

# APOSTOLATUS MARIS

4th REGIONAL CONGRESS

South West Indian Ocean



**PEOPLE OF THE SEA**

WITNESSES OF THE GOOD WORD  
IN THE MARITIME WORLD

THABOR — MAURITIUS

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## INTRODUCTION :

The Fourth Regional Congress of *Apostolatus Maris* was held at the Diocesan House of "Le Thabor" in Mauritius from the 7th to the 12th December 1990. The theme of the congress was : " People of the sea, Witnesses of the Good Word ".

During the congress, the " *Spirale Pastorale* " method was used. Much time was devoted to sharing of experiences of different countries of the region. The sharing of experiences and life was enriched by an exchange with seafarers' and fishermen' wives, on one hand, and with mauritian seafarers on the other. Different contacts with mauritians involved in the maritime sector, either during the visit at the *Apostleship of the Sea* Centre or during the port visit, have been valuable contributions. The experience of our partners has enabled the widening of our horizon. This time of reflection on the maritime world of our region, first stage of our proceedings, ended with the synthesis of the different experiences around these four points : *Evangelisation, Formation, Solidarity, Development of Apostolatus Maris.*

At a second stage, some realities of maritime life were analysed and an attempt to trace back the root causes was made. This has enabled us to understand the causes of so much exploitation and weaknesses in the maritime world.

Then, a doctrinal exposé on the engagement of laity in the transformation of the world helped us to understand in a theological perspective the realities of maritime life and its problems.

At a fourth stage, after having attempted a first analysis of life in the maritime world and a theological reflection, the perspectives and the needs of each country were highlighted and priorities established.



**OPENING SESSION FRIDAY 7 DECEMBER 1990**

**LIST OF SPEECHES AND MESSAGES**

1. Speech of Father Gérard Tronche, Regional Coordinator.
2. Message of the Honourable D. Gungah, Minister of Trade and Shipping, read by his representative, Mr. G. Lapierre, Permanent Secretary.
3. Speech of Father François Legall, Representative of the Pontifical Council for the Care of Migrants and Itinerants.
4. Opening speech of his Eminence Cardinal Jean Margéot.

*“ For God alone my soul waits in silence,  
from Him comes my salvation... ”*

(Ps 62 : 2)

## OPENING SESSION

### SPEECH OF Fr. GERARD TRONCHE, REGIONAL COORDINATOR

7th DECEMBER 1990

As a frenchman having already had the chance of appreciating Mauritian hospitality in three occasions, I could have discoursed in French. As a member of the Tanzanian delegation, I would like to speak in Swahili. In fact, I will continue in English, this second language of Tanzania and one of the three international ones spoken in our region.

The first congress of the *Apostolatus Maris* in this region took place in Tamatave, Madagascar, in 1977. Then came the congress of Reunion Island in 1981 and the congress of Dar es Salaam in 1985. I was in Dar es Salaam to act as translator, called from the far away shores of lake Tanganyika where I was a missionary. It was then that I discovered *Apostolatus Maris* for the first time, an organisation which expresses the pastoral care of Church for seafarers, fishermen and their families all over the world.

This part of the world which we call "South West Indian Ocean Region" comprises the Indian Ocean islands of Madagascar, Mauritius, La Reunion, Comoro Islands, Seychelles and all the countries of the east coast of Africa, from Durban to Djibouti. It was the turn of Mauritius to invite its neighbours to this 4th Regional Congress which opens today.

The congresses we usually hold have three main objectives :

Firstly to offer to seafarers, fishermen, their wife and chaplains who have in common the same problems, interests *and* the same *Holy Word* and often feel isolated or not well understood, a chance of meeting and sharing in friendship.

We also come to work ! Together, we will analyse situations which we must face in the maritime world of our countries, the success or failures met ; together, we will try to see how to ameliorate our situation and devise new methods to be put into practice.

And thirdly, it will be an occasion for us to place our reflections and plans in the context of *Apostolatus Maris* as an organisation, present all over the world under the guidance of the Pontifical Council for the Care of Migrants and Itinerants. Our host, his Eminence Cardinal Margéot, is a member of this Council which is also represented by Father François Le Gall. Many of us know since long this pioneer of *Apostolatus Maris* in Madagascar and this first Regional Coordinator of the South West Indian Ocean Region. He is now at the Secretariat of *Apostolatus Maris* in Rome.

The Executive Committee of the *Apostleship of the Sea* in Mauritius, with the help of Father Fleurot, have done an excellent work to prepare this congress ; no doubt that this fourth Regional Congress will come up to the expectations of those who have prepared it and who are going to participate in it, in this beautiful setting of "Le Thabor" at Beau Bassin, in Mauritius.

Thank you for your kind attention.

## MESSAGE FROM HONOURABLE D. GUNGAH, M.L.A.

### MINISTER OF TRADE AND SHIPPING

Government and specifically the Ministry of Trade and Shipping welcomes the initiative of the management of the Apostolat de la Mer de l'Ile Maurice to assemble the delegates of East Africa and other neighbouring regions for an exchange of experience between the various maritime and seafarers organisations, those organisations which were formerly considered marginal ones but which contribute so much to putting several countries on the map of the world.

2. Since 1983 the responsibility for administering shipping matters has been grafted to the then Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Prices and Consumer Protection. The new Ministry of Trade and Shipping, through various legislative and administrative measures, saddled itself to the objective of bettering the lot of the Mauritian seamen by trying to improve their conditions of employment, training and employment opportunities.

3. As I stated recently at Parliament and in the press, Government will early next year proclaim the Merchant Shipping Act 1986 under which will be made various regulations pertaining to seamen. A Seamen Code setting out the obligations and duties of shipowners towards seamen is being finalised by the new Director of Shipping, Captain Veres who is of Canadian origin. The code will deal *inter alia* with articles of agreement between employers and seamen, hours of work, wages and overtime, food and accommodation, leave with pay, complaints, procedure and conciliation, repatriation and conveyance, death of seamen while working on a Mauritian ship.

4. The Seaman Code will be a big stride forward in favour of seamen, being given that up to now there had been no law to safeguard the interest of seamen. For example the International Labour Organisation has recommended for seamen 280 US dollar as the basic wages per month. In the Code being elaborated the exact wages will not be specified and will be fixed by the employer taking into account the output and personality enhancement of the worker. Also, according to international standard, a seaman is entitled to 1.5 day per month as leave with pay ; in the Mauritian Seaman Code it is the intention to provide a minimum of 3 days per month as leave with pay. The Seaman's Code will provide for the minimum conditions which the shipowner will have to satisfy ; however it does not preclude the Seamen's Union from entering a collective agreement with the employers in the shipping sector — through the collective agreement the seamen can secure higher benefits in terms of pay, working conditions, annual leave etc.

5. Government has adhered to five IMO international Conventions :-

1. The International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) 1960 and 1974.
2. The Convention on the International Regulations for Prevention Collisions at Sea, 1972.

3. The International Convention on Load Lines, 1966.
4. The International Convention on Tonnage Measurement of Ships, 1969.
5. The Convention on Facilitation of International Maritime Traffic, 1965.

The SOLAS Convention is considered as the most important of all International treaties concerning the safety of merchant ships. The main objective of the SOLAS Convention is the laying down of minimum standards compatible with safety for the construction, equipment and operation of ships.

6. Government has approved the setting up of an open registry in Mauritius. A package of incentives will be offered to shipowners to encourage them to register in Mauritius. A shipowner registering in Mauritius will have to recruit 25% of his crew from among Mauritian nationals. This will help to reduce the pool of unemployment seamen and offer employment opportunities for our newly trained seamen and other categories of marine personnel. The categories and number of seamen trained by the Sea Training School are retraining course : 604, pre-sea course 266, survival course 172.

7. In a world where the continual improvement of skills has become a key to opening vaster vistas of employment, the Sea Training School which operates as a training arm of the Ministry of Trade and Shipping intends, in addition to the pre-sea and retraining courses it has traditionally mounted, to embark on more specialised courses. Those courses are intended to meet skills for which there is a demand; a Certificate Course in Marine Engineering is scheduled to be run early next year with the collaboration of the University of Mauritius and the financial support of shipping companies and the Industrial and Vocational Training Board. It is also proposed to run other courses: the Pre-sea Navigating Cadet Course, the Second Hand Course and the Skippers Course.

8. I therefore send to all the participants of the congress all my best wishes for fruitful discussions, a frank exchange of views and sound conclusions for the betterment of those permanent itinerant ambassadors of countries which seaman represent.

**Hon. D. GUNGAH, M.L.A**

*(Minister)*

7th December 1990.

**ADDRESS BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL  
FOR THE CARE OF MIGRANTS AND ITINERANTS**

Last week in Rome, I was rapidly going through the Pontifical Council's files on the South West region of the Indian Ocean. I can only say that these amount to a good deal of correspondence and reports even if *Apostolatus Maris* has been only recently present in this region. This stands as a sign that you wish that the good evangelisation work you are doing here be related to that of the international community of *Apostolatus Maris*.

While doing this inventory, I had the extreme pleasure of discovering that in 1968, that is well before the creation of the Pontifical Commission which has now become a Council, the National congress of *Apostolatus Maris* in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, decided to establish as soon as possible a regional organisation of *Apostolatus Maris* and thus unite all the countries of the Indian Ocean region.

This wish did not only come true — with some exceptions, Seychelles and Mozambique having not yet joined us — but the marvelous expansion of *Apostolatus Maris* is a proof of the apostolic dynamism of local churches and the missionary solidarity among themselves in this region.

The Pontifical Council for the Care of Migrants and Itinerants cannot forget that it was seafarers that first put up the *Apostleship of the Sea* 70 years ago in Glasgow, Scotland. A few years later, the Pope gave it the status of "Action of the Universal Church" which it did become very rapidly later by setting up an important number of maritime dioceses around the globe.

His Excellency, Giovanni Cheli, president of the Pontifical Council has not asked me to deliver any special message to you. However, he has particularly reminded me, in the name of His Holiness Pope John Paul II, to tell you about his deep joy and his gratitude for the evangelisation of the maritime world of the South East Indian Ocean region.

Your Eminence, if I were to explain precisely the justification of the Pope's gratitude, I would be first of all turning towards you to simply thank you. We thank you for having welcomed us at the Thabor, a place intensely fresh from the Pope's visit. Thank you for having organised and presided over this 4th Regional Congress of *Apostolatus Maris*.

It is not because all maritime activities are limited to life at sea, far from the presence of land dwellers and legal controls as well as administrative supervision, that we should permit the dishumanisation of such a noble trade which is so vital for international exchange.

To the seafarer whose whole life is marked by solitude in travel and itinerance, cut away from his family for many months, from his native community, always kept at a distance from ordinary life, to this seafarer we owe the *Good News* of Jesus which becomes a source of dignity and hope.



Ladies, gentlemen, dear friends, thank you for your encouraging presence this morning, especially for the congressists who will be working for the betterment of their apostleship at the service of seafarers and their families.

In less than two years' time, Houston will be harbouring the 19th World Congress of *Apostolatus Maris*. Regional congresses, similar to that organised in Mauritius, will be succeeding one to the other, in preparation of the World Congress, all relating to the theme : “ *The Christian life of Seafarers on board their ships* ”.

What can be done so that, throughout their whole life, even at sea, seafarers — with the same feelings as the church community which is on land — be able to praise that Lord, our God !

“ The Glory of God is Living Man ! ”

What can be done so that the life of these people on board their ships be that of a true human being ?... Problem of relationship among the crew members, true, but also safety of the crew and the ship, communication problems with the family, with the ship owners...

We are perhaps many, here, to feel concerned. Indeed, whatever be your function, it cannot be limited to a technical, economic or administrative scope. In maritime activity it is human life that is at stake. *Apostolatus Maris* can only succeed in its work if there is an act of conscientisation from the part of all protagonists of the *Apostolatus Maris*. Let us all think and act everyday in our respective tasks at the service of the maritime world.

## SPEECH OF HIS EMINENCE CARDINAL JEAN MARGEOT

I cannot tell you how glad I am that Mauritius has been chosen to hold this 4th Regional Congress of *Apostolatus Maris*. I welcome you all and hope that you will be enjoying a pleasant and fruitful stay among us. I ask our Lord to bless you and to be present with you through his Holy Ghost throughout your proceedings.

### 1. Islands, Lands of Welcome

Islands have always been, for all seafarers and navigators, lands of welcome par excellence. Whether in the Indian Ocean or in the Pacific, our islands have had, since the beginning of their history, the vocation of welcome. I just recall having heard, during a visit in Polynesia last year, a native from these islands describing to me, with much enthusiasm, this vocation. This vocation stems from a double aspiration : that of the seafarer who, after long months spent at sea, longs for fraternal meetings ; that of the islander who, by his isolation, carries deep within him a kind of expectation, of wish of sharing and exchange with brothers coming from abroad, rich of a different experience and culture.

Development of communication links, aviation, technological progress and its impact on modern ships have, of course, reduced distances and modified the intensity of the feeling of isolation and need to meet. But there remain altogether basic aspirations which are still present in the age of atomic submarines, with seafarers and navigators. It is evident that Indian Ocean islands are not, as in the past, havens for the big sailing ships which sailed past the Cape of Good Hope on their way to India. Today, with bulk cargo and the improvement of engines, ships hardly spend 24 hours in a port. But there still remains that Indian Ocean islands must accept new challenges. I precisely think here to all this network of fishing vessels which are run around our islands. Situations change, but human aspirations remain the same.

### 2. Today's Seafarers

Seafarers' lives have always been difficult, dangerous. In certain cases, their living conditions remain precarious. During this congress, you will have the occasion to hear the testimonies of our compatriots engaged in the Apostleship of the Sea. The seafarer suffers because he is cut from his family for long time ; he does not see his children growing up. He is an eternal stranger. But he sometimes has to work on board ships which many have qualified of floating coffins.

Besides these dangers, seafarers have to undergo the authoritarian attitude of certain captains. They are even administered, I am told, extremely rigorous punishments ; and when they reach port and look for some human warmth, a little affection and comprehension, they come across gambling, taverns, prostitution — ephemeral and superficial pleasures which never fulfill their need to be cared for, their longing for tenderness.

Sometimes, certain seafarers become true refugees refusing to get back on their ships, being tormented by utter distress. Others still have disappeared at sea ; they have never been found.

## 8. The Answer of Christians

How could Christians remain indifferent before such distress ? How could the church remain deaf to such appeals and not respond to the words of the Gospel: “ *I was hungry, I was thirsty, I was naked, I was a prisoner...* ” “ *When have we seen you Lord ?* ”

Members of the Apostleship of the Sea have heard this call. They have understood that the face of Christ could be seen through that of seafarers.

Here in Mauritius, I would like to acknowledge the work of the team that has initiated *Apostolatus Maris*. First there were members of “ *Légion de Marie* ” who cared after seafarers by visiting them on ships or at the Civil Hospital. In 1979, with the arrival of Brother Raymond Gauvrit, a small team of volunteers was constituted. Father Jacques Harel has much supported this team and Brother Raymond Gauvrit has found a precious collaborator in Mr. Jean Vacher. Today, the little centre of St. Georges street stands like symbol of what the Mauritian Church wishes to do for the care of seafarers. It is a modest achievement, like the seed of mustard in the Scriptures or the grain of sand on the immensity of beaches !

I take this occasion to thank all members of the Executive Committee of the Apostleship of the Sea, Father Jacques Harel, Brother Raymond Gauvrit, Mr. Jean Vacher and all their benevolent collaborators.

It would not be fair to speak of the Apostleship of the Sea without underlining the work accomplished with fishermen in Mauritius by Father Fleurot and his team in collaboration with IDP (Institute for Development and Progress) and other NGO's. The Church must care for the foreign seafarer in distress but it would fail its mission if it did not respond to the distress of the Mauritian seaman-fisherman, a brother nearer to us, victim too of lack of adequate structures, faced with bad weather conditions and lack of safety conditions and formation.

A huge task has been accomplished with seamen-fishermen to make them aware of and make them become more involved with their own development. Inspired by the chinese proverb which says that it is better to show a man how to fish instead of giving him one fith everyday, APPIM has enabled many Mauritian fishermen to get back their dignity and that of their family.

I therefore thank Father Robert Margéot, founder of APPIM. I also thank Father Fleurot and his collaborators and I encourage them to continue their efforts in this sector.

## 4. Methods of Apostleship

Enable me to end by telling you a word on methods of apostleship. We are here in Mauritius heirs of two methods — two traditions I would say — one calling for the organisation of *Apostolatus Maris* around Navy Clubs. In Ireland, in England,

in Australia, much is invested in welcome centres for seafarers as well as pastoral visits on board ships in direct line with the work of 'Légion de Marie'. In the other tradition, we specially retain the concept of Catholic Action, apostleship of the environment by those living in this environment, the wish to constitute, on board each ship, a small team of Christians with deep faith who will be on the same wave-length as seafarers in order to make a discernment work and work slowly at the transformation of this environment. The two methods seem complementary to me and can enrich each other.

But these methods of apostleship all meet with real difficulties, the principal one being, according to me, of the duration order. Contacts with seafarers become more and more short, sporadic and the apostleship suffers from a lack of continuity. To this main difficulty, the communication gap adds itself. Here, we find ourselves at a linguistic crossroads and to establish a true contact with seafarers, we should know spanish, portugese, korean, taiwanese, mandarin.

### **Conclusion**

Dear friends, let us not feel discouraged in front of challenges to be met. This Regional Congress is a blessing which enables us to live true solidarity at the level of Indian Ocean Dioceses. I am sure that the Lord's spirit will know how to guide us on new roads, and will also know how to call for more generosity from your part.

Thus, I come with all my heart to wish you full success and I declare the Fourth *Apostolatus Maris* Congress open.

# SHARING OF EXPERIENCES

*Report of Participating Countries :*

TANZANIA, KENYA, MADAGASCAR, MAURITIUS

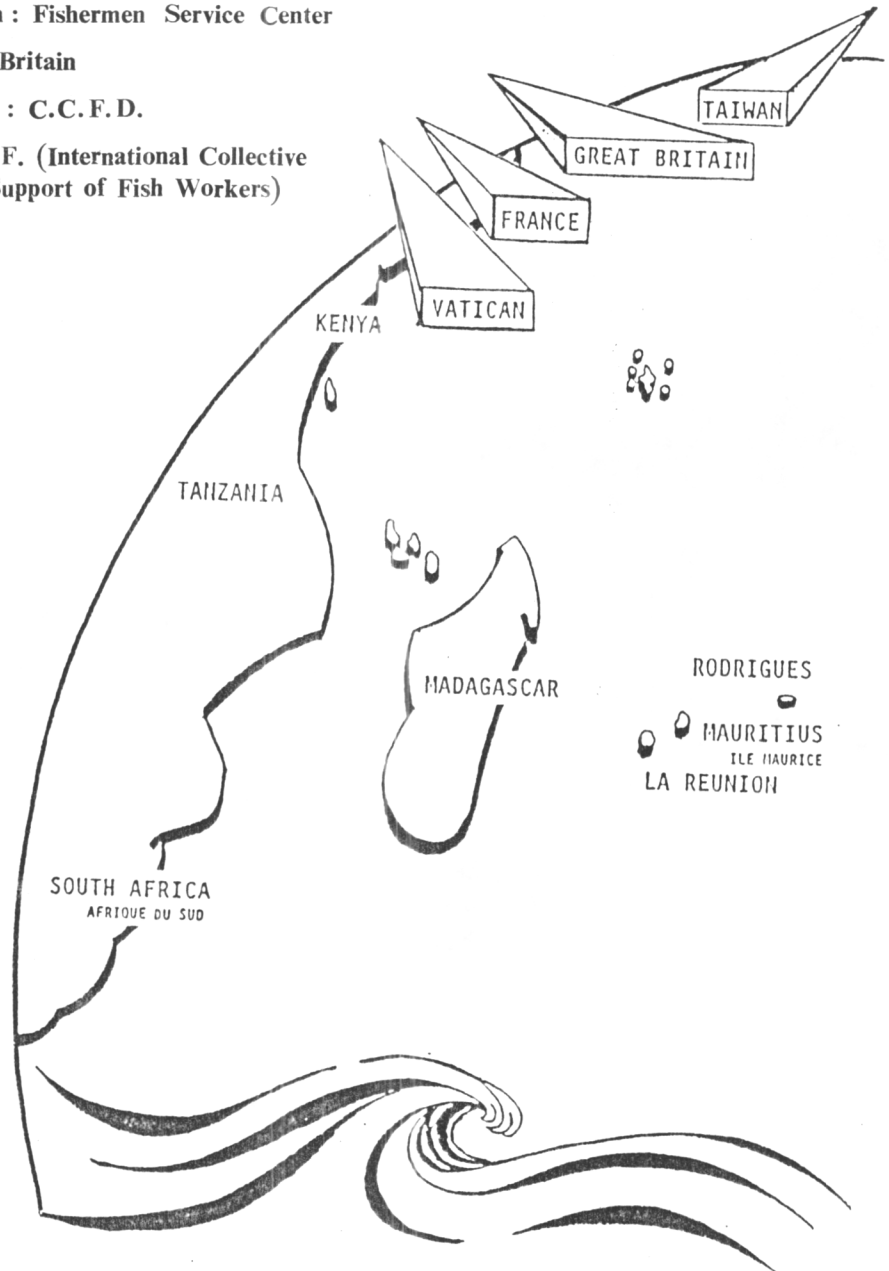
*Testimonies and Communications of our Partners*

Taiwan : Fishermen Service Center

Great Britain

France : C.C.F.D.

I.C.S.F. (International Collective  
in Support of Fish Workers)





## REPORT OF THE APOSTLESHIP OF THE SEA IN TANZANIA

### The Country

The United Republic of Tanganyika and Zanzibar. 950,000 km<sup>2</sup> and 26 million inhabitants.

1/3 christians (incl. 5,000,000 catholics)

1/3 Muslims

1/3 following traditional religions.

### The Tanzanian Maritime World

Coastal Strip : 1474 km.

Continental Shelf : 30,000 km<sup>2</sup>.

Area covered by lakes (Victoria/Tanganyika/Nyassa) 52,000 km<sup>2</sup>.

Four Seaports: Dar-es-Salaam, Tanga, Mtwara and Zanzibar.

A Marine Training School : Dar-es-Salaam Marine Institute.

### Merchant Navy

Foreign seafarers calling in : 10 to 12 thousand per year.

Tanzanian seafarers : less than 600.

### Industrial fishing

Foreigners and Tanzanians : less than 500.

### Artisanal fishing

At sea : ± 20,000.

In lakes : 50,000 full-time, 100,000 part-time (These fishermen take in 10 times the amount fished at sea ..)

### Apostolatus Maris in Tanzania

- A National Promotor, the Bishop of Mtwara, Mrg. G. Mmole.
- A full-time operational priest acting as Chaplain of the port of Dar-es-Salaam and National Director of Apostolatus Maris.
- Three priests acting as part-time chaplains : Mtwara, Bukoba and Zanzibar.
- Two Diocesan Committees in Mtwara and Dar-es-Salaam.
- A National Committee in formation...

### Apostolatus Maris — The Tanzanian Experience

#### 1. In the Archdiocese of Dar-es-Salam.

The Archdiocese of Dar-es-Salaam has a catholic port chaplain since 1979 and a Diocesan Committee since 1983. This committee meets four to six times a year. Many of its members are also members of the "Flying Angels Club's" committee in the Missions to Seamen which was founded in Dar-es-Salaam in 1956.

In Dar-es-Salaam, the Apostolatus Maris assists all Foreign seafarers in Association with Missions to seamen without any confusion being created.

*Some of its activities are :*

- Chaplains from the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church often visit ships together.
- Ship visits and Mass for Catholic crews.
- Presence of the Chaplain at the Club for several evenings.
- Participating in Club Committee Meetings and weekly meetings of the Chaplains
- Sunday celebration at nine for Seafarers and the local Apostolatus Maris community in the Club's Chapel.
- Ecumenical Prayers every Sunday evening for Seafarers and Missions to Seamen/Apostolatus Maris.
- Concerted celebration for the Sunday of the Sea (second Sunday of July).
- The Club puts at the disposal of Apostolatus Maris an office, a meeting room and a shed to store the fishing material of the Apostolatus Maris project.

The Apostolatus Maris Port Chaplain is also National Director of the organisation in Tanzania, and from 1987 to 1992, the coordinator of the South West Indian Ocean region.

The Apostolatus Maris is present in the sector of Artisanal Fishing in Dar-es-Salaam with the MV Stella Maris II, a sardine-fishing unit. This project has been financed by the CCFD of France and the CAFOD of England. Some twenty fishermen are involved in it, a combination of professionals and young ones, of Muslims, of Protestants and Catholics. A young qualified Master-Fisherman and an engineer collaborate with the Chaplain in this Fishing Project. The point is that a close follow-up of this venture is to be made in order to know the true problems of the artisanal fisherman and to study the solutions one can bring there. Plans for an Education and Social Centre For Young Fishermen have been long drafted, but the Municipal Administration still hinders the project. A solution is however possible.

Since November 1989, the Chaplain issues a monthly leaflet: "The Gangway of Dar-es-Salaam" to visiting seafarers and members/friends of the AM. On one side, some news on the maritime worlds and the Apostolatus Maris, on the other excerpts of the Holy Scripture, for each day of the month, extracted from the "Letter of Taize". A Merchant Navy Officers Association of Tanzania" (MNOAT) has been created since seven years as well as an Association of Seafarers' Wives, but both organisations are sadly on hold for the moment.

## **2. Other Dioceses.**

In the other dioceses of Tanzania, there has been a recent move in the taking in consideration of the particular needs of Seafarers and Fishermen. The 1st National Convention of Apostolatus Maris has been very fruitful in such an awakening.



**Resolutions of the 1st National Convention of the Apostolatus Maris  
Mtwara — August 1990.**

- Seafarers and fishermen often live and work in an hostile and dangerous environment. They need sympathy and help the Christian Community they belong to in spite of their regular absences.
- The aims and projects of AM towards Seafarers and fishermen must be presented and communicated to the general public through media to invite and encourage greater cooperation.
- This apostolate will be successful thanks to the contact between all members of Apostolatus Maris, People of the Sea and of the Land together in a spirit of sharing together and cooperation.
- There should have been more meetings at the level of villages, parishes, dioceses, regions as Coast and Lakes, which would see not only the participation of seafarers/fishermen, but also that of the people and organisations which are in contact with their world in any way whatsoever.
- The convention invites fishermen to create Christian Associations of Artisanal Fishermen in order to establish better links with the local Christian Community.
- Catechists have an important role to play in fishermen's villages for the existence of the AM in their world. They will speak of the problems of fishermen and the AM during their meetings in Parishes and Dioceses.
- Each Archdiocese or Coastal Diocese of the Ocean or Lake should have a Diocesan Chaplain for the AM.
- The National Director will have to be ready to help any Diocese or group of Dioceses to organise Congresses and Meetings. The Chaplain of Bukoba should study as soon as possible the possibility of such a congress for the lake Victoria Diocese.
- The AM should become an Apostolic Movement for People of the Sea and of the Land alike with a certain period of formation before the remittal of the official Badge of the Apostolatus Maris. For a serious engagement to pray for the Maritime World and to serve it through the Apostolatus Maris.

## REPORT ON SEAFARERS — ARCHDIOCESE OF MOMBASA, KENYA

The maritime world of Kenya stretches the whole Coastal strip from Lamu to Vanga. This Coastal strip has a very interesting history with its connection with the SULTAN OF OMAN in the last century, who moved to the Island of Zanzibar and ruled the present Kenyan Coastal strip until the time Kenya gained its political independence in 1983. The Coastal strip has a very strong Muslim influence.

For our concern, our maritime world actually involves the chief Port and Harbour of Kenya at Mombasa. Mombasa is actually an Island and its Kiswahili name is " Kisiwa Cha Mvita " i.e. " The Island of War ".

### MARITIME CONGRESS IN MOMBASA

After the 1987 Congress, Bishop Kirima was transferred to Nyeri. During the " interregnum " nothing happened concerning Seafarers.

I was appointed Bishop of Mombasa towards the end of 1988 but I was installed Bishop of Mombasa in 1989. Going through the files, I discovered that we have received some money from Rome to put up a Stella Maris Centre for the welfare of the Seafarers. This Centre could not be built due to some complications regarding the land. It was only on the 5th of Sept., 1989 we had the ceremony of the breaking of the ground, in order to start the foundation of the Stella Maris Centre. Concerning this Centre, not much progress has taken place because of some legal complications with the Municipal Authority of Mombasa which is mainly Muslim.

The Apostolate that was undertaken at the Port Chaplaincy was done by Fr. Paul Cunningham C.SSP. He lived at Shelly Beach Holy Ghost House and operated from there. Fr. Cunningham retired. In February 1989, I appointed Fr. Martin Keane Parish Priest of the Cathedral and the Vicar General with the view to invigorate the Port Chaplaincy.

Rev. Fr. Martin Keane got busy in establishing various groups which would be available to be pastorally involved in the Port and to meet the maritime people. These groups consists of St. Joseph's Society, St. Ann's Society, Solidarity of Mary for the Youth and Y.C.S. Fr. Deleany of Chaani Parish was directly to look after St. Ann's Organization and to make sure that they make themselves available also for the visitors coming from the Port. This is one of the strongest groups we have here. St. Joseph's Society which is directly under Fr. Martin Keane selected a group of men who would be involved in the Apostolate. Solidarity of Mary consists of young women who take care of the parochial needs in their various parishes in town. This group has formed a kind of a team with Y.C.S. and under the guidance of Fr. Mnjala, Srs. Betty and Margaret involve themselves in the Port ministry.

It is to be noted here that while our people are readily available to offer the necessary services to the maritime people many of these seafarers are not particularly interested in spiritual matters. On the contrary they arrive at the Port in great numbers

(especially the Americans who invade the Island in groups of 30,000 men) and visit the Island of Mombasa and indulge in seeking worldly pleasures. I have had my own personal experience in encountering these seafarers.

Fr. Kean left the Diocese for good. Fr. Cyril Owambo who is also the Parish Priest of Kongowea was appointed to this post. As soon as Fr. Owambo was appointed, he started making contacts with all the people concerned with the seafarers. The contact with the Port authorities started producing fruit. He was issued with the necessary 'special passes' for a car and for himself. He received also Special Identity Card as Chaplain from the Port Authority. He has a free access to the Port at any time. The Kenyan Port Authority Information Officer has helped Fr. Owambo to gain the publicity he needs for his apostolate. In the Christmas issue of the Kenyan Ports Authority Magazine there will be some publicity concerning Apostolatus Maris. The contact that the Port Chaplaincy has made with the Kenya Ports Authority has enabled the Chaplain to know what ships are docking when and where at the Port.

Anyone working with the maritime world has to know the world of ships. Mr. Mike B. Ereri, a Senior Manager with the biggest shipping agency in Mombasa offers us a valuable help. He is also the Chairman of the Association of the Kenya Clearing and Forwarding Companies in Kenya.

For a fruitful Apostleship of the Sea in Kenya one has to be involved with all those companies and agencies that are either directly or indirectly involved in the Maritime World. The Seamen who are our immediate concern are involved with the Kenya Ports Authority, Ship Agents, clearing and forwarding Companies and their partner companies who are involved with the maritime world. At Mombasa we have a very good number of Catholics, laymen and women working within these agencies. The groups mentioned above are still active and helpful. The maritime world is a rough world. What we have tried to do is to publicise through all the available maritime network, that there is a Catholic Priest available in Mombasa for Spiritual guidance and counselling. The contact, address and telephone supplied.

### **Centenary Celebrations**

It is to be noted that the Port Chaplaincy played an important role during the Centenary celebration. The Catholic Church through the contact with the Kenya Ports Authority Management, organised boat trips so that the Christians could experience a modern boat-trip into the country re-living the first missionary boat arrivals to Mombasa. Six trips of 240 people each were an eye-opener to many of those who had come to Mombasa for the Centenary Celebrations. To many who went on these executive boat-trips at the Port, it was a life-time experience with very enjoyable memories. On practically every boat trip, a moment was spent reciting the Rosary, meditating on the Scriptures and singing Hymns to praise the Lord.

# MADAGASCAR

## 1. GENERAL DESCRIPTION

A delightful country and a delightful people...

A country with a very varied climate, natural resources (flora, fauna mines, etc).

A country with future and which is privileged in being an “ island ”.

A population in full development, belonging to the rice culture, an original culture : a population which is eager to succeed in its development.

### 1.1. Profile

Though situated and as it was clinging to the flank of Africa in the Indian Ocean, Madagascar is not Africa. Far from it !

The Great Island which in area is the third largest in the world (587,000 sq. kms) has a very characteristic flora and fauna, original and different from what one finds in Africa. It has 5,000 kms of coastline. They are flat or deeply indented, with some ports for deep sea fishing vessels and some minor harbours not always easy of access for coasters, schooners and fishing smacks.

Physically, Madagascar is made up of a central Plateau, which is as if it were the backbone of the island, about 1200 kms long and 300kms wide, with peaks reaching 2,876 metres above sea level. This plateau, very tortuous in shape, has a series of ridges which make communication very difficult. Rivers in the east are short and very rapid but much wider in the west, even though they are not navigable all the year round.

The population density which has increased very much in the last twenty years has gone from 11 inhabitants per square km to 20 per sq km in 1990. This population is very unevenly distributed, and Madagascar is under-populated. It isn't land which is lacking to provide food for future inhabitants but labour to exploit what exists already (rice, a rational method of stock-raising, intensification of the cultivation of possible exports such as coffee, vanilla, cloves, cocoa. The nature of the climate with its cyclones, floods periodically, and the very low rainfall in the south, often threatens the crops and damages communications.

How the island first came to be inhabited is a bit of a mystery. We really do not know how the people was constituted as a race. There is no written ancient document. We have no knowledge dating further back than the 15th century (1500) when the island was discovered by a Portuguese navigator.

Madagascar has 18 different races or ethnic origins. In spite of this diversity, they form the people of Madagascar, with a common system of beliefs, customs and language. The historical basic population came from Indonesia, at a time not exactly known. Successive waves of immigrants arrived at various stages : Semites at Sainte Marie and on the Northeast coast ; Malaysians in the Centre, Africans almost everywhere but

above all in the west ; Indians in the west and south east ; Chinese in the east ; Europeans in the south west and in the east. Among the mosaic of races two were to play preponderant roles in the history of Madagascar : the *Sakalava* in the whole western sector, and the *Hova* in the centre. Opposed to the *Sakalava*, the kingdom of the Hova little by little manages to impose its rule.

To simplify and bring the story up to more recent times, as a result of disagreements between the last queen and the French Government, France sent a military expedition in 1885, which landed in Majunga, marched to Tananarivo and the capital was captured on September 30, 1895. On August 6, 1896, Madagascar was declared a French colony and Galieni on his own initiative abolished the Hova kingdom.

Madagascar was to remain a French colony until 14th October 1958, the date of the proclamation of the Malagasy Republic. Then on June 26, 1960, the country became independent.

Since 1960 after a period of euphoria which lasted about 10 years, the history of the country is one of changing fortunes : riots, assassinations, as with many other nations who have become or re-become independent. For the accession to independence in 1960 did not fully satisfy Malagasy's nationalists. Even though politically independent, the country was economically dependent on France, and remained tied militarily, ideologically and culturally to the Western bloc.

The revolution of May 1972 even if it is difficult to be precise about its instigators, was a manifestation of this dissatisfaction. "Malgachisation" was the "in" word, but there was no coherent political plan and no one to implement a new political project. The army took over the "revolution" and the old demons of division, on the base of class, race and caste took over.

The most recent products of this story are sufficiently well known. The reign of General RAMANANTSOA, the brief period in power of Colonel RATSIMANDRAVA, (who was assassinated after 8 days in power) and with much fla-fla, the socialist experiment having a Marxist's flavour, became the official policy under the leadership of Captain Didier RATSIRAKA.

This experiment was for the last 15 years and it has had the results that everyone knows : an economic collapse, pauperisation and widespread unemployment no chance of a job for the 250,000 who appear on the job market every year. The crushing of human dignity in the process did not help.

During the French President official visit to Madagascar, President Ratsiraka declared on 15th June 1990 that : "Today the post-colonial era is definitely over".

## **1.2. Basic facts on Madagascar**

*Area* ; 587,000 km<sup>2</sup>

### *Population*

10.3 millions (estimate for 1986) ; density 17 km<sup>2</sup> ; the annual growth is 2.5% ; 55% of the population is considered to be active ; 87% work in the primary sectors ; 4% work in the secondary sector and 9% in the tertiary.

### *Principals Towns*

Antananarivo	:	1.2 million	(1986)
Toamasina	:	118,000	(1985)
Fianarantsoa	:	102,000	(1985)
Antseranana	:	100,000	(1986)
Mahajanga	:	99,000	(1985)
Tohary	:	56,000	(1985)

### *Climate*

Tropical but fresh on the central plateau.

### *Currency*

Malagasy Franc (FMg)

### *Languages*

Malagasy and French.

### *Production cash crops*

Coffee	:	59,000 tonnes	(estimate 1986)
Sugar	:	102,000 tonnes	(estimate 1986)
Clove	:	69,000 tonnes	(estimate 1986)
Vanilla	:	600 tonnes	(estimate 1986)

### *Production of minerals*

Chrome : 68,600 tonnes (1984), 69,000 tonnes (1986)

Graphic : 14,200 tonnes (1984).

GNP (Gross National Product at current prices) : FMg 1950 billions ; rate of growth of GNP : 2.2% ; GNP per capita : \$ 240. The average growth of GNP from 1965 to 1983 is 1.2%.

### *Main Commercial Products and their Values*

Exportations (1986) : coffee — FMg 93,9 billions; vanilla — FMg 33,6 billions ; clove — FMg 24,1 billions. Total — FMg 214 billions.

Importations (1984) : raw materials — FMg 64 billions ; energetic products — FMg 58,3 billions ; equipment — FMg 49 billions; products for consumption — Fmg 225 billions ; food products — FMg 15,6 billions ; total — 209,6 billions.

### *Main Partners*

Exportations (estimate % 1986) : France 30%, United States 17%, Japan 12%, Germany 7%, Singapore 5%, Italy 5%, Spain 5%.

Importations (estimate % 1986) : France 31%, URSS 9%, United States 9%, Germany 6%, Japan 6%, Thailand 5%, Quatar 4%.

Balance of payments (1981) : \$ 183 millions

General Reserves (June 1987) : \$ 156,9 billions

### *External debts*

In 1987, the estimation of the external debts was \$ 3 billions and several recasts have been made. The service of the debts absorbs 51% of the revenue generated by export in 1986 and around 55% in 1987.

### **Structural Readjustment**

*The following readjustment measures were taken :*

- Progressive suppression of subsidies to consumption
- Adjustment of prices at production, for agricultural and industrial goods.
- Liberalisation of import.
- Diversification and development on export.

These measures taken with the approval of the IMF and the World Bank are inserted in the main objectives of 1986-1990 plan, that is :

- Food self sufficiency.
- Export increase.
- Upgrading of the standard of living.

## **THE MARITIME SECTOR**

### **2.1. Marine Transport — Recent Developments**

The TRANSEPT is no longer fit working... The CMC has disappeared... New companies have been launched.

The S.M.G.I. (Société Minière Grande Ile) with the *Ilderins V* and the *Ilderins VI*.

The *M.S.L.* (Malagasy Shipping Line) with the SAMBRINA and the ANY have switched from the Panamian to a Malagasy flag.

2.1.1. Right in the middle of the Indian Ocean, 392 kms from Africa and at the cross-roads of maritime connections between Europe and Asia, Madagascar has only sea and air connections with the outside world. The bulk of its exports and imports come by sea. This is true also for supplies of food etc. and to certain towns on the coast-principally on the east and north west coasts.

Formerly, international shipping used the secondary ports, but harbours dues were so high and were not compensated for by the volume of goods being handled. This led to high costs of freight. At present and in accordance with a policy for the concentration of port services, goods are loaded or unloaded from international vessels in international ports, and steamers look after the servicing of the small ports.

There is a very busy steamer service on the small ports between Antsiranana and Mantirano. The port of Mahajanga receives dhows, lighters and steamers transporting salt from Antsiranana, sugar and cocoa from Sambirano and Namakia etc. These goods are subsequently sent by road to Antananarivo or are loaded aboard international vessels.

At present the Pangalanes Canal is the only official navigable route used, although on the west and on the north west coasts, there are navigable rivers (at least after some preliminary infrastructural work).

There are three national Shipping Companies serving Malagasy ports :

- La Société Malgache de Transport Maritime (SMTM) looks after international trade.

- La Compagnie Malgache de Navigation (CMN) provides regional steamer services.
- La Compagnie Malgache de Cabotage (CMC) provides east coast services.
- Lastly, la Société de Transport de Produits Pétroliers de Madagascar is in charge of the supplying of the refinery of Toamasina.

The Marine Consortium Capricorne which is a holding company for five European maritime companies, along with the SMTM has the monopoly of international trade in both directions. This same Consortium under the aegis of the International Conference of Madagascar, the Comores, Reunion and Mauritius (CIMACOREM) has the monopoly of marine inter-island transport in the Indian Ocean.

### **2.1.2. Infrastructure and Material**

#### *The Ports*

The Ministry of Transport, of Meteorology and Tourism is in charge of the exploitation of the 18 ports open to commerce. They are classed in two groups :

- International ports :
  - \* Toamasina is the main one.
  - \* Antsiranana, Mahajanga and Toliara are considered to be of less importance.
- The steamer ports are divided as follows :
  - \* principal steamer ports : Taolagnaro, Manakra, Morombe, Morondava, Nosy-Bé, Saint Louis and Vohimaro.
  - \* secondary steamer ports : Analalava, Antsohihy, Mantirano, Antalaha, Sainte Marie and Sambava.

The port of Toamasina enjoys an independent management for its functioning and finances.

### **2.1.3. Port Characteristics**

For General Characteristics (cf Table I and II) : only Toamasina has deep water quays (12 metres) Antsiranana and Toliara have quays of 8,50 metres and Vohimaro of 5,50 metres.

The other ports are not very deep and are often dry at low tide.

Table I : **The Situation with regard to Port Infrastructure** (see Table A)

Table II : **Characteristics of the Port of Toamasina** (see Table B)

### **2.1.4. Present Norms**

#### *Quays*

The annual output of the quays per linear metre is 670t/metre per year for international ports, 485 t/m/year for the steamer ports. The maximum output per year of the international ports is in the region of 1000 t/m and 400 t for the steamer ports.

#### *Quay area*

32 sqm. per linear metre of quay (as against 100 m. sq. in the industrial world),



### *Warehouse*

32 sq m. of warehouse capability per linear metre of quay for the international ports and 19 sq m. for the steamer ports.

#### **2.1.5. National Shipping Fleet**

It includes at present three international vessels, 12 heavy tonnage units, 15 steamers, 42 tugs "en bornage". The steamers type LCT (VATSY) have the advantage of being able to operate directly from the beaches.

#### **2.1.6. Lighterage**

14 lighterage companies operate in the ports of Madagascar. For Toamasina it is the SEPT (Société d'Exploitation du Port de Toamasina).

The Chambers of Commerce looks after the storage of goods and realises 30% of the overall business.

#### **2.1.7. Traffic in 1985/1986 (see Table C)**

O.G. — Ocean-Going (Long Courier)

C.T. — Coastal Traders (Steamers)

#### **2.1.8. Tariffs**

##### *Freight Costs for Coastal Steaming*

The Union of Maritime Transports has established a scale of tariffs for the different routes. Freight costs vary according to these classifications and the nature of goods.

##### *Long Distance Transport*

Rates depend on distances, nature of goods, tonnage and volume of goods.

##### *Containers (liquid or other)*

The extra freight tariffs for heavy goods does not apply for containers under 5 tons gross weight for trips between Mahajanga, Nosy-Bé, Antsiranana, Vohimaro, Toamasina and Toaljara. For the other ports the minimum weight for containers, involving extra freight tax, is 2.5 tons.

##### *Palletised goods*

Palletised goods get a reduction of 5% on freight costs.

##### *Minimum Freight Costs*

The minimum levy per bill of landing is fixed at half of the basic rate.

#### **2.1.9. Prospects for the Future**

The SMT is likely to play a more and more active role in CIMACOREM traffic. The national fleet needs to be reinforced to cope with foreseeable growth in traffic. The same is true for infrastructure equipment and port facilities.

For berthing, quay lengths of 200 metres and ship's draughts of 10 metres are needed as the length of ships used to Malagasy ports varies from 160 to 170 metres with a draught of 9.50 metres.

Ships should have a quay approach area of 25 to 40 metres and hangars of 80 metres long by 50 to 60 metres wide.

The Lights in the port need to be modernised. For landing lights and marker lights, 90 are needed (principally on the west coast).

Local training of officers for ships (at the National School for Maritime Studies — ENEM) gives reason to hope that there might be considerable development of the Malagasy National Navy and in regional co-operation.

It is also necessary to make up for the lack of communications by land, to make certain rivers navigable : Betsiboka, Mahavavy, Mahajamba, Sofia, Loza and Bernarivo. The improvement include dredge works, the construction of wharfs and landing areas, and finally the installation lights for certain difficult approaches.

**Table C — Maritime Traffic in 1985/1986**

SHIP TRAFFIC					1985	1986
Entering Port	...	...	...	...	4,295	4,739
Leaving Port	...	...	...	...	4,325	4,622
PASSENGER TRAFFIC						
Embarking	Foreign Going	...	...	...	100	162
	Coastwise	...	...	...	2,042	5,375
Disembarking	F. G.	...	...	...	92	235
	Coastwise	...	...	...	3,264	6,838
CARGO TRAFFIC (Tons)						
Embarking	F.G.	...	...	...	317,858	345,769
	Coastwise	...	...	...	369,350	360,055
Disembarking	F.G.	...	...	...	845,252	764,033
	Coastwise	...	...	...	377,293	389,130

**Table A — Port Infrastructure**

				<i>Length of Quays (m)</i>	<i>Stores (m)</i>	<i>Land Space (m)</i>
Foreign Going Ports	...	...	...	2,697	85,395	65,026
Coastwise Traffic Ports	...	...	...	1,469	27,501	47,592
TOTAL	...	...	...	4,166	112,896	112,618
				=====	=====	=====

**Table B — Characteristics of Toamasina Port**

			<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>draught</i>	<i>stores (m)</i>	<i>Land space (m)</i>
Pier C1	...	...	155			
Pier C2	...	...	180			
Pier C3	...	...	181	9 to 10.5	53,860	79,800
Pier C4	...	...	180			
Coastal Boats Pier	...	...	550			
Tankers Pier						

## 2.2 THE FISHERIES SECTOR

### 2.2.1 The Fisheries Sector as seen by " Les Média Demain " (Tomorrow Media) No. 18 of 17/7 to 24/7/90

The fisheries sector is threatened in Madagascar with numerous malpractices, mismanagement of some compagnies, inexistant maintenance programs and insufficient rigourous global control. Such are the main lines of a speech of Maxime Zafera, Fisheries Minister, in front of M.Ps.

The minister has however based his action on three points considered essential since a long time: protect, produce and develop without destroying. Theoretically, the plan is fine. Implementing it is much more difficult. Thus, the responsible ministerial department has sought the collaboration of deputies and of the public in general to help experts to deal effectively with the protection of fishstock and marine ressources, one of the most bountiful aspects of our economy at present. An intense war has to be waged against the numerous poachers which continue fishing shrimps, crabs and lobsters even out of fishing season.

M. Ps have also denounced, besides small poachers, the large shrimp-vessels which deplete shrimp-stock and spill gas oil in the territorial waters. They speak against the use of nets with small mesh size by these ships which thus catch small fish which are dumped on beaches as they are valueless for them. Fishing infractions within the regular two-mile strip are frequent. The minister has asked the deputies to draft their observations to enable his department to take the necessary steps.

As regards material management, it has been revealed that private firms having signed leasing-user conventions with Japanese-owned tools and equipment do not pay their yearly due. In Antsiranana, the fishing company "Mahatoky" has already changed of manager twice and its contract has had to be cancelled owing to a huge debt and mismanagement of equipment. Now, after offer of tenders, a new firm will take in charge.

Other problems : the SOGEDIS of Mahajanga still owes 12.2 millions Fmg to the state, the Morondava based SOPEMO 4 millions, 13.2 millions for the COFRITO

Experts believe that in such a situation, controls should be enforced: "as provided legislation cannot cover all". Thus, the 1971 decree which regulates trawling in territorial waters is far from being respected. The fisheries ministry has issued in 1989 84 authorisations for 48 ships possessing a permit. In the same year, total shrimp catch being of 6962 tons, a 14% increase from 1988 figures. However, according to experts, these ships have practically depleted all reserves.

Finally, sale of tuna-fishing permits have brought in 2.362 billion Fmg for the state against 1.66 billion in 1987 and 2.1 billion in 1988. The fisheries and Aquaculture department is composed of a 384-strong work team all across the country.

### 1988 Production (in Tons)

<i>Products</i>	<i>Industrial Fishing</i>	<i>Artisanal Fishing</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Production</i>
Shrimp ... ..	7,162	545	7,707	7,855.5***
Small pelagic fish ... ..	—	PM	PM	PM
Tuna ... ..	382	PM	382	7,857.5
Other fish ... ..	1,585	50,000*	51,585	14,500
Crabs ... ..	PM	833	833	675
Lobster ... ..	PM	341	341	189
Other marine products (Shell, algae, etc...) ... ..	—	458	458	238
Fresh water fish ... ..	—	60,000	60,000*	60,000*
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9,129</b>	<b>112,177</b>	<b>121,306</b>	<b>91,315</b>
<b>PERCENTAGE</b> ... ..	<b>7%</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>100%</b>	

- (\*) = Estimate being a simple indication of production  
 (\*\*) = Export Figures owing to lack of precise data  
 (\*\*\*) = Industrial Production.

Some other dark spots : The SOGEDIS of Mahajanga still owes 12.2 millions FMg to the public Treasury, the SOPEMA of Morondava : 4 millions, the COFRITO : 13.2 millions...

The experts estimate that in the present situation there should be strict controls as the existing texts cannot foresee all eventualities. Thus Rule No. 71 concerning trawling in territorial waters is very often infringed.

In spite of this situation, the Ministry of Fisheries has for the year 1989 alone, given 84 permits for 48 licensed boats. During the same year, the shrimp catch reached 6962 tons, up to 14% on 1988. According to experts, these boats have already cleaned out all the reserves.

Lastly the sale of licences for tuna fishing brought in 2,362 billion of FMg in 1989 to Government, as against 1,66 billion in 1987 and 2.1 billion in 1988.

The Fisheries and Aquaculture Authority has a personnel of 384 members working throughout the country.

### 3. THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE APOSTOLATE OF THE SEA IN MADAGASCAR

#### People involved

A bishop, National Promoter of the Apostolate: Mgr Armand Razaf indatandra, a National Director, presently Rev. Fr. Marcel Batard.

3 Chaplains (of whom one is Malagasy) : Fr. Carron, Fr. Jeft, Fr. Emmanuel.

2 Religious : Br. Yves Aubron, Br. Felix Mejia and 4 nuns : Sr. Louise, Sr. Odile Lucie, Sr. Sabine and Sr. Félicité.

Many lays people : seafarers and seafarers' wives, members of ENEM, friends of the Apostolate of the Sea (either individually or as members of teams).

### **Existing Structures**

#### 1) Geographical situation :

- TAMATAVE (Toamasina) : Mother-Centre from where the original impulsion came, with a zone of influence on the north east and north west coasts.
- ANTALAHA : pre-cooperative for transport and fisheries.
- ANTSIRANA (Diego) : commerce, fishing, marine repairs.
- NOSSI-BE : Commerce, fishing.
- MAHAJANGA : commerce, fishing.

#### 2) *Other Structures* :

- Seafarers Home (Tamatave, Diego, Nossi-Bé, Mahajanga)
- Other Associations (for men, women, children of seafarers).
- National Days (January 1987 at Tamatave).
- National Team, created in July 1987 and which has worked regularly since.
- Various Commissions : commercial, industrial and artisanal fisheries also, Home and Hostel, Family and Future.

### **Activities : Broad Overview**

- Personal contacts with seafarers on board or on land.
- Hostels and Sailors' Homes (Tamatave, Antsiranana, Mahajanga).
- Visiting families.
- The works of the different Maritime Associations.
- Information work : oral, written, mass-media (radio, television).
- Different publications : informative, training, spiritual and liturgical animation
- Training programmes : human, women's promotion, technical and spiritual.
  
- Organisation for Unemployed Fishermen (Antsiranana, Mahajanga).
- Growing involvement in organisations of artisanal fishermen (Aranta on the west coast) or launching a highly structured development in artisanal fisheries (Tamatave fishing project).

### **Progress and Spirit of the Apostolate**

- Each APOSTOLATE has its own history : a long period of gestation very often with not much to show (depending on the people involved, the concrete difficulties, circumstances).
- Each project or apostolate has its difficult periods : folding up, re-forming, varied developments, but they all have hung in.
- At large, the Apostolate of the Sea in Madagascar has had its successes and its failures nevertheless looks to the future with courage.

### **Positive Developments**

The progressive territorial extension of the Apostolate of the Sea has undertaken in the northern part of the island, with the determination to spread to the southern part of the west coast (Morondava, Tulear,...).

The human, technical and Christian formation of seafarers and seafarers' wives (bringing awareness for responsibilities, fostering sense of solidarity).

The pre-occupation of involving the whole family of the seafarers in a holistic approach.

The desire to evangelise both on board and on land and to awaken faith (adult baptism) or to strengthen it.

The concern to prepare the future (finding cadres as facilitators human, technical and christian formation of the young).

Progress made in organisation and in the sharing of the various experiences, as for example the desire to organise Artisanal fisheries and develop this.

This has led to the production of *various documents* :

Pastoral Directory (84/85)

National Days (January 1987)

Local Bulletins : TELEX, Maritime Route (Tamatave), TELEXZOMPONA (Tamatave), AKON'NY APOSTOLAT (Mahajanga)

Small informations Bulletin (Antsiranana)

This has also led to *various training sessions* :

— for seafarers' wives, for artisanal fisheries.

— in the context of Christian Youth Organisation (TAK)

— in the context of broader themes sessions (Faith and Development, Church and Development).

This led to the study of a whole theme for the year or to the preparation of Regional congresses (on the dignity of the fisherman/seafarer's work ; on the education of seamen's children).

This has contributed to the organising of religious celebrations — for example for the Sundays "Dead at Sea", and to publish liturgical materials (Tamatave) or a Gospel suitable for the seamen, "VOAVAO MAHAFALY" for example.

We could speak at length on the day to day life of the different Associations, each having its own history...

For example, here are a few figures :

IVIA :	:	Tamatave 220 members
		Diego 120
		Mahajanga 230
— FIVATAMA :	:	Tamatave 79
		Diego
		Mahajanga 52

Through all these efforts, the guideline remains the same : sensitise people to what constitutes their life and their dignity ; formation in human promotion ; evangelisation of the seafarers' world with a view to develop a greater well-being in their real life setting.

### **Delays, Oppositions, Failures**

Above all it is the difficulty in understanding correctly and in explaining correctly what the *Apostolate of the Sea* is all about. With the knowledge gained by our experience

here on the spot, it is time to sit down and try to see things in perspective and to put the result of our reflections on paper for our own local use here.

Prejudices remain, and some confusions. Some find it hard to see the difference between Apostolate of the Sea, Trade Union, Political Party or Political Power.

At church level, there has been the new awareness of the importance of this Apostolate of the Sea, Trade Union, Political Party or even Political Power. At church level, the awareness of the importance of this Apostolate of the Sea is being acquired very slowly. It is not yet perceived as a priority.

The Apostolate of the Sea is still too much identified with particular individuals (Chaplains, facilitators)... We lack finances and clear and audacious methods for the direct apostolate.

People hesitate to engage in this apostolate for fear of possible consequences on board ship or at home. A long time is needed to become an evangeliser on board ship. The evangelisation of the milieu of Artisanal Fishing seems particularly (a single baptism after 15 years).

### **Projects, Prospects for the Future**

Basing ourselves on what was discussed at the last National meeting at Tananarivo, this can be put under two headings :

#### *Orientations*

- for the present year ;
- try to be attentive so as to discover what is vital for seamen and their families to-day.
- an effort to meet the seamen on a personal level, even going so far as joining them wherever they may be.
- an effort to become aware of the educational realities among the children of seamen, adolescent or pre-adolescent, and of the needs.
- intensify the formation of formation teams ; foresee eventual replacements (chaplains, religious, lay people) ; try to extend the Apostolate of the Sea, for which all are equally responsible.
- continue human and Christian promotion work among the traditional fishermen and their families, with reflection on the objectives of true development.

### **Guidelines for Action**

- 1) For Christian animation and evangelisation.

#### *On Board*

Create a sense of responsibility in this regard among the seamen, and create cells of active Christians.

To achieve this, look for seafarers capable of becoming Christian animators and form them.

Using such basic means as visits, courier, liaison bulletins, bible, religious celebration, etc.

As for pedagogical method-start with real-life situations, follow up a deeper analysis in the light of the faith : provide sample programs.

### *On Land :*

In order to create a sense of responsibility above all among the wives of seamen with regard to their christian life.

Give special attention to the social aspects (meetings, exchanges where sharing of ideas takes place, questioning, formation).

Try to arrange idea-sharing in the family when the husband returns home.

Spiritual animation of religious and chaplains by recollections, retreats, study of the word of God, religious ceremonies.

Get initiatives going for the children's education ; basing oneself on what is already being done (at school, in the home, neighbourhood, parish or organisation of youth).

### 2.) *Concerning formation and human development of the seamen.*

Create awareness of the importance of human formation, either from the start (ENEP, centre for Maritime Training), or later, in the form of continuous training.

### *Items in this Formation :*

- a) Life at sea to-day, with present developments (articles, testimonies by seafarers, exhibitions).
- b) a little handbook with a list of requirements for those going to sea (including long distance voyages).
- c) Security requirements and conditions on board.
- d) Information about Associations and Trade Unions.
- e) How to develop groups formation among those engaged in Artisanal or traditional fishing :
  - formation of individuals.
  - Animation based on what exists already.
  - Creating awareness of the latest technical progress in view of a true development.
  - Give details about the *Apostleship of the Sea*.

To let people know about these new efforts, existing publications can be used, or memos or brochures can be prepared which can be easily distributed on board of ships or at different points in the port.

### **By way of Conclusion**

This brings to an end this short presentation of Madagascar, its Maritime world, and the efforts of the Apostolate of the Sea there. Doubtless it is incomplete, even clumsy and a little incoherent.

We present it to our dear readers as if it were some of the fruits of the Malagasy forests.

Each one can make his choice of what can become profitable and agreeable for him.

**Mrs RANJASOA RAKOTOBÉ, MARIE LUCIE  
APOSTOLATUS MARIS — MAHAJANGA, MADAGASCAR**

I would like to bring to you some simple personal experiences to illustrate the ways in which the wife of a seafarer can become a *Witness of the Good News* at home and in her commitments at the *Apostolatus Maris*.



*At Home :*

My husband is an engineering officer on board of a ship and we have four children. I must say that we have been going through difficult times relating to the working conditions of my husband, particularly between 1988 and 1990.

My husband was discharged from his ship in October 1988 and could find a new job only in January 1990. He embarked on this ship in a foreign port and since then, he has been at sea for eight months during which we had to face the problem of an irregular source of income at home.

I will now just relate to you the various incidents which I have had to face :

- In 1988, my daughter had to be admitted at Antananarivo hospital where she undertook a surgery (bilateral perforation of the otite, cardiac problem, anemia). As the company employing my husband had no provisions for onerous medical costs, the reserve money which I had left all was used up.
- After 7 months of waiting, my husband returned to Nossi-Bé as he had to work on the repair of a 5-year old abandoned ship. At first, he had refused to do it as he had not received a bonus. However, under the pressure of the captain, he had to do it. A few hours after his departure, an agent from the company came to inform me that my husband's bonus was ready to be collected. During the three months of work in Nossi-Bé, no salary had been paid. In order to be able to make both ends meet, I had to learn basket making so as to get some money. In spite of these difficult times where worry had replaced joy, we did not forget our commitment to the *Apostolatus Maris*. We also had to find a solution to our own problems. My husband managed to put up a Solidarity Movement on board his ship in order to get from his company his due salaries. In July, I joined him in Nossi-Bé so as to restart the *Apostolatus Maris* there and to set up an *Association of Seafarers and of Wives of Seafarers*. A seafarer's wife of Mahajanga and another one of Nossi-Bé have helped us in this direction along with a priest and a few seamen-fishermen.

It was mainly the faith we had placed in God which gave us courage to go on with our task. Thus, the Nossi-Bé *Apostolatus Maris* started to work again. We had to leave Nossi-Bé in a hurry as my husband had to leave for Brest in France. However, he had to be admitted to hospital one week before his departure as he had to undergo surgery. All of this was quite discouraging. We had to live through hard times but we had the certitude that God was looking over us. Together, we managed to regain hope and find moral support, more than ever ; we even went to pray on the tomb of VICTOIRE RASOAMANARIVO who was recently canonised in Madagascar by Pope John Paul II.

In the maritime world, all is difficult and takes much time (except those which concern truth and justice). However, thanks to the help of God — it is my conviction — and also the help of some friends, my husband has been able to find a job on a Mauritian ship, after having meanwhile been for 15 days on a ship of Madagascar.

So, he went for fifteen days without us having the chance to meet again. This absence was to last 8 months. It was very hard, with financial problems to feed the small family. But God did not abandon us during this new difficult period.

My christian faith as a seafarer's wife has always made me remain faithful to my husband however hard it has been. I managed it knowing that without God's help, I would never have succeeded.

#### *Commitment at Apostolatus Maris*

In mid-august 90, the home of seafarer's of Mahajanga started to work and welcome seafarers. The chaplain asked me to be there a few hours a day for the welcome of seafarers, and to act as secretary.

I answered "YES" without hesitation. This is in direct line with the commitment I had already taken at the *Apostolatus Maris*. And they offered me a new way of work and commitment. I began to welcome and to listen to the seafarers who came. They found it pleasant to be thus welcomed and to be able to feel that we care for them and for their status of seafarer. On every possible occasion, I take the opportunity to explain to seafarers what the *Apostolatus Maris* and the I.V.I.A. are (as they are not well educated and think that they are dealing with unions or that the *Apostolatus Maris* is a political party).

Quickly, they came in large numbers at the *Apostolatus Maris* for two other reasons : the work of an active member of the IVIA who made a terrific recruitment for the movement ; and we have had the idea of putting up a similar project for unemployed seafarers at the *Apostolatus Maris* of Diego.

The first seafarer came ; I asked him to bring his friends ; it's thus how things started. After that, there was an announcement on the radio Feony Boina so that the unemployed seafarers met at the *Apostolatus Maris* centre.

They come 50 at a time. We took note of the discharge-book and classified them by order of years of experience ; they themselves took the decision to reserve the first contracts available to those who had been unemployed for a long time. Solidarity which calls for reflection !

Through different contacts, I understood the importance of welcoming and respecting the dignity of those unemployed seafarers. They come to spend some time at the *Apostolatus Maris* centre and to talk among themselves.

The number of persons at the IVIA went up from 160 to 308, (perhaps due to the hope of finding a new ship).

To help those seafarers, my husband Henri reorganised some commissions at the IVIA ; for example :-

- Formation-Information
- Finance
- Health
- Social

These commissions work together in the spirit of the association, so that those seafarers do not have the feeling of being useless and do have some responsibilities.

We discuss, learn to analyse some facts, and take decisions together.

Some actions are taken : visits to sick seafarers, visits to families where there is a mortality, collecting funds to help seafarers in difficulties. For example, a woman had to be helped financially when she gave birth to her child and we had to help many others in a thousand different ways.

Since January last, an association of merchant navy seafarers was created in order for them to fight for more justice for their husbands. On the 3rd November 1990, they organised a small party proceedings of which they gave to the solidarity fund for seafarers' wives in difficulties.

While going over all the things which have happened to me since a few years, I can say that though important, money and material means are not enough to give happiness to one. There is something of deeper meaning : *Faith in God* which teaches us His *Holy Word*.

This is the best and most reliable teacher to help us find true happiness and fulfilment.

## MAURITIUS

### 1. PROFILE

#### 1.1. Geographical Location

Mauritius is situated in the South East Indian Ocean approximately 1000 kms east of Madagascar. A french colony until 1810 when it came under british rule, it obtained independence within the British Commonwealth on 12 March, 1968.

#### 1.2. Population Density

Its area is of 720 square miles (1843 sq. kms). Its population amounts to a little over 1 million inhabitants — 536 inhabitants per square kilometre. Mauritius, mid-way between the African continent and Asia, is among the four countries in the world with the highest density of population per square kilometre (after Hong Kong, Singapore and Bangladesh).

#### 1.3. Ethnic appartenance and Religions

Mauritius has a multi-racial population. The population originating from India can be subdivided into the hindu group (52.4%) and the muslim group (16.5%). The European/French origin population, along with the African origin population, constitutes what can be termed "general population" (28.4%). There is also a sino-mauritian community (2.7%). Most frequently used languages are english, french, hindi, bhojpuri, tamil, mandarin and a local "franca-lingua" understood by all, namely "creole". The local radio broadcasts in 18 languages. This population diversity is bountiful for the cultural aspect but does not promote national unity. Mauritius is often quoted as the typical cosmopolitan island in touristic pamphlets.

#### 1.4. Economic Situation

For some time now, Mauritius has been importing foreign labour essentially for the building sector and textile industry. This has not always been the case. In the fifties, after the eradication of malaria, the population increased significantly reaching a yearly rate of growth of 3% (implying that the population doubled in less than 25 years). As the country depended mostly on agriculture, the development of this sector could not cope with demographic growth so that at one time, the rate of unemployment was alarmingly high ; 20% of the economically active population was unemployed.

To cope with this situation which could quickly turn into an explosive one, a diversification of the economy was carried out. The monocultural agricultural system based on sugar-cane cultivation was not abandoned ; industrialisation and tourism developed.

With an abundant working force, Mauritius chose the "labour intensive" type of industrialisation scheme aimed at export markets. The concept of Export Processing Zones which had produced positive results in Kaochiung (Taiwan) was taken up by Mauritius and in 1970, one such sector was created. The EPZ sector employs 90,000 workers and is mainly based on the textile industry ; with the years, it has achieved vertical integration by processing cotton and raw wool to produce ready-to-wear clothes.

Tourism has also developed. This year, the 300,000 — mark of tourist arrivals will be reached. Mainly from South Africa, France, Germany or Reunion Island, they contribute into making the tourist industry the third foreign exchange earner after textile and sugar.

### **1.5. Political Situation**

Mauritius enjoys a political regime where democracy rules. The parliamentary system, though based on the British Westminster Model, works well.

### **1.6. The Roman Catholic Church in Mauritius**

Hinduism is the most spread religion (more than half of the population). Islam represents around 16% of the population. Bhuddism and Confucianism do still concerned some Sino-mauritians but tend to disappear in Mauritius. There are actually around 300,000 Catholics in Mauritius, i.e. 30% of the total population.

The evangelisation of Mauritius starts around 1722 with the Lazarist fathers which remained here for almost one century. In 1819, the Benedictine, then the Holy Ghost Priests and Jesuits came to spread the Holy Word.

Port Louis became the seat of the Apostolic Vicariate in 1819 before being turned into a Diocese in 1847. Three spiritan bishops from the province of Ireland were in charge of the Diocese until 1968. Mgr Margéot, elevated to the rank of Cardinal in 1988, is the first Bishop of Mauritian nationality since 1969.

The following figures show how the Mauritian Church presents itself :

- 85 priests : 50 diocesan, 10 Jesuits, 9 MEP (Missionaries of Paris), 14 Spiritans  
2 Franciscans.
- 29 brothers : 10 among them (two Mauritians) belonging to the Congregation of Brothers of Saint Gabriel.
- 317 nuns : 269 sisters of Bon Secours, 42 Reparatrices and 6 Missionnaires of Charity.

Furthermore, 25 Mauritian priests, 6 brothers and 32 nuns work abroad as Missionaries in various countries. At present, 30% of the population belongs to the Roman Catholic Church.

### **1.7. The presence of the Church in Society**

Mgr Margéot notes that the Church has always made it a point to stand out with the population. The problem of overpopulation was among the existing ones 25 years ago : “For this, three solutions were proposed : emigration, birth control, economic development. The Church helped on emigration by putting up an emigration Office and helping thousands of Mauritians to emigrate to Australia or Canada.

By creating “Action Familiale”, the Church worked at the sensibilisation of the population and at motivating it to reach a state of responsible parenthood. It has also contributed to the social, economic and technical formation of youth.”

Mgr Margéot, first bishop of Port Louis of Mauritian nationality since 1969 speaks about a positive evolution of the country : progress of democracy, controlled demographic explosion, nearly erased-out problem of unemployment, diversification of the economy with industrialisation and tourism.

He also underlines the cultural mutations that have greatly affected the family unit and society : employment of young girls and women in industries and in the tourist sector ; the drastic changes thus brought about in the life pattern of the Mauritian family, drug-abuse related problems, prostitution..., more and more frequently seen mixed marriage; communalist-related problems whose spirit still prevails and which hinders national belonging (communalism can be defined as the tendency of one ethnic group to be centered on itself).

“The Church has intervened in some debates of national interest such as the liberty of the press or still save some values about transmission of life”.

Mgr Margéot also remarks that the Church has tried to open itself to the other religious communities which composed the Mauritian rainbow.

## **2. THE MARITIME WORLD**

### **2.1. Traditional Fishing**

#### **2.1.1. Some Details**

Traditional fishermen are those who fish either inside the lagoon of an area of 240 square kilometres or outside the lagoon covering an area of 1100 square kilometres. Such fishermen are of the number of 1806 and 600 respectively.

The fishing boat usually consist of a crew of two or three fishermen, but it is not rare to find one fisherman alone. According to the Ministry of Fisheries, 1989 figures showed that 60% of such boats were sail or oar-driven whereas 37% used an out-board engine and 3% an in-board engine.

Fishermen mainly use the “pirogue”, a wooden boat whose length varies between 3 and 8 metres. The construction pattern is basic : ribs are fixed to a central keel, then covered with wooden boards.

The fishing equipment is traditional and can be classified into three categories :

- fishing with lines (always in nylon), does not go over 2000 metres.
- basket trap fishing in bamboo or wire-mesh.
- net fishing with 500 metre-wide nets or gill-nets.

### **2.2. Problems**

Excessive utilisation of illegal nets, proliferation of under-water fishing and fishing with dynamite are some of the factors which have caused a disrupture in the marine ecosystem. Meteorological conditions are often unfavourable : South East Trade Winds blow from October to May and cyclones which threaten Mauritius from November to May.

Year after year, total production of traditional fishing has not stopped decreasing : from 2500 tons in 1976 to 1300 tons in 1989. Yearly production of Mauritian fishermen are thus not much high. We can compare it to the production of the fisherman from Reunion island (800 kg/year) but it is well behind that of the fisherman of Seychelles (6500 kg/year).

Traditional fishing is still characterised by the predominance of middlemen. The latter, beside their commercial functions, have become money lenders during the course of years : they give to the fisherman a boat, an engine and at times the equipment. Traditional Fishing, besides a low productivity and the predominance of middlemen along with the lack of possibilities of development, is barely surviving. The limit of saturated fishing has been reached and this sector has also reached a degree of " overfishing, ".

### **2.3 Fishing on the Banks**

#### **2.3.1. Fishing Banks**

Banks which are mostly exploited are Nazareth Saya de Malha, St Brandon and Chagos. They are found in between Seychelles and Mauritius around 400 to 1100 kilometres north of Mauritius. A "Mother" ship with cold storage facilities is equiped with many small boats which go fishing during the day.

The fishing method is still traditional : line fishing. The few vessels practising this type of fishing employ around 500 fishermen and produce some 5000 tons of fish yearly. During winter months, from June to August, the vessels remain in Port Louis.

### **2.3 Merchant Marine**

An exposé will be made during the visit of the Port and documents will be provided.

## **3. THE WORK OF APOSTOLATUS MARIS**

3.1. The first organised initiative in the world of fishing can be traced back to 1967. Exploited, without means and faced with numerous problems of illegal fishing : such was the situation of fishermen. René Magon, professional fisherman and Robert Margéot, priest, grouped fishermen and created the Mauritian Association of Professional Fishermen (APPIM) in 1968. Later, APPIM and the "Institut pour le Progrès et de Développement (IDP) continued this action of mobilisation and representation of fishermen with various concerned bodies. In 1976, APPIM and IDP launched a common project aimed at liberating fishermen from the grip of middlemen by providing them an access to loans in order to purchase fishing material and thus, a revolving fund project was launched. Up to now, the revolving fund has helped more than 30% of fishermen either in liberating themselves from their dependence on middlemen or in keeping this independence. APPIM and IDP have continued their work of sensibilisation of motivation and formation : general consultations and meetings have been held and numerous formation sessions and seminars organised.

In 1987, emphasis was placed on saving and a saving plan which would conduct on a mutual credit association was launched. As from 1977, members of APPIM and IDP have started participating in regional and international meetings concerning the world of the fisherman. Since its creation, an animator of these different actions in the fisherman's world is a member of the "International Collective in helping Support of Fisheworkers" (ICSF), an international Organisation helping traditional fishermen.

### 3.2. Work undertaken by the Seamen and their Families

*Apostolatus Maris* exists since 1977 in Mauritius. It was however in 1988 that this organisation started to extend its services when 12 seamen-fishermen of Philipines sought refuge at the St Louis Cathedral in Port Louis in February 1988 so as to escape from the torture inflicted upon them by their employer. Port Louis Diocese then decided to give a new start to *Apostolatus Maris* by putting at its disposition a building in St. Georges Street.

Every year, around 30,000 seamen and seamen-fishermen transit through Port Louis. *Apostolatus Maris* has had a rate of visit of 198 persons per month those last 3 years. It is also greatful to many people and institutions (journalists, lawyers and voluntary workers) who in one way or another have helped us.

The building of the *Apostolatus Maris* is composed of seven rooms which are used as office, library, dining room and bedrooms which have been rarely empty these last years. Indeed, *Apostolatus Maris* has had to shelter in numerous occasions seamen and seamen fishermen of Philipines, Burma, France, England who are often without any means after having been forced to abandon ship owing to problems such as :

- their work contract not being respected, or
- the refusal from the part of the shipowner to provide them medical care in case of illness or accident.

It also happens that seamen and seamen-fishermen wish to work on board ships but are prevented from doing thus owing to communication barriers.

*Apostolatus Maris* also organises recreative activities (outings, celebration of Christmas...) for the Maritime Community. But the lack of a means of transport is very much felt. A small bus would be most welcome in this case.

*Apostolatus Maris* also works for the general welfare of the Mauritian sea-worker. These sea-men and sea-men fishermen are often exploited and our organisation helps them to defend their natural and acquired rights. We also pay attention to their families.

After a first meeting in december 1989, the "Association des Femmes et Mères de Marins" (Association of wives and mothers of seafarers) was created. This association works hand in hand with *Apostolatus Maris* and aims at uniting all wives, mothers and sisters of seamen in order for them to stand up against their problems (financial, material, legal, moral and spiritual) during the absence of a husband or father or brother. By grouping themselves, they discuss and share their experience and find some solutions to be taken in the defence of the rights of their husbands, fathers or brothers who are often absent from their homes.



The "Association des Femmes et Mères de Marins" also organise activities and aims at promoting solidarity among the members of the Maritime community. It appeals to all communities and neither discrimination nor outdated dogmas must forbid them of being as active as men when it comes to revendicate their rights and propose solutions. Thus, it was in that perspective that the association participated in a meeting with Seafarers Unions and with their employees just as in the case of the Convention 147 held in February 1989.

Owing to all this solidarity, the recent National Convention of *Apostolatus Maris*, which was held on Tuesday 18 October, was a complete success. It enabled our whole community to situate its problems and the *Apostolatus Maris* was also able to understand the demand of seafarers, this in view of a better future. The National Convention was also a preparatory meeting for the Regional Congress of *Apostolatus Maris*. But it showed that Mauritian Seafarers can unite so as to demonstrate their solidarity in front of problems to the whole world so as to receive what is their due.

*Apostolatus Maris* wishes that the whole Maritime community knows an unprecedented wave of solidarity. Much remains to be done however. But these last years of intense activity show that *Apostolatus Maris* has to grow in importance so as to satisfy an increasing demand. Let us hope that *Apostolatus Maris* continues on this trail of success and be able to bring its help to all seafarers in need.

## GEORGES CHRISTOPHES

### Mauritian Seafarer

Ladies and gentlemen of all the different delegations, as a representative of Mauritian seamen-fishermen through the APOSTOLATUS MARIS, I would like to underline the fact that Mauritius administers the numerous islands under our sovereignty being situated in our national waters. The population of such islands as Agaléga, Chagos, are mainly composed of fishermen and their families. In this context, I must thank Father Jacques Harel who regularly visits these people and as a priest, he brings them Much comfort.

To be still more precise, I would like to talk about these fishermen who go on fishing banks like NAZARETH or SAYA DE MALHA. I would like to underline their value as professional and experienced people who are the pride of Mauritius. However, what is the point of being experienced and courageous when you have no true identity or when your life is at stake each time you go fishing. I would like to further explain this to you. These seamen fishermen embark on a big 'mother' ship which is equipped with some ten to twenty small boats on each fishing expedition which may last from 40 to 60 days. Once on the fishing grounds, teams of three fishermen by boat go in each and every direction since around five in the morning with all their fishing equipment which consists of a fishing lines with five to six hooks. As for security measures, there is hardly any protection for the seamen-fishermen and no means of contacting the mother ship during the fishing day. The fishing season lasts from October to May, in summer.

We have often made proposals to the government, so that special funds are made available to seamen-fishermen and their families in winter when there is no work on the fishing vessels. The fishermen are even prepared to contribute to this fund. Until now, our proposal has remained unanswered to. We have also asked to be given training sessions in safety and life-saving practices such as use of distress flares, walkie-talkies, life jackets and so on. Seamen-fishermen badly need this kind of formation which will be of a great help to them. All these problems have just become the cancer of the fishing industry in Mauritius, a cancer that no responsible authority wishes to deal with or analyse in order to obtain good results.

To conclude with, I would like that the government and fishing companies find a solution to all the problems I mentioned above. I hope that the fishing industry in Mauritius will be having brighter days in the future with God's help.

THANK YOU

**FRANTZ RIBET**

**Merchant Navy Seafarer**

During the official opening ceremony of the congress, we have all listened to the representative of the Minister of Trade and Shipping who made mention of the Seamen Code, the Merchant Shipping Act and the introduction of the project aimed at introducing the Mauritian flag as one of convenience.

He has been just briefing us about the future of the Mauritian seafarer. But what kind of future is it when we consider, for instance, that the seafarer will be entitled to only 36 days of holidays per year ; instead of the 42 days he normally enjoys.

The new version of the Merchant Shipping Act was drawn up in 1986 but has not still been ratified.

In the same line, we find it strange that the government refuses to sign the U.N. Convention 147 on safety on board ships, sickness insurance, food, medical care, living conditions on board, the competence of officers and repatriation of seafarers.

We wish that amendments be brought to the Shipping Act for better conditions of life for seafarers.

Too long shipments (nine to twelve months for the working crew) are often the cause of accidents, especially for container ships or some bulk carriers as these ships (particularly container ships) remain but a few hours in ports.

Formation and human promotion of the seafarer, relationship between seafarers and *Apostolatus Maris*, safety on board ships, these are all important matters.

At the time when calls in port are more and more of shorter duration, won't human links between *Apostolatus Maris* and seafarers tend to disappear ? How can we think about new links between these two ? Such are questions which must be answered not only by *Apostolatus Maris* but also by seafarers.

To look for, among the crew, responsible seafarers who will become christian social leaders will not be an easy task as it will be almost impossible to have representative groups of *Apostolatus Maris* on board ships (some seafarers are afraid to be black-listed by ship owners). So, A.M. will have to carry out a difficult job which will mean constant attention given to all that is vital for seafarers as well as their families.

But how will *Apostolatus Maris* work for seafarers? Won't the few seafarers<sup>s</sup> wishing to promote the work of A.M. feel isolated if Church, on its part, does not provide more help from more priests or other religious officers who will give hope to seafarers, propagate Love and Peace as "life on board" is very important for the seafarer and it is more and more increasing in importance. At sea, days succeed to each other in a monotonous way; at times lack of sleep and fatigue make communal life more difficult. More and more shorter calls at ports do not enable those who wish it to meet people of different cultures. Crews, as well as ships, are more and more submitted to constraints, this owing to competition. But there is the need to adapt oneself. It is however difficult at times to go and meet seafarers though *Apostolatus Maris* envoys are most frequently warmly welcomed on board ships.

Can the seafarer live his Faith on his ship where social injustice often exists? We must accept realities. We must also help the seafarer to live his Faith on his ship by bringing a message of the Evangile to him (deliver this message in a simple way as seafarers are not aware about religious terms). Help the seafarer to live his Faith by celebrating a mass but also help him to promote his situation.

For the seafarer to live his Faith on board his ship, he will be needing support originating from "land" which will enable the Church to be better present in the maritime world, Third World fishermen to find a way to solve their problems, seafarers' families feeling responsible for christian exigences to lead a better life in the absence of the seafarer.

On ships, older seafarers will have to give the example of solidarity — and not individualism which benefits to ship owners — but also responsibilities in front of the diversity of situations which now exist on board ships (multi-religious composition of crews, safety on ships). Too much *laissez-aller* is being felt among officers as well as competent port authorities concerning safety measures: an effort will have to be made to avoid accidents. We must have all the will to ensure safety on ships as that of seafarers has not been ameliorated as compared to technical evolution of ships. Information on prevention of accidents and safety must be given since the beginning but in a permanent way on board ships.

Every one has his part of responsibilities in the limitation of risks of accidents. Often on board ships, routine is such that certain rules of safety are neglected.

"*Lead a Christian Life on board Ships*" : this would mean personal life of prayer but also living the Evangile on ships: that of being Fair, that of knowing how to Share, Service, Forgiveness, Solidarity, Fraternity...

I will end by wishing that this congress will bring spiritual betterment in the situation of seafarers, particularly those of the region.

THANK YOU.

## RODRIGUES

The island of Rodrigues 14 kms on 6 kms is situated at about 560 km North East of Mauritius. Rodrigues has been a French colony until 1810 and as Mauritius has been an English Colony until in 1968. The Rodriguan population amounts to some 37,000 bodies including some 20,000 who live abroad including Mauritius. Relying principally on agriculture and rearing, the development of Rodrigues has met many impediments seen its geographical position. In fact the island constantly suffer either from cyclones or otherwise very long dry periods. Even if Rodrigues is officially declared the 10th district of Mauritius, there are many factors and conditions that are specific to Rodrigues, so rendering many decisions taken by the government in Port Louis inapplicable in Rodrigues.

Nevertheless, Rodrigues can turn over its development on fishing. In fact the island is surrounded by 110 km<sup>2</sup> of inner reef sea water but the lagoon has been over-exploited. In this connections the Government in relation with the "Fond d'Aide de Co-opération Française" decided to study means to have incitative measures to encourage fishermen out of the reef. So was born the "Formation Itinérante de Pêche" which is a school where fishermen, who an unfortunately 100% illiterate follow practical courses in fishing gears, mechanics out board and inboard, basket trap making, line and hook fishing, trygrim, security, seamanship, net repairs and elementary navigation rules.

To now on some one hundred fishermen have successfully completed the courses and are ready to embark when the hatch-out of the F.I.P. that is the "Outer-reef Development Programme" will be launched in January/February 1991. Meanwhile a great number of our local fishermen move to Mauritius to embark on Mauritian fishing vessels to fish on the fishing banks.

The Apostleship of the Sea is up to now inexistent in Rodrigues but in view of the future developments that have already started, it would be a right thing to start thinking of and ponder over the question. Rodrigues being a tiny island its development is not deem to linger.

## TAIWAN SITUATION REPORT

*by*

**Linda Petrucelli**

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The island of Taiwan, roughly 400 kilometres long and 130 kilometres at its widest point, is located just 160 kilometres off the coast of China, opposite Fujian province. Its contours resemble a sweet potato with a rugged mountain range running from north to south. This formidable natural barrier separates its teeming cities on the west from the less populated east coast.

Portuguese sailors named it, *Ihla Formosa*, Beautiful Island, more than four centuries ago. Holland and Spain also attempted to establish trading colonies with moderate success. Between three and four hundred years ago famine in China prompted waves of Chinese immigrants to brave the Taiwan Strait and settle in the fertile western plains. These immigrants drove the island's original aborigine population into the mountainous regions of the island. Later Chinese immigrants called Hakkas arrived about two hundred years ago.

Formosa was a sleepy backwater until 1885 when the island became a province of China. Following the Sino-Japanese war, China ceded Formosa to Japan, which colonized it for 50 years. The island was returned to China at the end of WWII.

When China fell to the Communists in 1949, Chiang-Kai-Shek and two million Chinese retreated to Taiwan and established a bastion of "Free China" on the island. They exercised complete political and military control while instituting an economic policy which encouraged rapid industrialization.

Considering Taiwan only a temporary home from which to eventually invade China, the KMT (Nationalist Party) transformed Taiwan's agrarian life-style into an industrialized, export-oriented powerhouse. In the process, the "Beautiful Island" suffered from capitalism-at-any-cost. Nearly all of its rivers are polluted to dangerous levels. Its air is darkened by a smoky haze and its 20 million residents live in an area with one of the highest population densities on earth.

The KMT government lifted martial law in 1987 after 38 years. Since that time, pluralistic political system has begun to take shape. The KMT still has a firm grip on power, but no longer has a complete monopoly.

Yet the island remains bound to a political ideology which is out of step with most of the world. The KMT continues to claim to be the legitimate government of China which has fostered Taiwan's isolated diplomatic status. Only 28 nations recognize Taiwan by its official name, the Republic of China (ROC). China, on the other hand, claims Taiwan as one of its provinces and continues to use the threat of force to retake it.

Sometimes called an "economic miracle", Taiwan has a per capita yearly income of US \$ 7,500, the 27th highest in the world and the second highest in Asia behind Japan. Unfortunately, because of its breakneck industrialization, quality of life has worsened and a speculative and increasingly lawless society faces an uncertain environmental and political future.

## The "Maritime World" of Taiwan — Crisis in Taiwan's Fishing Industry

I do not presume to be a fishery expert. The only specialized knowledge I possess has been gained through my five years of service living and working as a missionary in Taiwan. The report I now share, is limited to the maritime world of fishing, not the commercial or container shipping industries which are also significant in Taiwan.

Over the past 30 years, Taiwan's fishing industry has been characterized by rapid expansion and increasing development of the deep-sea sector. Ranked among the world's top twenty fishing nations, the island has major ports in the north, Keelung, and in the south, Koahsiung. Its total fishing population is estimated to be 600,000.

According to the 1988 report of the Council of Agriculture (COA), the island's highest fishing authority, Taiwan's total fish catch has increased tenfold since 1952, now totaling over a 1,361,000 mt worth US \$ 3.25 billion dollars. After domestic consumption, which provides the island's residents with 30% of the animal protein in its diet, surplus fishery products are exported. Thus seafood tops the list of food exports and earned Taiwan US \$ 1.17 billion.

The island's boats, deep-sea, inshore and coastal, number over 32,000 vessels. Aquaculture, especially the production of prawn and eel, is extensive. But the inshore and coastal fisheries have suffered significantly because of industrial pollution fouling nearby waters. Destructive fishing practices, such as overfishing and the use of explosives, have significantly depleted the island's marine resources. Territorial fishing accounted for less than 1/4 of the total catch in 1988.

The big business of Taiwan's fishing industry however, does not reveal its darker realities. Recent controversies have troubled the beleaguered industry while serious abuses confront its fishworkers. Let me first highlight some of the crises which plagued Taiwan's fishing industry over the past year.

Most of these crises have involved Taiwan's extensive driftnet fleet. By the end of 1989, the island came under constant criticism by the nations of the South Pacific. They feared that pelagic driftnetting would soon eliminate albacore tuna stocks.

Last November, representatives of the island's fishing industry grudgingly attended the South Pacific forum on driftnets in Wellington. But the delegation walked out at the last minute. Taiwan's representatives refused to sign any agreement in protest of the conference's failure to use its official name, the Republic of China.

While the COA issued several promises that its South Pacific driftnet fleet would be scaled back, the government appears to be powerless to regulate its industry. Tonga, Fiji, the Cook Islands, Australia and Samoa have all detained Taiwan ships for illegal driftnet use this year.

Meanwhile in the North Pacific, salmon poaching by squid jiggers equipped with driftnets created more controversy, especially with the United States and Canada. In August 1989, two Taiwan fishers were nabbed aboard an undercover Coast Guard vessel as they attempted to offload salmon on the high seas. The sting operation, conducted

by the FBI, revealed an elaborate plot by Taiwanese nationals in Seattle. The two fishers served 15 months in US prisons. (In handling this case however, I have come to believe that these men are not pirates, only pawns of unscrupulous fishing companies).

As Taiwan's squid vessels returned to the north Pacific this autumn, over half of its fleet was reported to have deactivated the mandatory satellite transponders each ship must carry. Reports also revealed that many of them were flying Mainland Chinese flags to avoid on-board searches by the US Coast Guard.

Similar problems with the Soviet Union culminated, September 10, in an embarrassing incident. Three Taiwanese squid trawlers, 49 Taiwanese and 7 foreign crewmen were detained in Kholmsk, USSR. Soviet authorities charged the boats with trespassing and conducting illegal fishing operations. Stiff fines totalled over US \$ 1.1 million.

Due to Taiwan's diplomatic isolation, private channels and actions by the semi-official ROC External Fishery Co-operation & Development Association, all failed. After requests for aid from Japan were refused. China began third-party negotiations. Lawyers were finally hired, the men have been freed and appeals are being made in Soviet courts.

While Taiwan's fishing industry has always been troubled by its government's lack of diplomatic relations, even official friendship with South Africa is waning. In August, Pretoria's fishery authorities announced that they have stopped issuing new licences to foreign fishing vessels. Boat owners in Taiwan believe the ban is specifically aimed at their vessels and will seriously affect the industry.

A series of incidents have worn out Taiwan's welcome in Capetown and which led to the ban. In January, 16 boats were arraigned for carrying driftnets in violation of South African law. Later in May, the Taiwan trawler An Hung, ran around off the southern Africa coast. When salvagers inspected the hold it was discovered to contain illegal driftnets and 50 carcasses of Jackass penguins, a protected species.

Perhaps most damning were reports in June that 38 Colored and Black South African workers had to have fingers amputated because of frostbite suffered aboard Taiwanese trawlers while they labored in the ships refrigeration holds. Some of the men alleged that the Taiwanese sailors were given fur-lined gloves, while black seamen were issued only plastic ones.

Taiwan is not a member of the United Nations and so is not expected to fully abide by the proposed 1992 ban on pelagic driftnets. The COA has never actually announced that Taiwan will abide by the ban. Firm data about the actual size of Taiwan's driftnet fleet is non-existent. Conservative estimates report 600 vessels ; other inquiries suggest a much higher number, perhaps as many as 2,000. On August 14, the New York Times reported that 15 Taiwan fishing boats carrying driftnets were docked at Jamaica and heading for the Atlantic. While the COA bans driftnetters from this region, the government has yet to find a way to control its fleet.

Given these recent events, Taiwan's fishing industry suffers from an increasingly bad reputation. While the COA continues to make announcements about its efforts

to regulate the industry, the fact remains that over the past 30 years, no official body of law exists which governs the island's deep-sea fisheries.

### **Inshore Fishworkers**

Within the inshore fisheries, fishworkers endured a difficult year. The majority of these fishworkers are native Taiwanese who pool their resources among family members and friends, co-operatively owning a boat of less than 50 tons. Because of extensive pollution however, their fishing grounds have dwindled and given rise to many problems. These fishers can no longer rely on fishing alone to earn a living.

Instead, almost every inshore fisher has resorted to some kind of smuggling. Several years ago, as visits across the strait were just beginning, the smuggling of mainland Chinese agricultural products was the rage... tea, watermelon seeds, dried fruit, mushrooms, peanuts and herbal medicines were most popular. It was easy for customs officials to look the other way. Many fishers claimed that it was more profitable to trade cheap electronics products for mainland fish than to catch it themselves.

But now the business of smuggling has been taken over by several crime syndicates. Endangered species such as rhinoceros horn and lion pelts, along with drugs, prostitutes, guns and even political dissidents have all been regularly smuggled into Taiwan via its hundreds of small boats. Foreign workers, desperate for better paying jobs are also smuggled into the country. A June 6 newspaper report claimed that one smuggling voyage can earn a fisher US \$ 30,000.

To combat this, 20,000 military troops have been engaged in an anti-smuggling drive, Nanliao harbor was declared a special military zone with strict exit and entry controls. Patrol boats are also on the lookout for mainland Chinese "pirates". Intermittent reports of Taiwanese fishers being held up by Chinese have received a good deal of press. However, some believe the alleged attacks and thefts are smuggling-related incidents.

### **Distant-water, Deep-sea Fishworkers**

Deep-sea fishers have not fared much better than their inshore fishing brothers. On the whole, inshore fishers are a more homogeneous group, often living together in smaller villages. This has aided their efforts to form numerous fishermen's unions. In the deep-sea sector, men come from different parts of the island, work from between one to three years on a distant-water vessel. To this day, a truly representative union of deep-sea fishworkers has yet to form in Kaoshiung, the island's major deep-sea fishing harbor.

There is a severe labor shortage on the ships. Introduction brokers, many of them related to crime syndicates, charge inflated fees, between US \$ 1,400 to \$ 3,000. They especially prey upon young aboriginal youth, just graduated from junior high or finishing their compulsory military service, making false promises of big money and luring them with alcohol and women.



The pay scale and basic wage scale remains low for Taiwan's seamen. Captains and officers make a great deal more than crew. Most crew do not receive a fixed wage but are seen as "partners" of the fishing company. Because of Taiwan's "bonus system" it is easy to keep crew at the lowest end of the pay scale, usually averaging about \$ 300-350 per month.

Monthly family allotments are in fact a loan. At the end of the voyage when all expenses are subtracted from the sale of the final catch, a 60-65% share goes to the company, then what remains is divided among the 17-22 crew members. If the crew's share is less than the total family allotments, then the fishworker is in debt to the company.

There are numerous ways to keep a fisher in debt. 85% of the fishers never sign their own contract nor understand its contents. The fishworkers' most important identification documents are handed over to the introduction agent or company. Companies often lend large sums of money to the fishworker before he leaves port. This sum is deducted from his family payments so his wife or parents are left without financial support. Onboard expenses are calculated double the actual price. When the fisher finally returns to port, many discover that they are deep in debt. I have seen many cases where fishers work for three years and return owing money. Because their ID papers are with the company, they must sign back on ship to repay the "loans".

Benefits, especially the basic fishermen's insurance, is inadequate. Factories in Taiwan must pay employees' labor insurance, but not to fishers. These sums are taken out of the initial expenses, not from the company's share, so it ultimately comes from the fishworkers' pockets. Insurance coverage is limited only to work at sea, not on land. Even if the fisher is making repairs on his ship and is injured, he will not receive compensation.

Because of these circumstances, is it any wonder that there is a labor shortage on the ships? Over the past year, foreign labor on Taiwan's deep-sea boats have proliferated. COA regulations limit foreign workers to 30% per boat, but often the percentage is much higher. Because of language difficulties, cultural differences, abuse of alcohol and overwork, Taiwan's deep-sea vessels have become violent and fraught with danger.

### **THE PCT FISHERMEN'S SERVICE CENTER**

In 1985, the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan's General Assembly Church and Society Committee sent workers to Kaohsiung to investigate the detention of Taiwan's ships by other countries. It is estimated that over 6,500 fishers have been detained over the previous ten years. Thus in April 1986, the FSC was formally established to support fishworkers and their families undergoing crisis. In addition to addressing the problem of detention, the FSC educated fishers about the contract, insurance and legal rights.

The FSC employs 3 full-time workers, 1 consultant and 1 director of the project. Two of the staff are aboriginal, one being a disabled fisher and the other the daughter of a fisher. The work of the FSC is supported by a Board of 11 individuals which include fisher representatives, lawyers, social activists and fishing industry specialists.

The work of the FSC begins at the case level where a problem-solving approach is used. Beyond this however, casework is an avenue for attempts to organize parts of the fishing community. Educational outreach is done through numerous publications, some designed for the fishing community and other designed for awareness in the wider community. Small seminars conducted in tribal languages, in mountain villages, are another important aspect of education and organizing efforts.

On the systemic level, the FSC has developed a supportive group of academics, elected officials, lawyers and fishing trade unionists who have studied the government's model contract and drafted suggestions to improve the well-being of fishers. Currently, the Legislative Yuan is holding hearings on promulgating new fishing laws ; FSC is participating in this process.

Yet our successes have been modest. Due to the political sensitivity of our work, FSC staff members are closely scrutinized and do not receive full cooperation from the government's fishing authorities. Several hundred cases have been handled but organizing efforts have never fully taken root. Personnel turnover has been high ; workers get over-worked and burnt out fast. The church's eyes have not yet fully opened to why this kind of social ministry is mandated by Christ's example and teaching.

Our hopes for the coming year include the formation of either a fishworker's association or union. Our contacts within the fishing community have deepened and strengthened, so this is where our hope lies... within the power of fishers themselves, willing to stand and withstand the challenges before them.

## MINISTERING TO THE CHRISTIAN LIFE OF SEAFARERS

Fr. JOHN MAGUIRE MHM

National Director, England & Wales

The Apostleship of the Sea was founded in Glasgow in the 1920's by a group of lay people who were concerned about the lack of witness the Church was showing to Seafarers, whose lifestyle dictated that a major part of their lives was spent away from family and loved ones. Full of enthusiasm, they began visiting ships to invite crews to share in the life of the local parish, especially in the celebration of the Eucharist. Gradually, local Bishops appointed Chaplains and Stella Maris centres were established to provide leisure facilities for seafarers whilst in port. Another change in emphasis was caused by the widespread use of Flags of Convenience by shipowners wanting to increase their profits. Naturally this led the A.O.S. to defend and uphold the dignity of the seafarers being exploited.

However, the above changes meant that "concern" for the "spiritual" welfare of the seafarer diminished and receded quietly into the background. Today, we are acknowledging that the "spiritual" dimension of our work must not be forgotten. In an ever changing Maritime World, where uncertainty is the most constant factor, the seafarer must be encouraged to develop and grow spiritually in order to find sustenance on his journey through life. We, as an organisation, need to devote time, energy and resources to create an environment in which the seafarer can discover that he, like all land-based christians, is called to share the Gospel, his faith with those around him. We must give **him** the tools to help him articulate and give expression to the live of God that dwells within him.

### How to promote christian life among Seafarers

1. Be convinced that it is a real and fundamental option for all who represent the A.O.S. in the midst of seafarers. To deny this option means that you will be involved merely in Social Work.
2. Be a person of "Prayer". You can't give to others what you haven't got yourself.
3. In the United Kingdom we have devoted "time" to convincing Bishops and Laity that we exist and that we are committed to bringing our faith into the midst of Catholic Seafarers. (In this exercise we have used calendars and a quarterly publication called the "Anchor").
4. We have enlisted the help of the Laity through "Prayer". Every year we promote a Novena in Honour of Our Lady Star of the Sea. 70,000 copies are distributed annually. The impact of such support can never be known, only felt as we exercise our ministry.

## 5. Our Publications :

1. SEAFARERS PRAYER BOOK
2. NOVENA IN HONOUR OF OUR LADY STAR OF THE SEA.
3. “COME FOLLOW ME”. A small booklet based on the life of Abraham.  
It gives the seafarer the opportunity to reflect on his life through the eyes of the Bible and to articulate his faith.  
It is the first of a series of booklets based on biblical characters.
4. Cassette Tape — “LORD YOU ARE NEAR”. This is often used by small groups of seafarers who wish to listen, in community, to the celebration of Holy Mass. The reverse side contains a series of meditations for his own personal reflection.
5. FUTURE : PROJECTS
  - a) Video with celebration of Mass
  - b) Series of celebrations for the different liturgical seasons of the year.

## Conclusion

We, who serve seafarers through the Apostleship of the Sea, should always be promoting christian life on board ships, helping them to discover and share the beauty of their faith with others. It is the foundation of all our endeavours and should permeate all our actions. It is the very reason for which the Apostolate was founded seventy years ago.

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## GROUP SEA OF THE C.C.F.D.

*Report presented by André DESCOL*

### ORIGINS — ISSUES — AIMS — ACTIVITIES

#### 1. Its Origins

In July 1984, a conference of the F.A.O. (Food and Agricultural Organisation) was held in Rome. It was concerned about the development of traditional fishing, a sector not much cared for by the F.A.O. until then. Experts, ministers, head of states and government officials met whereas the small fishermen were not invited to the conference.

To voice out their opinions, fishermen of the Third World, some of whom had already met in India (in state of Kerala), decided to organise another conference in Rome at the same time with the help of their friends (researchers, representatives from non-governmental bodies) aiming at exchanging their experience and analysing their respective problems.

Aware of the importance of this meeting for the development and organisation of traditional fishing in the Third World, the C.C.F.D., which had been since a good number of years supporting development projects in favour of small traditional fishermen (in Philippines, Mauritius, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique...) decided to participate in the conference and to send a few French fishermen there.

However, to show a spirit of partnership, it was also decided that after the Rome Conference, a delegation of fishermen from Third World nations would be coming to France, invited by the C.C.F.D. "Mission de la Mer" (Mission to Seamen) of France and teams of Coastal Diocesan Missions participated in this project which brought about much information and more mutual understanding (from Brittany, Boulogne, Mediterranean area).

At the end of 1984, the C.C.F.D. made the summing-up of this experience and created a 'Group Sea' made up of people having links with the maritime world.

Thus, for six years now, seafarers — both active and retired, priests and Mission to Seamen, scientists, volunteers (fishing) and researchers meet at least three times a year. This includes some fifteen people whose diversity enables a good representation of maritime professions, be it as regards specialisation or geographic location (North, Normandy, Brittany, Mediterranean area.)

The Group Sea, through the composition and experience of its members, offered to the C.C.F.D. the possibility of pragmatic reflexion on all these problems. In this way, there has been a group definition of the few following working objectives :

## II. WHAT ISSUES AND AIMS ?

### A. Issues

Often marginalised and ignored, the maritime world is a very important area for the general and global development of mankind. Whether in the fishing sector or in the trading one, its activities remained much obscure, in France at least, for the major part of the population. Unfortunately, it has become today a sector of disbalance between developed and Third World Nations and it is no exaggeration to say that all — or almost all — is permitted in such a sector.

For fishing, there are commercial agreements or development plans which often ignore the defavourised, thus causing the unjustified destruction of ressources in the traditional areas of artisanal fishing.

For trade, the increase of flags of convenience (more than 1/3 of the world's total ship fleet) enables the exploitation of a disorganised working force from developing countries (ref : Congress of Mombasa : A new type of slavery : Message to seafarers 1987).

The Group Sea, through its composition and the experience of its members, offered to the C.C.F.D. the possibility of a pragmatic reflexion on all these problems. In this way, there has been a group definition of these few following working objectives.

### **B. Aims of the Sea Group**

- To provide counselling for the matirime projects of the C.C.F.D., provide a follow-up of the projects, evaluate the extent of their realisation, and also the spreading out of the information on them.
- To inform the entire C.C.F.D. and public opinion in general on the issues of maritime problems through conferences, film shows, exhibitions, radio broadcasts, publication of pamphlets etc...
- develop a solidarity link between French fishermen (or european ones) and Third World fishermen.
- promote south-south cooperation among fishermen's organisations.
- back the initiatives of fishermen for alternative development projects.

In short, try to promote a more equitable international maritime order which will not turn rich people richer and poor ones poorer (Pope John Paul II).

By putting into practice this ambitious plan of objectives, the Group Sea was called for to take an important and original dimension in the development of the C.C.F.D.

### **III. ACTIVITIES OF THE SEA GROUP**

One of the most important conclusions of the 1984 Rome Conference (34 nationalities, 100 participants present) was the will to maintain or to create links among the participants, fishermen's communities and organisations which help them throughout the world.

In this way, the INTERNATIONAL COLLECTIVE SUPPORT OF FISHWORKERS was thus created 2 years later in November 1986 in Trivandrum (India).

C.C.F.D. backed the creation of this organisation which regroupes today artisan-fishermen's organisations of West Africa, Indian Ocean, South East Asia and Latin America. The secretariat of this Colective is found at Trivandrum. It also publishes *Samudra*, a periodical edited in Brussels.

It was rapidly noted that by developing working links with ICSF, the GROUP SEA opened itself to an international scope of activities, reflexion and information in the fishing sector and thus, in a process of widening of the perspectives it had fixed itself in the beginning.

## 1. Creation of a Sea Program

To answer to demands of this process, C.C.F.D. established a **SEA PROGRAM** in 1987, a true plan of projects and activities relating to the whole of the maritime world : (fishing, aquaculture, maritime transport).

It must be noted that C.C.F.D. was the only **Non Governmental Organisation** of the Northern Hemisphere to possess a working group and a plan of activities relating to problems of the sea. C.C.F.D. was also the only **N.G.O.** with aims of development to be invited to the **Apostolatus Maris Regional Congress of Dar-Es-Salaam (1985)** (at least to our knowledge) as well as the **Mombasa Congress (1987)**.

## 2. Partners of Sea Group

C.C.F.D. backs some thirty projects of fishermen's and seafarers' organisations in some twenty countries. Because of this, the working limits of the **SEA PROGRAM** are wide in scope and brings it to collaborate with various international partners. Here are some of our main partners :

- ICSF
- **APOSTOLATUS MARIS** (and **MISSION TO SEAMEN** in France) : Madagascar, Tanzania, Mauritius, Greece, Port de Bouc, Lorient.
- **CEASM** (Centre for Study and Maritime Social Action) which deals with formation programs in the Group "FISHING" since 20 years.
- **SOLAGRAL** (Agro-Alimentary Solidarity) which is a **Non Governmental Organisation** whose "FISHING" section informs, through pamphlets, conferences on the problems in this sector, general public.
- **CBDIPAC** : the Centre for Studies, development and Research on artisanal fishing in Chile.
- **ERR** (Earth Resources Research-London), a centre for agro-alimentary research.
- **OIKOS** : a Portuguese NGO.
- **SIDI** (Society for Investment and International Investment), branch of C.C.F.D. which offers financing facilities for the creation of small production enterprises in the Third World (Morocco, Bangladesh, Turkey...)
- **F.P.H.** (Foundation for Human Progress). This Swiss-origin NGO has signed a convention with C.C.F.D. to undertake financing of the **SEA PROGRAM** projects specifically orientated towards research aimed at development, that is at projects which group scientists and all those concerned with field work. In its turn, C.C.F.D. makes it a point to prepare a "log-book" of these activities and a yearly report on them so that to enable F.P.H. to have a follow-up of these projects it finances.

This list — which is not complete — of partners of the **SEA PROGRAM** clearly puts in evidence the collaboration which has been installed between the **GROUP SEA** and various concerned about both **NORTH** and **SOUTH** development after daily working sessions and reflexion together.

### 3. Necessity for Collaboration with New Partners

This can be explained by various reasons :

(a) the fact that today, Non-Governmental Organisations are called for by national and international organisations (European Economic Community, European Funds for Development, United Nations Development Plan, etc... ) to participate in development programs :

- out of economic concern : big projects are often costly and do not often reach their aim,
- as the action of NGOs better answers to the needs of populations due to their links with them.

(b) In France, decentralised cooperation put into practice by local government authorities (municipalities, Regional and General Councils, Chambers of Commerce, Port Organisations, Church organisations) is gradually playing a very important role. Here is a good opportunity for the GROUP SEA to intervene : possibilities of counselling and reciprocal sharing of information.

(c) The necessity of developing exchange of experiences between North and South NGOs which work in the maritime world.

Having a naturally global scope, this sector calls for not only geographical and sectoral approach and answers, but also global and universal ones to problems of development.

### IV. ACTIVITIES OF THE SEA PROGRAM

They are of three kinds and are closely linked.

1. Support of projects with long term planification.
2. Evaluation of projects, follow-up, research.
3. Information of public opinion and decision-makers.

This constant wish of the C.C.F.D. for long term planification finds its application in the maritime world through the SEA PROGRAM.

A. In the FISHING sector where one of these days, all the fishermen all around the world will have to work together in order to share their resources; without forgetting that any alimentary strategy at global scale necessarily calls for the taking into consideration of artisanal fishing which employs many people and concerns a rich human milieu which is at present marginalised.

B. In the MARITIME TRANSPORT sector, look after a better enforcement of existing international conventions (on conditions of work on board of ships, minimum salary, security), have in mind concern of welcome for seafarers in ports, propagate information on rights of seafarers, finally defend them when their most elementary rights are not respected (flags of convenience).



C. In the sector of INFORMATION OF PUBLIC OPINION, mention must be made of the essential :

1. The publication of two documents in 1986 on "Fishing, North/South issue : The small boat and the Trawler" and "Fishermen of Third World".

In May 1990, a document on Maritime Transport and the Third World entitled "Les Routiers de la Mer". For its edition, this document obtained help from 'Development and Peace (Canada)' 'Foundation For Human Progress (France)' and Mission to Seamen. Mgr. Cheli, President of Apostolatus Maris, has written it preface.

2. Again in the sector of conscientisation of public opinion, I will not forget the summer project : "A SHIP FOR MADAGASCAR" which proved exemplary, thanks to the active collaboration of Mission to Seamen. It aimed at purchasing a 10-meter long boat in France for fishermen of Tamatave grouped in an association having links with Apostolatus Maris. At present, 'FIRAIKANKINA NO HERY' is operational under the direction of captain Grégoire, holder of a scholarship of C.C.F.D.

## V. TODAY, WHAT ARE THE PRIORITIES OF THE SEA GROUP OF C.C.F.D. ?

1. Our first objective is the Project for 1991 Fast Period during which one of the chosen theme for informations of public opinion will be "welcoming seafarers in ports". The action of C.C.F.D. in a not so well known sector will have to be shown. At the same time, we would wish to underline the major importance of maritime transport in the world's economy and the importance of seafarers in this context. This project will be bringing SEA GROUP to its participation in the General Meeting of C.C.F.D. in 1992 (TERRE D'AVENIR).

2. Another important objective : enable the follow-up of projects already in practice. Among these, the PAMEZ "FISHING PROJECT" in Casamance and the project of small fishermen on the East coast of Madagascar. For the welcome of merchant navy seafarers, besides the centre of Port-de-Bouc, there is another one in Rouen. The Tamatave centre is already a few years old and that of Pirée is being built.

3. Two other fields of reflexion must also catch our attention :

(a) Sensitise Catholic Non-Governmental Organisations of other countries about needs of populations and maritime professions. We must already note that "Development and Peace (Canada)" has accepted to participate in the financing of the pamphlet "Les Routiers de la Mer". It is a good beginning. In this context, we can find research in collaboration with european organisations which support fishermen of ACP countries concerned by the Lomé Convention and 'Blue Europe'.

(b) We must also look for scientists, geographers and economists with a true pastoral spirit and who could make up — in relation with the C.C.F.D. — a team of reflexion on problems of the maritime environment, maritime trade and aquaculture caring both for producing for poor and for ecological balance.

4. We must widen our collaboration with I.C.S.F. The two meetings in Lisbon (June 1989) and Bangkok (January 1990) on the future of world fishing have, among other things, enabled the launching of a sensitisation program relating to the last Lomé Convention for artisanal fishermen. Much remains to be done in this sector at the level of governments so that the interests of small fishermen are cared for during international negotiation. The GROUP SEA is aware of the importance of such issues. In this way, it will back the efforts of small fishermen as well as that of merchant navy seafarers, to organise themselves into groups, associations or professional unions according to their likings. We are convinced in this context, that *Apostolatus Maris* and Excellencies Bishops in their respective ministries can do much to make things progress. As it really concerns efforts made by the concerned ones themselves in the pattern of true development.

5. GROUP SEA will continue its partnership with the Centre for Studies and Maritime Social Action. This Formation Centre works in cooperation with us for PAMEZ project and alternative fishing in Mozambique.

6. At last, I will say that we are also enforcing our links with *Apostolatus Maris* and local churches. Links are however strong between *Apostolatus Maris* in France, Madagascar, Tanzania, Mauritius... and us, but there remains for us to stick to programs of pastoral action in-situ and to put together all our experience and hopes.

## VI. TOWARDS A NEW DEVELOPMENT PLANIFICATION

After this brief description of activities and future projects of the SEA GROUP, we cannot help noting that a new planification of helping the development of Third World populations is starting to take its place at the C.C.F.D.

The Sea Program takes this into consideration in the way that it is itself brought to look for new partnerships.

To its traditional partners are added firms, local government representatives, researchers, bankers, international organisations and of course, other North and South NGOs.

Directed by the Group Sea, in which Mission to Seamen — its true social foundation — holds an important role, the Sea Program, while developing, remains at the service of seamen-fishermen and merchant navy seafarers in the Third World as well as in developed countries.

In respect with its original aims, it helps them, through their own means, to establish living and working conditions close to a Christian idea on human dignity.

## PRESENTATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COLLECTIVE IN SUPPORT OF FISHWORKERS (I.C.S.F.)

by **Robert Fleurot**, *Member of the I.C.S.F.*

I.C.S.F. is an international organisation which was founded in Trivandrum (India) in 1986 to enable workers of the sea, men, women and children altogether, voice out their opinion at an international level. This in order that the difficulties, which they come across either at sea or on land, are taken into consideration by governments and international organisations.

Through its search for cooperation and solidarity, the Collective collaborates with fishworkers' organisations and trade unions. Its unique aspect is to enable a close cooperation between scientists and social workers on the one hand, and between fishworkers of the North and of the South on the other.

The main objectives of the Collective are :

- monitor global issues affecting the fishworkers.
- help create space and momentum for the development and sustenance of alternatives, particularly in the sector of small scale fisheries.

The Collective has launched four programmes over a long period :

### **Study and Research Program**

This program comprises :

- (i) The compilation of a report on the profile of workers of the sea in order to highlight certain specific situations.
- (ii) Analyse the different tendencies in assistance and investment in the fishing sector.
- (iii) Evaluate the impact of aquaculture, particularly on artisanal fishing, explore the possible part to be played by fishermen in this sector and examine capacity of aquaculture as source of proteins for poorer ones.
- (iv) Study experiences of countries which have created a Fishing Exclusive Zone for artisanal coastal fishing.

### **Program of Action and Support**

Act as pressure group with private companies, governments and international organisations whose actions threaten the existence and survival of workers of the sea. Thus, the Collective has led a whole series of actions against a private owned company which sold out board engines with defaults to fishermen.

### **Program of Formation and Exchange**

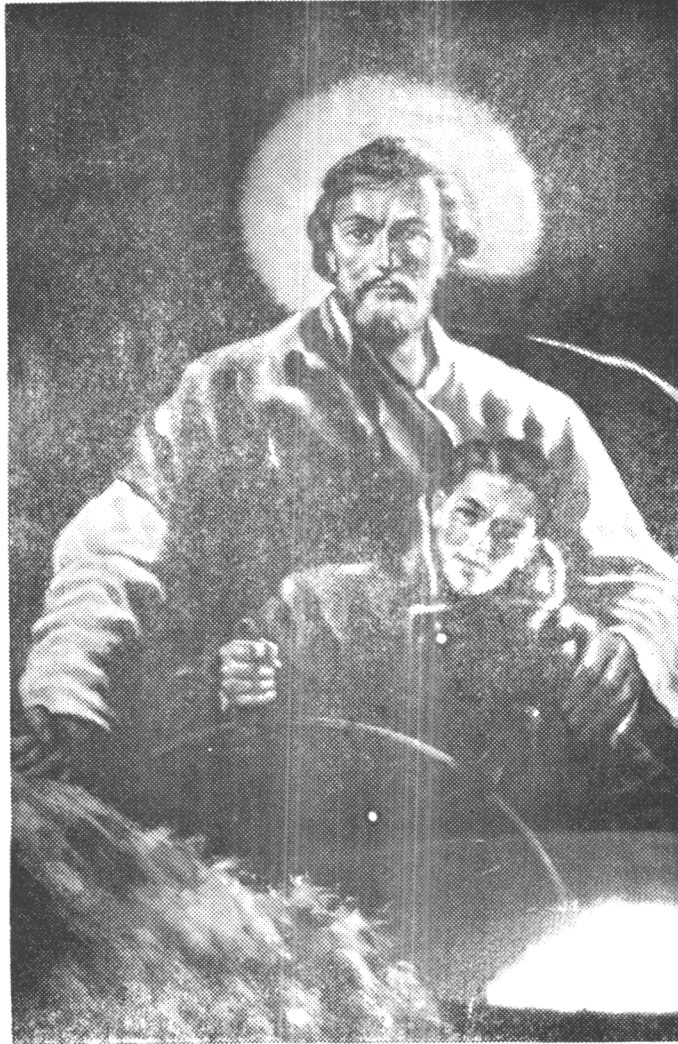
This program encourages the exchange of experiences, sharing together new and appropriate technologies, and formation from new structures of formation. This program also gives incentive for group workings between scientists and workers of the sea and the exchange between workers of the sea of different countries.

### **Communication Program**

The Collective puts at the disposal of various groups: a magazine, "Samudra"; Documents, "Samudra Documents", monographies, "Samudra Monographies"; films and different other audiovisual material.



## CHRIST AND THE SEAFARER



*The strength of this picture is a comfort to many seafarers, christian and non-christian, for the dangers and isolation of the sea-life constantly challenge the human spirit and remind man of his frailty.*



## SYNTHESIS

During the first two days of our congress, we have extensively shared our experiences in the *Apostolatus Maris*. Out of this collective sharing stand out the following four points : Evangelisation, Formation, Solidarity and Development of the *Apostolatus Maris*.

### I. EVANGELISATION

To work for evangelisation, it is first hand importance to be first of all attentive to the maritime world and to always have a welcoming open mind for the seafarer and fisherman.

Then, we have underlined that “ the new name for evangelisation is development ” or in other words, human promotion. There are two aspects of this development :

- provide regular assistance. For example, lodging of seafarers, interventions with concerned authorities to solve eventual problems.
- supporting long term development projects. For instance, helping traditional and artisanal fishing, helping towards permanent formation.

We have underlined the fact that at the same time, this evangelisation work must relate to the explicit announcement of Jesus. Indeed, this is the main scope of evangelisation. It is achieved through the Bible, the New Testament, the *Evangelii* and religious books; through teaching of catechism; and through celebration (prayers and sacraments) which must be regular, weekly for the *Apostolatus Maris*... That is why we find the work of leaders on board a vital one.

For us, Evangelisation is something active and communicative. It is the working of each and everyone of us. Thus the personal evidence of members of the *Apostolatus Maris* cannot be replaced. Everyone is concerned : the staff of the Seafarers' Centre : laymen, nuns, brothers, priests ; members of the Association of Commerce and of their wives, sea-men-fishermen and of their wives, artisanal fishermen and of their families.

Finally, the children of seafarers and friends of the *Apostolatus Maris*. One aspect of this evangelisation which remains as true for the *Apostolatus Maris* than for other types of apostolateship is the sharing of our convictions with others, of leading them to the *Apostolatus Maris*. We must take up the courage to call others just as Christ did with his twelve apostles 2000 years ago. Today, Christ calls others for us.

### II. FORMATION

The second point of our synthesis underlines the importance of formation. There are different types of formation achieve :

#### 1. *Human Formation*

We have organised reflections on the life of the couple, education of children, life in association in different branches of the *Apostolatus Maris*. We wish to

continue these. We also think that it is also necessary for seafarers to have information on what must be known on life on board a ship and on land. To do this, we can use the pedagogical system of "group dynamics."

2. Seafarers must be also aware of the rights they are entitled to on board and land and at the same time their duties.

3. To be good seafarers and fishermen, they need professional formation according to their categories. For some, mechanical formation is needed. For others, it is fishing techniques or boat construction methods that need to be taught etc....

4. Seafarers are believers. They belong to different religion among them Christians. Many are catholics. They have the right to religious formation. And at times they asks for it. The Holy Scriptures, religion culture, liturgy are to be inserted in the program of formation. Here are the means of formation which exist and which have to be promoted: Sea Training School, Formation courses, Session and meetings, publications, Mass media, individual Dialogue.

### **III. Solidarity**

In our sharing of experiences which also bring to the actions in the MARITIME WORLD, the reality of solidarity was very much present, this term being mentioned several times.

1. *What does "SOLIDARITY" mean?*

It is to unite all together and love each other.

2. *What are its objectives?*

Solidarity is necessary first of all to change and ameliorate living and working conditions of seafarers and to defend the rights and dignity of seafarers, fishermen and families. Then solidarity is necessary to fight against unemployment, illtreatments, injustice, lack of means and bad living conditions in the family life of seamen/fishermen.

3. *Levels of Solidarity*

We have started living and wish for a solidarity from a local stage to an international level. And it will be a lived through experience with his own family and among his fellow crew-members, in his company and in his category (artisanal fishing, industrial fishing and merchant navy).

A solidarity between seafarers and land dwellers. A solidarity among seafarers of the different Christian Churches, one based on the sole baptism in the name of Jesus Christ. Hence, we must help in the creation of this solidarity which must also develop and strengthen itself. And for this, we must take necessary and effective steps starting with small ones to huge-scale international action as the Sea Group of the CCFD the ICSF.

We should start acknowledging the already existing solidarity, their ultimate source, the Body of Christ, this loving and Saviour God. And we are convinced that solidarity is an important step in the Evangelisation process. (*Matt 25*)



## **DEVELOPMENT OF APOSTOLATUS MARIS**

In our sharing together, we have talked about the Women and Seafarers' Wives Association in Madagascar, of its objectives, of its activities, of its success, of its difficulties. And the regional Apostleship of the Sea is unanimous to continue and go further away.

### **1. Seafarers' Centre :**

Certain ports already name their more or less important Seafarers' Centre. Others are freshly starting. But in all cases, we are looking for a convenient centre, *i.e.* a convenient house where seafarers feel at ease and at home. We wish these to fulfill the main objectives of Apostolatus Maris, Evangelisation, Formation, Solidarity. Indeed, A. M. should enable each of its member to be a witness of the Holy Word which is Jesus Christ, lived announced and celebrated. To be witnesses among ourselves and for all the people we are given to meet by the Lord in Society and in Church-life. Thus, these so important centres have to be created if they are still inexistant and have to be developed where they exist.

### **2. Quality of hospitality offered to Seafarers :**

We must continue to maintain hospitality towards seafarers and, as much as possible, respect the peculiarity of each one, of each group. We wish for a kind of welcome that is : suitable, personalised, responding to the vital needs of seafarers, responsibility promoter, ecumenical.

### **3. Give consideration to Associations :**

We know that each category of people is important and has a peculiar importance in the maritime world. They live different realities and have specific needs. Associations are made to take these in charge. For this reason, we are ready to create them where they do not exist and to follow them during their existence.

### **4. Structure the explicit Words of Christ :**

Everyone from the Apostolatus Maris agrees on this, but the ways, the regularity, the structures and means are different. The sharing of experiences has brought about many improvements on the contents, the reason behind, the means through which and the Media of these words of Christ. And to reach this objective, all Apostleship of The Sea Centres are called to continue Formation on Evangelisation and solidarity and also celebrations. This synthesis which has been presented in a few pages is alive with our life and experiences and our deep convictions. Let us hope it will enable our analysis to reach further out in order to help us in our future — and effective actions.

After the synthesis on the sharing of experiences, congressists, in a sharing together, evoked their deep convictions and the reasons behind their engagement in *Apostolatus Maris*

**Report of the sharing together :**

1. A.M. is a necessity for us. It helps us to live our faith. It asks from everyone of us a deepening of our faith through a permanent formation and testimonies which we give to each other. The spirit of A.M. helps the captain and the officer to respect dignity and value of each member of his crew.

2. An association is necessary for seafarers' and fishermen's wives/families. This enables mutual welcome, reciprocal comprehension, moral help, solidarity before difficulties and support in front of temptations. An association helps to consider problems of life with more patience and faith in God.

3. When the seafarer is aware of his rights and knows how to defend them his wife will not be afraid to defend her rights and those of her family during the husband's absence.

4. Faith in Jesus reinforces fishermen, seafarers and their wives and gives them courage in order to overcome problems which they meet.

5. We are aware that being Witness of the Good Word asks for much. We have to fight individualism, work together and progress humanely, intellectually and spiritually.

6. We are convinced that Christ identifies himself with the poorest seafarers and fishermen, even the most marginalised or exploited and He calls us to put ourselves at their service in his name.

## WORKSHOP DISCUSSION

*Monday 10.12.90.*

### Questions put to participants :

1. Complete the synthesis.
2. What are the problems seafarers/fishermen and their families have to face? Why?
3. What are your convictions ? Give their reason.

## WORKSHOPS' COMPOSITION

*Tuesday 11.12.90.*

### 1st French Speaking Group :

R.P. François Legall  
Mgr. Armand Razatindratandra  
R.P. Emmanuel Rabeza  
Denis Thion  
Fr. Félix Mejia  
Alfred Andriamprany  
Fr. Raymond Gauvrit  
Frantz Ribet  
Marie Lucie Ranjoso Rakotobe  
Rakotobozaka Ramanoelina  
Jocelyne Ravomimirina

### 2nd French Speaking Group :

Fr. Yves Aubron  
R.P. Marcel Batard  
Marie Angèle Rahantranirina  
France Andy  
Marie Josée Bouquet  
Georges Christophe  
R. P. Gérard Tronche  
Marcienne Lecluse  
R.P. Mackinnon  
Alfred Ialy

### 1st English Speaking Group :

Rt. Rev. Gabriel Mmole  
R.P. Marcel Kaberwa  
André Descol  
R.P. Jacques Harel  
Gabriel Savrimuthu  
Rev. Cyril Owambo  
Clothilda Mahundi  
Emmy Mutabazi  
Anne Marie Rwehumbiza  
Daudi Shigemelo

### 2nd English Speaking Group :

R.P. John Maguire  
R.P. Anselme Mwangamba  
R.P. Augustine Fernandez  
Jean Vacher  
Marlène Jouanna  
Cpt. Salvatory Rwehumbiza  
Capt. Benoît Barbeau  
Paul Libermann Prosper  
Rev. Linda Petrucelli  
John Theodor Ng'ombo

## RESUME OF THE SHARING TOGETHER

Different workshops have enabled the underlining of problems faced by seafarers and their families, often through life experiences.

Isolation, which is inherent to this trade, and distance from the family continuously come up during our discussions.

Living conditions on board are harsh ; there is a lack of safety on ships as employers do not respect international norms and the authorities are too laxist. There is also a negative atmosphere on ships and the insecurity of employment and the exploitation of seafarers by some companies without any scrupules.

Specific problems inherent to each country have also been evoked. In Mauritius, there is no proper law to protect conditions of employment of seafarers. In Dar-Es- Salaam, traditional seamen-fishermen have had to invest much in a project.

Furthermore, many seafarers are vulnerable owing to their ignorance of maritime codes and laws which are supposed to protect them along with their families. The gap which exists between seafarers and officers goes on increasing.

Many find it sad that seafarers and their families are marginalised. Thus, the families which remain on land find themselves very vulnerable before the problems they are faced with. Among these, there is the education of children, the absence of social security and medical provisions, financial problems etc... It has also been noted that many seafarers and their families are not aware of the existence of *Apostolatus Maris*.

## THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION ON

### “CHRISTI FIDELES LAICI”

by Mgr. Gilbert Aubry

Dear Brothers Bishops,

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Brothers in humanity,

1. It is with great joy that I have come to share your work in this Regional Congress of *Apostolatus Maris* in our South West Indian Ocean region. From my point of view, the more important thing of this congress is the meeting of people engaged in the same struggle and also the sharing of what is being done at all levels.

2. I am sorry not to have been able to participate in your meetings in order to have a better grasp of your problems, needs, life and your hopes. It is also with sadness that I come alone from Reunion as there is nobody there to represent *Apostolatus Maris*. However, I have pleasant memories of the meetings of Tamatave, Hong Kong, Réunion, Dar-Es-Salaam... and the good work of the delegation of my diocese.

3. Such is life with its ups and downs, its crisis which are also an opportunity for a better continuity of our mission. The mission of *Apostolatus Maris* will start again in Réunion but it will take some time as we need leaders to start the mission anew. I take the engagement to do all that is possible so that with God's help we may have a diocesan delegation from Réunion at the next regional congress. This is my conviction because our Church is alive and well and from life, life will always spring.

#### **At the Crossroads of International Routes**

4. Coming to Mauritius, most of you did not know each other. For some, there was perhaps some apprehensions in the beginning. However, rapidly, you have discovered yourselves as people of the sea, traditional fishermen, seafarers... whose heart without boundaries roam between land and the rocking of the swells of the Indian Ocean. We come from Kenya, Tanzania, Madagascar, South Africa, Mauritius, Réunion...

5. The colour of one's skin, one's nationality or even one's religion in a way matters little. Those who live of the sea understand each other under all latitudes and longitudes, much better than the people from their own villages who do not have this experience of departures and returns, of forced absences and of reunion with wife and children. Then, there is the changing weather... the sunshine and the cold, the calm and the storm, the narrowness of the ship and the immensity of the ocean. And there are deaths, three mauritian seamen-fishermen lost on the fishing banks of Nazareth. We have met their three widows, two of whom are pregnant. Two children will never know their father. There has also been the ship of Felix which has sunk and there has been five people drowned. The dizziness of paradise and the fall to hell occurs everyday. Everyday, there is economic war, a race for rentability, competition between shipping companies, international laws being flouted now more than ever.

6. Our maritime region is open to the whole world with its conflicting interests. Every problem has international consequences which have to be considered. There are first of all the questions of maritime relations among members of the C.O.I. (Indian Ocean Commission) but also the ever-increasing links with South-Africa, India and East-Africa. Our region is in evolution and we hope that this will lead to better and more peaceful relations among nations.

7. People of the sea, traditional fishermen, seafarers, navigators, continuously live at the crossroads of international routes between different economic systems, between diversified cultural worlds. All of this has repercussions in the heart of individuals, crews, families, groups. Each individual becomes bearer of many worlds. How difficult it is to unite one's life, to have a global vision... How difficult it is to abandon fatalistic attitudes and to be able to master one's destiny.

### **Putting Ourselves at the Service of Christ**

8. This is the work we are doing. Humanely and divinely. That is *Apostolatus Maris* : meet together with difficulties by building up a network of human and divine solidarity. One lives with others, but while taking the time to think, to pray, to act together to contribute to change what has to be changed. You have said : "To take our destinies in our hands and to love each other." Evangelisation, Formation, Solidarity. Laypeople, brothers, nuns, priests, bishops, it is exactly this that we have to do : *we must serve others !*

9. This is precisely the mission of the whole Church as it is the mission of Christ as prophet Isaiah states : "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."

And Jesus adds : "Today, this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." (Luke 4, 18-21). We can translate this to : "Today, I, Jesus, accomplish what I have announced."

10. It is Jesus who proclaims the Good News, it is Jesus who releases, who cures, who restores sight. And it is not us. Thus, when we say that our mission is to serve, we must altogether note that we should not serve mankind at our will, but rather put ourselves at the service of Christ in his continuous love for man. (J. Rigal : *Le Courage de La Mission* Pg. 133). Jesus identifies himself with others, especially the smallest : "As you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me."

Thus, we have to :

— serve Christ in others

— serve others with Christ.

Being collaborators of Christ the Servant and the Good Shepherd, we shall thus be able to serve men through our human solidarities while continuously living these solidarities in God's Heart. And there is a first evangelisation which is common to all Christian denominations, hence the important part to be given to oecumenical relations.

### **The Church — the World**

11. All Christians together, we form "the chosen race, the royal priesthood, the holy nation, God's own people". (I Peter 2, 9). And this because we are baptised "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Mt. 28, 19). Together we form Christ's unique body. And it is the whole Church, all of us with different vocations, laypeople, brothers, nuns, priests, bishops, who put ourselves at the service of Christ, the Good Shepherd who wishes to bring all men to the plenitude of His love. Christ risen from the Dead is not an isolated Christ, He is alive and the Church is His mystical body.

12. Church on Earth does not limit itself to the structured ecclesial community. It is formed by all the baptised with their different vocations engaged in the middle of religious, cultural and political realities. The Church is to be found in the very heart of world.

13. While not being of the world, our whole life is spent in the world. Pastoral work which consists in organising the mission of the Church is not the sole responsibility of the priests or the bishops but the concern of all the christian community,

### **Laity**

14. Thus, it is as members of the Church — Bride of Christ — that each Christian participates in the triple function of Christ Priest, Prophet and King. John Paul II in his apostolic exhortation "Christi Fideles Laici" teaches us that the heart and the life of the mission of the Church is its union with Christ risen from the dead. There are five chapters in the exhortation which is constructed on the Parable of the vine and vineshoots. (John 15)

15. The three-fold functions of Christ Priest, Prophet and King are :

- The priestly function consists in uniting Heaven and Earth in the sacrifice of one's life, so that all our life be an Eucharist in the praise of the Father.
- The Prophetic function consists of the power of the Word Creator which makes all things new. It encourages all that is good and denounces all that is evil.
- The Royal function consists in doing everything freely for love's sake and to be at the service of those who must be freed from the chains of all kinds of slavery.

16. All baptised persons, each one in his own way, and according to his specific vocation, have to give themselves totally to Christ, the Good Shepherd, so that through us and by our activities, Christ will :-

- Unite heaven and earth ;
- proclaim the Gospel : Encouragement to do good and denouncing of what is Evil.
- set all men free and give them the freedom which belongs to the Church of God.

17. Our Church is built on the Apostles and is composed in vast majority of laity. While talking about the human and divine work of *Apostolatus Maris* a few moments ago, through the multitude of relationships among people of the sea, traditional fishermen, and seafarers at work, I thought about these numerous laypeople without whom there would have been no maritime life, without whom there would have been no church life in the maritime world.

18. To define the laypeople in “Christi Fideles Laici”, John Paul II uses a text of the Vatican II Council :

“The term layman includes all Christians who are not members of the Sacred Order and of the Religious state” recognised by the Church, that is Christians who, joined to Christ through Baptism, constituted as People of God, are participating in their own specific way to the priestly and royal functions of Christ, who are fulfilling in the world and in the Church the mission of Christ”.

19. If, at first sight, this definition appears negative: “laypeople... are not members of the Sacred Order and of the Religious State”, at a second glance, we find that laypeople :

- are defined in a network of relations ; with the Lord Himself, with God’s People, with the priests and religious life and with the world.
- are defined not as dependents of the Church hierarchy, but through their incorporation in Christ and integration in God’s people.
- are part of Christ, “ they live in his life ”.
- are called to be active in Church and in the world by exercising the mission of God’s people.

#### **The proper field of the activities of the Laity**

20. John Paul II takes up again the teaching of Pie XII who wrote in 1946 : “That is why they (laypeople) must always have a clearer conscience, not only of belonging to the Church, but also of being the Church itself : that is the community of faithful on earth, under the guidance of a common leader, the Pope, and of the Bishops in communion with him. They are the Church.”



21. Thus, having a clearer conscience of being the Church, the laypeople will have to take into consideration that which is said in the “*Evangelii Nutiandi*” exhortation by Paul VI: “The proper field of evangelisation by laypeople is the world, wide and complicated, of politics, of social realities, of economy, of culture, of science and arts...” (Nr 70).

It is in this proper field of evangelisation of laypeople, that they are called to live their three-fold vocation : sacerdotal, prophetic and royal. It is in their ordinary activities of fishermen and seafarers that the laypeople of *Apostolatus Maris* have to live the grace of their baptism in order to help Jesus Christ the Good Shepherd be at the disposal of those they meet daily.

### **The Pastors**

22. The bishops who are Christians and successors of the apostles will have to live the three-fold functions in a particular manner. They are responsible to regroup the people and to lead them in the name of Jesus and feed them with the Word and the Sacraments. Their mission consists in :

- sanctifying the people by offering the sacrifice of the Eucharist (priestly function).
- teaching the word of life which transforms all life (prophetic function).
- administering the community and organising the pastoral mission of the Church (royal function).

This ministry is for the good and the service of the people (many a time John Paul II has reminded us of that). It guarantees the unity of the Church, the authenticity and infallibility of the Church’s faith and directs us towards the plenitude of the love of God.

### **To be a Community**

23. Today, the Church, with its different vocations, must do all that is possible to put itself at the service of Christ in his love for the people of the Sea, their families and their countries. Our vocations and our callings are different but to be faithful to the mission of the Church we need each other.

24. We must let ourselves be assembled by the Good Shepherd to “form the Church”, to “be a community”, with the ideals of the first christian community : “they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.” (Act 2, 42). No baptised person can do without a community.

25. In his apostolic exhortation “*Christi Fideles Laici*”, John Paul II insists on the co-responsibility of the laity in the mission of the church. Thinking more particularly of *Apostolatus Maris*, I shall retain two main aspects :

- One must live the Gospel by serving people and society, and
- the promotion of human dignity. (Nr 37).

It is interesting to put these two paragraphs in relation with Nr 8 of the encyclical "Laborem exercens".

"Appropriate associations can develop a clearer conscience of the worker's rights, thus allowing them to have an influence on their conditions of work, remuneration and social legislation."

26. Our missionary aim is also one of social development. Our missionary effort must favour "association". We must :

- look for social trends which are found in groups and encourage all that is positive.
- help to accede to better conditions of existence.
- not jump stages but rather go step by step.
- widen our horizons and favour community-projects.
- work together with government officials, bearing in mind that all collective action has a political dimension.
- be ready to welcome foreigners who make us aware of the needs of other nations and who may at the same time help us with new ideas and techniques.

27. Let us not forget the work done in Dar-Es-Salaam in 1985. There, we tried to adapt to the maritime world the fundamental rights of the human person. There is a gap which exists between these fundamental rights and the way in which legislations have been passed. Bridging this gap must be done if the seafarers' dignity is to be recognised by the companies and the states.

### **Living the Council**

28. *Apostolatus Maris* is a part of the general Apostleship of the Church. I am convinced that our maritime dioceses must intensify their collaboration in A.M. as in other sectors, and in doing so, all our pastoral work will be revitalised. May the Lord help us widen our horizons. May He give us the strength and the means to put into practice what He has inspired us, May He himself be "the Way, the Truth and the Life" which will lead us always.

29. We pray Mary, Mother of the Church, Star of the Sea, 25 years after the final session of the Vatican II Council. Today more than ever, we have to understand and develop the teachings of the Council. This quest is essential for the spiritual combat we are leading in the world for the Glory of God and for the happiness of humanity.

Thank you for having listened to me and I wish you every success in your undertakings.

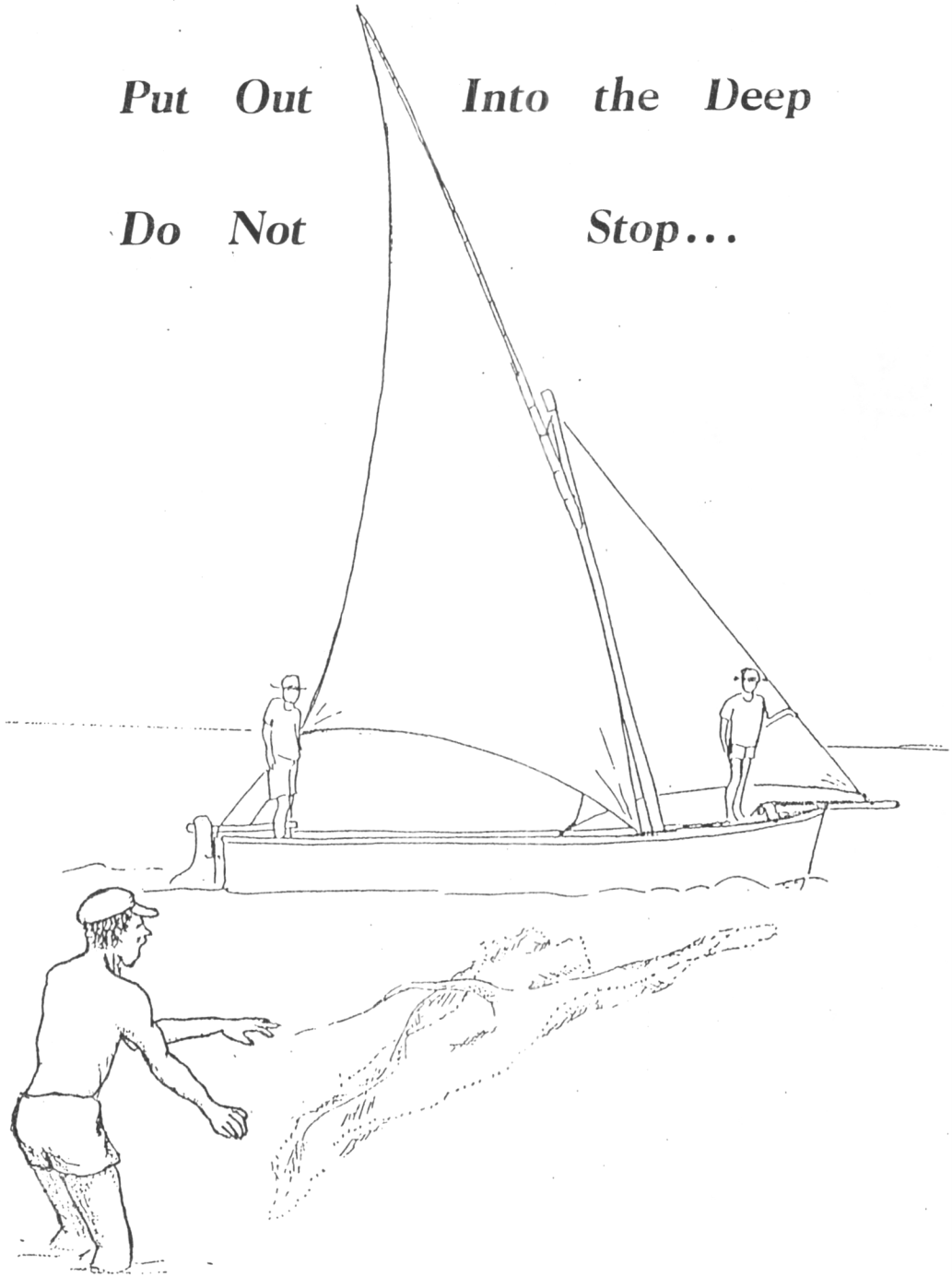
**Gilbert AUBRY**  
*Bishop of Reunion*

*Put Out*

*Into the Deep*

*Do Not*

*Stop...*





# FUTURE PROSPECTS

*THE FUTURE PROSPECTS WERE WORKED OUT FROM OBJECTIVES WHICH WERE AGREED UPON BY EACH DELEGATION AND IN RELATION WITH EACH COUNTRY'S POSSIBILITIES*

## MADAGASCAR

### **Evangelisation :**

- Develop on board christian life by looking for seafarers able to become leaders on board, and give them the formation they need.
- Nourish the faith of the members of the AOS by regular prayer meetings.

### **Formation :**

Increase everybody's awareness (of Bishops, Priests and Local Christian Communities), of the situation people of the sea live in, and the problems of evangelisation among them, by calling various meetings to that end.

### **Solidarity :**

- Put life in and develop existing Associations.
- Help unemployed seafarers to get organised.
- Keep on and develop the Fishing Projects.
- Strive to promote the traditional fishing.
- Keep in contact with public and private organisations interested in the Development of people of the Third World.

### **Development of the Apostleship of the Sea**

- Help the Diego Suarez branch to get better structured.
- Extend AOS to new Ports (Tulear & Fort Dauphin).
- Intensify the coordination of our work by sharing experiences and publishing documents.
- Make an annual Budget in each Branch of AOS and at National level.

## MAURITIUS

### **A. Objectives :**

- Reflect upon and deepen the commitment to Apostolatus Maris.
- The formation of leaders on land and spiritual leaders at sea.
- Reaching a greater collaboration with Associations of Fishermen.
- Create a branch of AM at Rodrigues.
- Form an AM cell to study especially problems of welfare.
- Intensify associative life.
- The formation of women of the Maritime World.

- Develop our network of communication with some Ports like Taiwan, Singapore, Tamatave, Dar-es-Salaam, etc...
- Make a census of all people of the sea in Mauritius.
- Formulate prayers which can be used also with non christians.

**B. Means :**

- Look out for people who could join Apostolatus Maris.
- Publish a periodical bulletin.
- Make use of Mass Media.
- Share the findings of the Congress with clergy and people of Rodrigues.
- Build another Centre to welcome Seafarers in Port Louis.
- Get a means of transport.
- Collaborate with I.D.P., Institute for Progress & Development, for helping in the Formation.

**TANZANIA AND KENYA**

- Make the Apostleship of the Sea more known and recognised.
- Make a better use of Mass-media.
- Open branches in new areas : Tanga, Mwanza and Kigoma in Tanzania, Kisumu, Turkana, Garisa and Lamu in Kenya.
- Form Associations which will promote solidarity.

# RESOLUTIONS

*The following resolutions were adopted in general assembly :*

## **Evangelisation**

1. Promote christian life of seafarers, fishermen and their families.
2. To enhance visits to crewmembers of merchant and fishing vessels on board and ashore, their families and also to fishermen at stations of stay.
3. Help liberate the seafarers from their fears and in doing so, help them to fight for their rights and dignity.
4. Encourage a better understanding between different categories of persons on board.
5. Sensitize the maritime authorities and the agents about their responsibilities and about the difficult conditions experienced by the seafarers.
6. That each team of A.O.S. be a fraternal community, united to Jesus Christ and fed by His Word and that they be the witnesses of Christ in the maritime world.

## **Training and Formation**

1. For a commitment to be more productive, devotion and good work are not enough. Training is necessary at the religious, social and legal levels. The wives of seafarers and seafarers themselves, as well as other members of A.O.S. need to be trained for a better service to the seagoing community.
2. The wives of seafarers and fishermen are the backbone of the family and thus need special formation.
3. Seafarers must be spiritual leaders on board their ships and to be able to do it, they need prior training.
4. Regional and international cooperation is essential to produce prayer-books and other documents which are so necessary for celebration aboard and for the undertaking of spiritual life aboard and ashore.
5. Sharing documents and liturgical material between countries speaking different languages is essential to encourage celebrations and oecumenical efforts.

## **Solidarity**

1. People are often ignorant of the problems of the maritime world, with the help of the media, inform public opinion of the problems met by seafarers and their families.
2. Help develop friendship and good relations between seafarers and shore people.
3. Educate population to greater awareness and solidarity with the maritime world by promoting contacts and good relations with local and international media.
4. To foster good relations between members of the A.O.S. and members of other associations engaged in the maritime world.
5. To provide better assistance to seafarers and their families when they are in difficult situations. The setting up of a special committee for their welfare should be considered.
6. Inform Chaplains of next ports of call of cases needing follow-up.

## **Development of A.O.S.**

1. To make A.O.S. better known.
2. To bring our seafarers' friends to A.O.S. and integrate fishermen including the traditional ones, in the A.O.S.
3. To recruit more voluntary members and workers for the A.O.S.
4. Revitalise existing centres and create new ones.
5. Include in the A.O.S. lake and river fishermen, establish A.O.S. centres in all villages, parishes and Dioceses where fishermen live and work.
6. To make available in English and French, the statutes of existing associations of fishermen, wives and families of seafarers and fishermen.



# CLOSING SESSION

Wednesday 12/12/90

1. Speech of Father Legall
2. Speech of Father Tronche

*.. You are the salt of the earth...  
You are the light of the world..."*

(Matt 5 : 13, 14)



## 1. SOME BACKGROUND

(Family history... one needs to know it)

- First branch of *Apostolatus Maris* in Glasgow, Scotland, in 1891. Launched by Fr. P. Egger, S.J.
- In the course of two years, 200,000 seafarers become members. Br. Daniel Shields is in charge.
- April 22, 1922, the Rules and Regulations of *Apostolatus Maris* (international) are approved by the Vatican.

Pie XI : “ *It is clear that such a noble enterprise, backed by the work of dedicated priests, whether will experience an over-expanding progression all along the shores of the two hemispheres* ”.

- From then on, A.M. becomes a world organisation for the care of seafarers, organisation where laymen have held an important role since the beginning.
- After the second world war which froze all activities, 80 *Stella Maris* centers were already existing. And the International Office settled from London to Rome.
- In 1957, the Vatican approved the new Rules and Regulations of A.M. There are two priests in charge in Rome then, one as the General Secretary and the other as International Patron; a Frenchman : Fr. Butel, and an Englishman : Mgr. Freyne ; Arthur Gamon, a layman, joined them.
- In 1970, A.M. becomes a Pastoral Structure of Universal Church through its integration within the Pontifical Commission which has become since 2 years, the Pontifical Council for the Care of Migrants and Itinerants.
- This means that each Episcopal Conference of a shoreline country must designate a Bishop as National Patron and a priest as National Director of A.M.
- The precise role of this Bishop and this Priest are clearly defined in an official document : “Norms for the Care of Seafarers and Navigants” of September 24, 1977, implemented in 1982.
- Today, *Apostolatus Maris* is recognised (Pastor Bonus) as an apostolic action : and in Rome, we study all possibilities that A.M. becomes more autonomous and enjoys of more liberty of initiative.

## 2. OEUCUMENICAL DIMENSION

- In Dar-Es-Salaam, Father Tronche works for merchant seafarers, operating from the Anglican Seamen’s Club in collaboration with “Missions to Seamen ”

- In Durban, Fr. Mackinnon cooperates with “British Sailors Society” and others.
- Recently, in Tamatave, Br. Yves met Lutherians of the town to study the possibility of a collaboration.
- And we have among us, discreet but attentive, Linda Petrucelli. And I have the pleasure of renewing once again in front of all of you our appreciation for her presence today and for having come from so far to join us and share in our proceedings.
- Almost all of us have heard about the “Seafarers Rights Center” in New York where Br. Pedro, a catholic, has been working with the Preacher Paul Chapman who has been recently replaced in this ministry.
- Everywhere around the world, in direct line with Vatican II, Bishops, priests, catholic seafarers, work closely with other christian Churches for the care of all seafarers of the world.

This collaboration among Churches which believe in God is not without difficulties at times, The main guidelines are to respect each other in our differences. It amounts to nothing to hasten christian unity through the multiplication of confusions and trying to proselyte. Forcing it not oecumenism.

I.C.M.A. (International Christian Maritime Association) has been created to this effect of respecting each other and A.M. is a founding member of I.C.M.A. The acting Chairman of the Standing Committee is Mgr. Kreiss, A.M. chaplain in Hamburg.

In ICMA, each Church keeps its own identity and responsibility. ICMA is here to facilitate a better collaboration among all Christian Churches for the care of seafarers, of all seafarers.

### **3. Apostolatus Maris is for Fishermen as well as Seafarers**

- Even if it is true that A.M. started in Glasgow with merchant seafarers, in France, at the same time, “Mission de la Mer” worked primarily with seamen-fishermen of St. Malo, Dieppe and Fecamp.
- And later, it was stated that *Apostolatus Maris* was an apostolic action for seafarers and fishermen.
- Today, there are many countries where A.M. works for both fishermen and seafarers : FRANCE, SPAIN, ITALY, PORTUGAL, POLAND, SENEGAL, IVORY COAST, CAMEROON, TANZANIA, MADAGASCAR, MAURITIUS, BRASIL, CHILI, U.S.A., COLOMBIA. And still more in South Africa and in Reunion island these last years.
- And this principle of opening towards fishermen must apply altogether to those of industrial fishing and traditional fishing sectors. We are responsible of the evangelisation of all people of the sea and their families.

This is no doubt a difference of A.M. with the other work of other christian, churches which did not deal with fishermen for a long time.

For us, catholics, A.M. cannot limit itself to the welcome of seafarers in ports, even if it is a very important dimension of A.M. : that of the foreign seafarer, especially when he is exploited or in difficulties far from his home-country. We should not also allege that taking care of fishermen does not leave time for seafarers, a not so easy task.

And all seafarers, including fishermen, particularly those of third world countries, have the right to the Love of the Church through A.M.

The setting up of associations and the launching of Development Projects for Traditional Fishing are a part of the mission of A.M., of the Church's mission. We must continue in bringing our contribution to the fundamental reflexion on "Evangelisation and Development".

We give to Denis Thion and Andre Descol of the C.C.F.D. this perspective so that they work in this direction on their part at the service of Church and seafarers of poor countries.

It is the unique mission of Church to unite all different activities of A.M. for seafarers. That is why that Bishops of shoreline dioceses of A.M., Bishops — national patrons and national directors of A.M. have a responsible authority towards the engagements of A.M. in one specific country.

#### **4. The Theme of Houston 92 " Christian Life on Board "**

I was telling you yesterday that each region will have to present a Report on this theme at the 19th World Congress in 1992, in the U.S.A. A report which will have to be written and sent to Rome well in advance. We have a little more than one year.

— What does it concern ?

##### **Ascertainments**

Seafarers spend less and less time in ports, and more and more time at sea, on their ship. Cruise durations, often for third world seafarers, are sometimes very long. They return to their country, family, only after 1, 2 or 3 years.

Crews are very often multi-cultural and multi-religious.

##### **Reflexion**

Seafarers beneficiate very little of the work of the Church of their own country. Port Chaplains and their teams have less and less time to take care of merchant seafarers. and it is worse for those of industrial fishing.

Seafarers are more and more left to themselves to live their Christian life on board.

Indeed, we all believe in the permanent aspect of the grace of Baptism, Confirmation, Marriage, for those who are Catholics (more than 40% of merchant seafarer at present).

This is the precise reason why some seafarers are true witnesses of human dignity and of the Gospel on their ships. Through their competence, their respectful and fraternal attitude towards all other members of the crew, their responsible attitude in the organisation of life on board, organisation of work, of community life, of spare time, they act as witnesses.

There are seafarers, many more than we may believe, who think much of a personal reading of the Bible. There are even some who organise group prayers on board their ship.

All of this said, there remains that we must find means to help seafarers renew themselves in their faith, make them become aware of the godly bountiful presence in them, of our Lord's call to love Him to be able to love and serve others with Him.

Marie Lucie has helped us, through her testimony, to understand the important part seafarers' wives can play in the support of the Faith of their husband.

We have been told about the care of *Apostolatus Maris* of creating and helping to encourage the growing up of seafarers' faith through Biblical index cards, a Gospel in Malagasy easy to read.

Gerard Tronche has given to us the monthly pamphlet through which he proposes to seafarers a daily and guided reading of the Bible.

Linda has told us how she tried to make all discover the unchanging dignity of every man through comic strips.

John has resumed his work in four words : presence, witnessing, announcing the Holy Word, follow-up.

But there remains much to be thought about on this theme, and above all, many missionary initiatives to be taken so that seafarers are the least cut from the Church which is present on land, and they should first of all be the living and present Church on their ships.

It is this effort which is offered to all of you as aim. Do not forget this in your conclusions.

**REGIONAL COORDINATOR'S ADDRESS TO PARTICIPANTS  
AT THE END OF THE CONGRESS**

Wednesday 12/12/90

Dear Friends,

When rereading my first draft of this address, I realised I was starting another conference about Church, Associations, Coordination, etc... We had a much better one with the paper of Bishop Aubry !

I'll try to keep to the point.

“Nothing is perfect” as we noted some other time, but I am convinced we have all contributed to the best of our ability to the Congress by preparing good reports, bringing them, discussing them, working and praying in such a fraternal atmosphere.

I know that Robert has put the best of his knowledge and experience to make it work, leading us from synthesis and objectives through to resolutions...

I know also that the preparation of the congress and these six days have taught me a lot about Apostolatus Maris and the Maritime World of our Region.

Coordination in the Region is seen by most of you as being of some importance. It is but the first level of communication and sharing, of a network which has to have also its world wide international level, within the Church, with Non Governmental Organisations and with World Maritime organisation, (recall our resolutions). This Regional Coordination is not easy, costly in terms of time as well as money... With your help it is possible to improve it.

Reports were hinges between past experience and our congress. Objectives and resolutions are the hinges between the congress and the task ahead of us, short term and long term. If the seed of this congress is to bear fruit it has to be put into the ground *as soon as possible*, no procrastination... and it has to be watered with *Prayer and Perseverance*. It is not enough to go with a good boat, a good engine and a good fishing gear, if you want to come back with fish, you have to work and sweat.

Will you please send to me as soon as possible the answer of each country to the request of François. In due time we shall have a restricted meeting to write up our regional contribution to the 1992 A.M. World Congress, and decide of the composition of our delegation.

I will not offer a “best participant certificate” to any national delegation or participant of this Congress. But I am sure we have all highly appreciated the active presence among us of the two bishops who have led the Malagasy and Tanzanian delegations. We are all grateful for it.

To conclude, I invite you to pray with me :

*“ Bless O Lord all who sail in ships, boats and canoes. Preserve them for Yourself. Bless all who serve them, and lead us all into your Kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord ”.*

*Amen.*

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## PRESS RELEASE

Officials of the Apostleship of the Sea in the Indian Ocean Region met in Mauritius for their 4th Regional Congress while the press informed the nation of another tragedy at sea. Indeed, three families of seamen-fishermen have been struck by this dramatic event, and through them, the whole community of People of the Sea. Last Sunday, at the seafarers' mass at the Immaculée Conception, women afflicted with mourning : the wives of the three missing fishermen of the REEF ; one with her baby in her hands, carried offerings which they remitted to Cardinal Margéot for the Eucharist.

On this occasion, the Apostleship of the Sea Congress wishes to renew a call to all partners of the fishing industry in the Indian Ocean

- To government authorities
- to maritime authorities
- to ship owners
- to crew members
- to the public opinion

Because the life of one man is much too precious for God and his family, we have the duty to do all that is possible to promote safety at sea for sea workers. Dangers of the sea are such that we cannot pretend avoiding them all. However, all technical and material precautions must be put at the service of man in order to protect his life.

If we wish to succeed in a true social and economic development in our countries, man and his safety must surpass all other considerations, and thus, we call for more awareness concerning safety at sea for seamen and fishermen.



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