

Message to all Merchant Mariners on National Maritime Day & National Day of Prayer and Remembrance for Mariners May 22, 2009

From the Apostleship of the Sea of the United States of America, in this year dedicated to St Paul, Apostle and seafarer, the professional association of Catholic Mariners and the official Catholic organization of Catholic Maritime Ministers, which held its annual meeting in New Orleans, Louisiana May 5-8th 2009– send words of encouragement and blessing on your maritime vocation which we share.

- In the turmoil of today's world recession, amidst huge anxiety and stress related to your continuity of employment we greatly respect and appreciate your ongoing commitment and loyalty to your profession ensuring the movement of world essential commodities.
- We join in solidarity with unending trust in the Providence of God to help you to maintain your goodwill and strength to continue this fine tradition of seamanship coupled with its enormous responsibilities- notably your endeavors to safeguard and protect those very waters that mankind relies on for constant sustainability for future generations in regards to food, employment, and recreation.
- We irrevocably condemn the evil of piracy and pray for all people of the sea who face hazardous shipping routes where once vital fish stores were abundant and now starvation and hopelessness have begotten such acts. Meanwhile we call on all governments and men and women of good will to aid in the elimination of all types of injustice that lead to devaluation of human dignity, and are at the foundation of much of today's modern piracy.
- Despite modern technology, which has greatly enhanced communication, we acknowledge and honor your personal sacrifice of isolation and separation from your families, friends and loved ones residing in the sanctuary of your homeland as you ply the oceans and rivers of the world in confined space, with dietary and sleep irregularities in uncertain, dangerous, and suspicious waters to facilitate and supply daily requisites to countless countries along with maintaining your families at home.
- We include all fishers and seafarers in our daily prayers, and we stand by you as advocates in your workplace, whether on vessels, docks, maritime academies, training schools, or oilrigs. We offer our services and facilities in caring for your spiritual, emotional and material needs while you are in a port in a faraway land.

Protect O Lord, your servants whose lives are spent on the oceans of the world
Guard them from all dangers