

Scalabrinians



Scalabrinian Young Religious Meeting

Strengthening fraternity, spiritual life, and Scalabrinian identity.

My Musings - "So Close Yet So Far"

A Scalabrinian reflection from San Ysidro on borders, vocation, and immigration.

125th Anniversary of Scalabrini's Visit to the United States

A reflection on Scalabrini's historic visit.



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SAINT CHARLES BORROMEO PROVINCE

People search for survivors while others try to salvage belongings in a collapsed building following an earthquake in Catia La Mar, the state of La Guaira, some 30km North West of Caracas, on June 25, 2026. Federico Parra—AFP/Getty Images

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The Church's Catechetical Response to Children of Immigrants

From the humble beginnings of our nation's history, Catholicism has continued to grow in legendary proportions, despite layers of hostility and other challenges, even as American society faces criticism, denunciation, and division. Nevertheless, the people's strong support for integrating cultures within their faith or in religious interrelationships has been evident in the rise of immigration to this country.

Faith communities have come to grips with the need to find the grace and wisdom to nurture the cultural, economic, and spiritual roles in dialogue with other segments of the Christian world. There is one thing that others may envisage, looking at the increasing pattern of coexistence and faith in God. It is the church's joint effort to strengthen its mission to people of all cultures.

At the turn of the twentieth century, the modern catechetical movement began producing numerous new studies on methods and content, along with new insights into the ultimate goal of catechizing children of immigrants. It focused on imparting the Catholic faith more effectively and sought to orient toward an

understanding of Catholic doctrine, in keeping with Christ's message of salvation. Other disciplines also contributed to the dynamic field of American catechesis, along with the inspiration of papal encyclicals that emphasized the urgent need to *"guard the deposit of faith from corruption"* and to resist modernism.

With the development of the Munich Method (1898), whose contributions were important to the heritage of modern catechesis in America, the transition away from the old catechetical method of rote memorization has presented an ongoing challenge to the learning process, particularly in the effectiveness of presentation, explanation, and application to one's life. This, however, also has a national relevance in how the Church adapts its teachings to the local needs of

people from a multiplicity of cultures that America has become. Strategic plans and various activities tailored to the involvement of faith communities among the immigrant populations can nurture an environment that carries the catechetical implications of the *kerygma* and its clarity into a single message, proclaimed with hope and love.

Over the years, we have weathered many challenges that have shaped our lives, particularly our character and our mission. The Church's language has also shifted toward alternative ways of thinking and interacting, with receptivity to new cultures and to true beauty as we seek God in our lives. As our faith evolves, we come to embrace John Henry Newman's dictum:

"To live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often."



Love your Neighbor

How many times have we heard that at the center of our faith is the love of God and the love of the neighbor? Love is the very identity of a Christian, to the point of understanding that no one can be called one if there's no love. We can spend a long time and put in a lot of effort defining love, but the best way is to turn to the Gospels and learn from Jesus himself. His teachings and parables will make clear what love is all about. One thing is easy to understand: love is always concrete, not abstract. One of the most touching reflections on love I have read lately is Pope Leo XIV's homily given on the Italian island of Lampedusa this past Fourth of July. On the celebration of America's 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, the pope left us a reflection on the very core of humanity's goodness. We have much to learn from it.

He began by saying that "God always loves us first." That is the origin of all love. Then the pope has shown how the people of Lampedusa, a small Italian island in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea that has been a harbor to so many African immigrants and refugees who try to reach Europe. Pope Francis chose this island for his first trip as pope. It is an island that has also seen so much tragedy and death.

The background of Pope Leo's teaching is the parable of the Good Samaritan (Cf. Lk 10:25–37): *"Here you have seen not just one, but thousands of human beings fallen into the hands of robbers who have taken everything from them, beat them brutally and walked away, leaving them half-dead"* (cf. *ibid.*). The sea has claimed the lives of others, those who did not manage to reach their hoped-for destination. Yet we feel their



Refugees on a boat crossing the Mediterranean sea. Wikimedia Commons.

presence, which challenges us no less than that of those who have landed in need of attention and aid. Indeed, before any intellectual consideration or ideological conviction, the encounter with those who lie before us, stripped of everything, calls us to be close to them. This closeness is the very essence of love. We can choose to look and turn away, or look and have compassion. The pope thanked those who *"with or without the gift of faith, have chosen to love one another."*

The words the pope chose to use struck me: those who have chosen to love. To love is a choice. He goes on to say that *"There are also those who choose not to be a neighbor and those who choose not to make a decision."* He is talking about a very specific humanitarian crisis, but the lesson applies to any situation in life. We can choose to love or not to love. In a world as polarized as we live in today, it is very easy to find excuses not to love the one in need, as indifference, or the sense of not being responsible, prejudice against others, and the belief that other people's problems do not concern us will stop us from committing to doing good acts. We should not get discouraged, even when we feel powerless. Again, the pope reminds us, *"the civilization of love will not arise from a single or spectacular gesture, but from the total of small and steadfast acts of fidelity that serve as a bulwark against dehumanization"* (Encyclical Letter Magnifica Humanitas, 213). Each one of us has a role to play in building the civilization of love: *"Certainly, not everyone has the same power to make a difference... Yet, no one is without responsibility."*

"May we choose love, may our choice be transformed into action, and may our action inspire others to do the same."

From *Tabula Rasa*¹ to Mission: A Journey of Grace Among Migrant Communities

I would like to begin this reflection with Matthew 7:7–8, which beautifully captures the journey of my vocation: “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you.” This verse has become a spiritual map for my life. I sought, and God guided me. I knocked, and He opened the door. I asked, and He gave, often in ways that sound like “divine humor.”

Looking back, I can only say: everything is grace. God knows what is best for me, according to His time and will, not my own plans. I never imagined my first mission assignment would be in the United States. In my heart, I always pictured Asia, the place where I was born, raised, and felt most at home during formation. But God has His own way. Sixteen years ago, a week before entering the propaedeutic year, my mother asked me over dinner, “Where do you want to serve after ordination?” Half-jokingly, I replied, “The closest one...is America.”

I wasn’t serious, but apparently God heard that joke. After ordination, I was sent here to St. Joseph, Patron of the Universal Church. Similar things kept happening: words I said in passing

or thoughts that crossed my mind lightly somehow became reality. This journey has taught me one thing: God is always faithful in guiding us, when small surprises we never planned arise. Time eventually brought me to St. Joseph Parish, Patron of the Universal Church, my first mission as a Scalabrinian priest. In addition to serving as a vicar, I was entrusted with accompanying the Indonesian Catholic community in the Diocese of Brooklyn, which has been present for 41

years. St. Joseph Parish in Bushwick, Brooklyn, is home to people from many nations, especially the vibrant Latino community: Ecuador, Mexico, Guatemala, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, and many others. Their faith flourishes through living traditions and devotions: Virgen de Guadalupe, Virgen de la Altagracia, Virgen del Cisne, Cristo de Esquipulas, Divino Salvador del Mundo and other expressions of popular religiosity that shape the spiritual identity of migrant families.



Fr. Aloisius sharing with the community

1. According to Webster Dictionary, it is “the mind in its hypothetical primary blank or empty state before receiving outside impressions.”

Faith and culture come alive in processions, novenas, mañanitas, serenatas, fiesta patronal, and family devotions, moments when the community expresses its love for God. These traditions are not merely cultural heritage; they are “spiritual pathways” that lead us back to Jesus, the Shepherd we believe in. There are various groups in the parish. They are as follows: 1) Juan XXIII, with its motto “Con Cristo todo, sin Cristo nada”, reminding us that Christ is the Center of life. 2) Grupo Carismático, with the cry “Fuego del Espíritu, renueva mi vida”, rekindling renewal in the Holy Spirit. 3) Cursillistas, with the spirit of De Colores, Piety, Study, Action, forming mature disciples through

prayer, formation, and service. 4) Legión de María, with the joyful acclamation “¡Viva Jesús, viva María!”, guiding the faithful closer to Christ through Mary. 5) Sagrado Corazón de Jesús, with the prayer of trust “A ti hemos confiado”, placing our lives in the merciful Heart of Jesus. 6) Legión de San José, embodying the virtues of St. Joseph—faithfulness, silence, hard work, and fatherly protection. 7) Cristo de Esquipulas, a beloved devotion among Central American migrants, presents Christ as a source of consolation, healing, and hope for those who carry wounds, longing, and struggles in a foreign land.

All these groups, devotions, and traditions, though diverse, flow toward the same source: Jesus Christ. Here, faith and culture do not stand apart; they enrich one another, strengthen one another, and together form a community rooted in God’s love. As a Scalabrinian missionary, I am called to embrace, accompany, and walk with migrants, to build a community that welcomes, strengthens, and unites. In the diversity of Latino devotions and cultures, I have discovered a Church that is truly alive: a pilgrim Church, a missionary Church, a Church that keeps its doors open for anyone seeking a spiritual home in a new land.



Alongside serving the Latino community, accompanying the Indonesian Catholic Community in Brooklyn and Queens has been a joy in itself. Their presence brings back the warmth of home familiar language, shared laughter, and comforting food like “rendang, bakso, sate, nasi kuning, pempek”, or simply coffee and fried snacks after Mass.

In the liturgy, we praise God through Indonesian songs, dances, and cultural expressions, bringing the colors of the archipelago to the city that never sleeps. We stand united under Indonesia’s national motto, “Bhinneka Tunggal Ika”, “Unity in Diversity”. In New York, the city that never sleeps, the Indonesian community becomes a spiritual family that supports one another. This year, we celebrate 41 years of presence in the Diocese of Brooklyn and Queens, a journey marked by prayer, perseverance, and togetherness.

Indonesian migrants in New York come from multiple backgrounds, including restaurant workers, chefs, baristas, salon workers, home attendants, Uber/Lyft drivers, office workers, nannies, students, artists, and small business owners. Amid the challenges of migrant life, the Indonesian Catholic Community (KKI) becomes a home, a place where we redis-



cover family, faith, and identity.

The motto “Bhinneka Tunggal Ika”, “Unity in Diversity” resonates deeply with the Scalabrinian mission to embrace migrants from all nations. Amid the diversity of Indonesian culture, language, and experience, I see the face of a living Church: a Church that welcomes, unites, and becomes a home for anyone seeking a place to belong.

A JOURNEY STILL BEING WRITTEN

My priestly journey as a young missionary, beginning as a *Tabula Rasa*, has gradually been enriched by the lives of the people I serve. The richness of Latino devotions and the warmth of the Indonesian community have shaped me into a spiritual shepherd. In the midst of language barriers, cultural differences, and pastoral challenges, I have learned that ministry is not primarily about ability, but about a heart ready to listen and to walk with others.

Yet this journey has also taught me that “ability matters”, language, cultural understanding, and pastoral competence are gifts that must be continually cultivated so that a present heart can truly be understood, welcomed, and become a bridge of God’s love.

Every Mass, every devotion, every simple conversation after the church doors close, every laughter and every tear, each one becomes a stroke of color that God paints onto the canvas of my vocation. And behind it all, the spirit of “be a Scalabrinian” must continue to burn: the spirit to embrace migrants, to be a home for those far from home, to bridge faith and culture, and to see Christ in every face from every nation. In the end, I realize that God is the One shaping this journey. From *tabula rasa* to pages slowly filled with love, struggle, and hope. And I believe that as long as the flame of vocation is guarded and the heart remains open, God will continue to write His story through my life and ministry. //

Misión con Sentido

Testimonio de una misión Scalabriniana en la Ciudad de México. Llegué a la Ciudad de México después de varios años de misión en la Pastoral de Movilidad Humana de la Conferencia Episcopal de Guatemala. Quien ha trabajado en la frontera sabe que ninguna realidad migratoria se parece del todo a otra; aun así, el contraste me sorprendió. Guatemala me había preparado de un modo que entonces no alcanzaba a comprender: la tarea de animar la pastoral en todo un país, el acompañamiento en parroquias pluriculturales, haber visto gestarse varias casas de acogida.

Pensaba que llegaba con experiencia. La verdad es que llegaba a una realidad que desbordaría toda iniciativa y toda fuerza.

México ha sido, desde hace mucho tiempo, un territorio de tránsito. Por aquí pasan personas de Centroamérica, de Suramérica, del Caribe e incluso venidas de otros continentes. No todas llegan del mismo modo. Buena parte de esas movilizaciones se realiza en el marco del tráfico ilícito y de la trata de personas, y en los últimos años el crimen organizado ha ido asumiendo un papel preponderante en las fronteras,

SCALABRINIANS MAGAZINE

Scalabrinians Magazine highlights our missionary work across communities in North and South America. It offers a Scalabrinian perspective on migration and related topics, reflecting our commitment to guiding migrants in faith and cultural values. Active in countries like Canada, the U.S., Colombia, and more, our ministry seeks to expand spiritual and pastoral care to migrants.

Inspired by our founder, Saint John Baptist Scalabrini, we strive to become more Christ-like through our service. The magazine invites reader submissions, which may be edited for clarity. Send your articles to:

info@scalabrinisaintcharles.org



las rutas y las redes de tráfico. Pero no todos vienen con guías ni con coyotes. Los hay, sobre todo centroamericanos, que llegan solos o en grupos de amigos, porque ya conocen el camino, porque ya lo recorrieron antes. Un flujo gota a gota, familias enteras, grupos organizados en caravanas, todos han pasado por esta gran ciudad. En ese contexto se me encomendó, como scalabriniano, la dirección de la oficina de Pastoral de Movilidad Humana de esta arquidiócesis primada de México. Lo primero que encontré aquí fue esperanza, y conviene decirlo así de claro. Religiosos, religiosas y laicas compro-

metidas que dirigen casas de acogida para personas migrantes. Instituciones civiles y académicas que, una y otra vez, salen en defensa de los derechos humanos de quienes están en movimiento. No llegué a un desierto: llegué a una red viva de personas que ya estaban entregando su tiempo, su nombre y su seguridad por los más vulnerables. Eso me sostuvo desde el principio.

Me tocó ser testigo de la crisis humanitaria de 2023, 2024, 2025. Miles de personas llegaron a la Ciudad de México ante la posibilidad de obtener una entrada regular a los Estados

Unidos mediante lo que se llamó CBP One. Miles que habían atravesado la selva del Darién llegaron a lo que ellos mismos llamaban “la selva de cemento”, y sobrevivieron en las calles, víctimas de un sinnúmero de vejaciones y violaciones de sus derechos humanos. El crimen organizado está haciendo de las suyas. Vidas perdidas en la ruta. Personas cargando dolores y duelos sin resolver.

Todos los albergues y casas para migrantes están saturados. El personal y los voluntarios están agotados. Y todo ello sin una gestión ni una gobernanza humanas e integrales por parte de las autoridades. Siendo director de una casa en Iztapalapa, luego también asumí la dirección de otra casa en Ecatepec, para poder llevar a gente, sobre todo mujeres y niños, y ponerlos bajo resguardo. Todavía me pregunto cómo salimos de aquello. ¿Cómo soportamos tanta tensión, tanto cansancio? Y, sobre todo, soy testigo de que la mano de Dios no nos abandonó. En el peor momento de la crisis, en medio de tanto dolor, sentimientos de abandono y desesperanza, esa mano se dejó sentir.

¿Qué me hizo fuerte, resistente, y al mismo tiempo dio un sentido tan profundo a mi vida? La convicción de seguir a Jesús en lo que hizo y dijo y la imagen de Scalabrini y el carisma que el Espíritu donó a su Iglesia.



Casa del Migrante Arcángel Rafael



Acoger, proteger, promover e integrar dejaron de ser cuatro verbos de un documento para convertirse en lo que hacíamos con las manos cada día.

Junto al resguardo y la atención, está otra tarea que considero igual de urgente: crear contrarrelatos sobre las personas migrantes. Intentar cambiar percepciones equivocadas, nacidas del desconocimiento, de la discriminación y del miedo. Lo he dicho varias veces y lo sostengo: nuestras misiones en la Ciudad de México se han convertido en espacios de resistencia frente a las violaciones de los derechos humanos y frente a las ofensas a la dignidad de las personas en situación de movilidad. No tengo duda de que nuestro Santo Fundador sigue haciendo milagros, constantemente, para que nuestras casas sean verdaderos espacios seguros y dignos.

Hoy los flujos han disminuido. Hubo vuelos de retorno voluntarios a Venezuela. Y, sin embargo, seguimos atendiendo a muchas personas que necesitan un espacio seguro donde recuperar fuerzas, sanar física y emocionalmente y ser acompañadas con asesoría jurídica y con los trámites para obtener un estatus migratorio regular. La crisis cambia de rostro; la necesidad permanece. Solo puedo decir que estas realidades le han dado un verdadero sentido misionero a mi entrega y a mi consagración en la vida religiosa. Me han hecho consciente de las grandes fragilidades que compartimos los seres humanos. He sido testigo de enormes muestras de solidaridad. He tenido delante grandes ejemplos de fe, de resistencia, de valor y de resiliencia. Y siento la certeza de estar del lado correcto: allí donde la vida se ofrece, se entrega y se desgasta por el Evan-

gelio, por el discipulado con Jesús, maestro, amigo y camino. Esta misión también me ha hecho consciente de algo que a los misioneros a veces nos cuesta admitir: la necesidad del autocuidado. De hacer tiempo para parar, descansar, evaluar, organizar y retomar. Doy gracias a la Congregación de los Misioneros de San Carlos, a mis hermanos scalabrinianos, a la Iglesia local de la Arquidiócesis Primada de México, a la Diócesis de Ecatepec y a la Diócesis de Iztapalapa. Y me sigo encomendando a tantos amigos y amigas que rezan por mí y por esta vocación al servicio de las personas migrantes, refugiadas y sobrevivientes de trata.

“En este tiempo de fronteras cerradas, de múltiples violencias y de rutas controladas por el crimen organizado, doy testimonio de que vale la pena. De que aquí, en la selva de cemento, seguimos caminando con quienes caminan.” //

Summary at a Glance

This testimony shares a Scalabrinian missionary experience in Mexico City, where migration is lived as a complex and painful reality. After years of service in Guatemala, the missionary arrives in Mexico and finds a city crossed by people from Central America, South America, the Caribbean, and other regions, many of them exposed to trafficking, organized crime, violence, and human rights violations. During the humanitarian crises of 2023–2025, thousands of migrants reached Mexico City, some

after crossing the Darién Gap, hoping to find a regular path toward the United States. Many ended up surviving in the streets, facing exhaustion, fear, uncertainty, and deep emotional wounds. In this context, shelters and migrant houses became essential spaces of protection, especially for women and children.

The testimony highlights the commitment of religious communities, lay people, civil institutions, and volunteers who defend the dignity of people on the move. For the missionary, the Scalabrinian mission is not only

about offering shelter, but also about accompanying, healing, giving legal guidance, and creating new narratives that challenge fear, discrimination, and indifference. At its heart, the text is a witness of faith, resilience, and missionary meaning. Even amid closed borders, violence, and routes controlled by organized crime, the missionary affirms that the mission is worthwhile because it means walking with those who walk, serving Christ in migrants, refugees, and survivors of trafficking.

Brazilian Festa Junina at Saint Tarcisius Draws Large Crowds

Every June, St. Tarcisius Church in Framingham, MA, hosts a lively *Festa Junina* featuring Brazilian music, food, dances, games, and costumes that blend African, European, and indigenous cultures. Brazilians across Massachusetts celebrate these festivities in honor of St. John the Baptist, St. Anthony de Padua, and St. Peter. Its cultural significance brings communities together and strengthens them.

At least as early as the 17th century, Festa Junina has been celebrated in Brazil. Considered the biggest celebration after the Carnival on Shrove Tuesday, before Lent begins, it is believed by historians to have originated with pagan gods and been shaped by Catholicism over the centuries. *Forró* is a big part of the party. It is a popular Brazilian rhythm heard throughout the festivities and year-round. *Forró* comes in many forms, and

while the classic, oldest versions are a staple at the *Festa Junina*, there is also room for newer styles. Regarding the food they serve, the menu features a selection of traditional foods, including popcorn, *canjica*, *pamonha*, corn bread, and *curau*. It also offers sweet confections crafted with peanuts, such as peanut brittle and *paçoca*. Other foods with interesting names include *mané pelado*, *maria mole*, candy apple and hot dog. In this world, the *Quentão*, a tea made with ginger, cinnamon, and *cachaça*, and the *Vinho quente*, made with wine, fruits, cloves, and cinnamon, stand out.

The celebration is adorned with pennants, balloons, bonfires, and fireworks, creating a vibrant ambiance. Straw and wood are also used to lend a rustic character to the celebration, reflecting its historical roots. Guests also participate in games and activities such as *pau-de-sebo*, *lavagem dos santos*, *correio elegante*, *casamento caipira*, and more. The famous *quadrilha*, a choreographed dance performed by couples to music and special steps, is also a highlight. In this connection, as Scalabrinian missionaries engage with diverse cultures among migrant populations, Brazilians are no exception in this instance. “Viva São João!” //



My Musings - "So Close Yet So Far"

On the U.S. side, it takes about five minutes by car to reach the border, famous for its two massive walls that divide the two great countries and states: California in the United States and Baja California in Mexico. On a sunny afternoon, with a strong wind sweeping through the city of San Ysidro from every direction, I walked from our Church of Mount Carmel to the far end of the parking lot. From there, one can gaze out upon a view of the beloved city of Tijuana, Mexico. As I contemplated the beauty of this cherished city, a phrase suddenly came to mind: "So close, yet so far."

I am Father Van Tinh To, C.S., a Scalabrinian missionary, originally from Vietnam. I was born and raised in a simple Catholic family in a town called Ninh Binh. I have two sisters and one brother, and I am the youngest of the four children. I completed my primary and secondary schooling in my hometown. Following this period, I experienced many ups and downs; after failing the high school entrance exam, I traveled to Saigon to work in construction for a year. After a year of work, I moved to Nha Trang to attend high school in the evenings, while spending my days working at a pho (noodle soup) restaurant.

After finishing high school, my religious aunt asked if I wanted to join the Scalabrinian Missionaries' seminary. I just said, No, but she asked three more times, and I repeated my answer. At that time, I didn't feel called to become a priest or pursue religious life. However, when my cousin chose to enter the seminary, I asked him to take me just out of curiosity. Once there, I was introduced to the community and life at the seminary. I really enjoyed the experience and sensed that this might be where God was calling me. As a result, I decided to stay,

and I continue my journey as a Scalabrinian missionary to this day. In 2012, I began my journey at the seminary in Saigon, Vietnam. I spent nearly three years in the Philippines. Afterward, I was sent to Brazil, the land of samba and soccer, for six years. I was recently ordained at the Minor Basilica of Our Lady of the Good Journey (Nuestra Señora del Buen Viaje) in São Bernardo do Campo, São Paulo, on January 19, 2025. Following my ordination, I was assigned as the Vicar of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish in San Ysidro, California.



Fr. Van Tinh To in black



San Ysidro is a border town, a place where thousands of people cross daily from Tijuana into the United States, and vice versa, primarily for work or to take their children to school. Many people must wake up very early to cross the border on time. During peak hours, the crossing can take several hours. This reality presents a significant challenge for pastoral ministry.

Currently, I am serving in a multicultural parish where the majority of the parishioners are Mexican. There are also several

Filipino families, as well as people coming from various countries in South America and the Caribbean, including Colombia, Venezuela, and Puerto Rico.

We host a local American community that enriches parish life through cultural exchange and active groups. Recent U.S. immigration policies, including mass deportations and raids, have caused widespread fear and distress among parishioners, many of whom are afraid to leave home for work, Mass, or errands, resulting in feelings of confinement and insecurity.



Beyond this local reality, I serve in the Diocese of San Diego, a diocese deeply shaped by the immigrant experience. For this reason, various peaceful and interfaith demonstrations have been held in support of our immigrant brothers and sisters. Likewise, a “Faithful Accompaniment” ministry has been established to support immigrants as they navigate their legal proceedings in court. We are especially grateful for the leadership of the Bishop of San Diego, Michael Pham, the son of an immigrant family that fled Vietnam following the war in 1975. Drawing on his personal experience, he has raised his voice, through both prayer and concrete action, in defense of immigrants, making an impact that has resonated at both national and international levels.

As Scalabrinian missionaries, we have actively participated in various events and initiatives to support immigrants over the past year. For me, accompanying migrants in San Ysidro during this historical moment, which is as challenging as it is painful, is a mission that calls for the collaboration and commitment of the entire community.

On a personal note, one of my initial challenges when I first arrived here was the Spanish language. I also had to learn about new cultures and diverse traditions. I am still in the midst of this process of inculturation. But thanks be to God, and with the help of the Scalabrinian brothers and the parishioners, I have learned many new things in this mission land. In my mission, I have a motto that

guides me and gives me strength daily: the phrase from my priestly ordination, “I will give you a new heart and a new spirit” (Ez 36:26). It is a new heart for loving, and a new spirit for working and facing every challenge along the way.

In short, for many immigrants in San Ysidro, turning their gaze toward Tijuana means breathing in the maternal air of Mexico, remembering and mourning the loved ones they miss, and finding the strength to continue the struggle for a better life. On the other hand, for many residents of Tijuana, looking toward San Ysidro awakens the dream that, one day, they will be able to visit or reunite with their relatives in the United States. Yet, the distance remains, “so close, yet so far.” //



Toronto Hosts Interprovincial Assembly

The provinces of Saint Charles Borromeo and Saint John Baptist in the United States held their interprovincial assembly in Toronto, Canada, from April 20-24. This year's theme centered on Intercultural Fraternity as a Scalabrinian Religious and Missionary Vocation, with the invitation: *"Rekindle the gift of God that is in you,"* in celebration of the Scalabrinian Vocation Year.

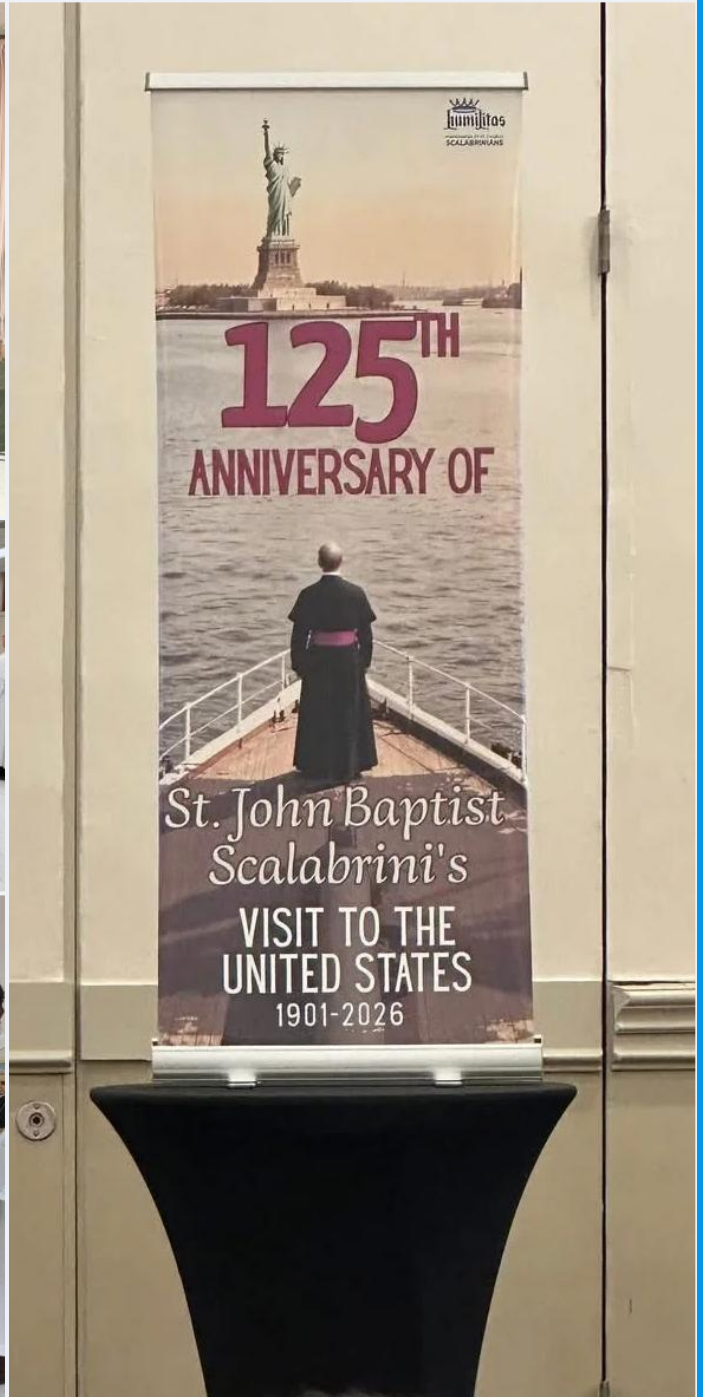
The two provincial superiors, Fr. Horecio Carlos Anklan of

Saint Charles Borromeo and Fr. Giovanni Bizzotto of Saint John Baptist, extended a warm welcome to the participants and articulated insight into the growing cultural diversity among the young members.

Fr. Leonir Chiarello, Superior General, reflected on the emergence of results from a process rooted in a religious life and founded on Hope. Drawing on the convergence of discernment and biblical interlocutors within the congregational jour-

ney, he offered some pointers for a generation in which the Holy Spirit is immanent, to rekindle the Church's incarnational vision and missionary dimension. By integrating spirituality, intercultural community life, mission, and conciliar insights into the climate of the times, Fr. Chiarello embodied the living presence of God in the life situations of his missionaries, shedding light on and addressing concerns arising from the needs and uncertainties faced by migrants.







From its genesis in the foundation, the Founder's charism has carried out significant developments in the congregation's evolution. It brought interest in expanding into other cultures, like a new vocabulary, through pastoral work with migrants worldwide. It sought to create a better understanding of what it means to be a migrant among migrants, which connected the missionaries within the global context of a world church in postmodern times.

In a reflection on "Priestly Spirituality" presented by Cardinal Frank Leo, Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Toronto, the Christ-centered movement is characterized by the foundational principles of Saint John Baptist Scalabrini directed towards a deeper living of the members' witness. The centrality of the mystagogical Christ in his narratives provides layers of meaning that help refocus and retain the core emphasis on commitment to communion and holiness.

The kind of symmetry between the rhetorical value of life-giving engagement with the mission and the language of consecrated life used to recapture the portrait of the Founder's spirituality aligns with the vocation to which God calls them.

The unifying theme of this event highlighted the need to shape a deeply contemporary praxis in mission and religious life. Its dynamic intersection of charism and the thought-pattern of holiness as life in Christ encapsulates the faith proclamation of Pius X's motto, "*Instaurare omnia in Christo*" (To restore all things in Christ). However, despite societal shifts and secularization, a renewed consciousness of the missionary presence in dialogue with the signs of the times sees Christ communicated through growth and the transformation of values among the members.

Celebrations of the Holy Eucharist were held at two parishes, St. Catherine of Siena in Mississauga and St. Paschal Baylon in Thornhill, Ontario. The respective pastors, Fr. José Gabriel Forero, C.S., and Fr. Ezio Marchetto, C.S., hosted members to dinner. Priests previously assigned to these two parishes held brief conversations and took snapshots with parishioners. Some generous sponsors at St. Paschal's Parish also received recognition certificates from the Superior General.

During the separate provincial meetings, the provincial superior and his councilors presented reports on their respective areas, such as Finances, Formation, Religious Life, and Mission. Fr. Marcio Toniazzo, C.S., Director of SIMN (*Scalabrini International Migration Network*), also shared an update on the mission's ongoing projects and programs in the province.

At the end, the two provinces gathered to discuss changes or clarifications to the Interprovincial Directory prepared by the Committee. The motion to implement it was put to a vote. Evaluation sheets were handed out to members. //

visit

www.scalabrinisaintcharles.org/news-events/provincial-assembly-2026

Scalabrinian Youth Group Meets at Casa San Carlos in Delray Beach, FL

The youth group representing four Scalabrinian parishes of Saint Vincent, Margate, FL, Queen of Peace, Delray Beach, FL, Resurrection Parish, Winter Garden, FL, and Saint Bernard, Riverdale, MD, gathered for a retreat from June 5-7 at the San Carlos Retreat House in Delray Beach, FL. They gathered with a clear purpose to meet, reflect, and renew their Christian commitment in light of St. John Baptist Scalabrini's charism.

Fr. Noé Vera, C.S., Vocation Promoter for San Carlos Province, and Sister Kleise Restirolla, M.S.C.S., Vocation Promoter from Mexico, led the event, guiding young people through discernment tools and clarifying their roles in the pilgrim Church. They worked closely together, demonstrating their love and dedication.

The gathering was also deeply enriched by the testimonies of local pastors. Fr. Mateo Didoné, C.S., offered a deeply significant reflection that captured the essence of missionary life with his wisdom and warmth. Fr. Víctor Córdova, C.S., also shared his testimony, whose presence strengthened the young people's missionary spirit. This atmosphere of fraternity was further enriched by visits from Fr. Stephen Hoan, C.S., and Fr. Hugo Learte

Santana, C.S., as well as the warm welcome from Fr. Moacir Balen, C.S. Their approachability and witness reflected a united Scalabrinian family committed to mission and supporting new generations. Their presence served as a testament to unity and missionary zeal.

At the heart of the gathering was a deeper exploration of the

spirituality of Saint John Baptist Scalabrini, the “Father to the Migrants.” The young people did not merely learn historical facts; they engaged deeply in understanding his life, works, and the invaluable legacy he left for the Church at large. They also drew on their personal experiences of migration realities and connected them to wider societal challenges today.





Through prayer, reflection, and group dynamics, participants connected their personal experiences to the congregation's charism. Scalabrini's spirituality, centered on seeing Christ's face in migrants, resonated strongly with young people facing the challenges of a rapidly changing world. Scalabrinian faith is embodied in the flesh and blood of life, and these young people demonstrated it. The event extended beyond the retreat house, fostering unity and fellowship as the group visited the parish communities of St. Vincent and Queen of Peace. These visits gave young people the chance to experience com-

munity life in other parishes, promoting mutual growth and demonstrating that Catholic youth are actively engaged, present, and willing to serve. Beyond the scheduled talks and activities, the real miracle of the weekend unfolded through daily fellowship. Sharing meals, singing around the table, and laughter helped build a strong bond of fraternity.

Eventually, the event marked its conclusion and the start of a new chapter, and a new challenge. The youth groups from Margate, Delray Beach, Winter Garden, and Riverdale returned home with mission-

ary spirit: inspired by memories rekindled in their hearts, lessons learned, and, most importantly, a renewed passion. The legacy of St. John Baptist Scalabrini, nurtured by the vocation ministry, has taken root among these courageous young people. They have come to understand that the Church knows no borders in its mission to welcome people of all cultures.

In the same vein, they have deepened their understanding of *Humilitas*: "less of me and more of God."

"The seed has been sown; the future is already unfolding."

Scalabrinian Young Religious Meeting

Forty-seven young Scalabrinian priests from the two provinces of Saint Charles Borromeo and Saint John Baptist gathered at the Amoris Christi Retreat Center in Delray Beach, South Florida, from July 6 to July 10, 2026. The assembly provided a platform for formation, reflection, and fraternity. The young priests shared their pastoral experiences and challenges in migrant missions while deepening their understanding of Scalabrinian identity and spirituality.

This year's theme, "*Rekindle the gift of God that is in you*" invited young priests to revisit their calling and reflect on their spiritual journey as Scalabrinian missionaries. They were also guided through aspects of formation and in recognizing God's presence in their mobility, particularly in their prayer life and ministry, inspired by the mission fire of the Holy Spirit. Both Provincials, Fr. Carlos Anklan of Saint Charles Borromeo Province and Fr. Giovanni Bizzotto of Saint John the Baptist Province, also participated in all activities. They reminded young priests that ongoing formation is not merely an annual program but is vital for their growth and development as Scalabrinian missionaries. This assembly serves as an opportunity to

reaffirm their commitment, strengthen fraternity, and refocus their ministry.

Fr. Carlos Caetano, the Vicar General of the Congregation, was also in attendance. He discussed the challenges young priests face today. He highlighted that the primary challenge extends beyond the demands of pastoral duties to include the diminishing perception of Christ as the central focus of life. The initial years of the priesthood are characterized by grace and vulnerability to fatigue, solitude, cultural adaptation, conflicts, frustration, and digital distractions. The key question remains: Is Christ still at the heart of it all? He also emphasized that while a young priest can be active and appreciated, 'social usefulness' alone is insufficient for the priesthood. Jesus' words, "*Apart from me you can do nothing*," remain central.

The Scalabrinian mission should focus on evangelization and human dignity. Migrants are key to shaping this mission, not merely recipients of aid. To sustain the vocation, he recommended that a Rule of Life serve as a guide, including Scripture, Eucharist, the Liturgy of the Hours, shared meals, ongoing education, prudent use of media, spiritual guidance, and

annual retreats. Fr. Mario Geremia, another confrere working in Panama, urged young priests to recognize the beauty of intercultural community life. While personal freedom matters, it thrives in community, where creativity becomes service and cultural differences foster growth. This gathering fostered pastoral experience and community life, shaping mature, humble missionaries.

A SIMI presentation by Fr. Percy and Br. Joaquín emphasized that migrant ministry requires study, research, and an interdisciplinary approach. Scalabrinians, as *migrantes por vocación*, are called to understand migration through research, dialogue, and theological reflection, in line with Pope Francis's four pillars: welcome, protect, promote, and integrate. Academic reflection, community engagement, and service to migrants should be incorporated together.

Fr. Nilo, on the other hand, emphasized a Scalabrinian priest's identity: seeing Christ in migrants and prioritizing human mobility. Service may take place in parishes, migrant centers, or chaplaincies, but the core remains. Challenges such as language, culture, and intercultural life demand a loving, non-possessive heart. Consequently,

a priest's human and spiritual health is essential to genuine mission work. A significant moment was the Mass at Amoris Christi Retreat House celebrating ten-year priestly anniver-

saries, symbolizing deeper maturity in the missionary vocation. The joy of ministry was also evident during visits to Our Lady Queen of Peace in Delray Beach and Saint Vincent in

Margate. After Mass, the young priests shared a meal, told stories, and enjoyed community. Mariachi music made everyone smile, sing, and dance, highlighting that the Scalabrinian



mission thrives not only at the altar but also at the table, in conversations, and cultural encounters. At the end of their gathering, young priests returned to their missions filled with renewed zeal, revitalized

vocations, and deeper commitments. Their vocation rests on two key pillars: prayer/contemplation and action. Prayer alone, without action, can become mere superficial religiosity, whereas action without prayer

may simply amount to social work:

“When both elements come together, the priest’s heart remains focused on God, and his hands are prepared to serve migrants.” //



Celebrating the Scalabrinian Year of Vocation, “Rekindle the gift of God that is in you”

The Scalabrinian Year of Vocation, which officially began on Good Shepherd Sunday in 2026 and is set to conclude on Good Shepherd Sunday in 2027, provides a great opportunity for all individuals to contemplate their vocations and their participation in the divine mystery.

Under the motto “*Rekindle the gift of God that is in you,*” we launched this year of vocation. It encourages seminarians, Scalabrinian religious, and parishioners to reignite God’s love, live their faith, and deepen their identity by responding fully to the call of the God of Jesus Christ.

WHAT DOES THE GIFT OF GOD MEAN?

The vocational journey is a personal process that invites us to recognize and respond to the call of God, the source of our lives. God’s gift can be understood in many ways. As noted in the prayer for the Year of Vocation, it includes the talents and potential given to each person at birth. These gifts need nurturing and sharing. God’s gift also includes the faith and grace given at baptism, empowering us to live fully with God and others. God should always be a living presence in our lives.

Saint Paul, in his second letter to Timothy, reminds us and exhorts each of us to “*Rekindle the gift of God that is in you*” (Cf. 2 Tim 1:6).

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SCALABRINIAN YEAR OF VOCATION

In light of the 150th anniversary of the episcopal consecration of Saint John Baptist Scalabrini, and in accordance with the mandate of the XVI General Chapter, the Congregation invites a return to the One who is the source of all vocations and calls for every human being to become aware of the gift they carry within. This is a significant moment for the Scalabrinian family to unite in prayer and reflection and to participate in activities that nurture a sense of vocation among all its members.

During the Eucharistic celebration on April 22 at the Inter-

provincial Assembly of the two Northern provinces, the Superior General, Father Leonir M. Chiarello, emphasized that the Year of Vocations transcends formality; it is a grace-filled invitation to rekindle the gift within us. He quoted Saint Paul’s message to Timothy about rekindling God’s gift, reminding us that our Christian vocation, originating in baptism, and our specific vocation as Scalabrinian Missionaries are like a flame inherent within us. Like any fire, it needs proper care, attention, and renewal. To reignite it means returning to its origin, to God, the giver of the Gift.

Choosing the Fourth Sunday of Easter to launch the Year of Vocations is symbolic and significant. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, knows and cares for His sheep. For those called to consecrated life, He is not just a model, but The Model.



Beginning on this day also highlights the value of accompaniment, listening, and service to others, especially the most vulnerable, such as migrants, refugees, and seafarers.

SOURCES OF INSPIRATION FOR THE SCALABRINIAN VOCATION

Today, more than ever, the challenge of migration captures everyone's attention, regardless of their beliefs. For us Scalabrinians, whose very essence is rooted in human mobility, this issue resonates even more deeply, inviting us to put into practice the words of our holy founder: *"The Church must be where the people suffer and struggle."*

To address the many needs in diverse contexts, we are all invited, seminarians, religious, laypeople, families of Scalabrinians, and prospective Scalabrinians, to pray for vocations throughout this year of grace wherever the Congregation is present. For the harvest is plentiful, and only the Lord of the harvest can send laborers into His harvest. Therefore, we are encouraged to organize discussions, retreats, and workshops focused on vocation and to share our charism in parishes, missions, schools, reception centers, and beyond. Over these months, despite the challenging socio-political situation caused by



insecurity in Haiti's capital, there is a clear desire among young people to participate in community life, embrace the Scalabrinian charism, and engage in thoughtful discernment.

Effective ways to promote vocations include emphasizing God's plan, sharing the founder's inspiring story, and living as a witness, while cultivating a sense of purpose and community. This process involves essential changes and improvements, reinforced by a sense of belonging that fosters a unique identity. Such identity stems from self-awareness, which entails understanding and valuing one's personal history. God calls us by name in our specific context to be with him, leading to three main components: listening, discerning, and deciding.



Truly, this Year of Vocations offers a good opportunity for an ad intra (inward) reflection that will eventually manifest ad extra (outwardly). It calls us to be mindful and to approach this reflection with a creative spirit, helping us rethink and rediscover the gift God has given us in our hearts. Guided by the motto "*Rekindle the gift of God that is in you,*" every child of God is called to actively seek and nurture their vocation

through concrete acts of faith and witness. The hope is that, once discovered, others will be inspired to embrace this gift as well.

May our communities become nurturing grounds that support, inspire, and accompany vocations, promoting generous, self-giving service to God that aims to help those in greatest need and to promote a culture of genuine fraternity. //



Reflecting on the 125th Anniversary of Scalabrini's Visit to the United States

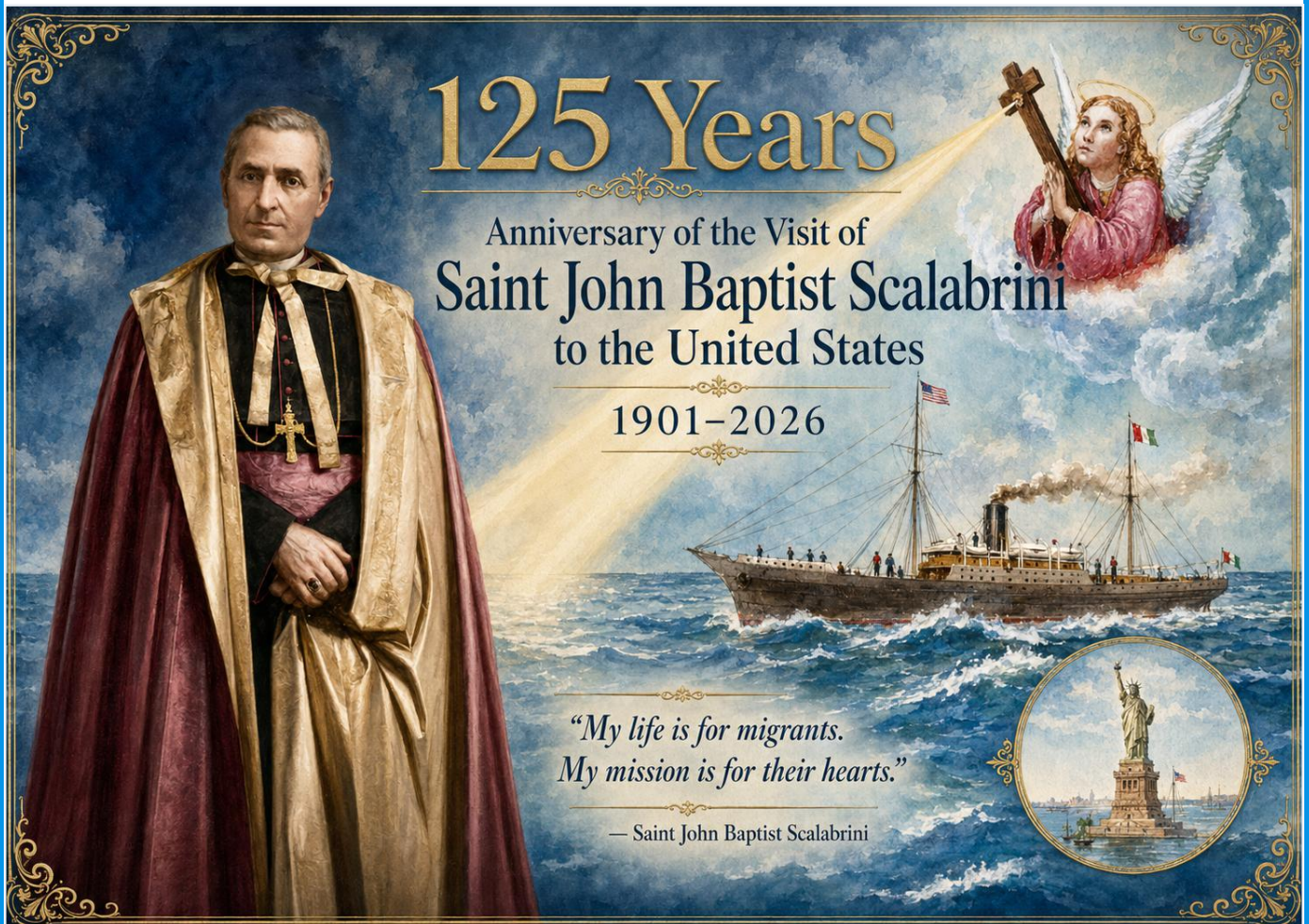
Over the centuries, Rome has dominated scholarship on its Christian saints, catacombs, ancient churches and basilicas, and the uninterrupted history of veneration of martyrs and saints. Every detail is examined with no stone left unturned to cover their historical significance as well as the prevalent issues of the time.

As I continue to look for models from the past, I find myself thinking of our Founder, St. John Baptist Scalabrini, during his visit to the U.S. more than a century ago.

The churches and other places he visited, particularly his courtesy visit to the White House with Theodore Roosevelt, who was then the President, in 1901, were documented in commemorative inscriptions that reaffirmed communal identity as a representative of the Italian Church, bringing his missionaries to this nation. These inscriptions have become part of our congregational history, reinforcing the sacred character of his role and focusing on communal memory through a collective prayer of gratitude to God.

Scalabrini's experience during his sojourn in the U.S. was always mindful of his migrant people, particularly the Italians, who had emigrated to this country, as well as his own missionaries who had already been working here.

His presence at several churches brought him to the front pages of some metropolitan newspapers. Through his preaching to the Masses, he helped those who were lost or grieving feel connected to Christ. Like the disciples of Jesus, Scalabrini was aware of



some of his priests who were faithful to their priesthood and obedient to their local bishops. Others, however, were a group of characters with conflicting traits. Despite their weaknesses, he encouraged them to continue the mission and to be transparent about the concerns of their faith communities. For Scalabrini, this transparency serves as a window through which one may gain insights into and understand key aspects of the missionaries' ministry. For most of his talks and homilies, Scalabrini ascertained what the Church teaches about discipleship, prayer, and rest. He sustained the gospel story with a relevant view to people's character and mission.

As his foundation grew, Scalabrini always wanted it to be a canonically established congregation. After going through challenges with the Roman Congregation over religious vows in 1934 and turmoil among members, Pope Pius XI approved placing the Society's governance under the Roman Consistorial Congregation. Cardinal Raffaele Carlo Rossi, a Carmelite, played a key role in reforming the congregation's internal governance and earned the title "Alter Parens" (another parent). Between 1936 and 1949, new constitutions were drafted and approved by Rome. The congregation expanded and was renamed from the Pious Society

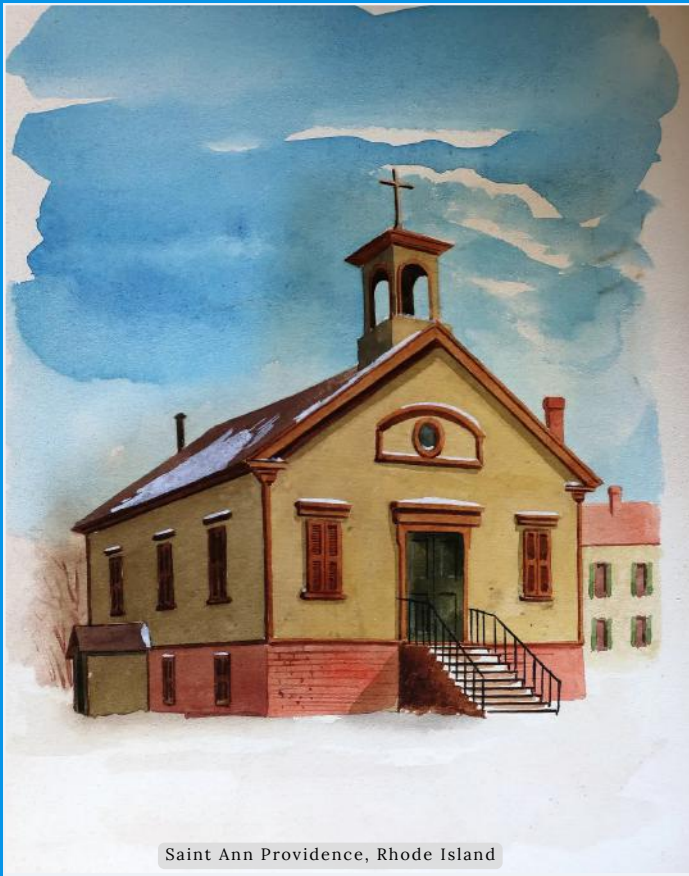
of Saint Charles (P.S.S.C.) to the Scalabrinian Congregation (C.S.), aka the Missionaries of Saint Charles. In this retelling of the past, shaped by the concerns, needs, and insights emerging from the unfolding of historical realities, the clearest and most developed expression of Scalabrini's legacy is to articulate anew a language suited to this present world, an embodied function of migrants'

mission that exemplifies our continuing conversion reflected in discipleship. As missionaries called to a vowed religious life, we are also focused on finding God in the practice of ordinary works and virtues, in the challenges of everyday life with people of other cultures. The gift of fraternal relationship is what unifies us as we seek to understand what it means to live in a community. //

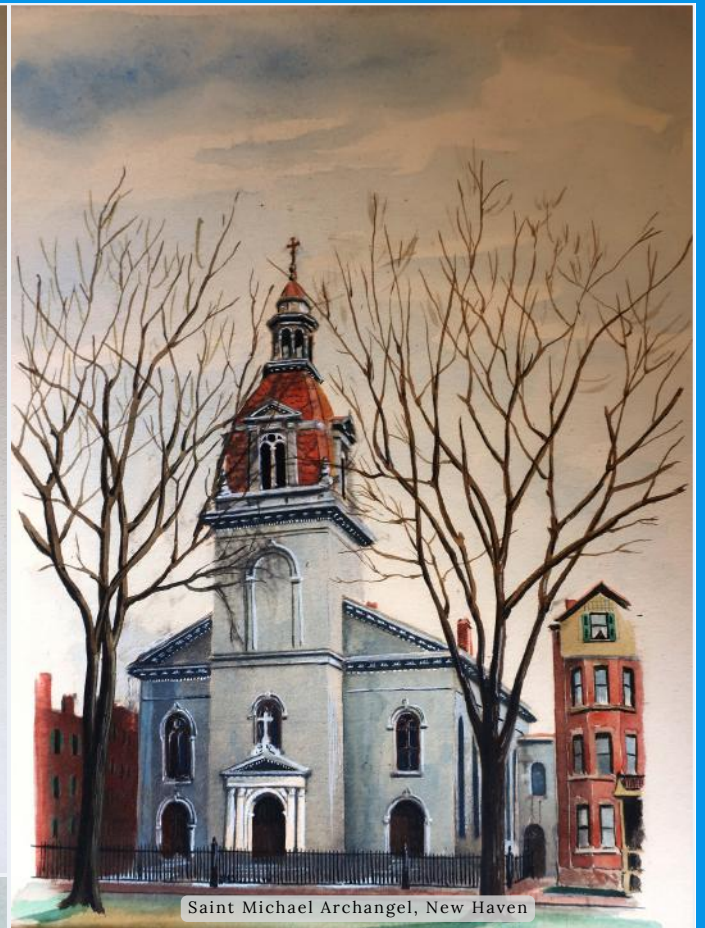


Saint Michael, Detroit

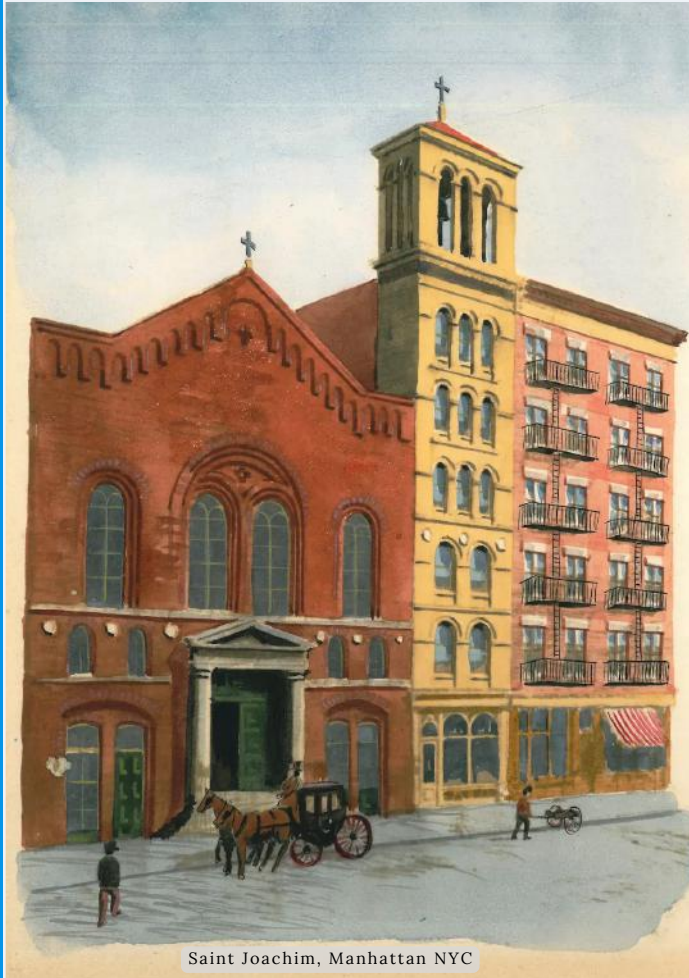
Father Giacomo Gambera was the provincial of the U.S. province (there was only a U.S. province, which covered New England, New York, and the Midwest) when Bishop Scalabrini visited. He prepared a gift for the bishop, commissioning an artist to paint watercolors of all the missions the Scalabrinians then had. These are some from the United States.



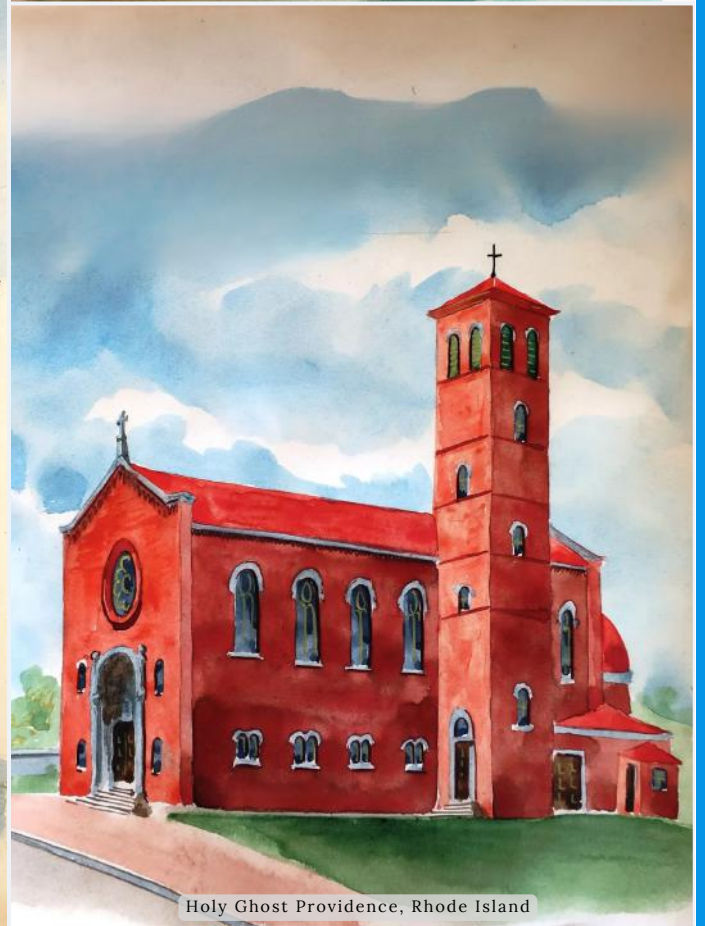
Saint Ann Providence, Rhode Island



Saint Michael Archangel, New Haven



Saint Joachim, Manhattan NYC



Holy Ghost Providence, Rhode Island

Coping with Hope in a Newly Adopted Country of Immigration - The Untold Narratives

My name is Jervi Arellano-Capunitan. I am married and a proud mother of three daughters, ages 32, 31, and 26, all of whom have completed their university degrees. Our oldest daughter is married and resides in London, England, where she works and lives. The two younger daughters still live with us, and we maintain a close, supportive family bond. My husband and I immigrated to Canada in April 1999 in search of a better future for our family. Back home in the Philippines, my husband was a licensed Civil Engineer, and I had completed an Accounting degree. Like many newcomers, we came with hope and uncertainty.

Our early years in Canada were tough. We arrived with two children, ages 6 and 5, and I was 7 months pregnant. Being far from family made it harder. Fortunately, a relative welcomed us into their home for a month until we found our own place. We literally began from nothing, adapting to a different culture, environment, and lifestyle. My husband faced difficulties in finding work in his field because his engineering license from the Philippines wasn't recognized in Canada. To support our family and gain Canadian experience, he worked various odd jobs.

After five years and earning a diploma from a public college in Toronto, he finally secured a good position at a pharmaceutical company.

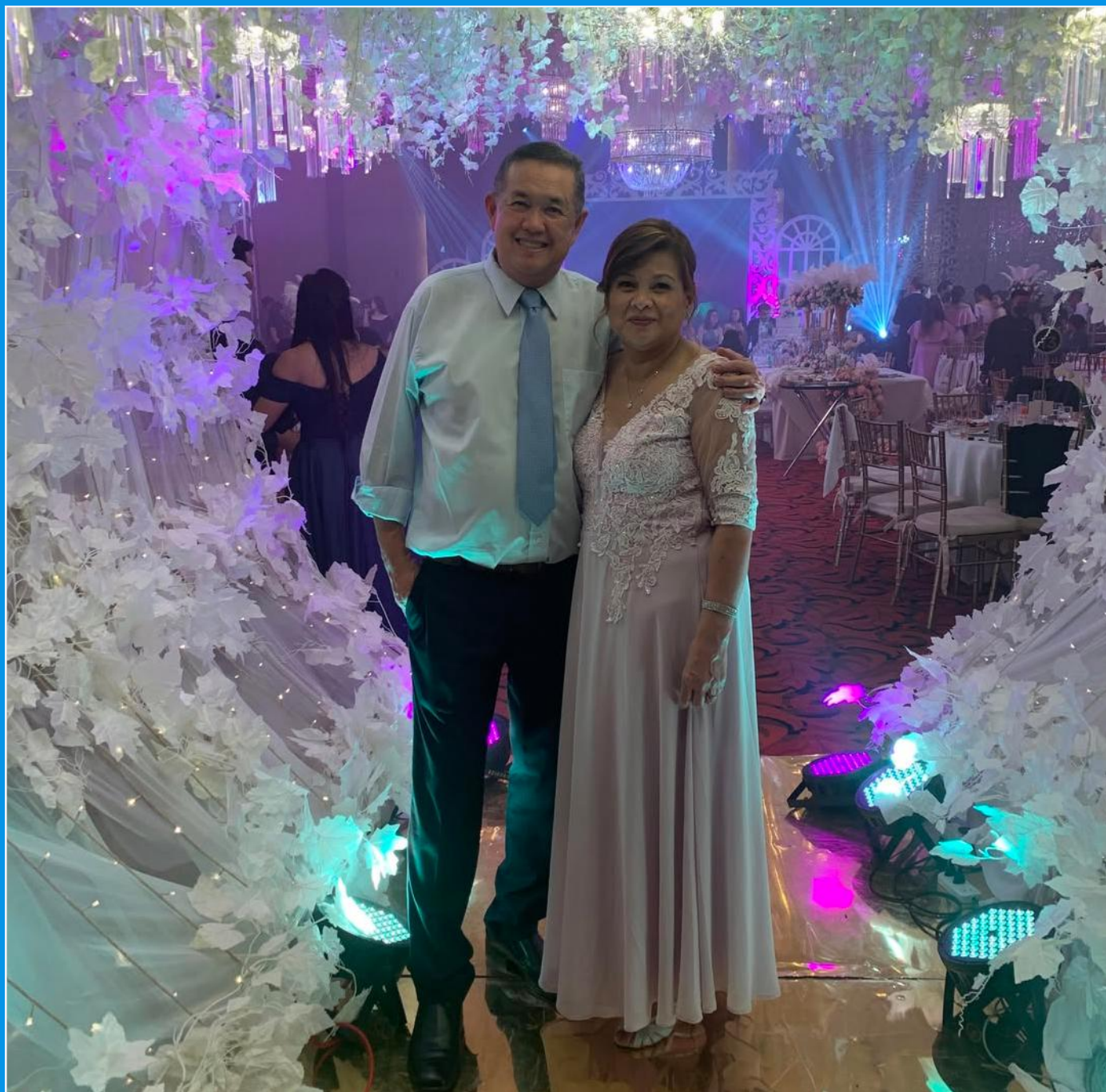
With three young children, I focused on caring for them. After eight months, I started job hunting, but my career path shifted when I joined the Ontario Ministry of the Attorney

General as an Intake Clerk. I've now completed 25 years in public service, working in various roles across different ministries, gaining diverse experience, and contributing to public service.

Just as life was starting to stabilize, everything changed. In May 2002, at 36, I was diagnosed with breast cancer,



Jervi with her lovely family



the news was devastating and upended my world overnight. With three small children depending on me, fear and anxiety overwhelmed us. I was concerned about my health and if I could support, guide, nurture, and see my children grow. But even in that darkest moment, I knew I had to be strong for them and for myself.

The months that followed were among the most difficult of my life. I underwent surgery, followed by months of treatment that tested my physical and emotional resilience. There were days when I felt weak, afraid, and uncertain about the future. The side effects of treatment were exhausting, and it sometimes

felt as if my world had shrunk to hospital visits, medications, and waiting for results. Yet through it all, I was never alone. My family became my pillar of strength. My children, though young, gave me a reason to keep fighting. Their smiles, hugs, and innocent words of encouragement became my source of courage.

I wanted to see them grow, to guide them, and to be present for all their milestones.

I found strength in the support of friends, colleagues, and our community. My workplace showed compassion and understanding during my treatment, allowing me to focus on healing without worrying about job security. My Catholic faith was vital throughout this journey. In moments of fear and doubt, I clung to hope and prayed that this difficult experience would not define me but help shape me into a stronger person. Prayer is incredibly powerful. I believe in its power. It might not work instantly, but it works in His mighty name.

Life after cancer felt different. I went back to work with a new sense of purpose. Surviving such a transformative experience changed my outlook. I became more grateful, present, and deliberate in my actions. I understood that success isn't only about career milestones but also about the love we share, the resilience we develop, and the lives we influence. As the years passed, our family continued to grow and move forward. We watched our children thrive as they finished their education, pursued their own careers, and built their own paths. Seeing them become strong, independent women is one of my greatest blessings.

Our eldest daughter, building a life in London, UK, with her husband, reflects the journey we began years ago. From starting over in a new country to seeing our children succeed around the world, I am proud. Our journey was difficult, marked by the challenges of being immigrants, parents, and individuals. Yet through perseverance, faith, and determination, we overcame every obstacle. Today, I carry scars from my past and the strength of having survived it.

Cancer was one of my hardest battles, teaching me the value of life, family, and hope. My story is about resilience, a mother who refused to give up, a family that stood together, and faith, courage, and new beginnings. Looking back on my experience in Canada, I see it as bitter-sweet. There were struggles, sacrifices, and uncertainty, especially early on and during my cancer battle. Yet there were also opportunities, growth, and blessings I'm grateful for.



I'm thankful we immigrated here because Canada allowed us to build a better future, access opportunities, and achieve stability. We raised our daughters here, watching them grow into strong, independent women.

The journey was tough but worthwhile. I see Canada as a land of freedom and opportunity, especially for newcomers like me. It allowed my family to build a better life, access education, and thrive in a safe, diverse environment. However, opportunity is not always immediate or equal. For instance, my husband had to start over despite his professional background, taking years of hard work to rebuild his career.

Canada is truly special because of the many opportunities available to those willing to pursue

them. With determination and resilience, you can advance and reach your goals. To me, Canada represents hope, growth, and the promise of a better future, regardless of your background.

My advice to fellow immigrants is to come prepared, bring hope, patience, resilience, and an open mind to adapt. Keep in mind that while many opportunities exist in Canada, success usually requires time and effort, so stay motivated and persistent throughout your journey.

Based on my experience, my husband, a licensed Civil Engineer in the Philippines, found his credentials unrecognized in Canada. He had to begin anew, working various jobs for years to rebuild his career. It was challenging, but we persevered. Given today's stricter immigration rules, it's crucial to understand the process, pursue legal options, and set achievable

goals. Focus on enhancing your skills, language, and understanding of the job market to increase your chances of success.

For newcomers aiming for improved employment and quality of life, starting with modest roles is wise. Many begin with survival jobs, which can serve as stepping stones to better opportunities. Continue learning, network actively, and leverage available support systems.

Most importantly, stay focused on your long-term goals. The journey may be difficult, but with determination and perseverance, Canada can still offer a better future, as it did for my family. In the end, success in a new country is not just about where you start, but about the courage to keep going until you reach where you are meant to be. //



Scalabrinian Solidarity Brings Hope to Earthquake-Stricken Venezuela

On June 24, 2026, Venezuela was struck by two powerful earthquakes measuring 7.2 and 7.5, occurring just seconds apart. The disaster severely affected the country's northern and central regions, particularly "La Guaira" and other areas near Caracas. Thousands of people lost their lives, many more were injured, and families were displaced as homes, roads, hospitals, and essential infrastructure were damaged or destroyed.

Amid this tragedy, the Scalabrinian Mission in Caracas has become an important center for coordinating humanitarian aid. The Scalabrinians, operating from the Italian Catholic Mission of Pompeii, are instrumental in ensuring that donated supplies reach families enduring some of the toughest conditions. A significant shipment recently arrived from the Bogotá Food Bank in Colombia. The humanitarian cargo traveled across both countries before reaching the Scalabrinian Mission in Caracas, where it was received by Fr. Francesco Bortignon, C.S., the pastor of the Italian Catholic Mission.

"This delivery comes as a gift from the Bogotá Food Bank," Fr. Bortignon explained during an interview with Caracol Tele-

vision. He emphasized the extraordinary logistical effort required to transport the aid to Venezuela. The driver traveled with approximately 25 tons of supplies and continued almost without rest to complete the journey and deliver urgently needed relief to affected communities. According to Fr. Bortignon, the shipment includes three main categories of assistance: food, personal-care products, and medicines. The supplies are expected to provide approximately 1,000 to 1,200 family food packages, offering immediate support to people who have lost their homes, possessions, and livelihoods.

However, receiving the supplies is only the first stage of the mission. Fr. Bortignon explained that the Scalabrinians are conducting a careful assessment to determine where assistance is most urgently needed. Rather than distributing the donations without sufficient information, the Mission is identifying the most vulnerable families and communities that have been difficult for humanitarian organizations to reach. "The most difficult part has been transportation," Fr. Bortignon said. "Now we are conducting an assessment, already well advanced, in order to reach the most difficult-to-access locations." In this context, Fr.

Bortignon's remark reflects the Scalabrinian commitment to accompanying people not only through emergency assistance, but also through sustained closeness, organization, and pastoral care. For families experiencing grief and uncertainty, the arrival of medicine and food signifies that they have not been forgotten. The collaboration between the Bogotá Food Bank and the Scalabrinian Mission shows that solidarity can transcend borders.

The national network of Colombian food banks has mobilized donations and logistical resources to assist Venezuelan families affected by the earthquakes. As Father Bortignon affirmed, this is precisely the assistance the Mission had hoped to provide to these families. In a time marked by destruction, the Scalabrinian presence continues to offer a message of hope: to remain close to those who suffer, to protect human dignity, and to translate generosity into concrete acts of service. Through every food package delivered, every medicine distributed, and every isolated community reached, the Scalabrinian mission renews its commitment to being present where human mobility, poverty, and suffering most urgently call for compassion. //



Caracol's News reporter with Fr. Francesco Bortignon, C.S., in Caracas - Venezuela



Scalabrinian Pompei School and Parish in Caracas with humanitarian help ready to be distributed



**SUPPORT FAMILIES AFFECTED BY
THE EARTHQUAKE IN VENEZUELA**

Stand with Venezuela. Help Bring Hope.





Missionaries of Saint Charles Borromeo
PROVINCE

#12

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Scalabrinians



In Milano I witnessed an event that left an impression of deep sadness inside me. Passing through the station, I saw the vast hall, the porticoes... the square... invaded by three or four hundred poorly dressed individuals...”

(St. Scalabrini. Mario Francesconi, Beginning of the Scalabrinian Congregation, 1886-1888)

