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Video Message of the Holy Father Francis to maritime personnel

The following is the text of the video message sent by the Holy Father Francis to maritime personnel:

Video Message of the Holy Father

Dear brothers and sisters,

These are difficult times for our world, for we have had to deal with the suffering caused by the coronavirus. Your work as maritime personnel and fishermen has thus become even more important, since it is providing our greater human family with food and other primary needs. For this, we are grateful to you. But also because we know the risks involved in your work.

In these past months, your lives and your work have seen significant changes; you have had to make, and are continuing to make, many sacrifices. Long periods spent aboard ships without being able to disembark, separation from families, friends and native countries, fear of infection... All these things are a heavy burden to bear, now more than ever.

I would like to say something to all of you. Know that you are not alone and that you are not forgotten. Your work at sea often keeps you apart from others, but you are close to me in my thoughts and prayers, and in those of your chaplains and the volunteers of *Stella Maris*. The Gospel itself reminds us of this, when it speaks to us of Jesus and his first disciples, who were fishermen.

Today I would like to offer you a message and a prayer of hope, comfort and consolation in the face of whatever hardships you have to endure. I would also offer a word of encouragement to all those who work with you in providing pastoral care for maritime personnel.

Make the Lord bless each of you, your work and your families, and may the Virgin Mary, Star of the Sea, protect

you always. I too give you my blessing and I keep you in my prayers. And I ask you, please, not to forget to pray for me. Thank you.
