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Message of the Holy Father to participants in the 11th World Conference of the International Christian Maritime Association (Kaohsiung, Taiwan, 21 to 25 October 2019)

The following is the Message sent by the Holy Father on the occasion of the inauguration of the Eleventh World Conference of the *International Christian Maritime Association*, on the fiftieth anniversary of its founding, taking place in Kaohsiung, Taiwan from 21 to 25 October 2019, on the theme “50 years of working together for seafarers, fishers and their families”:

Message of the Holy Father

I offer greetings of peace and goodness to all of you, dear Delegates of the International Christian Maritime Association.

You have gathered at Kaohsiung, Taiwan, for your Eleventh World Conference, during which you commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of your praiseworthy Association. This anniversary allows me an opportunity to encourage you to persevere, with renewed ecumenical spirit, in your service to seafarers and maritime personnel.

In these days of encounter and reflection, I am confident that you will identify increasingly effective ways of assisting sailors, fishers and their families. In this regard, the 1997 Apostolic Letter *Stella Maris* remains most timely. There, my predecessor Saint John Paul II set forth basic principles for the pastoral care of seafarers, their families and all those who travel by sea, and urged that every effort be made to see that they are “provided abundantly with whatever is required to lead holy lives” (II § 2).

I renew that invitation to all of you who represent different Christian traditions. May you help seafarers and maritime personnel to know Jesus Christ and to live in accordance with his teachings, in respect and in mutual acceptance.

I encourage you to surmount whatever difficulties you may encounter in your mission and to promote with

conviction the spirit of ecumenism. I accompany you with my prayers and my blessing, which I readily invoke upon you, upon your deliberations in these days, and upon all those entrusted to your pastoral service.
