



DECEMBER
2021

Stella Maris

SUPPORTING SEAFARERS AND FISHERS AROUND THE WORLD

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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.

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

Tel: +44 020 7901 1931

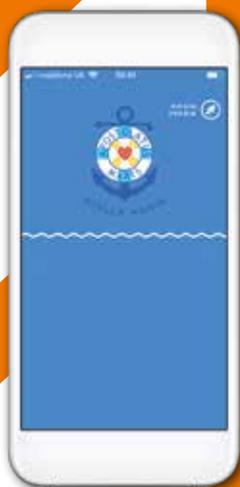
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Registered charity in Scotland number SC043085
Registered company number 3320318

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



CASTELLÓ DE LA PLANA, SPAIN

The history of Port Castelló in Castelló de la Plana began in ancient times, with the existence of a pier for goods and supplies. However it is considered that the Port began operating formally with the constitution of the Junta de Obras del Puerto (The Port Works Board) in April 1902. This 100-year-old port is located in the Mediterranean Sea about 70 kilometres north of the city of Valencia. Today it holds the ninth place in the ranking of important Spanish ports.

The facilities (originally built for the export of oranges - an agricultural product that experienced a great boom at the time) evolved in parallel with the social and economic growth of the area. In the second half of the 20th century, the port has undergone a great expansion and transformation thanks to the large petrochemical industries and the growth of the ceramic industry in the same region. This port specializes in the movement of raw materials and in solid and liquid bulk, which are supplied to local industry.

The port has a fishing harbour, a sports club for mooring recreational boats, and an inland basin in the

north with a transverse quay. The port of Castelló also offers a recreational and leisure area, created in the 90's to attract tourists and social activity. It is a growing port and looking ahead, a project is under way to acquire more land and create more docks with a budget of around 100 million euros.

With this growth of the Port and with the aim of responding to the growing demand for support from merchant seafarers, the idea of setting up a Stella Maris base in Castelló began in 2015 on the initiative of the parish of the maritime district and marine veterans who knew, from their own experience, the help that Stella Maris offers. The project began with the opening of a building (provided by the Port Authority) in July 2017.

These headquarters are located within the port, but next to the urban nucleus. There is a meeting room, a games room, a library, a TV room, as well as other services. Its operation is partly funded by the Castelló City Council and with occasional help from institutions and individuals. A group of volunteers and the chaplain offer ship visiting services to all the

seafarers and transport from their vessels with the van provided by ITF to the Stella Maris headquarters. It is, in short, a home from home on the mainland; we are their family and temporary friends during their stay in Castelló.

Recently, the president of the Port has announced the expansion of the Stella Maris Centre with a plan for its upper floor that will double the space. He has also announced the creation of a Social Welfare Committee that will work alongside Barcelona and Tenerife which already exist in Spain. The recent accident which took place in May 2021 when the Nazmiye Ana ship capsized during cargo operations and sank at Castelló, and which caused the death of a crew member and a stevedore, has led to the adoption of this agreement. That incident put the material and human resources of the Stella Maris to the test. For months, the survivors were given all kinds of help as well as legal and employment advice. It has been, without a doubt, the most challenging episode in which Stella Maris de Castelló so far the newest centre in Spain has been involved.



Stella Maris Castelló Seafarer's Centre

Av. Ferrandis Salvador (B.P. 10)
12100 Grau de Castelló (Spain)

Opening times

From Monday to Saturday 16:00- 22:00 hours
Closed Sundays and Festivities

Stella Maris Castelló chaplain: Fr. Albert Arrufat

E-mail: info@stellamariscastellon.org

Mobile: +34627884409

Sunday at Sea with Fr Pio Idowu



SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT SUNDAY 5TH DECEMBER

GOSPEL LUKE 3:1-6

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, in the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness; and he went into all the region about the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God."

THE GOSPEL AND YOU

In this season of Advent, the Church invites us to prepare our hearts spiritually for the Solemnity of Holy Christmas, with the most attentive and assiduous listening to the Word of God which speaks to us today through the great figure of St John the Baptist. The Gospel passage, taken from St Luke, frames it in the historical framework of the great personalities of his time. With subtle irony, the evangelist points out that God, in the historical moment in which he chooses the right person to prepare hearts for his Kingdom, does not use the voice of the great men of the world, accustomed to making their subjects tremble with their imperious word, but that of the Baptist, the Precursor, the one sent by God to precede and announce the coming of the Messiah and his kingdom.

Called by the mighty voice of the Baptist, the people of Israel flocked to hear his prophetic message announcing the imminent coming of the Kingdom of God: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth". The Precursor invites Israel to prepare to receive the Saviour who brings to all the good news of eternal salvation. Every man purified by repentance of his sins and renewed by the sincere desire for new life, "will see the salvation of God!"

St John the Baptist teaches us that in order to welcome Jesus into our lives we must first of all straighten out the distortions of the heart, freeing it from all sinful attachments and affections. It is necessary to fill the voids caused by laziness, spiritual indolence, the yielding of faith, inconstancy, and finally lower the mountains of pride and selfishness. This programme of radical change of life is the straight path of which St John speaks, which leads to a life-changing encounter with God.

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

SUNDAY 12TH DECEMBER

GOSPEL: LUKE 3:10-18

At that time:

The multitudes asked John,

“What then shall we do?”

And he answered them,

“He who has two coats,

let him share with him who has none;

and he who has food, let him do likewise.”

Tax collectors also came to be baptised,

and said to him,

“Teacher, what shall we do?”

And he said to them,

“Collect no more than is appointed you.”

Soldiers also asked him,

“And we, what shall we do?”

And he said to them,

“Rob no one by violence or by false accusation,

and be content with your wages.”

As the people were in expectation,

and all men questioned in their hearts concerning John,

whether perhaps he were the Christ,

John answered them all,

“I baptise you with water;

but he who is mightier than I is coming,

the thong of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie;

he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

His winnowing fork is in his hand,

to clear his threshing floor,

and to gather the wheat into his granary,

but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

So, with many other exhortations,

he preached good news to the people.



THE GOSPEL AND YOU

As the feast of Christmas approaches, so does the joy of our waiting increase. For this reason, the whole Liturgy of this Third Sunday of Advent - called, precisely, “Gaudete” Sunday - is an invitation to joy.

The words of the entrance antiphon already resound with this invitation to joy: “Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice. Indeed, the Lord is near.”

How much joy should fill the Christian’s heart at the thought that Jesus is not only close, but is already present in us, in a continuous communion of love! His sacramental presence, especially in the Eucharist, and the intimate and ineffable presence in our souls, constitute the greatest source of joy for the Christian.

The Christian who has God in his heart has joy in his heart. In reality, true joy which lasts, can only come from God. The other joys of this world are transitory, and almost always leave the heart dissatisfied. And the worldly joys that are the fruit of sin leave in the

soul a fearful emptiness and a depressing sadness that man tries to hide under a mask of noise, external and illusory pleasures. In this regard, the behaviour of so many Christians who do not live the joy of the Christian message to the full is profoundly striking. Always anxious and worried about so many things, they easily forget to seek in God the source of true joy.

The saints are the most credible witnesses of Christian joy. Through their lives and works, they make us understand that only in God is found the secret of true joy. In the writings of Padre Pio of Pietrelcina we read this encouraging expression: “Live therefore in a holy joy”. In these last days of preparation for Holy Christmas, let us accept the exhortation of the Liturgy and of Saint Pio and, putting aside all discouragement, all sadness and concern, let us approach Confession to rediscover the joy of Christ’s divine presence in us, lost or diminished by our sins.



FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT SUNDAY 19TH DECEMBER

GOSPEL LUKE 1:39-45

In those days

Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a city of Judah, and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth.

And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the child leaped in her womb;

and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and she exclaimed with a loud cry,

“Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!

And why is this granted me,

that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

For behold, when the voice of your greeting came to my ears,

the child in my womb leaped for joy.

And blessed is she who believed

that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.”

THE GOSPEL AND YOU

On this last Sunday of Advent, the Church presents to us, as an unsurpassed model of preparation for the now approaching feast of Holy Christmas, the figure of the Virgin Mary in the radiant light of her profound faith, lived in continuous and loving obedience to the Will of God. Today’s Gospel, taken from St Luke, reports the beautiful episode of Our Lady’s visit to her cousin Saint Elizabeth who proclaimed Mary blessed for her profound faith: “...blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.” Mary believed without hesitation in the announcement not only of the great and admirable things, but also of the disconcerting and obscure things that were to come.

Man has always felt aware of the need for salvation, that is, to be freed from the limits of his own nature and the world around him; unfortunately, he thinks he can achieve this end in his own way: with the effort of his intelligence and the work of his own hands. In reality, man, only through a relationship of deep faith with Christ, can find true salvation. Jesus is the true Saviour sent by the Father to free humanity from all kinds of slavery. Only those who believe in Him, therefore, will be saved and will inherit the blessed life of the Kingdom of God.

The Church, in Mary, offers a sublime model of faith, as a response to the man of today in search of salvation. She teaches us to give our full adherence to the Will of God, even when this is mysterious and incomprehensible. Padre Pio of Pietrelcina, in a writing to a spiritual daughter, exhorts us to always believe, without ever being discouraged, especially in moments of trial: “Yes, my daughter, do not be discouraged if the trial continually increases. Believe always, raise your heart on high and rest assured that there is no fear of your being lost... Isn’t it God who arranges everything for our greater good?” May these encouraging words dispose us to accept always and joyfully the dispositions of the Divine Will.

FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY

SUNDAY 26TH DECEMBER

GOSPEL LUKE 2:41-52

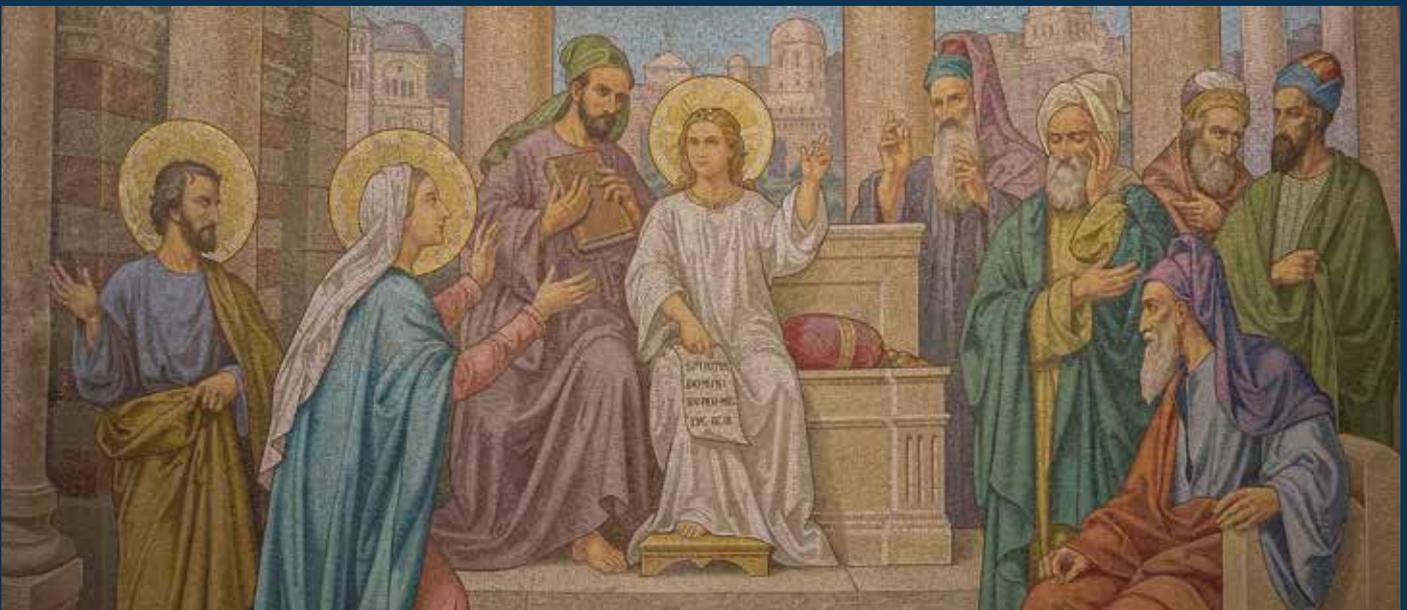
The parents of Jesus went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up according to custom; and when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, but supposing him to be in the company they went a day's journey, and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintances; and when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions; and all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. And when they saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been looking for you anxiously." And he said to them, "How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" And they did not understand the saying which he spoke to them. And he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them; and his mother kept all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and man.

THE GOSPEL AND YOU

Every year, on the first Sunday after the Nativity of the Lord, the Church invites us to fix our gaze of faith on the Holy Family. One cannot, in fact, celebrate the birth of Jesus without thinking of Mary his Mother and Joseph, because of the decisive role they played in the human growth of the Saviour. For about thirty years in the small house in Nazareth Jesus shared with them the joys and sufferings of much of his earthly life. Although little is known about the ineffable mysteries that took place within the Holy Family, however, the few episodes that the Gospels transmit to us are sufficient to make known to Christian families the examples and admirable teachings of Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

From the words of Jesus to his parents when they found him in the temple, we understand that God must occupy the first place in the life of the family. We also admire the exemplary attitude of the two holy spouses during the three days of frantic search for who, with great spirit of faith and obedience accept the divine Will concerning the unexpected disappearance of their son. The passage of today's Gospel shows us yet another great teaching: obedience to God and to His representatives. Jesus, after being found by his parents, "went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them".

On the feast of the Holy Family, there is no better wish that can be offered to Christian families than what Padre Pio of Pietrelcina suggests to us from the depths of his heart: "Model yourselves on it and you will have temporal and spiritual peace and good". Parents and children should reflect seriously on these words of the Saint. They teach us that families, only by following the admirable examples of virtue of the Holy Family of Nazareth and its teachings, will be able to rediscover true peace of hearts and obtain every other good, both temporal and spiritual.





Waiting for the King: Rediscovering the Meaning of Advent

➤ Advent isn't a time for feeling "Christmassy". Yes, Advent is a time of anticipation for Christmas, but not for sleigh bells, snow and presents – it's anticipation for the birth of the King.

“But I am sure I have always thought of Christmas time, when it has come round... as a good time; a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time; the only time I know of, in the long calendar of the year, when men and women seem by one consent to open their shut-up hearts freely, and to think of people below them as if they really were fellow-passengers to the grave, and not another race of creatures bound on other journeys.”
– A Christmas Carol, Charles Dickens

What does Advent mean to you? For a lot of people, Advent is a time for preparation. So far so good! But preparation for what exactly? That depends entirely on what you think of Christmas. Is Christmas the day for the fat man in the red suit and white beard who comes bearing multitudes of gifts? Or is it for the King born in a manger, who brought with him gifts of an entirely different sort?

Feeling “Christmassy”

We live in a culture of instant gratification. We avoid queues at any cost; food that isn't fast isn't worth waiting for; the latest iPhone must be bought the day it comes out, and your favourite TV show is best binge-watched. It's fair to say that for most of us, waiting is seen as a waste of our time and energy.

Waiting is exactly what we're asked to do during the four weeks of Advent, and the thing about waiting is that what we do while we wait is just as important as what it is we're waiting for. So what are we doing to prepare for Christmas? We might be caught up in preparing the food, preparing our homes for Christmas guests, finishing the Christmas shopping, wrapping the many presents we've bought...

But Advent isn't a time for feeling “Christmassy”. It's not about waiting for the Coca Cola advert to tell us that “holidays are coming” so we can start listening to Christmas music and put up our decorations. Yes, Advent is a time of anticipation for Christmas, but not for sleigh bells, snow and presents – it's anticipation for the birth of the King.



The joy of the Incarnation vs a universal birthday

To prepare properly during Advent, we need to remember what we're celebrating at Christmas. It's a mystery completely unique to Christianity: the Incarnation of God. Unlike other religions, we believe in a God who humbled Himself to become like His creation. As St Paul tells us:

Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death – even death on a cross. – Philippians 2:6-8

The reality of Christmas is far more amazing than the secular notion of Christmas as a sort of “universal birthday”. In fact, the powerful testament of a God born in a manger draws such interest that His story is still being told and sung about 2000 years on. You don't have to be Christian to sing songs about Jesus' birth, and you don't have to regularly practise any sort of religion to want to go to church on Christmas Day. Even the concept of Santa – that you are rewarded for being good – isn't miles away from Christianity, despite the materialistic form it has taken. It's the one time of year when it's popular to think of others.

How will He find us when He arrives?

So if Advent is a build-up to a celebration of this incredible event, preparing for it should be less about preparing presents and more about preparing our hearts. What are we doing to be ready for the arrival of our King? Will He find us asleep (cf. Matthew 25:1-13) or will he find our hearts open, waiting for Him? While Lent is traditionally associated with fasting, Advent too is a time for penance and atoning for our sins. It's a great time to get to Confession, especially if we haven't been in a while. We can also prepare ourselves by praying more fervently. Finally, we should always remember the joy of what it is to come and look towards it with great happiness and anticipation.

The world had so many expectations from the Messiah, and 2000 years later we are still piling up these expectations. But what about what He can expect from us? We ask so much of him, but what can we give him in return? All we can do, all we can ever give him, is ourselves, and that is all he would ever ask of us.

“What can I give Him, Poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd I would bring a lamb;
If I were a wise man I would do my part;
Yet what I can I give Him – Give my heart”
– In the Bleak Midwinter, Christina Rossetti

Women in Shipping

Denmark's Parental Leave Café



➤ **With support from both the Maritime fund and Lauritzen fund, Danish Shipping and WIS-Denmark is opening the doors to a new Parental-leave-café, which makes it possible to preserve a strong affiliation to the Maritime industry and shipping during parental leave.**

There will be space for breastfeeding, crying babies, and small talk, when the parents on leave will roll their buggies to Amaliegade Street in Copenhagen to visit the Maritime parental-leave-café.

The parental leave café has been named Parent'SHIP offers presentations from professional speakers about subjects such as career counselling and work-life-balance. Another of its aims is to preserve a strong affiliation to the Maritime industry to keep the employees from the industry updated regarding news in the shipping industry during parental leave. The main, and most important purpose of the café is to gather all the parents on parental leave together with their babies as the café is meant to be a place where there is space to talk and connect with your parental leave co-workers. Furthermore, the café will provide different sorts of refreshments for all the participants!

The parental leave café is one of the initiatives which Danish Shipping and WIS-Denmark are working on with



support from both the Maritime fund and Lauritzen fund. Danish Shipping and WIS-Denmark are opening the doors to a new Parental-leave-café in order to encourage their project "More women in shipping". There have been several requests regarding the establishment of a dedicated parental leave café within the shipping industry.

It can be challenging to return to a job and an everyday rhythm when you have sleepless nights and diaper changes. Even though, the shipping industry is quite dependent on getting the new parents back to their work life, we hope that the café can make the transition from parental leave to getting back into their work mode easier.



ADVENT PRAYER

O shepherd of Israel, hear us,
O guide of the flock of Joseph!
Rouse your power, and come to save us.
O Lord of hosts, restore us,
Let your face shine upon us, then we shall be saved.



STELLA MARIS

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: jachenri@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: pauloprigo@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: srmaryleahy@gmail.com

Mobile: +61 (418) 724 713

www.stellamaris.org.uk
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