



AUGUST  
2022

# 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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provides seafarers  
with practical  
support, information  
and a listening ear

# TAURANGA, NEW ZEALAND

The Port of Tauranga is situated on the east coast of New Zealand's North Island in the natural harbour of Mount Maunganui. The harbour's first use as a port started in the 1860's and was officially established by the government in 1873.

The local area with its wide sandy beaches and rolling waves coming in off the Pacific Ocean make it a popular holiday spot for families and surfers. The local sightseeing and shopping facilities make it also popular with cruise ship tourists.

The Port of Tauranga is the largest port in New Zealand, both in terms of total cargo volume, and in terms of container throughput. It is fortunate to have road and rail links to major transport hubs in North Island.

On the western side of the harbour, where Mount Maunganui guards the entrance, there are eleven bulk carrier (timber, coal, animal feed, grain, and fertiliser etc.) berths, and one tanker berth: the Mount Maunganui berths. The port has four massive mobile cranes here to assist with loading and unloading.

On the eastern side of the harbour, known as Sulphur Point, there are three container berths. There are nine Liebherr container cranes and 53 straddle carriers servicing the container terminal, and annual throughput exceeds 1.2 million TEUs (Twenty-foot Equivalent Units). There are nearly 1,000 power points provided for refrigerated containers.

The start of seafarer welfare at the

port was in the 1950's when Christian families concerned about seafarers' wellbeing began taking seafarers on trips around the local areas, took them home for meals and gave them a bed for the night. In the following decades a number of Christian seafarer organisations grew up: the Mission to Seafarers, the Galilee Mission, the Apostleship of the Sea. This resulted in a number of different premises being used and some repetition of welfare work.

In 2001 these organisations merged to form the United Seafarers Mission, USM. Based in Oceania House, located securely inside the port, the various Chaplains and volunteers work ecumenically providing seafarer welfare support. This has proved to be an excellent working arrangement as all have the same aim, and with many volunteers, around sixty, the Mission is able to be open every day of the year from 11.00 am to 9.00 pm.

With over 100 ships visiting a week, pre-Covid, the Mission was always busy, with around 16,000 plus seafarers passing through its doors. Here seafarers can relax, use the recreational facilities, exchange money, be taken to the local shopping mall or places of interest by USM volunteers in the minibus, attend church services, be taken to doctors or dentists, or contact home using the Mission's high speed fibre internet service.

At the country's current Covid level, the number of ships visiting

has risen slightly, but few seafarers are being allowed shore leave. To provide assistance, there are three Port Welfare Officers, employed by the Seafarers' Welfare Board, New Zealand, attempting to visit every ship that comes in to see what help they can offer, whether it be getting shopping, counselling, ascertaining that working conditions and employment contracts are being met, or just chatting to the crew about their situation, and how their families are coping.

We are all looking forward to the day, with God's help, when Covid is history.



## United Seafarers Mission

Suite 2  
Oceania House  
127 Hull Road  
Mount Maunganui  
3116  
New Zealand

**Opening times:**  
11:00-21:00 Daily

**Port Chaplain:** Rev. John  
Limrick Dcn.

**email:** johnlimrick@gmx.com

**Mobile:** +64 22 634 9965

# Sunday at Sea with Fr Pio Idowu

**NINETEENTH SUNDAY  
IN ORDINARY TIME**  
SUNDAY 7TH AUGUST

## GOSPEL LUKE 12:32-48

Jesus said to his disciples: 'There is no need to be afraid, little flock, for it has pleased your Father to give you the kingdom.

'Sell your possessions and give alms. Get yourselves purses that do not wear out, treasure that will not fail you, in heaven where no thief can reach it and no moth destroy it. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

'See that you are dressed for action and have your lamps lit. Be like men waiting for their master to return from the wedding feast, ready to open the door as soon as he comes and knocks. Happy those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes. I tell you solemnly, he will put on an apron, sit them down at table and wait on them. It may be in the second watch he comes, or in the third, but happy those servants if he finds them ready. You may be quite sure of this, that if the householder had known at what hour the burglar would come, he would not have let anyone break through the wall of his house. You too must stand ready, because the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.'

Peter said, 'Lord, do you mean this parable for us, or for everyone?' The Lord replied, 'What sort of steward, then, is faithful and wise enough for the master to place him over his household to give them their allowance of food at the proper time? Happy that servant if his master's arrival finds him at this employment. I tell you truly, he will place him over everything he owns. But as for the servant who says to himself, "My master is taking his time coming", and sets about beating the menservants and the maids, and eating and drinking and getting drunk, his master will come on a day he does not expect and at an hour he does not know. The master will cut him off and send him to the same fate as the unfaithful.

'The servant who knows what his master wants, but has not even started to carry out those wishes, will receive very many strokes of the lash. The one who did not know, but deserves to be beaten for what he has done, will receive fewer strokes. When a man has had a great deal given him, a great deal will be demanded of him; when a man has had a great deal given him on trust, even more will be expected of him.'



## THE GOSPEL AND YOU

Even though I have travelled by ship or boat quite a few times, I have never been away at sea for more than a day. I think the longest must have been an overnight travel. It is difficult for me to imagine what it must feel like to be away on a ship for days or even weeks on end without being able to go on land. And I think you seafarers who work on ships are always very happy when your ship docks at a port and you are able to go on land.

We can think of life as being away at sea on a ship with no land in sight. Our destination is heaven, and we look forward to that day when the boat of our earthly existence docks at the ports of heaven. Perhaps, we are afraid, anxious that we may never make it. Christ, in today's Gospel, tells us: "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." By faith, we know that God has made us for heaven. We also know that He wants to help us reach heaven. Therefore, we should never be afraid, never be anxious, knowing that God is all powerful; that he has a great love for me; and that He will be faithful to His promises.

Just as a ship is guided along its path by a rudder, so the boat of our earthly existence is guided to the ports of heaven by a vigilant faith. The ship's rudder is steered by a helmsman who must always remain vigilant so as not to go off course. We journey towards heaven guided by a faith that must remain vigilant, with eyes set on heaven and not distracted by the comforts and pleasures this world has to offer. In this journey of life, we set our eyes on Mary, Star of the Sea, so that she may guide us safely to our heavenly homeland.

**TWENTIETH SUNDAY  
IN ORDINARY TIME  
SUNDAY 14TH AUGUST**

**GOSPEL LUKE 12:49-53**

Jesus said to his disciples: 'I have come to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were blazing already! There is a baptism I must still receive, and how great is my distress till it is over!

'Do you suppose that I am here to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. For from now on a household of five will be divided: three against two and two against three; the father divided against the son, son against father, mother against daughter, daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law, daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.'

**THE GOSPEL AND YOU**

In today's Gospel, Jesus says: "I came to cast fire upon the earth; and would that it were already blazing!" St. John the Baptist, when he spoke about the Christ, spoke of one who would come to baptise with a baptism of fire: fire that consumes, fire that purifies. And we all know what it is this fire purifies: our sinfulness, our lukewarmness, our tepidity in the service of God. One who is set on fire with divine love will seek to do all things out of love for God. And according to Jesus, this is the greatest commandment: to love God with the totality of your heart.

Now, this can create a problem when you, inflamed with divine love, have to deal with people who are cold and indifferent to God. You don't think alike, you don't have the same spiritual vision, there is that lack of spiritual compatibility and this can have consequences for you socially. The Gospel talks of division even among members of the same family. A sad thing when you have to suffer misunderstanding from your loved ones because of what you believe. So then, would you separate yourself from God so as not to lose the closeness of your loved ones?

To be a follower of Christ will never be easy. Some painful sacrifices will be demanded of us. I'm sure we all understand, but the question is: are we ready to accept and embrace these sacrifices? Are ready to embrace the cross and carry it just as Jesus did, carrying his cross all the way to Calvary? It will never be easy. And for this reason, we need help. And what better person to help us than the Blessed Virgin Mary? St. Catherine of Siena calls Mary the bearer of fire. The fire she is referring to is the fire of divine love. If we want to be set on fire, we have to get close to Mary. So, one thing that can be of benefit to all of us is getting close to the Blessed Virgin and learning from her the most perfect way to love God with all our heart.



## TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME SUNDAY 21ST AUGUST

### GOSPEL LUKE 13:22-30

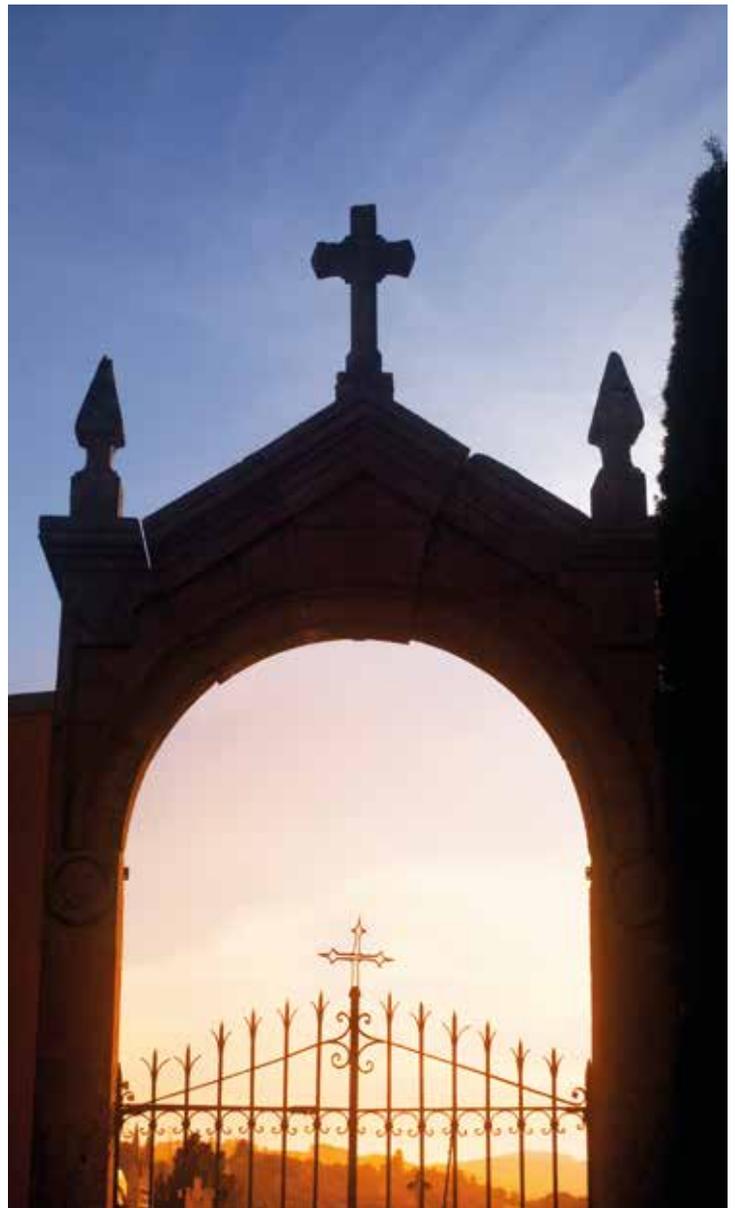
Through towns and villages Jesus went teaching, making his way to Jerusalem. Someone said to him, 'Sir, will there be only a few saved?' He said to them, 'Try your best to enter by the narrow door, because, I tell you, many will try to enter and will not succeed.

'Once the master of the house has got up and locked the door, you may find yourself knocking on the door, saying, "Lord, open to us" but he will answer, "I do not know where you come from." Then you will find yourself saying, "We once ate and drank in your company; you taught in our streets" but he will reply, "I do not know where you come from. Away from me, all you wicked men!"

'Then there will be weeping and grinding of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves turned outside. And men from east and west, from north and south, will come to take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God.

'Yes, there are those now last who will be first, and those now first who will be last.'

**'Try your best to enter by the narrow door, because, I tell you, many will try to enter and will not succeed.'**



### THE GOSPEL AND YOU

Jesus Christ came to earth to teach us the way to heaven. I very much like how the Gospel reading of today begins. It says that Jesus "went on his way through towns and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem". Jerusalem is the place where the Temple is, it is the holy city of God, where God dwells. And in biblical interpretation, it is the symbol of heaven, the dwelling place of God. To see God, to be in his presence, this is salvation. In this way we come to understand the question that was then put to Jesus: "Lord, will those who are saved be few?"

The Venerable Archbishop Fulton Sheen once said that "...there will be three surprises in Heaven. First of all, I will see some people whom I never expected to see. Second, there will be a number whom I expected who will not be there. And – even relying on God's mercy – the biggest surprise of all may be that I will be there." Deep down inside us, beneath all our

worries and anxieties about making ends meet and catering for our loved ones, there is that unanswered question which will always remain: will I be saved, will I get to heaven?

Deep down in our hearts, we all want to be saved. And we wonder if we will make it to heaven. Christ tells us: "Try your best to enter by the narrow door, because, I tell you, many will try to enter and will not succeed." Do we want to be part of the few or do we want to be part of the many? It is a choice we all have to make and the way we live our lives determines the choices we make. Do your best to enter by the narrow door. Do your best to live a truly Christian life in obedience to God's commandments. And when you have done your best entrust the rest to the mercy of God. And God, who sees the depths of our hearts, will reward us for the sincerity of our efforts.

**TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY  
IN ORDINARY TIME**  
SUNDAY 28TH AUGUST

**GOSPEL LUKE 14:1,7-14**

On a sabbath day Jesus had gone for a meal to the house of one of the leading Pharisees; and they watched him closely. He then told the guests a parable, because he had noticed how they picked the places of honour. He said this, 'When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take your seat in the place of honour. A more distinguished person than you may have been invited, and the person who invited you both may come and say, "Give up your place to this man." And then, to your embarrassment, you would have to go and take the lowest place. No; when you are a guest, make your way to the lowest place and sit there, so that, when your host comes, he may say, "My friend, move up higher." In that way, everyone with you at the table will see you honoured. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the man who humbles himself will be exalted.'

Then he said to his host, 'When you give a lunch or a dinner, do not ask your friends, brothers, relations or rich neighbours, for fear they repay your courtesy by inviting you in return. No; when you have a party, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind; that they cannot pay you back means that you are fortunate, because repayment will be made to you when the virtuous rise again.'

**THE GOSPEL AND YOU**

Being a ship visitor has offered me a few opportunities to interact with seafarers in their workplace. On one or two occasions I had the chance to meet groups of seafarers together and learn of the different ranks on a ship. We met one particular group as they sat outside their ship and spent quality time together. There was the chief mate, some cadets and an able seaman. All of them were from different countries around the world. I perceived a very relaxed atmosphere among them and an absence of distinction or superiority.

The Gospel for this Sunday teaches us about the virtue of humility and the need to avoid a disordered desire for ambition and honour. True humility does not stop one from legitimately pursuing one's personal and professional development. True humility does not shy away from praise and honour when it is duly deserved. But the truly humble person will never show off. The truly humble person will never use rank or authority to lord it over others but as an opportunity for service to others.

Sometimes working relations among seafarers can be very difficult and challenging, especially when members of the ship's crew are from different parts of the world and with varied levels of professional qualifications. But there is the need always to keep in mind that rank and authority are given for service to others and for the common good. We must act as servants and not as masters.

The virtue of humility is the foundation of the Christian life. Jesus Himself, by becoming like us, did not insist on His equality with the Father but became a helpless infant in the womb of a woman. He humbled Himself even to the point of accepting a most humiliating death on the Cross just to save us from our sins. Jesus has given us the example, and if we are to be his disciples, we must learn to cultivate in ourselves this indispensable virtue.



# St Augustine's Battle With Chastity

➤ **St Augustine's battle with chastity is as inspirational as it is well-known. For many years he struggled to change his life, while at the same time being so completely chained to his sin that he was unable to make the changes necessary. Discover his story and learn how to overcome the persistent sins in your own life by following his example.**

By Fr John McKeever

"Lord, give me chastity and continence, but not yet!" This infamous prayer of the young Augustine of Hippo (354-430) reflects the inner conflict of any soul who recognises the virtuous thing to do, yet fears the demanding struggle against human urges and passions. In his *Confessions*, St Augustine was not afraid to admit his utter powerlessness in the face of sexual temptation. As a young man, he had given in to the attraction of sexual pleasure and took a lover whom he would never marry but who bore him his only son, Adeodatus. He was brutally honest about why he chose to live with this woman: "I had chosen her for no special reason but that my restless passions had alighted on her". He was faithful to her throughout their years together, yet he could see that his love for her, marked by lust, was very different from the love he would expect in a proper marriage. This difference was most apparent in the attitude to children. Whereas marriage is contracted for the purpose of being open to new life, his irregular union was "a bargain struck for lust, in which the birth of children is begrudged, though, if they come, we cannot help but love them".

When Augustine abandoned the Catholic faith of his youth, much to the anxiety and dismay of his mother, St Monica, he never ceased to search for truth, even if his search led him down a few blind alleys. This search was hampered not just by his lack of understanding but by the power of the favourite sin which blinded him. His conversion was delayed because his sin enslaved him and prevented him from surrendering to the truth of the Catholic faith which would, in turn, have meant the abandonment of his old sinful lifestyle. He wrote: "I was bound down by this disease of the flesh. Its deadly pleasures were a chain that I dragged along with me, yet I was afraid to be freed from it". His friend, the chaste Alypius, tried to talk good sense into Augustine. However, vice is contagious, and curiosity together with Augustine's ideas began to lead Alypius astray: "For my part, I was a prisoner of habit, suffering cruel torments through trying to satisfy a lust that could never be sated: while Alypius was being led by curiosity into a like state of captivity".

## The Power of a Mother's Tears

The power of sin enchaind Augustine and used him as a net to ensnare others, but a far greater power was already at work. His saintly mother, Monica, had been praying for him for years with such weeping and longing that her local bishop reassured her: "Go in peace. It cannot be that the son of these tears should be lost."

Monica followed him to Milan, intensifying the outpouring of her tears and prayers. She could see that the good influence of St Ambrose's teaching was weakening her son's resistance but that he still had a great crisis to pass through before he would be converted. She tried to organise a marriage for Augustine to a suitably Catholic lady and so managed to get him to leave his lover. This attempt at virtue only revealed how weak and vice-ridden Augustine really was. He later recalled:

**Meanwhile I was sinning more and more. The woman with whom I had been living was torn from my side as an obstacle to my marriage and this was a blow which crushed my heart to bleeding, because I loved her dearly. She went back to Africa, vowing never to give herself to any other man ... But I was too unhappy and too weak to imitate this example set me by a woman. I was impatient at the delay of two years that had to pass before the girl I had asked to marry became my wife, and because I was more a slave of lust than a true lover of marriage, I took another mistress, without the sanction of wedlock. This meant that the disease of my soul would continue unabated, in fact it would persist into the state of marriage.**

His fiancée had a lucky escape, being spared marriage to this immature, sex-obsessed cheat. Monica's prayers, the influence of Ambrose and his spiritual father Simplicianus, and the designs of God's providence intervened to convert the sinner into a saint. Augustine was already being swayed to embrace the truth of the Catholic faith, yet his mind was being held back by the sinful habits that bound his will. He knew the truth, but he could not pay the price for this great treasure, that is, the renunciation of his sins, especially sexual immorality. He admitted:

**I was quite sure that it was better for me to give myself up to your love than to surrender to my own lust. But while I wanted to follow the first course and was convinced that it was right, I was still a slave to the pleasures of the second.**

## The Brink of Resolution

Liberation came as suddenly as it was unexpected. One day, a senior official from the imperial court came to visit Augustine and chatted to him about the wonderful life of St Antony of Egypt, saying it had convinced him that it was far better to be a friend of God than of the Emperor. These words struck a chord with Augustine. Suddenly, he could see himself as he really was: sordid and miserable.

He could no longer turn a blind eye to the sin he knew all too well. His conscience gnawed at him and he was overcome with shame. At this point, Augustine grew unsettled, frantic, like a man on the verge of a nervous breakdown. Grace and nature were at war within him and he could take no more! He knew that only a small chain held him back from converting. By his own willpower he tried to break it, repeating "Let it be now, let it be now!" St Augustine's words may well strike a chord with all those who struggle to make that last, definitive, break with their past:

**I was on the point of making it but I did not succeed. ... I stood on the brink of resolution, waiting to take fresh breath. I tried again and came a little nearer to my goal, and then a little nearer still, so that I could almost reach out and grasp it. But I did not reach it ... My lower instincts, which had taken firm hold of me, were stronger than the higher.**

In his mind, Augustine saw the beauty of Chastity approaching, beckoning him. She seemed to say: "Why do you try to stand in your own strength and fail? Cast yourself upon God and have no fear. He will not shrink away and let you fall ... he will welcome you and cure you of your ills." He retreated to the garden in tears, seeking to hide from his friends, when he heard a child's voice say, "Take it and read". So he took up the Bible beside him and opened it at random. His eyes immediately fell upon these words of St Paul: "Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires

of the flesh" (Rm 13:13-14). In an instant, his heart was flooded with light and he was filled with faith and love for God. He no longer desired a wife or any earthly pleasure.

**Transformed and Uplifted by Grace**

Augustine received baptism from St Ambrose and eventually became a priest and bishop. Although he never relapsed into his former ways, the struggle for chastity never fully left him. In the Confessions, he admitted to the impure thoughts and temptations that still assailed him in later life: "The load of habit is a force to be reckoned with". When a man converts, he is never fully changed. Some of his old nature stays with him. This is the price that grace demands, for grace builds upon nature, and if some aspects of our nature still incline us to sin, these same aspects, transformed and uplifted by grace, can also become instruments of God's good work. While Augustine's nature was still strong enough to make him struggle for purity, even requiring him to ban all visits of women from his monastery and never be alone with them, that same nature was used by God to sing of his praises and preach his word with all the untamed passion of a lover! His passion never changed, only its direction.

The power that enabled St Augustine, St Francis and so many other saints to undergo such a radical conversion from sexual impurity to chastity is the only power that can help any of us overcome the temptations that are part and parcel of our human nature: the power of God's grace. St Paul told the Galatians that we are set free from sin by Christ through the power of his Holy Spirit dwelling within us. Without the Holy Spirit, we are as helpless in the battle for chastity as Augustine was.



# The Logic of the Assumption

By Fr Stephen Wang

➤ **The Assumption is the belief that Mary, at the end of her life, was taken up to heaven. How can Mary relate to those whose bodies will become corrupt in the grave? This doctrine has ancient roots in the Church's Tradition, but many find it puzzling, or even needless.**

But the Assumption, seen in the grand picture of salvation history, is a matter of divine logic. Since Mary was sinless and since she bore the perfect Incarnate Son of God, it follows that her body – the tabernacle that bore the God-man – would not suffer the corruption due to sin. She would instead be glorified, just as all those who are filled with grace and who have “put on the Lord Jesus Christ” (Rm 13:14) will one day be glorified.

As theologian John Saward explains:

**The Assumption is an application of the Lord's teaching when he raised Lazarus: “I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die.” (Jn 11:25f) No one lives more truly in Jesus than Mary: he is flesh of her flesh. No one believes in him with greater devotion: “Blessed is she who believed” (Lk 1:45). Thus the Theotokos is not detained by death and passes into glory.**

Mary is all about her Son and is always going about his business in heaven as she did on earth.

In his encyclical *Redemptoris Mater*, Pope John Paul II explains a clear, beautiful truth about the Assumption: “By the mystery of the Assumption into heaven there were definitively accomplished in Mary all the effects of the one mediation of Christ the Redeemer of the world and risen Lord”. And here is the glorious, joyous truth of Advent: “If as Virgin and Mother she is singularly united with him in his first coming, so through her continued collaboration with him she will also be united with him in expectation of the second”.

Mary has experienced every joy and pain imaginable. She clasped in wonder the newborn Christ in her weary arms. She held in sorrow the bloody body of that same Son, grown and violently killed. She stands in heaven and patiently waits for her sons and daughters to come home.

## Rejoicing in Salvation

Commenting upon the final words of the “Hail Mary”, the *Catechism* reflects:

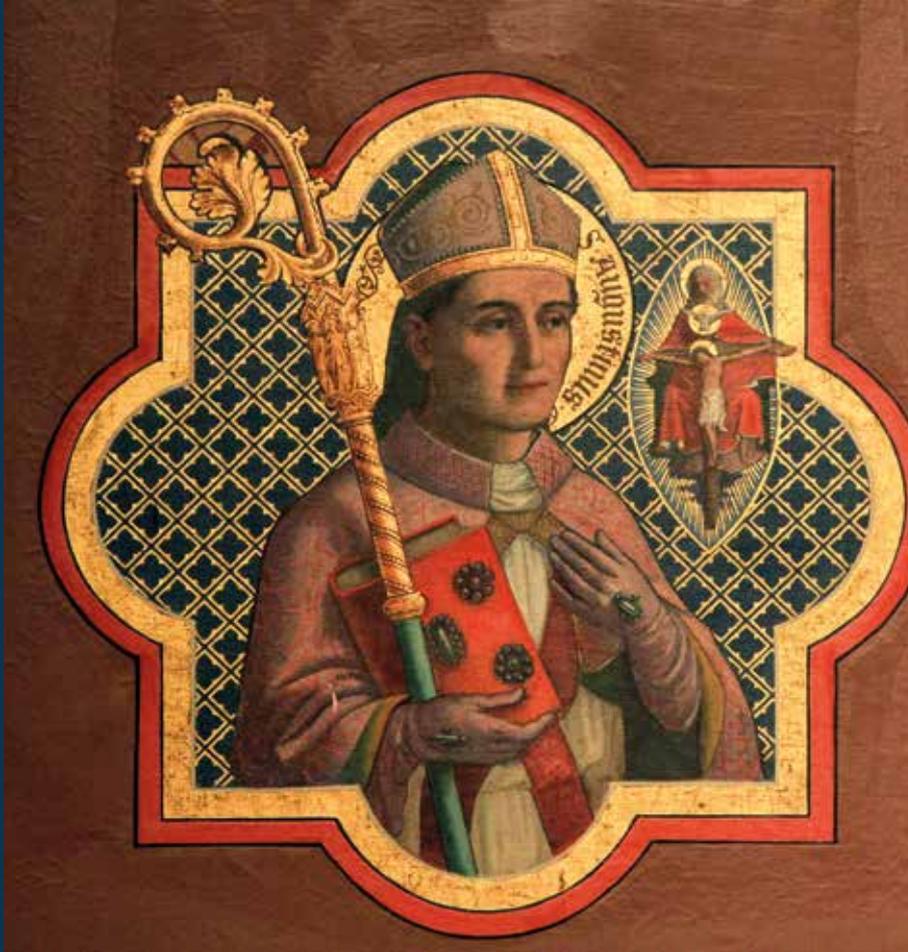
**We give ourselves over to her now, in the Today of our lives. And our trust broadens further, already at the present moment, to surrender “the hour of our death” wholly to her care. May she be there as she was at her son's death on the Cross. May she welcome us as our mother at the hour of our passing to lead us to her son, Jesus, in paradise. (CCC 2676)**

No one knows the hour of their death. But it will come, just as Christ will come. Both are good reasons to examine our consciences and to go to Confession as often as we can.

As Psalm 24 exclaims, “Let the Lord enter; he is the king of glory.” Heaven comes to meet us, so let us prepare ourselves to enter heaven.

(The Feast of the Assumption of Mary into heaven is celebrated on the 15th August.)





*28th August is the Feast of St Augustine*

## PRAYER OF ST AUGUSTINE

Breathe in me, O Holy Spirit, that my thoughts may all be holy;  
 Act in me, O Holy Spirit, that I love but what is holy;  
 Strengthen me, O Holy Spirit, to defend all that is holy;  
 Guard me, then, O Holy Spirit, that I always may be holy.  
 Amen.



**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.



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