



inside: Adventure Race Japan 2025 raises
\$1.85 million in aid of seafarer welfare

Seafarers Awards



Twenty Twenty Five
Singapore

The Mission to Seafarers invites the maritime community to join us on this special evening to recognise the role seafarers play in our everyday lives.

The award categories are:

Seafarer Award / Cadet Award / Shore-based Award
Innovation Award / Rescue Award / Secretary General Award

To submit your nominations or for sponsorship enquiries, scan the QR code or visit:

missiontoseafarers.org/events/seafarers-awards-2025



Welcome to the latest edition of FAN!

Despite the fact that extensive travel is possible beyond what previous generations would have imagined, it is actually not that common for most people in most places to have seen a great deal of the world. To be involved in some way in the life and work of an agency like the Mission does, however, offer an insight into a considerable number and range of places around the world.

Life may not take you personally to The Philippines, to a port in South Australia, the Norfolk coast in the UK, and a national park in Japan, yet through the Mission that you support, or in which you serve, you can have a stake in all these places, and an insight into the work that the Mission does there.

Over 200 ports and over 50 countries is what we say, and through our Family Support Networks, our digital networks, and our training resources, that reach and impact are amplified.

The breadth of the content for this edition of FAN will take you to precisely the places I have mentioned above and more. At times, it can sound just a little exotic when one mentions the different places where we serve. The reality, however, is that the Mission is in each place because there is need in each place and the help and support of the Mission



**Mission is in each place
because there is need in
each place"**

is needed to address it. To those who are navigating a path through difficult times, it is no more exotic than the place where you live. The work in each place of which you read will have been possible only because of those who support it, so many of whom are regular readers of FAN.



With every good wish,

The Ven. Dr Peter Rouch
Secretary General

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Adventure Race Japan

Raises \$1.85 Million

The Mission to Seafarers' flagship fundraising event, Adventure Race Japan 2025 (ARJ), raises an impressive US\$1.85 million and showcases the maritime community's commitment to seafarer welfare.



GREEN DRAGON FASTEST TEAM
WINNERS, SHOEI

Held from 15–18 May in Japan's breathtaking UNESCO Geopark on the Izu Peninsula, ARJ brought together over 100 teams from 26 countries in a high-spirited test of teamwork, endurance, and spirit. Teams tackled the exhilarating 'Green Dragon' and 'Black Dragon' race routes, combining steep

ascents, forest trails, and orienteering challenges—all in support of the world's 1.89 million seafarers.

Jan Webber, the Mission's Director of Development, praised the collective effort, 'We're immensely proud of the remarkable amount raised through the dedication and hard work of everyone involved. This event was a great opportunity to bring together the global shipping community.'

A JOURNEY OF PURPOSE AND PERSEVERANCE

Excitement was high from the moment over 330 participants, volunteers, and guests arrived, warmly welcomed by Secretary General, Peter Rouch and representatives of the event's major sponsors. Spirits were further lifted by





OVERALL BLACK DRAGON RACE WINNER, MOL WIND RUNNERS RECEIVE THEIR TROPHY FROM MOL CEO, TAKESHI HASHIMOTO

clear skies on Day 1, as teams embarked on the 9.25km Green Dragon or 20km Black Dragon routes. Participants were rewarded with stunning views—including glimpses of majestic Mount Fuji, offering unforgettable photo moments.

Day 2 introduced an added layer of complexity with a rogaining challenge—a timed orienteering race where strategy, navigation, and team coordination were key. Participants braved torrential rain, but morale remained high as teams pressed on, undeterred, clad in waterproofs and determination.

“ARJ 2025 was a celebration of deepened connections”

CELEBRATING IMPACT AND UNITY

The event concluded with a vibrant awards ceremony, honouring the fastest

teams, top fundraisers, and standout performers in the rogaining challenge. Beyond the accolades, ARJ 2025 was a celebration of deepened connections and shared commitment to the welfare of seafarers.

“Let’s continue to work together”

Takeshi Hashimoto, CEO of Platinum Sponsor Mitsui O.S.K. Lines, reflected, ‘The Mission’s work is crucial to MOL as they provide help and support for the world’s seafarers when they need it most. Let’s continue to work together towards a bright future for seafarers.’

Adventure Race Japan 2025 has proven not only the power of teamwork but also the unwavering dedication of the maritime community to those who keep global trade moving.

The Mission to Seafarers is grateful to all 35 sponsors, including Platinum sponsor Mitsui O.S.K. Lines, and key Gold sponsors: Swire Bulk, Swire Shipping, NYK Line, Shoeni Kisen Kaisha, V.Group, NorthStandard, and Arrow, who together raised over US\$500,000.

Women at Sea:

Listening, Supporting, and Breaking Stereotypes

Women remain a minority in the maritime industry, but the Mission's female chaplains are using their unique skills to ensure there is equity in care, empathy, and support.



BEYOND THE STEREOTYPES

Life at sea is challenging, especially for women, who often face outdated stereotypes or worse. Ruth Campbell, our chaplain for the Thames Ports, urges a nuanced approach.

'We can't treat every female seafarer as a victim,' she says. 'Some crews are like big brothers. It's about asking the right questions, not making assumptions.' That's not to say harassment doesn't

exist, but that can't be the starting point of conversations.

TRUST AND FRIENDSHIP

The more common burden born by female seafarers is what Ruth calls 'mum guilt.' It's an issue that Katerina Powell, chaplain in Southampton, has also noticed. She says, 'Many of the women at sea are single or widowed. They're leaving their children with extended family. The sacrifice they're making is massive.'

For women who have missed the camaraderie of female friendship onboard, the presence of a female chaplain can be a powerful source of reassurance.



When they see a woman, they're wide open"

'When they see a woman, they're wide open,' says Linda Watts, newly appointed port chaplain in Costa Rica. 'They tell you what's going on at home. It's a different kind of trust. Onboard, their supervisors are watching. But in a Seafarers' Centre—they feel safe, relaxed, and free to speak.'



It's a different kind of trust"



CHANGING ATTITUDES

Many crews are still surprised to see a female chaplain, but they are warmly received. “My husband, who is retired, volunteers with me. Sometimes when we board a ship, they talk to him thinking he’s the chaplain,” explains Revda Dilce Paiva de Oliveira, our chaplain in the port of Açú in Brazil.

‘Once they understand I’m the chaplain, they’re always respectful and welcoming. Many of the seafarers are from the Philippines, and they often treat me maternally, even calling me ‘mom’ sometimes.’

A GROWING IMPACT

Women make up only 2% of the global seafaring workforce, though on cruise ships the figure is closer to one-third. As the Mission expands its reach in this space, the impact of female chaplains continues to grow.

Whether offering toiletries, a safe space, advocacy, or simply listening, our female chaplains are making a quiet but profound difference.



A quiet but profound difference.”

A Hug Before They Go

Port Giles may be small, but it's full of heart. On the South Australian coast, lay chaplain June Harrison explains how she has become a surrogate grandma for the seafarers who travel through.



WHAT IS PORT GILES LIKE?

Port Giles is a very small, purpose-built grain port—really, it's just the wharfs, the silos, and some bunkers. There's no town, no houses. Only one ship can dock at a time. We're about 250 kilometres from Adelaide, and the most common reaction we get from seafarers is, 'Where's the mall?' We only got our first supermarket last October!

HOW DID YOU BECOME INVOLVED IN THE MISSION?

My husband and I decided to retire here in our holiday 'shack'. We planned to travel, be 'grey nomads' and travel around the country in our van. But our Bishop asked if we'd help start a Mission

at Port Giles—there was a port, but no one to look after the seafarers. At first we said no. But somehow, God changed our minds. We turned a hall behind our church into a seafarers centre thanks to grants, elbow grease, many helpers, and a lot of faith. My husband and son even built an alfresco area and an outdoor barbecue kitchen.

“ I think of them as my sons and daughters ”

WHY DO SEAFARERS LOVE PORT GILES?

Time. That's our magic. We only have one ship at a time, so we can sit down, share cake, laugh, pray, and listen. I think of them as my sons and daughters. When they leave, I always give them a hug and say, 'God bless you.' And they hug back—some don't want to let go. One young Filipino called me 'Grandma' and came back just to ask for another hug. Moments like that, they stay with you.

“ When they leave, I always give them a hug ”

WHAT DO YOU WISH MORE PEOPLE UNDERSTOOD ABOUT SEAFARERS?

That they are invisible—and vital. Without them, we wouldn't have food, clothes, electronics—anything. One seafarer described his ship as a 'prison on the water'. They make huge sacrifices. I once



spoke to a young seafarer who broke down talking about his son. He hates being at sea, but he's doing it for his child's education. We all rely on these

men and women, but most people don't even see them.

WHAT KEEPS YOU GOING?

My husband passed away two and a half years ago—he was the first lay chaplain here. Before he died, I told him, 'I'll keep going as long as I can.' I am blessed with a great team of volunteers and supporters, however we desperately need more. I'm nearly 81, and I just pray for the strength to keep doing this work. But I'll carry on as long as God gives me strength.



JUNE AND VISITING SEAFARERS



I'll carry on as long as God gives me strength"

What the Philippines Taught Me About Seafarers

What began as a work trip became something far deeper for Nina Edy, the Mission's Communications Manager, as she experienced the strength and solidarity of the seafaring community in the Philippines.

I thought I knew all about seafarers. After all, I've been working with the Mission for six years now, but nothing prepared me for the Philippines, where seafaring

“ Nothing prepared me for what I experienced ”

is a way of life. The country supplies the world with more seafarers than any other. This nation breathes seafaring. Everyone knows someone at sea: fathers, daughters, wives, sons, husbands—gone for months at a time.

DISCIPLINE AND RISK

At the United Maritime Training Centre in Manila, I witnessed the depth and rigor of maritime training—simulations to train crew members in both routine operations and emergency situations using realistic, often immersive environments, requiring careful attention and discipline. It's a reminder that this profession balances precision and risk. Yet society often reduces them to invisible workers on distant vessels, forgetting the strain on their bodies, minds, and families.





The Mission partners with the Centre and other crew management companies to deliver suicide prevention training like SafeTALK and ASSIST—tools that truly save lives. Mental health isn't often discussed, so seeing it integrated as part of their training—and the crews being so receptive and understanding of its importance was powerful.

A FAMILY BUSINESS

In the mango-rich island Guimaras, and the city of Kalibo on neighbouring Panay, I met families left behind who carry the emotional weight of absence, uncertainty, and quiet sacrifice. One mother, her voice shaking, shared how her son's mental health had deteriorated so badly that her husband had to quit his job and return



home. They'd depended on seafaring to support their family.

Through our Family Support Network (FSN), we're creating lifelines across the country. In speaking with the volunteer leaders of Altavas and New Washington, Aklan Chapters of FSN, I met the women who are taking a lead and bringing people together. They're hosting courses like our WeCare financial and social well-being seminars, organising community events and activities which help families plan and support one another. The dedication and support that the volunteers selflessly give to the Mission are invaluable, enabling us to remain a lifeline to the wider seafaring community. We are deeply grateful to them.

QUIET DIGNITY

The dignity and camaraderie of seafaring communities was evident everywhere, including Luneta Park. This large space near the port in Manila has become a hub for seafarers to share stories and songs and search for work.

I met one seafarer who was seeking support for his brother-in-law, who'd been injured at sea. He'd already been waiting months for his financial support claim to be processed—that's months with no pay and mounting debts.

He wore years of pain on his face, but was genuinely encouraged when we invited him to seek the support of the Mission's office in Manila, where I know the team will provide the necessary guidance.

I returned to the UK, my head full of stories just like this and a realisation that we're not just supporting seafarers—we're fighting for their visibility, dignity, and humanity.

Day of the Seafarer

‘My Harassment-Free Ship’

On 25 June, the global maritime community comes together to celebrate the Day of the Seafarer. This year's theme is ‘My Harassment-Free Ship’, a bold initiative to promote a culture of respect and zero tolerance for bullying and harassment at sea. In preparation for the day, crews share their experiences of how supportive environments are essential for safety, teamwork, and wellbeing.



Working on a vessel with crew from different countries has always been a challenge. Respect is essential and goes beyond following policies.

It's about professionalism. We perform better when we're valued and respected. This leads to safety, which is of great importance.

John Harry Santillan, Second Mate DPO, The Philippines

“Respect is essential and goes beyond following policies.”



Ships known for their harassment-free work culture have a friendly atmosphere and higher ship owner satisfaction ratings than their competitors. Loyalty,

cooperation among seafarers, and higher engagement are three important markers of a happy ship. A harassment-free workplace benefits from all three.

Capt. Rex D. Hechanova, Southampton, UK



As a female seafarer, a harassment-free workplace empowers me to be more confident and effective in the tasks given to me. It creates an environment of serenity and progress, where I am not afraid to showcase my talent and grow both personally and professionally.

Cristy Mae Magbanua, Third Officer, The Philippines



I was 20 when I started my career. When I went onboard, I was discriminated against, but now, as a Chief Officer, I am the one who stands up for all the young men

and women cadets. We must continue supporting them, empowering them, and taking courage to a better one someday.

Joven Larida Aguilar, Chief Officer, China

Life onboard a harassment-free ship reminded me of Psalm 133:1: 'How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity.' With Christ at the centre, we uphold

respect, kindness, and harmony. This Seafarers Day, I thank the Lord for a workplace where peace prevails.

Capt. Leonardo P. Racho, Indonesia



A happy crew works hard."

The full support of management level officers plays a big role in a successful harassment-free ship. It means productive work for all crew. A happy crew works hard not only because it is their duty but because they are valued and appreciated.

Erick Laurel, Chief Engineer, Namibia



It builds trust and respect among the crew."

A harassment-free ship means I can focus on my duties without fear or stress. It builds trust and respect among the crew, which is vital at sea. Working in a respectful, harassment-free environment has made me feel safe, valued, and truly part of the team.

Mark Bureros, Third Officer, Brazil



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If you would like to make a donation, please fill out the form below, and complete your contact details at the bottom of the page.

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A Chaplain's Journey of Faith and Service

As Revd. Peter Paine steps down as chaplain in Great Yarmouth he reflects on a remarkable 25-year journey—from offering support from the back of his car to establishing a vital community hub.

How you can support us

There are many ways in which you can support our work with seafarers around the world.

Find out more about getting involved

Please tick the box below and fill out the contact details panel overleaf to find out more about:

- ☐ Fundraising
- ☐ Remembering The Mission in your Will
- ☐ Volunteering
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We will send you regular updates about the work, needs and impact of The Mission to Seafarers.

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When I took up the role of chaplain 25 years ago it was completely new. At that time, we had a large seafarers' centre made from two portacabins. When that closed I was working out of the back of my car.

SUPPORT ON AND OFF THE SHIP

Then, out of the blue, I was contacted by the new port owners. They asked if I wanted a building, and I said 'yes' without even speaking to my boss first. We've now got a rest area, places where they can use their laptops, laundry facilities, and a shower. It's like a little Doctor Who TARDIS!



It's like a little Doctor Who TARDIS!"

These days, there are fewer vessels going in and out, but the flip side is that I've seen massive improvements in seafarers' accommodation and the food. And in welfare too—especially communications.

SHARING THE HARD TIMES

But one of the most important things we do is listen. In around 2002, we had a helicopter crash off the coast here and I met the crew of the rescue vessel that tried to recover bodies.

For ten weeks I listened to them, came home, showered, changed, and went back out again. When I had finished, my boss sent me for counselling. I said I didn't need it—but boy, did I need it.

Any port chaplain will tell you—no two days are the same and I will miss the seafarers, but now I have my garden to keep me out of trouble.



Thirty Years of Challenge and Change

As Revd. John Attenborough takes up the post of Regional Director for the Middle East and South Asia, he reflects on a 30-year career that has taken him from a windswept port in northeast England to sunny Cyprus and everywhere in between.

When I began my career in the Port of Immingham, my job included licking stamps and sending letters for seafarers—I can still taste the glue! But perhaps the biggest change I've seen has been the pace of the industry – from communication to turn around times everything is faster.

And it's seafarers who are dealing with the consequences. With smaller crews, quicker turnaround times, and limited shore leave they're often out of sight and out of mind more lonely and isolated than ever.

As exhausted seafarers retreat to snatch rest where they can or catch up with loved ones, gone are the communal games, movie nights, and camaraderie. My experience is that today's ships are quieter – and lonelier.

“ Today's ships are quieter.”

Access has also become harder as port security increased dramatically. Getting onto a ship now involves negotiations and permissions – a far cry from the days when you could just walk up the gangway with a smile and a hello.

LOOKING AHEAD

My vision for the MESA region is indeed to grow into new places and to work



JOHN ATTENBOROUGH ON A SHIP VISIT IN DUBAI

together with new and existing partners – for the benefit of all seafarers. There are particular opportunities in India. We're currently partnering with the Maritime University in Chennai and exploring new ways of working together to support seafarers.

It's uncharted territory, but we must be bold. The Mission has been on the front lines of caring for Seafarers for 168 years, and as the maritime world changes so must we. One thing remains constant; our care for the shipping industry's most important asset – the seafarers!

“ as the maritime world changes so must we.”

10 Years of the Seafarers Happiness Index

As the Seafarers Happiness Index enters its tenth year, the latest report reveals a stabilisation in seafarer satisfaction, but concerns over ageing vessels, training, and shore leave persist.

AGEING VESSELS AND RELEVANT TRAINING

The Q1 report shows an overall rise in seafarer happiness to 6.98 out of 10, up from 6.91 in Q4 2024. Despite the positives, concerns were raised around older vessels, where maintenance demands place extra strain on already busy crews.

Respondents reported that small crews struggle to balance urgent repairs with regular upkeep. One seafarer noted, 'Sometimes we take shortcuts because we have no choice.'

“ We need proper training from people”

There is also a need for more practical, scenario-based training, not just theoretical knowledge, especially in high-stress or emergency situations. As one seafarer said, 'CBT [computer-based] training is not enough; we need proper training from people.'

WORKLOAD AND STRESS

Workload and stress remain major issues. Several respondents voiced frustration that efficiency is prioritised over wellbeing, leaving little room for rest or recovery.



Even when shore leave is technically permitted, a lack of transportation or time pressures often make it impractical. This, coupled with limited connectivity, deepens the sense of disconnection and isolation.

CAMARADERIE IS VITAL

Despite these challenges, many seafarers find fulfilment in their work, often citing strong camaraderie as vital to morale.

“ The health of our workforce cannot be an afterthought”

Ben Bailey, Director of Programme at The Mission to Seafarers, said, 'These findings remind us that the human element is central to maritime success. The health of our workforce cannot be an afterthought.'

Read the full report at
seafarershappinessindex.org

Port Round Up

Our centre managers and chaplains share tender moments of connection and humanity with the seafarers they meet.

THE TALE OF THE BABY DOLL

Aidan Webster, Centre Manager, North Tees & Hartlepool



My wife had given me a nearly new little baby doll, suggesting that a seafarer might have a child back home who would appreciate it. I had taken it from her, sceptically.

I was returning four crew members to their ship and enquired whether any of them had small children. One of them, Eugene, piped up, indicating he was FaceTiming with his six-month-old daughter. Retrieving the baby doll from my car, I presented it to Eugene, who was delighted.

Eugene had to leave his newborn daughter when she was only one month old and would only be returning home in time for her first birthday. It was a poignant moment. As they walked away, all I saw was four seafarers wearing their PPE—one of them cradling a little baby doll in his arms.

A MOMENT OF PEACE AT SEA

The Revd Isaac Franklin, Port Chaplain in Bahrain

I had the privilege of spending time with two officers: Chief Officer Nikolaeu and Third Officer Danylo. Nikolaeu stood on my right—a native of Russia. Danylo stood on my left—hailing from Ukraine.

For the past three years, these two have shared not only a ship but a deep friendship. Despite the tensions and tragedies that have plagued their homelands, their bond remains unshaken—forged in mutual respect, kindness, and shared humanity.



As we stood together, sharing stories and hopes, we exchanged the familiar words: “The peace of the Lord be always with you.” And today, those words carried a depth I have rarely felt before.

It was not just a liturgical phrase—it was a heartfelt prayer, a shared longing, a sacred moment between three souls seeking light amidst global shadows.

Breaking Waves: A Woman's Journey at Sea

Deck Officer Danica Madela is not only forging a successful career in shipping – she's also inspiring the next generation of female seafarers.



AN UNCONVENTIONAL PATH

It was actually my aunt who introduced me to seafaring. Once I started researching, I thought, 'This is cool'. It's unconventional – especially for a woman – but I liked the challenge.

I qualified in 2017 and am now a deck officer responsible for life-saving

appliances, firefighting equipment, cargo operations and navigation. It's demanding work, but I really love it.

NAVIGATING A MALE-DOMINATED INDUSTRY

Being in a male-dominated environment hasn't always been easy. When I was starting out, I felt I had to prove myself.

On my last vessel, it had been quite some time since some of the crew had worked with female seafarers. While I wasn't the first female officer they had served with, it was still a new dynamic for some of them.

Some found it difficult due to their cultural beliefs and differences in personalities. But my mentor once told me, 'Just pray for them. If you try to change them, it may be a disaster.'

Over the years, I've realised you don't need to prove anything. You just have to do your job well, let them see that you're capable – and that's enough.



**Let them see that
you're capable"**

SUPPORT FROM THE MISSION

I first met Ma'am Lala and team from The Mission to Seafarers in the

Philippines in 2022 during Sea Sunday. That year was a difficult one for me, but they helped me get back on track— a simple conversation can really make a big difference.

Female support is so important. I'm in a group chat with some of the female seafarers I've met, and we update each other and ask how they have been. I think we, as women, open up in different ways, so when I hear the voice of a female ship visitor, I get so excited! And having female chaplains would be great as they bring some 'motherly essence' to the conversations.

INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION

Women have so much to offer the shipping industry and I want young women to believe they can reach the top, but the industry still needs to become more accepting.



Women have so much to offer”

I'm currently teaching at the maritime college in Canaman, in the Philippines, where I'm the first woman instructor. It means a lot when students tell me I inspire them. If I can share knowledge and help them become good officers one day, I feel truly fulfilled.



Rethinking Port Development

Paul Trathen shares how his role as Port Development Manager is helping the Mission rethink where—and how—it serves today's seafarers in this ever-evolving industry.

As the name suggests, my role is about developing our work in ports—but what that means in practice is changing rapidly. Ten or twenty years ago, the model was fairly standard: a chaplain visiting ships and a seafarers' centre. Today, that's often no longer the case.

With limited shore leave and faster turnarounds, seafarers are more likely to spend what time they have in a local shopping mall. It's now far more effective to have a chaplain and team actively visiting ships.

ADAPTING SERVICES IN WALVIS BAY

A case in point is Walvis Bay in Namibia, where we saw a tenfold drop in use of our seafarer centre within a few years. A nearby mall opened, shore leave fell, and priorities changed. After 70 years, we



PAUL, THE MISSION'S PORT DEVELOPMENT MANAGER, SPENDING TIME WITH A SEAFARER

made the tough but necessary decision to close the centre and reinvest in ship visiting.



IN BATUMI, GEORGIA, SHIPS AT TEN BUSY BERTHS WILL SOON BE VISITED BY A NEW, FULL-TIME CHAPLAIN

“What is the right model of welfare for seafarers?”

The key question we ask is: “What is the right model of welfare for seafarers, in the right ports, right now?” We consider whether we're meeting an unmet need, if we're already supporting these seafarers elsewhere, and how many we can realistically reach— it's vital we use our donors' gifts wisely.

REACHING NEW SEAFARERS IN GEORGIA

In Georgia's Port of Poti, around 80–85% of seafarers are on short circular Black Sea routes, often unserved by anyone else.



PAUL PRESENTING TO APM TERMINALS MANAGERS IN THE PORT OF POTI, GEORGIA

We began work there in 2023 following an invitation from the terminal operator.

Since then, we've appointed a full-time chaplain, created a legal entity under Georgian law, and are building a long-term presence in Poti and Batumi. Sometimes the slow pace of progression can be frustrating, but the success of our work is underpinned by trust and that's something you just can't rush.

ESTABLISHING RELATIONSHIPS IN SAUDI ARABIA

All port development work is done in close collaboration with our regional directors who invite us to explore priority ports based on their insight.

We're currently doing this Saudi Arabia, which has two coastlines and ambitious port growth plans. The concept of charity and welfare is less familiar there—but conversations are progressing, and we hope to begin work within the next year.

“ Start early, be clear, be open, and keep at it”

The key to success? Start early, be clear, be open, and keep at it. We also need to be willing to adapt. With more ships idling at anchor, we're reviewing the possibility of increasing our boat-based ministry—returning to our roots to meet seafarers where they are in anchorage. It's not simple or cheap, but it may be where we're needed next.

PAUSE FOR REFLECTION

By Secretary General, the Ven. Dr Peter Rouch

In my introduction, I described the broad scope of the Mission's work, some of which is reflected in the stories shared in this issue. Now, I want to highlight one more location where our presence makes a vital difference—and the significance of what we do there.

This particular port lies somewhere in Latin America. I won't name it more specifically, but it's remote, about four hours from the nearest city. Its primary business is the export of raw materials like powdered bauxite—used to make aluminium—and agricultural products. The export of live cattle, a practice banned in many parts of the world for its cruelty, still occurs here. The air is thick with the stench of animal waste and fine, toxic dust from the bauxite, requiring dockworkers to wear filtration masks. The climate is oppressively humid, and when the sun emerges, the heat soars. By the dockside, the sunken remains of a fully loaded cattle ship—never removed—continue to rot in the sweltering heat.

While shore leave rules here are not overly strict, the surrounding terrain—mainly dense jungle—means

that without transport, seafarers are essentially confined. Some are even more restricted. One man, unable to return home due to war in his country, had barely left his vessel since the start of the pandemic.

Port officials are not hostile, but they operate without knowledge even of the existence of the Maritime Labour Convention—the international standard that protects seafarers' rights. They simply don't realise that they are responsible for ensuring the wellbeing of those who pass through their port.

Despite this, MtS chaplains and welfare staff are there five days a week, visiting every ship. They offer transportation for those who can take shore leave, allowing them to experience a brief but vital change of scenery. Wi-Fi, often scarce on board, is provided. Small gifts, conversations, support, and prayers, when sought, are offered and shared freely. Most importantly, the seafarers are seen and welcomed as people who matter, treated with dignity and kindness in a place that otherwise seems to ignore their humanity.



Watching the Mission's work here, I saw weary faces lighting up, care lines easing in response to simple acts of care. As Easter approached, I was reminded of a hymn familiar in English churches:

"Love to the loveless shown
That they might lovely be."

It struck me again how deeply this work echoes the heart of the Christian faith.

PERHAPS YOU MIGHT LIKE TO JOIN ME IN THIS AS I PRAY:

God of compassion who in Jesus Christ grants us your love beyond understanding and summons us to be like you, agents of care and compassion in our world, grant to all who serve with and support the work of The Mission to Seafarers both the capacity to love as we have been loved, and joy in the service of the seafarers.
Amen.



To donate please visit www.missiontoseafarers.org/donate/fan

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Thank You

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