



Invocation

Leader: The Lord is the great God, the great King above all gods; in his hand are the depths of the earth.

People: The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land.

Leader: Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our maker.

People: For he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care.

Hymn: Eternal Father

1 Eternal Father, strong to save,
Whose arm has bound restless wave,
Who bade the mighty ocean deep
Its own appointed limits keep;
O hear us when we cry to Thee
For those in peril on the sea.

2 O Savior, whose almighty word
The winds and waves submissive heard,
Who walked upon the foaming deep,
And calm amid the storm didst sleep;
O hear us when we cry to Thee
For those in peril on the sea.

3 O Holy Spirit, who didst brood
Upon the chaos dark and rude,
And bid their angry tumult cease,
And give for wild confusion peace;
O hear us when we cry to Thee
For those in peril on the sea.

4 O Trinity of love and pow'r,
Your children shield in danger's hour;
From rock and tempest, fire, and foe,
Protect them where-so-e'er they go;
Thus, evermore shall rise to Thee
Glad hymns of praise from land and sea.

Psalm: Reading: Psalm 107: 1-3, 23-32

1 Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.

2 Let the redeemed of the LORD tell their story — those he redeemed from the hand of the foe,

3 those he gathered from the lands, from east and west, from north and south.

23 Some went out on the sea in ships; they were merchants on the mighty waters.

24 They saw the works of the LORD, his wonderful deeds in the deep.

25 For he spoke and stirred up a tempest that lifted high the waves.

26 They mounted up to the heavens and went down to the depths; in their peril their courage melted away.

27 They reeled and staggered like drunkards; they were at their wits' end.

28 Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble, and he brought them out of their distress.

29 He stilled the storm to a whisper; the waves of the sea were hushed.

30 They were glad when it grew calm, and he guided them to their desired haven.

31 Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for mankind.

32 Let them exalt him in the assembly of the people and praise him in the council of the elders

Bible Reading: Acts 27:21-38

After they had gone a long time without food, Paul stood up before them and said: "Men, you should have taken my advice not to sail from Crete; then you would have spared yourselves this damage and loss. But now I urge you to keep up your courage, because not one of you will be lost; only the ship will be destroyed. Last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me and said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you.' So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me. Nevertheless, we must run aground on some island."

... ..
Just before dawn Paul urged them all to eat. "For the last fourteen days," he said, "you have been in constant suspense and have gone without food—you haven't eaten anything. Now I urge you to take some food. You need it to survive. Not one of you will lose a single hair from his head." After he said this, he took some bread and gave thanks to God in front of them all. Then he broke it and began to eat. They were all encouraged and ate some food themselves. ..

Hymn: "Will your anchor hold?"

1. Will your anchor hold in the storms of life
When the clouds unfold their wings of strife?
When the strong tides lift and the cables strain
Will your anchor drift, or firm remain?

2. We have an anchor that keeps the soul
Steadfast and sure while the billows roll
Fastened to the Rock which cannot move
Grounded firm and deep in the Savior's love

3. It is safely moored, 'twill the storm withstand
For 'tis well secured by the Savior's hand
Though the tempest rage and the wild winds blow
Not an angry wave shall our bark o'erflow

4. It will firmly hold in the Floods of Death
When the waters cold chill our latest breath
On the rising tide it can never fail
While our hopes abide within the veil.

Bible Readings

The sleep of a laborer is sweet, whether they eat little or much,
but as for the rich, their abundance permits them no sleep. Kohelet 5:12

Do not love sleep or you will grow poor; stay awake and you will have food to spare. Proverbia 20,18

Homily

Prayer (Response: Guide and help us loving God.)

We have the privilege of working with those who work on the water. Help us to care for them.

Guide and help us loving God.

As we talk to the seafarers we are made aware of troubles in various parts of the world.

Help us listen with intent.

Guide and help us loving God.

Seafarers live a life of loneliness and isolation, sometimes they make unwise life choices.

Let us not judge, but guide them in their choices.

Guide and help us loving God.

Our families are often part of our ministry. Help us to keep them in our hearts and minds.

Guide and help us loving God.

We sometimes over-extend ourselves.

Let us realize we are of less use when we are tired and help us balance our life.

Guide and help us loving God.

May all we do be in your Name.

Guide and help us loving God.

(in a moment of silence we request God's grace on those we wish to remember).

Leader: As our Jesus Christ taught us to pray, let us now pray:

People: Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Hymn: Bless this ship (tune from Taizé: Bless the Lord, My soul)

Bless this ship, o God, and all who sail on her. - Bless the crew o God, and all their families.

Blessing & Dismissal

Leader: Go into the world in peace; be of good courage; hold fast that which is good; render no one evil for evil; strengthen the fainthearted, support the weak; help the afflicted, honor all people; love and serve the Lord, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine on you and be gracious to you;
the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace. (Numbers 6:24-26)

Dismissal

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Response: Amen

Dear brothers and sisters,

(In this seminary we heard about health – what’s doing good and what is not that good.)

The last months I have seen a lot of flyers and campaigns on social media calling on seafarers to care better for their health.

Wellness on board – is the name of a training program – and it’s really a good idea to help the seafarers with some suggestions to maintain their wellness.

Also the mental health of seafarers is receiving more attention...

Great, that is what we were talking about so many years... it’s good that there is more focus on all these issues of the wellbeing of seafarers.

But then one of these days I read these verse in the bible, in the proverbs:

Do not love sleep or you will grow poor; stay awake and you will have food to spare (Prov 20:18)

Do not love sleep ... - of course, if you love sleep too much, you will be lazy or even more than lazy...

But this actually is not the problem with seafarers. They sleep - let’s say honestly - not that much ... they stay awake quite a lot...

Some days ago somebody from a YMCA called me and asked for help for a friend who became a seafarer and was wondering how to keep the Commandment about sabbatical rest. I couldn’t give my answer to the seafarer himself, but thinking about it, I remembered one of the most powerful versions of the commandment in Exodus 23:12 “Six days do your work, but on the seventh day do not work, so that your ox and your donkey may rest, and so that the slave born in your household and the foreigner living among you may be refreshed.”

Even the animals shall have rest – and the slaves and the foreigners also. We follow Jesus when we don’t apply directly the laws from the first testament, but Jesus said: The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. (Mk 2:27)

For man - ---- this means for me: there should be some rest.

In the MLC the minimum rest per day can be divided in 2 periods, one of which shall be at least six hours. As we know, six hours in this case doesn’t really mean six hours of rest and even less of sleep... it takes some time from the workplace to the place of rest.

I never could imagine doing this for months.... I thought I myself was loving sleep too much, like the person criticised in Proverbs... but then I read about a study about the physical and economical harm of lack of sleep.

Less than 6 hours of sleep is harmful, especially for a long time.

It's not only causing accidents: people who are over tired, and then it's said: the accident was caused by the human element

It's also damaging the wellbeing of these seafarers, their health. I wonder how many heart attacks may be caused by this lack of sleep ... - but it's called natural death...

As I said, we are following Jesus when we not apply the laws from the first testament directly. But they still have some meaning. In certain situations, like the storm and shipwreck related in acts 27 it's the right thing to encourage to eat to survive ... that is not the moment to rest ...

But that's about survival in an emergency. After this they were totally exhausted...

In normal situations there must be some time to rest.

It's good when we encourage seafarers to lead a healthy life: to eat well, to do some wellness at sea stuff – but all this can't be meant to make them just function better. Even if many times they are seen as part of a big machinery, and the word human is more used to describe errors and shortcomings than all the positive things – they are not part of a machine, they are human beings with their dignity as every human being. This dignity is the key motivation for us to be engaged in Christian Maritime Ministry. Our faith leads us to follow Jesus in seeing those who are not seen – we open our eyes and ears to listen and see – we show them that they are seen as human beings - but we should also open our mouth when they are not even seen as human beings but just as parts of a machine who have to function.

Amen

The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.