



Apostleship of the Sea
Supporting Seafarers Worldwide

Stella Maris Antwerp Bulletin n° 11

Fall Edition 2022

Dear Sponsor, Dear Reader,

Stella Maris is a Christian charity organisation with practical support, information and a listening ear for seafarers

The war in Ukraine has completely shifted the cards in terms of security, supply chains and energy. Yesterday we had to cope with the Covid pandemic and climate change. Two serious threats for the world economy and the transport industry. Today, Covid-19 and the climate change did not disappear but some other issues meanwhile joined the list of trouble shooters : a war situation in Europe, a nuclear threat, mass

migration, low water levels on the Rhine, an energy crisis causing a two digit inflation and probably the first signs of deglobalisation in the supply chains.

All these issues have a profound impact on our daily life. For seafarers another huge problem should be added : the crew change crisis. Thousands of crew members remained stranded on board their ships. Stella Maris cannot change all these problems. But we start from the idea 'Wir schaffen das'(we'll manage). Our chaplains and volunteers are constantly in action to support the difficult life of many seafarers and bring relief and comfort for those who are responsible for 90 % of our daily supplies.



President Jacques D'Havé

In this newsletter we bring you the sad story of the second mate of m/v Magnifica, we give a portrait of Kiran Joy, our new chaplain and a report of the celebration of the 'Day of the Seamen' in Antwerp. Furthermore you will find in this issue a brief outline about the 25th Stella Maris World Congress in Glasgow and some local news from Stella Maris Antwerp.

THE SAD STORY OF THE SECOND MATE OF M/V MAGNIFICA

An urgent request from the Shipping Police to send chaplains on board of a vessel is always bad news. When our three chaplains Rev Ulf, Fr. Kiran Joy and Fr. Jorgedy boarded the Italian tanker m/v Magnifica, with Filipino ratings and Italian officers, they knew a fatal accident occurred. A young second mate Dennis Timoteo died as a result of an accident on board. During the mooring manoeuvre in the Zandvlietlock the rope snapped and hit the second mate. This is a report from Father Jorgedy and Father Kiran who just started as young chaplain at Stella Maris.



Father Jorgedy

'The cargo manager was very thankful that we responded so quickly to the request. Already on the gangway we saw two Filipinos who were on duty. We asked them what happened exactly and they showed us immediately the place on deck where the accident took place. We still saw the blanket used to cover the body and the helmet of the unfortunate seaman.'

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Inside we met the crew gathered together, their faces were greyish-brown and sad. We presented ourselves as priests from Stella Maris and from the Seamen's mission. Slowly the conversation started and they told us what happened the day before. One of them could not say a word in English but started talking in Tagalog, the language of the Philippines. I spoke with him for a long time and gave him the occasion to share his emotions.

The captain told us, that still he has not eaten anything since that evening and could not sleep also. With teary eyes he was happy to see us in this time of sadness. The captain was so busy with the formalities but still managed to attend the celebration of the Holy Mass and offered a prayer for the soul of the 2nd mate Dennis, whom he said in teary eyes that "he's like a son to me."

In our shared homily in Tagalog and English the crew told us the friendship and kindness he showed to them all. A very young 33 years old officer whom they will miss and we prayed together that his soul may rest in peace in the presence of our Lord.



Father Kiran

Also Father Kiran who just started at Stella Maris gave us an emotional report:

"I had a very emotional start to my apostolate at Stella Maris on the morning of 26th July. After meeting with the chaplains of the Antwerp harbour in what could be unofficially called as my very first activity as port chaplain, I was invited by Fr. Jorgedy to join an emergency call from an Italian ship whose young crew member had died during a mooring operation. Revd. Ulf took us to the location of the ship. On board the ship was the scene quite emotional. I saw the captain almost in tears for we learned that he considered his officer Timoteo like his own son. He was very happy to see us, and I saw his face brightens when we said we were there to offer a mass for Dennis. Despite the fatigue of his previous sleepless night, he joined the mass very devotedly and I think our presence and prayers were a source of solace for him in that moment of grief. The other crew members were also in a state of gloominess. In the beginning they were a bit distancing but once the mass started, they took very active part in the liturgy and shared quite emotionally their close experiences with Dennis during the homily. After the mass I was able to get into better conversation with them since now they were ready to open-up quite freely. This was not the kind of beginning that I ever expected or wanted. It was sad and emotional. But I went home very satisfied because I felt our very presence on board was a great relief to the captain and crew and it really meant a lot to them."

Meet Father Kiran our new chaplain

We are sitting together in the meeting room of Stella Maris with a cup of coffee having an informal chat with our new chaplain. 'Please call me Kiran' says our new chaplain, 'I was born in 1990 in Kerala India and have a brother, we are identical twins but my twin brother has now a long beard and is working

for a bank. I choose another path and joined the Dominican congregation and was ordained as priest in 2018’.

Kiran proves to be an intelligent, dynamic young priest eager to learn and ready to start his ministry. After his bachelor studies in India, the Provincial Superior



Father Kiran Joy Payikatt

of the Dominicans sent him to Belgium where he continued his studies in Leuven and obtained a master degree in theology with a paper on the subject of oecumenism in the church. He also followed language courses in Leuven and can express himself very well in Dutch as we soon found out.

‘I joined the Dominican congregation at the Sint-Paulus church in Antwerp in 2019’ explains Kiran. ‘All together we are seven Dominican friars. Three Belgians, one Congolese and three are from India’ he continues. The dwindling number of vocations forces the church to attract priests from elsewhere to fill the gap in many parishes. ‘Our first mission is to live Dominican spirituality, to form community and to be present in prayer’. Kiran stands firmly in his shoes: ‘Our core business is preaching. We want to spread the good news because we are convinced that God still has something to say to all people today including the seamen, having sometimes a difficult live.

Because Antwerp is one of the leading ports in Europe, the bishop sent me to Stella Maris to support the other chaplains and volunteers in their work. This is the place to put oecumenism which you studied into practice my Dominican colleagues said’.

Family name : XXX

His full name is Kiran Joy Payikatt, but in India the given name is more important than the family name which is seldom used.’ My identification card mentions a triple X as family name’ he explains. Kiran shows his identification card and indeed XXX is mentioned as family name. ‘This caused already serious problems at the migration department but now I also use my family name to identify myself for the authorities’. The given name Kiran means ‘**rise of the sun**’ in Sanskrit. It is an appropriate name because Kiran has an open and inviting smile putting everyone at ease from the beginning.

It is a welcome gift when starting his new ministry in the port of Antwerp with seamen from so many different continents. We wish Kiran a lot of success and joy at Stella Maris.

Day of the Seamen

On September 25th, the traditional solemn eucharistic celebration “Day of the Seamen” took place. This is the annual mass in which the fallen sailors from both world wars are commemorated, along with the sailors who tragically died in other professional circumstances.



The Eucharist was presided by the chaplains of Stella Maris, the different port chaplains from the Antwerp Seafarers Welfare, and the Dominican parish priest Didier Croonenberghs op.p.,



Holly Mass concelebrated by the port chaplains and the Dominican Parish Priest D.Croonenberghs op.p. © Georges Janssens

After a welcome by the chairman of the organising committee, who also briefly outlined the historical context of this event, Father Jos Vanhoof welcomed everyone and opened the celebration.

Entirely in the tradition of the Day of the Seamen the mass was graced by beautiful music from Peter Benoit, Mozart, Ch. Gounod



Welcome by Marc Schippers from Antwerp Seafarers Welfare © Georges Janssens



Honorary Guard at Sint-Paulus church © Georges Janssens

and J. Hayden. As closing song we were offered “Jubilate tota civitas” by C. Monteverdi, followed by the LAST POST (on clarion) and the National Hymn (on organ)

News from Stella Maris

XXVth Stella Maris World Congress

The XXVth Stella Maris World Congress took place from 2nd till 5th October under the heading : ‘ After the storm moving forward at the service of the people of the sea’. The place of venue was Glasgow and this was a deliberate choice. Stella Maris was indeed founded in 1920 in Glasgow. Due to Covid-19 the centennial celebration could only take place this year.



Participants to the World Congress

A global conference is a unique occasion to bring together port chaplains, ship visitors and volunteers from all over the globe. It is the place to exchange best practices and pass on information on how to deal with changing welfare issues of seafarers. In several workshops and panel presentations also representatives from the maritime industry gave their

view on the challenges of crewing companies. A panel presentation of CEO’s from the ‘Merchant Navy Welfare Board, ISWAN and the Seafarer’s Charity focused on recent calamities (pandemic, typhoons, war in Ukraine, etc.) which have changed the priorities and relationships between funders and delivery partners.



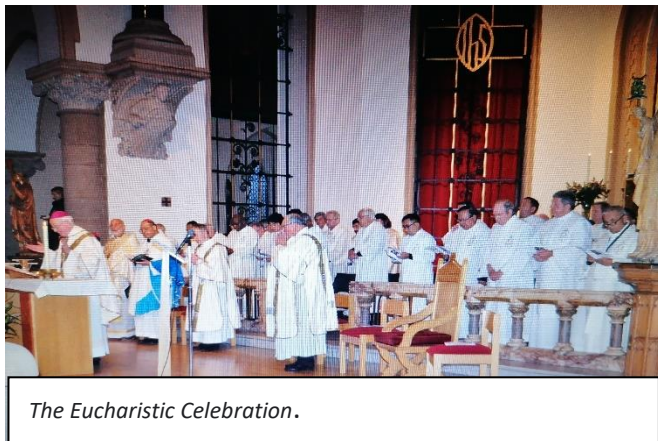
*One of the many participants
Mrs. Helen from Korea*



Port chaplains Fr. Jorgedy Bago and Fr. Jos Van Hoof from Stella Maris Anterp

Many ships have a mixed crew Ukrainian and Russian together with other nationalities. For the people of the sea this is however seldom a problem as they learned to live and work together in a close community. All these issues changed the priorities Stella Maris organisations worldwide and were discussed.

Participants from so many different countries share all the same motivation in their daily work : the spirituality and charity of the gospels is the driving force in the centennial history of Stella Maris.

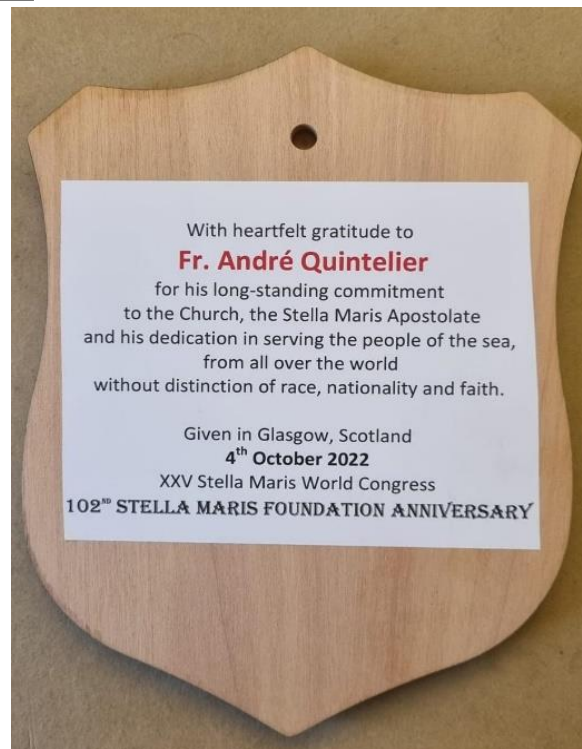


The Eucharistic Celebration.

The XXVth Stella Maris World Congress was concluded with an Eucharistic Celebration. The principal celebrant was Mgr. Alexander Antony Vadakumthala, Bishop of Kannur and Stella Maris Bishop promotor for India.

After a buffet dinner in the Mariott Hotel an 'Award Ceremony' took place.

Fr. André Quintelier, Stella Maris port chaplain in Gent, received a well-deserved distinction for his longstanding dedication in serving the people of the sea 'without distinction of race, nationality and faith' which are the basic principles of Stella Maris.



Visits to Stella Maris Antwerp

In August we received in our new premises at the Noorderlaan 100 the visit from the management and staff of one of our structural sponsors : the Antwerp Shipping Federation .

The participants showed a genuine interest in the different welfare organisations located at our new premises as well as the services offered by the Antwerp Harbour Hotel to seafarers.



Management and Staff of both the Antwerp Shipping federation and Stella Maris



From left to right : Edgur Schellenberg, Nils Hunsche and Nils Elske

German Volunteers

It is a well-established tradition that German students follow a 'sabbatical year' between their secondary studies and their higher education. During this

'sabbatical year' or 'abitur' some go abroad to practice foreign languages.

Some of them come to Antwerp and are volunteers for the Deutsche Seemannsmission (DSM). Their contribution is much appreciated by the different Antwerp Welfare Organisations and they work closely together with our people from Stella Maris. For these youngsters it is an open window on the world and a nice introduction to the fascinating maritime industry as well as the business at the Port of Antwerp.

Coming Events :



Sinterklaas gifts to seafarers

Very soon our volunteers will start their traditional distribution of 'Sinterklaas gifts' to the crews in the port. This is already a well-established activity on our yearly calendar and highly appreciated by the international crews.

Christmas Celebration



The Christmas Eve service and reception will be celebrated on the 24th December at 20.00 hrs at the dining room and the bar of the Antwerp Harbour Hotel- Noorderlaan 100 Antwerp.

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