



## AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

BISHOPS COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE, MISSION AND SERVICE

STELLA MARIS AUSTRALIA

MEDIA STATEMENT

JULY 1, 2026

### **Bring hope to the ‘invisible’ on Sea Sunday**

Australian Catholics have been encouraged to reflect on the lives and experiences of mariners on Sea Sunday (July 12).

National director of Stella Maris Australia, Fr Tony Cox SSC, said mariners live on the margins of society and most of their working life is spent beyond the reach of land.

“One visiting seafarer said to me: ‘People do not see us and because of our invisibility they think we are not human. They do not see what we do and forget that we too have needs,’” Fr Tony said.

He said the experience of the COVID pandemic, when seafarers were unable to set foot on dry land for a year and a half, and now the war-torn seas of the Straits of Hormuz highlight how dangerous the work is.

“It is a lonely life and when away from family and friends this adds to the isolation they may experience,” Fr Tony said.

“Enduring treacherous seas is a reality we can easily gloss over too.”

Stella Maris had its humble beginnings through the St Vincent de Paul Society over 100 years ago in Scotland.

Formerly known as the Apostleship of the Sea, the official maritime welfare agency of the Catholic Church operates in over 300 ports around the world.

“Sea Sunday is a time when we reflect on the lives and the work of all the seafarers of our world,” Fr Tony said.

“Through helping and supporting their spiritual and material needs, advocating for their dignity and human rights and also championing strengthened international relations, Stella Maris continues to serve our human family no matter the nationality, creed or background.”

Noting the Gospel reading for Sea Sunday, Fr Tony said Jesus spoke of seeds being sown generously.

“The work of Stella Maris is like sowing seeds,” he said.

“Every visit, every conversation, is a seed planted in a life that is often hard, isolated and unseen.

“You may never meet the people who benefit, but your support helps that seed take root.”

Donations can be made to ‘The Apostleship of the Sea Current Account’, BSB 062 784 and Account Number 100 012 583.

A Sea Sunday message from Cardinal Michael Czerny, the Prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, can be found [here](#)

ENDS