

Star of the Sea



Newsletter of the Apostleship of the Sea
for North America & the Caribbean

Summer 2008

Greetings from Deacon Albert Dacanay:

For some time now, the world has been adjusting to the effects of the sudden increase and fluctuation of gasoline prices. When I asked a seafarer how he feels about this global fear, he said: 'I can't do anything about it... I am just so glad and thankful to God that I have a job and that my family will have food to eat.' True enough, there is only so much we can do about it... We worry so much about the future that we forget that God has constantly assured us that he will provide us with all our needs and lose sight of the blessings he has already given us.

The 1st AOS Regional Conference held jointly with the AOS-USA National Conference was indeed a great success. I have included a copy of my report in this edition and again I would like to express my gratitude to Sr. Myrna (AOS-USA National Director), Fr. Sinclair Oubre and Doreen Badeaux who have done an excellent job of hosting the conference.

We now have four (4) AOS Chaplains from our Region who completed the Trainor's Course for Ship Welfare Visitors. They are fully accredited by the International Commission on Ship Welfare (ICSW) to officially train Ship Visitors. Congratulations to Fr. Tom Falkenthal (Port of Miami and Fort Everglades), Deacon Reggie Seymour (Port of New Orleans), Deacon Michael Ho (Port of Toronto) and Chaplain Mike de Toro (Port of Stockton) who will now actively be taking in requests for training in their assigned coverage. Fr. Henry Hernando (Port of Long Beach) initiated and his Port will benefit from the training that Fr. Tom will conduct on the last week of July 2008. There is still a lot of work to be done... and I would like to enjoy your support and cooperation in this special endeavour. With our limited resources, I still believe that much can be accomplished, as long as we are united in our efforts.

May Mary, Star of the Sea, guide and bless us all!

A Message from Archbishop Agostino Marchetto, Secretary, Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants & Itinerant Peoples

Dear readers:

It is with great pleasure that I am able to include in the pages of this edition of the *Star of the Sea* the warm greetings of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, which has the "AOS International" as one of its "sectors".

I congratulate the Regional Coordinator and his team of devoted collaborators, who have succeeded in publishing this regional Newsletter. We follow with great interest the developments of the AOS in your region and commend you all for the vitality of your organizations.

We know that the maritime profession is a very hard one. The situation faced by seafarers in transit in foreign ports, who are denied shore leave, and unjustified detentions and criminalisation of seafarers and fishers is becoming a major source of concern for us. The denial and disrespect of their basic human rights in many parts of the world remain a permanent problem. Almost every day we

hear about shipwrecks, piracy and disappearances at sea. It is in this context that the chaplains and many committed laypersons are called to promote solidarity and human dignity with the people of the sea, and to give witness to the Gospel.

We all this in mind, it is therefore not surprising that the Holy Father, in his last Encyclical Letter, compare life to a voyage on the sea of his history "*often dark and stormy, a voyage in which we watch for the stars that indicate the route*" (Benedict XVI, *Spes Salvi*, 49).

So we pray to Mary, the *Stella Maris*, Star of the Sea, to intercede for us in asking God's blessing upon you for all that you have accomplished thus far and fill you with his grace, so that in the present and for the future you may continue to work with great joy for the Kingdom of God.

+ Archbishop Agostino Marchetto
Secretary, PCPMIP

Sea Sunday - July 13, 2008



Remember and pray for
all those who are mariners,
fishers, port workers
together with their families
and dependents.

Regional Conference: AOS North America & the Caribbean

When: April 1-4, 2008

Where: Maritime Institute of Technology & Graduate Studies (MITAGS), Linthicum, Maryland, USA

The Apostleship of the Sea – North America and Caribbean Region held its Regional Conference coinciding with the AOSUSA (the Apostleship of the Sea – USA national membership organization) Annual Conference. There were thirty two participants from USA, Canada and the Caribbean, and one representative from the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrant and Itinerant Peoples.

Msgr. Novatus Rogambwa, undersecretary for the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrant and Itinerant People and Deacon Albert Dacanay, Regional Coordinator for AOS-North America and the Caribbean mentioned the realignment of the Region which will now include the English, French and Dutch speaking countries of the Caribbean, Canada and the United States of America. The Spanish speaking countries of the Caribbean including Mexico is now under the Latin America Region.

The Apostleship of the Sea – USA announced the recent appointment of their new Episcopal Promoter in the person of Bishop John Kevin Boland, from the Diocese of Savannah, Georgia. Bishop Boland has been a member of AOSUSA Cruise Ship Priest Program for many years and is familiar with the activities of the Apostleship of the Sea. Fr. Allan Deck, S.J., the Director for Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church, of which the Apostleship of the Sea – USA falls under, discussed the restructuring of the USCCB.

On the practical implementation of the XXII AOS-World Congress:

1) Get the cooperation and assistance of the local church.

The AOS Port Chaplain must promote and make the local community aware of the existence of the ministry in the Diocese. Everyone is encouraged to contribute articles, stories and pictures of their activities to the AOS National Magazines/ Newsletter.

2) Improving our service in providing the sacramental needs as well as Pastoral Care to the Seafarers.

Too many of our AOS chaplains work in isolation...there is an urgent need to develop a strong volunteer base who will assist the chaplain and serve as friend,

presence, guide and advocate to the seafarers who comes to our centers. There is the need to develop good listening and pastoral interview skills to be able to care and attend to the situation the seafarers are in.

3) The best means to get the cooperation and support of the local Bishop.

The Episcopal Promoters of each country are the best means to gain cooperation and support from our local Bishop or Archbishop. It is a peer to peer fellowship which will best gain the ear and then the understanding of the task and mission. Port Chaplains should, occasionally invite their Bishop, to celebrate mass with the seafarers on board the ship, to visit the seafarer center, to do regular ship visitation and to host fundraising events. The response might not be forthcoming so persisting in the need for cooperation and support will take persistence.

4) Promote and encourage more permanent Deacons to engage in Port Ministry work;

Based on experience, it has shown that the Permanent Diaconate is particularly well suited to this apostolate work – this being a ministry of presence and service. In the exercise of their ordained ministry, by listening, sharing and empowering, they manifest the solicitude of the Church and are the signs of the presence of Jesus, the Servant.

5) The existence of the Apostleship of the Sea?

Even in the busiest Ports of North America, not too many people of the diocese are aware of the existence and activities of the Apostleship of the Sea. People can drive over a bridge and not even notice the huge cranes and cargo ships that dock daily or weekly in their city. It is right in front of them and they have no idea... so obviously, the parishes that don't border on the docks will be far less aware.

On the Fishing Industry:

AOS should make the fishing communities and the maritime industry aware of its ministry and services – through special outreach and visitation as well as invitation to visit the Seafarer Centers. In New Orleans we have gathered the 4 other maritime churches (Greek Orthodox, Norwegian, German and Baptists) on a regular basis to collaborate our own unique services to the fishers. This has fostered a relationship with them that encourages

their interaction with those of other faiths.

AOS must be cognizant of fishing issues and must be knowledgeable of ILO and FAO activities; International Treaties of the U.S. and Canada. AOS must endeavor to make their voices heard during forums and discussions on these issues. AOS endorses and supports International Conventions, i.e. Work in Fishing Convention 2007.

On the Cruise Ships Priests' Ministry:

Cruise Ship Chaplains can and should offer Mass for the crew. They should also have good relationship and must cooperate with local AOS Chaplains who can be in a better position to handle issues of crew members on his/her treatment on the ship. There is a cruise ship manual that is very helpful. Every member must be reminded that they have access to the yahoo.com discussion group concerning the ministry.

On the Manual for Chaplains and Pastoral Agents of the AOS:

The consensus is that the Manual should be in English, French and Spanish in separate booklets. Every chaplain or pastoral agent should have a copy of the Manual. It is suggested that the Bishop of the diocese where there is Port should also have a copy so that he will be kept abreast of the uniqueness of our ministry and hence support our needs and our activities with greater enthusiasm.

On the AOS Newsletter and AOS Website:

AOS North America and the Caribbean has released the 2nd edition of its quarterly newsletter – 'Star of the Sea'. An AOS website for the region is under study.

On the Ministry to the Caribbean:

AOS have a good starting point of developing the ministry in the Caribbean. There had been inquiries from Jamaica, Trinidad & Tobago and Bahamas regarding the formal setup of AOS in that area. A representative from Jamaica who is in the Diaconate Program attended the conference and is eager to begin doing the ministry work.

Sea Sunday Message from Cardinal Renato Raffaele Martino President, Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants & Itinerant Peoples

Sea Sunday is annually a day set aside for the remembrance and prayer for all those who are mariners, fishers, port workers together with their families and dependents. This is therefore an opportunity for us to remember the issues that seafarers daily confront in undertaking their professional and seafaring life in the context of the pastoral care of the Apostleship of the Sea throughout the world, which is characterized also by our support for human rights, fair trade and the defence of the environment.

Coming one year after the XXII AOS World Congress, which was held in Gdynia (Poland) in 2007, this celebration will certainly give new impetus to our pledge to remain in solidarity – as stated by the theme of the Congress – with the People of the Sea as witnesses of Hope, through the Proclamation of the Word, Liturgy and Diakonia, and to promote in the maritime world a humanism inspired by Christian hope. Its introduction in the maritime environment means first and foremost the creation of a climate of respect and fairness for all seafarers.

Towards this end, the AOS has welcomed the adoption by the ILO of the *Maritime Labour Convention 2006* and the *Work in Fishing Convention 2007*. Now that these two Conventions have been adopted, the work of all national AOS continue in order to ensure that they are ratified and implemented as quickly as possible so that they may make a genuine improvement to the lives of millions of seafarers and fishers.

However, there is one area of maritime activity which is of particular concern all over the world, that of the fishing profession. The fishing communities in fact are battling against the more negative aspects of globalisation and are confronted with economic, social and ecological problems of international proportion. Everywhere AOS has to manifest solidarity with them and intensify its pastoral mission in this area, as these next years will be decisive if we want the oceans to live, the fishing communities to survive and to continue harvesting fish, on which more than one billion people rely, till now, as their main source of protein.

In this perspective Pope Benedict XVI has spoken about “the great challenge of today [that] is to ‘globalise,’ not just economic and commercial interests, but also the call for solidarity.” This will be possible only if “the person, created in the image of God and loved by him, [is] at the centre of every economic plan to protect and administer the immense resources of creation” (Speech to ‘*Centesimus Annus-Pro Pontifice*’ Foundation, May 31, 2008).

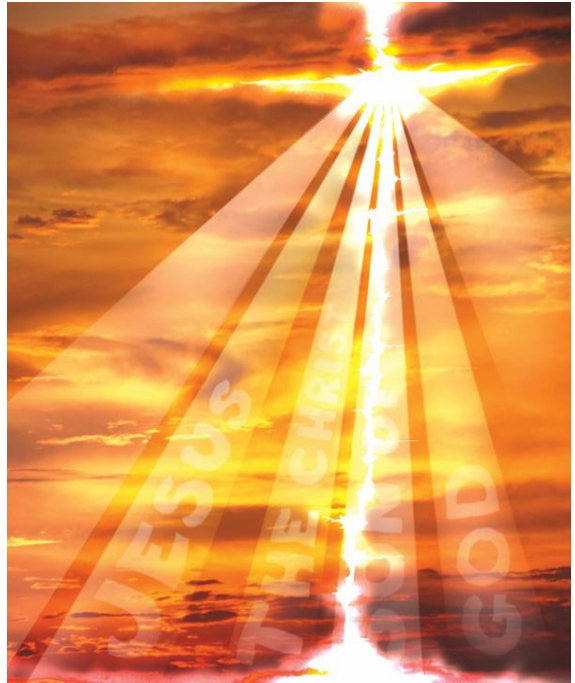
Another sad and emerging phenomenon, which must be mentioned, is piracy. In some parts of the world, this is prevalent and presents a real threat to the security of vessels and their crews. AOS therefore must support every move by the International Community and local Authorities to address this problem.

Our world celebration also gives us this year the opportunity to thank again all chaplains, pastoral agents and volunteers who are active in the AOS and who extend pastoral and practical assistance together with hospitality to all seafarers regardless of race, creed or political opinion. One of our great strengths is the number of laity who work in a voluntary capacity for the AOS in chaplaincies, together with the ongoing formation and training in so many places that continue to bear fruit.

In this respect we would like to recommend that our new ‘*Manual for Chaplains and Pastoral Agents of the Apostleship of the Sea*’ be translated if possible in local languages under the authority of the respective national AOS. In this way this pastoral instrument, which has already proved to be an excellent guide, will benefit to an ever greater number of people.

We rejoice too – as it was stressed in Gdynia – for the ecumenical collaboration and interreligious dialogue taking place aboard ships, in the ports and in seafarers’ centres. Our presence and witness express the solicitude and proximity of the Church to all those who are involved in the maritime environment, especially to the poorest and those most in need.

We pray that this celebration of Sea Sunday will enable us to renew our commitment to human promotion and evangelisation. May Mary, *Stella Maris*, intercede for us in asking for God’s grace, so that AOS may ever more remain committed to the building up of God’s Kingdom in the maritime world.



CONFERENZA CONGIUNTA DELL'AOS-USA E DELLA REGIONE NORD AMERICA E CARAIBI (de Monsignor Novatus Rugambwa):

La Conferenza congiunta dell'Apostolato del Mare degli Stati Uniti (AOS-USA) e della Regione Nord America e Caraibi (AOS-North America and Caribbean Region) ha avuto luogo a Baltimore (Stati Uniti) dal 2 al 5 aprile 2008.

Erano presenti 34 partecipanti: cappellani di porto, volontari ed assistenti dei vari centri 'Stella Maris'. Era presente anche un rappresentante della Giamaica.

La Regione Nord America e Caraibi era rappresentata dal Coordinatore Regionale, Diacono Albert Dacanay, che è anche Direttore Nazionale del Canada.

Com'è noto, l'AOS-USA è parte dell' "Opera" dell'Apostolato del Mare, di cui fanno parte cappellani e volontari – chierici, religiosi e laici – e che opera in stretta collaborazione con la Conferenza Episcopale degli Stati Uniti, in comunione con l' "Apostolato del Mare Internazionale" del Pontificio Consiglio della Pastorale per i Migranti e gli Itineranti. La Conferenza Episcopale era rappresentata dal Rev.do P. Allan Dick, SJ, Direttore del Comitato Episcopale per la Diversità Culturale nella Chiesa, che si occupa di gruppi dei fedeli bisognosi di una speciale attenzione pastorale, e da Suor Myrna Tordillo, MSCS, Direttore Nazionale dell'Apostolato del Mare degli Stati Uniti.

Gran parte dei lavori sono stati dedicati alla valutazione dell'andamento e delle varie esperienze dell'Apostolato del Mare in tutta la Regione. L'intervento principale dell'incontro sulla **tratta di esseri umani** (Human Trafficking) è stato pronunciato da un ufficiale del "Migrant and Refugee Service" (MRS) della Conferenza Episcopale degli Stati Uniti. Esso intendeva individuare cosa fare pastoralmente e legalmente qualora le attività degli operatori dell'A.M. comportino la necessità di aiutare le vittime di questa nuova forma di schiavitù.

L'intervento di Mons. Novatus Rugambwa, Sotto-Segretario del Pontificio Consiglio, ha sottolineato i seguenti punti:

- necessità di mettere in pratica le conclusioni e le raccomandazioni del XXII Congresso Mondiale;
- cura pastorale per il settore dei pescatori – con riferimento agli interventi dei rappresentanti della FAO e dell'ILO durante l'ultimo Incontro dei Coordinatori Regionali a Roma (31 gennaio – 2 febbraio 2008), e in particolare importanza della *Work in Fishing Convention 2007*;
- diffusione del "Manuale per cappellani e operatori pastorali dell'Apostolato del Mare";
- collaborazione e necessità di sostenere l'Apostolato del Mare nelle isole dei Caraibi.

Altre attività dell'incontro hanno toccato i seguenti punti:

- A) Per la Regione del Nord America e Caraibi
- collaborazione tra i Paesi della Regione a favore della comunità dei pescatori;
 - implementazione pratica delle raccomandazioni del XXII Congresso Mondiale di Gdania (Polonia);
 - diffusione ed uso del Manuale per l'Apostolato del Mare;
 - Cruise Ship Priest Ministry;

- Corsi per visitatori delle navi e/o comitati per il Port Welfare. Questi punti sono stati discussi in gruppi e le conclusioni saranno raccolte e inviate a tutti partecipanti.

B) Per gli Stati Uniti

- Elezione e nomina dei membri del "Board of Administration" dell'AOS-USA;
- Creazione all'interno della Conferenza Episcopale statunitense (USCCB) del Comitato per la Diversità Culturale nella Chiesa;
- Amministrazione marittima negli Stati Uniti;
- Protezione dell'ambiente marittimo.

Il 1° aprile il Rev.do Allan, Suor Myrna Tordillo e Mons. Rugambwa hanno visitato il Centro "Stella Maris" dell'Arcidiocesi di Baltimore e, il 3 aprile, tutti i partecipanti si sono recati a Washington per incontrare il Segretario Esecutivo e gli altri ufficiali Comitato Episcopale per la Diversità Culturale nella Chiesa, della Conferenza Episcopale Statunitense.

Stay in Touch!

Star of the Sea is a quarterly newsletter featuring updates and greetings from: the Pontifical Council for Migrants and Itinerant Peoples, the Regional Coordinator for Canada, the United States, and the Caribbean; and, Episcopal Promoters and National Directors this region. The print newsletter is circulated free of charge, and is also available in Portable Document Format (PDF) from the following websites:

- Apostleship of the Sea, www.stellamaris.net
- Apostleship of the Sea-Canada, www.aos-canada.org
- Apostleship of the Sea-USA, www.aos-usa.org

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