

# Moving on

TO me the last year seemed to pass very quickly and we are now into a New Year which for many of us, including myself, brings with it a fresh beginning

I have often wondered how many ships seafarers serve on during their time at sea. Some stay with the same shipping line or ship for many years but, even so, very often the routes change and they never go back to the same port.

In the five years that I have served in Felixstowe, I have met many seafarers – some only once, but others many times, as their ships return to the port on a regular basis.

Over those years I have seen crew going on leave looking very happy and excited and then have seen them on their return, looking a little

less happy, but trying to make the best of it as they face a new contract of nine months or longer. It is often when they are returning to work that they talk most about the happy times they had with their family, or sometimes the not so happy times.

For seafarers moving from one ship to another, the return to work can be difficult as it's likely they won't know anyone on board. But in my experience of seafarers, they tend to be very adaptable, forming new relationships and becoming familiar with different routines very quickly.

And now it is my time to change "ship", or at least job and location. I have enjoyed my time as port chaplain in Felixstowe, Ipswich, Mistley and Harwich but, as with seafarers, I too will need to form

new relationships and adapt to different routines.

In my new post I will be covering the Thames and Medway and the port of Tilbury, where I will look forward to meeting some new and some old friends. I know it will not be easy finding my way to different locations and becoming familiar with new port layouts. It is also a larger area to cover than I had before. However, we are all set these challenges in life and I know that with God's help I will overcome these difficulties.

When Jesus began his public ministry, he repeatedly asked people to turn to God because the kingdom of heaven was near (Matthew 4:17) and he also began to gather his disciples together – 12 full-time followers some of whom were fishermen. They left everything behind to follow him.

Whoever we are, as we move around we don't have

to change our ways or act differently. Those of us who are Christians have to be wary of any temptations we find out in the world. There will always be people who will try to change our beliefs and our faith and urge us to follow them in theirs. But we must not allow them to distract us or turn us away from our faith. Jesus asks us to turn to him, and keeping true to our faith is one way we can resist such temptations. It may not be easy, but it is what we must do.

Jesus asked his disciples if they would follow him and give up every thing, which was truly a big ask, and it can't have been easy. Indeed, discipleship is never easy, but when God asks us to join him, he demands that we lay aside all our ideas and ways that go against his way of love and service in order to follow him in faith, trust and obedience wherever he may lead us.