

OCTOBER – DECEMBER
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.

➤ **To support Stella Maris with a donation visit www.stellamaris.org.uk/donate**

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NEED HELP?



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



VANCOUVER, CANADA

The Port of Vancouver on Canada's west coast is by far the country's largest port and North America's second largest export facility. Via highways and railroads, the port connects Canada and key North American markets to the rest of the world, enabling trade with more than 170 economies globally.

Foreign-flagged vessels carry cargo back and forth across the Pacific Ocean to Japan, South Korea, and China, and via Singapore to the Indian subcontinent. Ships also carry cargo down to South America, as well as to Europe and as far as the Persian Gulf States mostly through the Panama Canal.

The Port's twenty-nine major terminals include container, break/dry/liquid bulk, and automobile, with several being on the Fraser River and Delta and operating year-round. It serves as the homeport for the Vancouver-Alaska cruise itinerary from May to October each year.

Significant neighbouring ports in the Pacific Northwest include Victoria and Nanaimo on Vancouver Island, Prince Rupert and Kitimat on British Columbia's northern coast, and Seattle and Tacoma in Washington State not far to the south.

Our port chaplains currently work in an ecumenical setting with the Anglican Mission to Seafarers and the Christian Reformed Church's Ministry to Seafarers. The former administers two "Flying Angels" seafarer centres, at the Downtown Waterfront and at Roberts Bank in South Delta. Most of the pastoral and temporal care offered to seafarers by the Stella Maris chaplains is

via direct contact with seafarers through boarding their docked vessels, and by transporting them to shopping malls and other facilities outside the port terminals.

Our Stella Maris chaplaincy team, sponsored by the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Vancouver, is coordinated by Deacon Dileep Athaide, who also serves as the National Director for Maritime Ministry in Canada. Deacon Steve Whan is a new part-time chaplain, and Douglas McDonald a long-time ship visitor. We are in the process of establishing parish-based Support Groups for our port ministry.

Vancouver's commercial fishery is a now tiny version of the grand industry that it was in decades past. All the same, support to fishers is offered by Stella Maris, most notably by an Annual Blessing of the Fleet conducted at Vancouver's Fishermen's Wharf.

Stella Maris works collaboratively with other maritime organizations in order to optimize our service to seafarers. Deacon Dileep is an active member of the Vancouver Seafarers Welfare Committee as well as the National Seafarers Welfare Board.

Stella Maris Vancouver Chaplaincy

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THE CHURCH YEAR AT SEA



1ST OCTOBER

SAINT THÉRÈSE OF LISIEUX

St Thérèse Martin (1873-1897) was born at Alençon and, aged fifteen, entered the Carmel of Lisieux, thus joining two of her sisters. Although she died of tuberculosis at the age of twenty- four, such was the influence of her spiritual writings and her 'little way' that she was declared a Doctor of the Church by St John Paul II in 1997. She is also Patron of the Missions and Co-Protectress of France (with St Joan of Arc).

Pray for all missionaries around the world and for the grace to do even the smallest everyday things for God.

2ND OCTOBER

THE HOLY GUARDIAN ANGELS

Three days ago the Church's liturgy celebrated the Archangels SS Michael, Gabriel and Raphael; today is the turn of those angels who, according to Scripture and tradition, guard and assist us at every moment. Each person has such a Guardian Angel and we rightly rejoice in their company.

Pray the Guardian Angel Prayer each day:

Angel of God,
my guardian dear,
To whom God's love
commits me here,
Ever this day,
be at my side,
To light and guard,
Rule and guide.
Amen.





4TH OCTOBER

SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI

St Francis (c.1182-1226) was the son of a wealthy merchant in Assisi (Italy) and, responding to the Lord's call, embraced poverty and preached the love of God to all. In 1210 Innocent III approved his Order of Friars Minor (Franciscans); two years later he helped St Clare establish a female community (Poor Clares). In 1224, while praying at La Verna, he received the wounds of the crucified Lord, which caused him great pain in his final years.

Pray for a spirit like that of St Francis, he loved and saw the hand of God in all of creation:

Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars, in heaven You formed them clear and precious and beautiful.

Praised be You, my Lord, through Brother Wind, and through the air, cloudy and serene, and every kind of weather, through whom You give sustenance to Your creatures.

Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Water, who is very useful and humble and precious and chaste.

(From the Canticle of the Creatures by St Francis)

7TH OCTOBER

OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY

This Memorial (originally Our Lady of Victories) commemorates the battle of Lepanto (7 October 1571), when a Christian fleet defeated the Turks. The victory was attributed by Pope St Pius V to the recitation of the Holy Rosary. This great Marian prayer is sometimes traced back to St Dominic and his confrères, preaching against the Albigensian heresy in the thirteenth century, although it seems more likely to have taken its familiar form in the fifteenth century. Since then it has spread all over the world and has produced marvellous fruits, bringing countless Christians 'to Jesus through Mary.'

Take fifteen minutes to pray the rosary together today.



24TH OCTOBER

SAINT ANTHONY MARY CLARET, BISHOP

St Anthony Mary Claret (1807-1870) was born near Barcelona (Spain). In 1849 he founded the Missionary Sons of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (Claretians) and was appointed Archbishop of Santiago (Cuba). He worked hard to spread the Gospel and ensure better conditions for slaves. Such was the anti-clerical mood that no less than fifteen attempts were made on his life. In 1857 he returned to Spain and acted as confessor to Queen Isabella II.

Pray for all those trapped in modern slavery and for their quick return to freedom.

NOVEMBER

November is traditionally the month dedicated to the remembrance of the dead. As Catholics we are joined through our baptism with the Church on earth and to all those in heaven and those still awaiting their purification in purgatory. Our prayers for them are of great value in easing their sufferings and reminding us of our own journey.

1ST NOVEMBER

ALL SAINTS

The Solemnity of All Saints celebrates all those who are in heaven, in the light of God's face – both those recognised by the Church as saints and those known only to the Lord. We ask for their intercession and we strive to follow their example, so that we too can fulfil our vocation to be saints.

The saints in heaven are our allies and are always ready to take our prayers before the throne of God. Remember to choose a heavenly patron and to pray to him or her often.



2ND NOVEMBER

THE COMMEMORATION OF ALL THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED (ALL SOULS' DAY)

Having celebrated the saints in heaven, the Church today turns her attentions to the Holy Souls in purgatory – holy because heaven awaits them but suffering the pain of purification in the crucible of God's love. It is customary for priests to celebrate three Masses on this day for the Mass, the sacrifice of Calvary renewed on our altars, has always been the principal means of fulfilling the great commandment of charity towards the dead. The process of purgation can also be assisted through our prayers, penances and good works. Today we are reminded that the love which we have for one another in this world is stronger than death.



Pray for all your loved ones who have gone before you: Eternal rest grant unto them O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them; may they rest in peace.

12TH NOVEMBER

SAINT JOSAPHAT, BISHOP AND MARTYR

St Josaphat (c.1580-1623) was born in Volodymyr-Volynskiy (Ukraine) of Orthodox parents, though he later became a Catholic and entered the Basilian Order at Vilnius. As Archbishop of Polotsk, he worked faithfully for the reform of the Church and unity between East and West. He faced much opposition and suffered martyrdom at the hands of an angry mob at Vitebsk (Belarus).

Pray for all those who have suffered in Ukraine in the past years and for a lasting peace.



24TH NOVEMBER

SAINT ANDREW DUNG-LAC, PRIEST, AND COMPANIONS, MARTYRS

The feast celebrates the witness of 117 Vietnamese martyrs, who died between 1625 and 1886 and were canonised in 1988. They include St Andrew Dung-Lac (1795-1839), a Vietnamese diocesan priest who was beheaded at Hanoi in 1839. Twenty- one of the martyrs were foreign missionaries, such as St Théophile Vénard, a member of the Paris Society of the Foreign Missions, who was beheaded in 1861 and exercised a strong influence on St Thérèse of Lisieux.

30TH NOVEMBER

SAINT ANDREW, APOSTLE AND MARTYR, PATRON OF SCOTLAND

St Andrew (first century) was born at Bethsaida and worked as a fisherman. He is called the Protokletos or 'first called', for he was originally a disciple of St John the Baptist before following Christ and bringing with him his brother, St Peter. After Pentecost he zealously preached the Gospel and was crucified at Patras (Greece). He is the Patron of Scotland, where his relics were formerly venerated at St Andrews.

Pray for all missionaries and fishermen for their safety and wellbeing.



DECEMBER

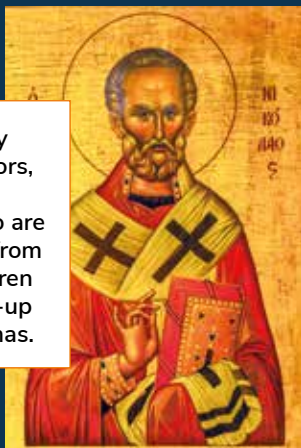
In December we have the four weeks of Advent to prepare for the coming of Christ. In the first two weeks of Advent the Church invites us to think about Jesus's coming in glory at the end of time – then from the 16th December onwards we think of Jesus's coming in humility in the manger in Bethlehem. It is a beautiful time of year but also a difficult one to be away from friends and family. Let us spend this month preparing for the coming of Jesus and praying for those with whom we would most like to spend it.

6TH DECEMBER

SAINT NICHOLAS, BISHOP

St Nicholas (fourth century) was born perhaps at Patara (now in Turkey) and became bishop of Myra. He may have been imprisoned under the Emperor Diocletian and have attended the Council of Nicaea which opposed the Arian heresy. He is venerated in both the East and the West, especially as a patron of sailors and of children, as can be seen in the Christmas tradition of 'Santa Claus'. The saint's relics were later brought to Bari (Italy).

Pray today for all sailors, especially those who are far away from their children in the run-up to Christmas.



8TH DECEMBER

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Today we celebrate the Blessed Virgin's unique privilege of being preserved from the stain of sin at the very moment of her conception. This was fitting for she would one day carry the second person of the Trinity in her womb. St John Henry Newman wrote that 'there is no difference in kind between her and us, though an inconceivable difference of degree. She and we are both simply saved by the grace of Christ.' But with Mary, the manner in which she was saved was exceptional: from the first moment of her existence, she was freed from the stain of Original Sin. This dogma was solemnly defined by Blessed Pius IX on 8 December 1854 but had long been believed by Christians.

Today we thank God for his boundless mercy and pray through the intercession of his mother to keep us free from sin.

28TH DECEMBER

THE HOLY INNOCENTS, MARTYRS

The Holy Innocents were the young children of the neighbourhood of Bethlehem, all under the age of two, put to death by Herod in an attempt to kill the Infant Jesus. Some ancient texts number the victims in the thousands but in all probability there were no more than two dozen. On this Feast of 'Childermas', while still in the Christmas Octave, these innocent, nameless victims are honoured as the first to shed their blood for Christ.

Let us pray for all children who have died before birth and for all innocent victims of violence.



Lectio Divina – a short introduction

How to link up 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.

Prayer for the Dead

SCRIPTURE

On arriving, Jesus found that Lazarus had been in the tomb for four days already. Bethany is only about three kilometres from Jerusalem, and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them about their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming she went to meet him. Mary remained sitting in the house. Martha said to Jesus, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died, but even now I know that God will grant whatever you ask of him.' Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again.' Martha said to him, 'I know he will rise again at the resurrection on the last day.' Jesus said to her: 'I am the resurrection and life. Anyone who believes in me, even though that person dies, will live, and no one who lives and believes in me will ever die. Do you believe this?' She said, 'Yes, Lord. I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into this world.'

REFLECTION

We all lose dear friends and family through accident, illness, old age. In this gospel passage Jesus's friend Lazarus has died, and Jesus goes to comfort the family, two sisters, Martha and Mary. He comforts them by bringing Lazarus back to life. This is a sign that he will raise up to life all who trust in him as the Son of God. It will be a different sort of life, bathed in the warmth of God's own love, no worries, no painful departures. At our death we come face-to-face with Jesus and after that vision we will be cleansed of all our filth and evil. It will just melt off us, so that we are ready to enter into his company for ever. In November we pray especially for the dead, especially for our departed friends and relatives, that they may enter into the joyful company with the Lord.

Preparing for Christmas

SCRIPTURE

The angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the House of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. He went in and said to her, 'Rejoice full of grace! The Lord is with you.' She was deeply disturbed by these words and pondered what this greeting could mean, but the angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. Look! You will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David; and his reign will have no end. The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. And so the child will be holy and will be called Son of God. And Mary said, 'Here I am, the Lord's servant, let it happen to me as you have said.'



REFLECTION

This story of the angel's visit to Mary puts us in the frame of mind to prepare for Christmas. We can only guess what she was thinking, getting ready for her marriage to her beloved Joseph, planning the wedding, imagining the family they would have together, when suddenly this message came to her from the Lord. She was not to have a horde of children but one special Child. He would be the fulfilment of all the hopes of all the world. He would bring to perfection all the promises of God. He would deliver us from all worry, evil, disappointment and failure. What must Mary have thought as the baby grew and developed within her! How close she must have come to God who had given her this sacred task! If we, too, open ourselves for the coming of Christ at Christmas he will fill us with his joy and strength.



A Maritime Pilgrimage around Britain

➤ **Seventy plus days at sea, covering 2,433 miles, with sixty different crew members, visiting more than fifty ports and holy sites, and joining hundreds of parishioners and groups in prayer and fellowship in twenty-three locations across the UK.**

This best sums up an epic Round Britain Sailing Pilgrimage undertaken by intrepid sailor and passionate Stella Maris supporter Russ Fairman. Russ made this voyage to raise awareness about the fantastic support Stella Maris has been providing seafarers, fishers and their families for over one hundred years.

As a precursor to Russ's journey, Stella Maris trustee John Hood circumnavigated the world with our beloved Stella Maris icon and met with our network of international chaplains. Shortly after John arrived back in the UK, Russ set sail on Saturday 29th April, from Southampton, England.

Russ made his amazing journey on his small but faithful 34ft sailboat 'Mintaka', which was beautifully decked-out with Stella Maris flags and logo, with Our Lady on board.

He sailed the British Isles in an anti-clockwise direction, stopping along ports and harbours including Gravesend, Harwich and

Grimsbay, before heading for Scotland to take in Leith, Lochboisdale in the Outer Hebrides, Campbeltown in Argyll and the Isles, and Glasgow – Stella Maris's birthplace.

Russ then sailed across to Ardglass in Northern Ireland, Milford Haven in Wales, Cornwall and Plymouth, prior to arriving back in the south coast of England, in Portsmouth. His arrival coincided with Sea Sunday on 9th July.

With over thirty years of sailing experience, Russ visited holy sites including the shrines of Our Lady of Walsingham in Norfolk, Our Lady of the Taper in Wales, and the holy islands of Lindisfarne (with its historical connections to St Cuthbert and St Aidan) off the northeast coast of England.

In every port and harbour, Russ and crew were welcomed with much warmth and hospitality by Stella Maris's chaplains and volunteers, local

parishioners and groups who gathered to greet and speak to him about his exciting, yet spirit-filled adventure.

These gatherings began with Mass and were followed by receptions featuring all manner of homemade sandwiches, cakes, pastries, teas and coffees. Those who turned up to these events listened to inspiring talks from Russ, and from local port chaplains and ship visitors about the wonderful work that Stella Maris does.

The sailing pilgrimage concluded with a celebration of Mass in the lovely Cathedral of St John the Evangelist on Sea Sunday, followed by a welcome home and thank you reception. A fitting conclusion, with Russ describing his pilgrimage around the coast of Britain as "one big prayer hug".

As a sailor, Russ shares an affinity and comradeship with seafarers and fishers. During his journey around Britain he encountered similar experiences which many seafarers themselves often face; a sense of being vulnerable to the threats of the open sea, and all the risks that comes with it.

"Seafarers are very resourceful. Even in times of danger. their focus is on what to do next, on doing the right thing in that moment that will see them through a problem they're encountering. Seafarers are always tuned into their fears; it's something we've learnt to do in order to remove that fear," Russ said.

"It's essential to stay in prayer whilst on your boat or ship. Continue to pray through your daily actions onboard, and when you return home to your families. Live a life of prayer, it changes you and your perspective of life.

"I'd like to thank everyone for their tremendous support in making this voyage a success. What a fabulous way to celebrate 103 years of Stella Maris's work! There have been so many memories of time spent with such wonderful people from the charity, doing such amazing work all over the world. Stella Maris is an extended family whom I love dearly," he said.



How to Pray the Rosary More Often

Do you struggle to pray the Rosary? Fr Lawrence Lew OP, Promotor General of the Rosary for the Order of Preachers, offers advice from his own experience of praying the rosary, guiding you in your prayer to become more like Mary in faith, hope, and love.

People often ask me how best to pray the Rosary, or they tell me that they've struggled with the Rosary and find it difficult. And some have thus given up on the Rosary. My own experience has also been one of struggle with the Rosary, and my mind wanders, I get distracted, or I find myself just going through the paces but not really concentrating on the meditation.

However, I find that having sacred art before my eyes does focus my mind. Nowhere is this more apparent to me than in my own Rosary Shrine church in London, where each mystery of the Dominican Rosary is depicted in sculpture or stained glass. As I walk from one Rosary Chapel to the next, slowly praying the 'Hail Marys', I enter these distinct chapels dedicated to each of the mysteries, and it is as though I am entering the mystery itself, and as I gaze on the sculpted tableaux, I find myself interacting with the art, the imagination is engaged, and the scenes come to life in my mind's eye. This engagement of intellect and imagination is vital, it seems to me, when we meditate on the Rosary. Occasionally, music can also help to focus the mind.

The assumption of the Rosary Confraternity, too, which does not require its



members physically to pray together, is that one can pray the Rosary alone, at one's own pace, and in a place and manner of one's own choosing: pray it at home, sitting in the garden with your morning cup of coffee, kneeling by your bed, or at school, in the office, while waiting for the train or bus, while standing in a queue, or whenever you have spare moments. Very often we reach for

our smartphones, but perhaps we can reach for our rosaries instead.

As the Rosary was preached and used by itinerant Dominican friars, it seems likely that these beads are our 'mobile praying device' to be carried on journeys and to be prayed as we travel from place to place; many of my Dominican brothers have said that they prefer to pray the Rosary while walking. Praying the Rosary in this way, especially when we're using public transportation or walking down the street is also a beautiful public witness of prayer, and it is a way of encircling our neighbourhoods and parishes with prayer.

However, I think it is most important that we do not overload ourselves by praying the Rosary all in one sitting. As St Thomas Aquinas said, we should stop praying

when it becomes tedious and it no longer increases our devotion. Pope Benedict XVI once said that he found it too intense to pray the Rosary all at once, and so he broke it up during the day, saying a decade or two now and again. St Louis de Montfort, although he encouraged groups to pray the Rosary together, also permitted busy people to pray just one decade at a time, for it is better to pray one decade well than to rush through five decades of the Rosary.

My personal practice is to say a decade or two at a time, beginning the morning with a decade of the Rosary and offering the day to God. If you check your social media accounts, use this time as a chance to gather prayer intentions, and then pause and offer a decade or two of the Rosary for those intentions. In this way, before work, or between meetings, or in the middle of some writing, or after cooking a meal, punctuate the day with more decades of the Rosary so that, as St Paul says, we can "pray at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication" (Ep 6:18).

I usually aim to say at least five decades a day, but through this method of interspersing the day with the Rosary, I find that by the end of the day, I can often manage fifteen decades with relative ease. The day is thus suffused with thoughts of Christ and of his saving love for us; the heart thus increases in devotion for God; and so we are led by the Rosary to become more like our Blessed Mother Mary in our faith, our hope, and in our love. No wonder Our Lady has given us a daily prescription of five decades of the Rosary a day, because if each day is directed towards Christ in this way, then our whole life will be, like Mary's, surrendered to God's love.

The Rosary, therefore, is for life because it leads us to the fulness of life, to union with him who is the Resurrection and the Life (Jn 11:25). Therefore, St Paul says: "Rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." (1 Th 5:16-18)



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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