



The Master's Mariner
March 2021

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A Greeting from Rev Tay

Dear MTS family - The Message of HOPE!

A year ago, our Mission and seafarers went into lockdown due to the pandemic. Seafarers were confined to their vessels without shore leave and their contracts were extended from 9 months to 15 months and 18 months. Realising the unprecedented challenges they were facing, we shifted our focus from providing transport for them, from the Port to our Centre, to going out to purchase a wide range of items they need. This has been a great blessing to so many seafarers and helps to alleviate their anxieties, loneliness, fears, and promotes positive mental health. During Christmas until now, we have distributed over 900 gift packs to them. (Please refer to the article from Chaplain Jack Starmans, p 2 and Letters of Appreciation, p 4).

Despite the many months of doom and gloom, at this Easter time, we want to shift our focus to our Lord Jesus Christ, who through His sufferings and sacrifice on the cross, brings hope and healing to us. Over 2,000 years ago, God the Father sent His one and only Son to bear the sins of all mankind on the cruel cross of Calvary. The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ transcends life's circumstances and represents a historical marker that lies at the centre of everything we believe. And three days later, light overcame darkness and hope conquered fear as Jesus rose from the dead! Fast forward to today, and God is still on His throne weaving His redemptive threads through our lives. He loves you and has a unique plan for you.

For all of us affected by COVID-19, "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope." (Romans 15:13)

A prayer for the Isolated:

Father God,

I have never felt so alone. I could never have imagined facing something like this on my own and I'm afraid. Please remind me that you are with me. Allow me to feel your presence. Remind me that, as your child, you have not given me a spirit of fear. Remind me that I can trust you with whatever may come. Lord, this isolation is overwhelming. I know I could pick up the phone and call someone, but I don't want to be a burden. Please help me to have concern for others above myself. I know I'm not the only one feeling lonely, give me the courage to reach out and offer encouragement to others. In Jesus Name, Amen.



By Chaplain Jack Starmans

That's how it felt over the past twelve months. Our ministry, as Chaplains, has certainly changed since seafarers were barred from coming ashore-due to the virus. When we got the news, that seafarers were no longer permitted shore leave, we began to wonder how this would affect the Mission. Would we have to close? How long would the Mission be closed? Well, the answer came quickly, no we wouldn't have to close, but we'd change our operating hours, and the way we minister. No pick-ups, or return to port for our bus, but we would serve the seafarers in a different way. We would shop till we drop; that's how it has felt. We now take orders from the seafarers to buy from the shops for them. As they cannot physically do the shopping themselves, we do it for them. Trying to buy from emails, WhatsApp, and phone calls can be very frustrating. Like the computer I'm trying to buy for the captain of Seroja Enam - spent the last hour on the phone trying to track it down - it's out of stock - contacted captain to find an equivalent computer in another store - he will get back to me and hopefully, I'll be able to buy it - then deliver it to the ship. You thought your shopping was complicated! As there are a thousand different items they want; there are a thousand different stores to look for them. But so far, I have only talked about how the lock down has affected the mission. The most important point is how it has affected the seafarers. The fact that they have no shore leave and, that their contracts have been extended has been very stressful on them. But one little ray of sunshine has been our ability to shop for them. To see the smiles, and the appreciation, that they show when we deliver makes it all worthwhile.



This was a delivery of Christmas gift bags to the Orea, we delivered over three hundred of them during the Christmas season.

We also delivered 5kgs of Aussie beef to them. As you can see it looks really good on the mess table, thanks to Cookie.

Fifty kgs of meat were donated by Young Shipping Australia, which we delivered to various vessels. From crispy cream donuts to lap top computers, and everything in between, we have and will continue to take them to the ships, God willing. So, we continue to minister to seafarers, though differently than in the past. We will caringly and compassionately continue to serve those who serve us.



The Mission to Seafarers is active across all nations - some excerpts taken from the Australian edition of The Guardian

The crew of an oil tanker who have not set foot on dry land for nearly four years after being abandoned on board their ship, which later ran aground off the United Arab Emirates, are finally going home to see their families. The seafarers, who said they experienced “living



hell” on board the 5,000-ton MT Iba after the tanker’s owner hit financial problems and stopped paying salaries almost three years ago, have been given a settlement for wages owed to them. They hope to be repatriated in March.

The five-man crew had a brief and emotional trip to dry land to meet with representatives of Alco Shipping, the vessel’s owner, on the beach at Umm Al Quwain, on Monday. Two cheques from a new buyer, Shark Power Marine Services, were handed over to the

crew via the **Mission to Seafarers** charity, which has been negotiating on their behalf. They agreed to accept \$165,000 ... in unpaid wages, around 65% to 70% of the wages they were owed ... Nay Win, the 53-year-old chief engineer, who is from Myanmar, said: “The buyer has promised us we will get home and I hope I will get home after 5 March. My family are really happy.”

Win and Riasat Ali, a 52-year-old second engineer from Pakistan, have been on board since July 2017. Monchand Sheikh, 26, a cook from India, joined in late 2018, while Vinay Kumar, 31, another second engineer, and Nirmal Singh-Bora, 22, both from India, joined in late 2019. The Rev Andy Bowerman, Mission to Seafarers regional director in the Middle East and south Asia, said: “Hopefully, all being well, 15 days from now, they will be at the port of Dubai and ready to go home.” It was an emotional meeting at the beach, Bowerman said, marking the first time some of the seafarers had been ashore in almost four years.

“The crew came off and swam to the shore. Nay Win was in tears. He was off the boat, there was a cheque in my hands. But unfortunately, they could not just step down and go home.” The seafarers have agreed to stay on to do essential work on the ship before it is towed to Dubai, where they will wait 15 days for legal work on the sale of the vessel to be completed. They will then be paid the other half of the money they are owed, and repatriated.

A spokesperson for the UAE Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure said the authorities were helping the seafarers renew passports via their embassies, so they could be quickly repatriated. The crew will require a PCR Covid-19 test and will be allowed to fly if the test is negative; otherwise, arrangements will be made for quarantine. Asked why the UAE is the worst country for seafarer abandonment, according to a database run by the International Maritime Organization, the spokesperson said that it was a busy maritime hub, with 20 active ports, and that more traffic led to more cases. New legislation that would allow the port to arrest an abandoned ship and auction it without the involvement of the courts was not yet in place. Mohamed Arrachedi, Arab World and Iran Network coordinator for the International Transport Workers’ Federation (ITF) said the long-running case of the Iba was a “symptom that something very wrong exists and has to change”.

“The seafarers are the workforce that keeps ships at sea. Their rights, wellbeing, wages, conditions and welfare must be at the centre of priorities.” - This statement is extremely applicable in Australia as well. **The work of the mission must continue.**

Letters of Appreciation

It is wonderful when we are sent letters and photos from the crew expressing their appreciation for the shopping and services that the staff of the mission have provided. Please enjoy reading a few of these and know that this is what your generous donations are making possible.

"Sailing in the morning, the network is not good, I haven't opened your chat record yet, but I already feel your care for our crew. Thousands of miles away from home, living in a foreign country, you make our crew feel warm. Yesterday's gift is also very good, thank you."



Thank you so much all of you for not forgetting us. When all world is forgetting. It doesn't matter big or small anyone likes to have a gift. And especially when we are all alone. Now we feels: **WE ARE NOT ALONE.** Thank you Mission to Seafarers, Sydney

Thank you for everything! I was not expecting this Much appreciated, Seafarers

Good evening, It's Chief Officer M. V MAJD received your compliments for crew and distributed to all crew today. All on board crew place great thanks for your valuable compliments



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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.

PLEASE CONTRIBUTE TO OUR EASTER APPEAL

and 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.