

The Baltimore International Seafarers' Center

A Good Listener for 17 Years



The Right Rev. Eugene Taylor Sutton, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Baltimore, and Allene Taylor, Vice President of the Baltimore International Seafarers' Center Board and an active and long time volunteer, discuss the importance of the ministry of visiting with, and listening to, the seafarers who arrive in the Port of Baltimore.

Allene has been a volunteer for 17 years of the Center's 20 year history. During their discussion, the Bishop relates Allene's service to the call from Jesus to ".welcome the stranger."

When Allene retired, she prayed that God would lead her as she looked for an opportunity to volunteer. She soon attended an Episcopal convention as a visitor and found a booth with t-shirts with the Baltimore International Seafarers' Center's emblem. She struck up a conversation with the Center's founder, Ed Munro, who invited her to join him in visiting seafarers who were docked at the Dundalk Marine Terminal. She learned a lot from that visit and soon was on her way learning how to serve as a volunteer for the Center. In listening to God, she learned to listen to others.

Over the 17 years that Allene has visited the ships in the Port of Baltimore, she has heard many stories which have touched her. Allene recounted one time when a Philippine ship captain expressed how appreciative he was to have someone listen to him, because as he said, on board, the Captain is expected to listen to his crew, but he in turn does not have anyone with whom he can share his concerns.

During their meeting, the Bishop explained why the diocese is so willing to support the Center in its work. Bishop Sutton relayed Jesus' words: "I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink; I was a stranger and you welcomed me." Allene and the volunteers of the Center have welcomed many strangers to the Port of Baltimore.

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