



The Apostleship of the Sea of the United States of America

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AOS - USA Expresses Appreciation and Solidarity With the People of the Sea of the Gulf of Mexico in Light of the Explosion and Sinking of the MODU Deepwater Horizon

In 1997, Pope John Paul II called on the Apostleship of the Sea to be “. . . concerned with the specific pastoral care of the *people of the sea* . . .” He noted that the *people of the sea* include seafarers and maritime personnel, including oil rig workers. (*Motu Proprio Stella Maris*, Title II).

The Apostleship of the Sea of the United States of America expresses its ongoing prayers and condolences to the families and friends of oil rig workers killed on April 20, 2010, when the drilling vessel *Deepwater Horizon* exploded in the Gulf of Mexico. We also express our ongoing prayers and solidarity to the 115 rig workers who survived the explosion, and are presently recovering from the physical and emotional trauma that each person suffers.

In solidarity with the Confraternity of Our Lady Star of the Sea and all men and women of good will, the Apostleships of the Sea - USA prays daily for the ongoing efforts to control the well, recover oil, mitigate environmental damage to the Gulf waters, marine life, coastal marshes, and beaches.

The Apostleship of the Sea - USA also wishes to acknowledge the skill and courage of the US seafarers who were the first responders, rescued those in the water, coordinated air rescue with US Coast Guard aircraft, and remained on scene fighting the raging fires until the *Deepwater Horizon* slipped below the surface.

These seafarers, joined by hundreds of other fellow mariners and Gulf fishermen, have worked, often in challenging conditions, to skim, corral, burn, disperse, and shuttle recovered oil to shore.

Recalling the motto of the US merchant marine, “In Peace & War,” the Apostleship of the Sea - USA recognizes that in the peace of the Gulf of Mexico, the merchant marine responded, mitigated the environmental impact, played an integral part in capping the well, and will continue the work of recovery for many months ahead.

The Apostleship of the Sea - USA expresses its prayers for US mariners in the Gulf and all US merchant mariners in the aftermath of the *Deepwater Horizon* incident. With the implementation of a moratorium on deepwater drilling, and a call by some congressional leaders for a repeal of the Jones Act that is so much the life blood of US merchant mariners, we share with you your anxiety and concern for the future of your job and profession.

Finally, this has been the greatest environmental disaster in US history, and calls all of us to reflect on the decisions and practices that led to it. We wish to echo Pope Benedict XVI’s concerns for the environment as he expressed them in his third encyclical, *Caritas in Veritate*,

“The environment is God's gift to everyone, and in our use of it we have a responsibility towards the poor, towards future generations and towards humanity as a whole.” (Paragraph 48)

Pope Benedict also states, “Questions linked to the care and preservation of the environment today need to give due consideration to *the energy problem*. The fact that some States, power groups and companies hoard nonrenewable energy resources represents a grave obstacle to development in poor countries . . . The international community has an urgent duty to find institutional means of regulating the exploitation of nonrenewable resources, involving poor countries in the process, in order to plan together for the future.” (Paragraph 49)

In closing, The Apostleship of the Sea - USA prays that in the aftermath of this ecological tragedy, that all Americans will recognize our responsibilities and call for ecological stewardship in future domestic and international energy development.