



CATHOLIC MARITIME NEWS

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The council of American Master Mariners Focus on the Criminalization of Seafarers at Puerto Rican Conference

(Special thanks to the CAMM's Summer 2007 issue of Sidelights, which is used as a source for this article.)

The ripples from the conviction and sentencing of Capt. Schröder by a federal judge in Mobile, Alabama continued to stimulate passionate discussion and concern months later at the Council of American Master Mariners' Professional Development Conference in April.

The highlight of the conference was the two-part presentation by Capt. Schröder's lead attorney, Mr. Irwin Schwartz. Capt. Schröder, a German citizen, was arrested on federal charges of negligence, imprisoned and treated as a murderer, after the accidental death of an electrician working at on a container crane at the Port of Mobile. It was clear to Mr. Schwartz that this was an accident, and similar to events we see every day in the news caused by unforeseeable mistakes or errors.

The Department of Justice used a law from the early 1800's, the "Seaman's Manslaughter Act" against Capt. Schröder. This law permits a maritime officer or pilot to be charged with a crime for "simple" negligence when a death occurs. However, for all other transportation workers, prosecutors must prove that the alleged party committed "gross" negligence in the death of the victim. The difference is that with gross negligence a wanton, reckless disregard for human life by one's actions must be proven, whereas simple negligence is caused by an error of judgment in which previous conduct has been prudent. With this approach, Capt. Schröder became the target with little chance of avoiding prosecution.

Once Captain Schröder was charged, he surrendered to authorities in Houston, TX and was taken in handcuffs to Alabama. An American so charged of a non violent crime would most likely be able to remain free on bail but foreign citizens are often denied such. Schröder was remanded to federal prison and deemed a flight risk, despite the assurance of his employer that such would not happen. Because there is no federal facility near Mobile, the government has a contract with state prisons in the area, therefore placing him in state custody. These prisons are far less safe with much more harsh conditions than the federal equivalent.

Mr. Schwartz said the jurors in the case were divided as to the guilt of the captain, several feeling sympathy toward him. He



The CAMM Panel included Mr. Irwin Schwartz (Esquire), Fr. Sinclair Oubre (AOS-USA), Mr. Will Watson (Fairplay Magazine), Capt. Rodger MacDonald (IFSMA), Mr. Richard Ferraro (Lloyds Register), and Capt. Tim Brown (IOMMP).

noted some jurors became ill during the trial. Those who commented later said the instructions given gave them little leeway in reaching a decision. The circumstances of the case and the treatment afforded the captain were major embarrassments to the U.S. government, particularly in the UK and Europe. The maritime community worldwide, including CAMM and IFSMA, displaying shock and outrage, mobilized to mitigate the damage done.

Mr. Schwartz stated he couldn't remember a case in which a client received so much support. Letters were sent to the judge urging Capt. Schröder be released with time served, which was the sentence given.

Fr. Sinclair Oubre, president of the Apostleship of the Sea of the United States of America, presented a paper entitled Criminalization of the Master, during a special panel. In his paper, he outlined AOS-USA's participation in the trial of Capt. Schröder, summarized the average citizen's perspective of seafarers, and noted the need to sensitize the public to the dignity and professionalism of merchant mariners.

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President's Column...

AB Among Masters



In April, I had the honor of giving a paper at the Council of American Master Mariners' Professional Development Conference in Ponce, Puerto Rico. I addressed the activities that the Apostleship of the Sea of the United States of America played in the Capt. Schroder case in Mobile, Alabama.

At the conclusion of my remarks, I committed AOSUSA to working with CAMM to seek changes in US Code in what is called the Seamen's Man Slaughter Act. There is no justifiable reason for maritime officers to face imprisonment for accidental deaths that occur in the course of their work, when the same situation would only bring civil penalties if it happened at a factory or construction site.

In my address to the participants, I stressed that simply changing the laws will not be sufficient to protect seafarers. Until all of us recognize the dignity of mariners, and the important role that they play will over zealous laws like the Seamen's Man Slaughter Act finally be expunged from the US Criminal Code.

I believe that the closing words of my talk points to how far we have to go to truly recognize the dignity of mariners. I said, "We know that we will have accomplished these tasks (bringing dignity to mariners) when the mariner and Joe Q. Public can say 'ship crew,' with the same understanding of professionalism and dignity that is implied when they say 'airline crew.'"

STORY OF ELIJAH

The Sunday school teacher was carefully explaining the story of Elijah the Prophet and the false prophets of Baal. She explained how Elijah built the altar, put wood upon it, cut the steer in pieces, and laid it upon the altar. And then, Elijah commanded the people of God to fill four barrels of water and pour it over the altar. He had them do this four times.

"Now, said the teacher, "can anyone in the class tell me why the Lord would have Elijah pour water over the steer on the altar?"

A little girl in the back of the room started waving her hand, "I know! I know!" she said, "To make the gravy!"

Please Pray for:

- The Rev. Bill Fleming with the Seafarers' Friend in Chelsea, MA, who is undergoing Cancer Treatment
- Brother Jim Horan, AOS Baltimore, who will be undergoing surgery for skin cancer
- Fr. Joseph Pusateri, AOS Tampa, who is recovering from illness
- Fr. James T. McGeean, AOS-USA Cruise Ship Priest, undergoing procedures for blocked arteries
- Repose of the Soul of Fr. Thomas P. McGourty, CM, AOS-USA Cruise Ship Priest.
- Repose of the Soul of Sandy LaPoint's brother. (AOS Lake Charles, LA)

XXII World Congress of the Apostleship of the Sea

Article by **R. Jon Furukawa**,
AOS-USA Vice President

With the theme "In Solidarity with the People of the Sea as Witnesses of Hope through Proclamation of the Word, Liturgy and Diakonia," the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People held the 22nd World Congress of the Apostleship of the Sea (AOS) the week of 24-29 June 2007 in the city of Gdynia on Poland's Baltic coast. H.E. Cardinal Renato R. Martino, President of the Pontifical Council for Peace and Justice presided and H. E. Archbishop Agostino Marchetto, Secretary of the Pontifical Council moderated the proceedings. 292 priests, deacons, religious, lay chaplains and volunteers attended the congress from 72 different countries including 30 national bishop promoters. Simultaneous translation services to English, French, Spanish and Polish were provided. Leading the Apostleship of the Sea of the United States of America (AOS-USA) delegation was Sr. Myrna Tordillo, MSCS, National Director; Fr. Sinclair Oubré, J.C.L., National President; and Mr. R. Jon Furukawa, National Vice-President.

Presentations and round table topics included: Role of the Bishop Promoter, State of AOS Around the World, Deus Caritas Est, AOS International Website, Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Milieu, Outreach to Fishing Communities, Role of the Deacon, and Cruise Ship Chaplainry. Non-Catholic keynote presentations were made by Mr. David Cockroft, Secretary General of the International Transportation Workers Federation; Dr. Jurgen Kanz, Secretary General of the International Christian Maritime Association; Mr. Andrew Elliot, Administration of the International Committee on Seafarers' Welfare; and Mr. Douglas Stevenson, Director of the Center for Seafarers' Rights.

A particular lively discussion was made after Fr. Oubré's presentation of the 650 member AOS-USA Cruise Ship Priest Program, which puts valid priests in good standing aboard every Celebrity, Norwegian and Holland America voyage to minister to the passengers and crew. Recently Princess Cruises has agreed to have AOS-USA priests on High Holy Day cruises.

The highlight of the World Congress was the intimate surprise speeches on the Role of Faith in Solidarity and the Downfall of Communism; and the Need for Faith in Globalization by former President Lech Walesa during the group's city visit of Gdansk. After his speeches Mr. Walesa was mobbed by the adoring group of bishops, deacons, religious and lay people.

AOS was founded in 1899 in to care for the bodies and souls of seafarers and their families. Today, AOS-USA works under the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Migration and Refugees Services Department and the Holy See's Apostleship of the Sea - International. There are AOS Mariner Centers and Chaplainries in 58 U.S. ports. There are national AOS organizations in 113 countries that operate Seafarer Centers and Chaplainries in almost every major port in the world. More information can be found at www.stellamaris.net, www.aos-usa.org, or www.usccb.org/mrs/pcmr/onmove/aos.shtml. Catholics planning to go on a cruise ship should ask the company if there will be a valid Catholic priest in good standing aboard celebrating daily Mass. Catholics are urged to use those cruise lines, mentioned above, which are complying with the request of the American Bishops to supply approved priests for maritime ministry. Mr. Walesa addressing the XXII AOS World Congress in Gdansk Blessing of the Fishing Fleet by Cardinal Martino and Archbishop Gocłowski of Gdansk Archbishop Marchetto providing Spanish translating services for ITF.

Council

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Joining Fr. Sinclair on the panel were Mr. Irwin Schwartz, counsel to Capt. Schröder, Mr. Will Watson, senior correspondent for Fairplay Magazine, Mr. Richard Ferraro, Lloyd's Registry, North America, Capt. Roger MacDonald, General Secretary for the International Federation of Ship Masters Association and Capt. Tim Brown of the Master, Mates and Pilots.

The final piece of business at the conference was the presentation of the 2007 Lalonde Award Spirit of the Seas Award. This award was named after Fr. Vivant LeLonde, OFM. Fr. LeLonde is a graduate of New York Maritime Academy, a Franciscan priest, and an active ship master until his retirement in the early 1990's. He is presently living at a Franciscan monastery in northern New Jersey. The LaLonde Spirit of the Seas Award is presented to a CAMM member for exemplary service to mankind, especially seafarers. This year the award was presented to Captain James Morgan, head of the Los Angeles Pilot Service, and who serves on the Board of Directors of the International Seafarer Center in Long Beach, California. The service that he has rendered to his community, the seafarer center and abandoned seafarers truly exemplify the spirit of the award.



Irwin Schwartz address CAMM attendees on the Capt. Schroeder's case.

Merchant Marine

Coast Guard seeks Mariner feedback

WASHINGTON, JUNE 20, 2007 – The U.S. Coast Guard announced today that its Merchant Marine Personnel Advisory Committee has established a mechanism to provide ongoing feedback on the mariner licensing and documentation program and the relocation of the National Maritime Center.

“The committee is reaching out to organizations such as trade associations, labor unions, and educational institutions to obtain their feedback, as well as mariner feedback, on how implementation of the plan is affecting their constituents,” said Andrew McGovern, committee chairman. “This process includes an early warning email contact system so problems warranting immediate action can be brought to the Coast Guard’s attention.”

Those wishing to provide feedback should email the committee at MERPACfeedback@gmail.com.

The Coast Guard began restructuring its mariner licensing and documentation program in March 2005 to improve service to mariners. The project will relocate the National Maritime Center to Martinsburg, W. Va., change mission focus for the 17 regional examination centers and implement technological improvements such as electronic imaging of mariner records, electronic administration and grading of exams, and on-line payment of user fees. When the plan is complete the processing of all applications for credentials will be centralized and managed by the reorganized National Maritime Center staff, and the responsibilities of the regional examination centers will be limited to fingerprinting mariners, establishing mariner identities, providing application assistance, administering testing, and providing course oversight.

National Maritime Center Change of Command Ceremony

By **R. Jon Furukawa, V.P., AOS-USA**

On Monday June 11, 2007 Captain David C. Stalfort relieved Captain Ernest J. Fink as Commanding Officer of the U.S. Coast Guard’s National Maritime Center (NMC). In his speech Captain Stalfort laid out his vision of a more efficient Mariner Licensing and Documentation program. His management goals are to: increase throughput of mariner application evaluations and production of mariner credentials; significantly lower backlog inventory; and decrease operational expenses.

His NMC priorities are to fill vacant billets, complete the NMC’s move from Arlington, VA to Martinsburg, WV; complete the centralization of mariner evaluation and credential production from the 17 Regional Exam Centers to NMC; communicate to mariners and the maritime industry with an outreach program; be on schedule to commence issuing the consolidated Merchant Mariner Credential in August 2008; and to automate or “Turbo-Tax” the mariner application process. He pledged to give his staff the resources to accomplish the mission.

Captain Fink was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal and the Change of Command Ceremony was followed by Captain Fink’s retirement ceremony after 31 years of U.S. Coast Guard active duty service. Captain Fink will return home to Long Island and has accepted a position as Director of Continuing Education at the State University of New York Maritime College at Ft. Schuyler, the Bronx.

Captain David C. Stalfort
United States Coast Guard

Prior to his assignment to the National Maritime Center, Captain Stalfort was assigned as the Chief of the Office of Planning and Resources for the Assistant Commandant for Prevention in August 2005. In this position he directed the performance planning, budget, and workforce management for the \$188 million, 3,500 person Prevention Operations program. Since November 2006, he has held the position of Chief of the Office of Performance Management for the Assistant Commandant for Operations, where he has directed

the performance planning activities for national programs including port, vessel and facility safety and security; waterways management including navigations systems, aids to navigation, bridge administration, and marine transportation systems.

Prior to his current assignment, Captain Stalfort was the Commanding Officer of the Coast Guard Marine Safety Office in Memphis, TN where he implemented new maritime security procedures, significantly reducing risks among the vessels, ports, and facilities operating along 1,200 miles of Lower Mississippi River system. He also streamlined merchant licensing operations at the Memphis Regional Exam Center, significantly improving productivity and customer service. Captain Stalfort led the efforts to combine Marine Safety Office Memphis with Group Lower Mississippi River to form Sector Lower Mississippi River, one of 35 new Coast Guard field operations commands.

As a specialist in commercial vessel and port and facility operations, his field assignments have included Coast Guard Group Mayport, Florida, Group/Captain of the Port New Orleans, Marine Safety Detachment St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands, and Coast Guard Marine Safety Office, Juneau, Alaska. His staff assignments have included the Marine Safety and Law Enforcement School at U.S. Coast Guard Training Center, Yorktown, Virginia, and Coast Guard Headquarters.

Captain Stalfort graduated from Florida Institute of Technology and holds degrees in Applied Technology and Offshore Marine Technology. He also holds a Masters of Business Administration degree from Colorado State University.

Captain Stalfort is an experienced mariner holding a U.S. Merchant Marine Officer license as a Master of Motor or Auxiliary Sail Vessels. He also attended marine industry training at the American Petroleum Institute.

Captain Stalfort’s personal decorations include two Meritorious Service Medals, two Coast Guard Commendation Medals, and three Coast Guard Achievement Medals. Captain Stalfort is married to the former Trena Marie Baker of Vienna, Virginia. They have two sons, Taylor and Connor.

Merchant Marine

Deepwater Port Licensing Program Provides Job Growth Opportunities for U.S. Mariners

By Sean T. Connaughton

United States Maritime Administrator

As the Nation's demand for energy continues to grow, so does our need for natural gas. Over the past five years, U.S. liquefied natural gas (LNG) imports have more than doubled and they are projected to increase eight-fold by 2025. Clearly, significant investment in new U.S. LNG terminal capacity is required to accommodate this growth. (LNG is natural gas cooled to minus 259 degrees Fahrenheit to convert it from a gaseous to liquid state for transport).

The Deepwater Port Act, as amended in 2002, established a licensing system for ownership, construction and operation of both oil and natural gas deepwater port structures located seaward of U.S. territorial waters. Deepwater ports are fixed or floating facilities that are used as terminals to offload and transfer imported oil and natural gas from carrier vessels to shore via sub-sea pipelines. By delegation from the Secretary of Transportation, the Maritime Administration has been granted the authority to issue deepwater port licenses. Over the last four years, the Maritime Administration has received 16 applications and expects at least five more to be submitted throughout this and the coming year.

Congress, in an effort to promote the Nation's security, further amended the Act in 2006 to direct the implementation of a program to promote the transportation of LNG to the United States on U.S. flag vessels. It also instructed the government to give top priority to applications that will use U.S. flag vessels in their operations.

To address these Congressional mandates, the Maritime Administration announced, last December, an innovative combined public and private partnership with SUEZ Energy, the first official partnership of its kind within this international industry. Under this agreement, SUEZ will provide training and employment opportunities for U.S. citizen officers and unlicensed mariners. Since that time two other manning agreements have been signed with deepwater port applicants, and more are expected in the future with both applicants and the energy industry as a whole.

The growing world-wide demand for qualified mariners and



Senator John McCain and Maritime Administrator Sean T. Connaughton at the United States Merchant Marine Academy's (USMMA) commencement June 18, 2007. Senator addressed the class of 2007.

Congressional interest in secure LNG transportation provides a unique growth opportunity for the nation's maritime industry. As such, we established an "LNG Crewing Initiative" to ensure the development of a reliable and consistent supply of U.S. citizen mariners to serve on the LNG vessels that call at our nation's gas receiving facilities in coordination with the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, State Maritime Academies, and labor-based training facilities. Together we developed a universal set of training standards and innovative educational programs that will provide entry level mariners, both licensed and unlicensed, immediate employment into the LNG industry and retraining programs to permit all U.S. mariners the opportunity to transition into LNG service. These initiatives represent sound public policy – increased safety, security, and improved transportation efficiencies – and open up vital training and employment opportunities United States citizens. We plan to build on these efforts in the future.

Bill introduced re USCG authorizations

Representative Oberstar (D-MN) introduced the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2007 (H.R. 2830) to authorize appropriations for the Coast Guard for fiscal year 2008, and for other purposes. This lengthy (151 pages) bill has numerous provisions of interest, including a requirement that each facility security plan provide a system for seamen assigned to a vessel at that facility, pilots, and representatives of seamen's welfare and labor organizations to board and depart the vessel through the facility in a timely manner at no cost to the individual. There is a major portion relating to ballast water management. In addition to setting ballast water quality standards, the bill, if enacted into law, would impose design and construction standards relating to minimizing uptake and entrapment of sediment; facilitating removal of sediment; and providing for safe access for sediment removal and sampling. These standards would apply to all (domestic and foreign) new vessels as of January 1, 2009 and all existing vessels not later than

December 31, 2013. The bill is scheduled for markup on June 28 by the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. Note: This looks like another OPA 90-style assault on international uniformity. Some of the cause of this particular initiative is the slow progress to date in bringing the International Convention on Ballast Water Management into effect.

USCG - sector realignment

The US Coast Guard has amended its regulations to reflect the recent organizational realignment involving Sectors. The Sectors combine legacy Marine Safety Offices (including marine inspection and Captain of the Port functions), Vessel Traffic Services, Groups, and some Air Stations into a unified organizational structure. Each Sector includes Prevention, Response, and Logistics departments. This organizational change is intended to have minimal impact on the public and the regulated communities. The amendments come into effect immediately.

Port Ministry

Professional Development Column ...

Last month I talked about career opportunities in the maritime industry, which at the present are many in all sectors of the industry. This month I am going to attempt to cover some of the many changes that are taking place in the documentation of mariners in the US. As is the case in many industries nothing stays the same; that is the best way to describe what is happening with the USCG and NMC at the present time. The NMC is in the middle of a national reorganization of how mariners are tested, licenses are issued, and how and where mariners are to submit their applications.



Capt. David Teel The office in the USCG that has authority for mariner training and documentation is the National Maritime Center. The Coast Guard began restructuring its mariner licensing and documentation program in March 2005. The National Maritime Center will be relocated to Martinsburg, West Virginia. Additionally, the restructuring will change the mission focus for the 17 regional examination centers and implement technological improvements, such as electronic imaging of mariner records, electronic administration and grading of exams, and online payment of user fees, according to the Coast Guard. When the plan is complete, the processing of all applications for credentials will be centralized and managed by the National Maritime Center staff, and the responsibilities of the regional examination centers will be limited to fingerprinting mariners, establishing mariner identities, providing application assistance, administration of tests and providing course oversight, according to the Coast Guard. There is an outline of this project at the NMC website <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-m/nmc/web/index.htm>.

Currently the Merchant Marine Personnel Advisory Committee is seeking feed back on this reorganization plan. I encourage all mariners or individuals associated with the maritime industry here in the US to e-mail comments to MERPACfeedback@gmail.com. This feedback will be used to gauge how this process is working so far and to give an early warning on problems and allow small problems to be fixed before they grow into large systematic problems.

One theme that is central to this plan is that of quality service to the customer, the mariner. First and foremost in giving quality service to the mariner is that of cutting down the time for application process to just a few days. There are three other actions being set up that I applaud loud and clear. Those steps are 1) setting up a web based system allowing the mariner to check the status of his application at any time, 2) allowing payment of fees online, and 3) a toll free call line for mariners to talk to NMC staff about their application and discuss resolution of any problems with their application.

As a staff member of NMC I applaud this reorganization plan and do think that once the reorganization is complete the documentation process for US mariners will be a quality operation that is recognized as such by the maritime industry and across the country as one of the best government operations.

Feel free to e-mail me at kps77@cox.net with questions about training, advancement or a career at sea.

Capt. David Teel has 20 years sea service as a member of the American Maritime Officers' Union, including 7 years as Master in command of tankers and Roll-on/Roll-off vessels. He was Senior Deck Instructor at AMO's STAR Center and has worked for the last six years at the National Maritime Center as a Marine Transportation Specialist in the Course Instructor Approval Branch. He is a graduate of King's Point (USMMA) and has a Masters of Quality Systems Management from the National Graduate School.

Hernando celebrates 40 years of service

Father Henry Hernando is celebrating his 40 years of ordination as a Catholic Priest. He will be celebrating it with his family and friends and well wishers on July 27, 2007 at Mary Star of the Sea Catholic Church in San Pedro where he is assigned Port Chaplain for the Diocese of Los Angeles. He is also on the Administrative Board of AOS-USA. He ministers to all the ports in the Los Angeles area including and up to Port Hueneme/Point Mugu in Ventura County. The anniversary celebration for Father Henry Hernando will take place at 4:30 PM with a reception on the ship the Queen Mary.



Fr. Henry Hernando

CMN bids Middleton "bon voyage"

Our dear friend and trusty worker, Tracie Middleton, is leaving the staff of *Catholic Maritime News*. She will become a crime scene photographer at the Orange County Sheriff's Department. She will be missed but we wish her well.

"God sends people into your life when you need them", said Doreen Badeaux, AOS-USA's Secretary General. "We were looking for a new layout person for CMN as our former employee was phasing out. Oddly enough, Fr. Sinclair and I met Tracie through the local Fencing Club, where Tracie was a lean and trim fencer with loud yellow socks! Between duels we learned that she worked for a local newspaper. We also found that she was a deeply spiritual person, and had an understanding of church issues and the need for the magazine to reflect our faith, and not simply report on the maritime world. And I'm happy to say that after 4 years, though we met through fencing, we never had any duels over Catholic Maritime News!"

Fr. Sinclair Oubre noted, "Tracie has been a wonderful asset to both *Catholic Maritime News*, and the local maritime ministry community. Taking a crash course on the maritime industry as layout and design editor, she then incorporated this into her own spiritual life, and expressed it in service to the seafarers who called in Port Arthur and along the Neches River."

"She now serves as the Lay Episcopal Chaplain at the Port Arthur International Seafarers' Center. Though she will be leaving *Catholic Maritime News*, she will continue to serve seafarers through her studies in the Episcopal seminary, and her corporal works of mercy at the seafarer center," said Fr. Oubre. "We truly have been enriched by her service, and *Catholic Maritime News* is a much better newsletter because of her efforts."

Tracie has been at CMN for four years and has been a valuable asset. We are sure she will be just as great at her new position as she was here. She had quite a few adventures during her time with CMN including meeting and spending the day with Fr. Charlie McTague.



Fr. Sinclair, Doreen and Tracie with former National Director Fr. John Jamnicky.

Life on a Mercy Ship

Thousands of people have gone up the gangway of a Mercy Ship to receive a life-changing operation. Highly skilled surgeons remove tumours and cataracts, straighten crossed eyes, repair cleft lips and palates, correct fistulas, and provide a wide range of orthopaedic procedures. For most of the population of the countries Mercy Ships visits, these operations are often unavailable and/or unaffordable. However, many other people walk up the gangway to volunteer their time to help others. Time and time again they find that they receive more of a blessing in return.

Among those who volunteer – nurses, cooks, housekeepers, and teachers – are the Mariners that make the work of the doctors and missionaries possible. They are the ones who move the ship to West Africa. They are the ones who load and off-load the supplies. They are the ones who provide the power to keep the operating rooms running. Mariners are crucial to the work of Mercy Ships!

The African sun rises with the promise of a sweltering day for the deck hands. Both the deck and engineering departments start their day with morning devotions, where they get encouraged spiritually and are assigned their tasks. Today is cargo day where the different departments on the ship can get their supplies for the week from the hold. Each pallet of supplies represents lives changed – from the poor who will receive it, to the people who devote themselves to providing the care they need.

The process of organizing the cargo is not a fast proposition. Consequently, the deck hands on the dock have plenty of time to talk and get to know each other. The crew is made up of Christians from around the world. It is not uncommon to become best friends with someone from a country that you have never even heard of before, let alone knew someone from.

Lunch hour is a welcome break from the sun. Some people stay and talk all through lunch while others take the opportunity for a mid day nap. In the afternoon, we are told that the cargo work is done, and we are going back to deck work.



If you are a mariner and have ever thought of doing humanitarian/missionary work but didn't think that you could be used, Mercy Ships can use you! For more info go to www.mercyships.org.

The sound of needle guns and chipping hammers are the common sound of a deck hand. The talking still goes on, but now it is yelling for all to hear. The whole ship hears the deck hands, with the exception of the motormen. They are on watch, keeping the entire ship's equipment running.

When the work day is done, the crew have many options. Some go on crew outreach where they can help lead a local service, or act as a human monkey gym at a local orphanage. Others like to laugh and socialize, and some take the opportunity to read that book they've been meaning to read. Whatever they decide to do, they rest at night, knowing that they have made a difference.

The newest ship the Africa Mercy sails for West Africa, May 2007.

St. Michael's Church once again sets the "Wedding and Blessing of the Sea" – August 15

Atlantic City, NJ - An Atlantic City tradition will take place once again on Tuesday, August 15 as Bishop Joseph A. Galante celebrates Mass on the Feast of the Assumption in the Boardwalk Hall. The concelebrated Mass will begin at 12:00 Noon with Bishop Galante as the principal celebrant and homilist and the Fifty Voice Choir of the Diocese of Camden and St. Michael's Choir singing music for the Mass. Doors open at 10:30 a.m.

This year's celebration will mark the 39th successive year that the festival has been held since its reinstatement in 1967, following a lapse of 16 years.

According to tradition, the ceremony commemorates an event in the life of the Bishop of Cervia in Italy, Paul Barbo who later became Pope Paul II. The Bishop is said to have been returning by ship from Venice on the Feast of the Assumption in 1445 when he was caught in a storm. The Bishop, it is said, calmed the storm by prayer and throwing his pastoral ring into the sea.

The "Wedding of the Sea" is a popular, centuries old rite in many European seacoast cities and towns like Venice, where the "Doge"

of Venice is borne to the sea in an elaborate gondola to perform the rite.

Following the Noon Mass, a statue of the Blessed Virgin will be borne in procession down Michigan Avenue to the Boardwalk, then to Kennedy Plaza at Mississippi Avenue and the Boardwalk for the traditional "Blessing". There Bishop Galante offers a special prayer for the sick and then blesses the sea.

After the blessing, a lifeguard will take Father Robert B. Matysik, Pastor of St. Michael's and Atlantic City Mayor Levy into the surf, where they will cast a wedding ring and floral garland into the sea. The "Rite" symbolizes the Wedding of the Sea and the City – brought together by their proximity to one another, their fortunes and their future. Masses in St. Michael's Church, 10 N. Mississippi Ave., will also be celebrated at 8:00 a.m. and 9:30 a.m.

Meatball and sausage subs, homemade pizza and desert will be sold in St. Michael's Parish Hall from 1:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. For more information about St. Michael's Church and the festivities surrounding the Wedding of the Sea, call (609) 344-8536.

PIRACY UPDATES

Mombasa 17th July,2007

Reports reaching Mombasa indicates that,a Panamian flagged cargo ship MV INFINITY MARINE 1,has mysteriously disappeared on or around the 26 June 2007,some 37 miles from the coast of Ras Kafoon while enroute to Mogadishu from the UAE.

The vessel was carrying general cargo of white sugar, cooking oil, jumbo chicken, spaghetti, Galvaneted Iron sheet, generators, Batteries, white wood and light vehicles.

Piracy Updates are sent in by Andrew Mwangura, Coordinator of the Seafarer Assistance Program, in Mombasa, Kenya.

International Transport Workers Federation backs action on piracy

6 July 2007

The ITF is supporting moves to address incidences of piracy and armed robbery that have plagued vessels sailing off the coast of Somalia.

The ITF has lent its full backing to a proposal to take the issue of piracy and armed robbery close to the Somali coast to the UN Security Council. The proposal, made by the IMO Secretary-General, was endorsed by the Council of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), which met for its 98th session from 25 - 29 June in London, UK. It is hoped that this will lead to a request to the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia to take action to prevent piracy and armed robbery. This includes allowing ships to enter its territorial waters when they are attempting to deal with acts of piracy or armed robbery, which are putting the safety of crewmembers at risk. The proposal particularly refers to vessels bringing humanitarian aid to Somalia.

Renewed attacks on ships - including those carrying humanitarian aid through the World Food Programme - have been prompted by recent instability in Somalia, with a rising number of reported incidents.

Jon Whitlow, ITF Seafarers' Section Secretary, commented: "The ITF welcomes the IMO's initiative and we supported it at the IMO Council. It is to be hoped that urgent action will result and that seafarers will no longer subject to such attacks and held hostage against the payment of a ransom."

Philippines deals blow to crewing industry

By Marcus Hand in Singapore - Monday 2 July 2007

Article from Lloyd's List:

In a blow to the Philippines crewing industry, the country's Supreme Court has ruled in a fourth case that a seafarer is considered 100% disabled after 120 days of medical treatment.

The Philippines Supreme Court has found in favour of seafarer Fabilio Cantomayor in an appeal by Micronesia Resources that he should be considered permanently and totally disabled following 120 days of treatment for a heart condition which started while he was working onboard the tanker Cloud in 1999.

Micronesia, representing Dynacom Shield Shipping and Singa Ship Management, had been appealing that his disability should be classified as Grade 7 under the Philippines Employment Administration contract, giving compensation of \$20,700. The ruling of total and permanent disability entitles Mr Cantomayor to a payment of \$80,000.

Associate Justice Ma. Alicia Austria-Martinez Ponente cited an earlier ruling in the case of seafarer Remigio versus the National Labour Relations Commission.

The decision comes as a blow to the Philippines crewing industry which had united behind the Filipino Association of Mariners Employment in appealing both the Remigio case and the more recent Crystal Shipping versus Natividad case.

In March the Supreme Court ruled in favour of the industry in the appeal of the Crystal Shipping case and said that the POEA contract does not measure disability in terms of number of days but by gradings only.

However the ruling was far from definitive as the latest failure to appeal by Micronesia Resources in the Cantomayor case shows.

Eyes will now be on the ongoing appeal in the Remegio case. "The Office of the Solicitor General sided with the manning agencies and was in favour of the reversal of the 120 days rule," said firm Del Rosario Pandiphal, which is appealing the case.

"The First Division has not yet ruled on the Motion for Intervention. The ruling in this case may decide the issue with finality."

Concern in the Philippines crewing industry revolves round the fact that although a seafarer may not be permanently disabled after 120 days of treatment, he or she will now be entitled to the highest level of compensation, even if at a later date they prove to be only partially disabled or have a full recovery.

Industry officials believe the 120-day ruling could increase both the number of claims and fraudulent cases. In the Cantomayor case \$80,000 in compensation represents over 8 years of the seafarer's basic salary.

The Philippines is the world's largest supplier of seafarers accounting for around 20% of the international crewing industry.

LOT'S WIFE

The Sunday School teacher was describing how Lot's wife looked back and turned into a pillar of salt, when little Jason interrupted, "My Mummy looked back once, while she was driving," he announced triumphantly, "and she turned into a telephone pole!"

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Letters

Dear Fr. Oubre:

On behalf of Captain Thomas Bradley, National President, and all of the Officers and members of The Council of American Master Mariners, I want to thank you for your contributions to the success of our 2007 AGM. The Thursday Professional Development Conference was one of the best I have attended. Our focus of trying to identify and prevent the further spread of the International Criminalization of Master Mariners was addressed from many sides of the Maritime Industry.

Your words regarding how wide spread this problem is were both enlightening and frightening. Your work both as a caregiver to those who need assistance, through the Apostleship of the Sea and as an active sailing mariner puts you in a unique position to make some inroads in halting this evil phenomenon.

Please keep up the good work, and please be advised that we at the Council of American Master Mariners will offer all the help we can muster.

Once again, Thank You for your outstanding contribution.

Respectfully Submitted,
Captain Donald M. Moore, Jr.
National Secretary/Treasurer
Council of American Master Mariners

Doreen,

I just thought I would share with you my experience this past Jan-Feb of a cruise on Celebrity's Summit . It was a 14 day cruise through the Panama Canal . I would not hesitate to travel alone. The people that I met at the Sunday and Week day Masses were very solicitous about me not eating alone or not being asked to join in different activities. While I lucked out (18 of my parishioners paid to join the cruise) I did join others I had just met on board. The crew and everyone affiliated with Celebrity went out of their way to make my journey and ministry enjoyable. Additionally, I did 2 non-denominational services on the two Sundays aboard ship. The "Protestants" were equally as welcoming to me as were the Catholics. There were 4 Presbyterian ministers and their wives on the cruise....they said I would pass as a Presbyterian any day!!! I asked them not to tell that to my bishop! I did have a friend accompany me, but I would not hesitate to take another cruise without a guest and without parishioners!

I shared this in view of the memo you sent out yesterday and priests not wanting to travel "alone".

Peace, Fr. John B. Boyle

Subcommittee Members Cite Frustration at Hearing Examining TWIC Program

Yesterday, House Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Chairman Elijah E. Cummings (D-MD) expressed his "extreme frustration" at administrative issues that have delayed the implementation of the Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) program for years. This sentiment was echoed at the subcommittee hearing by several members as well as House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Chairman James Oberstar (D-MN) who asked Transportation Security Administration (TSA) TWIC Program Director, Maurine Fanguy, what the difficulty and problem was with complying with the Maritime Transportation Security Act that was enacted five years ago. Noting that the hearing gave the subcommittee an opportunity to take a comprehensive look at the impact that the introduction of TWIC may have on the maritime industry, Chairman Cummings advanced that "the introduction of TWIC requires the government to strike a delicate balance to ensure that this security measure achieves our critical security goals, but does not place an undue burden on the maritime industry, interfere with the flow of commerce, or lead to the unfair treatment of workers."

In her testimony, Ms. Fanguy acknowledged that the greatest technological challenge that the TSA is addressing is not the card itself as much as it is the network behind the card. According to the TSA witness, before TSA rolls out one of the world's most advanced interoperable biometric systems, the agency must ensure the IT network behind the systems is functional, secure, integrated, sustainable, and does not adversely affect the free flow of commerce. "The importance and enormity of this task within the maritime environment, with a dynamic and mobile workforce, demands that we get it right," she added. Testifying on behalf of the Coast Guard, RDML Brian Salerno, Assistant Commandant for Policy and Planning, updated the subcommittee on the agency's efforts, in partnership with the TSA, to implement the TWIC program. Rear Admiral Salerno announced that the Coast Guard has prepared and made available a Navigation and Vessel Inspection Circular (NVIC)

03-07, *Guidance for the Implementation of the Transportation Worker Identification Credential Program in the Maritime Sector* to provide guidance to transportation workers, owners and operators, and merchant mariners on implementation of the TWIC requirements. the NVIC is available at <http://homeport.uscg.mil>. In addition, Rear Admiral Salerno advised the subcommittee that the agency was engaged with affected stakeholders on this program; future regulations regarding readers onboard vessels would follow the completion of the TWIC pilot program to begin this fall in the port of Wilmington; and, that the agency is in the process of procuring handheld biometric card readers for use during vessel and facility random inspections and spot checks and to randomly check the validity of an individual's TWIC.

The subcommittee also received testimony from representatives of labor and industry associations who enunciated a plethora of major concerns with the implementation of TWIC and offered a number of suggestions: that the deadline for TWIC be extended; that vessels with 12 or fewer crew members requiring a TWIC should not be required to have a card reader installed onboard; to allow a newly hired employee to work onboard a towing vessel for up to 90 days before making an application for a TWIC (interim work authority); federal preemption of state and local security programs; exemption for seasonal workers; ascertain the independence and impartiality of Administrative Law Judges; and interoperability with international standards.

Support for Harbor Maintenance Tax Waiver

The Coastwise Coalition, which the Transportation Institute is a member, wrote a letter to the Senate Finance Committee leadership urging the waiver of the Harbor Maintenance Tax (HMT) for short sea shipping operations. Noting the congestion reducing and fuel efficiencies of short sea shipping (*Maritime Updates February 23, March 19, April 20, and June 22, 2007*), the letter recommended the Committee's support of a HMT waiver request such as proposed in H.R. 1499.

Migration and Religiosity: *The Filipino Seafarers Onboard Abroad*

By Sr. Myrna Tordillo

Reprinted in part from REHMU (*Revista Interdisciplinar da Mobilidade Humana*), Brazil.

This article is being reprinted in serial form. This is Part 2 of 2.

Filipino seafarers and their Faith

Faith plays a significant role in everyday life for the believer. For those who migrate to foreign lands, uprootedness leads migrants to seek channels of connection, socialization and ties. For the seafarers, who by the nature of their work find themselves onboard ships for weeks and even months before they see land, the need for connectedness is even more acute. Noteworthy are the familial concerns that seafarers have especially about their loved ones back home. While seafarers “develop firm solidarity and close relations with their work companions on board, and create with them a temporary but intense life community”¹, yet adverse conditions on board ship, living and working with other seafarers of different nationalities day in and day out in the confines of space are among the catalysts for seafarers to come to port. Unfortunately, setting foot on shore does not always happen when a seafarer does not have shore leave, mostly for visa reasons. As one seafarer recounts, it is a lonely life at sea. He further adds, “we call it ‘prisoner of the sea’”.²

Turning to religion offers the ordinary Filipino Catholic seafarer strength, hope and peace. There are trade offs and sacrifices for seafarers. Religious experience for him/her does not serve as an “opium for the vicissitudes in life”. On the contrary, religious experience

results in a living contact with God within the person’s historical context. Neither does it refer to the ways and means to arrive at ecstasy or intense concentration beyond what is normal. Rather, authentic religious experience has the effect of putting in their proper order all the levels of human experience.³

What brings into sharp focus is the Filipino Catholic seafarer’s attempt at appropriating in his/her life the true value of sacrifice, to live out the faith. It is a fidelity that “summons any serious Christian to courageously follow Jesus Christ in his or her daily encounter at the crossroads of life”.⁴ One ship cook comments about participating in the Mass after being at sea for two months, “Mass is very good. It gives a charge”.⁵

Orthodoxy and Catholic practice pose a challenge for Filipino Catholic seafarers, for lack of opportunities to be in a regular parish community. To cite an example about the sacrament of the Eucharist, those who attend weekly Mass in the Philippines as in the case of the ship cook mentioned above will find it extremely difficult to be at Mass weekly while on board and at sea. The captain of a ship with an all Filipino crew whom I met during a ship visit in the Port of Houston which was occasioned by the celebration of the Eucharist by the port chaplain, lamented that he missed Mass for long period of times, but look forward when a port chaplain comes on board and celebrate the Mass for them. One crew member mentioned before the Mass started, that popular devotion through the praying of the rosary was done on board their ship once a week when many of the seafarers are not on duty. While it may not be common to have an all Filipino Catholic crew in one ship, nor can we assume that all Filipino Catholic seafarers are very religious, what is demonstrated here is the ordinary living expression and practice of the faith, that which has been referred to as an aspect of the dimension of ‘ritual activity’.

Here we are confronted with the question, what does it mean to be religious? To capture the sense of being religious is to go back to the identity of Filipino Catholics in the country of origin. Highlighting the country of origin of the seafarers has its own reason namely, seafarers, unlike immigrants who intend to settle in the adoptive country, go back to the Philippines after finishing their contract. Naturally, the seafarers maintain a renewed faith practice and religiosity each time he/she goes home.

Filipino Christian Identity

As “hearers and recipients of the Word”, the Filipino Christian’s response stresses three dimensions. First, “the response in terms of person as self and as a person in community; second, the Filipino value system; and third, Filipino Christian values.”⁶ The true search for Filipino Christian identity finds its ultimate answer in the source and end of our life-God.⁷ Following Jesus means “an enduring and intimate commitment to Jesus, a love for him that does not count the cost”.⁸ The communitarian dimension of the quest for self understanding should lead back to the model of the community of the first disciples, which is love of God in Christ through love for one another, and this must be the center of the Filipino Christian life in community.⁹ Self understanding needs also to look at the Filipino value system, which can be enriched by the Gospel. Social scientists pointed to the ambivalence of some Filipino values.¹⁰ However, when properly understood, appropriated in life and function for the good of the person and others, such values are potentials for the development and growth in the formation of mature Christians.¹¹ PCP II points out,

We must take a closer look at how values that we have from our Christian faith can strengthen the good of our cultural values or correct what is excessive in them and supply for their deficiencies.¹²

Thus, some predominant cultural values such as *utang na loob* (which expresses a person’s deep sense of gratitude for help extended) can be an experience of undying gratitude of Christians to Jesus who died on the cross. What this value demands is a reciprocity from Christians, that is, to love God and neighbor in action. Another cultural value is “*bahala na*”, translated, it means ‘come what may’. It can be viewed as a fatalistic resignation. However in a Christian perspective, ‘*bahala na*’ is an attitude of trust, to leave everything in God’s hands, trusting in Divine Providence that offers the Christian a sense of peace and serenity in times of adversity. “*Hiya*”, which literally means ‘shame’, is a potent means to safeguard morals and ethics in Philippine society.¹³ A Catholic understanding can be applied to the “workings of sin and grace in our lives”¹⁴ that will lead to Christian humility and modesty. The value of ‘*pakikisama*’ which implies getting along well with others, results in camaraderie and fosters closeness. In the context of Christian solidarity, this value can enhance the formation of an informed conscience which supports social justice. Filipino cultural values, when properly redirected will deepen authentic Christian living in a uniquely Filipino way.¹⁵

Pope John Paul II in his Apostolic Exhortation recognize that immigrants “often bring with them a cultural and religious heritage which is rich in Christian elements.”¹⁶ Different cultural identities, as pointed out in the Instruction *Erga migrantes caritas Christi*, “are thus to open up to a universal way of understanding, not abandoning their own positive elements but putting them at the service of the whole of humanity.”¹⁷

The Filipino seafarers embody a rich heritage which they transmit as they practice the faith in the reality of life at sea and on port.

The Church' Pastoral Concern

The Church, ever mindful of the human costs of migration and the consequences for those who migrate, is "committed to spare no effort in developing her own pastoral strategy among these immigrant people".¹⁸ The theological finding that grounds the pastoral lines of the Magisterium are,

the central position of the human person and the defense of the rights of migrants, both men and women, and their children; the ecclesial and missionary dimension of migration; the reappraisal of the apostolate of the laity; the value of cultures in the work of evangelisation; the protection and appreciation of minority groups in the Church; the importance of dialogue both inside and outside the Church; and the specific contribution of emigration to world peace.¹⁹

The U.S. Catholic Bishops, in their Statement, *Welcoming the Stranger Among Us*, reaffirmed the commitment of the Church citing the words of Pope John Paul II, to work

so that every person's dignity is respected, the immigrant is welcomed as a brother or sister, and all humanity forms a united family which knows how to appreciate with discernment the different cultures which comprise it. (Message for World Migration Day 2000, no. 5).²⁰

The U.S. Catholic Bishops, emphasize that the "welcome and hospitality that we ask our parishes to extend to newcomers must include active efforts on the part of the pastor and parish staff, individuals and families..."²¹

Pastoral Responses

Recognizing and reaffirming the contributions of many Catholics in their pastoral responses to the needs of migrants, Pope Benedict XVI, make mention of the,

generous response of many men and women, associations and organisations which, seeing the sufferings of countless persons caused by emigration, are struggling for the rights of migrants, forced or voluntary, and for their defence. The commitment of these people can be attributed above all to that compassion of Jesus, the Good Samaritan, that the Spirit stirs up everywhere in the hearts of men and women of good will and in the Church too, which "relives once more the mystery of her Divine Founder, the mystery of life and death"²²

One of those who responded to the challenges of migration and concretely put mechanisms for action was Blessed John Baptist Scalabrini (1839-1905), founder of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo and the Missionaries of St. Charles. Then Bishop of Piacenza, Italy, Blessed Scalabrini, in a century that was not fashionable to speak and defend about the dignity and rights of migrants formulated a plan for assistance:

-To wage implacable war against the traders in human flesh, i.e. against those who speculate upon the misery of the immigrants.

-To promote religious assistance during the journey, after disembarking and in the places where the migrants are accustomed to settle.²³

These plans were carried out in many different ways up to the present time through the missionary activities of the Scalabrinian women and men religious who minister to migrants, immigrants, and refugees. Many more people, either individually or as belonging to an institution, have promoted and offered pastoral assistance on behalf of the migrants.

The Apostleship of the Sea

The Apostleship of the Sea (AOS) or *Apostolatus Maris* in Latin, is an international Catholic organization that began in 1899 in Glasgow, Scotland. Today, Stella Maris Centers around the world "offer pastoral care to all who live from seafaring and fishing, their dependents and communities".²⁴

In the United States of America, the AOS "is active over 61 American sea ports; these include the ports along the Pacific Coast such as Alaska and Hawaii, the Gulf Coast and ports along the Great Lakes".²⁵ The Apostleship of the Sea exists in 51 Arch/dioceses in the United States. There is a Bishop Promoter and a new National Director. There are 96 chaplains and chaplaincy team members ministering in the American ports and providing pastoral care to the people of the sea and to port personnel: 55 priests, 22 deacons, 2 religious brothers, 1 religious woman, and 16 Catholic Laity. This committed team of dedicated men and women provide pastoral care to the people of the sea. The sacraments of the Eucharist, Reconciliation, and Anointing of the Sick are provided to the seafarers and fisherfolk. In one port alone, a total of 375 Masses were celebrated on board ship and 220 Masses celebrated in the local seafarers' center in the year 2006. The number of communion services on board ship ranged from a lowly 1 to 1,767. Sacramentals, such as ship blessing, blessing of religious articles and ship room were done. Besides the spiritual care, Catholic port chaplains and the team members also extend assistance by making available a) access to communications such as telephones, cell phones, phone cards, the internet; b) a place to relax in a seafarers' center by offering refreshments, or a choice of food in a snack bar or restaurant, game rooms and other recreational activities, a swimming pool and a basketball court; c) giving out reading materials either religious or secular; d) or managing a money transfer for a seafarer.²⁶

Thus, the Apostleship of the Sea in the U.S.A. provides for the spiritual and material welfare of seafarers and fisher folks.

In his concluding observations at the XXI AOS World Congress, Archbishop Marchetto reminds the participants,

I make an appeal from this Congress to all A. M. people around the world that they continue to welcome, serve and support all seafarers, whatever their differences of culture, nationality and religion, and stand by them and help them in solidarity in their struggles for justice. This will only be a small seed of a new world, more human and more fraternal, but an important seed.²⁷

Archbishop Marchetto also stressed the importance of working in a spirit of ecumenical cooperation.²⁸

In Search of a Synthesis

Filipino Catholic seafarers, as they come to U.S. ports on board ships, bring with them their religious and cultural identities. Expressions of faith, cultural and Christian values are embodiments of who they are as migrants, seafarers and Catholics from a different cultural milieu. By their numbers, they impact the local receiving Church, making vibrant the liturgical celebrations through their worship and popular devotions. The Apostleship of the Sea, through its chaplains and chaplaincy team members, make possible for seafarers regardless of color, religion or race, to find a spiritual haven and social assistance, thus recognizing the dignity of persons and welcoming the newcomer, in a spirit of solidarity, in unity through diversity.

Migration then, is seen to impact the religiosity of seafarers while at the same time, their religiosity and faith practice mitigate difficult situations during their migration.

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Oostende Belgium – The Seamen's Memorial (1953) can be found on the Zeeheldenplein. Each year the numerous fishermen from Oostende who died at sea are commemorated. This was also the location of the first lighthouse in Oostende (1771)

