

MEDIA RELEASE

Bishop Norton named Stella Maris Bishop Promoter

Brisbane Auxiliary Bishop Tim Norton SVD has been named the new Bishop Promoter for Stella Maris Australia, the local ministry of the international Catholic organisation that supports seafarers.

Bishop Norton's pastoral ministry as a member of the Society of the Divine Word has been varied, including outreach to diverse members of the community, some on the fringes of society.

He said those who work on the oceans can also often be vulnerable.

"Stella Maris provides support to seafarers who regularly face the loneliness of being away from family and friends for long periods and the hardship of work on the ships," Bishop Norton said.

"They can often be invisible, but our port chaplains and seafarers' centres help them know that people care for them deeply.

"I am looking forward to working with the team towards a more just and peaceful life for sailors who are often working long hours under extremely difficult conditions, bringing goods and services to many parts of the world," he said.

Stella Maris national director Roslyn Rajasingam welcomed Bishop Norton's appointment as Bishop Promoter as the ministry emerges from the hardships of the COVID-19 pandemic that curtailed seafarers' movements.

"Stella Maris managers and chaplains had to adapt their methods of serving the pastoral and welfare needs of the seafarers that come into Australian ports during this time," she said.

Mrs Rajasingam said the ministry has also been financially affected by the pandemic as churches were closed during the annual Sea Sunday fundraising campaigns and donations have been significantly reduced.

Stella Maris Australia is currently working with Anglican ministry Mission to Seafarers and the Commonwealth Government to ensure a sustainable future for the operational and welfare services that support seafarers.

It is also preparing for local and international events to celebrate the work they undertake. An event in Glasgow, Scotland next month will commemorate the centenary of the Catholic Church's ministry and affirm the dedication of those serving in ports around the world.

Stella Maris national committee chair Ray Collins paid tribute to Bishop Bosco Puthur, who served as Bishop Promoter for several years.

"Bishop Bosco was a strong advocate for those who work on the oceans and for providing leadership and support to those who minister to them," Mr Collins said.

Find out more at: <https://stellamarisaustralia.org/>