



MISSIONARIES OF ST. CHARLES
SCALABRINIANS
SAINT CHARLES BORROMEO PROVINCE

Symposium on Spirituality

Papers on Scalabrinian Spirituality

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A message for our community

Beloved children,

this year of the Lord 2023 has been a year of graces and blessings for all of us and for the whole world. The indiction of the "Scalabrinian Year" has brought us the great gift of canonization, which is the official and universal recognition of our charism by the whole Church on Earth and in Heaven. Now you are preparing to conclude with a fruitful Congress on our spirituality.

Of course, dear children, holiness is the only thing necessary; the first purpose of our life and pastoral action is holiness. Do you remember what I was telling you? "Make yourselves saints and everything else will flourish in your hands". Today I want to remind you, dear brothers and sisters, of this promise you made on the day of your religious profession and on the day of your priestly ordination.

How much time do you devote to daily personal prayer? Are you able to give me an hour just for you and me? Do you get up early in the morning to offer your first hour to your Jesus? And do you meditate every day? I had forced myself to a full hour every day and a half hour when I was travelling. Do you remember what I said? "A missionary who does not meditate either has no faith or is crazy!" It is true. The Word of God is our daily food! You cannot live without food. And the Holy Mass? Do you celebrate it only as a service to others? No, you have to sacrifice yourself with Christ on that altar. It is a mystical marriage with your soul first and foremost. Do not abandon the nuptial bed of the love of your Christ. And the breviary? The hosts of Angels and all the Saints in heaven sing night and day with you on earth. We are sorry when we see that our brothers on earth always have something else to do! How nice instead to see mini celestial assemblies on earth between priests and faithful, to experience the same grace with us in heaven.

Finally, my dear beloved children, with a sorrowful heart I would like to remind you of two spiritual needs that I often reminded you of when I was on earth: if you want to be my children, you must recite the Holy Rosary every day to our Mother Mary, possibly in communion with other confreres or other faithful devotees. I too used to gather my family every evening (secretaries, servants) to recite the blessed Marian prayer together. In every home I want to see my missionaries together with the rosary beads in hand.

The other requirement (non-optional) is Eucharistic Adoration at least every week. I spent hours and hours in loving conversation with my Lord every day; and He consoled me, guided me, strengthened me. Dear ones, the life of heaven cannot be lived without this love of of the Eucharistic presence. Don't you know that you have in front of your eyes none other than the Second Person

of the Holy Trinity whom we here in heaven are ceaselessly adoring? You don't know what a privilege you have to be in the presence of the Most High. And that is a presence made entirely of LOVE for each one of you.

Dear friends, let us begin a new era of our "little Congregation"! The time has come to journey all together. I have given you another gift: the new provincial superior. Whoever listens to him listens to me, whoever follows him follows me!

A final recommendation: Prayer, Meditation, Eucharist and our dear Madonna. (Read the latest issue of TRADITIO). I am with you happier and more trustful than ever, because I see that young people from the East and the West are responding to Christ's invitation in our community.

With great love I bless you all, young and old.

Your brother and father,

J. B. Scalabrini, saint



Come to me first (212)

Rise earlier. Give me the first hours of the day. Come to me before seeking anything or anyone else. I will strengthen you to use well the hours of each day be gone in this way. I have called you to be my Adorer, all else is secondary.

I wait for you in the Sacramento of my love, and I am often disappointed because you allow other things to absorb your time and consume your energy.

Give me as much time as you can, and I will give you time and energy to do all that you must do.

You will see that by coming to me first, **everything else will appear to you in it's just proportions.** It will do one thing after another, and all that you do will be marked by serenity and by an inward adoration toward my abiding presence in the tabernacle.

I call you to a life of a perpetual adoration. **Perpetual adoration is a loving attention to my presence.** It is seeking after my face and drawing close to my heart; **it never ceases,** and that's suffuses every moment of life. This perpetual adoration nonetheless begins with and returns to **times of real adoration spent before my Eucharistic face,** during which **all other things are left aside.**

Come then to the **place apart** that I have prepared for you. I wait for you there. Come to my tabernacle in abide in my presence. I will fill you with joy, with serenity, and with wisdom for the demands of the day.

Begin always by adoring me. Do not allow your heart to grow cold towards my Eucharistic presence. I have called you to this life for one thing only: calling to adored me for the sake of my beloved priest, your brothers, **especially for the sake of those will never come into my Sacramental presence** to find, close to my Heart, refreshment, light, peace, and above all else, **the love for which I created them** and of which I have made them my servants.

I forgive your weaknesses in this matter, but I invite you to pick yourself up and to return to the generosity of our love, that has no delay and is defeated by no obstacle.

What I'm telling you is simple, but it is the **secret of a strong vitality,** and of a wisdom that sees all things rightly, and judges them prudently.

The principal difficulty in your life, and in the lives of so many priests of mine is the neglect of adoration. In your life, I want it to hold the first place. You are, before anything else, the adorer of my Eucharistic Face and the consoler of my Sacred Heart. This is your mission, and it alone is the justification for everything else you undertake.

I am pleased with the adoration you offered me, but I wait for a **greater generosity from you.**

Seek me in the sacrament of my love, and I promise that I will give you all else besides, and that you shall want for nothing.

Adoration is the exchange of love, and the exchange of love is the source of all fruitfulness.

If the fruits are meagre, it is because you have been sparing in the exchange of love with my Eucharistic Heart. Do not begin by saying, "I must make three hours of adoration a day". Begin rather by adoring me as much as you can. The rest will follow effortlessly.

There are special graces I have attached to the office of Matins for those who, by vocation, are called to it. Please say it quietly and peacefully in my presence, and I will visit your soul with the sweetness of my divine Love, and with the fragrance of my presence within you.

I am consoled when souls rise when it is still dark, and make their way to my tabernacle to chant my praises and to unite themselves to my own adoration to the Father. The psalms will unite you to My Heart and you will emerge from the Night Office refreshed and strengthened in love.



Saint John Baptist Scalabrini precursor of the new evangelization

*Pastoral letter from Monsignor Bishop of Piacenza to the teachers
of the catechetical schools of the city and of the diocese (1877)*

- 1 – IMPORTANCE of the lay vocation in the church.
- 2 – IMPORTANT role in EVANGELIZATION
- 3 – Difficult situation in Italian society “because the left in power is trying to remove the teaching of religion in elementary schools”.
- 4 – COPPINO LAW - The municipal administrations have the competence to replace the classes of religion with “the notions of the duties of man and of the citizen”.
- 5 - The catechist must instruct, train and set an example for children.
- 6 - The clergy has the obligation to form and prepare lay catechists.

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APPRECIATION OF HIS 3000 CATECHISTS

Be blessed ! Seeing how solicitously you have worked so far for the benefit of our dear children, knowing you have now grown to more than 3,000, all intent on such a holy work, all desirous, as we hope, of committing you ever more to it, our heart rejoices and our tongue does not cease to give clear testimony of you, calling you beloved.

Reflect a little on the greatness of the mission entrusted to you, on the need that precedes it, on the importance that accompanies it, on the profit that follows it. What is, faithful, the GOAL for which Jesus Christ, the only begotten of the Father, came from heaven? Precisely that of **evangelizing** to the poor in wisdom and enlightening them to know the ways of justice: “Evangelizare pauperibus misit me” (Luke 4:18).

LOVE OF JESUS FOR CHILDREN

Jesus loved children in a special way and with his divinely sweet gaze he looked for them in the midst of the crowds. How, therefore , is it not glorious for you, teachers and women teachers of the Catechism, to have Jesus Christ himself at the head of this work?

It is true that you are Christians by baptism, but by the office you exercise, you

are something more. **You are the apostles of the new generation**, the saviors of your brothers. More fortunate than those who gave them the life of the body, you give them the life of the spirit, the life of the intellect, which is the knowledge of God, the supreme truth; the life of the heart, which is the love of God, infinite goodness.

“FEED THE CHILDREN OF THE CHURCH”

Well, the church, you know, is the bride not of a king of the earth but of the sovereign himself, monarch of heaven. In the person of her ministers, she repeats to each of you exactly what Pharaoh's daughter said to the nurse of Moses who escaped from the waters: “ Accipe puerum istum et nutri mihi ” (Exodus 9:9). Take these children and feed them for me; feed them not with any material food, but with the spiritual food of truth and love. Dearly beloved, do you understand what sublime mission that is yours?

WHAT IS CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE?

Christian doctrine, the one of which you, dearly beloved, are the masters and teachers, is a celestial science, it is the science of sciences, indeed the cornerstone around which all other sciences revolve, the only truly great, truly noble, truly necessary, the only one which adequately responds to our dignity, which entirely satisfies all the inspirations of our soul, the only one finally which will not collapse forever and which will make us perpetually happy.

Privilege of being catechists ! What glory for you now, our dearest children, we will even say what fortune, to be able to imitate such splendid examples of so many past saints, to be able to associate with them and to a work so sublime and holy!

DIFFICULT TIMES

Unfortunately we live in very sad times! War is waged against God in the world! And now more fierce than ever here is the universal creed of the wicked; they drive God out of families, schools, the whole of society. Away, in short, everything that reminds God, the soul, eternity. There is no remedy dear ones; but this remedy is in your hands, the catechism.

THE SCHOOLS OF CATECHISM

They would like a youth ready to favor any crime, a youth that is an atheist, a non-believer; and to succeed more quickly, attempts are made **to remove the catechism from schools** or, worse still, its teaching is entrusted to people who are capable of transmitting it in poison. Now instead it is the souls that are killed, snatching them from the contact of the crucified Jesus, to throw them into the devil's mouth.

Because of ignorance of the catechism, power is exchanged for oppression, freedom for license; the foundations of every private and public authority are shaken; scenes are renewed which fill the soul with terror and the earth with mourning. They don't know religion and yet they despise it!

Anyone who knows the catechism knows that life was given to us not to consume it in amusements, not to make stuff or to obtain riches and honors, but to move with a frank step towards the conquest of heaven, keeping us on the path of virtue and doing good works.

Anyone who knows the catechism knows that anyone who does not look to God as a father does not have the church as a mother; knows that one seriously sins by violating public holidays, both by keeping shops and workshops open publicly, and by working and making people work without absolute need

Very direct, those who have faith, those who live by faith, not only love God but feel compelled to make others love him as well, which is why love never adapts to indifference.

A true Christian and Catholic is the one who not only says with his lips every day: "Lord, your kingdom come", but who studies all ways, uses all means, employs all his strength, so that this kingdom expands more and more and spreads on earth.

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THE FUTURE OF THE CHURCH AND OF SOCIETY

Children grow up fast!. In them, as in the seed of the plant, there is the society of the future. Within a few years they will be the people of the countryside and the city. It is a matter of forming them as the honored heads of the house, the honest merchants, the patient craftsmen. In the girls, the angels of the families, the provident mothers, the faithful wives; in youngsters, solicitous fathers, respectful sons, obedient servants, holy priests, upright magistrates, mayors, councilors; the administrators of the most vital interests, this point being the purpose of the catechism: man and his civil-religious moral improvement. Can one give himself a more sublime task?

But it is important to arrive **before** the hostile man manages to sow the seeds of evil in the heart of the child. It is therefore when man is a child that we need to be vigilant, to correct bad habits and incline him to good. The grain of virtue wants to be sown in the April of life; the seasons that follow have nothing else to do but develop it and mature it. On the other hand, the man educated early in the catechism school is not so easily deceived. It is then that, mindful of the peace of his early years, he regards his father's house with envy and bursts out resolutely in those words: I want to return to my father's house, and the return of the sinner takes place in the arms of God.

TO THE CATECHIST - INDULGENCIES

Teach children the catechism and you will do something that will equal in merit the work of converting idolaters, and your name will be written in the book of life, alongside the names of the most honored heroes. Indeed, the Holy Spirit assures us that those who teach others in the ways of righteousness will shine like stars for endless eternity.

Angelic Pius IX, with all the outpouring of his paternal heart, has deigned, as you will see from the brief attached hereto, to open for you the treasures of sacred indulgences and to open them in a manner well worthy of him. As from an accumulation of merits, therefore, you can in a short time acquire that glorious ineffable and great prize.

METHODOLOGY

However, it is not enough to teach children these truths materially. You have to make them taste them and put them into practice. You have to **educate** their character, their conscience, and their heart. You must, according to the apostle's phrase, **form Jesus Christ in them**, raising them in innocence, in piety, in the light and in the grace of the evangelical virtues, in the fear and love of God; in regulating thoughts, desires, affections; in short, dispose them for the future life, through the sanctification of the present life; be exemplary in everything and everywhere, but especially in front of children. They **live by imitation** and will grow up more or less religious according to how more or less religious you are.

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EXAMPLE SPEAKS LOUDER THAN WORDS

What would be the use of all your efforts without a good example? Good example, Dear Ones, good example! And what we say to you, mind you, must be said all the more to fathers and mothers, to all those who have the responsibility of educating their children in any way.

Let your little pupils **know that you love them**, that you work solely for their good, and then they will also gladly receive your admonitions and gladly listen to you.

Remember that children need your **tenderness** more than anything else, but a tenderness of compassion. Far from you, therefore, that harsh and severe tone of imperious voice that so disgusts them.

UNITY IN THE SPIRIT

I invite you to walk in a manner appropriate to the vocation to which you are called, with all humility and meekness, with patience, putting up with each other out of charity, solicitous to preserve **unity in spirit** through the bond of peace. Yes, united: united among yourselves, united with your director and with the superiors of the congregation, united with your parish priest, and then you will become strong, you will be invincible.

Do not take part in profane spectacles, nor stoop to the indecent amusements of the world; may your conversations always be accompanied by charity and modesty.

Jesus in the Sacrament; here is what should be your dearest delight; if you receive Jesus more often in your heart, you will be rewarded by him in abundance for the privations you suffer for love of him.

To your faith **add virtue** ; to virtue Christian science, to Christian science temperance, to temperance patience, to patience piety, to piety fraternal love , to fraternal love charity.

Do not fear; the time will come when the laughter of your enemies will turn into the most bitter weeping; the time will come when they, seeing you crowned with glory, will be forced to exclaim trembling: We fools!

To you, zealous parish priests, who, overcoming certainly not slight difficulties, know well how to work for the establishment and increase of catechetical schools, my blessing. God will know how to repay you. To you, therefore, we impart from the depths of our hearts the pastoral blessing, in the name of the Father of the Son of the Holy Spirit.

*Piacenza from our episcopal palace,
the day of San Carlo 1877*

John Baptist, Bishop

