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ASIA/HONG KONG - Apostolate of the Sea: the ecumenical and interfaith dimension gets more and more important

Hong Kong (Agenzia Fides) - Father Valan Arasu Arockiaswarmy, Divine Word Missionary (SVD) of Indian origin, is the chaplain of the seamen in the diocese of Hong Kong.
Considering that every year more than 6 thousand ships stop in the port of Hong Kong, he undoubtedly has a demanding pastoral mission. According to information collected by Fides, Fr. Arasu Arockiaswarmy manages to visit about twenty ships a week: he goes on board, talk to the sailors, listens to their needs and problems, offers spiritual and moral support. Part of his mission is also the blessing of new ships and the sailors marriage. During the recent celebration of Sea Sunday, he explained his mission of nourishing the hearts of sailors with the Love of God: "Our pastoral has to adapt to the situation that is evolving. Before most of the sailors were Filipino Catholics. Today, the majority are Chinese, Indonesian, Vietnamese, or from Eastern Europe, with a great cultural and religious diversity." So ecumenism and interreligious dialogue are increasingly important elements in the Apostolate of the Sea and on Sea Sunday all Christian denominations pray together. The diocese of Hong Kong has always given importance to this apostolate, being a major international port, and every year the Liturgical Commission of the diocese prepares the material to be handed out before the event, with prayers for sailors. (NZ) (Agenzia Fides 18/7/2012)

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