inside:
Celebrating The Queen’s Platinum Jubilee, women seafarers and women of the Mission
Welcome to the latest FAN!

Over the last few editions, you have become used to our reporting about the pandemic and its overwhelming impact on seafarers and their families. You have also learnt much about our response and the radically adjusted nature of our work.

When the last edition of FAN came out, there were some hopeful signs. However, just as we sensed some light at the end of a long tunnel, the Ukraine war hit.

With 15% of the maritime workforce being either Ukrainian or Russian, once again shipping – and the people at its heart – have been very badly impacted. Ukrainian crew face acute anxiety about family back home. There has been immense difficulty for Ukrainian seafarers wishing to return, or even just to get money back home.

Russian seafarers have also been very badly hit by a conflict not of their making. Other seafarers have also been affected, not least those who found themselves trapped in Ukrainian ports.

In response, our teams across the world have been offering vital pastoral support, as well as providing access to free communication at a time when connecting with families is even more vital than usual.

We have produced additional “own language” Russian and Ukrainian mental health resources and set aside a substantial fund to support individual families in Ukraine (working closely with colleagues on the ground).

We remain deeply committed to do all we can and thank you for your amazing support. Beyond our need to respond to all this, it has been an exciting few months – not least with the launch of our three-year ship visitation expansion programme in which all our nine regions are participating.

You will learn much in these pages, including about women in maritime on which there is a particular focus. Enjoy!

The Revd Canon Andrew Wright
Secretary General

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Jubilee Congratulations

At The Mission to Seafarers, we want to join with many others in congratulating HM Queen Elizabeth II on her most extraordinary Platinum Jubilee.

We are extremely proud of the patronage Her Majesty The Queen has given to us throughout her reign. Our teams and supporters throughout the world, operating in around 200 ports in 50 countries, are united in grateful thanks and the utmost respect for the depth, quality, and inspiration of her long service.

As a Christian charity, working closely with the Church of England and with the Anglican Communion globally, we have particular reason to be thankful for the example of faith which she has set, and which has clearly supported her throughout these last 70 years – as it continues to do in relation to our work.

We are also deeply grateful for the support we received from her late husband, the Duke of Edinburgh, during his period as our President.

Today, we are particularly thankful for the incredible and exceptional level of engagement and interest shown by her wonderful daughter, HRH The Princess Royal. As our long-serving and current President, her work with us and for us has been, and remains, absolutely transformational.

To mark this momentous occasion, our port centres across the world will be planting trees in honour of Queen Elizabeth II and giving thanks for her ongoing service and commitment. As we mark her 70-year reign, we wish her long and continuing health and happiness. You will continue to be in our prayers.

“We are extremely proud of the patronage the Queen has given”

Supporting Remarkable Women

The Mission to Seafarers continues to look for new ways to support female seafarers blazing a trail in this male-dominated industry.

In 2019, our chaplains attended the World Maritime University (WMU) International Women’s Conference in Malmö to better understand how we can support female seafarers.

What became apparent was that issues faced by all seafarers are compounded for women. For example, isolation is particularly acute for women serving on all-male crews; family pressure is exacerbated by cultural pressures and the challenge of maternity leave; and health and medical support doesn’t always meet women’s needs.

While we as the Mission can advocate for systemic change, we can also provide practical and immediate support.

WE ARE HERE

While not commonplace, harassment, abuse and discrimination do occur. Many seafarers simply don’t know where to turn. We are the knowledgeable friend they can rely on.

Judith Alltree, the Mission’s Regional Director for Canada, describes how she helped a Ukrainian seafarer to return home after she was pressured to extend her contract.

“It turns out that the Captain was not letting her go home. He decided to retain her and forced her to sign on for more time. She had no one to talk to. Thankfully, she talked to me,” recalls Judith.

REACHING WOMEN

Many of our female chaplains and welfare officers speak of a particular affiliation with the women they encounter. “There are things they can talk to me about, like health worries and personal items I can get for them, that it would be hard for them to ask a man,” says Eva Classen, Welfare Officer in Richards Bay.

Many of our port centres are now stocking female healthcare products. Others are reaching out to Captains of incoming vessels to ask if there are female crew onboard. These women then receive gift packs filled with necessities and some little luxuries. Most importantly, they also contain contact information for our support networks.

Judith Alltree, the Mission’s Regional Director for Canada, describes how she helped a Ukrainian seafarer to return home after she was pressured to extend her contract.

“We are extremely proud of the patronage the Queen has given”

WOMEN REPRESENT JUST 2% OF THE WORLD’S 1.6 MILLION SEAFARERS AND 94% OF THESE WOMEN ARE WORKING IN THE CRUISE INDUSTRY, ACCORDING TO THE IMO.
Welcoming The Princess Royal to Rotterdam and Southampton

Earlier this year, we were delighted to welcome our patron Her Royal Highness, The Princess Royal, to visit our work in both Southampton and Rotterdam.

Back in 1992, The Princess Royal visited the Flying Angel Seafarers Centre in Schiedam, Rotterdam to officially open what was then a state-of-the-art centre for seafarers. In the 30 years that have passed, the centre has been a constant source of friendship and support to men and women from across the world.

The Princess’s most recent visit marks another significant gear change for our work in Rotterdam where we’ve played a major role in the welfare of seafarers since 1893.

Like all our centres, the team in Rotterdam have adapted their work over the past two years and supported seafarers through gangway visits, shopping trips, and digital chaplaincy.

THANKS ALL ROUND
A highlight of the visit was the unveiling of a new plaque to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the accession of her mother, Queen Elizabeth II, to the throne. The Princess Royal also helped to plant a tree in honour of the occasion – a commemorative act that will be conducted by many of our seafarers’ centres across the world.

In a particularly poignant moment, the Princess was presented with flowers as a token of our thanks from our volunteer, Kathy Hill. The touching moment recreated the encounter that took place at the opening of the original centre 30 years ago, when Kathy also presented a bouquet.

We were delighted that so many volunteers could be there to celebrate the occasion along with Allard Castelein, CEO of The Port of Rotterdam; Deputy Mayor Antoinette Laan-Geselschap; Board members of the Schiedam Seafarers Centre, including The Revd Canon Dr Paul Vrolijk, Henk van Deventer; and the Chaplain for the port of Rotterdam, Revd Dennis Woodward.

TIRELESS ADVOCATE
As Admiral and Chief Commandant for Women in the Royal Navy, The Princess Royal is an expert on maritime issues and has a clear appreciation of the work we do to support those who serve us at sea. In February, she joined our team in the Port of Southampton to thank seafarers for their hard work and perseverance during the pandemic. The event, jointly hosted by the Mission, Associated British Ports and DP World, highlighted the essential role that port communities have played during the pandemic and beyond.

As part of the visit, HRH boarded a Wallenius Wilhelmsen ro-ro vessel, the MV Tortugas, to meet seafarers and hear their stories in person. At a reception in the Horizon Cruise Terminal, HRH was able to thank the local Mission Committee whose dedicated efforts over many years have raised important funds to support the Southampton operation.

The Princess also unveiled a ceremonial plaque as a permanent reminder of seafarers’ dedication and resilience. In an inspiring speech she praised the unwavering commitment of the port teams and the essential work of seafarers remarking on the way they have “sustained trade at a moment of global crisis” and “shown tremendous heroism.”

The Princess also had some encouraging words for our team at the Mission, saying, “Your resulting efforts have been so vital and transformational for seafarers.”

www.missiontoseafarers.org
Meet the Women of The Mission

Four remarkable women share their experiences of working with The Mission to Seafarers.

JUDITH ALLTREE
REGIONAL DIRECTOR
CANADA

While Judith’s grandfather was a life-long seafarer and master mariner, she knew the Flying Angel centre as a social venue. “It was only when I was invited to interview for the role at The Mission to Seafarers that I realized it was one and the same,” she explains.

Judith was ordained in 2003 having previously worked in the travel industry and run her own music management company. These varied roles, she says, “were all great training for seafarers’ ministry.”

While her priority is overseeing the welfare of seafarers, Judith is also a stalwart advocate for seafarers – speaking and writing extensively about their service and the challenges they face. “To bring us all that we need, seafarers sacrifice everything – sometimes even their lives,” she says emphatically.

EVA CLASSEN
PASTORAL SHIP VISITOR
RICHARDS BAY, SOUTH AFRICA

Eva was born in the Philippines and has been a caregiver, a wedding planner, and even a beautician in both Singapore and Saudi Arabia. She speaks fluent Arabic, English, Tagalog, and Bisaya alongside a smattering of Chinese.

While her language skills are clearly invaluable, it’s her ability to connect with seafarers that really sets her apart. “We serve with dignity, integrity, and honesty,” Eva says. “We are the family waiting for them.”

Many affectionately call her ‘ate’ which is Tagalog for big sister and Eva’s compassion for seafarers has a personal motivation. All her brothers were seafarers, but they kept their professional struggles private. Eva admits that “until working for the Mission, I didn’t realise the sacrifices they made.”

If that wasn’t enough, Eva is also blessed with a beautiful singing voice, and you’ll often find her participating in onboard church services or doing karaoke in pre-COVID times.

EVETTE HALL
PORT WELFARE OFFICER
FOWEY, UK

For years Evette enjoyed sailing along the estuary in the Cornish town of Fowey, oblivious to the nearby port. “It was only when I read the job advert that I gave a second thought to it,” she admits.

As a former police officer and qualified counsellor, Evette is perfect for the role of welfare officer. She was also well equipped to cope with the unpredictability of the job.

One encounter that particularly sticks in her mind is that of a Burmese seafarer who was airlifted to hospital with a head injury on New Year’s Day. Evette rushed to the hospital to find the man with “nothing but his passport and a few personal items in a plastic bag.”

During his six-week stay in Cornwall, he was fully supported by The Mission to Seafarers, other welfare organisations and the local community to ensure he had everything he needed.

CRISTI CHAPMAN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
SEATTLE, USA

Cristi has spent much of her life blazing a trail for women in male-dominated industries. She was ordained as an Episcopal Priest in 2017, worked at the University of Washington and held senior positions at global accountancy firm KPMG.

Here at the Mission, she loves connecting with and encouraging the women who work at sea. “When female seafarers see that there is a female chaplain, we have a special affinity,” she says.

“There are a lot of women moving into senior positions in the maritime industry in Seattle. It’s exciting to see how we can help to propel each other forward.”

Having gone to seminary in Austin, Texas while her family stayed in Seattle, Cristi also understands the heartache that comes with separation. Her ability to genuinely empathise with seafarers puts all those who she encounters at ease.

“We are the family waiting for them”
As part of the campaign, seafarers were invited to share pictures of their life at sea. Seafarers registered with my Ocean Life, an online network where seafarers socialise and support each other, for a chance to share their snaps and vote for their favourite image.

Congratulations to Maden Grace G. Edradan, an officer in charge of navigational watch, for her winning entry. Maden began her cadetship at the age of 23, and has quickly risen up through the ranks.

“Working in a male-dominated industry is not that easy,” she explains. “Sometimes I have to ask myself, ‘why did I choose this path?’ But the answer is always just the same, it’s because it’s what I love. And when you love something, you will never get tired of it. In fact, you will do anything for it – even if it takes time.”

She also has some words of encouragement for fellow female seafarers. “That photo reminds me of how I started and how far I’ve come. To other inspiring women seafarers remember this: have faith in how far you can go and don’t forget to enjoy the journey.”

DURING BISC’S 2022 HARBOUR TOUR, THE REV. MARY DAVISSON (RIGHT) INTRODUCED INCOMING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR THE REV. JOSHUA MESSICK TO THE BISC ON BOARD.
A Unique Contribution

Women from across the Mission share their insights into the unique contribution that females make in the maritime industry.

1 Singapore

"I believe women could contribute like men if not more in the maritime industry. We have a softer motherly figure which could make a difference in a stereotyped male dominating setting. Caring for seafarers, decorating and maintaining the drop-in centres, organising events are gifts that the Lord has bestowed upon women." Penny Phillips, Voluntary Chair of the Falmouth Mission to Seafarers, UK

2 The Philippines

"Women bring a distinct warmth that softens even the hardest heart of a man, her strength is amazing and her presence can make an ordinary day into a special celebration. While maritime is a male-dominated industry, a woman therein surely makes an extra-ordinary contribution, she can make an inimical environment into a more caring and inclusive one." Lailani O. Tolentino-Rahon, Country Manager, The Philippines

3 Falmouth, UK

"Over 44 years I have met hundreds of female seafarers from female cadets to female officers and superintendents – all advise that maritime is a very rewarding career. Some are engineers, some just love the sea, but nearly all of them had a wish to travel and to see the world."

Penny Phillips, Voluntary Chair of the Falmouth Mission to Seafarers, UK

4 Canada

"While only 2 per cent of the world’s maritime workforce is made up of women, I, like others, promote inclusion and diversity with a goal to transform the industry. Women are nurturers. We are the caregivers of this world. To mentor comes naturally. I embrace change and will continue to break down barriers to equality."

Helen Glenn, Mission Manager, Halifax, Canada

5 London, UK

"The contribution of women is essential to helping the maritime industry adapt in a rapidly changing world. Women bring a unique perspective which can unlock the creativity and innovation essential to building a strong and viable future for the industry." Tomilayo Toluhi, Director of Human Resources and Administration

6 London, UK

"One of the areas of work that we are considering is the welfare of women seafarers. It is really great, therefore, to reflect on the many different contributions that women of the Mission make. I am always inspired by the compassion, dedication, love and professionalism of our women volunteers, ship visitors, chaplains and staff. There are so many unsung stories of these women." Ije Ajibade, Regional Director, Europe

Make a donation

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.

Please accept my gift of £10 £25 £50

or £ (your chosen amount)

My cheque is enclosed (payable to The Mission to Seafarers)

Please debit my credit/debit card: Visa/MasterCard/Maestro

Card number:

Start date: Expired date:

Issue no. for Maestro: Security no.

Name on card:

Signature:

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https://www.missiontoseafarers.org/privacy-policy to read about how we store, use and protect your information.
Support for Ukrainian Seafarers

The Mission is expanding support to Ukrainian and Russian seafarers in light of the ongoing war.

Ukrainian and Russian seafarers make up 15% of the world’s crews and are used to the stresses that come with the job. But nothing could prepare them for the horror of seeing their home become a war zone.

In Panama, our team recently met with a chief officer from Mariupol. “He is clearly upset and worried about the escalation of the violence and not being able to do anything concrete to help or support his family,” they reported.

Similar stories are flooding in from port centres across the world. In response, the Mission has enhanced its Samaritan’s Fund to provide more SIM cards and MiFi units. Our emergency fund is also available to help stranded seafarers.

Pastoral Care
As a high priority, we are looking at ways to provide mental health support to affected crews through our WeCare suite of programmes. We have recently added Ukrainian/Russian “own-language” material on how to manage trauma.

Above all, we remain committed to providing pastoral support wherever we encounter Ukrainian and Russian seafarers. Our teams are well trained to offer a listening ear and a friendly welcome, alongside guidance, practical help, and signposting to other organisations.

Sometimes, the smallest of gestures can mean so much. When Wai, one of our ship visitors from Hong Kong, realised a Ukrainian seafarer he met had returned home just a few days before war broke out, he immediately got in touch.

“I just sent him immediate regards of his wellbeing just a few days after the crisis,” says Wai. “He is also encouraged to keep in touch with us.”

The seafarer knows he can reach out at any time. In these unprecedented times, it’s important that seafarers know we are here for them whenever and wherever they need us.

You can make a donation to support the vital services we provide for seafarers at www.missiontoseafarers.org/donate

Send your memories of the Mission’s involvement in the Falklands War 40 years on. On 2 April 1982, the tiny British territory of the Falkland Islands was the scene of a ten-week war, following its capture by the Argentine military.

We know the Mission was instrumental in supporting seafarers and their families impacted by the campaign. Were you among the Mission’s volunteers? Perhaps a loved one of yours was supported by the Mission. If you have any memories of our work with families or soldiers during or after the Falklands War, we’d love to hear them.

www.missiontoseafarers.org
Setting off from London, participants will cycle through to the east coast of England to catch an overnight ferry to Holland. A beautiful vista of windmills and flower-filled fields meets the eye on the way to Amsterdam, before departing for another two days in the saddle, arriving at the challenge finale in Brussels.

To Sign up now visit www.missiontoseafarers.org/events

7 — 11th September 2022
266 Miles (approx.) — 5 days

On 14th September Rev Tim Tunley, Chaplain, Mission to Seafarers Scotland will ride 1370 km over 14 days on the Rhine Cycle Route. Tim is fundraising for MtS Scotland with a target of £5,000. Support Tim by visiting the GCU events page (link below).

“It has been a difficult time for seafarers, highlighted most recently by the Ukrainian crisis. Ukrainian seafarers are a long way from home and desperate to hear from the families they love. I commend the Global Challenge to anyone who wants to take part.”

Sign up now by visiting www.missiontoseafarers.org/events/global-champions-unite

Eastern Pacific Shipping’s ‘Around the World Fundraiser’ raised over 1.5 million Singapore dollars to support seafarers across the world.

In what was a truly global effort, members of the Eastern Pacific Shipping (EPS) community, partners, sponsors, friends and family were invited to walk, run and cycle 100,000km in just 20 days.

The challenge was part of extended celebrations to honour the life and legacy of EPS founder and philanthropist Sammy Ofer, who would have celebrated his 100th birthday on 22 February 2022.

An overwhelming number of participants, including one of the Mission’s two Vice-Presidents, Esben Poulsson and Head of Corporate Partnerships, Maurizio Borgatti, collectively covered more than 216,000km – a distance that could circumnavigate the globe 5.4 times!

EPS generously pledged S$250,000 and, thanks to the generosity of the wider seafaring community, they smashed their original target of S$1 million and raised more than S$1.5 million, which equates to £1.18 million. The exceptional amount raised will help to secure the future of the Mission as we deliver welfare services across the world.

Capt Rob Walker, Chairman of The Mission to Seafarers Singapore, said: “We are sincerely grateful to Eastern Pacific Shipping for this incredible initiative in bringing together the Maritime community to support and appreciate our seafarers in the true spirit of Mr Sammy Ofer KBE.”

We are sincerely grateful to Eastern Pacific Shipping”

Eastern Pacific Shipping’s successful fundraising challenge

Help us help seafarers by creating your own challenge today!
A Word from Esben

Esben Poulsson, Vice-President of The Mission to Seafarers, explores key challenges facing the industry and celebrates our partner Eastern Pacific Shipping.

The focus of this issue being women in shipping, I thought I would highlight some of the findings of a joint study undertaken by BIMCO (Baltic and International Maritime Council) and the ICS (International Chamber of Shipping) called ‘The Seafarer Work Force Report’, that was released at the end of 2021.

Whilst the report notes a 45% increase in the number of female seafarers since 2015, the number in absolute terms still only represents some 1.28% of total seafarers (approx. 1.89 million). So there is clearly a very long way to go in encouraging more women to become seafarers, in that we will likely see as a shortage of officers, especially by 2026.

In fact, the study forecasts a shortfall of some 26,000 officers, based on current projections of supply and demand. With the role of seafarers already undergoing considerable change – which is set to continue with the introduction of new technology and eventually different fuels – these trends will hopefully help continue with the introduction of new technology and eventually different fuels – these trends will hopefully help

We will likely see a shortage of officers”

CHALLENGES FACED BY UKRAINIAN SEAFARERS

I had the privilege of doing some ship visits towards the end of February in Southampton and was truly impressed to witness first-hand the impact of the work of the chaplain, Revd John Attenborough and the volunteers.

Speaking with some of the Ukrainian officers on board one particular ship really brought home to me the dramatic impact this war is having on seafarers and their families let alone the population as a whole.

EASTERN PACIFIC SHIPPING

Whilst covered elsewhere in FAN, in my capacity as Vice-President of the Mission, I want to express my deepest gratitude and appreciation to Eastern Pacific Shipping, especially Ian Ofer, Chairman, and Cyril Ducau, CEO, and all concerned on their incredible fundraising efforts.

Over a 20-day period, more than 5,000 people globally – sea and land based – covered 216,000km by walking, biking and running raising an astonishing £1.18 million. I was delighted to participate myself in Singapore on 2 February and on the final day in London on 22 February. The latter day marked what would have been Eastern Pacific’s founder, Mr Sammy Ofer’s, 100th birthday.

The words ‘THANK YOU’ seem somehow insufficient!

We Need to Talk About Suicide

The Mission’s Programme Manager, Thomas O’Hare, explains why suicide alertness training is so vital.

Recent reports suggest that 20% of seafarers have dealt with thoughts of suicide or self-harm. It’s prompted the industry to consider what should be done to support people facing these issues.

Despite technological advancements on board vessels, safety at sea continues to depend on human actions. Emotional stability is a requirement on board to ensure the safety of individual seafarers, the wider crew, and the ship’s passage.

Several reports from 2019 and 2021 found the stigma surrounding mental health means seafarers don’t feel able to speak out. To break the stigma, a culture of openness and sharing needs to be adopted and bring to light the fact that they are all – quite literally – in the same boat.

SafeTALK

At The Mission to Seafarers, we have been providing SafeTALK training to our welfare teams since 2013. Breaking that down, the ‘safe’ of SafeTALK stands for ‘suicide alertness for everyone’. No matter what your role is in the industry,

20% of seafarers have dealt with thoughts of suicide or self-harm”

‘TALK’ represents the steps we can take to connect a person with suicidal thoughts to safety and professional help.

‘T’ stands for ‘Tell’. It’s the first step to starting a conversation or speaking up.

‘A’ stands for ‘Ask’. The course equips individuals to ask those difficult questions.

‘L’ stands for ‘Listen’. Listening is a priority when lives are at stake.

‘K’ stands for ‘Talk’. It’s about connecting with suicide first-aiders via a helpline or in port.

PLANS FOR GROWTH

In 2022 The Mission to Seafarers will deliver SafeTALK courses to port chaplains and volunteers across the UK and Europe. The courses will then be made available to our wider teams across the globe and ship management companies.

Ultimately, we want to create a maritime community of suicide alert helpers and break down the stigma toward thoughts of suicide and poor mental health. Suicide is preventable. It’s time to break the taboo and talk.

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT OUR WECARE WELLBEING PROGRAMME AT WWW.MISSIONTOSEAFARERS.ORG/WECARE

18 flying angel news

www.missiontoseafarers.org 19
The latest Seafarers Happiness Index report reveals the lowest levels of seafarer satisfaction for eight years.

The survey, undertaken with the support of the Standard Club and Idwal, reports on the first three months of 2022. COVID, the Ukraine conflict, contractual concerns and global issues have led to a fall in the overall happiness rating from 6.41 to 5.85.

**THE CONTINUED COVID-19 CRISIS**
Two years on from the outbreak of COVID-19, seafarers are still feeling the effects. New variants of the virus continue to impact seafarers who face a maze of different regulations, ongoing port restrictions, and in many cases limited or no shore leave. Even when seafarers do get ashore, many facilities are closed, leaving them without support or basic services.

**INTERNATIONAL CONFLICT**
Anxiety levels of Ukrainian seafarers are, understandably, high. On some ships, Russian and Ukrainian crew members are actively working together. However, as the war continues and misinformation spreads, tensions appear to be rising. This has implications not only for social cohesion on board, but safety too.

Thom Herbert, Senior Marine Surveyor at our partners Idwal, a global leader in independent vessel inspections, said, “With such a sizeable percentage of crew coming from the affected areas, the industry as a whole should consider the implications for those on board.”

**CONTRACT CONCERNS**
The survey also highlighted the problems seafarers face surrounding employment rights, contractual issues, and calls to be recognised as key workers. The mental health of crews is being adversely impacted as they are forced to remain on board, often with limited connectivity and contact with home.

One seafarer commented, “Even after completing my contract I am told to sign [an] extension for two months without any crew change plan.”

**WELFARE AND WELLBEING**
Amidst the challenges, there was positive feedback from seafarers about efforts made to make life at sea more comfortable and enjoyable. These included examples of vessels having funds allocated for wellbeing events and activities such as weekly quizzes, sports, movie nights, and barbecues.

The survey also reports on the continued impact of the COVID-19 crisis, international conflict, contractual concerns, and global issues on seafarers’ overall happiness.

**PLANNED EXPANSION**
Instability in the region in recent decades has prevented expansion, but Raeid is confident that the current climate is conducive to the Mission’s expansion.

The Mission has plans to expand into Oman, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Yemen, and Lebanon.

Recent events with the Ever Given and the explosion in the Port of Beirut, Lebanon in 2020 have highlighted not only the importance of the region for international trade, but also the vulnerability of seafarers.

Currently, the Mission has a presence in Bahrain, Ashdod and Haifa in Israel, Aqaba in Jordan, and Port Said in Egypt (where a Chaplain was recently appointed), and Raeid is hopeful that the Mission will add new sites in the months and years ahead.

The Revd Canon Andy Bowerman, our Regional Director for the Middle East and South Asia and Raeid are already in advanced discussions to open port centres in Oman, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Yemen, and Lebanon, where the repercussions of the catastrophic explosion are still clearly visible.

**THE MISSION CURRENTLY HAS PORT CENTRES IN:**
- Bahrain
- Ashdod and Haifa in Israel
- Aqaba in Jordan
- Port Said in Egypt

**RAEID AND SOME OF THE MISSION TEAM VISITING IN AQABA**

The Mission has plans to expand into: Oman, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Yemen, and Lebanon.
Excerpts from a recent letter from The Revd Canon Ian Hutchinson Cervantes, our Regional Director in Latin América and Port Chaplain in Panamá.

Current events are lending the title of the Russian author, Tolstoy’s great novel War and Peace an additional layer of density of meaning. The book itself is remarkable in focusing on the interior struggles, personal and familial suffering, goodness, and the nascent courage to love individual human beings.

Historic events are both the catalyst for personal transformation and a crucible wherein individuals reflect the divine or are consumed. The Russian invasion of Ukraine echoes, in our time, what Tolstoy sought to describe and explore in his own.

We are seeing and experiencing how Ukrainian seafarers manifest rage, sorrow, impotence at not being able to return home, anguish for loved ones in the war zones and, always, a deep sense of God somehow present in it all.

**THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD**

In an effort to support Ukrainian and Russian seafarers, we are giving out free phone cards. We have also made wallet-sized copies of a Greek icon of St. Nicholas that hangs in my office with an Orthodox prayer and Psalm 23 on the back in Ukrainian and Russian.

The reaction to the icons is extraordinary. One chief officer took his and reverently leant it on his computer screen whispering the words, “Him I know; he is our protector.” Another, Andryi, on turning the icon over and seeing the prayer and Psalm in Ukrainian was rendered speechless, his eyes filling with tears.

Russian seafarers, too, are struggling. Some feel shame, others try to distance themselves saying, “This war is about the politics; not about the people”. Russian seafarers are finding it almost impossible to send money home, return to Russia at the end of their contracts and, increasingly, to find work.

**RADICAL ACTS OF KINDNESS**

While we witness the more barbaric manifestations of conflict in the Ukraine, the global consequences are merging with those of the pandemic, exacerbating the sense of desperation amongst the more vulnerable in our societies.

Experience teaches that times of crisis bring out the worst and the best in human beings. We have seen extraordinary outpourings of solidarity in these last months. The Sunday that Orthodox Christians celebrated Easter, Cantus, a local choir organised a concert in their director’s garage to raise money for phone cards for Ukrainian seafarers.

The local English-speaking women's group, too, is supporting this “project”. These and many other gestures of solidarity and compassion recall the words of the late Desmond Tutu’s little hymn, Goodness is Stronger than Evil. For one who stared evil in the face more than once, those words carry a charge of Easter hope to strengthen us to continue making a difference through the sum of our small radical acts of kindness.

Revd Canon Ian Hutchinson Cervantes
Regional Director of Latin América
To donate please visit www.missiontoseafarers.org/donate/fan

If you would like to donate to a specific region, you can select this from the dropdown menu titled – ‘Why are you Donating?’

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