



STELLA MARIS

SUPPORTING SEAFARERS AND FISHERS
AROUND THE WORLD

Catholic Maritime News

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Prayer, Penance and Fasting for Peace

Each Wednesday afternoon when he is in Rome Pope Francis gives a talk and greets pilgrims who have traveled there. On Wednesday October 18 he expressed his concern about the situation in the Middle East and the wars in different parts of the world. He asked us to join with men and women from around the world on Friday October 27 for a day of prayer, penance and fasting for peace. The following words are published on the website vatican.va, under the section General Audience of October 18. He said:



Appeal of the Holy Father

Bishop Brendan J. Cahill
Stella Maris, Bishop Promoter

Today too, dear brothers and sisters, our thoughts turn to Palestine and Israel. The number of victims is rising and the situation in Gaza is desperate. Please, let everything possible be done to avoid a humanitarian disaster. The possible widening of the conflict is disturbing, while so many war fronts are already open in the world. May weapons fall silent! Let us heed the cry for peace of populations, of the people, of the children! Brothers and sisters, war does not solve any problem: it sows only death and destruction, foments hate and proliferates revenge. War cancels out the future. I urge believers to take just one side in this conflict: that of peace. But not with words — with prayer, with total dedication. With this in mind, I have decided to call for a day of fasting and prayer, of penance, on Friday 27 October, to which I invite sisters and brothers of the various Christian denominations, those belonging to other religions and all those who have at heart the cause of

peace in the world, to join in as they see fit. That evening, at 6 p.m., at Saint Peter's, we will spend an hour of prayer, in a spirit of penance, to implore peace in our time, peace in this world. I ask all the particular Churches to participate by arranging similar activities involving the People of God.

I realize that I am writing this before October 27, and you will be reading this after October 27. I also believe that as we offer our prayers, penance and fasting for particular intentions we can join our prayers together in a powerful way. We can also invite other people to join us in praying for peace in the world, especially peace in the Middle East, and to ask God's protection for our military personnel, especially those serving overseas.

Reflecting on the power of our prayer, a few years ago I gave a talk on the reasons we pray and fast. First, the example of Jesus Himself who prayed and fasted in the desert for forty days and nights before beginning his public ministry. Second, the example of Moses who prayed and fasted for forty days and nights imploring God's mercy for the Hebrew people in the desert. Third, we gain clearer vision when we take away things that may be distracting us from the most important thing — love of God and neighbor. Fourth, we gain greater compassion for all those who are involuntarily hungry each day (we may choose to give up a meal, but most of the world does not even have that choice). Fifth, we can learn even more deeply that everything we possess is a gift from God.

United with men and women on the sea throughout the world may we be attentive to the voice of our Lord Jesus the Prince of Peace each day. God bless you and your families, let us keep each other in prayer!

by Bishop Brendan J. Cahill
Bishop of Victoria Texas

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Secretariat of Cultural Diversity in the Church
Pastoral Care of Migrants, Refugees & Travelers / Stella Maris National Office

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We encourage you to visit our website which has a user friendly navigation tools. Check out our interactive map with a list of Stella Maris chaplains and contacts, know about news and events and other relevant information.

Contact Catholic Maritime News

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

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An association of Catholic ministries in the United States, Canada, and the Caribbean that serve seafarers, fishers, port workers, and all the People of the Sea.

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Mary the Lighthouse: Guiding Seafarers to Safety

Lighthouses have long held a place of significance in maritime history, symbolizing hope, guidance, and safety for seafarers navigating treacherous waters. Their primary purpose has been to warn ships of dangerous coastlines, shallow waters, and hazardous rocks. The historical development of lighthouses showcases the ingenuity of mankind in constructing these structures to withstand the harsh marine environment while effectively guiding ships to safety. Lighthouses emerged as vital aids to navigation in response to the need for safer coastal travel. The lighthouse was strategically positioned to warn ships of hazardous areas, such as rocky shores and submerged obstacles. Lighthouses emit light signals that serve as beacons for sailors, helping them navigate accurately, during storms, fog, and low visibility conditions. This prevents shipwrecks and ensures the safety of both crew and cargo. Mary the Lighthouse stands as an emblem of both practical maritime assistance and spiritual symbolism. This reflection explores the dual nature of Mary the Lighthouse, delving into its historical significance, its association with Mary, and its enduring impact on seafarers and spiritual seekers alike.



*Sr. Joanna Okereke, HHCJ
National Director, Stella Maris*

Mary Symbolism of Hope and Guidance.

Over time, the very name Mary became synonymous with guidance and protection for sailors. Mary our Lighthouse, like many others, stood as a silent guardian, guiding mariners, and their vessels to safe harbors. Mary our Lighthouse stands as a timeless beacon, providing essential navigation and solace to those at sea. Mary our Lighthouse goes beyond its practical function as a navigational aid; it embodies a profound symbolism of hope and guidance. The image of a lighthouse standing tall amidst turbulent waters evokes a sense of security, promising a way out of challenges. Just as Mary, the mother of Jesus, is often associated with nurturing, protection, and compassion, Mary our Lighthouse becomes a metaphor for a guiding presence that helps seafarers navigate life's storms.

Mary as our symbol of hope is also our symbol of Light and Faith. The primary purpose of a lighthouse is to emit a po-

werful beam of light that penetrates the darkness, leading ships to safety. This symbolism of light cutting through obscurity is reflected in the spiritual realm as well. In the context of faith, Mary is often regarded as a guiding light, illuminating the path of believers, and offering a sense of direction and purpose. Mary, as this symbolic lighthouse, serves as a tangible representation of this spiritual light guiding seafarers and souls alike.

Mary the Never Fading Light.

Mary our Lighthouse is not merely a structure of stone and light, but a profound symbol that resonates with humanity's need for guidance and security. She is indeed the never fading light. Whether as a maritime beacon leading ships to safe shores or as a metaphor for the guiding lights in our lives. Lighthouses like Mary remind us of the importance of steadfastness, hope, and the assurance that we are not alone on our journeys. Mary our Lighthouse exemplifies the convergence of maritime necessity and spiritual symbolism. Its name and purpose intertwine to create a beacon that guides ships to safety and serves as a representation of faith's guiding light. Mary our Lighthouse remains an enduring testament to the dual role of guidance in the physical and spiritual realms.

Mary shines the beams of light from the lighthouse cutting through darkness and the guiding light of wisdom that helps us navigate our own journeys. Mary, the never fading light is a testament to the deep-rooted cultural and religious significance of the name itself. Mary, in various religious traditions, is often revered as a maternal figure of compassion, solace, and guidance. By associating the lighthouse with Mary, sailors found not only a physical guide but also a spiritual guardian who watched over them during their voyages.

Mary Star of the Sea.

Another important feature of Mary as our lighthouse is Mary our Star of the Sea. Just as stars have captivated human imagination for centuries, Mary's role as a guiding star captivates the heart and soul. Her presence as a guiding light in our spiritual journey beckons us to look beyond the mundane and ordinary, to reach for something transcendent and divine. Mary, as the guiding star, embodies qualities of protection, guidance, and hope. Just as a star's light breaks through the darkness of the night sky, Mary's intercession is believed to bring clarity and direction to our lives. Her maternal care and the assurance of her presence offer a sense of comfort, especially during challenging times.

In times of uncertainty, when the waters of life become turbulent, Mary's role as a protector and intercessor can

serve as an anchor for our faith. Just as sailors might navigate rough waters by charting their course by the stars, we can navigate the challenges of life by turning to Mary's example of faith, humility, and trust in God's plan. Mary's connection to the sea also speaks to the concept of pilgrimage. Just as sailors embark on physical journeys across the waters, we embark on journeys of personal growth, self-discovery, and transformation. The devotion to Mary, Star of the Sea, invites us to see our life's journey as a pilgrimage, with Mary guiding us toward a deeper connection with God.

Additionally, Mary's role as the guiding star encourages us to recognize the importance of inner navigation. In a world filled with distractions and noise, we're called to attune ourselves to the inner compass of our hearts, just as sailors had to rely on their navigational skills. Mary's guidance can inspire us to cultivate mindfulness, prayer, and introspection, enabling us to make choices aligned with our values and faith.

Conclusion.

In conclusion, our reflection on Mary, Our Lighthouse, Our Star of the Sea, invites us to explore the symbolism of light, guidance, protection, and trust. It encourages us to view our life's journey as a voyage that requires both faith and active navigation. Just as sailors look to the stars for direction, we can look to Mary as a guiding light in our spiritual journey, helping us navigate the challenges and uncertainties of life with hope and courage. Just as sailors of old relied on the stars to navigate the vast and unpredictable ocean, people often find themselves navigating the sea of life, encountering its storms and uncertainties. The same way sailors depend on the lighthouse to return to shore and anchor. So, we do need the help of our Blessed Mother to trace our way to safety here on earth and to our destination in heaven.

The imagery of Mary Star of the Sea also invites reflection on the balance between faith and navigation. Just as sailors trust in the stars to lead them safely, the devotion to Mary encourages a deep trust in divine guidance. It reminds us that there are forces beyond our control that can provide solace and strength during the trials we encounter. This devotion speaks to the universal human experience of seeking guidance and protection. Whether facing physical journeys across the oceans or the metaphorical journeys of life, the concept of Mary Our Lighthouse and Star of the Sea connects us to a timeless longing for a guiding light to lead us through the darkness. It's a reminder that even amid life's storms, there is a source of unwavering light and hope that we can turn to. In times of personal turmoil, we must turn to Mary, our own lighthouse, to

find our way forward. Mary, our lighthouse, is a steadfast structure against the backdrop of the ever-changing sea. She reminds us of the constancy of support, beacons of hope, symbols of human dependency on God, and guidance amidst the unpredictable nature of life.

As we approach Christmas, let us remember Mary who through her “Yes...Here I am” at the Annunciation brings Christ to us by the power of the Holy Spirit. As we thank God for the gift of His Son to us during this Christmas, let us remember Our Blessed Mother’s gift of herself to God and to each of us. Let us pray that Mary Star of the Sea may help us to foster the gift of Faith in us. Let us ask through her intercession - her love, to gaze at us each moment of our lives, to enfold us with her loving arms, to help us in times of need, to keep us safe and give us strength. Like Mary Star of the Sea, may we say yes to helping, serving, and caring for the seafarers, and the less privileged in our society. May they witness peace and joy.

During the Angelus address on December 19, 2021, Pope Francis encouraged people to do a small kindness for someone else, such as calling an elderly person, or giving them a little company. Explaining that Mary’s journey to Elizabeth’s house was made with a heart full of God and his joy. “By helping others, we help ourselves,” “Let’s do as Mary did: let’s look around and look for someone to whom we can be of help.” “Let us not forget that the first act of charity we can do for our neighbor is to offer him a serene and smiling face. Bring them the joy of Jesus, as Mary did with Elizabeth,” “May the Mother of God take us by the hand, and may she help us to arise and to go in haste towards Christmas,” Wishing you Merry Christmas! Wishing you joy and peace during this Christmas!

by Sister Joanna Okereke, HHCJ

Hospitality Is Ministry - Port of Baltimore, MD

I recently watched a video on YouTube about Benedictine spirituality. In the video, the Abbot of a monastery said the following regarding hospitality: “Hospitality, is fostering the human race’s recognition of its dignity.” This sentence really struck me! It struck me because it is easy to get caught up in the day-to-day minutia of life and lose sight of what ministry to seafarers is truly about. Our primary mission is to bring the Catholic Church and the love of Christ to the seafarers we serve! Some would call this evangelization and it is, but by the abbot’s definition, it is also hospitality. Msgr. FitzGerald was always fond of saying that ministry to

seafarers is “a ministry of hospitality”. When I heard the Abbot’s quote, I understood completely what Msgr. FitzGerald meant. In our efforts to evangelize and support the seafarers we serve, by means of our hospitality, we are truly fostering a seafarer’s recognition of their own dignity. How, you ask?

In an industry that views crew members as a commodity rather than as human persons made in the image and likeness of God, our visits remind seafarers that they are people and not just a link in the supply chain. The bags of religious articles, books, magazines, toiletries, and clothes we leave onboard are just small reminders to seafarers that they are loved and that they have a dignity given to them at birth by God, that cannot be taken away.

When we visit ships to sit down and talk with seafarers, it is really a three-way conversation. Two people sitting across from one another and God, sitting beside us, imperceptible to our ears but speaking to our hearts. A ship visitor might not know what is going on in a particular seafarer’s life when they sit down and may still not know when the conversation has ended. But the seafarer has been reminded that they are in fact loved and worth more than just the hours they put in at work.

Too often we take for granted our ability to move about freely and go where we want to go at the drop of a hat. We see it as our God given right. But imagine living on a ship for months on end, being at sea for much of that time and not being able to go anywhere else but the ship. Now, the ship is alongside, and you can see dry land, maybe even a shopping center or a mall. It’s so close, but immigration policies and terminal rules hamper your ability to visit those places. How would you feel? I think the recent pandemic has shown us all just how de-humanizing restrictions on our ability to move about freely and not having everyday necessities can really be. In some small fashion, this is the everyday reality for seafarers.

While we must guard against just becoming a “transportation service”, it is important to remember that providing for a seafarer’s ability to go ashore is helping to restore their sense of dignity and by virtue of the hospitality shown to them. It is evangelizing without preaching.

by Andrew Middleton

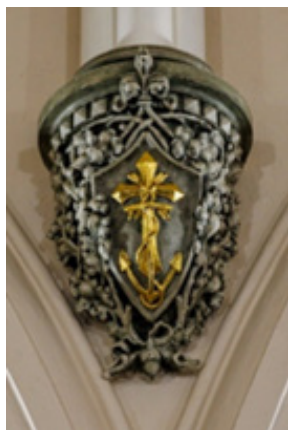
Director

Stella Maris, Archdiocese of Baltimore, MD

Faith, hope, and love – the Kindness of a Community in Galveston, Texas

The Seafarer's Center in Galveston, Texas held its annual Seafarer's Mass and Luncheon on September 27, 2023. The day started at St. Patrick's Catholic Church in Galveston, with a lecture and tour of the church which dates to 1870 when Bishop Claude Dubuis established St. Patrick Parish to serve the needs of the newly arrived Catholics on what was then Galveston's west end. St. Patrick's was destroyed by the 1900 Galveston hurricane and rebuilt in 1907. Its church edifice is said to be the most beautiful in the state from an architectural standpoint.

The church is adorned by a column relief, which displays a seafarer's motif with anchor and cross. The sheer beauty of the church reminded the participants of all the seafarers and fishers they were supporting. The lecture was followed by celebration of holy mass presided over by fr. Jude Ezuma, pastor of holy family parish in galveston, which includes st. Patrick catholic church.



After mass, attendees traveled to the Galveston Knights of Columbus Hall for a luncheon organized by the Bay

Area Deanery Council of Catholic Women. Deacon Jeff Willard, Chaplain at the Galveston Seafarer's Center, provided an explanation of the activities and support that the center provides for the seafarer's, ranging from transportation to the Seafarer's Center where various amenities are provided, from bringing Holy Communion on board some of the ships, and to supporting the local fisherman and shrimpers with food and other items.

After the delicious luncheon, Most Reverend Bishop Brendan J. Cahill, S.T.D., the Bishop of the Diocese of Victoria, Texas, as well as the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Promoter of Stella Maris, provided a lively exchange as he presided over a cake auction which was once again the highlight of the annual event. Cakes were donated by various individuals and groups, and included Italian Cream Cakes, Pecan Pies, and other delicious confections. Bishop Cahill thoroughly enjoyed his role as auctioneer and through his enthusiastic support, the cake auction was extremely successful and all proceeds were donated to the Galveston Seafarer's Center, supporting the needs of mariners. and the like.

Overall, 101 backpacks were dropped off at Deacon Bob Milmo's home. Additionally, a very generous supply of



personal hygiene items for the local fisherman were received. These items will be distributed to the shrimpers and oystermen who fish the waters off the Coast of Texas and Louisiana. Pictured is the trailer full of Stella Maris Backpacks and boxes of shampoo and soaps.



This story shows how Faith, Hope and Love can come full circle with the kindness of a community, donating their time, treasure, and talent to folks they might never meet in person.

On September 30, 2023, Deacons Lupe Martinez, Victor Tang, Bob Milmo, and ship visitor Rick Banke were out visiting ships when Bob and Rick stepped aboard the Pacific Trader moored at Galveston's Pier 39 for the next month or so. She was docked to undergo maintenance to the cargo hold. Rick and Bob immediately formed a friendship with the crew of seventeen, welcoming them to Galveston, providing them with mariner knives and jigsaw puzzles to assemble in their spare time. But more importantly, they wanted the mariners to know that the entire ministry was praying for each and every one of them. After a great visit with Maks the Chief Mate, Vadim, the Electrician and a few of the stewards, Bob and Rick were escorted back to the brow by Nikolas, a deck cadet from the Island of Cyprus. A few days later Deacon Bob received a WhatsApp message from Maks, asking if he could arrange for gifts to be purchased and delivered via Amazon for the Seafarers to send home to their families as Christmas gifts. How could he say "no" to such a request? This was a way to share Love with these mariners. Rick and Bob returned to the Pacific Trader

on Bob's 59th birthday to support the Chief Mate's request for his crew. And Bob couldn't think of a better birthday gift to receive than to spend an evening with the crew as they shopped for gifts. Rick's wife, Myra, sent the seafarers a care package of fine assorted cookies, on each of those visits. The seafarers experienced a very special delivery of those Amazon packages, which under normal circumstances would have been shipped directly to the Galveston Seafarers Center. This time the delivery was much more personal, as all of the gifts, which were sent to Bob's home in League City, TX, were hand delivered directly to the seafarers on the ship.

The Amazon drivers must have loved delivering all those packages to Bob's house. If they only knew it was for seafarers who would be at sea during the Holidays, they would probably have been even more grateful to lend a hand. However, a day prior to us delivering the packages, more crewmembers requested the opportunity to place orders. Fortunately the ship was still under repair and all the gifts made it just in time. Rick and Bob boarded the ship on the 19th of October before the crew sailed for their run up to Houston, Nova Scotia, New York and onto Jamaica. Prior to saying their final goodbyes (or rather, "until we meet again"), Bob and Rick took advantage of the perfect time to give them an early holiday surprise. Remember those Christmas Stella Maris backpacks filled with comforts of home? You know, the ones which were assembled by the ladies of the Bay Area Deanery, the same folks that organized the 2nd Annual Galveston Seafarers luncheon? Sure you do! After dropping off the Amazon packages, Bob and Rick left the ship to go back to the pickup truck. With the help of crewmembers Kartikeya, Nikolas and one other seafarer, they retrieved enough backpacks for each of the crewmembers, leaving smiles on all of their faces.

Faith, Hope and Love are the theological virtues which Jesus Himself modeled, and we are all called to emulate. Sure, it requires effort, but the rewards are immeasurable and fulfilling. There are no individual heroes in this article; just a group of caring human beings that created a sense of kindness that flourishes when the Community comes together. There is no better example of these virtues than when we can make a seafarer feel accepted and comfortable within a foreign country far from home. May God continue to Bless all our gracious donors, seafarers, and fishers.

by Richard Banke & Deacon Bob Milmoie
Port Chaplains
Seafarer's Centre, Galveston, TX

Accompanying Our Catholic Fishermen! Stella Maris Beaumont

For more than 100 years, fishing and specifically shrimping has been an industry dominated by Catholic families in the Western Gulf of Mexico.

Beginning with French-speaking Catholic Cajuns from Louisiana and Southeast Texas, the Western Gulf industry now includes Catholic Vietnamese who arrived as boat people in the 1980's and Catholic Mexicans who have migrated to Texas or work under an H2-B visa.

Historically, shrimping has been a feast-or-famine industry.



It is impacted by the weather, regulations, and the price of diesel. However, over the last year, our domestic shrimpers have been overwhelmed by imported, farm-raised shrimp from Asia and South America.

The situation is so severe that most shrimpboats are tied up at the dock. This is not because there are no shrimp to catch. Nor is it because our shrimpers are not competitive with imports. Rather, it is because imports have flooded into our country, and there is no room in our commercial freezers for our domestic catch.

As I write this article on October 30, 2023, the ex-vessel price paid to the shrimpers when they offload their catch is 75 cents a pound for 23/30 size shrimp. (That is, between 23 to 30 shrimp make up a pound of shrimp.)

According to a Seafood Source article in May of 2023, the smaller and less expensive 36/40 shrimp dropped in value from \$4.45 in February of 2022, to only \$2.46 in February of 2023. Now the larger 23/30 shrimp can only get 75 cents a pound at the dock.

The American Shrimp Processors Association has petitioned the US International Trade Commission for relief from dumping. We at Stella Maris – Beaumont are praying that the commissioners will recognize the need to establish



a level playing field between our domestic shrimp harvesters and the farm-raised importers.

If relief does not come, industry experts predict that there will be no domestic commercial shrimping industry in the United States by the end of 2024.

As a port chaplain, this is of grave concern to me. In recent decades, many family farms collapsed. The farmers were filled with hopelessness, and some committed suicide.

Just about now, you may be asking yourself: Well, what can I do to help? Stella Maris – Beaumont and the Port Arthur Area Shrimpers' Association ask you to do the following things:

1. Pray for our shrimpers and their family as they face the loss of their family business.
2. At your local restaurant, ask the waiter if the shrimp on the menu is wild caught or farm-raised. He or she will look confused, and then go to the kitchen and ask the chef. If it's farm-raised, think if you really want to eat shrimp today.
3. Learn about the child labor and human trafficking abuse that takes place in many farm-raised facilities. At the October 19 House Homeland Security Committee hearing, information from the Outlaw Ocean Project and the Southern Shrimp Alliance alleged that Argentinian farm-raised shrimp was shipped to China for processing, which was done by Uyghur labor, and then shipped to the US in contravention to the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act. (See: www.theoutlawocean.com – The Uyghurs Forced to Process the World's Fish.)

4. When you shop at your local grocery store, check that the shrimp is wild caught. Even if the package says "American" and has "red, white, and blue" packaging it doesn't mean that it is not farm-raised. Turn the package over and read the fine print.

Our Holy Father, Pope Francis has called us to accompany our brothers and sisters. Our US shrimping families really need our accompaniment

by Very Reverend Sinclair Oubre, J.C.L., AFNI, KHS
Diocese Director, Beaumont/Port Arthur, TX

Maritime Weekend in Mobile, Alabama

Five years ago, at the encouragement of our advisory board, Stella Maris Mobile joined the Propeller Club of Mobile. It was an opportunity to meet agents, port industries members, and various other people who support the local port. The Club, over those years, has provided financial support as well as direct support and encouragement for the services that we provide to seafarers. As a Propeller Club member, the Ministry also celebrated an enhanced Maritime Day, which commenced on Friday May 19th as the Club celebrated its 26th annual Gumbo Cook-off. The event took place adjacent to the Mobile River behind the Gulfquest Museum and included some twenty different teams from the Club. The location was perfect for this event and the weather on that day was just right. Thanks to my wife Judy, who is the Gumbo chef, Stella Maris Mobile once again participated in this wonderful event. The event provided opportunities for team members to gather and socialize, for other supporters to gather with us and to welcome our ministry partner, International Ministry, to join us for this event. At the encouragement of the Propeller Club, we transported four crew members from the TBC Progress to sample something in Mobile besides Walmart. While the event made for a long day (several days if you include the all-important Gumbo preparation), the day was enjoyed by all.

On Monday May 22nd we celebrated Mass in the Cathedral-Basilica of the Immaculate Conception in downtown Mobile. This event is a long standing tradition for our ministry but due to Covid and the weekend schedule the last few years we have been away from the Cathedral. Mass was celebrated by our Chaplain Fr Lito Capeding and the homilist was Deacon John Archer. The mass allowed us to also pray for the return to health of Deacon Joe Connick the previous director of Stella Maris Mobile and for two other deceased members of the port community: Mrs. Karen Kraisch, wife of Pastor Ken Kraisch and Port

Police Officer Kimberly Sickafoose. Our ship visitors and Advisory Board members were present and Father Lito offered a special blessing for all those who supported this wonderful ministry with their time and talents.



by Deacon John Archer

Port Chaplain Stella Maris Mobile, AL

Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary

I Was Blessed that Day. The Blessed Virgin Mary spoke through my mother. My Faith Saved Me. Still remembering September 11th. September 11, 2001 - I was a twenty-eight-year-old stockbroker trainee for Morgan Stanley-Dean Witter working on the 73rd floor of Tower two. On September 10th, the Monday before, my mom said to me, "Don't go to work tomorrow anak (son), we're going to renew our passports for our pilgrimage trip to Our Lady of Fatima in Portugal". This would be our second time going to the Shrine. So, I agreed and planned to go to work later in the afternoon when I had taken care of my passport. On the morning of September 11th, I watched the pre-market activity on CNBC at my parent's house in West Caldwell, at the time I typically would have already been in the office. We must have received at least thirty phone calls to the house from family, friends, and clients that knew I worked at the World Trade Center. As it turned out, it was me who answered each of these phone calls. When the person on the line figured out that it was me they were speaking to, they broke down and cried. I was blessed that day! The Blessed Virgin Mary spoke through my mom the day before to keep me away from the events of September 11th. I placed my faith in the Lord and Mama Mary first. My faith saved me! Who knows where I would be today if I had been there that day. I still remember my good friends Maritess Santillian and Judy Fernandez, my high school classmate Brett Bailey and co-worker Lindsey Herkness, Jr., who lost their lives that day and I pray for their souls on every anniversary.



Please keep close to your faith because you never know when it will save your life. Please share my story with those who struggle in their faith and seek answers. Please pray. If you pray now, please, pray more. I am sorry I could not share my story in person with you

all tonight on this most blessed of occasions, as I have celebrated the thirteenth of every month from May to October for the last eight years at the Our Lady of Czestochowa Shrine in Doylestown, PA with my family. God bless you all this day and always, Amen.

by Anthony Rivera

Volunteer Stella Maris Port of Elizabeth, Newark, NJ

Port Visit - Seattle, WA Seafarers Center

Sr. Joanna Okereke, HHCJ, national director of Stella Maris, Madeline Watkins, program coordinator, and Deacon Dileep Athaide, National Director for Maritime Ministry in Canada and Catholic Chaplaincy Coordinator (RCAV), Port of Vancouver visited the port of Seattle, Washington. Their aim was to motivate, listen, and encourage the chaplains in their efforts to develop their ministries and assist seafarers to meet their needs. They encouraged chaplains to provide a genuine welcome, spiritual renewal, a haven while in port, a safe work environment, a just contract, communications with loved ones back home, and a few hours of recreation. The national director's office en-



sures that ongoing pastoral care activities and resources needed by the chaplains are provided. She encourages the chaplains to achieve their goals and ensuring that the mission, vision, and values of the Maritime Apostolate is fulfilled.

At the Seattle Seafarers Center, Deacon Joey DeLeon the port chaplain and the pastoral team collaborated with the ecumenical partnership in support of the Center's Mission to welcome and care for seafarers who visit the port.

The Seattle Seafarers Center is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation and is an affiliate of two international seafarer min-



istries: the Anglican Communion's Mission to Seafarers and the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Seattle, Washington (Stella Maris Ministry). The Center was formed as an ecumenical partnership among the Episcopal Diocese of Olympia, the Archdiocese of Seattle, and the Northwest Synod of the ELCA.

The Center provides care through ship visits and transportation services as well as offering communication tools (SIM cards) and other necessities (e.g., shopping) for seafarers. The Center performs communion and memorial services, ship blessings, and a special Ash Wednesday liturgy. The Center engages in outreach with local communities to raise the visibility of seafarers and works with local parishes and other communities of faith to sponsor an annual holiday ditty bag drive. Starting Thanksgiving week through to the end of January, the Center packs over 1,000 ditty bags containing personal necessities and gives these bags to every seafarer who visits the ports of Seattle and Everett. This is one way of giving thanks to these essential and hidden workers and helps them celebrate the holidays while away from home. In addition, the Center uses the services of volunteers from community and parish organizations to assist in ship visiting and catering to the needs of the seafarers. During the Alaska cruise ship season (April – October), the Center provides shuttle services to and from the cruise terminal to downtown Seattle for crew members to do some sightseeing and/or buy their personal items and gifts for their families. Seafarers also come to the Center just to take a break from their busy work schedule and make use of the Center's internet to communicate with their loved ones.

The Center fosters leadership and vocational develop-

ment through its internship program in support of the mission for seafarers by obtaining grants from the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) and the North American Maritime Ministry Association (NAMMA). Internship funds are also made available by The Mission to Seafarers organization from the UK.

Overall, the visit to the Seattle Seafarers Center, although short, was full of learning and joyful experiences. Thanks, and heartfelt gratitude to Richard Shively, SSC Executive Director, Julia Cooper, SSC Director of Operations, Deacon Joey de Leon, and members of the SSC board who welcomed us and made our visit a memorable one.

by Sister Joanna, HHCJ

A Ministry of Brief Encounters - Seattle, WA Seafarer's Centre

When Joe Cotton from the Archdiocese of Seattle asked if I would consider applying for the Executive Director of the Seattle Seafarers Center last February, I had a general idea of the ministry. After all, Fr. Tony Haycock oversaw what was then known as the Catholic Seaman's Club when I was Directing the Vocations Office for the Archdiocese of Seattle. Fr. Tony was keenly interested in getting Deacon Candidates and seminarians to experience the ministry. I had some great conversations with him then, and his passion for the ministry was so clear.

The style of ministry has certainly changed in the almost three decades since the initial conversations with Fr. Tony. The building that housed the Catholic Seaman's Club was sold in 2015. The Archdiocese of Seattle, Episcopal Diocese of Olympia and Lutheran Maritime Ministries in the Northwest decided to merge at that time. We now operate under one roof, and under one board as the Seattle Seafarers Center. Ecumenical collaboration is very special. We are very fortunate to have a Catholic Deacon (Deacon Joey De Leon) as our Senior Port Chaplain. Julia Cooper is our Director of Operations, and she began as a member of the Episcopal Service Corps as an intern. Fr. Mac Murray is a regular ship visitor, driver for cruise ship crews and an Episcopalian Priest. Bishop Shelley Wee is the Bishop for the Lutheran Synod here in Western Washington and directly supports the work of the Seafarers Center in many ways. We also have two pastors from the Archdiocese of Seattle who are open to serving by performing Mass onboard ships, memorial services for Seafarers, and seeking volunteers from the parish community. Fr. Kevin Duggan and Fr.

Matt Oakland often express their desire to help as needed.

I mentioned that the ministry has changed. Our location on Harbor Island in Seattle puts us very close to where the ships are moored at the Port of Seattle. However, security at the Port and terminals and the speed of unloading and loading these huge container ships limits the time that crew members have for shore leave. We visit every ship that comes



into port. Often, crew members are interested in visiting Seattle. Not every crew member has a visa that allows for off ship excursions. Those that do are often buying necessities

for several others. One of the things we do is provide transportation for those crew members to and from shopping trips.

On a recent trip, we took six members of a crew from the Philippines to and from downtown Seattle. A new volunteer (Daniel Mullen-Vice Principal at St. Anthony School in Renton, WA) joined me on the trip. One of the crew members shared that he would be taking a leave from the ship after their crossing to China and will be getting married. We had a great conversation about married life (with input and some laughter from his crew mates). He called his fiancée to include her in the conversation via a Snap Chat call. Amidst the laughter, there were some serious moments about how they looked to navigate married life and be "all in" for each other while he was away at sea. His fiancée was very engaged with the conversation and grateful that he was surrounded by people that supported his preparation for marriage.

Such brief encounters, whether on a ship or a van on the way are important. These give us the chance to not only extend a welcome, but act as a reminder of God's love to crews that face loneliness, long stretches of 80 hours a week working, and rough conditions at sea. They give us (and our volunteers) a chance to be present to men and women who deliver so much of what we need and use every day. This ministry of brief encounters means so much to everyone involved!

by Rich Shiveley

Executive Director Seattle Seafarer's Centre

Christmas at Sea - Point Comfort, TX



After surviving the heat wave of 2023; we are gearing up for our 5th Christmas in Point Comfort. Please consider helping us. Don't have time shop, pack, wrap and deliver? No problem, we can do that for you when

you make a cash donation designated for Christmas. New this year, our center inside the port will be a drop off location. Because of port security, reservations will be required to visit the center and maybe meet some seafarers.

Your gifts can brighten life and console a seafarer far away from their family. While these gifts are not fancy or expensive, they are so important to those who receive them. They remind the seafarers that someone cares about them. The seafarers are amazed that strangers make these gifts for them and really appreciate this show of support. It is common for the ship's captain to hold all of the gifts until Christmas Day. Then, even if the ship is in the middle of the ocean on Christmas, each person receives a gift.

Starting the week after Thanksgiving, our volunteers will deliver gifts to all the ships and many of the towboats that visit our port. On average, a ship will have a crew of 23 and the inland vessels have 4 crew. We estimate we will need at least 700 gifts.

Many groups and individuals pack shoe boxes and wrap them in colorful paper. We ask that you use "normal" size shoe boxes -- please avoid extra-large boxes such as boot boxes and very small boxes from children's shoes. Some people use plastic shoe-sized boxes. All work well and we have had no complaints. In fact, several of the guys have mentioned needing something like a sewing kit or an envelope and they said, "hey wait, I think I have one of those in my Christmas box."



We estimate we will need a minimum of 700 gifts to

to share with the ships in port during the holiday season.

What do you pack in your gift? We recommend a variety of items that they can use and enjoy. We have found that many of the crews are like large families and trade items with each other. No doubt they play a version of the white elephant gift game and pass many items around the room. Our attached list does not cover every possible item that you can shop for, but it should get you thinking. Remember, you have a limited container size to fill. Pick and choose items you might like to receive or might need while away on a long trip from home.

Other people, especially quilting ladies, like to make cloth ditty bags with drawstrings. These bags are easy to sew and make an extra gift for the seafarers. Most ditty bags measure roughly 15 inches long by 12 inches wide. They can be made with one drawstring or two. Some groups have even purchased the drawstring backpacks at stores like Dollar Tree and used those. We are not picky. However, if you wish to pack, your gift will be appreciated by the seafarer who receives it. We do ask that you try to make gifts of approximately equal value.

by Rhonda Cummins

President Board of Directors, Point Comfort Seafarer's Centre, TX



**Message from
His Eminence Cardinal Michael Czerny, SJ
Prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral
Human Development
In occasion of World Fisheries Day
November 21, 2023**

Dear brothers and sisters,

Human work is a sign of the immense trust with which God instils dignity into our lives. God entrusts his creation to our care and responsibility. With the Apostolic Exhortation *Laudate Deum*, the Holy Father sought to arouse our consciences on the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, eight years after the publication of the Encyclical *Laudato Si'*. The titles of the two documents express the sense of wonder and praise that our souls experience when we live in a just relationship with other creatures and the Creator.

Many times, unfortunately, this has not been so. Instead, a cry of pain rises up to heaven from the earth, from the sea, and from all of creation that groans and suffers. Pope Francis is convinced "that our responses have not been adequate, while the world in which we live is collapsing and may be nearing the breaking point" (LD, 2). World Fisheries Day is a fitting occasion to heed his call.

Fishing communities in many parts of the world are suffering. Economic problems and unfair competition threaten the survival of fishing, especially family-scale fishery. The next generation often does not take over, and the fishery suffers due to the climate crisis that has made the marine environment more fragile and precarious. With *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis has helped us to think in terms of the paradigm of integral ecology. We are called to safeguard both the environment and jobs, both the sea and fishing communities. Every time that we think of these worlds as separate and disconnected, we undermine the equilibrium that preserves human life on our planet. We are living through a period of epochal change: in just a few decades we have moved from being mindful about labour issues, to the present risk being a culture that ignores people and forgets that fishers are also the stewards of the sea.

Ecological sensitivity is important for protecting the quality of the fish that are harvested and for caring for the seas and the oceans. Fishing that destroys the marine ecosystem frustrates the work of fishers, who know very well how important the care of the sea is for the future of their livelihood.

In recent months, many factors are putting small-scale fishing at risk, while favouring those who exploit labour and act unjustly, sometimes marketing fish that were caught in unhealthy environments and by underpaid workers. As Pope Francis reminds us: “the depletion of fishing reserves especially hurts small fishing communities without the means to replace those resources” (LS, 48). Fishing was the occupation of the first disciples of Jesus. The evangelist John tells of the miraculous catch of fish as an experience of encounter with the Risen Jesus (John 21:1-14). The Lord finds the disciples saddened by his death on the cross. They had already returned to their fishing on the Lake of Galilee. After a night of failure, the Risen Christ reveals his power to them: “Cast the net to the right side of the boat and you will find some.” Peter and the others trust him, and their catch surpasses all expectations: one hundred fifty-three large fish. Even so, the net does not break. In this way, the disciples learn to hope. Today all of us still need fishers: they demonstrate faith every time they cast their nets into the water. Fishing, in fact, does not depend on human ability alone, but also upon the conditions of the sea and on the providence of God. The work of fishing is a constantly renewed act of trust: it helps us to grasp the value of faith.

World Fisheries Day encourages us to pray for fishers and for their families. We thank them for their valuable work: they are stewards of a delicate equilibrium and even pioneers of integral ecology. Theirs is a strenuous, wearisome activity that is often not fully recognized by society. We are grateful for the care with which many of them clean up plastics and other materials that pollute the sea, as Pope Francis has recalled on numerous occasions. Moreover, fishing feeds many populations of the world. This is why the daily gesture of casting nets, coupled with deep respect for the generosity of creation, is so meaningful. We must counter the arrogance of the powerful who threaten the livelihood of honest workers and endanger marine biodiversity: “We need to rethink among other things the question of human power, its meaning and its limits. For our power has frenetically increased in a few decades. We have made impressive and awesome technological advances, and we have not realized that at the same time we have turned into highly dangerous beings, capable of threatening the lives of many beings and our own survival” (LD, 28).

Dear fishers, your simple faith enriches the Church that is living in a time of Synod. You are building the Church, uniting faith and work every day. Beautiful scenes of interreligious dialogue and of coexistence between diverse peoples abound on your vessels.

From the first centuries of the Christian faith, the ship has been the image used most frequently to describe the Church, a community on a journey on the sea of history through storms, swells and calms. May these words of Pope Francis encourage you as we all remember that: “Human life, intelligence and freedom are elements of the nature that enriches our planet, part of its internal workings and its equilibrium” (LD, 26). With intelligence and freedom, please join the Church in taking care of humanity. As guardians of the sea and honest workers, help the Church to cast its nets tirelessly, thereby transforming humanity into a family of brothers and sisters, and transforming earth, sea and sky into a new creation

Card. Michael Czerny S.J.
Prefect

ATTENTION: “Stella Maris” now official name replacing “Apostleship of the Sea”

Stella Maris ministry is organized through the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) under the Secretariat of Cultural Diversity in the Church/Pastoral Care of Migrants, Refugees, and Travelers (PCM-RT). Stella Maris has continued to be a vital ministry of the United States Catholic Church in providing pastoral care to seafarers and all people of the sea. Its mission is to reach out to seafarers, port personnel, fisher men and women and their families, who work or travel on the seas. A network of Stella Maris port offices and Catholic chaplains establishes a ministry that accommodates the seafarer’s unique lifestyle and needs, to continue the mission of Christ himself, through encounter, service, and celebration.

Stella Maris ministry reflects the Church’s care and concern to offer spiritual and material assistance to seafarers who are often away for many months from their homes because of the nature of their work and cannot participate in regular parish life. Stella Maris supports the ministry of chaplains and volunteers, who not only provide spiritual care for seafarers but much of their work is also about extending practical assistance (such as offering opportunities for seafarers to communicate with families back home) as well as advocating for the rights of seafarers. Stella Maris also provides pastoral resources such as rosaries, prayer cards, and the Catholic Maritime Newsletter which is sent to the local Stella Maris chaplaincies, bishops and other networks.

The occasion of the Centennial celebration in “2020” was an opportunity to launch a new name “Stella Maris” (Star of the Sea), a traditional name for Our Lady - referring to her as the guiding star who leads to Christ and a new logo, the design showing a heart, representing the Sacred Heart of Jesus, recalling the initial connection with the Apostleship of Prayer; a life-belt, representing the charity of its members; both resting on the anchor of Christian hope.

Logo explanation

The new Stella Maris logo has been designed to sit comfortably within the maritime sector context while expressing the distinctive nature of our charitable service offering and Catholic foundations. Translated from Latin, the name “Stella Maris” means “Star of the Sea”.

The elements within the symbol characterise Stella Maris’ mission.

The anchor symbolises Hope: when the anchor is dropped at sea, it holds fast to keep the ship and crew safe - just as we hold fast to our hope in God to keep us safe.

The lifesaver symbolises Faith: when a seafarer falls into the sea, they put their trust in the lifesaver to save them - just as we put our faith in God for eternal salvation.

The heart symbolises Charity: the heart of Christ is full of love for all - our charitable works are animated by the love of Christ.

The rays of light symbolise the Light of Christ: the light emanates from the Heart of Christ (the heart), shines towards our Faith (the lifesaver) and is rooted in Hope (the anchor).

The waves of the sea mark the environment for our mission - a source of livelihood for seafarers, but also a reminder of danger and death. Accepting and believing in Faith, Hope and Charity leads seafarers and their families to the safe harbour of Heaven.

Over 100 years of supporting seafarers

Stella Maris was founded in Glasgow in October 1920 and established to support seafarers in need. Over one hundred years later it is the largest ship visiting network in the world, providing seafarers with practical and pastoral support, information, and a friend in times of need.

Over 90% of world trade is transported by ship. The life of a seafarer can be dangerous and lonely. They may spend up to a year at a time away from

home, separated from their family and loved ones, often working in harsh conditions. They need our support, care, and a listening ear. We rely on voluntary donations, and grants to continue our work.

For further information or for donation, please contact:

Sr. Joanna Okereke, HHCJ

National Director – Stella Maris

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Cultural Diversity in the Church

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STELLA MARIS

SUPPORTING SEAFARERS AND FISHERS
AROUND THE WORLD

US Delegation of National Catholic Conference of Hispanic Ministry to the Vatican

Our US Delegation just returned from observing Consistory on 9-30-23 and Pope Francis' Synod opening Mass October 4. We participated in many related events and receptions and many meetings with Vatican officials from Dicastery for Integral Human Development which includes seafarer ministry, and we met with dicastery for the laity family and life. We met also with co-pontifical secretaries for Latin America Dr. Rodrigo Guerra from Mexico, and Dr. Emilce Cuda, a former University Professor from Argentina. Dr Cuda is most recognized for her expertise in social justice, and she reports directly to Pope Francis.

We Delegation of seventeen organized by NCCHM (National Catholic Conference of Hispanic Ministry) were guests of new Cardinal Papal Nuncio Christophe Pierre, and we returned October 5 – 6 to USA in wonderful high spirits. On October 7 we delegates watched in horror with the whole world the horrible massacre in Israel. We are reminded by Pope Francis that whether we are Christian, Muslim or Jewish, we all believe we have one God and creator who is mother-father of us all. That makes us all brothers and sisters, and we need to act accordingly. I will always remember Bishop Stephen Blair in 1999 speaking at my 300 member Stockton Rotary luncheon saying that his father had been a proud Rotarian living the Rotary motto, "service above self", and said the only way we will have improvements in society is when faith communities and not-for-profits like Rotary can meet with Government officials to forge positive changes. Bishop Blair in February 2017 brought WMPM (World Meeting of Popular Movements) which was lead by Cardinal Turkson to his Diocese. Pope Francis gave a powerful opening presentation at WMPM using the story of The Good Samaritan to tell we 600 social justice advocates gathered from every Diocese in USA that we need to not only be doing direct services for the poor, but we also need to look for ways to make positive structural changes in society where possible. Pope Francis' prophetic voice has been warning us that we are losing our Democracy and we are losing our Traditional form of capitalism, competitive free enterprise. President Biden must have heard this prophetic voice when he made his State of the Union Address in February this year saying, "Capitalism without Competition is not capitalism." That is the definition of MONOPOLY which is what I think Pope Francis references in Laudato Si saying that powerful international economic interests around the world are oppressing people and the environment for profit.

We met with Fr. Sergio and Sister Kathleen on seafarer ministry. Fr. Sergio told us he had met recently with Deacon Paul Rosenblum. We expressed our thanks for him spending a lot of time with Deacon Paul as he is our leader in US. We are pleased that news media reports say that Pope Francis wants now to work to end slavery. Seafarer Ministry will certainly be a crucial part in this very important campaign. Laudato Si whispered this warning, but now Pope Francis seems more urgent. Michelle Alexander in her book, "The New Jim Crow", says that slavery didn't stop in US until the 1964 Civil Rights Act—Not the Civil War. Greeks discovered steam power in 60 AD, but no one wanted to invest in this because there was so much slave labor. The same principle applies today. When our broom factories were outsourced post NAFTA for cheap labor, the factories have twice as much labor. It's a race to the bottom. The cheapest labor gets the business-not efficiency or innovation.

I owned and managed a broom factory for thirty years, and I was elected chairman of the association of 125 US broom manufacturers 1992 -1996. I worked with our lobbyist talking with Congressmen, USTR, and I testified before USITC (US International Trade Commission) and won our case. Our team lead a grass roots campaign and won Congressional support with President Clinton signing the bill into law to enforce the USITC ruling. One year later ISDS Court in private overruled the US Law signed by President of US. ISDS Court overruled President and US Congress, removed tariffs and fined us Government twenty-two million dollars in damages. ISDS Court offered no explanation and there is no right of appeal of ISDS ruling. I sold the company at liquidation value to a brush manufacturer I knew who promised to keep the factory in Stockton, Calif. and keep all 75 workers employed. I turned down two very good offers from Fortune 500 companies who would move the factory to Mexico. I felt for my broom makers, the same way that Fr. Sinclair Oubre feels for the US shrimpers in the Gulf of Mexico.

Frederick Douglas is recognized as the most important leader of the movement for African-American Civil Rights in the 19th century. Between Revolutionary War and Civil War, most seafarers in US were free black men. Frederick Douglas because he had seafarer credentials in an occupation that was vitally important could travel anywhere in USA at anytime without question. As we outsource more work than ever before, and we see more ships moving goods, we need to actively support Pope Francis in this difficult work. Pope Francis directed our AOS International Conference in Taiwan in October 2017

to address the plight of fishers where we saw proof of 1.5 million fishers in Asia alone who are enslaved. That conference was lead by Cardinal Turkson and we heard from many worldwide experts. The motto of our industry has always been, "We welcome the stranger in our land." WE heard from Cardinal Bo of Myanmar and Archbishop Costa of Bangladesh. Pope Francis on page 12 of his book, "Let Us Dream" cited the beautiful response of the Bangladesh people in welcoming the nearly one million Rohingya refugees. We attendees of the AOS Conference in Taiwan had the same conclusion Pope Francis related in his book three years later. The prophetic voice of Pope Francis has warned us that our Democracy and the traditional form of capitalism our country was founded on are both slipping away. Our politicians at every level are serving the powerful economic interests who are funding them. President Biden in his state of the union address this past February used a favorite slogan, "Capitalism without competition is not capitalism." What we are now promoting worldwide is MONOPOLY which are the powerful international economic interests who are oppressing people and the environment for profit. My fifty years experience in manufacturing and international business cause me to share Pope Francis' concerns. In my view, there is nothing that shows the difference that Pope Francis is telling the world than the story of the wall. Our politicians are arguing over whether or not to build a wall on our Southern border. Only Pope Francis is telling us to go to the root cause of this forced migration as he explains in his prophetic words of Laudato Si.

by John Claassen
Director, Seafarer's Centre, Oakland, CA



The Prayer of Saint Pope John Paul II to: Our Lady Star of the Sea

Mary, Star of the Sea, light of every ocean, guide seafarers across all dark and stormy seas that they may reach the haven of peace and light prepared in Him who calmed the sea. 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, work 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?"

Our Lady of Peace, pray for us!

Bright Star of the Sea, guide us!

Our Lady, Star of the Sea, pray for seafarers,
pray for us.



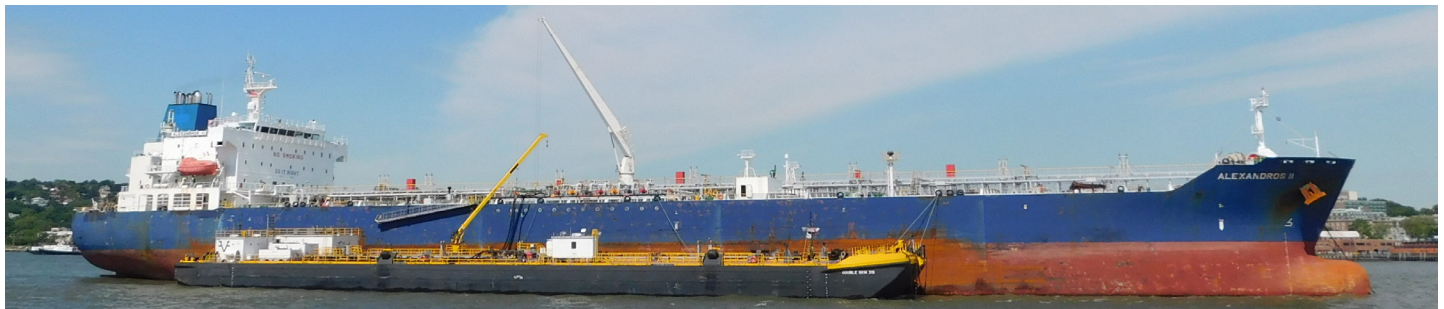
Stella Maris, National Office
Secretariat of Cultural Diversity in the Church
Pastoral Care of Migrants, Refugees, and Travelers
3211 Fourth Street, NE, Washington, D.C. 20017

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



STELLA MARIS

SUPPORTING SEAFARERS AND FISHERS
AROUND THE WORLD



Upcoming Events

2024 Maritime Day Celebration Mass

Saturday May, 18, 2024

@ 12:10PM

Crypt Church, National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception
Washington DC.

November 21, 2024

World Fisheries Day