

## **Sea Sunday (11<sup>th</sup> July)**

### **Stella Maris (Apostleship of the Sea) - Second Collection**

This post tells you about the work of Stella Maris, formerly Apostleship of the Sea, the Catholic church's maritime charity.

Seafarers are extremely important to this country. 90% of goods that come here arrive by ship. That is much of the food we eat, the equipment in our hospitals, our phones, cars, petrol, just about everything. Seafarers work long shifts, seven days a week, often for nine months at a time. In these times of pandemic, many haven't been home for over a year. They are far away from their family and loved ones, always at sea or a stranger in a foreign land.

And what happens when something goes wrong? When they are exploited or abused? When they are abandoned by their employer or their wages unpaid?

This was the case for Jimaster, a 22 year-old seafarer who got stranded in Uruguay during the pandemic. He had joined a fishing vessel when his father died, so that he could provide for his family. But his wages had never been paid and he was confined to his ship, with only a small amount of rice to eat and limited water. The temperature dropped and he had no winter clothing. Two of the crew came down with a fever and he thought he would die. But a Stella Maris chaplain came to the ship with food, clothes, phone cards, and medical supplies. The chaplain worked with the port authorities and ship owners and eventually managed to get Jimaster home to his family in the Philippines. He believes that, without Stella Maris, he would most likely be dead.

For hundreds of seafarers like Jimaster, a ship visit from Stella Maris provides critical support.

Stella Maris chaplains and volunteers are working in ports up and down this country and across the world. This weekend they will be out visiting seafarers as usual. They welcome the stranger, in line with Jesus's instruction in today's Gospel. In the good times, they provide seafarers with faith resources, warm clothing, SIM cards so they can talk to their families back home, and help them to get to confession or Mass, or to the local shops. And in the bad times, as in Jimaster's case, they do so much more.

But they can't do it without your support. Your prayers and generous donations ensure Stella Maris can continue to welcome the strangers in our ports, and be there for seafarers like Jimaster when they need assistance. You can help in two ways.

Firstly, please remember seafarers and fishers in your prayers. Thank God for them and the vital role they play in our lives, often working in difficult, hazardous conditions and harsh weather.

Secondly, please could you kindly give a donation? Your gift will help Stella Maris chaplains welcome seafarers who may be stranded and who may not have seen their families for months. Your support will be a generous expression of God's love, giving help to these key workers and hospitality to strangers.

You can donate in one of three ways:

- Use the giving envelope provided
- Text SEA to 70460 to donate £5
- Give via the website: [www.stellamaris.org.uk/donate](http://www.stellamaris.org.uk/donate)

If you are a taxpayer, please complete the Gift Aid section to increase your donation by 25%. Thank you for listening and may God bless you for your support of this work.