

Stella Maris App Privacy Policy

Welcome to the Stella Maris mobile app! We value your privacy and want to be clear about how we handle your information. This Privacy Policy explains what data we collect (if any), why we collect it, how we use it, and how we protect it. We've written it in a plain and friendly tone so it's easy to understand. By using the Stella Maris app (published by the Apostleship of the Sea, USA), you agree to the practices described in this policy. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us using the information in the **Contact Us** section below.

Information We Collect and Why

We only collect information that is necessary to provide and improve our services to you. Below is what we collect and why:

- **Information You Provide (Name, Email & Messages):** If you choose to reach out through our app's contact form or submit a prayer request, you may provide your name, email address, and the content of your message or prayer intention. We collect this information **only** when you voluntarily enter it. **Why we collect it:** We use your name and email to communicate with you and respond to your inquiries or prayer requests. The content of your message helps us understand your needs or intentions so we can address them (for example, praying for your specific request or answering your question). We do **not** use this information for any other purpose – we won't use it for marketing, and we will never sell it.
- **Usage Data (Analytics):** When you use the app, we automatically collect general usage information through Google Analytics. This may include data such as which app screens or features you use, how often you use the app, and other similar statistics. It may also include basic device information like your device model, operating system version, and an anonymous ID. **Why we collect it:** We use this data to understand how people are using Stella Maris so we can make the app better. For example, knowing which features are most popular helps us improve those features or add new ones that matter to you. This usage data is collected in an **anonymous, aggregate form** – it does not identify you personally, but it gives us insights into overall app performance and usage patterns.
- **Crash Reports (Technical Data):** If the app ever crashes or has an error, we receive an automatic crash report (through a crash reporting service) that tells us what went wrong. This report includes technical details like the type of device you're using, your app version, and details of the error that occurred. **Why we collect it:** These reports help us quickly diagnose and fix issues to make the app more stable. Crash reports do **not** include personal information like your name or email – they are solely about the app's

technical performance.

In summary, any personal information (like your name or email) is only collected when you actively provide it, and we use it only to communicate with you. Other data (usage and crash data) is collected automatically to help us improve your app experience, and this data does not personally identify you.

Use of Third-Party Services (Analytics & Crash Reporting)

To operate the app and provide the best experience, we rely on a couple of trusted third-party services:

- **Google Analytics:** We use Google Analytics to gather usage data about the app. Google Analytics may use unique identifiers or cookies (for example, a unique ID for your device) to analyze how you use the app – such as which pages you visit and how long you spend in the app. This information is helpful for us to see what's working well and what might need improvement. The data collected by Google Analytics is generally aggregated and anonymized. We do not receive your personal details from Google Analytics, only statistics and trends. (Please note that Google may have access to some of this usage information for analytics purposes; their use of the data is governed by Google's own privacy policy.)
- **Crash Reporting Service:** We use a third-party crash reporting service (for example, Google Firebase Crashlytics or a similar tool) to automatically send us crash reports if the app fails. This service runs in the background of the app and, when a crash happens, it sends us technical information about the incident. This includes data like error logs, the phone model, OS version, and the time of the crash. The crash reporting service helps us pinpoint the cause of a crash so we can fix it fast. No personally identifiable information (like your name, email, or account data) is included in these crash reports – it's purely technical info. The third-party service that provides these crash reports is obligated to handle the data securely and only use it to provide crash diagnostics to us.

Important: We want to highlight that these third-party services (Google Analytics and the crash reporting tool) are used solely to improve the app and fix issues. They are common tools many apps use. We do not share any additional personal information with these services beyond what is needed for their functionality. However, these services have their own privacy practices. Google, for instance, may collect or receive certain technical data for analytics and crash reporting; you can refer to Google's privacy policy for more details on how they handle that information. We choose reputable third-party providers and trust them to keep your data secure and use it only for the intended purposes.

How We Use Your Information

We use the information we collect for the purposes described above and **no more**. In particular:

- **To Communicate with You:** If you contacted us or requested a prayer via the app (providing your name and email), we use that information to respond to you. For example, we might send you an email to answer your question, acknowledge your prayer request, or follow up on feedback you gave us. We will not use your email to send you any unrelated newsletters or promotions unless you specifically opt-in to such communications.
- **To Provide and Improve the App:** We use usage data and crash reports to maintain and improve the Stella Maris app. This helps us troubleshoot problems (like fixing a bug after a crash report) and make informed decisions about new features or improvements (based on what parts of the app are most used or where users might be encountering difficulties). Our goal is to make the app as useful, reliable, and user-friendly as possible for you and all our users.
- **No Marketing or Advertising Use:** We do **not** use your personal information for advertising purposes, and we do not show third-party ads in the app that would use your data. We also do not sell or rent any information about you. The data you provide is used only to support you and the app's functionality, in line with the mission of Apostleship of the Sea, USA.

In short, any information you give us is used to serve you (for example, responding to a request), and any information we collect automatically is used to make the app better for everyone. We do not use your data in any invasive way.

Sharing of Your Information

We treat your personal information with care and confidentiality. In general, **we do not share your personal data with anyone outside of the Apostleship of the Sea, USA** except in a few specific situations:

- **Within our Organization:** Your information (like a prayer request or question) may be shared internally with authorized staff or volunteers of Apostleship of the Sea, USA who need it to respond to your request or maintain the app. For example, if you submit a prayer intention, it might be shared with the appropriate chaplain or prayer team, but it will **not** be publicly posted or shared beyond those who need to know in order to fulfill your request.
- **Third-Party Service Providers:** As mentioned, we use services like Google Analytics and crash reporting tools to help run the app. These service providers may process

certain data (usage stats or crash info) on our behalf. We only share information with these providers as needed for them to perform their functions, and they are **not allowed to use it for anything else**. We have agreements or terms in place with such providers to ensure your data is protected. For example, Google Analytics will get usage information to provide us analytics reports, but Google does not get your name or email from our app.

- **Legal Obligations:** We would only disclose your information outside of our organization if required to do so by law or legal process. For instance, if a law enforcement agency or court legally requires us to provide certain data, we might have to comply after verifying the request. This is a rare situation and has never happened to us, but we include this just to cover those extreme cases.
- **Protection of Rights and Safety:** Similarly, if necessary, we may share information to enforce our rights, protect our property, or ensure the safety of our users or others. For example, if someone were misusing the app in a way that threatens others, we might provide information to help stop that. (Again, this is highly unlikely and just a precaution.)

What We Don't do:** We do **not** sell your personal information to anyone. We do not share your information with third-party marketers or advertisers. We do not disclose any names, emails, or personal messages you provide to any outside organization for their independent use. Your trust is important to us, and we intend to keep your information private and use it only for the reasons you gave it to us.

Data Security: How We Protect Your Information

We are committed to protecting your data and have put reasonable security measures in place to safeguard the information you share with us. Here are some of the steps we take:

- **Secure Transmission:** The Stella Maris app communicates with our servers or email systems over encrypted connections (for example, we use HTTPS/TLS protocols). This means that when you submit a contact form or prayer request through the app, the information is encrypted in transit so that no one can eavesdrop on it as it travels over the internet.
- **Secure Storage:** Information that you provide (like your name, email, and messages) is stored in secure systems. We use trusted platforms and databases to keep data safe, and we ensure that these systems have safeguards against unauthorized access. For instance, if your prayer request or contact form is stored in a database or sent to our email, those are protected by passwords and other security features. Similarly, any analytics or crash data is stored by our third-party providers in secure cloud environments.

- **Limited Access:** Within Apostleship of the Sea, USA, your information is only accessible to people who need it to perform their duties (for example, responding to your message or maintaining the app). Our team members and volunteers are informed about the importance of confidentiality and privacy. We do not allow everyone in our organization to access personal data—only authorized personnel with a valid reason can do so.
- **Preventive Practices:** We regularly update our app and systems to apply security patches and improvements. By keeping our software up-to-date, we reduce the risk of vulnerabilities. We also monitor for any suspicious activity on our systems. If we ever detected a security issue, we would act promptly to address it.

While we do our best to protect your information, it's important to note that **no method of transmitting or storing data is 100% secure**. The internet by its nature can never be completely risk-free. However, we strive to use industry best practices and take all reasonable precautions to protect your personal data. If there is ever a security breach that affects your personal information, we will inform you as required by applicable laws and work to remedy the situation.

Data Retention: How Long We Keep Your Information

We keep your personal information only for as long as it's needed to fulfill the purposes we collected it for, or as required by law. Here's what that means in practice:

- If you submit a contact form or prayer request, we will retain the information you provided (like your name, email, and message) for as long as necessary to respond to you and follow up on your request. For example, we might keep your email on file until we're sure your inquiry or prayer request has been fully addressed. We may also keep a record of our communication (e.g. your request and our response) for a short period in case you reach out again or for our administrative records.
- We do **not** keep personal information longer than needed. If you ask us to delete your information (see **Your Choices** below), or if we no longer need it, we will remove it from our systems securely.
- Anonymous data collected through Google Analytics and crash reports may be stored indefinitely in an aggregated form (for example, overall app usage statistics or crash trends over time) since it doesn't identify you personally. This helps us analyze long-term performance of the app. However, this data remains non-personal.

In summary, we aim to not hold onto your personal data indefinitely. We regularly review what information we have, and if it's no longer necessary, we safely delete or anonymize it.

Your Choices and Rights

We believe you should have control over your personal information. Here are the choices and rights you have regarding your data in the Stella Maris app:

- **Voluntary Information Sharing:** Using the Stella Maris app generally does **not** require you to provide personal information. You can read prayers, reflections, and browse content without giving us your name or email. Providing your name and email (for example, in a contact form or prayer request) is completely optional and based on your choice. If you're not comfortable sharing that info, you can choose not to fill out those forms – you will still be able to use other features of the app.
- **Accessing Your Information:** If you have ever provided us with personal information and you want to know what information we have, you have the right to ask. For example, you can contact us to inquire if we received your contact form or what details we have on record for you (likely just the information you provided to us). We will be happy to tell you what data of yours we have, if any.
- **Correcting or Updating Information:** If you think the information you gave us is incorrect or needs to be updated (for instance, you want to provide a different email address or correct your name spelling), you can let us know. We will update our records accordingly so we have the right details.
- **Deleting Your Information:** You have the right to ask us to delete the personal information you've given us. If you previously sent a prayer request or message and you want us to remove your name, email, and message from our system, just contact us and we will delete it. For example, if you no longer want us to keep your email on file after we've responded, we can remove it from our contact list or database. Please note that if you have asked for prayers, deleting your request means we might not keep a record of it going forward, but we will respect your wish and remove your data as far as we are able.
- **Opting Out of Communications:** We do not send any regular newsletters or marketing emails through the app unless you explicitly sign up for them elsewhere. However, if we ever were to send you an email because you reached out to us, and you prefer not to be contacted again, just let us know. We will not send you any further communications beyond what's necessary to fulfill your request. Rest assured, we won't spam you or push unwanted messages.
- **Device/Analytics Opt-Out:** While we don't have a specific toggle in the app to disable analytics or crash reporting (since they don't collect personal info), you can typically control some privacy settings at the device level. For instance, on Android or iOS, you might have settings to limit ad tracking or reset your advertising ID, which can reduce the amount of analytics data collected across apps. This is entirely optional; keep in mind

that the analytics data we collect is anonymous and used only to improve the app.

To exercise any of these rights or choices, simply reach out to us (see the **Contact Us** section below). We will do our best to accommodate your request promptly and kindly. Our goal is to make sure you feel comfortable and in control of your data.

Children's Privacy

Stella Maris is a general audience app intended to support seafarers, fishers, and their families with spiritual resources. It is not specifically directed at children under the age of 13. We do not knowingly collect personal information from children under 13 years old. If you are under 13, please do not submit any personal information (such as your name or email) through the app. If we discover that we have inadvertently collected personal data from a child under 13, we will delete that information as soon as possible.

If you are a parent or guardian and you believe your child under 13 may have provided personal information to us through the app, please contact us immediately (see below for how to contact us). We will promptly delete the child's information from our records and take any other necessary steps to protect the child's privacy.

Contact Us

We at Apostleship of the Sea, USA (Stella Maris) are here to answer any questions or concerns you might have about this Privacy Policy or the way we handle your data. Please don't hesitate to reach out – we're happy to help and hear from you. You can contact us in the following ways:

- **Email:** doreen@aosusa.org – This is the official contact email for Apostleship of the Sea, USA. Feel free to send us an email regarding any privacy questions or requests, and we will respond as soon as we can.
- **Mailing Address:** *Apostleship of the Sea of the United States of America, 1500 Jefferson Drive, Port Arthur, TX 77642-0646, USA.* You can send us mail at this address. If you write to us with a privacy inquiry, please include a way to contact you (like an email or phone number) so we can respond.
- **Phone:** 409-985-4545. You are welcome to call us during our business hours. Let us know that your call is about a privacy concern with the Stella Maris app, and we will direct you to the right person who can assist.

Whether you have a question about what data we have, want to update or delete your information, or simply need clarification on something in this policy, we encourage you to contact

us. Your privacy and peace of mind are very important to us, and we will do our best to address any issues.

Changes to This Privacy Policy

From time to time, we may update or make changes to this Privacy Policy. This could be because we add new features to the app, or because laws and regulations change, or simply to improve clarity. When we update the policy, we will revise the "Last updated" date at the end of this section. If there are significant changes in how we handle your data, we will do our best to notify you – for example, by posting a notice within the app or on our website, or by other reasonable means.

We encourage you to review this Privacy Policy periodically to stay informed about how we are protecting your information. Your continued use of the Stella Maris app after any changes to this policy will signify your acceptance of the updated terms.

Last updated: August 6, 2025