

Scalabrinians



Casa del Migrante Raphael Archangel

More than 1,100 people have been hosted, and provided with hot meal... (Pg. 05)

My name is Alejandra Lainez Rodriguez

"With God, I have hope and live in victory. I experience love that cannot be explained!"... (Pg. 10)

Scalabrinian Year of Spirituality

A set of deep thinking articles about our Scalabrinian Spirituality. (Pg. 13)



Do we welcome, protect,
promote and integrate the
least among us in society




humilitas

SCALABRINIANS

SAINT CHARLES BORROMEO PROVINCE



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Migrants walk along a road in a caravan heading to the U.S. border,
in Tapachula, Mexico November 18, 2021. REUTERS/Jose Torres

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Scalabrinian Spirituality: Embracing the Human Family

Welcome to our new edition of the magazine, dedicated to exploring the world of Scalabrinian Spirituality. The Scalabrinian Order also known as Missionaries of Saint Charles Borromeo was founded in 1887 by Saint John Baptist Scalabrini, with the mission of providing support and guidance to migrants, seafarers and refugees around the world.

At the core of Scalabrinian Spirituality is the belief that every human being is a member of the same family, and that, we are all called to work together, to build a more just and compassionate world. In this issue, we will explore some aspects of Scalabrinian Spirituality, and how they can inspire us to live more fulfilling and meaningful lives.

One of the central themes of Scalabrinian Spirituality is the concept of migration. The Scalabrinians have a long history of

supporting migrants, seafarers, and refugees, and has become an important voice in the global conversation on immigration. We believe that all people have the right to seek a better life for themselves and their families, and that we have a responsibility, as Pope Francis says, to welcome, protect, promote, and integrate those who are seeking refuge and safety.

Another key element of Scalabrinian Spirituality is the belief in the dignity of every human being. This means that we must treat everyone with respect and kindness, regardless of their country of origin, race, religion, or social status. We are called to love our neighbors as ourselves, and to work for the common good of all people.

Scalabrinian Spirituality also emphasizes the importance of community and solidarity. We are not meant to live our lives in isolation, but rather to be part of a supportive and caring community.

In this issue, we will hear from members of the Scalabrinian community and lay people from different places of our province, who will share their personal stories and experiences of living out Scalabrinian Spirituality.

We hope that this issue will inspire you to explore Scalabrinian Spirituality for yourself, and to embrace the idea of a global human family. Together, we can create a world where all people of all races are valued and respected, and where everyone has the opportunity to live a fulfilling and meaningful life.



*There were old men bent by age and hard labor, young men in the prime of manhood, women pulling along or carrying their little ones, boys and girls, all drawn together by the same desire, all heading toward a common goal. They were emigrants.”
(St. John Baptist Scalabrini)*

A Message from our Provincial

The Missionaries of St. Charles, also known as Scalabrinians, are committed to the promotion of human dignity and human rights of migrants, including their faith and cultural values.

We are committed to promoting the total salvation of humankind, leading migrants in particular, to a rediscovery of faith in their lives with a longing for dignity and justice.

Our primary focus is to be migrants with the migrants and to welcome, protect, promote and integrate migrants, providing special priority for the poorest migrants. In accordance with the will of the Church, the institutions of our Founder, and the history of migration, we reaffirm our preference to serve those migrants who are acutely living the drama of migration.

We promote total salvation through spiritual assistance and

facilitate human, social and cultural assistance, preventing the causes of evil that afflict migrants. In line with the dictates of the recent Scalabrinian General Chapter, a renewed commitment of our Province to evaluating every community and pastoral position in the seven countries, has been given a priority. This includes countries such as Canada, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Haiti, USA, and Venezuela. Each religious community identifies a pastoral project, which is:

“A dynamic process, one of constant growth, born on the virtues of listening to reality and to the Word of God. It helps circumvent the recurrent risk of personal and pastoral individualism. It favors the continuity of our pastoral activities and makes it easier to respect the people we serve and our collaborators in the Scalabrinian mission. It makes life witnessing and the mission of the individuals and the community more credible and effective.” (15 GC 22.1).

The overall goal of this Provincial Plan is to acknowledge and answer to the changes taking place within the Scalabrinian Congregation as a whole. At St. Charles Borromeo province, in particular, is to rekindle our missionary and religious identity (15 GC 2).

Every community, with different cultures and ethnicities and united by the Scalabrinian charism, proclaims to the world the possibility to live in communion and diversity, and to build bridges of encounter, solidarity, and fraternity in Christ Jesus (see 15 GC 9).

The criteria of intercultural and inter-communitarian pastoral care of our positions must be pursued and strengthened, together with internal collaboration among the many Scalabrinian institutions (integrated centers) present in the territory and within the Province (see 15 GC 10.1).

Immigrants arriving to Ellis Island during the big exodus



“Casa del Migrante Raphael Archangel” in Iztapalapa, Mexico City



The “Casa del Migrante Archangel Raphael” was blessed by Mons. Jorge Cuapio, Bishop of the diocese of Iztapalapa, on October 25, 2022.

From that day until mid-February 2023, more than 1,100 people have been hosted, and provided with hot meal three times a day, personal cleaning

items, medical care, legal advise, play spaces for children, moments of prayer and psychological care. We have few staff to attend to all the needs of the house.

Thanks for the help of volunteers it is possible to provide service that is now offered. The migrants cooperate by cooking,

which is not an easy task, since they have to feed more than 150 people daily, and they also keep all the areas clean.

In addition, some of the men who work in the food market, when they return, bring fruit for fresh drinks at meals. We have the support of student religious sisters who carry out their social work, Scalabrinian seminarians, Scalabrinian Secular Missionaries, interns from the Autonomous University of Mexico, a volunteer doctor and various parish groups that come to carry out activities with the population and deliver donations.

All the parishes of the diocese, at the request of the bishop, have organized themselves to support the “Casa del Migrante”. This is a truly exemplary gesture that should be replicated in other dioceses.





Despite the shortcomings, “Casa del Migrante” continues to be a welcoming community replete with space to welcome so many people loaded with stories of fatigue, pain, suffering, abuse, robbery, extortion, rape, duels,

family separations, deportations, thirst, hunger and even kidnapping and labor slavery. It has become a space for the recovery of dignity, a space to recover the physical and spiritual strength to continue on the

journey. We ask God through the intercession of the Archangel Raphael to heal the sorrows and wounds of so many noble and generous people who only await better moments to redo and rebuild their history.

The Feast and Novena of Our Lady of Guadalupe at St. Leo the Great Parish in Houston, TX.

The feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe is a celebration that brings together Hispanics, specially Mexicans, who live in the United States, as Saint John Baptist Scalabrini would say, to remember; “the smile of their homeland and the consolation of their faith”.

Among the different parishes in the United States where Hispanics are cared for pastorally, a novena is celebrated in her honor.

For nine days before the feast, the communities gather to remember the story of the apparitions of Our Lady of Guadalupe on the Tepeyac hill and her message.





For parishes that are pastorally cared for by the Scalabrinian missionaries in the United States, these nine days of prayer, reflection and celebration are carefully prepared. At the parish of Saint Leo, The Great, in Houston, Texas the novena and the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe involved many groups.

The parish priest, Fr. Carmelo Hernández, c.s. and Fr. Enrique Figueroa, c.s. organized the migrants from Mexico into eight groups, according to the state of Mexico where they were born, and a group from Central and South Americans.

Every night, during the nine days of the novena, a group was responsible for animating the Eucharist, sharing the representative food of their state or country, and presenting their typical music.



My name is Alejandra Lainez Rodriguez...

I am from Honduras but I live in Maryland. I am currently 21 years old, I am a Junior at the University of the District of Columbia majoring in Early Childhood Education where I also play Women's Lacrosse under a scholarship program.

Education has always been important in my life, Education not only secures personal life but collectively contributes to the development of a more reliable nation and the world. That's the reason why I want to be able to teach children, so they understand the importance of education. I am blessed to be able to attend an HBCU school while playing a sport where we are the only public university in the city. Playing sports always been important in my life since I was young.

Playing sports have allowed me to build many friendships and has taught me life lessons. Playing in teams has helped me to develop social skills. It has taught me how to cooperate, listen, and work with others and more importantly, how to be a great teammate, which applies in the field and outside the field. My life has always been busy but I have always made sure to keep my faith strong and to always allow God to guide me in the right path.

As I reflect on my spiritual journey, I remember the times of questioning God, praying in times of need, and asking why certain things happen the way they do.

My journey has brought me through rough patches of my life and times of life learning lessons.

My Faith in Christ has given me a unique life filled with optimism and purpose. From a young age, I was raised in a home where I was taught about the love of Christ. My life has been filled with experiences that have amplified my faith. For example, I lost my Dad at a very young age, and it wasn't easy to understand but through all the



difficult circumstances that I have faced, faith in Christ has given me the encouragement that I need to persevere in life.

Faith has influenced my decision making, which is why I strive to always say:

“If God allows it, If it is his will.”

All thanks to him, I felt that call to start teaching children about his everlasting love at St. Bernard of Clairvaux, the day I dro-

pped off my little brother to his pre-communion class.

As I made that decision, I started to get more involved in church services, which little did I know it would have a big impact on my family, because it allowed them to take the same footsteps. God has a plan for everyone. Those plans will not be perfect and will not be easy. These plans have taught me about life and who I am becoming today. As I reflect, I understand that we shouldn't be afraid to take a risk into new

opportunities God puts in our way, because if we are walking with him, anything is possible. Walking with him has allowed me to experience incredible interactions with others who God is their first priority, It has allowed me to understand what my purpose is.

Taking that chance has allowed me to take a lead into our church community newest group with the young adults, to guide them in their path with God. There is deep hunger in youth and young adults; hunger



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for love, for truth, for meaning, for belonging, and for purpose that society cannot provide. This hunger is satisfied in friendship with Jesus Christ; a friendship that leads to community in his Church and to fruitful sharing of love and care with those in need.

Another way to describe this friendship is the invitation to

become a missionary disciple of and for Jesus Christ. I want to be able to bring more young adults to engage more, and help young disciples encounter Christ. Accompany them, promote the sense of belonging in the parish community, and lead them to missionary witness.

Without God I would lose hope and live in defeat. I would never

see victories in my life, because I would not have the strength to complete the journey.

“ Without God I would live this world lost and alone.”

With God, I have hope and live in victory! I experience love that cannot be explained! I enjoy life to the fullest, and all because I walk with him.



SCALABRINIAN YEAR OF SPIRITUALITY

FR. PETER PAUL, C.S.

THE LAYING OF SOLID FOUNDATIONS

St. Scalabrini's faith, which he had inherited from his mother and had been nourished through his formation in the seminary, was sustained by a constant and solid prayer life throughout his life. It would not be possible to speak of spirituality without a sustained and persistent prayer life, intended not as recitation of formulas but, especially in the case of St. Scalabrini, as an ongoing intimate relationship with the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, as

St. Paul says, "It is no longer I who live, but Christ living in me." (Gal 2, 20).

From early on, Scalabrini learned to see God present and active in history. He knew from his early religious education that God breaks into history through unsuspecting men and women whom he chooses, who find themselves led to act in different ways and with a language, unlike that of the utterances of the world. In the New Testament, the Christian believer relies on the words of

Jesus to his disciples: "behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age." (Mt 28, 20). Living his faith within the Church, as a young priest, St. Scalabrini knew that the Holy Spirit, who came on Pentecost, is always present in the Church, as the ongoing incarnation of Jesus in human history until the time of its fulfillment. Evident ways in which the Spirit of Jesus Christ is present and active in the Church are the sacraments, especially the Holy Eucharist and the Apostolic Succession.



Young J.B. Scalabrini newly appointed Bishop of Piacenza



Piacenza Cathedral, Italy

A PROCESS OF DISCOVERY

Those who had the privilege of knowing or working with St. Scalabrini, or were the heirs of his legacy, have felt from the beginning the need to write about him and to share with others their memories and impressions and to set in writing the lessons learned from his example. They kept very vivid and good memories of him and of his labors and initiatives, given the special person that he was in all that he did and in how he lived.

He was a charismatic giant in both his actions and words, a shepherd who lived what he preached; a guide who led his flock walking ahead of it, in the midst of it and following behind it to make sure none was lost. In his 39 years as Bishop of Piacenza, he left such an indelible

mark, that very early, some of the missionaries of the Congregation he founded, began to do research and to deepen the understanding of his impact in church and civil history.

In view of helping and furthering Scalabrini's process of canonization, which had been set up in Piacenza in 1941, Bishop Marco Caliaro began a research in earnest, to clarify his true intention and the nature of his initiative on behalf of migrants, and especially in founding his Congregation of priests and brothers to assist them. Together with Fr. Mario Francesconi, he later published in 1965 an early reliable biography: "L'Apostolo dei Migranti - Giovanni Battista Scalabrini," which was quickly translated or reproduced in the four main languages of the Scalabrinian Congregation.

The process for the cause of canonization had brought to light precious personal details and information which begged the need to understand more fully Scalabrini's spirituality and stimulated further research into his numerous writings and extensive correspondence.

There was a sense among these missionaries that, since he had operated in very difficult and tormented times, maybe he had not been fully understood and often there were still ideological raw nerves exposed with regard to his active involvement in the most sensitive current issues in the church and society, during his 39 years as Bishop (1976-1905) and Founder of two religious congregations.

There were many prejudices to dismantle and much misinformation to be abated to allow a



Brazil 1904, St. Scalabrini with some of his missionaries and the Capuchin Franciscan Friars



more informed access to who he really was and to how and why he did what he did on so many levels, affecting so many peoples, always in contact with the Holy See, and in communion with his fellow bishops in Italy, throughout Europe and across the Atlantic.

It was during these years, especially due to the thorough research by Fr. Mario Francesconi, that the attention toward the Founder, turned from being just biographical, and to being more inclusive and fully open to the wealth of his multifaceted spirituality. In the 1960s and 1980s while the Scalabrinian Congregation was opening itself to the whole gamma of modern migration and was rediscovering a renewed missionary identity, more attention turned to his charismatic and prophetic understanding of human migration as an integral component of human history with the potential for the transformation of human society and, most of all, a potential ally to the evangelizing mission of the Universal Church.

This renewed interest caused a more detailed study of St. Scalabrini's writings as Bishop and his active and dynamic role in facing the challenges and sharp conflicts of his time in the Church as Bishop, especially in an Italian society still under construction following the unification of the country in 1870.

Driven by a strong sense of duty, as well as by his apostolic vocation as Bishop, he engaged all levels of society, along with the press, in confronting the new phenomenon of mass migrations, which had a deep emotional impact on him "both as an Italian and as Bishop."

This rediscovery of St. Scalabrini as a spiritual leader and charismatic man of action would involve all branches of the Scalabrinian Family, including many members of the laity. Fr. Mario Francesconi was conducting from 1969 to 1982 his in-depth research in view of publishing the six volumes of the History of The Scalabrinian Congregation. Later he would undertake the massive effort of bringing together all the historical elements for a "Life of John Baptist Scalabrini." In response to this vast undertaking, several Scalabrinian missionary men and women began a concerted effort to put together an extract from the treasures contained in Scalabrini's writings as Bishop and as Founder.

This resulted in the work published originally in Italian in the mid-1980s "Scalabrini: Una Voce Viva", which was finally published in English in 1987 as "Scalabrini, A Living Voice," thanks to the translation skills of the late Fr. Gino Dalpiaz.

Still in the mid-1980s, Fr. Francesconi produced another masterpiece on St. Scalabrini's *Spiritualità d'Incarnazione*. It was published in 1989, the year of his death. In this masterful publication, Father Francesconi offered "distilled" high quality reflections from all he had uncovered and discovered throughout his focused, relentless and meticulous work. This publication was edited in English by Fr. Ezio Marchetto and published in 1995.

St. Scalabrini experienced and filtered into his heart and mind the great challenges and conflicts of his time not as a mere spectator but with a passion all his own, which will become more and more evident especially as Bishop in his initiatives, his multiple writings and his abundant lively correspondence. He took personally all the attacks on the Church and on her truths. His faith was lived intensely in and through the Church, his loyalty to the Church and to the Pope was uncompromising.

Scalabrini knew the profound truths of the faith and their impact on his life and on the life of the Church both local and universal. He knew the power of the Magisterium and of the Apostolic Tradition and embraced both as a shield to fend off the attacks against the Church which he loved deeply and defended just as fiercely. His faith and spirituality became increasingly Christ-centered and Cross-centered.

flesh and lived among us. Scalabrini believed thoroughly that Jesus is present in his Church and in the sacraments, especially the most holy Eucharist, but he also knew that Jesus is always found among the poor because he is one of them. He is in the children who need to be catechized, in the migrants who need to be assisted and protected, in the workers inside factories or on the farms, with the blind, with the speaking-and-hearing-impaired.

now, by his grace, does what seems absurd: he allows us, sinful mortal creatures, to become as holy as he is holy. Divinization is the reverse process of the Incarnation and is the real basis for our active and intimate relationship with Jesus and through him with the Father, regenerated once again in the divine image.

Pope Benedict XVI helps us with his reflection on this mystery:

“The Christian life demands, so to speak, the ‘martyrdom’ of daily fidelity to the Gospel, that is, the courage to let Christ grow in us and let Christ direct our thinking and actions. But this can only happen in our lives if our relationship with God is solid. Prayer is not wasted time, it is not stealing space from activities, even apostolic ones, but it is exactly the opposite: only if we are able to have a faithful constant, trusting prayer life, it will be God Himself who will give us the ability and strength to live happily and serenely, overcome difficulties and witness Him with ready courage.”

Scalabrini fed the hungry, and unceremoniously sought out the lost and the forgotten, no one was excluded from his boundless charitable heart. He needed to be and to act where he knew Jesus was present calling him.

St. Scalabrini believed that in coming to us Jesus draws us to him in a process of “Theosis” which he referred to as “divinization.” As by his love, God allowed his Son to take on our sinful mortal human nature, he



SPIRITUALITY OF INCARNATION AND DIVINIZATION

For St. John Baptist Scalabrini, as well as for many Fathers of the Church, the Incarnation was not just a one-time event, when the angel Gabriel came to Mary at Nazareth. That was only the beginning of God’s active saving presence in the world. No longer through the prophets, God now speaks through his Beloved Son, the Word who became

Pope Benedict XVI
CNS photo/Paul Haring 2011



Make a good discernment to make concrete and correct decisions

Discernment, from a simple definition, is the ability to differentiate truth from error. For others discernment is:



The ability to see what is dark.”

The Jesuit Agustín Rivarola, defines discernment as a skill that responds to basic needs of the human being:



Discerning is something essential, constitutive, of the human being as being oriented to act with freedom and responsibility.”

The concept of discernment is used in all situations and contexts of the life of human beings, however, many have wanted to reduce it to the spiri-

tual field. From a global vision, discernment is seen as a process during which all the senses of the discerning person are active and set in motion towards a reality that will be decisive and definitive for the person.

The human being discerns to distinguish in a concrete way and not to be confused when choosing between several options. Discernment is the lung of the full realization of the human being who is and must always be in search of himself, of the well-being of his neighbors and his own.

Discernment embraces all the realities of the human being, it is not reduced to the sole disci-

pline of spirituality, nor is it seen only as an element to arrive at consecrated life. However, in the following lines, we will stop at the spiritual-vocational aspect, that is, discerning to discover and accept the will of God.

It is of utmost importance to understand that discernment taken seriously and accompanied by adequate and qualified people, allows you to make a good decision and choose for life. Therefore, this requires an interior discipline, which ensures that the fruit of discernment is not the result of emotions, but of the Spirit that moves within the desire to listen to God's voice and respond to his call.



If someone wants to discover God's will in his life, the important thing would be to have awareness and knowledge of himself that leads him to approach God. This approach to God will propel him, through concrete people who have experienced God's presence in their lives and, from concrete realities to perceive and marvel at God's creation with us. The young Samuel, to discover, identify the voice of the Lord went to Elijah who was directing him until he discovered that it was God who called him. Therefore, every young person desirous of knowing and entering a community, should approach a consecrated person, a priest or someone of experience who will help him, like Samuel, to discover the call of God in his life. It alone cannot be discerned.

For God puts others on our path to help us develop antibodies against deception and know how to distinguish the good from the less good, what is God's and what is not His.

In his first letter, St. John declares the following:

“Beloved, do not create every spirit, but try the spirits if they are of God; for many false prophets have gone out into the world. (1 Jn 4:1).”

A serious process of discernment should not be optional, but one of the most important requirements for discovering one's vocation.

The latter requires listening to the inner being, sacrifice, determination, conviction, openness to the unknown and a leaving of your world of comfort for something different. Dare for something essential, leaving the necessary and the ephemeral.

It is of utmost importance to understand that discernment taken seriously and accompanied by adequate and qualified people, allows you to make a good decision and choose for life. Therefore, this requires an interior discipline, which ensures that the fruit of discernment is not the result of emotions, but of the Spirit that moves within the desire to listen to God's voice and respond to his call.



Migrants Achievements

FAMILY

My name is Raphael Alves, I am married to Karla Monteiro, we have three children David (14), Mariana (8) and Lucca (5). I'm from Vila Velha, Espirito Santo. Our story as migrants begins in September 2007 when we arrived in Newark, New Jersey, pursuing the American dream like everyone else.

DIFFICULTIES AND NEW LESSONS

Life is an unpredictable journey, full of joy and sorrow. As I look back on my life, I can see that it has been full of ups and downs, successes and failures. Despite all the difficulties I have encountered along the way, I am grateful for the lessons that these experiences have taught me. Through my struggles, I have become stronger and more resilient in facing whatever life throws at me.

Some of my initial struggles were language, work adaptation, discrimination against us for being migrants. We just wanted to be able to provide for our family and give them the best that life has to offer. However, we have always been aware that this would not be an easy journey and that we would need help along the way.

Thankfully, God has always been there with me and my family guiding us through every

step and helping us stay on track.

WORK AND FAMILY

I took on the job of delivering pizzas and my wife started working at a Brazilian bakery, our family grew. We spent two years in this situation until I finally found employment in the construction industry. My wife continued to work at the bakery until the birth of our daughter, Mariana, which was truly a miracle. She was born in this blessed land, but her arrival was accompanied by a near-death experience. Despite this difficult beginning, God graced us with this precious little angel. Soon after, our son Lucca was born. Like in every story comes challenges, and Lucca had his

share. However, through it all, we were able to navigate these difficulties with the grace of God.

TAKING UP NEW ROLES

After that my wife stayed at home to take care of our children and, by the way, a job much more arduous than mine in construction. My wife has always been passionate about creating beautiful things. Now, my wife is living her dream of designing jewelry made with acrylic mass and using the gift that God gave her to create beautiful pieces of art. It is an incredible feeling when I see something come out of her hands that other people can appreciate and enjoy. Every piece of jewelry is unique.



PARISH LIFE

Our family is actively involved in St. Antonio de Padua Church, which is part of the parish of Padre Lino Garcia located in Somerville, Massachusetts. We take great pride in contributing to the growth and success of our home parish where I serve as coordinator of catechesis, offer assistance in the kitchen and participate in church festivities. Furthermore, I also hold the position of being coordinator of the extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion and at the same time work as a catechist. Recently, I have taken on the role of an acolyte in our church. Meanwhile, my son, David, is an altar boy, which fills us with immense joy.



As immigrants, it brings us great comfort to have Father Lino Garcia as our pastor, as he too has walked a similar path and understands the day-to-day struggles that come with being an immigrant.

Life is a journey of ups and downs, and our family is no exception. However, if you stay focused on your goals, you can achieve anything you want with God's grace. This has been the story of my life that shaped my dreams and helped me make them come true.



Migrants risk their lives by crossing the Darien Gap



Venezuelan Immigrants crossing the Darien Gap, Oct 15, 2022.
(Fernando Vergara / Associated Press LA Times)

Most Americans are aware of the dangers migrants face when they decide to irregularly cross the US-Mexico border: being kidnapped or even killed by criminal groups dedicated to smuggling and human trafficking, extortion and violence from authorities, getting lost in the desert or lack of enough water or food are some of the perils faced by those who take the risk to reach the US, which cause hundreds of deaths every year.

But not many people are aware of another extremely dangerous spot in the Western

Emisphere for migrants: the Darien Gap, the tropical rain-forest border region between Colombia and Panama. This spot is transited by migrants who leave different South American countries in their attempt to cross by land all Central America and Mexico in order to reach the US and, some times, from there, attempting to reach Canada. Even if the majority of them are Venezuelans, nationals from other South American and Caribbean countries and even African and Asian nationals transit this dangerous route too. Theft, human trafficking, killings and

disappearances are some of the dangers migrants are subject to, due mainly to the presence of transnational criminal networks that conduct with all impunity their lucrative business. Also, serious physical and health issues are detected in those who manage to reach the assistance centers in the Panamanian side of the border. As Jean, a survivor recalls: “There are people in the forest who can rob you or even kill you. I know people who were killed; yes, people who left before me and while crossing the jungle I found their dead bodies”.

In 2022, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), almost 250,000 persons crossed the Darien Gap, nearly doubling the number in relation to the previous year. Unfortunately, according to the National Migration Service of Panama, only in the first two months of 2023, the numbers have already reached more than 50,000, a jump that clearly indicates that the numbers will increase exponentially at the end of the current year.

Why migrants decide to transit such a dangerous and treacherous route, even if they are well aware about all the dangers they would face by attempting to cross to Panama? The reason is simple: their living conditions either in their country of origin or in the countries where they temporarily stayed are dire ones, and the hope to reach the U.S. and have much better

prospects for their future and that of their families are worth enough to try it. But beyond the specific reasons that lead people to take this dangerous route, all migrants risk their lives by taking it. Governments are responsible of creating conditions to allow their nationals to remain in their own land, so nobody is forced to migrate out of material need, but many times, due to lack of political will or sufficient resources they do not achieve that goal. But transit and destination countries are also responsible of offering regular migration pathways that prevent people from experiencing different kinds of abuses and violence, including death, and to provide humanitarian assistance for those in need, even though this help many times is provided by other agents, such as humanitarian organizations, including the Scalabrinian centers.

In this respect, it is worth mentioning that even if there is no Scalabrinian presence in the Darien Gap itself, the Scalabrinian missionaries in Colombia provide a wide variety of services to tens of thousands of migrants and internally displaced Colombians to prevent them from taking this extremely dangerous risk at their three missions in the country (Bogotá, Cúcuta and Villa del Rosario): from humanitarian assistance (shelter, food and clothing) to formal education for children (schools), training, employment and capital seed for entrepreneurs. Needless to say, the needs grow by the day, but with determination and trust in God's help and that provided by people with good heart, we are hopeful that we will keep on making a difference on those who reach our centers in great need.

VÍCTOR GENINA

Director of Development and Policy at the Scalabrini International Migration Network of New York (SIMN)

SIMN fulfills its mission through an extensive network of think tanks, social service centers, shelters, senior centers, orphanages, medical clinics, kindergartens, schools, employment centers, and cultural centers.

<https://simn-global.org/>



Immigrant Families in a temporal camp crossing the Darien Gap.
(John Moore, Getty Images)

Am I called to be a Scalabrinian Priest or Religious Brother?

These are some signs that I have a vocation to be a Scalabrinian Priest/Brother:

- ✓ A personal relationship with Jesus Christ is important to me.
- ✓ Going to Mass and Adoration is a very important part of my life.
- ✓ I feel called to give more of myself to others.
- ✓ I have a burning desire to help people get closer to Christ and to know the truth about God.
- ✓ I have a desire to deepen the knowledge of faith.
- ✓ Generosity and concern toward others.
- ✓ Love for the Catholic Church and its teachings.
- ✓ Openness to different races, ethnic groups, and cultures.
- ✓ Normal Social Talents/skills.
- ✓ Courage and willingness to express in the name of Christ opinions that are not popular.
- ✓ People have told me I would make a good priest.
- ✓ The thought of becoming a priest keeps coming back over and over again.
- ✓ After hearing the readings at Mass I think about how I would preach.
- ✓ I have a strong sense that what I have planned for the future is not what God has planned for me.
- ✓ Devotion to the Holy Eucharist is part of my life.
- ✓ Desire to live a good and holy life.
- ✓ Ability to make friends.
- ✓ Love for the poor, the migrants and the helpless.
- ✓ Good image of my own self.

If some of these statements reflect how you feel, If you have these vocational concerns and questions you are called to be a Scalabrinian Priest or Brother, possibly it is time for you to call our vocation point of contact to talk about your calling. Please contact:

Fr. Noe Vera James, at
+1 (347) 274-7791

Fr. José Gabriel Forero Martinez, at
+1 (647) 675-2093

Fr. Khiet Cao Dang, at
khietdangcs@gmail.com
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Fire at Migrant Detention Center in Mexico

Province of Saint Charles Borromeo Stands in Solidarity with Victims of Deadly Fire at Mexican Migrant Detention Center."

DEAR READERS,

We want to share with you the news about the recent tragedy that occurred in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua on March 27, 2023. The Provisional Station of the National Institute of Migrations caught fire, claiming the lives of 39 men and leaving 29 others injured, mostly Guatemalan nationals.

As the Province of Saint Charles Borromeo - Scalabrinians, we join our confreres of the St. John the Baptist Province present in Central America, Mexico, the United States, and Canada to express our heartfelt solidarity with the families of those who lost their lives in this tragic incident.

We strongly condemn the detention of migrants in the so-called "migrant shelters," which are nothing but detention centers. The lack of clarity in immigration policies has been generating despair among migrants for a long time. It is time for governments to ensure that migrants are not subjected to discrimination or exploitation and are provided with adequate



A woman places flowers in front of a gate that has been converted into a makeshift memorial Tuesday outside a Mexican immigration detention center in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, where a fire in a dormitory left more than three dozen migrants dead. (Christian Chavez ~ Associated Press)

protection and assistance when needed.

The recent tragedy in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, highlights the suffering and injustice faced by migrants everywhere.

It is heartbreaking to see how these people are treated, and it should be a wake-up call for the Mexican government to take action.

The Scalabrinians, who serve migrants, refugees, and seafarers worldwide, are deeply saddened by this tragedy and call for greater support and protection for migrants and vulnerable communities. We stand in solidarity with those who have been affected and hope that this incident draws attention to the urgent need for greater support and protection for migrants and refugees worldwide.

Let us remember that it is the responsibility of governments to guarantee the human rights

of all individuals residing in the country, regardless of their immigration status. Governments must ensure that migrants are not subjected to discrimination or exploitation and are provided with adequate protection and assistance when needed.

We condemn those who had a role, whether active or passive, in the deaths of these 39 men. These men had either been deported from the United States and were awaiting repatriation, or had been arrested by the Migration Police while asking for food on the streets to survive. They were protesting the migration policy that is solely focused on policing and repression without providing genuine opportunities for a better life.

Let us continue to stand in solidarity with those affected by this tragedy and work towards a world where migrants and refugees are treated with dignity and respect.

The 2023 Interprovincial Assembly: Assessing Our Work and Exploring New Possibilities

From April 17 to 21, the Interprovincial Assembly took place in Houston, TX, bringing together members from across provinces to assess our work, dis-

cuss our future and new possibilities, and create a fraternal environment that promotes integration and collaboration. The main objective of the assembly was to evaluate our work done

over the past year and to plan for our future missions and endeavors. We examined the challenges and opportunities that we encountered, identified areas for improvement to en-



hance our impact on the Scalabrinian communities we serve. The assembly was held in a spirit of brotherhood, providing an opportunity for members to bond and connect with each other. We also took the opportunity to visit Saint Leo the

Great and Saint John Neumann Parishes, where we participated in the Eucharist and cultural festivities.

During the assembly, we discussed new projects that we plan to undertake, such as ex-

panding our mission work to new ethnic communities and providing Scalabrinian formation and vocational discernment for young people. We also explored new possibilities for collaboration and partnership with Saint John the Baptist pro-



vince to enhance our impact and reach.

Another important aspect of the assembly was promoting integration and inclusiveness among our confreres. We emphasized the importance of working together and building relationships across provincial boundaries to achieve our shared goals.

In conclusion, the 2023 Interprovincial Assembly was a fruitful and productive event that allowed us to reflect on our work, plan for the future, and create a sense of fraternity among our confreres. We look forward to working together to make a positive impact on the migrant communities we serve.



Scalabrinian Spirituality

The love for the Eucharist was the most outstanding characteristic of the spirituality of St. John Baptist Scalabrini. This is the conclusion reached by Fr. Mario Francesconi, cs, who wrote the documentation for the process of Canonization.

St. John Baptist Scalabrini was Bishop of Piacenza from 1876 to 1905, a time in which the Catholic Church experienced a restoration of the worship of the Eucharist, after the “winter” of Jansenism. He promoted this restoration with his teaching and with concrete pastoral initiatives, stemming from his profound faith in this Mystery.

In his pastoral letter for Lent of 1902, he presented the content of the Diocesan Synod on the Eucharist, celebrated two years before, and wrote that the Eucharist produces the highest degree of perfection that is possible in the present life. If through the Incarnation the Word of God assumed the human nature, in the Eucharist the Incarnate Word enters in communion with each person who receives him. A priest has the duty to give to the faithful a solid and profound teaching on the Eucharistic mystery.

St. John Baptist Scalabrini celebrated Mass daily and after the celebration he used to have a

a long private prayer of thanksgiving. When he was on the ship crossing the Atlantic going and coming from North and South America, he was able to motivate the passengers to participate in the celebrations. At the end of the voyage to Brazil, a passenger said that it was like living in a monastery for 24 days.

To his priests he recommended: “It would be highly praisewor-

thy and desirable for a priest to come early in the morning, before the holy tabernacle, and there, almost anticipating the sun in praising God, to make his meditation.” (3rd Address at the 3rd Synod, August 30, 1899)

He had the practice of placing documents that involved difficult decisions under the corporal, in physical contact with the Sacrament, sure to be enlightened.



Duomo of Piacenza. (Wiki)

He wrote to a priest:

"I would like you to read this letter of mine in front of the tabernacle. There you will receive the light and the strength you need to carry out my advice."

In their ministry, priests were urged, above all, to transmit to the people the word and the life of Christ drawn personally and directly from the tabernacle: "I would like to suggest that you prepare your sermons before the Blessed Sacrament so that you may communicate to your people the very words that Christ has inspired you."

He thought of every possible means for an adequate preparation of the children for first Communion. He recommended the daily reception of Communion anticipating the directives of Saint Pius X.

At the beginning of the new century, he instituted for the priests the perpetual adoration "so that no hour, not even during the night", would pass in his diocese without at least one priest in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament.

We would be mistaken if we thought that the Eucharistic devotion that St. John Baptist Scalabrini lived and promoted was individualistic or pure sentimentalism.

His contemplation of God and of His Mystery gave him the capacity to carry out an intense pastoral activity. He did five pastoral visits to the 365 parishes of his diocese. He visited his missionaries and their missions in the US in 1901 and in Brazil in 1904. He gave conferences on emigration in some

major Italian cities to promote the cause of emigrants. In 1899 he authored a publication on "Socialism and the action of the clergy." In the conclusion of his synodal document, St. John Baptist Scalabrini wrote: "My dearly beloved sons, allow me to address you and tell you together with Saint Paul: 'Examine yourselves, to see whether you are holding to your faith.' (2 Cor 13,5). Consider with every diligence your knowledge and your faith in the Eucharist [...]. Any way it might be, commit yourselves, especially during the Lenten season, to better know it so that it may become the sweetest nourishment for your intellect, the most profound enjoyment for your heart, the safest guide for your pilgrimage, and it may be said of you that you truly want to live the life of a Christian, the Eucharistic life."



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Novena to Saint John Baptist Scalabrini - Intercessor of Migrants

FIRST DAY

Saint John Baptist Scalabrini and the Family

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

Saint John Baptist Scalabrini, promoter of the human family, I ask you, with great faith, to intercede with the Almighty God to grant me the grace of (...). I, for my part, promise to pray for the families.

Word of God - (Eph. 5:33;6,14)

Each of you love your wife as yourself, and the wife respect her husband. Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Parents, do not give your children a reason to revolt against you; raise your children by educating and correcting them as the Lord wants.

Reflection

"The family is the first nest of the soul, the first school for intelligence, the first shelter for faith, the first refuge for love, the first temple of God, the sanctuary of the most cherished traditions, the joyful play of our childhood, the heart's first and last breath." (Scalabrini).

Prayer

God, our Father, who in Saint John Baptist Scalabrini gave us a zealous defender of the human family, grant us the grace to have holy and blessed Christian families; Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen.

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be...

SECOND DAY

Saint John Baptist Scalabrini and the Sick

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

Saint John Baptist Scalabrini, attentive to the sick, I ask you, with great faith, to intercede to the Almighty God and grant me the grace of (...). I, for my part, promise to pray for the sick and infirm.

Word of God - (James 5:14-15)

Is any of you sick? Call the elders of the church to pray for him, anointing him with oil, in the name of the Lord. Prayer made in faith will save the sick person: the Lord will raise him up, and if he has sins, he will be forgiven.

Reflection

"Certainly nothing pleases God so much as the care of the sick. It is one of the most beautiful forms of the Christian and civil life." (Scalabrini).

Prayer

God, our Father, who in Saint John Baptist Scalabrini gave us a shepherd sensitive to the illnesses of the sick, grant us the grace of restoring the health of our sick and infirm; Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen.

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be...

THIRD DAY

Saint John Baptist Scalabrini and the Workers

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

Saint John Baptist Scalabrini, mobilizer of workers, I ask you, with great faith, to intercede with the Almighty God to grant me the grace of (...). I, for my part, promise to pray for the unemployed and workers.

Word of God - (1 Thess. 4:11)

May it be a matter of honor for you to live in peace, minding your own business and working with your own hands, as we recommend.

Reflection

"If work values capital, why shouldn't there be greater participation by workers, at least to the point of guaranteeing them enough healthy and safe food?" (Scalabrini).

Prayer

God, our Father, who in Saint John Baptist Scalabrini gave us a bishop committed to social issues, grant us the grace of work, employment and decent wages; Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen.

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be...



FOURTH DAY

Saint John Baptist Scalabrini and the Sinners

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

Saint John Baptist Scalabrini, Minister of Reconciliation, I ask you, with great faith, to intercede with the Almighty God to grant me the grace of (...). I, for my part, promise to pray for my conversion and that of my brothers.

Word of God - (Mt. 18:21-22)

Peter approached Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times must I forgive if my brother sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus replied, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven."

Reflection

"He who does not love and does not forgive is not with the Church." (Scalabrini).

Prayer

God, our Father, who in Saint John Baptist Scalabrini gave us an authentic minister of reconciliation, following his example, move our hearts to forgiveness, reconciliation, and peace; Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen.

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be...

FIFTH DAY

Saint John Baptist Scalabrini and the Sufferers

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

Saint John Baptist Scalabrini, man who united the crosses of life to the cross of Christ, I ask you, with great faith, to intercede with the Almighty God to grant me the grace of (...). I, for my part, promise to pray for the suffering.

Word of God - (Job 2:7.9-10)

Satan smote Job with grievous wounds from the sole of his foot to his head. His wife said to him, "And you are still in your integrity? Curse God and die at once!" Job replied, "You are talking like a madwoman! If we accept good things from God, shouldn't we also accept bad things?" And despite all this, Job did not offend God with words.

Reflection

"The year that is about to end has been, for me, full of crosses, but perhaps - thank God! - the most fruitful in holy works. How true it is that vigor and strength are found in the cross!" (Scalabrini).

Prayer

God, our Father, who in Saint John Baptist Scalabrini gave us an example of fidelity, grant us the grace of faith in the face of life's trials; Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen.

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be...

SIXTH DAY

Saint John Baptist Scalabrini and the Migrants

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

Saint John Baptist Scalabrini, father and patron saint of migrants, I ask you, with great faith, to intercede with the Almighty God to grant me the grace of (...). I, for my part, promise to pray for migrants.

Word of God - (Mt. 25:35-36)

I was hungry, and you fed me; I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink, I was a stranger, and you welcomed me; I was naked and you gave me clothing; I was sick, and you took care of me; I was in prison, and you came to visit me.

Reflection

"For the migrant, homeland is the land that gives him bread!" (Scalabrini).

Prayer

God, our Father, who in Saint John Baptist Scalabrini gave us a father and apostle of migrants, grant us the grace of a welcoming Christian life; Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen.

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be...



SEVENTH DAY

Saint John Baptist Scalabrini and the Children

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

Saint John Baptist Scalabrini, friend of children, I ask you with great faith, that you intercede with the Almighty God to grant me the grace of (...). I, for my part, promise to pray for children and adolescents.

Word of God - (Mk. 9:36-37)

Jesus took a child and placed him in their midst. He hugged the child and said: Who receives in my name one of these children receives me. And whoever receives me does not receive me, but Him who sent me.

Reflection

"Put well in the mind, parents, for children live by imitation, and may your example, more than words, serve as a stimulus and encouragement for them." (Scalabrini).

Prayer

God, our Father, who in Saint John Baptist Scalabrini gave us a father of orphans, grant us the grace of caring for the little and weak, Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen.

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be...

Final Prayer

Kind Father, we thank you for the life of faith and the work of Saint John Baptist Scalabrini in favor of migrants. Pilgrim Jesus, give us a welcoming heart and make us promoters of fraternity among peoples. O Holy Spirit, awaken in our hearts the missionary vocation. Lord our God, grant us, through the intercession of Saint John Baptist Scalabrini, the grace that we confidently beg of you (...). **Amen.**

EIGHT DAY

Saint John Baptist Scalabrini and the Vocations

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

Saint John Baptist Scalabrini, founder of the religious congregation The Missionaries of Saint Charles (Scalabrinian), I ask you, with great faith, to intercede with the Almighty God to grant me the grace of (...). I, for my part, promise to pray for seminarians, aspirants, religious and priests.

Word of God - (Lc. 10:2)

Jesus said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. So ask the owner of the harvest to send workers into the harvest."

Reflection

"If over time we can form priests among the children of our immigrants, we will have workers for the abundant harvest." (Scalabrini).

Prayer

God, our Father, who in Saint John Baptist Scalabrini gave us a faithful servant, grant us the grace to live the vocation to which you call us; Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen.

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be...

NINTH DAY

Saint John Baptist Scalabrini and the Hungry

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

Saint John Baptist Scalabrini, steward of the hungry, I ask you, with great faith, to intercede with the Almighty God to grant me the grace of (...). I, for my part, promise to pray for the poor and those who are hungry.

Word of God - (Is. 58:6a.7a.10-11a)

The fast I want is this: to share food with those who are hungry. If you give your bread to the hungry and satisfy the hunger of the oppressed, then your light will shine in the darkness and the darkness will be like midday to you. The Lord will always be your guide and will give you plenty even in a desert land.

Reflection

"The poor man! He is deprived of so many earthly goods, but rich in heaven's goods. He is often angry, dissatisfied, ungrateful, but his forehead always shines with the character of divine filiation [...] The poor are God's pupils and what we do to the poor, we do to God himself." (Scalabrini).

Prayer

God, our Father, who in Saint John Baptist Scalabrini gave us a servant of the poor and hungry, grant us the grace to share bread and goods with the most needy; Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen.

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be...

Scalabrini Mobile

We have reached version 2.0 in the past weeks featuring now Saint Frances Cabrini Province. Find out everything about our Congregation's life, events and missions.

- The history of Saint J.B. Scalabrini.
- Our missions.
- Scalabrinian Magazines, Books and Music.
- A bit of Catechism.
- Apologetics.
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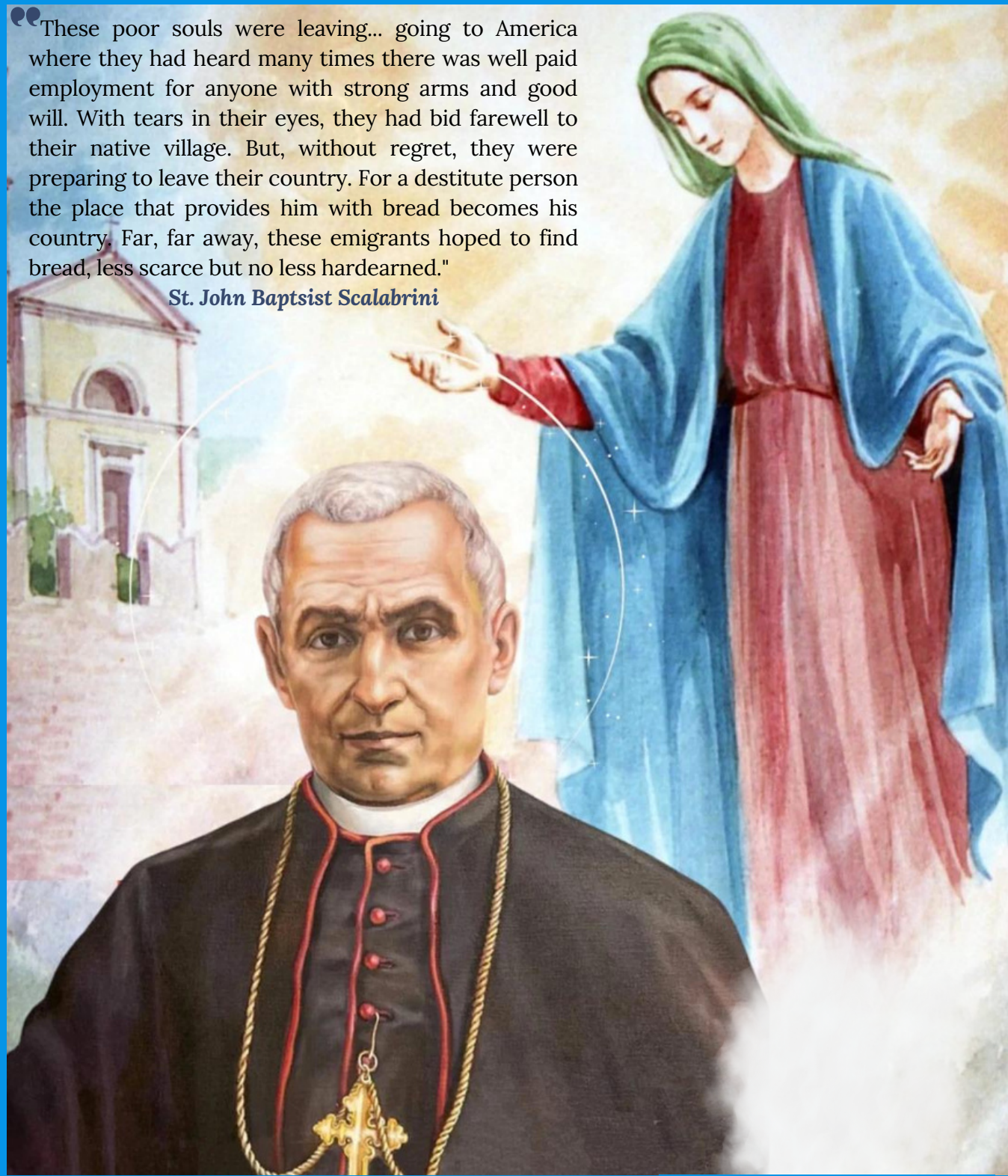


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“These poor souls were leaving... going to America where they had heard many times there was well paid employment for anyone with strong arms and good will. With tears in their eyes, they had bid farewell to their native village. But, without regret, they were preparing to leave their country. For a destitute person the place that provides him with bread becomes his country. Far, far away, these emigrants hoped to find bread, less scarce but no less hard earned.”

St. John Baptist Scalabrini



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Missionaries of Saint Charles Borromeo
PROVINCE

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Scalabrinians



There were old men bent by age and hard labor, young men in the prime of manhood, women pulling along or carrying their little ones, boys and girls, all drawn together by the same desire, all heading toward a common goal. They were emigrants.

(St. John Baptist Scalabrini)

