



## *Sailors' Society Antwerp Project Information*

### **The Need:**

There are **1.3 million** seafarers worldwide, men and women who are unseen and often forgotten yet we rely on them to transport an estimated 95% of the world's trade. The working life of a seafarer can be exhausting, both physically and emotionally. Working relentlessly for an average of 9-12 months at sea, in a multicultural and multilingual environment, can leave them feeling very isolated and lonely. This is made worse by the fact that 81% of seafarers have no access to internet services whilst at sea and satellite telephone use is often severely restricted.

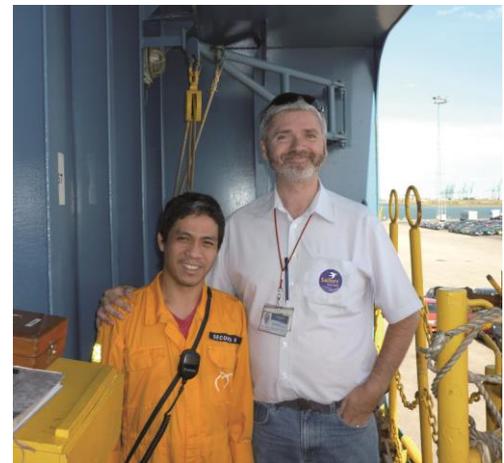
Seafaring is a perilous career with seafarers frequently worried about the threat of shipwreck and piracy. With little or no means of communication back home, it can be weeks or months before seafarers receive news that their family is safe and well, and vice versa. Out at sea and miles away from home, a seafarer is left with the constant worry about the welfare of his loved ones. It is a self-perpetuating situation as he is often compelled to leave home in order to fend for his family.

More than 150,000 people work in the Port of Antwerp area. The estuary is navigable by ships of more than 100,000 Gross Tons as far as 80 km inland. The inland location means that the port of Antwerp enjoys a more central location in Europe than the majority of North Sea ports. Antwerp's docks are connected to the hinterland by rail, waterway and road. As a result the port of Antwerp has become one of Europe's largest sea ports, ranking second behind Rotterdam by total freight shipped.

### **Sailors' Society Activities in Antwerp:**

The Sailor's Society provides a lifeline of support for seafarers across the world. Our 73 port chaplains and ship visiting volunteers are based in 66 ports across 20 countries where they offer practical and spiritual guidance for seafarers whoever they may be, regardless of rank, religion or culture.

Our Belgian port chaplain is Reverend Marc Schippers. Marc offers a hand of friendship, pastoral support and practical help to seafarers visiting or residing in Antwerp. He does this through regular visits to ships docked in the port, where he will go on board and offer seafarers practical provisions such as woolly hats for journeys to cooler climates, maps of the local area, internet news sheets from their home countries, port directories and phone cards. Such simple items can have such a positive impact on the welfare of a seafarer by giving them important connections home and to loved ones.



Our chaplain also provides free and safe transport to wherever seafarers may want to go. He frequently makes trips to local amenities and takes them to the Seafarers' Centre where they can access phone and internet services. Should a seafarer find himself in hospital or imprisoned, Marc will support him throughout the ordeal and act as a vital link between him and his family. Equally as valuable as the practical support provided, is the spiritual counselling that is offered to seafarers. Our chaplain offers an unbiased and impartial ear to which troubled seafarers can share their concerns.

## Beneficiaries:

The main beneficiaries of this project will be seafarers and their families in the Belgian port of Antwerp supported by Reverend Marc Schippers. In 2012 our Antwerp port chaplain made **1,074** ship visits, safely transported **79** seafarers, and regularly visited **1** seafarer in hospital.

Tentatively assuming that our port chaplain in some way support one fifth of seafarers on each ship they visits, we can estimate that the Society's work in Belgium will benefit at least **5,000** seafarers every year; without taking into account the thousands of family members who benefit from the support offered to visiting seafarers, and the local seafaring community.

## Monitoring and Evaluation:

Each month our port chaplains are required to submit a statistical and written report, accompanied by photographs, so that the impact of their work can be monitored. The following quotes are taken from Marc's recent monthly reports and illustrate the nature of their support:

*"On 3<sup>rd</sup> July I talked with a 53-year-old Filipino 2<sup>nd</sup> officer. As it was his first time on a car carrier, he felt very busy and tired. He explained his view of life and death, confirming as I heard many times before, that seafaring life is a sacrifice. As he has three relatively young children, he is forced to remain in seafaring for a long time in order to pay for their education."*

*"Antwerp is still the second largest port in Europe, after Rotterdam. Every day between thirty to fifty sea-going ships come into port. According to statistics, half of them stay less than 24 hours. Even when the ship stays a bit longer, one needs to take into account the time zone of the home country of seafarers. Several times I have visited ships late in the evening as seafarers were desperate to contact their families. Some had had no contact with their wives and children for more than a month. I experienced the gratitude of the crews as they appreciated the chaplain doing his best to help them whatever the time of day."*

*"On 27<sup>th</sup> May I had a talk with a 37-year-old Filipino mess man called June. He was already eight months onboard but was probably extending his contract to twelve months. His mother had already died ten years ago from a stroke and now his father was in ill health because of diabetes; he had to undergo regular operations because the veins in his legs and feet were fast deteriorating. June has to stay onboard longer because the operations cost a lot of money. He is still unmarried because he cannot afford to provide for a family of his own. He was glad to be able to talk about his problems with me."*

## Funding Needed:

Our port chaplaincy project in Belgium will cost the Sailors' Society €45,057 to run in 2013.

Please see budget below for details:

<b>ANTWERP BUDGET 2013</b>	
<b>CHAPLAINCY OVERHEADS</b>	<b>€</b>
Gross salaries/wages	33,467
Chaplain's training	174
Transport	5,775
Property	2,489
Administration	2,187
Emergency welfare fund	965
<b>Total</b>	<b>45,057</b>