the Sea along her 7,000 km. long coastal line. Their toil contributes to the economy of the country.

Developing countries account for half the world's production of fish. Asian countries account for 1/5 of the value of global fishery products. By 1985, India was the 18th largest exporter of fishery products in the world, the 6th largest among developing countries, the 4th largest in Asia.

Pre-independence exports of fish did not call for substantial changes in technology as only the surplus was exported. The harvesting technology (the boats and nets) and processing technology (drying the salting) were artisanal in nature. The people involved in trade were merchants from the local communities. No change was required in the quality and quantum of employment or investment for exports. The consumer profile within and outside India was similar.

In post-independence India, the entire situation changed as it was the market that determined the nature of the industry. There was the growth of a fishing fleet that was fishing exclusively for export. This was a new technology (trawling) which made significant changes in technology and design especially in Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Prior to 1970, only 20% of the Indian fleet were trawlers. By 1980, 60% of the fleet were trawlers.

This change in technology had a marked impact on the fishery itself. In itself it was a very aggressive technology which destroyed the Sea bed and small fish as it was only targeting shrimp for export. But more significantly, the nature of the work force changed too. The majority of workers on these boats needed to have mere muscle power unlike the traditional fishermen who had developed fishing and navigating skills over the years. The artisanal fishermen had very selective methods of fishing and had a relationship with the sea which made them fish for need and not for greed. Fishing was a way of life. On the other hand, the export-oriented fishery is shortsighted, trying to reap as much as possible in the shortest possible time, thereby causing over fishing and depletion of the marine resources.



The impact of this unsustainable exploitation of the Sea hit the people who depended on the Sea for their livelihood. They had very little share in the fruits of the Sea, nor had they any say in the matter. The policy makers on the whole were in favour of the powerful firms that exploited marine resources. Not able to bear the sufferings of poverty and misery, the people of the Sea started to assert their rights and agitate unitedly against these destructive policies from 1976 onwards. In 1991 the Government of India introduced the joint venture giving licenses to foreign vessels to fish in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of the Indian territorial waters which resulted in an open clash. From February 1994 to August 1996 the National Fish Workers Forum, in solidarity with the Central Trade Unions and the National Voluntary Organizations went on a systematic dialogue with the Government of India and agitated to cancel all their licenses to the foreign vessels. The fish workers of India succeeded in their action. The A.O.S. wing of the Commission for Labour of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI) motivated the Church in India to support this just action of the fish workers of the country. Several local churches in the coastal area motivated and encouraged their faithful to participate in all the activities organised by the National Fish Workers Forum (NFF). Several Bishops joined the letter campaign. The Convener of the NFF appreciated and thanked the Church in India for the solidarity given to their action.

The A.O.S. of India has made a National Survey of Women workers in shrimp processing industries. The survey reveals the magnitude of the problem of migration of women in search of work and how they are exploited when they are away from their homeland. It studies in depth their working, living, financial and health conditions. As a follow up, in March 1996 a National Consultation was organized by the A.O.S. in Cochin to study in depth the outcome of the survey and plan ways and means of implementing the conclusions and recommendations of the survey. Following this, various regional consultations were organised with the view to involve more people. Many more participated in the regional meetings conducted in local languages in the regions of Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

In the beginning of March 1997 the South Asian Regional Conference of A.O.S. was organized in Chennai. Eight port chaplains from India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka were present. Here is a glimpse of the work done in the port cities. For the past 27 years the diocese of Mangalore in the west coast of India has been caring for the fisherfolk through a Society which takes care of their economic development, education and health. In Goa, periodical visits to the seafarers are being made by the chaplain residing at St. Xavier's Church and he looks into their needs to the extent possible. There is certainly an absence of pastoral care to those hundreds of young men who come from all over India to the training centre for seamen in Goa, to be trained there in various skills to work on board the ship. In Cochin, down South, there

is a seafarers association which cares for the sailors who touch the Cochin port. Liturgical and sacramental services are made available to the sailors. The Chaplain of Chennai besides, his other responsibilities, is involved along with a team of lay people to reach out to the seafarers. Their motto is 'make the seafarers feel at home away from home by concern and service'. A seafarers centre is being planned in Chennai. In Bangladesh, specially in Chittagong, there is a long tradition of service to the fisherfolk. The majority are Muslims. There are many gypsies who live on fishing. One priest is working with them. There is no one full time for this work at the national level. There is a proposal of a team ministry with lay participation in order to make the work more effective. The local churches in the coastal regions of Sri Lanka are doing a good work with the fisherfolk for their economic development and education, but there is a need of a pastoral structure which can adequately respond to the demands of the fish workers and the seafarers. Fr. Ray F. Maher from the Pontifical Council was with us; his presence and contribution was valuable during the conference.

Though the A.O.S. in the region exists, the participants in the conference felt that we have still a lot more to do at the level of making the pastors of the local churches in the coastal area understand the importance of this ministry and appoint a priest who can full time be involved in this ministry with a team of trained lay volunteers. This, we thought, should be done at least in major port cities of the region. In order to carry out this task effectively, our Bishop promoter, Leon A. Tharmaraj, and the National Director are taking steps to find a full time National Chaplain for the A.O.S. in India. We have another challenge in the region viz. Regional Animation and Co-ordination. Due to evident reasons, we are unable to contact and work with Pakistan. We have to work out some strategy to overcome this difficulty.

Finally, we thank the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of the people on the move for their encouragement and support for our work in the region.



## SOUTHWEST INDIAN OCEAN REGIONAL REPORT

*Fr. François LE GALL*  
*Regional Coordinator*

Our region of the Southwest Indian Ocean is vast and diversified. It is not easy to take it all in in one glance except for the Lord who inspired our Bishops to bring us together twenty years ago in order to experience the same adventure of the Apostleship of the Sea. The region includes the islands of Madagascar, Réunion, Mauritius, the Seychelles and the Comoros, and on the African continent, South Africa, Mozambique, Tanzania and Kenya. The Southwest Indian Ocean constitutes a basin of economic and commercial exchanges as well as an ocean area that is frequented especially by industrial fishing ships and artisanal fishing boats. There are ports of international importance, such as MOMBASSA, DAR ES SALAAM, DURBAN, CAPE TOWN and PORT LOUIS with a commercial emphasis, as well as others with an industrial fishing emphasis like SALDANHA in South Africa, VICTORIA in the Seychelles, MAHAJUNGA in Madagascar and PORT LOUIS in Mauritius. Our pastoral concern also extends to the host of artisanal fishermen all along the coasts of each of the countries in the region.

In each of these countries, the Apostleship of the Sea is organized on the level of ports or coastal zones and meets each year for a national meeting. Since 1967 we have come together for the Regional Conference which is held every five years in a different port of the region. It was MAHAJUNGA, the shrimp port of Madagascar, which hosted us last year for our Fifth Conference on a theme close to the one of this World Congress: "People of the Sea, Responsible Partners of the Creation".

As the delegates to that Conference stated, "We believe in regional cooperation beyond any cultural prejudices or the different economic levels from one country to another. The experience of these last years has shown us that we are all confronted, on the one hand, with the positive developments in maritime activity—greater capacity for transport and harbour service and increased catches bringing in more cash— just as we are confronted with the signs of deterioration in the seafarers' situation: injustices, insecurity, unemployment, long working hours, long periods of separation, fear of an uncertain future. We believe in the need for collaboration with the associations of seafarers and seamen's wives and the Christian labour unions. However, the AM adds to the common concern for the promotion and defence of

seafarers' rights, the added dimensions of faith and salvation in Jesus Christ. Faced with the current situation and the demands and difficulties of the evangelizing task in the maritime world, we continue to proclaim the Good News in humility and confidence. We know that the Lord is the Master and that his Spirit makes our work fruitful". In cooperation with the Mission to Seamen in Durban and in Dar Es Salaam, and with the Lutheran Church in Tamatave, the Apostleship of the Sea in the region gives witness to its support for the ecumenical effort.

But what did the forty representatives from six countries discover who met last year in Manhajunga to study the theme, "People of the Sea, Responsible Partners of the Creation"?

Many people share the Bible's same vision of creation: the environment and humankind are connected, and harmony between the two is vital. God has entrusted men and women with the responsibility of maintaining that harmony. And it is human sin which has destroyed it. How in fact can the depletion of the ichthyic resources, the destruction of coastal zones, the pollution of the oceans and throwing back non-selected species into the sea be described, if not as sins against our covenant with God the Creator? And what can be said about life aboard ship—employment contracts which are not respected or are imposed, employment periods that are too long, overly brief stops, excessive working hours, insecurity because of the lack of qualifications, equipment or life insurance, unpaid salaries, insufficient food, the search for maximum profit to the seafarer's detriment—except that these are sins because they threaten the dignity of maritime workers. When we, men and women, who are involved in the universe, stop building it, we halt our own development and divert nature from its objective. By going against God's plan, we insert sin into the heart of creation; it turns against us and, whether we want it or not, it leads to our ruin.

By having solidarity with men and women and proposing that they become children of God, Jesus reveals himself to be the true foundation of human dignity. Through him seafarers can escape the decay and participate in the universal liberation of all creation with the children of God. The risen Jesus makes us live again like a new creation, like new men and women in fidelity to the Father's design of love. He makes us capable of protecting the environment and respecting the rights of seafarers by reconciling ourselves with God, with our sisters and brothers and with nature. Isn't this the new Spirit that prompts hospitality initiatives and the struggle against injustice and for the defence of the environment, and which brings the Apostleship of the Sea together with so many other bodies? Respect for the maritime environment (What have you done with your world?) and the rights of seafarers (What have you done with your brothers and sisters?) is an authentic mode of evangelization for all Christians



through the Apostleship of the Sea, and it becomes a challenge and an exciting task for all women and men of good will.

With the men and women of the sea grouped into the four large countries and the five islands of the region, the Apostleship of the Sea proposes to bring about greater respect for the protection of the maritime environment and the rights of seafarers. In order to do this, we organize: hospitality for the seamen and the proclamation of Jesus Christ to those who wish to listen; reflection and action by seamen's wives; we alert public opinion about the situation of crews; we exert pressure in order to improve maritime laws; we encourage associative and labor union solidarity in a national and international framework.

We hope that our regional action in the Indian Ocean will find greater inspiration and an occasion for renewed development in the framework of this Twentieth World Congress.

# CENTRAL AND WEST AFRICAN REGIONAL REPORT

Fr. Cyrille ABOSSÉ KETE  
Regional Coordinator

The Central and West African Region of AM includes all the coastal countries from Mauritania in the north to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Zaïre) in the south.

A Regional Meeting was held in Lomé (Togo) 2 - 6 December 1996. The following remarks, followed by a reflection, arise from that meeting.

## A. Remarks

### *Merchant shipping*

We noted more efficient and improved methods of handling and storing cargo, together with more sophisticated technology and equipment on board ships.

All the countries in our region are undeveloped countries, with weak economies. National merchant fleets are very tiny, almost nil. As a result, the number of seafarers is dropping and unemployment is rising. Jobs are scarce and so the number of active seafarers continues to fall. Seafarers are also in danger of losing their sense of solidarity. The absence of such solidarity creates nightmares in situations where international and national laws are completely or almost completely flouted.

### *Small-scale and Industrial fishing*

All the problems and difficulties which are inherent in the life of our undeveloped countries threaten more and more the lives of the people of the sea in the region. Fishing equipment has become very expensive and the devaluation of the CFA franc has worsened the situation.

The environment and its resources are being damaged through the use of dynamite and chemicals without proper control, and through the absence of clear and bold plans to protect the environment. Industrial fishing heartlessly subjects the seafarers to very bad conditions. No one cares about tackling safety problems on old ships. One hears people saying, proudly, that making profit is more important than seafarers' lives.



## *Exploitation of oil resources*

Current oil production may be a source of wealth for our poor countries but often the required precautions are ignored leading to damage to the ecosystem and threats to the lives of fisher-communities.

### **B. Reflection**

All the representatives who attended the Lomé meeting are now aware of the above factors and problems. We call on this World Congress to alert seafarers, Christian communities, politicians and public opinion to the seriousness of the situation. We need to be not only awake to the situation but also aware that we are partners with God, responsible for His Creation. Our faith in Jesus Christ, mysteriously present in Creation, calls us to change our mentality and behaviour in the way we use the sea and its environment. It calls us to safeguard them for future generations.

### **C. What are we doing?**

Our actions will not be effective if we stop short at reflection - we must make them real. Our call goes first of all to seafarers themselves, who are the most concerned group, and then to society in general and to public opinion. We call on governments, trade unions and other associations to work together and to overcome differences of opinion which affect seafarers and the environment.

- 1. 'Unity is strength' and so we try to publicise a common AM badge and membership card in our region.
- We wish to have Stella Maris Centres in all ports. There are already clubs which welcome seafarers at Pointe Noire (Congo) and Abidjan (Ivory Coast). At Lomé (Togo) a site for a Stella Maris Centre has been acquired and we expect work on it to begin soon .
- "Sea Sunday" is being promoted in all maritime dioceses in the region.
- In order to improve communication between local AM members and the regional Coordinator, we have published a Directory so that seafarers calling to ports in our region will know where to go and whom to contact.

May the Lord who inspires us, help us and teach us to help each other to go forward always. May we not only be present in the maritime world, making Christ present to seafarers, but, above all, may we be true partners of Christ, the saviour of Creation.

## EUROPEAN REGIONAL REPORT

Fr. Joseba BEOBIDE  
*Ad Interim Regional Coordinator*

### BELGIUM

AM is active in Antwerp, Ghent and Zeebrugge. In 1996 more than 40,000 seafarers visited the Stella Maris Centre in *Antwerp* which works ecumenically with three other Christian agencies. Fr *Geert Bamelis* replaced Stefan Grillet as Chaplain and National Director earlier this year. AM is also represented on the board of management of the Mariners' Club in Antwerp, which is operated by MtS and BISS. In Antwerp there is also a Sports' Field for seafarers. The Stella Maris Centre at *Ghent* has a full-time pastoral worker and it was visited by more than 11,000 seafarers last year. At *Zeebrugge* there is an elderly AM chaplain (and no replacement in sight); the Club there is not connected with AM.

### CROATIA

AM is active to greater or lesser extents in the ports of *Split, Zadar, Plo e, Dubrovnik, Rijeka and Pula*, and recently, following a recommendation from this year's National Assembly of AM, moves have begun to explore how AM's apostolate can be extended to crews of ships and barges on the River Danube.

### ENGLAND AND WALES

After years of sterling service to AM, Fr John Maguire moved to new pastoral fields and has been replaced as National Director by Mr Tim McGuire. AM work continues in the large centres at Tilbury, Merseyside and London, and through a network of chaplains and chaplaincy teams in other ports. Cruise-ship ministry is an important part of AM's activities.

### FRANCE

*Mission de la Mer* offers a constant and effective presence in the maritime world, as it strives to be a witness to God, made present among us through the Incarnation of Jesus Christ.

*Fisheries:* The crisis of 1993-94 has deeply changed the industry. Fishermen's wives are taking a more active role now and are better organised. *Young people* in nautical schools are having serious problems in getting jobs due to flags of convenience. Seafarers are welcomed at 13 Centres along the French coast. These centres well know the increasing number of vessels being arrested in port for various reasons. Mission



de la Mer is *present at sea* with a deacon and priest. Last year a harbour pilot in Marseilles was ordained deacon. Mission de la Mer has a *National Team* made up of representatives from different regions, with an executive. It works in cooperation with the Episcopal Committee for the Maritime World and the local churches. Each year a concrete programme of work and research in different areas is set. Priority is given to involvement in the life of the maritime world and its problems. Problems in both the fisheries and merchant marine sectors have been brought to the attention of senior government officials. Mission de la Mer is blessed with a large number of enthusiastic volunteer-workers, and it is in contact with students in *Nautical Schools* through their chaplains and members of Maritime Youth. In May there was an International Meeting of Seafarers' Wives, mainly from France and Spain. About 110 members of Mission de la Mer attended its *National Congress* this year at La Rochelle. Mission de la Mer maintains regular working contact with ICMA, with other national AM organisations, and with other apostolic groups.

## GERMANY

Germany has two AM posts on the North Sea coast, at Hamburg and Bremen, and one on the Baltic coast at Rostock. In *Hamburg*, there is a professional ships' visitor and a social worker to help seafarers. The large *Stella Maris* hostel is no longer fully used and this creates financial problems. AM at *Bremen* looks after several outlying ports along the River Weser as well. There is a *Stella Maris* Club and a caravan, equipped with a telephone, used by the professional ships' visitors. The Port Chaplains at Hamburg and Bremen have other pastoral works beside AM work. The local Archbishop has not yet named a replacement at *Rostock* for Fr R Maher since his departure for Rome.

## IRELAND

AM is active in these ports: Dublin, Cork, Waterford and Belfast. In *Dublin*, where National Director Fr Albert Hayes *ofm cap* is port chaplain, ships are visited regularly and Mass is celebrated on board when necessary. Seafarers are brought to and from the *Stella Maris* Club by minibus, and when hospitalised are visited. In *Cork* and two neighbouring ports, Fr D Campion *sdb* looks after seafarers. In *Waterford* Fr U Ó Cinnéide *op* and Mr S Kavanagh visit ships. In *Belfast*, Northern Ireland, seafarers are cared for by a local parish priest, Fr L Mullan. There is a nice *Stella Maris* Centre there with overnight accommodation.

## ITALY

The Apostleship of the Sea in Italy is located within the organization of the Migrantes Foundation, the organism of the Italian

Episcopal Conference for the pastoral care of people on the move. Engagement in the pastoral care of people of the sea is especially active on two fronts: that of the WELCOME of seafarers in transit at national ports and that of ACCOMPANYING seafarers and passengers on board certain cruise ships.

The welcome is done through the *Stella Maris* Centers in the ports of Savona, La Spezia, Cagliari, Palermo, Augusta, Ravenna, and Venice. To this list Taranto has been added recently. In some other places (Genoa, Civitavecchia, Ancona), though there is no *Stella Maris*, there is some form of pastoral assistance to seafarers.

Unfortunately there are some things to complain about: the lack of any kind of pastoral activity in important ports like Livorno, Naples, Trieste and in the new one of Gioia Tauro. Then there is a certain inadequacy of the existing *Stella Maris* setups and generally a minimal involvement of the local Churches, which rarely provide an organic and structured approach to this pastoral area.

## NETHERLANDS

Early this year *Fr Frits Maas mhm* became Port Chaplain at Rotterdam, replacing *Fr Willy van den Heuven scj*, and was later named National Chaplain with *Mr Toon van de Sande* as his Associate. Pastoral work for seafarers is promoted in an ecumenical way and earlier this year there was an ICMA-sponsored Chaplains' Training Course at Rotterdam. Ship visiting is a priority (every day 80 ships arrive at Rotterdam) with special attention being given to crews of arrested ships and stowaways. There are good working contacts with employees of International Seafarers' Centres, the Port Hospital, and the Maritime Families Association. However, there is a distinct challenge regarding the tension between religious, secular and commercial motivations in welfare work for seafarers. Other activities include memorial services in cooperation with Protestant pastors, the magazine *Quo Vadis* and contact letters. All these services are regularly evaluated.

## NORWAY

AM Chaplain *Fr Rudolf Hartz* has been transferred to Harstad nearer to Narvik where he worked for 17 years. There he had good cooperation with the Swedish Seafarers' Mission, but this has ended through lack of Swedish seafarers. He often meets Filipino seafarers on Norwegian ships and he and Filipino priests in Norway serve them pastorally. Scandinavian priests have an open heart for seafarers' problems.

## POLAND

AM is active with *Stella Maris* Centres at Gdynia, Szczecin, Gdansk and Winouj cie. Pastoral work also takes place with seafarers' and fishers' families. AM organised a large seafarers' pilgrimage to the National Marian Shrine at Czestochowa.



## PORTUGAL

No report received. The National Director of AM-Spain has made several attempts to contact and revive AM in Portugal, but with little success.

## SPAIN

AM is slowly making itself more present along the country's coastline, but it has still a long way to go. It is better known in the north-western Atlantic coast, but in the south and on the Mediterranean coast there are only two centres, at *Barcelona* and *Málaga*. Since the publication earlier this year of the Apostolic Letter *Stella Maris*, we have noticed more openness to our work in coastal dioceses where we have not yet a true presence. In February a *National Congress* of AM was held at Barcelona, with representatives from the Northern Coast, from Barcelona from Seville, Málaga and Canary Islands. The main themes on the agenda were the long-standing problems of the fishing and merchant marine worlds. In May the Bishop-Promoter and Fr J Beobide, the National Director, visited the region of *Galicia*, probably the leading area of Europe as far as the number of seafarers and fishers is concerned. There were meetings with priests in many fishing ports. In July the Bishop-promoter issued a *pastoral letter* on the feast of our Lady of Mount Carmel, Patroness of seafarers. There is now a new *Stella Maris* presence at *Vigo*, one of the biggest fishing ports in Europe. It is hoped to open Centres soon at *Málaga* and *Canary Islands*. The large *Stella Maris* Centres at *Bilbao* and *Barcelona* continue their daily heavy work, bringing seafarers to and from the centres by minibus. In Barcelona there is an active *Centre for Seafarers' Rights*, in contact with similar centres in USA and elsewhere.

## UKRAINE

Polish Salesian priests continue a pastoral ministry in the port of *Odessa*, where attempts are being made to promote a truly ecumenical approach; but enthusiastic involvement from the Orthodox Church has yet to be attained. As a result of contacts made by Fr Ray Maher while attending a seminar at *Yalta*, a Greek-Catholic (Uniate) priest in that port is now ready to be active part-time in port ministry there.

# CENTRAL AMERICAN REGIONAL REPORT

Most Rev. Fernando GAMALERO  
Bishop of Escuintla, Guatemala  
Acting Regional Coordinator

## Port Complex of the Central American Region

The Isthmus of Central America is located in the center of the American continent. On the north it is joined to the Yucatan peninsula in Mexico, and to Colombia in South America. This isthmus is bathed by the Atlantic Ocean through the Caribbean Sea and on the south by the Pacific Ocean. The isthmus is located between 17° North latitude, 90° East longitude and 9° North latitude and 79° West latitude. With Panama, through its canal, the two oceans are joined facilitating world maritime transport.

Central America is made up of the following countries: *Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama and Belize.*

The following dioceses geographically have access to the sea in the Atlantic and in the Pacific:

*Guatemala:* Apostolic Vicariat of Izabal and the Diocese of Escuintla.

*Honduras:* San Pedro, Sula and Choluteca.

*Nicaragua:* Bluefields, Julgalpa, Leon, Granada and Managua.

*Costa Rica:* Tilaran and Limon.

*Panama:* De Golon, David, Bocas del Toro, Panama, Chitre, Santiago de Veraguas and Penonome.

*Belize:* No information.

According to the data from the inquiry, the description of the maritime movement is as follows:

The harbor activity of our maritime port complexes serves products of importation and exportation; in synthesis, we will list the approximate volume of loading and unloading movements on the whole in the Atlantic and the Pacific:

*Guatemala:* from 5 to 6 million metric tons

*El Salvador:* from 4 to 5 million metric tons

*Honduras:* 4,979,670 metric tons

*Nicaragua:* No information.

*Costa Rica:* 5,000,000 metric tons

*Panama:* During the year 1996, 13,500 ships passed through the Canal transporting 198,067,660 metric tons and they paid the cost of US\$ 486,688,265.00. With regard to its own loading and unloading, there were 16.1 million barrels of petroleum, while thousands of persons passed through the Canal in 310 passenger ships.

*Belize:* No information.



## **Ports for Small Vessels**

Most ports in Central America and therefore of each country have an artisanal fishing activity for small vessels. Nonetheless, various industrial-type fishing fleets are developing.

## **Fishing Activity**

In Costa Rica, artisanal and industrial fishing together have 74 large ships with an annual tonnage of 13,600 metric tons of fish. There are approximately 9,405 fishermen working in this industry. In Guatemala, for example, the combination of industrial and artisanal fishing, both in the Atlantic and the Pacific, is calculated at approximately 13-15 thousand metric tons yearly. There are more or less 12,000 fishermen working in this sector.

## **Maritime Safety**

Generally, the Central American State offers a certain maritime safety to seamen and fishermen. In some countries, such as Costa Rica, only those working with the State are offered a policy against accidents on the job. In Guatemala, unfortunately, the State does not provide facilities for the artisanal fishermen. Although the diocese of Escuintla has succeeded in organizing the fishermen into an association for eleven consecutive years, they have not been allowed to use the port facilities and many have died when trying to pass the dashing of waves. Moreover, this governmental concern does not want to supply the space necessary for setting up a hospitality center for seamen in Stella Maris.

In all the countries of Central America there is a control of the fishermen who must have a license; in these countries, the Navy provides rescue service.

## **Fish Processing Plant**

In most of the port installations, the processing of fish is very empirical and there is no real control of its healthfulness. However, where industrial fishing exists, there are some processing plants. For example, in Costa Rica, in the maritime complex in Tilaran, there are three tuna plants and three shrimp plants; there are no scale fish plants. Most of the scale fish is exported while the surplus is destined for national consumption. In Guatemala there is the intention to install a processing plant for scale fish by the artisanal fishermen, but the harbor of Puerto Quetzal gives no place for it to exist.

In the port of Cahmperico and Puerto Quetzal in Guatemala, there is a processing plant for fish and shrimp on an industrial level. Normally, the fish from the artisanal fishermen is sold directly on the docks where the intermediaries obtain it at a low price thus exploiting the fishermen; later they sell it at high costs on the market. Because of

this, with some exceptions, in most Central American countries, fish is not eaten.

## Conclusion

In the region all the dioceses have a maritime responsibility; and they have the desire to begin this specific pastoral care. However, we have to prepare suitable personnel which will take us a little time. Unfortunately, for economic reasons, the region has not been able to meet as desired, and this creates a great disadvantage for us in facing the present challenges. If we succeed in meeting in the region with the persons in charge of each one of these dioceses in the near future, we will obtain a good programming for the development of this pastoral care.

For the moment, the data we have has been obtained through a rather generalized inquiry, but it provides us with a clear, although not a scientifically presented idea.

It is necessary to recommend to our Central American region to begin a process of education and formation in order to prepare the sea workers on the terra firma: port, families and hospitality centers, etc. In the same way, chaplains should be assigned to the ports and possibly catechists who should be seamen and/or fishermen.

The diocese of Escuintla will soon begin to build the Institute of Maritime Sciences for men and women where instruction will be given on the bachelor's level in the branches of aquaculture, navigation and ship building, with a "pensum" of scientific study, in addition to formation in the social doctrine of the Church. In this way, Evangelization will be brought to the marine environment.

When this Institute will be inaugurated, we will inform the Pontifical Council of the Apostleship of the Sea so that through it all those who are part of this apostolate will learn about the event.

The information obtained for both a detailed and synthetic view of the reality in the Central American region regarding the Pastoral Care of the Apostleship of the Sea has been made available by the Diocese of Escuintla, Guatemala.



## CONO SUR REGIONAL REPORT

*Fr. Aloys KNECICK, c.s.  
Regional Coordinator*

There have been many changes recently in the merchant marine world throughout Latin America, such as the transfer of shipping and port services and companies from the State to private hands, and the introduction of flags of convenience. This means we are now faced not only with structural changes, but also with the need for changes in our traditional patterns of seafarers' pastoral care. Shipping and seafarers are no longer the same, and they remain in port for a few hours only.

Social and pastoral work is now very different - reduced in volume and more difficult. Stella Maris clubs are not so much visited by crews as by people in search of information and possibilities of enlisting as crew members. Many local seafarers, but only a few foreign ones, are trying to improve their skills for working on merchant or fishing vessels. On the other hand, it seems that the Church is also becoming more active on behalf of those of its flock who search for better conditions on rivers and seas. So several dioceses in Argentina, Brazil and Chile are not only interested in opening clubs, but also in a specific pastoral programme for fishers and seafarers. Our Bishops in Brazil, Argentina and Chile are very interested and greatly concerned. It is still very difficult to work fruitfully with deep-sea (mechanized) fishing vessels, not only because they are far away and seldom call to port, but also because of the fact that their crews consist of people of very different languages, nationalities, and beliefs (Spaniards, Russians, Poles, Chinese, Koreans. etc.).

Argentine authorities have begun to send inspectors on board every ship, to protect not only livestock, but also personnel. They are also training technical personnel to keep a watch on ships sailing under flags of convenience, calling at ports from Mexico southwards; this is a very welcome initiative on behalf of seafarers.

We get little or no help from unions; they are vanishing or splitting up and thereby getting even weaker. The first Latin American meeting of the ICSW at Vina del Mar brought new hopes and optimistic expectations concerning the welfare of seafarers, and we hope that we will soon be able to see some results from the participation of all those involved. If all is well with the seafarer, then he produces more.

# NORTH AMERICAN REGIONAL REPORT

*Deacon Robert BALDERAS*  
*Regional Coordinator*

## **The Caribbean**

After the first International Conference on the Pastoral Care of Tourism and AoS Ministry held in Nassau, Bahamas, in December 1994, the General Secretary of the Antilles Episcopal Conference, Father Paschal Tiernan op, was designated or simply accepted the challenge of promoting and encouraging the establishment of port ministries in the Antilles. After many contacts with various individuals and organisations in the Islands, only the Society of St Vincent de Paul indicated a willingness to join AoS.

Fr Paschal Tiernan completed his term as General Secretary of the Antilles Episcopal Conference in July of this year and much to his regret before any substantial forward movement in the area of port ministry could be reported.

## **Mexico**

To identify specific needs and to bond with the people of the sea working as fishers from the port of Mazatlán, the National Director of AoS in Mexico, Father José de Jesús Aguilar Enríquez, has accompanied a number of fishers on their journeys to sea to ply their trade.

Father Aguilar has discovered that many fishing boats do not have the ability to communicate with anyone for they lack the basic radio equipment to do so; addictions to alcohol and drugs are rampant; basic religious formation is lacking among the people of the sea and many live in common-law relationships; little time is spent ashore and less time in Church.

Fishing boats with radio equipment on board may tune in on Sundays to Father Aguilar's 11am Holy Mass offered from his church through his parish radio station. Attending these Sunday Masses ashore are family members of the fishers at sea. After each Sunday Mass, family members ashore converse with relatives and friends tuned in at sea.

A national conference was held in Mazatlán in April of this year and included points of interest on migrants and itinerant peoples. It was attended by four students of the Mazatlán Nautical School who were disturbed to learn that there was no Stella Maris Centre in Mazatlán. The necessity of a Centre and who would run it and how it might serve the people of the sea was discussed with the Director of the Nautical School. The seed of hope for a Centre has been planted. May it one day bear fruit in the port of Mazatlán.



To serve the seafarers and families of some 500 shrimp boats, twenty tuna-fishing boats and a host of other fishing craft, a full-time priest is needed for port ministry at Mazatlán. A priest can not effectively minister in a parish, in a port and manage the office of National Director at the same time, says Father Aguilar.

## Canada

The nomination of a new Bishop Promoter and National Director have proven to be the first steps towards re-structuring Apostolatus Maris Canada and have made its members a cohesive group, reports Canada's National Director, Fr Guy Bouillé. AM chaplains are present in fourteen of the fifteen major Canadian ports and with one exception work from ecumenical Centres, the exception being the Stella Maris Centre at Sept-Iles.

Some of the major achievements within AM Canada include the recruitment and training of prayer leaders aboard ships; successful defence of abused seafarers through collaboration with ITF; closer links with local parishes; recruitment and training of volunteers; ecumenical cooperation. The Diaconate in the Canadian Church has also been recognised with the appointment of a deacon to the Toronto port ministry.

Father Guy Bouillé's activities now include regular and sustained contact with all AM members; port visits; participation in regional conventions; cooperation with seafarers' associations, unions, shipping companies; working with the local church in recruiting and assigning chaplains; public relations and close contact with the Bishop promoter of AM.

The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops is unaware of the importance of AM's mission to seafarers. The Canadian coastline is very long; ports are numerous and many are isolated. The distances between them are incredible. Port and chaplain visits are necessary but costly. The lack of financial support makes visits very difficult. The Bishop-Promoter of AM in Canada seeks to enlighten his confreres about the importance of this work to secure the funding necessary to continue the ministry as efficiently as possible.

## United States

On the shore side of our ministry, the Apostleship of the Sea is active in 51 US seaports. These include ports along the Pacific Coast up to and including the Pacific Northwest; the East Coast down to the South Atlantic; ports along the Great lakes and all major ports in the Gulf of Mexico.

The ministry to seafarers in these fifty-one US ports is being carried out by 34 priests, 15 deacons, two religious Brothers, two religious Sisters and ten lay people, five of whom are women. Only five of the thirty-four priests are working full-time in port ministry. In

addition there are scores of lay volunteers nationwide who give some of their time on a voluntary basis to the work of AoS.

AoS United States is a member of and takes an active part in NAMMA: North American Maritime Ministry Association. This is an ecumenical umbrella-body. In addition, NCCS (National Catholic Conference of Seafarers) is linked to AoS.

Not every port ministry claims a home-away-from-home for seafarers. Some chaplains work strictly from their vehicles. Some work from one or other of ten Catholic Centres, while others use ecumenical centres as their ministry base. Almost all work ecumenically.

On the waterside of our ministry, a number of ship's crews enjoy regular prayer services at sea. These prayer meetings are led by crew members using liturgical guides prepared by the National Office for the seasons of Lent and Advent. The port ministry of Oakland alone has deputed ten seafarers to be Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist. Others have been prepared and have been installed to serve seafarers from the ports of Newark and Galveston.

From a ship management perspective, time is money, competition is fierce and ships earn nothing sitting idly in port. Consequently ship owners continue to press their agents and ship's officers to keep the time spent in port to a minimum and to discover ways of reducing voyage expenses. As a result, short port stays, multicultural crews and grievances about provisions, water-quality and poor sleeping facilities all follow. Every possible avenue is still being explored by owners to further reduce crew size and keep expenses to a minimum.

From the national Director's vantage point, the needs of the people of the sea far outweigh the Church's response. Not every archdiocese or diocese sees candidates for port ministry among the Diaconate and the laity. The Church continues to push priests into two or three ministries hardly realising that, in doing so, losing one priest is tantamount to losing two or three ministerial positions. Unless this attitude changes, the next millenium will witness a decline in AoS memberships and a disappearing logo along each American coast.



# OCEANIA REGIONAL REPORT

Mr. Ted RICHARDSON  
*Regional Coordinator*

Oceania is one of the largest areas with diverse cultures and nationalities in the world. This was the last area to be discovered by European navigators, and the newest arrivals in whom the Church rejoices. Oceania has been a challenge to explorers and missionaries and to its own people, because of its immense size.

**Cultural Problems:** As many of the people in Oceania seek ways of reconciliation between native title and European settlement, it is not unlike our seafaring ministry. Many of the ports in the region which are mainly situated in Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea, report more and more on the problems with cultural and religious diversities of crew, throughout the world. As the differences become more pronounced on board ships and there appears to be a lower tolerance towards some nationalities, we as committed Catholic Chaplains and Lay Workers and Members need to show the face of Christ more today than ever before.

**Local Church Involvement and Private Centres:** In our regional work in seafarers centres we have found less and less involvement by the local Church. This in itself has created a situation where the spiritual growth of our missionary work is declining. Centres today struggle to find their place in the maritime world. Some centres in the region have gone to a lease/management operation with very little reference to the Church. On a recent tour of some of the New Zealand ports, we came across one centre in particular, in Lyttleton, which is now run privately for economic reasons. It has a small chapel that had not been used for some years. It was now being used as a storage room for books and cleaning implements, and even the altar was stacked high with magazines. Thankfully, the Apostleship of the Sea has not gone this way.

**Growth:** There are many new centres in the region, with the greatest growth being around Australia, with four new centres in Melbourne, Mackay, Townsville and Tasmania. The largest city in New Zealand, Auckland, is on the verge of a new development. Uniquely this will help the centre into the next millennium.

**Ecumenism:** Ecumenism throughout the region is developing slowly. In Australia, there is now an annual meeting between the Apostleship of the Sea and the Missions to Seamen. Recently, the National Director, Fr. Michael Richardson, was elected as the joint representative of our societies to ICMA. The societies will alternate

their representation each two years. In New Zealand, most ports are operated ecumenically and have good relations. The port of Lae, PNG, is operated jointly by MTS, AOS, and Lutheran. Those that still operate by single societies are finding it very difficult with voluntary work and funding. Although there are many difficulties in ecumenical ventures, not only from a religious point of view, but also management, we should seek wherever possible to overcome our prejudices.

In conclusion, our Church communities and religious are the most important link the seafarer has to God. Through these, we can enrich the lives of those we serve. Vocations to priestly orders have been on a decline for some years now, and it is obvious that much of the burden is now on the shoulders of laity, but wherever possible informed and caring members of the local Church can make a difference. The sacraments of reconciliation and Mass have become underrated in some areas due to lack of religious involvement. It is important to look after the spiritual lives of seafarers. A ship visiting Chaplain or ship visiting teams are the best form of communication between us, now that seafarers have so little time with their Church. The centre can provide the material needs, but only the Church can provide the love.

As stated in the Seafarers Welfare Board for New Zealand AGM Report, by Rev. Bill Law, "When is a Mission not a Mission? - When the Church is not involved."



## A CONTRIBUTION FROM MISSION DE LA MER - FRANCE

All the seafarers of the world have one thing in common: their lives are shaped by the sea, whether as something to be endured or as a friend to be espoused. They are formed and influenced by this common life, which is essentially a job for young men.

It is difficult and perhaps even impossible to speak on behalf of the seafarers of developing countries, the so-called "Third World". We perceive their reactions, from both the cultural and the religious viewpoints, through our Western outlook and mentality: Europe looking out over these countries and a Western Church looking at other cultures both do so from their own, "white" viewpoint.

What is not easy for us to understand are the reasons why people from these countries chose to become seafarers: a spirit of adventure, to discover the world, economic necessity, flight from a situation in their home-country, an ideal, a vocation?

In the context of today's globalization of communications and inter-human contacts — Internet, fax, telephone, TV, cinema, magazines to be picked up in seafarers' clubs and on board ship — these people come face to face with:

- cultural models varying from the European to the Japanese to the American;
- wealth, abundance, luxury, misery, poverty, oppression, freedom, scandals;
- man's exploitation by man in so many ways, affecting freedom and what that means for the individual and for whole peoples, including their religions, customs and traditions.

The people of the sea, merchant seafarers more than fishers, are swamped by this ever-changing world. What they learn from what they see matches their expectations of the various countries, developed and developing, from North to South. France is seen as a wealthy country which formerly held an influential position in the maritime world. Some know France also as the land of liberty and of the rights of man.

English is the medium of communication, and so each person's conversation is limited as he or she has to use a poorly-mastered language.

### **Europe and France are located in the free world**

It is there in the free world that they can make their demands with some chance that they will be taken seriously. They are often reticent

about presenting their problems in the presence of other crew members lest they be labelled agitators; but they do confide in the persons they meet in seafarers' clubs. They fear being cheated or exploited; they want to be advised; and they go out in groups, rarely alone.

They think that in our country it is possible to do what they like; they believe we have an easy life and earn lots of money.

Women's freedom and their way of dressing in our country may surprise them, especially if they come from Muslim countries, but they behave very correctly.

As they see many things thrown away (food, fruit), wealth and waste in our countries make them ask questions. Many of them hope to amass the maximum amount of "green" bills in order to live a better life at home. Some of them are motivated to accumulate money in order to set themselves up in their home countries or to take their families out of misery.

France is rich: "The streets are wide and beautiful and there are no pot-holes". They like to visit the supermarkets even without buying anything. Through the fashion catalogues—from *Redoute*, *Les Trois Suisses*, *la Samaritaine*, *La Blanche Porte*—they come to know French fashion: "Our women can get some ideas from them". To give them a catalogue means giving them a nice present!

One Ghanaian who disembarked in Boulogne brought a TV set and three other sacks "filled to the brim" back home with him. They also note that prices are high in our country; they are attracted by perfumes without being able to buy them.

### The Religious Sphere

Their approach to the religious sphere is different from that of French people (in our country, little is expressed in this sphere outside of the places for that purpose).

In general, they approach the priest readily and have great respect for him. He is the one whom they normally ask questions: to seek advice, to arrange a celebration, to see if it is possible to find work in a French company, to see if it is possible to come with their family in order to escape from religious persecution, to change religion.

When some of them attend Mass in the parish in a warm and lively Christian assembly (Christmas, Easter) and they are asked to come and pray at the microphone in their own language (which they do willingly), it is important for them. It is also important for them when people come to shake their hands at the end of the Mass and to chat with them in English.

Their greatest joy is to receive a picture or a medal of the Blessed Mother. For them and for us, it is an experience of the one and same faith, the one and the same Church, the one universal fraternity. The



Muslims also express the same joy when they meet a religious Muslim among the persons receiving them. They ask questions about the way Islam is received in France, a Christian country. Some of them have distorted ideas about the real situation. They also like to know how their country is viewed in France.

Unfortunately, not all the persons receiving them appreciate these view points and may not have great knowledge about other countries and religions. The seamen are often happy to express themselves by using a wall-map as they re-live their voyages. They suffer from the inclement weather of our northern countries; they are grateful when they can get warm clothes and they rarely ask for them. Some clubs have the custom of giving them woollen caps knitted by elderly ladies who are happy to do this service for seafarers. These gestures are greatly appreciated.

In the Center, they appreciate the presence of women and children very much and they will gladly play with them or converse in English. When the persons receiving them are seafarers themselves or former seafarers, they are happy to "talk shop". They understand one another...

The Filipinos willingly play the guitar or sing and create a happy atmosphere. The films they like to watch at the seamen's clubs are those with action, violence or sex. However, what they enjoy most is talking, playing and spending some congenial moments together. This is especially true for the Asians.

Christmas and New Year's evenings are exceptional moments for friendship and conviviality. They often hope that we will accept invitations to go aboard ship and share a meal on those feasts. It is not rare to receive a postcard expressing a seafarer's gratitude.

When the crews are forced to stay on their ships in a port for weeks or months, much deeper exchanges are experienced. Some of them refuse to become integrated too much and they stay on board the vessel. Nonetheless, long months of waiting in the port can lead to many marriages.

*A joke:* To say thanks for the good times in the Centre and express regret at being separated, some seafarers bought a plaque with the inscription "Eternal Regrets" which we would normally put on a grave to express our sadness.

They also have an idea about Paris. They would like to go there or to the South of France or to Lourdes, but they do not understand well the distances involved and the authorizations required.

Every human being is a sacred history.

Every person is the image of God.

True human language is expressed through hospitality, respect and solidarity, and this is understood in any port in the world.

## A SEAFARER'S WITNESS

Mr. Brian M. BINONGO  
Philippines

I am Brian M. Binongo, an overseas seaman since 1993.

I must say I really was not sure if our Chaplain's invitation to give a sharing during this Congress would become a reality. At first, I was reluctant although I had already given my partial acceptance of Fr. Roland Doriol's offer but then he really had his eye on me. I have had only three years service on board, yet I couldn't help asking myself if I would accept if he asked me again. He did on the basis of some points.

Firstly, I worked overseas and the deliberations of the Congress need somebody like me.

Secondly, because I was the one sent to represent the maritime students at the 19th AOS World Congress in Houston. I was still a student then.

Thirdly, because I have been a member of AOS-Cebu since the beginning.

And lastly, because after being at sea I have now landed a job as a Maritime Instructor.

So, here I am. Let's start from the very beginning.

### The Student

During my college days, everything taught inside the classroom and through practical learning experiences determined to a great extent how far I would go. The great times in school and more importantly the high-quality training the school gave me are things from the past that I always remember... I recall, for example, the study and use of those old-fashioned navigational equipment and aids: the "old-time" radar, the Loran, the Decca and the Omega equipment, to name a few. For a long time now they have not been used and are no longer taught. Then there was the use of formulas, the solutions of which usually took pages to arrive at. This is what I call "quality training".

My experience has been that we have a lot to do in school, most especially during examination period. There were beach parties, beer parties across the boulevard, nightclubs, discos, etc. in exchange for a passing grade. It was great! That's "quality time".

After college, I enrolled in upgrading classes, taking up safety courses. I went on to apply for overseas apprenticeship through one of the manning agencies in Manila. Fortunately, I made it to their apprenticeship program three months after I had done my upgrading classes. Then I underwent three-month, land-based, semi-military



training. This is where I really experienced real training as a cadet, the training the student must have undergone in school. At least I was finally trained to keep my knowledge abreast on the fast-paced technology on modern Japanese ships.

### The Apprentice

And so, my life did not need to remain in that training center in Manila. I recall the hardships there, the hunger at times, the heat, the traffic, the pollution, the noise, the keep-coming-back-policy at the office, to mention a few. After two months, I was assigned to a vessel as apprentice cadet. Unfortunately, I was treated not as a cadet but as an Ordinary Sailor.

The first real problem with those Japanese people was the communication barrier. I didn't study their language, so sometimes misunderstandings occurred. How could you readily react if you hear "ret go" instead of "let go"?

By the way, how can we determine a cadet from an apprentice, and the other way around? I've raised this point because not all the time did I feel I had been contracted as a cadet, since most of the tasks were normally the work of ratings.

Who cares, anyway? In the minds of my employers, perhaps, is not my training that matters but rather the ways they can use me for profit. Who cares, anyway? Not the people who at times forget to mail us just a little note of good wishes, people who always say they are very busy.

Anyway, it's not that big a deal for us. There are always our own *expensive* ways to make up for the very basic needs that our families, relatives and friends have neglected. Like shopping for the "pasa-lubong", placing phone calls, and most of the times getting into drinking sessions, be it on board or in the bar or clubhouses, and not forgetting the passing pleasures received from those ladies who for a moment eased or took away loneliness and lust.

### The Sailor/the Seaman

All these years, I've been haunted by the term "seaman". It sounds unhealthy to the ears of the many because of the reputation we once had. My own experience showed me that there are seamen's Centres or Seamen's Clubs in almost every port. I wonder which are the ones which really cater to our needs. Which among the Seamen's Clubs or Seamen's Centres are really for service and which are the ones which are only there for business, with plenty of drink available and with ladies "for sale"?

Anyway, that happens only a few times in every voyage. Those temporary pleasures disappear as we sail away. Everyday at sea, the thoughts, the memories, the loneliness being far from family society are

there all the time. Although I have tried to find a second home on board, the one I have left behind is sweeter and I miss it.

Regarding Manning Agencies, why is it that CBA (Collective Bargaining Agreement) cannot be readily available to us especially at the time of contract signing? Do we have to ask for this time and time again? And also, I say to the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA): Can't you use another system, a better one, in the processing of our Seaman's Books? Do we have to wait and sleep outside your office the whole night through? And for the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC): Can we not use calculators to pass a licensure examination?

### **The Maritime Instructor**

I have decided to join the staff in the Maritime schools since I have taken, over three months, almost all the upgrading courses needed for a third mate licensed seaman - even though the salary is less than that I would get when on board ship. But I don't want to waste my time waiting in a queue for a job - usually five months in my Manning Agency - time-wasting jobless.

In the classroom I can see the expression of eagerness on the faces of the cadets: they want to hear stories of what happens on board and abroad, rather than listen to the day's discussion. There was one time I was asked by a cadet if racial discrimination is still happening on board. I told the big "yes" if you will submit yourself to it. "How about if a seaman finds trouble on board or is sick or wants a holiday? Is it good to be working on board?" These are the questions they asked but often they would ask if there were really "pleasures" in every port.

These questions show that these young aspirants are wondering already what would life be like out there. Yet no one can ever really tell them, full time, exactly what they would like to know.

I would like to address this question to Maritime students. Have you been taught in school your rights on legal matters, or do you know the how, where and what of filing legal actions or proceedings whenever the need of such arise? Are we really obliged to work on Sundays? I have to confess I have had no Sundays on board. It was always Mondays.

### **The Seaman again**

And so I continue to go to sea. And it is already a cycle. But I ask myself again, am I now a seaman? This concern has often been haunting me since I first boarded my first vessel on 1993. I might be a seaman in a sense that it connotes of a person who, for a life-time, leaves his family, earns dollars overseas, has girls in every port. Well, if this is the generalized picture, it must be an ordeal for any seaman who has never been a "she-man".

A few weeks ago, during a workshop with the seamen's wives and relatives, and students, I have seen and observed that some, if not



all of them, see only their side. It is almost as if they are putting the pressure on their seamen-husbands: blaming him for not writing, for not being very open with their wives, for having affairs with "for sale" pleasures, for always thinking bad of her; being always jealous, for months not sending money in addition to the allotment. These are also questions I am sure most of you, wives and relatives are about to ask.

I have one final question. If you were to be in our shoes, how would you feel? You would surely answer, it's hard, it's dangerous, and it's lonely. No, there's more to it than that. It is our life that we submit to the sea for the life of our family. It's almost all of our life on the seas. It's not just that simple; it's our life and our soul, you know.

How could you all dare blame us when our life and our soul is already at stake? Could you all not think of ways of helping us instead of tossing, causing us problems, giving us sad stories and branding us "she-man"? Some wives have said that in this way they are testing only their husbands. How, again, could you do that? You've been united as one. Haven't you known each other since before marriage?

I beg your pardon if I've raised this today. I am just showing concern for the rest of the married seamen, for these cadets and for myself because, like it or not, I am going that same way too. This is what I have observed in the case of almost all Filipinos who get into trouble on board ship.

Maybe this is too much. Let's touch on my life now.

Last week, a day before flying here, I terminated my contract as instructor in the Maritime School in Cebu. And right after this Congress I'll leave for Manila for my next ship assignment - hopefully, as third officer. Usually this would not be easy. I might find it will be a tough time with well-known shipping companies. I have no other choice but to accept a low salary so that I can use my license. *If life is a gamble, then this is it.*

In conclusion, I myself need SOMEONE to talk to, someone who listens, and who cares. WE need all of you to care for our souls, to help us find within ourselves the God who watches over us as we sail the oceans.

It is great to have seen some of you once again.

I am a SEAMAN!

## POLISH FISHERS DURING THE TRANSFORMATION PERIOD

*Fr. Edward PRACZ  
AOS Port Chaplain,  
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During the past decade, the Polish nation has moved from the darkness of a totalitarian system to the openness of a democratic society. This transformation has brought new challenges to all its people, including those in the merchant and fishing fleets. There is tension between the struggle to understand one's identity as a human person with a unique God-given value, and with God-given life-values, and on the other hand the human craving to acquire wealth and position: a tension between "being" and "having".

About 10,000 fishers (about 33% of all Polish seafarers) are at present working on 33 fishing vessels operating in the Okhotsk Sea and the waters off the western coast of Canada. This number, when multiplied by 3 or 4 family members, gives about 40,000 people who often feel lost, neglected, not loved, stress-ridden and susceptible to losing the way to God - not to mention their negative influence on others, not necessarily family members.

One may ask: What makes thousands of people decide to work in extremely harsh conditions, under tremendous stress created not only by separation from their beloved ones but also by unhealthy competition among fishers and between various fishery enterprises? What pushes them to such extremes as the risk of mental breakdowns, extremely hard work resulting in the loss of 15kg or 20kg of their body weight during a voyage, the consumption of 3,000 pain-killer tablets per trip, the risk of becoming disabled for the rest of their lives? The answer is a short and bitter one: what pushes them is the bad economic situation in the fishery section. This has resulted from the closing-down of numerous fishery enterprises due to the fact that 95% of world fish stocks are now under national jurisdiction. Poland has highly educated and excellent specialists in the field of fishing, but that fact does not stop a struggle for survival at sea. Yes, for many "to have" is limited to the survival of their families; in the situation just described, they have no other choice. The struggle for a minimum "to have" and the frustration it brings about, affect very much the fisher's "to be"; this can only be cured by bringing spiritual values on board the ship. This new situation is a tremendous challenge for those of us in the Apostleship of the Sea.



All these thoughts are based on conversations I have had with hundreds of seafarers and on my own experience during a four-month stint with a flotilla of seven fishing vessels in the Okhotsk Sea. For me, the reality of my experience has confirmed what numerous voices have been saying to me: namely, that our role, particularly at sea where tensions are greater and personal evaluation of others much stronger, should shift a bit from "pulpit preaching" to being friendly listeners ready to explain the role of a very short and fragile earthly life and pilgrimage. Great patience is needed in ministering to seafarers; I know from my experience that the few people present the first time at Mass will grow to dozens as the voyage proceeds, perhaps up to 70% of the crew after some weeks. This is the common pattern and it should motivate the Church to further action.

This year again Pope John Paul II showed his incredible ability, as the Millenium approaches, to understand potential global threats and to foresee the needs of his native land. His Apostolic Letter *Stella Maris* of last January meets our requirements; it is a cornerstone on which to build a system for helping those in need and who are separated from families and native lands for months and even years at a time. The fish in the sea are undergoing evolutionary change, learning to avoid or escape from sophisticated modern fishing gear. Speaking metaphorically, our methods, that is, the methods of the Apostleship of the Sea, should evolve and change also if we expect to catch more fish in St Peter's net. This net, that is, the network of Apostolatus Maris, should be constructed as suggested in the Pope's Apostolic Letter.

### **Faith at Sea — a testimony of a fisherman**

This testimony of a deep-sea fisherman includes three basic stages:

- a) preparing for the voyage,
- b) surviving the voyage,
- c) returning to the family circle.

A peculiar characteristic of working on a deep-sea fishery vessel is that it exposes the fisherman to a separation from beloved ones, and involves various dangers at sea. It should be emphasized that the atmosphere at home before the departure has a great impact on psyche of a fisherman during the entire voyage. The better the atmosphere and harmony at home, the stronger the condition of a fisherman at the start of the trip. Separation from the family is always painful, no matter how long the trip is planned to be. These aspects can not be dealt with separately from spiritual preparations for the voyage, which should include confession and communion of all the family members. In addition, religious symbols such as the bible, rosary, simple prayer book, or cross can give strength in any difficulty at sea.

What makes every voyage difficult is not only a number of days spent at sea but the rather very rare port calls. As money is given

priority, every stay in harbour is limited to just a few days. For some sailors, any stay onshore gives negative possibilities such as the opportunity to buy alcohol and drowning sorrows in it.

Any recreational break is followed by frequent shifts on the ship, very hard work, and psychological stress arising from loneliness and separation from home. That is deepened by lack of contact with the family; this results from such factors as expensive satellite phone connections beyond the reach of numerous fishermen, poor quality of connections via Gdynia radio, delayed mail. All these factors coming together lead to stress and anxiety which make the fisherman behave and act like a dummy. The evil lies in wait and keeps looking for a moment when hard labour makes consciousness border on unconsciousness, when icy, freezing wind makes hands freeze on the nets, when lack of sleep makes the body become stiff, when the ship's bunk is just a dream, and when mind is not on good terms with conscience. So, difficulty creates negative feelings and harsh conditions evoke also negative emotions. However, it often happens that the powers of mother Nature make the fishermen realize that in the middle of the ocean, life often lies in God's hands. Prayers on the ship, in particular in the presence of a chaplain, ease tension and make it possible for life to cope.

Arrival home is a happy moment but it also leads to a realization that the seafarers need some time to adjust to new conditions. Many of us are found to be in need of sanatoria; that is the price one has to pay for providing the family with money needed just to live on. The adjustment is much faster if the family managed to deal with all the duties in the absence of the head of this basic, though smallest community. I know that if God is given priority in my and my family's life, everything is in order at sea and at home.



# LIBERATING EXPERIENCE OF GOD IN THE LIVES OF TRADITIONAL FISHWORKERS IN INDIA

Fr. Joseph JUSTUS  
Diocese of Kottar, India

For the past five years I have been involved with the fisherfolk as I was working in a coastal parish (Mela Manakudy) consisting of 95 percent fisherfolk of the southernmost part of India. Moreover, I am also from the fishing community.

My deep association with my parishioners helped me to deepen my faith as a disciple of Jesus. I am also called, like the apostles, to be fishers of men. This is how they taught me.

At times when I visited with my parishioners at the seashore, just to have an informal chat, they used to tell me that Jesus selected fishermen as his apostles not because they were men of letters, of influence or wealth or social status, but they were poor, simple, working people.

It has been pointed out that a good fisherman must possess these very qualities which will turn him into a good fisher of men.

- (1) He must have *patience*, to wait until the fish takes the bait.
- (2) He must have *perseverance*, never to be discouraged, but always to try again.
- (3) He must have *courage*, to risk and face the fury of the sea and of the gale.
- (4) He must have an *eye for the right movement*, to cast the net.
- (5) He must *fit the bait to the fish*.
- (6) The wise fisherman must *keep himself out of sight*.

Jesus started a "people's movement" with these simple people. The primary purpose of the first community created by Jesus was to incarnate his message of love in all its social dimensions, to be salt of the world, leaven, a light on the lampstand, a city on a hill.

My parishioners used to be proud to say that they are sons and daughters of St. Francis Xavier. From the day St. Francis Xavier walked the beaches of Kaniakumari District four centuries ago and brought the light of Christ to fishermen, the fishermen community is 100 percent faithful to the Catholic Church. They used to tell me that having to fight the mighty forces of nature to earn their living, made it inevitable that they were swayed towards belief in God more and more.

I still remember the day when two of my parishioners, Varghese and Thomas, traditional fishermen, were found missing when they did not return from fishing. The family members started crying and the fishing came to a standstill. The whole village was in sorrow. Fishermen from my parish and neighboring villages started searching for these two fishermen and continued for two full days. Days passed, Varghese and Thomas didn't turn up. People thought that they were dead. But after a month we came to know that they were in a Srilankan jail. With much difficulty, we got them back.

It was an unique experience to listen to them. They were full of tears when they narrated the incident. As they were fishing, the outboard engine in the traditional vallam (small boat) stopped and all their effort to repair it failed. Slowly they were carried by the wind. They couldn't locate the shore and they didn't know where they were heading. They were thinking about their family and were praying to God vigorously. To their great surprise and shock, they found the Srilankan Coast Guard arresting them and taking them in their custody. It is only then they came to know they were in Srilankan waters.

Fishermen operating close to the international borders at sea are often captured by the navy and coast guard of the neighboring countries. Since there are no visible and clear demarcation lines defining the borders of countries, violations by the fishworkers are unintentional and accidental.

From their sharing I could understand that these poor traditional fishermen had no idea of any legal aid or assistance. They did not get any information about the legal proceedings. They were worried about their families because they were the only breadwinners of the family. During their suffering they saw the hands of God guiding them in the form of kindhearted individuals who facilitated their return home.

A few years ago, the Indian Government started issuing licenses to foreign vessels to fish in the Indian territorial waters. People started complaining that the catch decreased to very little catch or no catch at all. A day without a catch is a day without a meal. They tried day after day with the hope of getting a better catch until the day when they asked the question, why was there no catch at all.

It is here the traditional fishermen of the cooperative society of my parish came together for many meetings to discuss the disastrous action of the joint venture depleting the fish resource.

Under the banner of "District Action Committee Against Joint Venture", all the traditional fishworkers of the district came together to chalk out the action plan. I was the adviser to this action committee. The executive committee was formed by the lay people. The committee discussed the issue at length. Practically, I attended all the meetings. Our meetings resulted in a few resolutions:

In order to have a sustainable development we have to save our fish resources.



The sea primarily belongs to fishworkers.

We have the responsibility to save our fish resources for future generations.

We conducted a lot of public meetings to make the people aware of the problem. Many rallies and protest marches were conducted in order to defend our rights. Letters and telegrams were sent to the government to cancel all the licenses to the foreign vessels, as it was harming the fish resources and traditional fishermen. Finally, the government canceled all the licenses and announced that no more fresh licenses would be issued. So our long struggle in solidarity with the local church and its Bishop Leon A. Tharmaraj brought fruit.

God has been with us in this struggle to save our fish resources and our fish workers. This experience of our united action gave us confidence that united we always stand. This has reinforced our faith in God, who is present with us in our creative actions for justice and peace and forged our links of solidarity.

# HUMAN AND CHRISTIAN VALUES THAT INSPIRE MY LIFE AS A SEAMAN'S WIFE

*Mrs. Marie Eliane RASOLONINDRINA*

*President of the Association of  
Merchant Seamen's Wives of Toamasina - Madagascar*

My name, Marie Eliane Rasolonindrina, indicates that I am from Madagascar. I am a seaman's wife, the mother of seven children and the grandmother of six. My husband, Gilbert Randrianarison, an old sea wolf, as we say, is still sailing. He has been in navigation since his youth. When he left the National School of Maritime Instruction in Mahajanga in 1963, he was 19 years old. He began to work as a "ship boy" and at this time he is an Officer on board a coasting vessel of a Madagascan Company.

## **A stable family life**

Last August 6<sup>th</sup> we celebrated our 31<sup>st</sup> wedding anniversary. This is a long time to live as a couple but to tell the truth, very often I have lived alone. In fact, I find myself alone almost every day facing all the problems: the spiritual and intellectual education of the children; health problems; managing the family budget. From 1969 to 1980, our life was relatively easy from a material viewpoint. I was able to live decently with my children despite my husband's long periods at sea (14 to 18 months). At that time there were more ships but not enough officers. There were some advantages: social and medical coverage; delegation of the regular monthly salary; the Christmas tree together.

Those separations did not make me forget my role as a seaman's wife and mother with the objective of promoting our life as a couple in order to live happily in Faith, Love and Hope. In such situations, it is not easy to have confidence. Humility is needed to overcome some failures and this must be reciprocal. As St. Peter says, "Finally, you should all agree among yourselves and be sympathetic; love the brothers, have compassion..." (1 Pt. 3:8). The fact that I believe that God is LOVE has helped me to overcome temptation.

The past fifteen years have been very difficult because the living conditions for a seaman have steadily worsened. Since Gilbert did not have a stable position, once he was on leave, he had no more rights. The family has to take charge of everything and it is I who have to manage a crisis situation like this. To add to the family budget, I had to do sewing. Late at night, Gilbert helps me to make buttonholes and overcast seams. Life as a couple is made for helping one another.

Because of the lack of ships, my husband had to change the



shipping company. The vessels in service are old and dilapidated because of the lack of upkeep and technical maintenance. I did not appreciate that situation because the risk of being definitively laid-off was growing. But as time passed, I realized that Man must go before Work. In fact, the former company was accumulating bad points: no new ships to renew the fleet, poor living and working conditions, lack of hygiene, no respect for the Work Code, lack of safety on board...

When my husband returned, he would never forget to bring some gifts for everyone. I talk with him in order to help him take up his place again in our home and his responsibilities in social life on land. We help one another to do our duty for our children's sake to the praise and glory of God and so that everything we do will be a fruitful model for the family. For this reason we, together, speak to the children to discuss their problems and plans. It should be pointed out that four of our children are married with children of their own.

Here is one experience I had during Gilbert's absence one New Year's Eve: One of my sons was arrested by the police, suspected of night burglary. I was completely shocked. As the family was preparing for the feast, his arrest was like a bomb that upset everything. He was kept in a cell for four days and four nights. I never stopped praying to God for those who arrested him because I could testify that at the time of the burglary, my son was at home. I had to wait six months for justice to be done but... he was purely and simply released. I thanked Mary, the Mother of Mercy, whom I begged to be my guide, to reach the port of salvation which was my son's liberation. This is an experience which I lived in Faith in the Resurrection.

### **Immersion in the Apostleship of the Sea**

In 1986, after the cyclone "Honorine", Fr. François Le Gall recruited me from among other seamen's wives to be his Secretary at the Apostleship of the Sea. I consider this as a gift from God and also as a vocation. I was timid in the beginning and also unqualified for the job. I accepted immediately. Over the years, and it is now eleven years that I am part of the Permanent Team of the AOS, I have never stopped praying to God to give me the courage to undertake any job and to do it faithfully for everyone's good and not for my personal profit. I followed the different formation courses in order to improve my professional competency. In addition to my responsibilities as Secretary-Treasurer, I also receive seamen's families, especially those with unemployment problems. What patience and devotion I have to display from day to day to listen to so many people tormented by misery and problems of all sorts! My mission consists in listening to them not only with an attentive ear but above all with my heart and with love. I asked for God's grace so that I can reveal His Word to all those whom I serve and that this will make me grow. The work with the permanent team, the meeting every Wednesday and the high points have encouraged me very much to develop my level of spirituality. Sharing the Gospel has helped me to live in reciprocal confidence with others.

## A Sea Couple that Lasts

1994 marked our 28<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. It was a wonderful year because it gave us the gift as a couple of living Jesus' enlivening presence in the very heart of our "I" and our "we". The conversations with our sea friends were also a present through which we understood how alike we are before God. Only the Lord is capable of making this sharing not only possible but also full of riches. Even if we have our differences in life, which is equally difficult to live, one feels that it is necessary to go forward in order to meet up with the other and, at the same time, one does not feel ready to take that step out of fear of disappointing the other.

After celebrating our wedding anniversary in the parish, we wanted to celebrate it in the AOS with the seamen and their families. *A sea couple that lasts: we are happy to be witnesses to this.*

That event, which was a grace of God, was followed by others that filled our family. Three of my grandchildren received Baptism in the AOS. It was an occasion to give witness again to my Faith as a godmother, an educator and a grandmother.

My children belong to Catholic movements. They receive formation there for group life and from this they are involved in activities that take up their free time. I think that they avoid bad company in this way. I have become involved in parish life as the Secretary of our neighborhood (basic Community) and this is despite my work, which already takes up all my time, and my unending family responsibilities. I believe that life in the Church transforms people and God will not fail to make grace spring forth from the common activities on me and my surroundings.

## My life within an association

Taking care of about fifty merchant marines' wives, each with her own way of seeing, thinking and acting, is not so easy. In the beginning I did the secretarial work. In 1994, I was elected President for a two-year term which made me hesitate before accepting it. Personally, taking on those responsibilities does not happen by itself. In the beginning, I took the responsibility lightly. I asked myself this question: Why have they elected me?

My role began with reflection together with the women, principally on social points. This is what is rather difficult. For example: support in taking the official steps with the Government and the Maritime Authorities; redrafting the Maritime Code with the seamen; participation in various labor union meetings or with other NGOs.

My role is not to shut ourselves into the AoS. Our Association is also a member of the Group of Women's Associations which has the objective of helping us to assume our responsibilities in our homes and in the education of our children, as well as ensuring our balance and personal growth as women. Sometimes discouragement gets to me



when I have to find solutions to various problems: *delay in the delegation of salaries; indeterminate duration of the disembarkment*. It is at those moments that I have to make an examination of conscience about my way of assuming my responsibilities so as not to disappoint those who are counting on me. As Mt. 5:13 says, "You are the salt of the earth..."

Visiting the sick in the hospital and visiting the members who do not show up at the meetings are also a very important role which I must not neglect. Despite my intention to go towards others, this is not always appreciated by some who have their own way of reasoning. However, "there is no need to be afraid or to worry about them..." (1 Pt. 3:13). It is love for my neighbor that makes this spring from my heart. As a leader, I never stop letting them know that every Person has the right and duty to develop the whole Person. This is said because in order to find profitable activities to fill the cash box, everyone's ideas are needed, and everyone must participate in the reflection. They must feel that they have the right to express themselves, that they have their personality for the well-being of society, and that they must develop it in the Light of Christ and live it according to Christ.

I have accepted the second mandate from 1996 to 1998 because I have to finish the tasks that were already begun. Here I find that I am a full participant in everything that pertains to the Maritime World. During my first mandate, I took part in various AOS Meetings: world, regional and national. I was asked to take the floor or to intervene in other animation meetings outside of the AOS: such as on the Day for obtaining *Equitable Fishing Agreements* between the European Union and Madagascar; and on *The Role of Women in the development of artisanal fishing Seminar on "the rights of seamen and their families"*, organized by TOMAMI (Toamasina Maritime Ministry) and the AOS.

My participation in all these activities proves that I am a woman made in God's image, that I have to share all my competencies with my neighbor. This does not mean that I have to accept the third mandate because in that case I would be selfish and not want to give up the position to others.

Recently a delegate went to Paris regarding the question of the massive laying-off of about a hundred seamen from industrial fishing of whom the majority has still not found employment after more than a year. In following up the suggestions received from the women who participated in that Seminar, we ought to support one another more and open a Solidarity Fund. This is a new struggle which we will have to take on in order to help one another. I am beginning to have the women do embroidery. Recently we have received some orders from abroad.

What I feel in the heart of my life is a personal relationship with the Lord. He makes me understand at the right moment what He chooses and how much he accompanies me with great sweetness and patience.

## CURRENT EXPLOITATION: A THREAT FOR THE PEOPLE OF THE SEA

*Rev. Joseba BEOBIDE  
National Director, Spain*

My conference will not be an academic exposition but rather a sharing with you of my own personal experience as a chaplain of the AS for 32 years, most of which were spent with the Spanish cod fishers in the waters of Terra Nova (Canada) and other areas of the North Atlantic.

From this direct contact with the fishermen and their specific world I will formulate my reflections here in a broader framework of the overall problem of current fish exploitation which is threatening all the people of the sea.

I am not going to give a long list of facts and figures; just a few are enough to have a good idea of the current situation. When I went with the cod fishers for the first time in February 1966, in Spain there were 26 large cod fishing vessels with a crew of more than 55 men each and about 150 smaller boats with about 22 crew members for a total of more than 4,000 men. Today we have none of those large cod fishing vessels and only 20 boats are left with a total of less than 500 men. In my own port of Pasajes in the Basque country, which once had about ninety cod fishing boats, at present there are no more than four boats left leaving that port.

The Portuguese codfish fleet at that time amounted to more than 60 boats with crews of more than 50 and as many as 70 men (in the boats that carried the "doris", small boats which fished at a distance from the supply ship). Today I do not think that more than 10 boats, if any, can be found in those waters.

France also had a good fleet of classic and modern cod fishing boats with some 33 boats. None of those are left. The same can be said about other European nations such as the United Kingdom, Italy and later West Germany. Their boats have disappeared from the scene. Also the countries of Eastern Europe have seen their fleets reduced drastically in the schools of that fishing area.

However, not only the European countries have suffered this collapse. The East of Canada, especially my beloved island of Terra Nova, is suffering tragically from the incredible collapse of its traditional means of fishing life. This goes without mentioning the case of my beloved, small archipelago of St. Pierre et Miquelon (South of Terra



Nova) which has seen its small fishing fleet annihilated in these last years.

It is obvious that there is something profoundly unhealthy in this fishing activity which has lasted more than 400 years. We should all lower our heads and admit our part in a collective sin.

The old system of exclusive fishing of salted codfish, as practiced for years by many boats, brought with it the massive destruction of fish which was not used, such as shellfish and flounder, just as an example.

Great factory ships, such as those which the former Soviet Union sent in great numbers to these waters during the 60s and 70s, with their nets with very small meshes, could "clean out" a place for lowering fishing nets quickly.

Other methods of fishing, such as the trammel nets used in Terra Nova, which form real submarine walls where fish are trapped and remain dead for hours and days and are even abandoned there, have also contributed to this panorama of destruction of fish resources. A good number of fishermen used to tell me that the amount of fish thrown back into the sea dead was as much as that used on board, and this is a fact which I myself have seen at times.

If we multiply all these and other abusive fishing practices by the great number of hundreds of boats capable of fishing in any place where nets can be put down with all kinds of modern technology, we can see the tragic result of this behavior.

Today we cannot ignore the imbalance of the marine ecosystem in the waters of the Northeast Atlantic. The seals have never been in danger of extinction on the coasts of Terra Nova and Labrador. The exaggerated and sentimentalist propaganda of the enemies of this hunt, orchestrated by people like the actress Brigitte Bardot, have caused an overpopulation of seals which, as a whole, eat and destroy more fish than all the fishing boats together working in those waters.

An indiscriminate and destructive fishing activity, which becomes more and more destructive because it has reduced the fish, has resulted in this vicious and suicidal circle throughout the whole world.

However, if the survival of fish resources is important, the critical situation of the many fishermen and their families in the whole world is no less important. Let us not forget the words of the Holy Father last Monday about respect for the dignity of the human person and the integrity of the Creation.

On this theme of the dignity of the person, I am going to give you some data about the kinds of conditions in which so many fishermen have to live.

*Cabins.* The bathroom I have in my room in this hotel would be sufficient for a cabin of eight men on some boats.

*Working hours.* Although on some large ships there is a regular working schedule, in most cases work is done until all the fish have

been taken care of, regardless of how much time this may take, even if it goes on for days with two or three hours of sleep.

*Medical assistance.* At times someone can be sick on board for days or weeks before receiving proper medical assistance owing to bad weather or simply because his health is less important than the fishing.

*Cold climate.* To the point that many fishermen have lost their fingers from freezing. The danger of ice on board has led in some extreme cases even to the sudden sinking of boats because of the overload.

*Accidents.* All kinds. There are different reasons: work is done when the conditions of the sea are bad, errors in using heavy fishing nets, generalized neglect in observing the rules of safety, old boats "floating caskets", men worn out by work without reflexes to avoid accidents, etc.

*Long stays on board.* There is no consideration for the crew's need to go periodically on land and thus be able to take advantage of a well deserved rest from the hard life on board, to communicate with their families, to go see a doctor, to go shopping, etc.

Although it may seem unbelievable, there are still some fishing boats that do not want to go to port for these or other reasons, and they remained at sea for six consecutive months. A real prison!

*Many other things* could be said about the hard life on board: living together with very different and at times difficult persons, lack of real friendship, loneliness, etc.

*Everything stated above* is made more acute by the basic fact that a boat itself is a closed, living space, separated from what we could call the "normal" life of human society.

In the face of all this, *what is our response?*

In the areas of cod fishing which I have known, it is my duty to mention some persons here who have dedicated themselves to the service of the fishermen and their families.

The now legendary Father Yvon was a French Capuchin priest who accomplished a great spiritual and material task with the French fishermen in the first half of this century. He worked together with the national French organization called "Ouvres de Mer" (Works of the Sea), which celebrated the centenary of its service to fishermen three years ago.

The local church of St. Pierre et Miquelon has always been at the service of the local and foreign seamen. I would now like to point out here the notable work done by Msgr. François Maurer, a real pastor of all the seamen who arrive in that port. Without him we would not have been able to have the great Stella Maris Center which I have known,



one of the best I have seen in North America. We were able to offer a whole range of services: telephone, money exchange, a large bar, library service (including groups of books that could be taken to sea), a large game room, games organized in the town, a room for the television and video, another area for writing letters, a kitchen, a free laundry service, showers, the chaplain's office, etc. Moreover, we used to write a simple but very popular publication which was distributed to our whole fleet; we organized radio programs through the local radio, etc.

The activity of the *Stella Maris* of St. Pierre was a decisive factor in obtaining a wonderful medical assistance which the Spanish government gave to its seamen in those waters.

Three years ago, on the occasion of the centenary mentioned earlier of "*Oeuvres de Mer*", Msgr. Maurer was named Knight of the Legion of Honor by the French government.

In relation to my pastoral work in Terra Nova, I would now like to come to the defense of the clergy and religious of that island whose good name was vilely sullied some years ago by a very cruel media campaign which extremely distorted the true image of persons of great hospitality, decency and generosity to which I was able to attest and which I enjoyed for years.

I would also like to point out the work of so many Spanish chaplains of the Apostleship of the Sea who dedicated themselves to serving the seamen there and in their places of origin. A couple of years ago I had the honor and responsibility of receiving the "Silver Anchor" award given to the AS through the vote of our maritime world, in recognition for the collective work carried out for many years.

I would like to conclude this brief presentation of my personal experience in the Apostleship of the Sea by extending a special invitation to you. I think that there is nothing that brings us closer to the seamen than embarking with them. When you are on board, you learn the truth about their life-style and then you not only work for them but with them; we not only evangelize but we are evangelized by them, by their life of suffering and joy. When it comes to establishing bonds of friendship, a few days on board are worth many months on land.

To conclude, and in returning to the theme of this Congress, I think that we all have to be more in syntony with our great religious tradition, with persons like St. Francis of Assisi, with texts that we ought to keep alive in our hearts like the magnificent *Canticle of Daniel*, the hymn "*Te Deum laudamus*", and the first pages of the Bible where we read: "And God saw that it was good". Only in harmony with this tradition can we guarantee respect for the integrity of the Creation and the dignity of the Human Person.

# THREATS TO THE MARITIME ENVIRONMENT AND TO THE FUTURE OF THE PEOPLE OF THE SEA: THE PHILIPPINE FISHERFOLKS

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First, allow us to wish the participants in this 20th World Congress of the Apostleship of the Sea a pleasant good morning. Maayong buntag kaninyong tanan!

When Fr. John Walsh, MM, approached me to participate in this congress, and later on received the official invitation from Archbishop Giovanni Cheli to give a 20-minute talk on the subject above, it was a YES. As a co-worker of the Creator, it is a privilege to talk about His creations and their environment to an audience (seafarers), different from what I am used to: the scientific community.

I was struck by the theme of this Congress "People of the Sea: Co-Workers of Creation" and I asked myself, "Who are the People of the Sea?" And I found the answer in this phrase:

"Her son, Jesus Christ, accompanied his disciples in their vessels (1), helped them in their work and calmed the storms (2)." And so the church accompanied seafarers, caring for the special spiritual needs of those who, for various reasons, live and work in the maritime world (Apostolic Letter *Motu Proprio* "Stella Maris")

This is an opportune time to share our personal experience, that of the academe, working with another sector of the "People of the Sea": the artisanal or subsistence fisherfamilies, who in the Philippines are among the poorest of the poor. Against a backdrop of the current situation of our seas where they depend on their living, we are presenting here images to give you a glimpse of the present realities of their life and of the situation where they are heading in the future.

- 1 The Philippine Archipelago is composed of 7,107 islands with an extensive coastline 17,463 km. long hosting a very diverse marine flora and fauna. Five ocean systems are converging within Philippines waters namely: Pacific Ocean, South China Sea, Sulu Sea, Celebes Sea and the Visayan Sea, which favored the development of many marine species.
- 2 Sad to say that today many of our productive marine ecosystems such as coral reefs, seagrass beds, and mangroves are being



degraded faster than they could rehabilitate. For example, our mangrove forests have been converted into fishponds and reclaimed for industrial purposes.

- 3 ... or this extensive seagrass bed, a rich fishing ground of many fish species, threatened by a forthcoming reclamation project.
- 4 Coral reefs are sensitive ecosystems providing food and shelter to a wide range of life. Shown here is a colorful intact colony of staghorn corals, *Acropora*. However, with the progressive degradation and destruction of these habitats, the number of species has declined considerably. At present, less than 10% of the Philippine reefs are considered in "good" to "excellent" conditions.
- 5 Our coral reefs are host to more than 2,500 fish species, which is more than the number of fish species of the Great Barrier Reef of Australia.
- 6 The coastal areas have the potential to provide food for all Filipinos if its fish stocks and other marine organisms are not overharvested by unregulated access to resources and destructive fishing practices. Schools of fish, like this of jacks at Apo Island, Negros Oriental, are becoming scarce.
- 7 Twenty years ago, it was easier for a single fisherfolk, in just a few hours per day, to make a catch sufficient to meet the food requirement of several families.
- 8 Locally caught and sold fish are still affordable sources of protein even to poor Filipinos. More than 90% of the Filipino people depend directly or indirectly on seafood as a major source of protein.
- 9 The problem of overexploitation of natural resources could be attributed to the rapid population growth. The average Filipino fisherfamily household is composed of 7 members.
- 10 In just a few years, most of the coastal areas and small islands in the Philippines became densely inhabited. As a result, fishing pressure on the already dwindling resources increased markedly and initiated a vicious cycle. More often, the fisherfolks resorted to destructive fishing methods just to make a catch for their daily food consumption.
- 11 Caught in the act! A dynamite fisher throwing an explosive container.
- 12 The blast destroys even solid corals in an area of about 5 square meters. This staghorn coral, *Acropora*, was turned upside down. It took more than 20 years to grow corals to this size and they are destroyed in just a second.
- 13 Not only is the blast destructive for corals and other marine life, the stirred up sediment caused by the blasting is transported by tidal

currents to a wider areas. Many species get suffocated because they are not able to tolerate this heavy sedimentation.

- 14 This is what is left behind of a healthy beautiful coral reef after dynamiting: a graveyard with no chance to support life for a variety of marine organisms.
- 15 Too little catch for so much destruction.
- 16 In the Philippines, dynamite or blast fishing is prohibited by law. But poor enforcement of the laws and the absence of viable livelihood options for our fisherfolks keep the practice going.
- 17 Fisherfolks use empty bottles, fill them with ammonium nitrate (commonly sold as fertilizer) and soak the blasting cap in gasoline. This combination is not only a threat to marine life... ..
- 18 ... but also to many fisherfolks who get blasted. Some lose their limbs or, worse, die on the spot from the unexpected early explosions. How will a disabled fisherfolk support his family?
- 19 Another destructive fishing practice is the use of sodium cyanide. The fisherfolks chase small reef fishers in crevices, spray the solution, and the stupefied fish is speared. Even if diluted by the water, cyanide can cause death of corals (*bleaching*) and many other marine organisms.
- 20 To cyanide fishers, there is no undersized fish ...
- 21 Another poisonous substance extracted from the roots of a plant, *Derris elliptica*, is rotenone which has a similar effect to cyanide. Fish exposed to it are also paralyzed.
- 22 The *Sahid* fishing grounds with this type of fishing. *Fishery* has also a destructive effect particularly on the coral reef/seagrass communities. A huge net is dragged over a shallow water area and covers several thousand square meters. Organisms larger than 1 cm., whether of value or not to the fisherfolks, are retained by the small mesh size of the net. Usually, a team of fishers travel to other fishing grounds with this type of fishing.
- 23 Retrieving the net. Watch the small mesh size!
- 24 *Hookah* diving is overexploiting high priced fishes, such as the grouper, locally known as *Lapulapu*. In some grouper species, females, after egg production, reverse their sex into males. So most of the big groupers are males and since big groupers are the target of fishers, it could happen that in a grouper population there are more females than males. These females are dependent on migrating male "foreigners" to get fertilized. Hookah divers do a risky job: most of them spend a longer time under water and surface too fast causing decompression or *Caisson* disease. The result is partial or permanent paralysis of extremities or even death.



- 25 If we continue the practice of such destructive fishing, this giant grouper with a size of a water buffalo "carabao" will be history.
- 26 We have been overharvesting almost all available marine resources which seemed to be infinite; these seastars ready for bleaching and painted as Christmas decors are exported to the USA, Canada and Europe.
- 27 Cushion stars, bought from the fisherfolks at 50 centavos each, are sold abroad at prices more than 30 fold per piece.
- 28 thousands of small cypreas dried under the sun...
- 29 ... made into fashion accessories, lampshades, plant hangers or other souvenir items.
- 30 Another massive exploitation is the thriving live ornamental fishery. The Philippines is one of the major exporters of ornamental live fishes mostly caught by sodium cyanide. Unfortunately, only 20-30% will survive the transport.
- 31 Clownfishes are being squeezed into the plastic bags to save transport costs... ..
- 32 A seahorse (endangered species, selling forbidden) costs 12 pesos a piece for the fisherfolks. In the USA it is sold at US\$50 per piece, while in Hong Kong dried seahorses cost US \$1,200 a kilo... Who is actually gaining? Fisherfolks harvest and market their valuable resources but do not even receive a reasonable profit for it.
- 33 Colorful sea anemones ready to die in an aquarium abroad.
- 34 Is there a chance for our fisherfolks and rich marine life to survive? What future is in store for them and for us?
- 35 From our experience we have identified four main problems which are crucial to the sustainability of the resources and, consequently, the future of the people of the sea. First the population growth has to be curbed - more mouths to feed increase pressure on the dwindling resource. Second, pollution of the coasts by both industries and domestic sewage (focus on the children playing in, by human feces, contaminated water) destroy precious habitat. The third problem is access and control over the resource by our fishing communities to the exclusion of those in other communities. Fourth, the absence or lack of alternative livelihood to shift from overexploitation to a sustainable use of the resources.
- 36 If the present situation is such, what interventions have been done so far? GOs, NGOs, church and academe are never short of interventions with funding from both local and foreign sources. In one of our Coastal Resource Management (CRM) Projects, we first intended to organize and provide alternatives to fishermen especially those engaged in destructive fishing practices. It was found

later that they are a bit difficult to gather and shy. So, instead, we organized the women or wives of the fisherfolks. It was possible to train them for small-scale gardening where they are planting vegetables like spring onions, eggplants, bell peppers, amplaya, etc.

- 37 An eggplant grown in the garden ready to be harvested.
- 38 Water is an acute problem in many areas in the Philippines especially in small islands like Olango where we are working. Since watering the plants is expensive for the women, we linked the group to a funding agency that provided a grant for *matabana* or water cisterns to collect rain.
- 39 In another project with the fishermen, we proposed *sea ranching*. This is an example of a set-up of a rabbit fish (*kitong*) farm. The fries are caught in the wild and protected against natural predators, decreasing the mortality. To enhance their growth, the fishes are fed with a mixed diet of seaweeds and pellets.
- 40 Close-up of one of the cages stocked with juvenile.
- 41 The culture of this giant clam (*takobo*) has two purposes. First, the flesh can be eaten and the shells can be sold to tourists as decorative items. Second, these clams could also be used for reef rehabilitation. Since the clams have symbiotic zooxanthellae they need only clear water, sunlight and protection against parasites/predators. Additional food is not required.
- 42 In another project, we provided through a grant, fish traps (*panggals*). This selective fishing gear takes advantage of small reef and seagrass fishes which are members of a short food chain. This allows a sustainable harvest. With the *panggals* the fisherfolks could increase their daily income from 100 to 234 pesos daily.
- 43 Abalones ("*lapas*") could also be cultured in suitable areas with rocky shores.
- 44 Spider conchs ("*sa-ang*"), another example of a highly-priced marine product, with good market potential if successfully cultured.
- 45 The list of suitable marine organisms with potential for sea ranching is long. What we need is funding programs and projects to enhance the transfer of simple or indigenous technologies from research institutions down to the fisherfolks. Emphasis should be given to implementation rather than pure research of promising projects.

The action has to be taken now... to allow the fisherfolks to sail out and return with a catch not only today, but also tomorrow.



# INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS AND NATIONAL LEGISLATION AFFECTING THE MARITIME ENVIRONMENT: WHAT HAS BEEN DONE AND WHAT REMAINS TO BE DONE

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## Introduction

In addition to using the oceans in a multitude of different ways, the people of the sea are ultimately responsible for their protection. This Conference has already heard how exploitation represents a moral and physical threat to the people of the sea as well as to the maritime environment and future food security. The extent to which this exploitation can occur is regulated to a significant extent by international conventions, with implementing national legislation, which affect the maritime environment in terms of preventing, responding to and providing compensation for pollution from ships.

The paper commences with an overview of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the specialist agency of the United Nations which administers each of the relevant conventions and oversees virtually all of what has been done and what remains to be done in this area of international law.

A brief summary of each major convention is then provided. Although the primary focus is on conventions dealing directly with maritime pollution, conventions dealing with safety are discussed as these areas of maritime law impact directly on seafarers safety and consequently on protection of the marine environment.

The paper then provides an Australian perspective on several of the key issues, and concludes that while much has been achieved since the first maritime pollution convention was developed over forty years ago, the continuing heavy workload of IMO demonstrates the particular dynamics involved in keeping pace with technical and operational advancement in global shipping and expectations of the people of the sea.

## International Maritime Organization

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) - whose motto is "Safer Ships and Cleaner Seas" - is the specialist UN agency for the

oversight and regulation of maritime safety, navigation and the prevention and control of ship sourced pollution. The IMO currently has over 156 member states, 2 associate members and 55 non-government organisations who have been granted consultative status.

The IMO is not simply an imposing building on the south bank of the River Thames with its million dollar views, nor is it the Secretary-General and his team of international technocrats working away on detailed technical developments. Quite simply the IMO is the 156 member states working together to achieve outcomes which enhance maritime safety and protect the marine environment issues.

Similar to all UN agencies, the IMO is only as good as its member states want it to be. Fortunately, it is still largely free of the political divisions that sometimes characterise other UN agencies and this is one of its enduring strengths. However, this reliance on states acting together to achieve the required outcomes is also its greatest weakness.

As an organisation the IMO has been very successful in striving to achieve its objectives. The range of measures aimed at safety and environmental protection is impressive:

- Over 40 conventions and protocols providing the technical basis for inclusion of the convention requirements into the national laws of member states.
- In excess of 60 codes and recommendations focussed on achieving the highest standards of seamanship, environmental protection, cargo handling and crew certification.
- An extensive program of technical assistance aimed at helping nations meet their international convention obligations.

Model training courses are aimed at achieving uniformity and consistency in training standards.

IMO's effectiveness in terms of the marine environment was reinforced by the Secretary-General of the UN who stated at the 1992 Rio Conference:

"Dramatic improvements have been made in controlling oil pollution in the past decade owing to the regulation of ship discharges ....Accidental spills are relatively isolated geographically so that apart from tar balls, transient effects in the vicinity of accidents and more chronic conditions in localised sites in some parts of the world, petroleum pollution does not now represent a severe threat to marine habitats and organisms. However, since accidental spills cannot be totally avoided, contingency planning and effective response action are essential."

The IMO has a continuing program of updating its conventions and recommendations to meet the challenge of a modern and technically advanced maritime transport industry.



However, in common with most other areas of international co-operation there are problems.

The IMO has no power to legislate, implement and enforce the convention requirements - that is the prerogative of its member states.

The IMO has no power of sanction against those states who flout their obligations.

To achieve consensus and resolution of issues the outcome is often based on the lowest common denominator and at times that can lead to a short term fix rather than a sustainable solution.

It is also true to say that in the past the development of a number of the conventions mentioned above may have been categorised as reactions by governments to the catastrophic spills such as the *Torrey Canyon*, *Amoco Cadiz* and *Exxon Valdez*. This reactionary approach drew particular attention at the Rio Conference, where it was concluded that "A precautionary and anticipatory rather than a reactive approach is necessary to prevent the degradation of the marine environment."

### **Pollution prevention**

Put simply, if we prevent maritime casualties, as well as saving the lives of seafarers, we aid protection of the marine environment. However, maritime casualties, which generally receive the most media attention, are only a small part of the pollution problem. To protect the marine environment we also need to reduce operational discharges from ships of oil, chemicals, sewage and garbage, and more importantly prevent pollution of the sea from land-based sources. The US Academy of Sciences estimates that ship operations account for 33% of the oil entering the marine environment while the generally highly publicised tanker accidents account for only 12%. On the other hand, land based sources, such as industrial discharge and urban run-off, accounts for some 37% of oil entering the marine environment. In line with the theme of this conference, this paper focuses on pollution from ships, and does not seek to address pollution from land based sources. However, it should be noted that pollution of the marine environment from land based sources is a significant global problem.

The international conventions mentioned below, in particular the MARPOL 73/78 Convention, form the basis for pollution prevention measures.

#### *Ship construction and operation - MARPOL 73/78*

The International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships 1973, as amended by the Protocol of 1978 (known as MARPOL 73/78), has its origins in the grounding of the *Torrey Canyon* off the southwestern tip of the UK in March 1967. The international focus on this incident at a time of increasing environmental awareness was

sufficient to generate a complete re-examination of international law in this field.

As well as being an environmental disaster, the *Torrey Canyon* highlighted the complex jurisdictional facts of life that govern ships. It is worth recalling the position, as set out in one of the reports of the incident:

The ship was owned by a Bermuda corporation which was controlled by an American oil corporation, was registered in and flew the flag of Liberia, and was manned by an Italian crew. It was chartered by a British oil company partially owned by the British government, was insured by companies in the United States and Great Britain. It was claimed for salvage by a Dutch corporation. It had sunk in international waters and had caused a great deal of pollution in the United Kingdom, France and the State of Guernsey. The official investigation as to the sinking was in Italy at the behest of the Liberian government and was conducted by Americans.

MARPOL 73/78 is currently in force in 96 countries representing 93% of world merchant shipping tonnage. The Convention includes five technical Annexes each dealing with a different type of pollution:

- Annex I - oil
- Annex II - noxious liquid substances
- Annex III - harmful packaged substances
- Annex IV - sewage
- Annex V - garbage.
- Annex IV is the only Annex which has not yet reached the required level of international acceptance to enable entry into force.

MARPOL 73/78 has been accurately described as consisting of two distinct "sub-regimes".

The first regime is the "discharge regime", which limits operational discharges into the sea to acceptable specified limits. Oil discharges, for example, are generally limited to a rate of 15 parts per million oil in water, providing certain conditions are met. The disposal of garbage is generally prohibited within 12 nautical miles of the nearest land. The regulations provide, however, that wherever possible all waste is to be retained on board for appropriate disposal ashore.

The second regime is the "design/construction regime", which depending on the size and type of vessel might require equipment such as oily water separators, crude oil washing and/or the fitting of segregated ballast tanks or a double hull. Under these regulations, all vessels (other than the smallest) are subject to regular and complete surveys to ensure that the structure, equipment, fittings, materials and arrangements fully comply with the Convention.

There is widespread agreement that the impact of MARPOL 73/78 in reducing global oil pollution of the marine environment from ships



has been significant, as suggested by the UN Secretary General. The US National Research Council Marine Board has estimated a 60% reduction from 1981 to 1989, from 1.4 million tonnes in 1981 to 580,000 tonnes in 1989.

Nevertheless, violations of discharge limits continue to occur frequently. The number of oil spill sightings reported in Australian waters during the last seven years has increased from 196 in 1989/90 to 349 in 1995/96, although this is largely attributable to better reporting.

Control of marine pollution from ships will over the next few years be extended with three new Annexes to MARPOL 73/78 being developed by IMO - air pollution, ballast water and solid bulk cargoes - which will bring the total number of annexes to eight.

#### *Air pollution from ships*

IMO has for some years been developing a new annex to MARPOL 73/78 to address air pollution from ships. The text of this Annex has only recently been concluded and formally adopted. However, it is likely to be several years before the new requirements reach the required level of acceptance to enter into force.

The Annex is designed to reduce nitrogen oxide (NOx) emissions from new engines by 30%, as well as the sulphur content in fuel oil used by ships. Other measures, designed to reduce emissions from ozone depleting substances such as halons and CFCs, are also to be included in the annex. Tankers will have to be fitted with vapour emission control systems for use during cargo loading and unloading, and ships will be subject to an initial survey and issued with an International Air Pollution Certificate.

#### *Ballast water*

Australia has been at the forefront internationally in introducing measures for reducing the risks posed by the introduction of exotic marine pests and diseases through ship's ballast water, having first raised the issue at IMO in 1991. With the support of other countries with similar concerns, IMO has developed draft international regulations that will form the basis of an additional Annex to MARPOL 73/78. It is expected that the new Annex will enter into force internationally within 3 to 4 years.

#### *Solid bulk cargoes*

The Diplomatic Conference which adopted the original MARPOL Convention in 1973 also considered a sixth Annex which was titled "Regulations for the Control of Discharge of Solid Bulk Cargoes and Effluents containing such Substances." The Conference was not able to reach agreement on this Annex. The issue re-emerged in the late 1980s following a number of serious pollution incidents, primarily the

sinking of the British ship *Olaf* in 1986 near the coast of the Netherlands with a bulk cargo of 3,600 tonnes of highly toxic fly ash.

The most controversial issue at present is the hazard profiles attributed to certain bulk cargoes likely to be the subject of regulation. There is still much work to be done on this Annex, and progress at IMO has been slow.

### *Double hulls*

Since July 1993 MARPOL 73/78 has required new oil tankers of 5,000 dwt and above to be fitted with double bottoms and wing tanks extending the full depth of the ship's side. MARPOL allows mid-height deck tankers with double-sided hulls as an alternative to double-hull construction. Other methods of design and construction may also be accepted provided they ensure the same level of protection against pollution in the event of collision or stranding and are approved by MEPC. IMO is continuing its assessment of alternative tanker designs.

Existing oil tankers built to MARPOL standards must comply with the double hull requirements not later than 30 years after the date of delivery. Oil tankers built to pre-MARPOL standards must, not later than 25 years after the date of delivery, have side or bottom protection to cover at least 30% of the cargo area. MARPOL also allows for future acceptance of other structural or operational arrangements as alternatives to the protection measures. This rule change has had a major role in phasing out older tankers built prior to the MARPOL Convention entering into force. Large numbers of these tankers are now being scrapped.

### *Anti-fouling*

In July 1996 several North Sea States proposed that IMO consider how to bring about a reduction of the harmful effects of anti-fouling paints for ships, including tributyltin (known as TBT). This proposal received widespread support, and IMO has commenced work on several issues, including encouragement of intensified research programs and development of long term measures towards a total ban of TBT paint. To date, IMO has focussed primarily on information exchange, and it is apparent that not all members agree that a total ban of TBT paints is currently a viable option.

### *Taking action following illegal discharges*

Parties to MARPOL 73/78 are obliged to prohibit violations of the Convention and to take action against violators if sufficient evidence is available to enable proceedings to be brought, ensuring that penalties "shall be adequate in severity to discourage violations". The difficulties with this type of regulation have been accurately summarised by IMO as follows:



The problem is detecting a violation in the first place (which is difficult) and then collecting sufficient evidence to prove the case in court (which has all too often proved to be impossible).

For a coastal state, initiating action against foreign vessels is not easy, and there are significant burdens of proof required to establish offences. A prosecutor will firstly have to determine whether the alleged violation has taken place within the jurisdiction of the country. There is then the problem of proving the substance was prohibited and a violation has occurred. The nature of marine pollution incidents means that samples can rarely be obtained for laboratory analysis and comparison.

The use of new technology to detect oil spills may assist in addressing these problems in the future. Airborne remote sensing systems not affected by atmospheric conditions are efficient methods of detecting discharges of oil at sea and supplying images for use as evidence in the prosecution of offenders.

Although there is keen interest and great potential in the use of satellite imagery for the surveillance of oil spills, it has been difficult to realise. Civilian satellites often lack the high spatial resolution required to detect minor spills. Also present earth resource satellites lack the high temporal frequency of imaging necessary to support a spill response.

Oil pollution monitoring from satellites is technologically possible and has already been used on some major spills overseas but as yet not in an operational mode.

#### *Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS)*

The SOLAS Convention in its successive forms is generally regarded as the most important of all international treaties concerning the safety of merchant ships and seafarers. The first version was adopted in 1914, the second in 1929 and the third in 1948. The 1960 Convention was the first major task for IMO after its creation and it represented a considerable step forward in modernising regulations and in keeping pace with technical developments in the shipping industry. A completely new convention was adopted in 1974 which included not only the amendments agreed up until that date but a new amendment procedure designed to ensure that changes could be made within a specified (and acceptably short) period of time.

The SOLAS Convention specifies minimum standards for the construction, equipment and operation of ships, compatible with ship and seafarer safety. Consequently, the convention also has a positive impact on prevention of marine pollution, even though this is not its primary focus.

Flag States are responsible for ensuring that ships under their flag comply with its requirements, and a number of certificates are

prescribed in the Convention as proof that this has been done. Control provisions also allow Contracting Governments to inspect ships of other Contracting States if there are clear grounds for believing that the ship and its equipment do not substantially comply with the requirements of the Convention.

### *STCW*

The International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978 was the first international instrument to establish basic requirements on training, certification and watchkeeping for seafarers at an international level. A major revision of the Convention has recently been completed. One of the major features of the revision is the adoption of a new STCW Code, to which many technical regulations have been transferred.

The original 1978 Convention had been criticised on many counts. Critics pointed out the many vague phrases, such as "to the satisfaction of the Administration", which resulted in different interpretations being made. Others complained that the Convention was never uniformly applied and did not impose any strict obligations on Parties regarding implementation. There was also a general recognition that, after 17 years, the Convention badly needed to be brought up to date.

Enhanced procedures concerning the exercise of port State control have been developed to allow intervention in the case of deficiencies deemed to pose a danger to persons, property or the environment. Measures have been introduced for watchkeeping personnel to prevent fatigue.

### *Loadlines*

It has long been recognised that limitations on the draught to which a ship may be loaded make a significant contribution to her safety. These limits are given in the form of freeboards, which constitute, besides external weathertight and watertight integrity, the main objective of the International Convention on Load Lines, 1966. The first International Convention on Load Lines, adopted in 1930, was based on the principle of reserve buoyancy, although it was recognised then that the freeboard should also ensure adequate stability and avoid excessive stress on the ship's hull as a result of overloading. Provisions are made determining the freeboard of tankers by subdivision and damage stability calculations. The regulations take into account the potential hazards present in different zones and different seasons.

### *International Safety Management Code*

It is pleasing to see shipping participating actively in voluntary environmental compliance regimes. Many owners and charterers operate long established tanker inspection and vetting systems which are used to assess the quality of ships before they are accepted for



charter. Shipowners and ship managers have taken constructive initiatives to improve performance, with recent examples being the introduction of the Code of Ship Management adopted in 1991 by the International Ship Manager's Association and the Interim Code of Practice adopted in 1993 by the UK Chamber of Shipping.

The IMO has taken this process a step further by adopting an International Safety Management (ISM) Code in order to provide an international standard for the safe management and operation of ships and for pollution prevention. The Code requires a company to implement a safety management system which entails the documenting of its management procedures to ensure that conditions, activities and tasks, both ashore and on board affecting safety and environment protection, are planned, organised, executed and checked in accordance with legislative and company requirements.

The development of plans and procedures for shipboard operations, pollution prevention and emergency preparedness are consistent with established quality systems. Operation of an effective safety management system will require the development of a safety culture and a new approach to the maintenance of safety systems related to the operations on board ship and ashore.

The ISM Code will become mandatory on 1 July 1998 for passenger ships, as well as tankers, bulk carriers and cargo high speed craft of 500 gross tonnage and upwards. Other cargo ships and mobile offshore drilling units of 500 gross tonnage and upwards must implement the Code not later than 1 July 2002.

The ISM Code is widely regarded as one of the most important measures to be adopted by IMO during the last few years because it is designed to ensure that shipowners make safety a priority. However, during the last few months it has become clear that only a small percentage of shipowners currently comply with the ISM Code and there has been speculation that some companies will miss the 1 July deadline. The IMO Secretary-General has issued a strongly worded statement making it clear that there is no possibility of the 1 July 1998 deadline being extended. Many Parties to SOLAS have made it clear that they intend to enforce the Code and shipping companies that fail to meet the target date could therefore find their ships being banned from many ports.

## **Responding to pollution from ships**

### *Intervention on the high seas*

The *Torrey Canyon* disaster off the coast of the UK in 1967 incident highlighted the need for a coastal state to be able to take action to protect its coastline and marine resources from the threat of damage as a result of a maritime casualty. The action taken by the UK Government in response to that incident was at the time contrary to international law and was deemed "piracy" in some quarters.

As a result, the Convention relating to Intervention on the High Seas in Cases of Oil Pollution Casualties was adopted by a Diplomatic Conference (convened by IMO) in November 1969 for the purpose of clarifying the rights of the coastal state. The Convention is often overlooked in considering control of pollution from ships - it is, however, of primary importance to any government in any major offshore spill. Australia places considerable emphasis on ensuring potential oil spill commanders and on scene co-ordinators are fully aware of the Convention, both in terms of the broad powers it provides and its limitations.

In brief, the Intervention Convention allows parties to take such measures on the high seas as may be considered necessary to prevent, mitigate or eliminate grave and imminent danger to their coastline or related interests from pollution or threat of pollution of the sea by oil.

Related interests, as defined, include fishing activities, tourism and the well-being of living marine resources and of wildlife. The Convention is not limited to tankers nor only to pollution by oil: it applies to any sea-going vessel of any type whatsoever and any floating craft.

#### *International Co-operation*

The entry into force of the International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation (OPRC) on 13 May 1995 renewed international focus on efforts to improve preparations for a major oil spill.

The impetus for the OPRC Convention was the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill in Prince William Sound, Alaska, in 1989. This was a particularly difficult clean up, with those who attempted to co-ordinate the clean-up plagued with logistical problems in attempting to gain access to international and domestic pollution response equipment. Even when access could be arranged, most of the equipment arrived late. The United States was unprepared to deal with an incident of this magnitude, and there was a widespread view that major oil spills followed by ineffective response were likely to continue unless substantial international efforts were undertaken.

The primary objectives of the Convention are to facilitate international co-operation and mutual assistance in preparing for and responding to a major oil pollution incident and to encourage countries to develop and maintain an adequate capability to deal with oil pollution emergencies. Australia is one of 21 parties to the Convention.

One of the most significant provisions of the Convention is Article 10, which deals with co-operative arrangements between parties and states that "Parties shall endeavour to conclude bilateral or multilateral agreements for oil pollution preparedness and response."

Another aspect of note is the undertaking of parties to cooperate with each other in responding to oil spill incidents and to render



assistance when required to do so. Assistance can take the form of advisory services, technical support and the lending of equipment.

The OPRC Convention also covers a wide range of oil spill response activities, including sampling and identification of oil spills and development of model oil spill response training courses.

IMO is currently considering extending the OPRC Convention to substances other than oil, which means parties will need to have in place a national contingency plan for responding to chemical spills from ships. It seems likely that an amending Protocol to the OPRC Convention will be adopted in 1998 or 1999.

## **Compensation for pollution from ships**

### *The shipowner's role - Civil Liability*

The International Convention on Civil Liability for Oil Pollution Damage 1992 was originally developed by IMO in 1969 to ensure adequate compensation is available to persons who suffer oil pollution damage resulting from maritime accidents involving large oil carrying vessels.

The Convention requires ships carrying more than 2000 tons of oil in bulk as cargo to maintain insurance to cover specified liability limits. The limit for larger vessels is approximately \$A118 million. A certificate attesting that insurance or other financial security is in force is issued to each ship. The certificate is issued or certified by the appropriate authority of the country of the ship's registry.

### *The cargo owner's role - Oil Pollution Compensation Fund*

A further Convention, the International Convention on the Establishment of an International Fund for Compensation for Oil Pollution Damage 1992 (known as the Fund Convention) was originally developed by IMO in 1971 to provide supplementary compensation to those who cannot obtain full and adequate compensation for oil pollution damage under Civil Liability. The payments of compensation and indemnification as well as the administrative expenses of the Fund are financed by contributions levied on any person in a Contracting State of the Fund Convention who has received crude oil and heavy fuel oil in a quantity exceeding 150,000 tonnes in one calendar year. Like the Civil Liability Convention, compensation is only payable to those suffering damage following an oil spill from a tanker.

The amount of compensation for oil pollution damage available at present to parties to the CLC/Fund regime is some \$A220m.

### *Environmental damage*

The compensation regime established by IMO accepts only claims which relate to quantifiable elements of damage to the marine environment, for example reasonable costs of reinstatement of the

damaged environment; and loss of profit resulting from damage to the marine environment suffered by persons who depend directly on earnings from coastal or sea-related activities, for example loss of earnings suffered by fishermen or by hoteliers and restaurateurs at seaside resorts.

Claims relating to unquantifiable elements of damage to the marine environment are therefore rejected. This position has been criticised as being inadequate in circumstances where restoration of the environment is impossible and there are permanent or long-lasting injuries to unique natural resources. Increasing environmental awareness means that decision makers will find it difficult to accept, particularly when a major spill does occur, that merely because something is "unquantifiable" it is paradoxically worthless.

The introduction of the Oil Pollution Act 1990 in the United States added a further dimension to the debate. Under this Act a shipowner or operator faces liability for natural resource damage, the most controversial element of which is "passive use value", defined as:

"the value individuals place on natural resources that is not linked to direct use of a natural resource by the individual, including the value of knowing the natural resource is available for use of family, friends, or the general public; the value derived from protecting that natural resource for its own sake; and the value of knowing that future generations will be able to use the natural resource".

### **Australia's approach**

Australia is a signatory to each of the Conventions mentioned above, and each is enforced through national legislation. If all shipowners complied with the Conventions at all times this might be all that is needed. Shipping is, however, run by people and people have failings. There are many links in the shipping chain - owners, charterers, ship managers, ship operators, insurers, cargo owners and classification societies - and unfortunately profit is often seen in some areas as more important than safety of seafarers and environmental protection. Consequently, implementation of these Conventions and administration of the necessary legislation is only a part of the broader policies impacting on maritime safety and the marine environment. A number of regimes have been put in place in Australia to ensure compliance by shipowners, several of the more significant are summarised below.

#### *Inspecting vessels to enforce convention requirements*

Control inspections, under the authority of the international conventions outlined above, are carried out to ensure that foreign flag ships are seaworthy, do not pose a pollution risk, provide a healthy and safe working environment and comply with the relevant conventions.



Australia is one of an increasing number of countries with an active and clearly defined program of Port State Control inspections. The current program of port State control inspections of foreign flag ships visiting Australian ports is conducted by 45 Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) surveyors stationed at 16 strategically located offices. These staff conduct inspections in over 60 ports and off-shore terminals.

Under its port State control regime, AMSA aims to inspect at least 25% of foreign ships visiting Australia. During 1996, 2901 inspections were carried out on ships registered in 69 countries. The total number of individual ship visits to all Australian ports during 1996 is estimated to be 12,237. Many of these visits were made by regular traders and ships calling at more than one port. It is estimated that 4895 "eligible" ships (an eligible ship is one which has not been inspected by AMSA during the previous six months - or three months for passenger ships) visited Australian ports during 1996. This gives an inspection rate for the year of 59.3%.

#### *Asia/Pacific MOU*

As a result of the success of a European-based Paris Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) between countries on port State control and following encouragement by the IMO, an MOU on port State control was entered into between 12 Asia Pacific countries on 1 April 1994. This regional agreement requires each administration to establish and maintain an effective system of PSC with the aim of ensuring that foreign merchant ships visiting its ports comply with appropriate international convention standards. An inspection target rate has been set at 50% of ships operating in the region by the year 2000 and the agreement requires each administration to consult, cooperate and exchange information with the other Administrations in order to implement the aims of the MOU.

During 1996 three additional countries, Fiji, Indonesia and Thailand, accepted the MOU. This has expanded the membership of the MOU to 15.

The countries whose maritime administrations are parties to the MOU are Australia, Canada, China, Fiji, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Russian Federation, Singapore, Thailand and Vanuatu.

#### *Flag State responsibility*

Australia has been operating an active Port State Control regime for some years now which, along with similar international programs, continues to identify a large number of ships with major deficiencies. Not only does this pose an unacceptable risk to the safety of life at sea and to the marine environment, it also means that the owners and

operators of such sub-standard ships are operating at a competitive advantage.

The Australian Government is concerned that recent casualty statistics show only a small, if any, reduction in ship casualties. It is clear that a significant reduction in the incidence of major deficiencies will be necessary before the international community can have confidence that the presently unacceptable casualty rate will decline and marine pollution incidents decrease.

IMO established the Flag State Implementation Sub-Committee (FSI) some 5 years ago to tackle this problem but there is little indication so far that it is having the desired effect on the volume of sub-standard shipping.

Australia and the United Kingdom submitted a joint paper to the Sub Committee at its fourth session in 1996, proposing that a new convention be developed as a means of improving flag State compliance with international maritime conventions. This caused considerable discussion but whilst achieving a great deal of support in principle overall, the Sub Committee failed to reach a consensus on the issue.

It is envisaged that a new convention would clearly set out the responsibilities of flag states and would establish criteria against which their operation could be measured. In this way the operation of flag states could be assessed and measures taken to ensure that they fulfil their responsibilities. This is not a new concept as similar obligations on states have been established for some considerable time in aviation under the International Convention on Civil Aviation.

A further joint paper submitted to FSI 5 in January this year sought to establish the criteria for effective flag state implementation rather than focussing on the means of achieving this. This paper succeeded in progressing the issue further, resulting in the establishment of a working group to consider and develop the requirements for effective flag state implementation and the Sub Committee seeking the endorsement of the MSC in relation to the broad approach on the issue.

A new convention which would clearly set out the responsibilities of flag states and would establish criteria against which their operation could be measured remains the long term goal of Australia.

It is recognised that this is a long term project which is likely to face some considerable opposition. On the one hand some reputable states may have concerns over sovereignty; on the other, less reputable flags may see it as a threat to their existence.

It is also recognised that there is a difference between states who are unable to implement and those who are unwilling to do so. For those states who take their responsibility as a flag state seriously but lack the appropriate resources to fulfil their obligations, properly targeted technical assistance will be available. By developing criteria



against which performance can be measured, technical assistance may be more effectively deployed and funds may be more forthcoming.

### *"Ships of Shame" Report*

The far-reaching Report from the Australian Parliament's House of Representatives Standing Committee on Transport, Communications and Infrastructure's Inquiry into Ship Safety, entitled "Ships of Shame" and issued in December 1992, highlighted the dangers to the Australian marine environment posed by sub-standard foreign vessels with poorly trained crews operating in Australia's waters, and essentially reached the conclusion that the human factor is a principal cause of shipping incidents and accidents. *Ships of Shame* has been successful in raising the profile of ship safety issues both in Australia and overseas. The report received wide support from Governments and world shipping organisations.

The recommendations of the *Ships of Shame* report have been a catalyst in the achievement of safety change globally. The recent revisions of the STCW Convention, for example, require accreditation of training systems by the IMO in order for seafarers qualifications to be recognised. The recommendations have ensured that AMSA's port State control system remains appropriately targeted and that the ship inspection regime is consistent with internationally agreed arrangements.

The Standing Committee continue working until 1995 in pursuit of a safer and more responsible international shipping industry by inquiring on an ongoing basis into developments at the national and international level in relation to the issues identified in the original *Ships of Shame* report. In its final report, the Standing Committee noted that although considerable progress has and continues to be made, the abuse and maltreatment of crews continues, and that the issue of flag States abrogating their responsibilities was a recurrent theme. Issues highlighted in the Report include language problems, where ships might have as many as nine different cultures on board, lack of basic fire fighting equipment, poor living conditions, inadequate food, refusal of leave, and inadequate medical attention. I recommend this report for anybody with an interest in issues related to crew welfare. Copies can be obtained by contacting me at the address provided on the front of this paper.

### *Compulsory Pilotage*

Being areas of shoals and reefs and experiencing strong trade winds, occasional cyclones and strong tidal streams, the Torres Strait and the Great Barrier Reef offer an exacting navigational challenge. In 1991 the Australian Government declared compulsory pilotage areas for the major shipping routes through the Great Barrier Reef. All vessels of 70 metres or more in length and all loaded oil tankers, chemical

carriers and gas carriers of any length, must use the services of a pilot licensed by AMSA. For the Torres Strait, IMO has adopted a resolution along similar lines.

#### *Ship Reporting Systems (REEFREP/AUSREP)*

AUSREP is a ship reporting system designed to contribute to safety of life at sea and is operated by AMSA through Australian Search and Rescue (AUSSAR) in Canberra. Participation in AUSREP is mandatory for certain ships but most other commercial ships participate voluntarily. It was established in 1973 in accordance with SOLAS.

Ships participating in AUSREP are provided with an active SAR Watch. SAR Watch is a "positive" process. This means that if a position report or final report is not received, MRCC AUSTRALIA will initiate checks to establish the safety of the ship. These checks are aimed solely at establishing whether a ship and its crew are safe. The checks include broadcasts to shipping and communications with owners, agents or charterers. If these checks are unsuccessful, then an air search may be started. As a "positive" system, it is vital that masters comply with the defined procedures as closely as circumstances permit.

REEFREP is a system identifier for an interactive mandatory ship reporting system (SRS) which, in accordance with SOLAS, was formally adopted by IMO in 1996. It is a joint AMSA/Queensland Transport initiative operated by Queensland Transport from the ship reporting centre ("REEF CENTRE") at Hay Point near Mackay.

It has been established as one of the measures that the Australian and Queensland Governments consider will assist in enhancing navigational safety to reduce the risk of ship sourced pollution from shipping incidents. It recognises the level of protection required for the Torres Strait as a Protected Zone under the Torres Strait Treaty arrangements between Australia and Papua New Guinea. It also serves to protect the Great Barrier Reef, an area which has been entered on the World Heritage List and is the only IMO recognised Particularly Sensitive Sea Area.

#### *Memoranda of Understanding and Regional Co-operation under OPRC*

Australia has a Memoranda of Understanding on oil spill response with New Zealand, Indonesia and Papua New Guinea, in line with the obligations of the OPRC Convention mentioned above. These agreements address national contact points, loan of equipment and personnel, reimbursement of costs and consultation on issues such as contingency planning and exercises. They are designed to provide a cooperative plan for mutual assistance in the event of a major oil spill incident which exceeds the response capability of either national government.



The need for a regional plan as envisaged by OPRC has also been raised at APEC. The seventh APEC Transportation Working Group meeting held in Beijing in April 1995 agreed that as the majority of APEC countries in the Asian region were already members of the ASEAN Oil Spill Response Action Plan an additional APEC agreement was unnecessary. It was agreed however that a list be drawn up of contact points in each country where a request for assistance under OPRC could be made in the event of a major oil spill necessitating assistance by other countries.

Australia has advised IMO of its willingness to participate in the OPRC training program in the East Asian Seas region currently being developed by IMO. This program is part of a Global Environment Facility (GEF) project entitled "Prevention and Management of Marine Pollution in the East Asian Sea", a five-year undertaking focussing on establishing and strengthening national and subregional capacities in marine pollution reduction and prevention and risk management on a long-term and self-reliant basis.

AMSA has also been closely involved in the development of the Strategy of Protecting the Marine Environment in the South Pacific in conjunction with the South Pacific Regional Environment Program (SPREP). Although implementation of this strategy has been delayed for some time due to funding constraints, it is expected to progress in 1998, when AMSA may again be called upon to assist. The IMO Technical Assistance Program for 1997 to 2000 also provides for the implementation of aspects of this Strategy, including assistance in the development of national legislation, studies on port waste reception facilities and advisory services to finalise contingency plans.

### *Welfare of Seafarers*

Australia is particularly concerned about the welfare of seafarers, having experienced a number of incidents of alleged abuse of seafarers and one serious incident where tragically a crew member of the vessel *Glory Cape* died after being struck by an iron bar as he jumped to escape his attacker. Whenever AMSA becomes aware of mistreatment of crew and where our influence cannot achieve a reasonable outcome, we call the specialist agencies responsible who can intervene more directly than AMSA in cases of crew abuse. Physical abuse is essentially a criminal matter normally referred to police. However, AMSA will also alert other interested organisations such as Stella Maris and the Mission to Seamen as well as the International Transport Federation. We also advise the flag State administration.

### **Conclusion**

A great deal has been achieved over the last 40 years in terms of international conventions and national legislation affecting the maritime environment, but there is still much that remains to be done.

National and international control of marine pollution from ships continues to develop and to place increasing pressures on the resources of regulating agencies. With the declaration by many countries of a 200 nautical mile exclusive economic zone, domestic legislation is being applied in ever increasing areas of our oceans. The development by IMO of new regulations dealing with air pollution from ships, anti-fouling paints, ballast water and solid bulk cargoes means that the scope of pollution incidents to be enforced is also expanding rapidly.

There is a need for developed nations to assist developing nations with the implementation of these international conventions. This may simply involve assistance with the preparation of national implementing legislation, but may also extend to assistance with enforcement. As a catalyst for this, developing nations need to specifically ask for help in these areas. Funding for this type of activity has in the past been available from the World Bank, the United Nations Development Program and the IMO Technical Co-operation Program.

Problems associated with obtaining conclusive evidence to ensure the imposition of sanctions where ships illegally pollute remain, in most instances, insurmountable. Addressing the problem of compensation of environmental damage to provide an acceptable international solution is also one of the most significant challenges. The problem cannot be solved by Governments alone. The responsibility rest with all People of the Sea.



## THE MASSES, THE MEDIA AND THE INVISIBLE SEAFARER

*Captain Augusto MERIGGIOLI  
President of the Professional Association  
of Maritime Captains, Genoa, Italy*

All those who walk up the gangway when a ship is alongside a dock, regard crew members on board in a rather bizarre way. For some, they are like a ship's gadget, a kind of working gear, an odd device. For others, they are an awkward and embarrassing presence, an annoyance populating the quarters. In particular, a person on board is seen by outsiders as a non-entity. The indistinct and vague silhouette of an individual wandering about the decks is barely noted. Visitors generally have more important business to deal with than to waste time and efforts in discerning, identifying and penetrating the real-life soul wandering about. For them, crew members do not exist. It is as simple as that!

On the other hand, ordinary people living ashore, the landlubbers, see the seafarer as a real, life-like, accident-prone personage, involved in the foundering of the Titanic or in the massive polluting of the pristine Alaskan waters by the Exxon Valdez. So-called public opinion - a blurred and barely discernible aggregation of easy-to-influence individuals usually eager to present listeners and TV viewers with abused sentences, share with the media the perception that seafarers exist solely to be blamed when something at sea goes wrong!

Operators in the shipping community, those who should know better about professionals manning this utensil called a ship (on which they and many others depend for their bread-and-butter), are even less virtuous and decent in their judgements. They see the seafarers as mere tools, unfortunately needed to navigate the ship, and whose most sought-after talent is that they are available in large quantities and at low cost. The seafarer is perceived not as an ordinary individual with a brain, a heart, a soul, but just as a kind of impersonal, modern slave, available for hard and prolonged work because of sheer necessity!

Consequently, crews are not regarded as a composite aggregation, a team of skilled and well-trained individuals exercising respected professions, but as an inevitable necessity to be assembled in the most irrational way, to be dispatched at the cheapest price to the working site and to be, as soon as possible afterwards, completely forgotten.

As a matter of fact, manning agents, the masters of the selection process, base their activity on purely economic factors, cost-effective-

ness being the most important and often the only consideration in the recruiting of a seafarer. If the applicant can submit a certificate of competency complying with Stcw '78, as amended in '95, and he appears to be reasonably fit, there is no more screening to interrupt the selection process other than deciding the wages. The lower, the better!

Once selected, whatever the vessel, conventional or hi-tech, he is assigned to, the mariner enters his new working environment, often totally unknown to him. He takes charge of complicated instruments frequently never seen before, he lives with a group of fellows that may well come from as many as 26 different countries and he undertakes, *motu impromptu*, an unguided ship's familiarisation course; all this gives rise to a high likelihood of many future problems. To complicate and confuse all this process, he will be faced with cultural differences and language barriers.

And more harsh problems await the mariner who joins a Flag of Convenience vessel. He lacks the most common rights of a migrant worker and he is alone against the flag, the law and the contract of employment, which is often a mere four pages of nonsense hieroglyphics!

That's why a seafarer, today, perceives himself as an under-privileged and a non-essential person, easily expendable once used. Motivation, ambition, self-esteem, job-satisfaction, loyalty, commitment: all these are irrational words having no place in his cultural seachest anymore. He joins a ship with the objective of making enough money to return home and to invest the savings in a more dignified activity.

He knows that overbearing shipowners, pressed by greedy shipmanagers, are asking him to be *flexible*, meaning with this word, that he has to work much more for substantially less, to operate without complaints in a hostile environment, to accept to live in miserly conditions and to accomplish his duty under pressure and exertion, dictated by economic reasons which favour someone else. And all this, there is no doubt, is to be accepted in soundless silence!

Sub-standard shipping operators ought to be hounded off the seas by the weight of a helpful and mindful public opinion. But seafarers and the marine industry do not have much support of this nature. Other businesses are in a far better position. Air disasters are fully reported by the world's press, and if the cause of the crash is a faulty pin holding the engine to the wing, this is fully reported. It is the same if the pilot overshoots the landing strip. Mechanical failure or human error - public opinion considers both as natural consequences of doing business and people keep flying.

The public has been told repeatedly and in a straightforward manner, that the marine industry is professionally managed by competent, well-trained and experienced seafarers who every day, without posing any hazard, operate thousands of ships, an essential



contribution to world trade. But this indisputable truth is counter-balanced by the massive and ill-informed media coverage which follow sea-accidents such as those of *Scandinavian Star*, *Herald of Free Enterprise*, *Sea Empress*, *Haven*, *Moby Prince*, *Exxon Valdez* and others. This has led to a hostile attitude to the widely-publicised "human error" factor. If the error is human, then it must be the seafarer's fault! It is very arduous to explain to public opinion that the *human element*, not *human error*, is the major culprit in most sea disasters. It is even more arduous and difficult to explain this to a professional!

The fact that the majority of crossings of the English Channel by oil tankers and ferries take place without any danger to the environment or to lives is not perceived in the positive light that it deserves. Public opinion is largely formed by what the media show; images of an oil-caked sea-bird are presented time after time until this image becomes synonymous with a tragedy provoked by seafarers. The 900 victims of the *Estonia* disaster in the Baltic Sea are today less remembered than *that poor bird*!

*Lloyd's List*, the best-known and most widely read maritime daily newspaper, prints 17,000 copies daily, and it is thought to reach a total reading audience of about 100,000. *Fairplay*, *Trade Winds*, *Seatrade*, *Tecnologie del Mare*, *Uomini e Navi*, *Avvisatore Marittimo* and others print just a few thousand each. In no way can these compete with the *Sun* (four million copies daily), *Wall Street Journal* (1,800,000 daily) or the *Daily Telegraph* (1,000,000 daily), the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*.

Some of the senior executives, operators, insurers, charterers, brokers, salvage experts, surveyors, port pilots and mariners read *Lloyd's List* and another one or two daily papers; but people who enact and enforce laws which directly and materially affect international maritime structures, rarely read it, while they sharply peruse every morning at least three or four major newspapers. This may explain why, under strong pressure from public opinion influenced by reports written by mostly incompetent journalists about the grounding of the *Exxon Valdez*, the US Congress unanimously and hastily approved the Oil Pollution Act 1990. A costly and useless regulation. The tanker went aground through an error in navigation. The Act does not correct any navigational procedures, merely legislating that a double bottom hull would suffice!

On the other hand the shipping industry is not without controls regarding safety of ships and prevention of environment disasters through pollution. Ships' classification is the primary and traditional function of Classification Societies. The *class concept* originated from the insurer's need to know that risks during normal operations at sea are acceptable for granting insurance coverage. There was, at the beginning, one recognized society, the Lloyd's Register of Shipping, then others entered the market. Now the 11 most important and

reputable societies are grouped in the IACS, the International Association of Classification Societies, while a large number of newcomers are struggling to make it into this select club.

In Italy, the RINA, Registro Italiano Navale, is the technical body of the Maritime Administration which carries out surveys required by international conventions and issues relevant certificates. RINA is presently authorized by about 70 Flag State Administrations to provide the same service to them. As with the other 10 members of IACS, RINA assists shipping companies to comply with legislation on safety at sea and marine pollution prevention. Due to its considerable know-how and experience, the RINA certified 650 companies in ISO 9000 standards and since 1995 is actively cooperating in ship inspections with Port State Administrations (US Coast Guards, Australia Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA), UK Marine Safety Agency, Netherlands Shipping Inspectorate, France Maritime Affairs, and many others). As of 31 March 1997, 170 detention orders of 130 individual ships for a total number of 1,672 deficiencies were performed. Other Agencies are doing even better due to an early participation in the Memorandum of Paris on Port State Control. IACS members are actively involved in the application of STCW 78/95, the standards for seafarers training, last amended on February 1st 1997, whose objective is to improve education, skills, workload and other quality aspects of those involved in navigation.

More prominence is often given by newspapers to Flags of Convenience, FoC. There is more spicy news in this largely unregulated maritime labour regime which comprises the majority of the 76,000 ships plying the waters of the world. And press relationships with FoC are usually two-fold, disagreeable in case of a sea accident and disturbingly sensitive when issuing solicited and well-paid editorials!

But Flags of Convenience have much more appeal to unscrupulous owners. Therefore to counterbalance their infamous influence and increasing "deflagging", some Maritime Administrations decided to institute a parallel register for ships, known as the Second National Register. Norway (NIS), Germany (DIS) and others - most likely Italy will soon join them - are offering shipowners the possibility of selecting crews of any nationality, generally the less expensive available on the labour market, fiscal bonuses and other fringe benefits to induce them not to deflag any further. This option, which solves some problems, is not without creating others.

Welfare, state protection and social benefits especially designed for seafarers were distinctive legacies of countries traditionally marine-oriented in the past, but now suffering a decline of their fleet because of the widespread flagging out. Such traditional maritime nations had in place structures, such as the Shipping Office in UK or the Contenzioso (Litigation) Office in Italy, ensuring that seafarers were fed and paid accordingly to labour agreements and the laws of the land, and that



accommodation was clean and adequate. Such public structures were intended to check and rectify mistreatment and abuses, and to put a stop to the exploitation of seafarers; but the competitive world of maritime shipping today wants no hindrance in its path. As a consequence, these positions were abandoned, even with protective laws still in place. FoC's want unrestrained liberty for their activities, no fastening buckles!

Because of their plain and useless organisation, FoC administrations know very little about the people on board their ships and they see no need to involve themselves in such non-profit activities as the generation and enforcement of sound employment laws and welfare provisions. The naive and basic maritime rules of FoC registers, where existing, gives little recognition to people working under their flag, and their ineffectual and incompetent organisation is incapable of enforcing anything.

St. Vincent and Grenadines register is located in a modest office in Switzerland, enrolls more than thousands ships and monitors the whole business with three inspectors. Cyprus is located in a larger bureau in Limassol, has 3,000 ships in the books and nine inspectors! Both these administrations, together with Malta, Romania and others, feature every month, without fail, at the top of casualty lists and the catalogue of vessels detained according to the Memorandum of Paris because of safety and health deficiencies. To put it bluntly, Flags of Convenience are providing disgraceful shipowners with a lawless environment in which sovereignty is in their selfish hands.

Consequently, lack of control together with commercial pressure driven by a thoughtless imposition of deceitful economic rules dictated by competition, has made a ship's workload grow into an onerous and stressful activity. A routine day at sea is made of 14/15 hours of duty. When coasting in and out of various ports, it is not unusual to work 16 to 18 hours with short periods of rest when the possibility of getting sufficient sleep is made very difficult, particularly on small vessels subject to vile weather conditions and hull vibrations. Fatigue can kill!

Long hours of watch, excessive workload and lack of rest, lead to a wide range of conditions such as depression, heart problems, eating disorders and a greater risk of personal injury. Fatigue may cause psychological and physiological disturbances accompanied by emotional stress. Failing attention and anxiety may arise also, increasing the risk of accidents.

The revised STCW and the ILO Conventions set a maximum limit of duty on board at 14 hours per day and 72 hours per week, with a minimum of 10 hours rest per day or 77 per week - working and rest hours to be duly recorded in a file. The traditional watch schedules adopted at sea, 4 hours on/8 hours off on board ocean going ships and 4 on/4 off or 6 on/6 off almost universally adopted on coaster and

cabotage ships, are not distressing *per se*, but are not adjusted to the man's sleeping cycle and have a detrimental side effect on the circadian rhythms. This decreases human efficiency and increases reaction-times in emergency situations.

It is inappropriate that crewmembers are called every day to work many more hours than the basic eight-hour scheme. A recent study highlighted that on board the EU fleet, 38% of the First Officers and 23% of the Masters work an average 5.3 hours and other Deck Officers an average of 4 hours, more than the traditional eight hours cycle per day. Ratings work from a minimum of 4 hours to a maximum of 10 hours more than the contractual 8 hours per day.

Truck drivers have a strict control of their working and resting periods, frequently controlled by the highway police. Train conductors have a well organised working pattern, normally not exceeding six hours per day and rest until next day. Alitalia pilots fly 40 hours per month.

### **Seafares, whatever the birthplace, work round the clock!**

Port State Control is not yet so efficient as to monitor properly in this matter despite last year's diffusion. It is improving at a fast pace and good results will come in due time. Slavery, virtually, has been banned, just two centuries ago!

The remorseless reduction in crew levels carried out in the last two decades in the wake of naval automation, has been singled out and blamed as the most common cause of fatigue on board ships. Container ships with up to 6,000 boxes full of precious cargo and Ultra Large Crude Carriers carrying 500,000 tons of dangerous liquids, are manned by a bunch of lonely souls. Minimum safe manning levels do not reflect the realities of trading patterns and duties allocation, but any attempt to stop reduction of crews is overpowered and neutralised by the trend towards building hi-tech ships whose handling requires fewer and fewer operators.

All those involved in the fast-expanding technological revolution bear an element of collective responsibility for solving man/machine interface conflicts. The situation requires a firm decision to turn wheel back and to change course towards human dignity on board!

To distribute adequately the workload without losing efficiency in the presence of minimal crews, would require the acceptance of a conceptual new *modus operandi* where *every crew member is a navigator*. This would involve a profound change of tradition by implying that every crew member, engineers and ratings included, should be trained to perform safe watchkeeping as any Deck Officer and be paid accordingly. Deplorably, Unions and shipowners are concurrently resisting such an approach.



Wages and living conditions of seafarers are very obvious to the eyes of our Chaplains who visit ships in ports. They see at first hand how onerously the majority of seafarers gain their daily bread. A ship is not asked to be a four star hotel, but neither is it expected to be a camp-site! A ship is a profit-making enterprise, whose benefits should rightly go to the shipowners in measure commensurate to their relevant investment of money, but, even more rightly, in fair proportion also to the seafarers for their laborious efforts.

On the contrary, our pastors are frequently confronted with the anger and resentment of seafarers cheated of the little that is their due. Even mail is sometimes delayed in delivery. Morale, persistently, hits the bottom. What chaplains see, journalists do not see and consequently readers do not see either! As far as public opinion is concerned, the seafarer is practically invisible.

Ships of the future might well have a two-man crew, but the seafarer's future is dependent on ethical, not technical, solutions.

And please, if you can do something to help all concerned re-focus on seafarers' human dignity, thanks!

# APOSTOLATUS MARIS AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Riccardo MORO  
(OCIC-MS)

## Introduction

During these past three years, the OCIC Missionary Service (International Catholic Organization for the Cinema and Audio-Visuals) has acquired a specialized experience in the field of satellite communications Immarsat at the service of missionaries in their pastoral care contributing to evangelization in many African dioceses where at present 50 satellite telephones are in operation. We would like to put this experience at the disposal of Apostolatus Maris in the hopes that it can also be applied in the complex reality of the seamen's world.

1. *Immarsat Satellite Telephones* are not difficult to understand. The Immarsat Consortium was created twenty-five years ago (International Maritime Satellite Organization) in order to take advantage of the satellites for developing a safety system for ships on the high seas (SOLAS-GMDSS).

Since that time, different norms were created for communication with different, special characteristics (Immarsat A-B-M-C-Immarsat Phones) and more will be decided later like the Immarsat P/ICO. We have brought you two satellite telephones of the most recent type to show them to you and how they work.

The prices are far from being exorbitant since one telephone costs around \$3,500 (US) and each minute costs less than \$3 (US) (this can vary with the companies).

This is truly a competitive solution for many particular situations but also on smaller or fishing boats, offering communication by voice, fax or modem. If it is used in a network with a PC, receiving and sending information can really cost very little and be very efficient.

Since the solutions proposed have found a consensus of favorable opinions from the field and the clients of SM are multiplying, the MS has become a provider of Immarsat service (ISP or "Immarsat Service Provider") and deals directly with Immarsat, the manufacturers and operators of Telecom. The SM has brought in experts to study the particular situations and this professional experience is available. Instead of waiting for the technologies to reach the missionaries at higher prices, the MS can propose some integrated and personalized solutions.



2. *Comparison with other telecommunication systems.* The choice of telecommunication techniques is very vast today and new plans for applying the SSM (Station Satellite Mobile) or the GMPCS (Global Mobile Personal Communication System) are planned to be operational and on the market before the end of the century (IRIDIUM, GLOBALSTAR, etc.).

OCIC-MS also provides, in addition to the Immarsat means, other communication means on the land such as the HF and VHF radios complete with modems for transmitting information.

It is also worth mentioning that the OCIC-MS is a member of PICTA (Internet for Africa) of the Midjan Group (European Telemedicine Workgroup) and contributes to the development office of the ITU.

### 3. *Seamen's personal communications:*

3.1 In general: Some new concepts in maritime communication are developing on a large scale (ISM – International Safety Management and GMDSS – Global Distress and Safety Systems) in order to improve the completeness and accuracy of information from companies and IT systems taking into consideration the customary needs on board ships with a dual advantage: the life of the men and commercial services. Here is one very important aspect that deserves the Apostolatus Maris' attention: the seamen's personal communications.

For the seamen these communications are made in three places: on board, in the ports of call, at home.

3.2 Communications on board. Here we wish to speak about the crew's possibility to take advantage of the telecommunication facilities available on board about which the following would have to be clarified:

How much do the communications cost? (Is there a shipowner's percentage and how much?). Is the cost based on the frequency of calls? Is it possible to receive calls from one's home? And if there is no telephone, what does one do? Can the seamen communicate with sufficient privacy? Just trying to answer these questions is a big job for the AM.

In the short term, what contribution can the AM make regarding this question of personal communications to ensure the privacy of communications, to guarantee a reasonably low and transparent rate, to give everyone the possibility to take advantage of personal services such as E-mail?

A serious study of the usual policies and problems could in the mid-term tend toward a better understanding of this question of personal communications (impact on the market, global negotiation, making the calls pass through the SP at wholesale rates (corporate), etc.).

3.3 In the ports of call: In these ports, seamen normally use telephone cards which are often provided by the Stella Maris Center.

An inquiry by the AM regarding this kind of calls which would be sent to the seamen or to the Stella Maris Centers throughout the world could:

specify the volume of this business (10,000 minutes per month or 100,000?) and the price range according to the countries and destinations, and make it possible to propose recommended prices or special rates to be negotiated wholesale with the telecommunications operators.

It is needless to mention that voice technology through Internet is going forward and will soon become a reality with the result being that international calls will have the same cost as local calls!

Attention could also be drawn to the impact on individual budgets of seamen's telephone calls either in the port, at the Stella Maris Center or at home.

### Conclusion

The AM ought to examine closely the different aspects which have just been spoken about in order to be in a better position as soon as possible to offer useful suggestions to all the seamen and everyone on this subject of telecommunications.



# APOSTOLATUS MARIS AND THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

## A concrete example: The AOS Philippines

*Sr. Maruja PADRE JUAN, MSCS  
AOS Executive Secretary, Philippines*

### Situationer:

The Philippine archipelago has some 69 million people. Count among this the number of Filipino seafarers, which is more than 360,000, and which if computed to include each seafarer's family will more than triple to 2.16 million or 3.13 percent of the entire population. This could swell to about 5 percent if we include the number of Filipino fishermen, port workers and other groups whose work is in domestic ports in the country.

Of the total Filipino labor force which, according to the Current Labor Statistics of the National Statistics Office, amounts to about 29.63 million during the first quarter of this year, the number of seafarers accounts for 1.21 percent. Yes, a big mass of people whose conditions differ and whose needs vary from basic to the more serious struggles for human rights, land, livelihood and sometimes even for a very dear possession: life itself.

The number of sea workers increases but this does not get corresponding attention from the government. Yes, the overseas seafarers get little attention despite the dollar remittance they contribute to the economy, but even this is no more than the granting of a title to them: the Philippines, modern heroes. To many seafarers, this title is empty because while they are called that, the title does not benefit them with policies, legislations and programs which would uplift their conditions as workers and citizens. Complaints continue to pile up from Filipino seafarers who become victims of illegal recruitment, illegal dismissal and delay or non-payment of wages and/or benefits. Worse is when, back home, they seek justice for their oppression, they come face to face with an expensive and snail-paced judicial system, thus ending up doubly victimized.

Ironically, many more aspire to join the seafaring force. This is noticeable because of the proliferation of maritime schools in the country, from Luzon to Visayas to Mindanao. Even places high up in the hills or mountains have maritime schools. And this says a lot of things. This means that the standards of a maritime training school are not observed. It is reported that of the 131 maritime schools, not even 10 percent of them are accredited. Moreover, in the recent survey

conducted by the Marine Training Council of 95 licensed maritime schools offering B.S. Maritime Transportation and B.S. Marine Engineering, only 53 percent had adequate classrooms and roughly 30 percent had faculty members with the required master's degree or its license equivalent. If this is happening, it only means that the national system tolerates it and this is because there is a lot of money in this business. But just what kind of seafarers will this system produce?

More than 300 manning agencies spread throughout the country recruit aspiring seafarers. Many of them collect placement fees ranging from P10,000.00 to P80,000.00 and this is especially rampant in the recruitment of fishermen for Taiwanese, Japanese and Chinese fishing vessels. This practice impoverishes the poor fishermen all the more, who would sell land or borrow from loan sharks just to have this amount in exchange for a job on board. This is a clear violation of the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration's policy on recruitment of seafarers in which category the fishermen fall. But seemingly, no amount of POEA policing could curb these money-making monsters because their escape strategies fast outsmart POEA's execution of case decisions against them.

Meanwhile, as the overseas seafarers get at least a title, the local sea-folks do not get anything at all. Life and work is hard for domestic seafarers and fishermen. In a report made by the Shipping and Travel Journal in March of this year, it was said that several labor related violations on board inter-island ships continue to be reported by the victims and their relatives. This was corroborated by the officials of the Bureau of Working Conditions of the Department of Labor and Employment, who said before a Congressional Committee hearing that recently, there is a quantitative and qualitative increase of violations against inter-island seafarers. To illustrate this, the same Bureau found a number of domestic shipping firms violating or paying below the minimum wage standard and this has documented the number to be some 18 firms out of the 130 inspected in 1994, and some 27 firms out of 64 inspected in 1996.

Nowadays, many ports in the country have widened the grouping of the so-called port workers to include the port sex workers. In Bicol and Batangas, particularly, young women, mostly in their teens from far flung provinces, are taken to fishing boats, which for a fee, would ferry girls to the ships waiting about 150 meters or so from the shore, to render paid sexual services to the crew and officers. This practice has become so frequent that it has already developed into a lucrative trade and is now popularly known among locals as "*akyat barko*".

Furthermore, while our human resources are drained by the dollar-attraction of overseas employment, our natural resources are depleted by unscrupulous foreign investments. And both culprits invoke the name of globalization. The way it is, globalization seems to work only for the rich and the privileged, for in the lives of the majority



of the poor Filipino fisherfolks, it is experienced as death and misery in the demolition of their shanties and in the loss of their lands and means of local livelihood. Along the coast of Manila Bay alone, some 1,100 families were already evicted from Three Islands, while 300 other families are awaiting demolition of their shanties. In Bacolod and Pangasinan, coastal areas which form part of the municipalities' public domain and which serve as the fisherfolks' source of livelihood, are being leased, if not sold, to rich and influential persons who are not even local residents. In so doing, local fisherfolks are deprived of much needed fishing area and the volume is depleted of their already precarious catch, thus forcing these lowly people to be socially and economically dislocated and be pushed further to greater poverty.

Even sea accidents have multiplied in these past years. From 1990 to 1995, the reported number of local sea accidents totalled to some 1,198. If we divide this number by 5, this means having had more than 200 accidents per year. These reported accidents ranged from collision, to sinking, to grounding, to fire aboard the vessel. Note that for the month of August alone, this year, some 6 maritime accidents have already been recorded.

Given this problematic situation, government agencies are divided in the way to approach the gigantic task. They fight one another for budget, for power and for resources so that their efforts are hampered by self-interest, political ambition, intrigues, competition and distrust. The well-meaning ones get discouraged because of lack of support from the power structure and/or lack of political power of their leaders. Take the famous case of the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) and the Philippine Coast Guard. The Maritime Industry Authority - without regard for the experience and efficiency with which the Philippine Coast Guard used to discharge its seaman's book processing and maritime safety functions, took over these tasks, claiming that they should be the sole agency to discharge all maritime functions in the country. This move seems to have been made with good intent, but if we dig deeper, we would realize that the taking over of the Marine Industry Authority of these functions meant additional funds and greater power for them. Given the already bloated graft and corruption among government agencies, this would add to the burden of the people rather than be of service to them. No wonder that when they took over, seamen's problems came one after another, the latest of which was the fee increase in the processing of seaman's record book and STCW certificates.

### **One faith, one call to salvation**

What I just described is the place where we as *Apostolatus Maris* are called to spread the Good News of the Lord of history, our Lord Jesus Christ. The Philippines is a place where we cannot just say to the unemployed and poor seaworkers, "Don't be lazy, go and find work",

because here, the poor cannot find work and even if they work hard, their lives do not necessarily become better. This is a place where we cannot just say "Be good and the Lord will take care of you", because they see how innocent seafarers are maltreated or killed on board foreign fishing vessels and get imprisoned for crimes they did not commit just because they cannot afford the cost of the justice system. We cannot just say, "God is with us", because around them is so much poverty, deprivation, greed, lust and violence.

The Philippines is a place where action must accompany a preached Gospel, where effective proclamation of faith takes the form of witnessing to the dynamism of Yahweh when He led His covenant people out of slavery and the radicality and magnanimity of Jesus when he touched the lepers, ate with sinners and openly confronted structures and lifestyles which oppress and insult the poor.

For Jesus, the poor, most certainly are the oppressed in the broadest meaning of that term: "those who have been humiliated, cannot defend themselves, the despairing who have no salvation". For Jesus, echoing the Old Testament Prophets, the "poor" are the disgraced or outcast persons, including the humiliated and needy who know they must rely entirely on Divine help. All who suffer namely the hungry and thirsty, the naked, the strangers, the sick and imprisoned, are among the "least ones" and are his brothers and sisters (Mt. 25:3, 1-46). His brothers and sisters and therefore ours likewise. Is not following Jesus into entering the process of *seeing and judging* historical events and situations as he did; and to *act* in response, within one's context, on behalf of the "least ones", the poor?

This is not easy. And nobody says it is. But anyone can start with the strength that emanates from a conviction rooted in the faith, which believes that the grace and Providence of God will not be wanting for those who love and serve in His name. This builds up courage and determination, sustains creativity and supplies undying inspiration to persevere in journeying with those for whom we are sent by God, to be co-witnesses and co-agents with the people of the sea, especially with the "least ones" among them, in the building of His Kingdom where peace, love, equality, truth and justice reign in relationships between peoples and with nature, and in structures which create rules, policies and legislations. This is what lies behind the energy, dynamism and perseverance of the Apostolatus Maris in the Philippines, despite the absence, for instance, of security in terms of structure like a building for a center, or a regular funding support, even if only to maintain operation. This is what feeds our hopes in a maritime horizon layered with problems, needs and concerns peculiar to a Third World.

### **A spectrum of relevant and responsive pastoral actions**

How one sees a problem determines how he or she responds to it. So much so that Apostolatus Maris in the Philippines located in Manila, Cebu and Davao has diverse pastoral programs based on the reality of



the Christian communities where they are. Apostolatus Maris Manila, Cebu and Davao analyze with objectivity the situation which is proper to their community, shed light on it, the light of the Gospel, and draw principles of reflection and directives of action in consonance with the pastoral program of their particular local Church.

All the three AOS centers in the Philippines conduct ship visitation and maritime school visitation; facilitate liturgical celebrations, retreats and recollections; provide guidance and counselling as well as legal referral services; and make communication and recreational facilities available to visiting seamen and fishworkers. Particular to AOS-Davao and AOS-Manila are programs like hospital visitation and outreach to seamen's families. The AOS-Cebu, like AOS-Davao, ministers to inter-island seamen.

In Cebu, aside from ministering to seasoned local and international seafarers, the AOS also ministers to maritime students, involving them in the ministry, preparing them to give their best to their profession through the realization that what is important is not only acquiring skills and knowledge but becoming full persons, living witnesses to the Christian faith. Its most recent activities are the publication of a quarterly newsletter and the survey on living and working conditions of young Filipino seafarers with work experience of between one to three years. Through the survey, the AOS in Cebu hopes to find out the situation of new seafarers with stress on the level of their preparation for a job on board.

In Davao, the AOS has implemented outreach programs for seamen's families, especially for those marginalized in their parishes. The AOS observed that a child whose seaman-father is away ends up with delayed baptism because of the difficulty in fulfilling a pre-baptismal requirement for both parents of the child to be present. To help the situation, the AOS started to organize services to enable the seamen's kin to prepare for the reception of the sacrament of baptism and also matrimony. Moreover, last year, AOS-Davao started to include in its reach-out the young girls engaged in sex trade in port.

In Manila, the AOS is becoming more vigilant about justice concerns regarding seafarers' rights. The AOS-Manila finds it a must to further develop its legal education and legal assistance program for seamen, fishworkers and their kin, alarmed by the case reports it receives for assistance and support. The cases include illegal recruitment, manning agencies exploitation of newly graduated maritime students, violations of contract, illegal dismissal, delayed allotment and/or non-payment of salary. Its regular Pre-departure Orientation Seminars include rights awareness interspersed with values education.

The National Office, on the other hand, following the same process, deals with the whole maritime community, rather than with specific target places. It tries to weave together varied local issues and concerns, link them to make a total picture for a more holistic approach

to the pastoral care of seafarers, maritime students and kin.

More specifically, as a national office, it works to :

- coordinate the AOS centers in Cebu, Davao and Manila
- develop and promote exchange learning programs among AOS chaplains and staff as well as among prospective volunteers
- facilitate the establishment of AOS presence in other ports of the country by networking with parishes in the dioceses where ports are located
- undertake advocacy projects on the countrywide-scale to promote the welfare and protect the rights of seafarers, maritime students and kin
- help sustain the flow and exchange of local and international maritime information through production of relevant publications like the "AHOY! News magazine" and networking with various maritime publishers
- promote nationwide Christian maritime awareness towards a more responsive pastoral care of seafarers and kin in coordination with AOS Cebu, Manila and Davao.

The AOS in the Philippines has indeed grown and developed into something more than what it was from the beginning, a simple ship visiting community. Constantly on the move with seafarers, the AOS reflects, dialogues and responds to the reality of the seamen's life, the Filipino especially, which necessitates a "moving with" from the concerns of a seaman's family life, to those of his recruitment, his training, his employment and his return. To achieve this, the AOS works as a team, representing all vocations of Christian life, in becoming the voice of and a bridging presence for maritime students, seafarers and families, towards a national and international network in the service of the world maritime community. This summarizes for us, AOS - Philippines, Manila, Cebu and Davao, everything that we do and will continue to do as "People of the sea: God's co-workers in creation".

The regular quarterly AOS meetings, initiated by Fr. Carlos Oda, first National Director of AOS in the Philippines, harness the working relationship between and among chaplains, staff and volunteers. Together in these meetings common problems are shared and discussed, information is exchanged and help is extended. In these meetings likewise, when the AOS Episcopal Promoter is usually present, national and international maritime concerns are raised and courses of action are decided upon and planned; so that alongside the pastoral activities of the AOS in Cebu, Manila and Davao, are the vigilant and vigorous advocacy strides of the national office through country-wide projects which seek to challenge the values that shape the perspective and decisions of the maritime powers and seek to transform the existing manipulative and unjust relationships and structures in the maritime system which victimize and exploit seafarers and fishworkers.



## **A creative approach to maritime community ministry: Philippine context**

The national office's advocacy program is premised on the conviction that to evangelize is to take the Good News, not only to a seafarer's conscience but to the social structures as well. It is premised on the awareness that the most fundamental principle of the democratic process is structured to provide means for bringing about change.

The process responds creatively when pressures are exerted: public officials who act irresponsibly can be challenged by the electorate; new officials chosen to take their place like congressmen, for instance, who must remain sensitive to the mood of their constituencies, can be forced to rethink positions the constituents deem unwise, if subjected to media letters, telegrams, visitations and significant influence through rallies, marches and lobbies. The public conscience can sometimes be translated into legislation that guarantees new rights to various workers groups previously denied them, whether the issue be labor rights, legislation or antipollution laws. With persistent political pressure, changes for the better can be effected, although in our experience, these pressures must continually be exerted not only to preserve gains already made but to push in the direction of new gains. The reason why the system works as it occasionally does is because people do insist that politicians be accountable for their policies, and remind them that they are accountable on election day with their very jobs.

This method was most effective for us, when with several other NGO groups, we lobbied for the protection of Filipinos working overseas including seafarers and fishworkers, after the tragic hanging of the domestic helper Flor Contemplacion in 1995 in Singapore. The result of this lobbying was the enactment of Republic Act No. 8042 better known as the Migrant Workers Act, which, among others, provides expansion of the coverage of groups which may be held liable for the crime of illegal recruitment to include even POEA licenced agencies. Under Republic Act No. 8042, large scale illegal recruitment is punishable by life imprisonment and a fine of not less than P500,000.00. This was a big victory for us especially because the Migrant Workers Act was drafted, finalized and signed within the period of the National Anti-illegal Recruitment Consciousness Year Program whose organization and implementation we had spearheaded.

### ***Why the National Anti-illegal Recruitment Consciousness Year Program? What are its significant contributions?***

The alarming growth in the number of reported cases of illegal recruitment among fishworkers and newly graduated maritime students nationwide prompted us to come up with a national program meant to lessen, if not deter altogether, the instances of illegal recruitment and to save thousands of aspiring sea-based and land-based

overseas workers from the prey of unscrupulous illegal recruiters, who pounce on the victim's desire to improve his/her life, on his/her ignorance and to on his/her trust and good faith. We felt that there was a need to mount a sustained information-dissemination campaign nationwide. The information-dissemination campaign was intended to make the people aware especially in the barrios about illegal recruitment. The purpose is to make them think twice before dealing with any recruiter to avoid the repeat of the likes of fisherman Donato Ret, who was maltreated and killed on board by his Taiwanese officer.

A concerted effort was made by the church, the government and the private sector to make the year-long campaign work. No less than Jaime Cardinal Sin led the campaign launched in Manila, Ricardo Cardinal Vidal in Cebu City, Bishop Sofio Balce in Nueva Ecija and Archbishop Antonio Mabutas in Davao City. The National Secretariat for Social Action (NASSA) of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines provided us the necessary diocesan network to reach even the remotest communities of the country.

The program which ended on July 15, 1995 reached out to a minimum estimate of about 45,000 prospective overseas workers in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. Some 333 parish and school seminars which warn of the dangers and risks of overseas work and the modus operandi of illegal recruiters were organized in Northern Luzon, 52 in Southern Luzon, 49 in the Visayas and 75 in Mindanao. Earlier, the program held some 15 regional and diocesan-wide training seminars to ready volunteers from the CBCP-Social Action Centers and parishes, for the organization and facilitation of parish-based and school-based seminars. To amplify and multiply the echo of its information dissemination drive against illegal recruitment, the program has produced jingle and scripts for plugging by the member radio stations of the Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster sa Pilipinas. It has also distributed some 10,000 anti-illegal recruitment booklets and flyers, some 20,000 posters and 266 reference books on the modus operandi of illegal recruiters. Anti-illegal recruitment mugs, caps, streamers and T-shirts have also been produced and distributed to contribute to its consciousness raising effort. Some 400,000 anti-illegal recruitment commemorative stamps issued for the program by the National Postal Corporation have been circulated. Press release and conferences have likewise been organized to enjoin the public and media to help in the information-dissemination campaign. Almost every month of the period from July 17, 1994 to July 15, 1995, the program and its calls have seen print in prominent and widely-read newspapers, in diocesan newsletters and in other local papers. Moreover, the program has been featured in three ABS-CBN Channel 2 television programs to wit: Mission Expose, Magandang Gabi Bayan and Assignment.

It is hard to quantify the program's contribution to curtailing illegal recruitment but it is safe to say that the level of awareness of



prospective victims to the lure of illegal recruiters would be higher on account of the correct information disseminated especially at the local parish and school levels.

Among the other significant contributions of the program were:

a) Presidential Proclamation No. 433 declaring the period July 1994 to July 1995 as National Anti-Illegal Recruitment Consciousness Year. The proclamation was issued on August 11, 1994 by President Fidel V. Ramos. This has given more credibility to the program and responding thus to the proclamation's directives, the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) launched a counter-part campaign against illegal recruitment entitled "Kruzada Laban sa Illegal Recruitment (KLAIR)," while other government agencies like the Department of Justice (DOJ) initiated similar moves to help intensify the drive against illegal recruitment.

Presidential Proclamation No. 433 was the fruit of the program's vigorous lobbying in Congress which found support in Senator Ernesto F. Herrera and Congressman Bonifacio Gillego who filed Senate Resolution No. 849 and House Resolution No. 1004 respectively, urging the President to make the declaration.

b) Issuance of the Anti-Illegal Recruitment Commemorative Stamp to the program by the Philippine Postal Corporation. In recognition of the relevance of the Program, the Philippine Postal Corporation approved the campaign's proposal for the issuance of a commemorative stamp to help bring the anti-illegal recruitment awareness to every corner of the country. Postmaster General Eduardo Pilapil launched the issuance of the special stamp during the program's launching ceremony on July 17, 1994 at the Philippine International Convention Center (PICC).

c) Lobby Work for the Cause of Filipino Migrant Workers. The program lobbied for provisions in the Filipino Migrant Workers Act to ensure better protection for overseas workers. It submitted comments, reactions and observations on the major Congressional bills for the Filipino migrant workers, rights. This effort contributed to the pressure mounted by the various sectors on the government to address more resolutely the problems of overseas employment.

### **Amplifying issues and demands that seek better protection and benefits for seafarers**

Following the Anti Illegal Recruitment Campaign initiative was the publication of the Ahoy! Manual for Filipino Seafarers. Once again, this initiative manifested our commitment to the protection and promotion of the seafarers' welfare. Essentially, we conceived the manual to serve as the guidepost for every Filipino seafarer who may one day find himself seemingly helpless in the face of a legal difficulty. The manual is an integration of local legislations and international conventions which every seafarer should know for his protection against abuses and exploitation that threaten him in his place of work.

The Manual is divided into three major parts. The first part gives the reader a general understanding of what overseas employment is all about, the second part makes a detailed discussion of the Philippine maritime industry, focusing mainly on Filipino seafarers, their profession and its exigencies in the light of relevant legislations, and finally, the third part, serves as a directory of the Philippine embassies, AOS Centers and other groups where help is available. The manual was launched on the occasion of the celebration of the First National Seafarers' Day on August 18, 1997.

As a component of the AHOY! Manual for Filipino Seafarers Project, we launched the nationwide seafarers' rights seminars in maritime schools to ensure that legal education will reach not only seamen but also those would-be seafarers from all over the country. The seminars provided preventive education as aspiring seafarers must already be made aware of the dangers and challenges of seafaring life even before they sign their first contracts.

The seminars were conducted in coordination with the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Filipino Seafarers, and the Tan, Manzano and Velez Law Office.

### **Creating new ways of voicing the aspirations of seafarers and of making their aspirations heard: the National Seafarers Day**

With some other twelve government and private maritime organizations, we initiated the organization of the National Seafarers Day whose first and grand celebration took place on August 18, 1996 on board the Superferry 9 at Pier 4 of the North Harbor, Manila. With the establishment of the National Seafarers Day, the Filipino seafarers, who were long overshadowed by their more controversial counterparts, the landbased overseas workers, finally earned a place in the sun. Upon our prodding, President Fidel V. Ramos issued Presidential Proclamation No. 828, declaring August 18 of every year as National Seafarers Day. Every Filipino seafarer could now look forward to a day at least, every year, when acts of solidarity from the Church, the government and the private sector would announce their appreciation and recognition of the Filipino seafarers' contribution to the development not only of the industry, but of the Church and the society as a whole.

Moreover, to pursue the gains of the establishment of the National Seafarers Day, we initiated the yearly Maritime Community Get-together Party, where all the main players of the maritime industry may have a chance to celebrate Christmas together, breaking the monotony of their relationships which only revolve around work and business. This way, we occasion for them a chance to reconcile personal as well as professional differences which affect the delivery of their services to seafarers, first of all.



## The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few

The process of organizing these activities strengthens our network which is very important given the fact that we in the national office are very few. We are aware that it is through our wide and strong network with the local Church, the government and the private sector, that we were able to launch projects which otherwise would have remained as dreams, without seeing the light of day.

In the Philippines, the AOS is present only in three ports: namely, Manila, Cebu and Davao. And knowing that there are between 800 to 1000 big and small ports spread out in the entire archipelago, we cannot help but wonder how we can reach out even to just the 21 big ports servicing domestic and foreign vessels. We have sounded off our concern to the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines through our Episcopal Promoter and the Chairman of the Episcopal Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant Peoples, of which the AOS-Philippines is one of the main apostolates, but much has yet to be done by the current AOS chaplains, the National Director and collaborators, to promote maritime consciousness among fellow Church people. Bishops and parish priests in places where there are ports first have to be convinced of the need for AOS presence in their areas before anything could be done to move. It seems that following this process is the only way to get the appointment of more port chaplains, who are very much needed even if only to visit the ships and/or fishing boats in their parish ports and accommodate requests for Mass on board.

In closing, let me bring this intention to prayer through the special intercession of our congregation's founder, Bishop John Baptist Scalabrini, who will be beatified in Rome on November 9, some few weeks from now. Bishop Scalabrini, in his lifetime, had always helped the cause of people on the move. He'll intercede on our behalf so that more workers may be sent to the Lord's vineyard here.

In the same spirit, I wish to thank all of you for the great help and warm hospitality you extend to all Filipino seafarers who come to your ports of ministry. And in saying goodbye to my work in the Apostolatus Maris, I leave with a grateful heart, not only for the growthful learning experiences I have had during my ministry years, but more so for this opportunity of meeting the people whom the Filipino seafarers love to talk to me about, when they share how much they have been helped by AOS port chaplains abroad in their crisis moments. That's all of you!

Once again, thank you so much and good luck for the many more years of ministry ahead!

## WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Archbishop Giovanni CHELI  
*President, Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care  
of Migrants and Itinerant People*

Coming as it does a few years before the end of one Millenium and the start of a new one, our 20th World Congress has had a certain urgency about it that was not shared by any earlier Congresses.

Our Congress takes place within the ambit of the call for a new evangelisation, a fresh presentation of the Good News, that is emanating from the Holy Father. Also, our Congress is taking place in the same year in which the Holy Father issued his Apostolic Letter *Stella Maris*. The real value of the Letter is that it provides a basic structure for our work, and, very importantly, draws attention to the basic call within which the baptised who form the 'People of the Sea' can live out their baptismal vocation and truly be the Church in the maritime world.

These factors naturally produce a certain sense of 'newness' into our discussions: new norms, new evangelisation, new structures, new millenium. But I believe it is important for us to realise that there is also an abiding 'oldness' which has not changed, which cannot change. The 'mission' confided by Jesus to his apostles has been, remains now and will continue to be the one and same mission for all time and places. We are sent, it is our 'mission' as baptised people, to live the new life of love and reconciliation which Jesus shares with us, and to witness by our lives to the Father's love, reconciliation and fullness of life which he offers through Jesus. This has been the one and same 'mission' or task of the Church and of each of its members through all the ages. It was the mission of a Christian slave in third century Rome, it is the mission of a Christian factory worker today. It was the mission of a feudal baron in medieval Europe, it is the mission of a Christian statesman in Africa today. It was the mission of newly-converted Vikings seeking new trading routes; it is the mission of Christian coastal fishers in India today. It is and remains the mission of Apostleship of the Sea.

But the circumstances within which we live out our Christian callings are constantly changing: new problems, new challenges, new possibilities of sin and destruction, changing cultures, and so on. These form the "newness" part of our calling as evangelisers of the maritime world.



I will deal with some aspects of these 'new' things in a few minutes; but first I want to talk a bit more about the 'old' and original mission. Our common calling to minister, through the Apostleship of the Sea, to the maritime world, begins with the baptism of each one of us. Each of us, as a baptised child of God, needs to nurture the new life that is within us; we need to understand the vocational aspects of our baptism. It is as baptised people sharing in the mission that Jesus gives his Church that we climb gangways, minister in Seafarers' Centres, provide shoulders for seafarers to lean on, and so on. And so we need to be people of prayer, people close to Jesus and sharing him through the scriptures, the sacraments and the Eucharist. And that is why our daily prayer, morning and evening, and our sharing in the Eucharist, during the Congress, have been as important as the discussions and input. I am grateful to the teams who have led the liturgy, and to those who arranged a room for quiet prayer or scripture reading. Our encounters with the Lord during these days - whether in other people, in the scriptures and prayer, or in the Eucharist - have been an essential part of the Congress, helping each of us to deepen our understanding of our new life in Jesus, and strengthening our response in faith to our unchanging calling as Christians.

Our calling to witness to our baptism is being realised in a changing world, in changing and indeed rapidly-changing circumstances. We have looked at some of these during the week.

Fr John Leydon combined theology, science, poetry and mysticism in his presentation. He helped us to see more clearly the beauty of God's plan through the eons, to understand the sheer ugliness of sin - in this case the sin of abuse of our planet and its seas. I hope that his efforts, and those of Dr Soto and Mr Julian, will encourage the Apostleship of the Sea at local, national and regional levels, to lend its moral support to efforts of governments and groups to protect our planet and its bio-sphere, especially the seas. I have no doubt that this issue - the protection of our seas from abuse and exploitation - will become a very urgent issue over the next few years, and I urge the Apostleship of the Sea to make sure that it has a prominent place on the agenda of national and regional meetings. It is, as was stressed at this morning's Round Table Discussion, the responsibility of all: not just the responsibility of governments and the media, and of big business, but the responsibility of each Apostleship of the Sea grouping, and the responsibility of each individual. Reports presented at National and Regional levels, and to the Secretariate in Rome, should have a space for this 'new' factor. But it is not really 'new'; healing of people and of the world they live in has always been part of the Church's witness to the Gospel: healing of disease and sickness through hospitals and clinics, healing of ignorance by providing schools, healing through counselling, healing through the celebration of forgiveness and reconciliation in the sacraments. I put it to you that our involvement in anything that heals our planet and its damaged oceans is an extension

of the healing work of Christ through the Church directed towards broken humanity. 'I have come that you may have life and life to the full.'

A very moving part of our Congress has been the personal statements or testimonies presented by individuals: the People of the Sea talking about themselves. These testimonies, together with much of the content of Regional Reports, have given flesh and reality to a situation dealt with in a more generalised way by Professor Morales and others. The maritime world is a world of *people*, not just of fish: people who more and more feel themselves to be small people and getting smaller in a world of big business, big money, big politics, big ships. They so often, as we have heard, perceive themselves as unimportant, marginalised, forgotten. Through the flags-of-convenience system and in other ways they are exposed to injustice and exploitation. I make a call from this Congress to all AM people around the world, that they continue to welcome, accept and support all seafarers regardless of differences of culture or nationality, and stand with them and help them in solidarity in their struggles for justice. It is wonderful when all this can be done, using a Stella Maris Centre or an ecumenical Seafarers' Centre as a base; but I want it to be clearly said that the work of AM does not depend only on such buildings. Chaplaincy teams can be formed from among the members of parishes in port cities, great and small; in fishing villages and coastal communities, and so on. These teams, with guidance and support from the local priest and from the National Director of AM, can live out that basic Christian mission by welcoming seafarers and visiting ships in port. I hope very much that during the next few years leading up to our next World Congress in 2002, there will be a growth of such 'small' AM groups.

I was very happy to learn that contacts and moves are under way, involving the Jesuits, Apostleship of the Sea in Philippines, and the Philippines Episcopal Commission, that will hopefully lead to some kind of centre for seafarers' rights in Asia. This would, I hope, be linked into a network of such centres around the world.

I turn now to the Apostolic Letter *Stella Maris* which the Holy Father issued earlier this year. As has been pointed out by Professor Baura, the Letter has a number of significant aspects which, to a greater or lesser extent, are rather 'new' in the maritime ministry and in the way this ministry has been perceived in the past. Sometimes in the past the ministry was seen primarily in terms of the shore-based Church *doing* something for seafarers, who were regarded as receivers rather than as active participators. The Holy Father's Apostolic Letter turns this around. He first of all designates the 'People of the Sea' in very wide terms: not just actual seafarers and fishers whether away at sea or visiting ports, but including all people whose way of life, economy and culture depend on the sea - families, port workers, nautical students,



oil rig personnel, and so on. His Apostolic Letter calls on all these people to *be* the Church. The Letter stresses that the Church in all its fullness is to be alive, active and witnessing even on the high seas. The Letter recognises that the baptised whose lives are tied to the sea have the same calling to share in the one mission of Christ as their brothers and sisters who are land-based. Even though they may be a small minority on a particular ship, they are called to be the Church there, the leaven and salt that Jesus speaks about; they are called to witness to their baptism and to the Good News. The practical implications of this for Apostolatus Maris are very important. The Letter of the Pope mentions the duty of the Port Chaplain to train those who can be leaders of the small Christian communities on board, leaders in Sunday celebrations of the Word, and even extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist so that the vital Eucharistic element of the Church will be found even on the high seas. The training of such leaders, and the provision of catechetical, biblical and liturgical material should be an important part of the work of the Chaplain and Chaplaincy Teams. You are all aware how often material from extreme and fundamentalist groups, sometimes explicitly anti-Catholic, can find its way to ships. I am grateful to those sections of AM, especially in the Philippines and USA, who are already trying to provide material. But there is need for much more activity in this area, and I hope that one fruit of this Congress will be an effort at the regional level to supply and coordinate pastoral training and the provision of material. Perhaps short courses or seminars could be organised at national and local levels to study and put into practice this call from the Pope's Letter.

The Apostolic Letter is also noteworthy for the way in which the Pope starts with the local Church, and from there moves through national and regional levels to, finally, the Pontifical Council of which I am President. In our maritime ministry, we come to know, accept and respect the diversity of cultures in our world, and this diversity will also be obvious in the local structures, activities and even vocabulary of Apostolatus Maris. But what is important is that each place develop a structure through which individuals, whether land-based or sea-based, can be linked in Apostolatus Maris, first of all at local level and then at national level. The local AM needs an enthusiastic animator or leader. Not only a Port Chaplain but others also share in the Chaplaincy ministry. A Port Chaplaincy cannot be a one-person job. Ways must be developed at local level so that all concerned may be fully accepted as members of the chaplaincy team. The use of AM badges and membership cards is to be encouraged as a way of helping all, whether involved part-time or full-time, to feel themselves part of the AM organisation. There will be no uniform way of doing this; much will depend on local outlooks, ways, terminology and existing organisations.

In parentheses, as it were, I should like to remark here that the Apostolatus Maris logo and the traditional name of *Stella Maris* for our Centres should be maintained everywhere.

The Holy Father's Apostolic Letter envisages the 'People of the Sea' as forming the Church in the maritime world. The fullness of Church requires a successor to the apostles, a bishop. And so we move to the role of bishops in AM. It is particularly gratifying that so many bishops have come to this Congress and have taken an active part in it. The Apostolic Letter recognises the task of the Bishop-Promoter of AM: to pastorally oversee, through the National Chaplain or Director, the ministry of AM, and to promote this ministry in the Conference of Bishops. I thank the Bishop-Promoters, both those here present and all others, for their efforts. The local Bishop, the bishop of the port, has a vital role. He it is who ultimately appoints a local Chaplain. It is to be hoped that the stress that has been laid on this maritime ministry through the Pope's Apostolic Letter will stimulate all bishops to encourage the presence and action of AM in their dioceses. It is a fact that there are ports, some of them major ports, and indeed whole regions, where AM does not exist or exists in a relatively weak way. In this connection, too, we recall that, five years ago at Houston, countries of the former Soviet Bloc were just beginning to emerge into a larger and freer world. By now the Church in these countries has had a little time to begin the process of new life. I hope very much that, with assistance and support from national and regional AM organisations, and from my Council, and following the fine lead already given by Croatia and Poland, the local Churches in the maritime areas of Russia's Far East, Ukraine, Albania, Romania and the Baltic States will soon initiate maritime ministry and will be represented at the next World Congress.

The rapid improvement in communications through fax machines and e-mail means that coordination and cooperation between AM organisations in different countries and regions will, I hope, become easier. I offer my thanks to existing regional Coordinators for their work up to now, and particularly for their excellent regional reports that they presented to this Congress. But over the next few years the role and work of these Regional Coordinators will become even more important. It is to be hoped that numerous short seminars can be organised, not just at regional but at more local levels - perhaps just two or three countries together - at which many AM people can be brought together at relatively low expense in order to learn how the vision and the basic structures envisaged in the Apostolic Letter can be made realities. All this involves work for the Regional Coordinators as well as for the office in Rome.

The Apostolic Letter states that relations between AM and world organisations with similar aims pertain to the Pontifical Council. We hope very soon to issue some suggestions about how a local Chaplain can and should relate to the National Chaplain and Bishop-Promoter, as well as to the Pontifical Council, in such matters as applications for funding.



As I said earlier, AM works in somewhat different ways in various countries, cultures and situations. Worldwide, AM is not to be seen as a pyramid, operating from the top downwards in uniformly structured ways at all levels and in all places. Rather, it is like a galaxy of stars, no two exactly alike, some very large and bright, others smaller and dimmer but none the less shining and giving light and heat. It is like a confederation of various initiatives by local churches and by the Church on board - all of them animated by the same Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus given to us in baptism, and sharing in the one and same mission. Our task now, as we draw to the close of this Congress, is to organise ways in which this confederation can work better, can support the individual parts, can encourage sharing between the parts. Very soon, in consultation with Regional Coordinators, Bishop Promoters, National Chaplains and others, the Pontifical Council hopes to offer some ideas or blueprints through which all this could be done.

This Congress has been and will remain a memorable one in many ways:

- 1) It comes in the same year which saw the publication of the Apostolic Letter *Stella Maris*;
- 2) It has brought together participants from 54 countries - the largest number yet;
- 3) A significantly large number of Deacons has been present, indicating the growing importance and increased role of deacons at all levels in our apostolate;
- 4) The calls that go out from here - to the worldwide Church, to seafarers, to the media, to all people of good will - will have an added significance in that they are made in the context of the whole Church's preparation for the new Millennium and for a fresh impetus in our evangelisation of the world.

I think a lot of important work has been done at this Congress, both here on the rostrum and behind the scenes. I believe the Spirit has been active. I believe that seeds have been sown here that will bear fruit over the next few years in a stronger Apostolatus Maris throughout the world.

## FAREWELL

This afternoon I am leaving Davao. I feel bad about not being able to stay up to the conclusion of the Congress, but unfortunate and unforeseen events compel me to travel to Rome before the end of the week. I am sure you agree if I say that this 20th AOS Congress has been one of the most successful of the already long history of our organization — because of the numerous countries represented here (more than 50), the number of participants, the importance of the theme we have discussed, and the highly qualified speakers.

Yesterday evening, at the Cathedral, I already expressed our deep gratitude to Archbishop Capalla, to his clergy, to the religious women and men, and to the lay people who have generously contributed to our Congress through their time and money, but I would like to say once more how grateful we are to Father Jack Walsh and to his team of volunteers for the tremendous amount of work they have done for us. They have our love and they deserve a big applause.

And now I would like to thank each one of you. You are the Congress, you are the AOS, you are those who take the Gospel, the compassion and the love of God into the maritime world. All my affectionate gratitude to Antonella Farina (ladies first), Fr. Tronche and Fr. Maher who are the backbone of the AOS in the Pontifical Council. They are extremely dedicated people who do not spare time and sacrifices to carry out their very demanding task. I am very proud to have them in my office in Rome. To Nilda Castro and her team of interpreters, our heartfelt thanks because we know that they had to face a very tough job. To all those who have helped make our liturgical celebrations fitting moments of magnificent praise to Our Lord and upliftment for our spirits, we wish to say a warm “thank you”. I do not want to forget the manager and personnel of the Apo View Hotel who have always been patient, kind and accommodating in all our needs. To them go our sincere thanks.

This is the last time I shall preside over a World Congress of the AOS as my tenure as President of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant people will soon come to an end, but I will always share your ideals and be at your side in your endeavours, in your peaceful but courageous and persevering struggle for a better future of the People of the Sea.

Let us remain united in prayer and love, and may the almighty God pour upon us his choicest blessings. May Mary, Star of the Sea, guide us to the everlasting port of Heaven.

*Archbishop Giovanni CHELI*



# FINAL DOCUMENT

## Preamble

Two hundred and fifty delegates from 54 countries have participated to the XXth World Congress of the Apostleship of the Sea which took place in Davao City, the Philippines, from October 19 to 25, 1997, bringing to it their concern for the spiritual and social well-being of the People of the Sea, and their desire to share in the mission of the Church in the maritime world. They joined together in serious work, prayerful celebrations and moments of leisure, all in the climate of warm friendship, the trademark of Filipino hospitality.

Humankind created in the image of God is called to collaborate with Him in using, caring for and developing Creation according to His will: such was the first conclusion drawn by the participants from the chosen theme of the Congress: "People of the Sea, God's Co-Workers in Creation". The mission of Christ empowers us to "have life in full" (*John*, 10:10) and to bring Creation to the full manifestation of its richness (*Rom.* 8, 22).

At the present time we witness in the maritime world, especially in the shipping and fishing industries, the desecration of the goodness of God's Creation through:

- 1) the exploitation of human resources for the sake of profit even at the cost of human rights;
- 2) the disregard of the dignity, values and integrity of individuals (in life and death) and their families;
- 3) the lack of concern on the part of some governments for the welfare of poor traditional fisherfolk;
- 4) the irresponsible use of natural resources with the consequent destruction and pollution of the environment;
- 5) the increase in transportation by sea of nuclear and other hazardous materials, and the inconsiderate and irresponsible dumping of polluting chemical products, which often poison traditional coastal fishing grounds.

AOS worldwide addresses these issues in a spirit of service to all humanity, and especially to its seafarers, fishers, their families and all maritime people of every race, nationality and creed.

As a founding member of the International Christian Maritime Association, the AOS remains committed to ecumenical cooperation in all fields of the maritime ministry.

The XXth World Congress of the Apostleship of the Sea expresses its gratitude to His Holiness Pope John Paul II for the Apostolic Letter

*Motu Proprio "Stella Maris"* on the Maritime Apostolate, with its guidelines for the pastoral care of the People of the Sea and its call to all maritime people to witness with their lives to their baptismal vocation.

### General considerations

The AOS Congress wishes to underline the following discriminatory realities in the maritime world:

1) the undercutting of small traditional fishers by more modernised fishing fleets deplete fish stocks indiscriminately and impinge on traditional local fishing-grounds and the livelihood of local fisherfolk;

2) the present trends in maritime development and employment reveal an alarming lessening of attention to the human side and, by contrast, an increased preoccupation with efficiency and profit:

- reduced crew sizes, increased isolation, longer working hours, fast turn around in ports,
- the proliferation of ships on open registers - many of which are, not without reason, called "flags of convenience" - with a tendency to disregard standards of safety and terms of contracts,
- the growing anonymity in today's complex dealings between management groups and seafarers,
- the increasing number of multinational crews, often with negative consequences for human relations and safety on board;

3) life on board is made particularly difficult on some merchant and cruise vessels on account of cramped living quarters, lack of privacy, insufficient food, indiscriminate reduction of rest periods, etc.;

4) the need for union organisations and their role are matters too often difficult to be understood by seafarers who even, at times, distrust them;

5) seafarers fear black listing as a consequence of pursuing their claims;

6) the practice of transporting nuclear and other hazardous materials with or without knowledge of the crew, often not properly trained to act in times of danger, is on the increase;

7) the proliferation of drug abuse, drug trafficking, alcoholism and prostitution in ports constitute dangers to family life;

8) in regard to ILO Conventions and Recommendations, we observe that the uneven application of the standards to seafarers from developed and developing countries, leaves much to be desired. Countries that have not ratified the Conventions sometimes leave seafarers totally unprotected. Complex international structures within the shipping industry make questions of liability difficult to resolve.



Most affected are inter-island seafarers and cadets who are used in place of professional seafarers; this is the case, for example, in the Philippines. Fishers in developing countries are also vulnerable because of the lack of contracts and illegal recruitment. While there exist ILO instruments for both seamen and fishermen, we observe few provisions and lack of political will on the part of governments to implement them.

In reference to the Apostleship of the Sea we observe the following:

- 1) There are too many ports without an AOS presence, and there is also a lack of suitable people, clergy or laity;
- 2) lack of forward planning can mean there is no guarantee that a port ministry will continue in case of people's transfer or retirement;
- 3) there is need for a more intensive training-programme for AOS people.

### *Resolutions*

#### *At local and national level:*

- 1) The livelihood of most local fisherfolk depends on traditional forms of fishing. In order to bring about more justice and solidarity, fisherfolk must be helped through raising the awareness of their plight, creating forms of associative power and encouraging them to participate with local organisations.
- 2) Stella Maris Centres should promote awareness of the pernicious consequences to nature through the use of uncontrolled and destructive fishing methods such as dynamiting, poisoning, small-mesh nets, etc., and the effect of pollution through oil spillage and dumping.
- 3) AOS people should develop and strengthen cooperation with port and state authorities to see that laws and regulations affecting seafarers are enforced.
- 4) AOS people should be helped to become proficient in pastoral care, social-welfare counselling and assistance, and in basic legal information and methods of referral to advocacy centres.

#### *At National and International level*

- 1) The local Church hierarchies should be better informed and more aware of this special apostolate, especially through the efforts of the Bishop Promoter and the National Director.
- 2) The nature of the Christian vocation means that lay people should accept their share in this apostolate and ministry, including its planning, when selected for official posts at the national level, alongside the Bishop Promoter and the National Director.
- 3) A network of regional offices for legal assistance should be established around the world - a need for such an office is par-

ticularly felt in the region of East Asia - connected and coordinated by an international committee, with a view to serving local seafarers in the regions. EXTRANET and INTERNET should be used in linking the seafarers' centres. Seafarers' centres should therefore be equipped with computers and other electronic devices. This electronic networking could also be used to facilitate ship-to-shore communications for the benefit of seafarers and their families.

- 4) AOS International should act in order to provide the necessary training of all AOS chaplains and people regarding national and international legislation on seafarers' work and welfare. In association with ICMA member organisations, it should seek the cooperation of ICSW and ILO Secretariates in implementing such programmes, starting with a feasibility study which would take into account already published material and training facilities offered by international organisations, governments and non-government organisations.
- 5) The International Secretariat of Apostolatus Maris at the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People should, in consultation with Regional Coordinators and National Directors and as a priority in the months following this Congress, explore and seek ways of improving structures and communications within AOS especially at Regional level and then decide on what changes are required.

*Steps to be taken in the implementation of the resolutions of the Congress:*

In all Regions, the National AOS organisations are requested, before the end of 1998, to make an evaluation of:

- a) the implementation of these recommendations and suggestions;
- b) the quality of networking within the region;
- c) the means of improving the quality of this regional networking in order to benefit seafarers in every way;
- d) the building up of the AOS International network..

## **Conclusion**

The Congress commends all who play a part in the maritime apostolate: the members of the AOS at local level as well as all the many people, known or unknown, who, at various levels, contribute towards making the AOS the instrument of the Church which, in the name of Christ and in the light of Mary, Star of the Sea, wants to promote justice, peace and love among the People of the Seas and Oceans of the whole world.



## MESSAGE TO SEAFARERS

People of the Sea, dear friends:

We, the delegates representing 54 countries at the 20th World Congress of the Apostleship of the Sea held in Davao City, Philippines, 19-25 October 1997, send cordial greetings to the seafarers and fishers of the world.

We have been prayerfully united with you in love.

Believing God has chosen you to live in solidarity with your family and the world-wide community, we acknowledge the endless sacrifices required in your challenging career: long separation from your loved ones, solitude, dangers, threats of unemployment brought about by changes in industry and the diminution of coastal fish stocks, demands of unceasing adjustment to new techniques and new flags.

The Congress has explored ways to more effectively reach out to you through our local Apostleship of the Sea communities around the world. Our study of the maritime culture and the testimonies shared by some seafarers has made pastoral ministers better aware of your unique lifestyle.

As the theme of our Conference indicates, we all share the gift of Creation given us for our benefit. We are committed to continue walking with you in fulfilling our mutual mission as co-workers with God in Creation, protecting and restoring our planet's environment for future generations.

We ask Our Lady Star, of the Sea, for her continued encouragement and guidance for the success of our common endeavours.

The Congress sends its love and prayers that there may be justice and peace for all in the maritime community.

*Delegates and Observers  
Apostolatus Maris XX World Congress.*

## HOMILY OF ARCHBISHOP GIOVANNI CHELI

The storm which features in today's Gospel, which so terrified the Apostles, would probably not have featured in today's weather reports and weather forecasts on TV. A passing if severe storm on a small inland lake - no big deal, perhaps, for the world at large. But for those apostles caught up in it in their frail boats, Jews with their innate fear of "the deep", it was a truly frightening experience. This experience, and the presence and action of Jesus during it, became etched in their memories. The story entered into the catechetical teaching of the apostles and the infant Church, and so reaches us through the canonical gospels: a story which helped the first Christians and helps us today to understand Jesus in relation to the storms of various kinds which are part and parcel of the human experience, individual and collective.

Storms at sea, with all their attendant dangers, fears, disruptions and uncertainties, have always been a part of the life of seafarers. Over the centuries, seafarers had learned to live with this reality. The steady rhythm of their lives, their cultural background and religious beliefs, the abiding reality of the communities to which they belonged and in which their vocation as seafarers or fishers was respected, their links to their extended families - all these supported them in their lives and work at sea and helped them to accept the occasional dangerous storms as part of life.

Nowadays the picture is rather different. Modern advances in science and technology, and in weather forecasting, have reduced if not eliminated the danger from tempests of the kind we read about in today's Gospel. But storms of other kinds are raging against the People of the Sea. These storms batter against them in their human dignity, against their cultures, against their family bonds, against their religious beliefs. The early Christians had to face the raging storms of persecution, of rejection, of being made scapegoats, of slander; and they asked, like the disciples in the boat, Where is the Lord in all of this? Today we seek, in this Congress, to see and recognise the Lord in the midst of upheavals in seafarers' lives.

Revolutionary change coming into our lives is like a storm. It brings uncertainty about the future, it brings an end to steady and accepted modes of living, it brings fear. In the past, revolutionary change - whether political, social, religious, technological or communication - came but rarely to peoples. The discovery of the use of fire was not followed immediately by the invention of the wheel, the coming together of clans in a rudimentary political structure was followed by long ages before the modern nation-state emerged, and



there is a long gap between the first time that neighbouring tribes exchanged information and today's Internet. But for the people of the Sea of our generation, there is not just one revolutionary change to be accepted: several revolutionary changes are occurring simultaneously in various spheres, and this fact brings about a great storm in their lives, a great fear, great uncertainty.

Fisher-communities on coasts and islands, and their age-old way of life, are now threatened by the rise of transnational industrial fishing. Seafarers on merchant ships, formerly forming a single-culture community as crew and with their own dignity respected, have now to cope with the storm involved in realising that today, to a great extent, they have become multicultural economic units to be exploited simply for profit.

The values of the market-place, the glitzy values portrayed in life-styles, magazines, ways of life encountered by seafarers in their new multicultural world - all of these are tempests which threaten to blow away age-old beliefs, cultures, bonds and values. For many people living today, and especially for seafarers, it is not one but several revolutionary changes that have to be endured simultaneously; not one storm but several storms coalescing into a mighty tempest. And so the People of the Sea at this time, like the disciples in their boat, are frightened and insecure. Like the early Christians, emerging from Palestine and the Middle East, who had to understand and live their Faith as they encountered the values and life-style of the Roman Empire and surrounding peoples, the People of the Sea, too, need to realise that they are not alone. "Jesus is Lord" was the simple statement of the first Christians as they came up against many others who claimed to be Lord - in politics, in business, in pleasure, as well as religion.

Jesus is Lord: He is Lord of the maritime world, too. He is with us to bring us the Father's love for each individual. He has come that "we may have life, and life to the full". He is "God with us", the Son of God who has shared our human condition and through whom all things (our seas, our planet, our universe) are reconciled with God. He has invited us, poor human beings shivering with fear and perhaps despair as we face all that is changing and going wrong in our world, to be partners with God in bringing wholeness and salvation to that world: to be co-workers with God in the work of his Creation.

We are gathered together to celebrate the opening Mass of our World Congress. As I look at you, it is very obvious to me that you are a gathering representing many peoples, many countries, and many cultures. But this gathering has brought together something else which is not visible to the eyes of the body. Gathered in this hall at this Eucharist are the abiding memories of many storms that each of us has encountered in our paths of life: personal crises, perhaps crises in faith,

family problems, pain and perhaps moments of disillusionment in our work in the Apostleship of the Sea, unexpected and threatening changes. Each one of us here knows the story of those storms, past and present in our lives. Perhaps at times we have been inclined to say: "Where is the Lord? Why are you asleep, Lord? Help me! Save me!" But we have passed through these storms, or are passing through them, because, through God's grace, we did somehow recognise the presence of the Lord in our lives in those difficult moments and opened our lives and its pains to his powerful presence. And we now gather to celebrate that abiding presence of the Lord, who shared in the whole human situation with his disciples, sin alone excepted. We share the word of God, we share the life and presence of the Lord in the sacrament of his Body and Blood. We know that he is the one who gives peace, strength and stillness to our hearts as we pass through life and its storms.

Present here in this gathering are those who have faithfully climbed gangways day after day on ship visitation, those who have served long hours in Stella Maris Centres or other seafarers' clubs, those who have listened patiently as seafarers shared their problems, those who strive to form communities of faith on board, those who stand in solidarity with seafarers as they struggle for justice, those who try to rouse the local Churches on land to their responsibilities to the People of the Sea. But let us never forget that the Apostleship of the Sea is not just a social welfare organisation. It is, as the Holy Father stressed earlier this year in the Apostolic Letter *Stella Maris*, the organisation for the faithful who are called to witness to their Christian life in the maritime world. Certainly this witness is given through the various and many activities of the Apostleship of the Sea, either alone or in cooperation with others. But all these works should be based on faith: faith in the presence of Jesus in our world, including the world of the sea; faith in Jesus the Lord of lands and seas; faith in Jesus who calls each of us through our Baptism to travel, work and abide with him in his work of redemption and salvation for us human beings and our world; faith in Jesus the Lord through whom we are called to be God's collaborators in creation.

As, in the coming days, we explore together the reality of the maritime world and its peoples, may we never lose sight of the wonderful reality of our vocation as Christians in that world.



# HOMILY OF ARCHBISHOP CARLOS JOSÉ RUISECO

(Cartagena, Colombia)

1. This Twentieth World Congress is the occasion for a big opening of our worldwide apostolate to the whole of nature, to Creation. In Houston we opened our minds to the whole Church, a church with different and complementary kinds of ministry. Yesterday Father John Leydon opened our eyes to an understanding of the Sea, which is our father, as the Earth is our mother. That Sea upon which the Spirit of God moved at the beginning of Creation (*Gen 1:2*); that Sea loved by Jesus who used to speak to His Father on top of the mountains but founded His Church on Tiberias' sea-shore. The Sea was the apostles home and workshop. The Sea was the place where the Lord called his disciples. We have the sea in our blood, but first of all we've got the church in our hearts. It's not possible to open ourselves to creation if we don't realize that the reflexion five years ago in Houston opened us to the ministerial Church: the Church, consisting mostly of lay people, that lives in every ship on the Ocean.

## The Church on Board

2. Today we read St. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians. And we found the apostle introducing himself as the least of the apostles. Yet he insists on the success the Gospel has, when it is preached by someone who received the Grace of God. And in doing so he proves both the unity and the universality of the Catholic Church. First, because - as Paul says - "what matters is that I preach what they preach, and this is what you all believed" (*1 Cor 15*). And secondly, the universality of the Church, because they cannot believe if nobody preaches to them; and there is nobody to preach if he or she is not sent (*Rom 10:24*). The vocation of bringing the Word of God to all creatures (*Mk 16:15*) cannot be accomplished if only ordained ministers are sent. The lay people have the vocation of sharing their faith with others, especially with those who have no other access to the sources of salvation: evangelisation and sanctification, through the Word and the sacraments.

## Bread of Life and Sea life

3. Now, let us ask ourselves: how could we be co-workers in God's creation and in God's redeeming work as well? The Gospel today teaches us the way Jesus chose to reach the depth of the human being and make him or her change heart and become an active member of his holy nation, his chosen people, his royal priesthood (*1 Pe 2:9*). Let's follow step by step the sacred psychology the Master uses.

The scenario we already know. It is the sea-shore in Galilee; it is not his home place, Nazareth (where his fellow citizens didn't accept him), nor Jerusalem where he used to discuss matters of faith with the Pharisees. And the time was the moment after the miracle witnessed by the greatest number of people, "when about five thousand did eat and were filled".

It is a meaningful process in which the Lord taught the apostles - and ourselves - how to be seafarers for God and his "fishermen" (*Mt* 4: 19). The first thing to note is the distinction Jesus makes between the disciples he himself called and sent, and those who "seek him not because they saw the miracles, but because they ate the loaves and were filled" (*Jo* 6:26, *ib*). "After the five thousand had eaten, Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and go ahead" (*Mk* 6:45) "while he sent the crowd away".

Then he feels the need of being alone with His Father: "After saying goodbye to them, he went off into the hills to pray" (*Mk* 6:46). That prayer was not intended for the success of their crossing, they being professional sailors, but for the acceptance of the power the Lord has over the forces of nature, and the power he would give them after his Resurrection.

Now the night arrives and darkens both the sky over the lake and the hope of the apostles. They started to miss their Master and friend, the reason being they were now sailors for God. The boat was far out on the lake, and he was alone on the land; he could see they were worn out with rowing (*Mk* 6:48). They felt the need of having him among them; but the boat was far out on the waters. And Jesus was moved with compassion towards them, because they were like seafarers without a pilot, just as on the previous day he was sorry for the sheep without a shepherd. And so he performed the miracle they needed to strengthen their faith in Him. "He came towards them, walking on the lake and was going to pass them by, but they cried out because they were terrified, and thought it was a ghost" (6:49). Jesus said: It is I, don't be afraid; and he went up to them in the boat.

At this point of the story one would expect that a general joy would have filled the apostles' heart. But no: "Their minds were closed because they had not seen what the miracle of the loaves meant" (6:52). The time of faith had not yet arrived for the apostles. It was necessary that "the Son of man should be delivered unto the chief priests, and should be condemned to death, and delivered to the Gentiles, and mocked, scourged and spat upon, and finally killed, just to rise again the third day (cfr *Mk* 10:33), and to remain with us in the Eucharist.

### Sea life and bread of life

4. This scene is the opening of a process of training the disciples, for the apostleship of the sea, that will be concluded in the Gospel



according to John (*Jn* 21:1-19). The apostles and ourselves were taught to be sailors for God and fishers of men.

After Jesus' Resurrection, but lacking the Master's leadership, it's Simon Peter who says:

"I'm going fishing, and they replied "We'll come with you". It was their own decision, because Jesus was not with them, that's why they caught nothing that night.

"Jesus stood on the shore, it was light by now, and they were only about 200 yards from land". Nevertheless, "the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus". They need a new miracle. But in this case it was not just that Jesus walked upon the sea. No. Now he was glorified, he made them come to him and not with empty hands: they brought one hundred and fifty three freshly-caught fish, and he invited them to a breakfast of bread and fish, and said: Come and eat. And after that none was bold enough to ask, Who are you?; they knew quite well it was the Lord. (*Jn* 21:12). The first miracle of the calming of the storm happened just after the multiplication of bread as a sign of the Eucharist. And the second, the miraculous catch of fish, preceded another sign of the Eucharist, the Lord offering the meal on the seashore.

On both occasions, "Jesus stepped forward, took the bread and gave it to them, and the same with the fish". The bread, produce of the earth and of human hands; the fish, produce of the sea and of human hands.

### **Apostleship of the Sea**

5. That is the word of the Lord, that is a lesson for the apostles and for us, for all men and women seafarers in the world and in the Church.

Two thousand years after Christ's physical presence on Earth, we the apostles of the third millenium, both lay people and ordained ministers, listen to the voice of God, "Get into the boat and go ahead". We first fill our souls with the strength of the Bread of Life and proceed into the maritime world. Then all those who listen "to the word of faith which we preach" (*Rom* 10:8) will be brought back to the Eucharist, and "anyone who eats of that bread, shall live for ever" (*Jn* 6:51)

Bread and fish are good examples of how mankind may live along with God's creation. The Word of the Gospel and the Sacraments are the outstanding signs which the Lord offers every day to accomplish His own mission of Re-creation.

Now, as twenty centuries ago, Our Saviour sends us to land and sea to preach His Word and perform His signs. And that shall be the most sacred way in which we may be the People of the Sea, God's Co-Workers in Creation.

## HOMILY OF RICARDO J. CARDINAL VIDAL

*(Archbishop of Cebu, Philippines)*

I greet all of you at this World Congress of the Apostleship of the sea. My warm greetings to all the delegates who came from the seven seas. May the Blessed Virgin Mary... Star of the Sea, and also, the star of the new evangelization of the third Millennium... accompany you in your journey as apostles of the sea.

The world has truly changed. Before, evangelization was exclusively a terrestrial endeavor. The sea was only a means to reach foreign shores. Now, the sea itself has become the venue for the effort to spread the Gospel. In this respect, we need to shift our metaphors... the pastoral and agrarian metaphors used by the Lord in the Gospels sound rather strange if applied to the maritime environment. We cannot plant seeds in the high seas. We cannot have vineyards in the middle of the ocean. Out there in the seven seas, there are no flocks of sheep, no green pastures. We do not have to look far to provide an alternative metaphor. Our Lord has already provided us with the Gospel today — a fitting description of the apostleship of the sea.

"You will become fishers of men", out there in the high seas, there where thousands of souls waiting to be evangelized. That is why we need men and women like you who are willing to take to the seas as the Apostle Paul did, disciples who can stand the rigors of a seaman's life in order to bring the good news to those men and women living in ships for months on end... to assure them that in the midst of a turbulent sea, the Lord is truly with them, sleeping on the prow of the ship... that in every port where they may dock, there is the Lord waiting for them... that in their longing for their families, the Lord himself is the way for them to be in touch with their spouses. My experience at sea is limited to the short distances which I had to cover as a young man in Marinduque, a small island in southern Luzon, and as bishop of an island diocese, the archdiocese of Cebu. Beyond a mere twenty-four hours of being at sea, I have had minimal experiences with the travails and hopes of a sea-farer.

I imagine the sea to be a mysterious, awesome place, where the soul who wants to be in communion with God can very well find him in the empty expanse of water that stretches as far as the eye can see. But I reckon the conditions of the seafarer are somewhat different from our romanticized view of the sea. Mystics may rejoice in the vast emptiness, but for the ordinary seaman — harassed by his masters, suffocated by his cramped quarters, severely tested by homesick shipmates, oppressed by the the harsh environment of the sea — such mystical notions may sound off-tangent.

We must therefore be realistic in our estimation of the apostolate. We are up against an environment which is as fluid as the shifting waves that constantly toss the ship. This environment is both an obstacle and an opportunity for the apostolate. It is both a bank and a



boon for someone who desires to become a "fisher of men".

Allow me to use the language of the sea to describe this environment and its relation to the apostolate. Fish is relatively easy to catch because they swim about in schools. The sea-farers do the same. The cramped quarters can often lead to many tensions among shipmates. But the same environment can be a conducive place for building communities. It takes only one community-builder, respected and esteemed by the others, to organize a bible study session, or call a prayer meeting, or celebrate the Mass. Your presence among them can be a real haven to facilitate fraternal sharing and bonding based on the values of the Gospel.

The sea can often lead to insecurities and loneliness, in the same way that the apostles who were at sea with the Lord were distressed by the storm that was raging around them. These feelings of loneliness and insecurity are predispositions to vice, or they could be predilections to grace. Loneliness is a void to be filled, and as all voids go, it takes in whatever comes closest to it. The apostle of the sea must therefore be able to share the consolation and the joy of Christ with his depressed shipmate. There are many ways of dissipating loneliness aboard the ship.

There will always be attractive vices and seductive schemes to ride out the depression. It is our duty to provide a better alternative. We must take note that it is not the inherent attraction of the vice itself which makes a desperate man cling to it, but the lack of a better alternative.

Most seamen are decent men. They are devoted to their families back home. It is the dream of giving their children a better life that drove them to choose the lonely life at sea. The apostolate must therefore include the family in providing a support system for our men at sea. Our Lord once waited at the seashore for the apostles. He built a charcoal fire and broiled some fish for them. It was John who first recognized him. It was Peter who leapt from the boat and rushed ashore the moment he heard that "it was the Lord".

The apostolate can add a new dimension to the term "port of call". There in every port, a chaplaincy awaits, where not only can our sea-farers receive the Lord, but they can also get in touch with their loved ones. A network of port chaplaincies, ship chaplains and the families of the seamen can work together to welcome every seaman at any port of call with letters from home. The present communications technology does not make such a network difficult. We have the e-mail and the fax machine available in most modern ports.

The sea once stood as a symbol of separation. Not anymore. Today, it can no longer separate families. It never separated us from the love of God. Nothing and no one can. More and more people respond to the call of our Lord for them to become fishers of men, nothing, not even the sea can separate us from the love of God.

## HOMILY OF BISHOP PETER FRANCIS DE CAMPO

(Port Pirie, Australia)

My brother Bishops, Fathers, sisters and my dear friends in Christ, in a very warm and poetical way the very first chapter of the Holy Scripture teaches us that the creating hand of God, who loved beauty and order, brought into existence the immense seas upon our planet and then blessed them, pronounced them good and directed that they "teem with an abundance of living creatures." From the moment of Divine intervention, the sea has always retained for the human mind, an imprint of that Divine creative hand outstretched with its many blessings.

For down through the ages it has always been noticed that those who earn their livelihood along the shores or upon its surface are imbued with a *deeper* reverence, and are more spiritual in their attitudes. This very fact is celebrated in Psalm 107 which reminds us that, "they who go down to the sea in ships and occupy their business in great waters, these *see* the works of the Lord and His wonders in the deep." Thus it has also been observed that generally, the humble fisherman has an abiding faith unknown in the halls of commerce, and that among the ranks of seafarers, *few* atheists are to be found.

The theme of this Mass is thanksgiving for Life, for the beauty of Creation and for the basic goodness of people "created in His own image and likeness." So as we reflect upon the lives of those who go down to the sea in ships, as we sense the beauty and the mystery of the sea and the sturdy qualities of those whose lives revolve around its shores, "it is truly right and just that we should lift up our hearts in thanksgiving".

The sea, like the human ear has its many moods. There are times when it lays calm and peaceful, rippling beautifully against a blue sky. At such times it forces us to raise our minds to its creator and loosen our tongues in praise "Sing to the Lord a new song for He has done wondrous deeds, let the sea and all its life resound to his glory." So too there are times in the lives of those who live by and on the sea, and in the lives of their loved ones, when all is well, when joy and peace reign. At such times, we need to be with them to share their joy in sacramental life inviting them to lift up their hearts and give thanks to God. Yet away from the comforting view of the shores and its lights and out on its immense distances the sea is a very lonely place.

From horizon to horizon, the unbroken pattern of its rolling waters induces a feeling of isolation. In the daily grind of a seafarers life, the unchanging pattern of his duties, or in the strangeness of



foreign ports with their diverse languages and cultures, far from home and loved ones, a seaman's life can be a *very lonely* one. When the human heart feels the pangs of loneliness, it is very vulnerable. It is especially at that time that our supportive ministry and friendship is so welcome, and so spiritually rewarding. "Amen I say unto you, even a cup of cold water given in my name will have its reward." How much more pleasing to our God is the gift of our precious time, our friendship and priestly and Christian guidance to the lonely members of the sea community.

Then again we have all, at one time or another, stood back from an angry sea as it lashed our shores, as its violent storms threatened all with disaster who were found to be out upon its turbulent waters. Despite all our technological advances, the recent loss of ships and life shows all too well that the sea, for its beauty and mystery, is still a force to be reckoned with. Yet the storms of life can be equally disruptive. Buffeted by the crosswinds of personal problems, by financial and uncertain employment, and moved off course by the currents of a highly materialistic and a highly pressurized society, the *sea community* also becomes fearful. The only cry they can make echoes the urgent appeal for help from the fishermen of Galilee caught out in a storm "Lord save us lest we perish." As they were fortunate in having close by, the saving presence of Christ, so we are called by our ministry in the Apostleship of the Sea, to be a soothing, calming Christlike presence with our gentle words of comfort and our sacramental comforts.

The dominant note of the message we bring, the central urgings of our ministry to our brothers and sisters whose livelihood is drawn from the sea, is surely a trust in the Providence of a loving God.

In today's Gospel Jesus proclaims the presence of a caring, fatherly love in this restless, ever-changing world, a supportive, protective force which should rid us of our anxieties. "Behold the birds of the sky, they do not sow or reap, they gather nothing into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not more important than they are? Behold the lilies of the fields. They do not work. They do not spin. Yet I assure you that not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed like one of these. If God can clothe in such splendor the lilies of the fields which bloom today and are thrown on the fire tomorrow, will He not provide much more for you?" In all this involvement with the sea community we bring what the Holy Father in his *Motu Proprio*, calls the specific pastoral ministry directed to people of the sea and the commitment of the faithful called to bear witness with their Christian life.

As we proceed with the Eucharistic Sacrifice let us not only lift up our hearts in thanksgiving for the great gift of life, for the beauty of creation, especially the beauty and mystery of the sea, but let us also give thanks for having been called by the Church to work in this specific pastoral ministry and let us renew our dedication and enthusiasm for the Apostleship of the Sea.

Let us also assure all seafarers that we stand firmly with them as they struggle for a just wage, and for working and living conditions befitting their dignity as human beings; remembering always that Jesus identifies Himself with the powerless and with the have-nots. "I was hungry and you gave me to eat, thirsty and you gave me to drink, naked and you clothed me, sick in prison and you visited me in the confines of my ship, homeless and you gave me shelter. For as often as you do these things for one of these, the least of my brethren, you do this to me".

May Mary, who is called Star of the Sea and to whom down through the ages, seafarers have always turned for protection, bless and keep us on course, as we navigate the years ahead ...



## APPENDIX

### APOSTOLIC LETTER

*"Motu proprio"*

#### ON THE MARITIME APOSTOLATE

*"Stella Maris"* ("Star of the Sea") has long been the favourite title by which people of the sea have called on her in whose protection they have always trusted: the Blessed Virgin Mary. Her son, Jesus Christ, accompanied his disciples in their vessels<sup>(1)</sup>, helped them in their work and calmed the storms<sup>(2)</sup>. And so the Church accompanies seafarers, caring for the special spiritual needs of those who for various reasons live and work in the maritime world.

In order to meet the requirements of special pastoral assistance for people involved in commercial shipping and in fishing - as well as their families, port personnel and all who travel by sea - we establish what follows, updating the norms issued earlier in this century and having heard the opinion of our Brother, the President of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and of Itinerant People.

#### SECTION 1

##### The Maritime Apostolate

I. Although it does not constitute an autonomous canonical entity with its own juridical personality, the Maritime Apostolate is the organisation concerned with the specific pastoral care of the people of the sea; it seeks to support the work of the faithful who are called to witness to their Christian life in this sphere.

#### SECTION 2

##### People of the Sea

II. 1. In this document, the terms used are defined as follows:

- a) *Seafarers* are those actually on board merchant ships or fishing vessels, and all who for whatever reason have undertaken a voyage by ship;

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(1) Cf Mt 8:23-27; Mk 4:35-41; Lk 8:22-25

(2) Cf Mt 14:22-33; Mk 6:47-52; Jn 6:16-21

- b) *Maritime personnel* include 1. *seafarers*; 2. those whose work normally involves being on board a ship; 3. those who work on oil rigs and platforms; 4. pensioners retired from the aforesaid jobs; 5. students of nautical institutes; 6. port workers;
- c) *People of the Sea* includes 1. *seafarers and maritime personnel*; 2. the spouses and children who are still minors of seafarers and maritime people as well as those who share a home with them even if they are not actually seafarers (e.g. pensioners); 3. those who work regularly in the Maritime Apostolate.

2. The chaplains and the authorities of the maritime apostolate will strive to see that the people of the sea are provided abundantly with whatever is required to lead holy lives; they will also recognise and promote the mission which all the faithful - and in particular the laity - are called to exercise in the Church and in the maritime world in accordance with their specific state.

III. Mindful of the special circumstances of the people of the sea and taking into account the privileges which over the years the Apostolic See has granted this people, the following is established:

1. Maritime personnel can fulfill their Easter Duty regarding Holy Communion at any time during the year, having first received appropriate instruction or catechesis;

2. Seafarers are not bound by the laws of fast and abstinence prescribed in can. 1251; they are advised, however, when taking advantage of this dispensation, to undertake a comparable work of piety in place of abstinence, and, as far as possible, to observe both laws on Good Friday in memory of the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ;

3. Seafarers, who have properly confessed and received Communion and who visit with religious piety a legitimately erected oratory on board and recite there the Lord's Prayer and the Creed for the intentions of the Supreme Pontiff, can gain a plenary indulgence on the titular feast of the oratory and also on 2 August;

4. These same faithful, under the same conditions, can gain one plenary indulgence, applicable only to the departed, if they visit with religious piety the aforementioned oratory on 2 November and recite there the Lord's Prayer and the Creed for the intentions of the Supreme Pontiff;

5. The indulgences mentioned in Nn 3 and 4 can be gained, under the same conditions, by people of the sea in chapels or oratories of places where the Maritime Apostolate is active. On vessels which have no oratory, seafarers can gain these indulgences by reciting the prescribed prayers before a sacred image.



## SECTION 3

### The Chaplain of the maritime apostolate

IV. 1. The Chaplain of the Maritime Apostolate is the priest appointed in conformity with art. XII, par. 2; the authority who appoints him also confers on him the office described in can. 564 of the Code of Canon Law, to attend to the pastoral care of the people of the sea. As far as possible, appointments to this ministry should be characterised by stability.

2. The chaplain of the Maritime Apostolate should be distinguished by integrity of life, zeal, prudence and a knowledge of the maritime world. He should be good at languages and enjoy good health.

3. In order that the chaplain of the Maritime Apostolate be fitted to carry out all aspects of this particular ministry, he should be properly instructed and carefully prepared before being entrusted with this special pastoral work.

4. The chaplain of the Maritime Apostolate must identify, among local and transient maritime personnel, those who display leadership qualities and help them to deepen their Christian faith, their commitment to Christ and their aptitude for creating and guiding a Christian community on board.

5. The chaplain of the Maritime Apostolate must identify among maritime personnel those who have a special devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and train them so that they can be appointed, by the competent authority, as extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist and be able to exercise this ministry with dignity, especially on board ships.

6. The chaplain of the Maritime Apostolate should provide pastoral assistance in Stella Maris centres and in other hospitality centres for maritime personnel.

V. 1. The chaplain of the Maritime Apostolate, by virtue of his office, can perform for the people of the sea all acts pertaining to the care of souls, with the exception of matrimonial matters.

2. The faculties of the chaplain of the Maritime Apostolate are cumulative with those of the parish priest of the territory in which they are actually exercised. For this reason, the chaplain must carry out his pastoral ministry in fraternal understanding with the parish priest of the territory and consult with him.

3. The chaplain of the Maritime Apostolate must take care to keep a register of those baptised, confirmed and deceased. At the end of the year he must send a report of what has been done to the National Director, described in art. IX, par. 2, together with an authentic copy of the registers, unless the acts were recorded in the registers of the port parish.

**VI.** All the chaplains of the Maritime Apostolate, by virtue of their office, have the following special faculties:

a) to celebrate Mass twice on weekdays, if there is a just cause, and three times on Sundays and Feast Days, whenever genuine pastoral necessity requires this;

b) to celebrate Mass habitually outside a place of worship, if there is a just cause, observing the prescriptions of can. 932 of the Code of Canon Law;

c) to celebrate a second Mass in the evening of Holy Thursday, the Memorial of the Lord's Supper, in churches and oratories, if this is required for pastoral reasons; and also in the morning in a case of genuine necessity and only for the faithful who cannot attend an evening Mass.

**VII. 1.** The chaplain of the Maritime Apostolate who is appointed by the competent authority to exercise his ministry on board a ship during a voyage is obliged to offer spiritual assistance to all who are making the voyage, whether by sea, lake or river, from the start of the trip until its conclusion.

2. Can. 566 of the Code of Canon Law remaining in force, the chaplain mentioned in the preceding paragraph has the special faculty of administering the sacrament of Confirmation to any of the faithful during the voyage, as long as there is no Bishop on board who is in proper communion with the Apostolic See and all the canonical prescriptions have been fully observed.

3. In order to assist validly and licitly at a marriage during the voyage, the chaplain of the Apostleship of the Sea must be delegated by the Ordinary or by the parish priest of the place where one or other of the contracting parties has a domicile or quasi-domicile or has been staying for a least one month, or, if they are transients, by the parish priest of the port parish where they boarded the ship. The chaplain is obliged to report the details of the celebration to the one who delegated him, for recording in the marriage register.

**VIII. 1.** The same authority competent to appoint chaplains can appoint a deacon, lay person or religious to be a Co-Worker of the chaplain of the Maritime Apostolate. This Co-Worker assists the chaplain and, in accordance with the law, substitutes for the chaplain in matters which do not require the ministerial priesthood.

2. Those so appointed to be Co-Workers in the Apostleship of the Sea must be distinguished by integrity of life, prudence and a knowledge of the faith. They should be suitably instructed and carefully trained before this task is entrusted to them.



## SECTION 4

### The direction of the Maritime Apostolate

IX. 1. In each Episcopal Conference with maritime territory there should be a *Bishop-Promoter* whose responsibility it is to foster the Maritime Apostolate. The Episcopal Conference itself will appoint the Bishop-Promoter, preferably from among the bishops of dioceses with ports, indicating the term of his appointment and communicating the details of the appointment to the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People.

2. The Bishop-Promoter will choose a suitable priest and present his name to the Episcopal Conference which will then appoint him, in writing and for a determined period of time, as *National Director* of the Maritime Apostolate, with the duties prescribed in art. XI. The Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People is to be informed of his name and the duration of his appointment. The National Director may be assisted by a pastoral worker.

X. The tasks of the Bishop Promoter are:

1. to give directives to the National Director, to keep in touch attentively with his activities and to give suggestions and advice, as appropriate, so that he can properly carry out the duties confided to him;

2. to request at the appointed times and whenever it seems appropriate, a Report on pastoral activities for maritime personnel and the work done by the National Director;

3. to transmit the Report, mentioned in no. 2, to the Episcopal Conference, together with his own comments; and to encourage interest in this Apostolate among his fellow bishops;

4. to maintain contact with the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People regarding all that concerns the Maritime Apostolate, and to transmit to the National Director communications he has received;

5. to present to the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and People on the Move an annual Report on the situation of the Maritime Apostolate in his territory.

XI. The principal duties of the National Director are:

1. to maintain relations with the bishops of the country in all matters affecting the spiritual good of maritime people;

2. to present to the Bishop Promoter, at least once a year, a Report on the "status animarum" and on pastoral work for the maritime people of his country: in this report he is to explain both the activities which went well and those which were, perhaps, less successful, as

well as any corrective action taken to avoid losses and, finally, whatever seems useful for the spread of the Maritime Apostolate;

3. to promote specific training programmes for chaplains;

4. to direct chaplains of the Maritime Apostolate without prejudice to the rights of the local Ordinary;

5. to make sure that chaplains diligently fulfill their duties and observe the prescriptions of the Holy See and the local Ordinary;

6. to arrange, with the consent of the Bishop Promoter and according to the circumstances of the time, meetings and spiritual exercises for all the chaplains in the country or for chaplains and other faithful who are involved in the work of the Maritime Apostolate;

7. to be particularly concerned to encourage and develop the apostolate of the laity, fostering their active participation while bearing in mind the diversity of their talents;

8. to establish and maintain regular contact with institutions and aid organisations - both Catholic and non-Catholic - and with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) which pursue goals akin to those of the Maritime Apostolate;

9. to make frequent visits to places where the Maritime Apostolate is active;

10. to send authentic copies, prepared by himself or by the chaplains, of Baptism, Confirmation and Death Registers to the appropriate diocesan offices;

11. to inform, as soon as possible, the parish priest where parties concerned have domicile, of the data that must be recorded in the parish registers;

12. to establish relations with the Maritime Apostolate in neighbouring countries, and to represent his own country at regional or continental level;

13. to maintain regular contact with the Regional Coordinator mentioned in art. XIII, 1, 6.

XII. 1. It is the right and duty of the *Bishop of a diocese* to show zealous concern for and to offer pastoral assistance to all maritime personnel who reside, even for a short time, within his jurisdiction.

2. The Bishop of a diocese is responsible for:

1) determining the most suitable forms of pastoral care for maritime personnel;

2) appointing, in agreement with the National Director, chaplains for the Maritime Apostolate in his diocese, and granting them the necessary mandate;

3) granting permission for the erection of an oratory on a ship listed in the public registry of a port located within the territory of his jurisdiction.



**XIII.** 1. The *Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People*, which is responsible for the overall direction of the Maritime Apostolate, has these principal duties:

1) to publish instructions, in accordance with can. 34 of the Code of Canon Law, and to give guidelines and exhortations concerning pastoral ministry among the people of the sea;

2) to ensure prudently that this ministry is carried out in accordance with the law and in a dignified and fruitful manner;

3) to exercise, with respect to other associations encompassed within the Maritime Apostolate, those functions proper to the Holy See regarding associations;

4) to offer assistance from the Pontifical Council to all who are involved in this apostolic work by encouraging and supporting them, and also by seeing to the correction of possible abuses;

5) to promote an ecumenical spirit in the maritime world, at the same time seeing that this is done in faithful harmony with the teaching and discipline of the Church;

6) to appoint a Coordinator for a region encompassing several Episcopal Conferences, at the suggestion of the Bishop promoters concerned, and to specify the functions of such a Coordinator.

2. So that the pastoral care of people of the sea may be better and more effectively organised, the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People should encourage and foster cooperation and reciprocal coordination of projects among Episcopal Conferences and local Ordinaries. This same Council will establish relations with institutes of consecrated life and with associations and organisations that can cooperate at the international level with the Maritime Apostolate.

We order all these things to have lasting effect, all things to the contrary notwithstanding.

Given in Rome at St Peter's on the thirty-first day of January, nineteen hundred and ninety-seven, the nineteenth year of our Pontificate.

IOANNES PAULUS PP. II