



# PORT CALL

Winter 2012

## SEAFARERS & INTERNATIONAL HOUSE

Serving Seafarers, Sojourners and Community

### Imprisoned in a Flawed System

In a nation with 5% of the world's population and nearly 25% of the world's prisoners,<sup>1</sup> we shouldn't be too surprised that, on any given day, the United States imprisons over 33,000 immigrants - many being refugees, tortured persons and human trafficking victims.<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand, in a nation of immigrants founded on the principle of liberty, we should expect that detention would be a last resort in processing a claim for asylum.

Within the framework of the Immigration and Nationality Act and its vigorous enforcement by the Department of Homeland Security,<sup>3</sup> detention of asylum seekers is the first and virtually only resort.

Even before any assessment of the asylum seeker's claim is undertaken, the individual is detained. DHS requires a wait of at least 48 hours after the applicant arrives at the detention center before conducting a "credible fear" interview, ostensibly so that the applicant may recover from travel.<sup>4</sup> (Let's pause, for a moment, to contemplate a traveler's recovery from jet lag in a prison for two days.)

During a secondary inspection at the port of entry, documents that might support the asylum claim will be examined only if the claimant is holding them. DHS will not permit documents to be retrieved from checked luggage and will not refer to those documents in the sworn statement, which the claimant is

required to sign and which will be needed in the credible fear interview.<sup>5</sup>

In 2003, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees conducted a survey of DHS conduct and found that many immigration inspectors had negative views of asylum seekers, treated them with derision, unnecessarily shackled them, failed to provide interpreters, improperly notified consular officials of the country from which the asylum seeker fled, negatively pre-judged the asylum claims and encouraged the claimants not to pursue them.<sup>6</sup>



*Asylum seekers do not receive much welcome or empathy.*

There are many explanations for this conduct, including poor training, understaffing and, in the wake of "9-11", fear-stoked mean-spiritedness.

Among many needed reforms of the immigration system cited in the ABA Report,<sup>7</sup> the need for DHS to accept alternatives to detention ("ATD") is critical. ATD offers four benefits.

First, it's less expensive, often one-tenth of the cost of private prisons holding DHS contracts.<sup>8</sup>

Second, ATD results in high immigration compliance rates.<sup>9</sup>

Hardly any asylum seeker has absconded pending the outcome of his or her claim for asylum.

Third, existing detention policies and practices impede a full and fair adjudication of asylum claims and arguably violate due process.<sup>10</sup>

Fourth, imprisonment creates traumas and deprivations from which an individual, previously persecuted and tortured, may not recover readily, if at all.<sup>11</sup>

Of course, mandatory detention is driven not only by our nation's obsession with terrorism, but by business interests, reaping huge profits from the building and the operation of prisons. We need to recapture our humanity.

1. Adam Liptak, "U.S. Prison Population Dwarfs that of Other Nations", *THE NEW YORK TIMES*, April 23, 2008

2. Leslie Velez and Megan Bremer, *UNLOCKING LIBERTY: A WAY FORWARD FOR U.S. IMMIGRATION POLICY*, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, Baltimore MD 2011

3. DHS's immigration responsibilities are handled through three agencies: U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Customs and Border Protection and Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

4. Arnold & Porter LLP, *REFORMING THE IMMIGRATION SYSTEM*, American Bar Association Commission on Immigration, Washington DC, 2010, page 1-15

5. *Id.* at pages 1-42 and 1-43

6. *Id.* at page 1-46

7. Arnold & Porter, *supra*

8. Velez and Bremer, *supra* at page 11

9. *Id.* at page 14

10. *Id.* at pages 15-23

11. *Id.* at pages 23-24

Christopher V. Roehrer, Director  
Development and Communications

### SAVE THE DATE

12th Annual  
*Setting the Course*  
Awards Banquet

Honoring

**Tom Murphy**

and

**Augie Tellez**

April 26, 2012  
New York Athletic Club  
New York, NY

## Now Serving in the Port of Baltimore

We welcome Rev. Gerry F. Rickel, our newest port chaplain, serving in the Port of Baltimore.

Rev. Rickel's arrival and the expansion of Seafarers & International House's port mission into Baltimore is the product of two efforts at collaboration – one with the Delaware-Maryland Synod and one with the Baltimore International Seafarer Center.

The DE-MD Synod's Bishop Herz-Lane and Council have authorized a special call for Rev.

Rickel to serve as port chaplain for Seafarers & International House and to serve as pastor of the Community of St. Dymas, a Lutheran congregation within the Maryland correctional system.<sup>1</sup>

Baltimore International Seafarers Center is the principal seafarer mission



Rev. Gerry F. Rickel

in the Port of Baltimore, and its Executive Director, Rev. Mary H. T. Davisson, welcomed an additional chaplaincy resource in an increasingly busy Port of Baltimore.<sup>2</sup>

Rev. Rickel and BISC will closely coordinate ship visiting schedules to better serve seafarers.

It has been reported that the Port of Baltimore rebounded last year from the economic recession by handling more autos and more containers – key cargo commodities for the port – than in

any other years.<sup>3</sup>

Seafarers & International House looks forward to the opportunity to raise awareness within the Lutheran community in Delaware and Maryland of seafarers and the role they play in the lives of us ashore.

1. [www.stdysmasmd.org](http://www.stdysmasmd.org)

2. [www.baltseafarers.ang-md.org](http://www.baltseafarers.ang-md.org)

3. "Containers and Cars Enjoy Record Years", *Press Release, February 12, 2012*, [www.mpa.maryland.gov](http://www.mpa.maryland.gov)

### SEAFARERS & INTERNATIONAL HOUSE

A Lutheran mission for seafarers and sojourners, seeking to nurture the human spirit and foster human dignity.

This mission is accomplished through pastoral care, hospitality, social assistance, advocacy and prayer, offered in ports in Baltimore, Connecticut, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island, and in an 84-room guesthouse in Manhattan.

### Executive Staff

Rev. Marsh Luther Drege  
Pastor and Executive Director

Christopher V. Roehrer, Director  
Development and Communications

Roberto Zapata  
Director of House Operations

Noreen M. Fleming  
Office Manager

Alina Kielczewski  
Financial Manager

### Chaplaincy Staff

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Rev. Luisito Desteza  
Sigrid Jaegersen Eriksson  
Rev. William C. Fensterer  
Rev. Clint Padgitt  
Rev. William D. Rex  
Rev. Gerry F. Rickel  
Ruth Setaro

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## Advocacy

### Write Your Message

1

*Very few asylum seekers are dangerous or represent a threat to our Nation. So, why does the Government insist on detaining them? A fraction of the money spend on incarceration would go a long way to assure a better equipped immigration court system and more prompt and fair asylum claim adjudications.*

### Send Your Message

2

*You can access the mail or email address of your Senator, Representative, the President or his Cabinet by logging onto:*

[www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov)  
[www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov), or  
[www.whitehouse.gov/contact](http://www.whitehouse.gov/contact)

### Add a Prayer

3

*After you've sent you message, please take a few moments to pray for the asylum seekers, who have escaped persecution in their homelands only to be shackled when they arrive here.*

## Corporate Spin

Corrections Corporation of America (CCA), the owners and operators of Elizabeth Detention Center, remark in their website that "faith-based programs are an integral and growing part of the inmate rehabilitation opportunities at every CCA facility."

Putting the best spin on business operations is an accepted method of public relations and investor communications. Not infrequently, spin surpasses reality.

Congregation in the ELCA New Jersey Synod hold monthly prayer vigils outside the Elizabeth Detention Center, in the hope that inmates may hear or receive reports from the guards that people are aware of their plight and are praying for them. The prayer vigil group usually consists of 6-12 Lutherans, utterly non-threatening in appearance.

On two occasions, CCA has demanded that the vigil relocate to the other side of the street - no reason given. The vigil participants weren't blocking traffic, they weren't picketing or using public address systems. They were just reading a few scriptures, singing a couple of hymn and offering prayers for the detainees and the guards.

While some pastoral care is recently allowed (and maybe even encouraged) inside CCA's Elizabeth Detention Center, outside prayer vigils are not. Apparently, CCA likes to control the spin.

Serving

Seafarers

Sojourners

Community

### Giving Thanks



Rev. Marsh Luther Drege  
Pastor and Executive Director

Dear Friends:

Our re-emerging target mission – reaching out to assist refugees and asylum seekers here at Seafarers & International House – has been as much a blessing to me as it has been a blessing to these individuals.

Right before Christmas, the Gospel came to life in front of my eyes: I got a call from one of the pro-bono immigration lawyers representing one of our asylum seeker “alumna”. The lawyer said that the asylum seeker, “Sara”, was in the lawyer’s office and had just gotten word that the immigration judge had approved her asylum claim and awarded her refugee status. The lawyer

asked Sara how she would like to celebrate. “Let’s call Pastor Marsh at Seafarers & International House”. So on that Friday my Christmas blessing was to talk on the phone with Sara and rejoice that her long journey towards freedom from oppression in her home country was now over.

Then Sara said, “I just wanted to call you, Pastor Marsh, like the one leper who returned and thanked Jesus for the healing. I didn’t want to be like the other nine who forgot to come back and say thank you”. Sara continued: “When I was released from detention, I was so depressed and sad. I knew no one, I had no place to go. And then you welcomed me into your guesthouse, and it was the best gift anyone had given to me here in America: a temporary home. Everyone was so nice and helpful. I will never forget Seafarers & International House.”

Sara is new to the Christian faith, and I congratulated her on knowing her parables! so well!

We give thanks to our many partners who have helped us serve refugees and asylum seekers released from detention centers. In 2011 we projected that we would be asked to accommodate only ten asylum seekers. By year end, however, we were able to help 30 asylum seekers with lodging, social services and pastoral care.

Last month I spent a wonderful weekend at



Rev. Dan Ward, Bob and Joan Cohen, Mary Heller and Rev. Marsh Drege

St. John Lutheran Church in Poughkeepsie where together we watched “The Visitor”, a movie about asylum seekers threatened with deportation. Out of concern for the many asylum seekers we care for at our guesthouse, this fine congregation (aided with matching funds from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans) contributed nearly a month of lodging for an asylum seeker. Now, I have the opportunity, like the one returning leper, and say, “Thank You” to the folks at St. John’s Lutheran Church in Poughkeepsie and all the others who enable us provide this important ministry.

Peace,

*Marsh Luther Drege*

1. Matthew 17:11-19

### Social Service Grant

Seafarers & International House received a grant from the New York Community Trust in the amount of \$10,000 to cover the costs of pastoral care, social worker intervention and miscellaneous food and travel expenses of refugees and asylum seekers staying at its

guesthouse. We express our immense gratitude to the Trust.

The number of asylum seekers detained in the New York metropolitan area alone is staggering. Additional funding will be needed to assist and accommodate more of these individuals.

### In Memoriam

With great sorrow, we report the death of our former board member, Elaine G. Abrahamson on December 27, 2011.

Dr. Abrahamson was elected to the board of directors in June 2001 and served for six years. During that time she was also a member of the Chaplaincy & Church Relations Committee.

Ms. Abrahamson was a public school teacher for over 40 years and held a

doctorate of education degree from Columbia University.

She was consecrated as a Deacon of the ELCA in 1986 and brought her considerable devotion, skills and insights to our mission programs.



## Dangerous Waters

Sailing in and around the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf, the Gulf of Aden and Indian Ocean has not gotten any easier. Aside from the usual navigational hazards of canals and straits, piracy continues to pose a threat to seafarers.

In 2011, 802 seafarers were taken hostage, compared to 1,181 hostages in 2010<sup>1</sup> with the number hijackings down 36%<sup>2</sup>. Ransoms, however, increased from an average of \$4 million in 2010 to \$5 million in 2011.

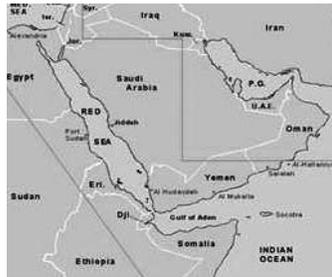
The irony is that these ransoms constitute a miniscule percent of the \$7 billion economic cost.<sup>3</sup>

In 2011, \$38 million was spent on prosecuting pirates, \$1.1 billion was spent on armed guards and security aboard ship, \$2.7 billion was spent on increased fuel to permit ships to travel at higher speeds and \$195 million was spent to pay seafarers as an incentive to sail in these waters.

Nevertheless, larger weapons, far-ranging mother ships and swarm attacks – five to ten high speed skiffs, each with several pirates – have caused greater damage to ships. Moreover, to gain leverage during ransom negotiations, there have been more incidences of maiming and killing hostages. Even with the number of hijackings down last year, there were as many killings in 2011 as there were in 2010.

It is not only hostages who have been killed. Last year, an Indian fisherman was mistaken for a pirate and shot and killed by a Sri Lankan Naval officer.

The fisherman inadvertently crossed into Sri Lankan



18,000 ships passing annually through the Suez Canal are exposed to pirates waters.<sup>4</sup> Just a few days ago, armed guards aboard an Italian flagged tanker shot and killed two Indian fishermen. The fishing boat, trawling for tuna, apparently sailed too close to the tanker. Nine other fishermen aboard the boat were sleeping and unharmed.<sup>5</sup>

There are no easy answers, but one can't help but wonder whether spending \$7 billion on the restoration of Somalian society and sovereign fishing rights in Somalian waters might not be more productive.

1. Allan Jacob, "Piracy at sea cost world \$7b in 2011" *KHALEEJ TIMES ON LINE, Dubai, February 10, 2012* and Harry Bradford, "Somali Piracy Cost Governments, Shipping Industry \$7 Billion In 2011", *THE HUFFINGTON POST, February 8, 2012, www.huffingtonpost.com*

2. *Ibid*

3. "Navy to step up security after fisherman killing" *JAGRAN POST, January 14, 2011, http://post.jagran.com*

4. Mark Tempest, "Indian Ocean Mistake", *EAGEL SPEAK, February 16, 2012*



*M/V Enrica Lexie, an Italian registered oil tanker*

## Dangerous Cargoes



*M/V VINALINES QUEEN, a 56,000 dwt bulk carrier built in 2005*

Last Christmas Day, the M/V VINALINES QUEEN, sailing from Indonesia to China with a cargo of nickel ore, suddenly listed and sank off Luzon. All but one of the 24-man crew perished.<sup>1</sup> The sole survivor, Dau Ngoc Hung, was able to reach one of the ship's life rafts, equipped with food and water. In the high seas, he couldn't locate any of his crew members for the next five days, when he was then rescued.

He stated that the captain had instructed all the crewmen immediately to lower the lifeboats, when suddenly, the ship overturned towards the starboard side, while Hung was standing on the port side. It is suspected that the cargo of nickel ore liquefied and shifted.<sup>2</sup>

The ship was built in 2005 and believed to have been in good condition. Nevertheless, three bulk carriers have sunk in the last two years caused by the liquefaction of the cargo of nickel ore mined in Indonesia and in the Philippines.

What is liquefaction?

All solid bulk cargoes contain a degree of moisture within the fine or small particles, and all bulk cargoes have a "flow moisture point (FMP) – the point at which the solid material starts to act like a liquid. As the

ship rolls from side to side, the semi-liquefied solid cargo shifts to one side, but does not return to the center like a normal liquid. As a result, a greater volume of cargo moves to and remains on one side of the cargo hold, causing the ship to list and eventually capsize.<sup>3</sup>

International shipping codes require that bulk cargo be tested within seven days of loading to determine its flow moisture point. The ship's master must be satisfied that the cargo is safe. Sometimes, however, the testing laboratory is not reliable; sometimes the exact composition of the cargo is not known and sometimes intervening weather conditions can render the test readings obsolete.<sup>4</sup>

This problem is exacerbated in Indonesia and the Philippines, because the nickel mines are located in remote areas, distant from both ports and laboratories. The nickel ore is stored outdoors under tarpulins pending loading aboard ship, and subject to increasingly erratic weather patterns.

Most importantly, ship masters are frequently pressured, if not threatened, to load the cargo quickly and not to wait for an additional independent FMP test at the loading pier.<sup>5</sup>

1. *DAILY VESSEL CASUALTY, PIRACY & NEWS REPORT, Countryman and McDaniel Law Offices, February 1, 2012, www.cargolaw.com.*

2. *Saigon Giai Phong, January 5, 2012, www.saigongpdaily.com.vn*

3. Chris Spencer and David Tilsley, "Liquefaction: Iron Ore Fines and Nickel Ore" *STANDARD CARGO, Charles Taylor & Co. Limited, London, February 2011, www.standard-club.com*

4. *Ibid*

5. *Ibid*

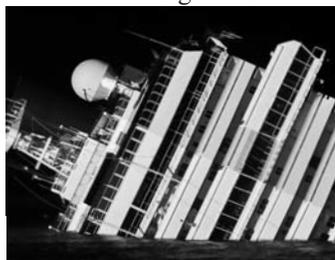
## Prepared?

Of all the maritime casualties that have occurred in the last few months, the grounding of the COSTA CONCORDIA is surely the most publicized.

The cruise liner was huge, 955 feet long, with a guest capacity of 3,570 and a crew of 1,000.

The cause of the casualty is not known. It is speculated that the master of the ship made a course deviation. The ship owners say it was unauthorized, but travel consultants say this practice is commonplace.

There are also claims that the navigation systems failed and that the rock outcropping didn't appear in the nautical charts. There are questions whether the captain abandoned the ship and whether the crew was properly trained for emergencies.



*Costa Concordia built in 2006 and registered in Italy*

One commentator noted that in the last few years, insurance has paid on average \$4 million per day for maritime casualty claims, of which 65% can be attributed to "human error".<sup>1</sup>

Given the cavernous magnitude of cruise ships and the teeming crowds aboard them, one such human error may be the failure to prepare passengers adequately. Also, passengers need to be more attentive to the safety drills.

*1. Geoffrey W. Gill, Esq., "Reflections on a Casualty", Countryman and McDaniel Law Offices, February 1, 2012*

## Nobody Knows the Troubles I've Seen

Every ship visit is different, and a port chaplain can't know what to expect when he or she climbs to the top of the gangway and boards the ship.

At a glance, the condition of the ship will give the port chaplain some idea of the welfare and needs of the crew. Reports of unpaid wages or inadequate provisions will not surprise the port chaplain boarding a ship with considerable hull damage, corrosion and chipped paint.

Within the first few minutes of conversation with one or two seafarers, the port chaplain will learn whether the ship sailed



*For the seafarer, smaller ports seem less populated and more lonely.*

through storm-driven seas or was attacked by pirates.

Other problems may take longer for the port chaplain to discover and address. Often they're relatively small problems that have been allowed to fester, because the seafarer had no one to whom he could turn.

A young cadet, at sea for eight months, was due to return home in another four months and then enroll in the local maritime academy. This was to have been his career, and his parents were so proud that their son would be able to pay for the education of his younger siblings. After just eight months at sea, however, he realized the life of a seafarer was not for him. He didn't know how to tell his parents: they would be so disappointed.

Another seafarer on the M/V PORT KENNY was privately grieving the loss of his four-year old daughter to leukemia while he was away.

It's not that these problems are insurmountable, but while the rest of us ashore have family, friends or pastors with whom to share our disappointments, large and small, the seafarers don't have anybody at sea.

Except for the brief time spent with the port chaplain, who listens, empathizes, counsels and encourages, they're alone.

Sometimes the seafarer's problem is solved, sometimes not. The intercession of the port chaplain nearly always helps the seafarer to better cope, because somebody else now knows the trouble he's seen.



*The loneliness is broken as soon as the port chaplain comes on board*



**THE ITF SEAFARERS' TRUST**

*"We put seafarers first"*

There are few organizations worldwide that have done more for seafarers and the missions that serve them than the ITF Seafarers Trust.<sup>1</sup>

The Trust was formed in 1981, dedicated to the spiritual, moral and physical welfare of seafarers, irrespective of nationality, race or creed. It provides funds for organizations that work for the benefit of seafarers with the stated purpose of making them healthier, less isolated, better represented and better connected with their loved ones and those who care for their welfare, at

sea and in port. Its funding comes from the investment income of the ITF Seafarers' International Welfare Assistance and Protection Fund.

Over the years, ITF Seafarers Trust has contributed to the refurbishment of our guest-house (1998-2001) and to the acquisitions of several vans (2003, 2009 and 2012). These grants reflect the evolution of Seafarers & International House as a ship-visit oriented mission: portable and cost-effective. These grants also help explain the increase in the number of

ports served and the number of port chaplains on staff, at a time when many other missions are contracting.

This March 22<sup>nd</sup> ITF Seafarers Trust will celebrate its Thirtieth Anniversary. We join the whole maritime community in heartily expressing congratulations.

*1. www.itfglobal.org*



## Christmas-at-Sea 2011

This last Christmas season, our port chaplains delivered 1,500 Christmas-at-Sea satchels, over 7,000 gifts in total, to seafarers aboard sixty ships, docked in the ports served by Seafarers & International House.

The crew members expressed their gratitude and offered our port chaplains their Christmas blessings and New Year's well-wishes. One such exchange was particularly memorable:

"Who do I thank?" asked the seafarer. "Well, you could thank the Lutheran church that filled your satchel," the port chaplain replied. "What's a Lutheran church?" asked the seafarer. "It is a church that believes in the amazing grace of God," answered the port chaplain. "Sounds like a pretty cool church," said the seafarer.

Actually, it is pretty cool.

It is cool that, in the midst of frenzied holiday preparations and crowded shopping malls, people would take the time to



*Twelve-passenger van filled to the top with Christmas-at-Sea satchels fill one or more Christmas-at-Sea satchels with sweatshirts, wool caps, casual shirts, socks, candy, nuts and greeting cards.*

Practical gifts, but all carefully selected as if the seafarer were a member of the family or a close personal friend. Yet the gift-givers and the seafarers are complete strangers.



*Bob Bradford, Bishop Driesen and Revs. Beth-Ann and Karl-John Stone*

This last year, Christmas-at-Sea was enriched with a year-long initiative of the Upper Susquehanna Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, urging its local congregations to reach out to seafarers with gift satchels for seafarers alone at sea. Over 500 Christmas-at-Sea satchels were filled and delivered to the synod offices in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania.

It took a couple of vans and a couple of trips to bring these satchels to the ports. Not only have seafarers touched the lives of people in the middle of Pennsylvania through international trade, but those Pennsylvanians have touched the lives of seafarers through care and outreach.

In a world where strife, fear, poverty and injustice seem to monopolize the headlines, it's gratifying to see an interaction of people reaching out to each other, motivated simply by good will. It is pretty cool.

**212-677-4800**

## Remembering Last Year's Gift

"Do you remember me, Mother Ruth? You gave me this sweatshirt last year. It's my favorite one."

The M/V NORD TRUST had docked in New Haven a year ago, December 2010, and our Port Chaplain Ruth Setaro had delivered 27 Christmas-at-Sea satchels for the officers and crew. For one of the newer crew members, the Christmas satchels were a complete and delightful surprise.

So when the NORD TRUST was returning to New Haven this last December, this same seafarer

told all his fellows crewmembers that they would be warmly greeted and helped.

As soon as the ship docked and was cleared by port security, Chaplain Setaro climbed the gangway. She was met at the top by this seafarer who was



*After weeks at sea, a little shopping is both needed and refreshing.*

overjoyed to see her again. Most of the seafarers on the NORD TRUST took turns going on shopping trips with the port chaplain.

Seven crewmembers didn't have visas and couldn't disembark the ship, so they spent their time speaking to family and friends with the cellphones, phonecards and WiFi that the port chaplain supplied.

All the NORD TRUST seafarers received their Christmas-at-Sea satchels, carefully stowed away until Christmas morning on the Atlantic Ocean.

**[www.sihnyc.org](http://www.sihnyc.org)**

Pastoral Care

Hospitality

Social Assistance

Advocacy

Prayer

## Investing in the Second Greatest Commandment

*You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*<sup>1</sup>

Tacitly, most of us spend quite some time and a fair amount of rationalization dealing with this commandment. Love is such a difficult word. Maybe it's enough, we muse, if we extend a helping hand to the right neighbor in the appropriate circumstance. There are scoundrels out there, after all, who shamelessly would take advantage of our generosity. Aren't there instances when it is proper to refuse to help a neighbor?<sup>2</sup>

There is a tendency now to be a little more selective about our neighbors and taking greater care to "invest" in those in whom we see the best chances for success – success with which we can associate. Indeed, there is a growing market for wealth managers to introduce us to worthy neighbors (for a fee, of course).

It seems as if we've loaded a lot of baggage on the Second Greatest Commandment.

From the perspective of our neighbor, the cause of the hunger is secondary to the pain of hunger. From the perspective of our neighbor, the discomfort of homelessness doesn't vary if it results from unemployment, alcoholism or mental illness.

We are not commanded to love only our worthy neighbors or those in whom we might achieve a better rate of return. Nor are we excused from this commandment because of the difficulty of identifying and choosing the "right" neighbor to love.

Investment involves judgment, but the Second Greatest Commandment shouldn't.

We are called to what theologian Sharon Welch refers to as an "ethic of risk." Such an ethic acknowledges the broken-ness of our world and obliges us to work for the good without waiting for or depending upon the illusion or certainty of success.<sup>3</sup>

We are also called to be good stewards of our resources, and inevitably, we are confronted

with the need to make choices about which neighbors we want to assist. Choosing should be based on what touches our hearts, aided by the Holy Spirit, and not on some promised tax deduction or social recognition and certainly not on what some wealth manager recommends. We cannot outsource the second greatest commandment.

There is nearly an unlimited list of neighbors in need of love, and most faith denominations strive to reach out to them. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and its synods and congregations offer a broad range of opportunities.<sup>4</sup> Take a moment to meet some of your less fortunate neighbors in the world. It's the first step in learning to love them.

1. Mark 12:31

2. Most of the Google responses to this question deal with the duty of our neighbor to help us, mirroring current societal thought, "I'm entitled, you're responsible."

3. Rev. Betty Kornitzer, "Love Thy Neighbor as Thyself", November 7, 2004

4. www.elca.org (Our-Faith-in-Action)

Christopher V. Roehrer, Director  
Development and Communications

## An Old Seafaring Friend

For 61 years, Bob Hoffman was a seafarer, sailing well into his seventies. When he wasn't at sea, he resided at Seafarers & International House, and we came to know him as a rugged but gentle soul, who might on



Robert Hoffman  
(1927 – 2012)

occasion share an old sea story. Mr. Hoffman passed away last February 12<sup>th</sup>. We will miss him.

Bob's time here is a reminder of the rich history of this mission. Seafarers & International House was once a seafarer hotel. But times change. Few people spend a lifetime at sea anymore. Now, our seafaring guests are younger and just passing through town. They're joined by asylum seekers and others amid their "voyages". But the tradition began with folks like Bob. Thanks for the memories.



No, this is not a puzzle. It's a QR code reader. Scan this image with your smart phone and it will connect you directly to the donation page of our website, if you wish to make a gift. It just can't get any easier.

In this Issue

For 139 Years

In this Issue

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- Corporate Spin
- Giving Thanks
- Dangerous Waters



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- Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen
- ITF Seafarers' Trust-30 Years
- Christmas-at-Sea 2011
- Second Greatest Commandment

Serving Seafarers, Sojourners and Community

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