



Spirit of welcome leads 2019 Sea Sunday celebration

Media Release

June 25, 2019

The work of seafarers and Catholics across the country who provide spiritual, social and material support for them will be celebrated throughout the Church in Australia on July 14.

The annual Sea Sunday Appeal shines a light on the valuable work of one of the Catholic Church's international agencies, the Apostleship of the Sea, which attends to the welfare of seafarers in many ports around Australia and elsewhere through Stella Maris centres and chaplaincies.

Stella Maris chaplains, volunteers and staff visit to speak to ships' crews, offer friendship, arrange Mass and attend Mass with them, listen to their needs, and provide internet access so they can contact their families. Hospitality is also offered within Stella Maris centres, providing an important break from work routines on board.

Australian Catholic Bishops Conference president Archbishop Mark Coleridge said: "There are a million seafarers on the high seas, and that's why the work of Apostleship of the Sea is absolutely vital to caring for seafarers who are often doing it hard, and working under enormous pressure.

"That's why I commend to you, whether you have a commercial sea port in your diocese or not, to support the essential mission of the Apostleship of the Sea."

Bishop Bosco Puthur, Bishop Promoter for the Apostleship of the Sea said: "The Scripture verse that is central to this year's Sea Sunday comes from Matthew (25:35), where Christ challenges us all with the words: 'I was a stranger and you welcomed me'."

Apostleship of the Sea Australia national director Roslyn Rajasingam said: "Seafarers spend many months in the high seas, away from their homes and missing their families, combating times of loneliness and in constant fear of pirates and bad weather.

"About 130,000 seafarers arrive at Australian ports each year, which is roughly the size of a city with a population like Darwin. This gives some insight into the importance of our work," she said.

"For some of the men and women, it's the listening ear or the kind word or the shared prayer that reminds them of home and their spiritual centre.

"Like chaplains in other important ministries, those who seek to show the face of Jesus at our ports are reliant on and grateful for the generosity of Catholics and other supporters who help us continue this critical outreach to seafarers who visit Australian ports."

"Please pray for our seafarers and our ministry."

For more information and to support the work of the Apostleship of the Sea, visit www.aos-australia.org