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The Master's Mariner



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Caring for Seafarers

By Rev Un Tay

According to the statistics in the latest Annual Review from MTS London (FAN June 2019, Issue 26), 2018 was another significant year. The global team is one of the largest port-based welfare operators in the world. With 200 ports benefiting from our support in 50 countries. Our teams are on call 365 days a year, visiting ships, offering hospitality and advocating on behalf of seafarers and their families.

"We remain proud to be making a significant contribution to the happiness and wellbeing of seafarers and their families, often in quiet ways but sometimes dramatically so." - Secretary General, Revd. Canon Andrew Wright

Similarly, for The Mission to Seafarers Sydney, we have seen a significant growth in caring for seafarers from around the world. We are creating awareness among seafarers and the wider community that at our Mission Centre - we are providing a **home** away from home for seafarers. It is a place of **hospitality** where they can relax, reflect and be refreshed, a sanctuary of **hope** especially for those who are weary and looking for a place to cast their emotional and spiritual anchors. Here they can find assurance, peace of mind and rest for their souls. We recognise that many seafarers are struggling with mental health issues due to isolation, loneliness and depression. We are here to support and assist them.

Recently, following a tragic incident on a passenger ship we sent a chaplain to provide ministry and counselling on board for several days. Please see the report inside – A Cruise to Remember

Caring for Seafarers Who Serve Us! 1

Serving the crew of the Inge-Kosan, an LPG Tanker 2

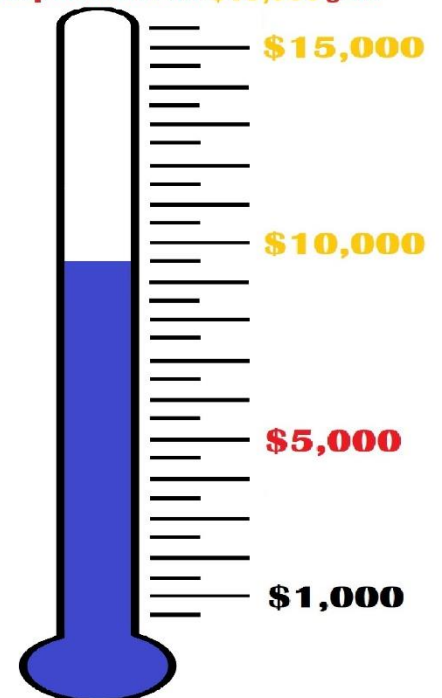
A Cruise to Remember 3-4

Supporting Isolated Seafarers 5

Support the Mission to Seafarers Sydney in 2019! 6

Massive Murray Paddle Fundraiser

- Help us reach our \$15,000 goal!



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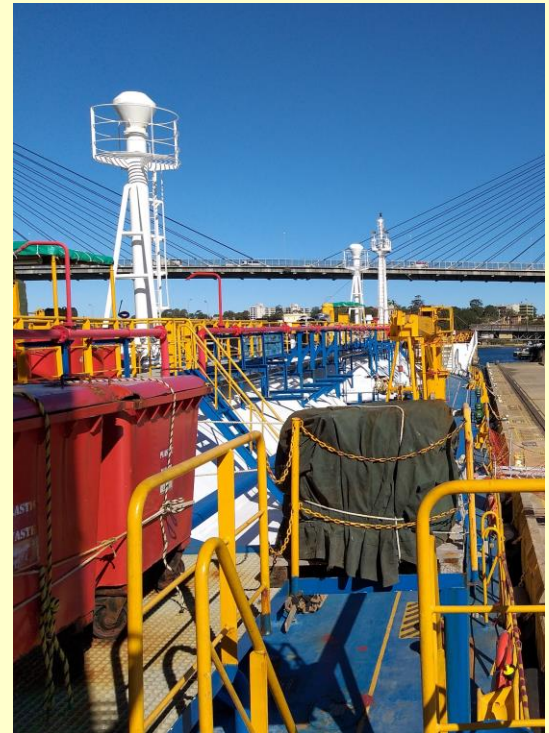
Serving the crew of the Inge-Kosan, an LPG Tanker

BY REV UN TAY

On Thursday, 11 July 2019, the Mission to Seafarers, received an email from Matt Stannard, Pilot Manager and Deputy Harbour Master of Port Authority NSW requesting our Mission staff to visit Inge Kosan, LPG tanker which was towed to Glebe Island for a major repair due to engine failure. On boarding the vessel, to visit the Captain and crew, I found out that the vessel had a major engine breakdown in April near Honiara, Solomon Islands. They had spent many weeks on the waters being towed, finally arriving in Sydney.

Obviously, the crew were all feeling wearied and exhausted having been at sea for a considerable length of time, in very difficult circumstances. This initial visit was very much welcomed by the Captain and the crew. I explained about the services offered at the mission and offered to pick the crew up once a day and bring them in to the mission centre. I also distributed newsletters, magazines, local maps and brochures about places of interest.

Since that first visit, our chaplains brought the crew of the Inge Kosan into our mission centre on several occasions, including to our Information & Drinks night, held on 23rd July. The Captain also requested a service to be held on board for the crew. On Sunday, 21st July 2019, along with four volunteers, we conducted a service for the crew and gave out 15 bibles, our Mission's calendar and a souvenir to each of the crew. We had an overwhelming response, feedback and appreciation from the crew for providing prayers and pastoral care to them. The crew were being kept very busy with the major repair work being carried out, but most weekends they were free to have some rest & relaxation time. We arranged for our bus to pick them up on the weekends to allow them access to our mission facilities and easy access to the city. As per request from the Captain, we conducted the Lord's Supper for the crew on Sunday, 11th August 2019. The vessel finally was able to leave Sydney in September.



“We had an overwhelming response, feedback and appreciation from the crew for providing prayers and pastoral care to them.



A Cruise to Remember

REPORT BY A MISSION TO SEAFARERS CHAPLAIN

It was around lunchtime when I received a phone call about an emergency on a ship. The initial message was that someone on board needed help but I thought nothing much of it because I was about to visit ships at a different location. The other chaplains were closer to the action and they would be able to handle it. Well it turned out that the first message was incomplete, there had been a death on the ship and they wanted someone to join the ship that afternoon to assist the crew for a number of days. I sensed there was a greater need than I first felt and perhaps my counselling skills would be greatly valued in such a situation. I set about preparing for the journey by calling my wife, who was available to have a late lunch, before then packing and heading off in an Uber.

The trip to the dock was somewhat eventful when we passed an accident involving 4 vehicles, which would have soon blocked the tunnel and prevented me from getting to the ship on time. We passed just in time and then I redirected the driver to my actual destination, not the one he had been given. Almost as soon as I got on board I could sense a weight that only death can bring. This was not obvious to the guests on board for they knew nothing of the calamity that had befallen one of the crew. For the majority of the passengers it was party time as they familiarised themselves with the many services that were available to them. Restaurants, bars, bands, shows, gaming, cafes, shopping, spa baths, pools, massage, gym, indoor sports and still more are available for the all the guests aboard this palace of the sea. The show must go on.

I was introduced to some of the officers and learned that the victim was one of their own. Of all the things that can go wrong on one of these large vessels, the staff captain had never experienced this particular one. Similarly, the master of the ship had not experienced this situation before and they were glad to have someone on board who was more familiar with handling people who had been close to the recently deceased. There were a number of teams on board who had been close to the officer as well as those who had been involved in the discovery and retrieval of his body. All these groups are vulnerable to the effects of trauma and secondary trauma. The circumstances surrounding a death, especially a suicide, can have an overwhelming affect upon those directly or even indirectly involved. The majority of people will undergo temporary traumatic symptoms but they will in fact be only temporary and after due process they will return to how they had felt before the event. There is however also a minority who, based on previously experienced traumatic events, will be especially vulnerable to its negative effects for an extended period of time. It might be 6 months or 12 months or even a lifetime before they might feel normal again.

My first job was to help the crew understand that their reactions were normal. Feeling numb, not being able to believe this has really happened, sudden anger, sadness and guilt are all normal reactions to the suicide of a friend and colleague. Many people who take their own lives do not tell anyone that they are about to do it. Tragically they seem to believe their family, friends and colleagues are better off without them. Nothing could be further from the truth.

At the memorial service we held a couple of days after his death, there was a long line of his crew family, friends and colleagues who walked up to his framed photo and paid their last respects. Some touched the photo, some stood standing there looking lost and shedding tears, some enjoined hugs as they considered their approach. It was a holy moment, an outpouring of love toward their fallen companion. This was no easy place to be, there is so much pain and confusion at such a time. He had been a kind officer, a gentleman even, who went about his business quietly and efficiently. Everyone, who knew him amongst the hundreds of crew members, were all affected. After the service the crew dispersed to take up their various duties when required and I wondered about them. There is no time for a traditional wake and someone told me they only get 10 hours off rather than a day off as a regular break. They work 7 days a week.

My hope is that the crew will be able to find enough space in their busy lives to process what they as individuals need to process. It is different for all of us. Some cultures have different ways of grieving and within those groups there is so much variation in approach because we are all the same and we are all different. What is consistent is that if we do not allow the grief to be processed, it will hurt us in the end. The greater our love, the greater the grief and the more help we will need. We need each other. We need to talk about the serious stuff and we need someone to really listen, people whom we really trust. I was able to provide a listening ear for a short time and I hope the crew are able to find other people who take the time to hear how much they cared about their friend. I will remember this cruise and the ship's crew for a long time.

As Christmas is now drawing near, it is important for each of us to be mindful that some of our friends, family, colleagues and neighbours struggle at this time of year. Christmas is a time to think about God's wonderful gift to us, His Son, Jesus. This is the greatest demonstration of God's love for us, so let us all pass on that love to all those around us. Make sure everyone you come in contact with feels loved, needed and appreciated.

Seafarers are particularly vulnerable to loneliness and isolation, due to their separation from loved ones at this time of the year. Remember them also, as they are people each of us rely on. Join us at our Christmas Celebration and Information evening, where we will look back with thanks, for the year that has nearly ended and look forward expectantly, to what 2020 will bring. At this celebration, we will be focusing on the issues of mental health, particularly in regard to seafarers.

Be our guest - join us for

Drinks & Supper at our

Combined Christmas Celebration & Information Evening

at

24 Hickson Road, Millers Point

Tuesday 10th December 2019 at 5.30pm – 7.00pm

RSVP 6th December 2019



Supporting Isolated Seafarers

BY TROY HANCKEL

When we look at the reality facing the crew of the vessels that bring to Australia, over 98% of everyday items that all individuals and businesses alike, use and rely on every day.

Due to the length of contracts and vessel schedules, seafarers do not have the privilege of talking to family members and loved ones on a daily and frequently not even on a weekly basis. This was very much emphasised on a recent visit that one of our chaplains, Troy Hanckel made to vessels berthed at Kurnell, a port that does not currently have any regular welfare services provided.

The distance between the city and the Port of Kurnell means that it is impractical to run a regular bus service into the Mission to Seafarers city centre. The crew would not have long enough "shore leave" to enjoy this service and it would be too expensive to operate a return bus service to Kurnell. In the past a launch service operated, transporting the crew from these vessels, across to Port Botany to link up with our regular return bus service that runs 4 times a day. Unfortunately, this service ceased several years ago. The re-introduction of this service would be wonderful, but as this is not under our control, we need to look at other options. Therefore, Troy was sent to visit Kurnell to ask the crews how we can assist them and what they see as their greatest needs.

Their isolation is keenly felt and brought out strongly by the fact that they really wanted someone to be there with them and stay longer!!! This was particularly evident with a Turkish crew who invited me to stay and share a traditional Turkish kebab with them

The seafarers all appreciated the visit and stated that they wished I had come earlier and stayed longer. What came out to me most strongly was their isolation and need for visitation, as well as provision of Sim cards and souvenirs. I see a great need for The Mission to Seafarers to provide a range of welfare services to the crew of vessels berthing at Kurnell. MTS intends to address this with our major 2019 fundraiser, that will allow us to provide ongoing welfare services at the Kurnell terminal.

Troy's Report

- All the seafarers enjoyed having some different company and would like a chaplain to visit on a regular basis
- Many remembered the bus service that they were able to link to in the past and wished that this was still provided
- All the crew needed Sim cards to allow them contact with home
- They also wanted Australian caps, hats and souvenirs
- Many seafarers asked if I would have a 'smoke' with them and stay longer
- The staff at the gate were also very friendly and helpful, remembering the good work that had been done earlier in the year by The Mission to Seafarers, Sydney, when they were dealing with the tragic death on the vessel

Support the Mission to Seafarers Sydney in 2019!

By WENDY KING

409

A reminder about our **major fundraiser for the year**. We are hoping this long-distance kayaking paddle will kick start our fund raising for the expansion of our services to areas currently missing out on welfare services.

Our 3 major projects include:

- The addition of a free morning return bus service to Port Botany
- Provision of transport & welfare services to crews arriving at the White Bay terminal during the cruise ship season
- Welfare services to crews arriving at the Caltex Terminal at Kurnell

The paddlers, our Accountant Gary, Chaplain Troy and Volunteer James are training hard for their epic challenge of kayaking 404km down the Murray River from Yarrawonga to Swan Hill over 5 days.

You will see from our fund-raising thermometer on the front page that at the time of printing we are well over halfway to achieving our goal of \$15,000.00. Thanks to all those who have already contributed, but don't worry there is still time. All donations are tax deductible.

Together, let's surpass the \$15,000.00 goal!

Volunteers

We are currently looking for volunteers to partner with us. We are looking for drivers who have a Light Rigid vehicle license, to drive our small buses. To get involved please [contact us](#).

Mission to Seafarers Worldwide Statistics for 2018!

1. 70,600 ship visits, up from 65,000 in 2017
2. 353,000 seafarers were helped by our teams, a rise of 18% from 2017
3. 673,000 visits were made to our 121 Seafarers' Centres, a rise of 16% from 2017
4. 439,000 seafarers provided with transport, a huge 64% rise from 2017

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Tax deductible donations can also be made directly into our Bank

Account:

BSB 062 074

Account 1000 8062