

APOSTOLATUS MARIS BULLETIN



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Dear Friends,

It is our pleasure to greet you on the occasion of the 100th issue of the *Apostolatus Maris* Bulletin, which began publication in June 1972. At that time, this Pontifical Council was still called the Pontifical Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrations and Tourism, which Pope Paul VI created in 1970.

Since then, so many events have marked truly significant steps towards achieving projects carried out together in time! It would be too long to go back over them again, even if we limited ourselves to the most outstanding ones. What we can state, however, is that the Apostleship of the Sea has continued in these years in the service of seafarers and fishers, and now also cruise ship passengers and workers, and adapted rightly to the circumstances in order to respond better to the needs and situations.

Today more than ever, seafarers need and appreciate the Church's commitment to them also because they are often invisible, even though they make up a crucial part of the global economy. But they are not invisible for their families and organizations like the Apostleship of the Sea that give voice to those who cannot make themselves heard.

We would add precisely for this special issue that communication is a very important instrument in our pastoral care because it allows us to get to know each other better and to observe the work being carried out in the different countries. Our Bulletin has surely contributed to this exchange with testimonies from the four corners of the world.

We would not want to end this brief Message without thanking all those who have done their best over the years to make our modest publication an instrument of information for those who serve the people of the sea. We hope that the Bulletin (which has a new typographical design for this special occasion) will continue to be an instrument of communion and a source of inspiration for you. For this purpose, we count on your cooperation by sending us articles and news about the initiatives in favor of the vast world of the sea.

Cardinal Renato Raffaele Martino, President
+Archbishop Agostino Marchetto, Secretary



MESSAGE FROM THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL

Dear Brothers and Sisters of the Apostleship of the Sea,

Christmas is the family feast par excellence. It is also the feast of sharing and hospitality for all Christians and for men and women of good will. For us of the Apostleship of the Sea, it is one of the intense moments when our pastoral care marked by hospitality, solidarity and fraternity takes on its full meaning. This is not surprising if we think of the events that night in Bethlehem.

Christians have been celebrating each year the birth of that little child in the manger of a poor stable surrounded by Mary and Joseph. Despite the poverty of the setting, the angels' song and the joy brought by the shepherds' warm presence around the newborn baby transformed the place.

The well-off and self-righteous considered the shepherds to be not pure people, of little worth, but they were essential to the economy of the era, somewhat like the seafarers of today, the invisible port workers! And yet, those shepherds would be the privileged witnesses to the God's irruption into our world and the first to proclaim the great good news.

Their presence already gave the tone to Jesus' future life. In fact, throughout the Gospels we are struck by Christ's concern and nearness to the poor, the humble, the sick, the nobodies and the marginalized. He was even criticized and ostracized for eating with sinners and people with a bad reputation. At Christmas, the Apostleship of the Sea is called to intensify its presence by giving ever more faithful witness to God's presence and love for the poor, people passing through and foreigners.



For Christmas, our wish is that the Apostleship of the Sea, through its network of hospitality, fraternity and solidarity, will bring a little joy and light to all those people who are waiting for joy and light on that long night. It is up to each one of us, according to our circumstances, to find the message of hope and encouragement most suited to all the men and women who "walk in darkness". Like the shepherds, may our fraternal and cordial presence brighten their loneliness and sadness.

We invite you finally to look to the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, the icon of all families, and to entrust all the people of the sea to them.

With our best wishes and prayers for a joyful, serene Christmas and a New Year filled with the happiness in the Lord.

Cardinal **Renato Raffaele Martino**, President

+Archbishop **Agostino Marchetto**, Secretary



26TH ANNUAL POLISH PILGRIMAGE OF THE PEOPLE OF THE SEA TO JASNA GÓRA

The Way of the Cross along the Walls of Jasna Góra

Poland. The People of the Sea, together with their chaplains, took part in the 26th annual pilgrimage to Jasna Góra on Friday and Saturday, September 19th-20th. There were captains, officers, mechanics, port and shipyard workers, and seafarer families among the pilgrims. They were accompanied by the seminarians from the Gdańsk Seminary.

We started out early in the morning on Friday, September 19th, with the pilgrims from different parts of Poland arrived in Częstochowa in the evening. We met up with other groups of pilgrims in the Chapel of Our Lady in front of the Black Madonna's picture for the daily supplication.

On the following day, the Mass in the Chapel of the Black Madonna was presided by Bishop Ryszard Kasyna, who was elected as AOS Episcopal Promoter during the 344th Meeting of the Polish Episcopal Conference to replace Archbishop Tadeusz Gocłowski who held that post for nineteen years. The liturgy was concelebrated by eight priests, including the organizer of the Pilgrimage, Fr. Edward Pracz, and the Chancellor, Fr. Stanisław Zięba, the co-organizer.

"Even the most splendid ships, cutters, machines and port facilities are not enough, although they are necessary for everyday life and work, because every human being, even an adult, longs for a mother's heart, for goodness, love, understanding, kindness, the

spiritual culture", said Bishop Ryszard Kasyna in his Homily. "Today, here at Jasna Góra, in our National Shrine, during the traditional Pilgrimage of the People of the Sea, true to the beliefs of our fathers and mothers, we thank God for the community we are, and for the fact that the Church has a Mother (...) We cry out to Her to be our Mother in these difficult times we are living. Be our Mother, you who in life and history shine as the Star of Hope".

"Our Lady teaches us how to not give up in hard times and suffering and how to not lose faith when it seems to be taken away from us. She is the Mother of the powerful spirit that should also live in us", stated the AOS Episcopal Promoter. "Let us ask Her to always be Mary, the Star of the Sea, so that thanks to Her we will find our way to Christ, especially in the dark and stormy moments of our lives". The pilgrims also prayed for those who did not return from the sea.



In an interview, Fr. Edward Pracz, who is also the AOS Coordinator for Europe, said: "I started to work as a chaplain on the Sea of Okhock for five months with fishermen on trawlers with fish. I was also fortunate to work on passenger ships and with the students of the Maritime Academy on board the sailing vessel 'Dar Młodości'. I visit ships and I am with seafarers who come to our port from many parts of the world. It is an interesting work". Piotr Spychała, a Captain from

Gdynia, added: "A seafarer's work is interesting, and when it is done with passion, it can even become a pleasure".

After Mass the pilgrims gathered in St. Joseph's Chapel to listen to the presentation made by a Professor and Captain from the Maritime Academy, Adam Weintrit, the Dean of the Navigation Faculty. He gave a power point presentation about St. Paul's sea voyages that provided the basic facts, but he enriched them with details about navigational practice. Many pilgrims took part in this.

* * *

After the Pilgrimage to Jasna Góra, I had the chance to participate in some pleasant events. On October 2nd, I blessed the ship for the Jewish ship-owner who chartered it to the Nyck Line Company. During my conversation with him I remarked that we do not have any Stella Maris Mission in Israel. I suggested that it would be great if we could establish a Stella Maris Center in Haifa. He replied: "No problem. We'll help". I said I needed a special space for it and he invited me to the Holy Land to look for the proper place.

On October 4th, the solemn Mass at our church in Portowa Street opened the inauguration of the Academic Year at the Gdynia Maritime Academy to which many professors and students came encouraged by their deans. In the homily, I told them to be witnesses to Christ both in the Maritime Academy and in their work at sea.

At 11 a.m., in Kościuszki Square, where the Mass during the XXII AOS World Congress was



celebrated on board the "Dar Młodzieży", the official inauguration took place with the grades of the first year students from four faculties. I accompanied the Bishop Promoter, H.E. Msgr. Ryszard Kasyna.

That same weekend, on October 4th and 5th, the International Sports Weekend at Kaszuby took place. Almost a hundred seafarers participated in different sports, such as basketball, football, tennis and table tennis. At 5 p.m. on Sunday, we celebrated Holy Mass and I sensed an unusual atmosphere. Regarding this, one seafarer said that we created one big international seafarer family because international teams were included in this kind of event for the first time in their lives.

After the Mass there was a party where the Kashubian Folk Band played. It concluded with a Prize Giving Ceremony. The participants were awarded trophies, diplomas and medals. Our local Gdańsk TV recorded the event.

The next day, Monday, October 6th, I took some orphaned families to attend Sunday Masses in our church for a barbecue in Kaszuby to help them get over their sadness and to be in solidarity with them as witnesses of hope through the proclamation of the Word, Liturgy and Diaconia.

Work with the people of the sea can give so much satisfaction!

Fr. Edward Pracz
AOS National Director
AOS Regional Coordinator for Europe



THE WORLD DAY OF THE SEA CELEBRATED IN MARSEILLE

Septembre
en Mer 2008

On Sunday September 28, 2008, the «World Day of the Sea» took on a very particular and rich meaning in Marseille. First of all, a Mass at Notre Dame de la Garde brought together many members of the maritime community, the merchant marine, fishing, the port services, sea rescue, the National Navy and students, but also members of the administration and the teaching body of the National School of the Merchant Marine, without forgetting the amateur sailors.

The great number of young couples was remarkable, most of them former students of the school's chaplaincy. Their presence with their children and babies bodes well for the future and for the influence of Christians on board ships and in the maritime world.

This year we joined in the activities of the «Septembre en Mer». Throughout the month, it displays everything that is lived in Marseille and its surroundings from the maritime viewpoint. Hundreds of people met on the hill for the Mass presided by Msgr. Jacques Bouchet, the new Rector of the Basilica, and concelebrated by Arnaud de Boissieu and Father Gabriel Ramel.

At the end of the celebration, the procession reached the new stele for those who died at sea for a moment of prayer. Father Bouchet, in the presence of the families, blessed our monument and the names of the two young men who did not return to the port: Sebastian, who fell from a container ship in 2003, and François-Xavier following a jet ski accident in 2006. Mrs. Elisabeth Rigal and Mr. Christian Maurel laid a wreath of flowers. The ceremony ended with the sound of the Notre Dame de la Garde's bell to which the sirens of the trade boats and the Old Port responded. From now on, there is a name plate in Marseilles for our seafarers. This year is important for us because it marks the inauguration of a place where families will be able to meet at any time and where pilgrims, when they simply read the inscription, can say a real prayer.

Afterwards we went to a large hall under the basilica to have an aperitif together, and those who wanted to continued the meeting with a picnic. This year's new formula proved to be much better than the previous ones. Thanks to the synchronization with the World Day of the Sea, the date made it possible for everyone to become more aware that the «Apostleship of the Sea» has a universal dimension and goes far beyond the limits of a diocese, region or country. Our association with «Septembre en Mer» enabled us to introduce a spiritual dimension into these Marseillaise maritime festivities. In the future, we can invite the other religious denominations to do likewise on the same day. Scheduling the Mass at 10 a.m. facilitated the young couples' presence with their little children and made it possible to show a renewed face of the Mission of the Sea.

Now we still have to finish the work of converting our location. We are certain that the dynamism and good will of the whole team of Notre Dame de la Garde, in addition to the seafarers' satisfaction at seeing this place built, will soon produce a very fine result.

Jean-Philippe Rigaud, Deacon of the seafarers in Marseille



DEPREDATION OF THE SEAS

How illegal fishing is impoverishing Africa



(from *Avvenire*, October 11, 2008)

The phenomenon of illegal fishing in the waters of the Indian Ocean, in addition to drastically impoverishing the valuable ecosystem, is bringing the economy based on fishing to its knees, together with many people who have found themselves in these past years deprived of the only resource on which their sustenance depends. It is estimated that within the span of one generation, many vast ocean areas that wash the eastern and southern regions of the [African] continent will be robbed of fauna useful to man.

The most recent alarm came from the meeting organized by the FAO at the end of January in Cape Town, South Africa. It is very difficult to evaluate the impact of the “depredation” of the seas; however, it has been calculated that the turnover from illegal fishing for the African area is equivalent to a billion dollars a year, a fourth of the entire continental export for

the fish sector. If we consider that fishing is responsible for 20% of Namibia’s exports and 10% of Mo-

For several years, the nations that look on the eastern and southern coasts of the Continent see their fish patrimony threatened by the activity of foreign firms. The damage to the economies of the region is estimated at a billion dollars a year. Jobs are lost and grave damage is done to the environment.

zambique’s, we can understand the impact of the phenomenon on countries whose economies are not flourishing.

The experts believe that the amount of fish along the more than 600 kilometers of Kenyan coast is decreasing drastically. A recent report from the British Department for International Development

confirms that Nairobi is losing approximately five million dollars and 10,000 tons of fish a year because of the illegal activity practiced by foreign boats.

“The government has never carried out countermeasures since the nation obtained its independence”, stated the Minister Paul Otuoma. “Since September 2008- he added- all the foreign boats that are found fishing within 200 nautical miles from the Kenyan coast must declare the quantity and quality of fish captured and pay the relative taxes to the authorities”.

Fishing boats from Europe, China, Japan and Korea cross through the EEZ, which extends between 12 and 200 nautical miles from the coast. Many times the ships also use flags of convenience to prevent the real owners from being recognized. The licenses cost between 12,000 and 20,000 dollars a year, or 5,000 a month. Many other States find themselves in situations similar to Kenya’s, especially on the eastern coast. For this reason, the World Bank has granted a loan to support fishing projects that include Mozambique, Mauritius, the Comoros, Madagascar, Tanzania, South Africa and the Seychelles in addition to Kenya.

The boats that fish illegally adopt the strategy of positioning themselves far from the coast with a “mother ship” from which smaller boats take off and go to the areas richest in fish...Besides tuna, over the years a growing reduction

EXCLUSIVE EXPLOITATION ZONES FAO is the watchdog

The phenomenon synthetically defined as “illegal” fishing includes what is called at the international level “illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing” (IUU). It includes all fishing without a license, and all the activities that violate the rules set down on the national, regional or international level. The main rules are based on the 1982 UN Convention on the Right of the Sea, which has been operative since 1994. It establishes the limit of the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) at 200 nautical miles from the coast. Each country can set its own EEZ and its rights can be sold to other parties, public or private. The FAO looks after the rules that make up the Code of Conduct for Fishing that has been in force since 1995. In 2001, the FAO also implemented the Plan of action to limit illegal fishing.

INDIAN OCEAN, FIGHT AGAINST ILLEGAL FISHING

END OF THE 7TH CONTROL MISSION



The seventh mission to control fishing in the Southeast of the Indian Ocean that opened last September 16th, came to an end on October 15th with the arrival of the French patrol boat *Osiris* in Port-Louis. This mission was directed by the Regional Coordination Unit of the Regional Surveillance Plan on Fishing in the Southeast of the Indian Ocean in close collaboration with the five member countries of the CIO.

Like the first six missions, this one aimed at locating, intercepting and punishing the boats that practice illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU) in the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) of the five CIO member countries. For the smooth running of the mission, the CIO countries contributed their human resources and deployed the logistical means at their disposal: boats, planes, operational control centers, and satellite technological support. This kind of mission, with intergovernmental cooperation, is a world first by the CIO. Seven missions in one year with more than 90 ships observed indicates the success of the regional surveillance plan of fishing. For some States that have no control means at sea, e.g., the Comoros, this was the first time that ships were controlled or even offenses recorded in their waters.

Illegal fishing is an economic, ecological and human scourge. This practice causes serious economic losses for the coastal countries and a real plundering of the fish populations living in the territorial waters of these countries and hence of the Indian Ocean. It would also seem that the living conditions on board these ships are not always among the most favorable.

On the other hand, the Regional Surveillance Plan of Fishing in the Southeast of the Indian Ocean follows an outline agreement signed on January 24, 2007 in the Seychelles between the Commission of the Indian Ocean (CIO) and the General Direction of Fishing of the European Union. The latter gives financial support to the CIO to the benefit of its member countries for a duration of three years to carry out activities aimed at reducing IUU fishing in the region.

Le Mauricien, October 15, 2008

has been noted in the number of sharks that are captured for their fins which are especially requested in the Far East...

The communities of fishers are the main victims of this phenomenon. Fishing is an occupation they have been carrying out for generations, but too many of them have already had to abandon it. Their culture has also changed: they no longer work as they did in the past, and those who can prefer to invest in tourism.

"The nets used by the fishing boats even capture fish that are 10 centimeters long and so they prevent them from repopulating", explains Tim Mc Clanahan of the

Wildlife Conservation Society. The long trawl net along the seabed destroys the corals and in this way changes the structure of the reef. The fishers ought to convert to using less destructive nets, or fish with a simple rod and bait. In six months, in the areas where we have worked, this practice which respects the marine environment has had great success. Both the capture of fish to the local communities' benefit, and the earnings derived from its sale have increased".

Finally, the "collateral" effects of illegal fishing should not be forgotten. In Tanzania, 110 people lose their lives every year because

of fishing practices that use explosives and sometimes hand bombs. Between July and November 2007, the inhabitants of the Tanga region recorded an explosion every ten minutes at certain times during the day.

At this rate, it is calculated that the stretch of sea between the Island of Zanzibar and the Tanzanian coast will see a drainage of fish equal to 100 million dollars, with the possible loss of 138,000 jobs related to marine tourism, a sector that covers 77% of foreign investments in the island.

(Matteo Frascini Koffi)

APOSTLESHIP OF THE SEA AND FORMATION OF FUTURE SEAFARERS

(*Servizio Migranti*, No. 2/2008)

The great development of the Italian Apostleship of the Sea (IAS) in these past five years brought about by increasing its activities



and getting structured in more modern and effective ways, could not avoid a comparison with the future of the country's navy.

The occasion came about three years ago when the new Academy of the Italian Merchant Marine was created in Genoa. It is a formative body which almost all the actors in the maritime world wanted strongly. From its conception, the

Academy aimed at forming the officers for the Italian fleet not only in the purely professional aspects, but also from an ethical and moral standpoint.

How important is it for the officer on board to be a complete and balanced man? Commanders, machine directors and first officers, especially on merchant ships, are the professional authority, but they are also the civil and moral authority. The use of discipline and fairness in work is entrusted to them, and when they are far from land, they often find themselves having to comfort, guide and "educate" their crews. The commander, or in any case the officer, represents the only reference point to authority on board, but this authority needs to be imbued more and more with authoritativeness.

This reasoning gave rise to the

subject of ethics in the Academy. Today this is a ticklish question because since there are no unique reference values as the Christian values once were for Europe, ethics can be understood in many different and even opposing ways.

The IAS, prompted by the actors in the Academy's project, accepted this challenge and collaborated with it precisely in this very difficult area of ethics. The choice to refer to the IAS attests to the esteem with which our activity in pastoral care and human promotion is regarded by public institutions, ship owners, formation bodies, labor organizations, etc.

Our collaboration and intervention have been carried out in different ways. The most important way has been Rev. Giacomo Martino's inclusion among the National Direction's teachers. His

How many officers will be needed for the merchant fleet in 2010?

For some time, messages of alarm have been sent out regarding the lack of personnel, especially officers, on board the international fleets. The question is very important and would deserve a more systematic approach... On the international level, the figures have been supplied and the sources are well known and informed. Decio Lucano, the former Director of "Vita e Mare", talks about this in his online newsletter. Lucano writes: "Jan Morten Eskit, the person in charge of the Norwegian firm Osm Group (specialized in managing new generation ships and offshore installations), stated, in the light of the current world credit situation, that this crisis is not as important as we are led to believe. There is something much more worrying for the world fleet: namely, the officers who are not being found and formed in sufficient numbers. The estimates drawn up (by Drew shipping consultants) in May 2008 indicated a lack of 84,000 officers in the near future. It is also estimated that more than 4,000 officers will be needed for the ships that arrive in the years 2009 and 2010". Unfortunately, "today we have already reached the threshold of a lack of 34,000 officers" around the world. "One of the factors is the great number of new ships delivered by the shipyards". Another is "the explosion of offshore research activity" for which "adequately prepared new officers are needed". A security problem is also feared. "The Scandinavian insurer Gard P&I Club anticipates that this will give rise to unqualified officers on deck". One possible consequence is "a 20-30% increase in maritime accidents due precisely to inexperience".

(from *Vita e Mare*, July-August-September-October 2008)

teaching aims at reaffirming principles that are recognized as a common denominator among all peoples but which have their essence in the Christian values that continue to permeate our society, whether it likes it or not. Moreover, Rev. Giacomo also brings his testimony as a seafarer (for several years he was a sailor as the chaplain on board). Last and no less important is the contribution he gives by transmitting his experience during the sometimes tragic moments when he assisted the most unfortunate seafarers whose ships were seized.

In this way we have achieved a strong presence among the young

aspiring officers. We hope that they will bring among the seafarers of their future crews values and choices that go in the direction of the promotion of the people of the sea. It is surely not easy to bring these young men to engage in certain reflections because they often seem to be interested mainly in their earnings and career.

Our commitment is to include these rightful objectives in a man-worker project that can be shared by all people of good will, beyond any differences in race or religion. Will we succeed? Dialogue, a constant presence and consistency are the most effective arms to win this challenge. For now, we limit our-

selves to recording the presence of a man of God in this project today when formation is only seen in a rigorously secular way. The first signs we have noticed are esteem and approval for the Apostleship of the Sea and its men and women even on the part of people who are apparently very far from us.

Let us continue the path we have undertaken to transform these youths into mature men of the sea who are also rich in the hope which the Holy Father speaks about today so insistently: a sign of goodness and human and moral development in our world.

Filipino Seafarers: Leading Global Maritime Service

Rev. Savino Bernardi, C.S.
AOS—Manila

This year's theme of the 13th National Seafarers' Day celebration on September 28, stands as a recognition of the world wide achievement of our Filipino seafarers and an invitation to take up the challenge for leadership in the maritime world services.

The recognition came in the form of a Thanksgiving Mass celebrated at the site of the monument to the seafarer along the Baywalk, Malate. The memorial of all seafarers victims of sea employment, fishing activities and even sea travellers, this year numbering over thousands of them due to onboard accidents and sickness, inclement weather and sea accidents, followed with the Rite of Remembrance in Manila Bay.

The challenge for leadership and excellence was expressed by the several messages delivered by authorities in Government and in the industry as well as by the winning oratorical and song-writing pieces ...

The most touching moment came with the throwing of a wreath at sea in remembrance of all the dear ones the sea had taken. Then those on board all threw a white rose to the waves, and some shed a tear as well.

(The Migrant Watch, Vol. 7 No 3—September 2008)

Italy rewards those who scrap old fishing boats and choose ecological his-tech

... The measure passed by the Minister for Agricultural Policies aims at reducing the extreme fragmentation of a sector which paradoxically has in its record numbers (in the EU, it is second only to Greece) the elements of its weakness: there are 14,000 boats, most of them used near the coasts, that have an average age of thirty years as opposed to Europe's twenty-two years ... Within sixty days, all the boat owners who decide to close their activity and demolish their boats, and give back their fishing license, will receive a contribution calculated on two criteria: the age and tonnage of the fishing boats. The older and bigger they are, the higher the amount will be. This will favor reducing the fishing boats in operation and renewing the fleet. What is more, public incentives are also planned for those who replace motors in order to favor the purchase of newer, safer and less polluting ones. Nothing prevents those who decide to get back into the game later from resuming their activity, even though they know they can no longer count on the public contributions assigned to the owners of fishing boats in the past. These are lofty objectives and they still need to be negotiated with the trade associations, especially for the part concerning the definitive stop of activity...For now, the opinion is essentially positive of the trade associations, the exponents of a world that gives employment to 44,000 workers and all too often ends up confined to the margins of the economy despite its value. (Massimo Minella)

taken from *La Repubblica*, August 6, 2008)



WHY ARE LARGE SHIPS VULNERABLE TO PIRACY?

Hugues Jardin, Ship Captain, Chief of Staff Operations of the National Navy

«The merchant ships are vulnerable to piracy because their crews are greatly reduced in order to cut costs. With the system of watches, many times only three or four men remain on watch. Radar offers an optimized surveillance system at the front, but there are two areas of non-visibility behind. Above all, it is difficult to distinguish between a fishing boat and a private vessel in an area of intense coastal traffic. Hundreds of 5-6 meter long boats equipped with outboard motors cruise in the Indian Ocean.

The pirates have perfected their tactics and can attack in less than fifteen minutes. The small boats let their target approach and then they quickly converge on it. It is very difficult for a merchant ship to slow down, accelerate or change course since they are heavily laden. A super oil tanker like the *Sirius Star* takes 10-15 meters of water depth, which makes it much more vulnerable.

Once the pirates are alongside the ship, they send grappling irons and 5-6 meter metal ladders and some men climb up on them. The pirates have become confident in their know-how at the time of the assaults. Their attacks are getting faster and involve boats that are bigger and bigger and farther from the coasts. The pirates are armed with assault rifles, Kalashnikovs and rocket launcher rifles to impress the crew, but what assures their success is their speed in climbing on board. Then they head for the bridge and take a man on watch hostage, playing on the surprise element.

Ships are taking more precautions and measures to prevent pirates from getting on board. Some companies do not hesitate to arm their men, enlarge their crews, navigate faster or take zigzag routes, as well as to develop response techniques that are kept secret.

It would be easy for the marine riflemen deployed in the region on board French military ships to intercept the pirates, but the most difficult thing is to identify them as pirates. To flush them out, information and a long hunt are needed. In the region, everyone is armed because of banditry. The military ships sometimes go as far as confrontation. This is how on November 11th the British frigate, the HMS Cumberland, opened fire on the Somali pirates who had taken possession of a Yemenite fishing boat, killing two pirates.

France has been a pioneer through the protection she provided to the WFP food aid ships a year ago and the vote on three resolutions at the United Nations. Her two frigates in the Indian Ocean in the «Enduring Freedom» coalition, the ships she will deploy in the beginning of December in the framework of the Atlanta European

operation, the companies of marine riflemen, and the air support she has in Djibouti all take part, under the authority of the regional command on board, in the fight against piracy».

The International Maritime Office has called on the States to stop the acts of piracy off the coast of Somalia. «The situation has already become uncontrollable», Noel Choong estimated, the Director of the Piracy Observation Center based in Kuala Lumpur. In addition to the *Sirius Star*, seventeen ships with 250 crew members are in the hands of the Somali pirates.

(*La Croix*, Thursday, November 20, 2008, collected by Nathalie Lacube)

MARSHALL ISLANDS

FIRST PRESENCE OF THE AOS

I left Korea on the 16th August 2005 and was assigned to the Marshall Islands shortly after. My experience of 15 years as Chaplain of the AOS–Incheon (Korea) is something I very deeply treasure in my inner being.

Marshall Islands is a tiny country made up of 29 atolls and 5 islands. All these are spread far and wide. It has a population of about 60,000 people and it is situated at the center of the Pacific Ocean between Hawaii and Guam. There are approximately 4,600 Catholics.

I was appointed Prefect Apostolic of the Marshall Islands by His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI on December 21, 2007 and installed on Jan. 6, 2008. My residence and office are located in Majuro, capital of the Republic of the Marshall Islands .

I am very pleased to inform that there is a small international seaport in Majuro and on the 17th October I started my first visitation to two ships: one crewed by Chinese and Filipinos; the other, by Japanese. This visit to the two ships could serve as the early start of Apostolatus Maris – Majuro. The timing is good because October 19, 2008 is “World Mission Sunday.” My contact persons and myself are exploring the possibility of establishing in the future a small center in Majuro which will be a combination of AOS and the Mission to Seafarers.

Raymundo T. Sabio, MSC
Prefect Apostolic of Marshall Islands .

In a letter to Msgr. Sabio, Archbishop Agostino Marchetto, Secretary, while thanking him for this information, said that “the Christian virtue of hospitality prompts us to extend a welcome to the People of the Sea in the name of the local Christian community, being the pastoral care of seafarers, fishers and their families, an integral part of the parish pastoral responsibility”. He asked to be kept “informed of any progress in your valuable initiative which, given your experience in the Port of Incheon, will surely succeed and benefit a large number of seafarers”.

OFFICIAL CHAPLAINCY IN MELBOURNE

After a long period of work, Archbishop Denis Hart, of the Archdiocese of Melbourne, and Bishop Peter Stasiuk, of the Eastern Rite Eparchy, have nominated and appointed Fr. Brian Kely and Fr. Olex Kenez as the Port Chaplains for Melbourne. The official Headquarters of the Apostleship of the Sea remains at 600 Little Collins Street, Melbourne, and operates under the management of the Stella Maris Association of Victoria.

Archbishop Marchetto asked Mr. Richardson, AOS National Director, to “convey to the new appointees our warm congratulations and the assurance of the support of our Pontifical Council in this pastoral responsibility. AOS-Australia is a dynamic organisation reaching out to a large and varied maritime population— he said— and I am sure that both Fr. Olex and Fr. Kelly will successfully carry out their mandate”. He also expressed “gratitude to Archbishop Hart and to Bishop Stasiuk for their cooperation and engagement in establishing an official Chaplaincy in Melbourne”.



CHAPLAINS TRAINED TO MINISTER IN ON-BOARD SITUATIONS

14 October 2008, Lohja, Finland

For two weeks, eight International Christian Maritime Association chaplains gathered in the village of Lohja, Finland, to be trained in the ministry of seafarers in on-board situations. The Finnish Seafarers' Mission, under the leadership of Rev. Jaakko Laasio, hosted this prestige training event. This is a specialized training, focusing on chaplains who would like to sail with ships. It includes the skills to share seafarers' life-space, understanding on-board situations, and especially the skills to respond to typical emergencies. Chaplains were taught safety procedures and appropriate life-saving responses to life-threatening crises. The chaplains also learned how to approach traumatized seafarers who have been exposed to stressful events.



This is a hands-on and physically taxing training event. Chaplains were exposed to simulated disaster situations, among these fire-fighting, abandoning ship and first aid. The training is identical to the required basic SWTC-training to which all seafarers are exposed before being certificated to sail.

The training was at times as moving as it was exhilarating. This is a programme of which the *International Christian Maritime Association* is particularly proud. Not only does it afford chaplains the opportunity to experience first-hand what is required of seafarers in preparation for sailing, this training sensitizes caregivers to both the pleasures and the dangers of the seafaring life. This training allows counsellors to hone their skills to real life situations. It is set to be repeated only in 2010.

Hennie la Grange, ICMA Secretary General

THE DEATH OF H.E. CARMELO ECHANAGUSIA

The Prelate passed away on Thursday, November 6th. He was the Auxiliary Bishop emeritus of Bilbao and the Episcopal Promoter of Spain's Apostleship of the Sea. The Pontifical Council sent the following message of condolences to Father Augustin Romero Lojo, the National Director.



Reverend Father,

With this letter, I wish to express to the members of Spain's Apostleship of the Sea this Pontifical Council's sincerest condolences on the occasion of H.E. Carmelo Echanagusia's death, the former A.M. Episcopal Promoter of this country.

In thanking the Lord for the ministry of the lamented Prelate who served maritime pastoral care with commitment and generosity, I assure you of my remembrance in prayer.

+ Archbishop Agostino Marchetto, Secretary