

Press Release

The Apostleship of the Sea



Cruise Chaplaincy is Vital to Help Maintain the Catholic Faith

On Wednesday 22nd September, at Westminster Cathedral, Apostleship of the Sea (AoS) organised an awareness day to promote their cruise chaplaincy programme. Seven priests who will be undertaking cruise chaplaincy over Christmas on P&O cruise ships met together to discuss the benefits of their work and the possible difficulties they will experience whilst at sea, especially over the Christmas period which can be very lonely for seafarers away from family and loved ones.

For cruise chaplains the focus of their work is centred on the crew of these ships, away from home for up to 9 months, working long hours, seven days a week. Often the crew are glad to have an independent 'ear' to share their concerns and also pray and celebrate the sacraments. They also take Mass for passengers and lend a friendly ear to all who sail.

In 2009, AoS provided 174 days of cruise chaplaincy free of charge, the view is to expand this over the next few years. P&O cruise director Neil Oliver was himself present and described the research done surrounding the needs of cruise ship crew and the noted benefit P&O see to having a chaplain on board for both passengers and crew. This combined with the continual growth of people in the UK opting (in 2009 more than 1.5 million) with these numbers expected to continue to grow despite recession, support the need for Apostleship of the Sea to continue to provide cruise chaplains and to further grow their outreach.

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Further information for Editors

The Apostleship of the Sea, AOS, is a registered charity and an agency of the Catholic Bishops' Conferences of England & Wales and Scotland. It is wholly reliant on voluntary donations to continue its work. 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 - regardless of their colour, race or creed (if any) and provide them with pastoral and practical assistance. 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 or call Sheila Bailey, Director of Fundraising & Communications, on 0771 286 4747.