



## THE APOSTLESHIP OF THE SEA STARTS RECONSTRUCTION PROJECTS IN THE PHILIPPINES AFFECTED BY HAYAN



"Helping seafarers, fishers and their families affected by the typhoon, in dialogue with the local Church, with sustainable projects which are economically and transparent, taking into account the ecological balance and the defense of the rights of the fishers". This was stated by H.E. Bishop Joseph Kalathiparambil, Secretary of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, on his return from the Philippines' trip in March, accompanied by Father Bruno Ciceri, in charge of the AOS within the same Dicastery.

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**Pontifical Councils ...**

After the typhoon of November 7 last year, the Pontifical Council started a special fundraising to support projects to benefit the people of the sea in the affected areas. Cardinal Antonio Maria Vegliò, President of the Pontifical Council, remarked that "this fundraising campaign has triggered a sensible reaction of support on the part of Stella Maris Centers around the world and by many people, that up today has allowed us to collect a remarkable amount of donations."

During their stay in the Philippines, Archbishop Kalathiparambil and Fr. Ciceri met, among others, S.E. Archbishop Pinto, Apostolic Nuncio, H.E. Bishop Villegas, President of the Episcopal Conference, Cardinal Luis Tagle, Archbishop of Manila, and H.E. Msgr. Pabillo, Chairman of NASSA (Caritas Philippines), that is coordinating the various projects in the dioceses affected by the typhoon. With these meetings, we wanted to give voice to the local community with regard to the choice of priorities and concrete projects, which was much appreciated.

The meeting with the chaplains of the Apostleship of the Sea was very important; they have submitted some reconstruction projects for the fishers and their families for which some of the funds collected were allocated.

Immediately after the typhoon, the AOS in Cebu took action by delivering basic goods to Bantayan Island located in the

northern part of Cebu. Now with the funds received, 70 small houses will be built, benefiting 320 poor families in the district of Sillon. The district with around 1060 families, was completely devastated by the fury of the super typhoon that in its trail has sown fear and destruction in this community of fishers and coconuts' farmers.

The Holy Rosary Parish with a population of about 15,000 people, 63% of whom are Catholic, is located in the extreme north of the Diocese of Maasin,. Here too, the typhoon hit with extreme intensity, destroying not only the homes but also the infrastructures. The AOS of Maasin is committed with the reconstruction of houses completely or partially destroyed in the districts of Caridad and Visca in Babay city. When the project will be completed 420 households will benefit.



The island of Guian is located in the Eastern part of the province of Samar. It was the first town hit by the typhoon and was completely destroyed. AOS Manila will be engaged in the reconstruction of the social and material structure of the community, in the small island of Manicani, trying to respond to the needs of about 300 families who derive their livelihood from artisanal fishing.

In all these projects the local people will be directly involved in the reconstruction process using their manual skills, in order to give them dignity and making them actors of their rebirth.

Furthermore, the reconstruction projects will be carried out in accordance with the local traditions and will be characterized by an environmental sustainability as, for example, the use of coconut wood and palm leaves taken from the many plants destroyed by the typhoon. In line with this principle is the last project implemented in the Northern part of Palawan, that will provide financial support for seaweed farming and planting mangroves that protect coastlines and create a favorable environment for fish reproduction.

Cardinal Vegliò indicated that for these projects is crucial a budget transparency in the management of the funds, which will be overseen by the local AOS and NASSA. A visit of the Cardinal is envisioned at the conclusion of the projects.

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From left to right: Bishop Joseph Kalathiparambil, Cardinal Luis Tagle and Fr. Bruno Ciceri.

**6,190 dead, 14 million people affected, more than 4 million displaced. These are the dramatic numbers of Hayan, which has devastated the Philippines.**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE PASTORAL CARE OF MIGRANTS AND ITINERANT PEOPLE THANKS ALL THOSE WHO SENT THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE FUND ESTABLISHED TO HELP FISHERS AND THEIR FAMILIES VICTIMS OF THE TYPHOON .**

**WE WILL CONTINUE TO KEEP YOU INFORMED ON THE PROGRESS OF THE PROJECTS.**



# REGIONAL COORDINATORS MEETING

Rome, 20-24 January 2014

## Final Document

We the Regional Coordinators would like to express our gratitude to the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of the Migrants and Itinerant People (PCPCMIP) for having gathered us together in Rome at the beginning of our mandate.

These days spent together were helpful to get to know and understand each other more deeply. We became aware of the challenges that are awaiting us in representing this PCPCMIP and coordinating the activities in our region.

Tuesday, the visit to the necropolis under Saint Peter Basilica was not only an archeological discovery but a journey of faith to the tomb of Saint Peter the fisherman and the first Apostle.

On Wednesday, at the Pontifical audience Pope Francis reminded us to be “the voice” of the seafarers, fishers and their families. He strengthened our commitment and dedication to be at the service of the people of the sea.

On Friday, the celebration of the Eucharist at the altar of Blessed John Paul II confirmed our desire to sail the AOS International “into the deep” moving out from the port of our acquired securities into the open sea of the challenges of the maritime world.

The qualified speakers with their presentations have stimulated our reflection on the future and unpredictable trends of the maritime industry and on the way that AOS will respond to them.

*On January 22nd, the Regional Coordinators took part in the Holy Father's General Audience in St. Peter's Square. The Holy Father addressed the following words to them: "I greet the participants in the meeting of Regional Coordinators of the Apostleship of the Sea, together with Cardinal Antonio Maria Vegliò, and I exhort them to be the voice of the workers who live far from their loved ones and face dangerous and difficult situations".*



From the regional reports common problems have emerged such as need of money to run our services, lack of communication and networking, lack of support from AOS Bishop Promoters and local Churches.

Analyzing the situation of AOS around the world, we feel challenged by the fact that much more can be done to provide better ser-

vices to the people of the sea but at the same time we recognize that there are many reasons to be grateful to the Lord for the great work done by the many chaplains and volunteers in Stella Maris Centers and ports around the world.

Now that we are returning to our ports, we would like to submit to the attention of the PCPCMIP the followings points that we intend to realize during our mandate:

1. The Apostolic Letter *Motu Proprio* on the Maritime Apostolate “Stella Maris” is the fundamental document for AOS and the people of the sea. It is necessary to stimulate a serious and specialized reflection to ensure that it remains relevant and properly implemented universally.
2. To submit an annual Regional Plan to the PCPCMIP and to receive the necessary financial support to implement it.

3. To create a Committee for fundraising comprised of experts, who can assist and promote the implementation of development plans prepared by the regional coordinators.

4. To respond to the invitation expressed in the Final Document of the XXIII AOS World Congress to “be instruments of the New Evangelization in the maritime world ...utilizing all means and ways of communication, including social media”. We urge the PCPCMIP to continue the development of the international website, making it operational and supporting it. The website should be integrated with other instruments (eg. APP) to promote Christian

formation and communication with the people of the sea, the Church and the maritime industry.

5. To better coordinate our press and media activities across all formats –TV, radio, print, online, social media - from a central point.
6. To introduce a common email network for all our AOS offices and personnel.
7. To seek an improvement in the coordination of the global ministry of AOS by utilizing the expertise and knowledge that exists in the international AOS family by asking particular national organizations and/or individuals to pursue agreed activities, reporting back to the PCPCMIP.
8. To empower seafarers to become apostles of evangelization through our sharing of catechetical materials.
9. To encourage the use of AOS Italy Ship Visitor Database as an instrument to collect information, to improve our ministry onboard and generate reports.
10. To define a new process for the election of the Regional Coordinators and further clarify their roles, responsibilities and resources.
11. To reflect on our name and logo, with a view to expressing ourselves in a standard way all over the world.

As Regional Coordinators we seek the cooperation and collaboration of the Bishops Conferences, AOS Bishops Promoters and National Directors to assist us in the implementation of these points.

The AOS Regional Coordinators

Rome, 24<sup>th</sup> of January 2014

*“I ask you to renew your commitment to be at the service of seafarers, fishers and their families by responding to their spiritual and material needs and also by accomplishing the added responsibility of coordinating the maritime ministry in your region.*

*We would also like to entrust to Mary, Star of the Sea, all the people of the sea around the world so that they learn from Her to live faithfully, trusting in God in spite of difficulties and trials. We ask Her to extend her maternal protection on those who go through the painful experience of being held hostages and who, after many days, weeks and months of captivity, lose hope.*

*Finally, I would like to ask the Blessed Virgin to be your guiding star and point of reference during these days of reflection and discussion as you analyze the maritime world, examine its problems, consider the difficulties experienced by the people of the sea and try to formulate some responses, guided by faith and trust in the Lord”.*

*Antonio Maria Card. Vegliò, President*

## SINGAPORE PASTOR'S LIFELINE FOR TRAFFICKED FISHERMEN

*Absence of enforced laws leaves seafarers prey to slave labor*

At the crack of dawn every day, Pastor Wilson Wong of the International Lutheran Seafarers' Mission (ILSM) in Singapore fills two bags with newspapers, brochures and reading material, and heads to the Jurong Fishery Port. For the last seven years, ministering to the fishermen that dock at the port has been his routine and that of his colleagues at the ILSM. "These men sometimes spend many months at sea and they don't have newspapers so they don't know what is going on," said the 55-year-old.



The ILSM is an international organization that helps seafarers and fishermen in distress. They are one of the few groups in Singapore – or anywhere else for that matter – that these migrant workers can approach for help. Indeed, the International Labour Organisation classifies fishing as one of the most hazardous and physically exploitative industries in the world.

Fishermen often work between 18 and 20 hours daily, have no contact with their family for months at a time and are paid next to nothing despite their two to three-year bonds, Pastor Wong said.

In Southeast Asia, migrant fishermen hail largely from impoverished nations such as Cambodia, Indonesia and the Philippines. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Asia accounts for 85 percent of the world's 45 million fishermen and 75 percent of motorised fishing vessels. A growing group of these men are trafficked to serve as what the UNODC calls "forced slave labor" on fishing boats. These boats dock in Southeast Asian ports, including Singapore, said the 2013 US State Department's Trafficking in Persons report. The report added that these workers face "severe abuse by fishing boat captains, the inability to disembark from their vessels, the inability to terminate their contracts and the non-payment of wages".

Yet there is scant hope for help and justice from governments. Singapore, for instance, has not specifically outlawed human trafficking and court cases charging traffickers in countries like the Philippines and Cambodia remain mired in process and bureaucracy. So Christian and Catholic ministers have stepped in to fill the void. They lend a sympathetic ear, provide counsel and in some cases launch investigations of their own to help the men get home.

"I see poor people getting bullied. It's the 21st century, yet this is still happening," said Pastor Wong. "They're treated like slaves." Former fishermen such as Condrad Banihit Vincente from Aklan province in the Philippines have men like Pastor Wong to thank for their eventual escape from the industry.

Three years ago, Vincente was working 20-hour shifts, hauling tuna from the depths of the Indian Ocean aboard a Taiwanese longliner. The 34-year-old was initially promised a monthly salary of US\$550 by a broker in his village but after paying close to US\$560 in broker fees, he found out he was only going to be paid US\$200 when he arrived at a staffing agency in Singapore.



“The first time I saw the contract I was shocked,” he said. But it was too late and saddled with debt, Vincente signed off the next three years of his life to an uncertain fate. He got lucky when, after 10 months, his boat docked at Cape Town, South Africa. For the first time since he set sail, he was able to call his family. “My family told me to come home, but this was one week before my ship was going to leave for the Indian Ocean,” said Vincente in his home in Aklan.

His family scrambled and contacted Reverend Monsignor Isagani Fabito from the Iglesia Filipina Independiente Church in Aklan for help. Reverend Fabito raised hell, bent on getting Vincente back. “We were desperate, I contacted the recruitment agency in Singapore, the ILSM and the Apostleship of the Sea (AOS) in Singapore,” he said. He finally managed to find someone from the International Transport Workers’ Federation in Cape Town to help Vincente get off the boat and on a plane home. The recruitment agency paid for the flights, but it was the reverend who arranged for a priest from the AOS to meet him after the transiting flight in Singapore. “I was afraid someone from the agency would come and get [Condrad] at the airport and put him on a ship again,” Fabito added. “I told him, never mind if you don’t bring home any money as long as you come home safe.” This is the fate many migrant fishermen face after being trafficked aboard commercial boats, often after being duped by informal brokers and recruitment agencies in their home countries.

Rights groups have said many men have begged to be sent home, unable to withstand the laborious conditions on the high seas. But doing so incurs early termination fees and flight ticket costs, which often offset the already meagre wages, said Father Romeo Yu-Chang, the East Asia regional coordinator at the AOS. So Father Romeo tries to use church funds to put fishermen on a flight home. He also prays with these men and sometimes offers them a bed in the church’s retreat centre. The AOS in Kaohsiung, Taiwan, also has a shelter and assists seamen. The shelter can house about 40 people and is usually fully occupied, mostly by fishermen, said port chaplain Father Ranulfo Salise.

He added that the AOS there has been observing an increasing number of complaints from fishermen since 2009, mostly from Indonesians. That said, only 32 have filed legal cases to pursue their unpaid salaries since 2009. “Most of them come to [our] shelter to sleep and go home. They don’t usually chase legal disputes,” said Father Salise.

The situation is similar in Singapore, although both Father Salise and Pastor Wong feel the men keep silent out of fear of repercussions. Said Pastor Wong: “A lot of them swallow their pain because they don’t want to be blacklisted. They need the job.”

Many of the Taiwanese fishing companies seem to have no qualms about overworking them to minimize costs, said Father Salise. It is easy for the companies to be irresponsible because they “do not necessarily have a contract with the workers,” but with the agencies and brokers who recruit the men. And although convictions for forced labor have been increasing – according to the US State Department’s 2013 TIP report – this has not done enough to reduce these incidents, said Father Salise. Drawing loopholes in the Taiwan legal system, he added: “It is necessary to enact a more just labor policy for foreign workers.”

Labor protections are often lacking because there are few international legal instruments that protect the rights of fishermen. The Work in Fishing Convention has only been ratified by four countries and is not yet in force. In contrast, the Maritime Labour Convention, which covers seafarers, has been ratified by 54 states, including Singapore. But despite the legal hurdles that hinder progress in the treatment of migrant fishers, these men of the cloth still find ways to go the extra mile.

Since June 2013, ILSM has been providing assistance to the crew of an Australian tuna longliner, the *Pacific Raider No 4* – left stranded in Singapore after the vessel’s owner went bankrupt. This includes engaging lawyers and filing a case for the wages of these six men in the courts. The ship is currently up for auction.

“When they come on board, they give us telephone cards to call home,” said second engineer Jing Qingshun, who is owed almost US\$40,000 in wages. “They have been a great help to us.”



## APINYA TAJIT AWARDED WITH JUDGES SPECIAL AWARD

The winners of the 2014 International Seafarers' Welfare Awards were announced on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2014 during a high profile ceremony hosted by Secretary General of the International Labour Organisation, Mr Guy Ryder at the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in Geneva, Switzerland. The winners are:

- **Judges Special Award: Ms Apinya Tajit, Thailand**
- Shipping Company of the Year: Wallem Ship Management
- Port of the Year: Port of Antwerp, Belgium
- Seafarer Centre of the Year: Flying Angel Club, Fremantle, Australia
- Welfare Personality of the Year Award: Fr Paul Noel, Durban, South Africa

The Welfare personality of the Year Award is named after Dr Dierk Lindemann who sadly passed away on 17 March 2014. Dr Lindemann served as the Shipowner's Group spokesperson at the ILO and took a lead role in getting the Maritime Labour Convention adopted. Commenting on the evening Roger Harris, ISWAN Executive Director, said: "The awards recognise excellent achievement and they inspire others to do more for the welfare of seafarers. We are particularly pleased that the awards are being held at the ILO with the Maritime Labour Convention eight months in force."

This year's judges were Mr Masamichi Morooka President of the International Shipping Federation and International Chamber of Shipping, Mr Steve Cotton, Acting General Secretary of the International Transport Workers' Federation, Dr Cleopatra Dombia-Henry, Director of the International Labour Standards Department, International Labour Organisation and Fr Bruno Ciceri, Chairman of the International Christian Maritime Association.

The awards are generously funded by the ITF Seafarers' Trust. The awards are also supported & endorsed by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), International Maritime Organisation (IMO), the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF), International Shipping Federation (ISF), and the International Christian Maritime Association (ICMA). International Shipping Federation (ISF) is sponsoring the Welfare Personality of the Year Award and Wrist Ship Supply is sponsoring Seafarer Centre of the Year Awards. Crewtoo is the media sponsor of the awards.



*Apinya is the beacon of light and hope for seafarers and fishers in trouble in Thailand and neighboring countries. AOS International congratulates Apinya for this important recognition.*

# DO OUR MARITIME SECURITY POLICIES TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE REAL MARINER

By: Fr. Sinclair Oubre, JCL  
AOS - Diocese of Beaumont



*The following article was written for the US Coast Guard Journal of Safety & Security at Sea Proceedings of the Marine Safety & Security Council.*

In designing any security policy, one must take into consideration the area that one is trying to apply security, the physical and human resources that are available to maintain security, and the profile of the persons who are the subject of that security.

As I sit and write this article two items are dominating the news. First, the jury has found George Zimmerman innocent of murdering Trayvon Martin. Second, investigators continue to question the pilots of Asiana Airlines flight 214 on what happened during the approach to San Francisco International Airport.

## PROFILING:

Though these news items appear to have nothing to do with maritime security, the right of seafarers to access shore leave, or our government's and maritime facilities' proper response, they in fact are key to understanding the problem. In both cases, people have acted on their impressions of who people are, and then formulate policies and actions that meet the impression or the prejudice that the policy maker has.

The whole case of George Zimmerman revolves around the question of whether he prejudiciously stereo typed Trayvon Martin, and then took action not against a hoodie-wearing youth who had just bought a pack of Skittles, but of a thug and thief who was a potential threat to the neighborhood.

Seafarers are terribly stereotyped. Like Zimmerman's profiling of Trayvon Martin, seafarers are assumed to be self destructive, drunkards, and simpletons. However, if this is the case, then why would a great business leader entrust a ship worth tens of millions of dollars, carrying a cargo of tens of millions of dollars to 23 self destructive, drunk simpletons.

This mariner stereotype was manifested by Illinois Congressman Joe Walsh back in 2011, when he accused President Obama of "spending like a drunken sailor." There was no outcry for Congressman Walsh to apologize to mariners, or undergo sensitivity training because, for most Americans, he was just stating a fact.

Contemporary mariners do not fit this profile. They come on board with internationally recognized training certificates and credentials. They spend a significant portion of their vacation in ongoing education and training to maintain their ratings and licenses. They are often married, and the income they earn educates their children, and provides a home for their families. In fact, the mariner and his or her life mirrors the lifestyle of any member of an airline crew. Well trained in his or her profession, entrusted with expensive vessels and valuable cargoes, performing essential services for maintaining the quality of life of the world community.

## THE PROFILING OF MARINERS:

Too often maritime security plans are built around the stereotypical image of the mariner, and not the professional who actually arrives at the facility. Security plans focus on imposing strict security on the mariner, and little on partnering with the mariner to promote a more secure environment.

We assume that airline pilots are professionals, and when something goes terribly wrong, there must be a reason, because airline pilots are professionals. (There is a certain circular logic here!) However, with



seafarers, since they are drunkards and simpletons, we must be tough so that they won't hurt themselves, and most of all, they won't hurt us.

So, is it any wonder that days after the Asiana Airlines crash landing, the pilots are continuing to be questioned about what happened. Simultaneously, no one is calling for the pilots to be charged with manslaughter in connection with the deaths of the three passengers. Yet, after Captain Apostolos Mangouras saved the lives of his 26 crew members when the M/V Prestige broke in two, he was immediately arrested by the Spanish government, imprisoned for ten months, and has been held under house arrest since 2003, for polluting the Spanish Coast.

### **SO, WHAT IS THE REALITY?**

1. Seafarers are well trained professionals, who are entrusted with tens of millions of dollars of assets.
2. They have been invited by the local maritime facility to either deliver or load cargoes.
3. Seafarers consistently meet the challenges of the sea and the weather, and still deliver their cargoes to the correct port, on time, and in good condition.
4. US mariners all have TWIC's, and have been subjected to extensive criminal and terrorist background checks.
5. All foreign mariners are screened 92-hours before arrival.
6. For a foreign mariner to go ashore, he or she is issued a D-1 visa by the State Department. As part of the issuing process, the mariner undergoes an extensive criminal and terrorist background check.
7. A foreign seafarer who possesses a D-1 visa can only go ashore after he or she has been inspected by a Customs and Border Protection officer, and is issued a shore pass.
8. The Government Accountability Office stated in its 2011 report that "According to Coast Guard National Maritime Intelligence Center officials we met, to date there have been no terrorist attacks involving seafarers on vessels transiting to U.S. ports and no definitive information to indicate that extremists have entered the United States as seafarer non-immigrant visa holders."
9. Surveys of denial of shore leave developed through seafarer centers show that 91.3% of all detentions on board of seafarers is related to a lack of D-1 visa, 4.6% are related to ship or shipping company restrictions, and only 4.0% are related to some action by Customs and Boarder Protection.
10. The terrorist attacks against the USNS Cole and the M/V Limburg were not perpetrated by mariners. The terrorists were stationed in the country, and were not part of the vessels' crew. The terrorist attack on Mumbai was not carried out by mariners, but by terrorists who hijacked Indian fishing boats.
11. The arrest by the Panamanian government of the M/V Chong Chon Gang and its crew, was a response to an act of smuggling, and not terrorism.

### **FINAL THOUGHTS:**

There is a disturbing twist to access to shore leave. Facility "safety" is getting blended in with facility security. As most security issues are being ironed out, new denials of shore leave take place because facilities impose new "safety" standards and procedures. Whether this is stopping the regular ship visitor at the gate for three hours to train him or her on new driving policies in the plant, or establishing an arbitrarily high insurance requirement to drive on to the facility, the net result is the same, the unnecessary denial of shore leave to the mariner.

The solution to many of these unnecessary challenges that seafarers face can be met by adopting a realistic understanding of who the seafarer is, and what role he or she plays in the security of our borders. We have to end policies that abrogate the right of seafarers to shore leave, and view mariners with suspicion. Keith Gessen described the problem well in his story on the crew of the M/V Nordic Odyssey. Since September 22, 2001, "...the United States abrogated centuries of international practice by severely restricting foreign seafarers' ability to go ashore. The crew stated, 'The only country as restrictive as the U.S.,' they said, 'was Saudi Arabia.'"



## THE SOMALI PIRATES ARE RETURNING TO FISHING

(*El Confidencial*, Monday 17 May 2014)

The wind is blowing in the bullet holes in the old lighthouse of Mogadishu. Meanwhile, small waves with a whitish crest are rocking a dozen boats moored near the beach. Just in front is the huge cement structure of the Aruba Hotel, the jewel of Somalia and East Africa, today an inexpressive skeleton rotting under the sun and saltpeter of the sea.

The sand bites his face hard. He lowers his head and looks at his watch. It is 10:30 in the morning. Muhudin Muhammad Hassan gazes from his observation point at the blue waters of the Indian Ocean. In the distance, small dots are approaching the coast at full speed. The fishers are starting to return after being out fishing all night.

Mohammad takes out an old notebook and a gnawed pen from his pocket, the unmistakable indication of hours of boredom which this man spends every day in the port. He walks down the stony steps to the beach. Here the wind hits with greater intensity. "We are currently in the off-season because of the wind. With the boats we have, it is practically impossible to go out fishing because we run the risk that a wave will overturn the boat," says this man commissioned by the Ministry of Fisheries to record the number of boats that sail out every day and the catch made by each of them.

The boats are sailing back into the harbor. Rhythmic waves are close to the beach where some young men with their pants rolled up to their knees are waiting to carry the fish to the market. A total of 100 boats and over 600 sailors have sailed in the night or early morning in search of the best fish. Those with bigger boats sailed out into the open sea to catch the finest fish. The rest, the coastal fleet, sailed about ten miles from the coast.

### 70% of the pirates has left the 'job'

"I have been working in this port for more than two decades, and I've never seen so many boats and fishers," declares Mohammad to *El Confidencial*. In Somalia, fishing has never been one of the leading industries, but in the last few years the trend changed when most of the pirates left

the AK-47 and returned to their nets and fishing gear. According to estimates, only 30% of the pirates continue the 'work': the rest have given it up. Most of them come from the semi-autonomous region of Himan, Heeb, and from the Puntland considered the historical centers of piracy in Somalia.

Several men are scrambling to clean a boat on the beach with sand. Another group is lifting up a small boat by hand to transport it to a ledge of sand on land. Mohammad approaches and greets the fishers. It was not a good night. They caught five lobsters and one tuna. "We were unlucky. The engine of our boat broke and we could not do anything else," says one of the seafarers while he loads the catch on his shoulders and heads to the nearby market.

The pace is frenetic. More and more boats sail into the port. Swordfish, sharks, manta rays, huge tunas ... The lineup of fishers is relentless. "This is nothing. Only three or four good fish in the whole morning. Western ships are over-exploiting our waters and leaving us the scraps," complains bitterly Noordin, 29, the owner of several fishing boats. Two men put a huge swordfish and a shark on their heads. They walk towards the market, but first they have to get around the countless debris scattered along the streets of a city destroyed by 23 years of war.

### **"The Chinese fish illegally in our waters"**

Many fishers agree with Noordin's complaint and are starting to gather around Muhudin Mohammad Hassan. Cries, requests, complaints, and even some threats to the Somali government official who foolishly accepts the situation. "Westerners fish in Somali waters with ships far better than ours. They use trawlers and we only have harpoons," says Hassan, siding with the fishers who have had a bad day.



In our waters, Korean or Chinese boats are engaged in illegal fishing. Their ships are so big that they look like huge cities full of lights. If the situation continues as in the past few months, the fishers will eventually get tired and go back to attacking ships. "Ultimately, it is much more profitable than going out fishing every day and coming back empty-handed", concludes Mohammad Hassan Muhudin trying to calm the crowd.

### **"Now it is suicidal to attack a ship"**

Since April 2005 when the first attack on a ship took place, Somalia has been on the front pages of newspapers around the world because of its already famous pirates. Since that first assault, 194 ships were seized and 3,741 crew members held captive. One of the peaks of this crisis occurred in 2011 when there were 243 attempted assaults on various boats. But gone are the glorious days of these modern pirates armed with AK-47 assaulting supertankers worth hundreds of millions of Euros. In 2013, only nine attacks were recorded and the downward trend continues. "It is the NATO navy's fault which opens fire on the pirates. Many believe it is not worth risking their lives and they have stopped turning to piracy," says Yusuf Hasan to *El Confidencial*. "It is no



longer easy for them as it was before. Now there are private armed guards on ships . It is suicidal to attack a ship," he declares.

Another reason why piracy has plummeted is government intervention - the first permanent executive the country has had in decades. Over 900 former pirates have been integrated into the Armed Forces of Somalia. Others have been trained as fishers. In addition, local companies have started to exploit the country's fertile waters. In February 2013, President Sheikh Hassan Mohamud offered an amnesty to pirates who decided to abandon the operations in the Indian Ocean. "We have negotiated with the buccaneers indirectly through the people's elders. Piracy must end," assured the agent.

## **The fish as a symbol of poverty**

Somalia has 3.300 kilometers of coastline. It is the country with the most kilometers of coastline in the whole continent, but it is also the country in the region that consumes less fish per capita: 3.3 kg per year. "The Somalis have never had a fish culture. Though they may be dying of hunger, they will do everything possible not to eat fish", asserts Abdel Kareem, who has been working for eight years in one of the fish market stalls in Mogadishu.

Somali's society is nomadic where owning animals is a reflection of economic status. For this reason, fish, historically, was considered a symbol of poverty and low social class. In recent years, this trend has started to change. To realize this it is sufficient to visit the market in Mogadishu.

Hordes of buyers walk among the stalls in search of merchandise. Small specimens of shark and hammerhead are piled on the shelves of one stall. A man points his finger and the dealer puts them in a plastic bag ... At the back of the market there is great confusion. Two manta rays are waiting on the ground. A young man lifts one up, puts his arm in its mouth while another starts to cut it into pieces with a huge knife. The blood drenches the floor delighting the onlookers who crowd in to watch the show.

Hussein Musab has spent half of his working life as a fishmonger in the capital's market. He is one of the veterans and one of the most critical voices we can find. He complains, "A few years ago, a kilo of freshly caught shark could cost up to eight dollars. Currently the price is less than four, just half".

The increase in fishing has brought down the price of goods. Even if there are more buyers than before, the profits have dwindled and they do not like this. He says defiantly: "Pirates? With the pittance we earn now, many fishers will return to hijacking ships and asking for ransom. We cannot continue to earn a living in this way".

But not all the news is disastrous. The Turks, who have entered Somalia with greater force, have started to support the local fishing activities by providing refrigerators in the market in order to increase exports of fish, particularly shark fins destined to the Asian market.

While Somalia tries to escape from the black hole it fell into in 1991, the fishing industry is starting to revive and with it the stability of a country known more for its pirates than for its beaches and turquoise waters, waters where these former buccaneers have already been working for two years.

# MESSAGE OF THE BISHOP PROMOTER OF THE APOSTLESHIP OF THE SEA REGARDING THE SHIPWRECK IN ASTURIAS

Thursday, March 20, 2014

The crew of the boat that wrecked near the Cabo Peñas with a Portuguese flag was made up of five Spaniards, one Portuguese and two Indonesians.

The people of the sea are in mourning once again because of the tragic wreck of the fishing boat “Santa Ana” that took place in these past days

near Cabo Peñas in Asturias. The Apostleship of the Sea mourns with the families of the two missing persons and the six deceased, some of them emigrants who died far from their homelands when the fishing boat of Muros sank, and it entrusts their lives to the Lord through the Virgin Mary, the Star of the Sea.

Once again, as on other similar occasions, and still with hearts heavy and trembling before this new tragedy, we wish to express the Church's solidarity and prayers and recall the insecurity in which the men and women of the sea live from day to day. It is easy to come together in such cruel moments, but there are many other difficult situations in the peoples of the sea's daily life that do not make the news in which we need to be close and united with them, with ongoing sensitivity to the harshness of their work, their suffering and the difficulties of all kinds that they encounter. Therefore, it is necessary to call the attention again of all the institutions involved so that they will always seek fair working conditions that facilitate a dignified and protected life.

We also ask for the support and special social assistance that can be offered in these circumstances.

Once again we would like the whole of society to be aware of the harshness of the seafarers' work with its long days and in conditions that are sometimes difficult to imagine, always with uncertainty about the weather, and always with anxiety about “the treacherous blows of the sea”.

The peoples of the sea recalled in the recent Assembly of the Apostleship of the Sea in Huelva that “we cannot forget the fishers who are often called 'the forgotten seafarers'. Their very long working hours, their effort and the dangers of the sea make their lives risky and problematic”. The complex effects of globalization sometimes lead to their greater vulnerability, and so we wish to not lower our guard in order to make the Church's concern more attentive.

In addressing particularly the families of the deceased and missing, and all those affected by this tragedy, from our great sorrow we ask that Our Lady, the Virgin of Carmen, the Stella Maris, will always enlighten their hope.

Most Rev. Quinteiro Fiuza,  
Bishop of Tui-Vigo  
Bishop Promoter of the  
Apostleship of the Sea



## Maritime Labour Convention

### NEW MEASURES TO PROTECT SEAFARERS FROM ABANDONMENT AND COVER CLAIMS FOR DEATH AND LONG-TERM DISABILITY

*The international maritime community has adopted measures to protect abandoned seafarers, and to provide financial security for compensation in cases of death and long-term disability.*

News | 11 April 2014

GENEVA – More than 300 representatives of seafarers, shipowners and governments, meeting at the International Labour Organization (ILO), have taken concrete steps to protect abandoned seafarers and provide financial security for compensation in cases of death and long-term disability due to occupational injury or hazard. The new measures are also aimed at improving the world's shipping industry.



"The adoption of the Maritime Labour Convention in 2006 was an historical milestone that heralded a new era in the maritime sector," said ILO Director-General Guy Ryder. "This latest step, building on international tripartite cooperation, is a very significant and inspiring example for other economic sectors."

"When they come into force, these measures will ensure the welfare of the world's seafarers and their families if the seafarers are abandoned, or if death or long-term disability occurs as the result of occupational injury, illness or hazard," he said. "These steps will certainly help improve working and living conditions for seafarers, doing what is right for the women and men in this sector who play a central role in keeping the real economy going with some 90 per cent of world trade carried on ships.."

The measures come in the form of amendments to the ILO's Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, which were adopted without opposition. They will now be sent to the ILO's International Labour Conference in May for approval.

The amendments were developed over nearly a decade by a Joint Working Group established by the ILO and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in 1998 and will strengthen the 2006 Convention. They establish mandatory requirements that shipowners have financial security to cover abandonment, as well as death or long-term disability of seafarers due to occupational injury and hazard.

"These legal standards will provide relief and peace of mind to abandoned seafarers and their families wherever they may be," said Cleopatra Doumbia-Henry, Director of the ILO Labour Standards Department. "In addition, by adopting these amendments to the Convention, shipowners and governments are also strengthening its provisions aimed at ensuring a level-playing field for quality shipping around the world."

Under the new provisions, ships will be required to carry certificates or other documents to establish that financial security exists to protect seafarers working on board. Failure to provide this protection may mean that a ship can be detained in a port.

The ILO Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 came into force on 20 August 2013. To date, 57 ILO Member States representing more than 80 per cent of the world's global shipping tonnage have ratified the Convention. As of March 2014, the ILO's Abandonment of Seafarers Database listed 159 abandoned merchant ships, some dating back to 2006 and still unresolved.

"The new measures will guarantee that seafarers are not abandoned, alone and legally adrift for months on end, without pay, adequate food and water and away from home," Ms. Doumbia-Henry said. "They also clearly make flag states responsible for ensuring that adequate financial security exists to cover the cost of abandonment, and claims for death and long-term disability due to occupational injury and hazards."



**“... IF I SEND THEM AWAY HUNGRY TO THEIR HOMES, THEY WILL COLLAPSE ON THE WAY, AND SOME OF THEM COME A GREAT DISTANCE” (Mk 8:3)**

**By Fr. Emanuele (Pasquale) Iovannella**  
*Friar Minor Conventual, Chaplain on board*

**Immigrants, itinerant people, migrants, circus, Roma and Sinti people, and the people of the sea are on the move for work or other reasons and would therefore, be deprived of the Eucharistic bread.**

**The Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People ensures a special and specific spiritual assistance for them by sending missionaries, chaplains on board and lay people who break the bread of divine mercy and promote for them the ecclesial way and the support of evangelical charity.**

Charity is the form, the *actus primus* of the Church. Just as for the *Scholastics* the soul is the substantial form of the body, charity is the form of the Church. Therefore, the Church, following Jesus' example, is committed to shaping the world: that is, to give soul-love through the dual way of the proclamation of the Word of Truth and the promotion of charity. The *Missio ad Gentes* is ex-

pressed through evangelization and, at the same time, the witness of charity, a tangible support to men and women in need. The Pontifical Council worldwide ensures a specific pastoral care for those who are on the move, such as migrants and itinerant people.

### **"give them some bread yourselves"**

The expression, "*give them some bread yourselves*", is the invitation, indeed the unequivocal, authoritative imperative that the Lord gives to the Universal Church to take charge of the people gripped by material and spiritual hunger and to care for them. Having material bread in the quality and quantity needed to satisfy daily needs has always been the "*conditio sine qua non*" for every person's human and social self-realization. Bread not only nourishes the body but it gives strength to the soul, physical and spiritual health. This vital condition increases the bread of dignity, promotes the person's peaceful, comprehensive and overall growth, realization in work, the family and healthy coexistence in society, and it facilitates the search for spiritual bread. These conditions are necessary to ensure the bread of personal and universal peace. The Church fulfills the Lord's mandate, "*give them some bread yourselves*", so that no one will be deprived of the food needed for survival; she promotes and supports the fair distribution of the goods of the earth given by God to the entire world community.

### **"he saw it and he had compassion"**

The Eucharist is the "*bread from heaven*" (Jn 6:32), a gift that God gives to all through his Son Jesus. He is the true manna sent to feed humanity: "*I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst*" (Jn 6:35). The parable of the Good Samaritan echoes this passage: "*When he saw him, he was moved with compassion ... and looked after him*" (Lk 10:33-34). Concrete charity responds to a deep need of the heart and originates from the compassionate look of the heart. A charitable man stops to see what touches his heart and it is his heart that guides his eyes and makes the needs of the indigent a request for love. The eye alone sees

many things, but what calls one's attention is the heart inflamed by living faith that enlightens the mind: the heart, faith and reason focus attention on what is considered a source of goodness, peace and justice.

**"if I send them away hungry to their homes, they will collapse on the way"**

The passage from Mark 8.3 offers us a wonderful demonstration of Jesus' extraordinary attitude towards human needs and sufferings. First of all, Jesus is attentive to every individual's primary needs and he strives to raise him up again by giving him dignity and concrete assistance because he knows that for a person to live and direct his life towards the full realization of his being on the way to happiness, he must have the bread of charity. The Church, following Christ's example, draws near to the poor, the unprotected, those who are far away, those who are humiliated by physical and moral suffering, and those who become the object of mockery and violence. Jesus himself gave us a lot of examples: he realizes, sees and decides that he cannot send the people away without giving them food: *"If I send them away hungry to their homes, they will collapse on the way"*. Extraordinary human sensitivity. Jesus is sensitive and kind, he manifests kindness toward the people; his act of charity always precedes his proclamation of the Word of salvation. *"Grace builds on nature"*, this also applies to the pastoral life of the Church because for evangelization to be effective, a person in difficulty needs to be in the best physical and psychological condition to welcome the word of salvation with a more open heart.

**Jesus' pastoral strategy and the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People**

Only those who live in and of love cannot escape the demands and needs of those who are in difficulty, deprived of the essentials and suffering. Therefore, *"he saw him and he was moved with compassion"*, and *"My heart is moved with pity for the crowd"* (Mk 8:2) is first and foremost of Jesus-Love, who feels the crowd's distress, realizes their suffering, makes it his own, and acts to solve it. Following Christ's example, the Church, through the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, with maternal pastoral care, sends ministers, priests and laity on board ships and in places where the person transits and settles, building a network of energies and conditions for welcoming and assistance. Where ethnic communities are constituted within local communities, the Church is present through *missionary centers* for migrant communities, places for meeting and for recreational and cultural activities; she publishes specific journals and periodicals for communication and information with ethnic communities; she promotes social, cultural and civil integration respecting the different traditions and cultures. Special services regarding psychological and cultural support are offered: foreign language courses, legal aid, training courses, after-school activities for children and young people.

Another sector and special field is spiritual assistance in airports, ports, large railway stations, on ships, by sending sacred ministers and lay people who share the lives and sacrifices of their brothers and sisters on the move, establishing small centers for worship.

The Church's action is not limited to ensuring sacramental life but she is strongly committed to the cultural, social and political level, in constant dialogue with the nations and the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and governmental organizations (OGs) in the sector to monitor the rights of the people on the move. She works for the realization of economic policies that safeguard the various sectors of workers on the move, acts as a stimulus for the different countries and worldwide organizations to develop policies to promote fishing and fight piracy; she provides assistance to political refugees, to the abducted, and to welcome the mass immigration

from the seas. She offers all-around assistance, similar to that of the Good Samaritan which was not rushed or superficial (*Lk 10: 29-37*).

### **“some of them have come a great distance”**

The passage from Mark highlights Jesus' other focus in a wonderful way. Jesus himself points out the people's condition of hard work. Many come from far away and Jesus recognizes the tough journey, the dangers of the road and the rough trail that often puts a strain on a traveler who loses all his security: his home, property and loved ones. The plight of a foreigner uprooted from his land generates loneliness, disintegration, difficulty with the language and culture. Limited social resources humiliate and annul his dignity and relegate him to the margins of indifference. Pope Francis never tires in asserting the primacy of concrete love as a primary action of evangelization; attention to the least ones, the poor, families in difficulty and the weak is the concretization of evangelical charity, the thermometer of the Church's faith. Charity is the fundamental choice and the testimony to faith so that it will truly be living, productive and consistent.

## **PHILIPPINES - THE PRESIDENT SIGNS LAW CREATING SINGLE MARITIME ADMINISTRATION**

by Aurea Calica, *The Philippine Star*

MANILA - President Aquino has signed Republic Act No. 10635 creating a single maritime administration to oversee the training and certification of Filipino seamen.

The law, which the President signed on March 13, institutionalizes the gains of Executive Order No. 75 signed by Aquino on April 30, 2012 designating the Department of Transportation and Communications, through the Maritime Industry Authority (Marina), as the single administration in the Philippines responsible for oversight in the implementation of the 1978 International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW), as amended.

Marina supported the measure, saying the Philippines needed to align its implementation of the 1978 STCW Convention as amended with global practice, being a signatory to the convention.

The single maritime administration will be responsible for the education, training and certification of seafarers and ensuring their competency.

It will fortify and strengthen the Philippines' position as the premier provider of competent and certificated seafarers in the international seafaring trade, accounting for more than 25 percent of the total crew requirements on board international merchant marine vessels, Marina said.

The seafarers industry is estimated to contribute about \$5 billion yearly to the country's economy.

Marina will assume all the powers and functions of the Professional Regulation Commission, Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, Commission on Higher Education, National Telecommunications Commission and Department of Health in the issuance, validation, verification, correction, revocation or cancellation of certificates of competency, proficiency, endorsement and other documentary evidence required of seafarers.







## **ILO BODY ADOPTS NEW MINIMUM MONTHLY WAGE FOR SEAFARERS**

**The mechanism is the only one in the ILO for setting the basic wage for any industry.**

GENEVA – A Subcommittee of the Joint Maritime Commission (JMC) of the International Labour Organization (ILO) has agreed on a Resolution raising the minimum monthly basic wage figure for able seafarers from US\$585 to US\$592, as of 1 January 2015 and US\$614, as of 1 January 2016.

The mechanism for setting the minimum monthly wage for able seafarers is the only one in the ILO for setting the basic wage for any industry. The minimum monthly basic wage figure for able seafarers has most recently been included in the ILO's [Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 \(MLC, 2006\)](#).

The Convention, known as the "seafarers' bill of rights", entered into force on 20 August 2013, and has been ratified by 56 ILO member States representing over 80 per cent of world shipping tonnage.

The Joint Maritime Commission is the only permanent bipartite standing body of the ILO. It dates back to 1920, and is composed of ship-owner and seafarer representatives from across the globe. Press release | 28 February 2014

## **ILO LAUNCHES NEW MARITIME LABOUR CONVENTION DATABASE**

**The International Labour Organization (ILO) has launched a comprehensive new database providing the most up-to-date information available on the implementation of the landmark Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, which came into force on 20 August.** News | 04 September 2013

The database provides a vital resource for governments, seafarers, ship owners and others in the maritime sector and is expected to grow rapidly, as certain provisions of the MLC, 2006 require ratifying Member States to communicate to the ILO Director-General, for further dissemination, specific information on how the Convention is applied in national law and practice.

The Independent ILO Committee of Experts on the application of Conventions and Recommendations is mandated to review how countries that have ratified comply with their international obligations.

The ILO has encouraged Member States to provide up-to-date information on national implementation and enforcement in order to keep the database current and accurate as possible. Data is provided in a reader-friendly format in English, French and Spanish.

The Maritime Labour Convention was adopted by a special ILO International Labour Conference in 2006, setting out decent working and living conditions for seafarers while ensuring a level playing field for quality shipowners. To date, 46 ILO Member States representing more than 76 percent of the world's gross global tonnage of shipping, have ratified the Convention. The development of the MLC, 2006 database is still on-going. The database may be accessed at <http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:80001:0>.

Contents of the database include:

- National determinations - any determinations which may have been made with respect to: (i) cases of doubt as to whether any categories of persons are to be regarded as seafarers for the purpose of the Convention; (ii) cases of doubt as to whether the Convention applies to a particular category of ships; and (iii) exclusion of particular categories of ships from the application of certain details of the Code subject to the conditions set out in Article II, paragraph 6 (Article II, paragraph 7, of the MLC, 2006);
- Branches of social security- specifications which are required at the time of ratification concerning the branches of social security for which protection is provided (Standard A4.5, paragraph 10, of the MLC, 2006);
- Authorization of recognized organizations - a current list of any recognized organizations authorized to carry out inspection and certification functions on its behalf (Standard A5.1.2, paragraph 4, of the MLC, 2006);
- Port State inspections - port State authorities have the possibility to transmit a copy of the authorized officer's report established where, following a more detailed inspection, the working and living conditions on the ship in question were found not to conform to the requirements of the Convention (Standard A5.2.1, paragraph 5, of the MLC, 2006);
- Complaints - a copy of the authorized officer's report in connection with any unresolved complaints, as well as statistics and information regarding complaints that have been resolved (Standard A5.2.2, paragraph 6, of the MLC, 2006).