



Catholic Maritime News

Winter 2012

Volume 71

XXIII WORLD CONGRESS OF THE APOSTLESHIP OF THE SEA (Vatican City, 19-23rd November 2012)

Message to the people of the sea!

Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People Vatican City

Bishop Promoters, port chaplains and volunteers of the Apostleship of the Sea (AOS) have gathered from November 19 -23, 2012, in the Synod Hall of the Vatican City for the XXIII World Congress, on the theme: New Evangelization in the maritime world (New ways and means to proclaim the Good News).

During the Congress we considered a variety of issues affecting your lives and work. We challenged ourselves to deepen our engagement with all sectors of the maritime world, to better understand the cultural and religious diversity among all seafaring nations and to support each other more effectively, particularly piracy victims, in a spirit of solidarity.

We look forward to the full implementation of the ILO's Maritime Labour Convention (MLC) 2006 and we undertake to renew our efforts to ensure ratification of the ILO Work on Fishing Convention 2007 (No. 188) and Recommendation, 2007 (No. 199). Both legal instruments should greatly improve your living and working conditions.

We are inspired by your example of service to one another in the midst of uncertainty, isolation and danger. We learned from you how to live in a changing world in harmony with others and the environment.

Christ calls each one of us to turn to him to spread his message of love to all those we meet. Therefore, we renew our commitment to serve you and your families, confident in God's love and the guidance of Our Lady, Star of the Sea.

May the peace and love of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all and your families during this Christmas Season.





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We welcome your comments, feedback and suggestions.

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

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FROM THE NATIONAL DIRECTOR

Catholic Maritime News is back after a protracted period of inactivity. We hope to continue regular publication of this newsletter by featuring relevant news and articles from the AOS network and maritime community.

As 2012 rolls to an end, events big and small have touched us in so many ways. The Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting in Connecticut that killed 20 young children and six adults brought the nation in mourning. Hurricane Sandy, which devastated New York and New Jersey areas, destroyed the Stella Maris Center and chapel in Port Newark/Port Elizabeth. In the midst of bad things that happened, there are everyday moments that we can be thankful for.

On a daily basis, Apostleship of the Sea chaplains and their teams all over the country and elsewhere, together with their collaborators are in the forefront reaching out to seafarers, providing a 'home away from home', advocating for their rights and dignity, offering spiritual assistance and sacramental services and, working to provide many other services to marginalized seafarers such as those who are abandoned in foreign shores or exploited. For these, the chaplains and their teams and collaborators deserve a big Thank You.

Apostleship of the Sea ministry is about Catholic Social Teaching put into action, making a connection between Scripture and social practices, policies, laws and institutions. It is about finding new ways and means to bring the Good News, meeting the people of the sea where they are at, on board ship and ashore. As Pope Benedict XVI says in his address to the participants of the 23rd AOS World Congress, "Since the dawn of Christianity, the maritime world has been an effective vehicle for evangelization."

Last November in London, stake holders in the maritime sector including ship owners, managers, operators, bankers and others attended a conference and were told of their corporate social responsibility. The shipping industry, if it has to do things properly, "has to do more for its seafarers".

Doing things properly for seafarers is a right thing. Applying social and ethical standards to businesses will have positive results. A company that values seafarers will have their loyalty, trust and quality work performance that will benefit the company and the maritime community at large.

May the Emmanuel, God-with-us bring you peace, love and joy.

Sr. Myrna Tordillo

Report and Reflection

XXIII World Congress of the Apostleship of the Sea 19th – 23rd November 2012- Synod Hall, Vatican City

Most Reverend J. Kevin Boland
Bishop Promoter, USA



You may be sitting at the family table eating a meal or perhaps driving your automobile in a busy city street - look around and observe everything with the naked eye - 90% of the world's goods at one time or another traveled by sea.

The seafarers of the world, seldom seen and seldom heard from are the primary agents for making this happen. They are at our service night and day. Since their labors are hidden, these mariners are frequently inadequately appreciated. Their hours are long, they are away from home months at a time, and their living conditions can be sub-standard. The Apostleship of the Sea (AOS) is a world-wide ministry to the people of the sea – especially seafarers and fishers. AOS had its beginnings in 1922 but it is now spread world-wide and it is ecumenical in its outreach.

Every five years the Vatican sponsors a Congress for the Apostleship of the Sea. As the Bishop Promoter for the USA, I gathered with 400 + delegates from all corners of the world at Vatican City. They were Port Chaplains, Volunteers, and a host of men and women whose primary purpose was to serve the needs of mariners who ply the oceans of the world night and day. It is estimated that 60% of mariners are Roman Catholic. Theirs is a most difficult and demanding service. For months at a time they are away from home and their shore leave is minimal.

When we arrived in Rome, the week of November 18, 2012, I was instantly struck by the enthusiasm of the gathering, the multitude of languages, and the obvious spirit of commitment in their care and concern for the mariners of the world.

What was the program?

We met in the beautiful Synod Hall of the Vatican – designed like an amphitheater and engineered to deliver translations in four languages. The following are samples of some of the presentations. The keynote address was delivered by Cardinal Veglió under the title of: “New Evangelization in the Maritime World.” Throughout the Congress there was a great emphasis on renewing gospel values in ministering to the seafarers. There was also a special emphasis on developing and putting in place the Rights of Seafarers. Rights to ensure proper living conditions, guaranteed recreational time, just salary and health benefits, etc.

There were also presentations referencing the scourge of Piracy and the steps that are underway to bring justice to those who perpetrate these terrible crimes. One of the highlights of the Conference was a presentation by an Italian Captain of an oil tanker which was hijacked by pirates. He and his crew of twenty two were held hostage for six months, tortured and close to death because of lack of food and water. Ransom was paid, they were rescued and returned to their homelands. In his personal testimony the Captain stated: “I knew that as a Catholic Christian I would never find peace until I granted forgiveness to the Pirates.”

The six day meeting was not all work and no play. We had an outstanding guided tour of the Vatican Museums, (including the Sistine Chapel), followed by a catered meal in the confines of that majestic place.

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XXIII World Congress of the Apostleship of the Sea

Report and Reflection *Continued*

The Apostleship of the Sea (AOS) is an integral part of the pastoral structure of the Universal Church. The II Vatican Council decree, “Christus Dominus” states as follows:

“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 pastoral ministry of the parochial clergy or are entirely deprived of it. These include the many migrants, exiles and refugees, seafarers and airmen, nomads and others of this kind.”

The spirit of World Congress XXIII was infectious. It brought together 400 + delegates from all parts of the globe – all dedicated to the care of the seafarers and those who are involved in the commerce of the sea. Maria, Stella Maris, Pray for Us.

On the closing day, (November 23) we participated in an audience with Our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI. I conclude this reflection by quoting part of his address. It was a fitting conclusion to a memorable gathering and a memorable occasion.

(“Excerpts from Pope Benedict’s Remarks”)

Confronted with the hardships faced by workers in the maritime industries, such as fishermen — and their families — there is a growing need to face these problems with “an integral vision of man, reflecting the different aspects of the human person, contemplated through a lens purified by charity” (Encyclical Caritas in Veritate, n. 32).

Since the dawn of Christianity, the maritime world has been an effective vehicle for evangelization. The Apostles and disciples of Jesus were able to go all over the world, preaching the Gospel to the whole creation (cf. Mk 16:15) thanks to sea voyages; we need think only of St Paul’s journeys. This is how they began their journey to spread the Word of God “to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8). Today too the Church sails the seas to bring the Gospel to all the nations and the network of your presence in all the ports of call around the world, your daily visits to ships in port and your brotherly welcome to crews during their layovers — are a visible sign of your affectionate attention to those who cannot receive ordinary pastoral care.

This world of the sea, with the continuous migration of people today, must take into account the complex effects of globalization and, unfortunately, must come to grips with situations of injustice, especially when the freedom of a ship’s crew to go ashore is restricted, when they are abandoned altogether along with the vessels on which they work, when they risk piracy at sea and the damage of illegal fishing (cf. Angelus, 18 January 2009).

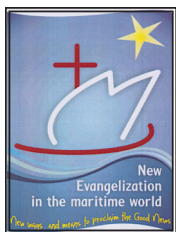
The vulnerability of seafarers, fishermen and sailors calls for an even more attentive solicitude on the Church’s part and should stimulate the motherly care that, through you, she expresses to all those whom you meet in ports and on ships or whom you help on board during those long months at sea. Yet, among mariners themselves there is above all a growing concern to support other seafarers, encouraging them to rediscover and intensify their relationship with God during long ocean voyages, and helping them with the spirit of charity in times of danger.

Be apostles faithful to the mission of proclaiming the Gospel, show the loving face of the Church which also welcomes and makes herself close to this portion of the People of God; respond without hesitation to maritime people who wait for you on board to appease the deep longing of their soul and make them feel active members of the community.

AMEN

For a full text of Pope Benedict’s remarks, refer to:

<http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/cultural-diversity/pastoral-care-of-migrants-refugees-and-travelers/apostleship-of-the-sea/aos-news-and-events.cfm>



OPENING ADDRESS
(Unofficial translation)

*H.E. Cardinal Antonio Maria VEGLIÒ
President of the Pontifical Council
for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People*



Your Eminences,
Your Excellencies,
Distinguished Representatives of International Organizations,
Dear Participants,

Audience with His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI

With great joy I welcome all of you who are present here. This is the largest World Congress ever organized in the history of the Apostleship of the Sea. More than 400 delegates from 70 countries are assembled here. They bring with them social, cultural and national differences, but in this hall, gathered together in Christ's name, under the logo that depicts the anchor of love and hope, we are one great family: the family of the Apostleship of the Sea!

We are here to celebrate the XXIII World Congress. Many of you will surely remember the preceding ones in Gdynia (Poland 2007) and Rio de Janeiro (Brazil 2002). Some others will recall the Congresses of Davao (Philippines 1997) and Houston (Texas, USA 1992). But I do not know how many of you present in this hall can remember the last Congress that took place right here in October 1982.

After 30 years, we have chosen to be in the Vatican again because we wanted to return to our roots and commemorate the 90th anniversary of Pius XI's approval of the first Constitutions and blessing of this new Apostolate. The small mustard seed planted 92 years ago in Glasgow by a small group of laypersons has grown and fulfilled Pius XI's wish that this initiative would develop in the maritime areas of both hemispheres.

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OPENING ADDRESS *Continued*

You and the other members and friends of the Apostleship of the Sea who could not be here with us are the tangible testimony that this is an important and essential apostolate for seafarers, fishers and their families. As bishops, priests, men and women religious and laypersons, you are the multinational crew of this pastoral care to which the task of evangelizing the maritime world is entrusted. You do this at the beginning of the Year of Faith and right after the conclusion of the Synod of Bishops on the New Evangelization, which took place in this same Hall, and in which I personally took part.

The evangelization of seafarers, fishers and their families is not different from the evangelization of those who belong to other social categories. In the Church's understanding, to evangelize means to bring the Good News to all human beings. However, the ways and means must be chosen carefully and take into consideration the conditions and situations of the ones who will receive it. In fact, if we refer to those who belong to the world of the sea, they are beyond the reach of the Church's ordinary pastoral care because they are forced to be far from their Christian communities for entire months.

The technological development of the maritime industry, the growing problems concerning the seafarers' life and work, the challenges raised by the new and often restrictive rules, and the world economic crisis make the Apostleship of the Sea evangelize in rather difficult conditions. Depute all these difficulties, the maritime world is a fertile terrain for evangelization. The ships, in fact, sail the seven seas of the world, stop from one port to another, and transport not only goods but also crews with a different culture, tradition and religion and create, for people from different ethnic groups, the opportunity to meet and appreciate the differences. Multinational teams live and work in the ships' very limited space, far from their families and Christian communities for months, and with no nourishment for their faith, which is often like a "smoldering wick". The New Evangelization and the Year of the Faith invite every chaplain and volunteer of the Apostleship of the Sea to deepen their faith, to believe in the Gospel message, and to go forward to proclaim the Gospel to those who do not know it and to rekindle in this way that "smoldering wick" through Christian witness.

This Christian witness must be given through a ministry of on-going presence, service and solidarity. For the seafarers who arrive in foreign ports, far from the city, the presence of an Apostleship of the Sea center with the chaplain and volunteers is always a beacon of light for those who have sailed for weeks only in the company of themselves. The constant service given with love to respond to the needs of all crews, regardless of creed and nationality, brings hope in the moments of discouragement. Solidarity for exploited and abandoned seafarers is an expression of Christ's love for all. Through your lives, often without saying a word, you are agents of evangelization! The Church appreciates your work and is grateful to you for what you do.

In order to come here, you have made long journeys, encountered difficulties getting entrance visas, and some of you who just arrived a few hours ago must still be getting used to the time zone. You have all made these sacrifices because you wanted to be here, in this Congress, with your stories and experiences. You have come to listen, share and reflect, in order to return later to your ports with renewed commitment, enthusiasm and unity among you. The program is intense but well organized, the speakers are qualified, and the Holy Father awaits us in an Audience: these are the ingredients for what we hope will be a successful Congress.

It would not have been possible to organize our Congress without the financial support of maritime organizations and friends who despite the difficult economic moment, have wanted to generously finance different aspects of this event. We want to acknowledge their contribution and express our appreciation to all of them.

I would also add a special thought for some people present here who in the past years have navigated with us and supported the cause of the people of the sea. In a few months, they will leave their present positions. I am talking about David Cockroft, Secretary General of the ITF (International Transport Workers' Federation) since 1993; Tom Holmer, Administrative Officer of the ITF Seafarers' Trust; and Rev. Hennie La Grange, for the past four years Secretary General of the ICMA (International Christian Maritime Organization). We thank them for their generous commitment to improving the welfare of seafarers, and we hope they will continue to be connected with the Apostleship of the Sea. Special thanks go to one of our volunteers, Mrs. Rose Kearney, who for more than forty years has served the seafarers with commitment and thoughtfulness at the Dublin Stella Maris.

In conclusion, I wish to invoke over all of us during these days the light and protection of Mary, Star of the Sea, using the prayer which Blessed John Paul II put at the end of the Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Oceania*. It also appears on the image of Our Lady Star of the Sea with Asian features which the Taiwanese painter Cheen Sheen made precisely for this occasion.

"O Stella Maris, light of every ocean and mistress of the deep, guide the peoples of Oceania across all dark and stormy seas, that they may reach the haven of peace and light prepared in him who calmed the sea.

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OPENING ADDRESS *Continued*

Keep all your children safe from harm for the waves are high and we are far from home.
As we set forth upon the oceans of the world, and cross the deserts of our time, show us,
O Mary, the fruit of your womb, for without your Son we are lost.
Pray that we will never fail on life's journey, that in heart and mind, in word and deed,
in days of turmoil and in days of calm, we will always look to Christ and say,
‘Who is this that even wind and sea obey him?’”.

As I express my best wishes to all for a fruitful meeting, it is my pleasure to declare open the XXIII World Congress of the Apostleship of the Sea.

PRESENTATION OF THE CONGRESS

*H.E. Most Rev. Joseph Kalathiparambil
Secretary of the Pontifical Council
for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People*

Dear Participants,

The preparations for this Congress began about a year and a half ago when the place that would have hosted the work was decided and the theme was chosen in syntony with the Synod of Bishops on Evangelization, and in continuity with the last World Congress of the Apostleship of the Sea held in Poland in 2007. Now there is also the fortuitous coincidence of the Year of Faith which has just begun.

There were so many things to prepare and details to be taken care of that kept us busy until the last moment. But now that His Eminence Cardinal Vegliò has declared this Congress open, we are ready to tackle the work that await us with enthusiasm.

Each day will be dedicated to a specific theme and it will be structured as follows:

A basic conference will open the morning's work and offer the participants elements for reflection on the pastoral activity under way and suggestions for stimulating and improving our service and, consequently, the life of seafarers, fishers and their families.

A round table will follow aimed at comparing some concrete pastoral experiences regarding the day's specific theme, which should suggest working areas and generate a discussion with all the delegates.

On Tuesday and Thursday in the afternoon, we will meet in study groups to analyze personal experiences, present ideas and projects to be developed, successes and difficulties, in order to gather together a series of recommendations and suggestions useful for planning the activity in the coming years.

At the center of our work day a Eucharistic celebration is planned. From this we can take the daily strength to offer joyfully to the Lord our work at the service of the people of the sea.

This evening, at the end of the work sessions, you are all invited to a guided visit of the Vatican Museums, which will be open only for us. This is a unique occasion to admire close up some of the masterpieces of great artists like Michelangelo, Raphael and others. This will be followed by a dinner in the special framework of the Chiaromonti Gallery inside the same Museums. We are grateful to the Embassy of the Republic of China (Taiwan) to the Holy See which has supported this event.

It is important to point out that next Wednesday marks World Fisheries Day, which is celebrated around the world every year on November 21st. For that occasion, and in a spirit of solidarity, we join our voice to that of so many fishers' communities to invite the International Organizations and Governments to develop regulations that will guarantee a dignified, safe and productive work. Above all, we make a heartfelt appeal for the 2007 Work in Fishing Convention (No. 188) to be ratified which aims at ensuring safe working conditions and social protection.

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PRESENTATION OF THE CONGRESS *Continued*

On Wednesday morning, since we cannot have access to the Syno Hall because of the Holy Father's weekly Audience, a meeting will take place at the "Casa tra Noi" Hotel which will be decisive in a certain way for the future of the Regions of the Apostleship of the Sea. In fact, the names will be chosen of the Regional Coordinators who will contribute to supporting the development of our pastoral care in collaboration with the Pontifical Council, the Bishop Promoters and the National Directors. We wish to express as of now our gratitude to the current Coordinators for the work they have done in the past five years, and it will be up to you to decide whether or not to renew them.

At the suggestion of some Bishop Promoters, on that same morning a small meeting will take place among the Bishops, the Regional Coordinators in office and the National Directors in order to deal with some important themes together. All of the other participants, on the other hand, will have a few hours of free time to take a look at this wonderful city before the afternoon session when we will meet again here in this hall.

Friday at noon the Holy Father will receive us in a private Audience. This will be a very important and profound spiritual moment. Ninety years after Pius XI's approval of the first Constitutions and blessing of this apostolate, Pope Benedict XVI will reconfirm the Church's support for our missionary and evangelizing mission which is essential for the people of the sea. During the Audience we will ask the Holy Father to bless a new image of Mary, Stella Maris, which the Taiwanese painter Chen Sheen painted with Asian features, and which you have been able to admire in the entrance.

I would like to thank all the speakers personally. I know that for some of you it was not easy to carve out this time slot to be present here.

These will be very intense and busy days. We ask for everyone's maximum participation and collaboration so that we can improve our understanding of the maritime world's problems and deepen reciprocal knowledge. For this reason, I invite you to dialogue with one another, without any fear of the language differences. In this way you will build a network of friendships that will make you feel less alone when you return to your ports, and they will be useful to you in the moments of emergency. Then you will know that you can count on the aid of the chaplain or volunteer you met in this Congress to bring a smile and hope to a seafarer in difficulty.

With my best wishes to all for a fruitful meeting!

Copies of additional presentations and talks given at the XXIII AOS World Congress can also be found at:
<http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/cultural-diversity/pastoral-care-of-migrants-refugees-and-travelers/apostleship-of-the-sea/aos-news-and-events.cfm>



USA participants in the AOS World Congress

AOS BREAKFAST MEETING



Bishop Rutilio J. del Riego, PCMRT Subcommittee Chairman (front row left) and Bishop J. Kevin Boland, AOS Promoter (back row, 3rd from right) with presentors and PCMRT staff at the AOS Breakfast Meeting, Baltimore Marriott Waterfront Hotel.

On November 13, 2012, the USCCB Subcommittee on Pastoral Care of Migrants, Refugees and Travelers (PCMRT) and Apostleship of the Sea national office sponsored a breakfast meeting for bishops of dioceses with maritime ports, in order to explore the Apostleship of the Sea ministry and the current programs that have been successful in the United States. The breakfast meeting was held in conjunction with the USCCB Fall meeting in Baltimore, MD. Over 20 bishops attended the breakfast meeting which included a short program led by Bishop Rutilio del Riego, PCMRT Subcommittee Chairman and Bishop J. Kevin Boland, AOS Bishop Promoter and Subcommittee member. The breakfast meeting was also participated by six AOS chaplains/pastoral agents who were invited to share about their ministries including: Msgr. John Fitzgerald and Andy Middleton-AOS Baltimore, MD; Fr. Yul Ibay-AOS Corpus Christi, TX; Deacon Sam Martinez-AOS San Diego, CA (accompanied by wife Nellie); Bro. Anthony Ornelas – AOS Houston, TX; and Fr. Sinclair Oubre-AOSUSA and AOS Beaumont, TX.

The National Director thanks Bishop del Riego and Bishop Boland for their leadership and support, all the bishops and guests who participated and, extends sincere gratitude to the AOS chaplains/team for graciously taking part as presentors.



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By Fr. Sinclair Oubre, JCL

I wish to extend a special thank you to Bishop Boland and Sr. Myrna Tordillo for inviting me to be part of this inaugural AOS Breakfast. I also wish to thank all of you for coming to this breakfast. Your presence is so important. In speaking with my own bishop, Bishop Curtis Guillory, he has shared how these meetings are so packed that it is very difficult to fulfill all the requests that are made.

The Diocese of Beaumont incorporates the northern section of the Texas Gulf Coast. Our maritime community makes up the fourth largest waterway in the United States according to tonnage. Our waterway contains three deepwater ports that make up the Sabine-Neches Waterway. We are the number one crude oil port and the number one military out load port in the United States. In addition, by 2015, we will be the number one US LNG export port, and by 2017, we will be a world leader in LNG exportation.

Each year, twenty-four hundred deep-sea vessels, and thousands of inland tug/barge combinations call in our waterway. We are also the home for 160 fishing vessels. This translates into annual visits of 50,400 deep-sea crewmembers, more than 32,000 inland towboat crewmen, and 640 fishermen. In total, more than 115,000 mariners visit our waterway annually. This makes the annual population of visiting mariners larger than the population of our sea city.

Though Catholics play a leading role in the local maritime ministry, the two seafarer centers are organized on an ecumenical model. The Beaumont and Port Arthur seafarer centers offer a safe place for seafarers to rest and relax while off their vessels. While there, the mariner can access the internet, recreate, post letters, and receive religious services and spiritual counseling. In addition, the Port Arthur seafarer center employs three minibuses, providing security escorting, and transportation to the Port Arthur center and local shopping centers.

Both seafarer centers struggle with the same challenges that many not-for-profits face: limited volunteers and limited financial resources. Attracting volunteers and raising funds is hard because of the unique group of people we serve. Foundations frequently congratulate us for providing unique and important services, but reserve their funds for people in the community or children and youth. The other challenges that confront our local maritime ministry are the decline in the local communities of faith, and maritime security procedures.

The first challenge takes two forms. First, many of the faith communities that established our local maritime ministry in the 1970's have declined, merged or closed. In my home of Port Arthur, the Jewish Temple, the Episcopal Church, the Greek Orthodox Church, Presbyterian Church and a Catholic parish and a mission have closed. In addition, the five predominantly White Methodist Churches have consolidated into one. Just last week, the First Baptist Church put its property up for sale, and will soon move or merge. This decline in Christian institutions significantly reduces the primary source of income and support for the maritime ministry.

The second manifestation of religious decline is among seafarers. For a long time, we have noted the decline of the European Church. A port chaplain considers it a special day when he or she finds a Norwegian or a British seafarer who actively practices his or her faith. However, until a few years ago, there was a vibrant and active faith among Polish and Filipino seafarers. Sadly, both seem to have been affected by Western consumerism, and are less willing to find the time in the ship's schedule for Mass. Just like our parishes, there is a profound need for the New Evangelization among the Catholic mariners.

The second challenge we face is maritime security. We are constantly confronted by the revised security procedures that treat each seafarer as a potential terrorist. This prejudiced view of mariners begins when he arrives at our airports and continues until he completes his contract and flies home. In between, he confronts facilities that actively work to frustrate his efforts at shore leave, and the efforts of the seafarer center to transport him, low-wage guards who do not understand the nuances of maritime security, and the extortion-level fees for transportation to the facility gate. When one is in port for 24-hours or less, any delay can become a de facto denial of shore leave, which may not be possible again for weeks.

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The Apostleship of the Sea of the United States of America *Continued*

In concluding this part of my presentation, I would like to thank my bishop, Bishop Curtis Guillory and the Diocese of Beaumont for their support, and the annual contribution to the two seafarer centers and the Apostleship of the Sea -Beaumont.

In addition to being the Diocesan Director for AOS - Diocese of Beaumont, I am also the president of the Apostleship of the Sea of the United States of America. AOS-USA was founded in 1976 under the title of the National Catholic Conference for Seafarers by the then AOS Bishop Promoter, Bishop Rene Gracida. In response to Vatican II, Bishop Gracida envisioned a new Catholic maritime ministry organization that allowed for more lay participation. Now, permanent deacons, religious and lay men and women would have a voice with port chaplains in the direction of US Catholic maritime ministry.

In 2001, the NCCS was reorganized and renamed to the Apostleship of the Sea of the United States of America. It is civilly incorporated in the State of Texas as a not-for-profit corporation. Canonically, it is an unrecognized private association of the Christian Faithful. We very much would like to gain canonical status, but there does not seem to be a means of doing this since the USCCB does not have the structures to recognize or monitor national associations of the faithful as described in canon law.

As a membership organization, AOS-USA is:

1. The US Catholic professional association of maritime ministers;
2. The professional association of Catholic seafarers;
3. The preeminent source for cruise ship priests.

In addition, AOS-USA is the primary source for Catholic maritime training and maritime information in the United States.

It does this by:

1. Providing continuing education through its annual meeting;
2. Producing an electronic newsletter that contains industry and ministry related news for its members.

In addition to the above, AOS-USA regularly participates in the federal regulatory process by submitting comments on issues impacting seafarers and maritime ministry. As recently as November 9, a member of our Administrative Board appeared before a Washington US Coast Guard hearing in Washington, and addressed important issues that should be included in a proposed Facility Security Officer training program.

AOS-USA also promotes evangelization and outreach in the maritime community. A few examples are:

1. Working in partnership with the Confraternity of Our Lady Star of the Sea and the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, AOS-USA is spearheading the placement of a marble relief of Our Lady Star of the Sea.
2. The monthly Star of the Sea Show on Radio Maria.
3. A Catholic information booth at the New Orleans International Workboat Show, the national conference of the Catholic Daughters of America, the National Small Boat Security Conference, the Coast Guard National Harbor Safety Conference, and the Canon Law Society of America.

In 2013, we will establish a Catholic maritime ministry presence during the America's Cup Races with the Archdiocese of San Francisco.

In closing, I would like to suggest some important evangelization opportunities that go beyond the scope of AOS-USA, but would do much to evangelize the Catholic maritime community. First, we have six maritime academies in the United States. Presently, there are no AOS Catholic chaplains assigned to these universities. If there is pastoral care offered, it is on an ad hoc basis by the local parish community. However, when these future Catholic US merchant marine officers graduate, they are completely unaware of the pastoral ministry offered by their Church.

Second, there is a need for AOS to connect with pastors in fishing villages in our country. In places like Chauvin, Louisiana and Half Moon Bay, California, there are large communities of Catholic artisanal fishermen, but their pastors are unaware of the support that is available through the Apostleship of the Sea. AOS could look to the National Catholic Rural Life Conference as a model for such an initiative.

Thank you again for attending this breakfast, and allowing me to share these reflections on Catholic Maritime Ministry. I pray that I have been able to outline some of the initiatives, challenges and opportunities that are out there, and how we can bring the New Evangelization to the US maritime community.

Fr. Sinclair Oubre is President of AOS-USA and Diocese of Beaumont AOS director.

AOS Diocese of Corpus Christi

By Fr. Yul Ibay, STD

Good morning. Thank you for inviting me to this AOS Breakfast Meeting. I am Fr. Yul from the Diocese of Corpus Christi. I have been a port chaplain for almost 5 years now. I also work in a parish full-time.

I was officially assigned by my bishop in the maritime ministry of the diocese so I sent the letter to AOS National Office my official appointment for their information. I am also a member of AOSUSA and I attend its meeting. The Seaman's Center is a member of the North American Maritime Ministry Association.

I have three cousins and an uncle who are seafarers and high school classmates who are seafarers. Because of our regular visits with the seafarers we, port chaplains, have a sense of what seafarers are feeling and experiencing.

The best feature I can share with about my port ministry is the spiritual care we provide to the seafarers, they turn to AOS chaplains for support. We address issues that are for the benefit of seafarers who come to our local port. We celebrate Mass and communion service. Two weeks ago I celebrated the Eucharist with the Peruvian seafarers.

The seafarers truly trust the AOS chaplains. One time a Russian captain requested the Seaman's Center that they needed a chaplain. I was wondering why? And then when I talked to the captain he said that they would like to have a celebration, and the chief cook would go the grocery to buy some stuff for their party. Although maritime security is strict, with the presence of AOS chaplains and ship visitors, seafarers see the better side because of the hospitality offered by the chaplaincy team.

The Apostleship of the Sea (AOS), Diocese of Corpus Christi, TX offers spiritual and practical help to seafarers, their families and all who work and travel on the waterways. This maritime ministry shows the Church's care and concern to seafarers who are often away from home for many months because of the nature of their work and they cannot participate in a regular parish life. The AOS Diocese of Corpus Christi works closely with the Alice Milloy-Corpus Christi International Seamen's Center. The ecumenical center is a "home away from home" for seafarers visiting the Port of Corpus Christi. It is committed to provide a safe and welcoming recreational and spiritual environment for all the seafarers. It is the task of the maritime apostolate of the Corpus Christi International Seamen's Center to offer pastoral care to seafarers who come to Corpus Christi Port.

The Apostleship of the Sea (AOS), through the Seamen's Center, its chaplains and volunteers, makes it possible for seafarers regardless of color, religion, or race to find spiritual care, hospitality and practical assistance in a spirit of unity and solidarity. This principle is clearly explained by Pope Benedict XVI: "Those who practice charity in the Church's name will never seek to impose the Church's faith upon others. They realize that a pure and generous love is the best witness to the God in whom we believe and by whom we are driven to love. A Christian knows when it is time to speak of God and when it is better to say nothing and to let love alone speak." (Deus Caritas Est # 31)

The Apostleship of the Sea ministry in the Diocese of Corpus Christi takes care of the Corpus Christi International Seamen's Center. The Center was chartered in 1974 as a non-profit organization under the laws of the State of Texas, and has, during its existence served hundreds of thousands of visiting seafarers.

The Center's ministry has added so much to our ability to reach out and touch the lives of the seamen visiting the Port of Corpus Christi. The pastoral team members are truly an essential part of our goals of assisting the seamen. The Pastoral team members include: Fr. Yul Ibay AOS chaplain; Mr. Thomas Reilly- AOS volunteer; Mr. John Sloan- AOS volunteer; Mr. and Mrs. Paul & Stephanie Pierce - AOS volunteers; Sharon Emerson -AOS affiliate volunteer; and Ron Chiles- volunteer.

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AOS Diocese of Corpus Christi *Continued*

Some Highlights for the year 2012

- The priest chaplain and pastoral team members are visiting more ships and seamen from Mondays-Saturdays.
- Last March 2012 the Corpus Christi Seamen's Center together with the AOS Corpus Christi pastoral team members had a very successful annual St. Patrick Day 2012. Many parishioners of Fr. Yul, friends and supporter of the Corpus Christi Seamen's Center attended the event.
- We have had around ten (10) communion service celebrations on board and one (1) Eucharistic celebration and one sacrament of reconciliation
- Our Lady Star of the Sea Church, the parish church where Fr. Yul serves and Tom Reilly and John Sloan are members, continues to support the maritime ministry of the diocese.
- The Diocese of Corpus Christi is showing concern and interest in this ministry. On May 19, 2012, the Corpus Christi International Seamen Center will celebrate the 23rd Annual Maritime Festival.

Challenges:

- We need more volunteer ship visitors to cover some days when some pastoral team members do some family errands.
- We need the involvement of other Christian denominations to make this ministry more ecumenical.

General Information:

The pastoral team members and priest chaplain bring to ships religious reading materials, magazines, phone cards, mi-fi and sim cards on board the vessels. This is particularly important to the crews that do not receive Shore Passes. The pastoral team and priest chaplain spend time visiting with the crew and officers on the vessels. They pray with the seamen if the seamen request it, communion services though they never push their religion or faith on anyone. They do bring religious publications, DVDs and Christian music CDs to leave with the merchant seamen. They transport them to the CC Seamen's Center, to Western Union branches and to shopping centers.

The Corpus Christi Seamen's Center has a beautiful chapel with stained glass windows, which is an ideal place for prayer or quiet reflection. The chapel, with its ship's wheel-themed chairs, has been the site of many weddings and christenings. We offer free Bibles in almost every language for the seamen to take with them.

The Seamen's Center has a pool table, foosball table and table tennis for the use of the seamen at no charge. We also have table-top games, magazines, books and movies for the seamen's benefit and relaxation. A full service bar, including beer, wine, soft drinks, water and energy drinks are available. We also offer hamburgers, cheeseburgers, barbecued sandwiches and other light snacks.

Our computer room has four state-of-the-art flat-screened computers for the seamen to use to stay in contact with family and friends around the world. The seamen may use these computers at no charge.

Fr. Yul Ibay is chaplain of AOS Corpus Christi and administrator of Our Lady Star of the Sea parish.

**AOS Galveston-Houston
and the Houston International Seafarers Center**

By Bro. Anthony Ornelas, SSS

The HOUSTON INTERNATIONAL SEAFARERS CENTER is an ecumenical center which opened in 1968 with Father Rivers Patout as one of the founding members.

The AOS Galveston-Houston is supported and funded by the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston and our bishop, His Eminence Daniel Cardinal DiNardo. With the support of the Archdiocese, we are able to have four full time chaplains on staff with three deacons, and three volunteers who serve as ship visitors. During the school year we have one seminarian who works one day a week visiting ships, and during the summer months we have two seminarians working full time. Our annual budget is approximately \$170,000.00 which covers three centers; namely, the Houston International Seafarer Center at the Port of Houston, the Lou Lawler Seafarer Center in La Porte, and the Seafarers Center of Galveston.

The Port of Houston is the number one Port in the US and number 8 in the world in gross tonnage. As of a few days ago we've had 4,682 ships that have visited Houston and our chaplains have ministered to 3,271 of them. Further, our chaplains served over 88,302 seafarers so far this year.

Each year the chaplains and ship visitors are able to give the seafarers Christmas boxes (10,000) due to the great generosity of the greater Houston community, many schools, churches and our own ACCW.

We also have the "Houston Maritime Ministry Training Program", which was the first of its kind in the world that began in 1973. This program is open to all port chaplains who wish to attend to deepen their knowledge in port ministry. So far this year we have three AOS Chaplains sponsored by AOS-USCCB who will be attending the 2013 program. Presently there are four training programs of this kind around the world sponsored by other seafarer ministries.

Additionally, the chaplains and ship visitors are able to work one on one with the seafarers and assist them in their time of need as we minister to them based on their individual needs and concerns. OUR ministry is truly a ministry of presence. We are truly blessed to be able to serve in this ministry.

*Bro. Anthony Ornelas is a member of the
Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament
and AOS chaplain in Houston.*



Welcome aboard AOS Pastoral team

AOS MIAMI

Fr. Roberto Cid
Chaplain
and Deacon Pepe Chirinos
St. Patrick Catholic Church
3716 Garden Avenue
Miami Beach, FL 33140
AOS cell: 786-970-0416

AOS LOS ANGELES/SAN PEDRO

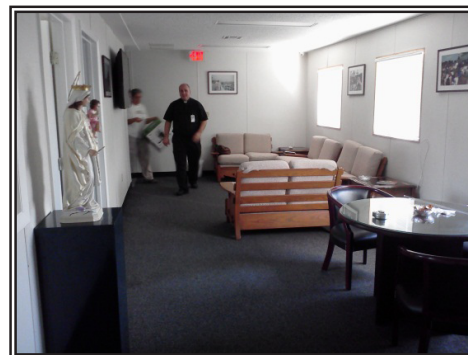
Fr. Freddie Chua
Chaplain
Stella Maris Chapel & Hospitality
Center
Berth 93-A, World Cruise Center
Port of Los Angeles, San Pedro, CA
Center: 310-521-1042

AOS SEATTLE

Deacon Michael Riggio, JD
Center Director
Catholic Seafarers' Center
2330 First Avenue
Seattle, WA 98121
Center: 206-441-4773

Newsbriefs

- **AOS Miami** - Fr. Roberto Cid, chaplain and his team are busy preparing for the reopening of the Stella Maris Center in January 2013. *See the photos.*



- **AOS Newark/Port Elizabeth needs our help!**

The Stella Maris Center was severely damaged by Hurricane Sandy. According to Fr. John Corbett, AOS Chaplain, the center was under 4 feet of water at the height of the hurricane. Everything was destroyed including the chapel, but Fr. John noted that something out of the ordinary happened, the tabernacle's vigil light never went off, even at the time of flooding. At present, Fr. John celebrates Mass in an auditorium somewhere. He is slowly rebuilding the center and chapel. Your help is greatly appreciated. Please send any donation to: Fr. John Corbett, AOS Newark/Port Elizabeth, 170 Corbin Street, Port Newark, NJ 07114. Tel. 201 401 9099, Email: corbetjo@rcan.org

- **International Committee on Seafarers Welfare (ICSW) 2012 Awardees:**

Welfare Personality of the Year: Fr Giacomo Martino, Apostleship of the Sea, Italy and Rev Denis Claughton, Flying Angel Club, Fremantle, Australia

Seafarer Centre of the Year: Seafarers' House, Port Everglades, USA

Port of the Year: Port of Kandla, India

Drop-In Centre of the Year: International Drop-In Centre for Seafarers, Keppel Terminal, Port of Singapore

Mark your calendar

- February 17–March 1, 2013 - **Houston Maritime Ministry Training**. For information, contact Rev. Dr. Ben H. Stewart , Coordinator at benhstewartiii@yahoo.com; Center Telephone: (713) 672-0511
- April 23-26, 2013 - **AOSUSA Annual Conference** at Hampton Inn Jacksonville, Florida. Mr. Roy Paul with Maritime Piracy Human Response Programme is one of the speakers. For more information: Doreen Badeaux, Tel. 409-985-4545; aosusa@sbcglobal.net
- May 22, 2013 – **National Day of Prayer and Remembrance for Mariners and People of the Sea**. On May 18, 2013 Maritime Day Mass will be celebrated at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Washington, DC. For information: Sr. Myrna Tordillo, aos@uscgb.org
- July 28-August 9, 2013 – **AOS Chaplaincy Training**, Our Lady of Mount Carmel Center, Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada. Contact Deacon Albert Dacanay, Adacanay@aos-canada.org

AOS SEATTLE

By Deacon Michael Riggio, JD

At the end of the year, I write to report on our mission in Seattle and to let you know what we have been up to this past year. Today is a time of growth and change for our outreach ministry to those involved in the maritime world in the Puget Sound!

You may know that our ministry to seafarers has changed quite a lot in the past few years. After the attacks of September 11, 2001, and the increased security that has been implemented in our ports, seafarers have an even harder time getting their basic needs met in the days or sometimes hours they spend at the dock. Some seafarers are lucky enough to have shore passes and visas. However, many seafarers are not allowed off their ships to pick up supplies, let alone to rest from arduous weeks or months at sea.

This is where the Catholic Seafarers' Center comes in.

First, some numbers: from January to July of 2012, we transported over 1,800 seafarers from their ships throughout the Seattle area. In those same seven months, we served 185 individual ships a total of 431 times. This is an increase over last year, and we expect those figures to rise, along with seafarer need, in the future.

But not all of the seafarers we serve can simply hitch a ride with us to Costco or downtown for shopping. Not long ago, the crew of a condemned tugboat came to our attention. Federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) had impounded the boat they were supposed to be sailing from Seattle to Mexico because it was not seaworthy. The crew was stuck on board with no visas. For over a month, we brought the crew fresh food and we provided warm clothing. Fr. Tony Haycock, our chaplain, celebrated mass with the men on the tug. For Thanksgiving and Christmas, the government allowed us to bring the crew to our Center for dinner and some time away from the small vessel. Eventually, we were able to work with the International Transport Workers' Federation union to secure plane tickets home for some of the men, and ICE allowed us to transport the crew to the airport. Eventually, the tug was repaired and it was allowed to sail. Our Center was able to assist these seafarers when they felt abandoned in Seattle. This story is just one instance of our daily effort to meet the needs of the people of the sea, whatever those needs may be.

Deacon Riggio is Stella Maris Center Director in Seattle. A retired Navy officer, he served as fighter pilot, attorney, and military judge in the US Navy. As a civilian attorney he has handled maritime and Admiralty cases.

AOS CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA



Fr. Robert Higgins with crew of Carnival Fantasy cruise ship

APOSTLESHIP OF THE SEA CHARLESTON, exists under the most supportive and generous guidance of Bishop Robert E. Guglielmone, the thirteenth bishop of the Diocese of Charleston. The local ministry is headed up by Rev. Fr. Robert (Bob) F. Higgins, Port Chaplain and Diocesan Representative to the Apostleship of the Sea.

AOS CHARLESTON operates in concert with and collaborates with the Charleston Port and Seafarers Society (CHAPPS), an ecumenical ministry, to provide for the spiritual and physical needs of all who come in contact with the waters. With the City of Charleston, being a peninsula port city surrounded by the Ashley and Cooper Rivers and the Atlantic Ocean, we serve six busy

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AOS CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA *Continued*

commercial terminals, two military installations (United States Navy Base and Coast Guard Station), an active commercial ship yard, a Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, a vibrant local fishing community and, a thriving tourism (cruise / pleasure / private / leisure) industry. Every imaginable form of maritime vessel and seafarer are always present in the Port of Charleston.

Most recently, AOS CHARLESTON in conjunction with CHAPPS helped serve the people of the sea, in the form of a service program of "CHRISTMAS AT SEA". The attached photograph is from a November 28 visitation by the Board of Directors to the crew of the Carnival Fantasy cruise ship which has its home base in Charleston. Over 1,000 hand knitted caps were delivered to and distributed amongst the crew so that each and every crew member was presented with a cap. In addition to the CHRISTMAS AT SEA program, the Carnival Fantasy is the recipient of services offered by AOS CHARLESTON, every five (5) to seven (7) day, when Fr. Bob Higgins boards the ship and offers the sacraments of Reconciliation and Mass every time that the Carnival is in port. Fr. Higgins is quoted as saying:

"GOD was revealed to me in a very special way, this past CHRISTMAS AT SEA. Since we are in our first year of ministering to the Carnival Fantasy, I was concerned that we were not able to provide the entire crew with full ditty boxes of personal hygiene products (we were only able to distribute caps). To my surprise, I was very touched by the level of gratitude expressed by the crew of the Carnival Fantasy. To see the expressions on their faces when receiving the caps, you would have thought that someone had just given them \$1,000,000. Many were caught up in their emotions, and to say that a few tears were shed would be a gross understatement. For some, this would be the only gift that they would receive for Christmas this year. They could not stop thanking me. The people of the Carnival Fantasy are "my parish", "my brothers and sisters". I have other job responsibilities as well: in addition to being the Chaplain to the local Veterans Administration Hospital, the State Chaplain to the Knights of Columbus and, supply priest to the Cathedral of Saint John the Baptist and several other historic parishes in the surrounding area. But I must say, it is in ministering to the people of the sea, where I find the most joy".

AOS CHARLESTON is always searching out and open to implementing new and exciting ways, to improve the ministry to the people of the sea in the Port of Charleston, South Carolina. Please, you are always invited and encouraged to share your ideas by contacting or visiting at:

Rev. Fr. Robert (Bob) Higgins, 105 Queen Street, Charleston, South Carolina 29401, Rfdh78@hotmail.com

On Tuesday, December 25th Fr. Bob will be celebrating Christmas Mass onboard the Carnival Fantasy for the crew while they are in port.



A Simple Thought at Christmas

By Karen M. Parsons OFS



Karen Parsons of AOS Port of Galveston (in Santa costume) with ship visitor

At this time of year, many port chaplains load up their vehicles with brightly wrapped gifts donated by many church groups, families, schools, scout troops, etc. Giving out Christmas gifts on the ships has been a tradition for many years. In these beautifully wrapped boxes are items thoughtfully placed by the people who packed them.

One day I went out to our banana ship to deliver their gifts. On board was a German captain, officers from Myanmar, and Filipino crew. The chief officer was not in a very good mood. His flashlight broke three weeks earlier. He asked for a new flashlight to be ordered. Provisions arrived and there was no flashlight again. I tried to make him smile but he was not having it. He needed his flashlight and was very upset the company was not supplying him with a new one.

It was just days before Christmas. The ship sailed from Galveston to Guatemala and was at sea for Christmas. Upon their return, the Captain told me this remarkable story:

On Christmas morning the officers and crew all gathered in the mess. The beautiful boxes were put out on the mess table. The chief officer was still moping around and did not want to participate. The Captain tried to coax him to smile and told him to pick the first box. Reluctantly, the chief officer chose a box. One by one each crew member took a box. When all had one, they opened their boxes. The chief officer didn't open his at first. After some prodding by the rest, he opened his box...one of 25. Remember he chose first. Inside his box and not in any other of the boxes was a brand new flashlight and batteries. The Captain told me the chief officer's face changed from angry and frustrated to surprise and shock. The others began expressing their amazement at this Christmas miracle. A flashlight is not a big miracle but for a man who truly needed this tool for his work, and who was unhappy on Christmas morning, finding a flashlight and batteries in a box packed by a stranger with loving hands melted his heart and had him singing holiday songs with the others that day.

God is good. We wish all seafarers a very Blessed Christmas and Peace in the New Year!



Apostleship of the Sea, National Office
Secretariat of Cultural Diversity in the Church
Pastoral Care of Migrants, Refugees & Travelers
3211 Fourth Street, NE ♦ Washington, DC 20017 USA

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Merry Christmas

Joyeux Noël

Buon Natale

Feliz Navidad

Sung Tan Chuk Ha

Maligayang Pasko

Linksmu Kaledu

Saint Dan Fal Lok

Nollaig Shona Dhuit

Froehliche Weihnachten

Wesolych Swiat Bozego Narodzenia

Kala Christouyenna

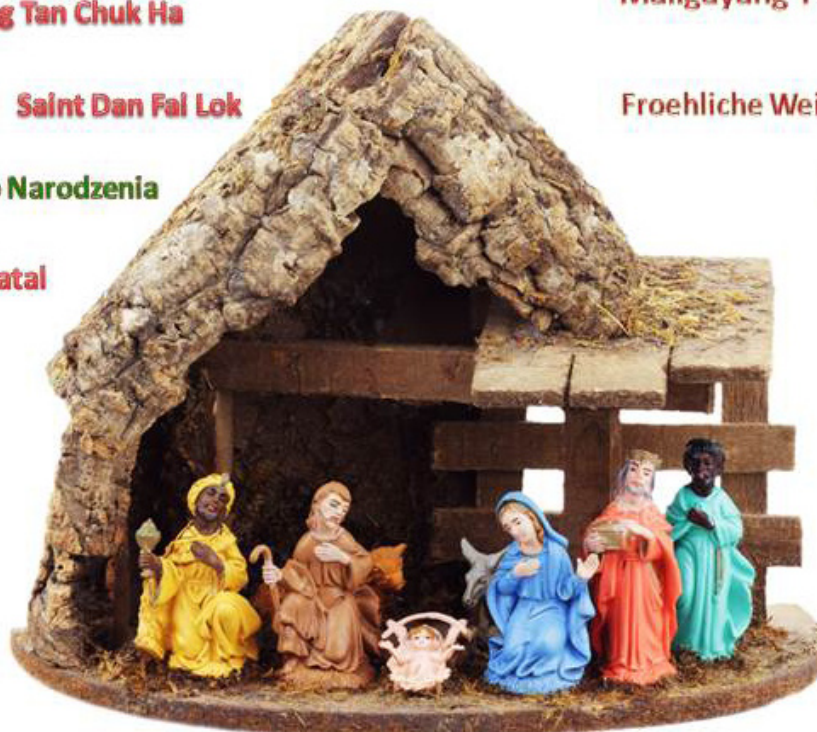
Selamat Hari Natal

Sawadee Pee Mai

Sretan Bozic

Feliz Natal

Shub Naya Baras



For a child is born to us, a son is given us; upon his shoulder dominion rests.

Isaiah 9, 5