

*Begin a great Occoquan boating season with the*

# Blessing of the Fleet

**May 10, 2003      11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.**

**Bring your boat and crew to share in this time-honored seafaring tradition...**

**! dedicated to boating safety**

**! celebrating the new boating season**

Plan now to “parade dress” your boat with festive flags and colors. Invite family and friends to witness a chaplain’s solemn invocation of blessing and safe cruising for the year ahead **for your boat and crew**.

This simple ceremony harks back to ancient times when fishermen and other seafarers yearned for good fortune and safety at sea—with priests invoking a blessing upon each vessel as it departed for sea.

Years ago, the Occoquan community sponsored an annual Blessing of the Fleet, and in 1999 the tradition was re-instituted by the yacht clubs of the Occoquan and the Occoquan River Maritime Association.



## **How does it work?**

The Fairfax County fire boat will lead a procession of boats outbound from Prince William Marina and passing the chaplain’s station vessel moored at the Belmont Bay Harbor Marina fuel dock. Boats will continue outbound for a day of cruising as desired or, upon safely clearing the area, may return to their respective marinas. The procession will include a host vessel with local dignitaries and media representatives embarked.

A detailed float plan and Notice to Mariners will be posted at local marinas and will be distributed through yacht club newsletters and Internet websites.

## **Plan now to take part!**

The Blessing of the Fleet—an Occoquan tradition—is sponsored and coordinated by the Occoquan River Maritime Association (ORMA) and its member organizations, with support from the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary and Fairfax and Prince William County public safety agencies.

**Questions? Contact ORMA Coordinator Chris Webster, [WebsterCw@msn.com](mailto:WebsterCw@msn.com).**