

WALKING WITH NON-SKID SOULS

As Port Chaplain, I have to put on non-skid soles to find my parishioners. I find them aboard the many ships which come into Portsmouth harbor. Last month, at the Granite State Minerals Pier, I met the crew of the cargo ship Alexandria. The ship had been sailing about 12 days from Peru to Portsmouth with 33,000 tons of salt for our roads during the New Hampshire winter. I met Edwin, a crew member from the Philippines shortly after the ship docked. He asked me for a ride to Western Union to wire money home. As I drove, Edwin told me the bad news. His home had burned to the ground a few days ago. "There is nothing left," he said. "33 homes burned to the ground. I called my wife from the ship and she could not stop crying. I told her not to worry, that God would take care of us." My heart broke as I listened to his story. What do I do to help?

The next morning, I was on my way to the annual Jazz and The Church Conference in Stony Point, NY. Each year, we come from all parts of the country to listen to great jazz musicians who share their musical gifts. Jazz worship is what we do when we come together. One evening as we planned our service, I told the participants the story of Edwin



Rev. Dr. Nash Garabedian, Jr. (right) visiting with seafarers.

and the crew aboard the Alexandria. Everyone there had the same reaction. What could we do to help? We quickly discovered our evening offering had found the perfect home!

When I returned to Portsmouth I had \$300 in cash for Edwin and his family! Before I left for the conference, I called The Washington (NH) Congregational Church and asked them to pray for Edwin and the crew. I had two gifts when I boarded the ship that night; a card for Edwin signed by everyone in the Church, and the offering from our service. When I gave him the offering envelope, his eyes filled up with tears. "Thank you. Thank you," he said. He sat there, smiled and opened up the card, reading the names and shaking his head. I'll never forget the look on his face.

I meet people like Edwin every time I visit a ship. These hardworking seafarers bring us salt for our roads, gas for our cars, and oil which keeps us warm. It was a privilege to give something back to one of them.

Thank you for your support for our work at Seafarer's Friend which helps make these acts of kindness possible.



Portsmouth Salt Pile. Seafarers work upon the ships that bring salt for New Hampshire's winter roads