



Catholic Maritime News



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“Maritime Education and Training” Selected as World Maritime Day Theme for 2015

Press Briefing - International Maritime Organization (IMO) - Reprinted with permission

The IMO Council has endorsed a proposal by IMO Secretary-General Koji Sekimizu to adopt “Maritime education and training” as the World Maritime Day theme for 2015.

Addressing the IMO Council, meeting for its 112th session at IMO Headquarters in London, Mr. Sekimizu said that effective standards of training remained the bedrock of a safe and secure shipping industry, which needs to preserve the quality, practical skills and competence of qualified human resources, in order to ensure its sustainability.

“The 1978 STCW Convention and Code, as amended, have set the international benchmark for the training and education of seafarers. While compliance with its standards is essential for serving on board ships, the skills and competence of seafarers, and indeed, the human element ashore, can only be adequately underpinned, updated and maintained through effective maritime education and training,” Mr. Sekimizu said.



“Maritime education and training” will be the theme for World Maritime Day 2015. Photo credit: IMO

Mr. Sekimizu said that it was pertinent and timely for IMO to focus its attention on the wider spectrum of maritime education and training, in particular its adequacy and quality.

IMO as an organization supports the skills-based training events and the sharing of technical knowledge, through national and regional Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme (ITCP) training events and workshops, which provide short up-grading courses, based typically on the IMO Model Courses. On another level, the World



Philippine maritime students. Photo credit: USCCB/AOS

Maritime University (WMU) and the IMO International Maritime Law Institute (IMLI) are at the forefront of IMO’s capacity-building strategy, supporting post-graduate training in order to maintain a cadre of high-level managers, policy-makers and other key personnel.

“The ITCP training events, together with the education imparted through WMU and IMLI, are there to ensure that more and more maritime personnel thoroughly understand, and can therefore implement effectively, the IMO standards and norms,” Mr. Sekimizu said.

World Maritime Day

The World Maritime Day theme provides a focus for year-round activities while the day itself is celebrated at IMO Headquarters and around the world in the last week of September. Since 2005, a formal parallel event has also been held, hosted by an IMO Member State. In 2015 the Parallel Event will be held in Japan and in 2016 in Turkey.

IMO – the International Maritime Organization – is the United Nations specialized agency with responsibility for the safety and security of shipping and the prevention of marine pollution by ships.

**United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Secretariat of Cultural Diversity in the Church
Pastoral Care of Migrants, Refugees & Travelers / Apostleship of the Sea National Office**

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AOS National Office web address has been changed. **If you have linked to us previously using the old www.aos-usa.org address, please remember to change your link to www.usccb.org/aos**

We encourage you to visit our website which has user friendly navigation tools. Check out our interactive map with a list of AOS chaplains and contacts, know about news and events and other relevant information. If you want to know about Mass schedules in parishes around the country, there is even a link to MassTimes.org.

Contact Catholic Maritime News

We welcome your comments, feedback and suggestions.
Tell us what you think by sending an email to aos@uscgb.org.

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Apostleship of the Sea of the United States of America (AOSUSA) is a professional membership association of chaplains/associates, cruise ship priests, mariners, student mariners and affiliate members.

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The Dignity of Work and Workers' Rights

Labor Day in the United States is celebrated on the first Monday in September to pay *"national tribute to the contributions workers have made to the strength, prosperity, and well-being of our country."* (www.dol.gov)

The Church has long addressed the dignity of work and workers. Among the key themes of Catholic social teaching is the dignity of work and the rights of workers.

In the encyclical *Laborem Exercens*, John Paul II wrote, **"the Church considers it her task always to call attention to the dignity and rights of those who work, to condemn situations in which that dignity and those rights are violated, and to help to guide the above-mentioned changes so as to ensure authentic progress by man and society."**

Pope Francis in his catechesis on the feast of St. Joseph the Worker on May 1st reflected, **"Work is part of God's loving plan, we are called to cultivate and care for all the goods of creation and in this way participate in the work of creation! Work is fundamental to the dignity of a person. Work, to use an image, 'anoints' us with dignity, fills us with dignity, makes us similar to God, who has worked and still works, who always acts (cf. *Jn 5:17*); it gives you the ability to maintain ourselves, our family, to contribute to the growth of our nation."**



Seafarers and all people of the sea have greatly contributed to the prosperity and well-being of this nation and other nations. Seafarers are the invisible workforce behind the transport of ninety percent of the world's goods by sea. We enjoy the bounty of the sea because of the hard labor of fishermen who often find themselves in dangerous working conditions. Thousands of women and men seafarers on cruise ships attend to the needs of cruisers on board. We pay tribute to all of them.

Christian maritime ministers, including Apostleship of the sea chaplains and their teams have been in the forefront providing pastoral care, advocating for the rights and dignity of seafarers and all people of the sea, and condemning situations when their dignity and rights are violated. **The work of chaplains and their teams contribute to the well-being of those they serve and the community at large. Let us acknowledge with gratitude the good work they do and let us remember to pray for and support them.**

Sr. Myrna Tordillo, mscs

Newly Ordained Deacon Ministers to Seafarers and People of the Sea in Charleston, SC

On May 9, 2014 Bishop Robert Guglielmone ordained Paul Rosenblum to the Permanent Diaconate for the Diocese of Charleston, SC. The Bishop assigned him to his home parish, St. Mary of the Annunciation Catholic Church, and to seafarers' ministry with the Charleston Port and Seafarers' Society. He writes about how his activity with seafarers' ministry influenced his decision to pursue ordination and how he hopes his ordination will enhance his ministry to the seafaring community:

I first became involved with the Charleston Port and Seafarers' Society (ChaPSS) in 2005 when Dr. Frank Hyatt, then the Catholic volunteer coordinator, came to St. Mary's looking for volunteers to serve on weekends at the port. Part of what attracted me was the "exotic" nature of the ministry, the chance to meet seafarers from all over the world. The child in me was also excited about working in the port environment. After all, what little boy would turn down the opportunity to be around big ships, trucks, cranes, and other noisy machines? But most importantly, I realized at that time that something was missing in my life. I knew that my commitment to Jesus was lacking in one crucial way; I was failing to fulfil my obligation to be Christ to those in need.

About that same time I began to discern a call to the Permanent Diaconate. In 2010, when Bishop Guglielmone authorized a new diaconal formation class I knew that the time was right for me to step forward, and I believe that my involvement with ChaPSS played a significant role in the discernment process and my decision to seek ordination. For some time I had been asking myself how I could do more in my ministry to the seafarers.



Paul (left) with a seafarer during a ship visit in Port Charleston
(Photos courtesy of The Catholic Miscellany)



Certainly the ministry of presence that I, and all of us involved in seafarers' ministry perform, meeting the physical and social needs of those we serve, transporting them on shopping trips, providing them with the means to communicate with loved ones far away, being a friendly face and a listening ear; all this was wonderful, but was there more that I could do? The Permanent Diaconate would offer me the opportunity to serve in a new way, to be a sacramental minister to my brothers and sisters on the ships, to bring them the spiritual nourishment of the Body of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. Now my good friend Fr. Bob Higgins, the Diocesan Port Chaplain, and I are working on plans to celebrate Masses and Communion Services on as many vessels as possible. With Bishop Guglielmone's permission I will also apply for faculties with the Archdiocese for the Military Services so that I can serve the Navy and Coast Guard personnel stationed in Charleston.

*My decision to join ChaPSS, get involved with seafarers' ministry, and become a Permanent Deacon has enriched my life in many ways. Every day at the port brings me new friends. So many seafarers have said "Come visit me in the Philippines, (or India, or Montenegro, or Ukraine or so many other countries)." Their graciousness and appreciation for the things we all tend to take for granted is their ministry to me. Conversations over a cup of tea or lunch with officers and crew have shown me how much we all share in our common humanity. We all desire the same things; the ability to care for our families, adequate food, shelter, and clothing, fair wages and just treatment in our jobs, to be treated with the dignity we inherit as children of God. We all need to know that someone cares about us, and my ministry to the People of the Sea is my chance to be the caring face and heart, hands and feet, of Christ for those in need. **With God's grace and the prayers of Our Lady, Stella Maris, I hope to be a good and faithful servant to them.***

Deacon Paul Rosenblum, Ph.D., is Professor of the Department of Biology at the Citadel, SC

Fishing Partnership Support Services

By JJ Bartlett

Fishing Partnership Support Services (FPSS)

is a non-profit organization that is dedicated to improving the health and well-being of commercial fishing families. The idea for FPSS was born nearly 20 years ago when Angela Sanfilippo of the Gloucester Fishermen's Wives Association, approached the Archdiocese of Boston at the Blessing of the Fleet. For centuries, Massachusetts fishermen, many of whom are of Italian, Irish, or Portuguese descent, have turned to the Church for prayer and support in times of need. In the 1990's, nearly half of all New England fishermen were uninsured, often resulting in inconsistent medical care. Emergencies would be treated, but screenings, early intervention, and prevention were too frequently ignored or, at best, delayed. The Catholic Church, through its affiliated hospital network, formed a working group of healthcare leaders to address this problem. Massachusetts legislators then joined the Archdiocese to rally support for the initiative. Massachusetts fishermen were inspired by the church's call for collaboration and the Fishing Partnership Health Plan was created.

The Fishing Partnership Health Plan operated from 1997-2011, providing a quality, affordable health insurance plan to fishing families. During its 14 years, the percentage of uninsured fishermen in Massachusetts dropped from 43% to 13%. FPHP also saved the Commonwealth of Massachusetts \$3.42 for every \$1 spent because the fishermen paid 60% of the costs and their preventative care resulted in savings for the state. In response to Massachusetts' successful statewide health care reform, the health plan discontinued. The Fishing Partnership Health Plan broadened its mission beyond health insurance and changed its name to Fishing Partnership Support Services.

FPSS now focusses its efforts on improving the health and well-being of the fishermen and families in the high-risk fishing community. Commercial fishing is among the nation's deadliest occupations. On surveys completed at our Northeast fishing safety trainings, nearly 1 in 5 of New England fishermen say they have known a coworker who died while fishing and

22% of respondents have been in a life-threatening situation while fishing. Many fishermen also suffer from chronic conditions that often go untreated, such as hypertension, back and neck aches, COPD, and arthritis. Our surveys show that 40% of fishermen who attend our trainings are smokers, and 9% have been diagnosed with melanoma or other cancer, significantly higher rates than in the general population. In addition, even with health care reform, fishing families are 5 times more likely to be uninsured.



Since 2011, **Fishing Partnership Support Services has intensified its outreach, education, and health interventions for the at-risk fishing community.** With offices in New Bedford, Gloucester, Scituate, and Chatham, FPSS employs community health Navigators who are located where fishermen and their families



work and live. Generally women, the Navigators come from fishing families themselves: wives, sisters, and mothers. They understand the unique challenges fishing families face; they know what services are available to fishing families and how to connect members to those services.

With its Navigators and other staff, FPSS provides help to fishermen who need to find health care and the right health plan. We also deliver safety-at-sea trainings and provide health services, as well as refer fishing families for professional advice on legal, financial, and family matters, such as counseling for mental health and substance abuse. Through its *Healthy Harbors* initiative, FPSS provides on-site health and wellness benefits, such as vaccinations, dental services, cancer screenings, and hearing tests, to commercial fishing families at harbors, landings, trade shows, and local offices.

While most of these services currently are available only to fishermen in Massachusetts, FPSS is committed to taking its interventions outside Massachusetts and to providing free safety and survival training to *all* New England fishermen in the coming years. A cornerstone of FPSS's mission, our Basic Safety program has trained more than 1,900 community members so far. During every course, Coast Guard-Certified Fishing Vessel Safety Instructors teach fishermen about safe approaches to man-overboard procedures; firefighting; flood & pump operation; flares & EPIRBs; survival suits; life raft deployment and use; helicopter hoist procedures; and basic first aid. At the end of the course, 82% of students have reported they were Likely or Very Likely to change their safety practices.

But our work has just begun. Based on Coast Guard and NOAA statistics, some 90% of New England fishermen have not received basic safety training. Cuts in groundfish quotas will only make matters worse as some fishermen will be forced to travel farther than they should, do the same work with fewer crewmembers, and make tough decisions about what equipment to buy and maintain with their limited resources. We are committed to helping fishing families through these difficult times. Through the services we offer in New England, fishermen and their families learn about safer practices and how to improve their health. Fishing Partnership Support Services is dedicated to sharing our successful model with commercial fishermen and their families around the country.



J.J. Bartlett is currently President of Fishing Partnership Support Services, a non-profit company that promotes the health and wellbeing of underserved commercial fishing families. In 2009 he was called upon by the White House Office of Health Reform to testify on rural health issues and hard-to-reach populations. J.J. was educated at Harvard University and holds an MBA from Boston University with a concentration in health care management.



Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care for Migrants and Itinerant People

Sea Sunday Message (13th July 2014)

Throughout the history of mankind, the sea was the place where routes of explorers and adventurers intersected, and where battles determined the rise and fall of many nations. But it is, above all, a privileged place for exchange of goods and global trade. Actually, over 90% of merchandises worldwide are transported by nearly 100,000 ships, that unrelenting, are sailing from one end of the world to the other, run by a workforce of approximately 1.2 million seafarers of all races, nationalities and religions.

During this Sea Sunday, we are invited to become aware of the hardships and difficulties that seafarers face daily and of the valuable service provided by the Apostleship of the Sea in being Church who bears witness of the Lord's mercy and tenderness in order to preach the Gospel in the ports of the whole world.

Due to a number of factors related to their profession, seafarers are invisible to us and to our society. As we celebrate Sea Sunday, I wish to invite every Christian to look around and realize how many of the objects we use in our daily lives have come to us through the hard and laborious work of seafarers.

If we observe their lives carefully, we immediately realize that they are certainly not as romantic and adventurous as sometimes is shown in films and novels.

The life of seafarers is difficult and dangerous. In addition to having to face the rage and power of nature, that often prevails even upon the most modern and technologically advanced ships (according to the International Maritime Organization [IMO] in 2012, more than 1,000 seafarers have died as a result of shipwrecks, maritime collisions, etc.), we should not forget the risk of piracy, which is never defeated it but is transformed in new and different ways and is manifested in many maritime routes, and also the danger of criminalization and abandonment without wages, food and protection in foreign ports.

The sea, the ship and the port are the universe of life of seafarers. A ship is economically viable only when sailing and, therefore, must continually sail from one port to another. The mechanization of cargo-handling operations has reduced the time of berthing and the free time of crew members, while security measures have restricted the opportunities to go ashore.

Seafarers do not choose their companions of journey. Each crew is a microcosm of people from different nationalities, cultures and religions, forced to live together in the limited area of a ship for the duration of the contract, without any interest in common, communicating with an idiom that often is not theirs.

For seafarers loneliness and isolation are traveling companions. By its nature, the work of seafarers bring them to be away, even for long periods, from their family environment. For the crews is not always easy to have access to the numerous technologies (telephone, wi-fi, etc.) for contacting family and friends. In most cases, children are born and grow up without their presence, thus increasing the sense of loneliness and isolation that accompanies their life.

The Church, in her maternal concern, for over ninety years has been providing her pastoral care to the people of the sea throughout the *Work of the Apostleship of the Sea*.

Every year thousands of seafarers are welcomed in ports, at the *Stella Maris* Centers, distinctive places where seafarers are warmly received, can relax away from the ship and contact family members using different means of communication made available to them.

The volunteers daily visit seafarers on ships, in hospitals and those who are abandoned in foreign ports, ensuring a word of consolation but also concrete support when needed.

The chaplains are always available to offer spiritual assistance (celebration of the Eucharist, ecumenical prayers, etc.) to seafarers of all nationalities who are in need, especially in times of difficulty and crisis.

Finally, the Apostleship of the Sea gives voice to those who often have no voice, denouncing abuses and injustices, defending the rights of the people of the sea and asking to the maritime industry and to the individual governments to respect international Conventions.

While, during this Sea Sunday, we express our gratitude to all those who work in the maritime industry, with a trusting heart we ask Mary, Star of the Sea to guide, enlighten and protect the sailing of the whole people of the sea and support the members of the Apostleship of the Sea in their pastoral ministry.

Antonio Maria Cardinal Vegliò, President ✠ Joseph Kalathiparambil, Secretary



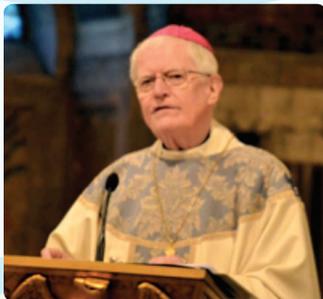
Mass. Fishermen meeting with Bishop Boland

(L) Angela Sanfilippo, president of Gloucester Fishermen's Wives Association and representatives from the Massachusetts Fishing Community met with Bishop Kevin Boland (R facing backward) and Sr. Myrna Tordillo on May 23, 2014 at the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

2014 Maritime Day Mass

May 24, 2014 † Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception † Washington, DC

Homily of Most Reverend J. Kevin Boland



Most Rev. Kevin Boland, AOS Bishop Promoter, celebrant and homilist at Maritime Day Mass

It seems like only yesterday that we gathered for this annual celebration. I wonder how many containers have crisscrossed the ocean waves over the past twelve months – it is in the billions.

I recognize Sr. Myrna Tordillo, National Director of the AOS and her office for planning the details of this annual celebration. Welcome

in a special way to Captain George McShea, President of AOS-USA. One of his responsibilities is the Cruise Ship Program and other related matters that pertain to sea families. Monsignor Rossi and the staff of the National Shrine for their excellent cooperation in celebrating this annual event. Also Father Michael Weston Master of Ceremonies and the music ministers and the altar servers.

Why do we have this annual day of remembrance for seafarers?

Do we have such for airline pilots or truck drivers who are on the road day and night? These professions are noble and essential to the life blood of our nation but seafarers are very special. What are some of these qualities?

- Marco Polo wrote that the man who goes out to sea is a man in despair. Today's seafarers are both men and women. Today's seafarer is also probably poor, exploited and his life is one of overwork and chronic fatigue.
- The author Rose George wrote a splendid book with a title that says it all:

"Ninety Percent of Everything: Inside Shipping, the Invisible Industry that 'Puts Clothes on your Back, Gas in Your Car, and Food on Your Plate'".



Massachusetts fishing community representatives attended Maritime Day Mass

The work of the seafarer in many respects is invisible – people never see the seafarer or his work. The public media reports the time schedule for the comings and goings of the freighters, oil tankers and container ships, etc., etc. The rest is hidden.

The following is an interesting observation. When Malaysia Airlines Flight 370 went missing with 12 crew and 227 passengers – the airwaves were reporting on the matter day and night for weeks on end. There was a never ending stream of commentary even to the point that we got tired and aggravated about the whole affair. Many nations came together, shared resources and every effort was made to locate the missing aircraft. To date no success.



Filipino American community from Annapolis, MD with Sr. Roschelle Isada, mscs, and Sr. Maila Miciano, mscs

On the other hand how many remember what happened in the days before Christmas five years ago. The cargo freighter Danny F II approached the port of Tripoli on route from Uruguay to Syria. This freighter carried 18,000 cattle, 10,000 sheep, and 83 human persons. Ships like these bring us 95% of everything we consume.

Eleven miles from Tripoli, in stormy weathers the Danny F II capsized. 43 men died including the captain. Their number was added to the estimated 2,000 who lose their lives annually. The sea was filled with drowning animals. The year was 2009 – 5 years ago. In this time period 35 other ships have not made it home.

Why were there no headlines? Who knows? Perhaps indifference or we take for granted our access to the goods of the world not realizing that these goods come for us at a price which is beyond our human experience.

The Book of Wisdom, written about 100 years before Christ, says: "But your providence, O Father! guides it, for you have furnished even in the sea a road, and through the waves a steady path, showing that you can save from any danger, so that even one without skill may embark".

The demands and challenges of sea commerce are gigantic. The answers are complex. No matter the solution the seafarer is essential to all solutions. History demonstrates he has been exploited.

Rose George summarizes it as follows:

When something goes wrong at sea, a seafarer has nowhere to turn. *"A land based person would have national jurisdiction"* says Deirdra Fitzpatrick of the ITF. *"I'm in the UK, my problem is here, and I know where to go for help. If you are a Filipino or a Panamanian flagged ship traveling from South Africa to the Netherlands, what law is going to govern you? You are a total moving target."*

This annual Mass is the opportunity for the Church to officially recognize the sacrificial life style of seafarers throughout the world and their contributions to the welfare of the social order. This day also provides the opportunity to influence the infrastructure that all agencies involved with seafaring make every effort to ensure that justice prevails for all. Justice in wages, working conditions, health benefits, vacations, opportunities to worship, and when difficulties arise that they are properly represented at the bargaining table.

Our Lady, Star of the Sea is the Patroness of the highways of the ocean. To recognize and emphasize her importance AOS-USA is sponsoring an effort for the installation of a Roundel depicting Our Lady, Star of the Sea in this Basilica Church. It is presently being crafted in Italy and will be installed above one of the primary doors of this Basilica. This ceremony could take place within the coming year.

This is a day of remembrance. There is no better source of consolation and guidance than the prayer to Our Lady, Star of the Sea.

Hence I conclude this Homily with such a prayer:

Prayer to Our Lady Star of the Sea

Star of the Sea, Great Mother of God and Our Mother, you know all dangers of soul and body that threaten seafarers.

Protect your sons and daughters who sail the seas, and protect also their families that await their return.

Star of the Sea, Mother of the Church, give light and strength to those priests and laypersons who bring the love of your Divine Son among seafarers.

Fill their hearts with a supernatural and life giving zeal for the apostolate.

Star of the Sea, light shining in the darkness, be a guide to those who sail amid the storms and dangers of life.

Stir up in their midst the hearts of ardent apostles and bring us all to the safety of heaven's port.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on all those who sail the seas.

O, Star of the Sea, help and protect us from the danger of hurricanes and floods and all perils of nature.



National Maritime Day Observance

The National Maritime Day observance was held on May 22, 2014 at the Department of Transportation headquarters in Washington, DC, attended by government officials, legislators, various representatives from the maritime industry, maritime academies, training schools, trade unions, NAMMA board and mariners. Mr. Paul "Chip" Jaenichen, Maritime Administrator gave the welcome address and the Honorable Anthony Foxx, Secretary of Transportation delivered the Remarks. General Paul Serva, USAF was Keynote Speaker.

The National Maritime Day Observance and Wreath-Laying Ceremony is an event hosted by the US Department of Transportation's Maritime Administration and the Military Sealift Command, to honor the hardworking men and women in "Maritime Service to America and freedom."

"On 20 May 1933, Congress by Joint Resolution designated each May 22nd as National Maritime Day. While the day originally commemorated the first successful transoceanic voyage under steam propulsion accomplished by the steamship *Savannah*, in later years it developed into an occasion for honoring the many sacrifices and contributions of American merchant mariners and the United States maritime industry." (Program, Maritime Day Observance, 2014).

The program was very enriching with insights from the speakers. On hand for the Wreath Laying were Mr. Jaenichen, General Serva and Rear Admiral Shannon. AOS National Director, Sr. Myrna Tordillo gave the program invocation.





Fr. Rivers and Me

By Karen M. Parsons OFS
Port Chaplain in Galveston, Texas

When I was about 8 years old a young priest who lived 1400 miles away from my Detroit home was being appointed port chaplain of the port of Houston, Texas. Fr. Rivers Patout was a young and very energetic priest determined to get a port ministry going in one of

our nation's largest ports. He knew it had to be a joint effort so he worked with several denominations as well as civic authorities and soon the Houston International Seafarers Center was born!

The Houston International Seafarers Center has been a beautiful model of ecumenical collaboration for port ministry all over the world. In fact, our own Galveston Seafarers Center is built on that model.

Fr. Rivers was born in Galveston and raised in Navasota. After high school he attended Notre Dame University; class of 1960. The Spirit called and he listened entering St. Mary's Seminary in Houston. He was ordained a Catholic priest in 1967. A year later Fr. Rivers became part of the founding ecumenical group that opened the Houston International Seafarers Center. In 1972 he was assigned as full time port chaplain. Prior to that he was part time in the parish and part time in the port.

Fr. Rivers was a dynamic force in port ministry campaigning for seafarers' rights, access to shore, and seeing that their basic needs were met. A few years into the ministry Fr. Rivers convinced the diocese to name Sister Rachel Smith OSF, a 50 year old Franciscan sister with a passion for the ministry, the first Catholic female port chaplain. Sister Rachel worked alongside Fr. Rivers and their ecumenical partners until 1992 when she was called back to San Francisco to serve at the Mother House.



My history in maritime ministry crosses paths with Fr. Rivers first in 1988 when I came to Houston to speak at the North American Maritime Ministry Conference. I spoke about "utilizing lay ministers in port ministry." I was already three years into the ministry in the Port of Detroit at that time. In 1990 I was invited to attend the Houston Port Chaplaincy School. Sister Rachel was a great role model and mentor. After finishing the course I was also invited by Fr. Rivers as well as Msgr. Ray Rau, our Apostleship of the Sea National Director at the time, to apply for certification through the National Catholic Conference for Seafarers. I applied for and received certification as a port chaplain and that same year took a course and received certification in seafarers' advocacy from the Center for Seafarers' Rights in New York.

In 1992, when the position of port chaplain came open in Galveston in the Diocese of Galveston-Houston, Fr. Rivers did not hesitate when I applied. He took my application to his then bishop, Joseph Fiorenza, and got it approved. It was then I became the first Catholic lay woman appointed port chaplain.

For the past 22 years Fr. Rivers has been my diocesan supervisor, mentor, and friend. He has been good to my family and me. He has trusted me with the port ministry in Galveston and eventually asked the Archbishop to also assign me the port of Texas City. Over the 22 years I have been port chaplain in Galveston, Fr. Rivers had encouraged and supported me.

On the evening of our Seafarers Center 2014 Gala Fr. Rivers attended and told me he had a brain tumor. He had surgery the following Wednesday. And less than two weeks later on the morning of June 2nd when he was due to start his first round of chemo and radiation he simply did not wake up. The Lord had other plans for him. Fr. Rivers is now in heaven receiving seafarers' souls as they arrive. We will miss you, Fr. Rivers. Thank you for all you have done for seafarers, your parishioners, your family and your friends.



Where Fr. Rivers' Trust and Guidance Has Led Me

When I arrived in Galveston in 1992 to take the helm as port chaplain, I had my initial interview at the Archdiocese. Archbishop Fiorenza told me that through Fr. Rivers Patout's knowledge of my ministry in the Port of Detroit and the recommendation from our then AOS National Director, Msgr. Ray Rau, that he was confident I was the right person for the job. And after 22 years and over 8000 gangways later I continue to have full support of the Archdiocese. Archbishop Fiorenza retired a few years ago and our new Archbishop, Daniel Cardinal DiNardo, continues to support the Apostleship of the Sea ministries in our Archdiocese serving the ports of Houston, Barbour's Cut, Texas City and Galveston.

Over the years I have been blessed with Archdiocesan support to be allowed to attend many conferences around the world to learn more about our ministry and be trained in many subjects concerning the maritime industry. I have traveled to every continent except Antarctica, visited over a dozen countries, and visited seafarers' families in many of those countries. Over my 29 year career in AOS I have also maintained a correspondence ministry; writing and receiving over 20,000 letters to and from seafarers and their families.

Just over six months ago I was appointed by the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrant and Itinerant People as Regional Coordinator for the Apostleship of the Sea in North America and the Caribbean. I am humbled by this appointment and will work hard to do what is needed in our region. I was one of the first two women appointed to the Regional Coordinators' position. Sister Mary Leahy RSJ (port chaplain in Sydney, Australia) is representing Oceania.

In my day to day ministry I visit ships, offer pastoral care to seafarers, bless ships, give invocations at maritime functions, advocate for seafarers, and much, much more. What a blessing this ministry has been in my life. I thank God for it daily.

Reflecting on a Devoted Life of Ministry † Fr. Rivers A. Patout, III

By the Rev. Lacy Largent, Port Chaplain, Houston International Seafarers' Centers, Inc.



In the summer of 1954, Rivers Patout went on a three-week scout trip with 31 other boys from the Houston Area Boy Scout Council. Upon their return, he was one of five boys elected to the "Ravens Nest"—a group of boys that demonstrated exceptional leadership and were held in high regard for their ability to be a positive influence in the lives of others. His "crew" of scouts later went on a floundering trip. As his

Assistant Crew Chief Ray Smith writes: *"We stayed up all night trying to gig flounders, and were somewhat successful. We were really tired and most of us wanted to sleep some before starting back. Rivers, however, insisted that he just had to make it to church. At first we didn't think he was serious, but he was distraught to think that he might not be able to make it to church, so we hurriedly put things in the car and came on home. We got him to St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church just in time!"*

Even during his younger years, Fr. Rivers demonstrated his faithful devotion to God, his leadership skills, and his now well-known ability to influence people and to get them to do what he wanted!

Fr. Rivers became the driving ecumenical force as the Houston International Seafarers' Ministry was formed in 1968. He was insistent that the Seafarers' Center be ecumenical and was joined by a Presbyterian Pastor and a Methodist Pastor; a short time later, the Lutherans and the Episcopalians also joined in the ministry to seafarers. By 1972, an article appeared in the Catholic Herald on the construction of a seafarers' center in the Port of Houston. The ministry would champion the needs of the many seafarers visiting the Port of Houston. The Houston Center became the first ecumenical center in the world.

The Director of the Houston Center, Patricia Poulos, remembers the early beginnings: *"I knew Fr. Patout from his first parish. Along with a friend we visited the temporary location of the Seafarers' Center on Thanksgiving Day 1972 intending to serve as volunteers. The first lesson learned from Fr. Patout was to use the volunteer opportunity to learn about other cultures and not to judge according to what we perceived as different. Fr. Patout never turned a seafarer away who might just need to talk or had a problem adjusting to being far from home and family. In addition to interacting with the seafarers in port, Fr. Patout would often in his numerous worldwide travels visit those same seafarers in their homelands. Lifelong friendships were forged."* Fr. Rivers traveled to every continent except Antarctica!

During the days when ships had much longer port stays, he would take seafarers to his family's farm. One of these seafarers from Belgium (Louis Huijbrechts) emailed Fr. Rivers on February 17, 2014: *"I hope that all is going well there in Houston. When searching for some photographs of the years before my marriage, I found a picture of you together with some crewmembers from the M/S Gand at your Navasota*

home. So everything came back in my memory, the longshoremen strike, we stayed 4 months and 1 week at wharf 29, the seaman's mission in town and later the beginning of the mission near wharf 23. I remember the repair of the school bus, the visit to the Space Center, and so many things more."

Poulos adds: *"Soccer matches were a big deal at that time and opposing teams would each ask for a special blessing on winning the match. If you listened carefully to Fr. Patout's blessing you'd hear "God bless you and keep you from injury and may you play as well as you are able to" - never was a mention made of "May you win the match!" Many years later I'd hear pretty much the same blessing when he sold raffle tickets for his parish: "Bless you for buying these tickets and supporting a good cause and may you have a GOOD chance of winning!"*

If you have ever heard Fr. Rivers pray, you have already noticed that he prayed his public prayers just as if he'd just kept on talking in an already-ongoing conversation with God. He didn't bow his head, he didn't say "let us pray" and wait for others to bow their heads, Fr. Rivers just started talking to God, keeping his eyes open throughout the prayer, and being very matter-of-fact with our Lord trusting that God was already granting his requests!

The Houston Maritime Ministry Training Program was started by Fr. Patout and others in 1973 and continues into the present day as the only training program for new port chaplains and ship visitors in North America. Fr. Rivers also went to Japan to teach a two-week port ministry course to seafarers' ministries beginning there. He was influential in all the maritime ministry organizations in which he participated, primarily AOS, NAMMA, and ICMA.

Fr. Rivers loved his life as a priest and chaplain and worked not only full-time at the Houston Centers but also as Pastor of St. Alphonsus Catholic Church. Chaplain David Wells noted that he never complained about too much work to do, too many people to see, or too much responsibility. His ministry day was morning, afternoon, and evening, and we often wondered how he could possibly keep up this pace! Yes, there were times when we just couldn't figure out where he even was, and we were relieved to find out that he did take care of himself with a brief nap, fine food and wine, golf, and jigsaw puzzles. He had definitely mastered the art of time management in ministry!

Yes, Fr. Rivers' life was centered on a love for people and a love for God. His ministry reached the seafarers, his parishioners, the maritime community, and countless others throughout the world!

About the Author: *I am an Episcopal Priest and have been the Episcopal Port Chaplain since February 1, 2002, which is a full 12 years, 6 months now. My written title is "The Rev. Lacy Largent"; seafarers call me "Mother Lacy". An interesting fact is that I was raised in Navasota, Texas, which was also where Fr. Rivers was raised as well. It is interesting that Navasota would produce two priests of different denominations who both wind up in Seafarers' Ministry!*

Deacon Gjet Bajraktari A Beacon of Light to People of the Sea

By Mark Udry

Courtesy of the St. Augustine Catholic Magazine • Photos by Scott Smith

It seems only fitting that a man who spent his formative years moving from one place to the next in his family's search for a home, would minister to seafarers.

Deacon Gjet Bajraktari of Jacksonville was born in Albania in 1944. Escaping religious oppression from Communist rule after World War II, his family was forced to move to Italy before gaining passage to America, passing through Ellis Island and settling in New York City. The family soon realized big city life wasn't for them, so they pulled up stakes and moved again, this time to Canada.

That's where he was ordained a deacon in 1979, at Our Lady of the Visitation Catholic Church in South Glouster, Ontario – a parish he served for five years before moving to North Florida.

Throughout his 28-year service with the Diocese of St. Augustine, Deacon Gjet served as a deacon at Our Lady Star of the Sea in Ponte Vedra Beach, and Jacksonville's Holy Spirit and San José parishes. He served the Albanian Catholic Community mostly at San José Parish for many years.

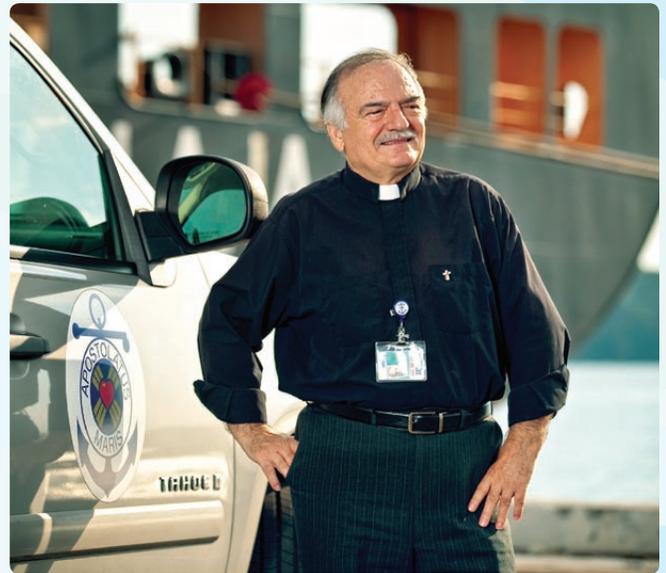


In 2001, Deacon Dale Wamstad retired from his ministry work with Apostleship of the Sea, and asked Deacon Gjet if he would be interested in taking over the ministry at Jacksonville's two port terminals on Blount Island and Talleyrand.

"I said I would go where I am most needed, so I thought I'd give it try," said Deacon Gjet. "I never thought it would last this long."

A ministry of Catholic Charities, Apostleship of the Sea is a professional association that offers counseling and spiritual support to mariners, fishermen, dock workers, work boat and cruise ship operators.

Along with a small group of volunteers, Deacon Gjet meets each ship at the docks and must escort the men throughout the port. They provide other assistance as needed such as driving seafarers to and from errands, as well.



After more than 14 years, Deacon Gjet retired as director of the Apostleship of the Sea, a ministry that serves seafarers such as fishermen, dock workers, merchant mariners, workboat and cruise ship operators and others.

Soon after taking over the ministry on September 1, 2001, the largest terror attack on American soil took place on September 11. As expected this posed a challenge to the Apostleship of the Sea ministry with increased security at U.S. ports.

And, then there was the fact that the diocesan ministry didn't really have a space to call its own. Taking matters in his own hands, Deacon Gjet lobbied for a permanent place to minister to the seafarers at both terminals.

"We had nothing," said Deacon Gjet. "There really was no Catholic identity at the port, and at least 90 percent of the seafarers coming off the ships are Catholic."

With funds provided by the diocese and Catholic Charities, a 1,750 square-foot center was opened at the Talleyrand terminal in 2003; Blount Island followed with its own facility in 2008. The centers offer computers with Internet access for seafarers to check email, a row of private phone booths, bathrooms with shower facilities, an area to relax and watch television and a chapel where Deacon Gjet performs a Communion service or where a visiting priest can celebrate Mass. He estimates that about 700 to 800 seafarers pass through the centers' doors each month.

For his efforts, the National Association of Apostleship of the Sea honored him with the Maritime Samaritan Award in 2013.

At age 70, Deacon Gjet is ready to retire. After the long journey from his Albanian homeland to his adopted country, ministering to men who make a living traveling from port to port, he has only one desire – "to rest a bit," he said, laughing. "I just want to relax and enjoy some time with my wife."

Deacon Gjet thank you for your many years of service – you and your volunteers are a beacon of light offering hospitality and pastoral care to the people of the sea!

Kiko the Seafarer

During a familial gathering among Filipino-Americans in Mobile, Alabama one weekend night on the first week of June 2014, at a prayerful celebration a nurse came to break the news that a Filipino seafarer has been confined in the intensive care unit (ICU) at USA Medical Center, Mobile, since May 5, 2014. She added that the critically ill patient was drop off at the hospital from a ship passing over Mobile. Since then nobody came to visit him and take care of him except for the regular care he received from the medical staff of USA Medical Center.

AOS Mobile

We immediately visited the critically ill patient, Mr. Kiko Lagman (not his real name) at USA Medical and made representation to the medical team that we are from AOS Catholic Maritime Club, and that we wanted to help the seafarer contact his family in the Philippines. Kiko could barely open his mouth and he sparingly said a few words in Filipino, "... gusto kung makita si Liezel ang anak ko at malaman ng pamilya ang kalagayan ko" (*I want to see my daughter Liezel and let my family know my medical condition*). I could sense his loneliness and desperation after more than a month of his confinement at the ICU. Through the feeble words he mumbled, I was able to deduce information about his family and his ship.

Ecumenical Networking

I lost no time by using the social media and internet search engines to find the name of the ship, the flag registry with its principal, the local agent and the manning agency from the Philippines. I immediately asked NAMMA, AOS and ITF contacts to help me assist Kiko in his wishes to contact his family and see his daughter Liezel at his bedside. God is indeed so good! There was unprecedented outpouring of support and assistance from: Jason Zudiema (NAMMA), Sister Myrna Tordillo(AOS), Doug Stevenson(SCI), Mike Colomb (NAMMA), David Seymour (ISC Mobile), Dwayne Boudreaux (ITF New Orleans), Rodrigo Aguinaldo (ITF Philippines), and Roger Harris of ISWAN who provided an emergency grant for the sick seafarer. In all honestly, I can say that with God's help and the wonderful ecumenical collaboration among maritime ministers and stakeholders for seafarers' concerns, we were able to bring



L to R: Daughter Liezel, Kiko, and AOS volunteer Perry Tan

Liezel, Kiko's daughter to America to personally take care of her sick father that helped in his subsequent recuperation. Situations like these, with the help of many people make our ministry more fulfilling and the sick seafarer's pain and condition more bearable.

Home at Last

The daughter arrived on July 2, 2014 and we met her at the airport and immediately brought her to the hospital and we witnessed the sweet reunion of a family. AOS volunteers from Mobile and other Filipinos in the area have shown their graciousness and hospitality. They took turns visiting the sick patient and making Liezel feel welcomed at their homes. Kiko finally was transferred to a regular room by the last week of July after spending more than two months at the ICU. The hospital medical team finally gave the clearance for Kiko travel and on Aug. 8, 2014 he and Liezel went back to the Philippines. We hope and pray that everything will be alright for them in the Philippines. Wishing all the best for Kiko and his love ones, Godspeed... Inshallah!!!

Rev. Lito J. Capeding, Chaplain
Apostleship of the Sea (Catholic Maritime Club)
Archdiocese of Mobile, Alabama

Visit to the Charleston Port and Seafarers Ministry

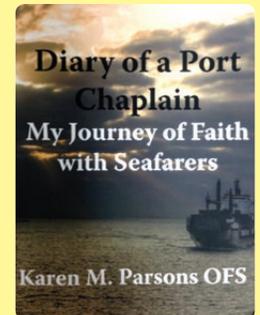


May 10, 2014
With AOS volunteers
(back row L to R)
Ernie Torres and
Dick Masonis
and seafarers.

New Book by Port Chaplain, Karen M. Parsons OFS

Copies available for \$15 (author's price) plus \$4 shipping and handling for US orders and \$14 shipping and handling for outside the US. Make check out to Karen M. Parsons. International orders may use Western Union. Enclose the address(es) you would like the book(s) mailed to in your correspondence.

Mail to: Karen M. Parsons OFS
The Galveston Seafarers Center
221-20th Street
Galveston, Texas 77550





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AOS Seattle

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Director, Catholic Seafarers' Center
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Houston Maritime Ministry Training Program

Save the Date!

Dates of Training: February 1 - 13, 2015

Contact Rev. David Wells, Coordinator,
email (wells6652@msn.com) or fax (713.672.2444) as soon as possible.

Application deadline is December 1, 2014