



KRB Update #2213 – Easter on the Ship

Keith R. Brinkman with Mercy Ships

28 March 2016

“He is not here, for HE HAS RISEN just as he said would happen” Matthew 28:6

Easter is *the* Christian holiday celebrated here on board the ship and I would like to share with you about Easter in this update. Our Chaplaincy

department’s focus is to provide and facilitate pastoral care for all crew. They do an amazing job year around and in particular at this season for meaningful opportunities especially considering our crew come from around 40 different nations and even more different Christian denominations. Prior to Holy Week, Ash Wednesday service and the Sundays of Lent took place. Then for Holy Week starting with Palm Sunday with story of Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem, the international lounge was adorned with palm branches and sounds of Hosanna. Often during the week, one of the Easter-themed movies is shown. The children from our Academy provided a Creative Arts Presentation with music, readings, dance, video clips, and playing instruments – their theme this year was ‘*Every Blessing You Pour Out...*’ as they praised God through the skills and talents He blessed them with – I was amazed at all the talent. Maundy Thursday included a few options from the stations of the cross and communion in an Upper Room Experience, Foot Washing out on deck 7, and the main lounge set up as a Garden of Gethsemane for quiet prayer, reflection and waiting on the Lord. I pondered on if I was in Jerusalem during that week 2,000 years ago, where I would be, what I would be thinking, feeling, sensing. Then thoughts about if I was Simon just coming into the city with my sons and being demanded to carry the cross for Jesus. Good Friday started with a somber morning service reflected on Jesus’ death – a wooden cross was in the room and you could write on a small piece of paper and hammer it in with a nail. In the evening on the dock, we showed the Jesus Film in the Malagasy language for the children for a girl’s orphanage who were staying with us. Saturday was quiet – though we continued with our regular visits to two of our Mercy Ministries partners – sharing the Easter story with the children and teens at a local orphanage, Enfants de Soleil (see photo as we worked on the craft) and with Love n’ Care for the homeless outreach.

Sunday started with joy and jubilation early with a sunrise service on the dock with songs of praise including ‘*Forever He is glorified! Forever He is lifted high! Forever He is risen: He is alive!*’, and *Because He Lives* a song which I remember from Kingsway Christian Church back in Avon, Indiana and scripture readings from the Gospels. As a community of faith, we gathered in a bright International Lounge for the Easter Celebration Service with our choir sharing, scripture readings, the call to worship that dates back to the early years of Mercy Ships with the *m/v Anastasis* (Greek for Resurrection) in the late 70’s and early 80’s with *Christos Anesti, Alithos Anesti, He is risen!*, a time of celebration of the Lord’s supper and placing fresh flowers in the holes on the cross. Then, I joined with others for a short service in the hospital ward led by Clementine for our patients and caregivers – sharing the importance of Easter, worship in Malagasy and some testimonies. Then together, we joined the second seating for the biggest meal of the year, the Easter brunch.



A few short patient updates – Sitraka and Mosolo have both returned home to their villages. Berthelin continues to do well walking without the assistance of the braces, he is getting stronger and looking forward to the two day small boat journey to take him home. Another patient, Jimmy, is doing good and so overjoyed to be without pain; he too will be discharged soon. Delon returned for a checkup and everything is fine and he is returning to his family in the south. Stani Junior returned for this third surgery and shared the good news that he has married and has a newborn daughter and is overjoyed to be a father. Mohamed from Toliara is coming this week for his maxillofacial surgery.