# **Appeal Talk**

Good morning/evening everyone,

My name is xx and I am here to talk about the welfare of seafarers and fishers. These brave men and women are the unseen backbone of our global economy, working tirelessly to bring us goods and resources that we need. They spend months away from their families, facing isolation, loneliness, challenging conditions, and sometimes extreme danger. This is especially true of those currently working in the Black and Red Seas due to the conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East.

Imagine leaving your family behind, signing on for a job at sea, and finding yourself at risk of missiles, drone attacks, and piracy. This is the harsh reality for many seafarers working on these vital trade routes.

Seafarers in these conflict zones are often scared, witnessing destruction first-hand. Security concerns frequently prevent them from going ashore, adding loneliness and anxiety to an already stressful situation.

This is where Stella Maris (formerly known as Apostleship of the Sea), the official maritime charity of the Catholic Church, steps in. They support seafarers and fishers in the UK and around the world. Their dedicated chaplains are a lifeline for mariners. They offer a listening ear and much-needed spiritual support. They bring food parcels, offer Wi-Fi so seafarers can call home, and provide hardship grants and access to mental health counselling.

In today’s Gospel, we were reminded of the importance of welcoming the stranger. This is needed more than ever for seafarers today. Imagine the relief they feel when they see a friendly face coming onboard, someone to talk to, someone who cares.

Stella Maris’ ship visits are only possible because of your support. Your generosity helps their chaplains and volunteers to assist 125,000 seafarers in UK ports and to reach up to 70,000 ships worldwide per year.

Please donate today. Your generous contribution will help this work to continue and grow. It will be an expression of God’s love, helping to welcome seafarers and fishers who are strangers in these lands.

Without your support and prayers, Stella Maris would not be able to carry out this important ministry on behalf of the Church. Thank you to Father [xxx] for allowing me to speak here today about this important, but often forgotten, ministry.