

Stella Maris

apostleshipofthesea.org.uk

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**Apostleship
of the Sea**

Supporting Seafarers Worldwide



About the Apostleship of the Sea, Stella Maris

The Apostleship of the Sea is a Catholic charity supporting seafarers worldwide.

We provide practical and pastoral care to all seafarers, regardless of nationality, belief or race. Our port chaplains and volunteer ship visitors welcome seafarers, offer welfare services and advice, practical help, care and friendship. The Apostleship of the Sea is part of an international network known to the maritime world as Stella Maris, working in 318 ports with 217 port chaplains around the world. 90% of world trade is transported by ship.

The Apostleship of the Sea relies wholly on voluntary contributions. We are only able to continue our work through the generous donations of our supporters and volunteers.

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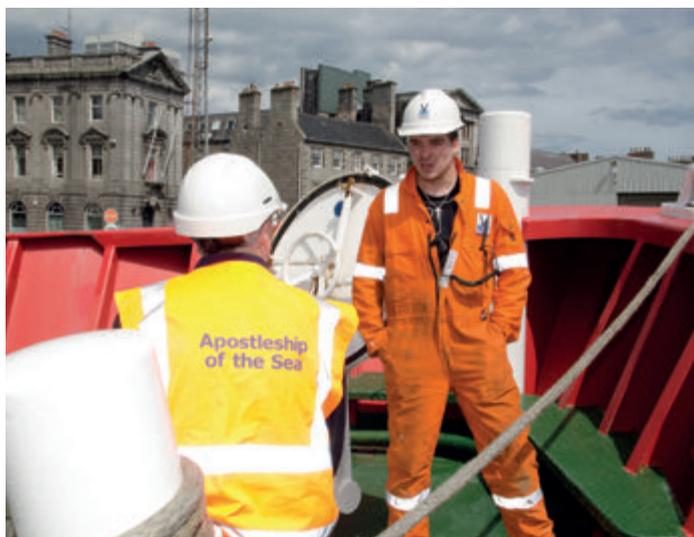
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90% of world trade is transported by ship





Sunday at Sea

3rd March 2019 – 8th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Commentary by Fr Colum Kelly

Gospel Luke 6:39-45

Jesus told a parable to his disciples. 'Can one blind man guide another? Surely both will fall into a pit? The disciple is not superior to his teacher; the fully trained disciple will always be like his teacher. Why do you observe the splinter in your brother's eye and never notice the plank in your own? How can you say to your brother, "Brother, let me take out the splinter that is in your eye," when you cannot see the plank in your own? Hypocrite! Take the plank out of your own eye first, and then you will see clearly enough to take out the splinter that is in your brother's eye.

'There is no sound tree that produces rotten fruit, nor again a rotten tree that produces sound fruit. For every tree can be told by its own fruit; people do not pick figs from thorns, nor gather grapes from brambles. A good man draws what is good from the store of goodness in his heart; a bad man draws what is bad from the store of badness. For a man's words flow out of what fills his heart.'

The Gospel and You

In these few verses Jesus warns "those who would hear" against those who would lead them astray. Let's look at one of them.

Every so often in the scriptures we come across a verse of such wisdom that it finds its way into our everyday language. How many times have you heard

"The blind leading the blind".

In this gospel story this translates into the need to beware following false prophets. There are many who will try to lead you for their own ends, their own profit. People who may pretend to have your interest at heart but are driven by selfish motives.

So who can be trusted? Who can be depended upon to guide you wisely?

Our loved ones, those who have taught us from an early age.

The Lord who loves us intensely with a love that is unconditional – all good guides.

In times of worry or doubt or faced with a problem that is way beyond our capabilities, we wait for guidance. We wait for someone we trust to steer us in the right direction. And of course the right direction might not always be to our liking but if we trust someone, and if that someone is the voice of God guiding us in prayer then we are more likely to take notice.

In the world of seafarers we need to find the answer to this question very quickly. All crew depend on each other for the safety of their vessel. We have to trust those who lead us, who teach us. We must work together trusting that each one of us, by our skills and teamwork can protect crew and vessel and guide us to our safe harbour.

So travel wisely with eyes that are open and sharp. Lead those entrusted to your care, with gentleness and wisdom.

First Sunday of Lent

10th March 2019

Gospel Luke 4:1-13

Filled with the Holy Spirit, Jesus left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit through the wilderness being tempted there by the devil for forty days. During that time he ate nothing and at the end he was hungry. Then the devil said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to turn into a loaf.' But Jesus replied 'Scripture says: Man does not live on bread alone.'

Then leading him to a height, the devil showed him in a moment of time all the kingdoms of the world and said to him, 'I will give you all this power and the glory of these kingdoms, for it has been committed to me and I give it to anyone I choose. Worship me, then, and it shall all be yours.' But Jesus answered him, 'Scripture says:

You must worship the Lord your God,
and serve him alone.'

Then he led him to Jerusalem and made him stand on the parapet of the Temple. 'If you are the Son of God,' he said to him 'throw yourself down from here, for scripture says:

He will put his angels in charge of you
to guard you,
and again:

They will hold you up on their hands
in case you hurt your foot against a stone.'

But Jesus answered him, 'It has been said:

You must not put the Lord your God to the test.'
Having exhausted all these ways of tempting him, the devil left him, to return at the appointed time.

The Gospel and You

The first week of Lent invites us to travel with Jesus into the wilderness. We are told that he was led there by the Spirit and he stayed there for forty days.

We read in the gospel of the anguish of Jesus in the desert and all the uncertainties and trials that came his way in that bleak place. So today's gospel is an invitation for us to travel into that bleakness. To face those dark places but without fear for we are certain that the God who overcame the demons of the wilderness is with us always to give us strength.

Almost all spiritualities have a special place for deserts, wilderness, and other such places where we are frightened and in danger from stormy seas, wild beasts and threatening spirits.

But maybe what frightens us even more, are the untamed and uncultivated deserts within our own hearts, the unexplored and dark areas inside of us where we would rather not go. Perhaps we are frightened of what might lie in hiding there, how vulnerable we might be if dared to take a closer look. What wild beasts and demons might prey on us. We too feel uncomfortable in those places, except our fear may not be for our physical safety, but often for our sanity and our sanctity. Maybe in this Lent we will allow ourselves to venture into those areas of our hearts and minds.

Most people think of wilderness as desert places, but for seafarers the vast expanse of open seas depict that wilderness. Day after day they travel often meeting no other vessel on the journey. And that wilderness can be unpredictable. One minute a calm sea can become a raging torrent that challenges their skill and endurance.

In those times they certainly need to carry an abundance of belief that God loves them and has a special care for each and every one. Perhaps a simple prayer from our wilderness to link today, the beginning of Lent, and the end of this holy season could be "Out of the depths I cry to you O God. Lord hear my prayer"

...carry an abundance
of belief that God
loves you...

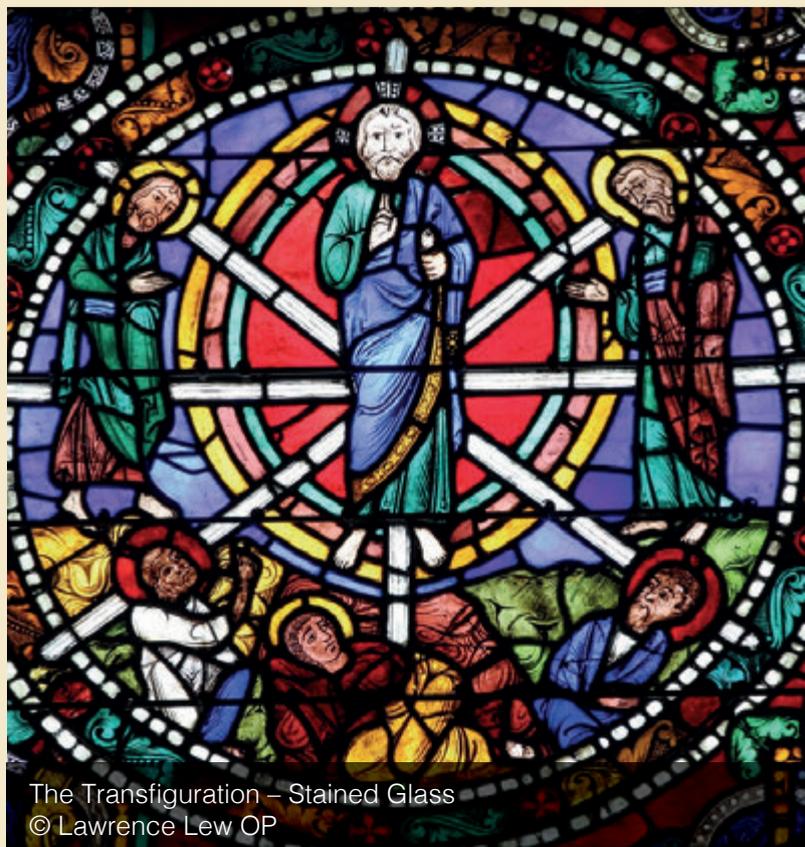


Second Sunday of Lent

17th March 2019

Gospel Luke 9:28-36

Jesus took with him Peter and John and James and went up the mountain to pray. As he prayed, the aspect of his face was changed and his clothing became brilliant as lightning. Suddenly there were two men there talking to him; they were Moses and Elijah appearing in glory, and they were speaking of his passing which he was to accomplish in Jerusalem. Peter and his companions were heavy with sleep, but they kept awake and saw his glory and the two men standing with him. As these were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, 'Master, it is wonderful for us to be here; so let us make three tents, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.' – He did not know what he was saying. As he spoke, a cloud came and covered them with shadow; and when they went into the cloud the disciples were afraid. And a voice came from the cloud saying, 'This is my Son, the Chosen One. Listen to him.' And after the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. The disciples kept silence and, at that time, told no one what they had seen.



The Transfiguration – Stained Glass
© Lawrence Lew OP

The Gospel and You

In the story of the transfiguration, we find a lovely touching moment. Pure heaven, and Peter wanted it to last. "Let's stay here forever".

Like many of us would, Peter, James, and John sometimes found it difficult to understand what was happening in front of their very eyes. Jesus remained a mystery to them and now is changed in appearance as he will be in his glorified Resurrection body. How could they take it all in? Peter offers to build three shelters for Jesus, Moses and Elijah.

It's easy to understand what Peter meant for he didn't want this moment to end but Jesus told the disciples they had to go back down the mountain. Going back down the mountain to face the ordinary and distressing things of our world is difficult for

when things are so good we do want them to last forever, don't we. Peter, James and John who came down the mountain certainly had to treasure the memories of what they saw and felt for they were soon going to have to face up to the awfulness of what was just around the corner, the suffering and death of the man whose glory they had just witnessed.

So holding on to the memory is so vital for us when times are bad. We know how it can be and know that it can be that way again. So let's enjoy the calm sea and the sunshine for those memories will have to sustain us when storms and darkness surround us. May we fulfil God's will in our lives in all he has asked us to do, acting in the service of others, with courage in the face of uncertainty and confusion.

So let's enjoy the calm sea and the sunshine for those memories will have to sustain us when storms and darkness surround us.

Third Sunday of Lent

24th March 2019

Gospel Luke 13:1-9

Some people arrived and told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with that of their sacrifices. At this he said to them, 'Do you suppose these Galileans who suffered like that were greater sinners than any other Galileans? They were not, I tell you. No; but unless you repent you will all perish as they did. Or those eighteen on whom the tower at Siloam fell and killed them? Do you suppose that they were more guilty than all the other people living in Jerusalem? They were not, I tell you. No; but unless you repent you will all perish as they did.'

He told this parable: 'A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came looking for fruit on it but found none. He said to the man who looked after the vineyard, "Look here, for three years now I have been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and finding none. Cut it down: why should it be taking up the ground?" "Sir," the man replied "leave it one more year and give me time to dig round it and manure it: it may bear fruit next year; if not, then you can cut it down."

The Gospel and You

Our Gospel today is divided into two sections. In the first we sample some of the conflict that existed between the Galileans and the ruling Roman authorities. Jesus is saddened by the news he hears about disregard for local religious traditions. Sad

also about the accident that had taken the lives of innocent people. Can anything good come from what seems like hopeless tragedy?

He guides us to the parable of the fig tree that doesn't seem to have a purpose any more. It hasn't borne fruit for some time but that doesn't mean it can never be saved or made fruitful again. Not in the eyes of Jesus. He reminds his listeners that there is always a second chance for everything, and maybe a third or fourth chance. It seems that God never gives up on us. It is we who can lose heart too easily. If the fig tree is given some extra care then perhaps it can bear fruit eventually.

I always think here of the God who never gives up on us. No matter how many times we have failed in the past there is a welcome home for the person who is willing to try again – the person who is willing to try to put things right. And if God never gives up on us, why should we be slow to give a second chance to those who offend us in some way.

There is a special pressure in living with a group of people day after day, for example the crew on a ship. Tensions can arise and accusations made for no real reason. The lesson in the gospel is that we must learn to put hurts behind us, to give another chance to people who seemingly offend us. Only in that way can we truly understand the God of the second chance who is always ready to forgive us and to offer support that we too might bear fruit.



Fourth Sunday of Lent

31st March 2019

Gospel Luke 15:1-3,11-32

The tax collectors and the sinners were all seeking the company of Jesus to hear what he had to say, and the Pharisees and the scribes complained. 'This man' they said 'welcomes sinners and eats with them.' So he spoke this parable to them:

'A man had two sons. The younger said to his father, "Father, let me have the share of the estate that would come to me." So the father divided the property between them. A few days later, the younger son got together everything he had and left for a distant country where he squandered his money on a life of debauchery.

'When he had spent it all, that country experienced a severe famine, and now he began to feel the pinch, so he hired himself out to one of the local inhabitants who put him on his farm to feed the pigs. And he would willingly have filled his belly with the husks the pigs were eating but no one offered him anything. Then he came to his senses and said, "How many of my father's paid servants have more food than they want, and here am I dying of hunger! I will leave this place and go to my father and say: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you; I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me as one of your paid servants." So he left the place and went back to his father.

'While he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with pity. He ran to the boy, clasped him in his arms and kissed him tenderly. Then his son said, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son." But the father said to his servants, "Quick! Bring out the best robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the calf we have been fattening, and kill it; we are going to have a feast, a celebration, because this son of mine was dead and has come back to life; he was lost and is found." And they began to celebrate.

'Now the elder son was out in the fields, and on his way back, as he drew near the house, he could hear music and dancing. Calling one of the servants he asked what it was all about. "Your brother has come" replied the servant "and your father has killed the calf we had fattened because he has got him back safe and sound." He was angry then and refused to go in, and his father came out to plead with him; but he answered his father, "Look, all these

years I have slaved for you and never once disobeyed your orders, yet you never offered me so much as a kid for me to celebrate with my friends. But, for this son of yours, when he comes back after swallowing up your property – he and his women – you kill the calf we had been fattening."

'The father said, "My son, you are with me always and all I have is yours. But it is only right we should celebrate and rejoice, because your brother here was dead and has come to life; he was lost and is found."

The Gospel and You

I often feel that the parable is misunderstood by the name by which it has become known – The Prodigal Son. In reality the son is not the key figure in the story, nor is the older brother, but it the Father who needs to take centre stage. It is the Father's prodigal love for both sons that is the pivot for the story, not the son's wastefulness or the elder brother's anger.

The wayward son returns and we are told that as he approaches the house, he is rehearsing his speech. We never get to hear the speech, just the beginning, for the loving father doesn't need to hear words. Love far outweighs anything that the son might have to say. The father loves him intensely despite his actions and we are told he has been keeping vigil for him and saw him coming "a long way off".

Equally well known in the story is the reaction of the son who stayed behind and did his duty. But don't you understand how he felt in all that anger? I suspect you might. Sadly, often, the feeling we are left with when we give our lives over in sacrifice is not joy and gratitude for having been given the opportunity but rather resentment that the load fell on our shoulders. Seafarers often tell me that sometimes that resentment touches their lives. They do their duty spending many long months at sea for the benefit of loved ones, but maybe feel hurt that their sacrifice isn't always appreciated.

So perhaps the story we hear in today's gospel calls us to imitate the love of the father who reflects the image of God's love for all of us wherever life takes us. Is the call of the Gospel that we become more like the father in the parable?

We all encounter stressful events in our personal, professional or social life. It is important to remember that not all stress is negative, some stress is positive, motivating us to maximise our productivity and creativity.

The Good Life

Dealing with stress onboard

Stress is defined as, “a negative emotional experience accompanied by physiological, cognitive and behavioural changes and responses aimed to reduce or change the stressful event or effects of it” (Baum, 1990). How well we cope with stress is mediated by our appraisal of the stressor and the resources available to deal effectively with the stressor. Unequivocally, seafaring is a strenuous occupation and seafarers are exposed to an increased number of work related stressors: fatigue, long hours, monotony, noise, vibration, temperature changes, a multinational environment, limited recreation, isolation, long periods away from home. In other words: “Factors that may produce an imbalance between work demands and personal resources leading to a decline in physical and psychological health and an increased risk for accidents and injuries”. (Carotenuto, et al, 2012). Most seafarers can suffer from moderate to high stress that can lead to a vicious cycle of unhealthy behaviours that are difficult to escape: sleep disturbance, unhealthy eating and weight gain, causing mental and physical ailments. Physical symptoms of stress include: anger, irritability, fatigue, nervousness, lack of interest or motivation, anxiety, sadness, muscular tension, faintness, dizziness, headaches, indigestion, stomach aches and appetite changes.

Tips for dealing with stress

- 1** Identify the strengths and skills that increase your confidence. Think of a survival resource that helped you cope with a stressful experience in the past.
- 2** Assess, recognise and develop your creative resources: talents, traits, skills or competencies. What are your resources? Optimism, humour or flexibility?



- 3** Evaluate your resources. Are they internal or external? Internal resources refer to personality traits like humour, optimism, courage, flexibility, spiritual connections or accountability. External resources can be hobbies, activities, team or religious associations or social support.
- 4** Use cognitive reappraisal when evaluating a negative event. Notice the negative thinking causing you emotional tension. It is mostly how we interpret events that evokes negative emotions.
- 5** Engage and interact with other people onboard. Do not isolate yourself – become interested in learning and engaging with your team mates.
- 6** Establish an open communication channel with somebody you trust to discuss your difficulties or concerns.
- 7** Do not let negative emotions overtake you. When something bothers you, address it immediately – don't turn it into rage, sadness or resentment.
- 8** Be realistic about your expectations.
- 9** Be accountable for your actions.
- 10** Develop a healthy lifestyle by eating a balanced diet, maintaining a sleep and rest schedule, exercising regularly and partaking in recreational activities.

Mindfulness

Research shows that practicing mindful meditation on a daily basis reduces stress and stress-related symptoms.

Adverse experiences can interfere with our ability to remain 'present', so we may find ourselves focusing on negative events, painful memories or worrying about the future. When we find ourselves dwelling on the past or painful memories, we are depriving ourselves of the necessary resources to deal with the present. Mindfulness can help us discover the resources we need to cope with stressful events in the present. Building on positive experiences can alleviate or ease the burden of stressful and difficult moments.

This advice was compiled by the UK P&I Club Crew Health Programme with the help of our psychological and psychometric screening partners I.M.E.Q. You can watch their video at: <https://youtu.be/4NAjL8cGN4g>

Port Focus: Cape Town, South Africa



The area around the Southern tip of the Continent of Africa was first named by Portuguese explorers as the Cape of Storms due to its reputation for rough weather and was later renamed the Cape of Good Hope as it became a stopping point between Europe and India. Cape Town began to be developed by traders from the East India Company in the 1650s and has grown into the legislative capital of South Africa, home to its Parliament. Robben Island, the famous prison where Nelson Mandela was kept for over 18 years is situated off the coast of Cape Town.

The port of Cape Town is strategically situated in the southern most part of Africa. The port handles a variety of shipping vessels which consists of container vessels, various bulk carriers, a large amount of fishing vessels and passenger ships. The variety of vessels entering the port is due to the fact that the depth of the harbour entrance is 15.9 metres and it is wide enough at the entrance to accommodate most vessels.

The port of Cape Town is in operation
24 hours a day
365 days a year.

Another reason for this very busy port is the number of dry docks or repair quays in the harbour that are suitable to have repairs done to vessels. Cape Town is predominantly Christian and we have a large number of Roman Catholic churches in and around the city of Cape Town with the Mother Cathedral, Saint Mary's Cathedral (aptly named after Mother Mary the patron saint of seafarers) situated in the city centre.

'The seafarers' centre is located within the docks and has a free bus service for seafarers to and from their ships to the seafarers' centre. The Apostleship of the Sea (Stella Maris) is one of the welfare organizations in Cape Town looking after all seafarers and we provide ship visitation and Holy Mass at the seafarers' centre on Saturday evening or on board vessels on request, we also visit seafarers in hospital.'



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Roman Catholic Mass at the seafarers' centre
every Saturday at 19h30.
Confession before Mass or by appointment.
Fr Gerardo Garcia Cs
Catholic Port Chaplain – Cape Town
Tel +27 (0) 21 461 4324
Cell +27 (0) 83 583 7490

*Note: Holy Mass can be arranged by appointment
in the ports of Durban, Port Elizabeth, Richards Bay
and Mossel Bay.*



Faith Stories

From Management to Ministry – the faith journey of Deacon Doug Duncan Stella Maris port chaplain. When Douglas Duncan dons his orange hard hat and high-visibility jacket and walks along the quayside under the swinging cranes in the port of Aberdeen, he looks like any other dock worker. But he has a very different job: to bring Christ to visiting seafarers, who find themselves in a foreign land, hundreds or thousands of miles from their families.

Some years ago, Douglas took on the role of Apostleship of the Sea port chaplain, covering Aberdeen and the north-east Scottish coast. It's a far cry from his previous job as a manager with one of the UK's major construction companies, which he decided to take retirement from to devote more time to his family and to the Church.

"Following a short retirement period, I returned from vacation to learn that Apostleship of the Sea were advertising for a port chaplain in Aberdeen and North East area. Following a week's prayer, I felt it was what God wanted me to do. I applied, had an interview and was offered the job," he said.

His ministry can involve anything from providing seafarers with internet access or transport to local shops, to arranging for Mass or a prayer service on board or visiting a sick seafarer in hospital.

"When I visit ships, I try to care for the spiritual and social welfare of the seafarers I meet. Apostleship of the Sea provided valuable training and I felt fully equipped with the help of the Holy Spirit to meet the needs of the seafarers. "Once the crew realise we are looking after their interests we are accepted as friends.

"Prior to boarding the ships, I ensure I have the armour of God on and cover myself in prayer. Wherever possible I take the opportunity to hand over a seafarer's prayer book and, if accepted, I offer prayer ministry. It feels as if I am bringing Christ on board."

Many of the seafarers Douglas meets are from the Philippines and have a strong Catholic faith. "In Peterhead I visited a ship where there were a number of Filipinos and following our meeting with the captain he asked all his men to meet in the galley, as the chaplain was on board. I met with the crew and we read the day's Gospel together and discussed what the reading meant to them. It was wonderful to feel and know that the Holy Spirit was with us. A couple of the seafarers welcomed prayer ministry and I knew that I was in the right place at the right time.

"Also, I have had to deal with a Filipino seafarer who, having lost his daughter to a heart condition only three years ago, discovered that his house had been severely damaged by a typhoon.

“I supplied him with some practical tools, including free phone cards to call his family back home, as he had been away at sea for four months. I also gave him a bible in Tagalog. We prayed together, inviting the Holy Spirit into his life.”

When Douglas goes on board a ship he doesn't always receive a warm reception. “We must remember that the ship is the seafarer's home they can be on board from a month up to a year at any time. Sometimes you get the feeling that you are not welcome as you come up the gangway, as various people – health and safety, customs, the ship's agent – visit a ship when it arrives in port to make sure everything is in order.

“Once on visiting a ship from the Ukraine my ship visiting volunteer and I felt very unwelcome. But we persisted, making small talk on the deck. I then asked if the crew required any phone cards, which seemed to get through to them.

“We were then invited inside and soon realised that the crew had not spoken to their loved ones back home for several weeks. They were pleased that we could help out by loading their phones with credit. On further investigation we realised that they were down on essentials, such as toothpaste, deodorant and soap. So we arranged to come back when they had finished their shift and take them to the local store.

“We returned an hour and a half later, to their surprise, as I think they assumed that we would not return. They were delighted to be taken to the shop for supplies, making good use of the boot of my vehicle. What had been very hard work communicating with each other when we first met became much easier, because of God's love. We left a happier ship behind.”

Although Douglas has been involved with his parish of St Columba's in Bridge of Don, a suburb in

Aberdeen, for 30 years, his faith didn't really come alive until he attended an Alpha course.

“Ten years ago my wife Denise convinced me to attend an Alpha course in the parish. It stimulated us both and we went on to do Life in the Spirit at St Mary's Cathedral. This changed our lives completely and we developed a hunger for the Holy Spirit.

“We became part of a Charismatic group at the cathedral and when our own parish church received a new priest who was full of the Holy Spirit he suggested that Denise and I start an Alpha course. We were surprised that in the first year 30 people attended and we followed it up with Life in the Spirit Seminars. Following this, our priest encouraged us to start a prayer group, which we named The House of Bread. The Tuesday night prayer group soon grew and now between thirty-five to forty-five people usually attend.

“The Holy Spirit has certainly built a strong community. Sadly Denise was diagnosed with a brain tumour nine years ago and passed away. I truly believe that the Holy Spirit strengthened my faith to help me through this period.”

Last year, Doug was ordained a Deacon by the bishop of Aberdeen, with his ministry focussing on serving seafarers.

Reflecting on his ministry with Apostleship of the Sea, Doug said, “As Catholics, we are encouraged to reach out to people. Jesus said when you welcome strangers you welcome me. And as a port chaplain I feel at home welcoming strangers to our shores here in north-east Scotland. And the Holy Spirit has been with me every step of the way.”

This article was first published in Good News Magazine interview by Greg Watts



Bishop Hugh Gilbert of Aberdeen and Douglas Duncan visiting the Malaviya Seven in the Port of Aberdeen



Heavenly Father:

we pray to You for those on the perilous ocean that You will embrace them with your mighty protection and grant them success in all their rightful undertakings. Grant them in all hours of need to see that they have a God who remembers them, and grant them grace in the hour of danger to commit their souls into Your hands.

O Lord Jesus Christ, Who can rebuke the storm and bring it to silence, and lay the roaring waves to rest, show them who call to You out of the deep that You hear their prayer and will save them. And finally bring us all to the only safe port.

Amen.



**Apostleship
of the Sea**

Supporting Seafarers Worldwide