

Apostleship of the Sea of the United States of America

AOS USA



Remarks of the President of the Apostleship of the Sea of the United States of America
Press Conference on Gulf Fishing
Port Arthur, Texas
June 4, 2010

On February 9, 2010, Archbishop Agostino Marchetto addressed a gathering of representatives from around the world gathered in Rome to reflect on the Apostleship of the Sea's activities with the world fishing community. In his opening words, he reminded the participants of the religious communities' responsibilities in supporting the fishing community:

“We are gathering every year, since 2003, because the Church cannot ignore the distressing situation in which many fishers and their families are living.”

When he spoke these words, his mind was focused on collapsed fisheries and illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing that was undermining the ability of artisanal fishermen to provide for their families and communities.

However, Archbishop Marchetto's words were quite prescient to our present situation. The religious community must come forward to join with government agencies and private organizations to assist and stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in our Gulf fishing communities.

This is why it is with such thanks that the Port Arthur International Seafarers' Center, the Apostleship of the Sea - Diocese of Beaumont, and the Apostleship of the Sea -USA have joined with the Port Arthur Area Shrimpers' Association, Texas Cooperative Extension SeaGrant, and CDM Consulting to raise our voices in solidarity with our local people of the sea.

At the meeting in Rome, Archbishop Marchetto also noted:

“From ancient times, fishing has been a major source of food for humanity and a provider of employment and economic benefits to those engaged in this activity. However, in recent years the technological development of fishing vessels and the globalization of the industry has created a deep impact on the general situation and the livelihood of many fishers and fishing communities.”

In the first few years of this decade, globalization through foreign fish farming caused the collapse of the US shrimp market and the livelihood of our Gulf of Mexico shrimpers. Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, Wilma, Gustav and Ike destroyed fishing boats, docks and infrastructure. Today, the ecological catastrophe of the Deepwater Horizon will not only close off fishing grounds for years, but it may destroy the superb reputation of wild caught Gulf shrimp.

Our goals in organizing today's press conference is to bring forth experts to reassure the public that wild caught Gulf seafood is safe, clean, and delicious.