

AMAZING GRACE- how the hymn began!

John Newton (1725-1807) began his public life as a tough slave trader and for many years he organized the shipment of slaves from the Caribbean to England. In 1748 while returning to England the slave boat that he was on was caught in an almighty storm. This storm prompted John Newton to pray for God's protection so he made a *deal* with God and it was if God saved the ship from being destroyed, he would become God's slave for the rest of his life.

The ship that Newton was on somehow was saved so he kept his word. In time he became an advocate for abolishing the slave trade in England then in 1764 he became an Anglican priest. Vividly remembering his ordeal many years ago in the mid-Atlantic John Newton wrote perhaps one of the greatest ever Christian hymns- *Amazing Grace*. Some of the memorable words of this hymn include "how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me, I once was lost but now am found, I was blind but now I see."

There are many *storms* that come to us in this world they can be *physical* that effect our health, *emotional* that effect our mental wellbeing, *relationally* that shape how we relate with others and of course establishing and then maintaining our faith in God. The challenge before us all amidst our particular life storms is to never underestimate the power of God's *Amazing Grace!* Fr Martin R Maunsell