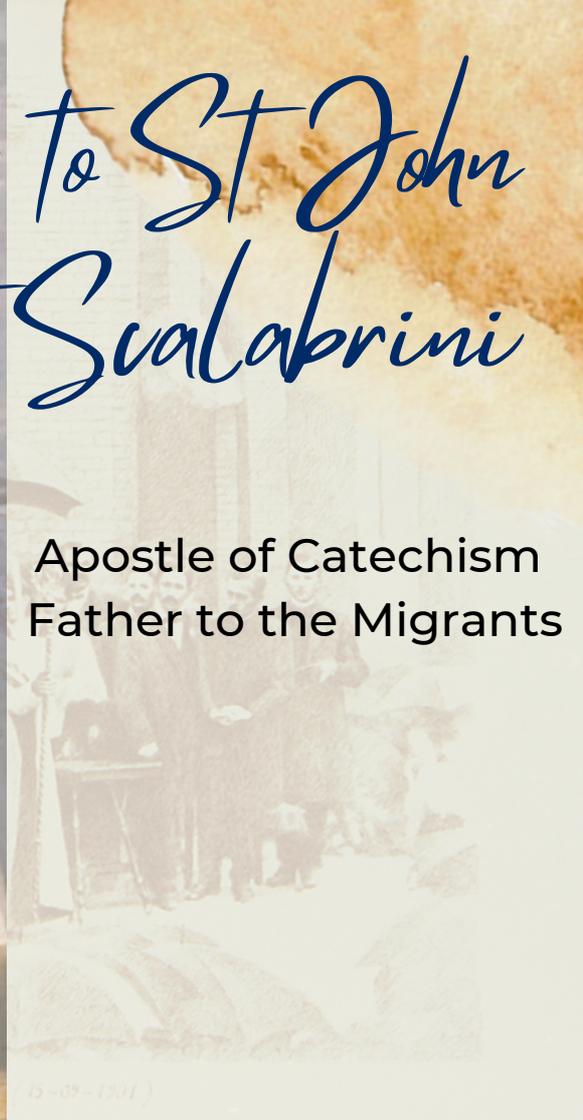


# Novena to St John Baptist Scalabrini

Apostle of Catechism  
Father to the Migrants



# Introduction: Personal reflection by Father Luciano Toldo Cs.

I was inspired to develop this Novena as I journeyed through the challenging times of lockdown and isolation. My hope is that it can support you and increase the devotion to St. John Baptist Scalabrini, the Father to the Migrants and Apostle of Catechism.

This text is just a suggestion for your spiritual experience containing nine encounters. The Image or Picture of Scalabrini can be displayed in the centre of the gathering space be it in a church or home. Around the Scalabrini image all the symbols from each encounter will be placed as we continue on this spiritual journey.

The nine encounters contain a background on John Baptist Scalabrini: his life, actions, spirituality and his testimony to the Gospels and our faith. The next component is a reflection on the life of the church today, following the example of Pope Francis; contained in the reflection are some questions to generate a dialogue or sharing moment. Included in each encounter there are some prayers and music to be used by the facilitator of this Novena.

This Novena is intended to promote the charism of the Father to the Migrant amongst families for communities, schools, parishes and the entire church. We celebrate the Church's announcement that he is a Saint for all the Church.

St. John Baptist Scalabrini, pray for us.

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# Encounter 1: The Family of St John Baptist Scalabrini 3

*(Symbols of this encounter: old or recent pictures of families)*

## Background

St John Baptist Scalabrini was born on the 8th July 1839 at Fino Mornasco. He was born in northern Italy. He was the third child of Luigi and Colomba Trombetta. His father was a very honest and religious man and his mother was very pious, a model of catholic women and faithful to prayers. His parents demonstrated and encouraged the importance of Catholic Christian Education to all of their children.

In those early years, the Industrial Revolution was ravaging in Europe and the whole continent was undergoing a dangerous transformation caused by massive crop failures; farmers and many of the city's poor throughout Europe were hungry and were becoming restless. Hundreds of thousands of the poor were leaving the countryside and the small towns seeking jobs in the factories around the large cities. Others migrated to far away "new Americas", Scalabrini's own brothers left home and crossed the ocean.

At the same time, across the ocean in the Americas, a new world was growing and it was in need of manpower. Vast territories and forests were open to individuals and families willing to take the risk of building a new life and a new future. One of his brothers migrated to Brazil and then drowned in the ocean off the coast of Peru, another sailed to Argentina and a third became the government representative to Italian schools abroad.



The Scalabrini family continued through all their actions to display a good cultural and Religious formation to John Baptist and this influenced him when making his decision to join the priesthood.

### Reflection for the Church today

Family migration has been the main channel of migration and typically accounts for a quarter to a half of the migrant population in the world. Young people under the age of fifteen years account for more than one-quarter of all family members migrating.

Family migrants have different education levels, with large variations by migration subcategory. Family migration is firmly linked to labour migration. Where accompanying migrants are allowed, about one enters for every principal economic migrant.

People need constantly to grow and mature in the ability to love," Pope Francis wrote. "People grow in holiness, and the church must be there to give them a helping hand rather than turn them away because they have not attained some degree of perfection."

"We need to foster in family the culture of encounter in order to face today's problems and troubles. No amount of difficulty can take away the joy of those who know that they are walking with the Lord ever at their side. Live out your vocation with enthusiasm. Never allow your faces to grow sad or gloomy."

### To reflect- Meditate- We call for a moment of Silence.

- Is your family's story similar to that of John Baptist Scalabrini in Catholic Values and Migration journey?
- The family of Scalabrini endured migration, how do you see the family unit in those times and today?
- How can we fill our family life with love?



## Prayers

For those arriving at our borders may they find welcome, protection, and empowerment to find opportunities and integration, we pray to the Lord.

**All: St John Baptist Scalabrini, pray for us.**

For those who seek to make a home in this country, especially the refugees, may they find us welcoming and willing to help them, we pray to the Lord

**All: St John Baptist Scalabrini, pray for us.**

So that our Church may work in every way for refugees, immigrants and migrants through the processes of welcoming, protecting, promoting and integrating them into our country, we pray to the Lord.

**All: St John Baptist Scalabrini, pray for us.**

For those who have escaped from war and poverty that they may find people who will welcome them with hospitality, we pray to the Lord.

**All: St John Baptist Scalabrini, pray for us.**

Our Father. Hail Mary, Glory ...



# Encounter 2: Scalabrini as a Priest

(Symbols of this encounter: stole of a priest)

## Background

John Baptist Scalabrini received the priestly ordination on the 30th May 1863 in Como. In his first few months as a priest he began his devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. He aspired to be a missionary in India but he was sent to be part of the formation of new priests in the dioceses of Piacenza in Northern Italy. In 1869 he was nominated parish priest of the Parish of St. Bartolomeo where he started to promote the Catechism for children. He felt strongly that every priest and all parents should teach the doctrine and Christian faith to the children.

As a priest, Scalabrini dedicated himself to perform social work. As he visited industries, farms, and sick people, he encountered poverty and misery and he was considered a shepherd of charity by those he met. He rose at 3 am so as to begin his daily ministry of offering assistance to the parishioners, celebrating mass, liturgies and confessions to workers. He was very well recognised by all, poor and rich.

Scalabrini said, "It is not enough for a priest to be pious and holy before God in the depths of his conscience. He must appear such even before people. A priest is a carer of souls, like a city on a mountaintop, exposed to the view of everybody. A priest is a lamp set on a lampstand, giving light to all in the virtue as example. The priest needs to be kneeling before the tabernacle, frequently encountering and dialoguing with Christ in the Holy Eucharist."



## Reflection for the Church Today

Pope Francis recalled a favourite imagery of a pastor, urging that priests be shepherds with the “smell of the sheep”, grounded in the situation of their flock. He said pastors should be “people capable of living, of laughing and crying with your people, in a word, of communicating with them”.

The Pope stressed that a pastor is one who puts God’s holy faithful people at the centre. For those priests who would like to be an intellectual, not a pastor, the Pope said, it is better for them to be lay persons. A priest has to be a pastor in the midst of God’s people because God has chosen him for that. “The priest is a man who, in the light of the Gospel, spreads the taste of God around him and transmits hope to restless hearts”. To those visiting their community, they can communicate the Gospel values of a “diverse and supportive fraternity”, and make them feel the fidelity of God’s love and His closeness.

Recalling their priestly ordination, he reminded them that they have been anointed with the oil of joy and are to anoint others with the oil of joy. He said only by remaining rooted in Christ can they experience a joy that moves them to win hearts. “Priestly joy is the source of your action as missionaries of your time”, he said.

### To reflect - Meditate - We call for a moment of Silence.

- What would you say to a young person who at this moment feels a vocation to the priesthood or religious life?
- How do we continue to support our priests in they own missionary life and their work?
- Scalabrini’s life was one of inspiration. What are your goaIs in your Christian Life?



## Prayers

For all priests who are ordained in the Scalabrini Family to serve our Church to the Migrants, that their ministry may be fruitful and appreciated by the people whom they serve, we pray to the Lord.

**All: St John Baptist Scalabrini, pray for us.**

For the gift to our (parish or diocese) of vocations to the ordained priesthood, that good men may be drawn to love and to serve the People of God and Migrants. we pray to the Lord.

**All: St John Baptist Scalabrini, pray for us.**

That we may never take the presence of our priests for granted, as we cherish the celebration of the Mass and are nourished by the Eucharist, we pray to the Lord.

**All: St John Baptist Scalabrini, pray for us.**

For all priests who struggle with loneliness, declining health, or loss of mobility, that they may be comforted by the grace of the Holy Spirit, we pray to the Lord.

**All: St John Baptist Scalabrini, pray for us.**

That this parish family may always embrace our priest(s), and sustain his ministry by our love, constant prayer, and our trust in his leadership, we pray to the Lord.

**All: St John Baptist Scalabrini, pray for us.**

For priests who now sleep in the peace of the resurrection, and for those who may die defending the migrants, that God lead them gently into their eternal reward, we pray to the Lord.

**All: St John Baptist Scalabrini, pray for us.**

Our Father. Hail Mary, Glory ...



## Encounter 3: Scalabrini as a Bishop

(Symbols of this encounter: a book of catechism)

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### Background

At the young age of 36, on the 30th of January 1876, John Baptist Scalabrini was consecrated as a bishop. On the 5th of February he took the chair of Bishop of Piacenza. On the 13th of February he was welcomed solemnly in the same diocese. Piacenza was very big and vast, with mountains and valleys, with 377 parishes.

Bishop Scalabrini, very soon developed his most characteristic and apostolic initiative with catechesis, pastoral visitations and care of migrants. For his own diocese he adapted a new style of Pastoral Care, marked by an intense administration of the Word and the Sacraments, caring for the souls by direct contact with the people of all classes and places. Five pastoral visitations, three diocesan Synods and seventy pastoral letters were completed by him during this time. He became a pioneer in the new Catechetical ministry encouraging parents to be first catechists of their children within the family.

Bishop Scalabrini faced the dramatic problem of migration. The Apostle to the migrants gave practical support to the needs of the migrants by founding two missionary congregations dedicated to this mission. As well as his religious congregation he founded the St. Raphael Society, to provide social and legal assistance to the migrants. He was concerned above all for the poorest and the most abandoned.



## Reflection for the Church Today

A Bishop oversees the ministerial and administrative life of a diocese, which is made up of local communities (parishes) of the faithful. A bishop is called to exercise a three-fold office within the Catholic Church: to teach, govern, and sanctify.

The very nature of the office of bishop is to be a teacher of the Faith. The teaching is grounded in the Word of God as has been preserved in the Church and handed on to us in Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition of the Church, continually inviting people to salvation by believing, accepting and living divinely as revealed by the Truth.

To govern a diocese is an exercise in constancy, courage and fidelity. Presiding in charity over the diocese entrusted to his care, the authority of the bishop comes from Jesus Himself and is always modelled on Christ, the Good Shepherd. A bishop seeks to administer and guide the Church in ways that preserve the unity of the Church while bringing people and resources together to accomplish the mission of the Church in love.

The ministry of a bishop is to sanctify the church and world, most importantly, through his good example of prayer and reverence for the things of God. The bishop, as the local chief shepherd, encourages a spirit of prayer, celebrates the sacred liturgy and all the sacraments for the sanctification of all people, and promotes the work of peace and justice, especially for the poor and disenfranchised.

### To reflect - Meditate - We call for a moment of Silence.

- What challenges is the Church facing today?
- What are some of the chronic problems we face at home, at work, in our local community, in our nation, etc.?
- Who are the sick or deceased to remember in prayer today?



## Prayers

For the leaders of the Church: that they may be given wisdom and a sense of justice to speak the words of life to a world overshadowed by a culture of death; we pray to the Lord.

**All: St John Baptist Scalabrini, pray for us.**

For the bishops: that by their commitment to the innocent child, the Gospel of Life might be preached in each of our churches; we pray to the Lord.

**All: St John Baptist Scalabrini, pray for us.**

For the hungry and the poor of the world, and migrants seeking refuge, safety and peace that we open our hearts to find ways to sustain their lives and to work for justice. we pray to the Lord.

**All: St John Baptist Scalabrini, pray for us.**

We pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit on our Synodal pathway so that we may lead firmly in accordance with the teachings of Christ in the way of love, truth, justice and care of the poor. we pray to the Lord.

**All: St John Baptist Scalabrini, pray for us.**

Our Father. Hail Mary, Glory ...



# Encounter 4: Scalabrini and devotion to the Holy Eucharist

(Symbols of this encounter: Chalice and missal)

## Background

Love of the Eucharist "was the most marked feature in Scalabrini's spirituality" (Francesconi). His devotion to the Most Blessed Sacrament - can be seen as a spiritual testament, and his burning love for the Eucharist.

It is important to note the Scalabrinian definition of Eucharistic devotion as "consisting in a pious movement of heart, an effective will to dedicate oneself generously to all that pertains to Eucharistic worship." Priests have the duty of providing the faithful with "solid and deep instruction" on the Eucharistic mystery. We do not love what we do not know, so it is vital "to enlighten the minds of all" in order to allow them to know and love.

Scalabrini spent a lot of time in front of the Holy Eucharistic, before and after his daily mass. From his room he would be seen to pray, early morning and late evenings kneeling down in front of the Holy Eucharistic. He frequently insisted that the community attend daily Communion and that all should form the practice of the daily mass. John Baptist Scalabrini was a bishop with untiring love beyond his diocese. He learned from his mother to love the Eucharist and Jesus.



## Reflection for the Church Today

Holy Eucharist is the most sublime Sacrament of our Church, the Mystery of Mysteries, the Sacrament of Sacraments. It is the eternal Sacrament whose value is incomprehensible and incalculable, and whose position in the worship of our Church is unique. The Eucharist is the centre of the Church's life. It is the completion of all of the Church's sacraments, the source and the goal of all of the Church's doctrines and institutions.

"The Eucharist is the centre of the Church's life. It is the completion of all of the Church's sacraments, the source and the goal of people's hearts. The entire church must be wide open to wonder and devotion to Christ and ready to embrace everyone — sinner and saint alike", Pope Francis said.

It is not enough for the church to be a small group "of the usual people who gather to celebrate the Eucharist. We have to go into the city, encounter people, learn to recognize and reawaken the thirst for God and yearning for the Gospel," he said. "It will be that renewed thirst that brings people to the altar to encounter God in the Eucharist," he added.

"God makes himself small like a piece of bread," so humble, hidden and sometimes invisible, that it is necessary that one's heart be large, open and vigilant to recognize, welcome and adore him," the pope said.

"When we receive the Eucharist, Jesus does the same with us: he knows us; he knows we are sinners; he knows we make many mistakes, but he does not give up on joining his life to ours," the pope said. "He knows that we need it, because the Eucharist is not the reward of saints, but the bread of sinners. This is why he exhorts us: 'Do not be afraid! Take and eat.'"

### To reflect - Meditate - We call for a moment of Silence.

- What is the importance of the Holy Eucharist in your life?
- How do you participate in the Eucharist within the community?



Prayers

With gratitude for the gift of the Eucharist, which strengthens and renews us, we turn to the Father with our prayers and petitions, we pray to the Lord.

**All: St John Baptist Scalabrini, pray for us.**

For the Church, that all who lead us and guide us in our faith will help us to live as the one Body of Christ, growing ever closer to Jesus, we pray to the Lord.

**All: St John Baptist Scalabrini, pray for us.**

For all who are in need, that richer peoples and nations will share their bread and wealth with those who are poor, we pray to the Lord.

**All : St John Baptist Scalabrini, pray for us.**

For our parish community and for all who hunger for meaning and purpose in their lives, that our needs will be satisfied by turning to Jesus, the living bread we pray to the Lord.

**All : St John Baptist Scalabrini, pray for us.**

For Catholics throughout the world who, for whatever reason, must go without the Eucharist, that they may be fed spiritually by the Lord we pray to the Lord.

**All : St John Baptist Scalabrini, pray for us.**

For all who are sick, or suffering in any way, that they will be comforted by the ever present love of the Lord, we pray to the Lord.

**All : St John Baptist Scalabrini, pray for us.**

Our Father. Hail Mary, Glory ...



# Encounter 5: Scalabrini and Devotion to the Holy Cross. 15

*(Symbols of this encounter: Cross)*

## Background

Scalabrini had a great devotion to the Holy Eucharist as he saw it as a connection to Jesus on the cross. He stated that it is the foundation of our Christian's life, where the Christian works, suffers and fights to encounter Christ and we need to share with God, humbleness and humiliation. The Cross is the protection for the meek, the humiliation for the proud, the victory of Christ. The Cross is the hope of Christian, the resurrection of the dead, the consolation of the poor, the wood of eternal life, the power of God.

The Cross accompanies you in the world. The cross will be a balm for every wound, support for every weakness, comfort in every trouble, illumination for every doubt, light in every darkness.

Scalabrini used to pray and say: "Let me be intoxicated by the cross". God tests us with tribulations, humiliations, sufferings, and with the monotony of the ministry and of audiences. So I must live crosses. I must clasp my pectoral cross to my heart and repeat often: "Let me be intoxicated by the cross".

Every missionary sent to the Americas by Scalabrini, was given a Cross, a continuation of the mandate the divine teacher gave to the apostles: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."



## Reflection for the Church Today

“God so loved the world that He gave his only Son” (3:16). The Father “gave” the Son to save us, and this resulted in the death of Jesus, and his death on the Cross. Why? Why was the Cross necessary? The Cross of Jesus expresses both things: all the negative forces of evil, and all of the gentle omnipotence of God’s mercy.

When we look to the Cross where Jesus was nailed, we contemplate the sign of love, of the infinite love of God for each of us and the source of our salvation. The mercy of God, which embraces the whole world, springs from the Cross. Through the Cross of Christ, the Evil One is overcome, death is defeated, life is given to us, hope is restored. This is important: through the Cross of Christ hope is restored to us. The Cross of Jesus is our one true hope! That is why the Church “exalts” the Holy Cross, and why we Christians bless ourselves with the sign of the cross. That is, we don’t exalt crosses, but the glorious Cross of Christ, the sign of God’s immense love, the sign of our salvation and path toward the Resurrection. This is our hope.

While we contemplate and celebrate the Holy Cross, we think with emotion of so many of our brothers and sisters who are being persecuted and killed because of their faith in Christ. This happens especially wherever religious freedom is still not guaranteed or fully realized. It happens even in countries and areas which, in principle, protect freedom and human rights but where, in practice, believers, and especially Christians, encounter restrictions and discrimination. So today we remember them and pray for them in a special way.

### To reflect - Meditate - We call for a moment of Silence.

- How are you strengthened by the Sacrifice on the Cross?
- How do you imitate Jesus’ cross in your daily challenges in life?



Because our God is full of compassion, we can bring our prayers forward with confidence:

For the members of the Church — that we may demonstrate glory in the cross, where our salvation was won, we pray to the Lord.

**All: St John Baptist Scalabrini, pray for us.**

For all people of goodwill — that they may respect the cross, a symbol dear to Christians, we pray to the Lord.

**All: St John Baptist Scalabrini, pray for us.**

For Christians suffering persecution that the one who died on the cross may encourage them, we pray to the Lord.

**All: St John Baptist Scalabrini, pray for us.**

For those whose sufferings bring them an experience of Calvary — that Jesus may transform their pain to glory, we pray to the Lord.

**All: St John Baptist Scalabrini, pray for us**

For the sick who are dangerously ill — that the cross of Christ may bring them comfort and hope, we pray to the Lord.

**All: St John Baptist Scalabrini, pray for us.**

For those whose lives have been lost through war, famine and disease — that Christ may liberate them from the chains of death, we pray to the Lord.

**All: St John Baptist Scalabrini, pray for us.**

We pray for those from the community who have died (N and N), that they may be brought to eternal life by the Christ's victory on the cross, we pray to the Lord.

**All: St John Baptist Scalabrini, pray for us. Our Father. Hail Mary, Glory ...**



# Encounter 6: Scalabrini and devotion to Blessed Virgin Mary

(Symbols of this encounter: a little image or card of Blessed Virgin Mary)

## Background

Devotion to the Eucharist and the crucified Christ was the true "devotion" of Scalabrini. In his Devotion to Mary he expressed the typical expression of popular religiosity.

The queen of Marian devotions for Bishop Scalabrini is the daily recitation of the rosary, a pious practice he remembers as a kind of family heritage, particularly from his mother. He highly recommended it in the three synods, as well as in his pastoral visits and letters: "We ardently desire that you strongly urge your parishioners to make an effort to practise the sublime devotion of the rosary in public or private, each one in his own home and family, and never skip it".

We have made this exhortation to you more than once during our pastoral visits, and we repeat it now with all our heart, my dearest children" (Pastoral Letter of 1883, introducing Leo XIII's encyclical on the rosary). Witnesses say that on this occasion he wanted to set an example by reciting the holy rosary for the month of October in the cathedral with his flock.



The rosary is "the most perfect and most sublime" prayer, because "it unites and harmonizes vocal prayer (prayer expressed in words) and mental prayer (contemplation of the mysteries of Jesus' life)." This structure means that the rosary can satisfy both great and small in every way, because, "while it is very easy for the simplest minds, it is sublime for the more intelligent ones. All can find in it a substantial and most pleasing pasture. All can learn from it very great lessons."

The rosary, especially with the contemplation of the mysteries, is a Christocentric prayer, in which even Mary "is always found at the side of Jesus."

The rosary is actually a theocentric prayer, in which the whole Church prays to "the Divinity."

Because of all these characteristics the rosary "is not any ordinary prayer, but the sum of the Christian religion, the most attractive depiction of what Jesus Christ has done for our souls, the memorial of the most marvellous wonders" In these two emphasized phrases we find two of the major features of Marialis Cultus.

Thus, my most loved sons and daughters, in the rosary we have what is needed to revive faith, change one's life, foster fervour, raise hopes, strengthen the will, console the spirit, and honour Mary.

### Reflection for the Church Today

Pope Francis pointed to the Blessed Virgin Mary as a model of prayer that transforms restlessness into openness to God's will. Mary accompanied Jesus' entire life in prayer, right up to His death and resurrection; and in the end, she continued and she accompanied the first steps of the nascent Church.

"Everything that happens around her ends up being reflected on in the depths of her heart ... The Mother keeps everything and brings it to her dialogue with God," he said.

Pope Francis said that the Virgin Mary's prayer at the Annunciation, in particular, exemplified prayer "with a heart open to God's will."

"When the world still knew nothing of her, when she was a simple girl engaged to a man of the house of David, Mary prayed. We can imagine the young girl of Nazareth wrapped in silence, in continual dialogue with God who would soon entrust her with a mission," the pope said.



“Mary was praying when the Archangel Gabriel came to bring his message to her in Nazareth. Her small yet immense ‘Here I am,’ which makes all of creation jump for joy at that moment, was preceded throughout salvation history by many other ‘Here I am,’ by many trusting obediences, by many who were open to God’s will.”

“A simple prayer, but one in which we place ourselves in the Lord’s hands so that He might guide us. All of us can pray like this, almost without words,” he said.

“Mary did not autonomously conduct her life: she waits for God to take the reins of her path and guide her where He wants. She is docile, and with her availability she prepares the grand events in which God takes part in the world.”

“Mary’s presence is in prayer, and her presence among the disciples in the Upper Room, awaiting the Holy Spirit, is in prayer. Thus Mary gives birth to the Church, she is the Mother of the Church,” he said.

“Someone has compared Mary’s heart to a pearl of incomparable splendour, formed and smoothed by patient acceptance of God’s will through the mysteries of Jesus meditated on in prayer. How beautiful it would be if we too could be a bit like our Mother!”

**To reflect - Meditate - We call for a moment of Silence.**

- Who do you see as Mary in the lives of others?
- How are Mary’s attributes able to be shared in motherhood?
- Scalabrini was inspired by Mary’s discipleship to her Son, Jesus, how do you follow her example?



Through the Blessed Virgin Mary, God has brought a new beginning to our world. As we honour her response to God, let us now join her in prayer to the Father.

That the Church, sustained by the prayers of the Blessed Virgin Mary, may be totally open and responsive to God's will, (pause) we pray to the Lord.

**All: St John Baptist Scalabrini, pray for us.**

That aided by the prayers of Mary, our Queen of Peace, hatred, violence and cruelty in the world will come to an end, (pause) we pray to the Lord.

**All: St John Baptist Scalabrini, pray for us.**

That Mary, untouched by the stain of sin, may be an example and inspiration for all, that we might aspire for purity in our bodies, minds and hearts, (pause) we pray to the Lord.

**All: St John Baptist Scalabrini, pray for us.**

For our brothers and sisters, families, communities, who have consecrated themselves to Jesus through Mary, that trusting in her prayers and example, they will more firmly renounce the works of Satan and resolve to follow Jesus more closely we pray to the Lord.

**All: St John Baptist Scalabrini, pray for us.**

That all of our loved ones who have died, crossing sea and borders, may find their home in heaven with Our Lady and the saints, (pause) we pray to the Lord.

**All: St John Baptist Scalabrini, pray for us.**

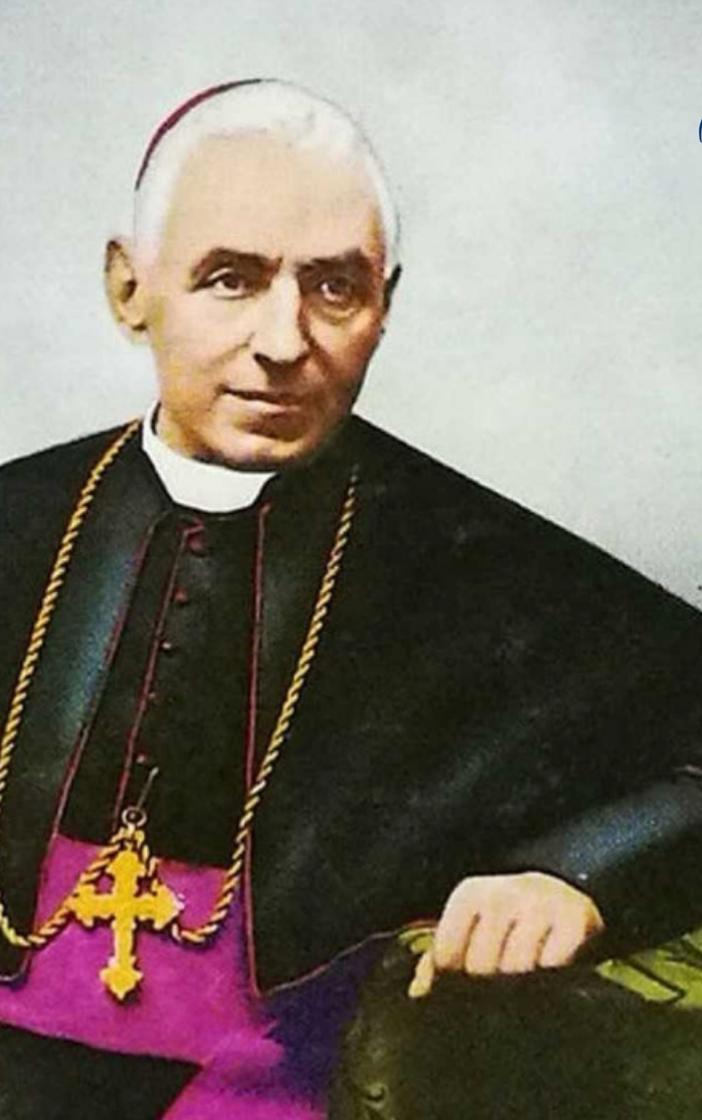
That through the prayers of our community, and those we hold within our hearts, we may be ready to respond to God's will as Mary did, (pause) we pray to the Lord.

**All: St John Baptist Scalabrini, pray for us.**

God of salvation, you reveal your steadfast love in the Virgin Mary the Mother of your Son. We ask that you never grow weary of reaching out to us to overcome the ways we stray from your plan for us. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Our Father. Hail Mary, Glory ...





## Encounter 7: Our Congregation... 22

*(Symbols of this encounter: World Globe, objects that represent diversity and communities)*

### Background

The Congregation of the Missionaries of St. Charles - Scalabrinians - is an international community of men who have as their identity and mission to be missionary religious, who follow in the footsteps of Bishop Scalabrini on behalf of the migrants.

The Congregation of the Missionaries of St. Charles or Scalabrinians was founded by John Baptist Scalabrini, Bishop of Piacenza, on November 28, 1887, to assist the migrants who were crossing the Atlantic to reach the Americas. The beginnings of the Congregation were humble and unpretentious: just two Italian priests who made their vows in the hands of the Founder. The first mission fields were the United States and Brazil. Subsequently, keeping pace with the evolution of the migration flows, they reached other countries and continents. Today, the Congregation is present in thirty-one countries, with about 700 missionaries and about 400 seminarians, coming from twenty nations.

The members of the Congregation are religious, consecrated to the Lord by the vows of obedience, chastity and poverty. Most are priests, but there is a number of religious lay brothers. They live in community and are called to proclaim the Good News to the migrants, to defend their rights, to promote a more humane society where the migrant is not seen as a foreigner or an illegal, but where the migrant can feel he is a citizen with full rights, because we are all sons and daughters of the same Father and members of the same human family.

By the word “migrants” we mean not only permanent migrants, but also temporary migrant workers, seafarers and refugees. The ministry is exercised in formation houses or seminaries, parishes, missions, chaplaincies, reception centres, shelters for the migrants, and at seaports. They are present in national and diocesan Church organisms; in centres of migration studies; in the teaching and in-depth study of the pastoral care of migrants through the Scalabrini International Migration Institute (SIMI). They engage in lobbying and advocacy through the Scalabrini International Migration Network (SIMN) and through an international network of public and private institutions dealing with the world of migration.

The Scalabrinian Family is made up of the three Institutes of Consecrated Life, founded by Blessed J. B. Scalabrini (The Missionaries of St. Charles, The Missionary Sisters of St. Charles) or which draw inspiration from him (The Scalabrinian Secular Missionary Women).

In recent years, the Lay Scalabrinians have also joined the family; their aim is to be trained so as to be salt and leaven at all levels within the world of migration (ecclesial, cultural, social, political etc.).

### Reflection for the Church Today

More people are on the move than at any time for several decades, many of them fleeing conflict or the effects of climate change. The New Humanitarian tells their stories and documents the world’s changing responses to migration and refugees.

### Migration by the numbers

Nearly 71 million people are currently displaced.  
 Almost 26 million of them are refugees who fled to another country.  
 About half of the world’s refugees are children under the age of 18 years old.  
 More than 60 percent of refugees live in cities. Less than one third live in camps.  
 Some 3.5 percent of the world’s population are international migrants.

Migration and displacement are not just about numbers. They also reflect the changing nature of humanitarian crises. Wars are becoming more complex and internationalised and thus harder to end. Countries with fragile governments, economies, and geographies ricochet from one crisis to the next. As more people are displaced, and for longer periods of time, aid budgets cannot keep up.



To reflect - Meditate - Keep a moment of Silence.

- There are many migrants around the world. Am I open to welcome, help and serve migrants?
- In which way we can be a community who welcomes and celebrates diversity?
- How can we support the Missionary of St. Charles Scalabrinian in the mission to serve Migrants?

Prayers

In communion with the Son and prompted by the Holy Spirit we address our prayer to the Father.

That the Church may be governed by holy shepherds, ready to give their lives for the people of God entrusted to them. we pray to the Lord.

All: St John Baptist Scalabrini, pray for us.

That those in public and political office may promote a culture of Solidarity and mutual acceptance, we pray to the Lord.

All: St John Baptist Scalabrini, pray for us.



For the poorest and neediest migrants who have yet to find their place in the host country: We pray to the Lord, we pray to the Lord.

All: St John Baptist Scalabrini, pray for us.

That we may be willing to welcome those who appear strangers and that attitudes of rejection and racism may be banned, we pray to the Lord.

All: St John Baptist Scalabrini, pray for us.

For the Scalabrinian Institutes, born on the heart of St. John Baptist Scalabrini, that they may be ever more enthusiastic about their calling and their mission, and may increase in number and holiness, we pray to the Lord.

All: St John Baptist Scalabrini, pray for us.

O God in the life of Jesus you privileged the poor, listen to our prayer for today's poor. We ask you through the intercession of St. John Baptist Scalabrini and in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Our Father. Hail Mary, Glory ...



# Encounter 8: The Society of St Rafael - Scalabrini Lay Missionaries.

(Symbols of this encounter: candle)

## Background

Bishop Scalabrini did not stop with the Congregation of the Missionaries of St. Charles. He founded the Society of St. Rafael: A group of lay people to help migrants.

"The needs of our migrants are of two kinds: moral and material. I would like an Association of Assistance to be organized in Italy, which would be both religious and lay and would thus be fully responsive to both needs," he said.

*The following is an extract from Scalabrini's action plan (The person I is referring to Scalabrini, in his own words).*

From the religious point of view, the field of action is very vast; but the economic one is just as vast. As I have already stated, the task of such an association should be to look after the spiritual and material interests of those unfortunate people who leave the land of their birth to cross the ocean.



**In a word:**

- 1.To keep the emigrant from falling victim to the shameful exploitation of certain emigration agents who, in order to make money, morally and materially destroy the poor wretches who fall into their nets;
- 2.To set up an office that will do what is necessary for the employment of emigrants upon their arrival;
- 3.To provide help in case of emergency or sickness, both during the voyage and after arrival;
- 4.To declare open war, if I may use this term, on the merchants in human flesh who are prepared to use the most sordid means for the sake of money;
- 5.To provide religious care during the crossing and after arrival, and in the places where the emigrants will be settling.

So I founded two societies with the purpose of lessening and, if at all possible, eradicating those evils; two societies, one made up of priests, the other of lay people; one religious, the other lay; two societies to help and complement each other.

The first is the Congregation of the Missionaries focusing especially on the spiritual welfare of our emigrants, the other on their material welfare. The first attains its purpose by setting up churches, schools, orphanages, and hospitals through priests united family-like by the religious vows of chastity, obedience, and poverty, ready and willing to rush wherever they are sent, as apostles, teachers, doctors, or nurses, according to the needs.

The second society carries out its task by discouraging emigration when it is unwise, keeping an eye on the work of emigration agents, seeing to it that they do not violate the law, and, if everything else fails, counselling the emigrants and channelling them toward good destinations.



## Reflection for the Church Today

The Church should always value the transformative power of faith-filled laity who are willing to serve the Gospel. "We need well-formed lay people, animated by a sincere and clear faith, whose life has been touched by the personal and merciful love of Christ Jesus," said the pope Francis.

"We need lay people who take risks, who get their hands dirty, who are not afraid of making mistakes, who go forward. We need lay people with a vision of the future, not confined to the little things of life."

He added that the Church needs lay people who "dare to dream." Pope Francis said many lay people would willingly and generously serve the Gospel if they were involved and valued by pastors and church institutions.

This is part of all Christians' baptismal vocation, he said. "Baptism makes each one of the lay faithful a missionary disciple of the Lord, salt of the earth, light of the world, and leaven that transforms reality from within," remarked the Pope.

Pope Francis encouraged those present to look to the distant parts of the world and to the many families in difficulty and in need of mercy.

For this, it is essential to be aware that we are part of a Christian community. We are not just one more group or an NGO, but the family of God summoned around the same Lord," he said. To deepen their faith, lay people should experience liturgy and prayer in communion with the whole Church.

Lay Scalabrinians are men and women, both adults and young, who, following a period of Scalabrinian missionary formation, commit themselves to the work of evangelization in the local church in synergy with Scalabrinian Missionary Priests, Brothers and Sisters.

### To reflect - Meditate - Keep a moment of Silence.

- Do I take seriously my Baptism Commitment?
- In which way can I serve and be a Scalabrini Lay in the church today?
- Am I committed to my own community?



## Prayers

That all the baptized will humbly welcome the word which has been planted in us and live it in loving service as volunteers and lay pastoral leaders, we pray to the Lord.

**All: St John Baptist Scalabrini, pray for us.**

For the Church that God will raise up men and women of faith who will put out into the deep and say “Here I am; send me,” when called, we pray to the Lord.

**All: St John Baptist Scalabrini, pray for us.**

That the gifts God has given us in Baptism will be used in gratitude to serve with joy and courage, we pray to the Lord.

**All: St John Baptist Scalabrini, pray for us.**

That we will confidently place our trust in the Lord and allow the Spirit to guide our hearts in discerning a call to lay Scalabrinians, we pray to the Lord.

**All: St John Baptist Scalabrini, pray for us.**

In gratitude for the many persons who serve our congregation as volunteers and lay pastoral leaders, benefactors, we pray to the Lord.

**All: St John Baptist Scalabrini, pray for us.**

For each of us, that we will offer our lives and all our deeds in service to our God, we pray to the Lord, we pray to the Lord.

**All: St John Baptist Scalabrini, pray for us.**

That those who have responded to the call to serve as lay ministers will know the goodness of the Lord, we pray to the Lord.

**All: St John Baptist Scalabrini, pray for us.**

Our Father. Hail Mary, Glory ...





# Encounter 9: Vocations

*(Symbols of this encounter: Pictures of ordinations, our Seminars,)*

## Background

John Baptist Scalabrini always supported the seminarians, brother priests and he encouraged young people and priests to be a missionary.

His vocation started in his family. He was grateful to God for giving him a "saintly mother, a model of Catholic woman and loved by all, especially the poor. It was she who initiated his love of the Eucharist, of Jesus Crucified, of the blessed Virgin and the saints.

An excellent student, he succeeded in being the first in his class every year in elementary studies and at High School. On Sundays he would get together with other boys and girls in the courtyard and repeat the religious lesson he had learned in the school. When he was 18 years old, John told his parents of his choice of vocation to the priesthood which his father had been nurturing for some time.

Today many young people are following his footsteps. Following his example, the Scalabrinians continue to fight for the cause of the migrant, working to ensure that their human rights are fully respected. They remain particularly sensitive to the protection and promotion of the faith and cultural values of migrants and to the appreciation of opportunities for dialogue.

The Scalabrinians work for justice and the possibility that migrants have an opportunity to seek development in life, even if they remain convinced that true development originates from the spirit. Economic achievement is not the ultimate goal in life. The true objective in life is to become what we are, children of God, no more scattered but reunited in one big family.

Aware that they are a little group, the Scalabrinians pursue their mission with humility, thankful that many others are committed to the same ideals, and aware that no achievement is permanent as we struggle toward the Promised Land.

## Reflection for the Church Today

Have you ever stood under the stars and felt as though that same vastness, that same emptiness exists inside of you? Have you ever stared out across the ocean and felt a mysterious connection between its depth and turbulence and what exists inside of you? In moments like those, we experience echoes of the calling. It is the calling of our soul, in its depth and restlessness, for something greater and more meaningful. It is the echo of the vast and infinite God, calling into our souls to recognise who we are and who we were created to be.

The word vocation comes from the Latin word *vocare* which means, 'to call.' When we talk about a vocation, or a calling, we are talking about the sense that something or someone has spoken to us, summoned us, and drawn us to a life that fulfils the deepest desires of our heart. St Augustine once said, 'You made us for Yourself and our hearts are restless until they rest in You.' Ultimately, the vocation of our life is to enter into a loving relationship with the God who made us, the only one who can bring us to the fullness of life.

But what we also recognise, within this broader calling is the existence of other, more particular callings that still find their meaning within this reality. These particular callings include the priesthood, religious life, marriage and family life, single life, and the permanent diaconate. All of these callings represent different gifts that the Holy Spirit gives to the Body of Christ as we walk this road of discipleship, taking the way of the Gospel together.

If you think the Lord is calling you and would like to know more about the Congregation or some guidance in discerning what is best for you, contact one of our priests.

### To reflect - Meditate - Keep a moment of Silence.

- How do you support the vocations of young people to our community?
- How do we support the seminarians in their journey?



## Prayers

With faith and confidence, we now bring our prayers to God our Father who sent his Son to be our Good Shepherd and to lay down his life for us in love and service.

We pray for the Church, that her members may care for each other with the spirit of the Good Shepherd who laid down his life for his flock so that we might have life and have it to the full. we pray to the Lord,

**All: St John Baptist Scalabrini, pray for us.**

We pray for those whom God is calling to serve him in the priesthood and religious life. May they sense that call with greater clarity and have the courage to respond generously, we pray to the Lord.

**All: St John Baptist Scalabrini, pray for us.**

We pray for those who work to promote vocations in our congregation, that they may work with our priests to create a culture of vocations in every parish community, we pray to the Lord.

**All: St John Baptist Scalabrini, pray for us.**

We pray for the leaders of the Scalabrinan Congregation that they might be renewed in faith and continue to be good shepherds of the people of God with truth, charity and joy we pray to the Lord,

**All: St John Baptist Scalabrini, pray for us.**

For all seminarians who are studying for the priesthood for our Congregation. May the Lord bless them, guide them and all those preparing for priesthood, we pray to the Lord.

**All: St John Baptist Scalabrini, pray for us.**

For our civic leaders, doctors, nurses and all who serve the common good. May the spirit of the Good Shepherd, of care and service continue to be strong at this difficult time, we pray to the Lord.

**All: St John Baptist Scalabrini, pray for us.**  
Lord hear us.

Merciful Father, hear the prayers of your people who praise you for your care. Through these prayers of intercession may we never grow indifferent to the needs of your people. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Our Father. Hail Mary, Glory ...



**Appendix:**

Litany to Blessed J.B. Scalabrini  
Blessed John Baptist Scalabrini, pray for us  
Ever loyal to the will of God, pray for us  
Ever devoted to the Eucharist, pray for us  
Ever zealous for the crucified Saviour, pray for us  
Most loving son of Mary, pray for us  
Courageous witness of the Gospel, pray for us  
Obedient servant of the Holy Father, pray for us  
Admirer and devotee of St. Charles, pray for us  
Loyal bishop of the Church, pray for us  
Father of the migrants, pray for us  
Apostle of the catechism, pray for us  
Promoter of family values, pray for us  
Model of compassion for the poor, pray for us  
Model of intense prayer, pray for us  
Model of vision and courage, pray for us  
Model of contemplation and action, pray for us  
Model of wisdom and understanding, pray for us  
Model of humility, pray for us  
Model of reconciliation, pray for us  
Model of perseverance, pray for us  
Model of faith, hope and charity, pray for us



### Biographical notes of St. John Baptist Scalabrini

- Born and baptized the same day in Fino Mornasco (Como) on July 8, 1839.
- Ordained priest on May 30, 1863.
- Ordained bishop in Rome on January 30, 1876.
- Entry into the diocese of Piacenza on February 13, 1876.
- Bishop of Piacenza
- He carried out five pastoral visits to the 365 parishes of the diocese.
- He celebrated three Synods: 1879, 1893, and 1899.
- Father to the migrants
- On November 28, 1887 he founded the Congregation of the Missionaries of St. Charles.
- In 1889 established the St. Raphael Lay Association for Assistance to Migrants.
- On October 25, 1895 he founded the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles.
- Visited his missionaries and their missions in the Americas: in 1901 in the US and in 1904 in Brazil.
- Died in Piacenza on June 1, 1905 (Solemnity of the Ascension).



# Beatification

35

- May 5, 1936: Bishop Ersilio Menzani introduces the Cause of Beatification in Piacenza.
- On May 11, 1982: Pope John Paul II ratifies the decree for the introduction of the cause.
- November 25, 1986: the theologian consultors give favourable vote.
- February 17, 1987: the ordinary Congregation of Cardinals and Bishops approves the affirmative response on the practice of heroic virtues.
- March 16, 1987: The Pope declared solemnly: "It is evident that the Servant of God, John Baptist Scalabrini, Bishop of Piacenza, has practiced the theological virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity toward God and neighbour and the cardinal virtues of Prudence, Justice, Temperance and Fortitude as well as all other related virtues."
- December 23, 1994 – June 5, 1995: the diocesan process on the alleged miracle attributed to Bishop Scalabrini is conducted.
- 1995: the process to verify the alleged miracle begins in Rome.
- December 5, 1996: the commission's medical experts express a favourable vote.
- March 21, 1997: the theologian consultors offer a unanimous favourable vote on the alleged miracle attributed to the intercession of Bishop Scalabrini.
- June 3, 1997: the congregation of Cardinals gives a unanimous vote and declares: "The healing of Sister Paolina has no natural explanation and it is to attributable to the intercession of the Venerable John Baptist Scalabrini".
- November 9, 1997: ceremony of the beatification of Bishop John Baptist Scalabrini is held in St. Peter's Square in Rome.
- May 21, 2022: Pope Francis, accepting the opinion of the cardinals gathered in assembly on May 17, has decreed that Blessed John Baptist Scalabrini will be venerated as a saint in the Church. The canonization ceremony will take place on a date to be established by the consistory to be convened by Pope Francis.



## Miracle of St John Baptist Scalabrini

On the 5th December 1996 the commission for the cause of Saints recognised one miracle of healing of Sister Paolina De Angeli.

Sister Paolina De Angeli was from Castellanza, Italy. She was part of the Missionaries of St. Charles Scalabrinians, she worked in several cities of Italy and Europe, till June 1987 where she went back to Piacenza for a very delicate operation.

The clinic exams revealed a very bad tumour, metastasis all over her body. The doctors decided it was inoperable and that she would only have a few weeks to live.

Aware of her ill health, she did not give up, she went to ask blessings and intercession from John Baptist Scalabrini, her companions sisters united with her in prayers with a fervent novena. At the end of the Novena she came back to the community and she was healed, even the doctors said this was a supernatural intervention, she went back to her normal activities, helping and looking after migrants in Italy.

In April 1995, the process of miracles had finished and the Holy See declared a miracle and on 9th November 1997 the congregation of Cardinals gave a unanimous vote and declared: "The healing of Sister Paolina has no natural explanation and it is attributable to the intercession of the Venerable John Baptist Scalabrini".



# Prayer to Saint John Baptist Scalabrini

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O Saint John Baptist Scalabrini,  
with the heart of a bishop  
and the zeal of an apostle  
you gave yourself completely to all.  
You listened to the cries of migrants,  
spoke in their name, defended their rights.  
You found sustenance in the Eucharist  
solace in the cross of Jesus,  
comfort in Mary, Mother of the Church.  
Through your intercession  
may God, who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit  
grant peace to all humanity,  
protect those who cross  
seas and borders sustained by hope,  
bless us and our loved ones  
and grant us the grace that we entrust to your  
fatherly love.

Amen



Giuseppe Zanetti

*Saint John Baptist Scalabrini, founder of the Society of the Holy Cross, USA (1815-1891)*

# Scala Pelegrina

+RAFFAELE ROSSI M.S.B.

*Alla famiglia Scalabrina e congregazione d'Australia e al servizio delle comunità Italiana e migranti nel mondo.*

Lento  
Refrain



Lento



1. Nel
2. In
3. Gli'a



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38

2



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# Pilgrim's Ladder

\*RAFFAELE ROSSI M.S.B.

*To the Scalabrinian Family and Congregation of Australia, and for service to the Italian and migrant Communities of the world*

**Lento**  
Refrain

Fa ther of na - tions, all scat - erd a-broad and shep herd to those who are mi - grants. We

**Lento**

5

hum-bly lift up our voi - ces in song; pre - sent them un-to the Lord.

1.In  
2.And  
3.With

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9 Verse

a - do - ra - tion be - fore the blessed pre - sence,  
in con - tem - pla - tion of Mys - tries Di - vine,  
teach - ing di - vine of A - post - les and Saints, the

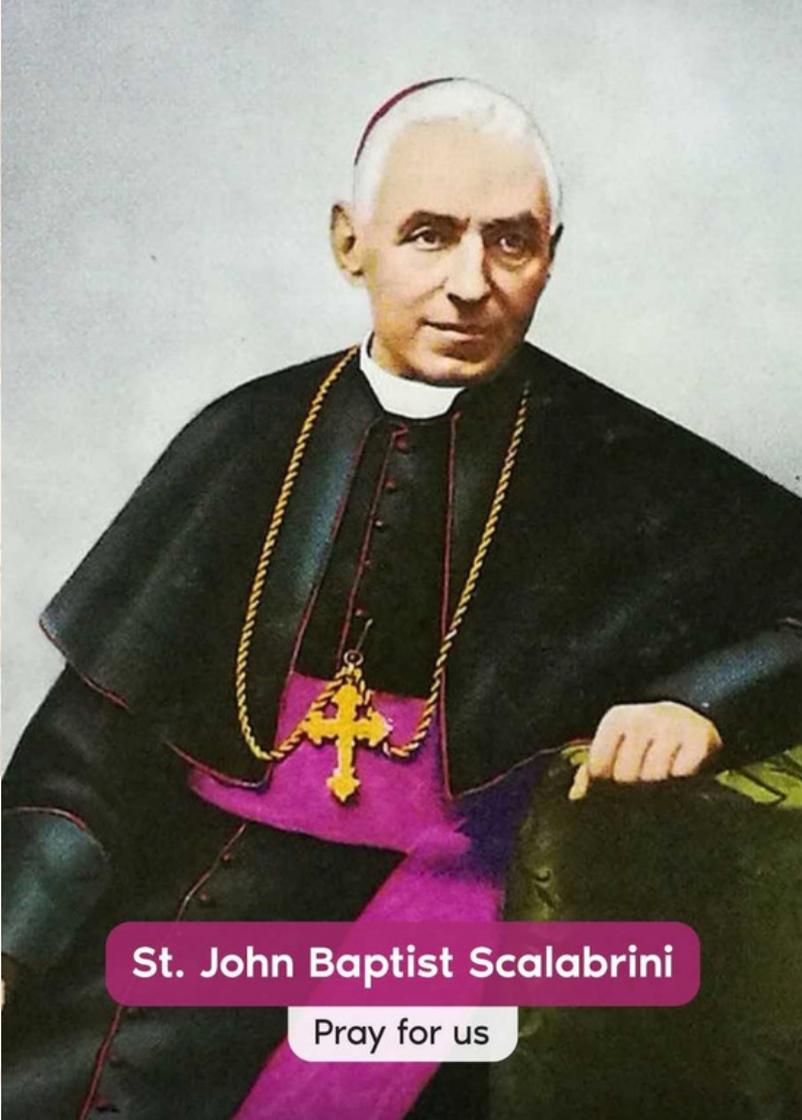
11

Christ who thus nur - tures and heals all our sor - rows,  
prayer of the A - ve Ma - ri - a re - fines,  
Gos - pel which her - alds God's king - dom come.

13 Chorale

Pray for us John Bap-tist Sca-la-bri - ni; o - ra pro no - bis De - um!

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**St. John Baptist Scalabrini**

Pray for us