

The Struggle between Man and the Sea

I was visiting a ship yesterday and was visiting a man over a typical Filipino lunch of fish and rice. A pleasant man with a pleasant face and attitude. He prayed for his lunch giving God thanks for food and life. As we ate we began to talk about the ship, life and well you know, “things.” I then asked about his family and he said he has 4 children 2 boys and 2 girls but his wife was filing for a divorce and an annulment!. We talked about this for some time. They had a good relationship for 20 + years but the separations were too long. You see he has been at sea for 25 years and his children are from ages 16 – 11. He loves his children and his wife but she wants to be free of the sea and he knows the sea is his only source of income.

When preparing for the SCI Newsletter a letter was submitted by a youth from Trinity Lutheran Church, Lansdale PA talking about their involvement during the Spring Cruise on the Delaware River where she and 11-12 other youth participated to help make this a memorable event.



What struck me was the chord that vibrated between this seafarer and this young girl. The sea is a place where livings are made and families supported but many times are lost. How many of our seafarers miss the milestones of family life? The joys and times of celebration or the times of sadness and loss? What a toll it takes on a marriage when contracts run for 9-12 months with maybe a month between contracts.

Danielle, the author below was quite right when she noted that the people on a very pleasant and successful 3 hour cruise could not wait to get off and get home. In her comparison she notes the harsh truth of the seafarer’s life. And we should, like her, celebrate the men and women who supply our country with so much as they sacrifice so much. Another man on the same ship lamented to me that at one time the seafarer was treated as an ambassador of the world to the USA now they are treated as terrorists. The life of a seafarer is hard enough let alone adding the stress of hate and fear aimed toward them for no reason at all.

A Service Day on the River

by Danielle Perez, Trinity youth member

Working with Danielle and the other youth from Trinity were Salina and Jared Spry youth members from St. Luke

Have you ever been away for a long time without family, friends, or home? It’s horrible. Sometimes we want to be away because we get annoyed or frustrated with our families, but could you imagine spending up to 10/11 months away? Seafarers do this regularly to support their families even if it means not being able to see them.

Seamen’s Church Institute helps to provide services to the men who come by the ports on the Delaware River. They offer them transportation to stores, telephones, computers to get in touch with their family and a church.

On June 19, a group of about 14 teenage youth and young adults from Trinity went to the Seamen’s Church Institute in Philadelphia and saw what it looked like. This event was coordinated by Mark Ristine. At the institute, our group put about 300 bags together filled with bananas, papers, and a pineapple. It took a while gathering them up, but when we finished, we were finally off to a cruise ship to enjoy a beautiful day on the Delaware River.



The ship was full of people that went to support and donate money to the seafarers. During the trip, lunch was served as we slowly traveled down the Delaware. The captain told us all about the different ports and what they are

used for. Besides relaxing on the river, we also raised money by selling raffle tickets! The winner of the raffle received half of the money collected.

After the three-hour tour, we were the first ones to get off. All of us formed a chain and delivered the bags to the passengers one-by-one. It took time, but they were very thankful. What I do remember very clearly from the trip was all the people waiting to get off the boat. They all crowded around the exit and were very impatient. They were desperate to get off after a measly three hours and most likely forgot the fact that the seafarers stay on a ship for up to 10 months! Following our three-hour trip, we had had enough. That gave me respect for the men that do this for a living. It was a nice ride, but definitely shouldn't be a way of life. I have a new appreciation for my dad and home that will always be there for me after a long day of school.