



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

New Apostleship of the Sea director breaks new ground

Media Release

December 14 2017

The Catholic Church's ministry to seafarers who visit Australian shores has a new national director, with Roslyn Rajasingam this week beginning as the first lay woman to hold the role.

Mrs Rajasingam, who has worked in Catholic and other faith-based agencies in Australia and overseas for most of the past 25 years, said the Church's work through the Apostleship of the Sea is invaluable to those who work on the water.

"For more than 100 years, the Catholic Church has been working to care for the spiritual, social and material welfare of seafarers," Mrs Rajasingam said.

"I now have the opportunity to carry on the work of helping seafarers refresh, refuel and reconnect, and to quench their spiritual thirst before they sail away to other shores."

Mrs Rajasingam said like other Catholic ministries, the work of the Apostleship of the Sea is aimed at supporting all who seek its assistance, regardless of colour, race or creed.

"Jesus himself had a special interest in and affection for his disciples, who were men who made their living as fishermen," she said.

"The Church holds that up as our example in supporting workers who come to Australia on merchant, passenger, fishing or military vessels."

Bishop Bosco Puthur, the Bishop Promoter of the Apostleship of the Sea, said Mrs Rajasingam brings a number of strengths to her new role.

"Ros has a personal and a professional connection with migrant workers and with seafarers, and knows how difficult it can be for those working on the oceans to manage their lives, including their spiritual lives," Bishop Puthur said.

"Given Australia's relative isolation from the rest of the world and its vast coastline, we have an important task in doing all we can to help seafarers find some respite and some comfort during their time in our country."

Mrs Rajasingam said she will move quickly to maintain and enhance the partnerships the Catholic Church has with port managers, with chaplains, with volunteers and with other Christian groups that support seafarers.

"There is a strong network of organisations that share the Catholic Church's commitment to the care of seafarers and there is significant value in combining our efforts for the greater good of those who work on the seas," she said.

"I hope to support workers and volunteers within the Apostleship of the Sea by making more people aware of their important ministry and ensuring that outreach can continue to make a difference in the lives of seafarers."