

Stella Maris

apostleshipofthesea.org.uk

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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

39 Eccleston Square
London, SW1V 1BX

Tel: +44 020 7901 1931

Email: info@apostleshipofthesea.org.uk

facebook.com/AoS.GB

www.apostleshipofthesea.org.uk

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

Port Focus: Hamburg, Germany



Stella Maris Hamburg welcomes seafarers to the third largest port in Europe. The Port is known as Germany's Gateway to the World. Hamburg is a modern pearl in the North of Germany and a popular tourist destination especially for culture and music with great orchestras like the Elbphilharmonie and Musical theatre too. Hamburg has been a major trade centre in central Europe for over 800 years and the Port today welcomes commercial shipping, cruise liners and is a major shipbuilding centre.

Though the Port is in a central location it is on the other side of the large river Elbe which is difficult to cross so Stella Maris staff offer not only information about the city but transportation as well.

We extend a warm welcome to seafarers of every nationality and religion. Because of the size of the port, there are over 43 km of quays for oceangoing vessels, there is a great need for transport for seafarers not only to our centre but also beyond. We welcome people to our new centre in the middle of

the working port which offers free Wi-Fi, a chapel as well as a garden and karaoke. On ship visits we bring newspapers, information about the city and details of where to get Sim cards. We are also there to listen to concerns, share a moment of prayer and help to arrange Holy Mass on board or give help to get to Catholic services in the city.

Stella Maris Hamburg has a very close connection to the Filipino Catholic Community in Hamburg, through the work of Fr Simon Boiser our chaplain, a Filipino working part time for Stella Maris Hamburg.

On-board support: Ship visiting is undertaken from 10:00 to 11:00 and from 15:00 to 16:00.

Travel services: We can bring seafarers to our centre from their ships by our minibuses on request. We can also bring seafarers to the city centre wherever they wish.

Visit us on Facebook
www.facebook.com/Stella-Maris-Hamburg



Stella Maris in Hamburg

Ellerholzweg 1a
20457 Hamburg

Mobile: +49 163 - 248 77 17

Tel.: +49 40 - 41 54 28 72

Fax: +49 40 - 41 54 28 73

E-Mail: info@stella-maris.de



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Sunday at Sea – 18th Sunday in Ordinary Time 4th August - Commentary by Fr Colum Kelly

Gospel 12:13-21

A man in the crowd said to Jesus, 'Master, tell my brother to give me a share of our inheritance.' 'My friend,' he replied, 'who appointed me your judge, or the arbitrator of your claims?' Then he said to them, 'Watch, and be on your guard against avarice of any kind, for a man's life is not made secure by what he owns, even when he has more than he needs.'

Then he told them a parable: 'There was once a rich man who, having had a good harvest from his land, thought to himself, "What am I to do? I have not enough room to store my crops." Then he said, "This is what I will do: I will pull down my barns and build bigger ones, and store all my grain and my goods in them, and I will say to my soul: My soul, you have plenty of good things laid by for many years to come; take things easy, eat, drink, have a good time." But God said to him, "Fool! This very night the demand will be made for your soul; and this hoard of yours, whose will it be then?" So it is when a man stores up treasure for himself in place of making himself rich in the sight of God.'

**"I will say to my soul,
you have plenty of good
things laid by for many
years to come"**

The Gospel and You

Jesus is interrupted, while teaching his disciples, by a man who wants his rightful share of his family inheritance. He seems a bit rude, and he seems to miss the point about what Jesus is teaching. So Jesus uses the interruption to tell a parable about the possible trap of possessions. In the story a man is so wealthy, he doesn't have room to store all his possessions. He has two obvious choices. He can give some of it away to those who may have little or he can build bigger storage barns. The man has never considered giving any of it away. For him having so much gives him a feeling of power over others, a feeling that he has total control of his life.

This rich man is really poor in the sight of God. His language betrays his thoughts of being in control - untouchable. "I will say to my soul, you have plenty of good things laid by for many years to come"

He is so arrogant that he thinks he can even determine how long he will live, that he can choose the moment of his death. Jesus ends the parable with the stark warning that it is the Lord who determines the length of our lives, no matter how much we think we are in control.

Maybe you too are a dreamer especially if your life is difficult and your job harsh. Do you dream of one day winning the lottery? Many dream with good intentions of sharing what they would win but when the time comes selfishness takes over. We hear of so many who win great sums of money but then whose lives turn sour as they selfishly hoard or protect their good fortune, grow anxious and paranoid.

A simple lesson then. We need to give away some of our own possessions, not just our wealth but our love, our time in order to be healthy.



Sunday at Sea – 19th Sunday 11th August

Gospel Luke 12:35-40

Jesus said to his disciples: 'See that you are dressed for action and have your lamps lit. Be like men waiting for their master to return from the wedding feast, ready to open the door as soon as he comes and knocks. Happy those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes. I tell you solemnly, he will put on an apron, sit them down at table and wait on them. It may be in the second watch he comes, or in the third, but happy those servants if he finds them ready. You may be quite sure of this, that if the householder had known at what hour the burglar would come, he would not have let anyone break through the wall of his house. You too must stand ready, because the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.'

**The gospel says:
"Be dressed for action"
and blessed are those
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It takes a deep breath
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The Gospel and You

The context of today's gospel is the awareness of Jesus that his conflict with the Jewish authorities is likely to end in his arrest and death. He is trying to prepare his disciples to be ready for this.

Jesus teaches us that central to the test of faith is the task of being constantly ready for the master's return. In many ways Jesus stresses that the time of his return will be a surprise to all. Comparisons are made to the return of the master from a wedding feast when the coming is certain but the timing is not. Or being ready for a burglar when not even the coming is certain.

But Jesus was not merely referring to the end of time when the Lord will come and all of us face judgement for the lives we have led. The Lord comes to us in many guises and in the most unexpected ways and we have to be ready for that too.

Jesus is knocking at our doors on a daily basis. We are being challenged to recognise him in the guise of a stranger, a person who is ill or who needs an encouraging word or a gentle touch. These moments are to be treasured as encounters with Christ, moments when we are truly "ready". Opportunities like these may not come very often.

The gospel says: "Be dressed for action" and blessed are those who are ready and alert. It takes a deep breath of faith to be ready for any unexpected event which may come upon us. But that is the call of the Gospel.

Whether on land or at sea, we live in worlds full of noise with many things crying out for our attention. It would be very easy to block out the call of the Lord to each one of us. May we never be deaf, blind or indifferent to the coming of the Lord in the ordinary moments of every day.



Sunday at Sea – Solemnity of the Assumption 15th August

Gospel Luke 1:39-56

Mary set out at that time and went as quickly as she could to a town in the hill country of Judah. She went into Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. Now as soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. She gave a loud cry and said, 'Of all women you are the most blessed, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. Why should I be honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord? For the moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leapt for joy. Yes, blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled.'

And Mary said:

'My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord and my spirit exults in God my saviour; because he has looked upon his lowly handmaid. Yes, from this day forward all generations will call me blessed, for the Almighty has done great things for me. Holy is his name, and his mercy reaches from age to age for those who fear him. He has shown the power of his arm, he has routed the proud of heart. He has pulled down princes from their thrones and exalted the lowly. The hungry he has filled with good things, the rich sent empty away. He has come to the help of Israel his servant, mindful of his mercy – according to the promise he made to our ancestors – of his mercy to Abraham and to his descendants for ever.'
Mary stayed with Elizabeth about three months and then went back home.

The Gospel and You

I'm told that many people who book to go on cruise holidays receive a dvd or a video link pointing out all the things they can look forward to on that holiday of a lifetime.

God doesn't send us a DVD. But God does give us this amazing Feast Day of the Assumption of Mary, as our preview of where we are going one day. We know, that where Mary went when she left this world, is exactly where we want to go, eventually, after we leave this earth.

Each Marian feast is really a celebration of Jesus. Mary's holiness comes from her role in the life of her son. And because she is the model for the Christian faith, her feasts are also about us.

Mary is an example of how God often works through the poor and unknown to carry out His plan for redemption. It is a feast that gives genuine hope to all who doubt the importance of their own lives.

Many people put us down and make us feel inadequate but we are unique, made and called by God in a very special way. God asks us to do what he has asked nobody else to do. That's how special we are! Sadly we see evidence of hopelessness and despair in many quarters today. In today's Gospel Mary sums up her relationship with God in the words "the Almighty has done great things for me". So this is a Feast inviting us to believe that God can do great things for each one of us.

The central part of today's gospel is the wonderful Magnificat prayer, a song praising God who works great things through humble and unknown people, just like Mary "for the Lord has routed the proud of heart. He has pulled down princes from their thrones and exalted the lowly. The hungry he has filled with good things, the rich sent empty away."



Sunday at Sea – 20th Sunday in Ordinary Time 18th August

Gospel Luke 12:49-53

I am not here to bring peace, but rather division. Jesus said to his disciples: 'I have come to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were blazing already! There is a baptism I must still receive, and how great is my distress till it is over!

'Do you suppose that I am here to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. For from now on a household of five will be divided: three against two and two against three; the father divided against the son, son against father, mother against daughter, daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law, daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.'

The Gospel and You

Some of Jesus's teaching especially on forgiveness and peace may have given the impression that he was preaching a soft gospel. Even John the Baptist had his doubts. But here Jesus assures his listeners that Christian discipleship is costly, even causing division in families. How true that prophecy was to become in the early Church when families betrayed one another to try to preserve themselves from persecution.

The anguish of Jesus, as he approaches the time of his testing and trial, is evident. He so longs for this time to be over, and his mission completed. Jesus has seen enough now to know that this mission will not be a straightforward one; he has preached the Good News, but many people have rejected his message.

Jesus does not set out to cause conflict, but his message is so radical that it inevitably does cause division in certain situations and relationships. And though his message is peace, it is such a hard-won peace that it can seem more like division.

Certainly Jesus came to bring peace. But it would never be superficial peace. It would never mean everyone agreeing. It would never make every follower likeable and appreciated by everyone else. It would never mean a life filled with nothing but harmony, as if there would be no anger, no division, no uncertainty, no struggles. Those who would go Jesus's way travel a road with trouble and trial, sacrifice and sadness. Yes, there will be joy, and glory, and life eternal in heaven, but also here and now. But the here and now is not only happiness but hardship, not only unity but division. The road ahead is good but not an easy road to travel.

Life has its difficulties for all. Nowhere in scripture does it say that following every commandment of the Lord will free us from future harm. Foolish indeed anyone who should think this way.

Life has its difficulties for all. Nowhere in scripture does it say that following every commandment of the Lord will free us from future harm.



Sunday at Sea – 21st Sunday in Ordinary Time

25th August

Gospel Luke 13:22-30

Through towns and villages Jesus went teaching, making his way to Jerusalem. Someone said to him, ‘Sir, will there be only a few saved?’ He said to them, ‘Try your best to enter by the narrow door, because, I tell you, many will try to enter and will not succeed.

‘Once the master of the house has got up and locked the door, you may find yourself knocking on the door, saying, “Lord, open to us” but he will answer, “I do not know where you come from.” Then you will find yourself saying, “We once ate and drank in your company; you taught in our streets” but he will reply, “I do not know where you come from. Away from me, all you wicked men!” Then there will be weeping and grinding of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves turned outside. And men from east and west, from north and south, will come to take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God.

‘Yes, there are those now last who will be first, and those now first who will be last.’

The Gospel and You

So Luke continues to tell of Jesus’s teaching on the journey up to Jerusalem. Along the way he is asked a question about how many will be saved. He doesn’t answer it directly but that there will be many who will not be saved, even though they

may think differently. Can we presume salvation for ourselves?

There’s a question often asked about God’s goodness. How can an all-good God condemn someone for all eternity? It’s a false question. God doesn’t send anyone to hell and God doesn’t deal out eternal punishment. God offers us life and the choice is ours as to whether we accept that or not. God sends his life into the world and we can choose that life or reject it. We judge ourselves in making that choice. If we choose life, we are ultimately choosing heaven. If we reject life, we end up living outside of life and that ultimately is hell. But we make that choice, God doesn’t send us anywhere.

Jesus points out that true discipleship is not a casual relationship with Jesus or a selective acceptance of his teaching. The cost of discipleship involves a sacrificial kind of love which commits the believer to Christ and to all that he teaches, both by word and example. So eternal life is not a simple matter of eating with Jesus and listening to his words

Perhaps this gospel poses this very question to each of us. Is our following of Jesus half-hearted, or fully committed? Even though the door to God’s kingdom may be narrow, due to the degree of commitment required, it is open and available to everyone. People will come to it from east and west, from north and south – from everywhere, in fact. Those who ‘stand outside’ are those who refuse to accept the reign of peace and justice, joy and love, which God so graciously and freely offers to everyone.



Do you have a faith story to share? email info@apostleshipofthesea.org.uk

Responding to ‘the call’ without conditions – Fr John Lavers

Faith Stories

By Greg Watts

“The strength of God’s grace during my vocational discernment was always very strong and positive. However, I would say that it became acute when I was serving and helping with Mother Teresa’s Missionaries of Charity sisters,” says Father John Lavers, a Stella Maris port chaplain in Southampton.

He trained at Holy Apostles College and Seminary in Connecticut, and was ordained in 2011. His home diocese gave him permission to move to England and serve in the Diocese of Portsmouth. He joined Stella Maris last year after working in a parish in Bournemouth and on the island of Alderney.

“Working and praying with the Missionaries of Charity gave to me the essence of what it means to be a servant to God’s people no matter in what circumstance you find them in,” said Father John.

The sisters also led him to discover Franciscan spirituality. “The sisters have a strong devotion to St Francis of Assisi because of the way he lived the life of poverty. On a visit to Rome in the 1990s, while working with the sisters, they encouraged me to make a day visit to Assisi, which I did. After that experience of visiting Assisi, I knew I had found my spiritual home in St Francis.”

St Francis believed in going out to meet people where where they were.

“It’s also extremely important to be aware of how Our Lord called his first four disciples, who were fisherman and left everything to follow Christ Jesus. This is responding to ‘the call’ without conditions.

“Furthermore, it is also important to realise and meditate on the Gospel passages that involve such themes which relate to the sea, such as: the struggle to earn a living from the sea, fishing, boats and nets, bad weather, almost drowning, transport, food and miracles. All of these particular points contribute to the gospels and are all designed to teach us something about our faith and how we are to grow in love for Jesus.”

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“I began my discernment in 1979, and although I was slow to respond to God’s call, Our Lord was patient in allowing me to have some wonderful experiences, which I can now see are benefiting and supporting the needs of seafarers. Once you have done everything in terms of your career, you start to think how can you give back and serve in a different way,” he said.

Before becoming a priest, Father John spent 30 years working in policing, military, intelligence, and national security for the Canadian Federal Government.

During this time, he was involved in a major maritime incident in 1986 when over 70 migrants were smuggled onto a container which sailed from Germany to Canada.

“The captain of the ship, instead of landing the migrants on dry land somewhere along the east coast of Canada decided to put them all off his ship in open life-boats at night in the middle of the North Atlantic Ocean and told them to row to shore.

“Without protective clothing, lights, communications, or any kind of navigational equipment, these people would have perished at sea. By chance they were spotted by local fishermen, who were able to rescue them from certain death.



The Good Life: Malaria

Malaria remains one of the world's leading killers and seafarers must not lower their guard when visiting an area where there is a risk of exposure to this mosquito-borne disease.

After more than a decade of steady advances in fighting malaria progress has levelled off. According to WHO's latest World malaria report, no significant gains were made in reducing malaria cases in the period 2015 to 2017. The estimated number of malaria deaths in 2017, at 435,000, remained virtually unchanged over the previous year. "A massive wake-up call", says the WHO.

It is therefore important that shipowners and operators continue to safeguard crew by focussing on awareness of recent areas with an outbreak of malaria as well as implementing prevention measures, including educating the crew.

Key facts about malaria

- Malaria is a life-threatening disease caused by parasites transmitted to people through the bites of infected female Anopheles mosquitoes.
- The Anopheles mosquito is active mainly at night, between dusk and dawn.
- Malaria is an acute febrile illness and symptoms usually appear 10–15 days after the infective mosquito bite. The first symptoms – fever, headache, and chills – may be mild and difficult to recognise as malaria. If not treated within 24 hours, the disease can progress to severe illness, often leading to death. Immediate medical attention should therefore be sought to ensure early diagnosis.
- In 2017, there were an estimated 219 million cases of malaria in 87 countries. The estimated number of malaria deaths stood at 435,000.
- Most malaria cases and deaths, approximately 90%, occur in sub-Saharan Africa. However, the WHO regions of South-East Asia, Eastern

Mediterranean, Western Pacific, and the Americas are also at risk.

- Fifteen countries in sub-Saharan Africa and India carried almost 80% of the global malaria burden. Five countries accounted for nearly half of all malaria cases worldwide: Nigeria (25%), Democratic Republic of the Congo (11%), Mozambique (5%), India (4%) and Uganda (4%).
- Malaria is preventable and curable.

Recommended precautions

Shipowners and operators with vessels trading to countries and areas with ongoing malaria transmission should ensure that these vessels are able to deal with the various challenges that this disease can bring. Depending on the area of trade, risks related to other mosquito-borne diseases, such as dengue, yellow fever, chikungunya and zika, should also be taken into account when planning for the next voyages. The following precautions should be considered:

Prior to visiting affected areas

- Monitor the WHO website and similar sources for official advice regarding any ongoing outbreaks. Contact a medical practitioner if in doubt.
- Review all the ports to be visited and evaluate the risk. Consider the length of stay in an affected area, time spent at sea, in port, on rivers, etc., as well as planned shore leaves by the crew.
- Inform the crew about the risks and the precautions to be taken as well as actions to be taken if illness occurs at sea. Stress that a headache, fever and flu-like symptoms are always grounds for contacting the medical officer.
- Ensure sufficient supplies of effective insect repellents (e.g. hose containing DEET, picaridin or IR3535), light coloured boiler suits, porthole/door mesh screens and bed-nets.
- Consider, in close co-operation with a medical doctor and based on the vessel's expected exposure time in an affected area, if the crew should take an anti-malarial drug.

During a visit to affected areas

- Implement measures to avoid mosquito bites, e.g. wear protective clothing, stay in air-conditioned screened accommodation areas, use bed-nets in sleeping areas. Use effective insect repellents on exposed skin and/or clothing as directed on the product label and when using a sunscreen, the recommendation is to apply sunscreen first, followed by repellent.
- If crew members are taking anti-malarial drugs, implement a method of control to ensure they take the medication at the prescribed times, e.g. via a log book.
- Remove pools of stagnant water, dew or rain in order for the vessel not to create its own mosquito breeding grounds. Pay particular attention to areas such as lifeboats, coiled mooring ropes, bilges, scuppers, awnings and gutters.

After a visit to affected areas

- Seek medical advice over the radio if malaria is suspected on board. Normally the vessel is in port only for a short time and will most probably be back at sea when symptoms are noticed due to an incubation period of several days.
- Place the patient under close observation and undertake the required onboard treatment, preferably in close co-operation with a medical doctor. Evacuation may be the only solution if the patient's condition does not improve.

Sources of information

Prevention requires vigilance so stay up to date! Here are some recommended sources of information:

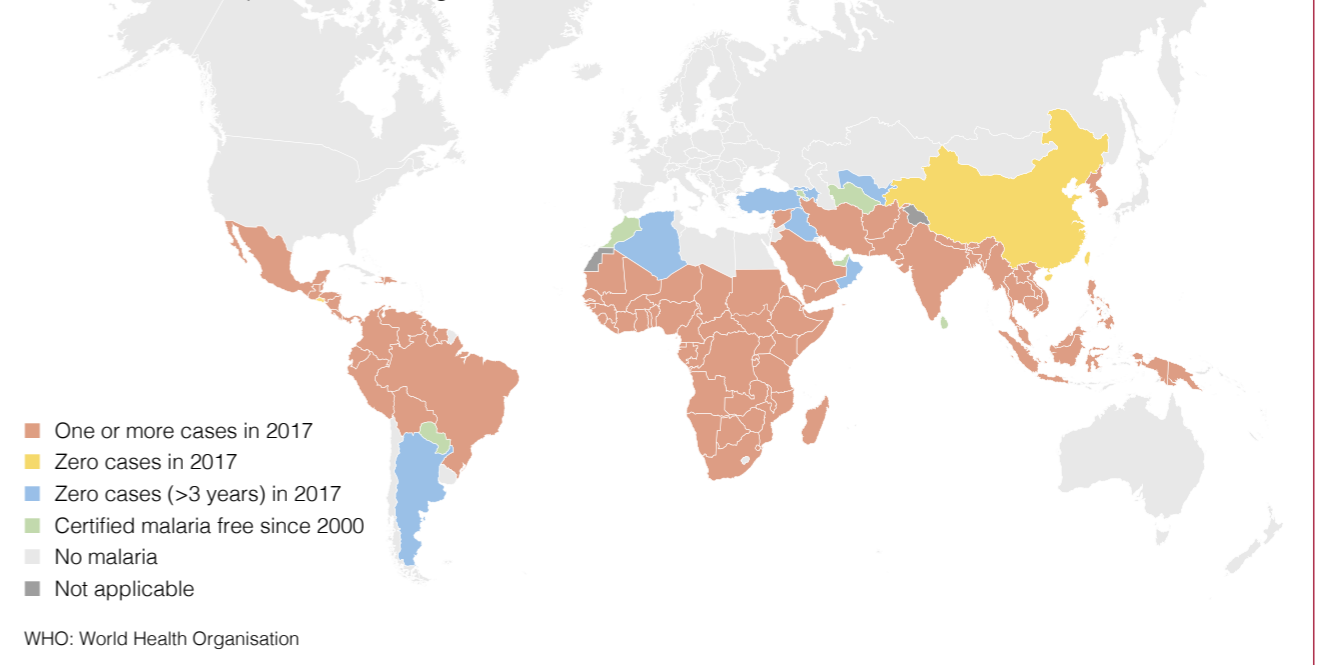
- Detailed information about malaria and other mosquito-borne diseases – their characteristics, treatment, prevention, geographical distribution and recent outbreaks – are available via WHO's "Health topics".
- The United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provides similar information via its "Disease & Conditions A-Z Index".
- The CDC's general "Destination List" is a good starting point for a voyage specific risk assessment related mosquito-borne diseases.

National governments may also publish safety alerts concerning seasonal outbreaks of the diseases on their "safe travel" websites. Relevant information can also be obtained from medical doctors and local vaccination offices.

Article courtesy of Gard marine insurance www.gard.no



Countries with indigenous cases in 2000 and their status by 2017 Countries with zero indigenous cases over at least the past 3 consecutive years are considered to be malaria free. All countries in the WHO European Region reported zero indigenous cases in 2016 and again in 2017. In 2017, both China and El Salvador reported zero indigenous cases. *Source: WHO database.*





The presence of Stella Maris in the ports, large and small, is already a sign of God's fatherhood and the fact that, in his eyes, we are all children, brothers and sisters to one another. Your presence is also a sign of the primordial worth of the human person, prior to and above every other interest, and an incentive for everyone, starting with the poorest, to work for justice and respect for fundamental rights.

(Pope Francis June 2019)



**Apostleship
of the Sea**

Supporting Seafarers Worldwide