



MAY  
2020

# Stella Maris

SUPPORTING SEAFARERS AND FISHERS AROUND THE WORLD

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with Fr Colum Kelly

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## Stella Maris is a Catholic charity supporting seafarers worldwide.

We provide practical and pastoral care to all seafarers, regardless of nationality, belief or race. Our port chaplains and volunteer ship visitors welcome seafarers, offer welfare services and advice, practical help, care and friendship.

Stella Maris is the largest ship visiting network in the world, working in 332 ports with 227 port chaplains around the world. We also run 53 seafarers' centres around the world.

We are only able to continue our work through the generous donations of our supporters and volunteers.

➤ To support Stella Maris with a donation visit [www.apostleshipofthesea.org.uk/ways-donate](http://www.apostleshipofthesea.org.uk/ways-donate)

### Stella Maris

39 Eccleston Square  
London, SW1V 1BX, United Kingdom

Tel: +44 020 7901 1931

Email: [info@apostleshipofthesea.org.uk](mailto:info@apostleshipofthesea.org.uk)

facebook.com/StellaMarisOrg

[www.apostleshipofthesea.org.uk](http://www.apostleshipofthesea.org.uk)

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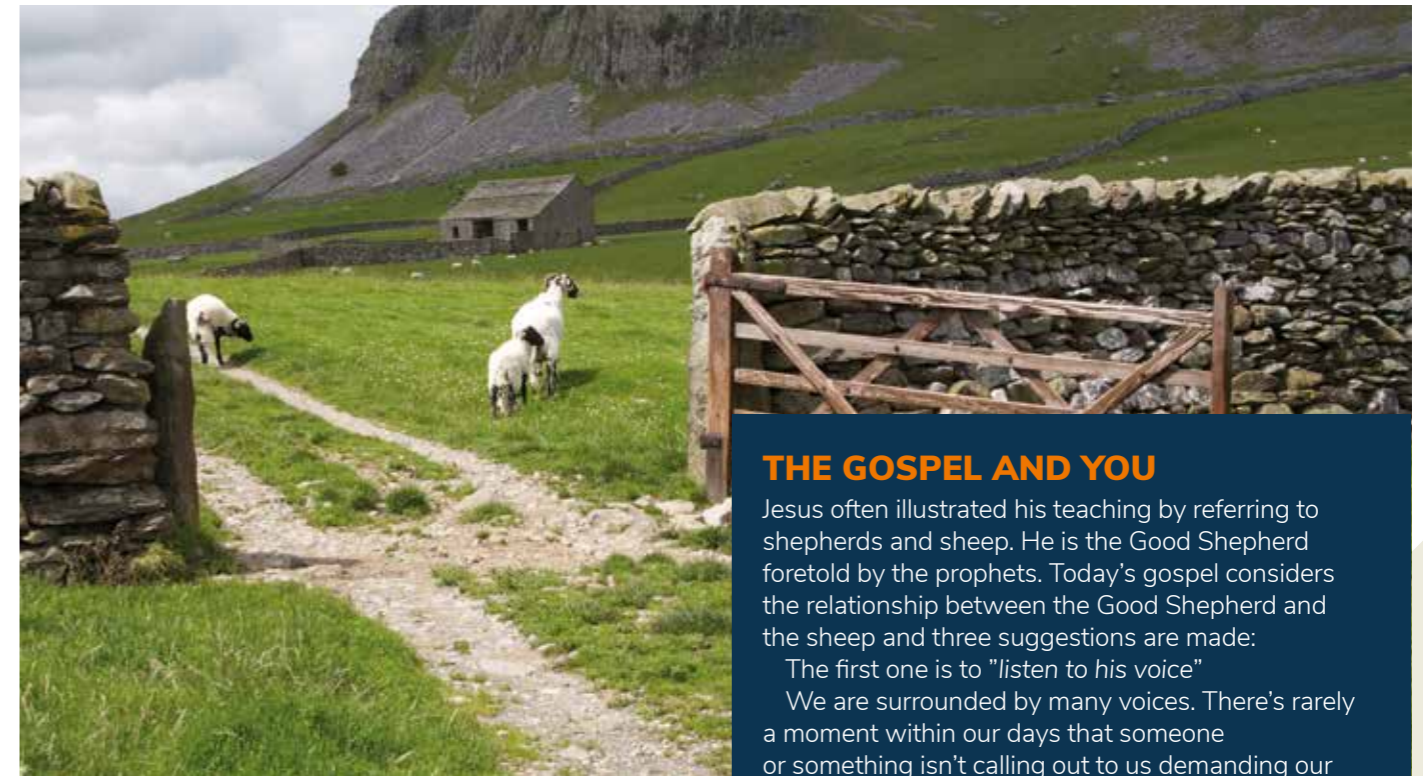
Stella Maris provides seafarers with practical support, information and a listening ear

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### THE GOSPEL AND YOU

Jesus often illustrated his teaching by referring to shepherds and sheep. He is the Good Shepherd foretold by the prophets. Today's gospel considers the relationship between the Good Shepherd and the sheep and three suggestions are made:

The first one is to "listen to his voice"

We are surrounded by many voices. There's rarely a moment within our days that someone or something isn't calling out to us demanding our attention.

Some voices promise us a wonderful life if we do this or buy that, others threaten us. Some voices call us towards hatred, bitterness and anger, while others call us towards love, graciousness, and forgiveness.

Which is the voice of God? How do we recognise God's voice among and within all the others?

The voice of God is recognised in what calls us to go beyond what we consider to be our limits. It calls us to holiness, to humility to complete selflessness in the presence of the one in need.

Secondly know that we are called «by our name». What a beautiful thing that God knows us by our precious name. By knowing our name he responds to our most profound yearnings, our deepest needs.

Finally our shepherd calls us to «follow him». Such following comes from trust. Our relationship with Jesus doesn't come from nowhere. It begins within us in fragile and simple ways. At first it may be just a desire, often surrounded by doubts and questions. But at some point it decisively marks our lives and defines who we are.

May I divert from John and pose a question.

Shepherds are such important figures throughout scripture. Moses was a shepherd. David was a shepherd. Jacob was a shepherd. Scripture refers to God's people, like today, as his flock. Shepherds were the first to hear the news of the birth of Jesus. Jesus referred to himself as the "Good Shepherd. But when it comes to choosing his disciples, there were no shepherds mostly fishermen.

What was it about fishermen that Jesus saw as vital in the inauguration of the kingdom?

People of the sea, rejoice!

## Sunday at Sea with Fr Colum Kelly

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER  
3 MAY 2020

### GOSPEL JOHN 10:1-10

Jesus said: 'I tell you most solemnly, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold through the gate, but gets in some other way is a thief and a brigand. The one who enters through the gate is the shepherd of the flock; the gatekeeper lets him in, the sheep hear his voice, one by one he calls his own sheep and leads them out. When he has brought out his flock, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow because they know his voice. They never follow a stranger but run away from him: they do not recognise the voice of strangers.'

Jesus told them this parable but they failed to understand what he meant by telling it to them.

So Jesus spoke to them again: 'I tell you most solemnly, I am the gate of the sheepfold.

All others who have come are thieves and brigands;

but the sheep took no notice of them. I am the gate.

Anyone who enters through me will be safe: he will go freely in and out

and be sure of finding pasture.

The thief comes

only to steal and kill and destroy.

I have come so that they may have life

and have it to the full.'



## FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

10 MAY 2020

### GOSPEL JOHN 14:1-12

Jesus said to his disciples:

'Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God still, and trust in me.

There are many rooms in my Father's house; if there were not, I should have told you.

I am going now to prepare a place for you, and after I have gone and prepared you a place, I shall return to take you with me;

so that where I am you may be too.

You know the way to the place where I am going.'

Thomas said, 'Lord, we do not know where you are going, so how can we know the way?' Jesus said:

'I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.

No one can come to the Father except through me.

If you know me, you know my Father too.

From this moment you know him and have seen him.'

Philip said, 'Lord, let us see the Father and then we shall be satisfied.' 'Have I been with you all this time, Philip,' said Jesus to him 'and you still do not know me?

'To have seen me is to have seen the Father, so how can you say, "Let us see the Father"?

Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?

The words I say to you I do not speak as from myself: it is the Father, living in me, who is doing this work.

You must believe me when I say

that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; believe it on the evidence of this work, if for no other reason.

'I tell you most solemnly, whoever believes in me will perform the same works as I do myself, he will perform even greater works, because I am going to the Father.'

### THE GOSPEL AND YOU

In today's gospel we hear familiar and consoling words often read at funerals. "In my Father's house there are many dwelling places"- words of reassurance that bring comfort to those saddened by the death of a loved one. There are plenty of rooms for many different types.

One of his most stunning revelations is that God does not discriminate: "God lets his sun shine on the good as well as the bad." And if God showers love equally on the good and bad, then surely God showers love equally on those who are happy and those who are embittered, Such is the breadth of God's embrace in a love that is unconditional.

And this enormous spread of The Father's love is what lies behind the proclamation of Jesus "In my father's house there are many rooms," This is a statement about the width of God's embrace, not about the structure of a heavenly mansion. God's heart, as revealed by Jesus, is a wide one, capable of embracing immense differences.

The simple question is "how do we get there"? Jesus' answer states that Christian hope is not in a method, not in a procedure, but in the person of Jesus himself

"I am the way, the truth, and the life"

He didn't just offer to show the way, explain the truth, and give life. Jesus is the way. He has already travelled it before us and protects us by traveling beside us. Jesus is the truth: One of the sayings that irk me most is when someone says "I have to speak my truth!" (I'm not sure what that even means but I digress...) Thankfully when there is need for discernment, the Holy Spirit helps us to identify and then abide in that truth. We can depend on Jesus to be the truth we are longing for.

Jesus is the life: In him, we discover our reason for living. Undeniably, life includes difficult periods of burden-bearing and cross-carrying.

It is little wonder that we hear these words when our loved ones pass from this life.

## SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

17 MAY 2020

### GOSPEL John 14:15-21

Jesus said to his disciples:

'If you love me you will keep my commandments.

I shall ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you for ever, that Spirit of truth

whom the world can never receive since it neither sees nor knows him, but you know him,

because he is with you, he is in you.

I will not leave you orphans;

I will come back to you.

In a short time the world will no longer see me; but you will see me,

because I live and you will live.

On that day

you will understand

that I am in my Father

and you in me and I in you.

Anybody who receives my commandments and keeps them

will be one who loves me;

and anybody who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I shall love him and show myself to him.'

"the Spirit of truth"



### THE GOSPEL AND YOU

In our gospel reading we find ourselves with a very sad group of disciples as they realise his time with them is coming to an end.

Endings are never easy because so much is uncertain of a future without a loved one who has to go on a new road or make a different voyage. For seafarers who have spent a couple of months at home, such departing brings much heartache. The long months ahead in dangerous waters are unpredictable.

Jesus is saying goodbye to his disciples. He sees them sad and upset, because soon they won't have him with them. Until now he has been the one who took care of them, defended them from the Scribes and Pharisees, sustained their weak and faltering faith, taught them the truth of God who loves them.

The disciples are called to do great works, just as Jesus has done. He will not leave them orphans, for he himself will ask the Father not to abandon them,

but to give them "another Advocate" that will always be with them. Jesus calls this advocate "the Spirit of truth".

Here things become a bit bewildering for a simple soul like me. So many comings and goings and strange new words – Spirit – Advocate.

This "Spirit of truth" is within each one of us, defending us from all that can separate us from The Lord. He invites us to open ourselves with simplicity to the mystery of a God who calls us into a new way of life. A life driven by his commandments. Whoever seeks this God with honesty and truth isn't far from the Kingdom.

Today truth is often difficult to discern We hear of fake news masquerading as truth, lies justified as strategy, exploitation is called sharp business practice.

It is naive of us to think that this didn't go on in the time of Jesus, but nevertheless we must do all we can to proclaim the truth!





## SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

24 MAY 2020

### GOSPEL John 17:1-11

They were yours and you gave them to me,  
and they have kept your word.  
Now at last they know  
that all you have given me comes indeed from you;  
for I have given them  
the teaching you gave to me,  
and they have truly accepted this, that I came  
from you,  
and have believed that it was you who sent me.  
I pray for them;  
I am not praying for the world  
but for those you have given me,  
because they belong to you:  
all I have is yours  
and all you have is mine,  
and in them I am glorified.  
I am not in the world any longer,  
but they are in the world,  
and I am coming to you.'

### THE GOSPEL AND YOU

Today's Gospel is part of a long prayer directed by Jesus to the Father. We find him situated somewhere between earth and heaven and between the Father and the disciples. Jesus prays for believers present and future that they may be strong in faith and that they remain as one.

Jesus is preparing his disciples for the time he will no longer be physically with them, and what a very human story of preparation that is.

This consideration is ever in the minds of those preparing for their departure whether from this life or departure from home and loved ones for a long time. The same question is ever in the mind of the seafarer about to leave home.

How will those left behind manage without us? But in a real sense they are always with us. Gradually we find new ways of being with the one who has departed. Something similar may be said about the early Christians dealing with Jesus being present to them in new ways. It involved a new, quite different way of being with Jesus in faith and discipleship.

I often think of my deceased parents whose love will always remain with me, and isn't it their very blood that still courses through my veins?

For Jesus, his life-giving spirit would forever enliven his followers. His leaving must be seen as something positive for until that time, the Spirit cannot come to live in them.

Soon the disciples will experience the end of Jesus' appearances. That will mark the completion of his life's mission on earth. So the new era of discipleship must first be clothed with the Holy Spirit before it can begin. The very absence of Jesus will make his followers grow in maturity for he leaves them sealed with his Spirit to promote in them a growth that is in every sense a new beginning.

## PENTECOST SUNDAY

31 MAY 2020

### GOSPEL JOHN 20:19-23

In the evening of the first day of the week, the doors were closed in the room where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews. Jesus came and stood among them. He said to them, 'Peace be with you,' and showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were filled with joy when they saw the Lord, and he said to them again, 'Peace be with you.'

'As the Father sent me,  
so am I sending you.'  
After saying this he breathed on them and said:

'Receive the Holy Spirit.  
For those whose sins you forgive,  
they are forgiven;  
for those whose sins you retain,  
they are retained.'



“May the Spirit of Pentecost cleanse, transform and refresh us all”

### THE GOSPEL AND YOU

I remember a few years ago a young lad in primary school describing the Holy Spirit as the one without the beard.

I knew what he meant for our churches are full of pictures or icons of Father and Son, invariably with beards. So at least there are images on which we can focus. Not so with the Spirit where the most we can expect is an image of a dove or a flame. Both of these have their origins in scripture, the Spirit descending on Jesus at his Baptism in the form of a dove and coming on the disciples in tongues of fire.

There are several reasons why we should never forget the Spirit. On the eve of the Passion, he promised to send the Spirit to the disciples. In fact, he took pains to emphasise the importance of the Spirit's role, helper, counsellor, teacher, a Spirit of wisdom. Another reason for acknowledging the Spirit is the example of the early Christians. Before his coming they were timid and afraid, huddling together away from the public in fear of their lives. When the Spirit came

among them in a miraculous blast of wind, and fire, they were completely transformed.

“They were all filled with the Holy Spirit.” So the Spirit is one of transformation, with the ability to root out, to change and to raise us to new levels of self-belief. I vividly remember the day I felt I had grasped this aspect of the life of the spirit. I was sat on a rock above a cave in beautiful Donegal, enjoying the warmth of the sun, mesmerised by the sound of the incoming tide. The beach below was covered in pebbles, small stones and as the tide rushed in, I could hear the loud hiss of it caressing yet disturbing every one of the thousands of small stones. As the tide rushed away again, nothing was exactly as before.

And isn't that the work of the Spirit within us, entering, cleansing every corner of our being leaving nothing untouched.

May the Spirit of Pentecost cleanse, transform and refresh all of us with confidence in the God who is always with us.



# KAOHSIUNG, TAIWAN

➤ **The port of Kaohsiung in Taiwan is listed as one of the 10 busiest ports in the world. Around 200 cargo ships and fishing vessels dock in Kaohsiung port daily.**

Taiwan also has the world's second largest long-distance fishing fleet with over 1,100 vessels. Around 30,000 foreign fishermen are employed in Taiwan fishing vessels. Most of them from South East Asian Countries (Indonesia, the Philippines and Vietnam).

The Stella Maris-AOS Kaohsiung has been present in the port of Kaohsiung to render service to seafarers and fishermen since 1971. It was established by an American Jesuit Chaplain, Fr. Joseph B. Donahue, S.J. (1915-1991) and in 1996, the Stella Maris Center was entrusted to the Missionaries of St. Charles Borromeo (Scalabrini Fathers), a congregation entirely dedicated to the service of migrants, seafarers and refugees.

Stella Maris renders various services especially for fishermen in Kaohsiung. We conduct regular ship visits and in 2019, visited more than 800 fishermen. The long line fishing vessels will dock in the port twice a year for a period of more or less a month. In our ship visits, we listen to their stories and at the same time, we want to find out what kind of services are best

for them when they are at the port. Many fishermen want to know their rights and the regulations on fishing in Taiwan. We try to help them when they have complaints related to their work. As port chaplains, we also offer spiritual assistance for the fishermen. We celebrate masses either in the fishing vessel or in the Marine Biro building. Almost every Friday we celebrate mass exclusively for the fishermen. We are privileged to have the land-based Filipino and Indonesian migrants who assist us in our masses and ship visits. Besides masses, we are available for confessions. Many fishermen practice their faith as they dock in the port.

For their wellness and mental health, Stella Maris Kaohsiung organizes activities such as visiting the interesting places of Southern Taiwan. Many fishermen expressed

their desire to visit some beautiful places in Taiwan just to refresh their minds. Secondly, we organize sports contest with small prizes for the winners. Last year, several teams from different fishing vessels participated the event. More than 80 fishermen came to cheer their team. Thirdly, we organise social nights in the Stella Maris Center with a BBQ, karaoke or simply spending time together. We are happy to have many fishermen come to our Center every Saturday evening.

Some fishermen have been in trouble. We visit, listen to them and give them necessary counselling and connect them with their families. We give updates about their situations in the prison and to the detained fishermen, we share the news from their families. It is one of the significant experiences of the Stella Maris Kaohsiung.



**Stella Maris Seafarers Centre:**  
37 Lai Nan Street, Yancheng District,  
Kaohsiung, 803, Taiwan

**Tel. No.:** +886 7 533 1840  
**Website:** <http://aos-khh.weebly.com/>



## FOOD SAFETY

➤ **A ship's engine may run on fuel oil, but the crew runs on food. Like the engine's fuel supply, the crew's food must be safe and be of the right quality. A recent outbreak of listeriosis in South Africa, reportedly killed almost 200 people and serves as a timely reminder that prevention is better than cure when dealing with food safety.**

Poor food safety management through improper storage, preparation and handling can result in food poisoning. As well as the problems this causes to the individual crew member, a severe outbreak on board could affect the safe operation a vessel.

A ships' crew must be made aware of the steps that can be taken to reduce the risk of falling to foodborne illnesses.

### Common Illnesses

Most cases of food poisoning on vessels are caused by bacteria. Even where there are good standards of hygiene and food safety practices on board, the crew are also at risk of eating contaminated food whilst ashore. Some of the more common illnesses are outlined below.

### Listeriosis

Caught from eating food containing the listeria bacteria, it is most often caused by eating contaminated ready-to-eat meat products and unpasteurised dairy products. Symptoms are flu-like and include high temperature, vomiting and diarrhoea. A healthy person typically does not need medical treatment and symptoms will usually go away within a few weeks.

### Salmonella

Salmonella bacteria live in the gut of many farm animals; therefore salmonella is caught from eating contaminated eggs, poultry and other animal products. Symptoms include nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, fever, headache and diarrhoea.

### E-Coli

A bacterial infection caused mainly by the E. coli O157 strain, found in the gut and faeces of many animals, particularly cattle and sheep. Most often associated with fresh fruit and vegetables, undercooked meat and unpasteurised dairy products. Symptoms include nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, fever, headache and diarrhoea.

### Cholera

Outbreaks of Cholera usually occur where there is poor sanitation. It is mostly caused by contaminated water and food including rice, vegetables and seafood. Symptoms

include vomiting, diarrhoea and abdominal pain which can result in severe dehydration.

### Norovirus

Usually associated with cruise ships or densely populated buildings, Norovirus is a common stomach bug which usually clears within a few days. Typically spread by close contact with an infected person, touching contaminated surfaces or eating food that has been prepared by an infected food handler. Symptoms include nausea, extreme vomiting, watery diarrhoea and abdominal pain.

### Practical Steps to Safer Food

Simple steps will help ensure food and water on board is safe and remains safe. This is particularly important for those preparing and handling food on a daily basis. The World Health Organization (WHO) has issued valuable advice on food safety and identified 'five keys to safer food'. These can form the basis of a vessel's food safety management system.

- **"Keep clean"**: wash your hands before handling food, during food preparation and after going to the toilet.
- **"Separate raw and cooked"**: store raw and cooked foods separately and use separate equipment, cutting boards and utensils.
- **"Cook thoroughly"**: especially meat, poultry, eggs and seafood. When reheating food do so thoroughly.
- **"Keep food at safe temperatures"**: avoid leaving foods at room temperature, refrigerate cold foods and cooked warm foods hot.
- **"Use safe water and raw materials"**: only use safe water, wash fruits and vegetables before eating and don't use food beyond its expiry date.

If a crew member thinks they have become ill through food or water contamination, they must report it. They should keep hydrated and follow any medical advice given. It is important to determine what food and drinks they have taken so the source of the illness can be identified. Avoid contact with other crew and foodstuffs in order to contain the illness and prevent an outbreak.

By Holly Hughes – Courtesy of North Global Service





# SAINT PETER – PATRON OF SAILORS AND FISHERMEN

➤ **Simon, whom our Lord nicknamed Cephas (Peter), the Rock, was a successful fisherman in Bethsaida. He was married and lived with his wife and mother-in-law in what might have been a sizeable house, perhaps (in the manner of the times) with a courtyard and separate kitchens. We might speculate that he was a junior partner in Zebedee's business, which employed many fishermen including his brother, Andrew, and the sons of Zebedee, James and John. With these two brothers, he seems to form an inner circle within the twelve, as together they witness the key moments in Jesus' ministry.**

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Was Jesus' nickname for Simon a little gentle fun? After all, Simon was known to be volatile, to be bold, courageous but sometimes unthinking – not exactly a rock upon which a Church could be built. But this is God's way, not ours. He turns impossible situations into something quite different; he converts the questionable into good; this we can see throughout the Old Testament and the New.

Simon Peter clearly possesses the qualities Jesus is looking for – boldness and determination. But first, those characteristics have to be tamed and controlled throughout the course of Jesus' ministry. "But who do you say that I am?" Jesus asks his disciples, and it is Simon Peter who blurts out "The Christ of God" (Lk 9:20). And in the gospel of Matthew, Peter declares "You are the Christ...the Son of the living God". Jesus replies "You are Peter and on this rock I will build my Church" (Mt 16:17, 18). So far, so good; later, however, Peter remonstrates with Jesus: "God forbid, Lord! This shall never happen to you". "Get behind me, Satan! You are an obstacle in my path..." (Mt 16:22, 23). Satan is the obstructor, he who tries to place obstacles between us and God. He is rather clever at making us do this work for him, and, often, do it unthinkingly or even willingly. But Peter's woes are not yet over, his bitterest pill is not swallowed until the last moment. "I will never lose faith" Peter declares. "Before the cock crows, you will have disowned me three

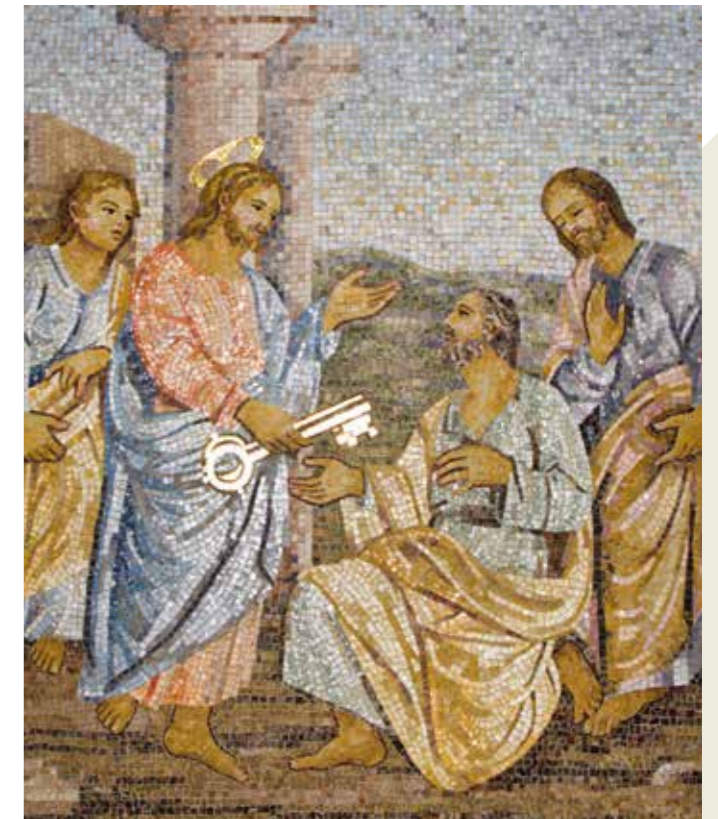
times" Our Lord replies (Mt 26:33, 34). And of course, a little later, Peter does precisely what Jesus predicts. On hearing the crowing of the morning cockerel, "he went outside and wept bitterly" (Mt 26:75). All of us, in some way or another, have our Peter moments, do we not?

And Peter's training continued to the very end. Doubtless the other disciples were very grateful to Peter for expressing the doubts they had, the convictions they had, because it is always good to leave that sort of thing to others in case the idiot in oneself is laid bare for all to see. Peter's boldness and emphatic determination were the qualities, properly controlled, that the early Church would so desperately require.

Peter must have been well known to Jesus before his three-year ministry began; Andrew too. After all, their fellow-workers, James and John, were cousins of our Lord. It was just that, until John the Baptist pointed out to Andrew that Jesus was the one they ought to follow, they had not quite seen Jesus in that light. So often we need to be nudged in the right direction.

Our Lord was able to use St Peter as an example throughout his ministry: his reactions to circumstances and what was said were invaluable teaching aids; and his strengths and weaknesses were essential ingredients in the instruction of the others. Only after this sometimes gruelling apprenticeship could Peter stand with his fellow apostles and preach with utter confidence and conviction: "Men of Judaea, and all you who live in Jerusalem, make no mistake about this, but listen carefully to what I say... God raised this man Jesus to life, and all of us are witnesses to that...For this reason the whole House of Israel can be certain that God has made this Jesus whom you crucified both Lord and Christ" (Ac 2:14f).

The Rock upon which the Church was built disappears from Luke's account of the early Church in the Acts of the Apostles with the words "Then he left and went to another place" (Ac 12:17). He does, however, make a brief appearance at the Council meeting in Jerusalem (e15:6). It is probable that he founded the Church at Corinth and then travelled to Rome to continue his work,



where he was eventually imprisoned and subsequently crucified during the reign of Emperor Nero (54-68), in about 64. In Rome, according to tradition, he wrote the epistle we know as his first. There is a tradition that Mark's gospel was the fruit of his association with Peter in Rome. Peter and Paul are celebrated together on 29 June and the Feast of St Peter's Chair occurs on the 22 February.

Pray for those who deny what they really believe; pray for all fishermen. Pray for the Pope.

St Peter, pray for us.

By Julien Chilcott Monk – Courtesy of the Catholic Truth Society  
www.ctsbooks.org







**Stella Maris (“The Star of the Sea”)** has long been the favourite title by which people of the sea have called on Her in whose protection they have always trusted: the Blessed Virgin Mary. Her son, Jesus Christ, accompanied his disciples in their vessels, helped them in their work and calmed the storms. And so the Church accompanies seafarers, caring for the special spiritual needs of those who for various reasons live and work in the maritime world.

**Pope St John Paul II**



**STELLA MARIS**