

Stella Maris

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**Apostleship
of the Sea**

Supporting Seafarers Worldwide

Stella Maris (Apostleship of the Sea) is a Catholic charity supporting seafarers worldwide.

We provide practical and pastoral care to all seafarers, regardless of nationality, belief or race. Our port chaplains and volunteer ship visitors welcome seafarers, offer welfare services and advice, practical help, care and friendship.

Stella Maris is the largest ship visiting network in the world, working in 339 ports with 227 port chaplains around the world.

We are only able to continue our work through the generous donations of our supporters and volunteers.

Apostleship of the Sea

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Download our free App

Search for 'StellaMaris' in the App store



Stella Maris provides seafarers with practical support, information and a listening ear



Port Focus: Felixstowe, UK

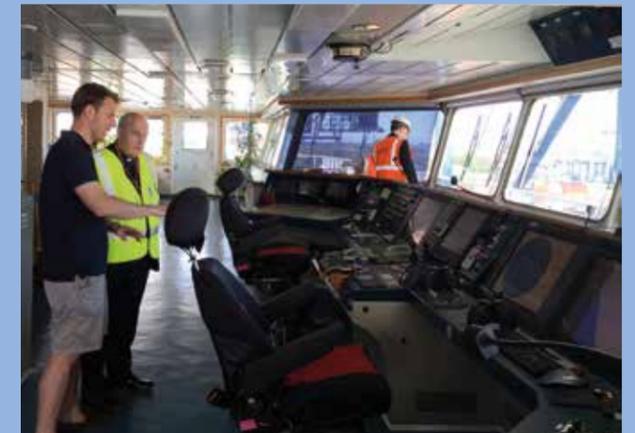


The port of Felixstowe is the busiest container port in the United Kingdom. It handles almost half of all containerised freight that comes into Britain and can deal with even the very largest vessels afloat at present. Currently over 3000 ships pass through Felixstowe every year.

The UK parliament gave permission for the private dock to be built in 1875 on the Suffolk coast in the South East of England and it has grown ever since. Ipswich is the nearest town but it is relatively small, what makes Felixstowe attractive are the road and rail links to the industrial heartlands of Britain in the North and the Midlands and the links to the capital, London. In addition Felixstowe is in close proximity to most of the major ports of Northern Europe.

Stella Maris provides a ship visiting service in Felixstowe, including taking communion to seafarers and sometimes being able to arrange to take seafarers to Mass or into the town. We will also visit seafarers in hospital when needed.

There is a seafarers' centre at Felixstowe run by a separate charity which is open from 10:00 until 22:00. They also provide a shuttle bus from the port to their seafarers centre.



Stella Maris provides a ship visiting service in Felixstowe, including taking communion to Seafarers.



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Sunday at Sea

27th Sunday in Ordinary Time

6th October

Commentary by Fr Colum Kelly

Gospel Luke 17:5-10

The apostles said to the Lord, 'Increase our faith.' The Lord replied, 'Were your faith the size of a mustard seed you could say to this mulberry tree, "Be uprooted and planted in the sea," and it would obey you.

'Which of you, with a servant ploughing or minding sheep, would say to him when he returned from the fields, "Come and have your meal immediately"? Would he not be more likely to say, "Get my supper laid; make yourself tidy and wait on me while I eat and drink. You can eat and drink yourself afterwards"? Must he be grateful to the servant for doing what he was told? So with you: when you have done all you have been told to do, say, "We are merely servants: we have done no more than our duty."'

The Gospel and You

The disciples yearn for more faith. Then they could do great things for God.

They could cast out demons and forgive a brother or sister who's especially annoying. Jesus tells them they don't need great faith; they need just a little faith. He clearly speaks of a small amount of faith since the mustard seed was the smallest seed known in his day.



The Kingdom of God, as Jesus assures us, is about mustard seeds, about small seemingly unimportant things, but which, in the long run, become the big things. Small gestures of cruelty or kindness, leave their effects long after the events.

Not much in our world today helps us to believe that. Almost everything urges us to think big and to be careless about small things. Likewise what is played out on the smaller stage of life – in the more domestic areas of family, marriage, and our exchanges with our shipmates – is also deemed to be of little consequence. The big stage is what we are told is important. But we tend to forget quickly who won the big prizes in life but we remember clearly who was kind to us in the apparent little things that caused us much pain and uncertainty. We remember who encouraged us when we felt insecure. Never underestimate the value of the small gesture, the smile, the word of welcome.

So too with our ships, people easily see the big picture. The magnificent vessel sailing with great splendour through the waves. But do they ever realise that it is the small things that make this happen: the work of the oiler in the engine room, the much maligned cook who keeps the crew fuelled.

Maybe today we should think on the mustard seeds in our own lives, the things we should attend to and not allow ourselves to be blinded by what we are told are the big important things.

28th Sunday in Ordinary Time

13th October

Gospel Luke 17:11-19

On the way to Jerusalem Jesus travelled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. As he entered one of the villages, ten lepers came to meet him. They stood some way off and called to him, 'Jesus! Master! Take pity on us.' When he saw them he said, 'Go and show yourselves to the priests.' Now as they were going away they were cleansed. Finding himself cured, one of them turned back praising God at the top of his voice and threw himself at the feet of Jesus and thanked him. The man was a Samaritan. This made Jesus say, 'Were not all ten made clean? The other nine, where are they? It seems that no one has come back to give praise to God, except this foreigner.' And he said to the man, 'Stand up and go on your way. Your faith has saved you.'

The Gospel and You

How satisfying it is to receive a sincere 'thank you' for a service truly appreciated. The contrary also holds, of course: how hurtful it is to be consistently taken for granted, without ever a word of appreciation. In our gospel one out of ten was a fairly poor percentage on the gratitude scale.

Maybe today we could reflect on another aspect of the story.

There are no places where God is not present, though we sometimes find that difficult to believe. We still have certain taboos about places that for us are far from God. Areas where we think God cannot or maybe even should not be present. In the gospels we often see Jesus going into those places that are considered godless and dispelling old fears and superstitions by being present there. In today's gospel we see Jesus entering into the lives of the sick, touching lepers who cry out to him appealing for his mercy.

The lepers, even though they were a mixed group of Jews and at least one Samaritan came to him as one. They were united by their misery and isolation from the people of the town.

Their great misfortune had broken down racial and national barriers. In their common disease of leprosy, they had forgotten that they were Jews or Samaritans, but only that they were men in need. And indeed God responded to their united prayer.

The loneliness of some crew on ships is often made worse by feelings of isolation, as if not part of the crowd for whatever reason, almost treated like lepers. On many ships, with multinational crews, barriers of language and culture disappear when the crew act together to express a complaint. Their shared grievance always gets a better hearing if the crew stand as one. May our eyes and hearts always be open to the plight of others and not blinded by prejudice or fear of the unknown.



29th Sunday in Ordinary Time 20th October

Gospel Luke 18:1-8

Jesus told his disciples a parable about the need to pray continually and never lose heart. 'There was a judge in a certain town' he said 'who had neither fear of God nor respect for man. In the same town there was a widow who kept on coming to him and saying, "I want justice from you against my enemy!" For a long time he refused, but at last he said to himself, "Maybe I have neither fear of God nor respect for man, but since she keeps pestering me I must give this widow her just rights, or she will persist in coming and worry me to death."

And the Lord said, 'You notice what the unjust judge has to say? Now will not God see justice done to his chosen who cry to him day and night even when he delays to help them? I promise you, he will see justice done to them, and done speedily. But when the Son of Man comes, will he find any faith on earth?'

The Gospel and You

This parable on persistence in prayer brings into contrast the unscrupulous judge and the loving God in whom we place our trust. The widow is only asking for her rights. In Jewish law she was one of the helpless who should have been given priority. Widows in the ancient world were incredibly vulnerable, listed among those persons deserving special protection. There was no doubt about the justice of her case, but the problem was to get a judge to hear it.

There was something that the widow wanted, and, despite all his toughness, or maybe laziness the judge simply had to give in to her eventually, because she showed no sign of giving up.

After speaking about the evil judge Jesus speaks of his Father. If even the unjust judge gave in to persistence, how much more will our heavenly Father respond to our prayers? God can read the heart and knows whether we really want and need what we ask.

Seafarers tell me that when they come aboard, their prayer seems to change. They no longer have the comfort of sharing prayer and worship with loved ones. They may even be the only one on the vessel who feels the need for prayer. Of course they continue to pray for those back home but their prayer may demonstrate a new set of anxieties; danger from the sea, difficult relationships on board, uncertainty about the next voyage.

The persevering widow encourages us to pray constantly, for ourselves and for those in great need. We recognise those needs and for our prayers to be granted. Our God is not like the unheeding judge of the parable, though it may often seem so. We need to persevere and never abandon hope.

God can read the heart and knows whether we really want and need what we ask.



30th Sunday in Ordinary Time 27th October

Gospel Luke 18:9-14

Jesus spoke the following parable to some people who prided themselves on being virtuous and despised everyone else: 'Two men went up to the Temple to pray, one a Pharisee, the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood there and said this prayer to himself, "I thank you, God, that I am not grasping, unjust, adulterous like the rest of mankind, and particularly that I am not like this tax collector here. I fast twice a week; I pay tithes on all I get." The tax collector stood some distance away, not daring even to raise his eyes to heaven; but he beat his breast and said, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner." This man, I tell you, went home again at rights with God; the other did not. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the man who humbles himself will be exalted.'

The Gospel and You

In today's gospel Jesus warns against contempt, not thinking ourselves better than others. He had many things in mind when he said that, but I suspect he was cautioning his listeners about how they feel about themselves when looking at what is happening in the lives of others.

This parable is addressed directly to the self righteous. When we do good things we feel good about ourselves. Virtue really is its own reward, and that's good. We should be pleased when we have done good things. However, feeling righteous can soon turn into feeling self-righteous, as depicted by the Pharisee in the parable.

The Pharisee is practicing virtue, his actions are exactly what they should be, but what this produces in him is not humility, nor a sense of his need to thank God, but self-righteousness and a critical judgment of others.

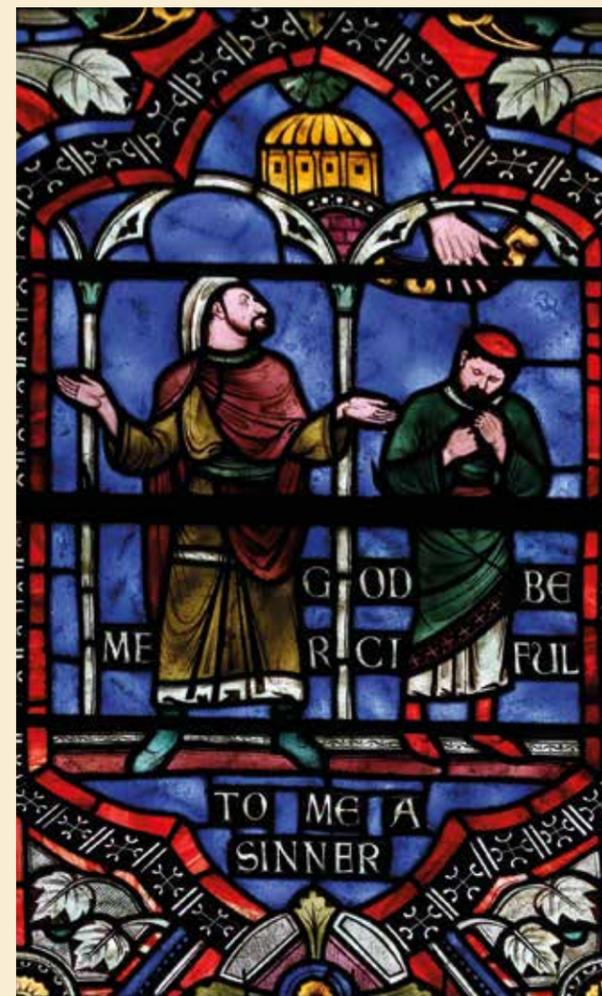
So too for all of us, we easily become the Pharisee: Whenever we look at another person who's struggling and say, 'There but for the grace of God go I', our seeming humble gratitude can show two very different things. It can express a sincere thanks for being undeservedly blessed or can just as easily be an expression of a smug self-righteousness about our own sense of superiority.

The tax collector, on the other hand, is conscious of his sinfulness. He knows he does not deserve praise for anything he has done. His prayer is: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner".

It is this helplessness and dependence upon God that opens us to receive the special grace He has for us. As Jesus says of the tax collector: "He went away justified."

This parable asks each one of us to examine our personal prayer life. Whether on land or at sea, in a vast church or in the privacy of our cabin. Our prayer is heard by the God who knows and loves us. When we approach God, are we like the Pharisee or the Tax Collector?

"God, be merciful to me, a sinner."





The Good Life: Pornography Addiction

While pornography has been around for centuries, the problem of addiction to pornography has increased dramatically in recent years largely due to its vast presence on the Internet.

Dr. Patrick Carnes, who in 1983 first advanced the idea that a person could become addicted to sex, calls the addiction to Internet pornography “the crack cocaine of sexual addiction.” Like crack, it doesn’t take long for an Internet porn user to become hooked, often a matter of just a few weeks. And like crack, habitual viewing of online porn creates an intense cycle of addiction that is extremely difficult to break without expert assistance.

These are some of the devastating effects of Internet pornography upon marriage, the family and the individual:

- It destroys the trust and intimacy within the husband-wife relationship and often leads to the end of the marriage itself.
- It creates obstacles to real communication and personal interaction with one’s spouse and with others.
- It stimulates within the porn addict a distorted view of sexuality that can lead to the desire for riskier, perverse and even criminal sexual behaviours.

- It draws focus away from one’s family life and relationship with God and sets a destructive example for one’s children.

Epidemic proportions

Porn addiction is an epidemic that has sprung up in the Internet age. Some estimates put porn use among churchgoing men at 50 percent, a figure that differs little from use among the adult male population at large.

For Robert Peters, president of Morality in Media, the Internet is the primary factor in the increase in porn use.

“Particularly with the Internet, we usually talk about the three A’s: accessibility, affordability, and anonymity. Sometimes I add a fourth A, addiction,” says Peters. “Pornography is addictive in any medium, but when you’ve got this smorgasbord at your fingertips, and you’re clever enough to keep anyone from finding out about it, it’s an awful lot easier for people to get into pornography.”

How a porn addiction develops

An Internet porn habit may begin out of curiosity, by clicking on a racy advertisement or e-mail or happening upon a site by accident. A man may continue to explore online porn because he feels it fills a real or perceived need, explains Mark Houck, co-founder and president of The King’s Men, a Catholic apostolate based in the Philadelphia area.

“Perhaps he is stressed at work, or perhaps he is bored with his life and looking for some excitement,” says Houck. “Whatever the case is, it begins with his false perception that the women and images he will see on the Internet will satisfy his needs. The truth of the matter is that they will never satisfy his needs, and he will be left in a worse situation than he was before. He is using pornography as a substitute for real human relationships, and he is suffering.”

Factors that may lead to the development of a porn-viewing habit include stress, marital conflict, profound self-centeredness, or the “pleasure principle,” a Freudian term for the drive to avoid pain and seek immediate gratification.

Gradually, the porn addiction escalates as he builds a tolerance to each level of his online experiences. He may seek out more explicit or perverse pornographic. He may be drawn to adult chat rooms where Internet users can meet online.

For some porn-addicted men, the obsession can get to the point that online images and encounters no longer satisfy their desires. They seek to act out their pornographic fantasies, for example, by having an affair, seeking casual sexual encounters, picking up prostitutes, patronizing “gentlemen’s clubs,” committing acts of voyeurism or even sexual abuse of another person.

Seeking help

Eventually, the anonymity ends when the secret gets out. As the addiction grows, a user’s cognitive abilities are impaired and he takes more risks. His increasingly risky behaviour and his efforts to conceal his problem raise questions among family and co-workers. His wife or child walks in on him in the act of viewing porn, or discovers his secret by chance when he leaves open a web page, a photo or incriminating e-mail onscreen, or fails to erase his browser history revealing the porn addresses he has visited.

The increase in Internet pornography addiction has brought with it an increase in the number of men and couples seeking help to overcome the problem, although it is not usually the man’s idea to seek help, says Fitzgibbons.

“The negative impact on marriages is quite significant,” says Fitzgibbons. “I’ve had many women say that this is no different to them than having an affair. A number tell their spouses, ‘Unless you address this and work on this, this marriage will not survive, because I experience it as total betrayal.’ They’ll say, ‘When you are doing that, you’re not thinking of me. You’re involved in adultery of the heart.’ And there’s no response to that one.”

“Particularly with the Internet, we usually talk about the three A’s: accessibility, affordability, and anonymity. Sometimes I add a fourth A, addiction,”

Arduous road to recovery

Most therapists today agree that obsessive viewing of Internet porn qualifies as a behavioural addiction. When a man views the images, the accompanying gratification tends to neurochemically “hard-wire” his brain and burn the images permanently in his memory in what some doctors call an erototoxin effect.

Because porn addiction compulsion has so many of the same causes and effects as adultery, the treatment and counseling are pretty much the same, says Dr. Fitzgibbons.

Rebuilding marital trust is a major undertaking in itself. The man must patiently discuss all that went on as deeply and as often as she requests. He must provide her with more attention and become more focused on their marital friendship. With time, if he can be chaste and accountable, his wife’s trust in him may grow again.

Part of the recovery process as well as a preventive measure is for husband and wife to practice good interpersonal communication and to spend quality time together – in other words, to build and maintain a strong marital friendship.

“Marital friendship is based on talking, communicating, being present to the other—not just watching television, but taking time to discuss matters or to do things together, even pray together,” Fitzgibbons says.

While treatment clinics and support groups can be helpful, Fitzgibbons emphasizes the need for a strong spiritual component if a man is to address and overcome his addiction effectively.

“Where there is a spiritual component to the recovery, we have seen great success,” he says. “The Lord doesn’t want this darkness to interfere with the great sacrament of marriage.”

Prayer, frequent reception of the sacraments, Bible study and support groups can be very helpful in the recovery process.

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Faith Stories

Faith in the world's toughest industry

Dilip Fernando arrived in Scotland, UK on the 12th March 2017 ready to work in what is considered, one of the toughest industries in the world: the North Sea fishing industry. Its tough reputation is one of many reasons why the fishing industry has to look far beyond its own shores to find people willing to do this type of work. Many of

the fishermen around the ports of Scotland come from as far afield as the Philippines, Ghana and Indonesia to name but a few of the countries involved as well as many Eastern European countries. Things change annually and at that particular time there were over 20 Sri Lankans working on the Northeast Coast of Scotland.

At home in Sri Lanka, Dilip was a 24 years old fisherman working on his father's small boat, earning enough for them to look after his mother and three brothers. The weather off the South Coast of the Indian subcontinent was warm and fairly calm, so the conditions Dilip faced when he found himself in Scotland were a shock to his system. Few people had warned him of the severe weather he would encounter, the lack of sleep and the long hard working hours he would face in return for the promise of earning better money.

Arriving in Fraserburgh after several days travel, Dilip was set to work with three other fishermen, fishing for scallops off the Northeast coast of Scotland. Dilip said it was "demanding work which required full concentration at all times".

His main reason for being on our shores was to support his whole family back home and when he lay on his bunk he would think of the times back home where he would be sitting round the dining room table with his family or at Holy Cross Church where he would teach the younger children catechism on a Saturday and Sunday, his memories were among the few things that kept him sane during this time.

It was only three months into his yearlong contract that disaster struck and a machinery failure caused a major accident which involved Dilip. It certainly was all hands on deck and an air ambulance was called for. Dilip was air-lifted to the Aberdeen Royal Infirmary through the early morning darkness and he was immediately

It was during this difficult time in hospital that the Stella Maris port chaplain met with Dilip and through regular visits they struck up a great friendship.

operated on. Due to the severity of the accident, he went through a five hour operation where the surgeons had to amputate three and a half fingers and the thumb of his left hand.

It was during this difficult time in hospital that the Stella Maris port chaplain met with Dilip and through regular visits they struck up a great friendship. After a month in hospital Dilip was released and went up to stay in Peterhead where Fr Anil Gonsalves the local priest, Ruth Watt the local ship visitor and Raj Selvaraj a local Sri Lankan business man were able to regularly pop in to see him, bringing him to church also taking him shopping. Stella Maris and the local Church were able to give him assistance and advice and supported him through the next fifteen months until he received a new prosthetic hand and his full compensation whereupon he returned to his family and friends. Dilip was unable to return to the same life he had left but he was able to help out in small ways even down to selling the fish his father was catching on the new vessel they were able to purchase with some of the monies.

Rev Doug Duncan, the local Northeast Scotland port chaplain went out in February this year to meet Dilip and his family, he particularly enjoyed the Sri Lankan hospitality and climate. He said "it was a wonderful experience to be with Dilip in his own surroundings", Doug visited Dilip's church and served with the local priest Fr Roshan Chaminda at the Sunday Mass.

Dilip had only come to work in the fishing industry to earn some money to look after his family but had returned very different. The issues surrounding safety at work need constant improvement but the consolation Dilip received from his faith in God and the support received from Stella Maris and the Catholic community in Scotland proved an invaluable help.

Dilip was able to show Rev Duncan around the church premises and introduced him to the catechesis classes that he had taught before the accident. Since his return Dilip has been even more involved in teaching grade 9 Sunday school catechesis and now is also on various committees in his Church.





Apostleship of the Sea

Supporting Seafarers Worldwide

The Joyful Mysteries

Said on Monday and Saturday

1. The Annunciation of the Lord to Mary
2. The Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth
3. The Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ
4. The Presentation of our Lord
5. Finding Jesus in the Temple at age twelve

The Sorrowful Mysteries

Said on Tuesday and Friday

1. The Agony of Jesus in the Garden
2. The Scourging at the Pillar
3. Jesus is Crowned with Thorns
4. Jesus carries the Cross
5. The Crucifixion of our Lord

The Glorious Mysteries

Said on Wednesday and Sunday

1. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ
2. The Ascension of Jesus to Heaven
3. The Descent of the Holy Spirit
4. The Assumption of Mary into Heaven
5. Mary is Crowned as Queen of Heaven

The Mysteries of Light

Said on Thursday

1. The Baptism in the Jordan
2. The Wedding at Cana
3. The Proclamation of the Kingdom
4. The Transfiguration
5. The Institution of the Eucharist



How to say the Rosary

October is the Month dedicated to the Holy Rosary here is how to pray it.

Make the Sign of the Cross and say the *"Apostles' Creed"*. Say the *"Our Father"*.

Say three *"Hail Marys"* for Faith, Hope, and Charity then say the *"Glory Be"*.

Announce the First Mystery and then say the *"Our Father"*. Then, say ten *"Hail Marys"* while meditating on the Mystery. Say the *"Glory Be"*. Announce the Second Mystery; then say the *"Our Father"* and repeat these steps as you continue through the remaining Mysteries.

Say the *"Hail Holy Queen"*, then a *"Final Prayer"*. Make the *"Sign of the Cross"*

