

# Scalabrinians

#7

Christmas  
Edition



## Scalabrinian Lay Members in Montreal

Exemplifying their life-giving mission with migrants.

## Hope generates awareness of God's ways

Walking in Faith: The hardships and hope of Migrants in Mexico.

## Visits to the detainees of Immigration

Uniting in Prayer Behind Detention Walls.



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**humilitas**  
SCALABRINIANS

SAINT CHARLES BORROMEO PROVINCE

Winter Migrants. Image: Wikimedia Commons.

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### 03 Editorial

Reverence for the mystery – A deeper resonance in the digital age.

### 04 A Message from our Provincial Superior Pilgrims of Hope.

### 05 Some insights in the prophetic mission An engagement with migrants.

### 08 Scalabrinian Lay Members in Montreal exemplify their life-giving mission with migrants Empowering Montreal's Migrant community through faith, service, and solidarity.

### 11 La Fundación Jubasca da testimonio del evangelio Entrenando Migrantes para un mejor futuro.

### 13 Hope generates awareness of God's ways Walking in Faith: The hardships and hope of Migrants in Mexico.

### 15 Visits to the detainees of Immigration bringing a message of hope Uniting in Prayer Behind Detention Walls.

### 17 Unveiling Aspects of Vocation Story: A Lifelong Commitment to the Priesthood An Interview with Fr. Van Tien (Joseph).

### 20 Enthronement of Our Lady of Aparecida - A Pilgrimage of Faith Brazilian community honor their Patroness in a historic Enthronement Ceremony.

### 22 Scalabrinians's 16th General Chapter Reaffirming our commitment to Migrants as Pilgrims of Hope.

### 25 ADVENT A Time of peace, hope, joy, and love in the Scalabrinian Family.

### 28 Celebrating 60 Years of the CMS A Legacy of Service to Migrants.

### 30 Pope Francis Appoints Scalabrinian Missionary A Cardinal A Global Advocate for Migrants Recognized with Cardinal Appointment.

### 32 Experiencing God's blessings in retrospect A Year of Spiritual Growth and Commitment.

# EDITORIAL

## Reverence for the mystery - A deeper resonance in the digital age

In the height of morning rush hours, there are times that we find ourselves particularly contemplative. We wander back to the past and dwell on it with some connection issues pertinent to our relationships. Some revelations fill the void left behind by departures in our lives. However, similar to others, we have been struggling to know through our journey what tomorrow has in store for us. We may still have so many miles to cross, so many schedules to coordinate, and all that kinds of stuff, and yet, we still wonder what we would become then; what we would have as our role in today's world, and what awaits us as our destiny.

Tensions over several issues have been simmering lately in the media and the culture perceived with the strength of secularized society like political polarization, the erosion of democracy, and the so-called "Great Dechurching" that more adults do not attend church. The many challenges of modernity in today's world exemplify a culture that convinces us that the present is all to situate our global engagements with moral actions. Similarly, the digital age provides us with another voice and responsibility that shapes our communication model of

interaction and contribution to the broader good of humankind. Its life's applicability to various moments in history remains a collective understanding of things with a wider lens that enables us to explore the diverse facets of how we live as Christians and whether or not we are living out of balance. This reflection integrates with who we are becoming and links experience in an ongoing process.

As we delve deeper into the mystery and meaning of Christmas, let's remember that it's not just a celebration involving various activities blending our customs and traditions, especially in table fellowship. Our joyous gatherings are significant, but the Scriptures remind us that the hopes of Israel and all humanity are tied to the mystery of the Incarnation – the birth of Jesus. It is the foundation of all the mysteries of Christ's life, especially the "paschal mystery." Likewise, his birth through the Virgin Mary

echoes the fulfillment of Isaiah's messianic prophecy. Matthew quotes Isaiah 7:14: *"Therefore, the Lord himself will give you a sign: the virgin shall be with child, and bear a son and shall name him Immanuel."*

Let's embrace the Christmas spirit by emphasizing the importance of sharing, a reflection of God's presence within us. The Danish philosopher Soren Kierkegaard famously coined the phrase "a leap of faith," representing a step beyond rationality, a jump that transcends logical reasoning. Hence, our reverence for the mystery of God leads to religious conviction that holiness stems from our connection with Christ. Through the grace of God manifested in history, we encounter the living mystery of the Church as a continuation of the Logos, the Incarnate Word.

May we reach out to people around us in concrete ways that reflect God's love for all. Merry Christmas! //



## A Message from our Provincial Superior

### PILGRIMS OF HOPE

Pope Francis has chosen as the theme for the Jubilee Year of 2025 “Pilgrims of Hope.” This is a very timely and appropriate guidance for a Holy Year that will bring blessings to the faithful in the world.

By the word “pilgrim” we understand those who are “on a pilgrimage,” defined as a journey to a sacred place or more broadly, the course of life on earth. So, all of us are pilgrims, “For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the one that is to come.” (Heb 13,14) Heaven is our destination. As people of faith, we journey guided by the word of God, who was revealed to an itinerant people and Jesus himself together with Mary and Joseph, became a refugee in Egypt. Therefore, we are all invited to immerse ourselves and our communities in celebrating this Jubilee Year even if we cannot travel to Rome and cross the Holy Doors at the Basilicas. We can choose a Shrine of our devotion, but more importantly we must be aware that the essential journey is internal, the one that will lead us to repentance and connection with God’s plan for our lives and the world.

The pope is inviting us to live our vocation as pilgrims, but in a very specific way, as pilgrims

of Hope. Hope is a virtue, together with Charity and Faith, constitutes the three theological virtues. Hope guarantees in the human person the search for happiness and fulfillment in life, sustains us from discouragement and selfishness. On the eve of the Jubilee of 1900, Saint John Baptist Scalabrini noted that, “the world is groaning beneath the weight of great catastrophes.” Today we could use these same words to describe the world’s situation: we live in fear.



We face uncertainties due to wars, division between nations; people who were forced to leave their native place in search of a life with dignity, that every human being deserves, are now targeted as criminals, placed at the center of a rhetoric inflamed by hate and prejudice. We affirm that every nation has the right to guarantee the safety of its citizens, but we also believe in the proper treatment of the foreigner who knocks at our door.

So, as we conclude this year, celebrating the great feast of

Hope of all time, the birth of Jesus, we look forward in renewing the hope that guides us: we will not despair when the world seems to turn against us. As Pope Francis said to the Scalabrinian Fathers and Brothers at the conclusion of their XV General Chapter, on October 28, 2024: As “migrants among migrants,” which is what your Founder wanted you to be, you have much to learn from them as you share in their journey. In this way, through interaction and dialogue, and by welcoming Christ present in them, you will grow in solidarity with one another, putting your trust “in God and in God alone.”

Do not forget the Old Testament: the widow, the orphan and the stranger are God’s privileged ones. The dream of a new future that drives people to migrate reflects a yearning for salvation that is present in all people, whatever their race or social condition. Indeed, “itinerancy,” despite the sufferings it entails, can become a precious school of faith and humanity, both for those who provide assistance and those who receive it, provided that it is properly understood and experienced.”



*May 2025 be a year  
when Hope will be  
ignited in our hearts”*



## Some insights in the prophetic mission - an engagement with migrants

"God walks with his people," Pope Francis reminds us. He emphasizes this as a focal point for celebrating the day of migrants and refugees. When we talk about walking, migrants and refugees are the first to come to mind, as for them, walking is not just about leisure, but a necessity for survival.

God walked with his people when they were walking from Egypt to the promised land. Even then it was not a walk in the park but a walk towards freedom. That is the difference between Egypt and the promised land, freedom. Migration is a walk towards freedom, even if the price to pay is often slavery. "Treated like slaves" declared the Filipino fishermen who worked for TN Trawlers, a Scottish fishing company, to the BBC. It is not the experience of all migrants, but a condition that many have to face, especially in certain countries or in certain occupations.

God accompanied his people on their journey from Egypt to the promised land. However, this

journey was a quest for freedom. The difference between Egypt and the promised land is the presence of freedom. Migration represents a pursuit of freedom, even though it often involves so-called slavery. "Treated like slaves," lamented Filipino fishermen employed by TN Trawlers, a Scottish fishing company, in an interview with the BBC. While not universal, this plight is a reality for many migrants, particularly in certain countries or occupations.

There are several forms of slavery, with the most profound absence of hope. Often migrants embark on journeys to break free from the enslavement of a future that offers no hope. In a similar vein, refugees flee because they believe there is no hope left to escape violence or death.

There are numerous ways to break free from slavery. However, for many individuals, the only way to freedom is through embarking on a transformative journey, leaving behind the familiar ones, and moving towards

### SCALABRINIANS MAGAZINE

Is published quarterly in full-color print editions. It shows the mission apostolates of the Scalabrinian missionaries in diverse communities across North and South America. It offers its readers a Scalabrinian perspective on migration and other expansive variety of topics.

The Scalabrinian Missionaries are committed to promoting the total salvation of humankind, leading migrants in particular, to connect their lives with the roots of their faith and cultural values. While we have more possibilities than ever to meet this diversity head-on with different cultures and ethnicities, our community aims at expanding spiritual and pastoral assistance to migrants. This dynamic process evolves within the context of every community and pastoral position we serve in Canada, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Haiti, the U.S.A., and Venezuela. Together with our readers, we pray that our ministry with and for the migrants will make us more Christ-like and serve in some way to draw others closer to God.

May the spirit of our Founder, St. John Baptist Scalabrini, help us strengthen our vocation as his missionaries in the world. Scalabrinians Magazine welcomes letters and articles from readers. Letters and articles may be edited for length and clarity. Please include your full name and address.

#### email:

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World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2024 celebration, Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish, Delray Beach, FL

something that promises to be better, even if unknown. This is why the journey can be arduous and painful but true liberation comes from embracing the certainty that leads to freedom.

God walks with his people to guide them in understanding the essence of freedom. Initially, we need to let go of the comforts of the past, learn to be content with just enough for the day, and deal with our flaws or wickedness, which can break our relationship with others. We must first experience that true freedom is found in our encounter with God who dwells in the tent to journey alongside us, remains there because the destination is still far away, and lives in the tent because it can be relocated. Migrants compel God to move the tent.

The Church is the people of God on the move, a pilgrim Church with God by its side as long as it continues to journey. It's not

just migrants who are on the move; their journey symbolizes the deeper journey we all take in the brevity of life. The Church accompanies people on their journey to bear witness that God walks with them.

The theme chosen by Pope Francis strongly echoes our mission, as summarized in the Rules of Life (2): the Church is on an earthly pilgrimage, accompanying the poorest and most marginalized groups. We must help people see migration as a reflection of humanity's eternal calling. We achieve this by journeying alongside migrants as fellow pilgrims. There are several ways to accompany migrants, but the most genuine approach involves sharing in their journey. This entails not simply leaving something behind, but rather traveling with hope and embarking on a journey of freedom. Migrants should feel that we stand beside them. They cannot perceive this

if we look at them from the outside, trapped in their quest, while we remain within our secure boundaries. Our initiatives, structures, and efforts should serve as avenues and spaces where migrants feel welcomed. They will feel our support when they sense that we are by their side, not just working on their behalf. In addition, they appreciate our presence in various situations.

In our journey with others, it's important for them to feel that they are not alone and that God is walking with them. The temple, representing the promised land, must transform into a tent, making God's presence felt wherever we are. Let's create sanctuaries in unexpected places like at work, on the border, in the desert, or even in a place of shipwreck.

Ultimately, we must maintain a clear goal in perspective. Instead of focusing on eschatolog-



ical thoughts about our citizenship being in heaven, let's concentrate on the hope that becomes a certainty for migrants. Their destination differs from their starting point, and this renewed hope endures because the journey continues.

It is our responsibility to ensure that migrants do not settle for

material wealth. Whether with or without God, the essence lies in not settling, as the promised land of abundance and prosperity always lies ahead.

We achieve this by accompanying them on their journey, embracing their quest as our own, and empathizing with the incompleteness of their happi-

ness, for there will always be another concern, another tear, but these tears do not fall in isolation.

What sustains us in our journey as migrants? It's the certainty of a promise that cannot be confined to a single land; a promise that transcends geographical boundaries. //



## LETTER TO EDITORS

Dear Editors: I am writing about your magazine, which briefly recounts the experiences of men and women in different settings. The ongoing conversation on cultural diversity has prompted the work of remembering to recognize common threads in human experiences. This work characterizes movements of people that turn inward to identify recurring patterns of human behavior. This helps us better understand our differences in terms of culture, ethnicity, and faith experience.

What is interesting in your magazine is that every culture searches for meaning in relationships with others. It is reflected in your parishes and mission apostolates. Every person indeed searches for meaning. As the

population in the U.S. becomes more diverse, i.e., an increase in non-Christian faith atheism and agnosticism, the study of faith as a verb is perhaps imperative. With the growing number of people these days turning towards secular spirituality due to avoidance of religion and the Church's dogma, I think again of what it means to be religious versus what it means to be spiritual. Spirituality is related to our quest for the sacred. It has individual and communal dimensions.

Perhaps your magazine can be a vehicle to entice the younger generation to value the insights from the contributors' perspectives. As faith is related to many facets of life, I think of interdisciplinary narratives to be incorporated into your magazine. It's not only about the activities in

parishes but also other institutions, particularly in medicine, where "the rubber meets the road" as we commonly say. For example, "how we should care for one another before we come to the end of our lives." While it draws God at the heart of those realities, contributors can help the readers see through the lens of commitment to loving and showing compassion to those who are suffering, potentially dying patients, or preparing to transition to another phase of life, perhaps a theological reflection can be written. At times, a non-religious perspective is also needed or we may say a complement for growth.

Sincerely,

Marie Scholastica Morelo  
Chicago, IL

## Scalabrinian Lay Members in Montreal exemplify their life-giving mission with migrants



Fathers Giampietro, Walter, Fugolo, and Mario, with Knights of Columbus at the Solemnity of the Assumption at Our Lady of Pompei, Montreal, August 2024. Photo by Sara Barone

Canada is a nation built by immigrants. It is an integral part of our identity. As children, we witnessed the challenges, sacrifices, and triumphs of our parents as they worked tirelessly to establish a new life for their families. Like many other immigrants, they came from humble beginnings, bringing only their youth, courage, culture, and faith.

Saint Scalabrini's profound encounter with the realities of migration at the train station in Milan inspired the foundation of a congregation of missionaries now actively involved across five

continents. Growing up, we observed this firsthand in our own home every day, laying the formation for our deep connection with the Scalabrinian mission.

This small grassroots group at Our Lady of Pompei Parish in Montreal initially comprised a few dedicated volunteers who had previously been involved with the Scalabrini Centre for Migrants and Refugees at the former Saint Rita Church property. In 2017, before the start of a residential building project at the property by the Scalabrinian congregation, the

statue and relic of Saint Rita were moved to Our Lady of Pompei. This relocation allowed her numerous devotees to continue their prayers and veneration of this beloved saint.

The Scalabrinian fathers, led by Father Joseph Fugolo, envisioned that each parish under their care in Montreal would establish a "service for migrants" as a parish group, taking over from the former Scalabrini Centre. With the support of the pastor, Fr. Giampietro Lazzarato, along with Fr. Mario Titotto, and Fr. Jairo Avila, who serves the Hispanic community, were

able to take on the management of the food pantry at Pompeii. Rosaria Monaco, however, takes charge of this ministry.

Over time, they continued their collaborative study and remained committed to the Scalabrinian charism. Some members had previously been consecrated as lay Scalabrinians in New York in the early 2000s. The volunteers warmly welcomed recent immigrants, refugee claimants, and those in need in the community. In their humble way, they sought to help these individuals settle in a new country and address their basic needs.

Every Friday, a group of volunteers and parishioners gather in the parish rectory basement to run a grassroots initiative supporting those in need. They operate a food pantry and gather donated furniture, winter clothing, boots, kitchen items, and more. While not professionals in migration services, they assist newcomers by researching and recommending places and organizations where they can receive help. They celebrate their victories and offer support during their challenges, showing that they are cared for and not alone.

Newcomers receive guidance from local churches that accommodate their language and cultural preferences.

Father Luigi Mansi has taken the initiative to lead a Bible study group, generously dedicating his time and effort to deepen their understanding of their faith.

There is optimism that Father Luigi's dedication will encourage others to participate. In addition, volunteers offer basic French classes to newcomers while they await the Quebec government's francization pro-

gram. They also provide Spanish and Italian courses for those interested, to promote solidarity among diverse cultural groups.

The coordinator works diligently to assist the elderly parishioners in need of care by connecting them with private caregivers if they do not have access to government-funded services due to the aging popu-



Procession following the Mass of the Solemnity of the Assumption at Our Lady of Pompei, Montreal. August 2024. Photo by Sara Barone



Lay Scalabrinians and volunteers at the Scalabrini Service for Migrants at Our Lady of Pompei



Volunteer Francisco del Bois teaching French language skills to newcomers

lation of Italian parishioners. In addition, the group organizes the distribution of Christmas baskets and hosts a Christmas party for those who have been served throughout the year. They also take charge of organizing the annual Feast of Saint Rita in May.

The funding for these initiatives comes from the generous contributions of the community, including parishioners, the Knights of Columbus, and devotees of Saint Rita. While currently modest, they are appreciative of the opportunity to carry out these parish outreach efforts with the support of the Scalabrinian fathers, in alignment with the biblical spirit, “I was a stranger and you welcomed me” (Matt. 25:35).

On August 13, the parish had the honor of hosting their former pastor, Father Walter Toneotto, who presided over the celebra-

tion of the Feast of the Madonna. He conducted a spiritual retreat for approximately 40 parishioners, emphasizing the importance of embracing Saint Scalabrini’s dedication and compassion for the marginalized and encouraging them to model their lives after the saint’s example.

Furthermore, Fr. Walter pointed out the need to nurture the value value of inclusivity to-

wards newcomers and those in need within the community. He said, “Through baptism, we are entrusted with the mission of evangelization.”

Similarly, Saint Scalabrini emphasized, “We often believe that to attain sainthood, we must perform extraordinary and singular actions, but, my dear community, it is the small daily actions that will guide us to sainthood.” //



Fr. Luigi Mansi holding weekly Bible study session



Left to Right: Fr. Giampietro Lazzarato, Fr. Mario Titotto, Fr. Giuseppe Fugolo, Fr. Luigi Mansi and Fr. Jairo Avila

## La Fundación Jubasca da testimonio del evangelio

La Fundación Jubasca ha brindado sus servicios (alojamiento y alimentación temporal, donación de alimentos, asistencia jurídica y psicológica, orientación documentación migratoria y derivación a organismos competentes), por más de una década en la ciudad de Manta de Ecuador; apoyando a personas en condición de movilidad humana, migrantes y refugiados.

Durante el primer semestre del año 2024 a través de alianzas y el espíritu de servicio de SIMN (Scalabrini International Migration Network) se pudo implementar el proyecto: “Empoderamiento a través de fronteras Mujeres Migrantes en el mundo laboral” Desde el 20 de mayo del presente año, se logró ofrecer talleres de formación en especialidades como: peluquería y barbería, cocina y pastelería, uñas y cejas, costura profesional, impartidos a personas migrantes y refugiados que tienen deseos de superación, y buscan mejores oportunidades laborales y de emprendimiento en la ciudad.

Con más de 20 beneficiarios en cada taller, se observó el interés y animo con el que minuciosamente los beneficiarios participaban dos veces por semana en sus clases, por un periodo de tres meses. Mediante clases teóricas que les nutrieron de conocimientos generales y



Hair-dressing, barbering, cooking, pastry making, nail and eyebrow care, and professional sewing training workshops





actualizados sobre distintas áreas, apoyadas en clases prácticas que les permitieron desarrollar habilidades y destrezas en cada especialidad, dando como fruto confianza en su campo, y de esta manera poder brindar un servicio a la comunidad con el objetivo de generar nuevas fuentes de ingresos.

A finales de agosto con mucha alegría se realizó una Casa Abierta en la Plaza Cívica de la ciudad de Manta, donde todos los beneficiarios de los talleres como parte activa del proyecto, lograron socializar y presentar las habilidades desarrolladas durante los cursos. En este día las personas de la ciudad pudieron recibir cortes de cabellos, adquirir prendas cosidas por nuestros beneficiarios, degustar un postre o alimento casero, o realizarse un corte y arreglo de uñas y cejas. Todo esto con el afán de socializar el proyecto con la comunidad y dar a conocer la misión de nuestra fundación y de las instituciones que nos respaldan, que nos permiten seguir en el camino de nuestros objetivos institucionales y llevar la misión a los migrantes de todo el mundo. //

## Summary at a Glance

The Jubasca Foundation, based in Manta, Ecuador, has provided support to migrants and refugees for over ten years, offering temporary housing, food donations, legal and psychological assistance, and help with migration documents. In 2024, they launched the project “Empowerment Across Borders: Migrant Women in the Workforce,” in collaboration with SIMN (Scalabrini International Migration Network). Starting in May, workshops were held in skills like hairdressing, cooking, nail and eyebrow care, and professional sewing,

targeting migrants and refugees seeking better job opportunities. Each workshop had over 20 participants who met twice a week for three months, learning both theory and hands-on skills. In August, the foundation organized an Open House at Manta’s Civic Plaza. Participants demonstrated their new skills, offering haircuts, homemade food, and custom-sewn clothing. This event aimed to introduce the community to the project and emphasize the foundation’s ongoing mission to support global migrants.

## Hope generates awareness of God's ways

A significant number of migrants, mostly from Central America, travel in search of better opportunities. For them, Mexico serves as a transit point or passage on their way to the United States. As a missionary priest, I had the opportunity to meet some of them at the Archangel Raphael Migrant House-Scalabrini Center, situated in Iztapalapa, Mexico.

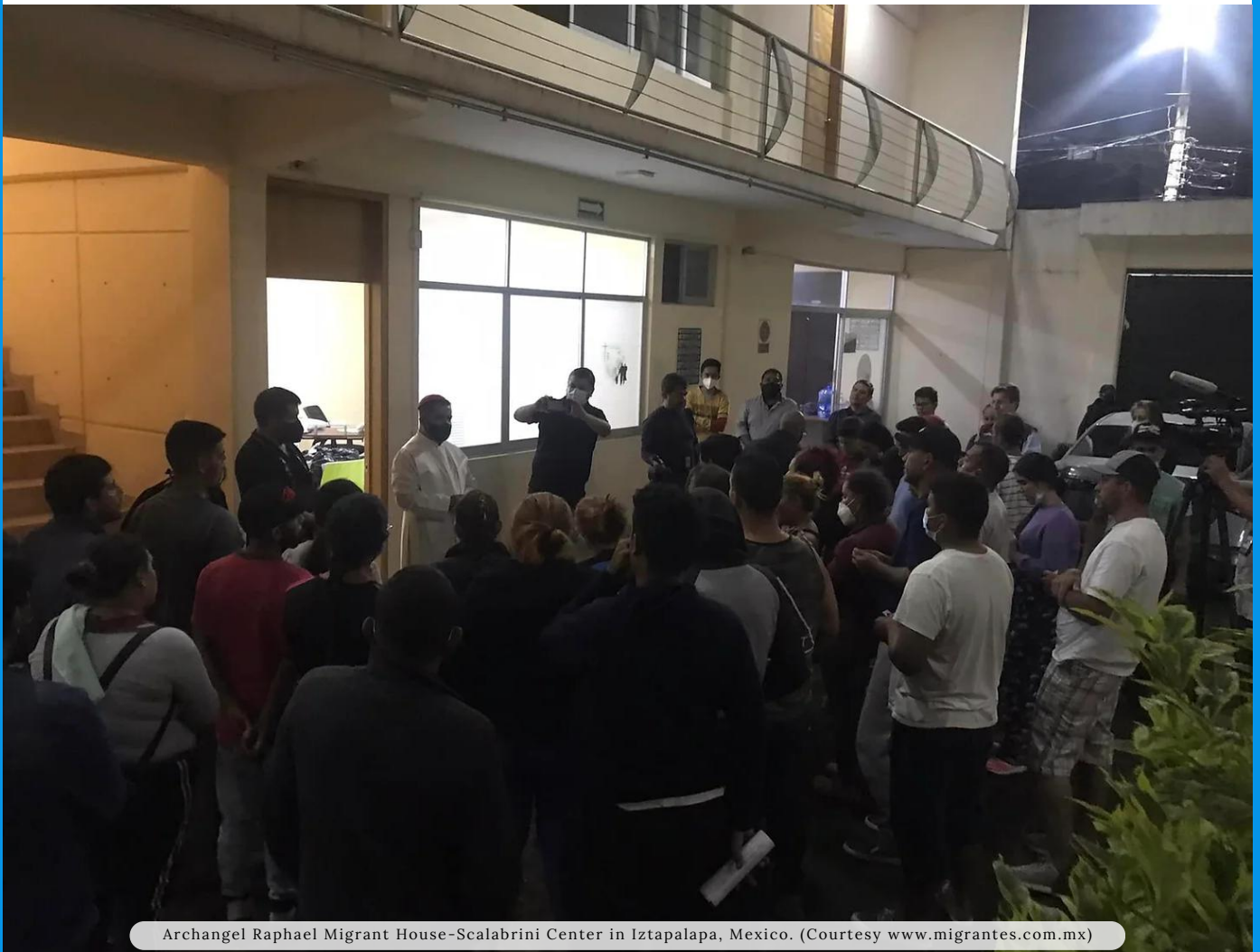
I know them as “the heroes on foot.” To secure a better life, oftentimes, individuals have to travel thousands of kilometers

on foot to reach the so-called “promised land.” While it is heartening that they make this journey together, it is unfortunate that we hear so little about the hardships and risks they endure along the way.

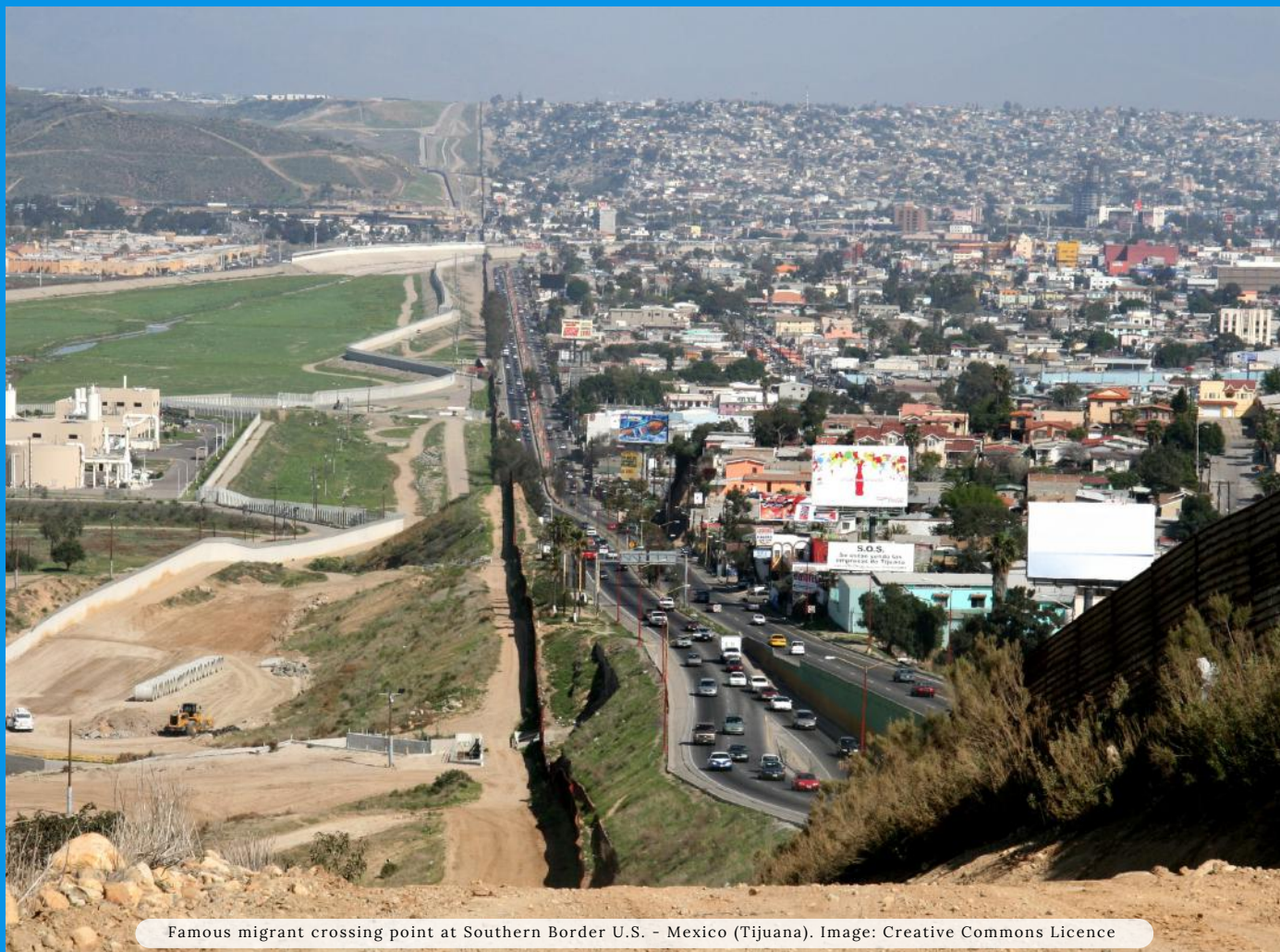
Some of them travel for months to reach Mexico because they cannot afford the bus fare, relying solely on their worn-out sandals for the journey. Exhausted and fatigued, they may wish for magical winged sandals to help them reach their destination faster.

I recall Jesus's words to his disciples: “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head” (Matt 8:20). This also reflects the lives of migrants; each night, they lack a roof over their heads, a bed to sleep on, and a decent place to live. They often find themselves sleeping on the streets, in the woods alongside wild animals, or wherever they can secure shelter.

Sadly, numerous innocent children are wandering the streets, unsure of their destination.



Archangel Raphael Migrant House-Scalabrini Center in Iztapalapa, Mexico. (Courtesy [www.migrantes.com.mx](http://www.migrantes.com.mx))



Famous migrant crossing point at Southern Border U.S. - Mexico (Tijuana). Image: Creative Commons Licence

Passing through unfamiliar places at night without shelter, food, or electricity is challenging, and the lack of security makes it even more dangerous. Despite these hardships, the children's innocence persists, unyielding. They manage to find joy in playing anywhere, at any time, with whatever they can find.

Upon arriving at our Scalabrini Center in Iztapalapa, Mexico, these children receive shelter, nourishment, medical assistance, and the Eucharist. As dedicated missionaries, volunteers, and individuals with a

common goal to be of service to them, we assure them of God's love and compassion.

With that, God's portrayal in their lives mirrors this message of being a companion and best friend in their journey.

At the migrant house, children have the chance to connect with others who have also recently arrived. It's truly touching to witness them coming together, transcending any barriers that may exist. The migrant children engage in play alongside their local counterparts, showcasing that despite their diverse back-

grounds, they are bound by shared expressions, greetings, embraces, and smiles.

Despite facing numerous challenges in their search for a new beginning, and perhaps having lost everything, these individuals continue to cling to hope and fulfill their dreams of freedom, which remains unquenchable. I earnestly hope that people across the globe will endeavor to foster new hope, justice, and solidarity in all corners of the world, especially in those places where they are scarce. //

## Visits to the detainees of Immigration bringing a message of hope



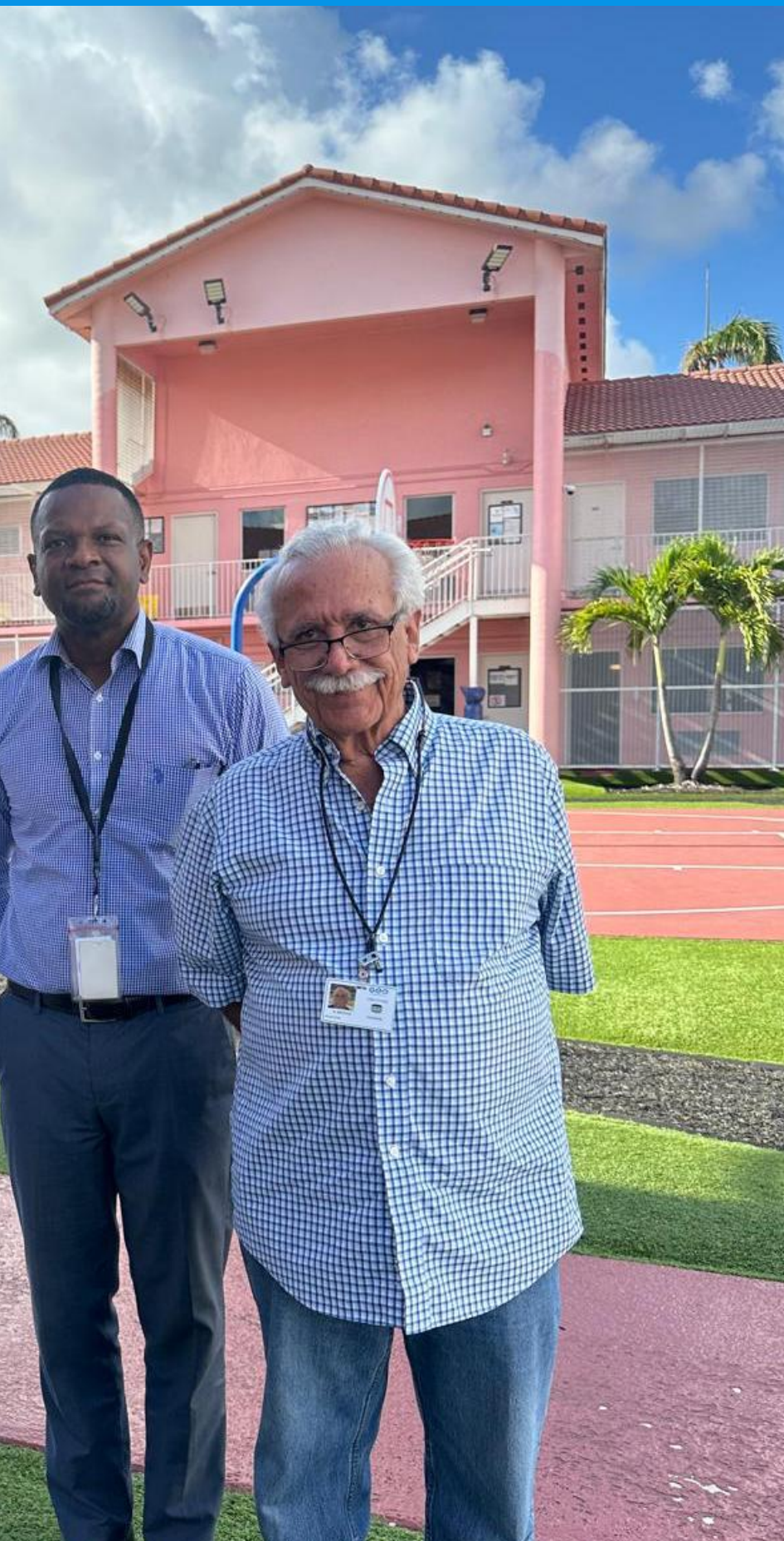
*I was in prison and you visited me, are the words of Jesus in Matthew 25:34"*

Visiting the Migrant Detention Center evokes the feeling of bringing Jesus's presence, along with His word and sacraments, to the men and women at the Broward Transitional Center (BTC) at Pompano Beach, Florida. One can feel the desperation and discouragement stemming from their repatriation experiences and the quest for an adjustment of status. With a community from different countries around the world, the presence of Hispanic individuals awaiting court resolution regarding their immigration status is particularly prominent.

The BTC is a detention center where migrants are detained waiting to be deported or taken to trial to resolve situations regarding their immigration status. It is a place where a diverse community from various countries converges. A group of volunteers visits the detention center every week to offer spiritual support to the detainees. During the week, particularly on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, they engage in catechism sessions, discussions, praying the rosary, and singing practice.

L-R: Mr. Jason Guzmán, Fr. Isaia Birolo, Mr Armstrong Brunache and volunteer Robert Brewer





Every 15 days they come accompanied for confession and the Holy Eucharist in the center's central courtyard. It is a special moment of spiritual encounter where the Word of God and Holy Communion are shared. The BTC authorities allow men and women to go out to the central courtyard to be able to unite in prayer and live a moment of encounter with God through the common prayer of the Eucharist.

Every fifteen days, individuals come together for confession and the Holy Eucharist in the central courtyard. This occasion serves as a significant moment for spiritual connection and worship. The BTC authorities allow both men and women to gather in the courtyard, allowing them to join in prayer and experience a meaningful encounter with God through the shared celebration of the Eucharist.

We need more volunteers to support detainees facing immigration issues. The detainees need someone who can listen to them, offer accompaniment, and share messages of hope. Currently, there are no volunteers in the women's section to assist female detainees. Jesus is with each detainee who needs to be heard and supported. They deserve encouragement to move forward with hope and peace in their hearts. //

## Unveiling Aspects of Vocation Story: A Lifelong Commitment to the Priesthood

As the changing face of the Church worldwide has become more evident in various religious congregations, the Scalabrinian Order is an example that has a shared commitment to forming young men of cultures in postmodern times. American Jesuit theologian, John Courtney Murray, described it as *“a growing edge that seeks continuity and change”* in new ways with solid roots in the Catholic view. Prompted by an ongoing conversation with the signs of the times, multiple voices have come to terms with deeper formative experiences that make connections with the Founder’s charism and a larger integrated

perspective. Its approach has an interdisciplinary guide that is cultivated and shaped within human formation.

**Good morning, Father Tien. It’s a joy to have you here for a conversation about your vocation, especially in light of the**

**changing demographics within our congregation. This is a relevant topic, I guess, that encompasses the mission, diverse responses, and perspectives within the Scalabrinian Order.**

**To start, could you share a bit about your background?**



I’m Father Van Tien (Joseph) Nguyen, born and raised in Vietnam. I was ordained to the priesthood in 2023. I come from a religious family and have two brothers who are also priests. They are Father Trung who is a member of the Diocese of Palmerston North in New Zealand. Another brother, Father Thong, is a member of the Archdiocese of Washington D.C. My youngest brother is a member of the Institute of Charity (Romanians) who is studying theology in Rome. Then my sister and two other brothers are married already and living in Europe.



**Where did the religious influence come from and how did you discover that calling to the priesthood? As Scalabrinian? Can you tell us how your formation went through?**



First of all, vocation is a gift and a mystery as St. John Paul II wrote in his book. As a child, my parents took me to church for Mass regularly. We prayed the rosary daily, and I served as an altar server while also participating in the choir and prayer group. While my brothers felt a calling to become priests, I did not share that aspiration. Instead, I dreamed of becoming a soccer player, dedicating much of my time to the sport instead of my studies.

One day, while attending Sunday mass, I heard the gospel in which Jesus called his disciples to follow him. I felt something different in my heart. When I got home, I listened to a religious song, and suddenly my brother said to me, *"Tien, it would be better if you consider entering the seminary to become a priest."* At that moment, my life changed. I began to contemplate a vocation to the priesthood.

In 2010, I traveled to Saigon for a year to explore my interest in the Missionaries of St. Charles - Scalabrinians. The following year, I decided to enter the seminary, commencing with a year of Propaedeutic studies, followed by two years of philosophy. After that, I journeyed to the Philippines for my postulancy and novitiate. In 2017, I took my first vows and was then sent to Colombia to pursue my theological studies. In 2022, I made my perpetual vows and was ordained as a deacon in Colombia. Finally, on May 27, 2023, I was ordained a priest in Atlanta, Georgia.

**You're now assigned to the Resurrection Parish. How would describe your ministry, community, and learning experiences with people of different cultures?**



I am currently serving at Resurrection Catholic Church in Winter Garden, Florida, alongside my two brother priests, Fr. Adriano Tezone and Fr. Noe Vera. This parish is relatively large and dynamic, serving three distinct communities: English, Spanish, and Portuguese.

As this is my first missionary assignment, I have faced various challenges and difficulties related to language and culture. However, I have learned to celebrate the Mass in different ways and to connect with people from diverse backgrounds. Thanks be to God, I feel truly blessed here, as I have the support of my community. We share wonderful moments in prayer and fellowship.

Although we live in the parish, we function as a close-knit community. We pray, share meals, and plan together, which fosters excellent communication among us. This communal life greatly supports me as a young priest. Additionally, several practices strengthen my vocation and enhance my ministry.



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**In your spiritual walk, how has God used adversity or challenge to mature you? Is it still ongoing? What steps do you follow in your religious life as a Scalabrinian missionary?**



While a proper perspective of religious life is essential to sustain one's vocation to the priesthood, it is particularly necessary to have a continuing commitment to prayer with faithfulness to the Liturgy of the Hours and the Sacraments. One needs to balance work and rest because ministry can be demanding. It is why I need to prioritize self-care, nurture my hobbies, and ensure adequate rest to prevent burnout.

Being open to change is important. I acknowledge the diverse cultures and backgrounds of the individuals I serve and embrace these differences. As a Scalabrinian committed to helping migrants and refugees, I am learning to accept people as they are. I also share my experiences—both the positive and the challenging—with trusted friends.

Finally, I remind myself to trust in God's guidance. I recognize that I am merely an instrument of God. This perspective helps me remain humble and let go of control when circumstances don't unfold as I expect.

**As your takeaway, what specific resources would you recommend for young men and seminarians of today to read and review for formation and encouragement in Christian discipleship?**



When I talk to my brothers, they often remind me that we cannot continue this journey without the grace of God, the prayers of so many, and especially the help and support we receive from others. We are always grateful for that. Please continue to pray for me as I strive to follow the Good Shepherd more closely, following the example of our founder, St. John Baptist Scalabrini, to be a migrant among migrants.

**Thank you very much, Father Tien, for your time and your dedication to the priesthood. Your work as a Scalabrinian missionary is a true service to the people of God and the Church. Please know that you will remain in our prayers.** //



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## Enthronement of Our Lady of Aparecida - A Pilgrimage of Faith

The Brazilian community, along with other ethnic members from Saint Bernard's and Our Lady of Fatima Parish in Riverdale, MD, joined fellow Brazilians in Washington, D.C. to participate in the enthronement of Our Lady of Aparecida on September 14 at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.

Cardinal Seán O'Malley, OFM Cap., former archbishop of Boston, presided over the mass. Other concelebrants were Cardinal Wilton Gregory, Cardinal of Washington, Cardinal

Chirstophe Pierre, Apostolic Nuncio to the United States, as well as several bishops and priests from Brazil, and various regions of the United States. Notably present were two Scalabrinian bishops - Msgr. Adilso Busin from Porto Alegre Brazil, and Msgr. Jacques Fabre from South Carolina, USA were present. Additionally, other Scalabrinian priests of Brazilian descent, along with clergy from other ethnic backgrounds participated in the celebration. Fr Horecio Carlos Anklan, provincial superior of St. Charles, Scalabrinians, was also

in attendance. Our Lady of Aparecida is highly revered in Brazil and was proclaimed the patroness of the country in 1930. The devotion to her began in 1717 when three fishermen discovered a statue of the Blessed Mother in the water. This remarkable event was soon followed by a miraculous catch of fish. Her feast day is on October 12. Professor Duilia de Mello, a Brazilian and Vice Provost of Global Strategies and Physics at the Catholic University of America, has been leading the initiative for the statue's installation since



Fr. Horecio Carlos Anklan with other Scalabrinian Missionaries at Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Washington DC.



Ms. Jocynny and Mr. Marco

November, 2021. The fundraising goal of \$85,000 was designated for constructing a pedestal for the statue that meets the architectural standards of the Basilica. The small chapel dedicated to Our Lady of Fatima at the entrance of the Upper Church provided an appropriate location for the placement of Our Lady of Aparecida.

The National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, located next to the University but not affiliated with it, features over 80 different Marian chapels and representations of unique Catholic devotions from around the world. Cardinal O'Malley offered to be the ecclesiastical sponsor of the installation and donated the statue of Our Lady of Aparecida. //



From left to right (See below)

From left to right: Reverend Monsignor Vito A. Buonanno, Associate Rector and Director of Pilgrimages of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Most Rev. Bruce Lewandowski, Auxiliary Bishop of Baltimore, Most Rev. Adilson Pedro Busin, Bishop of Tubarao, Most Rev. Luiz Fernando Lisboa, Archbishop of Cachoeiro de Itapemirim, Wilton Cardinal Gregory, Archbishop of Washington, Seán Cardinal O'Malley, OFM Cap., Christophe Cardinal Pierre, Apostolic Nuncio in the United States of America, Most Reverend Edgar M. da Cunha, Bishop of Fall River, Most Rev. Jacques Fabre-Jeune, C.S., Bishop of Charleston, Most Rev. Cristiano Borro Barbosa, Auxiliary Bishop of Boston, Reverend Monsignor Walter R. Rossi, Rector of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Father Ismael "Mel" Ayala, Associate Rector and Director of Liturgy of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.

## Scalabrinians's 16th General Chapter Reaffirms our Commitment to Migrants as Pilgrims of Hope

The Superior General, Father Leonir Mario Chiarello, inaugurated the 16th General Chapter of the Scalabrinian Congregation with a mass held in Rocca di Papa, Italy. He emphasized the importance of approaching this Chapter with humility and openness to discern God's will.

### A COMPREHENSIVE RENEWAL FOR THE CONGREGATION

The XVI General Chapter sought to assess the Scalabrinian Congregation's current state and present a renewed vision tailored to meet the contemporary needs of migrants. The agenda included a review of the Rules of Life, the election of new leadership, and development of a strategic missionary project to guide activities at both Regional and Provincial levels. Father Chiarello underscored the importance of reflecting on the past, highlighting significant milestones such as the can-

onization of Saint John Baptist Scalabrini, whose legacy continues to motivate the congregation's endeavors. This reflection reinforces our commitment to face current and future challenges. These challenges include the rising trends of global migration and the deepening divisions and polarization within society. The proposed solution is hope—not merely as a passive sentiment, but as an active and resilient response rooted in faith and solidarity.

On the final day of our XVI General Chapter, we had the honor of a special audience with Pope Francis.

He shared a moving message of hope for our religious congregation and emphasized our mission in support of migrants. Below is a brief reflection on the sentiments expressed by Pope Francis during our meeting.

### MIGRANTS AS BEARERS OF HOPE

Pope Francis, drawing from his own experiences as the child of migrants, reminds us that “migrants teach us to hope.” They embark on their journeys in search of a better life, demonstrating remarkable courage in the face of numerous challenges and rejections. Their resilience, fueled by love for their families and a longing for a brighter future, offers a profound lesson for all. As Pope Francis eloquently stated, *“The dream of a new future that drives people to migrate reflects a yearning for salvation that is inherent in all*



The 16th General Chapter of the Congregation of the Missionaries of St. Charles, Scalabrinians, has begun in Rocca di Papa, Italy. The superior general celebrated the Holy Mass and reminded to the participants to listen to God's will with an attitude of itinerancy, welcome and humility to draft out a project for the congregation in the following six years.

people, regardless of their race or social condition.” As members of a congregation that embodies the idea of being “migrants among migrants,” we are called to walk alongside them on their journey. Through this shared experience, we gain insight into their resilience and enhance our solidarity through open dialogue and compassion. In this mutual exchange, we come face to face with Christ, allowing our faith to deepen through the lived experiences of the migrants.

### **PASTORAL CARE CENTERED ON HOPE**

The significance of providing pastoral care rooted in hope cannot be overstated. Migration often involves pain and separation, yet it can also serve as an opportunity for transformation when accompanied by proper support. Pope Francis has cautioned against the dangers migrants face when confronted with “solitude and abandonment,” which can lead to profound existential crises and a crisis of faith.

To counteract this, our pastoral mission must encompass all aspects, providing not only spiritual guidance but also attending to the physical and emotional needs of those we serve. As Pope Francis has highlighted, “*migrants must be welcomed, accompanied, promoted, and integrated.*” This holistic approach embodies Christ’s presence among those who suffer.



Pope Francis meeting participants in the 16th General Chapter of the Scalabrinian Missionaries (VATICAN MEDIA Photos)



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## CHARITY: A JUST RESPONSE TO GLOBAL CHALLENGES

Pope Francis reminded us that during the Jubilee of 1900, Saint John Baptist Scalabrini stated, “The world is groaning beneath the weight of great catastrophes.” This message is more urgent today than ever. The global landscape continues to be defined by inequality, conflict, and economic injustice, pushing many individuals to leave their homelands out of necessity. Pope Francis has observed the troubling reality of wealthier nations treating migrants as expendable labor—exploited for economic gain and then discarded.

Charity should not be limited to just providing material assistance; it is fundamentally an act of justice. Pope Francis's teachings encourage us to see every person as “a gift of God—unique, sacred, inviolable, and a precious resource for the benefit of all.”

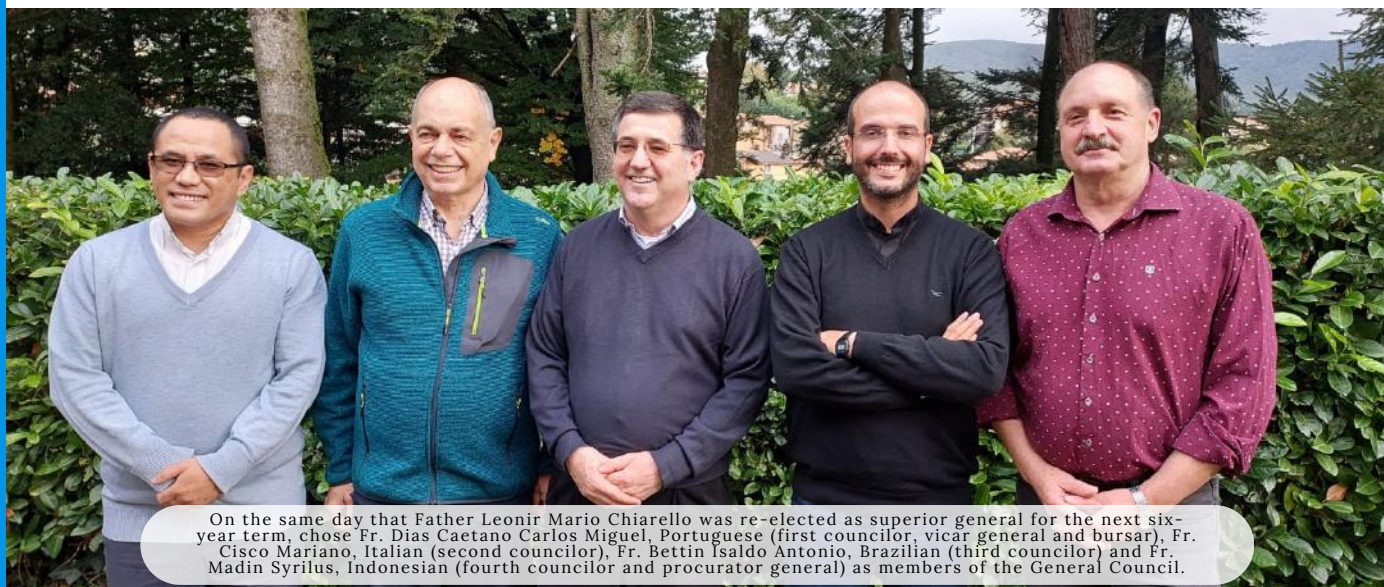
By embracing this truth, we can challenge harmful stereotypes and foster communities based on mutual respect and support.

## A RENEWED SCALABRINIAN CHARISM

As we move forward, let us take inspiration from Pope Francis's recognition of our charism as a vital force in the Church, reflected in the new generations joining our congregation. Our work, rooted in hope and love, should be a continuous act of thanksgiving, finding renewal in the Eucharist and our devotion to Mary, Mother of Migrants.

The recent elevation of Father Fabio Baggio to the College of Cardinals is a testament to the Holy Father's esteem for our mission and the dedication that motivates us. As we enter this XVI General Chapter, let us view it as an opportunity for gratitude and renewal. Let us move forward with renewed determination to exemplify the spirit of Christ in our service to

those in need, particularly to people on the move. As we concluded the XVI General Chapter, we felt deeply inspired. Pope Francis's reminder that “migrants teach us to hope” resonated profoundly within our congregation, urging us to accompany them with compassion and unwavering support. In light of Scalabrini's prophetic insight that “the world is groaning beneath the weight of great catastrophes,” we recognized that our mission must actively address the urgent challenges of our time. Father Chiarello's call to reflect on the past with gratitude while approaching the future with hope and courage compelled us to continue serving as “migrants among migrants,” embodying Christ's love. United by these teachings, we move forward, committed to welcoming, accompanying, promoting, and integrating those we serve, living out our charism as a beacon of hope and charity.



On the same day that Father Leonir Mario Chiarello was re-elected as superior general for the next six-year term, chose Fr. Dias Caetano Carlos Miguel, Portuguese (first counselor, vicar general and bursar), Fr. Cisco Mariano, Italian (second counselor), Fr. Bettin Isaldo Antonio, Brazilian (third counselor) and Fr. Madin Syrilus, Indonesian (fourth counselor and procurator general) as members of the General Council.



## ADVENT: A Time of Peace, Hope, Joy, and Love in the Scalabrinian Family

As we enter the season of Advent, we take a journey on a period of preparation, reflection, and anticipation. For the Scalabrinian family, deeply committed to welcoming migrants and fostering unity, this year's Advent holds special significance. This liturgical season calls us to prepare our hearts and minds for the coming of Christ, the Prince of Peace while reflecting on the past year and looking forward with hope to 2025.

Advent is inherently a season of hope, yet this year resonates particularly for the Scalabrinian community. The past year has been one of transformation, challenge, and learning. We have witnessed changes in the global landscape, from shifting migration patterns to geopolitical developments, all of which have profoundly affected the lives of those we serve. Throughout 2024, Scalabrinians have been reminded of the urgent need for solidarity, compassion, and hospitality as the world grapples with displacement, division, and uncertainty.

Advent reminds us that Christ enters our world precisely in moments when darkness seems to prevail. His coming illuminates our fears and doubts, bringing peace to the anxious, joy to the sorrowful, love to the

the brokenhearted, and hope to all who wait. This season invites us to reflect inwardly and prepare our hearts, embracing the Gospel values that resonate deeply within the Scalabrinian mission.

### 2024: LESSONS AND LEGACIES

Over the past year, the Scalabrinian family has experienced both challenges and successes. The ongoing refugee crisis, the struggles of the displaced, the challenges faced in Panamá, and the plight of those seeking better lives have been central to our mission. Simultaneously, 2024 has brought us numerous stories of

of resilience, courage, and faith. We have witnessed countless acts of kindness, generosity, and love within our communities as we continue to respond to the needs of those who are most vulnerable.

Advent is a time to reflect on these stories and hold them close as we look ahead. It is an opportunity to consider the lessons learned, the relationships built, and the lives impacted. We are reminded that our work is not just about service; it is about fostering a community of faith that stands as a testament to the love of Christ, especially for those who feel forgotten.



The four weeks of Advent, each centers around a theme that resonates deeply with the Scalabrinian mission:

## HOPE

We begin with hope—the hope that Christ's coming brings. This is not a passive waiting but an active hope that calls us to engage with the world around us. For the Scalabrinian family, hope means walking alongside those who are journeying in search of a better life, assuring them that they are not alone.



## PEACE

The second week brings peace, a peace that transcends borders and differences. In 2024, we have seen the need for peace in many forms—peace among families separated by migration, peace within communities divided by conflict, and peace within our own hearts as we strive to live out our calling. Advent is a time to cultivate this peace, fostering spaces of welcome, dialogue, and reconciliation.



## JOY

As we approach Christmas, the joy of the season fills our hearts. It is a joy that goes beyond our circumstances. It is grounded in the knowledge that God is with us. This joy is evident in the smiles of children in our shelters, in the warmth of shared meals, and in the friendships forged through service. Joy is not just an emotion; it is a commitment to seeing Christ in every person we encounter.



## LOVE

Advent ultimately guides us to the greatest gift: love. Love lies at the core of the Scalabrinian charism, inspiring us to reach out to the marginalized, welcome the stranger, and advocate for justice. This love, which is rooted in the coming of Christ, provides meaning to all our efforts and challenges us to keep moving forward.



Advent is not just a time to remember the past; it is also about preparing for the future. The upcoming year, 2025, will undoubtedly bring new challenges, including those in Panamá and other Scalabrinian missions. Political changes, economic pressures, and environmental concerns will continue to impact the people we serve. However, we face the future with faith, trusting that the light of Christ will guide our steps. We hope to see our communities become more open, our

our hearts more compassionate, and our mission even more fruitful. The Scalabrinians will remain a voice for the voiceless, a refuge for the weary, and a source of spiritual healing for those who seek God.

Let us take a moment to consider a profound question: What would Jesus Christ be doing right now if He were walking among us for a second time? Would He be closing borders and denying opportunities to those in need, or would His

actions look different? Imagine His words to us and to the world leaders.

He would certainly commend some for their good work and rebuke others—those who are corrupt, those who turn a blind eye to human smugglers and traffickers, and those who profit from human suffering. We are called to follow His example and offer help to anyone in danger, especially families with children who embark on the uncertain path of immigration.

They may lack money, but they possess an unbreakable will to succeed, resilience, and faith—faith that Jesus will illuminate their way.

We are committed to acting like Jesus. We will continue to provide spiritual guidance to anyone who reaches out to us at

our missions and parishes. May God bless and enlighten the world leaders, granting them the wisdom and courage to create comprehensive, sustainable, and secure immigration policies that serve migrants and locals. Policies that will end daily tragedies, injustices, suffering, trafficking, and insecurity for

everyone —migrants and residents alike.

For the sake of those seeking refuge, for the peace and security of local communities, for the prosperity of all, and the complete integration of migrants into their new homes, we pray to the Lord. //



## Celebrating 60 Years of the CMS: A Legacy of Service to Migrants



The Scalabrinian Center for Migration Studies in New York (CMS) is marking a milestone, 60 years of dedication to the study, support, and advocacy for migrant communities.

Established in 1964, the CMS has become a respected hub for re-

search and dialogue on migration, a topic of growing global importance. Its journey began with a clear mission: to understand and address the challenges faced by migrants and refugees through rigorous research, policy analysis, and educational initiatives.

### FOUNDING AND EARLY YEARS

The CMS was established under the leadership of the Scalabrinian Missionaries, an Order of the Catholic Church devoted to serving migrants and refugees. This congregation, officially known as the Missionaries of Saint Charles Borromeo, was founded in the late 19th century by Saint John Baptist Scalabrini. His vision of protecting migrants and fostering their integration laid the groundwork for initiatives like the CMS. In the early 1960s, Fr. Lydio F. Tomasi, a leading voice on migration with a deep commitment to social justice, played a pivotal role in founding the center.

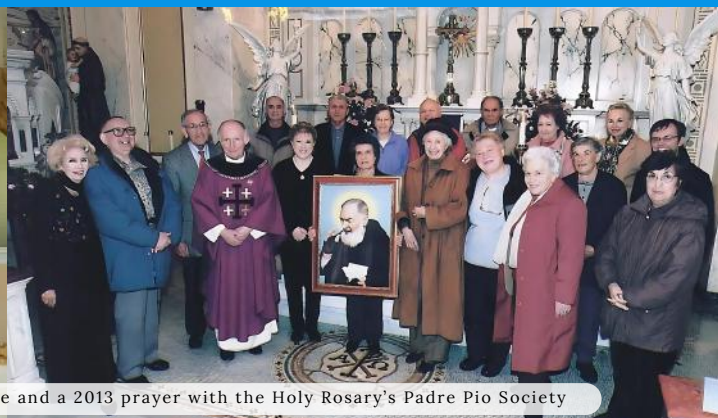


Fr. Lydio F. Tomasi (left) and Fr. Sylvano M. Tomasi



CMS' Conferences





Historical photos of Fr. Tomasi from a 2001 conference and a 2013 prayer with the Holy Rosary's Padre Pio Society

His vision was complemented by the contributions of his brother, Father Sylvano M. Tomasi (Cardinal since November 28, 2020), a prominent member of the Scalabrinian Order who would go on to serve in various diplomatic and academic roles within the Catholic Church. Both of them are well-respected advocates of human rights, they helped shape the CMS' initial research focus on migration patterns, integration challenges, and the role of faith-based organizations in migrant support.

### THE CENTER'S ROLE OVER THE DECADES

From its inception, the CMS has served as a bridge between academia, policymakers, and grassroots organizations. In the 1960s and 1970s, the Center concentrated on research that highlighted the unique experiences of Italian and Latin American migrants to the United States, reflecting the dominant migration patterns of the time. As global migration trends evolved, the CMS broadened its focus to include migrants from Asia, Africa, and the

Middle East, becoming a leading voice in international migration discussions.

The center's publications, conferences, and workshops have become essential resources for understanding migration issues, ranging from labor migration and refugee protection to human trafficking and the impact of globalization. It has built partnerships with universities, think tanks, and NGOs, advocating for evidence-based policies and the protection of human dignity for all migrants.

### THE CMS' CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE

Today, the CMS continues to play a crucial role in a world where migration remains a pressing issue. The Center's work is more important than ever as millions of people are displaced by conflict, climate change, and economic instability. In recent years, the CMS has focused on the humanitarian aspects of migration, stressing the need for compassionate and inclusive policies. Its research has informed U.S. immigration policy and contributed to global

discussions on refugee rights and the ethical treatment of migrants.

As it celebrates its 60th anniversary, the CMS stands as a testament to the enduring values of the Scalabrinian Missionaries. It remains a beacon for those dedicated to understanding and addressing the complexities of migration, ensuring that the human stories behind the statistics are not forgotten. //



CMS' Conferences



## Pope Francis Appoints Scalabrinian Missionary A Cardinal

Fr. Fabio Baggio, a Scalabrinian missionary, has been appointed cardinal in the Consistory for the creation of 21 cardinals who come from all over the world. Eight of these new cardinals hail from Europe, five from Latin America, five from Asia, two from Africa, and one from North America, Canadian Archbishop Francis Leo of Toronto.

Born on January 15, 1965, in Bassano del Grappa, Italy, Fr. Baggio has been a priest for thirty-two years. He completed his doctorate in Church History from the Gregorian University in Rome. Through the prism of his missionary works, Baggio held positions in various capacities.

He was a counselor of the INCAMI (Episcopal Commission for Migrations of Chile) in Santiago de Chile, from 1995 to 1997, and Director of the Migration Department of the Archdioceses of Buenos Aires (Argentina) from 1997 to 2002. Fr. Baggio worked as a researcher in the Center for Latin-American Migration Studies (CEMLA), in Buenos Aires, from 1998 to 2002.

He taught as an invited professor at the Faculty of Social Sciences at the Universidad del Salvador, in Buenos Aires, from 1999 to 2002, and at the Institute of Theology of Sao Paulo - ITESP (Brazil).



He was a professor and co-coordinator of the Migration Theology Program at the Loyola School of Theology, Quezon City, Philippines, from 2008 to 2010. At the same time, he was director of the Scalabrini Migration Center (SMC) in Quezon City, from 2002 to 2010, editor of the Asian Pacific Migration Journal (APMJ) and Asian Migration News (AMN) from 2002 to 2010, and vice-president of the Philippines Migrant Rights Watch (PMRW), from 2003 to 2010.

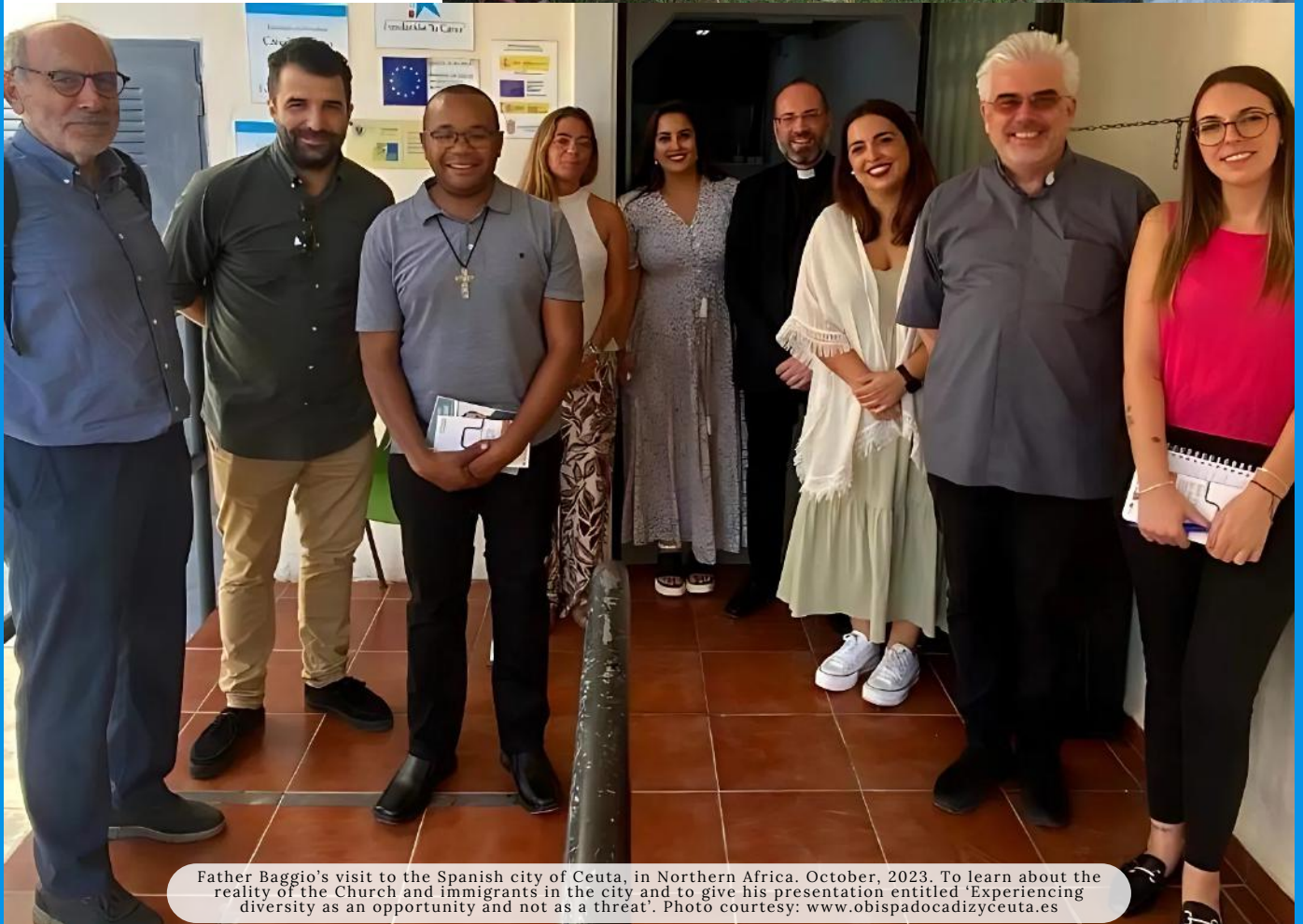
From 2010 to 2016, he was Director of the Scalabrini International Migration Institute - SIMI, in Rome and was a professor at the Master Internacional de Migraciones y Doctorado Internacional de Migraciones of the Universidad de Valencia, Spain from 2006 to 2016.

Father Baggio has had a distinguished career as a scholar and missionary priest. His leadership qualities articulate attentiveness to trends and patterns of today's

Church that leverage one's experience with a blend of scholarship and ethical judgment. Currently, he is the Undersecretary of the Migrants and Refugees Sections of the Dicastery for the Service of Integral Human Development of the Holy See. Other positions he still holds include Director General of the Centro di Alta Formazione Laudato Si in the Vatican, a professor at the Pontificia Universitas Urbaniana in Rome, and a member of the Advisory Council of the Instituto de Estudios sobre Migraciones (IUEM) of the Comillas University, Madrid, Spain. //



Father Baggio's visit to the Scalabrinian mission for South Sudanese refugees in Nyumanzi in northern Uganda. November, 2024. Photo courtesy: Scalabrini Press.



Father Baggio's visit to the Spanish city of Ceuta, in Northern Africa. October, 2023. To learn about the reality of the Church and immigrants in the city and to give his presentation entitled 'Experiencing diversity as an opportunity and not as a threat'. Photo courtesy: [www.obispadocadizceuta.es](http://www.obispadocadizceuta.es)

## Experiencing God's Blessings in Retrospect

As we rediscover the gift of each year and recapture the momentum of progress like in our religious congregation, we find that the world has become like a “social fact” where new institutions, new accomplishments, and blessings unfold. When we make God present in our lives, we have an epiphany, and many times, he comes into our place with all its ordinariness where he meets us in our own life experience.

While we find ourselves with some worries and anxieties, we are still grateful for each moment that we show our humanness and vulnerability to make changes for the better. Looking back as we recall diverse news events that occurred this year 2024, like ordinations to the priesthood and diaconate, religious professions, and opening the new mission, we welcome the challenges and keep our perspective intact with hope and gratitude that propels us to move on.

Perhaps some of us have seasoned against hurt in many forms. They evoke the humanness in us, e.g., language barrier, fear of rejection, discrimination, and different versions of interpersonal relationships in the community. Despite these realities, we have kept the focus on what is essential: the possibility

to incarnate our choices and embody the implication of being committed to our calling. In the same vein, we have also spent a good deal of time reflecting on these things as we seek God above everything else to sustain our faith and vocation to the priesthood.

As we are marching through time but anchored in eternity, gratitude remains our mantra. True to form, in every turn we make there is a spiritual culture developed through witnessing and habit of prayer. It braces for a continuing journey that enables us to trust in God's providence. Like the Emmaus story, we come to know the deeper experience of God's Word as our heart begins to burn within us. It embodies the truth that “divinity in our humanity” reflects

God's image in our interior selves – that we are God's gift to others.

Moving along, we seek the common thread that binds us together. In a significant way, we can identify the gift of our vocation to the Church, our sense of purpose, and our spiritual growth. Our yearning for something more than compliance and structures, something deeper than a rule, concerns this business of redesigning the future of our congregation. It has always been our commitment as paschal evangelizers to reveal the various pictures of Jesus in the gospels. This is our great strength to form and define who we are before God and others. As a church, “We are called to give an increasingly clearer revelation of Christ . . .” //



Perpetual Religious Profession of Rel. Jacob Desilé, Rel. Bui Duc Dinh, and Rel. Jovani Tonda in Bogotá, this, among other ordinations, symbolizes that gratitude, hope, and vocation celebrated in our reflection on God's blessings this year.

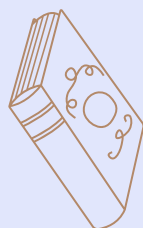
## Strewn with growing consciousness

Joining the exodus from my own country of origin,  
there's an excitement of discovery to make;  
notwithstanding the relationship I've made,  
I still go on with firm conviction.



Preparations have taken the centerpiece,  
along with my loved ones to leave behind.  
In fairness, I assure them of my love -  
that communication will always be at hand.

As I dazzle them with vivid remembrances  
and creeping relevance that shadows their minds.  
Hope to catch purveyors of friendly style,  
similar to depth and clarity of mind.



Some insights may derive from the messy rough road  
within the chapters like a pack of tarot cards.  
Thrown out on the table for one to pick  
and turn it over, turn the page.

As a real-life experience in a foreign land,  
some complex sequences and loneliness,  
capture the image of being a migrant -  
in this combination of odds and mushroom clouds.

I believe that pride is always there.  
whenever pain afflicts deep within;  
to bring out the issue in certain ways,  
will embrace infusion of inspiration.

Both birth and death in any relationship,  
convey the essence in a linear narrative.  
Captured by sensibility and vulnerability,  
make a human search for peace and tranquility.

It is no surprise that the revealing facts of life,  
connote some issues about our personal lives.  
Like the engine behind the battle lines with someone,  
makes a correlation, crammed with flashbacks and current lives.



*Thorns and Thistles*

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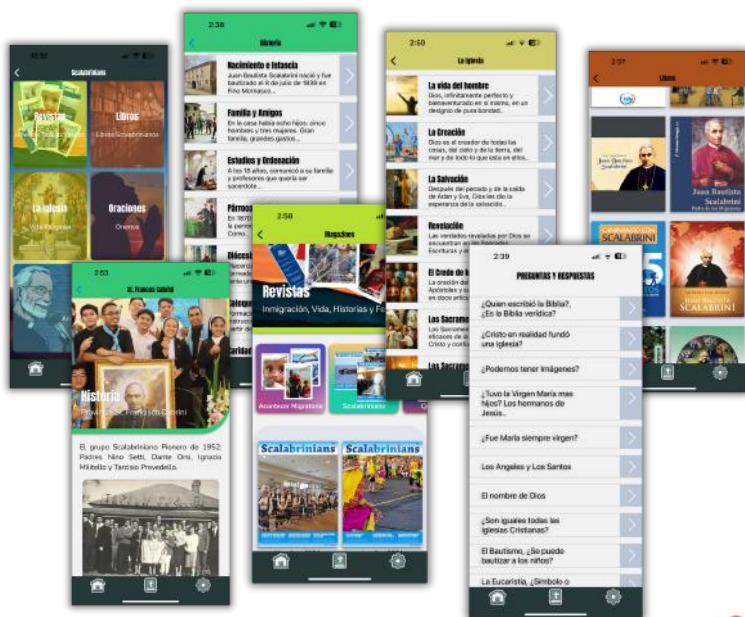
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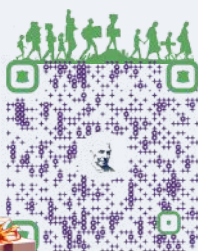
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# Scalabrinians

“Union of Jesus Christ with the Christian soul, here is the foundation of the whole supernatural order. Because of it, the human person can share in the divine nature and, thus, also elevate all of creation. Everything is yours, St. Paul cries out: -the world, life, death, the present and the future. You belong to Christ and Christ belongs to God.-

(Homily of Christmas Day, 1894)

