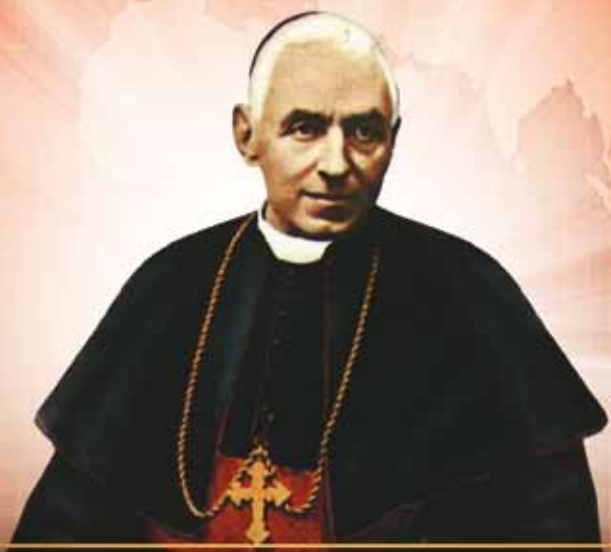




THE WORLD IS MY HOMELAND

JOHN BAPTIST
SCALABRINI

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Founder of the
Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of
St. Charles Borromeo - Scalabrinians (MSCS)
and the Missionary Fathers and Brothers
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INTRODUCTION

This short biography of John Baptist Scalabrini is written to make known his life. He is the founder of the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo, Scalabrinians (MSCS) and the Missionaries of St. Charles, Scalabrinians (cs) or as Carlistas Sisters and Fathers.

Blessed John Baptist Scalabrini was a bishop with untiring love beyond his diocese. He was a man for the people. He had an attentive look, noble heart, solidarity spirit and a heart full of love and compassion towards others. The world was his homeland.

When he witnessed how his own people were leaving to migrate to the Americas, he invited priests, sisters, brothers and lay persons to accompany the migrants in their journey to other countries who sought for a better future.

The life of John Baptist Scalabrini was marked by his strong personality, leadership and action. Nevertheless, he was a man with a spirit of faith, prayer and ardent zeal to the migrants.

His deep love for the migrants and knowledge of migration reality paved way for us to be the precursors in the phenomenon of human mobility.

Scalabrini's dynamic being and action was fruit of the Spirit of God that allowed to accompany all the missionaries and lay people who dedicate themselves to the migrants, so that "... they might have live and have it more abundantly "(Jn 10, 10).



The texts of this booklet have been prepared in a way that Scalabrini is telling us his own story. It's a different way of presenting the life and work of a special person.

As you read along, we hope that this will help you to be sensitive, generous and welcoming to the migrants that will allow you to experience the joy of commitment of a citizen and a Christian for the needy.

I MY STORY

1. My birth

I was born in a small town of northern Italy, Fino Mornasco on July 8, 1839. On that day, there were lots of visitors, friends and families who came to rejoice my birth. There was also a festivity in our parish since I was baptized on that same day I was born.

My father, Luis Scalabrini, owned a bar and a store in the town square, a business that could support a large family.



Fino Mornasco, birthplace of John the Baptist Scalabrini

2. My family

We were eight children in the family, five boys and three girls, a large family indeed with big expenses. Life was frugal then but despite of economic difficulties we were a happy. We lived in the love and grace of the Lord as my parents, Luis and Colomba, were deeply Christian. They had faith and hope in God.

The religious and social values in my family were growing that helped increase my faith and my love for God. Perhaps, this was how my priestly vocation was born. I learned from my mother to love the Eucharist, our Jesus Crucified and the Virgin Mary.

I had two elder brothers, Anthony and Joseph, and two younger ones, Peter and Angel. My three sisters were Mary Magdalene, Louise and Josephine. Like most of the women in my hometown, they got married and had children. Two of the children of Mary Magdalene became priests.

The painful experience of migration started in my family. My brother Anthony became a merchant. Joseph migrated but died in a shipwreck off the coast of Peru. Peter also left Italy and settled in Argentina. He did very well and was dedicated in teaching and scientific research. He held various positions and received the chair of natural sciences at the University of Buenos Aires. Angel, on the other hand, studied Philosophy and worked at the Ministry of Education. He became Inspector General of the Italian schools abroad. He also helped me broaden my knowledge about migration.

3. My childhood

I started my primary education in the school of Fino Mornasco. To study high school, my parents sent me to a school 9 km away from home. Because of the distance, I lived at the home of a family friend during the week and went home on Saturdays.

By then, I met with my friends and we played. I told them the interesting things I was taught and all the things I saw in the city. I also liked to tell them stories of the Bible which I had learned.

At home, I took the opportunity to share everything that had happened to me during the week in Como. That was my life routine until I finished high school. When I turned 18 years old, I told my family and teachers my desire to become a priest. They have supported me and approved my decision.

I entered the seminary in Como in 1857. The course lasted six years and was ordained priest in 1863 at the age 23.

4. My friends

In my childhood, I had many friends and most of them have been with me all my life. In particular, Louise Guanella, founder of the Congregation of the Servants of Charity which later provided spiritual and religious assistance to the migrants in the United States.

Another great friend of mine was Fr. Seraphim Balestra. He devoted himself to the education of the deaf and invented a phonic method to communicate with them. I learned this method which allowed me to establish an institute for the deaf and dumb. In the institute, I worked and educated them.

Also, the abbot and geologist Anthony Stoppani was my friend. He had modern ideas and advocated for a Catholicism that was more open during that time. So, I had to come out to his defense.



As a youth, Scalabrini felt the call to evangelize.

There was another person that accompanied my life story, he was Jeremiah Bonomelli. I met him when I was the rector of the seminary where he came to give spiritual guidance once a week.

5. My studies

In the seminary, I first studied Philosophy and then Theology. I also loved to learn different languages and became fluent in Latin, Greek and Hebrew. I studied French, German and a little bit of English. Later, I studied Portuguese so that I could communicate to our migrants.

6. As a priest: The brothers were waiting for me

I was ordained priest on May 30, 1863 and wanted to become a missionary to preach the gospel in distant lands. However, my bishop did not agree with me and said: “Your Indies is Italy.” Then, he sent me back to the seminary as an assistant dean and professor of history and Greek.

I worked there for seven years and during the holidays, I helped the parishes in the mountain regions. This experience allowed me to accompany the many movements of our people who migrated to the other countries in Europe.

During the summer of 1867, a cholera epidemic swept through the region. I had to take care of the sick until they were cured. For me, it was an extraordinary grace of God to help people in a difficult situation. I was surprised when the Italian government honored me for my work during the epidemic. I had done nothing more than many others but to care for the needy.

When the epidemic ended, the bishop appointed me as rector of the seminary where I stayed three more years.



Scalabrini considered the work he had done in 1867 for those who were affected by the cholera epidemic that struck the region of Como as “an extraordinary grace of God”.

6.1 As a parish priest: My people was also waiting for me

In 1870, I was appointed parish priest at St. Bartholomew in Como. I had enormous tasks to be done, primarily because of the great poverty among the population. Unemployment was high and therefore less economic power for the people.

Furthermore, there was a vast necessity in the spiritual life of the faithful, in catechesis and in the formation of the priests.

I started to respond to the needs and built a nursery for 200 children. I trusted it to my sister, Louise. Then I built a training center for the youth, an institute for the deaf and at the same time promoted the work of St. Vincent de Paul for the elderly and the sick. To support all these workers, I established a Mutual Relief Society.

Likewise, I took time for the formation of my parishioners. I taught the Word of God at all times. In 1872, I was invited to give lectures about the I Vatican Council (which had ended in 1870) at the Cathedral of Como. These conferences were published the following year in Italian, French and German.

In 1876, Pope Pius IX appointed me bishop of Piacenza and Don Bosco as bishop of Pavia.



May 30, 1863: Priestly ordination of John Baptist Scalabrini.



The missionary vocation of Scalabrini was not in vain by the bishop's response: "Your Indies is Italy."

7. As a bishop

My ordination as a bishop was held last December 30, 1876. On that same day, I sent a letter to be read to all the churches of the Diocese of Piacenza. In this letter, I truly expressed my point of view in embracing this responsibility:

“I was first sent for the poor whose life was miserable, in pain and desolation. I will be with them, in their suffering, so that that I can help and evangelize the poor who are rich in faith. They were chosen by the Lord as the first heirs of the promised kingdom of God whom they loved.

I will endure any fatigue to become the father of the abandoned, a teacher of the poor, a guide for the priests and a pastor for all, so that I can be of service to everyone and gain all for Christ!”

In fact, I had this vision of the mission I was endowed. I feared not getting it done. When I was informed that I was one of the Pope’s candidates to the episcopate, I was worried. I was afraid to face the difficulties a bishop has to encounter and to carry out a mission in a tumultuous time. I feared for my inexperience to govern at an early age.

But the pope wanted exactly young priests, with pastoral experiences and with “roman loyalty”, i.e., fidelity to the Pope, in Rome, in the affairs of the Church and in social and political issues of the time. Therefore, I accepted the will of God and the authority of the Pope. I left my hometown and went to visit the town of Piacenza, where I pledged to serve until the day I die.



Early episcopate years of John Baptist Scalabrini.

7.1 My diocese

Piacenza was a large diocese and geographically speaking is all mountains and plains. It had about 250,000 inhabitants and grouped in 366 parishes. There were a considerable number of priests, at least two priests in every parish. However, there was much work to do on religious life.

Both the people and the priests need to improve their knowledge of the Church's doctrine, strengthen the faith of the people and promote a closer relationship between the priests and the parishioners.

In many parishes, the people did not know their bishop and for others, they have not seen one for a long time. So, I decided to visit all the parishes of the diocese wherever they were, in the cities or in the most remote village.

7.2 Pastoral visits

I thought that to carry out my mission; I needed to know my people, their living conditions, their needs and desires. It was necessary to be close and to listen to them. Hence, I started to visit all the parishes of the diocese.

In my 30 years as a bishop, I visited five times each parish of Piacenza during my pastoral visits that lasted for four years or more. I definitely followed the example of St. Charles Borromeo and took him as my protector and model.

I began my first visit the same year I arrived in December 1876 and ended four years later. I visited every corner of the diocese: the parishes in the city and the plains during winter and the parishes of the mountains in summer time. Everyone welcomed me with joy and celebration.



Scalabrini had to be close to the people to listen to them.





Scalabrini before the Virgin Mary, looking for strength.

“I obtain my strength every day in the example of our Lord, in the mystery of the Cross and the Eucharist and of the Virgin Mary. I looked at Him intently to fulfill my mission.”

The pastoral visits gave me great joy because I could see and feel the enthusiasm of the people, when I heard confessions, visited the sick, celebrated feasts with them and consecrate churches. It was a privileged to know the needs, preferences and activities of my people because from these facts, I was able to formulate the most important initiatives as a bishop.

Even in a slow pace, I have seen the rebirth of Christian life in Piacenza. The people were cultivating their faith, catechesis is flourishing and there was a notable progress in the spiritual life of my priests. From my experience in the seminary and as a parish priest, I usually saw the needs of my people and the tasks to realize. Furthermore as a bishop, I felt the challenges were of great responsibility.



Scalabrini during his pastoral visit. He visited, listened and helped the people of his diocese.

I discovered in the town of Piacenza similar needs to those of the people of Como, in fact, throughout Italy: the poverty, religious ignorance, lack of education, inattention to the needy and lack of job. Confronted with this reality, I rolled up my sleeves and started my mission as a pastor for the people which the Lord had entrusted me.

7.3 Catechesis

First, I dealt with the formation of priests and the religious instruction of the laity, a catechesis.

In the seminary, I updated the teachings of Philosophy and Theology. I introduced the course in Humanities, regular retreats and meetings. I also reactivated the Diocesan Synods that were not being done 156 years ago. These measures achieved a great Christian renewal life in the diocese.

For the lay people, I organized a full program of religious education with four levels: catechism of initiation, school for first communion, perseverance school and catechism for adults. In 1876, I published a magazine in Catechesis, *The Catholic Catechist*. Then in 1877, I wrote a manual in *Catholic Catechism*.

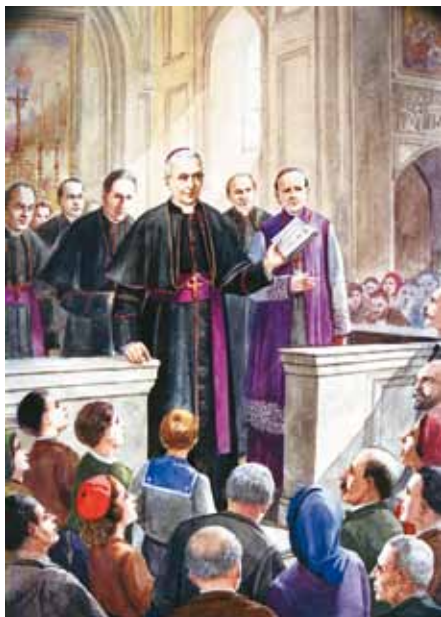
The result of this work was achieved after a year and a half of my arrival and there was a significant increased in number of catechists, catechetical groups, and the realization of the National Catechetical Congress.

Pope Pius IX praised my work and gave me a pectoral cross.

7.4 In the service of the Word

As a teacher, priest and bishop, I always considered my duty to preach the Word of God in the liturgy - not a common habit at that time. Also in catechesis, I always try my best to be present whenever possible during the meetings with the children and youth.

I believed that the Word of God must be proclaimed and therefore I used all the means at my disposal. I published several articles about the problems of the time and wrote many pastoral letters. I founded a diocesan newspaper "*The Friend of the People*", which first circulated weekly and then it became a daily newspaper.



At the service of the Word of God

7.5 Servant of all

People often had to go through many needs: severe winter, drought that destroyed crops, diseases and lack of work. On these occasions, it was necessary that everyone come together to share food, fuel and clothing for impoverished families. I organized committees in the diocese to look over the help necessary. They were so efficient that daily they fed three thousand people.

Even with the help of many people, there

Charity is above all!

As it is written on my staff, “**Charity has power**”, and with this thought, I made it as the statute of my government.



Scalabrini was distributing food and clothing to the needy.

was still lack of money to help the numerous needy people. One day, I had to sell the horses of my carriage. Then I was asked how I would travel without my carriage? I had to remind them: “in the house of the poor, the bishop must walk just like Jesus who walked throughout Galilee and Judea.”

After a while, I also had to sell the golden chalice given to me by Pope Pius IX as a gift last year. It was the most valuable thing I owned. People were surprised by the fact that I sold the present I received from the Pope but I said: “If people are hungry, Christ certainly prefer a metal cup to a cup of gold.”

7.6 A man of reconciliation

The Italy in my time was not like the Italy today. Before, there were lots of territorial divisions and each one was trying to overpower one another. The church itself had a large territory in central Italy today: the Vatican City..

The struggle for the unification of the country lasted until 1870 when the nation was under the leadership of King Victor Emmanuel. The Papal state was conquered in the year I was appointed as parish priest.

This situation of course affected the church and the priests. The popes of that period were Pius IX, Leo XIII



Together with my friend Jeremiah Bonomelli, I promoted the dialogue between the Church and the civil society.

and Pius X. They fought against the new ideas of liberalism. Even Catholics were divided into two groups: those who accepted new ideas (the Liberals) and the new ideas that fought (the conservatives).

In return, I advocated dialogue and understanding that would be more beneficial to the Church. However, I had to obey the Pope when he reprimanded me to be silent.

How to reconcile my ideas with the position of the Church?

I believed that there were many things to do, like following the principles of the Gospel and reuniting efforts of the Church and society.

In my experience, I have searched and found a reality that from an early age I already knew: migration and the migrants.

**And so, from 1886,
I began working for
the MIGRANTS.**

II APOSTLE OF MIGRANTS

In this time of political struggles, the small towns were the most affected of the economic crisis which caused hunger, food shortages, lack of labor and land disputes. The agricultural production was low and the new industries were burdened by the heavy taxes. For many, there was no alternative but to steal or migrate.

1. How it all began

As you know, since my childhood I had affinity with my people. When I became a priest, I was always on the side of the poor and the sick. As a bishop, I did the same. In 1882, I wrote in my pastoral letter: “You have to participate in the public life, using all legal means to make triumph the truth and justice.”

It was my belief that the church should be aware of the social issues that affect our people. Therefore, I reiterate: “We have to go out of our church if we want to have an effective action within the church.”

In my childhood, I experienced the problems and sufferings caused by migration when three of my brothers migrated. As you know, Joseph died in a shipwreck off the coast of Peru.

As a bishop, I have seen the same phenomenon in my parishes. Milan Station was packed of people wanting to go to the Americas in search of new opportunities.

2. Milan Station

It was in Milan station that God touched my heart when I saw the immense crowd of poor people, malnourished and ragged clothes waiting for the train. An overwhelming sentiment of sadness moved my heart.

“[...] I saw the hall, the nearby square and side porches filled by three or four hundred people badly dressed, divided into several groups [...]. They were bent by old age and fatigue, men in the prime of life, women dragging their children or carried in their arms, [...] all united in one mind and guided toward the same goal [...].

They were migrants. They came from the different provinces of northern Italy and, in fear, waiting for the train that would take them to the shores of the Mediterranean, where they were embarked for distant America.”

“Who knows how many misfortunes and hardships the migrants were to endure to make these painful steps seem weightless! How many of them would be victorious as they struggle for a better life? How many would lose the faith taught by their parents? Confronted with this deplorable situation, I felt the blush of shame and the embarrassment in my person as a priest and as an Italian, and I wonder: what can I do to help them?”



At the train station in Milan, at the time of Blessed John Baptist Scalabrini.

3. I went to talk to the society

To help them, I went to look for collaborators within and outside the Church. It was necessary to explain the causes of migration and to demand the government to regulate the movement of migrants abroad and to protect them against

the exploitation of the so-called “migration agents”. It was also fundamental to assist them when they arrived in the country of destination since they do not know the language and customs and not be defenseless in the hands of the unscrupulous people who take advantage of their ignorance.

Migration then was a recent phenomenon. Both the government and the Church did not know what to do and either the people who were interested in the matter.

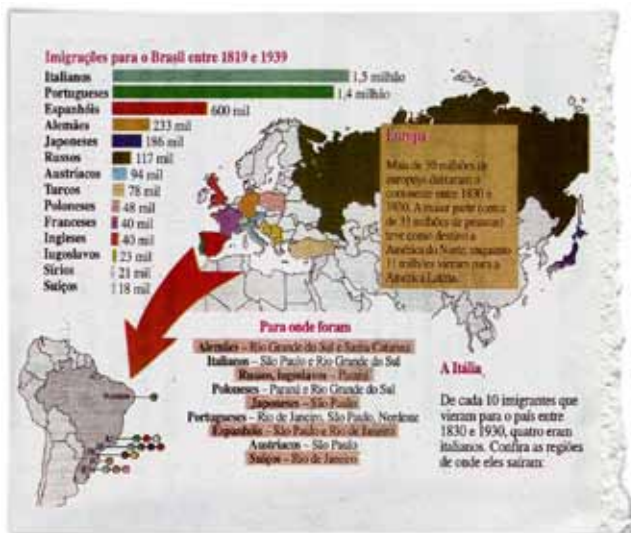
I went to travel around Italy to give conferences about migration. I have written several articles on the subject. And in each city I visited, I organized local committees of lay people to support the migrants.

4. The magnitude of the phenomenon of migration

The migration phenomenon has grown to become one of the most serious dramas in Italy. There was an increasing number of Italians, from all regions of Italy, who were leaving the country.

During the 30 years of my episcopate (1876-1905), nearly eight million Italians migrated: 3.800.000 to Europe, 1.771.000 to USA, 1.080.000 to Argentina and 1.014.000 to Brazil.

These millions of people were recruited by unscrupulous agents who exploited and abandoned them as they arrived in the country of destination.



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I saw it as a “sign of the times” this drama of the migrants. Because through them God invited all people of good will in the ecclesial community not to abandon the migrants to their fate, but help them become carriers of faith to the world.



A boat filled with Italian migrants waiting for the trip to America.

IN AMERICA

The lands in Brazil for the Italians

“Venite a sogni Vostri costruire and the famiglia”, i.e. = come and build your dreams with your family.

“It is a country of opportunities.

The weather is tropical and the mineral resources in abundance. In Brazil, you can have your house. The government will provide land and tools for everyone.”



The migrants were waiting to be embarked at the port of Genoa.



This was the image of the great exodus.



The migrants arrived at the port of Santos (SP), 1907.

5. I worked with the Church

In this situation, the Church needed to organize their action among these people who left their homeland in search of a new life. It needed a specific pastoral care for all the migrants of all nationalities and for the countries of destination. It was necessary that the Church just like her missionary work among the non-Christians will also work to preserve the faith of the Christians who were migrating.



John Baptist Scalabrini with the people.

So, I started in my Diocese of Piacenza and assumed the Pastoral Care of Migrants. I worked with the Holy See and insisted that the Church should respond with practical measures in order to assist the migrants, such as the creation of a pastoral commission specifically for them.

I defended a real migration policy and promoted the bills that will bring solutions to the problems of migration.

In 1901, I was fortunate to see that the Parliament adopted many of the proposals I advocated.

The kind of work I was proposing required many hands, many minds and above all, many hearts. Therefore, I founded a congregation of mis-

sionary priests, a lay movement and a missionary congregation of sisters.

These institutions would have as their characteristic to work for the migrants and should be in daily contact with them in order to help them overcome the adversities caused by migration so as to rebuild their lives.

6. The Missionaries of St. Charles

The Congregation of the Missionaries of St. Charles was founded in 1887. Its first members were Domingo and José Mantese Molinari. There was a celebration in Piacenza, at St. Antonino Rectory, the first mother house of the Congregation.

At that moment, many other missionaries and priests embraced the cause and made it their own. In 1888, the first group of seven religious left the church of St. Antonino.



November 28, 1887: Foundation of the Congregation of the Missionaries of St. Charles.

Four went to Brazil and three to New York. In the following years, the congregation became known and the missionaries continued to increase.

In 1892, the mother house of the congregation was moved into another place, a bigger one to accommodate all its members. In the same year, I entrusted the saint of Milan, St. Charles Borromeo, to the missionaries as their holy patron. And I wrote to my missionaries:

“From this moment, I will honor you with the name of the Missionaries of St. Charles as he was one of those men of action, who do not hesitate nor doubted that in everything you do, you put faith in your commitment, [...] who you are and you will succeed”.

I was convinced that it was necessary a definite religious consecration. With

the approval of the Holy Father, in the feast of the Immaculate Virgin, December 8, 1894, the missionaries received for the first time their vows.

7. The Society of St. Raphael

In 1889, I established a lay movement for the service of migrants, the Society of St. Raphael. St. Raphael was the angel that accompanied the young Tobias on his journey. I set up different committees in several cities, especially in the coastal cities of Italy and abroad. The most active ones were the Genoa, New York and Boston.

The St. Raphael Society attended the religious needs and the health care of the migrants during the entire journey. It also opened schools for their children, assured legal protection and helped them overcome difficulties to integrate in the foreign land.

To encourage them, I said: “Lay, you also ought to be apostles.”

You must be apostles likewise ye, brethren, that is, men of action and sacrifice, zealous for the honor of God and the Church for the salvation of souls.

You can practice your laity in the reality that surrounds you; you can be the minister of the Word, using a language that exalts in conversation, in instructions and

in correction. The exemplar apostolate is to profess openly your faith and human respect! The apostolate of charity is helping the poor, visiting the sick, comforting the afflicted, doing good to all, the apostolate of civilization, cooperating in the destruction of sin that make people miserable and to promote justice that make the nations prosper! [...] (Scalabrini current voice - p.191).

8. The Missionary Sisters of St. Charles

For a more integral apostolate for the migrants whose needs were complex, I realized that it was not only enough to have the masculine congregation and the secular society. It was necessary to have the presence of the



October 25, 1895: date of foundation of the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo - Scalabrinians.

sisters to take care of the migrant families. I had trouble starting another congregation. But I had an unexpected help from Father Joseph Marchetti, a young missionary, who made two trips to Brazil in 1894 as chaplain of the Italian immigrants. After his second trip, Father Joseph Marchetti decided to stay in Sao Paulo where he immediately began to build an orphanage for the orphans and abandoned children. To do this, he needed the sisters to take care and educate them.

Father Joseph Marchetti returned to Piacenza in search of these religious sisters. He went to his hometown, where convinced his mother Caroline, her sister Assunta and two young women, Maria Angela and Franceschini Larini to accompany him to Brazil. Thus, on October 25, 1895 in a solemn ceremony in my chapel in Piacenza, all four made their religious vows in my presence and received the mission cross, a symbol of the mission. Then, they left for Brazil.

I instructed them:

"Go confidently my daughters, I will send you other sisters and then you will come back for your formation and to strengthen your religious spirituality. The action of the priests would not be complete without you. Some things can only be done by you, dear sisters. God instilled in the heart of every woman a distinct ability that emits a mysterious power over the minds and hearts. Therefore, I

trust that you should correspond to the grace of God who calls each one of you to a sublime mission to the distant land”.



9. The protection and blessing

To oversee and protect my missionaries, I chose St. Charles Borromeo as the patron and protector, a saint who lived deeply humble. So, I gave the slogan Humilitas for all the missionaries of St. Charles Borromeo and to commit themselves to build the Kingdom of God among the migrants, especially the poor and needy.

III THE WORK EXPANDED

Throughout this time, 20 years have passed since I started taking care of the migrants. By then, the religious and lay missionaries multiplied and the work reached millions of migrants in the new lands wherever they went.

In the places where they settled, the migrants recuperated their lives and continued to work. They remained loyal to their culture and faith, built colonies, towns and cities which became a factor of prosperity to the countries that received them.

All this happened thanks to the accompaniment of the missionaries who migrated with them. They also worked, prayed and educate them. Wherever the migrants went, my missionaries were there, too.

With the intervention of the Holy See and with the grace of God, the two congregations were gradually overcoming their difficulties and their missionary enthusiasm was strengthened. More so, vocations multiplied.

The two congregations flourished and expanded beyond the countries of origin, to the United States of America, Italy and Brazil.

1. I traveled to the United States

The migrants, the missionaries of the Italian communities in North America and Brazil and the bishops had repeatedly invited me to visit them. So in 1901, shortly after celebrating my 25 years as a bishop, I decided to become a migrant among the migrants, a missionary to the missionaries and I went to the United States.

I embarked from the port of Naples after receiving the blessing and approval of Pope Leo XIII. There were 1200 migrants were with me. The trip lasted for 15 days. During that time, I lived with all these people and celebrated the Eucharist every day. I taught the Sunday school catechism, ministered the first communion and confirmation to many young people.

I landed in New York on August 3 where the Italian community was waiting for me anxiously. I visited the two churches of the city that were entrusted to the Italian priests. I had many activities and one of them was giving retreats to the missionaries.

Speaking to migrants, I told them, "I assure you, my dear children that you will always be in the heart of a father! [...] I can assure you that I will always love you, your joys are my joys, and your sufferings are my sufferings".

But I could not stay in New York for a long time. I had to go and see my other Italian brothers who were scattered over a large part of the US territory. In most of the major US cities, there were Italian colonies.

I have traveled over 15,000 km in total. I was greeted by Theodore Roosevelt, U.S. president and I presented the main demands of the Italian migrants who had settled there. I have lived for three months with my Italian brothers and conducting numerous pastoral activities.

I returned to Italy on November 14th and arrived 14 days later to resume my normal activities and continue my pastoral visits.

The trip showed me the importance of the action of the missionaries with the migrants. They suffered lots of discrimination, faced with many difficulties caused by the difference in language, culture and religious customs. Though, I did receive many compliments from the migrants and the religious authorities about my missionaries.

It was a joy to see the fact that my thoughts about the Pastoral Care of Migrants were confirmed. Our people needed help and support in the new lands so as not to feel uprooted, not lose their cultural and religious orientations that were part of their history, including their human heritage, their relatives and friends.

Back in Piacenza, I started to think about a trip to Brazil where more than a million Italians had gone in search of a new life.

2. I also went to Brazil

Finally in 1904, I went to Brazil in response to the desire of the missionaries residing there. I wanted to see my missionaries and my fellow citizens who had migrated to that country. I wanted to encourage them in their new life and strengthened their faith. I went to the port of Naples on June 13, the day dedicated to St. Anthony. I was accompanied by several consultants and was blessed by Pope Pius X. A group of 500 migrants traveled with me and half were Italian and the other half were mostly Lebanese Maronites and Muslims.

As we sailed, I made a detailed account of our trip and recorded the important events of each day. I took advantage of these days at sea, the waiting days to develop a catechesis, celebrate mass and to orient the people for the days to come in the new land still unknown to them. So, I prepared a group of people to receive the sacraments of Eucharist and Confirmation before disembarking.

During the trip, I tried to improve my Portuguese and speaking daily with Mr. Alberto Graice, a Brazilian colonel who traveled with me. He was delighted in my interest in their language.

The blessing of Pope Pius X accompanied me every day and gave me a sense of security and serenity that I never felt in my previous trip to the United States.

This trip was more uncomfortable because the sea was rough often to the point that it prevented us from sleeping at night. Many became sea sick and there were even violent fights. But by the grace of God, all has been overcome and I was in good health.

We arrived in Rio de Janeiro on July 6, a beautiful city. I was received by the Archbishop of Rio and with him I addressed the issues of the migrants.

I arrived on the 9th at San Pablo where Bishop José de Camargo Barros, my missionaries, the authorities and many migrants welcomed me.

I stayed at the Columbus Institute founded by Father Joseph Marchetti in 1895 for the poor and abandoned children. My commitments were intense. During these months, I spent in the state of Sao Paulo, visited several farms where Italian migrants lived, celebrated the Eucharist with them and preached retreats, confirmations, etc.

On August 5, 1904, I inaugurated the girls' section of the Institute in Columbus Villa Prudente and soon to be run by the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo - Scalabrinians. The group of pioneer sisters who came to Brazil dedicated themselves to the little orphans and abandoned children. The children that Father Joseph Marchetti used to bring to the Institute of Columbus have been increasing numerously.



Scalabrini traveling to the Americas

I also traveled to Rio de Janeiro, Niterói and the Holy Spirit. And from here, I always travelled by ship to Paraná, in the cities of Curitiba and Paranaguá. Every day while I was staying at St. Felicity, I went out to visit the Italian colonies and the distant neighbors. After the 15 days I spent there, I embarked in the port of Paranaguá, Florianópolis through to the port of Rio Grande.

On September 10, I was in Porto Alegre. From there, I went to Encantado where they built the first St. Charles parish in Rio Grande do Sul. I was greeted with enthusiasm. I ministered various confirmations, visited other migrant communities nearby like New Bassano, Garibaldi, Veranópolis, Bento Gonçalves and

Caxias do Sul.

When I returned to Porto Alegre, I went to Buenos Aires. It has been 36 years since I last saw my brother Peter. I was with him and his family just for three days due to the schedule departures of the ships. Although my visit was a brief one, I was so happy to see him. In the capital of Argentina, I sought to know the Italian colony and the possibility of founding a house for the Society of St. Raphael.

In all these places, I could see how the work of the missionaries was important for the migrants. Everywhere I could see a great diversity in the organization of my brothers. More so, the diligence of the migrants was reflected in the social and economic progress of the colonies where they were present.

I recorded all the details of my trips and all that I saw was awe-inspiring. Well, the good works my missionary priests and sisters were achieving among the Italian migrants confirmed the intuition I had in my life and ministry years ago. My own eyes also saw in Brazil the important significance of our mission.



*Minutes of the INAUGURATION OF THE ORPHANAGE IN VILLA PRUDENTE,
SP by John Baptist Scalabrini - August 5, 1904.*



Bishop John Baptist Scalabrini, center in the first row.



1916 -1917
Orphans of the
female section of
Villa Prudente/Sao
Paulo. (Lower)

*The presence of
the Missionary
Sisters of St.
Charles Borromeo -
Scalabrinians in the
Orphanage*

3. The trip back to Piacenza

I returned to Piacenza, Italy in December of that year after visiting the migrants abroad for six months.

Then, I immediately programmed my sixth pastoral visit to the diocese. I also began to organize the Second National Congress in Catechesis. Furthermore, I sent a proposition to the Holy See requesting the establishment of a Central Committee for Catholic migrants around the world.

However, I felt very tired and weak. My co-workers and friends urged me to suspend my scheduled pastoral visit. In fact, I was always sick. The constant trips I made in the diocese on horseback and two trips to America aggravated the inflammation of my prostate which I had for many years.

4. I am ready my Lord, come!

In May 1905, the doctors decided to that I had a surgery. But after that it got worse and the pain increased. I told my friends: "I am so tired that I felt I am dying!"

On May 27, I confessed and spent the night in adoration of the Eucharist. Then on the 31st, I received the last sacraments. I said goodbye to my friends and my priests. I received the special blessing of Pope Pius X and I embraced the love of my Lord: "Lord, I'm ready, let's go!"

Thus, on June 1st, the feast of the Ascension of the Lord, shortly before 6 am, I fell asleep in the Lord.



On that morning, the bells of the city announced to the people of the city the ascension of Jesus to heaven and my definite encounter with the Heavenly Father.

The people of my diocese attended the funeral mass. In the thirty years of my episcopate, I visited my people and now they wanted to see me for the last time.

He was a shepherd who was loved for his kindness and tireless dedication to the people. The bishop was buried in the cemetery of Piacenza.

In 1909, his body was moved from the cemetery to the cathedral of Piacenza. His tomb is visited constantly by the faithful. His work with the migrants has solidified and extended. His figure as a bishop was innovative during his time and left a testimony of love, kindness and charity. He said: **“Above all, charity.”**



John Baptist Scalabrini died like a saint.

IV HIS LEGACY

The voice of John Baptist Scalabrini has silenced. Now we speak, his devoted friends, those who embraced his cause, as this has been expanded beyond the borders of Italy. He conquered the world and today his spirit is present in the places where the human drama of migration is heartbreaking.

Migration today assumes the universal dimensions Scalabrini had prophesied. He understood the phenomenon of migration as “good to humanity as it opened new avenues for trade, dissemination of scientific discoveries and industrial”, promoting the cooperation and participation of the people in building a new world and as a means of spreading the faith in God and in Jesus Christ.

1. His pastoral work was innovative

Bishop Scalabrini introduced practices he believed were the best and which were new at that time. For example, to be close to his people as he himself became part of catechesis, visited each and every village houses and gave the sermon on Sunday masses. These things were little known in his time and were practiced by few bishops only although advised by the Church.

Scalabrini was a man that marked his era. He did not agree with the mediocre and knew how to read and bravely responded to the needs of his time.

2. The Patron Saint

The pastoral activities of Scalabrini were based on the example of the patron saint he had chosen for himself and his missionaries, St. Charles Borromeo. He was one of the first bishops to follow the rules of the Council of Trent and Bishop Scalabrini admired him so much.

But undoubtedly the key source of his inspiration for a model to follow is Jesus Christ who walked among his people, spoke of the Kingdom and visited homes; Jesus formed a special group of followers, the apostles who shared his doctrine.

3. The Migrants

Scalabrini was the pioneer in the pastoral care of migrants. He left his followers a mission to continue to love them, accept them and protect them. His work has been concretized and expanded. With its beginnings in Italy and spread out in the United States and Brazil, the religious congregations founded by Scalabrini is now present in 41 countries and in different contexts of human mobility.

During his travels to the United States and Brazil, Scalabrini saw the flourishing of the colonies founded by the Italian migrants. In Brazil, he visited Rio de Janeiro, San Paulo, Parana and Rio Grande do Sul. Most Italians settled in San Paulo and Rio Grande do Sul.

4. The beginnings in Brazil

It is interesting to highlight the beginnings in San Paulo in the late of nineteenth century, 1894 and beyond.

In mid 1892, the young priest Joseph Marchetti was ordained and asked Bishop Scalabrini his desired to participate in the “foreign missionary” work as the “chaplain for migrants who left Genoa.”

Father Marchetti made a trip in 1894 and another in January 1895 when he finally decided to the cause of migrants and settled in San Paulo.



Columbus Orphanage

A month after his arrival, on February 15th, he began the construction of the Columbus Institute, a house for the orphans and abandoned children.

Scalabrini narrated:

“The way he started the orphanage in San Paulo was almost miraculous. Indeed, a Jesuit priest promised to get help from a charitable man, Dr. Vicente de Azevedo. On the same day, eager to act, Father Joseph Marchetti boarded a train to visit the site given him but found out that there was not enough money for the fare. Embarrassed, he sought help from a passenger saying the purpose his travel. This gentleman offered to show a better field, on the hill of Ipiranga. Seeing the place, Father Marchetti was astounded. The gentleman then said: “Do you want it? It’s yours.” And he gave the land. The man introduced himself as Dr. Vicente de Azevedo, the same man the Jesuit priest had spoken about.

The next day the donation was made. In addition to land, building materials were also donated. The work began in January 1895 and was advancing rapidly. In early October of the same year, Father Joseph Marchetti went to Italy for her sisters to take care of the children. He went back in October with four sisters, including his mother and sister Assunta. The Columbus Institute began hosting 80 orphans that Father Joseph had rescued from the precarious situation until December 1896, when he died of typhus, which he had contracted in the farms.”

The Institute was the first of the many works of the Scalabrinian Missionaries.

The hand of God blesses those who give their lives for the sake of others. This explains how the Father Joseph Marchetti got all the resources to carry out the work of Christopher Columbus Orphanage. In 1904, nine years later, the 250 orphans in the orphanage welcomed Bishop Scalabrini. From its beginnings to the present, the orphanage had educated and sent a large number of children and youth to become professionals.



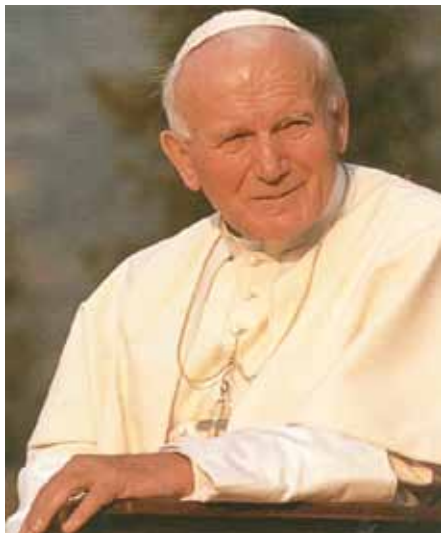
THE BEATIFICATION

On November 9, 1997, Pope John Paul II beatified the Servant of God Bishop John Baptist Scalabrini. The celebration was held in St. Peter's Square with the presence of a large number of pilgrims. That day the Pope in his homily stressed the figure and mission of the new blessed, saying:

"Scalabrini deeply in love with God and extraordinarily devoted to the Eucharist was able to translate the vision of God and his ministry in a great apostolic and missionary by becoming all things to all to proclaim the Gospel. This burning passion for the Kingdom

of God made him a zealous apostle of catechesis, pastoral activities and charity work, especially for the most needy. For his love for the poor and particularly towards the migrants, he became the apostle of many people who were forced to leave their homeland, often in very difficult conditions and in the danger of losing their faith. For these people Scalabrini became the father and a firm guide in faith.

We can say that Blessed John Baptist Scalabrini lived deeply the Paschal Mystery, not through martyrdom but serving the poor and crucified Christ in the needy and suffering he chose, with a genuine and caring heart of a Shepherd as his flock."



Pope John Paul II

Pope John Paul II also said:

Blessed John Baptist Scalabrini is a true Father of the migrants because:

- he made sensible the host communities to be open, respectful and caring for them;
- he fought vigorously for legislative and institutional instruments that ensure the human and legal protection of the migrants from all forms of exploitation;
- he had a noble, genuine and supportive heart especially to the migrants. No wonder, in Milan station, he looked with tenderness and compassion to those sunburned and wrinkled faces and burdened by their miserable life;
- he has been troubled by them in all dimensions and led them safely, taking care of them but above all, made sure not to lose their faith in the God of Jesus Christ;
- he put all his life energy, his eyes, hands, feet, heart and intelligence, as he was dedicated to the migrants who uphold their dignity and who preferred to migrate than to steal or starve.

Pope Benedict XV described him in one sentence as a “bishop whose love



went beyond his diocese”. A love that was so great that it could not remain in the limits of his diocese. Scalabrini’s heart embraced the world. For him, the bishop must “kneel down, so to speak, before the world and beg as a favor that he be allowed to do good”.

The Scalabrinians in Rome during the beatification of John Baptist Scalabrini. It was a day of celebration and festivity.

**Today, the spirit of John Baptist Scalabrini is “alive”
through the work of his missionary priests, religious and
lay in the world of migration.**



THE SCALABRINIAN SPIRITUALITY

It is the living and witnessing of the face of the Pilgrim Christ.

We find the basic Scalabrinian spirituality in Mathew 25, 35. As Jesus himself taught the most humane and dignified care for the migrants when he said: “[...] I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me.” These words are constant challenge to welcome the newcomers and give confidence to the ones who leave.

The Scalabrinian spirituality is the lifestyle which goes hand in hand in the willful contemplation of the Pilgrim Christ, his attitudes and gestures of welcoming the people. He embraces the children, forgives the sinner, goes in search of the sheep that are lost and teaches that we have to do what he did. With no place to lay his head, the Pilgrim Jesus starts to evangelize and do good, cure the sick and enlivening the people with his gentle, humble and loyal attitude. He seems not too tired of walking in the dusty streets, crossing valleys, rivers, seas and mountains up and down. He was always on the move. He is a God who is compassionately traveling with the suffering, those who are forgotten at the crossroads of the world.

Walking with the disciples of Emmaus, he approaches them and shows complete happiness in the breaking of the bread. Jesus is the model migrant who speaks with authority. Every time we welcome a stranger into our home, we are doing it to Jesus himself. When we do not welcome, then we also ignore and reject Jesus himself who is present in the migrant.

The face of the Pilgrim Christ is captivating. It speaks of hope because it teaches us that we cannot walk if we are clinging to what is transitory. This confirms that our feet need to be in constant motion, welcoming the itinerant God who is present on every human face.

The migrant Jesus is the reason and foundation of the Scalabrinian spirituality. Jesus had a migrant experience when he was a baby. He was exiled to Egypt. He was forced to migrate with his parents because Herod wants to kill him. So, they left for Egypt to protect the life of Jesus.

His way of life is a journey in view of liberating and dignifying the human person.

The disciples walk with Him, living the migration experience. We too, following the footsteps of Jesus, we have to be migrants and promote a life of dignity for all.

The Presence of the
Congregation of the Missionary
Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo,
Scalabrinians
MSCS
WORLDWIDE



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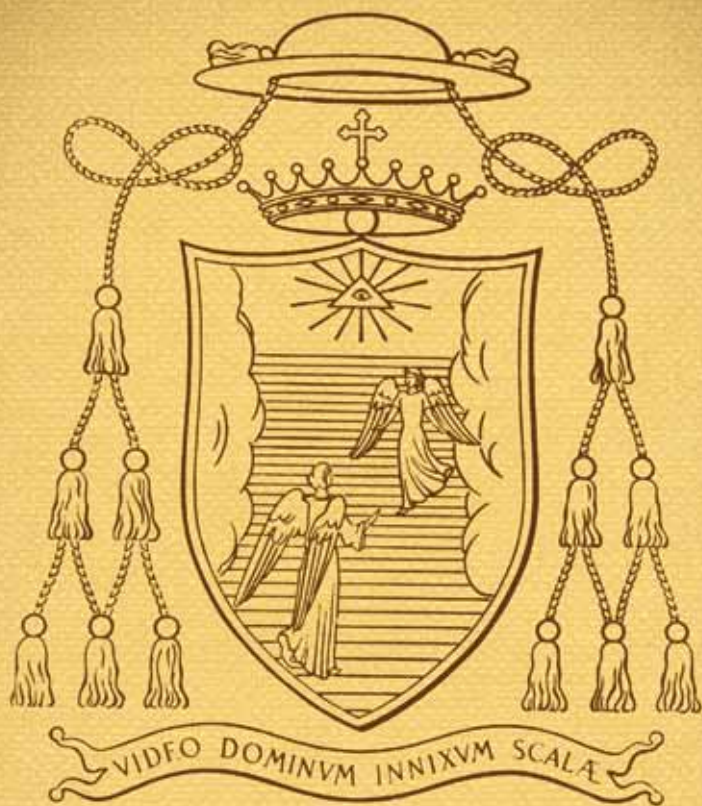
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THE EPISCOPAL SHIELD OF BLESSED SCALABRINI IS "JACOB'S LADDER", ONE ANGEL ASCENDING AND THE OTHER DESCENDING THE STAIRS WITH A LEGEND:

I SEE THE LORD AT THE TOP OF THE STAIRS.

And Scalabrini interpreted it as: there is a necessity for contemplation (the angel ascending) for a truly pastoral action filled with the grace of God among people (the angel descending).