

PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE PASTORAL CARE OF MIGRANTS AND ITINERANT PEOPLE  
XXII WORLD CONGRESS OF THE APOSTLESHIP OF THE SEA

**BISHOP PROMOTERS:**  
**“SPREADING THE SEED OF A NEW APOSTOLATE”**

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The Bishop Promoter has become the one with the greatest responsibility in each country for the pastoral care of human mobility. He is in charge of locating, choosing and indicating the pastoral agents, in this case a Chaplain who will act as coordinator and guide for this apostolic service.

The main task of the Bishop Promoters, along with the directors whom they have chosen themselves, takes into consideration that this personnel should have the necessary characteristics and charisma to take care of the men and women of the sea. For as we all know, these groups belong to the groups of human mobility mentioned earlier, but they have some *sui generis* characteristics that deserve a different treatment. Therefore, the chaplains and pastoral agents that are chosen should have extensive knowledge in order to offer better support to these human groups. On the other hand, the bishops have the fundamental task to recognize the places, areas and spaces where these groups are located in order to build support establishments for seafarers.

In Latin America, the role of the Bishop Promoters is aimed at sowing, encouraging and fostering the formation of chaplains, religious and pastoral agents so that they will give continuity to the projects for the care of the people of the sea, which is the reason for being of all the Stella Maris. In this same sense, they are also responsible for making it easier to hold meetings, congresses, seminars and courses with the idea of offering the formation needed for all the personnel related to the mission.

Their task, however, does not end here. In their role of promoters, they have to become multipliers of information by aiding the dissemination of printed and audio visual material that will always be very stimulating and help attract volunteers and hands to support this mission.

The role of the Bishop Promoters is also important with regard to relations with political, professional, labor union and other institutions,. They should act as a connecting bridge in order to obtain the unlimited support of these institutions, which will surely aid the normal development and growth of the pastoral care of the sea in every city-port where a Stella Maris Center is located.

Once this is all under control, the next step is the suitable location of the centers. For this the bishops need to have a broad vision and the support of their directors for the choice, location and adaptation of the areas that will be destined to make up the centers. In the cases where this step has already been taken, the work has to be coordinated by looking after what is being done, correcting any errors, improving conditions, being creative, and visualizing every day the best projection of these centers.

When we speak about the guidance which the Bishop Promoters have to give to the groups connected with the apostleship of the sea, it should be clear that they are ones who set the guidelines and endeavor through all means to give continuity to the projects and tasks that are carried out. In this regard, we wish to combat what we consider one of the great shortcomings or weaknesses of this apostolate because if continuity is not given to the directors, agents or chaplains in one same project, then the project runs the risk of failing. Therefore, the Bishops need to understand this clearly, and when they choose, prepare and train personnel for a given center with specific characteristics, they should allow these groups to finish their term. In this way, we will have hospitality centers for seafarers with solid bases that will last in time.