



Catholic Maritime News

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A Jubilee Year of Mercy

A declaration of a Jubilee Year is always a happening of great significance in the life of the Church. Pope Francis has declared this current year as a Jubilee of Mercy.

To emphasize its importance Pope Francis commissioned one thousand priests from all over the world to be designated emissaries of Mercy. These special delegates, together with the Bishops, priests and laity should lead the way in developing an awareness of God's merciful love and forgiveness. If God forgives us our sins, should we not forgive each other so that together we represent the mind and heart of Christ.



Bishop J. Kevin Boland

This past Lenten Season once again brought to our attention our sinfulness and our need for God's merciful forgiveness. We should always be mindful of the "Confiteor" prayer. We ask Mary, all the Angels and Saints to pray for us. For what are we praying? We are praying for God's Mercy and the forgiveness of our sins. What a gift! It is there for the asking.

A special word of gratitude to the priest chaplains. Your generosity of time in celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation is the gift of the hand of Jesus forgiving the sinner. There is no limit to God's Mercy. Quoting Pope Francis: "cover the sinner with a blanket of mercy so they can recover their dignity."

"A Blanket of Mercy": God's "Blanket" has no limits, it fits all sinners who seek God's mercy. We should forgive each other just as Christ has forgiven us.

In conclusion, I quote Pope Francis:

"In this Jubilee Year let us allow God to surprise us. He never tires of casting open the doors of his heart and of repeating that he loves us and wants to share his love with us... from the depths of the mystery of God, the great River of Mercy wells up and overflows unceasingly. It is a spring that will never run dry, no matter how many people draw from it." (Misericordiae Vultus, Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, Given in Rome, at Saint Peter's, on 11 April, the Vigil of the Second Sunday of Easter, or the Sunday of Divine Mercy, in the year of our Lord 2015, the third of my Pontificate. Francis, Bishop of Rome.)

AMEN.

A Seafarers' Prayer

O God, I ask you to take me into your care and protection along with all those who sail ships.
Make me alert and wise in my duties.

Make me faithful in the time of routine, and prompt to decide and courageous to act in any time of crisis.

Protect me in the dangers and perils of the sea; and even in the storm, grant that there may be peace and calm within my heart.

When I am far from home and far from loved ones and far from the country that I know, help me to be quite sure that, wherever I am, I can never drift beyond your love and care.

Take care of my loved ones in the days and weeks and months when I am separated from them, sometimes with half the world between them and me.

Keep me true to them and keep them true to me, and every time that we have to part, bring us together in safety and in loyalty again.

This I ask for your love's sake.

Amen.





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Secretariat of Cultural Diversity in the Church
Pastoral Care of Migrants, Refugees & Travelers

Bishop Promoter: Most Reverend J. Kevin Boland
Bishop Emeritus of the Diocese of Savannah, GA

AOS National Director Contact: Sr. Joanna Okereke, HHCI
3211 Fourth Street, NE, Washington, DC 20017
Phone: (202) 541-3359 ■ Fax: (202) 541-5417
E-mail: jokereke@uscbb.org

www.usccb.org/aos

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We encourage you to visit our website which has user friendly navigation tools. Check out our interactive map with a list of AOS chaplains and contacts, know about news and events and other relevant information. If you want to know about Mass schedules in parishes around the country, there is even a link to MassTimes.org.

Contact Catholic Maritime News

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

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

For AOSUSA membership enquiries:

Doreen Badeaux
1500 Jefferson Drive, Port Arthur, TX 77642
Tel. (409) 985-4545 ■ Fax (409) 985-5945
E-mail: aosusa@sbcglobal.net ■ www.aos-usa.org

National Maritime Day Celebration

The National Day of Prayer and Remembrance for Mariners and People of the Sea will be celebrated Monday, May 23, 2016 at the U.S. Department of Transportation located at 1200 New Jersey Ave. SE Washington D.C. 20590. The day is observed in conjunction with National Maritime Day in the United States, which has been celebrated since 1933, to recognize merchant mariners and others in the maritime industry.



"Pope Francis has called on those who work for the wellbeing of seafarers and families to 'be the voice' of those workers who live far from their loved ones and face dangerous and difficult situations", Bishop J. Kevin Boland, retired bishop of Savannah, Georgia, and Apostleship of the Sea (AOS) promoter, encourages dioceses to mark the national day by remembering the men and women of the sea.

Ninety percent of the world's goods are transported by sea and the waterways. Approximately 1.2 million seafarers work worldwide in 10,000 commercial ships and maritime vessels. The Apostleship of the Sea (AOS) is a worldwide Catholic maritime ministry for the spiritual and practical assistance to seafarers, fishermen, their families and all those who work and travel by sea and the waterways.

The National Day of Prayer and Remembrance for Mariners and People of the Sea was designated in 2005 to encourage the faithful in the country to support, remember and pray for merchant mariners, fishermen, port personnel and those in the maritime industry. The AOS National office requests special petitions in the Prayer of the Faithful at the Masses and encourages the use of the text for the Votive Mass, the Blessed Virgin Mary, Star of the Sea on May 22, when the Liturgical Calendar permits, and recommends the local AOS chaplaincies to commemorate the National Day according to their pastoral realities.

There will be a Eucharistic celebration on Friday, May 20, 2016 at the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 3211 Fourth Street NE Washington DC. 20017, at 12:00 pm. Let us ask Mary, the Star of the Sea, to enlighten and accompany our mission to support the work of the faithful who are called to witness to their Christian life in the maritime world

Sr. Joanna Okereke, HHCI

Assistant Director, Cultural Diversity in the Church



Subcommittee for Pastoral Care of Migrants, Refugees and Travelers: Sponsors Houston Maritime Chaplaincy Training Program

Since 1973, the Houston International Seafarers Center has provided Maritime Ministry Training Program for many chaplains and volunteers. The purpose of which is to train chaplains and volunteers for outreach to seafarers. Students in the two-week program held February 21-March 3, 2016 are multi-denominational. Topics covering relevant issues and current trends regarding Maritime ministry and care of the seafarers are presented. The program offers promising results as participants significantly increase their basic skills and understanding of the Maritime ministry. The program also provided participants an opportunity to share their ministerial experiences and to learn from one another.



Some participants at the Houston Maritime Chaplaincy Training Program

The Houston International Seafarers Center is a non-profit entity with two locations whose purpose is to serve the seafarers calling at the Port of Houston. At the center, there are chaplains of the Roman Catholic, Episcopal, Lutheran, Baptist, and Presbyterian churches. The Christian chaplains minister in a non-proselytizing manner allowing them to work closely with and relate to seafarers of all faiths – Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs and Buddhists. Religious leaders of other faiths are also welcome to serve at the Seafarers' Center. The chaplains and volunteers assist thousands of seafarers and offer them a friendly welcome, an invitation to visit the center, spiritual or practical guidance and assistance. They offer support services, legal aid, and help them with whatever needs they may have. They also bring with them practical services like wire transfer forms, calling cards, and cell phones to connect with loved ones at home.



Fr. Jan Kubisa celebrating Mass



George Chan, Rev. Daniel Phannenhour and Jeanie Wodka

The Houston International Seafarers Center also provides Ship Visitation and Worship Services for those Seafarers that wish to participate on a daily basis. Worship services and other religious and spiritual guidance are offered to the seafarers on board. Bibles in 47 different languages, a Christmas box program, and transportation for seafarers for shopping to local shops are provided. The centers offer seafarers a rewarding experience while far from their homes. It provides a place where the seafarers can come to relax, get online via computer to loved ones at home, play games, exercise or read books. The seafarers are invited to attend a religious service of their preference. And there are also small stores for convenience items needed by seafarers.



Port of Houston, TX

The goal of the Houston Maritime Chaplaincy Training Program is to develop the needed knowledge and skills of chaplains and volunteers. The success stories from the past and present training program are evident proof that the program has the ability to motivate participants and to help make the entire ministry to seafarers stronger. The staff of the Pastoral Care of Migrants, Refugees and Travelers (PCMRT) of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops was encouraged and strengthened by the unique experiences and ideas gained there. After the training, the participants were ready to go back to their various ministries with a renewed energy and feeling that they have learned something worthwhile. PCMRT offers scholarships to Catholic chaplains for this important training. We also encourage as many volunteers as possible to take advantage of the training, to further their knowledge of the ministry and to strengthen their networks.

Subcommittee for Pastoral Care of Migrants, Refugees and Travelers: Sponsors Houston Maritime Chaplaincy Training Program

Continued from page 3.



Ministering to the Seafarers at the Port of Houston, TX



Rev. Ronda Ploughman, Jeannie Wodka, Sr. Joanna Okereke, HHCI, Marshal Bundren, Rev. Daniel Phannenhour



David Corrales and Sr. Joanna Okereke, HHCI

AOS USA Annual Conference. AMO Star Center Dania Beach, Florida. March 14-16, 2016

The AOS-USA – professional Association of Catholic Ministers, Catholic Mariners, and Cruise Ship Priests gathered March 14-16, 2016 in Dania, Florida. The purpose of the meeting was to strengthen their outreach, for renewal through prayer and mission to teach and witness to the Word of God and to serve God's people; especially seafarers, maritime personnel and people of the sea. The Chaplains are encouraged to be present to the seafarers, and seek opportunities to recognize and to share the love of Jesus. Archbishop Thomas Wenski of Miami celebrated the closing Mass.



Closing Mass with Archbishop Wenski of Miami, concelebrating priests, and conference participants



Fr. John Vakulskas, Sr. Joanna Okereke, HHCI, Fr. Thomas Ziegler, and Fr. Jean Ridley Julien sharing in discussions

AOS USA Annual Conference AMO Star Center Dania Beach, Florida March 14-16, 2016



Archbishop Thomas Wenski of Miami and Sr. Joanna Okereke, HHCJ



(Left to right) Fr. H Loren Allen, Fr. David Gwinner, Pietro Parravano, Rose Kearney and Fr. Peter Lin, join in discussion with (front) Capt. Jerry Pannell and Debra Meador



Fr. John Vakulskas and Sr. Joanna Okereke, HHCJ



Deborah Meador, Rose Kearney, Doreen Badeaux and Sr. Joanna Okereke, HHCJ



Fr. John A. Jamnicky and Sr. Joanna Okereke, HHCJ



Group discussion among participants at AOS USA Annual Conference

Apostleship Of The Sea - USA: Fisheries Committee Report

AOS-USA HOSTS WORKSHOP FOR PORT ARTHUR SHRIMP FISHERMEN

The Port Arthur Seafarer's Center hosted a training workshop for the shrimp fishermen. The workshop was attended by many captains and crew members. The purpose of the training is to assist fishermen with compliance of recent, new regulations regarding vessel safety. Several regulatory agencies participated in the training workshop.



DUNGENESS CRAB FISHERY STILL CLOSED IN CALIFORNIA

The commercial Dungeness season remains closed until more of the California coast is clear of a deadly neurotoxin that continues to be found in Dungeness crabs. On February 9, 2016, Gov. Jerry Brown (CA) asked the federal government to declare a fishery disaster related to the delay in the opening of the Dungeness crab season. In submitting the request for aid to U.S. Commerce Secretary Penny Pritzker, Gov. Brown said direct economic losses already had reached an estimated \$49 million, excluding any additional impacts on fish processors, gear and tackle suppliers, restaurants, markets and other interests.

Public officials and fishermen alike hope this request will bring some financial relief to the struggling fleets in California. The commercial Dungeness crab industry has been locked out of fishing for the tasty table favorites since the season's planned opening date in mid-November. Domoic acid, which can cause seizures or death in humans, began showing up in crabs after the presence of colossal algae blooms caused by unusually warm ocean waters.

POTENTIAL SETBACK FOR SCALLOPS

Scallops are vital to New Bedford's fishing industry. Warming ocean waters could endanger a highly profitable mainstay of New Bedford's fishing industry in coming years, according to a newly released study of climate change's potential impacts on marine life. The report was published by the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration.

Water temperatures in Buzzards Bay, Massachusetts have risen 4 degrees over the past two decades according to a recent study by the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution and the Buzzards Bay Coalition. While there are no immediate impacts on the harvest of scallops, fishermen are keeping a close watch on the warning.

UPDATES TO FISH CAUGHT BY SLAVE LABOR

President Obama signed legislation that effectively bans American imports of fish caught by forced labor in Southeast Asia.

On February 10, 2016 the President signed the Port State Measures Agreement, which empowers officials to prohibit foreign vessels suspected of illegal fishing from receiving port services and access. By joining the Port State Measures Agreement, the United States commits to work together with other nations to prevent illegally caught fish from entering into commerce worldwide by reducing the number of ports where these fishing products can be unloaded. The United States became the 20th country to ratify the pact.

NEW PROGRAM TO TRACK SEAFOOD FROM SEA TO TABLE

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) announced a plan to improve how seafood is tracked from catch to market, imposing new reporting requirements on American importers. The proposed rules are meant to protect threatened fish species and crack down on seafood entering American ports that has been caught illegally or is fraudulently labeled. The new rules would impose chain-of-custody reporting requirements for 13 species of at-risk fish, including cod, snapper, mahi mahi and several types of tuna. The list includes types of fish that represent about 40 percent of the seafood that enters the United States, when measured by value.

MORE U.S. FISH IN SCHOOL LUNCHES

On the question of more U.S. Fish in School Lunches, Senator Dan Sullivan (R-AK) introduced S. 2529. This legislation would strengthen the Buy American provisions within the National School Lunch program to require that fish and fish products served through the program have to be caught in U.S. waters. This bill will ensure fish and fish products served in our schools are American caught, providing nutritious meals. Senators Maria Cantwell (D-WA) and Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) are co-sponsors.

STATUS OF MSA HEARING FEBRUARY 17, 2016

In conclusion, on February 23, 2016 the Senate Subcommittee on Oceans, Atmosphere, Fisheries, and Coast Guard held a hearing to examine the Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Management and Conservation Act's (MSA) successes, challenges, and opportunities. The Magnuson-Stevens Act, first enacted in 1976, governs our nation's fisheries and is credited with balancing conservation and economic issues. While there are many issues that remain before we can achieve the complete sustainability of all U.S. fisheries, the MSA is credited with successfully manage many U.S. fisheries since its implementation 40 years ago. On April 13, 2016, the Magnuson-Stevens Act turned 40.

Pietro Parravano
Chair, AOS-USA Fisheries Committee



Pastoral Visit to Ports of Fort Everglades and Miami, Florida March 16-17, 2016

Pastoral visit to the ports of Fort Everglades and Miami as part of PCMRT's care for the Port Chaplains and to support the Chaplains in their mission of helping seafarers find the way. The centers are safe and friendly places where mariners relax and connect to their families and friends.



Rev. Fr. Peter Lin Chaplain and Sr. Joanna Okereke, HHCI
at Port of Fort Everglades, FL



Rev. Mr. Jose "Pepe" Chirinos at Port of Miami, FL and
Sr. Joanna Okereke, HHCI



Pastoral Care Project on Board the Ship

Fr. Thomas Ziegler, believes in the pastoral presence of a priest on board the ship. From 2003–2006, he was a chaplain aboard the cruise ship of the Italian company "Costa". In 2009, he embarked on the Spanish company "Pullmantur" on a French-speaking passengers' vessel, Bleu de France. His pastoral projects include worship, conversation sessions, and spiritual guidance for the passengers and the crew members.

The Blessed Charles de Foucauld, whose life was centered on God and was animated by prayer and humble service inspires Fr. Thomas' pastoral care of listening to the passengers and being available for any religious demands and advice. He prays to be a real source of inspiration and to be a "Bearer of the Good News" in his ministry to the cruise ship.

Fr. Thomas Ziegler,
Priest of the diocese of Strasbourg
(East of France) participates
in the AOD-USA Annual
Conference Dania Beach, FL.
March 14-16, 2016.



Jubilee Year of Mercy

Pope Francis is offering us the opportunity to encounter the mercy of God. Encountering mercy means encountering God.

It can transform your life, our relationships, our work, and our ability to embrace and experience life.

It is an invitation to love, to show kindness, and to forgive.





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

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UPCOMING EVENTS IN 2016:



MAY 4-5, 2016

Texas Shrimp Association 66th Annual Convention, San Antonio, TX

MAY 22, 2016

National Maritime Day & the National Day of Prayer and Remembrance for Mariners

There will be a Eucharistic celebration on Friday, May 20, 2016 at the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, located at 3211 Fourth Street NE Washington DC. 20017 at 12:00 pm and on Saturday, May 21, 2016 at the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington DC at 12:00 pm and Annual National Maritime Day celebration on Monday, May 23, 2016 10:00 am - 12:00 pm at the U.S. Department of Transportation located at 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE Washington D.C. 20590.

JULY 10, 2016

Sea Sunday - <http://www.seasunday.org/about-sea-sunday>

AUGUST 2-5, 2016

AOS Regional meeting/North American Maritime Ministry Conference, Portsmouth, Virginia - <http://www.namma.org/conference-2016.html>

SEPTEMBER 29, 2016

Feast Day of Our Lady Star of the Sea

SEPTEMBER 29, 2016

World Maritime Day - Theme: Shipping: Indispensable to the World
<http://www.imo.org/en/About/Events/WorldMaritimeDay/Pages/WMD-2016.aspx>

NOVEMBER 21, 2016

World Fisheries Day - <http://www.wiseoceans.com/event/world-fisheries-day/all/>