



### **From the Scalabrinian Year to the Symposium on Spirituality.**

***I will come to gather all the nations (Is 66:18)***

The Scalabrinian Year has reached its conclusion. It began on Nov. 7 last year with a number of events in the city of Como, Scalabrini's home diocese, and was to conclude on Nov. 9 this year in Piacenza, his diocese as bishop. Then there was Scalabrini's canonization, and in particular there was the Mass of Thanksgiving in Piacenza on Sunday, October 23, with large participation of clergy and people.

For all intents and purposes, that celebration also marked the closing of the Scalabrinian Year. However, there were still events in various parts of the Scalabrinian world, communities that met in the spirit of this particular year and thanked the Lord for Scalabrini's canonization. In keeping with the formalities, therefore, it seemed appropriate to recall the closing date for a review and a relaunch.

In the letter of convocation of the Scalabrinian Year a number of objectives were proposed. These included making Scalabrini known, talking about him, telling of his passion for migrants. The publicity that was given everywhere to the Scalabrinian Year certainly has contributed to the achievement of this goal. In the headquarters we attempted to collect the many testimonies about the spread of his veneration. The section of the website dedicated to the Scalabrinian Year contains an extensive, though not exhaustive, collection of paintings depicting him, of statues representing him, of altars, chapels and churches dedicated to him, of buildings, schools, migrant homes, and streets named after him. The Scalabrinian Year has also been an opportunity to commission some portraits of Scalabrini, which were then widely used in posters, brochures and various literature.

The theme "Making the World Everyone's Homeland" has been the subject of commentaries in various circumstances, starting with the message on November 28 last year, where it was concluded that the theme " is an invitation to give a homeland to those who have no homeland, to develop in particular that mission which expands its boundaries beyond the usual and the trite by attempting unexplored paths, to be at the side of those who are far from home so that they may feel at home. Internally, it is an invitation to strengthen the will to walk together, not emphasizing the homelands from which we come, but the greater homeland, the belonging that was created when we listened to the invitation of the One who called us, feeling like fellow citizens but also foreigners, because the true homeland always remains elsewhere." This, of course, is a program that is not limited to these past twelve months but remains a program for our mission and our life.

It is not possible to give an account of all the various initiatives organized at the local level during the year, because we would risk overlooking some of them. However, it is useful to highlight some of the moments of prayer that marked the year, particularly the vigil on the Immaculate Conception, with renewal of vows, the June 1st celebration and especially the prayer marathon, which involved 48 Scalabrinian communities praying and thanking God for 24 hours. It is also fitting to thank all those who responded enthusiastically, who got creative with various initiatives, and who prayed and worked for Scalabrini's canonization; those who

engaged in gathering migrants in the great celebration in St. Peter's Square and those who stayed behind in the missions to celebrate in their usual places.

The most important goal of the Scalabrinian Year was to follow in Scalabrini's footsteps, to cultivate his aspiration for holiness. In this sense, the Scalabrinian Year that is ending should not remain an event to be archived and forgotten. Instead, it becomes a relaunch, because it ushers us into the year in which we must prepare for the symposium on Scalabrinian Spirituality, to be held Oct. 9-14, 2023. The 15th General Chapter indicated what the tone of the symposium should be when it called for an "updated and intercultural reinterpretation of the Scalabrinian charism and vocation." The General Secretariat of Religious Life has drawn a preparation plan.

- **First phase: personal reading.** A section dedicated to spirituality has been opened on the congregational website (*scalabriniani.org*) and various articles have been made available in the various languages, and more will be added. It is important to give space for this personal reading to learn about what was already written and to create a common understanding among us on the topic of spirituality.

- **Second phase: area and interest group meetings.** These meetings should serve as an opportunity to share among us a deeper understanding of how Scalabrinian spirituality is lived today, keeping faithful to its origins but reinventing itself creatively with the rich contribution that comes from living the charism and vocation in different cultural contexts. In particular, it is suggested that meetings with the laity be organized so as to spread the Scalabrinian spirituality that must be the basis of their commitment and at the same time to grasp from them those aspects that come from their experience and that enrich our listening to the Spirit.

- **Third phase: regional/provincial assembly on spirituality.** Each region/province is invited to organize the assembly on the theme of spirituality, with reflections specific to the context of each region/province and also with the help of experts.

- **Fourth phase: the symposium.** The theme of the symposium will be: **I will come to gather all the nations (Is. 66:18)**. In this line of the prophet Isaiah we grasp the synthesis of the objective of the symposium (an updated and intercultural rereading of the Scalabrinian charism and vocation) and Scalabrini's own yearning: The union in God through Jesus Christ of all people of good will. Indications for those attending the conference have already been provided. More will be sent later.

The Lord is always with us. But from time to time he visits us and makes us feel his closeness. He does it when He calls some of our confreres to Himself and reminds us that we are on this world to serve in His Kingdom, a privilege to be grateful for and responsible for; He did it recently in a solemn way when He asked us to know and imitate the holiness of our Founder; he does so this year by giving us the opportunity to live the mission not just as a job, an occupation like so many others, but first and foremost as men "moved by the Spirit," whether when he calls us to the temple (Lk. 2:27) or when he leads us in the desert (Mk. 1:12) or when he invites us to set sail to a new destination (Acts 13:4).

Fr Leonir Chiarello, cs  
Superior general