

Press Release

The Apostleship of the Sea



Apostleship of the Sea and Western Union support seafarers to send money back to their loved ones.

June sees the start of the new school year in the Philippines. For Apostleship of the Sea (AOS) chaplain Paul Atkinson working at the Port of Tyne, this means frequent trips to the local Western Union outlet to accompany seafarers to organise money transfers back to their loved ones at home.

Paul has visited the Philippines several times and knows the country well. He explains that education is highly valued. Filipino citizens who seek work overseas share the dream of providing a good education for their children so that they in turn find well-paid jobs abroad and send money home to support the family. But a good education is not cheap. In addition to enrolment fees, there are uniforms to be bought. Even the poorest school takes pride in its pupils being smartly dressed. This is why so many Filipino citizens choose a life of hardship working on the high seas to earn money to send back home to provide for their children's education.

AOS chaplains are on hand to listen to seafarers as they talk about their families and their hopes and fears. They also provide practical services, such as in this instance, transport to local money exchange facilities. In addition to this AOS chaplains work hard to integrate seafarers into the community and work with surrounding businesses. Thanks in part to the number of customers brought in to the local Western Union by Paul, the outlet named The Money Shop in South Shields was recently awarded a prize for growth. Manager Linda Thomson says

"Paul certainly helped to put us up there. We really enjoy his visits and the Filipino people he brings in seem to hang on his every word. He is obviously really caring and always goes the extra mile for people. We think he's lovely."

Our congratulations to Linda and her staff on their prize. For Paul, it is all in a day's work which he describes as "small things that touch people's lives in big ways".



Paul Atkinson, Chaplain to the Port of Tyne

-Ends-

Further information for Editors

The Apostleship of the Sea, AOS, is a maritime welfare charity, providing practical and pastoral support to seafarers, regardless of race, colour or creed (if any).

Ninety percent of world trade is carried by ship, and some 100,000 seafarers visit British ports each year. They are commonly away from home for nine to 12 months at a time, suffering loneliness, depression and even exploitation. They also have to work in gruelling and often dangerous conditions. AOS chaplains and ship visitors welcome seafarers to our shores. They recognise them as brothers with an intrinsic human dignity which can be overlooked in the modern globalised maritime industry. For more information visit www.apostleshipofthesea.org.uk

For further information about the work and vision of AOS please contact Sheila Bailey Director of Fundraising and Communications Tel: 0771 286 4747
sheilabailey@apostleshipofthesea.org.uk