



## Shots Were Fired Across Her Bow

On the 25th September the Irish Navy, the Irish Rangers, the Air Corps, the Customs and the Garda Siochana joined forces to arrest the *MV Matthew* as it entered Irish waters.

Despite repeated requests to halt, the ship altered course away from Ireland. Warning shots were then fired across the bow of the ship and a platoon of armed Irish Rangers were lowered from a helicopter on to the deck and control was taken of the vessel. A pilot was put onboard and the ship was escorted into Cork harbour and berthed in a remote quayside.

Armed Gardai went on board

and a search of the vessel revealed 2,523 kg of cocaine, with a street value of over €150 million, hidden in a lifeboat.

The Gardai arrested five of the senior officers and later an additional three were also detained. All mobile telephones were confiscated for forensic analysis. This left a crew of 13, made up of 12 Filipino and 1 Iranian, detained on board the ship. Many of them were young and inexperienced seamen and were now cut off from the outside world and their families.

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# News from the Chairman

**Steven Thompson, Chair of the Board of Trustees**

On Thursday 19th October, SCFS held a Supporter Celebration Event in the Long Gallery, Parliament Buildings at Stormont, Belfast. It was a pleasure to have the evening hosted by Joanne Bunting, MLA. Over 70 supporters joined us to celebrate the rebrand, rejoice and give thanks over the encouraging regional reports and to be inspired by our future vision.

October also saw **Colin Dickenson** move into the role of Executive Director. With Colin at the helm, SCFS embraced a rebrand and has also been navigating through a review and redevelopment of governance procedures. Please continue to pray for Colin and the Trustees as they seek to expand the work of SCFS in the ports and also to raise up new support.

We have been encouraged in recent months by the addition of new SCFS Volunteer Ship Visitors. **Hermie Santos** has joined the Portsmouth team and **Gordon Liston** is representing SCFS in Foynes Port in Limerick after an absence of 10 years! **Iain Sanders** has been exploring opportunities to minister to seafarers in Aberdeen. Iain,

along with his wife **Rosie** are preparing to move from Belfast to Aberdeen to become the Port Chaplain during the Spring. On the international front, SCFS have been approached by a local church about recommencing the work in Malta. At present plans are being made to send an experienced Ship Visitor to Malta to support, guide and train the Pastor and his church.



It has been a joy to have had **Sven and Dorothea Franks** work with SCFS in Slovenia. Due to a change in family circumstances, they have felt the need to move to support elderly parents. We are thankful for their work amongst the seafarers. Please pray for Sven and Dorothea in this time of adjustment.

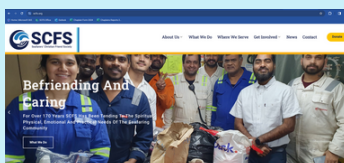
We are so thankful for the continued work off all our SCFS family.

God bless,

STEVEN THOMPSON



We are delighted to announce that the new SCFS website is live! Why don't you check out more about SCFS at [scfs.org](http://scfs.org)?



# Project "Woolly Hat"!



Recently a SCFS supporter sponsored the production of logo badges which can be stitched on to the woolly hats our knitters produce. These will make great gifts and souvenirs for the seafarers, and will help them to remember who they have received their hat from. **Some of our knitters share their stories...**

*I took up knitting again about 10 years ago when my church Home Group knitted some little suits for "fish-and-chip" babies in Africa (apparently new born babies had no clothes to go home in from where they were born so they were wrapped in newspaper). That cause came to an end.*

*Through our church we used to support a church in Romania, sending a lorry over once a year so I started knitting hats to go there. I also came in contact with a lady who helped refugees in Calais so gave her hats to take over too.*

*Both of these outlets came to an end but I was told about SCFS by a lovely lady from church. She was already sending hats so I have been sending too for a few years now. It is an absolutely worthwhile and satisfactory cause where I know that they are appreciated.*

*Julia*

*It is many years ago that my husband and I first came in contact with SCFS, and Gavin McGregor has stayed with us on occasion.*

*Our most recent connection came about through reading about the hats and scarves in Helmsman. I decided to knit a hat and scarf and showed them to the Ladies Craft Group at Bethesda Free Church. The ladies were immediately taken with the idea and you see the results to date on the photograph (see Helmsman Snaps).*

*We pray that God will bless you and all the seafarers who will receive a hat and/or scarf.*

*Love from the ladies of Bethesda Free Church in South Shields.*

*Linda*

*As a child I sat at my Grandmother's knee making pompoms to sew onto the hats she had knitted to go to Wally Burrell who worked with your organisation in Cork. Almost half a century later, I'm married and living in Lisburn, just down the road from your HQ.*

*Now I'm knitting the hats for Seafarers to clear the wool "stash" - an addiction inherited from my Gran.*

*Jenny*

*Thank you!*

SCFS is indebted to our faithful knitters who pour so much love and time into knitted goods for the seafarers. It is difficult to convey just how much they appreciate these gifts. They make them feel so valued while they are far from their loved ones - especially at Christmas time.

*Please contact the office to request a supply of badges for your knitting group.*



# Shots Were Fired Across Her Bow

Charles Hancock, Trustee

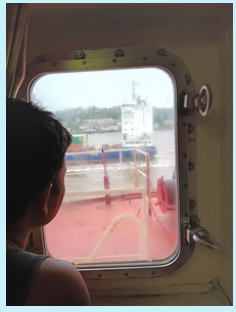
*Continued from Page 1*

Within hours of the arrival of the ship in Cork and despite the presence of armed Gardai, Colin Jenkins, the Cork harbour chaplain for the Seafarers' Christian Friend Society was allowed on board the ship, where he discovered a very frightened crew who claimed that they had not been paid any wages for two months work, and that they were without fresh water to drink and running low on basic provisions. Colin assured them of his support and prayed with them. Next morning he arrived at the ship with a consignment of fresh water and, much to the crew's delight, a McDonald's meal for each of them.

I joined him on the ship and liaised with the senior Gardai officer in charge and gathered a shopping list of urgent supplies to maintain the crew on the ship. The Gardai officer on the ship was an experienced and understanding man who appreciated our support to the remaining crew.

The following day Colin and I returned to the

ship with fresh bread, Irish butter and packs of noodles and more freshwater. The crew were not allowed access to their mobile phones and we were instructed not to use ours or permit the crew to use them.



They really appreciated our support and shared their worries regarding their families and the fact that they were detained on the ship with no charges being made against them and no release date being provided. They were in fact being held prisoners on the ship.

Colin continued to visit the ship almost daily and returned a few days later with a box of fresh fish which I had caught (Filipino's love fresh fish!).

The crew had received a visit from the Filipino consulate in Dublin and were told that efforts were being made to repatriate them. However, when I visited the crew again I found them in a desperate state of anxiety and depression. They had still not been allowed to contact anyone and were fearful that they may not get re-employed as seafarers. I contacted the Filipino consulate and informed them of the need to move swiftly as in my opinion desperate people do foolish things.

The crew were saying that they were literally





penniless, having not been paid for two months and even if they were flown to their countries how could they travel home with no money.

The Seafarers' Christian Friend Society is a charity established to support seafarers in time of need and these men were in desperate need. It was decided by the Trustees to open the Emergency Fund and grant each seafarer a gift of 100 euro to help them and to relieve some of the pressures they were under. I prepared 13 separate envelopes containing €100 along with a short letter of support from the Trustees of the Society.

I assembled all of them in the mess room and explained that the SCFS wanted to assist them. I then handed out the envelopes and together the crew opened them. It is difficult to describe their response other than to say that many tears were shed and many hugs received. To say that they were grateful would be an understatement!

It was not just the matter of the money, it was the fact that someone cared enough to do something to help them in their hour of need.

Upon leaving the ship that night I informed the Gardai of what had taken place.

Good Evening Sir,  
Thank you for All the help and support mentally and Spiritually, I really appreciate the kindness that we had from the SCFS family, without any hesitation SCFS family personally visit us in MV Matthew despite of what happened, it gives us hope specially when the SCFS family preach about the word of GOD, that's what I didn't expect to hear, I just had a peace of mind and heart❤️ hearing the word's of God 🙏❤️😭

Their response was to ask' **"Who are you people?"**.

My response was simply, **"We are the Seafarers' Christian Friend Society and we CARE for Seafarers"**.

About one week later the crew were escorted off the ship to a local hotel prior to being flown home.

We have since then received a number of messages from the crew thanking us again for our support and care shown to them. Our response lies in the saying "what would Jesus do" we hope we have done as He would do.



## SCFS Belfast, NI

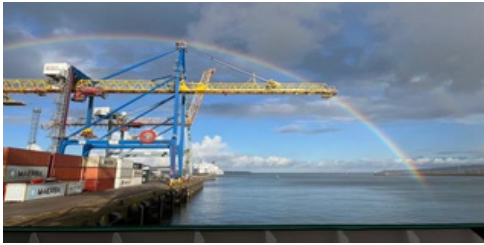
**Sam Cowan**

*"Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ."*

*Colossians 4:2-3*

2024 sees me entering my 25th year of service, and many of you have been with me and my wife every step of the journey. As we look back, we give thanks that God has been faithful in opening doors of opportunity with the seafarers. Yet we look forward, with our hand in God's hand, as He leads us into the unknown of 2024.

Thank you to all who contributed to the items for the Christmas Pack Appeal, in December. Over 500 packs were given out in in Belfast with 40 packs going to Warrenpoint and a church in Londonderry helping in Foyle Ports. It is good to be able to share a couple of photos from each port.



## SCFS Warrenpoint, NI

**Andy Burns**

Visiting the ships at Warrenpoint Port went well despite the ship visitation restrictions in place at the port. I have a good relationship with the port management and also with the workforce.

During the Christmas period I was able to visit five ships in all and hand out the gift packs, which were very much appreciated! I had a few short chats with some crew about the true meaning of Christmas and was well received on all the ships I visited (this was during lunch time so I only had an hour to visit). The calendars are very popular with crew and they also took some Christmas booklets.

All in all it was a good season!

Helmsman SNAPS Helmsman SNAPS Helmsman SNAPS Helmsman SNAPS Helmsman SNAPS Helmsman SNAPS





**SCFS Portsmouth, UK**

**Peter Wells**

### **He called my name!**

I was waiting in the cruise terminal at the busy security desk to go on to a Saga cruise ship when somebody called my name. I turned and recognised the security supervisor. "Can I have a word with you?"

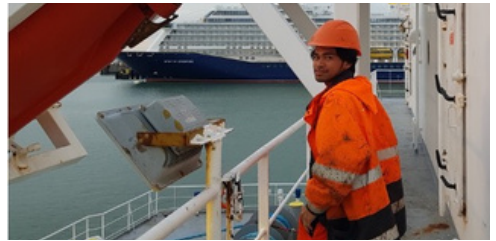
All sorts of thoughts flashed through my mind. What regulations had I broken? What gear was I not wearing? Where was my passport? His next question changed everything. "Do you know where I can get a Bible?"

I swung my big rucksack to the ground and almost dived inside. Buried beneath woolly hats and scarves, tubes of toothpaste, cans of deodorant and Christian books, I came up with the "Book of Books"! He told me that a passenger had wanted to read the Bible and he had searched the whole terminal building but could not find one. He was very grateful and said he would put it in a prominent place where it would be accessible to all who needed it.

I reflected on how in the busyness of life God's word sometimes gets relegated to a place where it's not very accessible. "Lord, what are you telling me?"

I eventually got onto the ship, went to the crew mess, set up on a table and put a New Testament right at the front of the other books and items. Within a few minutes a Filipino lady joyfully asked me if she could have it and was it very expensive? I said it was beyond price, but to her and to "Whosoever" it was free because the immense price had already been paid.

May the living word of God continue to affect us and those to whom we take it!



### **Jonathan Bayliff, our**

Portland Port Chaplain has been kindly invited to run a weekly service on board the *Bibby Stockholm* for Christian asylum seekers who need the support. The staff on board have kindly provided a room for this purpose and seven Sunday services have been provided so far. There are more Christians on board than expected but most prefer to leave the barge and attend local churches. However Jonathan has been able to offer spiritual and welfare support on and off the barge to Christian men from many different nations.





SCFS Ipswich, UK

Keith Oliver

It's not often I meet a German captain who wants to talk to me but this man was really friendly and joined in the conversation that I had with his crew, also showing an interest in the literature that I was offering them.

He, too, made me coffee but had I refused I might have offended him. Perhaps he was lonely as he had been on board a long time and he was the only European on board. His wife was a professional musician and used her musical abilities in the church.



Helmman  
SNAPS



"Project Woolly Hat" photos, including from Bethesda Free Church in South Shields (middle). See page 3 for details.



RTE interviews Cork staff. See pages 1, 4 and 5 for details.



## SCFS Foyle/Lisahally, NI

### Olly & Val Roebuck

Val and I are so thankful for the donations that we have been able to deliver to the seafarers that have been in the Port over the Christmas period. It is a privilege and an honour to be able to visit the ships and engage with these men and women. We have been able to drop over 40 packs of toiletries, gloves and woolly hats over the past few weeks. We always take Gospel literature and try and engage in spiritual conversations.

Pray for us as we make connections with the dock workers and staff. Pray also that conversations and literature will bear eternal spiritual fruit. Also, please pray for safety as we move around a busy dock area and negotiate steep gangways.

Many thanks for all who support the work. God Bless, Olly & Val Roebuck



## SCFS Dublin, Ireland

### Jaeguen Bae

During December 2023 I had three groups of ship visitors from different churches to help distribute Christmas presents, as well as to share Jesus' love and grace. They were a great encouragement to many as they led carol services. We had 18 volunteers in total!! I was so encouraged to receive an email from an officer saying,

Dear Rev. Jaeguen,  
This is the 2nd officer of MV MSC Tamishka F, on be half of the crew, we give thanks for all the efforts and time that you gave to us to sing, interact with each other, and most of all have a bible readings and share the words of God. We really much appreciate it. Specially to those who prepare for those presents "thank you so much". We are deeply honored to meet you. Have a blessed Sunday. God Bless.

An Ukrainian captain on a container ship, spent three hours asking many questions



about things in his life and in the Bible which he couldn't understand. We had a great conversation about how to know God and His Son Jesus. As we read the Bible and prayed together, he was urged to trust in Him (Psalm 40:2-4). Please pray that Vlad will trust in Jesus who wants to keep him in His perfect peace in any and all situations.





# SCFS Cork, Ireland

## Colin Jenkins

An Egyptian captain asked me to arrange haircuts for his crew. The Harbour Master granted special permission and 7 crew received a wonderful haircut for the super cheap price of €5 each. The ship company paid for it! It was so good bringing Leanne to meet and minister to them by helping in this practical way. She worked tirelessly for 2 hours straight! The crew are from Indonesia, Egypt and India. During our time there the captain sang a Muslim call to prayer in Arabic over the ship tannoy. It was quite an experience. Leanne later shared a wonderful testimony of God's goodness (which you can see opposite). God is good!

In Cork we've been busy for many months and there are so many stories and testimonies of God's goodness! Thank you to all our faithful supporters for your ongoing prayer and practical support. We've been busy distributing Christmas gifts during December and January, and look forward to a time of deputation in February. Then from April onwards we expect cruise liners to be back in full force. Thanks again for your prayer support and interest in this unique mission-field to many nations. Weekly updates are posted here: <https://bit.ly/scfsteam>

### Leanne's Testimony

*"If that wasn't ministry I would have charged €20 per cut. I went to €5 because I felt led. Seven cuts at €20 would have been €140.*

*I woke up this morning and felt led to check my bank account. Guess what was deposited into my account!!!!!! €140!!!!!!*

*A tax return I didn't even know I was getting. God is soooooo faithful!*

*And when the captain was doing a call to prayer I felt a heat all over my body and I said "Lord what's this?"*

*It's a wall of fire. God's protection!!! I could feel His presence all over me.*

*All Glory to God!!!!*

*'And I myself will be a wall of fire around it,' declares the LORD, 'and I will be its glory within.'*  
Zechariah 2:5

**God is no man (or woman)'s debtor! "Thank you Lord!" - and thank you Leanne!**

Below: Colin & family



# Be A Friend To Seafarers

A Thoughtful Gift, A Knitted Scarf, A Kind Donation Or Volunteering To Ship Visit Are Some Of The Ways You Can Help Us Bring Joy To A Seafarer

Get Involved

Check out our new website! [scfs.org](http://scfs.org)

Helmman  
SNAPS



## The Gift of Legacy

We are very grateful to those who entrust SCFS with a legacy – each one helps us to continue this vital ministry.

Would you prayerfully consider including us in your will?

Here is a form of words you could use...

- "I bequeath xxxxx to the Seafarers' Christian Friend Society, CH18, Colvin House, Inspire Business Park, 16 Carrowreagh Road, Dundonald, BT16 1QT, Northern Ireland. Registered Charity Number 209133".

To discuss further, call Claire Kyle between 10am and 5pm, Monday to Wednesday, on +44 (0) 2895 217 770.

If you decide to take this step, please let us know by writing to Claire at our headquarters address or emailing her at [hq@scfs.org](mailto:hq@scfs.org) with the details.

There are three types of legacy:

1. A **Residuary Legacy** is the giving of the remainder of your estate, or a percentage of the remainder of your estate, as a gift.
2. A **Specific Legacy** is the giving of a specific item that you have left in your Will, for example, an item of property or possessions, shares, bonds or a life insurance policy.
3. A **Pecuniary Legacy** is a specific sum of money left in your Will.





# The Need and Role of Female Ship Visitors

**Angela Benford, Ship Visitor**

**I have been a volunteer ship visitor for approximately 8 years now**, the last 3 years being based at Portsmouth with the SCFS team. Although I seldom meet female crew members on the merchant ships, it's a great opportunity to represent a female presence onboard, and be able, sometimes, to help the male seafarers with any issues or needs they may have, from a different perspective (wearing my "mother" or "grandmother" hat!).

However, I am now encountering many female seafarers as we develop our relationships with the cruise ships currently coming into the port, and truly believe that the need, and the role, of female ship visitors is invaluable, as we meet the many crew members with so many different roles and backgrounds. An example of this is the mainly female crew working in the spa, and as a female ship visitor I am able to use an ice breaker, (if sensing the need for one), by chatting about beauty therapies and products, gradually moving on to more sensitive issues, sharing my faith, and praying with them! They, too, are then more comfortable to open up to a female, and so often appreciate a hug too!



**SAFER WAVES**

I also represent a charity in Portsmouth called Safer Waves, which offers support through its phone line and other contact details, to any crew, male and female, who may be suffering abuse – be it verbal, physical or sexual, and

have been able on occasions to provide information cards and small posters. It's a very sensitive and difficult subject, but as a female visitor, I have been able to provide the information usually to an appropriate female crew member, who is in a position to make use of it if needed.

Being a female ship visitor, and working for SCFS, is so rewarding, and is a great way of serving the Lord!



## Hermie Santos, Ship Visitor

I'm originally from the Philippines based in Portsmouth. I joined SCFS as a female ship visitor in December 2023 and was amazed how this noble work could touch people's lives in a very special way. My experience as a female ship visitor is very limited as I just recently joined the team, however my previous exposure to meeting spiritual needs of crew on board helped me to see the effect of spiritual support to men and women on board and how the female ship visitor could influence deeper conversations.

My interest to help and support the spiritual needs of seafarers started when I went on my first cruise in 2019 and met those who were leading the Bible study, including the management who supported this work. I was able to join the Bible study and prayed and conversed with a number of people, and I was so encouraged to see how their faith helped them stand in the midst of challenges working on board. Last year, I had my second cruise and amazingly the Lord arranged for me to meet, chat and pray with Christians and even someone who didn't believe in Jesus who opened up about deep things in her life. I praise God for the opportunity to share the gospel and to pray for her. What struck me on both occasions was how someone could open up deep things, especially ladies who are quite shy and do not believe in Jesus and how this kind of short conversations could influence the way they see things.

With these exposures, it was evident to me that the Lord was drawing me to a role that will help reach out to the seafarers. Although being a

guest is different from being a ship visitor, the passion to help and support the spiritual and practical needs of the seafarers was coming from the compassion of Jesus, which is vitally important in doing this role. It is the grace of God to have this compassion and see His work in the lives of the crew on board.

From my very limited experience of being a female ship visitor I have seen the impact on some seafarers especially those who are young men from the Philippines. As this is part of our culture, I noticed that I was treated by some like an older sister and a mother which gave them an opportunity to open up and discuss their family situations, as a result I was able to pray with them and for them.

As a female ship visitor we bring something special during conversations which helps others to engage. Through this we are able to share the gospel of Jesus Christ. Our attention to details assists some seafarers to reflect on their situations and realise what they need to do. I have seen this from my last visit (with the team), when I was talking with one of the seafarers who suddenly realised how he was affected by the situation and recognised what he needed to do after the conversation.

With my limited experience as a female ship visitor, I would say that this role is necessary, as we can offer something that will help nurture and encourage the seafarers to reflect on their relationship with God and well being in collaboration with the team.





## SCFS Hamburg

Martin & Monika Otto

M., a woman from the Philippines, became the first female captain in the Philippines a few years ago. Countless people congratulated her on Facebook. When I also congratulated her, I also asked her to write an article for my new book. That's how a relationship developed. After a short time, M. was appointed as superintendent for a shipping company in Singapore. I gave her the address of a friend, who also works there as captain and superintendent.

After a short time, the three of us were able to start studying the Gospel of John online. During the online study, M. came to a living faith in Jesus. After a very short time, she was promoted again and transferred to Dubai, where she now works as the general manager

## An Encouraging Encounter

of a large tanker shipping company. Again, I was able to give her the address of a good church where she now receives regular spiritual nourishment and is integrated into a Bible study group.

In November she was in Hamburg on business, and we were able to invite her to our home. It was extremely exciting to hear about her background. She had grown up in a slum-like situation, her brother in prison for drugs, mother and father divorced. By a miracle, M. was able to study at a maritime school and work her way up. God accompanied her step by step on her path. Today she has a good relationship with her family, professes her faith in the shipping company, and lives as a living witness for Jesus wherever He leads her.



## SCFS Hamburg

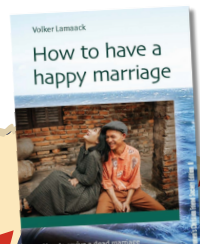
Volker & Doris Lamaack



Hi Sir,

I just wanted to let you know that I'm so happy reading your book that my sailor husband got from you. I haven't finished reading it yet, but it really captures my interest and excites me to read more of its contents and shared stories of other sailors. I'm also sharing it with my husband and giving him insights into each chapter I read. Thank you and I hope we can get another book soon. He's on board right now and your book is helping us to strengthen and do better for our marriage and family bonds.

Rose, the wife of a sailor from the Philippines





# Bethel Church, Ramsey, Isle of Man

Dave Robertson, Trustee



We were invited to participate in the Bethel Church's 50th Anniversary celebrations on the 2nd and 3rd of September 2023 at its present building. Both myself and my wife Dot had the privilege of representing SCFS and its links to the Church over the years. I was able to give a brief history of the Society and its link with what was then called the **Seaman's Bethel**.

The work of visiting seafarers, mainly local fisherman at the time, began in Ramsey in 1865. It was not until 1887 that the first building as a meeting hall was established, since then the building has moved three times.

By 1965 SCFS had only five operating coast

stations including Ramsey. But port activity in Ramsey had declined rapidly and eventually had been reduced to almost zero. The Seaman's Bethel became just simply the Bethel, and they moved into the current building in 1973. Over the years SCFS Port Chaplains have undertaken deputation work at the Church, and the Church continues to support the work of SCFS.

It was a real privilege to attend and contribute to the whole event and we were given a very warm welcome. It was also wonderful to see not only how SCFS had been supported but also the local community of whom many were in attendance.



## Arc Conference

We attended the ARC conference, in an ODEON cinema in Dublin, to represent SCFS. I set up the table with examples of literature and Bibles in foreign languages, also hats and blankets and played the SCFS video on a loop.

We spoke with a number of people, including other exhibitors, and shared about the work. A Muslim family appeared to visit the cinema, the children were delighted to receive hats and dad was pleased to receive a blanket for the smallest.





## Bayani Audea

Christmas is always the most awaited event of the year, not just among Filipinos, but all over the world. A time to give, a time to receive, a time to share and a time to love. How we celebrate this event depends on how we understand the occasion. For some, it is for family fellowship, reminiscing over the old days, and looking at the brighter tomorrow, as it is nearly the end of the year. For others, it is the most meaningful event of the year, remembering the birth of our Lord Jesus who gave His life for us.

SCFS Manilla celebrated this season by giving gifts to our church members and having a fellowship meal, after we heard the message, which inspired everyone. It was also a time to meet up with old friends and members, reminiscing over good memories which encourage us to keep going, even when it's tough as we remember that God is with us.

We have been filled with joy and sadness as we bid goodbye to 2023. The wife of our Port Missionary, Bro Geronimo (Jaffe) Garing,

passed away last January 9. She had been carrying out the tribal ministry and was also part of our SCFS team, as she was the speaker of the church.

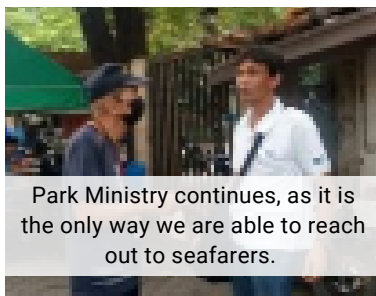
Things happen for a reason which we might not be able to understand, but we know that God's plan is far better than ours.

*"Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saint." Psalm 116 :15*

A reminder from my morning online daily devotion. **"God is good... and more than good."**

### PRAYER REQUESTS

- Please pray for us as we will be conducting a "Church on The Ocean" training seminar onboard *Doulos Hope* this coming February.
- Please pray for our meeting with the representative from *Doulos* and the founder of PCEC (Philippine Christian Evangelical Churches), Bishop Pantoja.



Park Ministry continues, as it is the only way we are able to reach out to seafarers.



# A SCFS Christmas

Seafarers accompanied me to a Carol Service - it was their first ever time in a church. They loved it, and the cook, in his broken English, told me during the service, "My friend I think I will cry".



SCFS Christmas tree in a Monaghan church



Christmas Wrap



"Thank you so much friends in Ireland for these gifts to remind us of the love of God at this special time of year!"



*giftaid it*

## GIFT AIDING YOUR DONATIONS TO SCFS

Last year we received £3,700 in Gift Aid – that's money the government added to your gifts! If you are a UK taxpayer please don't forget to complete and sign the enclosed Gift Aid form when donating to SCFS. We can then claim a further 20% from the UK Government towards bringing the Good News with practical, emotional and physical welfare support to seafarers.



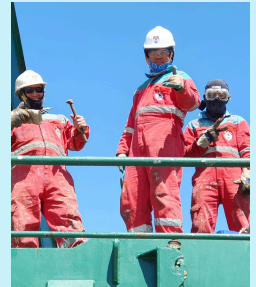
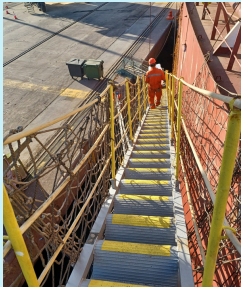
# LIFE AT SEA



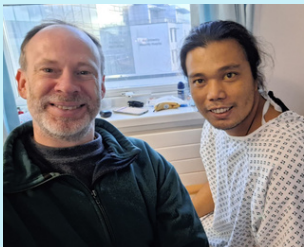
## ...ISN'T ALWAYS A CRUISE

- Seafarers on a bulk carrier were not paid in accordance with their seafarer employment agreements: Some contracts contained apparently-forged signatures from employees.
- Other seafarers appeared to have been coerced into signing new employment agreements which had lower salaries.
- One seafarer had signed a new contract for 50% less pay despite his contract being valid for four more months.
- A ship travelling from India encountered a hurricane! The crew were exhausted after very little sleep or food for four days.
- Shipboard jobs such as welding, chipping, painting, and working with hazardous material such as oil, chemicals etc. can pose great danger to seafarers. At times they do not have appropriate goggles or protective equipment while carrying out such jobs. Often they can be working on the side of the ships, without safety harnesses to save them from serious – even fatal falls.

Helmsman SNAPS Helmsman SNAPS Helmsman SNAPS Helmsman SNAPS Helmsman SNAPS Helmsman SNAPS Helmsman SNAPS



1: Steep ladders to encounter; 2: Loading provisions; 3: Supplying toiletries & spare clothes to a new crew member whose luggage was lost in the airport; 4: Seafarers at work



**Left:** "Milo" was in Cork hospital for 3 weeks with a gallstone. He reckons it was due to the bad food and water on his ship. He was suffering from severe pain and jaundice. I brought him pyjamas and shower gel. He said he only had €20 until he went home.

**Middle:** "Milo" safely reunited with his family back in the Philippines, while he waits for an operation.

**Right:** An encouraging Thank You card from "Milo's" daughter!

Thank you for  
visiting my Daddy  
Mr Colin Jenkins  
Thank you for the gift



# A Close Encounter

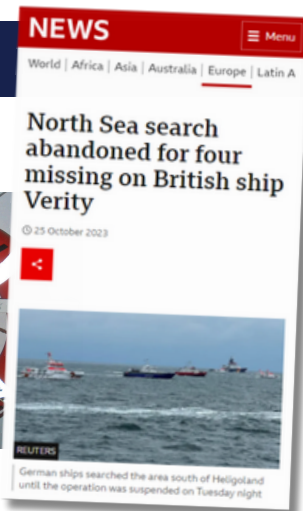
Colin Dickenson, Executive Director

My daughter and I were at the beginning of a much anticipated cruise on board the P&O *Iona* in mid-October 2023. Following a day at sea our second day had been memorable, sightseeing Hamburg, and were now sailing to Rotterdam.

Around 5.30am I woke to the ship shuddering and knew, from a previous experience, that we had stopped mid ocean. This was followed by three announcements in fairly quick succession, from the bridge. Firstly, for the crew to assemble at muster stations. Then for crew to go to look out stations and thirdly to announce that persons were overboard but with reassurance that they were not from our ship.

By this time I was up, dressed, and standing on the balcony peering out into the darkness which was quickly interrupted as search lights panned the water. Along with a number of other passengers I too began looking for "persons" overboard and earnestly praying for their safe rescue.

The surreal situation quickly unfolded. The *Iona* seemed to be the first ship on the scene of a major incident in which *MV Verity* had been struck broadside by a larger vessel. Due to the extent of the damage and holing to the *Verity* we were informed that it sunk within a few minutes. Four crew



went down with her and only two of the rescued survived out of a total of eight.

The *Iona* had launched tenders and had to remain in position for 12 hours as we watched the German Coastguard and other small craft sweeping the sea around us.

It was a shocking and traumatic experience and which still has a profound effect as I recount the event. However, God had planned for me to be there, to pray, to feel, to be a part of a circumstance which can, all too often, be the worry of seafarers' as they sail the oceans. They constantly risk such dangers to bring us the food, fuel, raw materials and products we rely on.

Please do generously donate to SCFS so that we can continue to share God's love and provide much needed comfort, support, encouragement and prayer to our seafaring friends.



The *Verity* survivors



Memorial Service for the *Verity* on board a ship in Belfast.



# Quotes from the Boats!

## What seafarers say about SCFS

- *"Please Sir can I have some more..."* (Many seafarers are taken aback and are shocked when we give them free items like toothpaste and woolly hats - things which we so often take for granted!)
- *"Thank you so much. Visit us anytime. This is your ship!"*

On a tanker the captain told me he hadn't gone ashore for four months. He got up at 4:30am and worked till 3pm without a meal. He was stressed out, exhausted and hungry. Above all, he really wanted to go ashore to have fresh air and to relax with a person who can be a friend. After shopping, we had a dinner at a restaurant. He later messaged:

Hi Jae, first of all thanks for giving me company and ride in your car to downtown and bringing back to vessel as well spent your time with me. I thank you what you do for people and think for seafarer, very few people like you take pain to give some happiness to seafarer. What you are doing is really wonderful. God bless you your family and us and all. Thank you again.



*Their Captain gave them money to buy a new TV (55') and a vacuum cleaner. The last TV was smashed in a storm last week where their ship looked like a roller coaster (5m waves). The giant new TV just about squeezed into my car!*

Sir Charles, sir Colin and SCFS thank you for help the foods, books, Bible's the suitcase thank you very much sir's it's very big help to all of the crew especially thank you for the prayers.. I just got home just today I'm so very happy that I'm with my family now thank you so much sir may GOD BLESS YOU ALL ❤️ I'll send a picture later with my family ❤️ Again thank you very much ❤️



*Scan me with your phone.*



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