



*The Master's Mariner*  
*December 2020*

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### *A Greeting from Rev Jay*

Dear MTS family,

Greetings from the Mission to Seafarers, Sydney, and seafarers around the world!

The year 2020 has been a tremendously challenging year! No lives have been left untouched or impacted by Covid-19. Yet by the sustaining grace of God and His mercies, we at the Mission to Seafarers, have sailed through this year safely and for that we give thanks and glory to God!



*Luke 2: 8-11*<sup>8</sup> And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. <sup>9</sup>An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup>But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. <sup>11</sup>Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.

### *Excerpts of a Christmas Message from Rev Canon Andrew Wright - Secretary General*

One of the most striking bits of the Christmas story are those shepherds out in the fields. Working men, perhaps even some women, while the town is bustling... rooms are unavailable... they are out there, rather isolated, and perhaps feeling rather forgotten. And yet, it is out there in the field, that the angels appear, singing peace on earth, good will to all people, good news. Well, good news has been in rather short supply for so many seafarers over these last months. Many, of course, have been working and continue to work, long beyond their contracts. Restrictions around shore leave, has made severe limitations on their freedoms, with all sorts of consequences. Many have been unable to access work or have lost work. This has brought tremendous fears, particularly around financial hardship. Many organisations, including the Mission to Seafarers, have been working to try to keep peace and hope alive, very much in the spirit of that Christmas story, to try and ensure that seafarers and their families are not forgotten... that they are at the frontline of feeling supported and valued. Through their heroic efforts during this pandemic, they have done amazing things for us. They need us to continue to try and do amazing things for them... a resolution to the crew change crisis... would be a proper angel's song for them and... we pray for it... All... at MTS want to thank you... for the support and friendship that so many of you have given... It is that which has made it possible for us to try and bring a measure of peace to those at sea, in whatever ways we are able... Happy Christmas.



## *From Quarantine to Nowhere by Jim Watt*

Seafarers who have been recently discharged from their ships in Sydney are presumably on their way home. They may have finished their quarantine in Australia, but they have not necessarily finished their stay. They may have to remain in their hotel for weeks afterward as their shipping agent tries to get them a flight or series of flights home. Flights are not in abundance in this time of COVID-19 and the quickest way home may entail a journey 3 times as long as before the arrival of the virus. This often does not help a seafarer's mental state, as they sweat it out in their hotel rooms, waiting to get word from the agent or home.

Thankfully, the mission is able to help. The Holiday Inn at Mascot is often one of their temporary residences. As we go to help a seafarer sometimes, we bump into other seafarers from different ships who are staying at the same hotel. This means that the single seafarers have other seafarers to share the journey with. This helps relieve some of the boredom and frustration. It also means that we can pick up a group of 5 or 6 seafarers and take them on a tour of the city along with some retail therapy. The magnificence of Sydney Harbour and the Opera House rekindle their spirits and checking out local souvenirs like boomerangs or getting the opportunity to get a fresh pair of Nikes brings a smile to their faces.

Another area that we have been able to help, is organising hotel food which caters to Asian palettes. The regular hotel menu is very Aussie and gets a bit monotonous for weeks when it is not to your normal taste. The Rev Tay knows an Asian cook who cooks all the Australian stuff but also Asian cuisine on request so that on the days he was working in the hotel, the seafarers who were sick of steak and chips could have some special fried rice or noodles. They could also bring their hot lunch into the mission and we would share a meal with them before they go out into the afternoon as eager tourists in our beautiful city.

One group of seafarers consisted of mainly Filipinos along with a lone Chinese

seafarer who couldn't speak a lot of English, in other words no English at all. Rev Tay had asked our volunteer EeSeh to come in so that there would be at least 2 Mandarin speakers with whom our guest could converse that day. That helped the group to connect across cultural divides and they went out to sightsee and shop, with EeSeh at the wheel. It helps when Rev Tay and EeSeh speak some Tagalog (Filipino) too. One of the seafarers was especially excited because he was flying home the next day to Manila. When I was dropping them off at the hotel that evening, he invited me to come into the hotel with him and his floormate, as the Chinese chef was on that night. He wanted to have a celebratory meal together, a feast of rice and noodles. They ordered 2 portions for each of us and I sat in amazement as these small, energetic men cleaned up 2 servings each. I barely survived the rice and definitely saved the noodles for another day. It was a joy to be able to eat with them, but a real downer when we learned the next day that his flight had been cancelled. Jorge was still with us and I think he suffered another flight cancellation before he finally made it home some 5 weeks after getting out of quarantine. During that time, his visa had lapsed, and I went to the hotel to help him fill out a visa application because English is not his first language. He was very grateful and insisted I hang out and share an Aussie dinner with him at the Holiday Inn. Had his previous flights gone ahead we wouldn't have had to go through this laborious process of ticking all the boxes but at least it provided another opportunity to show Jorge that he was not alone. His floormate had flown out at least a week before and he was doing it tough. Thankfully, it was only another few days before he was on a plane that actually took off from Sydney airport and he made it home at last. It is a privilege to be part of a group that is able to show these guys that their lives really do matter.

## Farewell and Welcome

It is with sadness that we farewell the Chairman of the Board of the Mission to Seafarers, Sydney NSW, The Reverend Philip Bradford, after an association with the mission of more than 25 years. Rev Bradford firstly became a member of the board but then quickly became Chairman and has been ever since. He has guided the mission through many and varied times, including, of course this very difficult past year of Covid-19.

The Archbishop of Sydney, The Most Rev Dr Glenn N Davies has written “Let me...say how grateful I am for your long and distinguished service to Mission to Seafarers. An important ministry in our Diocese, but one that is so easily overlooked by many. Philip, you have been a model of grace in all your ministry in the Diocese...and shown a loyalty to our Diocese that has earned you the respect that I and previous Archbishops have highly valued.”

The staff and members of the board of The Mission to Seafarers, Sydney NSW have also highly valued his faithfulness and the

wisdom that Philip has shown whilst serving with the mission over all these years. We do wish Philip and Rosemary God’s richest blessings as they continue to serve God wherever they are led. Thank you, Philip.

Of course, with the closing of one chapter another one is opened, and it is our great pleasure to announce the appointment of Mr Peter Janssen OAM. The Most Reverend Glenn Davies also warmly welcomed Peter to the role of chairman and said “...I am delighted that Peter Janssen has been nominated as Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Mission to Seafarers in Sydney and I heartily endorse his nomination.”

Peter has a wealth of experience with which to guide and lead us, he is an experienced not for profit Chair, and is passionate about serving the needs of seafarers. We are extremely grateful to him for being willing to take on this role and look forward to seeing where that will lead us. Welcome Peter.

## Certificate of Appreciation

The Nautical Institute held their awards night in November. The Rev Un Tay and Board member and Chairman of the Fund-Raising Committee, Mr John Bradley attended. They were grateful and delighted to receive Certificates of Appreciation. They were amongst several worthy recipients who received awards that night for their service to seafarers, particularly throughout the challenging times that Covid-19 has presented us with. At the same ceremony, the Merchant Navy Association presented them with a cheque to aid with continuing the provision of vital services to seafarers, for which again the Mission was very thankful.



# *Donations to the Mission to Seafarers, Sydney NSW*

As 2020 draws to a close, we look back over the year that none of us expected. A year bringing so many changes to all our lives. However, it has been wonderful to see that some things have remained constant - the generosity and faithfulness of our supporters. We thank God for each of you, who continue to give. Your words of support are a constant encouragement to all of us at the mission, and of course without your generous donations we would not be able to continue our vital work to the seafarers on whom we all rely. We would like to give particular thanks to some organisations who every year continue to support us:

- SBU, our major benefactor, providing both the centre that we operate in, and a large percentage of our running costs.
- NSW Ports
- Port Authority of New South Wales
- AMWS
- Merchant Navy Association
- ITF
- Sydney Pilots Association
- CMA CGM Group Agencies, Hapag Lloyd & MSC

And many others, too many to mention.

This year it has also been wonderful to welcome new supporters, including the Millers Point Monday Farmers Market, Engage Towage Sydney Pty Ltd & CSL Australia Pty Ltd, several churches, new individual supporters due to advertising on Hope 103.2, and those responding to our newsletter for the first time.

## **Volunteers – When once again possible**

We will be looking for volunteers to partner with us as:

- Drivers who have a Light Rigid vehicle license, to drive our small buses
- people to help with researching potential companies to partner with us financially

Please contact us if you would like to assist.



Once again, we thank each and every one of you, and we wish you all God's richest blessings over Christmas and 2021.

## **Sydney Mission to Seafarers**

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Tax deductible donations can also be made directly into our Bank Account:

**BSB 062 074**

**Account 1000 8062**

Cheques can be sent, however there may be a delay in processing as banking will only be done fortnightly.

As together we go through these troubling times, please continue to remember us and all seafarers in your prayers and financially through your donations, both regular and by creating a bequest through your will which is a special way you can continue to care for seafarers.

**Thank you, stay well and  
God bless you all.**