

JULY - SEPTEMBER
2023



Stella Maris

SUPPORTING SEAFARERS AND FISHERS AROUND THE WORLD

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Stella Maris is a Catholic charity supporting seafarers worldwide.

We provide practical and pastoral care to all seafarers, regardless of nationality, belief or race. Our port chaplains and volunteer ship visitors welcome seafarers, offer welfare services and advice, practical help, care and friendship.

Stella Maris is the largest ship visiting network in the world, working in 332 ports with 227 port chaplains around the world. We also run 53 seafarers' centres all over the world.

We are only able to continue our work through the generous donations of our supporters and volunteers.

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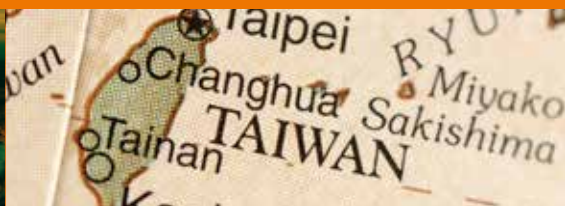
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Stella Maris provides seafarers with practical support, information and a listening ear

KAOHSIUNG, TAIWAN



The Taiwanese fishing fleet employs approximately 32,000 migrant workers, with almost two-thirds of these fishers working on distant water fishing vessels all over the world. Mostly from Indonesia and the Philippines, these migrant fishers were first recruited to solve the so-called 'labour shortage,' and purportedly to maintain the safe operation of the vessels. However, there are concerns that there was no real labour shortage, but that instead employers were seeking cheap labour which was compounded by local workers finding fishing work to be less desirable, perceiving the work as difficult, dirty and dangerous. Operating the second largest distant water fishing fleet in the world, the Taiwanese fishing industry has also not been immune to reports of migrant labour abuses, culminating in Taiwanese seafood being included on the United States Department of Labour's List of Goods Produced by Child Labour or Forced labour in 2020.

First arriving in Kaohsiung in February of 1996, Stella Maris has become an integral part of the Kaohsiung community, taking care of the migrant fishers and seafarers. In many cases, Stella Maris chaplains and volunteers are the initial point of contact and support when a fisher is abused and they facilitate grievance and remedy processes in a manner that empowers the fisher, and support the overall mental health and well-being of fishers and seafarers – many who may be out to sea for months at a time with little to no contact with their families.

As port chaplains, we offer spiritual assistance for the fishermen. We celebrate masses either in the fishing vessel or in the Marine Biro building. Almost every

Friday we celebrate Mass exclusively for the fishermen. We are privileged to have the land-based Filipino and Indonesian migrants who assist us in our masses and ship visits. Besides masses, we are available for confessions. Many fishermen practise their faith as they dock in the port. For their wellness and mental health, Stella Maris Kaohsiung organizes activities such as visiting the interesting places of Southern Taiwan.

Many fishermen expressed their desire to visit some beautiful places in Taiwan just to refresh their minds. Secondly, we organize sports contest with small prizes for the winners. Last year, several teams from different fishing vessels participated in the event. More than eighty fishermen came to cheer their team. Thirdly, we organise social nights in the Stella Maris Centre with a barbecue, karaoke or simply spending time together. We are happy to have many fishermen come to our Centre every Saturday evening. Some fishermen have been in trouble. We visit, listen to them and give them necessary counselling and connect them with their families. We give updates about their situations in the prison and to the detained fishermen, we share the news from their families. It is one of the significant experiences of the Stella Maris Kaohsiung.

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THE CHURCH YEAR AT SEA



3RD JULY

SAINT THOMAS, APOSTLE

St Thomas (first century), called 'the twin', is chiefly remembered for doubting the reality of the resurrection until he saw the Lord for himself. Once he was satisfied, he made a heartfelt profession of faith: 'My Lord and my God.' St Thomas, who probably suffered martyrdom as a result of preaching the Gospel in India, comforts us when our faith is weak, encourages us to persevere and demonstrates that 'every doubt can lead to an outcome brighter than any uncertainty' (Benedict XVI).

Today, pray for a firm faith and for opportunities to profess your faith to those around you.

JULY

July is the month traditionally dedicated to the precious blood of Jesus. Jesus shed his blood on the cross and this is the greatest sign of his love for us.

11TH JULY

SAINT BENEDICT, ABBOT, PATRON OF EUROPE

St Benedict (c.480-c.547) was born in Norcia (Italy) and was educated in Rome. Turning his back on the worldliness he encountered there, he retired to live as a hermit in a cave near Subiaco. His fame spread and disciples began to join him, whom he organised into twelve small monasteries. He eventually moved to Montecassino, where he founded the famous abbey, and produced his Rule, drawing on the monastic wisdom of the Christian East as well as earlier Western Rules (notably the Regula Magistri) and his own practical experience. He was proclaimed patron of Europe by Pope St Paul VI because of his essential influence in the formation of Christendom.

Like the houses founded by St Benedict, every ship could become a floating monastery - a place for work and prayer where the other is Christ.



22ND JULY

SAINT MARY MAGDALENE

St Mary Magdalene (first century), originally from Magdala in Galilee, was one of the Lord’s most intimate disciples and is often associated with the woman from whom he drove out seven demons. She remained with the Lord during his last agony on the cross and, according to St Mark and St John, was the first to see him after the resurrection. Tradition relates that she spent her last years as a hermit in Provence (France).

Mary was forgiven many sins and then became the first witness of the Risen Jesus. Let us pray to her for the grace to ask forgiveness for our sins and to carry the Good News to others.



25TH JULY

SAINT JAMES, APOSTLE

St James (+ 44), the son of Zebedee, was called by the Lord together with his brother St John. He was one of the three apostles, along with St Peter and St John, who witnessed the Transfiguration (Mt 17:1) and the Agony in the Garden (Mt 16:37). He was condemned to death by Herod Agrippa and beheaded in the year 44, the first of the Twelve to be martyred. His shrine at Santiago de Compostela (Spain) remains a popular pilgrimage centre.

When you return to your home port try to make a pilgrimage to a holy place.



26TH JULY

SAINTS JOACHIM AND ANNE, PARENTS OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

SS Joachim and Anne were the parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the grandparents of the Lord. They remind us that the Word truly became flesh in a particular family. Our devotion to them is an extension of our love of Mary and her divine Son.

Pray for your grandparents – thank God for what they have passed on to you – remember any grandchildren that you may have.

AUGUST

August is the month of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. We venerate her heart which was always united especially in her sufferings to the Sacred Heart of Jesus inflamed with love for us poor sinners.

6TH AUGUST

THE TRANSFIGURATION OF THE LORD

The Transfiguration of the Lord on Mount Tabor came to strengthen the faith of the disciples, for trying times lay ahead: the Son of Man would be put to death and all that the human eye could see was weakness, humiliation and suffering. Beyond the shame of the cross, however, is the light and glory of Easter, and it is this that the Transfiguration reveals. It shows the disciples, and us, Christ's divinity – he who is Light from Light - and anticipates the glory of heaven.

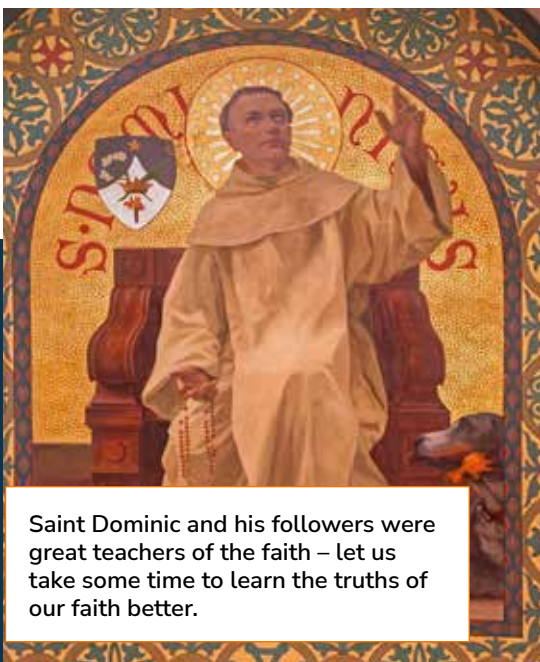
Let us pray for Jesus to reveal himself to us and for us to see him as our God.



8TH AUGUST

SAINT DOMINIC, PRIEST

St Dominic (c.1170-1221) was born at Caleruega (Spain) and initially joined the Canons Regular of Osma. In 1206 he was sent to Languedoc (France) to help uproot the Catharist or Albigensian heresy. While based in Toulouse, he founded the Order of Preachers (Dominicans) to assist in this work; the Order was approved by the Holy See in 1216 and has had a huge impact on the life of the Church.



Saint Dominic and his followers were great teachers of the faith – let us take some time to learn the truths of our faith better.

14TH AUGUST

**SAINT MAXIMILIAN MARY KOLBE,
PRIEST AND MARTYR**

St Maximilian Kolbe (1894-1941) was born near Łódz (Poland) and joined the Conventual Franciscans. Marked by an ardent devotion to the Blessed Virgin, who had appeared to him as a child, he set up the Militia Immaculata, preached Marian consecration and founded monasteries in Niepokalanów (Poland) and Nagasaki (Japan). Eventually imprisoned by the Nazis in Auschwitz, he offered himself in exchange for a father who was to be starved to death. St John Paul II canonised him in 1982 and proclaimed him the patron of the 'suffering' twentieth century.

Let us pray for the grace to suffer for others and offer it for the love of our Lord.

15TH AUGUST

THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

The Solemnity of the Assumption is, in some ways, the paramount feast of Our Lady, since it commemorates her passing, body and soul, into glory in heaven, where she stands beside her Son 'in garments of gold'. Though the dogma of the Assumption was only defined in 1950, it was widely believed by the earliest Christians. The Blessed Virgin truly leads the way; she fulfilled her vocation in humility and, given her Immaculate Conception, the grave was no place for her body. Where she is now, we one day hope to be.

Let us pray to our Mother in heaven that we may eventually join her and her Son in paradise.

28TH AUGUST

**SAINT AUGUSTINE, BISHOP AND
DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH**

St Augustine (354-430) was born in Thagaste (Algeria) and, despite the example of his mother, became a Manichean and fathered an illegitimate child. He was converted at the age of thirty-three and baptised by St Ambrose in Milan. St Augustine became Bishop of Hippo Regius (now Annaba, Algeria) and wrote and preached energetically in defence of the faith, making him one of the most influential doctors of the Church. His principles concerning the religious life continue to inspire Augustinian canons, friars and nuns.

Let us pray for our mothers and for all those who have had a role in our faith.



SEPTEMBER

In September we remember especially the **Seven Sorrows of Our Lady: the Prophecy of Simeon, the Flight into Egypt, The Loss of the Child Jesus in the Temple of Jerusalem, Mary's meeting Jesus on the Via Dolorosa, the Crucifixion of Jesus on Mount Calvary, Jesus Taken Down from the Cross and the Burial of Jesus.**



8TH SEPTEMBER

THE NATIVITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Nothing is known for sure about the details of the Blessed Virgin's birth. Even her parents, traditionally known as St Joachim and St Anne, are not mentioned in Sacred Scripture. Today's feast originated in the East, probably during the sixth century, and was later introduced to the West. A French legend tells of a man hearing angels singing on the night of 8th September and being told that the Virgin Mary had been born on that night. Her earthly birth is celebrated (like that of St John the Baptist) because it announced to the world the coming of Jesus, the beginning of the New Covenant.

Let us pray for all pregnant women and for those giving birth.

9TH SEPTEMBER

SAINT PETER CLAVER, PRIEST

St Peter Claver (1580-1654) was born at Verdú in Catalonia (Spain) and entered the Society of Jesus. In 1610 he was sent to Colombia and began his life's work among the slaves. He cared for them and baptised more than 300,000 during his thirty-three years of tireless ministry.

We pray for all those suffering modern slavery that God may send people like St Peter Claver to fight for their freedom.

13TH SEPTEMBER

SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, BISHOP AND DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

St John Chrysostom (c.350-407) was born at Antioch and trained as a lawyer. He became a monk, then later a priest and became a famed theologian and preacher, gaining the name Chrysostom or 'the golden-mouthed.' In 398 he became Archbishop of Constantinople and faced much opposition in his reforms. He died in exile and is honoured as one of the four Greek doctors of the Church.



The Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom, widely used in the East, was once attributed to him, although it is now recognised as very probably later than his time.

We pray for all the bishops of the church that they may teach the truth and speak beautifully of God!

14TH SEPTEMBER

THE EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS

The Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross commemorates the rescue of the relic of the True Cross by Emperor Heraclius in 629 after it had been captured by the Persians; it also marks the original dedication of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, where relics of the Cross were kept, in 335. The Feast celebrates the Cross, the instrument of our salvation, and is in many ways an extension of Good Friday. The Cross is a great and powerful sign of God's love for us – a love stronger than death – and also a daily reality in our lives: the only true path to holiness.

Spend some time in front of a crucifix thanking Jesus for his love for us.



15TH SEPTEMBER

OUR LADY OF SORROWS

This feast originated as a memorial of the Seven Sorrows of Mary, most of which were linked to the events of Good Friday, when she stood at the foot of the Cross. We remember that the Blessed Virgin had to live through the personal tragedy of seeing her Son die. She had a unique share in our redemption, offering her Son's life to the Lord, trusting that it was part of his plan.

Let us pray for all who suffer in mind and body, that Our Lady who suffered so much may comfort them.

**Lectio Divina – a short introduction**

How to link up with Jesus and with God if you can't get to Mass? Read the Word of God in scripture. It is like a letter from home, written specially for you – and God is writing to you. Perhaps light a candle to show God's presence.

Take a short passage, perhaps the Sunday gospel. Put yourself in the presence of God, open yourself to God, for God is all around you.

What is God writing to you about? What is Jesus saying to you? Imagine the scene. You are one of the disciples, listening and watching. Ask Jesus what he means for you.

Read the passage again, until it enters your heart. It may help to do this with others, to share with them and learn from them what Jesus is saying to them. Always end with a blessing, a sign of real friendship for your brothers and sisters and a prayer for each one's needs.



Scripture

FROM THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE, CHAPTER 1:

Mary set out and went with haste into the hill country to a town in Judah. She went into Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. Now when Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. She gave a loud cry and said, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. Blessed is she who believed that what was said to her from the Lord would be fulfilled.' And Mary said, 'My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour; since he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant. For see, from now on all generations will call me blessed.'

REFLECTION

For many Christians the centre of the month of August is the feast of the Assumption of Our Lady on the 15th. What happened when Mary came to the end of her life? The Church cannot bear to think that the body which had borne Jesus should have corrupted and rotted away, as do the bodies of the rest of us. She was without sin or any corruption. She was, of course, tested by temptation. She must have been tried by annoyance with tiresome neighbours, by tiredness, even by sexual temptations, but she never fell. At the end of her life she must have gone

straight into the embrace of her son Jesus in the glory of God the Father, rejoicing with the angels. Did she even die? We don't know! Can there be death without corruption? It is the direct consequence of our belief in the sinlessness of Mary that she must have been received wholly into the bliss of heaven. Mary's assumption into heaven is the forerunner of our own delight in God's presence, the shining light, the promise of our own liberation from worry, temptation and all hardship or discontent. Truly she is blessed among all women!

Scripture

FROM THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK, CHAPTER 10

Jesus and his disciples were on the road, going up to Jerusalem. Jesus was walking ahead of them. He began to tell them what was going to happen to him, 'For look, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the gentiles, and they will mock him and spit at him and scourge him and put him to death; and after three days he will rise again.'

REFLECTION

One great moment in September is the feast of the Triumph of the Cross on the 14th. Throughout his ministry Jesus was looking forward to his 'Hour', the hour of his glorious Resurrection. This could be reached only through his suffering and eventually his agonizing death on the Cross. That 'Hour' would be the moment when his devoted and loving obedience to his Father would triumph. His obedience would wash away the disobedience of Adam and of the whole human race and all our failures, bringing us back to loyalty to our Father and to Jesus. Let us pray to join Jesus in this triumph over evil.

In the year 317 the Roman Emperor Constantine, - at a time when Rome dominated Europe - before a great battle had a vision of the Cross. Written in the sky was 'In this sign you will triumph'. After winning the battle he made Christianity the official religion of the empire. Christians were no longer to be persecuted and martyred. Not long afterwards, in Jerusalem, in a dump behind the traditional place of the crucifixion, Constantine's mother found a relic which has since been venerated, especially on this feast day, as the true Cross of Christ.

Father Damien's Extraordinary Sacrifice

➤ **When the Hawaiian authorities established a leper colony, a prison for the sick and dying, Father Damien volunteered to be the first to minister to them. The young priest went there with a specific intention: he was going to sacrifice his life for the lepers.**

One of the modern Church's outstanding saints with regard to the fruit of generosity is St Damien of Moloka'i. Born in Belgium, Damien is more associated with Hawai'i, usually seen as a tropical paradise, but whose stunning landscape and lush vegetation hid terrible secrets and inhuman suffering: leprosy was raging among the native peoples. Believing the disease to be highly contagious, and terrified of an epidemic, the authorities established a leper colony on the remote Kalaupapa peninsula on the island of Moloka'i. Separated from the rest of the island by cliffs and surrounded by treacherous sea currents, the peninsula was a natural fortress, a prison for the sick and dying. In reality it became a hellhole. Deeply concerned for the souls of those abandoned to die on the peninsula, the Catholic bishop of Honolulu, Bishop Louis Désiré Maigret, issued an invitation for priests to consider volunteering to spend three months ministering to the sick and dying there. Among the volunteers was Damien who volunteered to be the first. As he left for his three months, the bishop warned him not to touch the lepers, otherwise he might catch the disease and have to stay. In reality this was what Damien intended – with



generosity of heart, the young priest was going to sacrifice his life for the lepers.

Damien embraced the lepers, not just physically, but spiritually and emotionally: he was their father. He gave of himself without measure. He believed all things were possible – the fruit of generosity had planted in him an eternal hope and the tenacity to ensure that hope was fulfilled. He administered the sacraments and formed souls, but he also cared for the lepers, tended their sores, fed them and made them as comfortable as he could. He prepared them to die; and when they died he made their coffins and buried them. He built them proper homes, an infirmary, and an orphanage for the children. There were many children thrown onto the island to fend for themselves; Damien took them under his wing and helped them live out as well as they could whatever life was left to them.

Damien spared nothing for his children, and was tenacious in demands for more money, more resources, more food and more volunteers, but his tenacity often



infuriated his superiors. While the bishop who originally sent him to Moloka'i, Bishop Maigret, was determined to get Damien whatever he needed, his successor, Bishop Hermann Koeckemann, was not as indulgent. He and Damien's religious superior, Fr Léonor Fouesnel, were often frustrated by Damien's constant demands, usually delivered in his rough and peasant way. They were not bad men, indeed both did a great deal of good for poor Catholics in Hawai'i, but they too were encountering an immovable and awkward force: a saint on fire with the Spirit and extraordinary generosity who expected an endless bounty and was determined to get it. They failed to see that Damien's insistence was not just stubbornness, but the Spirit speaking through him and pushing them to the limits of generosity.

This is a point to be noted for those growing in the fruits of the Spirit: when the fruit of generosity has taken possession of a soul and is nourishing it to produce a bountiful

harvest among those served, this can create difficulties in others who are not as advanced in or privy to the workings of grace in a particular context. These servants of the Spirit will be misunderstood, even by people in the Church, even by Church officials who know the theology of the Spirit but can at times fail to see it at work around them. But in such cases, the fruit also serves to feed and sustain the soul in grace as it continues its work in difficult situations, and such was the case with St Damien. He was frustrated by his superiors, at times overwhelmed by the situation of his lepers, and angry at the tardiness and bureaucracy of the government and Church to meet their needs. Did he go too far? At times, yes; but the lepers, his children, had the first claim on his heart and he cannot be faulted for constantly thinking about them and working out what he needed to get for them. It was a father's love and the zeal which the fruit of the Spirit nurtured in him.

By Fr John S Hogan

How to Be Holy: 5 Christian Responsibilities

➤ **Are you searching for holiness, wondering how to get there? Here are five examples of Christian responsibilities which can lead to holiness.**

1. LEARN ABOUT YOUR FAITH

If we want to have a strong faith then we need to learn more about it. We spend hours learning about other things that interest us – why not learn about our Catholic faith? Get some good books. Find some good websites. Go to a good discussion group or prayer group that has some input. Do a course in the Catholic faith or in catechesis.

2. EVANGELISE

This means literally 'sharing the Gospel'. We don't all have to go out into the streets and tell people about Jesus. But we do all have a responsibility to witness to our faith in everyday life, and to share our faith with others when the opportunity occurs. Simple tips: Don't hide your faith. If a conversation arises when religion or faith is the topic, don't be shy about sharing your own beliefs. And have the courage to start conversations; to ask people what they think and believe, so you can understand them, and have a chance to share your own faith. Better still, invite your friends to some Catholic events that are taking place – to a prayer group or retreat or young people's event. And pray. If you pray each morning for an opportunity to share your faith, you will be amazed how God will provide one – and it will seem like a miracle. We just need to be open, and brave. People are depending on us.

3. GET INVOLVED IN THE WORLD

Get involved in the issues of the day, and in the issues of the world in which you live. Vote, in local and national elections. Get involved in the social and political issues of your school, your college, your workplace, your neighbourhood, your town, your country. Don't sit on the fence, or leave it to someone else. Don't hide away in a Christian bubble. We are meant to be light and leaven in the world. We don't just get involved 'as Christians' – we go in as ordinary people who have a stake in society, trying to be just and kind and fair. And sometimes our Christian values will be important, and we will need to stand up for them, and help others to see how needed they are. There is a great tradition in this country of lay Catholics being involved in politics – it is a wonderful vocation. But even if we are not 'politicians' we are still called to be political in the best sense of the word.



4. SUPPORT YOUR PARISH

We support our parish simply by belonging and going to Sunday Mass and trying to be faithful Catholics. If we are over eighteen we support the parish by making a financial offering at Mass each Sunday. There is a biblical tradition of 'tithing', of offering one tenth of our wages to the Church, and some Christians still follow this tradition. The important thing is to be generous in our giving, to set aside a generous offering each week, and not just to leave it to chance or to whatever is in our back pocket. Think about whether you could give perhaps not 10% ('tithing') but even 2% of your wages. And apart from money, we can support our parish in so many other ways: by volunteering when help is needed; by taking on a ministry if we are asked; by making constructive suggestions about what can be done in the parish; by loving and supporting our priests. We do not need to be 'busy' in the parish all the time, because we have many other responsibilities, but we do need to be generous with our time and energy.

5. HAVE A SPECIAL CONCERN FOR THE POOR

Look out for those in any kind of difficulty or need. Support them, in whatever way seems realistic, with your love and time and money and prayer. Those who are unnoticed or unpopular or unattractive; those who are lonely; the sick, the elderly; those with learning difficulties; the stranger, the newcomer, the one who cannot speak the right language. Those without homes or families or jobs. Those without faith or love or hope. We should have a special concern for the poor. We find Christ in them, and we bring the love of Christ to them – so that Christ is 'all in all'. Generosity and self-sacrifice are two of the greatest Christian virtues – and deep down we are far happier when we are giving than when we are taking. But the real issue is love: to love all those we meet, with a sincere and kind and tender heart.

By Fr Stephen Wang



Stella Maris is the largest ship-visiting network in the world. *We improve the lives of seafarers and fishers through our network of local chaplains and seafarer centres, expert information, advocacy and spiritual support.*



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