

The Master's Mariner

CHRISTMAS EDITION 2022

Mission to Seafarers

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Welfare Fund ABN 91 451 928 534

www.missiontoseafarerssydney.org.au



Our Centre is now welcoming Seafarers Monday to Saturday – from over 31 nations!



Please support our Christmas Gift Appeal – Buy Sunnies and Treats for a Seafarer!

In 2021 we gave out over 2000 Christmas gift bags – and Sunnies were the most popular item. So this year, we are aiming to give a pair to all the Seafarers who visit us during the Christmas period – if we can raise the funds for enough pairs! Donate towards our bulk purchase or drop it in if you have a pair to donate.

Additional funds raised will go towards extra gift bag goods, buying Christmas treats that we can share with seafarers who visit our centre on Christmas Eve day and our wellbeing services.

Thank you to SWIRE Shipping who launched our Christmas Appeal with a donation of \$500.

Thank you also to Laurette Chao who donated \$500 for gifts for seafarers in memory of her mother Ruth.

If you've ever squinted into the sun or lost a pair of sunnies overboard, spare a thought for the seafarers who are not only about 2000 km from the nearest shop, but also far from friends and family at this special time.

Please support our **Seafarers Christmas Appeal** - click here or return giving card (enclosed)

<https://drct-missiontoseafarerssydney.prod.supporterhub.net/donations/2022-mtssyd-christmas-appeal>

Seafarers Face Christmas At Sea - Again

Sadly all the Seafarers we've chatted to visiting our mission this month won't be home for Christmas. They have been doing their Christmas shopping at our Centre but unfortunately despite our bargain prices, postage back home is just too expensive. Some will store their gifts and present them when they arrive home after their contracts expire. Others have them ready to hold up for that precious Christmas facetime call. Some have been sending their wages using our Western Union services to loved ones back home to purchase their own gifts.

One group of Seafarers buying plenty of food treats at our centre, smiled widely as they said they were buying their own Christmas gifts. It was also too expensive for their families to send something to them, so this was their compromise. Cruise ship crews in particular, have been grateful for our 'home away from home' service because it means Seafarers have an address they can use for their online purchases which they can then pick up from our Mission Centre. Electrical goods, Christmas decorations and clothing are the most popular.

Andre, a Jamaican 'shippy' from a visiting cruise ship said he does miss the 'fiesta' celebrations in the streets in Jamaica, the Christmas food and everyone going to Church together. After five years as a waiter on Christmas Day, he said he was grateful for the work and that his ship now provided free Wi-Fi for four days from Christmas to New Year. It wasn't the same as joining the 'fiesta', but it was more than on Christmases in the past at sea.



You are invited to our Christmas Thanksgiving Celebration
On Saturday, 03rd December, 2022 - 2:30 pm at St Anne's Ryde Anglican Church

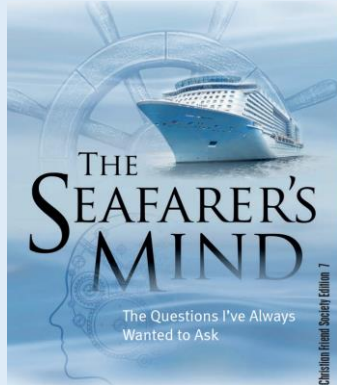
Theme: Compassion In Action - For more details or to RSVP (asap pl) see:

<https://drct-missiontoseafarerssydney.prod.supporterhub.net/events/2022-christmas-event>

Questions/Email rsvps: enquiries@missiontoseafarers.org.au



A Christmas Gift for Seafarers – and our Supporters!



E-book - *The Seafarer's Mind* by Rev Martin Otto, author and chaplain from Hamburg, Germany.

'The Questions I've always wanted to ask'.

Get an insight into the real experiences, thoughts and adventures of Seafarers – holiday reading with a difference! And if you're a seafarer, we'd love to hear what you thought about it too!

To receive your copy, email 'Yes' and your name to support@missiontoseafarers.org.au for your e-copy.

Thank you to Rev Otto for donating the ebooks.

Christmas Message Rev Un Tay, Principal Chaplain

The curtain of 2022 is about to draw to a close. After nearly two and a half years of struggle with lockdowns, continuous online environments, isolations, virus outbreaks, and no shore leave, life can finally begin to feel a little normal again for many seafarers, who worked between 12 to 24 months on board the vessels. A new norm will take place, the same world, shaped in a new way.

As I reflect upon the year, we can be immensely proud of seafarers around the world for their:

Resilience - in spite of the lockdowns, isolations, and many challenges they faced at seas and on board, they were resilient and sailed through the storms of life! They are the prime movers! Bringing goods and items for our daily usage and bringing raw materials to others for processing. They never stop!

Re-energising - (to give fresh vitality, enthusiasm, or impetus). To keep their spirits high and motivated, they ordered from us Data SIM cards to keep in touch with family members and friends and other items such as food, clothing, gym equipment, musical instruments, video games etc., to sustain and strengthen their mental health during the lockdowns.

Rejoicing - With the lockdowns lifted in most part of the world and shore leave granted, they are rejoicing! Since our Mission re-opened in April, they are coming back to us as well as visiting places of interesting and shopping at the malls. The Seafarers Happiness Index is increasing!

Our Vision is to provide a Home away from Home; a place of Hospitality and a sanctuary of Hope to all seafarers visiting our Mission in Sydney! As we enter 2023, we will focus on the wellbeing of seafarers, prioritising their mental health. The pressure and their workload is immense, so it is a struggle for all to cope well. Between feeling overwhelmed and just completely stressed, we need to pay more attention to our mental health. For all of us, including Seafarers, when one can prioritise mental health and self-care, this leads to a more joyful and enjoyable life, which is simply what everyone wants from life!

As we celebrate Christmas, consider conducting a Random Act of Kindness for someone who needs help. Such an unexpected act releases positivity into the world and encourages others to also be more compassionate. Be the one to set off a chain of kindness making the recipients and givers feel better and more positive about life. Regardless of what is happening in the world, everyone can give back by surprising someone with a random act of kindness. And if your act includes supporting our Christmas Appeal, this will both encourage my team and I and bring direct benefits to the wellbeing of seafarers.

Wishing all our supporters and stakeholders, a Blessed and Joyous Christmas!



Thank you from all of us at MtS Sydney:

*"When **Peter [Ernst-Port Authority]** and I were advised that there was prize money with the 2021 DCN Award presented to both of us, it was a unanimous decision to donate it to the Mission to Seafarers. Rev Tay, you and your team do a fantastic job supporting the seafarers who are a critical resource for our Maritime Industry." - **Wayne Ashton, NSW Ports** on LinkedIn 20/9/2022 after donating \$2900.*

Origin Energy Health, Safety, Environment and Community Award winners the **LPG supply team** chose us as the charity for their \$1000 prize money. They won for their work converting three ships from diesel to LPG.

Highlights of 2022 - We Delivered!

In 2022, despite cuts in our own finances during the past two years of Covid restrictions, **Mission to Seafarers Sydney** has continued our ongoing commitment to improving seafarers' wellbeing by:

- i) continuing and expanding on the new services in 2019 such as the mobile Vaccination program ;
- ii) restoring and expanding our pre-covid support services for seafarers such as transport to the city; and
- iii) establishing new ways to share the plight of seafarers with the general community including through events.

Highlights of 2022 included giving many their first taste of freedom after covid by offering supervised trips ashore, re-opening our centre and welcoming nearly 1000 seafarers so far, hiring an additional part-time Chaplain and:

Mission Centre reopens April 2022 – Chaplain Retchie welcomes Filipino seafarers in their own language



Chaplain Jim welcomes Ukrainian seafarers to our Mission Centre



Chaplain Retchie delivers Filipino treats to MV Portland Bay seafarers July 2022



Inaugural MtS Annual Luncheon to focus the wider community on the plight of seafarers



Seafarer Joseph thanks Rev Tay for Hospital visit and delivery of adapter so he can contact his family. Oct 1 2022



June 2022 – added flu vaccinations to our ship-side Mobile Seafarer Covid-19 Vaccination Station program



Christmas Service Invitation: Many seafarers are unable to leave their ships on Christmas Day so we have something special to help those with faith celebrate that God sent us the greatest gift of all.

St Andrews Cathedral, who ran the Sea Sunday Service for seafarers in July this year, have invited Seafarers to join in their Christmas services live or on YouTube. Join our WhatsApp for details or email us. According to YouTube, the 2022 Sea Sunday service, the first in Sydney in eight years, has had over 2.1K views. Thank you St Andrews for making it easy for Seafarers from all around the world to also celebrate that God sent His only Son so that all humanity could reconnect with God the Father - it's a free gift of love (*John 3:16*).

From Our Chaplains: Chaplain Retchie Reflects on Helping the MV Portland Bay Seafarers



It was still raining the evening of July 6 when I received a call from a seafarer called Ten-ten. He was from the MV Portland Bay bulk carrier that had been rescued after having an engine breakdown off the rocky cliffs near Cronulla during very rough weather. Ten-ten said all twenty Filipino sailors with their Ukrainian captain were safe and sound and their vessel finally berthed at Hutchison. But they wanted to contact their families to tell them – could we help? Jack and I quickly went to the vessel to deliver phone cards and offer them whatever support they needed. I asked how they were after their traumatic experience at sea - Ten-ten said they are deeply thankful to God and all the rescuers for their immediate and heroic response.

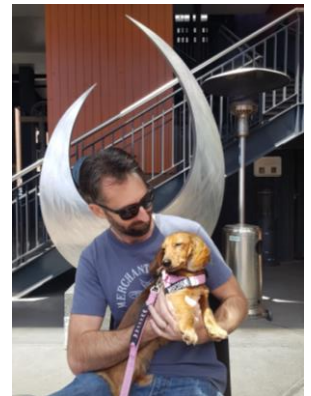
When Jack and I visited the vessel, the seafarers welcomed us inside the Mess Room where many of their colleagues were seated. We had meaningful conversations. They were very open in sharing their stories. One crewman told me, "This is my second life, and I am grateful to God we are alive." It was only two weeks since they had embarked. Speaking in Filipino, a seafarer added, "I had been through the worst times at the sea but this one is the toughest. However, I was more concerned about my new colleagues and the cadets since this is their first vessel to join. I know everyone was silently praying for the storm to stop. We don't want to see what would've happened if we'd stayed out there for another night." "I was scared, as I look out the window and saw our vessel getting closer to the rocks. There was no rest, no sleep, I was thinking of my family back home," said another. The following day, I returned after visiting a Filipino bakeshop so I could bring a variety of their favourite breads for them to enjoy. This was my simple treat for all the labours they've been through.



Before leaving the vessel, I asked someone to take me to the captain to personally thank him and to request if he can grant shore leave despite the many jobs that needed to be done on the vessel. He decided to allow his men to go ashore in turns. I took few of them to the city and at our Mission centre and handed them more gifts to take back to the ship.

Every time you hear seafarers thanking you and see the joy in their faces, or whenever they wave their hands to you as they bid farewell at the port; there is always this sense of fulfilment in your heart as you retire from day's work. You know that in simple ways, you gave them a reason to smile. – *Chaplain Retchie*

Meet Our Volunteers: Thank you to our social media and tech expert volunteer **Captain Ian Anderson** who first walked in the door offering to help in 2018! (*pictured visiting us with his dog Popcorn*). Rev Tay said Ian started off helping on our information booths before we discovered his amazing tech skills. "Ian is resourceful, reliable, very skilled and always willing to help – he is such a blessing to us," said Rev Tay. Rev Tay also thanked our new volunteer bus drivers: **Matthew Garth** and **Jacky Chan** – not a kung fu expert but very safe behind the wheel! Their help means our mini-buses can still work 'on demand' for seafarer's transport. "We just couldn't do all that we do without our volunteers!" said Rev Tay.



SBU Celebrates 200 Years of Caring for Seafarers

Congratulations from Mission to Seafarers President HRH Princess Anne in a royal letter was one of the highlights when about 140 people gathered at the National Maritime Museum to celebrate the Bicentenary of the Sydney Bethel Union (SBU). The SBU has been helping seafarers since 1822 and now continues to do so by supporting **Mission to Seafarers** in NSW, a partnership which began in 1896. Mission to Seafarers Sydney thanks the SBU for their ongoing support, especially for enabling us to continue to run our Mission centre in a central and welcoming location, offering care, respite and rejuvenation for the Seafarers.

Image: MtS Syd Chair Peter Janssen toasts 200 yrs with SBU Chair Clive Goodwin

Help Us Save On Postage – if you received this newsletter in the mail, please consider giving us your email address so we can email future editions. Email us if you agree, but if not, we are happy to keep mailing our news to you.

To Donate to our Seafarers Christmas Appeal:

i) select 'donations' on our website – this generates an instant receipt OR complete the enclosed giving card. **Thank you for your generosity!**

