

World Day of
Migrants and
Refugees

27•IX•2026



"Even just one of these children"

MASS 2026

Even just one
of these children.

*"Whoever welcomes one
such child in my name
welcomes me"
(Mt 18:5)*



LITURGICAL SETTING

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Today the Church celebrates the 112th World Day of Migrants and Refugees. The theme proposed for 2026, “Even just one of these children,” places a child in the midst of the community and allows the words of Jesus to question us anew: “Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me” (Mt 18:5).

The Gospel invites us to see migrant and refugee children not as distant statistics, but as persons whose dignity, fears, hopes, and future concern the whole Church. Their vulnerability makes the call of Christ concrete: to recognize his face in the little ones, to hear their cry, and to respond with compassion and effective care.

For the Scalabrinian family, this day has a special resonance. Inspired by Saint John Baptist Scalabrini, we renew our commitment to walk with people on the move, to defend their dignity, and to help build communities where children, families, migrants, and refugees can find welcome, protection, fraternity, and hope.

With this spirit, we begin our celebration. We entrust to the Lord all those forced to leave their homes because of war, violence, poverty, persecution, or other forms of insecurity. In a special way, we remember children and young people on the move, asking that no one be left alone and that our communities may become living signs of Christ’s welcome.

“Welcoming a migrant child is not merely an act of solidarity: it is an encounter with Christ himself, present in the face of the little one, the poor, and the stranger.”

INTRODUCTORY RITES

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen.

Greeting

The Lord be with you.

R. And with your spirit.

Penitential Act

Lord Jesus, you identify yourself with the little ones, the poor, and the stranger. Forgive us when we fail to recognize your face in our migrant and refugee brothers and sisters, especially in the youngest among them.

R. Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, you welcome us without distinction and call us into communion. Forgive our prejudices, divisions, and failures in hospitality, especially when we close our doors to those who are vulnerable.

R. Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you call us to receive the least in your name. Forgive us when we remain indifferent to those seeking protection, peace, dignity, and hope.

R. Lord, have mercy.

Prayer for the Celebration

Lord Jesus, by dying for us on the Cross, you opened your heart to all, and now no one is a stranger to you. Come to the aid of refugees, exiles, and children separated from their families. Grant us a new heart, capable of welcoming with love and respect those with whom you identify, especially the little ones. You who live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

Pastoral note: the celebration continues according to the Roman Missal and the liturgical norms of the local Church.



FIRST READING

The Lord shows no partiality. He executes justice for the orphan and the widow, befriends the alien, and asks his people to remember their own experience of being strangers.

A reading from the Book of Deuteronomy (Deut 10:17-19)

For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who has no favorites, accepts no bribes; who executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and befriends the alien, feeding and clothing him. So you too must befriend the alien, for you were once aliens yourselves in the land of Egypt.

The Word of the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

Scalabrinian key

The memory of having been a stranger becomes a school of compassion. Christian hospitality begins when memory is transformed into responsibility for the person who arrives today.



Psalm 107

R. Give thanks to the Lord for he is good; his mercy endures forever!

Let that be the prayer of the Lord's redeemed, those redeemed from the hand of the foe, those gathered from foreign lands, from east and west, from north and south.

R. Give thanks to the Lord for he is good; his mercy endures forever!

Some had lost their way in a barren desert; found no path toward a city to live in. They were hungry and thirsty; their life was ebbing away.

R. Give thanks to the Lord for he is good; his mercy endures forever!

In their distress they cried to the Lord, who rescued them in their peril, guided them by a direct path so they reached a city to live in.

R. Give thanks to the Lord for he is good; his mercy endures forever!

Let them thank the Lord for his mercy, such wondrous deeds for the children of Adam. For he satisfied the thirsty, filled the hungry with good things.

R. Give thanks to the Lord for he is good; his mercy endures forever!



SECOND READING

Saint Paul describes a community in which love is sincere, hope is persevering, hospitality is practiced, and no one is treated as beneath another.

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans (Rom 12:9-16)

Let love be sincere; hate what is evil, hold on to what is good;

Love one another with mutual affection; anticipate one another in showing honor. Do not grow slack in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, endure in affliction, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the holy ones, exercise hospitality.

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Have the same regard for one another; do not be haughty but associate with the lowly; do not be wise in your own estimation.

The Word of the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

Scalabrinian key

Hospitality in Romans is not an abstract virtue. It takes shape in shared burdens, mutual honor, perseverance, and closeness to those whom society may overlook.



GOSPEL

Jesus places a child in the midst of the disciples and makes welcome of the little one a direct encounter with himself.

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew (Mt 18:1-5)

At that time the disciples approached Jesus and said, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" He called a child over, placed it in their midst, and said, "Amen, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever receives one child such as this in my name receives me."

The Gospel of the Lord.

R. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Suggested focus for the homily

1. Christ identifies himself with the little ones and asks to be welcomed in them.
2. Migrant and refugee children often carry wounds of separation, insecurity, and fear.
3. Christian welcome must become concrete care, protection, accompaniment, and communion.
4. A community that receives even one vulnerable child becomes a visible sign of the Gospel.

Profession of Faith



EVEN ONE OF THESE LITTLE ONES

The theme of this World Day takes us directly to the gesture of Jesus: he places a child in the center. The one who is usually small in the eyes of the world becomes the measure of discipleship. Christ asks us to recognize him precisely there - in the person who depends on the welcome, protection, and care of others.

Jesus, the little one who comes to us

The Gospel is inseparable from the experience of human vulnerability. Jesus himself became small, poor, and dependent. The Holy Family knew flight and exile. In the face of migrant and refugee children, Christians are therefore invited to see more than a social problem: they are called to encounter Christ, who comes to us asking for a place.

To receive a child in the name of Jesus is to receive Jesus himself. This gives Christian hospitality its deepest meaning. Welcome is not only kindness; it is a path toward God and a concrete expression of faith.

The Lord hears their cry

Scripture repeatedly reveals a God who sees suffering, hears the cry of the oppressed, and draws near to those in distress. That same gaze must become the gaze of the Church. The suffering of young migrants cannot remain invisible to us, especially when they are exposed to separation, fear, hunger, dangerous journeys, or the loss of the people and places that gave them security.

The question for the community is simple and demanding: when the little ones cry out, will they find someone willing to stop, listen, and act?

Pastoral reflection based on the Biblical Homily prepared for the 112th World Day of Migrants and Refugees.



FROM COMPASSION TO CONCRETE ACTION

The biblical homily names the forces that make children especially vulnerable: violence, the abuse of power, war, dangerous journeys, trafficking, exploitation, uprooting, and the absence of a stable home. The Bible knows these experiences. Israel crossed the desert; Abraham left his land; the Holy Family fled to Egypt. God does not stand apart from the journey of the displaced.

Restoring dignity

The command to love the stranger is rooted in the dignity that God gives every human person. A migrant child is not first a category, a case, or a number. He or she is a child of God. Christian communities are called to create spaces where young people on the move can be safe, heard, accompanied, and included.

The Good Samaritan as a model

The Good Samaritan does not ask whether the wounded person belongs to his group before he stops. He sees need, draws near, cares for the wounds, and provides concrete assistance. In the same way, the Gospel asks us not to pass by the suffering of migrants and refugees, especially children and other vulnerable persons.

A Scalabrinian response

The Scalabrinian charism invites us to make this closeness visible: to welcome the person who arrives, defend dignity, accompany families and children, create fraternity among cultures, and help communities become places where no one is treated as a stranger. Even one child welcomed with love can reveal the presence of Christ and transform the community that receives him or her.

May the Lord give us a new heart: one that sees with mercy, listens attentively, welcomes with joy, protects with love, and serves with humility.



PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Let us pray, brothers and sisters, for the Church and for all people on the move. With special trust, we remember children, families, and those who are most vulnerable.

To each invocation we respond:

R. Lord, hear us; Lord, hear our plea.

For Pope Leo XIV, the bishops, priests, deacons, religious, and all the People of God: that the Holy Spirit may strengthen the Church to proclaim the Gospel through welcome, justice, and compassionate service, especially among migrant and refugee children. Let us pray to the Lord.

For the Church and her shepherds: that, enlightened by the Word of God, our communities may keep the dignity of the human person and the care of the most vulnerable at the heart of their pastoral mission. Let us pray to the Lord.

For nations and their leaders: that they may seek justice, peace, solidarity, and the protection of children and families who are forced to flee their homes. Let us pray to the Lord.

For the victims of war, violence, persecution, trafficking, and exploitation: that the Lord may protect them on their journey, heal their wounds, and open paths toward safety, dignity, and peace. Let us pray to the Lord.

For migrant and refugee children: especially those separated from their families, those who are afraid, and those who reach out their hands but find no help; may God wipe away their tears and move our hearts to compassionate action. Let us pray to the Lord.

For us gathered here: that this Eucharist may free us from indifference and make our parish a place where every person can be welcomed as a brother or sister and every child can encounter a caring community. Let us pray to the Lord.

God of mercy, hear the prayers we place before you. Give us hearts ready to welcome Christ in the little ones and courage to serve those who journey in search of peace and hope. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.



OFFERTORY PROCESSION

As we present the bread and wine, we also bring the joys, sufferings, hopes, and commitments of the human family. These symbols express our desire to build a welcoming Church where everyone finds a place as a child of God.

BREAD AND WINE

Presented by a family. We entrust all families to the Lord, especially migrant and refugee families, asking that they may find open doors, fraternity, and a place at the table wherever they go.

A GLOBE

Carried by a representative of the community. It reminds us that people of every nation, language, and culture belong to one human family. May our world become a place of welcome, peace, and protection.

FLOWERS

Carried by a child. Different colors gathered in one bouquet become a sign of communion in diversity. May every culture be received as a gift and every child be able to flourish in Christ.

FRUITS OF THE EARTH

Carried by a migrant child or family. These fruits represent the gifts God entrusts to humanity and our willingness to share what we have with migrant and refugee brothers and sisters.

Holy Mass continues according to the Roman Missal.



COMMUNION RITE

Lord's Prayer - Sign of Peace - Fraction of the Bread - Communion

Optional meditation after Communion

Lord Jesus, you have gathered us around one table and nourished us with your life. Teach us to recognize you beyond the walls of this church: in the child who needs protection, in the family searching for safety, in the refugee longing for peace, and in the migrant who asks to be received as a brother or sister. May the communion we celebrate become communion in daily life. Amen.



CONCLUDING RITE

Having listened to the Word and shared the Eucharistic banquet, we are sent to live what we have celebrated. May our communities become places where the little ones are seen, protected, accompanied, and welcomed in the name of Christ.

May almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen.

Dismissal

Called to recognize Christ in every little one and in every person on the move, let us go in peace.

R. Thanks be to God.

Suggested Hymns

Entrance Christ, Be Our Light	Offertory In Bread We Bring You, Lord
Communion One Bread, One Body	Thanksgiving Bless the Lord (Taize)
Dismissal As I Kneel Before You	



NO ONE IS A STRANGER

The conclusion of the biblical reflection for this World Day reminds us that Christians, too, are pilgrims. Our deepest citizenship is in God, and this truth should make us more humble and fraternal toward those who are searching for a home, peace, and hope.

When a parish welcomes migrant and refugee children and their families, it does more than offer a service. It gives visible form to the Church as a household in which no one is treated as a stranger. Every gesture of welcome says: your life matters, your story is heard, and there is a place for you among us.

"You are no longer strangers and sojourners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God." - Eph 2:19

The call of 2026 is deliberately concrete: even one. One child protected. One family accompanied. One person listened to. One door opened. One community willing to change so that another person can belong. The Gospel does not ask us first for grand gestures; it asks us not to ignore the person whom Christ places in our midst.

May this World Day leave a mark on our parish life. May our liturgy become service, our prayer become closeness, and our compassion become action. May children on the move discover in the Christian community a safe place, caring adults, genuine friendship, and the hope that comes from knowing they are children of God.

"By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." - Jn 13:35

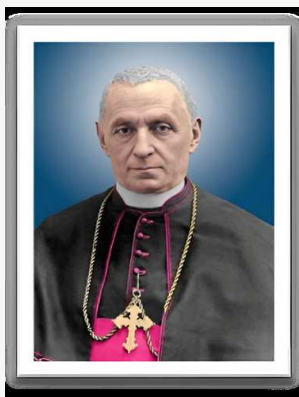


TO WELCOME EVEN ONE

The theme of the 112th World Day of Migrants and Refugees can become a simple pastoral examination for every community. In the coming weeks, we can ask how our parish, school, ministry, or family will make Christ's welcome visible to the little ones.

SEE	Pay attention to migrant and refugee children and families who may be isolated, newly arrived, afraid, or without a support network. Do not allow vulnerability to remain invisible.
LISTEN	Create time and safe spaces where children, young people, and families can tell their stories without being reduced to labels or assumptions.
WELCOME	Make parish life understandable and accessible to newcomers. A greeting, an invitation, clear information, and a companion can change the experience of arriving in a new place.
PROTECT	Take seriously every risk of violence, trafficking, exploitation, discrimination, or neglect. The little ones deserve environments where their dignity and safety come first.
ACCOMPANY	Walk with families beyond the first encounter. Christian closeness is patient and sustained, especially when people face uncertainty, separation, or difficult transitions.
BUILD COMMUNION	Invite migrants and refugees not only to receive help but to participate, contribute, pray, serve, and share their gifts. A welcoming Church becomes richer through encounter.

Even one child welcomed in the name of Christ can teach an entire community how to become more truly a family.



PRAYER TO SAINT JOHN BAPTIST SCALABRINI

Father to the Migrants

O Saint John Baptist Scalabrini, with the heart of a bishop and the zeal of an apostle you gave yourself completely to all.

You listened to the cries of migrants, spoke in their name, defended their rights. You found sustenance in the Eucharist, solace in the cross of Jesus, comfort in Mary, Mother of the Church.

Through your intercession may God, who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit, grant peace to all humanity, protect those who cross seas and borders sustained by hope, bless us and our loved ones and grant us the grace that we entrust to your fatherly love. Amen.

Three Glory to the Father in honor of the Holy Trinity.

www.scalabrinisaintcharles.org