



# Seamen's Christian Friend Society

World mission on our doorstep!



"But my life is worth nothing to me unless I use it for finishing the work assigned me by the Lord Jesus—the work of telling others the Good News about the wonderful grace of God." Acts 20:24 NLT

Seamen's Christian Friend Society:  
Monthly report  
Number 124: May 2020

## Rudders and bottles

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[www.scfs.org](http://www.scfs.org) [www.facebook.com/seafarerz](https://www.facebook.com/seafarerz)

[www.youtube.com/seafarerz](https://www.youtube.com/seafarerz)

Dear friends,

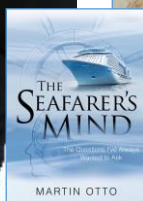
On 7<sup>th</sup> Dec 2019 an LPG tanker *Celanova* broke down and lost her rudder off the Philippines coast. Ten days later she was towed to anchor in Manila Bay. The thirteen Cuban and 2 Spanish seafarers who have been abandoned on this Spanish-flagged ship are still there! The crew have been left without electricity, lights, Wi-Fi, refrigeration, GPS, security and safety lights. They are running dangerously low on fuel, diesel, food, fresh water and medicines. They haven't been paid for 9 months! They wanted to go back home but, as is always the case with seafarers, they are not willing to renounce their right to get paid as they are breadwinners in their families. Crew have been sleeping on deck as there is no air conditioning, but storms recently forced them to take shelter in the dark below deck. Please pray that they will soon be rescued. When I heard of this terrible situation it made me think of how many Christians and churches seem to have a broken rudder because of the virus pandemic. Where is our voice? As Christians we have been given an assignment by our Lord Jesus – to tell others the Good News about the wonderful grace of God. Our rudders (tongues) are powerful in God's hand to steer men and women to faith (James 3:4-5). I hope that our own rudders are not silenced, but remain active in winning souls from the kingdom of satan to the Kingdom of Christ. "Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you." 1 Tim 4:16. Our SCFS colleagues in Amsterdam distribute beautiful ships in bottles with scriptures for seafarers. These days the ships seem more than ever to be in bottles of isolation and quarantine. Please pray for openings for us to proclaim the Good News on board again among people who might never hear the Gospel unless we bring it to them.



Celanova



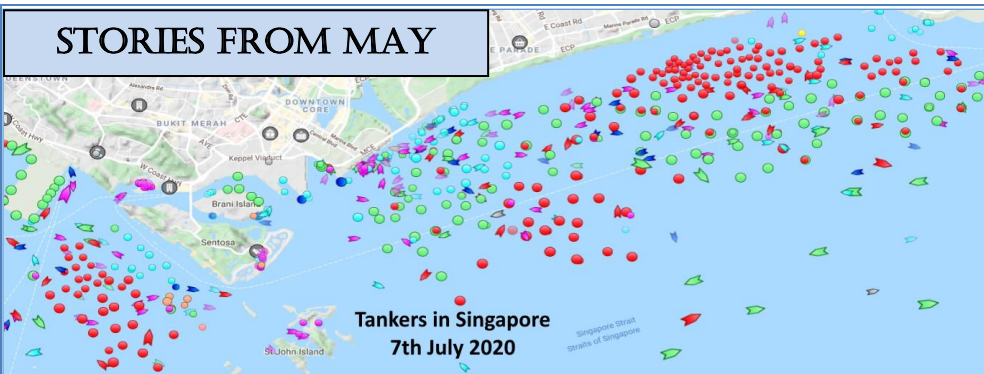
Greetings ! HET HAVENLICHT / S.C.F.S. Port-mission



Theo, our colleague in Amsterdam, says "I was able also to leave some literature for the crew and gave a bottle-ship to this ship's doctor. The Lord always leads us to the right people. **We have to go to the ships and reach out to the seafarers, in obedience to Him who called us. Don't let anyone hinder you! God is at work and so are we!"**

At the start of May I had a call on Facebook messenger from a cruise ship anchored off the Bahamas. One of my Indian friends is a senior officer on board. He said that many of the 1300 crew on his ship (and there are 20 such other ships anchored around them, and similar numbers in Singapore and Philippines and other places!) are getting depressed, lonely etc. Many have been quarantined in their cabins as a precautionary measure prior to repatriation. Thankfully many crew have already been repatriated (including my friend), but thousands are still stranded. You can see stranded cruise ships (blue dots) in [www.marinetraffic.com](http://www.marinetraffic.com) and tankers (red dots). Tragically some crew on cruise ships committed suicide. My friend asked me if we could make an encouraging video message to lift the spirits of the crew members. Here is one we made on YouTube: <https://bit.ly/SEAzoom> And another friend on a different cruise ship made this beautiful song in his cabin 'Princess Cruises for Christ': <https://bit.ly/PCforChrist> And a great message from my colleague Peter in SCFS Solent: [https://bit.ly/SCFS\\_Solent](https://bit.ly/SCFS_Solent) Thanks for praying for the seafarers who are stuck on board and those stuck at home. Ships depend on flights for crew changes, but these days since the virus planes are also grounded. "Please help me feed my family...I'm begging you!" is a request myself and my colleagues are hearing.

# STORIES FROM MAY



Tankers in Singapore  
7th July 2020

The bottom dropped out of the oil market. Consequently many tankers are also stranded and just waiting at anchor.

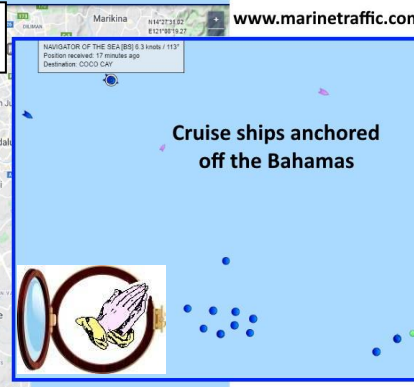
No passengers for cruise ships, but thousands of crew members stranded on board awaiting repatriation.

Message from my friend to me: "Dearest Colin I know you know how much comfort this will bring for all the crew on board. My heart warmed thanks to you & all the ministries across this blue wide world for coming together to deliver this super special message. Please convey my personal thanks to all. Love & be blessed by our lord Jesus Christ - Amen!"

The theme of Day of the Seafarer 25th June was going to be 'Our Seafaring Future', but it's now appropriately been changed to 'Seafarers Are **Key Workers**'.



Cruise ships in Manila Bay, Philippines



Cruise ships anchored off the Bahamas

www.marinetraffic.com



Left: Message from a tanker crew member **Neo** who leads the on-board fellowship group: "Brother, we are leaving now here from Georgia in black sea. And we are on our way to China. It will take us almost 30 days journey. Will also pass through the waters of Somalia (pirates). I always value your prayers..." "Continue to pray for the enlightenment of every crew onboard as they come and listen to hear and read the WORD of God in the bible..." "Will keep in touch always dear brother...though it's hard and difficult for us here as we don't have an internet when at sea...to connect with our love ones and friends..."

At the end of May I was given the 'all clear' by the Port to begin visiting the ships again. Of course, many ship companies, and even some terminals, still don't allow visitors because of the virus - so this is the next step. I was recently reminded of what a friend from Bhutan once told me "if you aim for the top of the tree you won't even get off the ground. You need to aim for the stars to climb the tree!" I think the same can apply for us port missionaries. If we aim to get invited to ships by the captain I think it's unlikely, rather we need to get clearance to approach the bottom of the gangways to pass a bag of gifts to the crew. Then some ships will allow us on board. We tell our supporters that 'ships are out of sight and out of mind', but now this applies to port missionaries! Please pray for more SCFS missionaries to get back on their respective docks. As Woody Allen said "90% of success is just showing up!" It's so important to be a presence in the port and to 'reclaim' territory.

18 Turkish crew transported fertiliser from Turkey to 2 ports in Ireland. Officers have 5 month contracts



We've been having weekly Zoom call Bible studies on 2 different container ships in Dublin Port with Jae. Please pray for these dear seafarers who Jae has been faithfully discipling for many months.

Right: It was during a Zoom call with other SCFS missionaries when I received a call from the ship's agent to bring sim cards to these Turkish crew. The sim cards have proved to be a real blessing in keeping doors open to the ships here, and building relationships with the agents. I see them as a kind of key. In fact when I was on board, because it takes some time for the sims to activate, it gave me just enough time to share a short Gospel presentation with them. They also appreciated the gifts, toiletries, teddies, Christian Turkish calendars, Bible and Jesus DVD in their language. Please pray for them and the seeds sown.



<https://bit.ly/SEACHURCH>

The Church on the Oceans at worship

If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter, please let me know by e-mailing: [colin@scfs.org](mailto:colin@scfs.org) Alternatively you can donate here. Many thanks: <https://bit.ly/helpscfs>

Tip for those who read our update on a computer: You can see the pictures more clearly if you **Zoom in** (click the button)

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Nurturing & caring for seafarers since 1846

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Thanks

Thanks for all your love, prayers and support

Colin