



The Apostleship of the Sea of the United States of America

The Diocese of Beaumont

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Apostleship of the Sea of the United States of America President Report

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Since my report in New Orleans, I have continued to supervise the work of our Secretary-General and the cruise ship priest program. I have participated in meetings of national and regional maritime organizations. I have continued to advocate for seafarer shore leave, the Maritime Labour Convention and greater protection of merchant ships against pirates.

Though we passed a deficit annual budget, I am pleased to report that we have stayed in the black. We have done this while accomplishing a number of the goals that we set out last year. For instance, we were able to use Michelle Homden and Fr. Tim Brien to attend conferences in England and Wales on behalf of AOS-USA.

Specifically, I represented AOS-USA at:

1. North American Maritime Ministry Association meeting (Houston, Texas, June 9-11, 2009)
2. Going-away party for Fr. Richard Adiukwu (Lakes Charles, LA, June 26, 2009)
3. MARAD/USCG Information Conference on the Maritime Labour Convention (Washington, D.C., September 24, 2009)
4. Maritime Trades Department of the AFL-CIO (Pittsburgh, PA, September 11, 2009)
5. Continued to participate in the USCG's Merchant Marine Personnel Advisory Committee (Conference call, July 21, 2009; Semi-Annual Meeting - Martinsburgh, WV, September 22-23, 2009 & New Orleans, LA, March 11-12, 2010)
6. *Seafarers 2010* in Houston, TX, March 9-10, 2010

Represented AOS-USA in a number of meetings:

1. Mike Rawlins and the *Somalia Maritime Assistance Foundation*. At the October 2009 Administrative Board meeting, the decision was made to assist in the foundation of SMAF by sponsoring their 501 (c)(3) application. The final documents will soon be submitted to the IRS, and SMAF will be awaiting IRS's determination. In addition I participated in...
 - a. A May 18, 2009 in Washington, D.C.
 - b. A conference call with Sr. Myrna, Steve Hilbert

(USCCB/International Justice and Peace), and Paul Miller
(Catholic Relief Services)

- c. A September 24, 2009 in Washington, D.C.
2. Denise Krepp of the House Home Land Security Committee (September 21, 2009) regarding shore leave
3. John Cullathers of the House Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Subcommittee regarding shore leave, cruise ship penalty wage and MLC.
4. Joe Byrne, Associate Administrator for Environment and Compliance for the Maritime Administration (Washington, D.C., September 24, 2009)
5. Msgr. Rossi & Dr. Geraldine Rholing of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception regarding the placement of an image of Our Lady Star of the Sea in the National Shrine. This will be discussed more extensively under new business. (Washington, D.C., September 24, 2009)

The recognition of AOS-USA as an important advocate for seafarer welfare was shown in two new ways. First, MARAD invited AOS-USA to coordinate the TWIC process for R-1 Visa holders. We later deferred this task to NAMMA since it required a more ecumenical dimension. They took up this task in June, and have done a fine job in getting all foreign port chaplains their TWIC cards.

We have been able to have an international presence by at a Nautical Institute seminar on the Maritime Labour Convention, and a *Lloyd's List* Piracy Training Seminar through our "Foreign Correspondent" Michelle Homden. In addition, we were able to utilize a cruise ship priest to attend a Seafarer International Research Center (SIRC) seminar in Cardiff, Wales. Fr. Tim Brien was able to drive down from his parish, stay with a community of sisters, and walk next door to attend the conference. He has prepared a report that will appear in a future Constant Contact e-news, and has forwarded the conference materials to us.

We have prepared the text, printed, framed and shipped the *Star of the Sea Award* to Msgr. Jacques Harel in Mauritius. We included the video that had the special messages that were recorded in New Orleans. We have also prepared a membership card, and wrote Capt. Phillips of the *Maersk Alabama* of his special merchant mariner membership to AOS-USA.

I continue to do the *Star of the Sea Show* on Radio Maria on the second Friday of each month. Radio Maria has expanded its network into Ohio and Pennsylvania. This allows the show to be heard by more listeners in our country. This past Friday, I was able to carry presentations by Admiral Allen, Acting Administrator Matsuda and John Sweeney from their appearances at the Maritime Trades Department meeting in Pittsburgh.

I am very excited about some of the new seafarer members. We are beginning to discover Catholic leaders in the maritime community who are interested in getting more involved in Catholic Maritime Ministry. We need to develop structure to harness their gifts and talents. Later, under new business, I will like to introduce the idea of a Merchant Mariner Advisory Committee.

Upcoming Activities:

1. Participate in Maritime Administration Maritime Day Observance, May 18, 2010;
2. Participate on Panel during NAMMA/NAMEPA Maritime Day activities at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C.
3. Participate in Panel during USCG Harbor Safety Committee/Area Maritime Security Meeting in Jersey City, NJ., June 8-10, 2010.

Cruise Ship Priest Program:

In December, Celebrity Cruises informed AOS USA that they were reducing the number of opportunities for cruise ship priests by 80%. This announcement significantly effected the program. In response, I have worked closely with our secretary general to meet this critical challenge. The Cruise Ship Priest Committee's and the Secretary General's reports will go into more detail about this issue, but some of the actions that I have made are:

1. January 19, 2010, held conference call with Celebrity Cruises' officials about the changes.
2. January 22, 2010, traveled with secretary general to Savannah, GA, and met with Bishop Promoter and National Director on the financial and organizational effects of Celebrity Cruises policy change.
3. Set up meeting in Washington, D.C. with Theresa Kettlekamp, Sr. Myrna & Fr. Deck to discuss the CSP. However, the February blizzard prevented this meeting from taking place.
4. Wrote vicar general of the Archdiocese of Miami regarding a clergy announcement promoting cruises through Compass Speakers.
5. April 7, 2010, sent letter to Fr. Allan Deck and Sr. Myrna asking for clarification about the relationship between AOS USA and the Secretariat of Cultural Diversity regarding the CSP. This letter was sent to all Administrative Board members. As of this writing, we are still waiting for a response.

In the next 60 days, we will need to inform our contracted cruise lines whether we will continue to operate the program. The CSP will be discussed thoroughly during the Administrative Board meeting.