

# SOLIDARITY WITH SEAFARERS

Join the Coalition of Organizations and Ministries Promoting the Abolition of Slavery at Sea (COMPASS), Stella Maris, and the Apostleship of the Sea of the United States of America in paying tribute to and advocating for our world's seafarers

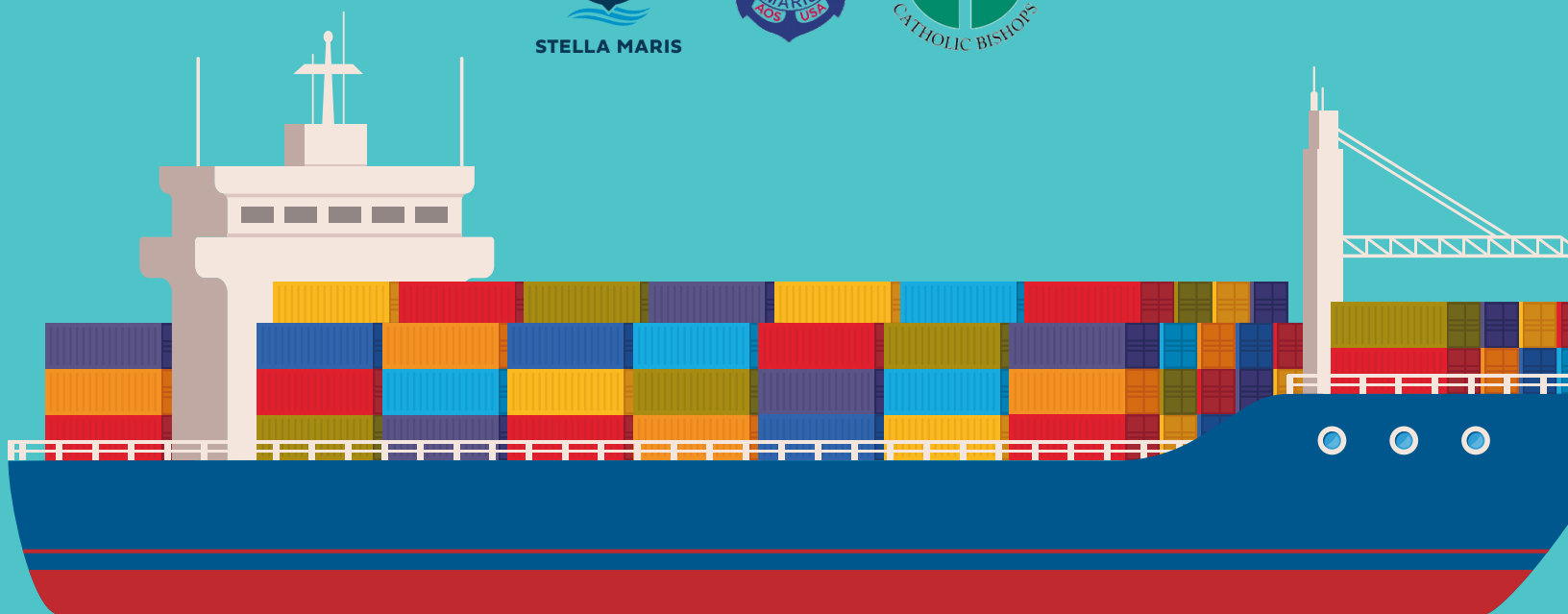
**Background** on Seafarers

**Prayers** and Intercessions

**Bulletin** Inserts

**Social** Media

**Making** a Difference



# BACKGROUND

## What Importance do Seafarers Play in Our Lives?

Have you ever stopped to reflect upon the ease with which we have access to our favorite morning coffee from Brazil, grapes from Chile, or wheat from Turkey? What about our prescription medicine produced in Germany or the gasoline that fuels our cars made with crude oil from Saudi Arabia? 90% of global trade is moved by sea and it is our fellow seafarers who work tirelessly to transport this cargo to and from the world's 6,000 ports, including the 360 seaports that line our U.S. coasts.

## Why Should Seafarers Be Considered Essential Workers?

Due to the risk that the current pandemic imposes on human life, essential workers are the men and women whose jobs help protect our wellbeing, safety, and access to basic needs. While much of the world has come to a halt, seafarers continue to deliver products essential for survival to our shores (vaccines, face masks, hygiene items, staple food items). Pope Francis also stresses that, "without the people of the sea, many parts of the world would starve."

## What are the Risks that Seafarers Face at Sea?

Seafarers contend with turbulent seas made worse by climate change, modern-day piracy, long and grueling workdays, constant exposure to the elements, and lack of medical attention while aboard a vessel. Pope Francis describes their occupation as one of the most dangerous in the world. Those who work on vessels are also at risk for labor exploitation, which at times rises to the level of human trafficking



# BACKGROUND

## What is the Church Doing to Support Seafarers?

Stella Maris, founded by the Catholic Church, is the largest global maritime ministry serving seafarers, fishers, and family members in the world. In the U.S. Stella Maris is present in 53 maritime ports in 26 states and in 48 dioceses. Port chaplains and lay volunteers minister to seafarers by offering pastoral care, friendship, transportation to purchase basic needs, Internet connection/phone cards to communicate with family members, and more. In addition to offering welcome on ship visits, Stella Maris staff assists seafarers in distress, whether due to exploitative working conditions or long periods of isolation on board the vessel.

Apostleship of the Sea of the United States of America (AOS-USA) is the official professional association of the Catholic Port Chaplains, Mariners, and Cruise Ship Priests. AOS-USA runs the Cruise Ship Priest Program with 500 priests from around the world serving on board over 650 cruises each year.

During the pandemic, AOS-USA and Stella Maris chaplains and volunteers have worked tirelessly to find ways to minister despite seafarers' inability to disembark at port. Many are offering "virtual chaplaincy" to lend a listening ear via email or

Facebook. Others are running errands and preparing care packages for seafarers in need of basic necessities such as cleaning wipes, and fresh water. AOS-USA also provides pastoral care and support for cruise personnel online and via phone, as well as access to the Holy Mass.

## How Can I Help Our Brothers and Sisters at Sea?

The resources in this booklet will help you to elevate the visibility of the seafarers as key essential workers! They will help you to advocate for seafarers through prayer, education, and action:

- The Prayers and intercessions allow us to come together in community to ask God to fortify our commitment toward seafarers.
- The bulletin inserts, social media messaging, and resources increase community awareness about seafarers' role in our lives and the impact of the pandemic on their safety and well-being.
- The call to action is to urge major retailers like Kroger to better improve their policies and procedures to protect workers. Such forms of advocacy help us to build protective factors for workers.



# PRAYERS + INTERCESSIONS

## PRAYERS FOR SEAFARERS

“Let us pray for all the those who work and live from the sea, among them sailors, fishermen, and their families.”

(Pope Francis’ Prayer Intention: People in the Maritime World)

### The Apostleship of the Sea Prayer

Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy upon all Seafarers

(Say one Our Father)

(Say one Hail Mary)

Our Lady, Star of the Sea, pray for us.

St. Peter, pray for us.

St. Andrew, pray for us.

Lord save us, or we perish! (First adopted in 1921)

### Seafarers Prayer

Lord God, we depend on you for life itself. We depend on seafarers for many of our daily needs. Watch over them, keep them from danger, befriend them in loneliness and bring them safely home to those they love. Amen.

We pray, O God for all seafarers as they face the dangers of their calling. Grant them your strength and protection and keep them in the hours of special need.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

### Stella Maris Prayer

O Mary, Star of the Sea,

Light of every ocean, guide seafarers across all dark and stormy seas that they may reach the haven of peace and light prepared in Him who calmed the sea.

As we set forth upon the oceans of the world and cross the deserts of our time, show us, O Mary, the fruit of your womb, for without your Son we are lost.

Pray that we will never fail on life’s journey, that in heart and mind, in word and deed, in days of turmoil and in days of calm, we will always look to Christ and say, “Who is this that even wind and sea obey him?”

Our Lady Star of the Sea Pray for us. Amen  
(Pope John Paul II)



# PRAYERS + INTERCESSIONS

## Thanksgiving of Seafarers

God of Love, we give thanks for all those who work at sea. We acknowledge our need for the food and raw materials they transport. We recognize that they are sometimes in danger and their long absences often involve sacrifices in their family life. Help us to show our gratitude not only in our words, but also in our actions. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen (Fr. Thomas Grufferty)

## Prayers for Those Who Care for Seafarers

God, we ask your blessing on all who care for seafarers. Strengthen them when the hours are long. Uphold them when the work is hard. And grant them the vision to see in those they serve the likeness of your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

## INTERCESSIONS

Please choose some of the following to be included among the intercessions in your church.

*Response: Lord graciously hear us.*

**Let us pray** for Pope Francis, the bishops, priests, deacons, and religious brothers and sisters that they are filled with the wisdom and courage of the Holy Spirit to be leaders in bringing light and justice to the plight of seafarers and fishers in the maritime world. Lord hear us.

**Let us pray** for seafarers and fishers who serve others on the waters of the world, for their gifts of labor and sacrifice to bring us the goods we use and consume every day, and for all people worldwide. Lord hear us.

**Let us pray** for the safety and well-being of all seafarers in their daily work at sea as they labor in dangerous and difficult conditions. Lord hear us.

**Let us pray** for all people that we may have a greater awareness of the working conditions and injustices experienced by seafarers and commit to joining their voices in solidarity. Lord hear us.



# PRAYERS + INTERCESSIONS

## INTERCESSIONS

**Let us pray** for the family members and friends of the seafarers and fishers, during long periods of separation, loneliness, and anxiety that they may experience God's loving embrace and comfort while their loved ones are at sea. Lord hear us.

**Let us pray** for the work of the Church; for chaplains, ship visitors, and volunteers; for all involved with Stella Maris and the Apostleship of the Sea of the United States of America; for all Maritime Ministries; and for those ministering to seafarers of different faiths, cultures, and ideologies. Lord hear us.

**Let us pray** for those who are trapped in a situation of slavery at sea, that they may remain hopeful and be strengthened to seek help. Lord hear us.

**Let us pray** for all those who have died and for all lost at sea we pray to the Lord. Lord hear us.



# BULLETIN INSERTS

Please include these paragraphs in your church's newsletter or bulletin. You may also use them as bullet points to educate others about the importance of seafarers to our daily lives.

Over 1.5 million seafarers work on ships that bring goods and medicine to stores here in the United States and around the world. Those who work on ships around the world, are mostly invisible and unsung heroes. They work to ensure that 90% of the raw materials, food, medicine, and products we use on a daily basis arrive to our shores. Without seafarers, the global economy would come to a halt. We would be deprived of basic necessities; some nations would struggle to survive. Join with Catholics around the globe in committing to stand up for the human rights of seafarers who face one of the most difficult jobs in the world!



*Seafarer Working*

Pope Francis teaches us: "The life of sailors or fishermen and their families is very difficult. Sometimes they are victims of forced labor or are left behind in distant ports ... Without the people of the sea, many parts of the world would starve. Let us pray for all those who work and live from the sea, among them sailors, fishermen and their families." Join with Catholics around the globe in praying for seafarers!

Thanks to Stella Maris and the Apostleship of the Sea of the USA, we have port chaplains, ship visitors, and volunteers who minister to seafarers and fishers throughout our country and around the world. They offer everything from a listening ear and spiritual guidance for seafarers struggling after months at sea to providing Wi-Fi access to connect them with loved ones. Stella Maris and AOS-USA work to ensure that the dignity and rights of seafarers and fishers are upheld by monitoring for any signs of unsafe work conditions or labor exploitation. Join with Catholics around the globe in raising the visibility of the Church's ministry to the men and women who work at sea!



# SOCIAL MEDIA

## SOLIDARITY WITH SEAFARERS

**#Seafarers; #SafetyAtSea; #Seafarer; #MaritimeTrafficking; #SeafarersAreKeyWorkers**

### Say Thank You!

Seafarers are a silent force moving the world's economy and delivering essential items necessary for our wellbeing and survival to our shores. Show moral support to them and for chaplains and volunteers working at ports with a Stella Maris and AOS-USA presence. Record messages of thanks using your mobile phone and publish them online! For inspiration, watch Pope Francis.

### Follow and Share:

Stay abreast of what organizations are doing on a daily basis to minister to maritime workers. You can "like" their Facebook pages, "follow" them on Twitter, and "bookmark" their websites. If you see a post that moves you, share, retweet, or repost to spread the word! If you use twitter, follow @StellaMarisOrg for Stella Maris and @AOSDoreen for AOS-USA @MRSServes

### Amplify Your Voice:

Use your voice to uplift the dignity of seafarers and educate your family and friends on their difficult and dangerous work in the maritime industry. Social media samples:

- The Catholic Church has a best-kept secret! AOS-USA and Stella Maris accompany seafarers and fishers with pastoral care, social support, friendship, and protection of their labor rights in 53 maritime ports across the U.S. Give thanks to a port chaplain today! @StellaMarisOrg @AOSDoreen
- Seafarers have kept our hospitals and supermarkets stocked. Let's prioritize their welfare and call for their status as essential workers. #safetyatsea for #seafarers
- Retail giants like @Walmart rely on seafarers to keep their stores stocked with merchandise. Let's urge @ Walmart to show concern for seafarers!





# SOCIAL MEDIA

## SOLIDARITY WITH SEAFARERS

**#Seafarers; #SafetyAtSea; #MaritimeTrafficking; #SeafarersAreKeyWorkers**

### Pray:

Many of us turn to social media to request prayers for ourselves or others. Pope Francis has highlighted the plight of seafarers and urges us to pray for those who work and live from the sea. Spread Pope Francis' concern and prayer for our seafarers, fishermen and their families. Start by posting the [Pope's video](#) on your favorite social media platform and encourage your friends to share.

### The Power of a Picture

We offer you several social media graphics [here](#) to spread word among your circles of influence! We encourage you to post them alongside the messages above or to use them independently.



**#SafetyAtSea; #MaritimeTrafficking;**



# MAKING A DIFFERENCE

## WHAT CAN YOU DO

### Educate:

Spread the word to family, friends, and the community about the importance of seafarers and the impact of the pandemic on their well-being. We invite you to explore these resources:

- BIMCO: [Ships Make the World Go Round](#)
- BIMCO: [Seafarers Deserve Support](#)
- Seafarers' Rights International: [Short Film](#)
- Pope's Worldwide Prayer: [The Maritime World Infographic](#)
- ILO: [More Must Be Done](#)
- Stella Maris: [Life at Sea Report](#)

### Donate:

Stella Maris and AOS-USA staff can bring care packages with nonperishable items directly to ships such as tote bags, toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap, shower spray, slippers, and more. Now that many seafarers cannot leave their vessels to shop for needed goods at port cities, they appreciate this gesture more than ever. Find out what items are needed most by contacting a [port chaplain](#).

### Call to Action:

Please join us in our Labeling for Lent Campaign where we are sending postcards to The Kroger Co. and Whole Foods Market to ask for change in ensuring policies, procedures and products are not tainted with slave labor.

Link to download the postcard is here.

#### Coalition of Organizations and Ministries Promoting the Abolition of Slavery at Sea (COMPASS)



According to the [NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION](#), the US Imports 90% of its seafood, and tens of thousands of people are exploited at every link in the seafood harvesting and production chain:

- **Abusive Recruitment:** With little to no alternative, vulnerable people are deceived and forced/kidnapped into jobs that become trafficking situations.
- **Slavery at Sea:** Once at sea, workers endure inhumane working hours and are compelled to labor under threatening conditions, including extreme and reckless exposure to danger and the elements, while being kept on the verge of starvation. Beatings and torture are routinely used to ensure submission. The cost of noncompliance can be death.
- **Exploitation on Land:** Conditions of slavery permeate seafood processing plants, and this seafood ends up on our plates.

To learn more visit: [www.justiceformigrants.org/stbakhita](http://www.justiceformigrants.org/stbakhita)

COMPASS is a global program that strengthens coordination, capacity, and worldwide collaboration on the Catholic response to trafficking; especially in its ministries at sea and ports. COMPASS in collaboration with Stella Maris, is a key leader in the Catholic struggle against human trafficking in the United States.

During Lent many Catholics eat fish and abstain from meat to be in greater solidarity with those in need. The Vatican has announced that it will "slave proof" its supply chain, and many major corporations are following its lead.

*Catholics want slave-free seafood and will be vigilant about this as we observe Lent and throughout the year.*

*Kroger, we acknowledge your efforts in the past few years to begin cleaning up your seafood supply chain. However, we urge you to enhance traceability and transparency efforts in your supply chains to inform the public of your progress. Along with stating*

**The Kroger Co.**

**1014 Vine Street**

**Cincinnati, Ohio 45202**



Signature



# RESOURCES

**Learn about the organizations supporting seafarers, fishermen, and their families in the United States and around the world!**

[Stella Maris National Office, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops](#)  
[Apostleship of the Sea of the United States of America \(AOS- USA\)](#)  
[Coalition of Organizations and Ministries Promoting the Abolition of Slavery](#)  
[at Sea \(COMPASS\)](#)

[Stella Maris International International](#)  
[Christian Maritime Association \(ICMA\)](#)  
[International Seafarers Welfare and Assistance Network](#)  
[International Maritime Organization \(IMO\)](#)  
[North American Maritime Ministry Association](#)

## **ANTI TRAFFICKING OFFICE:**

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