Apostleship of the Sea of the United States of America (AOS-USA)

Volunteer Training: AOS-USA Cruise Ship Priest Program
Introduction
Who is AOS-USA?

• AOS-USA is a professional Membership association comprised of AOS Port Chaplains, Cruise Ship Priests, Catholic Mariners, and others who are dedicated to the well being of mariners.

• AOS-USA promotes the work of the Apostleship of the Sea as stated in the Motu Proprio Stella Maris, promulgated by St. Pope John Paul II in 1997.

• AOS-USA promotes professionalism and continuing education for Port Chaplains, Cruise Ship Priests, and promotes ways that our Catholic Mariner Members can live their Catholic Faith onboard.
Introduction

Who is AOS-USA?

- AOS-USA promotes authentic Catholic ministry, and continued spiritual growth and theological understanding of our Catholic Faithful
- AOS-USA is a Private Association of the Christian Faithful
- AOS-USA Guiding Documents include:
  - Motu Proprio Stella Maris – John Paul II
  - AOS Manual for Chaplains
  - AOS-USA Cruise Ship Priest Program Manual
Founding of AOS-USA

- Created in 1976 by Bishop Rene Gracida, AOS Bishop Promoter., originally titled, National Catholic Conference for Seafarers (NCCS)
- Book *American Catholic Seafarers’ Church* – by Vincent Yzermans  p. 174-192
- Response to Vatican II – greater input from the laity and particularly, Catholic mariners
Creation of Cruise Ship Priest Program

- US Bishops and Cruise Lines received complaints about priests onboard
  - Actual priests
  - Rent-A-Priest - Former Priests
  - Schismatics
  - Priests who had lost their clerical status
  - Ministers of other Faiths “providing Catholic Mass”
  - Valid Priests behaving badly onboard, creating scandal
- Complaints about the Mass being said in bars onboard, irreverent or haphazard.
- Questions as to where the onboard Mass Collections were going.
- 2002 US Bishops and AOS National Director ask AOS-USA to facilitate program to screen and approve priests onboard cruise ships.
What Cruise Ship Priest Program Does

- Screens & approves Roman Catholic priests for ministry.
- Requires very specific annual letter of approval from priests’ Competent Authority.
- Requires that the Priest must provide ministry to passengers and crew.
- Requires that priests must provide Catholic and Interdenominational Services on board.
How to Join Cruise Ship Priest Program

- Short Application
- Annual Membership dues of $125
- Photo for ID Badge
- Copy of Current Passport
- Annual Letter of approval from Competent Authority, specific to this program
Opportunity!

• The “Teachable Moment” – Most Catholic Clergy were unfamiliar with AOS Ministry, or Maritime Ministry in general.

• Opportunity for greater and more long term access to crewmembers and staff onboard Cruise Ships
Attracting Priests to the Ministry & Getting them to Volunteer

• CSP Program is a volunteer ministry which priests do during their vacation, sabbatical or retirement.
• Expected to pay dues each year.
• Expected to pay their travel to and from the ship, as well as any Visas, etc.
• In a very real sense, we’re asking them to “buy into” the ministry and make a personal financial commitment to provide this ministry.
• This means they have to understand the full mission and really get excited about it.
• Our Job? Education, education, education!
What’s in if for the Priest?

• Discounted way to cruise and see the world.
• A vibrant ministry where they feel needed and appreciated.
• Knowing they are making a difference.
• Knowing that if they are not present, there is no one else providing ministry onboard, especially the Sacraments.
  • Death of Passenger onboard – husband stated “Her Church was there for her in the middle of the Ocean!”
  • Retired priest who felt useless, filling his calendar with doctors appointments, rejuvenated about his own Calling, when he served onboard a cruise ship and found many crewmembers, staff and passengers of all Faiths taking the opportunity to seek counseling.
Training

• Cruise Ship Priest Manual
• Motu Proprio Stella Maris
• Manual for AOS Chaplains
• One on one phone conversations
• Private AOS-USA Cruise Ship Priest Facebook site where priests can dialogue regarding best practices, share ideas, ask questions, etc.
• AOS-USA Annual Conference – brings priests together, along with AOS Port Chaplains and Catholic Mariners. Special sessions on Cruise Ship Ministry.
• Newsletter
• E-Mail Bulletins for all Priests regarding special issues
  • Instructions for Holy Week, ANZAC Day Services, etc
  • Code Red Precautions during virus outbreaks onboard
  • Emergency Issues that arise on a specific ship, etc.
In Conclusion

It’s all about educating the person about the importance of the ministry, making them feel a part, and helping to keep them inspired and motivated.

People have a need to be involved and to do something of worth. We give our priests that opportunity!
Some Facts & Figures

Since 2006, we have served onboard 7,446 cruises and 8 cruise lines!
Thank you for listening!
Any Questions?

Doreen M. Badeaux – Secretary General
Apostleship of the Sea of the United States of America
1500 Jefferson Drive
Port Arthur, TX 77642
USA
PH: 409.985.4545 FAX: 409.985.5945
E-Mail: aosusa@sbcglobal.net
www.aos-usa.org