

# Stella Maris

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July 2019

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**Apostleship  
of the Sea**

Supporting Seafarers Worldwide

**Sea Sunday  
14th July**

Stella Maris (Apostleship of the Sea) is a Catholic charity supporting seafarers worldwide.

## Port Focus: Lake Charles, Louisiana, USA



The Stella Maris Seafarers Centre of Lake Charles is located at the Port of Lake Charles, City Docks, and began operation in 1962, it started out in a small building and in 1995 it was expanded to double its size. Today the centre cares for 15 facilities on both side of the Calcasieu River. For the last 18 years Deacon Patrick Lapoint has been the director with the help of an assistant and five drivers.

The chaplains visit over 700 ships per year and transported over 5000 seafarers last year to the Seafarers' centre and into town. More than 1200 visited the centre. There are two vehicles for transportation: one an eight passenger van and the other a 15 passenger vehicle. Fr. Rommel Tolentino, the port chaplain, celebrated dozens of Masses and Deacon Patrick held three communion services.

The Lake Charles Stella Maris Seafarers Centre is open 10am to 10pm Monday to Friday and 5pm to 10pm on Saturday and Sunday.



The Historic Town Hall in Lake Charles, Louisiana

The State of Louisiana was originally named by a 17th Century French settler after King Louis XIV of France. In the South West of the state, the city which grew up on the shores of Lake Charles became an increasingly important industrial centre. Its importance as a commercial port grew in the aftermath of the destruction wreaked by the American Civil War (1861-65). Huge volumes of timber were required to rebuild the South and much of it moved through the port of Lake Charles. In the 1920s a channel was dredged which joined various small lakes, rivers and waterways to provide access to larger ships to the port which is 30 miles away from the Gulf of Mexico.

Today the Port of Lake Charles is the twelfth busiest in the United States dealing mainly with crude oil and food aid for the rest of the world.



### Stella Maris Louisiana

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Stella Maris provides seafarers with **practical support, information and a listening ear**

### SEA SUNDAY – 14 July 2019

Sea Sunday is the day when Stella Maris organises celebrations in ports and churches all over the world to give thanks for the lives and work of seafarers and fishermen.

On Sea Sunday 2018 Pope Francis prayed for seafarers, fishermen, and their families, "I pray for them and their families," he said, "as well as for the Stella Maris chaplains and volunteers of the Apostleship of the Sea."



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## Sunday at Sea – 14th Sunday in Ordinary Time

### 7th July 2019, Commentary by Fr Colum Kelly

#### Gospel Luke 10:1-12,17-20

The Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them out ahead of him, in pairs, to all the towns and places he himself was to visit. He said to them, 'The harvest is rich but the labourers are few, so ask the Lord of the harvest to send labourers to his harvest. Start off now, but remember, I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. Carry no purse, no haversack, no sandals. Salute no one on the road. Whatever house you go into, let your first words be, "Peace to this house!" And if a man of peace lives there, your peace will go and rest on him; if not, it will come back to you. Stay in the same house, taking what food and drink they have to offer, for the labourer deserves his wages; do not move from house to house. Whenever you go into a town where they make you welcome, eat what is set before you. Cure those in it who are sick, and say, "The kingdom of God is very near to you." But whenever you enter a town and they do not make you welcome, go out into its streets and say, "We wipe off the very dust of your town that clings to our feet, and leave it with you. Yet be sure of this: the kingdom of God is very near." I tell you, that on that day it will not go as hard with Sodom as with that town.'

The seventy-two came back rejoicing. 'Lord,' they said 'even the devils submit to us when we use your name.' He said to them, 'I watched Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Yes, I have given you power to tread underfoot serpents and scorpions and the whole strength of the enemy; nothing shall ever hurt you. Yet do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you; rejoice rather that your names are written in heaven.'



#### The Gospel and You

In today's gospel we find Jesus sending out a second group of disciples, 72 this time. The disciples are to go "ahead of him", not announcing their own message but preparing the way for Jesus.

There is no room for illusion, things will be very difficult for the disciples in a world that may be hostile to the message they bring. They will be lambs among wolves. Yet there is a great sense of urgency in the task they are given, for they are to travel light, no money nor haversack nor sandals. They are not to be distracted by idle conversation with those they meet on the way, another emphasis on the urgency of the gospel task.

For such a difficult task, the Lord sends them out in twos.

Why was that important?

Two people provide a valid witness. Instead of just sending out one person, Jesus created a support system by sending out two disciples together. The voices of two carry a more authentic witness than a lone voice.

Jesus gave the disciples authority when they worked together.

In doing this, Jesus recognised the very real fact that together we are stronger than if we are alone. No matter how convinced we are about the tasks before us, it is good that we can share these with someone close to us. When times are dark or when we feel alone or isolated, it is good to have the companionship of a soul mate. Someone who can walk with us and make us feel good about ourselves when others may mock or disturb our calm.

Whether on land or at sea, we should take the wisdom of Jesus upon ourselves. Enjoy the strength and support of a true soul mate who can walk with us in difficult times.

**When times are dark or when we feel alone or isolated, it is good to have the companionship of a soul mate.**

## Sunday at Sea – 15th Sunday in Ordinary Time

### Sea Sunday – 14th July 2019

#### Gospel Luke 10:25-37

There was a lawyer who, to disconcert Jesus, stood up and said to him, 'Master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?' He said to him, 'What is written in the law? What do you read there?' He replied, 'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbour as yourself.' 'You have answered right,' said Jesus 'do this and life is yours.'

But the man was anxious to justify himself and said to Jesus, 'And who is my neighbour?' Jesus replied, 'A man was once on his way down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell into the hands of brigands; they took all he had, beat him and then made off, leaving him half dead. Now a priest happened to be travelling down the same road, but when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. In the same way a Levite who came to the place saw him, and passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan traveller who came upon him was moved with compassion when he saw him. He went up and bandaged his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them. He then lifted him on to his own mount, carried him to the inn and looked after him. Next day, he took out two denarii and handed them to the innkeeper. "Look after him," he said "and on my way back I will make good any extra expense you have." Which of these three, do you think, proved himself a neighbour to the man who fell into the brigands' hands?' 'The one who took pity on him' he replied. Jesus said to him, 'Go, and do the same yourself.'

#### The Gospel and You

Today we hear one of the best known stories in the gospel – The Good Samaritan. Jesus tells the parable in answer to the question from a lawyer who tries to "justify himself" by proving that by observing the law he will inherit eternal life.

The parable he tells would have sounded strange and even shocking to his audience. A Samaritan, a member of a people despised and mocked by Jews, performing a loving service avoided by Jewish religious leaders? Unthinkable!

The lawyer's question "who is my Neighbour?" almost implies that there could be someone who is not my neighbour.

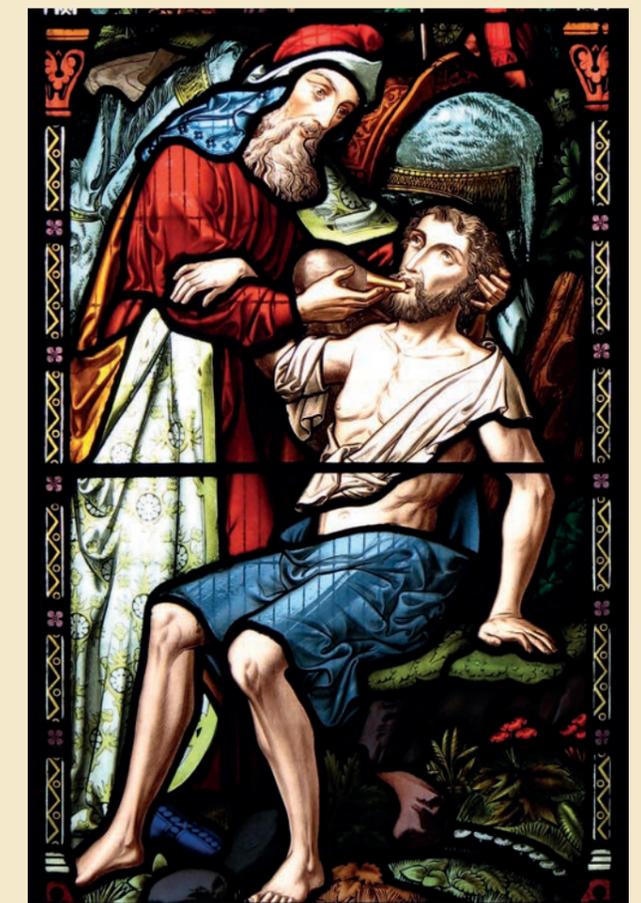
Jesus's parable of the Good Samaritan shows that everyone is my neighbour, even those of different

nationality or religion. So love for our neighbour is very demanding, and goes beyond all racism or prejudice. But how can we achieve that level of love?

An American journalist, after watching Mother Teresa caring for a man with gangrene, remarked to her: 'I wouldn't do that for a million dollars.' Mother Teresa replied: 'Neither would I... but I do it for love of God.'

Selfishness keeps us shut in, builds barriers, even walls, between us and others. What frees us is caring for others, being friends, being brothers and sisters to those in need, being good neighbours.

Today is also known as Sea Sunday when people all over the world pray for seafarers and for those who act as good samaritans to them. In ports around the world, hundreds of chaplains and volunteers will board ships to offer spiritual and practical help to those whose life at sea can be harsh and lonely. Seafarers are our neighbours, no thought is given to creed or nationality. Please pray for the work of these people, whether you are on land or at sea, and you too will be acting like the good Samaritan praised by Jesus in today's gospel.



## Sunday at Sea – 16th Sunday in Ordinary Time 21st July 2019

### Gospel Luke 10:38-42

Jesus came to a village, and a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. She had a sister called Mary, who sat down at the Lord's feet and listened to him speaking. Now Martha who was distracted with all the serving said, 'Lord, do you not care that my sister is leaving me to do the serving all by myself? Please tell her to help me.' But the Lord answered: 'Martha, Martha,' he said 'you worry and fret about so many things, and yet few are needed, indeed only one. It is Mary who has chosen the better part; it is not to be taken from her.'

act as the good Samaritan. But it would be good if in those hours, time could be spent like Mary, staying close to the voice of the Lord to help understand what his call to love means for us.

**'Martha, Martha,' he said  
'you worry and fret about  
so many things, and yet  
few are needed, indeed  
only one.'**

### The Gospel and You

Today our gospel follows on from the story of the good Samaritan. Yes we must do good to our neighbour but that is not the whole story. Our acts must be based on a strong personal relationship with the Lord. Without that, our care for others' needs may not be rooted in love but in some selfish motive to make ourselves feel good.

Martha and Mary and their brother Lazarus were close friends of Jesus, he often visited their home and went there just a few days before his Passion. It looks like Jesus's words to Martha are words of criticism – that her sister Mary had chosen the better part by sitting at his feet and listening to him rather than bustling about attending to the details of hospitality.

Jesus does not downplay all the work that Martha is doing, otherwise everyone would remain hungry, rather, he invites Martha to keep her focus on the life of the spirit even while working and not to let anxiety distract her. Martha, we are told, was a lady who worried and fretted about so many things. Perhaps rightly so as Jesus and a bunch of his disciples turn up unexpectedly and need to be fed.

But sometimes there are more important things in life than work, even the necessary work of tending to hospitality and preparing a meal for others.

So maybe the lesson in the gospel is that if our actions are to be fruitful and rooted in love, then we must find time to listen in prayer to what God is saying to us and asking of us. Many hours can be spent at sea when nothing much seems to happen. There may not be many opportunities to



## Sunday at Sea – 17th Sunday in Ordinary Time 28th July 2019

### Gospel Luke 11:1-13

Once Jesus was in a certain place praying, and when he had finished, one of his disciples said, 'Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.' He said to them, 'Say this when you pray:

"Father, may your name be held holy,  
your kingdom come;  
give us each day our daily bread,  
and forgive us our sins,  
for we ourselves forgive each one who is in  
debt to us.  
And do not put us to the test."

He also said to them, 'Suppose one of you has a friend and goes to him in the middle of the night to say, "My friend, lend me three loaves, because a friend of mine on his travels has just arrived at my house and I have nothing to offer him"; and the man answers from inside the house, "Do not bother me. The door is bolted now, and my children and I are in bed; I cannot get up to give it to you." I tell you, if the man does not get up and give it him for friendship's sake, persistence will be enough to make him get up and give his friend all he wants.

'So I say to you: Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you. For the one who asks always receives; the one who searches always finds; the one who knocks will always have the door opened to him. What father among you would hand his son a stone when he asked for bread? Or hand him a scorpion if he asked for an egg? If you then, who are evil, know how to give your children what is good, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!'

### The Gospel and You

The theme of today's gospel very much follows on from that of last week. We heard of the importance of maintaining a good relationship with The Father and now Jesus teaches his disciples how to develop that relationship. Here we have a short version of what we know as The Lord's Prayer.

There are so many definitions of prayer that we can get confused, but let's keep it simple. One classical definition of prayer defines it this way: "Prayer is lifting mind and heart to God."

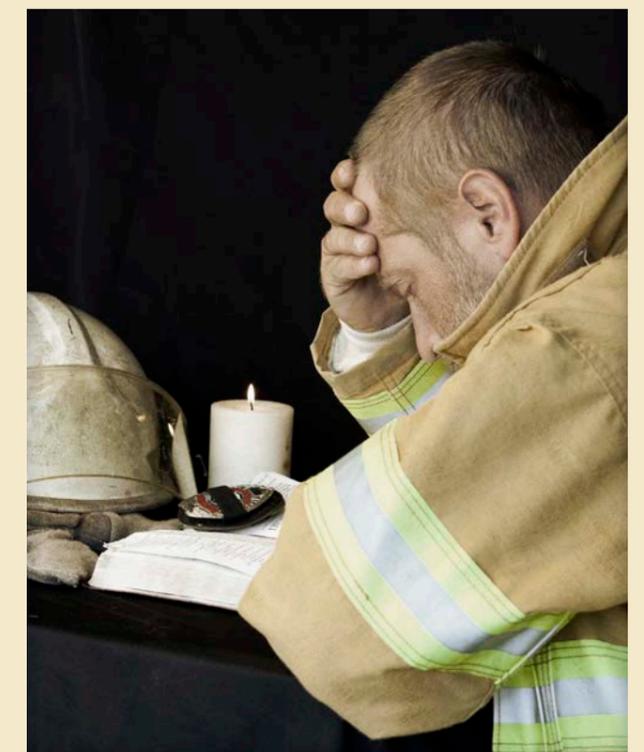
That's a wonderful and accurate description of prayer, the problem is that we rarely do that. It's rare that we actually open our mind and heart to God in order to show God what's really there. Instead we pray by telling God what we think God wants to hear rather than what's really on our minds and hearts.

All our thoughts and feelings are valid material for prayer. When you go to pray, share what's inside you at that moment. If you are bored, share that boredom; if you are angry, share that too.

One of the experiences of prayer is that it seems that nothing happens. But God always responds to our prayer in ways that are best for us, though not always in ways we expect. The gospel examples of the sleeping friend and the father who would give snakes and scorpions to his children show the absurdity of thinking of Our Father as harsh or cruel. God always wants the best for us.

So whether on land or at sea, know that our prayer is heard. It's good to talk to God in our own words but when that becomes difficult we have a ready-made prayer given us by Jesus himself.

"Our Father", not mine alone but ours, which makes me less self-centred and more conscious of those around me, a very good thought to begin any form of prayer.



# The Good Life: Healthy Kidneys

Your kidneys are important. They carry out essential roles within the body to keep you healthy, such as:

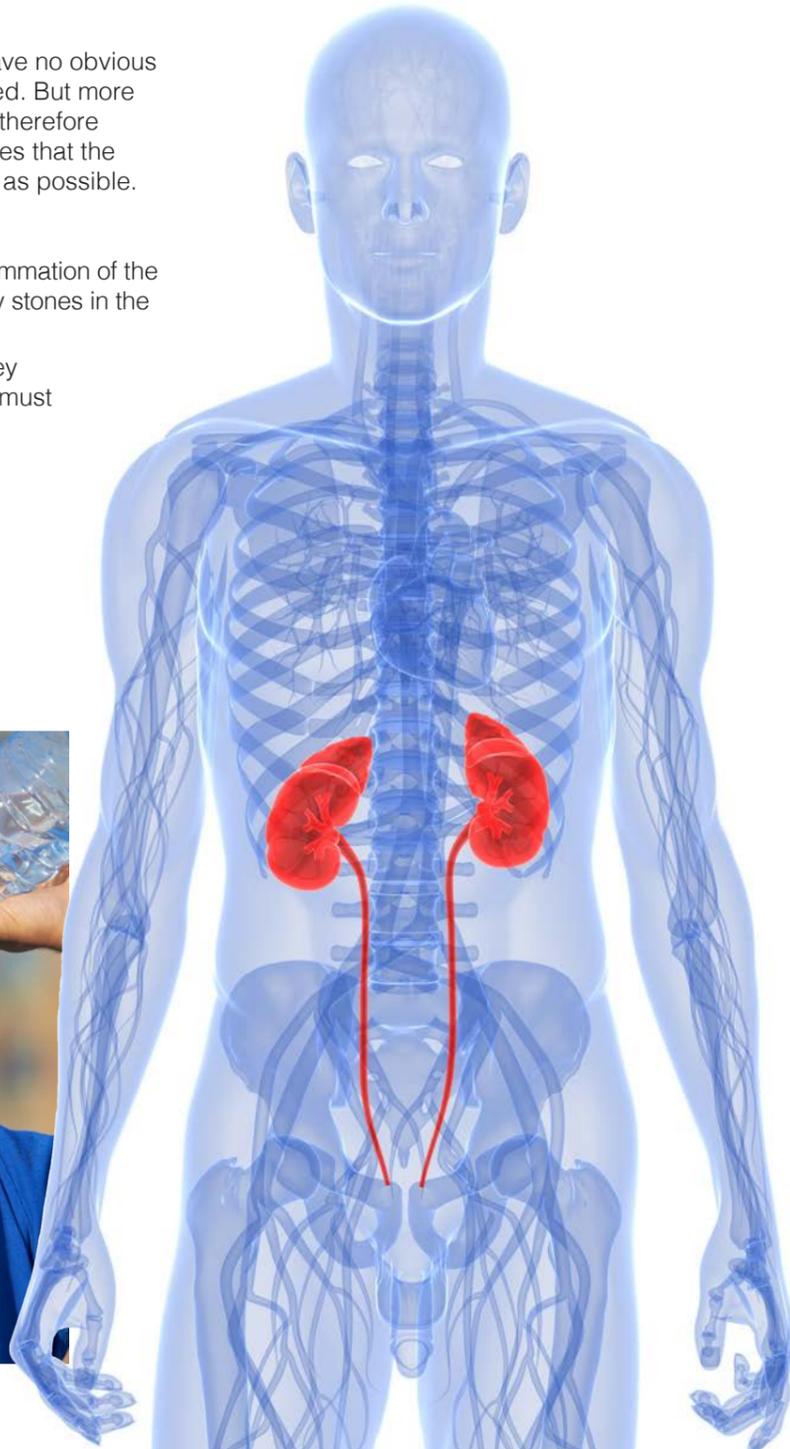
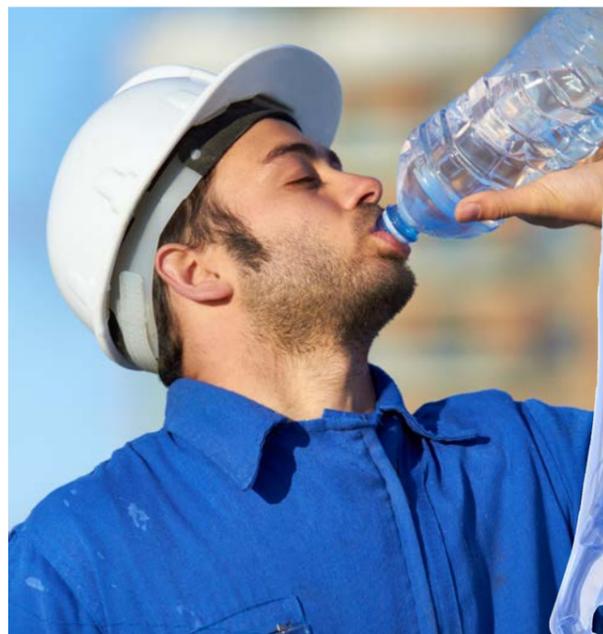
- **Maintaining the balance of water and chemical constituents within the body**
- **Eliminating chemical waste**
- **Producing hormones and enzymes that assist bone formation, regulate blood pressure and stimulate the production of red blood cells**

The importance of these vital organs is clear. However, seafarers continue to suffer from kidney-related illnesses.

## Know the signs

The early stages of kidney conditions usually have no obvious symptoms and small stones often pass unnoticed. But more advanced conditions can prove to be fatal. It is therefore important to know the warning signs. This ensures that the appropriate treatment can be provided as soon as possible. Such warning signs include:

- Painful urination – this can be caused by inflammation of the neck of the bladder due to infection, or kidney stones in the urinary passage
- Blood in the urine – this can result from kidney stones, an acute infection or even cancer. It must not be ignored!
- The need to urinate more frequently
- Fatigue
- Weight loss
- Water retention causing facial puffiness or swelling of lower extremities and abdomen
- Headaches
- Nausea/vomiting
- Lower back pain, sometimes felt in the groin



## Keeping kidneys healthy

In order to prevent such conditions arising, The UK National Health Service has suggested the following five lifestyle steps to help your kidneys keep you healthy:

### 1. Stay hydrated

It is important that you drink plenty of fluids. This will help your kidneys function properly. If your urine is dark in colour, this may be a sign of dehydration. Remember that in hot conditions, or when exercising, you need to drink more water than usual to make up for the fluid lost by sweating.

### 2. Eat healthily

A balanced diet ensures you get all the vitamins and minerals your body needs. Make sure you eat plenty of fruit and vegetables and avoid eating too much salty or fatty food. A high protein, low fibre diet will increase the risk of developing kidney stones.

### 3. Check your blood pressure

Check your blood pressure regularly. High blood pressure has no symptoms, but it can increase your risk of kidney and heart problems. If your blood pressure is higher than it should be, your doctor should be able to suggest lifestyle changes or prescribe medication, if necessary.

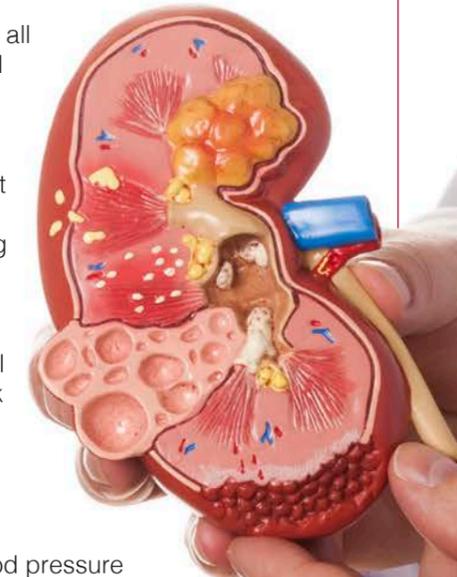
### 4. Drink in moderation and don't smoke

Try to stop smoking completely and limit the amount of alcohol you drink. Drinking too much alcohol and smoking both increase blood pressure. High blood pressure is one of the most common causes of kidney disease.

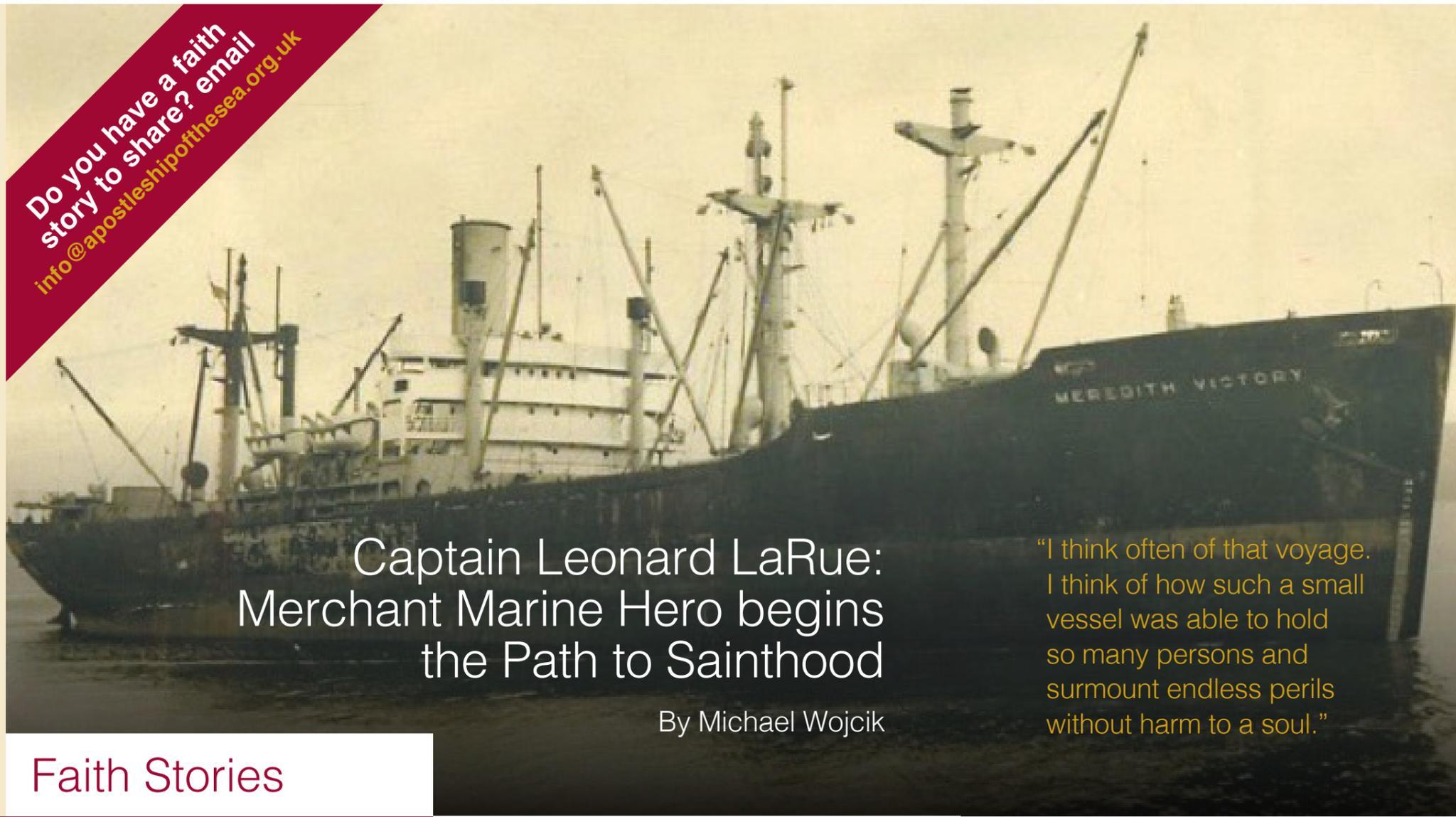
### 5. Maintain a healthy weight

Being overweight raises your blood pressure, so try to maintain a healthy weight by keeping active and not overeating.

Author: Robert Robinson  
Courtesy of North P&I Club



Do you have a faith story to share? email [info@apostleshipofthesea.org.uk](mailto:info@apostleshipofthesea.org.uk)



# Captain Leonard LaRue: Merchant Marine Hero begins the Path to Sainthood

By Michael Wojcik

"I think often of that voyage. I think of how such a small vessel was able to hold so many persons and surmount endless perils without harm to a soul."

## Faith Stories

**U.S. Merchant Marine Capt. Leonard LaRue peered through his binoculars on 23rd December 1950 and surveyed a heart-breaking scene from the deck of his ship. Thousands of Koreans — men, women and children — their eyes filled with fear — were crammed onto the docks of the City of Hungnam, desperate to flee the invading Chinese communist forces that were closing in quickly during the early months of the Korean War.**

Time was of the essence for Capt. LaRue, (who after the war became Benedictine Brother Marinus of St. Paul's Abbey in New Jersey), and the brave crew of his U.S. Merchant Marine cargo freighter, the S.S. Meredith Victory, to save as many of those ragged and frightened refugees as possible. Artillery fire roared above them, as they wasted no time in loading their new passengers, who took only what they could, into the ship's hold and onto the deck. They then steamed out of port and imminent danger. Armed with courage and compassion, the

captain and crew risked their lives to transport their precious cargo — 14,005 refugees — on a perilous 450 mile voyage through treacherous mine and submarine-infested waters to the safety of Goeje Island on that Christmas Day.

The mission — undertaken against all odds — has been called a "Christmas Miracle." "I think often of that voyage. I think of how such a small vessel was able to hold so many persons and surmount endless perils without harm to a soul."



Over the years, the heroism of Brother Marinus and his crew has merited them countless honours for their rescue, such as the Gallant Ship Award from the U.S. Congress and the Korean Presidential Unit Citation. In 2017, Mon Jae, president of the Republic of Korea, visited the National Museum of the U.S. Marine Corps in Quantico, Virginia for a wreath-laying ceremony at a monument for the Battle of Chosin Reservoir in the Korean War. He told the audience that the crew of the S.S. Meredith Victory had rescued his parents and sister, two years before his birth. He added, "Had it not been for the valiant warriors of the Chosin Battle and the success of the Hungnam Evacuation, I would not even exist today."

### Life of prayer at St. Paul's Abbey

In 1954, Brother Marinus entered the Benedictine order at St. Paul's to pursue a quiet life of humble prayer — influenced by Benedictine priests he met in Brazil and Japan — and professed his first vows in 1956. Taking his religious name in honour of the Blessed Mother, he performed the menial tasks of washing dishes, working in the gift shop and ringing the abbey's bell each



morning for decades and after having suffered for years from a lack of mobility and dementia, Brother Marinus died on the 14th October 2001.

"We are so happy — Brother Marinus was our brother!" said Prior Samuel Kim, superior of St. Paul's community, who had seen the new Servant of God on a visit to the abbey in 2001. "He was a hero but also was a humble monk". In his homily for Brother Marinus' funeral, Father Joel Macul, abbot of St. Paul's community at the time, said that the monk "left the sea with all its drama and heroic opportunities for the intimacy of a daily sustained relationship with the Lord and his Mother." Recognizing that heroic voyage of Brother Marinus and his crew and his profound faith in God, Bishop Serratelli has opened his cause for sainthood in the Diocese of Paterson. On March 25, the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord, the Bishop signed and sealed a decree that opens "the informative process for Beatification and Canonization" to "study the heroic virtues and reputation of the holiness of the Servant of God, Brother Marinus" — the first step in his cause.

For years, Admiral Lunney visited Brother Marinus at St. Paul's. The monk, he said, once gave a simple yet profound reflection on how he was able to muster up courage to lead that daring and dangerous rescue in 1950 — "The answer is in the Holy Bible 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend.'"

*This is an abridged version of an article originally published in the March 2019 Issue of the Paterson Diocesan Newspaper — The Beacon*

"He was a hero but also was a humble monk"

# Sea Sunday 2019



**Apostleship  
of the Sea**

Supporting Seafarers Worldwide

The Apostleship of the  
Sea provides spiritual  
and welfare support for  
seafarers.