



GOOD NEWS

From The Ministry to Seafarers

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PADDLING IN THE SAME DIRECTION!

We're delighted to reintroduce Benjamin Ripley who began volunteering with M2S in 2022. This year he stepped into the role of Stella Maris chaplain, previously occupied by the now retired Father Andrew Thavam. Benjamin recently shared his reflections on what being a chaplain means to him...

Small Miracles!

by Benjamin Ripley

The final part of Mark's Gospel describes how Jesus commissioned his disciples to go out into all the world and spread the Good News. He gives them the power to perform astonishing miracles: exorcising demons, healing the sick, speaking in tongues, handling poisonous snakes, and safely drinking deadly poisons (Mark 16:15-18). Out they went, performing these great miracles as they preached the Gospel. Followers of Jesus Christ have all received this same commission.

Now, I can't speak for anyone else, but I have never exorcised demons, healed anyone of any disease, or spoken in tongues. I have no love for snakes, and don't have any desire to handle one, let alone a poisonous one; and I think I'm smart enough to avoid poisonous drink. So sometimes I wonder, if I can't do these things, how good of a disciple am I?

Reflecting on this though, I realize that I **am** performing miracles. I don't think I'm bragging or presenting myself as something I'm not. I say it because I believe that **all** those involved in ministry are miracle workers. They may not be spectacular miracles like those of Jesus and the Apostles, but they are miracles all the same.

Small miracles.

I am a Stella Maris port chaplain in the Port of Montreal, working in collaboration with Mariners' House and M2S. I am also a Stella Maris volunteer at **Foyer des Marins** in the Port of Trois-Rivières. Stella Maris is a Catholic organization that provides outreach services to merchant sailors who arrive at ports around the world. I believe that small miracles are at the very core of seafarers' ministry. How can I say that? It's what I've observed being done each day by staff and volunteers at ports around the world.



Every time I meet and talk with a seafarer about their home and their family, their work, their life at sea, every time I take the opportunity to listen to them and hear their joys and sorrows, I perform a miracle of healing by lightening their load a little bit, by providing a ministry of presence and letting them know that someone cares.

Every time I transport seafarers for shopping or Covid-19 vaccinations, every time a volunteer comforts and prays with a seafarer who is suffering a personal or family crisis, every time that something is done for them that shows that they are a person and not just a piece of machinery, a small miracle of healing is performed by treating seafarers with the dignity that they deserve – seemingly small miracles, yes, but very powerful miracles too.

I believe that is what we all do in our own particular work and ministries, whatever that may be. During difficult times like the Covid-19 pandemic, this became more important than ever. Every comfort we gave, every connection we provided, exorcised the demons of loneliness and isolation. All the ways we've had to get creative in our ministries have exorcised the demons of frustration and futility that we all sometimes feel.

These challenging times have altered the ways we minister and serve others, that is for certain. But we have persisted as best we can, confident that social distancing, facemasks, and lockdowns had no power to stop these small miracles from taking place. Our ministries of small miracles are how Jesus calls us to show the world that we are his disciples. May he continue to bless us and strengthen us each day.



Volunteers Are Back!

After a 3-year hiatus, we will be welcoming out-of-town volunteers once again this summer. If you would like to learn more about what it means to serve seafarers, come join us in Montreal. Contact Patty at info@ministrytoseafarers.org. In the meantime, we're thankful for the contributions of local helpers: **Sheila, Rob, Harry and Emre**.



The international **Day of the Seafarer** recognizes *"the unique contribution made by seafarers all over the world to international seaborne trade, the world economy and civil society as a whole."*

All are welcome to join us at the Seafarers' Centre on **June 26th at 6 pm** for a celebration!

Seafarers have a unique perspective on the world and see many spectacular sights while sailing. We post the photos they share with us using the **#WhatISeeAtSea** hashtag. For this year, the IMO (International Maritime Organization) has created the **#OceansWorthProtecting** hashtag. How have you been impacted by the marine environment? You're invited to take part in the campaign by showing what you think is worth protecting. Share your photos on IMO's social media platforms.

Ukrainian Potluck

We continue to develop relationships with Ukrainian seafarers and their extended community. On Easter Sunday, we hosted a potluck and 25 people gathered to share food and friendship. We plan to repeat these gatherings on a quarterly basis as a way to serve this dear community.

Visitors

This spring we welcomed students for educational/mission tours from **Emmanuel Christian School** and **Woodland Christian High**.



Though the two groups did not meet in person, they worked on two halves of an Easter craft that we gifted to seafarers. We appreciate the creativity of students as well as their good questions about the work we do! When



Heritage Christian School came by, the Centre was full of seafarers and they were able to chat with three young Danish seafarers and a group of Filipinos! We



regrouped in the chapel, stringing Christmas bags together and processing what we learned from the seafarers.



Cabane a Sucre Fundraiser

For the first time, Mariners' House and M2S collaborated on a joint fundraiser this spring. We transformed the cruise ship terminal into a sugar shack and more than 200 people took a longer lunch break to come out and support our work. We had excellent feedback and hope to make this an annual event. The event netted just over \$7K for each organization.



Board Member Openings

We are presently in need of a board member from Classis Quinte. Another board position will open in spring 2024 for a person from Classis Eastern Canada. Meetings are held twice/year in the spring and fall. The M2S Board of Directors strives to be a governance board, leaving day-to-day operations in the hands of the staff.

M2S is dedicated to enhancing the lives of seafarers regardless of race, religion, gender or rank, through ship visiting, advocacy and hospitality; and showing Jesus' love by caring for their physical, emotional, spiritual and justice needs. Interested candidates should inquire with **Sonja Verbeek, Board Chair** (sverbeek@bell.net) or **Chaplain Michelle DePooter** (chaplain@ministrytoseafarers.org).

Financial Update

A link to our Annual Report, including our (abbreviated) Financial Statements is available in the footer of our website.

How to Donate

You can make a secure, online donation through CanadaHelps, the PayPal Giving Fund, by cheque, or e-Transfer to **donations@ministrytoseafarers.org**. For details, visit **www.ministrytoseafarers.org/donate**.

We encourage our supporters to take a wide view of stewardship. Sign up for the free **Christian Stewardship Services Donor Newsletter** (www.csservices.ca) and learn about creative ways you can make an estate plan. *What would you like your legacy to be?*



🏠 P.O. Box 128
Place d'Armes
Montreal, Quebec
Canada H2Y 3E9
☎️ +1 514 849 3234

✉️ info@ministrytoseafarers.org
🌐 www.ministrytoseafarers.org
📘 theminitytoseafarersofthecrc
📷 @m2smtl

CHAPLAINS
Michelle DePooter
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