



***Remembering  
John Baptist Scalabrini  
on the tenth anniversary  
of his Beatification***

Dear Missionaries of the Scalabrinian Family:

1. With *grateful heart* we give thanks to God for the beatification of John Baptist Scalabrini, thus presenting his holiness as a model of Christian life for our times. We want now to experience once again the excitement of that unforgettable November 9, 1997. From that date on, Blessed Scalabrini is not only recognized as founder and source of inspiration, but he is also brought forward for all the church to recognize as *intercessor and "father to the migrants"*. He is an example of unbound charity and of limitless service, with a heart for welcoming God's *infinite love* and for mirroring Christ's face in the poorest and neediest ones. For all this we want to give thanks, to bless and to express our best wishes to his daughters and sons, religious and lay people, volunteers and young people, present in 39 countries.

Encouraged by the Church's recognition of the *heroic virtues* of Blessed Scalabrini and of his *unique testimony* of pastoral charity, we are now invited to stay well in touch with all that is happening in today's world. God calls us to live and minister in this world at the beginning of the Third Millennium. In a time of powerful transformations, new opportunities and new troubles mingle together. We want at this moment to be the extension of the *missionary heart* of a man, like our Founder, who with faith and courage saw in the migrant sisters and brothers the Lord Savior, who walks our streets and wants to guide humanity toward salvation.

2. This event is an opportunity to look back with sincerity of heart in the way we have lived out the *gift of Beatification* and how we have been able to accept the spiritual and pastoral progress, while *being creatively faithful* to the charism. In gratefulness we recognize the many gifts received throughout these ten years and the good that the Lord has allowed us to carry out to the church and to migrants. For this reason, first within the *silence of our heart in prayer* and then in *fraternal community dialogue*, we express our thanks for the gift of the Scalabrinian charism, for the vocation received and for the richness that we are to each other. At the same time, we ask that we be evermore *authentic signs* of Jesus' universal love in the realm of the people on the move.

At institutional level, we should thank the Lord for making the Scalabrinian family more apt to the task of helping out the local churches to *become aware* of their responsibility to *welcome the strangers* in their midst and to become more "catholic", that is universal. Together we want to thank the Spirit who moved us to open the horizons of our presence in new countries - Angola, Belgium, Bolivia, Congo, Japan, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Mozambique, Peru, Spain and Vietnam - and in the frontiers of internationalization, intercultural and inter-religious dialogue.

For all of us Scalabrinian missionaries, it is necessary to drink constantly at the wellspring of charism and to refer to Blessed Scalabrini, *great friend of God*, in order to journey in the truth of the Gospel at the "*sequela Christi*" and in *genuine missionary thrust*. He remains before us as an extraordinary *synthesis* of action and contemplation,

passionate servant of the wounded humanity, firm believer in the Trinity, and real lover of the Eucharist, that was indeed the source of his vision.

3. Looking back to his heart of father and tireless shepherd of souls, today we present these two challenges:

a) An authentic *fraternal life* in community, that puts into practice the Lord's commandment of love: *"This is my commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you"*. (Jn 15:12). This is echoed in the Founder's hearty commendation: *"Therefore union with Jesus Christ first of all. (...) fruit of this union is then union among you"*. (*To the Missionaries to the Italians in America, Piacenza, 1892*).

b) *Evangelical poverty* must be the counseling and inspiring force to be creative about ways of reaching out to the demands of our vocation and ministry. Only by freeing the heart from the temptation of *holding riches and seeking securities*, will we be able to be truly free, that is: to love the poor and to welcome the migrants, embracing their language and culture. This is the only way we will take ownership together of the gospel identity: *"I was a foreigner and you welcomed me"* (Mt 25:35).

4. In conclusion, let the words of John Paul II spoken on the day of the Beatification of the Founder, resound once more: *"Profoundly in love with God and extraordinarily devoted to the Eucharist, Blessed John Baptist Scalabrini knew how to translate contemplation of God and His mystery into an intense apostolic and missionary action, becoming totally entrusted to all for the sake of announcing the Gospel to all."* And moreover: *"Mons. Scalabrini set out to soothe the material and spiritual wounds of so many sisters and brothers forced to live far from their homeland. He sustained them in the fundamental rights of each human being. He sought to help them live out their commitments of Christian faith. As true "Father to migrants", he strove to help the local communities to a respectful and open acceptance, in mutual solidarity. In fact, he was convinced that the presence of migrants is a visible sign of the catholicity of God's family and may contribute to create the essential premises of a true encounter amongst nations, which is the fruit of the Spirit at Pentecost."*

Dear missionaries, daughters and sons of Blessed Scalabrini, may he sustain us with his intercession in our journey of fidelity to the Rules of Life and the guidelines set forth by the General Chapter and Assemblies. May he sustain through his witness, all women and men in all corners of the world who give their life at the service of the migrant sisters and brothers. We present to God all prayer intentions of our Scalabrinian Family, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, *living icon of the migrant woman*, well portrayed in the popular devotion as *Our Lady of the Journey* and symbol of *humanity in pilgrimage* toward the everlasting homeland.

Rome and Stuttgart, November 1, 2007  
Solemnity of All Saints

P. Sérgio Olivo Jeremias, cs  
*Superior General*  
Missionaries of St. Charles  
Scalabrinians

Sr. Maria do Rosario Onzi, mscs  
*Superior General*  
Missionary Sisters of St. Charles  
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Adelia Firetti, mss  
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