

Sea Sunday 9th July 2023

A Homily based on The Director-General, Rev'd Canon Andrew Wright's experiences, and read by guest Clergy, the Rev'd John Smith.

We in Fremantle have met Andrew Wright on many occasions, most recently when he came to a special dinner to welcome him just hours after he had stepped off the plane from London and was about to commence a whirlwind tour of Australia. He did a great job of keeping awake at dinner that evening.

In his recent blog, Andrew told of taking part in the Adventure Race in Japan and having his 65th birthday during the event: 64 teams, almost 200 competitors, probably the largest and most complex event in history of Mission to Seafarers. It was groundbreaking for Japanese maritime, which is such a vital part of global shipping, and a rip-roaring success in both terms of money raised for our front-line work and in terms of building partnerships. Andrew spoke of toiling up the slopes, hauling themselves up, falling frequently, and subsequently, reflected on the parallels of life.

“There are times in all our lives when it feels like we are going up impossibly steep and painful slopes in terrible weather, sometimes without much light and carrying heavy weights. We can only put one foot in front of the other. Thankfully there are times when we also reached the top of one summit and suddenly see life from a new perspective, when all is suddenly fresh and hopeful. We rest our tired limbs for a while. So, it is often for seafarers and their families. Especially in these last years, when crew have to travel the slopes without friends and family on hand. We were well supported on this challenge. Guidance was given, help was at hand, rest stations provided food and drink, and most importantly we had the companionship of our teammates. That is what the Mission to Seafarers tries to do around the world; to ensure seafarers and their families have the support and friendship, the rest stops and nourishment and the guidance and care that can help them along the way and hopefully support them in reaching easier ground.”

Thank you to Andrew Wright. We always appreciate you visiting us here in Fremantle and thank you for this inspiration on this Sea Sunday.

In Memory of Ragai Wanis, prayers and reflections on Sea Sunday 2023.

Ragai died on 16th May 2023 and these words are taken from a tribute at his funeral on 2nd July by Gisela Gmeinder:

“A sad and fond farewell to a friend of decades, a gifted artist with a searching and creative mind. Ragai, well-travelled and educated, never tired of stimulating conversations and challenging inquiries with others and of his own mind. He had many conversations with God and of late asked him to take him home. His wish has now been fulfilled”. Farewell Ragai.

Derek also gave a tribute on Sea Sunday, mentioning Ragai's long-time dedicated volunteer work and affinity with the Fremantle Flying Angel Club. He talked about Ragai's love of photography and artwork and then his frailty on the last occasions he had visited but how he had always enjoyed dropping in and visiting. It was sad to recall how that Ragai had said he would soon be “going home”. Farewell, Ragai.

