



# Stella Maris

SUPPORTING SEAFARERS AND FISHERS AROUND THE WORLD

SEPTEMBER  
2021

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# Stella Maris 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.

Stella Maris is the largest ship visiting network in the world, working in 332 ports with 227 port chaplains around the world. We also run 53 seafarers' centres all over the world.

We are only able to continue our work through the generous donations of our supporters and volunteers.

**To support Stella Maris with a donation visit [www.stellamaris.org.uk/donate](http://www.stellamaris.org.uk/donate)**

**Stella Maris** 39 Eccleston Square, London, SW1V 1BX, United Kingdom

**Tel:** +44 020 7901 1931

**Email:** [info@stellamarismail.org](mailto:info@stellamarismail.org)

**facebook.com/StellaMarisOrg**

**[www.stellamaris.org.uk](http://www.stellamaris.org.uk)**

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



# PORT OF ODESA, UKRAINE

The uniqueness of the Odesa seaport is that thanks to it the former Turkish settlement-fortress Hajibey and the Cossack town of Kotsyubiyiv were renamed Odesa – one of the largest cities in modern Ukraine. As early as the third century BC, on the territory of modern Odesa there was a Greek settlement with a functioning seaport. Later the port operated during the Cossack and Turkish rule. As a result of the Russo-Turkish war, the Russian Empire decided to build a port here and 1794 is considered to be the official date of the founding of the modern port of Odesa.

Today, the port of Odesa is one of the largest commercial seaports in Ukraine with a total capacity of up to 50 million tonnes per year. Port operating area is 141 hectares, number of berths – 54, length of the berth line is more than 9000 metres.

The port is able to accept and service vessels up to 330 m long. The port can accept containers of all types and sizes, dry and liquid cargo.

The passenger complex of the port is one of the largest in the Black Sea and is designed to receive and serve up to 4 million tourists a year.

In 1994, the Stella Maris Mission in Ukraine was established in the port to take care of foreign seafarers entering Ukrainian ports and Ukrainian seafarers, including their families scattered around the world.

The Stella Maris Centre in Ukraine is located in Odesa, 100 meters away from the main port gate.

The Sea Chapel of St. Michael the Archangel is in the Stella Maris centre, so seafarers have the opportunity to participate in the Liturgy or download the Sea Prayer app and send free prayer requests

for relatives and friends from the ship. Seafarers receive communication advice and support, including free wireless internet access, indoor games (table tennis, chess. They are also given the possibility to talk to someone if they need advice or support. They can also receive spiritual support, prayer and counselling regardless of their religion.

At Christmas, the mission prepares gifts for seafarers aboard ships in the port of Odesa. Every year a summer camp is organized for the children of seafarers. The purpose of the camp is to help the children of internally displaced seafarers, to adapt to new living conditions based on Christian life principles. In addition, the vast majority of children have the opportunity to draw closer to Christ and the Catholic Church.



## Stella Maris in Ukraine

**Chaplain:** fr. Oleksandr Smerechynskyy

**Address:** Lanzheronivskyi descent, 2, Odesa, Ukraine

**Work time:** Mon-Fri: 14:00 – 20:00

**Holy Mass:** Saturday: 09:00 and 17:00, Sunday: 10:00

**Website:** <http://aosukraine.org>

[facebook.com/aosukraine](https://facebook.com/aosukraine)

Download Sea Prayer from the App Store and Google Play

# Sunday at Sea with Fr Pio Idowu



**23RD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**  
SUNDAY 5TH SEPTEMBER

## GOSPEL MARK 7:31-37

At that time:

Jesus returned from the region of Tyre, and went through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, through the region of the Decapolis. And they brought to him a man who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech; and they begged him to lay his hand upon him. And taking him aside from the multitude privately, he put his fingers into his ears, and he spat and touched his tongue; and looking up to heaven, he sighed, and said to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened." And his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. And he charged them to tell no one; but the more he charged them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, "He has done all things well; he even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak."

## THE GOSPEL AND YOU

A man who was deaf and had an impediment of speech was brought to Jesus so that He could lay His hand on him and heal him. The Gospels are full of accounts of the miracles Jesus performed in for the sick and infirm. And this miraculous cure the deaf and dumb man would seem to be just another of Jesus' miracles.

But there is something special about this miracle. Jesus takes the deaf and dumb man aside, away from the multitude, perhaps because He wished for more privacy, or maybe because He wished to remain hidden. How different our Lord is from the many false shepherds of today, who are not really interested in the flock but seek only their glory and self-gratification.

And unlike many of His other miracles, in healing the deaf and dumb man, Jesus performs a ritual. He touched the ears of the man, He spat, and He touched the man's tongue. Then Jesus looked up to heaven, sighed and said "*Ephphatha*", which means "*Be opened*", upon which the deaf and dumb man began to hear and to speak.

Christ did not need to go through this ritual of touching the man's ears and tongue and spitting. But by so doing, Christ wished to bestow the grace of healing through symbolic signs and gestures. This method of communicating God's grace continues today in the Church through the Sacraments. The Sacraments are visible signs of inward grace given to the soul. One who physically receives the Sacrament also receives inwardly the grace of God.

The Sacraments, when correctly celebrated, are always infallible signs of God's grace given to the soul. Yet, they remain ineffective if the soul is not well disposed. A soul that is well disposed is open to receive God's grace. The soul without good disposition is like the deaf and dumb man in need of the healing touch of God.

## 24TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

### SUNDAY 12TH SEPTEMBER

#### GOSPEL MARK 8:27-35

At that time:

Jesus went on with his disciples, to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, "Who do men say that I am?" And they told him, "John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others one of the prophets." And he asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Christ." And he charged them to tell no one about him. And he began to teach them that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. And he said this plainly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him. But turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter, and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are not on the side of God, but of men." And he called to him the multitude with his disciples, and said to them, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the Gospel's will save it."



#### THE GOSPEL AND YOU

This Gospel reading places in contrasts two attitudes towards Christ, two ways of perceiving Him and His mission. First, there is the attitude of men who do not recognise Christ and His redemptive mission. In ultimate analysis, they are moved by the spirit of Satan. Then, there is the spirit of God who grants the ability to know and recognise Christ for who He is and the mission He came to accomplish.

Christ asked His disciples, "*Who do men say I am?*" And the disciples began to relate the popular opinion regarding the person of Christ: "*And they told him, John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others one of the prophets.*" Then Christ asked for their own opinion: "*But who do you say that I am?*" Peter, moved by the Spirit of God, said, "*You are the Christ.*" Here we see how men perceived Christ as a great prophet but nothing more. This is in contrast to the answer of Peter who, moved by the Holy Spirit, said, "*You are the Christ.*"

But unfortunately, this same Peter is the one who begins to remonstrate with Christ because He spoke of His coming Passion and Death. And Christ, seeing the bad example Peter was giving to the other disciples, immediately rebuked him, saying, "*Get behind me, Satan! For you are not on the side of God, but of men.*"

Many today speak of Christ as a great man, an extraordinary prophet and so on. But they stop short of calling Him the Son of God. Even those within the Church who are meant to believe in the divinity of Christ, do not preach Christ Crucified. They are imbued with the spirit of the world and are ashamed of the cross of Christ.

Today, Jesus asks us the same question: "*But who do you say that I am?*" And we must be able to say: *You are the Christ, the Saviour of the world.*

**"Even those within the Church who are meant to believe in the divinity of Christ, do not preach Christ Crucified."**



## 25TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

SUNDAY 19TH SEPTEMBER

### GOSPEL MARK 9:30-37

At that time:

Jesus and his disciples went on from the mountain and passed through Galilee.

And he would not have any one know it; for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, "The Son of man will be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him; and when he is killed, after three days he will rise."

But they did not understand the saying, and they were afraid to ask him.

And they came to Capernaum; and when he was in the house he asked them, "What were you discussing on the way?"

But they were silent; for on the way they had discussed with one another who was the greatest.

And he sat down and called the Twelve; and he said to them, "If any one would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all."

And he took a child, and put him in the midst of them;

and taking him in his arms, he said to them,

"Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me;

and whoever receives me,

receives not me but him who sent me."

### THE GOSPEL AND YOU

Jesus and His disciples travelled through Galilee on their way to Capernaum. It was a journey in which Jesus was alone with His disciples and He taught them many things about Himself and about the kingdom. His conversation aroused in them thoughts of worldly glory and success and they spoke of these things among themselves, hoping that Jesus would not hear them.

But Jesus knew exactly what they were talking about and upon arriving in Capernaum, He asked them: "*What were you discussing on the way?*" The question caught them off guard and they remained silent out of embarrassment. Our Lord doesn't scold them but instead calls the Twelve apostles to Himself and helps them to understand wherein lies true greatness: "*If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all.*"

As future leaders of the Church, the apostles must shun all ambitions for worldly honour and praise, but instead seek to serve Christ in humility. Christ sets before His apostles the ideal of humble and devoted service of which he himself had given the example. In the kingdom of Christ, there is no place for selfish ambition and true greatness will be measured by the degree of devoted service.

Many of the saints we honour today were great men and women in their own time. They were not all perfect but they all had in common the virtue of humility. Humility conquers the heart of God, and it is even considered greater than any exterior devotion we may practice. Humility is the mother of many virtues, according to the words of a saint, for from it springs obedience, holy fear, reverence, patience, modesty, mildness and peace.

Let us pray often for the gift of humility. Let us pray for this gift using the words of St Francis de Sales: *My dearest Father, I beg you, for the love of God, help me to humble myself.* Let us ask for this virtue from the Sacred Heart by saying: *Jesus, meek and humble of heart, make my heart like unto yours.*

## 26TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

### SUNDAY 26TH SEPTEMBER

#### GOSPEL MARK 9:38-43,45,47-48

At that time:

John said to Jesus,

"Teacher, we saw a man casting out demons in your name, and we forbade him, because he was not following us."

But Jesus said, "Do not forbid him; for no one who does a mighty work in my name will be able soon after to speak evil of me.

For he that is not against us is for us.

For truly, I say to you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ, will by no means lose his reward.

"Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him

if a great millstone were hung round his neck and he were thrown into the sea.

And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire.

And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame than with two feet to be thrown into hell.

And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye

than with two eyes to be thrown into hell, where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched."

#### THE GOSPEL AND YOU

The Christian life is one continuous battle against the enemies of Christ. And most definitely he who uses the name of Christ to do good is certainly on the side of Christ. Just as Jesus said in today's Gospel, "... *no one who does a mighty work in my name will be able soon after to speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is for us.*"

The Christian life is like a battlefield. The followers of Christ must constantly fight against sin if they are to preserve in themselves the life of grace. Sometimes, this fight against sin may cost an arm and a leg, but for the Christian who loves God no sacrifice is too great.

St. Pio of Pietrelcina, while still very young, had a vision of the spiritual battle he would undertake later on in life. St. Pio recounts that he was suddenly taken by a majestic man of rare beauty to a very large field where, on one side there were people dressed in white, spotless as snow, and on the other side there was a multitude with horrible faces, dressed in black. Then a formidable monster appeared from the other side and challenged St Pio to a fight. The majestic man said to the young saint: "*You will have to fight as a valiant warrior. I will be close to you. As a reward for the victory you will receive a splendid crown.*" Out of fear St Pio refused to fight but the majestic man told him that he had no choice. With the help of the majestic man St. Pio fought, overcame him, and defeated him, compelling him to run away. The majestic man of rare beauty was Christ, who placed a crown on his head and said: "*I have reserved for you a more beautiful crown if you persevere in battle against that demon. This demon will assault you again but never doubt my help... I will always be close to you.*"

If we persevere in the fight against sin, a beautiful crown of glory awaits us in heaven. The pain and sacrifice we may have to endure to remain faithful is insignificant compared to the glory that awaits us in heaven.





# 5 Steps to Positive Mental Health

A Good Mental Health Guide for Seafarers

There are several factors that can impact seafarers' mental health; such as job stress, family pressures, limited shore leave and more. Being away at sea can also make it difficult to access support. However, help is out there! This self-help guide details some skills, exercises and coping strategies to help you deal with your emotions when life becomes stressful or your mood is low.

## Steps to Positive Mental Health

**B**ody  
**A**chieve  
**C**onnect  
**E**njoy  
**S**tep back

### BODY: SELFCARE

- Taking good care of our physical body means we will be better able to cope with emotional problems.
- Eat healthily and regularly
- Exercise regularly, preferably in an outside/natural space
- Plan how to make best use of rest times
- Beware of how things like drink, drugs, smoking and caffeine affect you

### ACHIEVE

Our brain gets a boost when we achieve things during the day. Achievement increases the neurotransmitter dopamine and purposeful activity increases serotonin.

It is helpful to plan realistic and achievable goals every day, such as those concerning work, chores and study, but we can also set goals and achieve activities relating to connecting to others, enjoyment and exercise.

### CONNECT

- As our mood drops, we feel more tired and we tend to do less. We start to stay alone more, withdrawing and isolating ourselves. The unique conditions on board a ship can make isolation more likely.
- You may have limited opportunities to communicate with friends and family back home but it's important to keep connected to loved ones when you can.
- Different shift patterns and other reasons may make it difficult to connect with other crew on board, but making an effort to socialise could help.
- Are there opportunities on board to get involved in a film or games night? If not, why not plan a range of regular activities to enjoy with crew mates such as: deck BBQs, game evenings, team sports, movie nights and karaoke contests.

## ENJOY

When our mood is pretty good, we tend to do a large variety of enjoyable activities, in addition to the things we have to do. As our mood and energy levels drop, we do less and less, until eventually we struggle to even do the necessary daily chores.

- Aim to do more enjoyable activities.
- Try to find activities you can enjoy now and plan ahead for your next voyage/contract – what can you take with you that you can enjoy doing on board?
- Try to get a balance between time on your own and time with others. Individual hobbies can help when social activities aren't possible:
- Exercise can really help lift your mood.  
Try [www.trainingonboard.org](http://www.trainingonboard.org) for inspiration.
- Want a challenge? Learn new skills at your own pace. There are many free online courses which may introduce you to new interests and activities.  
For example, try [www.lynda.com](http://www.lynda.com)
- Feeling creative? Keep a written or photographic journal of your time on board.

## STEP BACK

When we have a problem we can get caught up in the emotion (anger, frustration, sadness) – it is difficult to think clearly and see the bigger picture at those times and we can react by doing things that are unhelpful. At stressful times, we tend to be driven by our emotions and opinions, which create a vicious cycle by fuelling each other. Our emotions strengthen our opinions, which in turn, intensify our emotions. This leads to impulsive acts and unhelpful longer term consequences, which can help to maintain the overall problem. It might seem like doing those things helps at the time, but by reacting impulsively or the same way all the time, we just keep the problem going.

**We can learn to react and think differently.**

Courtesy of Iswan [www.seafarerswelfare.org](http://www.seafarerswelfare.org) Seafarers Health International Programme

**"It is helpful to plan realistic and achievable goals every day, such as those concerning work, chores and study, but we can also set goals and achieve activities relating to connecting to others, enjoyment and exercise."**





# IS THERE SUCH A THING AS RIGHT AND WRONG?

Fr Stephen Wang

**If you found a suitcase containing millions of pounds, what would you do with it? Is there a right or wrong course of action to take? There is a wide range of views on morality today, but most people agree that we need some kind of moral code. In this blog, discover what Christians believe about morality, and reflect upon your own views on right and wrong.**

I saw an old film by the Coen brothers recently called *No Country for Old Men*. There is a gunfight in the desert when a drug deal goes wrong. The next day, a local guy played by Josh Brolin is out hunting, and he finds two million dollars in a suitcase at the scene. He thinks hard, then puts it in the back of his truck, and takes it home. He spends the rest of the film running from a hit man played by Javier Bardem, one of the most terrifying characters ever to grace the screens.

So Brolin finds the very thing he has been searching for all his life: a tonne of cash. But in the process (spoiler alert) he loses everything else that has been important to him: his home, his work, his wife, his freedom, and eventually his very life.

The film is a classic morality tale. It raises all the big questions: What are you searching for? What would you do to get it? Is it really worth it? Are there any moral boundaries?

If you speak about morality today, you get a fascinating mix of views. On the one hand, we don't like to judge or interfere. We value diversity. In Britain there is a great emphasis on the virtue of tolerance. Live and let live. We want to respect people's freedom.

On the other hand, most people agree that we need some kind of moral code, some shared values. It's not enough just to say: do whatever you want. Some things are just wrong. So there is a bit of tension between freedom and morality.

I see this every day. I spend most of my time working with university students. I often have conversations with them about what they hope to do in the future. And most of the time I wouldn't dream of pushing them in one direction or another. I'll pray with them and maybe give some gentle advice. But they need to find their own way. Every person is unique.

But sometimes they ask a moral question. Is this right? Is this wrong? And sometimes I do step in and give some stronger advice. I'm not trying to impose anything on them, but just being honest about what is right and what is wrong. We can't make good decisions if we don't have at least a few clear moral guidelines.

Christians believe in freedom. They also believe in an objective morality. Not everything is relative. There are some fundamental human values that all people have in common. Why? Because we all share a common humanity, and some things help us to live a good life, they lead us to a genuine fulfilment, and other things can damage that.

It's a good thing, for example, to care for the sick, to tell the truth, to honour your parents, to do an honest day's work. And it's wrong, for example, to kill an innocent person, to steal, to betray your spouse, to exploit the vulnerable.

We can argue about the exact details. But Christians believe that a core set of values has been accepted by most people in most societies. They're expressed in the Ten Commandments of the Jewish-Christian tradition and many other similar codes.

If a society loses touch with these fundamental values, it begins to fall apart. This is what happens in the novel *Lord of the Flies*, when a group of boys trapped on a remote island descend into chaos and violence.

Most of us are struggling to live a good life. We are not sure what we would do if we found that suitcase in the desert, stuffed with two million dollars' worth of bank notes. We are not sure about lots of our day-to-day choices. Life is often very complicated and messy. But the knowledge that there are some guidelines and boundaries is actually a huge gift, rather than a burden. And trying to follow them actually helps to set us free.

## QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

Do you think there is such a thing as right and wrong? Why?

Do you think morality changes from one culture or country or religion to another?

Do you think human beings are free? Do you think people are capable of change?

# PRAYER TO THE GLORIOUS CROSS

I adore You, O glorious Cross,  
which was adorned with the  
Heart and Body of my Saviour  
Jesus Christ, stained and  
covered with blood. I adore You,  
O Holy Cross, out of love for  
Him, Jesus, who is my Saviour  
and my God.



Stella Maris is the largest ship-visiting network in the world. We improve the lives of seafarers and fishers through our network of local chaplains and seafarer centres, expert information, advocacy, and spiritual support.



#### STELLA MARIS REGIONAL COORDINATORS

##### NORTH AMERICA & CARIBBEAN

###### **Deacon Paul Rosenblum**

Stella Maris Port Chaplain, Charleston Diocesan

**Email:** paul.rosenblum@stellamarismail.org

**Mobile:** +1 (843) 822-3572

##### EUROPE

###### **Martin Foley**

Stella Maris National Director, UK

**Email:** martin.foley@stellamarismail.org

**Mobile:** +44 7941 231628

##### AFRICA INDIAN OCEAN

###### **Fr. Jacques Henri David**

Stella Maris Port Chaplain, Port-Louis, Mauritius

**Email:** jachsenri@intnet.mu

**Mobile:** + 230 57287348

##### SOUTH ASIA

###### **Fr. Johnson Chirammel**

Stella Maris Port Chaplain, Cochin, India

**Email:** chirammelj@yahoo.com

**Mobile:** +91 9447308759

##### WEST AFRICA

###### **Fr. Celestin Ikomba**

Stella Maris National Director, Ivory Coast

**Email:** ikomba\_celio@yahoo.fr

**Mobile:** +225 08041035

##### EAST-SOUTH EAST ASIA

###### **Fr. Paulo Prigol**

Stella Maris Director, Manila, Philippines

**Email:** pauloprigol@yahoo.com

**Mobile:** +63 908 819 0230

##### LATIN AMERICA

###### **Fr. Samuel Fonseca, C.S.**

Stella Maris National Director, Brazil

**Email:** samufonto@hotmail.com

**Mobile:** +55 (13) 9772 1191

##### OCEANIA

###### **Sr. Mary Leahy, RSJ**

Stella Maris Port Chaplain, Sydney, Australia

**Email:** srmmaryleahy@gmail.com

**Mobile:** +61 (418) 724 713