

São Paulo, June 1, 2026

Celebration of the Solemnity of Our Founder, Saint John Baptist Scalabrini

Dear Sisters, Formandis, Scalabrinian Lay Missionaries, and Collaborators of the Province of Mary, Mother of Migrants – São Paulo, SP.

*“To work, to work, to sacrifice oneself in every way
to expand the Kingdom of God here and save souls.
To kneel, I would say, before the world
and implore a grace to do good.”
(Scalabrini, Pastoral Letter, 15.2.1892)*

It is with great joy and jubilation that we gather today to celebrate the solemnity of our founder, Saint John Baptist Scalabrini. Together, we raise our voices in gratitude and thanksgiving for the holiness of our founder, from whom we, through the Church, received the precious gift of the Scalabrinian Charism, an unwavering dedication to serving migrants and refugees.

On this meaningful day, our reflection as Scalabrinian Missionary Sisters turns to our Holy Founder. When we think of Scalabrini, we see a man of action, a spiritual man, passionate, dynamic, and deeply rooted in embodied spirituality. He constantly contemplates the Son of God, who became man to reveal the Father’s love and to restore humanity.

Every decision, motivation, and choice made by Scalabrini was intimately connected to his personal experience of feeling and living for his God¹. He perceived the needs of his time and immersed himself in them with the passion of a dedicated missionary. In the hopes, struggles, and contradictions of his era, he knelt before God and interceded for the world, asking for the grace to do good for all humanity. We remember his strong yet gentle character, his concrete and creative intelligence,

¹ Cf. *Pastoral Letter for Holy Lent of 1884, Piacenza 1884, pp. 11-13*



and his organizational skills, and qualities that manifested in his apostolic mission and profound act of love. He recognized in migrants the presence and face of the Creator, especially in their vulnerability.

This year's celebration is especially significant as we commemorate the 150th anniversary of Saint John Baptist Scalabrini's² episcopal consecration, a milestone that highlights his early maturity in faith and his visionary leadership. Even as a young bishop, his gaze radiated the clarity of a shepherd, and his heart beat with the universality of the Church. In his first Pastoral Letter, issued on the day of his consecration, even before arriving in Piacenza, he expressed his preferential option for the poor: "As for me, debtor to all, according to my strength, I will embrace everyone with my ministry, making myself a servant of all for the Gospel (1 Cor 9), especially the poor and the most unfortunate, who live in desolation; I will suffer with them, seeking to help and evangelize them." Scalabrini was a vigilant, tireless shepherd, listening, discerning, and acting with evangelical courage. His primary goal was "the good of souls," guiding his priestly and episcopal activities. Like the Good Shepherd, he left his comfort zone, his tent and sacristy, to seek out the scattered sheep across plains and mountains, proclaiming Jesus Christ, crucified and ready to give his life³.

The qualities of holiness already shone brightly in the young bishop of Piacenza: The Father of Migrants, a builder of bridges, and a witness of a Church unafraid to move forward, to approach, and to walk alongside the men and women of his time. Therefore, Saint John Baptist Scalabrini calls us once more to deepen our charismatic identity, which shapes and guides our vocational response in daily life⁴.

He inspires us to live with the heart of God, recognizing migrants and refugees not merely as those in need but as fertile opportunities for communion among different peoples, cultures, and religions. Let us nurture the spirituality inherited from our Founder as a response to the challenges of our present world, always guided by the steps of our Pilgrim Jesus Christ.

We are sent to every woman and man of our time entrusted to our care. Our mission is to "keep the prophecy alive," embracing our vulnerabilities with hope and becoming sources of life. This calling is reinforced by the directives from the recent XV General Chapter, which invites us to walk alongside migrants and refugees with renewed commitment.

We pray to the Lord, following the example of Saint John Baptist Scalabrini, to grant us the grace to witness charity toward migrants and refugees and to continue our mission with apostolic fecundity. As pilgrims on the journey, we sing the wonders of God, hopeful that we may radiate tenderness, compassion, and the love of God the Father to our brothers and sisters in mobility.

*Saint John Baptist Scalabrini,
pray for us and for all migrants and refugees!*

Sister Neusa de Fatima Mariano, MSCS
Provincial Superior, Sr. Alda Mônica Malvessi,
Provincial Counsellors and Sisters of the PMMM

² *Episcopal Consecration of Scalabrini: 30.01.1876; Solemn Entrance in Piacenza: 13.02.1876*

³ *The Saint of Migrants - John Baptist Scalabrini, p. 23*

⁴ *Scalabrini, a current voice, p. 209*

