

AOSUSA Merchant Marine (Deep Sea) Annual Report 2005

People:

- Global maritime workforce (2002 estimate)
 - 400,000 officers
 - Most from OECD countries (North America, Western Europe, Japan)
 - Growing numbers from Far East and Eastern Europe
 - 825,000 ratings
 - 20% are Filipino
 - China and India are major maritime labor supplying nations
- 207,488 active U.S. merchant mariners Oceans, Lakes and Inland (2005)
 - Only 10 mariner members of AOSUSA (2 of 10 are dual membership Port Chaplains)
 - “Recruit” more AOSUSA mariner members

Ships:

- 29,036 entire world merchant fleet (MARAD 2004)
- 931 U.S. owned self-propelled oceangoing vessels 1,000 gross tons and greater
- 412 U.S. flagged self-propelled oceangoing vessels 1,000 gross tons and greater (171 of the 412 are U.S. government owned)

Ports:

Largest U.S. Coastal Ports by port call (MARAD 2003)

LA/Long Beach	SF Bay Ports	Port Arthur, TX	Jacksonville, FL
Houston, TX	Phil/DE River	Baltimore, MD	San Juan, PR
New York, NY	Savannah, GA	Norfolk/H Roads	Miami, FL
New Orleans Ports	Charleston, SC	Portland, OR	Tacoma, WA

Security:

- Visa required by U.S. State Department
- ILO185-SID came into effect February 2005 (signed by France, Jordan & Nigeria)
 - U.S. has not signed
 - No effect on Visa requirement
- U.S. STCW Endorsement – developing document with more security features
- Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004
 - U.S. citizens will be required to have passport to reenter the U.S. after January 1, 2008
- Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2004
 - Transportation Workers’ Identification Credential (TWIC)
 - US VISIT, Office of Screening Coordination and Operations (SCO)
 - Background search to ensure no terrorist connection
 - Will effect approximately 6 million U.S. maritime transportation workers (blue & brown water mariners, rail, pipeline, stevedores and truckers) that required unescorted access to 3,000 MTSA facilities and 10,500 vessels

Safety:

2003 Annual Flag List from U.S. Coast Guard Port State Safety Targeting Matrix

Algeria	Cambodia	Lithuania	Rep. of Korea
Antigua and	Cayman Islands	Malta	St. Vincent and the
Barbuda	Croatia	Mexico	Grenadines
Belize	Cyprus	Netherlands	Turkey
Bolivia	Honduras	Antilles	Ukraine
Brazil	India	Panama	Venezuela

House Resolutions (not passed):

- H.R.23 “Belated Thank You to the Merchant Mariner of World War II Act of 2005”
- H.R. 1191 “National Marine Scholarship Act of 2005”

Cruise Ship Priest Report

Fr Bob Sipe, Board Representative

**AOSUSA Conference
VALLEJO, CA
APRIL 5-8, 2005**

Since I am just finishing my first cruise assignment and am still on board as I write this, these are mostly scattered thoughts:

1. We should develop a better orientation process for Cruise Priests to prepare them for the culture shock of serving as a Cruise Priest, including the following:
 - Being aware of the tight schedule of cruise ships that have many programs going which sometimes require a constant change of schedule.
 - The importance of establishing a good relationship with the Cruise Director and Activities Director, and understanding the many pressures facing them with many programs to juggle. They may not understand the demands of Catholic practice. For them, Catholic Mass may be just one of many amenities offered.
 - Recognizing that “good Liturgy” may be very difficult on a cruise ship since they often don’t have a budget for music or missalettes. They may need input on how to care for sacred vessels, linens, and vestments if they are a line that provides them.
 - Cruise personnel may operate out of a different mind set than that which exists in parish life. They may see you as just another employee and see any criticism as being disloyal to the company.
 - Things can easily get lost on board with several different people handling liturgical things and sometimes moving them to a different area for services.
 - The priest’s visibility and approachability are the best and sometimes only real publicity for the program.
 - The crew often finds it difficult to attend Mass at all because of heavy work obligations and differing schedules. Try to find time when their work loads aren’t so heavy and you can just visit with them. They appreciate very much your interest in them.
 - As is often true with merchant ship crews, cruise line crews come from all over the world and are often away from home and family for very extended periods, often as long as nine months. Very few Americans work on ships since they have many more opportunities for employment at better wages.
 - Clarify with the Cruise and Activity Directors whether you are free to hang out in the crew quarters, particularly in the crew mess and recreation areas. Crew members are often stressed and lonely in spite of the constant smiles they wear.
2. Certain decisions might best be made for the Cruise and Activity Director by Robert Vasquez, Msgr Harriman, or their counterparts on other cruise lines as

they come on board with AOSUSA . We need to have conversations with them around the following issues:

- Holy Week and Christmas have special demands and it is very difficult to have services at the times prescribed for Liturgies without schedule changes which the Cruise and Activity Directors may not be authorized to make. Palm Sunday should have palms and there should be an understanding about who provides them. Is there a budget for music? Can Holy Thursday and Good Friday Services be in the afternoon or evening? Can there be a provision for a Penance Service for both Christmas and Easter? Can the Easter Vigil Mass be in the evening?
- Can there be an announcement that the priest is available for private Confessions or Counseling? Can people be told that they can contact the priest through Guest Relations?
- When disembarkation takes place on Sunday morning can there be an early morning Mass for those who may want to take a shore excursion on Saturday afternoon, or who may be busy packing on Saturday night?
- Can there be crew Masses at times that are more convenient for the crew, and perhaps several of them?
- If there is a vigil Mass on any Saturday can Catholics somehow be warned to arrange any shore excursions accordingly, and that they may have to rearrange their dinner schedule?

3. I really believe that Cruise Priest Ministry is a very rewarding ministry which should be seen as much more than a free vacation, yet I also know that many priests in parish and other ministries need a vacation and don't have the time or the energy on a short cruise to develop the relationships this ministry demands. It may demand that they forego shore excursions, which is one of the reasons they go in the first place. The cruise lines on the other hand want to fill slots. This is why they are willing to pay priests travel expenses at Christmas and Easter, and for longer stays. For Celebrity I believe it is 28 days. I believe many of these slots would willingly be filled by retired priests like myself if more of their expenses were covered. They would certainly be willing to forgo weekend assignments in warm climate parishes for assignments on warm cruises if they didn't have to forego the added income from weekend help.

4. A long term goal should be a salaried priest chaplain on every ship. Cruise lines might be willing to do this if they could see the real boost in crew morale this might bring, and the warm acceptance this would receive from Catholic passengers. The armed services are convinced of the value of chaplains, who often serve ecumenically as do some of us cruise priest now.

5. These things can't take place overnight and will require patience and persistence on our part, as well as our understanding of the bottom line issues of the Cruise Lines, and our deep appreciation of what some of them are already doing.

Shore Leave Committee Report.

Over the past year the Shore Leave issue has been relatively quiet. Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE) and U.S. Coast Guard policies and regulations continue to be enforced. These policies still appear to be rather draconian, but the upside, if there is one, is that more international merchant seafarers appear to be acquiring their D-1 visas.

On occasion, international merchant seafarers continue to be denied medical attention because of port security policies and regulations. Ship agents are often the first to deny medical care because they do not want to hassle with requests to ICE for a seafarer's "parole." When this is coupled with ship owners desire to cut costs by cutting crew services, an intolerable situation arises. It is recommended that port chaplains report all instances of denied medical care because of security and shore leave issues. Port chaplains can report to tmatyok@sghs.org.

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