

Prayer for Sea Sunday¹

(14th July 2019)

O God most tender Father, endless sea,

We thank you for the work of the million and a half seafarers, who sail the oceans and the seas, transporting about 90% of goods from one country to another, contributing to our comfort and well-being.

You know that their lives are full of challenges and difficulties. Fast turnaround in ports prevents them from going ashore to relax and release tension caused by their difficult working conditions, aggravated by the continuous threat of piracy and now also by the risk of terrorist attacks.

Support them with Your blessing in their work, which forces them to live in the confined space of a ship, for months at a time, away from their families and loved ones, sometimes not getting their own wages.

The presence of chaplains and volunteers in ports is a constant reminder of Your paternity and of the fact that we are all sons and brothers before you; it is a reminder to the primary value of the human person before and above all interest.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, Divine Helmsman,

as the Father sent you, so you today continue to send the chaplains to bring Your Good News to the complex and varied maritime world.

Make their hearts similar to yours, so that with compassion and discretion they will listen to the material and spiritual concerns of seafarers and fishermen.

Through Your gift may they open horizons of hope, sowing with full hands Your mercy in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, which gives peace to the heart.

Holy Spirit, which hovers over the waters of the sea,

assist the chaplains and the volunteers of the Apostleship of the Sea so that, during their daily visits on board, they be vigilant and approach each seafarer and fisher with empathy, pastoral creativity and tenderness.

Let them recognize in the faces of seafarers of various nationalities the face of Your Son, Jesus Christ, making them able to speak the language of love that welcomes each and every one.

¹ Inspired by the Message of the Dicastery for the Service of Human Integral Development and the Address of the Holy Father to the participants at the Meeting for Chaplains and Volunteers of Stella Maris – Apostleship of the Sea, 27.06.2019.

By your grace, through their apostolate, the isolation and depression of seafarers can be avoided; combined with the lack of a supportive environment, they can affect their mental health, sometimes with tragic and heartbreaking consequences for their families, crewmembers and ship-owners.

Give them light and strength to promote work that respects the dignity of the person and the prophetic boldness of denouncing the injustices of unscrupulous shipowners, who in many parts of the world make the working conditions on board ships intolerable. Let them redouble their efforts to confront issues that are too often the fruit of human greed: human trafficking and forced labor.

Give wisdom and discernment to International Organizations, government authorities and the different players of the maritime industry, to renew their efforts to protect and safeguard the rights of all people working at sea. Ensure that in the case of accidents at sea, seafarers are no longer criminalized and detained without effective legal protection and the benefit of fair treatment.

O Blessed Virgin Mary, Stella Maris,
strengthens, inspires and guides every action of chaplains and volunteers
and extend Your maternal protection to all the people of the sea.
Glory, praise and honor to you, *Father*, who through your Son *Jesus Christ*
in the power of the Holy Spirit guide us to the harbor of all our hopes
among difficulties and misfortunes.

Amen. Alleluia!