

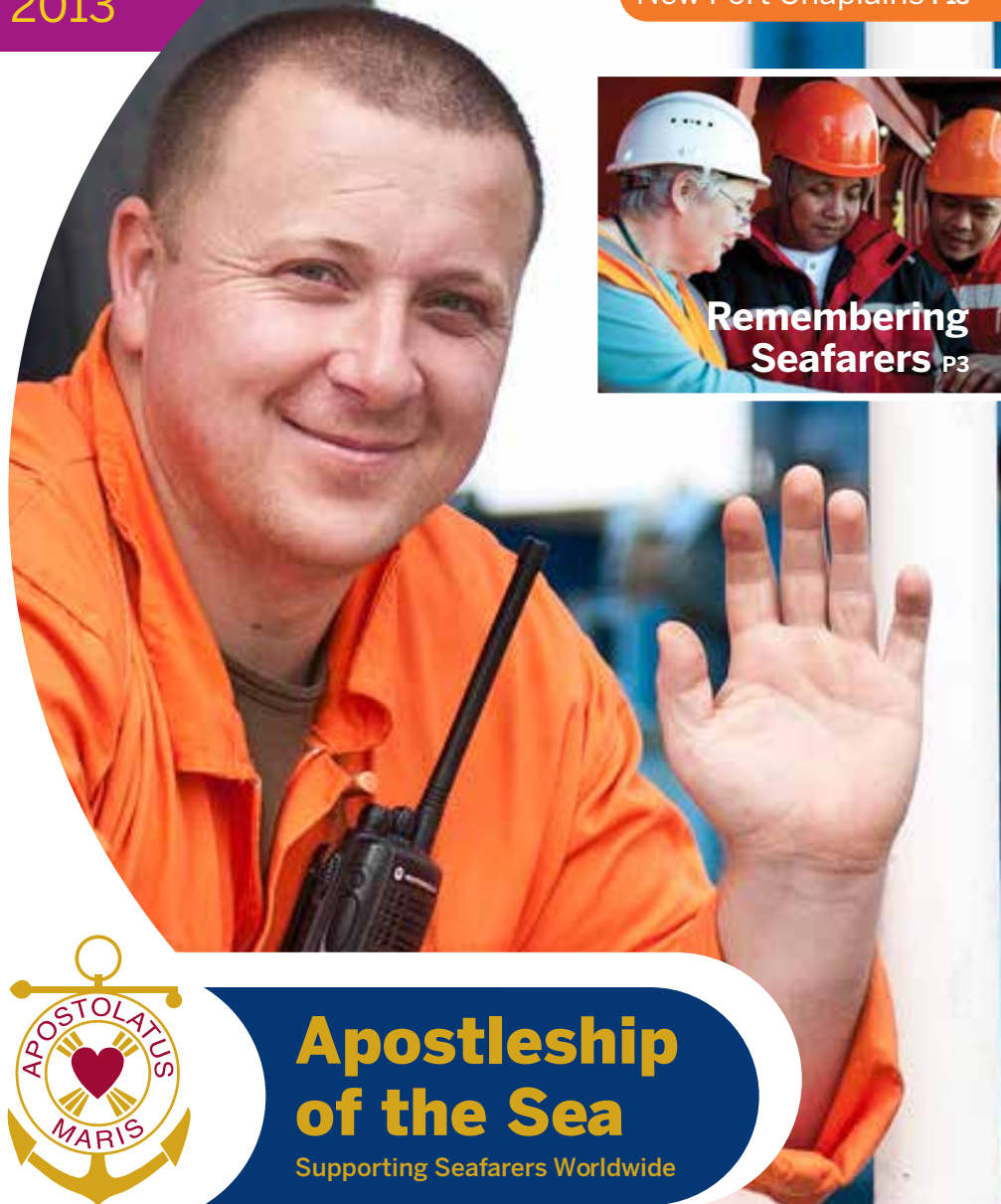
# Alongside

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## Apostleship of the Sea

Supporting Seafarers Worldwide

# Welcome To This Alongside

by Martin Foley, National Director



A very warm welcome to this bumper issue of *Alongside*. For a variety of reasons it's been quite some time since our last *Alongside*, so we have plenty of news, views and articles in this issue. In addition to news from our chaplains and volunteers on the front-line, we report on our national conference in May, the launch of our global port chaplain directory and this year's Sea Sunday appeal.

Prayer and action are at the heart of what we do. As Pope Francis recently said, "*Prayer that doesn't lead to concrete action toward our brothers is a fruitless and incomplete prayer...But at the same time, when ecclesial service only attends to work, not reserving time for dialogue with*

*God in prayer, it risks serving itself rather than God who is present in the brother in need...prayer and action must always be profoundly united.*"

Please continue to pray for seafarers and their families and invite your family and friends to do likewise. Many seafarers are men and women of deep faith. Our chaplains and volunteer ship visitors attest to the fact that when seafarers know there are people praying for them, this is a source of great strength and consolation amidst the difficulties and uncertainties they face.

**Thank you for your continued support.**



# Remembering Seafarers

By **Greg Watts** Previously published in Bible Alive July 2013

**When most of us think of ports what do we think of? Cranes swinging across the quayside? Containers being loaded onto ships? Forklift trucks scurrying in and out of warehouses? What we probably don't think of are the seafarers. For although around 95% of the goods that arrive in the UK come by sea, those who bring them to us often remain invisible.**

But not to the Apostleship of the Sea, the Church's maritime agency, which comes under the umbrella of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care

of Migrants and Itinerant Peoples. Its chaplains and ship visitors are to be found helping seafarers in most ports in the UK.

Father Colum Kelly, port chaplain in Immingham, on the south bank of the Humber Estuary, says one of his most important tasks is to visit ships when they dock and provide a welcome to the crew and invite them to the seafarers' centre, which provides a shop selling basic items, daily newspapers from various countries, a library, games room, and a phone. Often he will arrange transport for seafarers to visit local shops to stock up with supplies.

Life at sea is far from romantic. The hours are long and the pay can be low. As well as this, conditions onboard some ships are poor, with little thought given to the health and safety of the crew. Seafarers will often bring their concerns to the chaplain. In one case, when Father Colum heard that a crew was forced to sign a document saying they were satisfied with conditions onboard, even though water was flowing into it, he immediately contacted the International Transport Workers' Federation, and the ship was subsequently arrested. Many seafarers are Catholic, but don't have many opportunities to meet a priest and receive sacraments, he explained.



Fr Colum Kelly  
with a seafarer

# Remembering Seafarers

continued

*"When I celebrate Mass in the centre, seafarers will often comment that it was their only chance to celebrate Mass for a year or more. I am regularly asked to celebrate Mass on ships and these too are very special and joyous occasions.*

*"One time, I celebrated Mass for a Filipino crew, the temperature was -6°C, yet the men still took off their hats and balaclavas. Two of the crew had to keep watch on deck, but they opened the*

*portholes in order to receive Holy Communion."*

He also visits any seafarers who have been admitted to hospital after accidents onboard. *"Seafarers appreciate a priest coming to see them, because lying in a hospital ward in a strange country can be a lonely and disconcerting experience,"* he said.

*"One of the big differences from traditional parish ministry is that I rarely know how the story ends. As chaplains we do all we can to support a seafarer during his couple of days in port. But then he sails away and we may never meet again."*

A team of volunteer ship visitors assists each port chaplain. Patrick Binks decided to join AoS after a 30-year career in the Royal Navy, where he served on everything from aircraft carriers to destroyers. He now works two days a week visiting ships in Portsmouth.

*"I go with a colleague, Paddy Ring, who was a dentist. There are normally two or three ships arriving and we normally spend from one to two hours on board depending upon how busy the crew are."*

He said the biggest issue for seafarers, most of whom come from developing countries such as the Philippines and India, is being away from their families.

*"They aren't there whilst children are growing up, or are away when there*



Fr Colum walking the docks



Sr Marian Davey and seafarers

*are problems to deal with.*

*For everyone there is a feeling of loneliness and being separated from the world – for some ships their only opportunity to go ashore each month is in Portsmouth and the ship might be alongside for only a few hours.”*

When he goes onboard a ship, he often meets members of the UK Border Agency, searching for stowaways and drugs.

*“The ships that I visit load bananas from Columbia so that makes these ships higher risk. There have been no recent finds but there have been several instances of both stowaways and drugs being discovered in Portsmouth in the past.”*

Having served in the Royal Navy, he knows what makes seafarers tick.

*“I understand things such as being away from home and family; working long hours; being confined to a small*

*environment; and coming into contact with only a few people and never being away from work.*

*You get to know the characters on board and can spot the ones who might be more homesick and need closer watching. I find a visit rather like visiting old friends.”*

One of the major dangers seafarers face at sea is being attacked by pirates, said Sister Marian Davey, port chaplain in East Anglia. *“Sadly we can no longer think of piracy as just part of maritime mythology or seafarers’ tales. It’s a reality for many seafarers on ships today.*

*Over the last two years or so I have had many conversations with seafarers who have had to experience the anxiety and fear of sailing through piracy waters as the ship makes its way to deliver its cargo to European ports.*

*I once spent some time with a crew in Felixstowe whose ship had been*

# Remembering Seafarers

continued

*threatened by pirates. One pirate attempted to climb on board, but fell off, as the captain made a series of movements with the ship, causing him to lose his grip.*

*Meanwhile there was a speedboat full of pirates with a lot of weapons ready to fire at the ship. In this case, it ended well, as the ship was able to speed away from the scene and out of reach of their guns.*

*When the ship arrived in Felixstowe three weeks later quite a few of the Filipino crew were still recovering from the experience. But they said they had no choice but to get on with the next stage of the voyage in order to earn a living wage to support their families back home."*

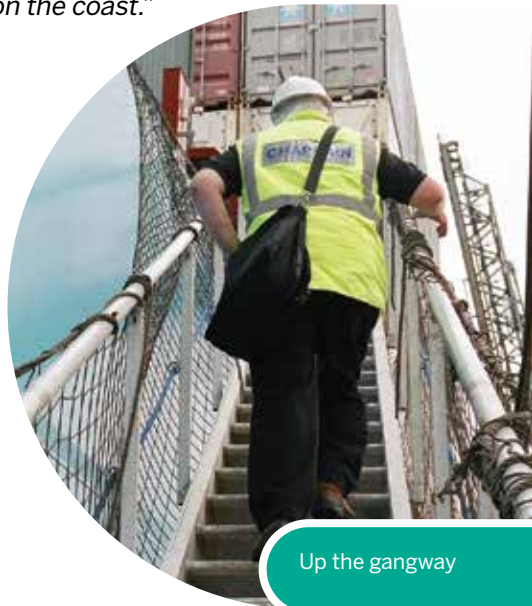
However, the Apostleship of the Sea doesn't just work in ports. It also provides chaplains on cruise ships, especially at Easter and Christmas. Father Angelo Phillips is one of 14 chaplains working on P&O ships.

*"I have found the work very much like being in a parish but only this time the parish was afloat, a sailing village of over 4,000 people, 3,000 passengers and 1,000 crew."*

He explained that a cruise chaplain – classified as an "entertainer" by shipping companies – is there primarily for the crew, not the passengers; and he is in no doubt of the valuable role played by chaplains

on cruises. *"It's all about being present, just being seen around the ship. As the captain of the Ventura said to me, 'Father, just having you present on the ship gives us all reassurance that we have God's blessing as we cruise from country to country."*

Apostleship of the Sea director Martin Foley said the Catholic Church's mission to seafarers is one all Catholics should support. *"I was told about a priest who said, 'We don't need to take a Sea Sunday collection. It's only if you are a parish near a port.' This is the mindset that I am trying to overcome. How do goods get from the sea to Nottingham or Manchester? So our work is as relevant to people in inland parishes as it is to those on the coast."*



Up the gangway



## AoS Will Provide

Sister Marian Davey, port chaplain in East Anglia, recounts a time late last year when she had to provide rags to clean the engine on a ship because the crew had no money to buy them as they had not been paid for nearly three months!

Sister Marian was asked by a Special Branch officer to visit a general cargo ship in Ipswich because he was concerned about the welfare of the crew following a routine visit. When she went onboard she was told by an angry crew about their lack of pay.

Marian told us *"The chief engineer said that he had no rags to clean the oil from the engine. So I went and bought some sheets in a charity shop. I also mentioned the problem to a port worker and he gave me two bags of compressed rags."*

After eventually being paid, the crew then spent 37 days anchored two miles off Felixstowe waiting for new orders.

*"The cook contacted me to say that they had very little fresh water, which meant they couldn't shower, use the toilet, or wash their clothes. They also had no cigarettes or TV. Being in these conditions on a small ship puts a crew under serious psychological stress,"* she said.

When the ship returned to Ipswich she provided the crew with bread and fresh vegetables and also phone cards and top-ups so they could contact their families back home in Russia and Cape Verde.

Sister Marian explains that when a crew isn't paid it also affects their families. *"One of the crew said to me, 'My children can't eat stones.' Another member of the crew had medical bills to pay. The seafarers were treated completely unjustly throughout this episode and they were powerless to do anything."*

This is another example of how your support enables us to help seafarers in need.

## Helping Communications

Thanks to the fundraising efforts of Carolyn Lewis from the Merchant Navy Welfare Board (MNWB) and the network provider 3, seafarers visiting UK ports are now able to have free access to the internet, email and Skype using new Mi-Fi units.

Mi-Fi units are mobile Wi-Fi units. Unlike a dongle, which has to be plugged into a laptop/computer and can only be used by one person at a time, a Mi-Fi unit can be used by multiple users in one area. It is therefore ideal for seafarers who, as we know, are always seeking a reliable internet service when they arrive into a port.



Carolyn (pictured above with National Director Martin Foley) undertook a fantastic fundraising effort to purchase these Mi-Fi units for seafarers' use. In 2013 she completed the Brighton marathon, the Petersfield Ups & Downs cycle race and the Great South Run. Many thanks Carolyn.

## First Global Port Chaplain Directory Launched

In January 2013 AoS GB, working with our AoS colleagues from all around the world, launched the first ever global port chaplain directory. The directory contains the phone numbers and e-mail addresses of our chaplains and ship visitors in 259 ports worldwide. AoS GB Director of Development John Green said, "We have chaplains in most of the world's ports, from Durban to Dubai and from Costa Rica to Colombo. We believe providing details of all our chaplains will be a valuable

*resource for both seafarers and many others working in the shipping industry. Our chaplains are a lifeline for many seafarers when they arrive in a port. Seafarers know that they can trust and rely on a chaplain."*





## The Future Of Fishing

Helping young fishermen to avoid drugs and drink is vital for the future of the fishing industry, delegates at the AoS World Congress were told in November 2012.

Speaking on World Fisheries Day, Father Dirk Demaeght, fisheries national chaplain in Belgium, told delegates at the 23rd AoS World Congress that many young fishermen in Belgium quit because of drugs.

*“Living and working at sea, away from home and friends, and so many other human factors, provoke discomfort and stress. Drink and drugs are a temporary means to escape. The question is how long they will last and how long they are able to ensure the safety of the crew,”* he said.

He added that a campaign has been running in Belgium to promote drug-free ships. *“We have created a road map where medical assistance is very important. We do everything so that the fisherman can continue to sail during the treatment, because we don’t have any standby crews.”*

Father Demaeght, an official of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Transport, explained that there are 520 active fishermen working on beam trawlers along the Belgian coast, mainly in Zeebrugge, Ostend and Nieuwpoort. He also told delegates that a guidebook for relatives of Belgian fishermen missing or killed at sea has been produced. *“On one hand this guidebook serves as a support for the surviving relatives, covering all steps from the reporting of the misfortune to the legal transfers at the notary. On the other hand it is a document to work with for the different rescue services. In recent times we have started an update of the roadmap taking into account the new international rules and methods in the rescue operations.”*





## AoS Promotes Bible Reading Amongst Seafarers

During the Year of Faith, AoS is helping seafarers visiting British ports to discover how the Bible can help them develop their spiritual life.

When port chaplains and ship visitors go onboard vessels they will offer seafarers free copies of the magazine Bible Alive, which contains daily scriptural reflections. Paul Glock, the port chaplain to Tilbury in Essex and also a permanent deacon in Southwark Archdiocese, said: *"During my ministry I meet large numbers of seafarers from countries like the Philippines where the overwhelming majority of the population is Catholic. You could say that seafarers have a real experience of God in the sense that the sea is commonly referred to as the power of God."*

*Many seafarers have a deep spiritual hunger which we seek to satisfy, not just through our ministry amongst them physically, but also through the provision of spiritual aids and resources like Bibles, prayer books and rosaries. Bible Alive, with its combination of daily scripture plus reflection, encourages seafarers to have direct contact with the Word of God. I have no doubt this Year of Faith initiative will prove immensely popular with seafarers."*

If you would like to support AoS with the purchase of Bible Alive for seafarers, please contact [johngreen@apostleshipofthesea.org.uk](mailto:johngreen@apostleshipofthesea.org.uk).

## Crews Left Stranded

Earlier this year a fleet of ships owned by one company were arrested in several ports including Shoreham, Rye and Hull in the UK and Santander in Spain. Crew on these ships were left confused and disillusioned about what fate awaited them.

AoS port chaplains became involved in support of the crew. On many of these

ships the crew had not been paid wages for a lengthy period of time. Not only did this affect the seafarers themselves, it also affected their families who depend upon the money sent home. In both the UK and in Spain, AoS chaplains and volunteers worked hard to allow the seafarers to contact loved ones back home. We liaised closely with other agencies as the contractual issues were resolved, providing emotional support to the crew and other practical necessities.



## AoS Steps Up To Help Crew Of Stricken Ship

Volunteers from the Sunderland branch of the Apostleship of the Sea stepped in to provide much needed support for the crew of a ship that unexpectedly had to dock in the port of Sunderland this January.

The Molat left Sweden bound for Egypt, but was found listing in the North Sea unable to complete its voyage. The ship was diverted to the port of Sunderland where its cargo of timber could be secured and the vessel checked for damage caused by rough weather.

Before the ship docked, volunteers of the Apostleship of the Sea made ready to provide practical support for the crew. Sister Scholastica was amongst those who visited the crew bringing items such as hats, chocolates and

toiletries. Sister Scholastica also helped one of the crew who was anxious to contact his family via the internet but whose dongle didn't work in the UK. She provided him, free of charge, with a UK dongle so that he could contact his family.

She said; *"The crew were not expecting to dock in Sunderland, but the rough weather changed that. Given the stress that this has meant for them, we were determined to give them a special welcome and ensure they were well looked after."*

AoS port chaplain Roger Stone told us, *"Many seafarers of arrested vessels suffer loneliness. They're far from home and cut off from their culture, family and friends. And it's not just the crew that suffers. If wages aren't being paid they can't send money back to their families in their home country. Our work is about providing moral support and giving them the opportunity to do normal things whilst the shipping companies sort out their finances."*

Across the world AoS sees situations like this with ever increasing regularity. Statistics for 2011 show that the number of ship arrests in the UK increased. The global economic challenges are affecting everyone and it can be assumed that situations such as arrested ships and unpaid wages will increase as everyone feels the pressure. This is why the work of AoS is so very important and why we need your support more than ever.



## Women Play A Key Role Helping Seafarers

Within AoS women play a key role in helping seafarers who arrive in UK ports. Speaking to mark International Women's Day (8 March 2013), National Director Martin Foley said, "People often think of working with seafarers as something only men do. But in recent years women have begun to play an important role within the Apostleship of the Sea, helping seafarers with both their spiritual and practical needs."

*Our port chaplains in East Anglia, Plymouth and Hull are women. We have a number of female volunteer ship visitors up and down the country. They do fantastic work in helping seafarers, many of whom are from the developing world and are at sea to support their families back home."*

Apostleship of the Sea port chaplains and ship visitors provide seafarers with a range of help, including sim cards, religious literature, and transport to local shops and churches. They also visit seafarers in hospital and liaise with their families back home. As well as this, they often mediate in disputes over pay and conditions and support seafarers who have been attacked by pirates or whose ship has been arrested.

## Stranded Cross Channel Ferry Crew Supported By AoS



The crew of a cross channel ferry that ceased operations earlier this year benefited from the help of AoS. The Ostend Spirit worked the Ramsgate to Ostend route, but was laid up in Tilbury Docks.

The Eastern European crew were still onboard as discussions about the future of

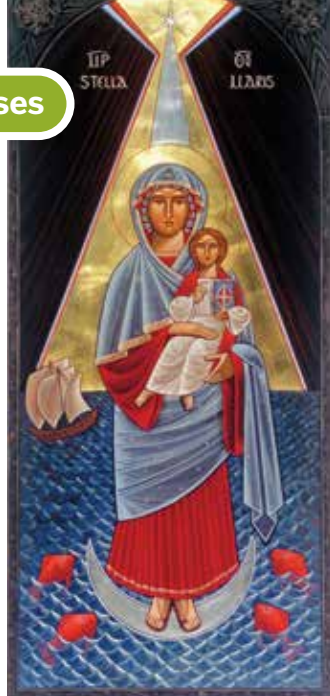
the ship and their contracts continued. AoS stepped in to provide support and practical help.

As well as regularly visiting the crew, port chaplain, Deacon Paul Glock brought them to the Tilbury seafarers' centre, where they could contact families and loved ones by phone or internet.

## Stella Maris Feast Day Celebration Masses

Last September, to mark the Feast of Stella Maris, we held two Masses followed by receptions, in London and in Glasgow. Both were a chance for supporters to pray for seafarers and celebrate the work of AoS.

The London reception also allowed us to raise some much appreciated funds by auctioning off a stunning painting kindly painted and donated to us by supporter Katerine Scharwatt. It raised an amazing £1000! We will be holding a Stella Maris Mass in London, Portsmouth and Glasgow every year in September. Please contact us if you are interested in attending.



## AoS National Conference

Over 100 port chaplains, ship visitors and others associated with AoS gathered in Derbyshire in May for our national conference.



Echoing the call of Pope Francis, the conference highlighted both the 'big picture' of seafarers' welfare and Catholic mission, but also the need for 'grassroots growth' in personal holiness to underpin ministry.

The conference was addressed by Fr Henry Wansbrough, who outlined the scriptural foundations of Catholic mission and ministry. Francis Davis, Catholic academic and commentator, discussed the centrality of Catholic Social Teaching to the ministry of AoS. Former AoS trustee Mgr John Armitage spoke of the importance of Catholic mission and identity. Headlining the big picture perspective on seafarers' welfare was Catholic lawyer James Gosling, 2013 maritime lawyer of the year, who considered the impact of piracy on seafarers, ship owners and their families.



## Port Chaplain Shocked At Kidnapping

AoS Tilbury port chaplain, Paul Glock, recounted his visits to a container ship that had four of its crew kidnapped by pirates off the coast of Equatorial Guinea in April this year. Media reports said that the container ship Hansa Marburg was attacked 130 miles south-west of the port of Malabo.

Deacon Paul Glock heard news of the kidnapping while he was visiting other ships in Tilbury. *"I'd been onboard that ship on a number of times. It's been visiting Tilbury for a couple of years. On my last visit I did what I usually do, such as asking the crew if they wanted to visit the seafarers' centre, go shopping in Tilbury, or if they needed sim cards. I also left them prayer cards to support their faith."*

He added that many of the crew were from Russia and the Ukraine. *"It's a tragedy. And it highlights that,*

*despite all the modern technology on ships, being a seafarer is still a very dangerous job."*

Martin Foley National Director of AoS said, *"Sadly we can no longer think of piracy as just part of maritime history or seafarers' tales. It's a reality for many seafarers on ships today."*

*Over the last few years or so the port chaplains of the Apostleship of the Sea have had many conversations with seafarers who have had to experience the anxiety and fear of sailing through piracy waters as the ship makes its way to deliver its cargo."*

In 2011 Pope Benedict had a meeting with a group representing the families of some 800 seafarers from around the world who have been kidnapped and held by pirates, assuring them of his prayers and concern.



## Tenth Annual Pilgrimage To Holy Island

Trustees, staff members, chaplains, volunteers, parish contacts and supporters came together as pilgrims for the AoS North East regions' tenth annual pilgrimage to Holy Island on Saturday 1 June 2013.

The pilgrimage began in glorious sunshine in a tranquil setting, just opposite St Cuthbert's Island, with the now traditional 'Celtic Prayer on the Beach'. This mix of music, readings and prayer is extremely popular with pilgrims and sets the tone for a peaceful and reflective day. At this point around 250 pilgrims were gathered, several from outside the immediate area having travelled from Guildford, London and Liverpool.

Following this, pilgrims were free to spend time exploring the island, having lunch,

visiting the churches and continuing the reflective mood established earlier. At 4pm, over 400 pilgrims re-assembled outdoors, in the grounds of St. Mary's Anglican church, for the Mass of Corpus Christi. This was led by Bishop Tom Burns of the diocese of Menevia, who is also

the Bishop Promoter of the Apostleship of the Sea in England and Wales. The Mass was concelebrated by Mgr Ronnie Brown (AoS Trustee) and Fr Michael Griffiths (St Joseph's, Hartlepool), Fr Anthony Hogarth (a priest from the diocese of Northampton now living in retirement back in his home town of Hartlepool) and Deacons Jude Newton and Peter Barrigan.

In his homily Bishop Tom spoke of the plight of seafarers, making particular mention of the trauma and suffering endured by those taken hostage by pirates. After Mass, AoS Chairman Eamonn Delaney gave a short address thanking all present for their support and expressing the hope that this annual gathering, which is such a key event in the AoS calendar, may continue for many years to come.

## Wellington Reception

To coincide with The Day of the Seafarer on 25 June 2013, AoS held a reception for our supporters and corporate partners on board the HQS Wellington, berthed at Victoria Embankment, London. The reception began with short presentations on the work and priorities of AoS from Vice-Chairman Captain Simon Culshaw, National Director Martin Foley and Immingham port chaplain

Father Colum Kelly. Guests also had the opportunity to view a short film about the work of Southampton port chaplain, Deacon Roger Stone. The reception concluded with drinks and canapés on the quarterdeck with an amazing view of the Thames and the London riverside.

We would like to thank everyone who came to support our work. We would also like to thank The Honourable Company of Master Mariners for allowing us to use the HQS Wellington as our venue for the evening.

## Tragic Death

In June, a Filipino seafarer was airlifted to hospital with severe burns after a fire in the engine room of a tanker off the Whitby coast. The 8,500 tonne vessel, the Mississippi Star, contained no cargo and had left Teesport en route to Antwerp, Belgium, when the fire broke out six miles off the Whitby coast. Media reports said that there were 18 crew onboard.

As always, AoS stepped in to provide support. Once the ship had docked in Teesport, local port chaplain Tony McAvooy visited the ship to provide support to the crew. The ship was in a virtual 'lockdown' as an investigation



into the fire had begun. Meanwhile, one of AoS's Filipino volunteer ship visitors met the injured seafarer's wife as she flew in from the Philippines. Unfortunately, the seafarer died. In the ensuing days the AoS team continued to provide practical and pastoral support to his wife.

Meanwhile the crew of the ship were not forgotten. At the request of the ship's Captain, AoS arranged for Mass be celebrated on-board by local priest, Canon Eddie Gubbins. AoS was also on hand to support the crew when they were informed that one of their colleagues had died.

## Sea Sunday

We would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of our supporters and all our supporting parishes for the amazing generosity they have shown towards this year's Sea Sunday appeal. At the time of this magazine going to press we had already received £109,234.58 in donations, and they continue to come in.

Sea Sunday is the day when we remember and pray for seafarers, their families and all who support them. It is a day of prayer and remembrance for

those seafarers who work tirelessly throughout the year bringing us goods we often take for granted. The money we receive from the Sea Sunday appeal makes possible our vital work with seafarers.





## Harvest Of The Sea At Our Lady And St Peter Primary School

In October 2012 AoS Hull port chaplain Anne McLaren led an assembly at Our Lady and St Peter Primary School, Bridlington.

The school is close to the sea, and decided to take 'Harvest of the Sea' as their Harvest theme. Anne gave a presentation to the whole school and told the pupils all about the ministry of AoS. The school subsequently held a 'Harvest of the Sea' assembly and auction, raising £210 for AoS. The picture shows AoS port chaplain Anne McLaren with Head teacher Anne Parr and some of the children from the school.



### Shipwrecked Mariners

Mark Kemmis-Betty, ship visitor in Weymouth and Portland (pictured), came to the aid of some shipwrecked mariners in Spring 2012. Mark was called by the local coastguard who told him that a 35ft Trimaran Starship had been wrecked on the Portland harbour breakwater, and the two man crew had been taken off and had nowhere to stay. Could he help? He met the two crew men, the owner of the craft and his father in law, at the coastguard office in Weymouth and took them home for the night.

He says "They were out of luck as Judy my wife was out and they had to put up with my cooking! The first thing they wanted was a hot bath /shower having

*been soaked through."* Unfortunately, as the lifeboat crew tried to tow the Trimaran back to Weymouth Harbour it sunk. Luckily one of the men had a mobile phone and a credit card with him, but the elder crewman lost all his personal possessions. Mark kindly put them up for the night and then arranged for them to travel back home the next day.



# Meet our New Port Chaplains



## **Douglas Duncan** Aberdeen

I am Douglas Duncan the new port chaplain covering Aberdeen, Fraserburgh and Peterhead. I took over from Deacon Brian Kilkerr who held the position for many years and will be sorely missed.

Changing career at the age of 60 can be a daunting prospect, but I decided that after 33 years of working on multi-million pound business deals, I would pursue a completely different track.

My life-altering decision came after I sadly lost my wife Denise, to a brain tumour, three years ago. When I lost her, it was religion that gave me the strength to go on. Dealing with her loss has made me a stronger person and I want to share that strength with other people who need it. I decided that I had to start giving something back.

Then the opportunity to apply for AoS arose. It seemed to be God's Will, and it was an exciting new venture. I hadn't considered doing much else. Although I am not a lay minister or priest, I felt drawn to do it.

I have been visiting ships and supporting seafarers as I settle into my new role. Some of these guys are away from home for nine months to one year. It is so long for them to be away from their friends and

family. They could miss the birth of their children or have to come away shortly after a death in the family, and that can be mentally very stressful. I am enjoying my new role and look forward to what it may bring. I expect that I will meet people who are dealing with all manner of situations in their life and I imagine this will be very challenging and exciting for me.



## **John Pinhay** Falmouth & Fowey

I am John Pinhay, new port chaplain in Falmouth and Fowey.

My association with AoS started 8 years ago when the current ship visitor from our Parish of St Mary Immaculate decided it was time to retire. My wife, Pat and I became ship visitors for the Port of Falmouth after our induction and training.

There are many stories I could share, but one that I recall is an experience Pat and I had when we went onboard a tanker that had been in the port for some time. It was a few weeks before Christmas and the Filipino crew told us that they would once again be at sea over the festive period. On Christmas Day they would all sit down to their Christmas meal and run a DVD on the story of Christmas. They would also place a star on the wall above a crib and would then run decorations from the star across the crew mess room to give the

impression of rays coming from the star. However, the DVD would no longer play and the decorations that they would put up had also become rather worn out. Pat and I went to the local £1 store to purchase a few new decorations and when we mentioned the problem of the DVD to our local Parish Priest, he immediately gave up his copy of 'Jesus of Nazareth.' When we went back onboard to deliver the decorations and DVD, the joy coming from these men of faith was truly humbling. Pat and I remember this crew at Christmas time and imagine them all sitting down together rejoicing in the birth of Jesus Christ.

Whether as a ship visitor or chaplain, meeting seafarers from all over the world is a privilege as you try and meet their needs either in a welfare or a spiritual sense. Although my ports are tucked away in deepest Cornwall, I am always aware that I am part of this amazing outreach mission.



**Fr Paul  
Osunikanmi**  
Milford Haven &  
Pembroke Dock

My name is Fr Paul Osunikanmi, the new port chaplain in Milford Haven & Pembroke Dock. I was born in Nigeria in the late 60s, into a Catholic family. I was inspired to be a priest by my local Parish Priest, but my plans changed whilst in my third year of secondary school. I decided to become a pilot, an ambition I sustained for a few years. However, whilst in my final and last stage of completing my secondary education, I had an

accident that led to me having a near death experience whilst in the hospital. I heard a voice from above that said 'it was not time for me to die, but to become a priest.'

I went to the Major Seminary to begin my formation in 1988, and I was ordained a Deacon in December 1996, and a priest in September 1997, for the Catholic Diocese of Ondo, Nigeria.

In February 1999, I was assigned to Saints Peter and Paul Major Seminary Bodija, Nigeria, as a member of both the Formation team and academic staff. During this time, I usually spent my summer months holiday in London working in the Archdiocese of Southwark. My pastoral engagements for the period gave a good foundation and experience in hospital chaplaincy at St Helier Hospital, London.

I resigned my appointment as a member of staff of the Seminary in late 2009, and proceeded to Sabbatical leave. I was assigned to work with the Late Fr Ernest Bonvini at St. Boniface in Tooting, London as an assistant priest. I functioned in this capacity for about three years before I joined the Diocese of Menevia, which gave me the opportunity to be appointed as an AoS Chaplain.

Today, I am happy that I am now working with the seafarers that I have campaigned and raised money for over the years as a priest. I am enjoying my ministry, and give thanks to the Vicar General and the Bishop of Menevia Diocese for making it possible for me to add to my pastoral experience in this way.

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