



Roma-Piacenza
8-17 September 1996

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE INTERNATIONAL
SYMPOSIUM ON

SCALABRINIAN SPIRITUALITY



General Administration of the Scalabrinian Missionaries - Roma

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*“Walk humbly
with your God” (Micah 6,8)*

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Preface

We publish for internal use some of the lectures and personal witness given during the recent International Symposium on Scalabrinian Spirituality held in September 1996 with the participation of more than 100 delegates as representatives of the three Scalabrinian families. Among them were three confrere Bishops and 26 lay people.

We are well aware of the shortcomings of these Proceedings. The translations of the original texts into the four languages used in our Congregation have been done in a rather hurried way. Thus the beauty and the depth of the original documents may be somewhat lost in the process. We invite the reader to look up the original texts to capture the spirit which has animated the authors to whom we are grateful for their willingness to share the fruit of their research and their love for Bishop Scalabrini.

This collection aims at making the reader share the spirit which permeated the Symposium which the delegates lived as pilgrims humbly yet courageously searching for their spiritual roots. It was this the atmosphere which pervaded all the activities during the Symposium. It is part of a journey begun much earlier often in a silent manner, but which has produced abundant fruits. In a few years essays and books on bishop Scalabrini have multiplied. We may recall the publication for internal use of the *Opera omnia* of the Founder, "A living voice", a reader containing the most inspiring excerpts from the writings of Bishop J. B. Scalabrini, the collection of his "Pastoral Letters", the spreading of pamphlets and booklets on the spirituality of the Founder by the "Postulazione della causa".

These Proceedings, whose publication was suggested by the 13th. General Assembly of Major Superiors, contain mainly the theoretical, historical and theological aspects discussed during the first part of the Symposium. But they do not exhaust the wealth of the living experience of faith and spirituality enjoyed during the Symposium

based on intense prayer life and intercultural liturgies, respect for and communion among the different cultures present, thirst for the Scalabrinian inspirational sources, realising with awe and deep gratitude that the life and the thoughts of the Founder have become a universal heritage. J. B. Scalabrini, remained for so long as a stranger in our midst, has finally become the inspiration and father of all and his message knows no borders.

The delegates, fortified by this viable experience, have committed themselves to bring home to their Provinces and to the numerous lay people who more and more are attracted by the ideals and the holiness of the Bishop of Piacenza, the originality of the ideas and the experiences lived during the Symposium. The Symposium in fact has turned out to be above all a training school for people willing to become the multipliers of the Scalabrinian spirituality. It was not intended to be the final stage of a journey of research on the spirituality of J. B. Scalabrini and of his first missionaries, but the search for a mission statement to conform to the Scalabrinian ideals for those who are debtors to this peculiar spirituality.

We must make our own this spiritual heritage and incarnate it as individuals and as members of a community in the cultural contexts in which Scalabrini's followers live and work. The Symposium was not intended as an oasis in order to rest, but as an effort to open up a new route to walk humbly with the Lord. The encounter with Christ and with his faithful servant J. B. Scalabrini requires a new heart (*the spiritual being*), demands a life of communion (*to be with*) and the acceptance of the mission (*to be for*). This pilgrimage, fruit of search and practice of Scalabrinian spirituality, will constitute the most significant gift we can place at the foot of the tomb of the Bishop of Piacenza, while waiting that his holiness be recognised and declared officially by the Church.

Central Steering Committee

Introduction

Welcome to this Symposium on Scalabrinian Life and Spirituality!

A word of welcome to our lay friends, who are involved like us in the field of ministry, and who give us "the precious contribution of their lay status and their special service." A special welcome to the representatives from the Scalabrinian Families, the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles and the Scalabrinian Secular Missionaries; and a word of thanks for everyone's prayers for the success of this meeting. Finally, thank you for agreeing to be with us, confrere Bishops Marco Caliaro, Lawrence Sabatini, and Jacyr Braido. The new Nuncio to Ethiopia and Eritrea, Archbishop Silvano Tomasi, will also be coming to greet us at some point over the next few days.

These words of mine are only meant to convey a very warm word of welcome, and to thank sincerely the General Secretariat for Pastoral and Religious Life, which has laid out the path we will be following during the course of these few days, with the help of our Lord, Jesus Christ, to grow as disciples who stay with Him, and as his apostles, sharing in His mission. The work of organizing this Symposium, down to the last detail, has been done by the Steering Committee here in Rome. I hope that together we will be able to benefit from the results of all this preparation (involving, of course, all our Provinces, united with us in prayer and awaiting the results). I am sure that each one of us will do his or her best to spend these days of grace with generous commitment and in a spirit of sharing, taking an active part in this great pilgrimage that will culminate at our Founder's tomb in Piacenza. There, we will symbolically connect with the mandate which, on June 19, 1991, concluded the Conference on Scalabrinian missionary life, where the seeds of the initiative which has brought us together were sown.

In a few months the three-year period called forth by the Holy Father in preparation for the great Jubilee of the third millennium will

begin, in the name of "Jesus Christ, our only Savior, yesterday, today and for ever." Scalabrini's statement becomes even more relevant in this context: "In Jesus (God the Father) embraces all things: even the body, even the flesh, even the soul. Now we are that flesh, those bones... indeed, we are that same Son of God who can be found in each one of us."

As heirs of our Founder's passion for that one flesh of Christ, which, naked, reviled, exploited and sold, he saw in the poor and the migrant, let us ask, through his intercession, that "creative faithfulness" which will help us over these next few days to raise our eyes from the disfigured face of Christ, whom we now see and serve in our migrant brothers and sisters, to gaze upon the Mountain the transfigured face of Christ, who has called and still call us "to put absolutely nothing ahead of Him."

If we make this effort to free ourselves from (without forgetting them) our daily worries, we will be able to walk together, humbly, with our God, and to develop our commitment, both personal and as a community, to growing in our "spiritual life", since it is on that very commitment that "apostolic fruitfulness, generosity in love for the poor, and the calling to serve" depend. Accompany us and help us, O Mary, Mother of Hope, to do all that He tells us to do, and may our cup overflow with new Wine.

A safe and fruitful journey for all of us!

Fr. Luigi Favero, cs, Sup. Gen.

PERSONAL WITNESS

Migration, cultural diversity and faith

SAURO ANTONELLI

Australia is said to be a land of immigrants. Barely 200 years since white settlement, migrants have formed the basis of this society. In 1996 more than 220 nationalities are represented in its population and 40% of Australia's population was born overseas or has at least one parent born overseas. Italian migration has been part and parcel of this settlement since the very early days, indeed history shows that there was an Italian on board the First Fleet, and migration to this country from the various parts of Italy has been occurring ever since that time.

However, mass migration from Italy to Australia occurred in the immediate post-war period, in the 1950s and 60s, when Australia embarked on a large scale immigration policy.

Australian society after the end of the Second World War was very insular given its isolation from the rest of the world and mass migration represented a challenge to the way of life in Australia. Australians' initial reaction was one of suspicion and the preference was for migrants to come from the British Isles, and in the pecking order of preferences, from Holland and Germany ahead of migrants from countries such as Italy, Greece, Malta and so on.

It is worth spending a moment to look at how official policies towards migration have evolved in Australia since the post-war period. Initially, Australia had what was termed an "assimilationist policy". This policy presumed that people coming to this country would somehow forget their language, their culture, (often a culture dating back some thousands of years) and immediately adopt the Australian way of life and the English language. Clearly such a policy was not only arrogant and patronising, but impossible to implement.

People cannot shed their culture and their language like one can shed an overcoat with the onset of Spring.

This policy of assimilation gradually gave way to a policy of integration which recognised the intrinsic value of people who migrated and which acknowledged that people would retain their language at least in terms of the first generation, but that subsequent generations would become for all intents and purposes, Australians in every sense of the word.

Subsequently, this policy gave way to that which has been operating in this country for the last 20 years, i.e. a policy of multiculturalism. That is a policy which recognises that Australia is a country of migrants and is made up of many cultures. It is a policy that acknowledges the inputs that the various people have brought to this country, that celebrates the richness of the cultures that go to make up the fibre of the country and that affirms that there is strength in cultural diversity.

The progression from a policy of assimilation to one of multiculturalism at the official level has had similar parallels within the Australian Church.

The Catholic Church in Australia had been largely established through the work of clergy who had come from Ireland. Against formidable odds and prejudice they managed to get their faith acknowledged and a strong network of parishes and schools established.

Having fought these battles, the Irish clergy in turn sought to protect what they had struggled to build up over a number of years. So the Church that faced migrants arriving in Australia from overseas in the post war was a different Church to what they had been accustomed. It was very Irish and one that was resistant to any different manifestations of faith.

This then was the society and the Church in which I grew up in the 1950s and 60s. I was born in 1948 and migrated to Australia with my mother in 1952 at the age of 3, my father having preceded us by some 2 years.

I grew up essentially in an assimilationist society and went to a Catholic college in an environment where although most of the students were of migrant background, there was little encouragement of the cultural diversity that these kids might have had. Accordingly there was no language teaching and, indeed, speaking in other languages was frowned upon. It was an environment in which we were encouraged to shed our own cultural and linguistic heritage and adopt that of the new country.

When I was younger I couldn't understand why I couldn't have peanut butter sandwiches as my Anglo-Australian mates had, instead of *mortadella* rolls. I continually argued and fought with my parents about speaking Italian in the home and accused them many times of not making a sufficient effort to shed their cultural and linguistic heritage and somehow, chameleons like, become these new people.

In the years when I had finished high school and was attending university in the late teens and early 20s – which is traditionally a time when one starts to question many of the issues that influence our lives – I began to recognise that indeed I was doubly blessed by having the capacity to have two languages and two cultures to draw upon, and was able to more objectively recognise the contribution that my parents and people like them – simple, peasant folk by and large – had made to the development of this country.

This period coincided with my first introduction to the Scalabrinian Fathers.

In 1960 I was living in Lalor a suburb in Melbourne, Victoria, with a large (almost 50%) population of Italian background. In that year the Fathers were invited to take over the running of the Parish Church – St Luke's, Lalor. This was when I first came across the Scalabrinian Fathers and, as indicated earlier, it coincided with a re-awakening and a re-evaluation of what my background was, of my roots and all of the richness that goes with that cultural heritage.

Interestingly, the advent of the Scalabrinian Fathers in my life at that particular time seemed to meet the two key drives or motivations which appeared to be important at that time as I was maturing from a youth to an adult: a rediscovery of my culture and a reaffirmation of my faith. The messages that these men gave me challenged many of the established norms of the time and struck very responsive cords in my life in terms of saying that people like myself had a very key role to play in society generally, by bringing to it the capacity to have a different perspective on life and a different set of values which could only enrich Australian society and the Australian Church in all its various facets.

Their influence, coming as it did at a time of life when many of one's career decisions are determined, was also instrumental in some of the life choices that I made.

Despite having a Commerce degree and having worked for over six years as an economist, when the opportunity arose to join the public sector in a position where I could have an important role to

play in the development of Australia's ethnic affairs policies, I jumped at the opportunity. Over a period of fifteen years I was variously employed with the Victorian State Government and the national government with the Ethnic Affairs Ministry, the Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs, the Ethnic Affairs Commission, the Settlement Advisory Council and other such bodies.

Similarly, in an honorary and voluntary capacity, I had an active involvement with a range of community bodies, other than the *Federazione Cattolica Italiana (F.C.I.)*, such as CoAsIt, ethnic radio, the Diocesan Commission on Migration, the Italian Arts Festival and later the Assisi Center for the Aged and the *Comitato di Coordinamento delle Associazioni Toscane d'Australia* and to this day I am *Consultore* for the *Regione Toscana*.

As mentioned earlier this involvement was due in some significant measure to the influence of the Scalabrinian Fathers and the messages and philosophy they communicated to me.

The Scalabrinian Fathers had settled in Australia in the mid 1950s and by the late 50s had established a lay movement called the *F.C.I.* which quite quickly established itself across different parts of Australia where the Fathers were operating. A branch of this group was established at Lalor, and I, and many of my friends who were of similar background, became members of this group. The *F.C.I.* sought to give people of Italian background the wherewithal to take a role in their Church but also in the social and political structures of society.

The Scalabrinians, both through the work that they did in establishing the *F.C.I.* and in the general messages that they imparted to the people that they came in touch with, were, at the time, indeed, visionaries.

You will recall that I mentioned earlier that official Australian policy progressively moved to one of multiculturalism which is the official policy currently in force to this day. The Scalabrinian Fathers were espousing the underlying principles of a multicultural policy in the early 60s, well before that policy became a generally accepted across Australian society some 10-20 years later. In other words they were imparting a strong message that people from other cultures had a very important and significant role to play in the shaping and the development of Australian society.

Similarly, well before Vatican II changes started to influence the Church, the Scalabrinians were saying to the laity that we had a key role to play, in equal partnership with the clergy, in shaping the

Church and in the responses to the challenges before us. They set about – often in partnership with the *F.C.I.* – establishing Italian language Masses and missions where there were many migrants. Often this required overcoming major obstacles because the local parish priest would very reluctantly allow these initiatives to take place in his parish because it was seen to divide the parish community. In other words the old assimilationist policy was alive and well in the 1960s in the Australian Church.

However the Scalabrinian Fathers, before Vatican II and before multiculturalism became the official Australian policy, were already well on the way to changing this mentality and this philosophy. They were, for all intents and purposes, visionaries.

This visionary approach was not limited to this field, however. They took on the hard challenges. As I indicated above they took on the Australian Church in all its Irishness and paved the way for many other communities that in their faith practice were different to the norm, such as the Maltese, the Vietnamese, the Maronites and the Melkites.

They also went to the rural areas. Following the example of their founder, Bishop Scalabrini, they established themselves in a number of rural areas, where migrants had gone to look for work. An example is on the island of Tasmania, in the rural mountain areas, where migrants had gone to work on the construction of a major hydro electric project. It was the Fathers who not only tended to the pastoral care of these people who were often young, single men separated from their loved ones and their families, but also arranged social gatherings, activities, film nights and so on. In other words they ensured that these single men were not abandoned in a strange country, but were able to develop as full members of society.

The Scalabrinian Fathers also recognised the importance of mass media. Initially they established a newspaper through the *F.C.I.*, which later became a magazine called *Il Messaggero* and which, in more recent years, has been merged in a joint operation with *Il Messaggero di Sant'Antonio*. They also submitted regular columns in the main Italian language newspapers and established programs on Italian radio stations when these started in the middle to late 70s, thereby bringing matters of faith, as well as their own messages about the migrants' roles and responsibilities in shaping the society within which they lived.

Furthermore the Scalabrinian Fathers created a strong social

policy and research role in the area of ethnic affairs through a range of initiatives including the establishment of the Center for Migration Studies in Sydney, which linked up with similar such Centers across the world. In doing so they became one of the foremost policy organizations in the ethnic affairs field, and were a significant influence on the development of Government policies and views. This was especially so in the 70s and early 80s, which were the critical years in the development of the policy of multiculturalism and its various "spin offs", including the establishment of the Special Broadcasting Service, the provision of interpreting and translating services, the establishment of a Grant-in-Aid Project, the creation of a network of Migrant Service Centers, and so on.

In the middle to late 70s they again showed that they were truly visionaries by foreseeing that the issue of the care of the aged was going to be of foremost concern for the Italian community in Australia. In other words the people who had migrated to Australia in the 50s and 60s in the prime of their life would, towards the end of this century, become aged and require special care in their old age. In this context the Scalabrinian Fathers with the support of the community and of the Australian Government, established a number of centers for the care of the aged, and to this day run the main centers and nursing homes for the Italian aged currently operating in Australia.

Similarly the Fathers recognised that, both for their own development in terms of vocations to their Order, and in terms of the emerging trends in international migration and refugee settlement, there was need of a base in Asia. So we saw in the 1980s the opening of a Scalabrinian base in the Philippines, and we are now beginning to see the full fruit of that effort.

The Italian community in Australia has become settled and has taken a key role in shaping this nation's multicultural society. To a large extent, the pressing concerns associated with the migration experience are now a thing of the past. In this context the Scalabrinians have sought to adhere to the ideals of their founder by establishing a chaplaincy to the Filipino community in Melbourne, ministering to the Spanish-speaking communities in Melbourne, Sydney and Perth, and shortly will be establishing a chaplaincy to Portuguese-speaking migrants in Adelaide.

So, in summary, their vision, their commitment, their intellect, especially in the field of migration and social justice, and their capacity for hard work is second to none.

To some extent, however, the Fathers themselves don't recognise just how influential they are capable of being. For example, they have an enormous capacity to further shape the second generation of Italians in Australia. It is this group, professionally trained, that has taken up a key role in many of the various facets of society, and which, through their cultural background and their faith, will be quite incisive decision makers.

In terms of developing their faith and further developing their cultural background, and fusing the two to help shape Australian society in all its facets, the Scalabrinian Fathers – given their history, given their own role in the societies where they have worked throughout the world and through their experience in Australia – could be very influential “eminencies grises” in the shaping of the community.

The laity – recognising this potential – has invited the Scalabrinian Fathers to dedicate specific resources to the second generation to help shape this group. It is an invitation that has not been taken up as the Fathers argue that they are only there to help. However, I would argue that they should be mentors and guides. Together, we could be even more significant shapers of an even richer Church and an even richer society.

In Italian politics some years ago it was fashionable to talk about converging parallels. In this context my growth as an adult particularly through the *F.C.I.* has been in many ways a converging parallel with the Scalabrinian Fathers. I have had the pleasure and honour of walking hand in hand “with them”, even if I am not one “of them”, and I have been able to share, even if at a distance, many of their very real achievements.

What then are the challenges for the future for the Scalabrinian Fathers and for the laity with which they are in contact in Australia?

I mentioned earlier that the Scalabrinian Fathers had foresight in a number of areas: the mass media, social policy and research, care of the aged, missions in the Philippines and more recently the chaplaincy to emerging ethnic groups in Australia.

The Scalabrinian Fathers, together with those of us who are keen to work closely with them, need to take a step back and ask where the challenges lie in the future. In some areas, for example the aged, these challenges are being addressed as best possible. However, in other areas, they and we could do more.

The area of young people, for example, is one that should be addressed. Young people today are losing their faith, as they are much

more concerned with the material side of society. However, given the right approach, the right role models, the right messages, perhaps many of our young people, particularly those of migrant background could be challenged. This comment is made as a father of two young men – one 22 and the other 19 – and as a person who, as I indicated earlier, was strongly influenced by the Scalabrinians in the career and community choices I made.

As well the Fathers should seek to develop strategic alliances to position the Church for the challenges of the future. We are clearly becoming a much more a technological society. The Jesuits in Australia have already taken steps to establish a Pay TV channel. Given the Scalabrinians' past role at the forefront of social thinking, social policy and social development, they should seek to develop an alliance with groups like these so that they can obtain maximum benefit from new technological developments and thereby help shape the Church of tomorrow and the conscience of tomorrow.

In conclusion, the Scalabrinian Fathers have been instrumental in the faith choices that I, and my wife, have made. The values they espouse and seek to live on a day-to-day basis are:

- awareness and attention to those in need, especially migrants;
- hope to those who are suffering and an example to society's institutions to embrace the cause of those in need;
- communion, but not uniformity, which promotes the concept of co-operation, sharing and respect;
- availability to those in need.

These values are a continuing inspiration to me.

Finally, I am proud to have been associated with the Scalabrinians, and I hope that in some small way I, and my lay colleagues, may have provided friendship, ideas and occasionally some inspiration to them. It is more important, however, to look to the future, to pause and take stock so that together we can take on the challenges facing our communities in the next century.

Thank you for this invitation to share these personal reflections.

Seeing the Lord in you

GIUSEPPE DALLA ZUANNA, CS

I was born 63 years ago. I entered the seminary in Bassano del Grappa in 1947 and remained there for three years. Due to school difficulties I was dismissed. But I asked to come back as I wanted to dedicate my life to the cause of migrants. I went to Crespano in 1950, started my Noviciate in 1952, took my first vows in 1954 and made my perpetual Profession in 1960. I remained at Crespano for 18 years. At the beginning I was working as the cook. In 1968 I was sent to Siponto with Fr. Stefanelli to work in the minor seminary just opened. I helped organising the seminary. Seminarians were not living a normal seminary life: at midday they had lunch and in the evening just a sandwich. I remained there for 2 years and then I was sent to Osimo where we were directing the Institute for migrant children. I was sent as an assistant to primary school pupils and was aiding the treasurer. I remained there for 6 years. Then in 1976 I was sent to Carmiano as the treasurer and as the animator of the youth of the town. I remained there for 10 years. From 1986 I have been working in Arco. Already 10 years have passed living in the company of our sick and elderly confreres. I am in charge of the sick, I am the treasurer and work in the fields.

What can I say?

I spend my religious life with the sick. I try to do my best to see the face of the Lord in them. It is an exercise which may be difficult at times. It would not seem so, but at times when people become old... we say that a priest should have the greatest faith on earth. But at a certain age, sometimes, everything seems to fall apart. And then? Then we try to help each other out with the spirit of faith. And sometimes I say, "I must see in you the Lord." And I make every effort to see the Lord in my confrere. "But sometimes

you too must try to see the Lord in me. Thus let us try to live our life in communion.”

There are other missionary brothers with me. Truly we live a life as intended by Scalabrini because we must be compassionate. And we try to remember not only those who live with us there, but all our missionaries as well as the migrants. We know that the others work and we too make an effort to live fully our committed life, even though at times nature is weak... We are always journeying as the Hebrew people, who sometimes fell, were hit and then got up again. And I too am like this. I am the least important member of the group. We strive to live together and to help each other: “ I pray for you and you pray for me.”

I am taking part in this Symposium as a representative of the missionary brothers. They held their first Congress last May after more than one hundred years. We also took part in a pilgrimage on the footsteps of the Founder. And it has been a marvellous experience: we met and we were able to share our experiences. It has been possible for me to see something with my own very eyes that there exists a willingness to live and to express the desire to live among migrants with a true spirit. And I have been very edified. It was of great help also the fact that new and young brothers have joined the Congregation and they come from different nations. Sometimes when you meet a person from a another nation, you may be tempted to keep at a distance. Instead this international spirit has helped me.

(transcription from tape not revised by the author)
(original text in Italian)

Small Milan railway stations

ALFREDO GONÇALVES, cs

My presence among migrants is becoming for me a rich and difficult lesson. In my life history there isn't something similar to the episode at the "Milan railway station". Instead there has been and still there is a long, conflict-ridden and painful process of learning. Various have been the situations in which I have learnt from migrants some steps of our pilgrimage here on earth. I would like to highlight the relevant points of this process, which could be described as "small Milan railway stations" in which I found motivations to continue in my pilgrimage.

The first was my life experience as a migrant. When I was 15, I left the Isle of Madeira, Portugal with my entire family to try a better life in Brazil. I cannot say I suffered a great deal. But I still vividly remember the sadness of departure, the difficulties during the voyage, the sense of insecurity upon my arrival, privation, the tears, the humiliations... and the harsh work of my parents and my brothers to start anew. It was an event which left its scars. For my mother, especially, this migration experience undoubtedly shortened her life. I was an adolescent boy, a young tree which adapted fast to the new environment.

The second moment I wish to recall was my experience among the *favelados* in the outskirts of São Paulo. At the time I was a seminarian studying philosophy. I used to dedicate my weekends to pastoral activities in the eastern area of the metropolis. A great concentration of migrants used to live there, coming mainly from the North East of Brazil. They were poor families, discriminated upon, who lived thousands of kilometers from their hometowns. From them I learnt to withstand adversities and the strength of solidarity. Not-

withstanding their total lack of security, they placed their lives into the hands of God and in the organizations of the little ones. Especially the women, as the Hebrew midwives in Egypt, used to show much stamina and courage to fight injustices and taking part in grassroots organizations.

The third moment I wish to recall is my work among the *boias frias* in the inner region of the State of São Paulo. It was a pastoral stage, a pause from our studies, which we took, Antenor Dalla Vecchia and I, in the sugar cane plantations of the region. We were seminarians and had just completed our philosophy course. Before starting our theology courses we thought it was a good idea to share an experience with the cane cutters, in the year 1980. It was there that I learnt the lesson of silence. At least on my part, I was convinced that we could bring about a revolution by changing drastically the situation of poverty experienced by those workers. Soon I realized that my words had little or no impact whatsoever on their lives. I can say that I spent one year in silence, or rather, what I had to say, had little significance in the daily life of these migrants. There was a great abyss between my words and their existence marked by suffering. I was there to conduct "an experience", while they were there for the "absolute necessity of surviving". What could I say? It was an experience of an inner conflict, for sure, but also a source of richness and blessing.

Later, as a theology student and a priest, I returned to the slums of eastern São Paulo, at a place called Jardim Elba. Once again I was highly impressed by the faith and happiness of life amidst so many great adversities. Trust in the Lord and relationships among them were once again a lesson from the migrants. From their constant moving about, they have learnt that the only security comes from God; from so many sufferings and deceptions, they have learnt that organization and fight can bring about changes. As the people of Israel, they know that the Promised Land is a gift, yes, but it is also a conquest. Faith and commitment to life were subsidiary and thus they obtained drinking water, electricity, a school, a clinic and other social benefits for the area. Even here women were always on the forefront in the fights for their rights.

My experience in the slums, in the heart of the city of São Paulo, is the fifth point on which I wish to expand. It is a population entirely uprooted, tired of so many wanderings and crushed by suffering. There the intimacy of the family and the individual is exposed to all,

as in a public square. They are persons who have to live in a very limited space, without any privacy, with their nakedness exposed to all. In the middle of these abysmal sufferings and misery, I was asking myself how could one continue to live, how could he hold on to hope. But I was surprised at the energy and the endurance of these people. I discovered that this could be so with the certainty that God is the faithful one. Yes, I learnt that especially in these human hells much surprisingly God reveals his face. When all is lost and desperation knocks at your door; when only hunger, pain and loneliness are your companions; when persons are at the end of their tether... then there is a total surrender to God. Almost with fear, I have discovered in those human hells the presence of the Risen Lord. There is His face disfigured by suffering and transfigured by the infinite mercy of the Father.

The final point is my transfer to the North East and my living with some groups of sugar cane cutters. At the beginning my change was much more difficult than I had thought. After 25 years in São Paulo, where my family lives as well as all my friends, it was painful to break away. I felt my roots exposed to the sun, I found myself a tree without protection. I experimented on myself the fragility and insecurity. I had never felt so deeply the experience of the migrant's uprooting, not even when I had left Portugal. This taught me not to trust in my "certainties", my securities and my own strength. Upon my arrival in the Northeast region, I began contacting the sugar cane cutters. For 5 or 6 months of the year they leave their families in the state of Paraíba and go to the sugar factories in Pernambuco. They reside in great huts which can accommodate 70, 80, 100, 120 men. There they encounter every sort of difficulties. With them – trees with very frail roots as I was feeling – I learnt to place the future into the hands of God. I felt the necessity to value new relationships with different and unknown people and to recreate ties of friendship and living together. Faith in God and relationship with brothers was essential to survive in the North East and in my mission. As I said, this experience of change and an encounter with new migrants helped me relativize a series of "truths" which had given me support. Perhaps I have somehow learnt that the most important truth, the greatest commandment, is "to love God and our brothers". I feel it is too early to speak of all of this, but in spite of suffering, this stage in my life had rewarded me with this light.

As a conclusion of the points mentioned above, I wish to pin-

point that all this has helped me to value community life in a special way. The presence among migrants helped me discover the hidden face of the Father, the journey of Jesus Christ and the living strength of the Holy Spirit. This relationship with migrants and with God, on the other hand, helped me understand the value of friendship and of community life. It gave way to understanding, friendship and collaboration. I discovered how important it is to have someone at our side during the time of crisis, of conflict, of perplexity, of impotency, of failure, of happiness and of success... in sum somebody with whom to share, to walk. All this, I repeat, is still in a process. But I am inclined to think that Mission, Community Life and Spirituality are three inseparable dimensions of a unique commitment. If one is missing, a leg from the table is missing and it will fall. I know that I have to walk much more, I am only beginning my journey, but perhaps today the horizon is clearer. Will it be so later on? I don't know. After all, the God of truth is always the unknown God. At least I learnt not to trust in the gods that are too known, that can be manipulated, made according to the image and likeness of our own petty projects. I only hope that God gives me strength for this journey. And from you, my brothers, I ask support, encouragement and prayers.

(original text in Portuguese)

The story of my exodus

ADALID MENESES LOPEZ

The history of each migrant is a personal history of his/her own "exodus". I was brought to Argentina as a child. In a parish school I learnt the immense love of God, rich in mercy. I understood then that I had left my fatherland to enter into this "dimension of faith". This led me to take part in youth groups, to announce enthusiastically the newness of God and his Gospel, to live together with the Argentinean people their hopes of liberation being made manifest, at that time, in the messianic movement of the "peronismo", which was later crushed by a barbarian military regime. My life, as that of the people, was marked by the progress brought about by the Spirit of God and by shortcomings marked by sin.

As a young man I was invited to work among Bolivian immigrants in Argentina. Some exiles, lay persons from Bolivia and Paraguay and a Jesuit priest, invited me to reflect on the meaning of being a Christian in a migrant situation. For me this meant to tread upon the same pathways of my people, to know their homes. Thus I discovered my people, I entered into the people's dimension. I belonged to them, I discovered myself in my culture. I saw the suffering of my people, the contempt, the alienation, the discrimination, the uprooting, the loss of faith. I also discovered its values.

At that moment Fr. Sergio Geremia, cs, contacted us and with him we walked "saying mass with the Bolivians": a way to revalue the richness of faith of which our people were the bearers. Fr. Vittorio Dal Bello, cs, used to say: "What you are doing is what Bishop Scalabrini had proposed: keep the faith, revalue the culture, seek the integration of migrants and care for their social and legal status in the new country".

To be a Christian meant to commit myself to the living conditions

of my own people: thus a pastoral ministry among Bolivians was born with the aim of keeping the faith and the religious expressions typical of the Bolivian migrant in Argentina.

Then the time came when *las villas miserias* were been turn down because they were considered a "blot on the landscape." Thus the organisation which had just started was dismantled. Everything seemed to lead to the conclusion that no pastoral activity could be reorganised. But in spite of this the Bolivians held on their public expressions, their religious manifestations, their religious feasts.

And as a "new wind", an itinerant missionary came in our midst. He came to our homes, and used to speak about the Bolivians of the North and South, and that it was necessary to start again with a specific pastoral ministry. He used to pray with us, kiss our children, take part in our feasts. He spoke about this to the Argentinean and Bolivian bishops. And as a *Mallku* [Chief Great Condor], which dominates the heights where God kisses the mountains, he went up and went to sleep in a small church of the Alto Calilegua, Jujuy, the priest dearly beloved by the Bolivians, Fr. Tarcisio Rubin, cs.

Prayer, humility, poverty, availability, missioning, an all encompassing tenderness, enthusiasm for itinerancy, a sincere love for the Bolivians is what he has left us as a heritage. He has made me see that it is worthwhile to be engaged in pastoral activity, or to be a missionary for migrants.

The experiences shared with the persons I have mentioned previously have helped me discover the novelty of a specific pastoral ministry among migrants with a specific culture, a typical manner to express and live their faith. And we have had to defend this even in our own local church. Keeping in mind that we are dealing here with persons uprooted from their own environment, we feel they need even more solidarity and help.

After the missionary impact of Fr. Tarcisio, Fr. Claudino has carried on his work with his presence among the Bolivians.

To listen, to observe, to learn is what we have done among Bolivians, visiting their homes, keeping and strengthening their religious faith, in a spirit of unity, integration, participation and community belonging.

A constant effort is necessary so that our religious manifestations will help us integrate ourselves into the local church and be part of her. By nurturing these expressions with constancy and sacrifice, we have succeeded in generating a new life and give a dynamic move-

ment to the community which is maturing towards new expressions at social, cultural, sport and commercial levels.

By keeping alive the spirit of the people we keep their dignity. And this helps them feel secure of themselves and be inserted into the host society.

Jesus in fact wants us to have life and that we stand up so that we may live it to the full.

(original text in Spanish)

On the exodus road with Scalabrini

CHRISTIANE LUBOS, mss

I would like to start by thanking all the people who by their witness have handed down in the past, and still do it today, the Scalabrinian charism which is so much part of our lives as Scalabrinian Secular Missionaries.

My name is Christiane. I am German and come from Ingolstadt, near Munich.

How did my first encounter with the Scalabrinian world occur? It happened quite casually. I was taking part in a formation seminar organised by the Rottenburg-Stuttgart Diocese. It is unlikely that during these workshops you meet a foreign-born person. Instead that day among the participants one was not German. She was a Scalabrinian secular missionary. We introduced ourselves and she invited me to take part in an International Youth Meeting to be held at the Spirituality Centre of the Scalabrinian Missionaries in Stuttgart.

And I went. It was Easter 1983.

What struck me during that meeting? What was it that fascinated me?

- The depth and the communion which we experienced among persons with different languages and so diverse life stories;
- the welcoming and the simplicity of Fr. Gabriele Bortolamai, the missionary who was moderating the meeting;
- the meeting with migrants who live as marginalized people in our beautiful cities. My eyes were open and saw the poverty of my country and, at the same time, the wealth of generosity and sacrifice of these people;
- and during the Easter vigil I discovered a God who is Father,

Father to all, who was asking me: "Do you really love me?" (*John* 21:15s).

But I was not ready to say yes, to leave everything and trust in Him completely. My heart was on fire with His question, but I answered "no" and I left.

I went far away. I spent one year in Israel for a *praktikum* in social pedagogy, teaching in an Arab school for young Palestinian refugees while, at the same time, I was pursuing my theological studies.

That Easter chapter by this time had been closed. I plunged into many social activities and was helping different leftist political movements. I was committed to many causes and had a lot of dreams for the future.

Many possibilities were opening up. But I wanted to do something to eliminate the injustices that I was witnessing everywhere in the world. I was looking for authenticity in people and something which could give meaning to my existence.

Today, as I look back, I realise that during my search two bishops have accompanied me – even though as a typical German, I was not always very fond of bishops.

One is Oscar Romero, martyr in El Salvador.

Since hearing of his death in 1979, I had been left with a lot of questions: how can one give up his life like this?

In the meantime, thanks to a joint communities program, I had the occasion to spend one year in a slum with a basic community in the Northeast of Brazil. I left.

Births and deaths were daily occurrences as well as violence and hunger. Nevertheless there was endless hope as well as a simple and authentic faith. It was a year which marked deeply my life and undoubtedly upset me: during that year I met closely with the crucified and Risen Lord in the poor and in myself.

The other bishop is Scalabrini.

During my stay in Brazil, I also went to San Paulo. I wanted to get a first hand glimpse on some projects concerning the *meninos de rua* and the migrants from the interior.

That day was "Migration Day" and a procession of poor people with their children was winding through downtown among squatter areas and skyscrapers. And who was walking and singing with them? Again the Scalabrinian family. Seven years had passed since my first

meeting them in Germany. It was totally unexpected. I stayed with the secular missionaries three days and I felt at home in their small apartment among the *cortiços*, a very small presence as a drop in the ocean. The missionaries were not the same persons I had met in Stuttgart, but there, on the other side of the ocean, I was meeting with the same community. This left a mark on me. Even though the environment was different, the heart was the same.

Meeting with them touched me deeply, but after those three days I renewed my no and I left for Foz de Iguacu.

As I was visiting on my own St. Michael's church, whom do I meet there? The picture of bishop Scalabrini on a big poster. Again I was not expecting this. I went near and I asked, "*Que queres de mim?*" What do you want of me?

After a few moments, the pastor came along, and hearing that I was German, he said, "I am a Scalabrinian missionary and I have a brother in Germany, in Stuttgart."

I had not yet known Scalabrini, but he was already playing tricks with me!

Before returning to Europe, I returned to San Paulo and I spent two weeks with the missionaries to know more about their life and the Scalabrinian charism. What hit me during those days was:

- their untiring love for migrants, a passion which manifested itself in welcoming the newcomers but also in sensitising the nerve-centres of society where decisions are taken, and as presence that intended to span a "bridge" between the rich and the poor, between the migrants' descendants and the present-day *indocumentados*;
- "how" they interpreted the events, often shocking, of every day: not so much as problems, but also as a chance, to recognise in human history and every day life the pangs of a new birth;
- the choice of the essential elements consistent with their life-style and their creativity in facing new and unforeseen situations;
- but above all the central place reserved to Christ in their lives and in their daily living. During the day I was accompanying these missionaries in their daily visits to slums, to families, in the offices. I was meeting them again in the evening, silent in front of the Eucharist. From the beginning I had asked myself where they would find their strength and their joy: during those moments of silent prayer in front of the Eucharist I had discovered the answer.

It was one of the last days of my staying in San Paulo. I had gone

to the Cathedral da Sé for the Mass in commemoration of the tenth anniversary of Bishop Romero's death. The church was packed with poor. During the offertory collection I noticed an elderly woman sitting closed to me, barefooted and dressed in rags. As she was moving in front of me to place her offering, I asked myself: "And you, what do you give?"

Then and there I understood that God wanted more than my hands and my social commitment. He was asking me to give up everything that he might give me all of himself and I said "yes" – a "yes" which has changed all my programs.

Some months later, I began my formation course in preparation for the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience which I took in Piacenza in '94. One of the gifts which I have received in these first years is my gratitude for the Scalabrinian missionaries through whom we have come to know Bishop Scalabrini.

And Bishop Scalabrini still plays tricks with me. Three years ago we were looking for an apartment in Rome. When we found it, we discovered that from the kitchen of our apartment we could go to a small veranda with a window overlooking the altar of the nearby church. How can I possibly forget bishop Scalabrini and his love for the Eucharist, hidden leaven of all his life, of every intervention and of every hope of his?

(original text in Italian)

Living with Scalabrinians

ENRICO PAROLIN

During my life I have often found myself giving my time to people in need. It has always been given without self-interest, and yet I have always gained something from the experience. I have always felt such great joy in giving myself to other people and this is something that has in turn marked my character in a happy, cheerful way. I did not waste time reflecting on my own experiences until I came in contact with the thought of bishop Scalabrini, who, in one statement, captured my life experience. What he says is simple, I would say normal, but it is also concise and incisive, as his statements so often are. Through his words I find my way fully and am filled with the desire to give still more of myself: especially now that I am working directly with the Scalabrinian Fathers in the *Centro di Accoglienza Scalabrini* in Bassano del Grappa, in the province of Vicenza (Italy).

“You lay people have great influence, since you are not, in the fine words of a well-known writer, the declining of old age, but the rising of youth. It is up to you to take a hold of society and make it Christian again, by working with big ideas and a tenacity of purpose, until the Catholic spirit has penetrated everywhere working itself into all that pertains to the intellectual, moral, and often even physical life of a human being.”

How did I come to be so involved with emigration, so much so that I am hardly ever seen without the company of maybe a “Moroccan” or a “Senegalese”?

I was born in Baden (Switzerland), the son of immigrants. From an early age I experienced what it was like to live a long way from an environment in which I could recognise myself and feel at home. I carried on my shoulders the painful weight of being a foreigner. Even

though I was a child, I could understand from things my parents said what some people go through: people who are different, simply because they were born elsewhere and are not originally from the place where they are actually living.

The first of us to emigrate was my father, and my mother joined him a year later. They were both factory workers. After my birth, I lived first in Italy with my grandparents for just under a year, until sometime around my first birthday my mother came to fetch me and took me home with her. From then on my mother no longer went out to work: also because three years later my brother was born.

After three more years, my father returned home because he was desperately home-sick. He could no longer bear the distance. This impressed me and I have kept it in my heart ever since: perhaps that is why I am always so attentive to the foreigners in our midst. I can sense it immediately and feel the need to introduce myself as a friend and companion. It is unlikely for me to remain insensitive to someone who has emigrated.

My three years in Junior High School were spent at the Scalabrini seminary, but then I lost touch with it completely. In the meantime, I was formed to live the virtue of gratuitousness, dedicating myself to the Scouts movement, reaching the upper levels of the organisation before passing on to the labour union and the *Pastorale del Lavoro* in the Bassano region.

I became aware of the immigration issue through my voluntary service in Caritas. This goes back six or seven years, when coloured faces were beginning to appear in our towns. At one meeting, a woman expressed herself in very strong terms against the immigrants, and was totally against their presence. I do not know what came over me, but drawing strength from my past and remembering my own roots, I stood up, took the floor and made a somewhat passionate speech in their defence: in this way I rediscovered my sympathies with them.

As fate would have it, a certain Fr. Roberto Zaupa, whom I did not know, was present at the meeting. At the end, we introduced ourselves and he, with that intuitive immediacy that distinguishes him, said to me (and I can still remember his exact words): "It's about time we do something!"

He put his trust in me, and I put mine in him: so, with the help of the labour union and of other voluntary agencies of area, we met up

to think things through and organised the first *Festa dei Popoli*. It was something: but it was not enough, because soon we were faced with the emergency of mass arrivals, and with it, the problems of housing: people were sleeping in train stations, in cars, under bridges, or wherever they could. One telling sign of this great problem came to us in the form of two Moroccans who actually managed to get a residency permit in their car parking space in Piazzale Cadorna, which is still now a city parking lot.

It was inevitable that the Scalabrinians should shift from being the Fathers of emigrants to becoming the Fathers of immigrants. They were universally well-known as the *Padri del Presepio*, but from then on they became known as the "Fathers who devote themselves to those who are far away". Not a single day goes by that we do not receive some kind of notification of "cases" which need to be resolved: whether from the Diocesan Curia, the parishes or the local councils. And, no matter how, it is always a question of immigrants. Because in this area, this is "their field of expertise".

Soon work began on a house, previously been lived in by nuns, to make it suitable for the new arrivals. We then moved on to building some prefabricated houses, and, through a building co-operative, we purchased some apartments which were then rented out to immigrants. Four *Centri di Accoglienza* have been set up, run by the *Casa a Colori* Association, which had been founded by a group of volunteers from the *Centro di Accoglienza Scalabrini*. It has its main office in the seminary from where it manages the other centres. We have also encouraged cultural events in our area to motivate the immigrants themselves, and to promote a welcoming spirit and reciprocal integration among area residence.

The Association has undertaken two sociological surveys (*Gli immigrati immaginati* and *La scuola e l'immigrazione: la visione tra gli studenti dello spaccato immigrazione*) and has published *Voci da lontano*, a collection of twelve stories about the lives of immigrants in our area. One characteristic that is typical of us, and perhaps also of the Scalabrinians, is that we act and then reflect on the completed action: the action has, however, always been meditated and pondered over beforehand.

In our contact with the Scalabrinian Fathers, I have always appreciated the compassion and interest shown towards immigrants, which in turn have affected us.

The formation sessions that we have, on occasion, been able to

undertake in recent years, both in the Seminary and at a national level, have also proved very positive.

Remarkable in all this is the perception, not just sociological but also as an interpretation of faith, which sees in the phenomenon of migration a progression through calamity and human drama towards the experience of salvation and the beginnings of a new humanity, where all peoples, different though they be have riches to both give and receive.

It has been a positive experience to be able to work together in groups to find a practical solution to the problems we have encountered, and I believe that one typical feature of the Scalabrinians is their ability to work together successfully to create a sense of community and family, extending it even to those who are working in the organisation. At the same time, we often realise that we differ in our ideas and experiences, and sometimes even in our creed. The Scalabrinians succeed in bringing us all together without undermining the individuals, but valuing each of us for what we have to offer individually, as well as members of a team.

Proposals

- a) We urgently require help and support in our out-reach towards immigrants. We need that faith journey, which moves through precise and regular stages without waiting for improvisations or until some emergency arises. We cannot look in on ourselves and say we have nothing to give. Each person gives what he or she can. We manage to give our time and goodwill, but is that sufficient?
- b) Personal presence at meetings with other volunteers is absolutely necessary. We are often in touch with the Fathers but, if we are not careful, nobody really pays much attention to us: to who we are, how we live, how we feel, how we speak, or what our quality of life is. Forming a group of lay-people would perhaps take up even more of their time, but, in the end, that time invested will be subtly but deeply repaid.
- c) This seems to be a suitable time to propose that more attention be given to Italian emigration, which is very much a current issue. We often come across, or receive calls from young Italians from the South of Italy asking about accommodation. They have been

- forced to emigrate for lack of work in their own home towns.
- d) We very much appreciate being invited as lay people to a Symposium of the Scalabrinian clergy. We hope that it may be typical rather than exceptional, since we are convinced that Scalabrini's ideas are not only for the members of the Congregation, but also ours. The Congregation is anyway secure enough in its considerations to embrace not only clergy and religious, but also married lay-people who see in Scalabrini's vision of emigration a possible as well as an inspiring way of life.

I wish to close with a thought from the Founder, from exactly a hundred years ago: "The Church, in its complete meaning; the Church as beloved bride of the Nazarene; the Church as the immortal kingdom of the living God; the Church as the Mystic Body of Jesus Christ is not founded on priests or bishops or the Pope alone, but on the shepherds together with the faithful, each depending on the other. Whoever has received baptism has become a member of this great, mystic body: "we have all been baptised into one body" (*I Cor* 12:13), as Paul wrote to the faithful in Corinth.

If, therefore, each member must function for the health of the physical body, it is clear that all Christians, whether clergy or lay, must, in their own way and to the best of their ability, contribute to the safety and well-being of the Catholic Church" (*Azione Cattolica. Lettera Pastorale di Monsignor Vescovo di Piacenza. 16 Ottobre 1896, Piacenza, Tip. G. Tedeschi, 1896, pp. 23*): or, as I would like to paraphrase it, to the well-being of "our" Scalabrinian Congregation.

(original text in Italian)

Scalabrini has marked my life

ERMELINDA PETTENON, mscs

I like to begin with a statement I gathered from a testimony of someone who, before I did, let himself be attracted by Scalabrini and his charism:

“Scalabrini was a whole man and everyone of his actions revealed him in his wholeness. He was a man of noble appearance, of grave and dignified bearing but without affectation, with a familiar way of dealing with all”.

His life, his thinking, his great missionary zeal, his great attention to the human person, transmit life to me and lead me as a result to act. I am becoming more and more aware that I, a Scalabrinian Sister, need to listen to Scalabrini; that even more I need to contemplate him, so that I may discover the work of God in him, work which has been revealed in part by his numerous writings.

As an example, let me quote a few lines from his Pastoral Letter of June 1891, written in order to present to his people the Encyclical of Pope Leo XIII *Rerum Novarum*:

“This mission of peace and regeneration is precisely the duty of us, people of the Church [...]. We must act and lead; we cannot stay on the sidelines [...]. My beloved, the world is advancing and we must not remain behind on account of some formalities or of some misunderstood prudence. If the world does not advance with us, it will advance without us and against us: let us remember!”

On another occasion, in a letter to his missionaries, he exhorted them to employ all their mind and strength to promote the religious, moral and civil welfare of migrants; to find the way to keep alive in them the love for their homeland; to help them becoming gradually participants in the Church which is receiving them, in the work en-

vironment and in the schools. Then he reminded them all about the goal and the style to adopt, with these words:

“As long as you will remain in Jesus, you will experience fullness of superhuman energy. The results you will achieve will be for sure abundant and lasting [...]. Therefore: most beloved brothers and sons, have unity; unity with Jesus Christ, first of all. You will achieve this unity by nourishing your faith through continuous exercises of piety and by keeping grace alive in your hearts [...]. United in mind, in heart, in aspirations, as you are united because of the same goal” (*Letter to the Missionaries for the Italians in the Americas*, Piacenza, 1892, pp. 3-4).

On his footsteps, I too felt being called to be a bridge that “unites” by fostering dialogue, mutual acceptance, sharing, appreciation of the diversities, etc. I have always relied on the writings of the Founder in order to find guidelines, strong ideas, the genuine spirit of my Congregation, and to increase ever more the capacity to change my heart into the heart of “a pilgrim”, for the sake of becoming fully “migrant with migrants”. I strived and continue to strive to have an attitude of obedience, as I am confronted with the following imperatives: “Go, proclaim, pray, accept and give witness...”. Above all, “give witness”, because, together with everyone else, I too am convinced that the first proclamation is done by our life (Cf. 1 *John* 1:1-4) and by our actions.

It has been always valid also for me what is written in the first *Rules of Life*, given by Scalabrini himself to his Missionaries:

“A missionary, being a worker of the Gospel, must remember that his first duty is to witness Jesus Christ with his life, to proclaim the Gospel more by his example than by his words. Faith is life and only the one who lives by faith is able to proclaim it”.

Being, through the gift of God, a follower of the Scalabrinian charism has always made me feel well with migrants, not because they were from the same country or because I empathized with them, but because I always found in them one of the deepest motivations for my missionary vocation.

The need to have “a heart of a pilgrim” has always come from reflecting on the intuition of our Founder: to see and love Christ in the person of the migrant. To keep abreast with migrants is very demanding, because it obliges us to a continuous conversion and to be always ready to abandon every custom that gives us security.

As I continue to share on how Scalabrini has touched my life, I

must explain that it was the charism which Scalabrini received, guarded, fostered and caused to grow that has determined my existential encounter with this Bishop who continues to mark my life every day. That charism, which has been transmitted with dynamic fidelity to us for over 100 years, urges me to search for ever more concrete ways to accept, understand and express in a vital way the heritage Scalabrini left us.

As I am doing so, I needed to take into consideration also my femininity, because has called me to clothe with it the correct expression of the charism which I embraced since the age of 14. It is a source of great joy to reflect on whatever is required by the yes I said to follow God in the road of the exodus of peoples, my brothers!

In order to give its irreplaceable contribution to the transfiguration of the world, so much desired by the Founder of my Institute (and looked upon with such a caring concern by Pope John Paul II in his post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation), our Congregation counts on the cooperation of every Sister, and therefore also on my contribution, both in the special events as in the most simple moments of our daily journey. And this urges me to live "the incarnation" in my mission, imitating Christ and John Baptist Scalabrini.

My many "yes" to the charism, which attracted me since my adolescence, as I said; my commitment to adhere to the specificity of my apostolate required by the dedication to the migrant; and the faithfulness to the historical situations which challenge my life every day; all these have made me understand how much or how little I was able to interiorize the richness of the charism Scalabrini left to the two missionary congregation he founded.

Aware of my limitations, but trusting on the power of grace, as the *Magnificat* of Mary of Nazareth teaches, I constantly seek to give my contribution, so that the charism may show forth its potentialities, in such a way that it may still mark with prophetism, a new prophetism, the complex and suffered history of migrations today.

Between the ups and downs of everyday, being a Scalabrinian, I feel to be called to rediscover the "gift of God" which has been entrusted to me by vocation and to value it in the hope, "because the love of God has been poured into our hearts through the Spirit who has been given to us".

Scalabrini has traced the missionary way and gave me guidelines to follow. I have received with joy and protect up to today, as a precious possession, the missionary mandate given to me, indirectly by

Scalabrini himself, a mandate which continues, in different ways, to highlight the need for me of contemplation, prayer, study, reflection, fraternal communion, initiative, creative activity, untiring courage, historical patience, search for newness, all things which are founded on this mandate.

As I conclude this my testimony, I cannot omit a most important element, especially for me a woman, an element which has not always been brought to attention in the various studies on Bishop Scalabrini which we have: the "motherly mercy" with which Scalabrini embraced with tender attention and unexpected acceptance the persons entrusted to his ministry, peoples that he always addresses with the title of "sons" (cfr. especially the letter of Bishop Scalabrini to Fr. Francesco Zaboglio, superior in the United States, in order to advise him about the attitude he should have toward his Confreres).

And lastly I deem necessary to add to this modest presentation of mine that Scalabrini is still alive, more alive than ever for me, because I know him now better than when I first met him at the age of 14 and therefore I esteem and love him more. With confidence I seek and I accept gratefully and joyously the light which emanates from his interior life, from his teachings, from his ample knowledge of Scripture and of the Fathers of the Church, from that spiritual patrimony that has nourished his fruitful existence. And I am grateful to him because he has called me to be "an apostle" and "a migrant with migrants". So that migrants should not lose their faith and should be strengthened by those truths that give consolation in life, because they bring close to us the goodness of God, Father and Mother.

(original text in Italian)

Beginning to move

MARTHA ROLDÁN

We are gathered here from many different countries, united by the same spirituality which makes us brothers and sisters and by an attentiveness to the same kind of persons. A sentence comes to my mind of a migrant woman from Nicaragua whom I met in Tijuana, the frontier town between Mexico and USA, who wanted to cross the border. She said: "Does it really matter to know where we come from? The important thing is know where we go."

However, I feel the necessity to tell you where I come from, as I am a child of a migrant family, whose parents had migrated to Northern Mexico, Tijuana, leaving behind all or the very little they possessed but which for them constituted "all". Difficulties and sufferings marked their lives, but it was from this experience that they, later on, were able to communicate to us that the feeling of suffering, when enlightened by faith and supported by hope, is as the light at the end of the tunnel. It is at the end and it is necessary to start on a journey to reach it.

I was born and I grew up in the middle of a border town tormented by migration flows not only from Mexico but also Central and South America. I saw migration as something normal, an integral part of city life.

It was much later after meeting one person and seeing a concrete place, where hundreds of persons had gathered to try crossing the border to USA, that we were put in front of a reality and a drama which challenged, provoked, put questions and certainly could not leave us tranquil. The person was Fr. Flor Maria Rigoni, a missionary of St. Charles, who taught us to see and listen to the cry of the "other". Our ears were open to listen to the cry of the migrant, the eyes to recognize the face of the Migrant Christ. This place, the

Zapata Canyon, was a station of the Way of the Cross and perhaps the last one for some of them.

As in any spirituality, a particular spiritual journey starts with a peculiar experience and encounter with God. God came to meet us and his invitation was "to start the journey". A famous refrain says: "Traveller, there is no path; the path is traced as you move on". We have been tracing our path walking in our missionary pilgrimage and in contemplation which turned us back to our history, seduced by God and by humanity. This invitation took us little by little in journeys throughout Latin America and far way places later on.

Migrants, refugees, displaced people, can be seen only as mere numbers, part of a statistical chart or they may be the "object" of study and research and the beneficiaries of our aid projects. But they are first of all protagonists, subjects of an exodus experience. It was walking together with the people, during our missionary journeying and our daily life, that we have learnt that by the example of Christ who by his Incarnation has assumed our condition and our sufferings, making his own the history of his time and living fully immersed in the culture of his people, it was not sufficient to become companions of their journey, but we had to become "migrants with migrants", "refugees with refugees", "exodus and pilgrimage to, with and for them." To make ours every situation which calls for liberation, where God who invites us to leave our bondage towards a new earth and new heavens. By being in the world and journeying in the world with the church, evangelizing, sharing each other's burdens and walking in the same caravan. To start a journey entails: to let ourselves be challenged, questioned and unsettled. To start a journey, the exodus experience, entails risks and lack of securities. "Exodus is an adventure as well as a certainty. It is breaking ties and knocking down fences. It is choosing utopia and reading the hard facts of life. It is crying for freedom and standing up. It is to open one's heart to hope and to unite ourselves to others as to one people. It is to rid ourselves of heavy shackles and to lift our eyes looking up at the horizon. It is to lift our hands to look for what belongs to us and to refuse to live as beggars."

Migrants and refugees have infected us with the spirituality of the "day to day", of the God of "every day life", who accompanies us in our works, in the field, in the humble tasks at home, during our meetings in the *barrio*, who is with us during the day and during the night.

It is God who walks amidst his people – a theme which we frequently find in the Old Testament. We feel called to make of the street, of the work, of the apostolate, of the community, of our daily living and of our consecration the cathedral of God's epiphany and the place where contemplation makes us attentive to the signs of God's presence in our time.

We admit that not all our daily "exodus" will arrive at the Easter of liberation. This challenges us to take on ourselves an attitude of listening, attentive to the words of God and to be able to recognize the signs of the times. It is the attitude of the sentry (*Ez 33:6s*). The sentry places himself in a place which, we may say, is contradictory: it is the point most further away from his own which he must defend and at the same time he is closest to the enemy line. He is right in the middle of the protections of his own and the danger coming from the enemies. Therefore we are called to be sentries of God and humanity, to recognize the signs of death and life; the hope in God amidst hopeless situations and historical events, to pinpoint the strategy of the plan of death and to return to God in contemplation, looking for a prophetic and liberating answer.

The faith of the refugee and the migrant wants to be so great, capable of destroying every threshold of defeat because it is constantly journeying and God who compels us to walk asks of us who wish to take on the journey with them, "pitch and unpitch constantly our tent", move on without ties, as the goal is always further on. "To be migrants with migrants" demands not only a spiritual commitment, but especially the availability and the freedom to let ourselves be transformed by God in the life experience and the pain that we may have to accept by living a little as they do. This requires to abandon forms of security, it implies a constant itinerancy. I would like to quote a passage from the Old Testament (*2 Sam 7:5s*) as a simple reference to shed light to the dimension of "itinerancy". This quotation presents the "God of the tent", where we see that God is fundamentally the God of journey, the pilgrim God with humanity. He desired to be journeying, in a constant exodus with the people with whom he had formed an Alliance. We have made a pact with God and his people within human mobility. For this we are constantly challenged to confront ourselves with this itinerant and contemplative dimension.

Mary, the new pilgrim woman, invites us to start our exodus journey with her to become a cenacle that waits for the Pentecost of our

day, as a servant of God and his Kingdom in our brother and sister migrants, refugees and displaced persons, who are the heart of our mission.

Finally I wish to let you know that at times during this speech I have spoken personally, at other times I was having in mind my community and elsewhere I was acting as a bearer of the life experiences of migrants and refugees who have interwoven these our years of pilgrimage and mission service.

May the Holy Trinity, the first pilgrim community, give life and impulse to the dedication and the missionary spirit of each one of us. For this I ask to be in communion with you through prayer and mission.

(original text in Spanish)

The spirit of the Founder knows no boundaries

YVES-MICHEL TOUZIN, cs

For those of you I never met before my name is Yves Touzin. Haitian born, I am a religious Scalabrinian and I am stationed in Haiti. We are in the process of opening a house of formation in the area of Port-Au-Prince.

Born in Haiti, I was called to the United States by one of my brothers who had migrated there a few years before. This is to indicate that I was a migrant when I entered the seminary. Apart from the fact that I had the privilege to be upon arrival a resident alien, I did experience everything else that usually a migrant does experience. That goes from the difficulties of not knowing the language, from the suffering of being discriminated upon to the homesickness for one's motherland. Nevertheless I was not discouraged. I was working full time while I was a full time college student.

Reflecting upon my vocation, I often think that the migration experience was for me something providential. For as you all know, out of his love for the Son, God the Father brought forth the whole of creation, including you and me. As stated in the letter of Paul to the Romans, in Christ, and from all eternity, the Father loves and knows each one of us (*Rom* 8:28ss). When he called Jeremiah, the Lord said, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you" (*Jer* 1:5). The psalmist also prayed: "Truly you have formed my inmost being, you knit me in my mother's womb... nor was my frame unknown to you when I was made in secret. In your book they are all written; my days were limited before one of them existed. How precious to me are your designs, O God! How vast the sum of them!" (*Ps* 139:13,15-17).

When I entered the seminary, I did not know much about the

Founder except that the charism of the community was to work with migrants. A name like J. B. Scalabrini did not mean much to me for then there were less frequent contacts between the Scalabrinians and the Haitian community. As a matter of fact, in August 1981 in the province of St. Charles there was a total of five Haitians: Fr. Robert Royal, the first Haitian to be ordained a Scalabrinian priest and through whom I came to know the Congregation, Fr. Roland Desormeaux, who was a deacon and whom I did not meet until I entered the community. And then, there were three other students: Jacques Fabre, Jean Pierre and Guster Lubrun who had not yet made their novitiate, and whom I met only after being in touch with the community.

My first encounter with the Founder did not happen until I was given by Fr. Walter Tonello a copy of that joint work of Mgr. Marco Caliaro and Fr. Mario Francesconi. And subsequently after many other readings such as *Una voce viva* and *Spiritualità di Incarnazione* I came to know him better.

Now, among the many Scalabrinian values and ideals that have touched my life, I would like to share some with you such as: his love for prayer, his thirst for God. Though he was a man of action, a man who had a great concern for the needs and the sufferings of the people, he was also a man of prayer, a man who found time for daily meditation, for spiritual readings, daily visitation to the Blessed Sacrament, daily recitation of the Rosary, the Angelus and more.

Bishop Scalabrini was someone who even felt guilty for not being able to help on time. Facing the sad situation of the Italian migrants he said: "Mi sento umiliato nella mia qualità di sacerdote e di Italiano, e mi chieggo di nuovo: come venir loro in aiuto?" As a priest and as an Italian I feel humiliated and I wonder once more how to help them? Whenever he received some bad news from them, it was like a blame on him.

Fortunately he had a tremendous way of combining action and prayer that clearly expressed his total dependence on the help of God. That reminds us of Jesus during his ministry: he would not do anything without consulting the Father through prayer and long meditation. In *Mt 14:23* after the feeding of the five thousands and before the healings at Genesaret we read: "He went up on the mountain to pray." Here we have one of the many testimonies of Jesus' great concern for the needs and the sufferings of the people, as well as his absolute trust in the Father. Even in his death. Who can forget

Jesus' famous declaration of trust before his death: "Into your hands, Father, I commend my spirit" (*Lk 23:46*).

Here is a divine expression of faith that I also sense in Scalabrini's life. The way he was looking for answers to the social problems through prayer and meditation and not from his own knowledge and *savoir-faire* certainly indicates that he was also a man of deep faith. For Lent 1884, in the pastoral letter to his Diocese he affirmed: "Justus ex fide vivit." By this Scalabrini wanted to remind the clergy and the faithful of the Diocese that with faith and by faith Christians need to see, touch and feel spiritual things the same way that with their human senses they see, touch and feel material things.

In order to better sense how deep his faith was, we need to hear him talking or better to see him acting on the basis of faith. He was the man who was wondering: "What would have been man without faith?" Or affirming: "Without faith man is lost." For him, it is "faith that gives us the real measure of the sacraments, of prayers and of the good deeds." Oh yes! Unless you are a man of faith there are things you do not accept. To accept them you need to be either a fool or a person of faith.

For Scalabrini it is faith that enables us to consider and accept all men as brothers. It is faith that enables us to see the merciful hands of God in all the events of life, sad or joyful. That reminds me of the teachings of St. Paul to the Romans: "We know that all things work for good for those who love God" (*Rom 8:28*). In other words we know that God makes everything work for the good of those who love him. All these, there is no doubt, are examples of spiritual values and ideals that have touched me deeply and that I would like to be able to imitate.

And as example of spiritual values and ideals, they cannot spring from anywhere else than from the Holy Spirit. Moreover we have learned from sacred Revelation that anything that comes from the Holy Spirit has in turn the power to heal, to transform, to convince and to strengthen. Is it not?: "In the beginning, when God created the heavens and earth, the earth was a formless wasteland while a mighty wind swept over the waters" (*Gen 1:1-2*). And everything took shape. The same did happen with man's creation. After being created by God, man was not a living being. For this God the creator needed to blow the breath of life – which is the Spirit (*Ruah*) – into his nostrils, for him to become a living being (*Gen 2:7*).

It was the same Spirit through his power that made it possible for

the Incarnation to happen. We remember well Mary's anxiety at the announcing of the Angel: "How can this be, since I have no relations with man?" And the Angel replied: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the most High will overshadow you" (*Lk* 1:34-35). Astonishing, is it not? The power of the Holy Spirit will make you pregnant. It will transform you.

One of the greatest fruits of the Holy Spirit is the Eucharist of which many of us have experienced the grace and the infinite power. In our Eucharistic Prayer II we read: "Lord, you are Holy indeed, you are the Fountain of all Holiness, by the power of the Holy Spirit may these gifts become for us the Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ."

This illustrates how powerful the Holy Spirit is and anything that comes out from him. Therefore we can be certain that the spiritual values of the Founder can touch anyone anywhere, as long as one does not close himself or herself to the actions of the Spirit of God. As the Spirit of God, the spiritual values of the Founder do not have frontiers. They are like the messianic goods and they belong to all nations. "As long as they join themselves to the Lord, loving the name of the Lord and becoming his servants. Their holocausts and sacrifices will be acceptable on my altar says the Lord" (*Is* 56:6-7).

At the light of the Haitian culture, the Scalabrinian spiritual values that appear to be very evident are Scalabrini's tremendous love for the cross and his thirst for unity. Scalabrini was a Bishop who loved deeply the Cross and who kept repeating: "Fac me cruce inebriari." He felt that God was using the Cross to educate man. In fact one of Jesus' strongest invitation to discipleship was exactly: "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me" (*Mt* 16:24). In the book of Deuteronomy God himself has confirmed the idea that He educates his people through troubles and difficulties. "Remember how for forty years now the Lord, your God, has directed all your journeying in the desert, so as to test you by affliction... He therefore let you be afflicted with hunger... in order to show you that not by bread alone does man live, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of the Lord" (*Deut* 8:2-3).

Since the departure from Africa in 1503 under the administration of the Vice-King Nicholas Ovando when the first group of Africans was brought to the Island, the Haitian people have been a crucified people. This abject and inhuman commerce went on from the XVI up to the XIX century with the blessing of the authorities of our Church,

the Roman Catholic Church. We were actually uprooted from the West Coast of Africa, the so called Gulf of Guinea along side of Togo, Benin and Western Nigeria.

From 1503 to 1996 the Haitians as a people have experienced the cross of slavery, the cross of dictatorship, the cross of poverty, the cross of illiteracy, the cross of injustices and oppression, the cross of human wickedness. Willingly or not, we love the cross hoping that it may not be a mere instrument of punishment, of shame and humiliation, but an instrument of transformation, of sanctification and of Redemption. We hope that it can be providential. In a way it can lead us to be a people pleasing to God. Where all Haitians may observe what is right and do what is just (*Is 56:1*). Our hope is strongly rooted in the promises of God who has used the infidelities of the People of Israel for the good of the Gentiles who have come to know the true God.

Whenever we talk about the cross, it is to evoke a difficult and painful reality. It is to suffer, to deny oneself and to die. Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew, offering the conditions of Discipleship, says: "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me" (*Mt 16:24*). To follow Jesus therefore is to take up the cross. Experience teaches us that no one ever chooses the cross. It comes. And it can be anything: from anxiety to fear, from insecurity to the incapacity to love or to be loved. When during the agony in the garden, we look at Jesus, prostrate in prayer, saying: "Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me" (*Mt 26:39*) we come to understand that no one can go that far without faith. Therefore the Haitian People must be a People of deep faith.

Whoever comes to know them, to see their sufferings and their resistance has to wonder where they get their strength from. And the answer is always very simple: from their faith. There are many signs that express the existence of that faith. It is clearly expressed in the name with which they baptize their children. They call them: *Dieula* i.e. God is there, *Dieumaitre* i.e. God is the Master, *Dieufort* i.e. God is strong, *Dieugrand* i.e. God is great, *Dieuseul* i.e. God is one. If you ever go to Haiti, look at the name they give to the *Tap Tap* (small pick up for public transportation), the boats and the stores. They call them: *Dieu si bon* i.e. God is so good, *l'homme pa Dieu* i.e. man is not God, *Merci L'Eternel* i.e. Thank you, Lord. They also write biblical passages as *Ex 14:14*: "The Lord himself will fight for you, you have only to keep still." They must have faith, because there is no way to

survive the hard times that they experience. Moreover they spend long hours in adoration, in prayers of praise and supplications.

They are also a people of hope. In many of their sayings we find the expression of this powerful hope which cannot be easily translated. When someone is lamenting on their situation, they will tell you: *Pasyans, Bondye bon* i.e. Patience, God is good. Or *sè le tèt koupe la pedi espwa li pap met chapo* i.e. only when you die you can loose hope to have a hat.

Like Scalabrini, the Haitians love unity but they cannot reach it. The motto on the Haitian flag is *L'union fait la force*. But it remains an ideal that we are still striving for.

Part Two

ESSAYS

At the core of spirituality and culture: “You are”

MARIA CAMPATELLI
Aletti Centre

I am a little afraid of talking in this context, even more than when I have to talk in public at a normal congress, because here I find myself in front of people that have seen suffering, who are in contact with the suffering of many people. And suffering is always a formidable instrument of weighing all the words one says, of shifting through them, to verify their authenticity. What comforts me is the fact that I don't think I am saying anything new – together with others – regarding this, that the Church hasn't already matured in its two thousand years of history and examined in the light of its life (the Eastern Christians say that Tradition is the elderly Christ), marked by the lives of the saints, known and unknown, from great and hidden deeds, from suffering, tears, and from many resurrections with the Lord.

Some misunderstandings regarding spirituality

A few days ago Father Špidlík – an old Jesuit, one of the major experts on spirituality in Eastern Christianity – told me that he was the first to give a course in spirituality at the Gregorian University. There were perhaps courses on the spirituality in saint Paul and so forth, but no “general” course on spirituality. This is an interesting fact, because it denotes the uneasiness with which the theological reflection, which could be called “scientific”, considered spirituality. For theologians spirituality dealt with matters of “devotion” and not with the “scientific” aspects of faith. Furthermore, it was an aspect of

which one was a little ashamed as he came into contact with the surrounding world, and above all with the intellectual world. Paradoxically, today, especially in intellectual circles, there is great interest in the themes of spirituality and at the same time an inability of theology to impose itself as interlocutor in these circles, as it is still tied to a vision of theology which is often surpassed, or to models of a positivistic type, of "scientific" criteria which today are not considered such not even by science itself. Or it is so fragmentary in its consideration that it is unable to be the "home" of the metaphysical and religious interrogatives of contemporary man's conscience.

It is not that this renewed interest in spirituality is without ambiguity: sometimes it is a mixture of eclectic contradictory tendencies, which very often have nothing to do with Christian spirituality, with the Personal God, with the God of Jesus Christ.

Even within the Church, with the drive to renewal brought about by the Council, to rediscover the sources, Sacred Scripture, the Fathers and to return to the "spirit of the founder" by the religious families, one is aware of the need to understand the essence of Christian spirituality.

Challenged by this context, we shall make a few suggestions.

1. The temptation of spiritual gnosticism

Christianity as a doctrine

Gnosticism has been one of the most dangerous heresies in the history of Christianity and – beyond the precise connotations which give it chronological limitations – the most enduring.¹ It is born the moment in which the message in the Gospel, entering many different circles, is conceived as a teaching, a doctrine, a science. *Gnosis* is already present in the Judaism of the Diaspora, at the moment in which its exponents have to compare the biblical revelation with a cultural context which considers "knowledge" as the most important thing. Of course the whole Bible talks a great deal about the "knowledge of God", but talks about it not as an abstract "science" but instead in the context of life. "To know a person means to enter into relationship

¹ Cfr. E. Cornelis, *Le gnosticisme*, in *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, 6 (1967), coll. 523-541.

with that person." The same is with knowing God.² This is *gnosis* in the Christian sense. And the door which leads to knowledge is love, says Evagrius. Even earlier, St. John says that God has known us first and St. Paul says that He has loved us first: therefore in the biblical world love and knowledge converge. A person reveals himself in the measure in which he faces the person who loves him, who doesn't judge him, and who isn't a threat to him. Christ, who in the hour of his passion commits himself to man in a supreme act of love, has full knowledge of man: in front of Him man appears in all his evil. It is written in fact that before Him "the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed" (*Lk* 2:35). This is the Christian *gnosis*. But there is always the danger of passing from the true to the false *gnosis*. In the latter, personal relationships with the known diminish in favour of a "science" which, as such, constitutes in itself the aim and the holiness (in Christianity this is constituted by correlation). From this point of view, the Gospel's message too could have seemed a new kind of teaching, a new doctrine. In this case, one would be more or less perfect in the measure more or less profound in which each one of us participates in the knowledge of that which is taught.

Irenaeus of Lyons wrote his great treatise "against those who value themselves on account of science" to defend the primacy of love and charity. From then on, no orthodox Christian who follows the right doctrine has doubted that Christian perfection consists in charity, because this is the surest sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, what in the first place Christianity brings to the people is not doctrines, but the new Spirit and a "new life" into which the believer must be reborn through water and the Holy Spirit (*Jn* 3:5), to become "spiritual".

The spiritual as immaterial

Another great contribution of St Irenaeus against the Gnostics was to refute another aspect of this concept; that of "naturally spiritual". The Gnostics, even according to the traditional Hellenistic philosophy, said that spirituality is the breath which constitutes man in its being animal, that is as an *anima*. Therefore an incorporeal

² Cfr. J. Corbon – A. Vanhoye, headword *Connaître*, in X. Léon-Dufour, *Vocabulaire de Théologie Biblique*, Paris 1971, coll. 199-204.

principle. Instead in the Bible the characteristic of “spiritual” is its immediate association with the *person* of God, and not only an element which is more or less “divine” of the human person: “God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul” (*Gs* 2:7). Man therefore cannot develop his “spirituality” unless he enters into a relation with God, and spirituality is something which has direct relevance with the “person of God.”³

Going back to St Paul’s phrase on the Spirit, the soul and the body of the Christian (*Tm* 5:23), the Fathers elaborate this trichotomic formula, the superior element of which is the biblical *Pneuma*: man is made up of the soul, the body and of the Spirit which is in us.⁴

In the West this formula was less diffused. A twofold structure (body/soul) was preferred. But they both meant the same thing: that man is a reality both created and uncreated. Only that, in these modern times when culture has lost its transcendental dimension and has become secularised, these terms – body and soul – have lost any meaning which could have a theological and religious dimension.

In this way the term “soul” acquires always more a psychological meaning, up to the point where it can be identified with the psyche.⁵ The “spiritual” world ends up by coinciding with the psychic world, that is with the intellectual world, that of the will and the sentiment.

These dynamics and the return to spirituality today

The return to spirituality which we witness today, must be placed within the cultural Western context, that is within the immanent horizons in which the classical terms of spirituality are now immersed. For the most part it is a reaction to the Cartesius-Newton paradigm on which the modern era was built.⁶

³ Cfr. T. Špidlík, *La spiritualità dell’Oriente cristiano. Manuale sistematico*, Roma 1985, pp.25-26.

⁴ Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 26.

⁵ Cfr. M. I. Rupnik, *Nel fuoco del rovetto ardente*, Roma 1996, pp. 8-9: *Un cambiamento nell’antropologia moderna*.

⁶ For this one can dip into the abundant editorial production on the post-modern. Only as a guide here are some references: R.Guardini, *Das Ende der Neuzeit. Ein Versuch zur Orientierung*, Basel 1950; A. Touraine, *Critique de la modernité*, Paris 1992; D. Bell, *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*, London 1976; A. Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*, Cambridge 1990.

Schematizing, with Cartesius (1596-1650) rationalism begins. Reality is reduced to thought, to "clear and distinct ideas", and life needs to be arranged on the criteria of clarity. The ego is reduced to a thinking subject. And consequently one reaches subjectivism of thought. A sort of obsession for clarity, control and planning is developed. Knowledge is reduced to method and what one wants to know is of secondary importance. An idolatry to method is born as an intellectualism as the characteristic illness of European philosophy after Cartesius, is also born with its *cogito, ergo sum*: both life and the person (*sum*) demand a rational foundation from philosophy. This latter, being uprooted, plummets inevitably into a folly of grandeur, diving into a world of phantoms and dreams, sometimes magnificent and seductive, but more often than not lacking life. In this way the epoch of a dreaming idealism begins: *cogitare=esse=vivere*. It is the "Copernican" ambition of the omniscience of the scientific laboratory.⁷

Just think how this conception has influenced even the way of doing theology, when the most important thing was the demonstrability, the "scientific quality", with the consequent objectivity of the object of knowledge, which is God, known no longer as a Person, in the way in which the Person is known. The Fathers already say that the first exponent of a certain method of theology was the serpent in the garden of Eden, because he talked *of God*, but not *to God*.

In such a cultural context, spirituality is understood as a mystery, an enigma, as a taboo, as something irrational, since every allogical or over-logical data must be rejected. The *irrational* will only be accepted as a possibility of the problems, inserted in the system, and therefore rationalized.

Newton (1643-1727) instead is the symbol of functionalism which derives from such rationalism. In this case clarity is not in the subject, but in nature, so it is easy to take the laws of the world which behave according to a mechanical and causal logic. But things become bare, naked, isolated and simply described in their purely physical functions. Nature, used and governed, becomes dumb.⁸ The world

⁷ Cfr. S. Bulgakov, *Filosofia chozjajstva*, Moskva 1912. The pages quoted refer to the French translation *Philosophie de l'économie*, trans. by Constantin Andronikov, *L'Age d'Homme*, Lausanne 1987, p. 19.

⁸ Vladimir Solov'ëv was already writing: "So in every effective knowledge of the object this latter exists for us in triplicate: as relatively real in its effective ac-

and nature become rational patterns, nature is made inanimate in the name of still life, which is considered a combination of atoms.

For spirituality, either one has the same attitude of rationalization, or as a reaction, it's understood as esoterism, something sensitive, pietistic, sentimental, almost magic.

In the same way, using a schematic form, a spirituality which is a reaction to the Rousseau-Marx paradigm, i.e. to a determinism on society's part over man, to the exclusive influence of sociological dynamics, to the reducing of life to economics, which in fact is reification, will have the characteristics of emphasizing ceremonies, rites and the identity of the individual. Here the social aspect is substituted by the membership to a certain trans-social mysticism and the lack of interest for this world increases always more. Spirituality concentrates on the individual and its claim on originality.

All this generates, globally:

1. a disembodied mysticism
 - apparently deeply theistic
 - sensualistic
2. an emphasis of the vital aspect
 - avoidance of historical institutions
 - avoidance of any dominant philosophical theories
 - acceptance of that kind of thinking which conforms to the life which is being experimented. One doesn't first think and then live, but one lives and adjusts one's thought to that which one lives.
3. The return of various theosophies, antroposophies etc.⁹

tion on us that is in its effective phenomenon, as relatively ideal thought rapport with the whole, as absolute and absent. We *perceive* a certain action of the object, *think* its generic properties, *are convinced* of its existence that is to say unconditional. If we don't believe in the existence of the known object, if we weren't convinced that a determined object exists independently from me, I couldn't relate my concepts and my sensations to it, these objects and sensations would only have been subjective of my conscience, they would be my feelings and thoughts of which I would know nothing other than them as they would be psychic facts." In *La critica dei principi astratti*, in *Sulla Divinoumanità e altri scritti*, Milano 1971, pp. 197-198.

⁹ At the beginning of this century S. Bulgakov wrote: "Here is the highest spiritual difficulty of our time: on the one hand, it is clearly time to perceive nature in a more spiritual light than has been for the modern era, with its «natural science», the need for an «occult» conception in the widest sense of the term be-

4. A religion without God, without a God Person. Everything remains closed in the ambient of immanence, within a world created by man, without man ever crossing the threshold of its ego, where man seems to be watching a film in which he projects himself.

2. Repercussions in the Church context

This gnostic mentality has spread widely in the Church, so as to produce dangerous repercussions.

If the spiritual is identified with an intellectual dimension, with thought and ideas, one is not a religious person but an intellectual who believes that the more he cultivates the fineness of thought and intellectual acuteness, the more spiritual he is.

If the spiritual is identified with the dimension of the will, the result is voluntarism.

If the spiritual is made to coincide with sentiment, then it is the feeling of emotions which is considered "spiritual".

This is valid also for spiritual exercises, which are done as psychic exercises and of which we calculate the benefit in terms which are purely psychological: prayer is identified as an intellectual concentration, with meditation; moral perfection becomes the criteria for evaluating the level of spirituality reached (with the consequence that if one conforms to the moral parameters given one is to be contented and proud and if one does not conform one becomes frustrated. This always happens when we follow certain models). The ascetic exercises "work" and the more well-being, gratification and pacification they give the more they are practised. One loses sight of their aim, which is to enter, purify and remain stable in the relationship with God.¹⁰

comes evermore deep and wide, but at the same time also the religious risk of this way, which leads to the betrayal of Christ and pseudochristianity, to the immersion into paganism and natural magic, is extraordinarily great." In *Svet nevezernij*, Moskva 1917, p. 197. The religious lie in the occult, as being a surrogate of religion, consists in the silent and evil intention of separating itself, through "religious" observation of the world, from God and the religious path, from the attitude which leads to Him. It is the ancient temptation of the *eritis sicut dei scientes bonum et malum*. The "gnosis", the "spiritual science" comes forward again through making oneself "god".

¹⁰ Regarding this, cfr. M. I. Rupnik, *Nel fuoco del rovelto ardente*, Roma 1996, pp. 12-13.

In any case, everything remains closed within an immanent context, where man is alone, where he never comes out of his shell, where there is no real religious life. If etymologically religion comes from *religio-religare* this means a tie, a binding a connection. In religion a bond is established and lived, a bond that man has that is above him. "At the bottom of the religious relationship there is therefore a fundamental and insurmountable dualism: in religion whatever its concrete form may be, there are always two beginnings, two poles. Religion (...) is always a splitting of man within himself, his relationship with himself as with another, a second person, not the same, not unique, but bound, united, related. In religion man feels he is seen and known before he knows himself, but at the same time he knows he has been detached from this good source of life with which he tries to establish a tie, a religion. Therefore, this definition can be given to religion: religion is «the acknowledgement of God and the experience undergone with God»."¹¹ This includes also love, because faith is also love, since one cannot know God without loving Him. In fact, in its essence faith is not something apart from love, a love which tries to achieve its object, and which reduces to ashes all that is foreign to it: "I am come to send fire on the earth: and, how I wish it be already kindled" (*Lk* 12:49).¹²

But to close the spiritual life within the mind – that is within thoughts, feelings and will – leads to the absence of a real integral relationship towards God; leads in other words to the impossibility of a personal knowledge, and therefore to the impossibility of a religious knowledge, of a truly religious life.

A definition of spirituality enclosed within thoughts, will and sentiment, but without any real opening towards the Holy Spirit leads ultimately to a spiritual dualism which takes the form of different deviations or pathologies of the spiritual life: ethicism, moralism (which is in fact a form of religious "atheism"), voluntarism, idealism, fatalism, psychologism...

¹¹ S. Bulgakov, *Svet neveruernij*, Moskva 1917, p. 12.

¹² "Religion derives from the sentiment of the difference between immanent and transcendental – at the same time – from the strong inclination towards it: in religion man seeks God incessantly and the sky bows towards the earth answering with a kiss." S. Bulgakov, op. cit., p. 64.

3. *The inevitable reactions*

Such a structuring of the spiritual life inevitably produces reactions. But, as Dostoevskij said, one cannot live only on revolution: the rebellious spirit represents a reversed form of slavery.

Where there is no prayer, that i.e. a personal relationship with God, with the "You", there is no religion. One must not mix prayer with its surrogate theosophies: concentration, meditation, intuition which have nothing to do with God but with the world and don't sink man into the Transcendental, but into the immanent and want to exchange God for the divine – deceiving or self-deceiving as it may be. If all spiritual life is concentrated in the psychic world, one very quickly reaches an unbearable tension. With thought and will (called "soul") one tries to direct, contain and control all the reality of the body – instinct, passion, desire or need. Tension becomes always stronger, until it becomes unbearable and the person feels that sooner or later all this reality will explode.

If our spiritual life is reduced solely to practice without any tie with a Subject, it will become a purely immanent exercise, an ascetic exercise without taste, unable to offer a true liberation of the person, imprisoned within intellect and passions. So, to ease the tension, one begins to compromise and consequently justify one's behaviour rationalizing about one's incapacity to succeed. It's a type of "defence", of self-justification. One's "own will" or "carnal will" tries to justify itself, perhaps using a few words from the Scriptures, of the Fathers, to give one the illusion of being on the right road.¹³

This reaction is also present in the theological and ecclesiastical field. In many contexts in which the study and work of intellectual life was once cultivated, there is a reaction which consists in pure praxis, in direct dedication, almost in a definite refusal to study.

This reaction also comes about in the history of populations. Where, for example, a rigorous and legalist ascetic Catholicism was predominant, decades of rebellion to any kind of authority and a break with every kind of tie with the past followed. Father Špidlík often tells of how rigorous Holland was when he studied theology there; now it is one of the countries in which radical ethics prevail.

¹³ Cfr. Dorotheus of Gaza, *Instr.* 4,60, SC p. 249.

God for man, and reveals the meaning of the true wine and the true bread which is a taste of God, a sharing of God. For he who is spiritual, for he who is able to pluck a word from God, a deferment to God, every reality has a spiritual value and becomes a memory of God. It is this too which is illustrated in the lives of the saints: saint Catherine of Siena, for example, tried to find the spiritual sense in everything she saw or that happened to her...

2. *Spiritual life*

The acquisition of the Holy Spirit

On the basis of this meaning, one can understand what spiritual life in the Christian tradition is. The masters of spirituality would often repeat: spiritual life is life in the Holy Spirit. Seraphim of Sarov when speaking of the parable of the wise and foolish virgins used to say: "Some believe that the lack of oil on the part of the foolish virgins represents an insufficiency in the number of good works done throughout life. This interpretation is not altogether exact. What lack of good deeds could there ever be if they are called virgins, albeit foolish?... I, unworthy one, believe that they lacked the Holy Spirit of God. Although they were virtuous, those virgins, were spiritually ignorant, they thought that spiritual life consisted in those practices."¹⁷ Therefore the real end of the Christian life consists in the acquisition of this Spirit of God. The ascetic practices, prayer, vigils, fasting, penitence and other virtuous actions undergone in the name of Christ are only the means to acquire it.

Spiritual life is the art of giving the Holy Spirit consideration: "The fundamental act in the spiritual life is the recognition of the Holy Spirit, an acknowledgement that is so radical that it creates an interior *habitus*, that of giving the Holy Spirit precedence, living constantly in an attitude of openness to the Other, and being fully aware that in Him resides power, life and wisdom."¹⁸ This recognition is the beginning of faith, of the religious act: in fact the religious principle is the radical recognition of the unconditional existence of the Other: "[...]

¹⁷ Irina Gorainoff, *Serafim de Sarov*, Abbaye de Bellefontaine, Bégrolles en Mauge (S. et L.) 1973.

¹⁸ M. I. Rupnik, *op. cit.*, pp. 35-36.

faith in the strict sense of the word is the affirmation of an absolute existence [...] an unconditional existence."¹⁹

A radical acknowledgement of the other through Love

"That unconditioned value and that absoluteness which he quite rightly attributes himself denying it quite rightly to others, has in itself an exclusively potential character: it is only a possibility which asks to be realised. God «is» everything, that is He possesses in a single absolute act all the positive content, all the fullness of the being. Man in general, and in particular every man as an individual, is in fact only «a particular thing» and not «another» and so can «become» everything, but only on condition that he eliminates from his conscience and his life those interior limits which separate him from the others. He can be «everything» only «together with the others», only together with the others can he realise his absolute value, becoming an invisible and irreplaceable part of the whole unitotal, an autonomous body, live and specific of the complete existence."²⁰

This act of crossing the boundary of the oneself coincides with the Christian understanding of Love.

In fact, the evil of egotism and its main deception is not so much in the self-evaluation of the subject, but in the fact that this, giving itself, quite rightly, an absolute value, ends by refusing it unjustly to others; the subject recognises himself as the centre of life and ends up by confining the others to the outskirts of his being giving them value which is exclusively exterior and relative.

But "knowing thanks to love the truth of others not in an abstract but in an essential way, carrying the centre of our lives beyond the limits of our empirical particulars, we reveal and realise our truth and our absolute value which consist in the capacity to transcend the limits of our factual and phenomenal existence, to live not only in ourselves but in others... In order to uproot egotism totally it is necessary to counterbalance it with a love which is just as concrete and unquestionable, a love which is just as capable to permeate and dominate all our being".²¹

¹⁹ V. Solov'ëv, *Kritika ovlečënných nauk*, Sobr. Soč., II, Bruxelles 1966.

²⁰ V. Solov'ëv, *Smysl Ljubvi*, Sobr. Soč., VII, Bruxelles 1966.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 96-97.

Love means to detach oneself from the affirmation of one's absoluteness, common to each individual, in order to recognise all the absoluteness in the Other: "Love is the shifting of all our vital interest from ourselves to the other, the shifting of the very centre of our personal lives."²²

It is a shifting which is a non-destructive, alienating exit. An exit which is at the same time *kenosis* and feast. True love has always these two dimensions together, the *kenosis*, the sacrifice and the feast, beatitude, the joy of fulfilment, consolation. The two Trinitarian Persons – the Son and the Spirit – to whom is given the revelation of the Person of the Father express these two aspects: the Son is the *kenosis*, the emptying out, the sacrifice, the Spirit is the Consoler, the beatitude, the triumph of the vivifying love.

We can come out of ourselves in our "ecstasy" thanks to the Holy Spirit who is given to us: the "Holy Spirit pours into our hearts the love of God the Father" (*Rm* 5:5). The coinciding of the religious principle and of the principle of Love for us Christians isn't a surprise: our God is Love. To believe in God for us Christians isn't to adhere to doctrines or to assume certain ethic attitudes, but to recognise God-Love who was the first to love us and to turn our whole lives towards Him. The exercise of faith is relationship; to believe means to acknowledge that we enjoy ourselves in an existentialist relationship with the personal God who embraces the whole person, even with his knowledge and moral behaviour.

So to believe and to love are two inseparable dimensions which constitute the true essence of the person in spiritual life.

The sharing in the love of God the Father

We have seen how the spiritual life has its origin in the action of the Holy Spirit who inhabits the human being, and acts within him until it penetrates all his life and manifests himself externally. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the person is the participation given to man of the Father's Love. This participation is a constituent act of man. Man distinguishes himself from the rest of creation because he has within himself a principle which is not created, a spark of the divine: "And the Lord God blew into his nostrils the spirit of life" (*Gn*

²² *Ibid.*, p. 102.

2:7). God is not satisfied to create man like the rest of the universe, giving him life like a thing, through his command ("the earth brought forth grass", "bring forth water"...), but gives him the human spirit as something which is His (the breath), something divine. The creation of man is the communication of the Love of God, that is the nature of God, his most personal reality. It is in fact the communication of the "personal" dimension of God which makes the human being a "person".²³

So, one can understand that the spiritual is the reality of dialogue, of a relational nature, and of communication through God's own characteristics and of Love. Divine Love is a relational reality in the absolute sense, a total reality which includes and embraces everything and excludes no-one, a personal dynamism in contact with every existing reality. Love is the only absoluteness in the real sense of the word. If we were to put a limit to the dynamism of Love, Love would not be so. Even in our human experience it is so. If I say: I love you up to here, up to this point, or if I put a condition on this love, it's love no longer.

However an essential dimension of Love is freedom.

Its essence is the relational nature of freedom. Love embraces all, and is sustained and maintained ("in Him in fact we live, we move we exist", *Acts 17:28*), but conditions nothing. Love exists as if it didn't exist. Love loves, but the loved one can reject it; it is there, but doesn't impose itself. Love can wait eternally, even if the loved one ignores it and never accepts it. Love doesn't destroy the loved one because it cannot be separated from freedom. Love doesn't exist if not with freedom, as on the contrary, the real meaning of freedom is found only in love. Therefore there is always a *kenotic*, dramatic dimension in love and a dimension which overcomes the tragic aspect.

Every love is a *kenosis*, a humiliation, because it means acknowledging the other totally, trusting in him to such an extent that the other can do what he wishes with us. Love accepts the other so radically that it also accepts the possibility of his rejection of love. God loves us in this freedom: the very act of creating man shows us this. When He created man, God did not give a command – as we have already said – as he did for the rest of creation, but He breathed His breath into him, He spoke waiting for an answer, as if the very act of

²³ Gregory of Nissa, *De anima et resurrect.*, PG 46,96c.

creating man could not come about without his consent. As man is dialogic, created by Somebody who has spoken to him, he is by his very nature a person who answers a call. Man's life can easily be considered as an answer to God who constantly and incessantly talks to him.

The dynamics of Love

It is because Love is of an absolute relational nature that it is capable of combining that which is impossible for human logic. Such a relational nature, such a unifying dynamism, operates on two levels: on self and in relation.

There exists therefore a movement of the spiritual life which is centripetal, that is to say from the outside to the inside. It is the dynamics of Love as the principle of personal integration: only Love which unites, but doesn't uniform, can harmonise into a single unit all the contradictions, the antinomies, the "jarring notes" of a person, his psychological and physical wounds which keep him in his condition of alienation and suffering. Love is the strongest force, which gathers in a single knot all the soul's energy: neither science nor art possesses the force of the spiritual tension which belongs to love and which is revealed in religious faith.

Love, however, lives also an expanding, relational, ecstatic dynamism, a movement towards others and towards the whole of creation, a sort of centrifugal movement.

This is clear. In the measure in which a person accepts what he is – not because of what he is, but because he feels loved and accepted – in the measure in which he rejoices at what he is, in the measure in which he feels loved, he becomes a gift to others. Viceversa, "when a person lives his own particular circumstances even physical in the function of Love, this is taken in by Love, and therefore becomes itself Love, and as a gift and relationship is integrated with the person. (...) The person feels himself as one and integrated through Love which manifests itself in the particular circumstance, because by loving him another has recognised him."²⁴

Here we can also perceive the paradoxical character of the "effects" of love: in the measure in which it penetrates the most in-

²⁴ M.I. Rupnik, op. cit., pp. 40-41.

dividual reality of a person, the most suffered, the most personally conditioned of the all the vital acts, makes this reality universal. It is therefore manifest that between the individual and the universal there is no opposition: that which is really individual – that is to say personalised in love – is also truly universal and contrarily that which is truly universal subsists and is recognised only as individual.

Christ, God's total and final communication

If we have said that "spiritual" is everything that speaks of God, that sends me back to Him, that communicates Him to me, then spirituality cannot but be Christological, seeing Christ as the final word of God, God's total and final communication. In Christ on the cross the last truth regarding man is revealed: his being God the Father's son.

"In Christ man is completely spiritual because he is God. Christ on the cross who with the power of the Holy Spirit offers himself in absolute and loving sacrifice, is a person where everything is hypostatized in Love. There is not the smallest part of the person of Christ which has not been taken over by Love and lived in the function of Love. The whole of Christ is consumed by Love and it is in His Easter that the real meaning of spiritual is founded."²⁵

Just as the Body of Christ nailed to the cross reveals par excellence the depth of God's love for us, so the sacraments, as reality founded by Christ and in Christ in his Easter mystery are spiritual, a reality which communicates par excellence God's life.

"The Eucharistic dogma offers the authentic meaning of the spiritual and of spiritual life. The bread and wine, two realities which unite the fruit of the earth and the work of human hands, through the power of the Holy Spirit, become a perfectly spiritual reality, the body and blood of Christ.

The person who carries the bread for the offertory, the fruit of the earth, offers a bread kneaded with many worries, pain and problems. He offers a bread which is stained with sin and the wounds of daily life which don't speak of God, but break our heart. But that very person leaves the church and returns home with Christ.

Just as the Eucharistic bread by becoming Christ tells the whole

²⁵ Ibid., pp. 42-43.

story of Christ's sacrifice and his love for us, so does the offering together with the bread, once united with Christ, begin to turn the person's heart towards Him. Even though they are suffered and painful realities, if they are repeatedly united in Christ, i.e. offered together with the bread which has become the body of Christ, these difficult and heavy realities are now in the body of Christ, they are united to Him and marked on his flesh, as in his hour of passion He took upon Himself with all our iniquities."²⁶

"When one has to join the individual being of man with Christ, religion is not content with an invisible and purely spiritual communion but it wants man to enter into communion with God with his entire existence, even through the physiological act of nourishment. In this mystic but real communion, the matter of the sacrament is not simply destroyed and obliterated but it is transubstantiated, which means that the intimate and invisible substance of the wine and bread is raised until it reaches the sphere of the divine corporeity of Christ and until it is absorbed. All this while the exterior appearance of these objects remains the same, without any noticeable change, so that they can act in the conditions of our physical existence and so be united to the body of God. In the same way, when we are dealing with collective and public life, this too must be transubstantiated albeit preserving the species or the external forms of the earthly society."²⁷

Everything becomes spiritual

Man and his body, where instincts, passions, selfish desires, self-saving will mix, become in Christ the completion of the creation, the real image of the invisible God. Once matter, the body and any other reality are penetrated by Love, they become transfigured, showing their inner truth. The bread becomes real bread, the drink real drink and man real man.

So as in the Eucharist when the bread and wine speak of the Body and Blood of the Lord, the things, objects and events also speak of Him, and burn in front of us like Moses' burning bush in the desert.

²⁶ Ibid., pp. 44-45.

²⁷ V. Solov'ev, *La Russie et l'Eglise universelle*, Paris 1889, recently republished by F. Rouleau in *La Sophia et les autres écrits français*, Lausanne 1978, pp. 123-297.

Moses understood nothing of the bush until he tried to understand why those mysterious flames burnt. When he realised he was in front of God he took his sandals off, he desisted all cognitive claim and let the voice from the bush speak to him. Only then he got to know God. It's the action of the Spirit which invites us to kneel, take our sandals off, install a rapport with things, with objects, with creation, and to look for the Subject in these realities. Moses in front of the bush teaches us that one recognises only by recognising, by taking into consideration, by having a relational nature. Here once again returns the fundamental attitude in the spiritual life: to give precedence and to hold in consideration. Only when Moses begins to hold the Lord in consideration and accepts the logic of Love, does God speak to him. It is not possible to know God without God. With the logic of Love the Holy Spirit makes the objects open and from the objects emerges the Subject who speaks.

The spiritual life is nothing short of the Holy Spirit's initiation of the spiritual reading even in the most tragic human dimensions, like death and sin.

The sinner who meets the One who forgives, forgets oppression and the agony of the sin, and the sin is transformed into the memory of Christ who forgave us.

In this way we "find God in everything", as St Ignatius of Loyola said, to see things in their relationship with God.

Spirituality and culture

If we now consider what is the foundation of culture, we can see that there is a coincidence at the basis of what makes culture such and what we have defined as spiritual. But let's take one step at a time, starting with a few points of a phenomenological nature.

1. Culture belongs to the context of communication

Let's see how we can see the presence of two realities in culture: the one which is circumscribed to a spatial temporal, cosmic and human point of view, and the one which is universal, trans-temporal and superindividual. Cultures have differences, specific traits. They all have some precious aspects, but they are all partial and furthermore,

pass and die. However, the human traits they possess transcend their historical existence and are transmitted. For this reason can we define culture primarily as “communication”. For the very reason that culture is a reality in which the individual goes beyond his boundaries, it represents par excellence the reality of communication.

In this context of communication, we can define culture as the meanings and the values shared by a group, where “shared” means participated, communicated, belonging to life and people who communicate and meet.

2. Culture is born from the hope of sharing

So culture is born from the human being’s need to share and open himself. Let us remember the words of Solov’ëv which have already been quoted when speaking of the fact that we realise our truth the moment in which we go beyond the limits of our individual existence and we are able to live not only in ourselves, but also in others. Culture wouldn’t be possible without this force which pushes man to enter into a relationship. Culture is therefore born with the hope of being able to relate and truly communicate with the other. Without this hope there would only be silence, where every voice, every sign in a closed jealous heart would be interpreted as a threat. So, it’s the very existence of culture which testifies as to the strength of the relationship.

3. The theological foundation of culture is the recognition of the other

The philologist Pavel Florenskij affirms that the basis of culture is the *cultus*.²⁸ The cultural event is tied and inseparable from the religious event. This also means that the consideration on culture and that on faith must walk hand in hand. Cult is the adoration of the absolute expressed through visible signs (I kneel, say the words etc.). It is in this way a recognition of the other, as we have said referring to faith: “[...] faith in the strict sense of the word is an affirmation of an absolute existence.”

²⁸ In *Bogoslouskie Trudy*, 17(1972), pp. 85-248.

The basis of culture is therefore the religious principle, i.e. the recognition of the "unconditional existence of the other", the capacity of taking away one's selfish look from one's own individuality and to discover the other recognising him and turning towards him. We have said how, in this sense the "religious principle" coincides with "love". And we have seen how faith is fulfilled in love and comes from love. In fact it's not possible to believe, give oneself to God and recognize Him completely if we aren't saved by Him and touched by His love which gives us the capacity to recognize: "Love is the real joint penetration of one existence in another, true love for man. This love is the real knowledge of the other, because such knowledge coincides with absolute faith in the reality of the loved one. This, in a more general sense, implies going beyond oneself and relinquishing oneself: a reality which is both *pathos* and love. The symbol of such joint penetration is made in the affirmation with the whole will and with the complete understanding of being extraneous to the «you are». By making this complete affirmation of being unrelated, in the fullness of which and through which the whole content of my universal being has deprived and exhausted himself (*exinanitio, kenosis*), the unrelated has ceased to be unrelated for me, the «You» has become another description of my «ego». «You are» doesn't only mean «You are recognized by me as really existing», but «your being is lived by me as my being and I know myself more in your being». *Es, ergo sum.*"²⁹

Beyond all the silences and selfishness, beyond all the possible barriers, man has a relational nature; he cannot relinquish communication without relinquishing being a man.

4. The foundational value and the cultural strata

Every cultural group dips into the true culture, in a live-giving sense to the extent that he succeeds in taking his attention away from himself in order to open himself and recognize another cultural group. When a group narcissistically falls in love with its own forms and cultural expressions, it becomes fossilised in a kind of ethnocentrism which is a true cultural selfishness. In this way we find

²⁹ V. Ivanov, *Dostoevskij. Tragedija – mif – mistika*, Sobr. Soč., IV, Bruxelles 1987, p. 502.

ourselves in contradiction with that which is the true nature of culture: the need for communication based on the recognition of the other. By making the forms, and the exterior phenomena of culture absolute, we cease to be moved by that foundational value which pushes us to an opening and an ever more universal communication which, because of this push to communication and to the affirmation of the other, could also require the death of our own cultural forms. The values of a particular culture are life-giving if they are vivified by the fundamental value of opening to, of recognizing the other and of communicating. When the cultural strata maintain their roots in this deep nature of culture, then the diversities no longer cause separation, envy, jealousy, conflict and rivalry, but they receive consent and recognition. In culture a kind of Pentecost occurs for which the different languages and the different cultures tend to express the same contents. This content makes every language a means of communication for another.

Communicating to this foundational value and not discarding the opening of this established value, the cultural strata are no longer the cause of separation, envy, jealousy, conflict and rivalry, but become a trans-individual content, albeit with characteristics, forms and individual connotations.

How is it possible that a strictly personal reality can communicate something trans-individual? Christ, totally Jewish, an absolutely concrete man, has become the means of communication of a unitotal content, for God's absoluteness. In his limitation as a human being, Christ communicates the whole God, all his love. This is possible because in Him the two realities are united by a link, that of Love. Christ the Person is the meeting point between the sacrifice of the Divinity, who accepts to take on an imperfect human form, and the sacrifice of humanity which consents God denying His instinct of self-affirmation. It is in this encounter that the Divine-humanity grows and develops to His fullness. Here is the Christological meaning of everything, even of cultures. Christ is this living force, this concrete love which ties this transcendental aspect of a culture and its temporal dimension, making the temporal element the receptacle of eternal love. In fact it is the *kenotic* love which is more personalizing, because it has the capacity of saving individuality by separating from each one the selfish ego, its demoniac double, and winning without destroying. When every individual characteristic enters love and is absorbed by love, it enters the memory of God, passing to eternity and

in this way it is connected to Everything.³⁰ In this way every form of individuality – whether personal or collective – ends by finding the being inside the real creature, a creature in truth. The destruction of the evil identity is permitted to those who love, they are allowed to abolish the boundaries within themselves and find their ego in the other. These interior limits are what divide one's individuality from everything else, therefore they are the death of individuality, in so far as they transform individuality into an isolated form which is therefore empty if it is but a unitotal form. So, far from being a form of conscience and self-affirmation of one's individuality, egotism is its self-negation and death. There were many ancient Middle Eastern cultures, the Egyptian, the Babylonian, the Phoenician culture... and they were all probably richer cultures than the poor culture of the shepherds, which thanks to the fact that the Son of God made it His and within it loved, is still a live culture and we still pray with the psalms of this people.

5. Easter as a criteria of judgement of cultures

Every true value must be crucified and buried and the world will see it rise after three days. As it is for Christ that the most important reality is His Father's will, to be one with the Father so that for Him he will go to his death, so it is for every true value: I am ready to die for my cultural form in order to allow communication and sharing, for which it was born, live.

The limits which circumscribe individuality exist because they are filled with love. Distances are shortened with the ecstasy of one towards the other. "Christ with his divine ecstasy towards man and with which he reached everyone, is the basis of our ecstasy towards each other; in fact He is the space through which we can reach each other."³¹ We have seen how Solov'ev states that the individuality that each one of us wants to affirm is saved by the sacrifice of selfishness. Individuality is recognized in its identity the moment it makes room for the other. So, "the way in which distances are shortened is eter-

³⁰ Cfr. M.I. Rupnik, *Il dialogo interculturale secondo alcuni aspetti della teologia ortodossa*, in J. López-Gay (ed.), *La missione della Chiesa nel modo di oggi*, Roma 1994, pp. 47-60.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 58-59.

nally remembered by the other. A culture enters the eternal *anamnesis* to the same extent that other people, other cultures at the end of time will recognize words, songs, and the images with which this culture has loved. The gesture which stems from love remains in eternity, because love lasts for ever.”³² In paradise we will speak Arabic, English, Spanish, French, Quechua to the extent in which one has been loved in that language, as it is only love which remains in eternity (cfr. *1 Cor* 13).

The culture which manages to recognize the other is born from a real value, because it dips into the established value of culture, which is the constitutive value of man. The way in which this recognition is made is how the culture is recognised and becomes part of the eternal *anamnesis*. “When a man of a particular culture, driven and sustained by the only foundational value which is the recognition of the other, whispers “You are”, something in him dies and the other makes the other rise in his *anamnesis* of being loved. In the same way that Christian humanity constantly recalls the way in which God, in Jesus Christ, in his *kenotic* sacrifice, has filled the space and has shortened the distances between God and man, so true cultures enter the *anamnesis* of each other. The disciples recognized Christ in the breaking of the bread. The intercultural dialogue is therefore not based on similar concepts bound by a common logic, but on the culture itself, that is on what constitutes the person and makes him capable of transcending his own individuality. Basically one remembers only the way in which he was loved.”³³

6. *And if nobody says “You are”?*

The experience of many of those working in the field of emigration is of having to deal with many people whose culture, rights and therefore dignity as a person are not recognized. It is the experience of God Himself who “came unto his own, and his own received him not” (*John* 1:11) and the moment in which He “recognized” creation. He established the Golgotha not as a temporal episode of His love for the world, but formed a “metaphysical substance of creation”.³⁴

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid., pp. 59-60.

³⁴ S. Bulgakov, *Svet neveruernij*, Moskva 1917, p. 159.

However, notwithstanding this absolute recognition by God, who humbles Himself before man and makes Himself man, giving Himself over to perverse and sinful humanity, man doesn't see Him being bent in upon himself. The Fathers say that after the original sin, after having detached himself from the Source of life with whom he could speak "face to face", man gradually bends in upon himself until his eyes are fixed on his own navel. From that moment, man is continually careful of his own needs and is enslaved by the appeasing of his own existential security which he continually feels is being threatened. From that moment, man must "take" in order to guarantee this security. From that moment, the history of humanity is a history of closures, selfishness and murder. We cannot get out of this contorted history if we don't feel the look of love upon us and feel recognized by someone. This could be through an interior revelation, in which God touches the heart of a person and makes him understand that He cares for him, that he is precious for Him, or because somebody gives us this experience. I believe that one of the duties of the religious life today is to "come to know and accept" people, helping them to open up by making them feel freely loved. But this can be done if one loves with the love of God, a love which has a meaning, an end, doesn't look for a recompense, which looks for nothing for itself and which can bear all sacrifices because of the beatitude of love, as the recompense itself is found only in love.

(original text in Italian)

Spirituality during Scalabrini's time

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1. Is it possible to draw an outline of Christian spirituality of an era?

1.1. Christian sanctity and historical context

To talk about Catholic spirituality, particularly the one regarding Italy at the time of Giovanni Battista Scalabrini and starting or being inspired, at least in a way, by the great bishop of Piacenza, means above all measuring oneself against the relationship between Christian sanctity in a historical-civil context and in its social-cultural situation.

Scalabrini is an eminent figure of Christian sanctity and the Church has recognized his exemplariness at the level of spiritual experience or rather, with a formula which goes back to the apostle Paul, of life in or with the Spirit. In fact, as you well know, the Church has already claimed that he has practiced the theological and moral virtues in a heroic manner. However, he is undoubtedly an eminent man of the Church, a bishop who in times of great cultural, political and social transition – from 1876, when at only 36 he was made bishop, to his death in 1905 – faced the problems which worried the Church and the society of his times not with superficiality but with depth, not in an academic way but actively. He didn't limit himself to a religious view detached from political reality, but, on the contrary, took up his own position. He took part in the dispute regarding the delicate problem of the relationship between the Church and modern civilisation which was taking place between the intransigent and the transigent, between those who advocated tem-

poral power and those who wished a reconciliation between Church and State. Neither did he limit himself to the care of his diocese as had been done in the past, but in an original way pushed his pastoral activities outside the confines of the diocese, which had been put into his hands, and founded two religious families, one male and one female, to assist the emigrants, urged the opening of a third one which considers him its founder, in the emigration field and a fourth called *Suore Sacramentine Sordomute*, which is now extinct – for the deaf and dumb, joining it as a tertiary branch to the nuns of St. Ann.

So he was a spiritual person but also a man of the Church who lived through the contrasts and anxieties of his time, not hesitating to throw himself in its midst. Historians have looked into and have studied the connection between his position as a defender of the reconciliation movement and his pastoral interest for the emigrants. In fact the link between his political views and his pastoral work undoubtedly exists. It is causal, in the sense that the political-cultural view influences the kind of pastoral work and viceversa, that is to say pastoral sensitivity determines a particular approach to political questions and to the more general cultural-civil problem.

But can we say that there is an analogical connection between his pastoral life and his spirituality? Is there a relationship between his multiple pastoral commitment and his conciliatory political-cultural view, on the one hand, and the experience of his relationship with God, of his faith on the other? Is this relationship one of subordination, (the dependence of a pastoral life on spirituality or, viceversa, the dependence of spirituality on a pastoral life? In other words, did Scalabrini make certain political and pastoral choices because he lived a certain experience with God? Or, on the contrary, did his communion with God reach such heights, and become of such a nature, for the very reason that he deeply felt certain pastoral problems and had a particular political and cultural sensitivity?

This is the question which goes to the bottom of the problem of the relationship of the experience of sanctity and the influx of the context in which it's expressed. It is a question which regards the history of sanctity as a whole and, I would say, particularly that of the contemporary age, an age of great transition in which politics and the need to redefine the relationship between the Church with civilisation is of extraordinary importance.

Sanctity, without doubt, is tied to a particular age. It has a precise place in history because it is a human phenomenon, the experience

of men and women who live during a particular time and in a certain geographic space, marked by a particular culture. Therefore there is no doubt that, at least in the phase of their formation, the saints – those Christians who distinguished themselves for the deep experience they had with God – were subject to the influences of their times and were marked by the cultural and social climate in which they were born and grown and in which they later worked. If, for example, we look at the figure that many historians give as the most significant example of evangelic spirituality of our contemporary age, Thérèse of Lisieux, we cannot but notice the dependence on the bourgeois background in which she was born and grew. She was middle-class in tastes, reactions, thoughts and behaviour. However, Christian sanctity always shows – especially if it has to do with an eminent sanctity – the ability to overcome the historical conditioning, a transcending of the historical context. Studying the saints one can see how their interior experience cannot be simply and completely traced back to their cultural influences albeit they are moulded deeply by them. An eminent spiritual person is not the result of various influences. He always expresses an originality which he has been given through his relationship with God, because he has allowed himself to be led by the Spirit into a new experience which is always in some way a break not only with one's environment but also with one's own personal story. All this is documented by historical research. Going back to the case of Thérèse of Lisieux, one cannot but be impressed by the clarity of the evangelic thinking reached in the last period of her life, and which places her at the top of Christian sanctity in contemporary times. She really overcame the bourgeois mentality with which she was brought up.

To the question whether there is a link which more or less ties Christian sanctity to the historical-cultural context in which it manifests itself, I think that one can and must answer there is no link of reciprocal cause or of mutual subordination. If sanctity, in its experience of communion with God – overcomes historical conditioning, then it becomes problematic to establish a relationship of reciprocal dependence.

Does this also mean that sanctity has no real influence on historical matters, and therefore cannot determine the effects on a historical level, or be of influence in a society? But don't the saints' biographies show us that very often they have had a noticeable influence on their environment? However is it not also true that people who are known

to have had a very close experience with God have remained more or less unknown to their contemporaries and don't seem to have had any influence on the matters of their time? For my part – from what I understand from my studies of Christian spirituality – I feel one can say, using the terminology of the theologian Giovanni Moioli, that there isn't a reciprocal dependence but a convergence between communion with God of a specific spiritual person and his work in society and his influence on history. One may encounter the case of a spiritual person who manages to be influential either because of his apostolic work or because of his intellectual productions or even because of his work in politics. However, the greatness of his spiritual experience is not measured by his historical effectiveness, nor is the importance of his achievements on a historical level proof of the experience of spiritual greatness. There is therefore convergence and not reciprocal cause between sanctity and historical influence.

If the answer I have given on the question of the relationship between spirituality and historical context is convincing; if it is therefore true that spiritual experience implies going beyond the historical-cultural conditioning, it seems obvious that it is problematic to speak, in general terms, of a complete picture of the spirituality of a particular period (in our case: of the spirituality at the time of Scalabrini). Anyway, it is obvious that the characterisation of spirituality of a particular historical period cannot be looked for by taking into account the influence of culture on the spiritual people, in that period. By history of Christian spirituality we don't mean the history of the spirit of a particular time (*Zeitgeist*, the Germans say), but the history of God's Spirit in man or rather, more modestly, the acceptance or answer that man gives to the action of the Spirit of God.

1.2 The history of Christian spirituality is the history of spiritual people

However, there is another deeper motive which is intimately connected with what has already been said, and is in fact the basis of what has been said up to now, which makes the attempt to draw a complete picture of Christian spirituality of a particular period, difficult. This reason is that Christian spiritual experience is always personal. It is a personal answer to grace. It coincides with what is currently called "faith journey". The study of the history of spirituality is,

therefore, the history of the "experience" of personal spirituality which has gained a certain importance and significance, the history of the interior event of eminent Christian people, who have come to the foreground because they are an example of spiritual experience. This exemplary role stems from the fact of having realised a process of "personalization of faith" which imposes itself because of its value and meaning and which is historically noticeable and phenomenologically capable of being described through personal writings and other documentation which show the inner life (diaries, letters of spiritual direction, etc.) of these people.

It is obvious that if the situation is this, the history of Christian spirituality of a particular period is nothing more than the history of the spiritual people who lived at that time. If we have to indicate common characteristics, they are characteristics which regard the spiritual experience itself of the most significant people of a period, not simply the common traits relative to the influence or the historical presence of these people.

2. The common traits of spiritual people in the times of Scalabrini

Having made these necessary clarifications about the possibility of drawing a picture of the spirituality at the time of Scalabrini, and regarding the inevitable limitations of such a picture, I will continue by mentioning some traits which seem to unite, at least in some way, Italian relevant spiritual personalities between the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century, which is when Scalabrini lived.

2.1 An "ordinary" sanctity

Regarding the spirituality of this period the historian must take notice that the number a saintly people of this period, who are now being beatified and canonised is noticeably high and ever increasing. Every day new canonisations which bring to our attention hidden figures of men and women who have distinguished themselves in a life of faith and their love for God are being examined. Undoubtedly in recent years, the streamlining of bureaucracy has favoured the in-

crease of the processes of canonisation and has encouraged the undertaking of the long procedure for ecclesiastical recognition for one person or another who is often tied to a certain context, a certain diocese or a small religious congregation. The fact remains that these people exist. Many were under examination before this streamlining began. They are, however, people who have shown sanctity in a very ordinary life. It was brought to the notice of the late father Valentino Vacca, a scholar of the history of sanctity and consultant for the Congregation for the causes of the saints, that at that time there were hundreds of priests in the dioceses of the Lombardo-Veneto area like the nineteenth-twentieth century Giuseppe Baldo, parish priest of a village in the diocese of Verona and founder of the Congregation of the Little Daughters of St. Joseph. The observation is correct. In the sense, at least, that it cannot be said that the many canonised people of that period lived through extraordinary events. They lived through an experience of sanctity in their very ordinary everyday pastoral or civil life, in their life within the family, while caring out their duty, in every type of work, sometimes very modest. Referring to the Lombardy area and regarding the period of the nineteenth-twentieth century, Giorgio Rumi talks about the "ordinary" aspect as a characteristic of sanctity. Very often it is a sanctity which pursues evangelic radicalism in the most common forms of human condition and not according to the rules of the "heroic" type which were even somewhat spectacular like those of much of the counter-reform and Baroque Catholic sanctity (marvelous asceticism, harsh penitence, thaumaturgic power of attraction...). In the nineteenth-twentieth century there is no longer a peaceful and homogeneous Christian society which is reflected in the saint who emerges in an extraordinary way attracting the admiration of the believer. The Christian generations of today – which experiment the encounter with a society which is no longer officially Christian – prefer to live the Christian experience, even at the most perfect levels, with a discretion unknown to the former generations. Talking of the Lombard sanctity of the nineteenth – twentieth century Rumi refers to a succession of "ordinary" people, immersed as they are in an active "daily routine". The observation can be extended to the whole of Italian sanctity, at least as far as the generality of its more significant people are concerned.

However, it must be pointed out that this sanctity which is revealed in its ordinary aspect isn't a sanctity which is less radically evangelic or less demanding than that of the former centuries. It is

practiced in its ordinary aspect and in very reserved forms, but it is a sanctity which is authentically Christian, firmly centred on the person of Christ, intent on following and imitating Him, and characterised by a constant and sincere search for God's will. The theme of God's will is recurrent and dominant in almost all the personages of Italian sanctity of the nineteenth- twentieth century.

It has already been confirmed by the study of spiritual letters, formative tracts and similar material produced by these people, that the teaching of Francis of Sales on the call to holiness extended to all has been an important point of reference. The influence of the saintly bishop of Geneva in the nineteenth century was truly great. Scalabrini too read him, and quoted his maxims in his pastoral letters and treasured his advice. And don Bosco – one of the most significant spiritual figures of that time-dedicated to Sales the religious family he founded.

There were two other spiritual authors who were widely read in the nineteenth century and had great influence on many people who pursued the path to sanctity during that century: Ignatius of Loyola and Alfonso de' Liguori. So much so that some scholars when talking about the nineteenth century Italian spirituality talk about a salesian-ignatian-liguorian synthesis. Ignatius of Loyola influenced with his need to search for the will of God. But the ignatian influence meant above all the prevalence of the ascetic orientation of the Jesuit tradition which insisted greatly on the moral virtues and on the regularity of spiritual life through faithfulness in prayer. Alfonso de' Liguori too influenced in the same way by putting emphasis on the search for the will of God. But he influenced especially with his devotion directed in particular to the Eucharist and to Our Lady.

2.2 A devout sanctity

The Italian spiritual leaders of the nineteenth and early twentieth century don't usually show any reservation about popular devotions. They have no elitist prejudice. On the contrary, they often support their personal spiritual journey with an intense practical devotion. There is a great affinity between the spiritual experience of the saintly figures of this period and the ordinary life of piety of the population. However, there isn't a dispersion of devotion. Apart from the occasional person whose life of piety is full of minute devotions, the

majority of spiritual people considered in this period show the need for great spiritual concentration which, obviously, is the result of a direct and rigorous rapport with the person of Christ and God's will. The correspondence and intimate letters of these people, often deeply felt, are valued as a great help in the apostolic duty in the Church: a missionary commitment to God's will and as an effort in imitating Christ.

It isn't daring to think that this sanctity, which is close to popular piety and has roots in God's will, which is centered upon Christ, and which reaches out towards Christian perfection without allowances but also without anxiety, has made no small a contribution to preparing the terrain for the renewal of prayer and the liturgical cult which distinguishes the path of today's Church up to the liturgical reform carried out by the Vatican II. I would say that it has been a contribution connected to the characteristics of this sanctity: the need to walk along the path of Christian life with radicalism and deep commitment to Christ, through popular prayer implied a necessary purification and elevation of these very prayers.

2.3 A popular sanctity

In my opinion a third element which characterises the Italian sanctity of today seems to be tied to the first two and it is the community and, I would say, authentically popular dimension in the path towards sanctity. Many of today's saints – those already canonised and those awaiting ecclesiastical recognition – have founded religious communities, or have opened new spiritual paths in the church; although often restrained and almost keeping a low profile, they have been spiritual teachers who have been able to attract numerous disciples and have been mothers and fathers who have generated children in the faith. They have done so with their own experience of Christian life, with the same sobriety of essential attitude, not overburdening their disciples and children with demanding tasks and heavy loads. They have proposed a Christian radicalism which is generous and totalitarian but not "shouted about" or shown; I would say a sturdy but "possible" Christianity which has involved a wide popular base.

The hundreds of young women who have taken up the consecrated life of the founders of religious families, were ordinary

women often with an elementary education and mainly from the peasant class. Many of the boys and girls who were involved in different ways by the educational aims, which suggested concrete models of Christian life stemming from the same founders of religious life, were from the lower classes. Later the laypeople's involvement, and primarily that of the young, in the Catholic organisations became very common with reference to the proposals on sanctity which were effective in so far as they were incarnated by people with a great spiritual attraction like Armida Barelli, whose influence was great among the young women of Catholic Action.

It was thus that between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries a popular network of many sincere, serious and generous people searching for Christian sanctity grew and spread in all directions. This, I feel, represented in a certain way a novelty in the historical journey of the Italian Church. Before, in the centuries of so-called Christianity, sanctity was above all to be admired; today – when we are faced with the dissolution of the old Christianity and the collapse of the protective structures of Christian society – sanctity becomes a diffused imperative, a journey proposed to all ecclesial communities. Sanctity becomes part of the people's life; not only in the sense that its most eminent representatives no longer belong to the upper classes, but also because models of sanctity, which are humbly close to the common experience prevail and are anchored to a faithful sacramental life and the active participation to ecclesial life.

This popular aspect of today's sanctity, has still, for the most part, to come out in the historiographic production. But I believe that by widening this field of research, this aspect will emerge with always greater evidence. In this way the importance of the work diffused by the clergy of the so-called spiritual direction between the nineteenth and twentieth century will be clearer. Spiritual direction was not only put into practice by the clergy in a specific form but was present in the spiritual maternal role acted out especially by the foundresses of religious congregations or secular institutes.

An example of this is the spiritual epistolary of Maria Domenica Mazzarello, the co-foundress of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, recently published in SEI in the same series as the volume of Scalabrini's pastoral letters. It offers an illuminating example of letters with a simple but very effective spiritual direction which guides and urges the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians to continual prayer, joy and working without tiring or grumbling; in a word: to loyalty to

our Lord and one's vocation. And all this is done paying attention to the single person and with a delicate maternal tenderness; and also with the intent of making the community sense grow, as well as the will to follow the Lord together with the sisters of the entire congregation and particularly of the house or institute in which one lives.

The letter that Mazzarello writes on 9th April 1878 from Nizza Monferrato to her sisters in Montevideo, Uruguay, is very beautiful. After having given news and recommendations to the group, she speaks to each sister in turn: "I'll begin with sister Philomena. Are you happy? Be so always, neh! Unite yourself strongly to Jesus, work to give only Him pleasure, force yourself to become more saintly every day, and you will always be joyful. Long live Jesus! Don't forget to pray for me. Sister Victoria, I have been told that you are well, I am very happy; work hard to earn paradise; never be discouraged, never say but. (...) And you, sister Josephine, do you still remember the promises made on the feast of the Immaculate? Never forget them; begin every day by being really humble, praying with your heart and working with the right intention. (...) Sister Angela Cassulo, are you always a cook? Through having to stay near the fire you must already be burning with the love of God, mustn't you? And do you always observe poverty? (...) Sister Teresina Mazzarello, are you already a saint? I hope you are getting there. Work always only to please Jesus, think of paradise and be of good example in everything. (...) Sister Giovanna, you still study, don't you? I think you are also studying how to become a saint (...). Now there is still my dear sister Laura, what can I say to you? I'll say that as you are the first American daughter of Mary Help of Christians, you will have to pray so that many other Americans will be able to have the same grace that the Lord has given you."

Such simple but insistent exhortations from a person considered mother and teacher of the faith had a sure response in the interlocutors and anyway contributed to create the climate for the search for sanctity, in the humble and common forms, which I have already mentioned. The same thing can be said about the correspondence with the spiritual sons and daughters of many other founders of religious congregations in this period or of spiritual directors. Of course they are spiritual letters manifestly poorer than those of the previous centuries, without great mystic impetus, without references to extraordinary experiences, and intent on sustaining a humble, ordinary practice of Christian virtue. And, in my opinion, they are letters

which indicate the humbly popular figure of today's Italian Catholic sanctity. The confirmation of the II Vatican Council on the universal vocation of sanctity finds its nearest historical roots in this imposing phenomenon of popular sanctity.

2.4 An "active" sanctity

The fourth element which I think characterises Italian sanctity today is its active and apostolic trait. It is a sanctity which is almost always realised with great awareness in the practice of a mission inside the Church and inside society, usually a mission of charity (in the sense of assisting the needy materially but also of having the responsibility of educating, guiding and caring for them: boys and girls, young people and orphans...). The importance of this element hasn't up to now been adequately evidenced. In my opinion, it is the coherent development of that sense of mission which characterises some of the great spiritual figures of the counter-reform, foremost Ignatius of Loyola. But it's a development which marks a further development: the action is no longer seen simply as a modality in the practice of a mission but assumes a value of the place or moment of the rapport with God in so far as it is wanted by God. One would say that for today's saints there is no longer any hierarchic difference between contemplation and action. However the action isn't made absolute: it always refers to the Absolute who is God. It is this reference to the will of God – who alone establishes the mission to be undertaken – that makes the action radically relative. It doesn't find the means of measure within itself and doesn't take pride in its historical effectiveness. It receives its consistency from referring to the will of God, regardless of its effectiveness or ineffectiveness of which it is effectively capable. The spirituality of the foremost figures of nineteenth- twentieth century Catholic sanctity is a spirituality of action and not simply for the action.

The antecedent charitable work of this way to holiness – which as has been mentioned is expressed through charitable actions – is obviously the testimony of some of the great saints of the counter-reform, first and foremost Vincent de Paul. Many of the founders of active congregations in the nineteenth century refer to his teaching. But in the nineteenth century there is something more than the apostolic and charitable sensitivity of the seventeenth century saints. There

is also the awareness that the Christian tradition has to be safeguarded and sometimes the same possibility of orderly civil cohabitation of populations and especially the working classes subjected to the havoc produced by capitalist expansion and disintegrated or, at least, disturbed by the liberal conception of religion as a private affair or by the suggestions of the atheist and utopian sermons of the socialists. There is therefore the desire to return not so much to a pre-Revolutionary Christian society but to rebuild a society on a clearly Christian basis. It is on this aspiration that much of the nineteenth century political and social Catholicism was nurtured, in its diverse souls: transigent and intransigent, liberal and polemic defender of the temporal power of the Pope. But although holding to what was said at the beginning about Christian sanctity overcoming social-cultural conditions, one can say that the spiritual figures in Scalabrini's time allowed themselves, to be provoked by the needs of their time, in the sense that they saw in them God's appeal for help, a particular call, the taking on of a special charitable mission.

3. The limitations of nineteenth century spirituality

We wouldn't be faithful to our role of historians if we didn't also mention some aspects of spirituality at the time of Scalabrini which to us, who have been formed by the theological sensibility matured after the Vatican II, and above all instructed by the great lesson of the transparent evangelic sanctity of Thérèse di Lisieux and of Charles de Foucauld, cannot but seem limited. I shall rapidly indicate four of these limits.

First of all spirituality in Scalabrini's time seems to have been at least in some of the leading figures will-centered, very ascetic, in the sense that it relies greatly on one's own effort to be faithful to the Lord. Sometimes this need to be faithful to the Lord, counting on one's own effort, seems to be predominant on humbly giving oneself to the Lord, asking and being sure of His help.

To make you understand what I'm saying, think of the resolutions that your founder Scalabrini took and how he gave himself to certain devotions daily, weekly and monthly. The completion of these practices (meditation, the rosary, days of recollection etc.) for him meant a pledge with God, the proof of the sincerity of his love for our Lord. These practices were experimented as a support in the faith journey

in Christ. But one must remember that man's ascetic commitment was often emphasised more than the action of the grace. There are some revealing expressions in this sense. Scalabrini's biographer, Mario Francesconi, reports the *Propositi* on 24th August 1894 which conclude with the expression: "If I want to, I can" (pg. 349). There is obviously great faith in his own ascetic commitment. The voluntary asceticism is a common trait of sanctity of that period.

This ascetic accentuation undoubtedly derives also from the spiritual experience of great part of the nineteenth century figures with the life of the piety of the population. They felt the same piety as the population. They intended, however, to educate the population and bring it to a greater essential attitude, to a greater purity. From here they aimed at a seriousness in the ascetic commitment, in the adherence to certain practices which they could use as a sure road towards God. From here derived also the fight against sin, and the avoidance of everyday defects. In this light we may recall the life of don Bosco, don Guanella, don Orione. I don't think we can be surprised if in the lesser people this ascetic accentuation could induce a certain moralism and reducing Christianity to the experience of a morally correct life. It has induced a certain individualism, devoid of real ecclesial breath, worried about saving one's soul. However, it must be said that ascetic voluntarism meant a serious commitment as an answer to the action of grace, a great sense of God, which in turn becomes a horror of sin as an offence to God. It was a voluntarism which left room for the risk of withdrawal into oneself but in substance it was nothing more than the will for a generous and totalitarian answer.

Secondly, the nineteenth century spirituality is a spirituality which is theologically rather poor, i.e. lacking in doctrinal developments, very simple and elementary in penetrating the mysteries of the faith. For example the Trinitarian dimension of Christian life is not gone into in depth. This can be seen in the centrality of the theme of Providence. It is a dominant theme not only in Manzoni, as we know, but also in spiritual figures that were very significant in that period, like for example don Orione, who called himself the son of Providence and founded a congregation called *Piccola Opera della Divina Provvidenza* (The Small Work of Divine Providence). These spiritual people saw Providence as the goodness of God who created all things and keeps everything alive and in particular intervenes on behalf of man; it is therefore also seen as a model of charitable work

which must distinguish the Christian in his relationship with his neighbour. The theme of Providence is therefore very much tied to the dynamism of charity which has been expressed by many of the nineteenth century figures of sanctity. According to Francesconi, it was a theme much felt by bishop Scalabrini (pg. 466-467). But one has to admit that it is a theme which is theologically poor in so far that it means that the relationship with God is felt as a rapport with the creator of the universe and the lord of history and not specifically with the divine Persons. Christian experience is not simply an experience of dependence on God as providence, but more appropriately a filial love for the Father in union with the Son through the Holy Spirit.

But even the highest mystic figures of this period did not live a truly Trinitarian experience. Just think of Gemma Galgani who greatly felt her rapport with Jesus. She lives an extraordinary intimacy with him, but it seems – through her own confession – that she is unable to live her rapport with the Father with the same intensity.

Thirdly, the nineteenth century spirituality, generally, has little contact with Holy Scripture. The lack of theological content, which I mentioned before, as well as the ascetic accentuation and moralistic risk, depend, at least partly, on this scarcity of contact with the Bible. This however does not mean that the nineteenth century spirituality didn't have strong evangelic substance and wasn't nourished by the word of God. But this reference seems to be differently mediated. There isn't a direct approach and a frequent reading of the Scriptures. We can see a reflection of this even in the ascetic-spiritual production of the nineteenth century which badly lacks information on Bible and doesn't refer to the rich and established biblical themes, especially from St. Paul and St. John's writings, of the life of the Spirit. It seems to me that the lack liturgical-sacramental sensitivity is tied to this lack of contact with the Bible. This does not mean, obviously, that the sacraments were not received and that the mass was not given central position. On the contrary, confession played a very important part in spiritual life and the participation in the mass was truly central. However, the great importance given to the sacraments and to the liturgy was experimented with modalities which were fundamentally devotional. In other words the practice of the sacraments was thought and lived, even by the major spiritual figures of the time, as personal super-devotion, which aimed at obtaining more merit, and not as a real participation in the mystery of Christ.

Fourthly, the spirituality of Scalabrini's time is the spirituality which seems inclined towards virginal models of Christian life. In the spiritual figures of this period there isn't only great consideration of the virginal state, which often assumes tones of polemic exaltation in front of the corruption and growing immorality in the secularised societies, but also a personal and enthusiastic Christian journey along the path of virginity. Almost all those canonised in this period are in fact virgins. This doesn't mean that married people were not asked to lead a saintly life. However, the fact remains that the models of saintliness – offered existentially by the more eminent spiritual figures and by the spiritual handbooks – were virginal and married people were asked to adapt to those models in some way.

In this unbalance there isn't simply a recognition of the most perfect way which is virginity, according to a traditional line which goes back to the apostle Paul himself, but, as has already been mentioned, a certain polemic tone regarding the sadness of present times that denies its Christian inheritance and seems to want to fight Christianity itself. Virginity was considered as the victorious answer to the corruption of the customs which was judged as a programme pursued by hostile forces to destroy the Church. So, a more general characteristic of nineteenth century spirituality, which is the convergence with the more general pastoral and cultural attitude of the Church at a time of intolerant polemics with the modern world, is made evident through the exaltation of virginity. In fact the great majority of the spiritual figures of the Italian nineteenth century took on attitude of intolerance with the modern world. With the exception of the solitary figure of Rosmini. And, in certain aspects, your very founder, Scalabrini.

But other motives converged on the exclusive and polemical exaltation of virginity, motives which a recent "female-oriented" historical interpretation in these last years brought to light: a certain romantic exhaltation of the feminine role and the "feminization" of Catholicism, or as others would say, a pastoral alliance between clergy and women, which brought about an active engagement in apostolic activities and an increased appreciation for women consecrated to God in virginity according to unprecedented models of organisation. A fact that, in a historical perspective, before being a limit, is really a process of great fecundity for Catholicism today.

I have rapidly mentioned some of the limits of Christian experience which are encountered, in my opinion, by many spiritual

figures at the time of Scalabrini. The fact remains that there are many exemplary spiritual people in the period considered. Even with all the obvious limits, remains the impressing fact that there is exemplary testimony of Christian life much more vast and diffused than ever before in the history of Italian Catholicism. For the believer – and in this moment I am talking to those who believe, sisters and brothers in the faith – it is a testimony which invites, even before emulation, a communion of love with many brothers and sisters who live in the light of God.

Thank you for listening patiently.

(original text in Italian)

The spirituality of John Baptist Scalabrini, Bishop and Founder

✠ LAWRENCE SABATINI, CS
Bishop of Kamloops, B.C.

In reading the biographies and the works of John Baptist Scalabrini, one cannot help but marvel at the extraordinary success story this one man was able to write in the history of the Church in a relatively short span of life.

The priest

Born in 1839 in the Province of Como, Italy, here is a man who very early in life heard the call of God to dedicate himself to priestly ministry in the Church. He was ordained a diocesan priest at the age of 24 but felt a strong desire to be a missionary. In fact, as a young priest he signed up with the Institute of Foreign Missions in Milan. His bishop decided instead to assign him to the task of priestly formation as teacher and vice-rector and later rector of the diocesan minor seminary. Nonetheless later Pope Pius XI would refer to him as a “missionary bishop”.

At the age of 31, Scalabrini was named pastor of St. Bartholomew Church in the industrial suburb of Como with a population of 6,000. It is here that he began to display his exceptional pastoral gifts especially in the areas of instruction in the faith and works of charity. Catechetics always ranked high among his pastoral priorities so much so that he even wrote a small catechism for kindergarten children. His love for the sick and his frequent visits to them were well known

among his flock. His preferential option for the poor was very much in evidence as he founded the first Christian Mutual Aid Society; the first male oratory in Como; a group later to become the St. Vincent de Paul Society for visits to the poor and infirm; a group to protect the rights of women workers in the textile industry. Under the leadership of Father Scalabrini, St. Bartholomew's Parish was quickly becoming the focal point of Catholic social action in the diocese.

While all of this intense pastoral activity was taking place, Father Scalabrini nonetheless recognized the need for on-going priestly education. He immersed himself in the study of the teachings of the First Vatican Council which was suspended in 1870. He was invited by his bishop to give eleven conferences on the Council in the Cathedral of Como in 1872. His ecclesiology centered around the doctrine of papal infallibility.

The bishop

At the age of 36, Scalabrini was named bishop of Piacenza. There he remained for 29 years until his death in 1905. His accomplishments as a diocesan bishop are truly mind-boggling.

As shepherd of his flock, Bishop Scalabrini chose as his role model another great bishop in the Church who lived in the 16th century – St. Charles Borromeo. In fact, if we examine the lives of these two bishops, we see some interesting parallels. Both were very practical people with a deep commitment to social action; both were committed to the pursuit of holiness through prayer, penance, self-denial and an intense zeal for their flock; both had a great devotion to the Crucified Lord, the Holy Eucharist and the Blessed Virgin Mary; both had a genuine concern not only for their local church but the universal church as well; both were genuinely concerned about the formation and spiritual life of their clergy. Interestingly enough a portion of one of St. Charles' inspiring talks to his priests was quoted by Pope John Paul II in his post-synodal exhortation *Pastores dabo vobis* on the formation of priests in the circumstances of the present day (n. 72) while Bishop Scalabrini's very first Pastoral Letter as bishop was written in Latin to his clergy on the importance of the Spiritual Exercises (Aug. 15, 1876).

What did Bishop Scalabrini accomplish in 29 years of episcopal service to the faithful of the Diocese of Piacenza? The list is long and

impressive. Like the Good Shepherd Jesus Christ and St. Charles Borromeo, his model, Bishop Scalabrini wanted to know his people. During his tenure he visited not once but five times all 365 parishes in the diocese, 200 of which were in mountainous areas accessible only by mule and some only on foot.

Bishop Scalabrini convoked three diocesan synods, the last of which in 1890, dedicated entirely to the Holy Eucharist, produced a text of 350 pages written by Bishop Scalabrini himself. This work offered a spiritual vision to the world as it was on the threshold of the 20th century. He also left us 2000 pages of homilies and 60 Pastoral Letters – a veritable treasury of spirituality.

Catechetics continued to maintain a high profile in the overall pastoral plan of Bishop Scalabrini. He recognized the fact that knowledge of the faith is essential for living the Christian life in imitation of Christ.

Even as bishop he continued to teach catechism as he used to do when he was a seminarian. He taught it on his rounds of pastoral visitations and he taught it also in his episcopal residence. In 1889, he organized in Piacenza the very first national catechetical congress in the history of the Church with its 400 pages of Acts. Bishop Scalabrini published the first Italian catechetical review, only the second of its kind in the world. Bishop Scalabrini wrote: “Il Catechismo è il Vangelo, la lieta parola di Gesù” (*Il Catechismo cattolico*, p. 102). Bishop Scalabrini’s catechesis was deeply rooted in the word of God. It was not only presented as an instruction of the mind but as a call to conversion and a deeper following of Christ. For, it is in the word of God that we learn what God has done for us so as to resolve what we must do for God. No wonder then that Pope Pius IX would call Bishop Scalabrini “The Apostle of the Catechism”.

Bishop Scalabrini will also be remembered for his extraordinary efforts on behalf of the poor. His innate love for the needy was limitless. He never turned away those who every day knocked on his door for help. He aided the sick, the orphans and prisoners. During the period of drought in 1879-1880, he set up a soup kitchen which in two months alone distributed almost 250,000 bowls of soup as well as bags of flour and cords of wood. When funds depleted, Bishop Scalabrini sold the horse which was donated to him for his pastoral visitations as well as the chalice given him as a gift by Pope Pius IX.

Two other major social projects deserve mention. In 1879 he founded an institute for the hearing and speech impaired and in 1903

an agency to provide religious and social assistance to the more than 170,000 rice pickers in Piedmont and Lombardy, an organization designed to prevent abuses to women and children in the workplace.

Bishop Scalabrini's teachings on social issues were summed up in a booklet he wrote entitled: *Il Socialismo e l'azione del Clero* (1899). These included such ideas as profit-sharing; the right to work and to strike; workmen's compensation; old age pensions; lower working hours and retirement age – practical applications of the teaching of Pope Leo XIII in his encyclical *Rerum Novarum* of eight years earlier.

The prophet

The social dimension of Bishop Scalabrini's pastoral activities is perhaps best seen in his founding three religious institutes: The Missionaries of St. Charles (1887); The St. Raphael Society (1889); The Missionary Sisters of St. Charles (1895). In these three extraordinary accomplishments, we see the prophetic side of Bishop Scalabrini.

The Pastoral Constitution on the *Church in the modern world* of the Second Vatican Council recognized massive changes taking place in the social order: "One cannot underestimate the effect of emigration on those who, for whatever reason, are led to undertake a new way of life" (n. 6). Bishop Scalabrini saw this happening almost 100 years earlier. He read the signs of the times and saw the need for prompt pastoral action.

The heart of the pastor would not allow him to remain oblivious to the fact that in 110 years over 25 million Italians emigrated in large part to North and South America. He saw 11% of his own people of Piacenza leave Italy for foreign lands.

Bishop Scalabrini travelled up and down Italy trying to sensitize public opinion to the seriousness of the phenomenon of migration. He was instrumental in the formulation of Italy's policies and legislation concerning emigration. He recruited lay men and women volunteers for the St. Raphael Society to help at the ports of departure and entry. This Society opened secretariats in Genoa and New York as well as 19 committees in Italy. There was also an ecumenical dimension to the work of the St. Raphael Society in as much as the members obliged themselves to provide assistance also to immigrants of other religious persuasions. We would not expect Bishop Scalabrini in his day to expound on the theology of the equal dignity of women

and men or address the intricacies of the contemporary women's movement. However, he was very much aware of the call of women to apostolic work and the importance and uniqueness of their contribution in the life of the Church.

The Scalabrini Congregation of priests and brothers now totals more than 700 members while the Congregation of Sisters numbers more than 1000. These spiritual sons and daughters of Bishop Scalabrini, scattered in all corners of the globe, dedicate their lives to the pastoral and social work of evangelization on behalf of migrants, refugees and people on the move.

Bishop Scalabrini's unique charism of pastoral concern for migrants was inspired by his desire to preserve in them the gift of faith which was being put to the test in an entirely new and sometimes hostile environment. In his first conference on emigration, Bishop Scalabrini said: "I guai della nostra emigrazione si riassumono in questo: perdita della fede per mancanza di istruzione religiosa.... Ah, la sventura della privazione di quel pane spirituale che è la parola di Dio." But like a true missionary he was also concerned about proclaiming the Good News of the Word of God to those who had no faith.

The inner man

In summarizing the pastoral accomplishments of Bishop Scalabrini, we are drawn to ask ourselves with a certain amount of envy: What was the secret of his success? What was the driving force behind all of these extraordinary activities?

There is an ancient philosophical dictum which says: *Actio sequitur esse*. Our actions are the products of our inner being. We must search the psyche of Bishop Scalabrini to discover how he experienced God in his life and how this profound inner reality influenced his life and actions.

Bishop Scalabrini was above all a man of deep faith. In a Pastoral Letter of 1884 he writes: "Quanto più la fede è viva, tanto più sono abbondanti le buone opere; e viceversa, l'abbondanza delle buone opere aumenta la vivacità della fede. Quando la fede languisce, si rallentano le buone opere, e l'interruzione delle buone opere rende fiacca e languida la fede". In an earlier Pastoral Letter of 1877 he had said: "Chi vive di fede non solo ama Dio ma si sente spinto a farlo amare dagli altri."

Bishop Scalabrini's intense life of faith and love for God led him to grow in his love for God's people. His daily efforts at oneness with the Lord showed in an intense commitment to the traditional and time-honored practices of piety. He was a man of prayer binding himself under pain of mortal sin to spend a half-hour daily in meditation. We know that more often than not it was a full hour of meditation. He recited the Liturgy of the Hours each day without fail. He read the Scriptures daily as well as one of his favorite books – *The imitation of Christ* by Thomas A Kempis. He had a filial devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, reciting every day the rosary which for him was like the queen of all Marian devotions. He also had a devotion to the saints, notably St. Joseph, St. Charles Borromeo, St. Francis de Sales and the patron saints of the Diocese of Piacenza.

Regarding the importance of daily prayer and mediation, Bishop Scalabrini said: "Chi lascia la meditazione o manca di fede o di cervello." In a letter to his missionaries abroad, he wrote: "La preghiera è la parte più viva, più forte, più potente dell'apostolato". And again, "La preghiera è senza dubbio la funzione più nobile e più gloriosa che l'uomo possa esercitare in questo mondo, e gli conferisce una grandezza al tutto sovrana. Non solo essa ci mette in intimo rapporto con tutto ciò che c'è di vero, di bello, di santo in cielo e sulla terra, ma ci rende anche partecipi dell'amicizia di Dio, delle sue più tenere effusioni, delle sue più intime confidenze" (*La Preghiera. Lettera Pastorale alla diocesi di Piacenza per la Santa Quaresima dell'anno 1905*, 16.2.1905, Piacenza, Tip. G. Tedeschi, 1905).

Bishop Scalabrini was remarkable for his devotion to the Holy Eucharist. He celebrated Mass each day with extreme devotion and often would assist at a second Mass. He spent long hours in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. He said that the Eucharist is the treasure and deposit entrusted to priests. His devotion to the Holy Eucharist was far removed from any form of sentimentalism. Rather he described it as "un trionfo dello spirito sopra la carne, della carità sull' egoismo, della fede sull'orgogliosa ragione" and it is "alimentata dal sangue del Redentore immolato sulla croce" (*La devozione al SS.mo Sacramento. Lettera Pastorale di Monsignor Vescovo di Piacenza per la Quaresima dell'anno 1902*, 29.1.1902, Piacenza, Tip. G. Tedeschi, 1902).

In addition to his devotion to the Holy Eucharist, Bishop Scalabrini had a great devotion to the Crucified Lord. In these two devotions we see how his spirituality is incarnational. As he put it:

“L’Eucaristia e il Golgota sono un’estensione dell’Incarnazione” (*Ibid*).

Needless to say, the Cross of Christ forms part of the religious experience of all followers of Jesus who said: “Whoever does not take up his cross and follow in my steps is not fit to be my disciple” (*Mt* 10:38). In some cases this experience of the cross takes the form of martyrdom for the sake of Christ. For others it is a mystical experience of the sufferings of Christ in the form of a crown of thorns or the stigmata. For others it comes through voluntary acts of penance, mortification and self-denial. The theme of suffering voluntarily accepted for the love of God and neighbor was clearly evident in the life of Bishop Scalabrini. He penned these inspiring words about the Cross of Christ: “La Croce che la Chiesa ci fa portare sul petto, d’oro, ma che si cambia spesso in ruvido ferro che strazia l’anima. Il vescovo porta la croce senza l’immagine del caro Gesù: Perché? Perché dobbiamo amare la croce anche senza i comforti della vista di Lui: *fac me cruce inebriari!* Stringere la croce pettorale al cuore e ripetere di frequente *fac me cruce inebriari!*... *Fac me cruce inebriari!* ripeterò spesso stringendo al cuore la croce pettorale. Le umiliazioni, i dispaceri, le ingiurie, le delusioni amare entrano nei disegni di Dio... non mi mancano mai, né mi mancano al presente... Dio mio, siate benedetto. Coraggio nella Croce di Cristo” (*Profilo*, a cura di P. Stelio Fongaro, p. 20).

Bishop Scalabrini had more than his share of the sufferings of the Cross. These he bore patiently as coming from the hands of God: the attacks on the part of his enemies, and especially the incessant verbal and printed attacks on his person by one of his dissident priests, Father Miraglia, who threatened the unity of faith in the Diocese. These were equivalent to a martyrdom which lasted six years. Accepting the heavy crosses which came his way was not enough for Bishop Scalabrini. He added various forms of penance, mortification and self-denial (corporal and otherwise). He saw these as a participation in the paschal mystery of Christ’s passion, death and resurrection and he celebrated this in the Sacrament of Penance faithfully each week.

Bishop Scalabrini’s spirituality was also ecclesial. He believed, trusted and loved the Church. He was a true churchman (*Vir ecclesiasticus*) in the sense of the Fathers of the Church. His motto was: *sentire cum ecclesia*. He respected the rich tradition of the Church’s past, studied its history, explored and revered the Church’s tradition but never sought to hide in the past nor condemn the Church of the

present. Bishop Scalabrini's love for Christ, the invisible head of the Church, was paralleled by his love for the Pope, the visible head of the Church. Bishop Scalabrini's obedience to the Holy Father was a constant in his life and constitutes one of the elements of his heroic virtues. His obedience was based on faith which ultimately was to the person of Christ Himself represented by the Pope of Rome. Once he remarked facetiously: "Se il Sommo Pontefice (per impossibile) mi comandasse di camminare sulle mani e con i piedi in alto, io mi ci proverei" (*Aneddoti e Detti* a cura di P. Stelio Fongaro, p. 26).

The legacy

What is the significance of the spirituality of Bishop Scalabrini in the life of the Scalabrinian religious today? Bishop Scalabrini's apostolic activities flowed from the intensity of his spiritual life. His love for Christ dictated the ardor of his commitment to his people. His personal spirituality was perfectly integrated into his apostolic ministry. This is what he admired so much in St. Charles Borromeo and why he chose him as the patron of his two religious congregations. He saw in St. Charles this harmonious integration of spirituality and ministry. His love of Christ suffering on the cross and present in the Holy Eucharist was translated into a loving service to the Christ present in the poor, the marginalized, the migrants and in the changing events of the day. In this we see more evidence of his incarnational spirituality.

For Scalabrinians, it is not enough to admire Bishop Scalabrini, to respect his teachings or nod approvingly when they conform to the Gospel message. The religious congregation bearing his name compels its members to learn more about him and how he mirrored Jesus in his life. It compels them to embrace wholeheartedly the spirit of his work and to make the purpose of his spiritual and apostolic life the purpose of their own. His following of Christ becomes the path of their journey. His vision of faith and ministry becomes their vision of looking at their lives and the world in which they live.

In his post-synodal exhortation *Vita Consecrata*, Pope John Paul II pointed out the need for "fidelity to the founding charism and subsequent spiritual heritage of each Institute. It is precisely in this fidelity to the inspiration of the founders and foundresses... that the essential elements of the consecrated life can be more readily dis-

cerned and more fervently put into practice" (n. 36). Later the Pope affirmed the need "to rediscover the ascetic practices typical of the spiritual tradition of the Church and of the individual's own Institute. These have been and continue to be a powerful aid to authentic progress in holiness" (n. 38). The Holy Father also stated that Institutes of Consecrated Life are "invited courageously to propose anew the enterprising initiative, creativity and holiness of their founders and foundresses in response to the signs of the times emerging in today's world" (n. 37).

The *Rules of Life* of the Congregation of the Missionaries of St. Charles (Scalabrinians) certainly capture some of the distinctive features of the spirituality of Bishop Scalabrini. "After the example of our Founder and in his spirit, we attach special importance to the daily celebration of the Eucharist and to personal colloquy with Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. Toward Mary, Mother of Christ and the Church, we nurture a devotion befitting a son, also through the Rosary or other daily practices of devotion" (n. 43). "Our commitment to carry the cross in the footsteps of Christ transforms the way we think and act and thus prepares us to share more intimately in the Paschal mystery and make our own the trials and tribulations of the migrants. This duty requires of us a penitent heart, which finds an outlet in the frequent reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. But it also requires that we take upon ourselves the sufferings and privations that are inseparable from the religious and missionary life and choose such personal and community penances as are in keeping with the mentality of the people of our day" (n. 46).

"We make ours the spirit of the founder, for we regard obedience to the Pope, even in virtue of our vow, and to the bishops, as an indispensable condition for living in union with Christ and our brothers and sisters" (n. 14).

Advocacy and evangelization of all migrants

Bishop Scalabrini saw no dichotomy or contradiction between being a man of God and a man of social action. In fact, he viewed these two as complementary. His apostolic preferential option for the poor was seen in his pastoral concern for the migrants who were leaving his diocese for economic reasons, bound for North and South America. He saw the need for a specialized pastoral care for these

poor people struggling to keep their faith in new surroundings. This is what led him to found two religious communities dedicated specifically to this purpose.

Bishop Scalabrini viewed migration and the movement of peoples not as a social phenomenon which would eventually disappear but rather as something which the world and the Church would have to deal with for ages to come, contrary to the thinking of some people in high places. He saw migration as part of a changing society. This is why he wanted his religious congregations to be of pontifical rite with religious vows. This would ensure stability in the pastoral care of migrants. To support this effort worldwide, he petitioned the Holy See to establish an office in Rome to coordinate the pastoral activity of migration around the world. This took place after his death when in 1912 St. Pius X instituted an emigration office in Rome under the authority of the Consistorial Congregation. In 1970 Pope Paul VI changed it to a Pontifical Commission for the spiritual care of migrants still under the dependence of the then Consistorial Congregation (now The Congregation of Bishops). Finally in 1988, our present Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, created the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People. Bishop Scalabrini's dream was thus fulfilled.

As part of the ministry to migrants Bishop Scalabrini recognized the importance of social advocacy on their behalf. He defended the right of people to emigrate when this was done in a way consistent with human dignity. He was quick to denounce social injustices and the exploitation of migrants as well as unjust political structures which ignited the need to emigrate. He opposed the enforced assimilation of migrants and defended the social model of multiculturalism long before this term became fashionable. He rightly deserves the title "Father of the Migrants" and to have his name inscribed in the wall of honour in Ellis Island, N.Y. – the port of entry where, by the time of the death of Bishop Scalabrini in 1905, 1,771,000 Italians had arrived.

The *Rules of Life* of the Congregation of Scalabrini support the Founder's advocacy of migrants. The Congregation "proposes to influence the Church and civil society to welcome the migrants and have a Christian view of and solution for their problems, so that in an atmosphere of non-discrimination, of justice and charity, the migrants will be looked upon as persons and likenesses of Christ" (n. 27).

This apostolic commitment implies a thorough understanding of

the social teachings of the Church just as the socio-political philosophy of Bishop Scalabrini was deeply rooted in Pope Leo XIII's ground-breaking Encyclical *Rerum Novarum*. Understandably, the social doctrine of the Church has developed considerably since then. Our present Holy Father Pope John Paul II has contributed much to this development with his numerous writings and addresses, notably three major Encyclicals: *Laborem Exercens* (1981); *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (1987); *Centesimus Annus* (1991).

Some might ask: What is it that distinguished Bishop Scalabrini's initiatives on behalf of migrants from other socio-political ones? The answer lies in the religious finality, namely, the call to evangelization of migrants. Bishop Scalabrini looked at the social reality of migration not as a sociologist or an economist but above all as a man of God and a man of the Church reflecting on a human situation which required a pastoral intervention.

Thus, Bishop Scalabrini saw catechesis as a major pastoral activity for his missionaries and wanted it to be a high priority in ministry to the migrants and their children. Bishop Scalabrini expressed this in these words: "La Chiesa di G.C., che ha spinto gli operai evangelici fra le genti più barbare e nelle contrade più inospiti, no, non ha dimenticato e non dimenticherà mai la missione che le venne da Dio affidata di evangelizzare i figli della miseria e del lavoro" (quoted in M. Francesconi: *Giovanni Battista Scalabrini*, Roma 1985, p. 967).

Once again The *Rules of Life* reflect this priority of the Founder: "In our specific apostolate we give priority to evangelization, in particular to catechetics, and we work to bring the migrants together in communities of faith, charity, and worship, helping them focus their Christian life on the Eucharist" (n. 24).

The Catechism of the Catholic Church with its reference to the reality of migration (n. 2241) stands as a valuable resource to teach the faith to migrant communities.

Synodal Proposition n. 27 which Pope John Paul II cited in his Apostolic Constitution *Vita Consecrata* (n. 37) urges Institutes of Consecrated Life in accord with the spirit of the Founder to come up with creative initiatives which respond to the signs of the times emerging in contemporary society.

Bishop Scalabrini founded a lay society and two religious congregations precisely because of his profound concern for the emerging reality of human mobility and migrations of people. His immediate and initial target was the thousands of Italian emigrants leav-

ing their country every day for lands beyond the sea. He recruited Italian priests and Italian-speaking laity to assist them with their religious and social needs in their land of adoption. Identity of language, culture and traditions was deemed by him most helpful in building the bridge between the old and new world.

But like the true missionary, Bishop Scalabrini maintained a universal mindset. Migrants of other nationalities or racial backgrounds were also the object of his pastoral concern. This is why he sought an agency at the highest level of the Church to direct and coordinate the problems of migration on an international scale within the universal Church. During his lifetime, Bishop Scalabrini also sanctioned the pastoral care of Polish immigrants in the United States. During his visit to South Boston in 1901, Bishop Scalabrini celebrated Mass in a new church built by Polish immigrant Catholics and ministered to by the Polish Scalabrinian priest, Father G. Chmielinski.

During his visit to Brazil in 1904, Bishop Scalabrini expressed an interest in the pastoral care of the aboriginal peoples in the State of Paraná after visiting with one of the tribal chiefs. The Bishop of Curitiba offered the Scalabrinians the parish of Tibagi and from there two missionaries ministered to the 3000 native peoples in the area. Upon his return to Italy, Bishop Scalabrini petitioned Pope St. Pius X to erect an Apostolic Prefecture for the evangelization of the aboriginal peoples of Brazil and assign it to the Scalabrinians in Paraná. Bishop Scalabrini's death not long after precluded any further consideration of such a proposal.

When the Second Vatican Council in its decree *Perfectae Charitatis* (1965) called for the renewal of religious life, the Scalabrinian Congregations took this call seriously by returning to the primitive and original inspiration of the Founder and viewing it in light of the changed conditions of the times. The pastoral care of migrants remained intact but the Founder's first and immediate concern for the Italian migrants now became a pastoral concern for all migrants. The new and approved *Rules of Life* establish this universal perspective: "We fulfill our mission, first and foremost, among those who, for any reason, are living outside their native land or ethnic community and, out of real necessity, require a specific pastoral care; likewise among those who, because of internal migration, live in analogous situations because of ethnic, social and cultural differences; finally among the seamen" (n. 23).

The vision continues

It is becoming obvious to all that migration is a world-wide phenomenon of extraordinary proportions. United Nations statistics alert us to the fact that the number of persons living in a country other than that of their birth is escalating. There were 75 million in 1965; 85 million in 1975; 106 million in 1985; more than 125 million in 1995. This amounts to one out of every fifty people living in the world. Furthermore, the number of people seeking asylum as well as displaced persons continues to grow. Human mobility, for whatever the reason, seems to have become a structural dimension of modern society. No one country seems to be alien to some form of migration. Developed countries like the United States and Canada which previously allowed open immigration have now adopted strict border control and repression of illegal immigrants. Nations such as Italy which were traditional countries for emigration have now become countries of immigration. In Brazil, internal migration from the rural areas of the Northeast because of unemployment, lack of property ownership or unacceptable living conditions, is moving towards the industrial cities in the South. Migration continues to propel people from one area of the world to other distant lands with all of the less desirable social consequences, e.g. separation of family members etc. Furthermore, fluctuations in the job market open the way to seasonal migration. Today, migration is looked upon by many as a disagreeable nuisance, an attitude which easily spawns indifference, suspicion or hostility towards migrants.

This is the unique and pressing challenge which faces the world and the Church today. Scalabrinians worldwide are privileged to respond to this apostolic challenge. There is a Chinese proverb which says: "May you live in interesting times". This is indeed an interesting time in the life of the Church – a time to remind ourselves that the Church is God's gift to us, that the Holy Spirit continues to animate the Church and will continue to do so until the end of the ages. This is a time that calls for a renewal of trust and confidence in the Church and in the leadership of the Church.

We are on the threshold of the sacred Jubilee of the year 2000. Our Holy Father Pope John Paul II in his Apostolic Letter *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* has set the course for all of us. "How can we fail to lay greater emphasis on the Church's preferential option for the poor and the outcast? Indeed it has to be said that a commitment to justice

and peace in a world like ours, marked by so many conflicts and intolerable social and economic inequalities, is a necessary condition for the preparation and celebration of the Jubilee" (n. 51). The saintly Bishop of Piacenza would be the first to urge us to follow the Pope's lead.

John Baptist Scalabrini remains more than just a page from history or a period piece which is exemplary in a particular age but does not transcend his era. His spirituality and his pastoral zeal flowing from it identify him as a true classic in the tradition of the Church. He may stand apart from us by a century of time but he reaches far beyond his own time period. He speaks to the world of today and stands as a contemporary positive role-model for bishops, priests and religious. May this "Apostle of the Catechism" and "Father of the Migrants" soon be numbered publicly among the blessed in heaven.

The spirituality of Scalabrinians in Latin America*

REDOVINO RIZZARDO, CS

1. "True heroes... authentic martyrs"

We can start with the views of two people normally considered experts in the field. The first is that of the Founder himself, John Baptist Scalabrini, expressed at the start of our presence in Latin America. During his visit to Brazil, he wrote to Father Francesco Sidoli, his vice-secretary, from the interior of São Paulo State on July 30, 1904, as follows: "As you see, I am 250 miles north of São Paulo, visiting our young Italians, who live on the plantations. The one where I am at present is one of the best, because the owner, Count de Prates, is a good Catholic and has built a church in the middle of the settlement, where they can gather to recite prayers, and once every two years receive the Blessed Sacraments when our missionaries visit. Now that I have seen how things are, I have to describe the latter as truly heroic. At present almost all of them are out, praying and hearing confessions, and for months at a time they travel from one estate to another, with great discomfort. If I had a hundred true priests available, how much glory could be paid to God, and how much good done for these poor abandoned souls, who are almost a million in number" (quoted in: Mario Francesconi, *Storia della Congregazione Scalabriniana*, vol. III, p. 288).

The second view is that of Father Francesco Tirondola, and was expressed in 1938 when the Congregation was celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of its presence in Brazil. In a letter of March 12 to the

* When no source is indicated, the document quoted comes from the archives of the Province of St. Peter.

Scalabrinian students in Rome, written from Guaporé where he was making his canonical visit, he gave a deeply moving and appreciative description of the signs of faith and the progress he had seen on all sides, and then concluded as follows: "All this is owing to our dear confreres, who have worked and are working in these settlements with a truly religious and missionary spirit. Our small, beloved Scalabrinian Pious Society in Rio Grande do Sul has saved the faith of a people, founded towns and cities, and, despite difficulties and sacrifices so great that our elderly missionaries are true martyrs, carried out its duty and fulfilled the aim for which the great and venerable Bishop Scalabrini founded it" (*L'Emigrato Italiano*, July 1938, p. 104).

A few days later, on April 27, he continued from São Paulo: "I have never seen people so famished to hear the word of God as in our settlements in Brazil!" and he concluded, as in the earlier letter: "I can say, without fear of contradiction, that the missionaries have saved the faith and civilization of a people!"

If Bishop John Bishop Scalabrini and Father Francesco Tirondola – as well as hundreds of other witnesses from the Church and Latin-American society – observed and praised the lasting fruits of life which appeared in such abundance on all sides, it is because these fruits were guaranteed by a strong and generous sap. And that sap was of course spirituality.

So what was the spirituality that nourished the life and sustained the pastoral work of the first Scalabrinian missionaries in South America? What were its main features? Was it incarnated in reality? Did it liberate and promote the human person? Did it only form "true heroes and authentic martyrs" or was it also used to mask other, more obscure interests?

This is what we shall try to discover. However, we would first make a short digression on the religious situation and spirituality that our early confreres found in the new lands.

I should also like to recall that since this is an historical study, most of the observations refer primarily to Brazil, inasmuch as the Congregation did not start to reach other South-American countries until 1940, when it settled in Argentina.

2. Spirituality in South America

First we have to remember that South America cannot be viewed

as a single country, despite Simon Bolivar's dream of transforming the continent into one "Great Country".

Of course there are many tangible features uniting the peoples who make up the Latin-American universe. In terms of negative aspects, we cannot forget that the various processes going on at present include impoverishment of the majority of the population, social imbalances, foreign debt, generalized corruption, institutionalized injustice, the exodus of farmers heading for the urban centers, discrimination against African and indigenous groups, lack of respect for life, violations of human rights, and proliferation of sects. If, on the other hand, we want to highlight the positive common features, it is important, especially among the poor, to emphasize appreciation of the person for him- or herself, solidarity, sharing of material goods, austerity of life, communion with nature, respect for the other, a welcoming, hospitable attitude, encounter, peace, joy, popular piety, etc.

Despite these resemblances and the present globalization process, every church and Latin-American nation – in fact, every race and ethnic group – has its own distinctive features. This is why inculturation seems to have been the dominant point of the Santo Domingo Conference, just as "the option for the poor" and "communion and participation" were the central themes of the Medellin and Puebla Conferences respectively.

When the Scalabrinian missionaries arrived in South America, they had to deal with types of piety and spirituality different from those they knew in Italy.

The evangelizers of these lands had brought a type of Catholicism in vogue in Europe at that time, with its values and defects. It was a piety that most of our first missionaries considered skin-deep and as going no further than sacramentalism, ritualism and pietism. In their letters to the Founder and other confreres in Italy, we find frequent references to the passivity and indolence of the *brasileiros* – in other words, the descendants of the Portuguese, *indios* and *africanos* – in the face of the problems and challenges of life, and the condition of dependency generated by this attitude.

One of the consequences of this type of piety was that Latin-American society erred less through atheism or lack of faith than through idolatry, either because it was hard for it to discover the true face of God, or because it was plagued by a whole series of superstitions, injustices, illusions and idols. Even today, visitors from other secularized countries are still struck by the fact that the vast majority

of people in South America say that they believe in God. The key questions should therefore be: "In which God do you believe? And what does this conception of God mean for life?"

Unfortunately, the God that people knew and prayed to often seemed to lack any close connection with life and human history.

The most serious heresy that threatened – and to some extent still threatens – South America was therefore that of believing not in the "God who puts down the mighty from their thrones and fills the hungry with good things," but in the "God who tortures the weak and keeps the powerful on their thrones." People would often turn not to a God committed to the cause of freedom and promotion of the poor, but to a God who had to be implored and placated with devotions, celebrations, vows, promises, processions, etc. Especially in communities in the interior, religion sometimes seemed to be reduced to the sporadic reception of certain sacraments.

Evangelization left much to be desired, and when preaching was practiced, too much emphasis was placed on doctrinal elements and moral behaviour, with little attention to the "whys" and "wherefores"; in other words, it was hard to see what connection there was between the religious facts being presented and everyday life.

What tended to be seen was "a Christianity divorced from reality" and a Church allied with political and economic power. The organization of society had little connection with faith. The Trinity itself, the central element of Christian life, was seen more as a "mystery of the faith" than a supreme model for new relationships and a real social program within the Christian community.

These considerations were also recognized by the bishops when they met in Puebla: "Undoubtedly situations of injustice and acute poverty are an indictment in themselves, indicating that the faith was not strong enough to affect the criteria and the decisions of those responsible for ideological leadership and the organization of our people's socio-economic life together" (*Puebla Document*, n° 437).

The substratum underlying the popular piety of most of the people was certainly "Christian," but the Catholicism that sprang from it had an over-religious, over-clerical, individualistic and intimistic approach, so that it could produce good but inoffensive people, who bore a treasure in their hands without realizing it, and had little awareness of the novelty and importance of Christianity for human and social life.

This was certainly why, starting in about 1967, "Liberation Theol-

ogy" was born in South America in an effort to provide a concrete response to the situation of abandonment, alienation and injustice in which most of the people live. Even the *Instruction on Christian Freedom and Liberation* published by the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in 1986 called on Christians to "work out and set in motion ambitious programs aimed at the socio-economic liberation of millions of men and women caught in an intolerable situation of economic, social and political oppression" (*Puebla Document*, n° 81) because this situation "openly contradicts Christ's Gospel and cannot leave the conscience of any Christian indifferent" (*ib.*, 57).

However, if a full and correct response is to be given, today more than ever there has to be a spirituality to support and give "soul" to liberation theology, purifying it of illusions and ideologies, together with a community spirituality built up according to the trinitarian model, and accepted and lived on every level of the Church and society; in other words, a spirituality that helps us to live "like God" and "in God."

Puebla leaves no room for doubt here: "The communion that is to be fashioned between human beings is one that embraces their whole being, right down to the roots of their love. It must also manifest itself in every aspect of life, including economic, social, and political life. Produced by the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, it is the communication of their own Trinitarian communion" (*ib.*, 215).

3. Scalabrinian spirituality

Until a few years ago, Scalabrinian missionaries in South America tended on the whole to devote themselves more to what they saw as the pastoral care of migrants than to investigating and discussing the existence or otherwise of a spirituality that could be termed "Scalabrinian."

The most faithful and authentic of them lived a spirituality that we can call traditional – a spirituality known and offered at that time, and embraced by those whose ideal of life was to become good pastors for the people. Even today when religious formed some time ago are given a chance to talk about Scalabrinian spirituality, not a few of them will start to talk about the Founder's devotions – the Eucharist, Our Lady, the Pope, etc.

This traditional spirituality was obviously not always successful in

breaking down the walls of conservatism and nationalism of most of the first Italian Scalabrinians. Shut off in “traditional” parishes and practices, it became hard for them to open themselves to the “new,” the “stranger” and the “other” – although such an opening would have transformed them into prophetic signs of a Church in constant growth and renewal.

However, for the sake of objectivity and justice to all, we have to admit that only recently – starting in 1978 with publication of the document *Mutuae relationes* – has the Church started to insist that religious institutes should have, live and spread their own charism, spirituality and specific pastoral approach, as a wealth offered to them by God for the renewal of the Church and humanity.

“The charism of the Founders (*Evangelica testificatio*, 11) appears as an experience of the Spirit transmitted to their followers to be lived by them, to be preserved, deepened and constantly developed in harmony with the Body of Christ continually in a process of growth. It is for this reason that the distinctive character of the various religious Institutes is preserved and fostered by the Church (*LG* 44; cf. *CD* 33, 35 §1-2, etc.). This distinctive character also involves a particular style of sanctification and apostolate which creates a definite tradition so that its objective elements can be easily recognized.

In this time of cultural evolution and ecclesial renewal, it is necessary to preserve the identity of each Institute so securely as to avoid the danger of ill-defined situations arising from religious involving themselves in the life of the Church in a vague and ambiguous manner, without giving due consideration to their traditional apostolate and their distinctive character” (*Puebla Document*, n° 10-11).

On the other hand, when we began to talk about charism in our Congregation, its meaning was quickly reduced to the pastoral care of migration, almost forgetting its bond of interdependence with the spirituality that underpins it and gives it its meaning.

Here I am obviously not supporting manichaeian dualism, for the pastoral care of migrants and Scalabrinian spirituality are both born and grow on the basis of the quality of service and acceptance offered to Christ in the migrant, and not exclusively.

Those who receive the grace of discovering its beauty see Scalabrinian spirituality as one of the most beautiful and attractive existing in the Church today, for basically it means taking on Jesus’ own mission as expressed in his “priestly prayer”: “That they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may

be in us, so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (*Jn* 17:21). The Scalabrinian undertakes to give his life for the transformation of the world, taking the Trinity as model, in other words through relations of equality, fraternity and freedom in a Church and society that respect and appreciate diversity.

This is not some dream or forced inference. From the first to the last of his writings on migration, Scalabrini saw the movement of migrants and the evangelical service that the Congregation offers them as a very special path to the civilization of love. For example in 1887, in other words at the beginning of his ecclesial service of migrants, he wrote as follows: "The ignominious barriers created by hatred and resentment will disappear; arms will open out in a fraternal embrace; hands will shake in a warm sign of love; lips will open to smile and kiss; and, with all class and party differences eliminated, we will understand in all its Christian splendor the meaning of the aphorism: *Homo homini frater*"¹.

And even in his last piece of writing, which was sent to the Holy See in May 1905, a few days before his death, he again referred to his utopia: "No longer the extermination of peoples, but fusion and adaptation, by which different nationalities meet, intermingle, acquire new strength, and give rise to new peoples! Despite differences, these new peoples display specific characteristics and particular religious and civil tendencies typical of the whole national group."²

We can thus state that the search for human, fraternal and equitable relations constitutes the heart of our charism in the Church.

It would obviously be ingenuous to think that most of the first Scalabrinians fully appreciated this ideal of life handed down by the Founder. As we all know, a thorny road had to be travelled in order to reach our days, which seem to be making Scalabrini's dream come true. In this long and difficult process of opening and renewal, religious formation played a particularly important role, proving able to transform an approach that was often spiritualistic into evangelical sensitivity toward the most abandoned and excluded of migrants.

If we want to open a parenthesis here to try to explain and define Scalabrinian spirituality, we could do so in terms of its three main components.

¹ Giovanni Battista Scalabrini, *L'Emigrazione Italiana in America*, Piacenza 1887, p. 54.

² *Ibid.*, Memoriale sulla Commissione *Pro Emigratis Catholicis*, 1905.

The first component is that of “becoming migrants with migrants,” which covers the missionary spirit, the sense of availability, feeling – and making the other feel – at home everywhere, and being always on the move, like God who always goes beyond our hopes. This spirituality spurs us on to seek the things of heaven, giving sense and value to what is relative so that it is turned and addressed to the absolute. The Scalabrinian will not be conformed to existing personal and social structures, taking them as definitive and absolute, but will first and foremost make his life a incomplete and unfinished process in search of full maturity. After this – or at the same time – he will break and help others to break the chains of the false security brought by the “ready-made,” thus becoming the agent of new forms of society that are ever closer to God’s plan.

Migrants are always insecure, always in search, always on the move: their reality is one today, another tomorrow. One of the tasks of Scalabrinians is therefore that of nourishing their hope, creativity and capacity to adapt, adjust and change, with an optimistic view of history based on the Lord’s presence, “which presides over human destiny, leading all people, even through great calamities, to their final goal: the perfection of man on earth and the glory of God in heaven.”³

In the second place, Scalabrinian spirituality is based on catholicity and universality, following the example of the Founder, who was very rightly considered a man whose homeland was the world, or St. Frances Saverio Cabrini, who told those who tried to restrict her work at the Columbus Hospital in New York: “The world is too big to confine ourselves to a single place: I’d like to embrace it all and reach everywhere!”⁴

Scalabrini saw migration as one of the signs of the times raised up by God in order to compose – in a hidden, patient and often painful way – the wonderful mosaic of the human family, in which the wealth, the values and even the defects of peoples end up as special opportunities for solidarity, sharing and fraternity for all. His writings on the subject can be seen as a subliminal call to a new mentality and to an education that teaches people to live together and grow in openness to the other and to otherness, viewed not as dangerous and

³ Ibid, *L'Italia all'Estero*, Torino 1899, p. 8.

⁴ Francesca De Maria, *La Madre Francesca Saverio Cabrini*, Torino 1928, p. 78.

suspicious, but always considering the hierarchy of values and circumstances with respect, following the model of the Trinity.

“The trinitarian life teaches us that communion is made up of difference, not uniformity. Each Person is distinct, has His own specific qualities, has revealed Himself to us in a specific form, and acts in us in a specific way. The communion of the Trinity is built up through the sharing of each Person in the trinitarian life, each according to his individual features. The Trinity is not a finite community, but a community that is eternally being built up through the participation of each divine Person.”⁵

So we can say that a Scalabrinian can do no better than to embrace and spread Pope John Paul II’s ideal, as expressed in his message for *Giornata Mondiale della Pace* 1991 (World Peace Day): that of working together so that “the mass migrations occurring in the contemporary world are directed toward the construction of a society where the different ethnic cultures promote unity and not division, reconciliation and not hatred and intolerance.”

Scalabrini’s view of migration was similar, though expressed in different terms: “It is almost always a human good, in as much as it opens up new paths for trade, helps spread the findings of science and industry, shapes and refines civilization, and extends the concept of homeland beyond physical frontiers, making man’s homeland the world.”⁶

This is why the missionary spirit is a fundamental requirement for Scalabrinians, as the Founder made clear in his first “mandate” on July 12, 1888: “These generous souls have wedded the poverty of Christ and abandoned comforts, honors, country, family joys, and whatever in this world is most human and tender and hasten breathlessly to the help of their emigrant countrymen and women beyond the ocean. They have heard the cry of pain of our distant brothers and sisters and they go forth! [...] Infinitely vast is the field that opens to our zeal” (*Una voce viva*, p. 489).

The activities of Scalabrinian religious in the Latin-American missions were in fact always marked by a decided identification with the universal Church – although some historians see this as indicating

⁵ Fr. Francisco Taborda, SJ, *Comunhão Eclesial e Vida Religiosa in Convergência*, n. 289, 1996.

⁶ Giovanni Battista Scalabrini, *L’Emigrazione degli operai italiani*, Ferrara 1899.

that the missionaries found it hard to understand, formulate and assimilate the newness of the culture and situation they encountered, because they tended to remain bound to the European and Italian Church.

The third feature of Scalabrinian spirituality would be welcoming acceptance, which is manifested as solidarity and incarnation, the basic reason why Scalabrini first thought of setting up his institute to help migrants: "Now, there is a duty to support the freedom to emigrate, but there is also a duty to oppose the freedom to compel emigration: the ruling classes have a duty to obtain useful employment for the forces of the proletariat, help them to shake off poverty, and guide them in search of profitable employment. [...]"

What a vast field lies wide open for the activity of clergy and laity in the simple words: guiding and protecting emigration! Guiding it and protecting it, both by reinforcing and intensifying the action of government and law, and by making up for the inevitable shortcomings of both."⁷

The fundamental Christian – and naturally Scalabrinian – attitude is one of welcoming acceptance. Both in community life and pastoral life, the Scalabrinian has to travel a long road of acceptance and mutual appreciation, and this has been especially so since the Special Chapter of 1969/71, which opened the doors of the Congregation to cultures, races and ethnic groups previously unknown within it. The missionary to migrants learns the value of acceptance through his own experience of becoming a migrant with migrants, so that "every foreign land is home and every homeland is foreign," as the *Letter to Diognetus* says. And in the last analysis this acceptance is always offered to Christ: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me" (*Rev* 3:20).

4. The spirituality of the Scalabrinians in Latin America

Having considered Latin-American and Scalabrinian spirituality, we shall now try to produce a synthesis, analyzing the life and work of some of the first missionaries in South America in order to con-

⁷ *Ibid.*, *L'Italia all'Estero*, Torino 1899, pp. 14-21.

template and grasp the fruit that this spirituality has produced in those who have allowed it to draw them in and guide them.

4.1 Milan station

In the first place, like John Baptist Scalabrini, many of them had their individual "Milan station" – the moment when the sufferings of migrants touched them and led them to give a courageous response to God by leaving for the mission. We can cite Father Pietro Colbachini as an example here: "In May 1884, I was at Feltre, preaching in the cathedral. A good priest from Campo di Quero, a nearby place, came to show me some letters he had received from his fellow-countrymen who had emigrated to the Brazilian states of Rio Grande and Santa Catarina, in which they begged him to travel to them in order to perform his apostolate there. My heart bled at the cries in those letters, reflecting the state of abandonment in which so many unfortunate Italians found themselves, and the danger they were running of losing the faith."⁸

I think I can say that the first and true Scalabrinian vocations were normally born either from direct contact with migrants and their needs, as was the case for Fathers Antonio Seganfreddo and Giuseppe Marchetti, or from the enthusiasm of the Founder and the missionaries themselves, who infected others and drew them into their mission, as was the case for Father Domenico Mantese, who was won over by Father Pietro Colbachini, and for Fathers Aneto Bogni, Giuseppe Foscallo and Domenico Carlino, who were fruits of the great vocation campaign carried out by Fathers Pacifico Chenuil and Giovanni Costanzo in 1920.

4.2 The soul of the whole apostolate

There is no doubt that the majority of the first Scalabrinians belonged to a breed of true heroes, who set sacrifice, fulfilment of duty, fidelity to prayer and the sacraments, pastoral zeal and unyielding defence of the truth and of the rights of the Church above any

⁸ Pietro Colbachini, *Relatório ao Internúncio no Brasil, Mons. Francesco Spolverini, 23 de junho de 1889.*

personal interest. They were giants, with an individual and demanding holiness that was sometimes far removed from the world, which they viewed with some suspicion if not actual aversion.

This is clear, for example, in a short biography of Father Pietro Negri by Father Carlo Porrini, who writes about his colleague as follows: "Faithful, very faithful to the practices of piety: daily meditation, Mass celebrated with devotion, the breviary never omitted, even when he had to recite it on horseback or stay awake until midnight. He attributed great importance to religious celebrations, imbuing them with a solemn tone. If he was lighthearted at home he was equally severe in church, where he sought to impose piety, order and silence."

Until a few years ago, if people were asked to talk about the first Scalabrinians, the thing they would most remember was their spirit of prayer and their pastoral zeal. Here we would cite two examples, the first from Espírito Santo State: "All we know about Father Remigio Pezzotti is that his apostolate was short, and full of many sufferings, both because of environmental adversities and because of his long journeys on foot. Migrants recalled that Father Remigio also used to afflict his body with long, harsh penances, voluntarily embraced in order to make his apostolic zeal more fruitful for the spiritual good and sanctification of his flock."⁹

The second example comes from Encantado and is provided by Father Massimo Rinaldi, who was recalled sixty years after his death by a woman who had known him well: "One day, Father Massimo went to celebrate Mass at Anta Gorda, twenty-five miles from Encantado. At a certain moment in the middle of the forest, a bandit appeared and pointed a revolver at him. Unafraid, the Father held up the crucifix that he always had with him. The two men stayed there for a few moments without moving or speaking. Finally, Father Rinaldi put the crucifix back in his pocket and told the criminal: "You can leave now!" When he got back, tired and hungry, from the chapels, he used to head straight for the mother church to visit the "Chief" as he used to say. Such visits often lasted a long time, and the cook and other people would find him rapt in prayer, kneeling or lying on the floor. Father Massimo was very good, but also energetic and severe in opposing abuse, vice and disorder, and in defending the principles of faith and morality, and the rights of the poor and weak."

⁹ Máximo Zandonadi, *A Igreja na história da Venda Nova*, Belo Horizonte, Editora O Lutador, 1984, p. 16.

The people remember some of the first missionaries – for example Massimo Rinaldi, Giuseppe Marchetti, Claudio Morelli, Luigi Pedrazzani, Luigi Capra, Augusto Battaion, Natale Pigato and Faustino Consoni – as true saints. Those who knew Father Consoni, for example, have always seen him as one of the Scalabrinians who best incarnated the sanctity, charism and devotion of his Founder. His love for migrants, the poor and orphans was so great that he was known as the “St. Vincent de Paul of São Paulo.” The spirit behind his life’s work was defined when he was still young: “For God, a son’s heart; for my neighbour, a mother’s heart; and for myself, a judge’s heart.” And he would constantly say: “The poor are Jesus, they are my dearest brothers. Charity cannot be measured with a tape-measure, it doesn’t argue, doesn’t weigh things up It always gives to everyone.” St. Frances Saverio Cabrini wrote to her religious in Brazil, urging them: “If you need some reliable direction in difficulties, after knocking on the door of the sanctuary, look for Father Faustino! He is a man of God!”

We would also mention the brothers Carlo and Luigi Pedrazzani. The last years of Carlo’s life were marked by whole hours of prayer, and he eventually had a straw hut built near the Dois Lajeados cemetery where he lived, so that he could withdraw there to pray. If any of the fathers suggested that he might be going too far, he would answer: “It’s your job to work, mine to pray!”

Father Luigi broke his leg falling from a horse in January 1928, and from then until his death in 1956 – 28 years in all – his life became a constant sacrifice of self, because the wound never really healed. He spent the last 10 years of his life almost totally bed-ridden, praying and suffering for the people, so that when he died, everybody considered him a saint. He never gave anyone cause for concern, and his priesthood was marked by silence, long hours in the confessional, and suffering accepted as apostolate and service of his brethren. The announcement of his death contained the following words: “Father Luigi died in the Lord, as he lived for the Lord. He has left his confreres the wonderful example of a long sacrifice accepted with serenity, and of constant union with God. We can describe his life as made up of prayer and suffering”

4.3 Defense of the downtrodden

The social training instilled in them by the Founder meant that

most of the first Scalabrinian missionaries were seriously committed to all-round promotion of the people assigned to them, and did not hesitate to set themselves firmly on the side of the downtrodden against the greed of the great. As a result, quite a number of them were persecuted by civil and military authorities, as well as by employers and dishonest traders.

Their ordinary, traditional spirituality was transformed into a liberating and incarnate spirituality which made them ready to risk themselves and lay down their lives, both in the daily sacrifice of self that the pastoral ministry entailed and in defending the rights of God, the Church and migrants against error and injustice. Let us give some examples.

We can start with Father Pietro Colbachini. Born into a family of what might today be described as successful businessmen, he saw and spread the Catholic religion as the best way of promoting the whole human person. When he reached Brazil in early 1885, he spent almost a year and a half among the Italians who worked on *fazendas* (the coffee plantations) in the interior of São Paulo State. However, the situation of slavery in which the landowners kept the migrants meant that in May 1886 Father Pietro was forced to move to the region of Curitiba in Paraná State with a large number of settlers who were willing to follow him. He wrote at this time: "Most of the *fazendeiros* (plantation-owners) do not care about morality, but their bad examples and words in fact push the poor settlers to abandon their religion and become lax in their morals. How many hapless young men have fallen victim to the wiles of their employers! If they do build chapels or eventually allow the priest into the settlements, this is almost always simply in order to impress on the settlers their duty to submit to their employer and not claim anything belonging to him. There are still some who do not allow priests to care for the spiritual good of the settlers, saying that the settlers have come to the *fazendas* to work and not to live like monks! Few plantations have a church."¹⁰

However, his life went no more smoothly in Curitiba. During the Federalist Revolution that ravaged Brazil in 1893, he stood out firmly against all moves to force Italian migrants in the region to join the revolution, even going so far as to help the flight of sixty who had already been forced to give up the hoe for the gun. To escape the

¹⁰ Pietro Colbachini, *op. cit.*

wrath of the revolutionaries they had to hide in the forest for almost a month on a *jirau* (a wooden structure on which houses are built to keep dry). He said jokingly: "I never thought I'd become a bird – though I'm very pleased to do so for the good of our migrants."

So we can fully believe the words he wrote to Father Faustino Consoni on January 26, 1901, four days before his death. Written from Nova Bassano, where he had been living since the end of 1896, they sum up his life: "I have suffered endless tribulations, partly caused by men's malice, and partly coming from God's hands." Even so, when he preached his last homily to the people the following day, a Sunday, he quoted St. Francis to explain his innermost conviction: "Remember what St. Francis said: «I look forward to so great a good that all sufferings seem sweet to me.»"

Despite the goodness and gentleness that he exuded, even Father Faustino Consoni quite often had to take his courage in both hands in defence of migrants, as one such man testified:

"We spent fifteen years without seeing a priest's face, and Father Faustino was the first to appear. The *fazendeiro* did not want to let him in. The father shouted that he would come in even if they threatened him with a gun: «Whatever it costs, I want to see my immigrants!» And he won. He gathered us together in a large room at night. We were forty families, and we wept with joy at the scene, hearing our priest and taking part in the Holy Mass. He confessed us and gave us Communion; he gave over two hundred first Communions and performed countless baptisms and marriages."

Father Luigi Capra has gone down in the Scalabrinian Congregation's history as a priest completely dedicated to the people, a shepherd who would go without necessities in order to help the poor. People also recount many stories about him – and eye-witness reports are again the most convincing evidence – revealing his concrete, evangelical love. For instance, there was the time he took off his clothes and shoes, and gave them to those in need, or the time he dyed his old clerical hat to save a little money for those in need (and the rain turned his face into a carnival mask!). Another side of his personality is seen in his work to help inculturation of the Congregation. For him, inculturation was identified with universal love for those in need, regardless of the cultural, social and ethnic divisions of society. In 1914 he founded the *Sociedade Operária Católica* (Catholic Workers' Society) at Santo André, where he lived, and when the First World War threw thousands of people

out of work, he had no hesitation over selling the parish hall to help the poor.

We cannot omit mention of Father Cesare Erminio Catelli, parish priest of Antagorda for thirty-six years, from 1912 to 1948. On September 27, 1926, when Monsignor Amleto Cicognani was visiting the Scalabrinian missions in Brazil on behalf of the Holy See, he wrote a long report on Father Catelli's activities in Antagorda: "Father Catelli was involved in some popular unrest, and people therefore judged him imprudent. Indeed, the accused father cuts a very poor figure in the pamphlet published by Dr. De Patta, then Antagorda's doctor, who was brought here by Archbishop Bussolari of Modena. However, justice had to be done to the father, and this has been unanimously done by the present superiors, whom I questioned separately and in depth.

It turned out that Dr. De Patta, a Neapolitan, had used the people's money to open a hospital in Antagorda, which he then exploited shamefully for his own profit. He would not allow other doctors to work in the place, even when the families themselves called them in, and he refused to carry out maintenance work demanded by contract. These flaws and others meant that people started to mutiny. In 1921, when Father Catelli came back from a visit to Italy, he found the parish divided into factions, and many people went to him for guidance. Perhaps the father let a few strong words escape him – in keeping with his usual style – but he did nothing other than take up the defence of his oppressed people. It could be claimed that even this was not up to him, and that he should have kept out of things... but we have to remember that apart from the fact that he did not go seeking to be involved – but that the people came to him – in such places far from any center and almost always without any control of law, the parish priest is practically the sole authority, and it is almost impossible for him to cut himself off from problems connected with his ministry, as in the case of the hospital."

This witness of faith of the vast majority of the first Scalabrinians, as manifested in love of migrants, was then taken on in a broader context and in a new light by their successors, starting with religious in formation or only recently ordained, as happened with Father Alberto Romano Zambiasi. The Scalabrinian missionary is always sustained by the same spirituality, whether he sets himself at the service of sugar-cane cutters in the interior of São Paulo State or the north of Argentina, or devotes himself to alleviating the sufferings of domestic

migrants in São Paulo shanty-towns and of Bolivians in Buenos Aires, or makes his presence felt in church and civil bodies in building awareness, animation and support of migrants.

4.4 Promotion of the poor

For a long time now, a process has been going on in South America with the aim of bringing about a shift from a somewhat dualistic spirituality to a more unitary type which encompasses body and soul, faith and culture, and salvation and secular history. One of the keynotes of the Scalabrinian presence in the continent has in fact been the Congregation's work in support of over-all promotion of the human person. The father's arrival meant development and progress. Father Domenico Vicentini had realized within a month of his arrival in Rio Grande do Sul, so that on May 23, 1896, he wrote as follows from Encantado, where he had settled: "The great difficulty in the settlements is the choice of location for the parish church, because that is where the village – the city – will grow up."

And indeed, only four years later, in 1900, he managed to set up the first school in the place.

Before him, however, Father Giuseppe Marchetti built the Christopher Columbus Institute in São Paulo in 1895 for the education of orphans, the poor and the children of migrants. Scalabrini wrote to Father Faustino Consoni on January 15, 1897, describing it as "the most important mission of our Congregation, and one we have to make any sacrifice to maintain," and inviting him to take over the post left vacant by the recent death of its founder.

Education was one of the priorities of the Scalabrinian pastoral ministry, both in Brazil and Argentina, not only with a view to giving young people a Christian formation, but also in order to use the schools as recruitment centers for religious and priestly vocations. In practically all the missions, a school was built beside the church, whenever possible entrusted to the care of religious sisters called in by the missionaries.

An outstanding example of a Scalabrinian who made spirituality a source of social, political and economic development of the community was Father Antonio Serraglia in Protásio Alves. Everybody considered him a man of God, but precisely for this reason he never forgot the people's real-life situation. He arrived in Protásio Alves in

1910, and stayed there until his death thirty-four years later in 1944. During this long period, he not only devoted himself tirelessly to the Christian formation of the community, but was always involved in any initiative aimed at bringing about the progress of religion. For example, in 1912 he founded the first school for the community; in 1914 a beautiful mother church was opened; in 1917, the place was raised to the status of district; in 1918 the new road to Nova Prata was opened; in 1931 Protásio Alves received its first power plant; and in 1939 the telephone arrived. In accordance with the Founder's guidelines,¹¹ as need arose, Father Serraglia became missionary, notary, mail agent, photographer, engineer, and even head of the *Liberal Party* in 1934. Although he was small – he weighed 103 pounds and was just under 5 foot tall – when it came to defending settlers against the arbitrary oppression of the police, he was not afraid to stand up even to someone pointing a pistol at him.

Another name not to be forgotten when talking about incarnate spirituality is that of Father Eugenio Medicheschi. Following in the footsteps of the Jesuit Teodoro Amstad (1851-1938), the greatest proponent of unions in Rio Grande do Sul, Father Medicheschi, together with Father Enrico Preti at Montebelo do Sul, must be seen as one of the greatest supporters of progress wherever he went, founding cooperatives, churches, schools and even villages that are now cities, such as Sarandí and Rondinha. However, as happened to other religious, obstacles and persecution were the order of the day in his work. In November 1924, for example, he was almost killed by a group of revolutionaries, an episode described by a settler from Sarandí who was a close witness: "In such difficult moments, Father Eugenio was unwilling to abandon his flock, so that he became a victim of all the sufferings and dangers experienced in the last revolutions. Like all the people, the Father was stripped of his clothes, food and animals, and twice ran the risk of losing his very life. The fact that the Father stayed with us helped us to keep our courage up, until the fateful day when six hundred revolutionaries – whose only revolutionary feature was their desire for plunder and blood –

¹¹ "The Congregation fulfills its aim by founding churches, schools, orphanages and hospitals, through the work of priests united in a family with religious vows of chastity, obedience and poverty, who are ready to hurry wherever they are sent as apostles, teachers, doctors or nurses, according to need" (John Baptist Scalabrini, *Prima Conferenza sull'Emigrazione*, Rome, February 8, 1891, p. 12).

launched a surprise attack on our locality. The first victim was Father Eugenio himself, against whom more than one hundred bullets were fired at close range. Everybody gave him up for dead, but God granted that only two bullets actually hit him, one in the face and another in the leg, wounding him only slightly. The same group savagely slaughtered three farmers; I myself was taken by them, but escaped by miracle.”

4.5 Priestly and religious authenticity

Most of the first missionaries had the good fortune of living close to the Founder, who passed on the pastoral zeal that led him to exclaim: “What greater joy is there for the Christian soul than being able to succour the poor, teach the foolish, relieve the downtrodden, wipe away the tears of the sorrowful, save some souls, in other words do a little good?”¹²

Thus the sole aim of many of his direct disciples in coming to the Americas was that of pouring out their lives, seeking nothing but the well-being of the migrants and other people entrusted to them by God. Let us therefore consider some prototypes of most of the early European missionaries, who combined faith, self-sacrifice and idealism with an adventurous and fighting spirit – not always exempt from some residues of religious and cultural colonialism.

Let us start with Father Giuseppe Marchetti, who wrote as follows to the Founder in January 1896: “So here I am, ready to die. I have longed for martyrdom so many times. But if I have to receive the martyrdom of apostolic labour instead of that of blood, I shall be happy!”

On his twenty-seventh birthday, on October 3 of the same year, he made a vow expressing the desire that urged him on to unbroken gift of self: “Lord, in order to respond better to the high mission that has been entrusted to me by your mercy, I feel moved to sacrifice myself even more fully, swearing perpetually and with a vow that I will always be a victim of my nearest neighbour, for your love! So with the vow of charity I shall always place my neighbour above

¹² Giovanni Battista Scalabrini, *La penitenza cristiana. Lettera Pastorale di Monsignor Vescovo di Piacenza per la Santa Quaresima dell'anno 1895*, in Ottaviano Sartori (ed.), *G.B. Scalabrini. Lettere Pastorali*, Torino, SEI, 1994, p. 548.

myself, my pleasure, my health and my life. And with the vow of never wasting more than fifteen minutes, I consecrate all the physical and moral strength of my body to you and my neighbour.”

This is why the Founder had no hesitation in writing to Father Faustino Consoni on January 15, 1897, as follows: “I am writing to ask you to take over the place of the deceased Father Giuseppe Marchetti. He was a saint, and will certainly help you from heaven to continue with the work begun by him.”

As soon as Father Faustino himself had reached Brazil, he was sent to the Curitiba region, where he met Father Antonio Seganfredo the following September. Father Antonio, who was about to leave for Rio Grande do Sul, was so struck by what he saw that he at once wrote to Father Giuseppe Molinari, Rector of the Mother-House in Piacenza: “Father Faustino spends the day running like a soul in torment! He would like to convert the whole of Brazil! He visits the *brasileiros*, leading many back onto the straight and narrow. He even tries to make the Poles understand him. He has a word of advice, comfort or exhortation for all, but never keeps a moment for himself by day or night. If he is called to comfort a dying man, there is no time late enough and no road harsh enough to stop him. He runs with his horse – poor beast! – like a flash of lightning! And even if he has already fallen two or three times, he never gives up. He is well. His colleagues in Piacenza tended not to like him very much, but I guarantee that Father Faustino is a good companion, because he does not seek his own comfort and rest, but simply the good, both for himself and others.”

Convinced of what difference it make “for the Church” in Brazil to have one type of “priest” over another, Father Faustino himself wrote to the Founder on March 30, 1901, as follows: “Here more than in the other houses of our mission, we need young men of solid virtue and sacrifice, who are animated by apostolic zeal; otherwise, they could prejudice the others... In this connection, it would be a good thing if Your Excellency were to write a letter, possibly printed, to be sent out and read in all the houses, in order to consolidate members in ever fuller surrender of their own will and love of the Congregation.”

In the long and painful trials through which the Congregation passed, with many colleagues uncertain as to whether to continue on the road they had chosen or seek in other institutions for the security and guarantee they lacked in the Congregation, Father Consoni responded by repeating: “I made my vows with Bishop Scalabrini,

and I'll be faithful to them and die with them! I received my crucifix from the Founder's hands. I am a Missionary of St. Charles, and a Missionary of St. Charles I'll die!"

The need to send virtuous and zealous fathers to Latin America was the topic most harped on not only by provincial superiors, but also by other Scalabrinians, as we can see from Father Antonio Serraglia's letter to Father Giuseppe Molinari of October 14, 1897: "Here we need not good but excellent missionaries, men who are ready to make any sacrifice, and are strong in virtue. Many priests in these regions are truly scandalous. If no measures are taken, religion will die away day by day. So a few fathers, but good ones! The precise number doesn't matter!"

We all know about the financial difficulties of the Mother House and also the whole Congregation since its foundation. On the other hand, not all the missionaries were in a position to send in the contributions requested – the context in which we have to see the letter that Father Antonio Seganfredo sent to the Superior General Father Domenico Vicentini from Nova Prata on January 31, 1908. The letter also tells us about the pastoral priorities chosen by Scalabrini for his missionaries: "For my part, I am incapable of refusing anything to anyone, and things are therefore not going very well. Moreover, the plague of grasshoppers means that over a hundred *bugres* (a generic name given to indigenous Brazilians, especially the more war-like ones) have fled here from their devastated lands. However diligently they may work, there is not enough for all. So women and children knock on our doors and don't leave until they are offered something to eat. It's not their fault, but mine, because that's the way I started out, following the example of the late Father Colbachini, who begged me to show understanding and mercy. They take advantage of this weakness of mine, and I feel incapable of changing what I have done. But what could be done in those first years, and what could be asked of those who had nothing? Many of them didn't even attend mass because they had no clothes! This is why I have always had a house bare even of the essentials: I was happy to give everything to others. When my dear superior Bishop Scalabrini sent me here, he asked me what program I planned to use with the migrants, and I answered: «Whatever program Your Excellency decides; if you ask me to collect a little money for the Institute, I'll try to adjust to a financial program» He stopped me there, and said: «Because the love of Christ urges us» (2 Cor 5:14). And this is what I followed."

Father Massimo Rinaldi was another missionary infected with the Founder's spirit. In August 1900 in Rome, where he had gone to meet with Scalabrini, he asked the latter what he had to take with him to the missions. "The breviary and the crucifix" was the answer. And if his life had a keynote, it was precisely that of prayer and cross, or the deepest unity with God's will as expressed in the most disinterested sacrifice of self to his confreres in the Congregation and to the people. Like Father Faustino Consoni at São Paulo, one of Father Rinaldi's main tasks at Encantado was that of receiving missionaries newly arrived from Italy, and keeping them with him for some months so that they could be steadily integrated into their new situation, forming them for the missionary life.

One of his disciples in Encantado was Father Carlo Porrini, who wrote to his friends in Italy in March 1907 a few months after his arrival: "My missionary life can be summed up in these words: going from chapel to chapel, preaching and confessing. I am never without work; as soon as I finish one task, I at once start on another. I am convinced that this mission in Rio Grande do Sul is the most beautiful, demanding and comforting that a Scalabrinian missionary of true spirit can receive. There is no lack of sacrifices, but if I had to list all the missionary's joys, I'd have to write a book to hold them."

Let us end with Father Natale Pigato. A humble, simple man, lacking in any gifts and human capacities that could make him a dynamic and entrepreneurial leader, he was a man of God and of the people. Known as "the apostle of the highlands" because of his constant, exhausting journeys in the interior of Paraná State in search of migrants to help and comfort, he always preferred the itinerant missions to the tranquillity of parish life. Father Pigato felt comfortable with the least and the outcasts of society, who found in him a heart both fraternal and paternal. Like Father Luigi Capra in Santo André, all that belonged to him belonged also to the poor, including his clothes and shoes.

4.6 Spirituality of communion

One of the basic features of Latin-American spirituality is that of communion and participation, in other words, a church that is built up and grows on the basis of solidarity and sharing.

Unfortunately, despite the Founder's constant efforts to foster

union in his young Congregation, a large number of the missions founded over the years were the fruit of differences among the members. If some of them eventually failed, as happened in Espírito Santo State, this was mostly owing to the ambitions and rivalry of the religious working there. Many of the first Scalabrinians seemed not to have been trained for either community life or group work, and often gave the impression of pursuing personal projects, which were then dropped by their immediate successors.

However, Scalabrini himself repeated more than once: "I should like to see the members of my modest institute united less through external vows than through the sweet currents of love, for the good of our migrants."

And in his letter to his missionaries on March 15, 1892, he again emphasized this: "No group of people, however great their abilities as individuals, will ever be able to achieve great things if they do not submit to the great law of unity. Even less will Missionaries be able to achieve great things because, in working with souls, they – as simple instruments of Jesus Christ – derive all their efficacy from this sovereign principle of unity animating them.

For this reason, dearly beloved, I beseech you and implore you, out of love for Jesus Christ and for the good of our brethren, not to scatter without any other guide except his own will. Instead, you must be united and be as one: *ut sint unum*."

So Scalabrini entrusted apostolic service of migrants not to the good-will and initiatives of isolated sharpshooters but to people who would make it their own and carry it out together, that is as members of a religious community.

Despite the difficulties, the same fathers who were inadequate in community life also showed that they felt the lack of fraternal communion and wished for it. Thus we find Father Pietro Colbachini writing to Father Domenico Mantese from Curitiba on June 29, 1887, inviting him to come to Brazil with other fathers: "When you get here you'll see how necessary it is for these regions that priests should live together."

However, two years later, after a community experience with the first arrivals, Fathers Domenico Mantese and Giuseppe Molinari, two excellent Scalabrinians, he complained to the Pronuncio Francesco Spolverini on November 29, 1889: "They are excellent priests, and nothing more! For these missions, excellent religious are what is needed."

This is also why Fathers Giuseppe Marchetti and Faustino Consoni wanted the Christopher Columbus Institute to act as a central house for the missionaries dedicated to religious assistance of the migrants scattered over the numerous coffee *fazendas* in the interior of São Paulo State, so that they would return to it every twenty or thirty days to recover their physical, mental and spiritual strength. Both would repeat: "Parishes will be the death of our Congregation!"

Father Faustino write to Father Domenico Vicentini on January 27, 1907, commenting on the statement of the new Archbishop of São Paulo that he had no use for missionaries who wanted to remain alone: "Now this is exactly what everyone wants.... The Rule is a dead letter, and the poor Superior is seen as a doormat. Even if he himself deserved all the contempt, the post he holds does not."

Father Antonio Serraglia offered a very beautiful example of fraternal love, writing to Father Faustino Consoni from Nova Bassano on November 21, 1904, immediately after losing the company of Father Massimo Rinaldi: "After eight years of being accustomed to living with my confreres, it is hard for me to get used to being alone, even if I am very busy all day. «Woe to him who is alone!» (*Eccles* 4:10). These words apply to me and still more to Father Eugenio Medicheschi. Bishop Scalabrini should not allow his missionaries to live far from one another, but in twos as the Gospel instructs when it says: «[the Lord] sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to come» (*Lk* 10:1). However, the will of the superiors and not mine be done!"

A letter of February 23, 1914, from Father Enrico Preti, Parish Priest of Guaporé and Superior Provincial, to Father Massimo Rinaldi also tells us much in this connection: "Good intentions and even good training are not enough. I have the diary of a priest who was sent here – so he said – by the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, with all the requisites for success: excellent seminary training, very pious, education to doctoral level, and the best of intentions... He wrote in his diary: «I want to be a holy missionary.» But unfortunately not long after this, he failed completely. And why? Because of the absence of a confrère «of the Congregation» – and not simply «of the pastoral work» (the latter are all too present as witnesses of his misbehaviour, incapable like him of finding a solution) – to hold out a friendly hand and save him from the pit."

On March 29, 1956, Father Carlo Porrini died in the Mother House in Piacenza. His last words, spoken in a very weak voice, were ad-

dressed to the seminarians gathered around his death-bed, and seem to reflect a wisdom born of many sharp conflicts with confreres in Brazil: "My dear ones, always remember, only one thing really matters: you have to love one another!"

4.7 Missionary spirit

The most faithful Scalabrinians who were formed in the Founder's school found it natural to leave family, culture and everything they had, and to start to love other people's homeland as if it were their own, considering themselves and acting as missionaries wherever they were for the rest of their lives.

An example here can be seen in a letter of April 6, 1924, to Father Massimo Rinaldi, in which Father Domenico Carlino talks about the "true mission," describing it as the reason why he became a Scalabrinian: "Here in Putinga, the land is still very rich, and the settlement is going very well at present; however, as the years pass, it will perhaps become weak again. Our Founder decided wisely when he wanted his missionaries not to settle in any place, but to devote themselves to assisting migrants wherever they were. If that is so, why do we missionaries in Rio Grande do Sul not think of following settlers heading for Santa Catarina and Paraná, or even Santa Rosa? I know there are few of us, but we have to trust in the Lord. Perhaps in the future we shall manage to dedicate ourselves to the true mission!"

However, thirteen years later, on March 5, 1937, when he was now Provincial Superior, Father Carlino seemed to have forgotten this spirit when he protested to Cardinal Carlo Raffaele Rossi that Archbishop João Becker of Porto Alegre was setting up new parishes, dismembering them from "Scalabrinian territories" and entrusting them to the secular clergy. The cardinal replied as follows on April 26, 1937: "Your letter of March 5, in which you describe the situation of the Scalabrinian parishes and missions in the Porto Alegre Archdiocese caused me pain, but no surprise. For a long time now, the Porto Alegre curia has been gradually replacing priests and religious of other nationalities with its own clergy in the various parishes and missions. The parish of Casca was recently split up, and during Father Bogni's stay in Italy, he complained about this unhappy situation.

Perhaps all this lies in the plans of Providence, which once again makes the proverb come true: «One sows and another reaps» (*Jn* 4:37). The pious society has the merit before God of having given everything in past years when the early Italian emigrants were completely abandoned, accompanying them in their varied and often painful vicissitudes, and making considerable sacrifices, starting from the humble huts in which the missionaries lived. And now that God's help and the cooperation of the good have made it possible to build beautiful, large churches, comfortable parish houses, schools and hospitals, its members have the great merit of leaving these conquered positions to others, in order to go further ahead to where everything is still to be done. Indeed, this is what the Scalabrinian life and program should be. God arranges all things: if he brings to a close an activity in which the Scalabrinian spirit is maybe dying, he opens up another vast field of work further ahead..."

A major crisis in congregational identity had been growing in São Paulo for many years, and during the 1919 General Chapter a group of fathers from Rio Grande do Sul went so far as to request the suppression of that province. This malaise continued for many years. On December 3, 1924, for example, Father Giovanni Costanzo, Superior of St. Peter Province, complained to Cardinal Gaetano De Lai, then Superior General, that the Scalabrinians of São Paulo were becoming simple diocesan parish priests, lost in a generalized pastoral ministry, at the service of extremely nationalistic bishops who rejected the foreigner, the other and pluralism. In turn, the *paulistas* accused the *gauchos* of being blinkered, conservative and bound to an Italian nationalism which stopped anybody from becoming integrated and could not see the signs of the times.

The cardinal's reply arrived on January 16, 1925. After very careful consideration and discernment, he based his response on the orientations provided by the Founder, John Baptist Scalabrini. Although Scalabrini had founded a Congregation for Italian emigrants to the Americas, he was open to all the needs of the Church, and did not hesitate to send his missionaries to the indigenous people of Tibagi and to Polish immigrants in the United States. The cardinal therefore concluded: "I agree that Scalabrinians should be concerned primarily with Italians; however, although this is their main mission, they cannot neglect other members of the Church, or else they might fall into the same excessive nationalism that you quite rightly deplore in others..."

During Father Francesco Navarro's term as provincial (1929-1935), the congregational identity crisis grew more acute in São Paulo. Fathers Carlo Porrini and Francesco Milini saw the province moving further and further away from the specific purpose for which it had been founded – that of assistance to Italian migrants. The situation became so impossible that one by one the Councilors and then the Provincial Superior eventually resigned their posts. In 1935 Father Navarro was replaced by Father Milini, who started the *La Paz* Church complex the next year for the many Italian communities in the capital of São Paulo State, who had previously been all but ignored by the Scalabrinian missionaries.

As we can see, the process that led to the appearance of a truly universal religious Congregation, open to the assistance of migrants of every race, ethnic group, background and culture, has been very long and sometimes painful, but always beautiful. Large numbers of confreres gave the best of themselves to bring us to this point. Father Carlos Pedrazzani is an example here. On December 25, 1906, in answer to a letter from Father Domenico Vicentini who had asked his opinion on the future of the Scalabrinian Congregation, he wrote: "Here in Brazil, it is asked that religion be universal and not national in character; and if it is national, it should be Brazilian, not Italian. Father Marchetti had to change the aim of the orphanage right at the outset: a purely Italian orphanage in São Paulo is an absurdity for Brazilians." Almost thirty years later, on February 7, 1935, he returned to the subject in a letter to his brother Father Luigi: "If the Kingdom of Christ is to be spread wider, the missionary has to become all things for all people: Brazilian with Brazilians, Chinese with Chinese, African with Africans."

It was this openness to the other and the different, considerably assisted by religious rooted or born in South America, that brought the Congregation to greatness and renewal. Indeed, insofar as the Congregation has been able to appreciate and combine members who were different in charism, function, culture, race, nationality and country, it has become a new experience of God for the Church and the world – for God stimulates the unity of humankind while encouraging the variety and diversity of peoples. The Latin-American "way of being" has thus helped to bring about a rethinking and revision of the existing missionary ideal and practical approach, offering a new content for spirituality and the congregational identity.

As conclusion and example of this renewal brought about in the

Congregation by openness to “the other” and “the different”, especially when these are identified with the least, we would point to Father Tarcisio Rubin. Although he was not a member of the group of the Founder’s first disciples referred to in the present document, he deserves inclusion in it, because he so admirably put into practice the missionary ideal dreamed of by Scalabrini, inculturating it in the Latin-American situation.

His burning love for God and migrants led him to adopt the world as his homeland, always feeling at home wherever his pastoral zeal took him, for his Franciscan soul made him a “universal brother” regardless of the race, culture or social position of those who came to him. Rather than studying inculturation in books, he learned it at the Lord’s feet, adopting Jesus’ radical emptying of self. This was why he was so overjoyed to leave Europe, where his zeal and missionary vocation seemed seriously endangered, and become poor with the poor, Chilean with the Chileans, Argentinean with the Argentineans, and Bolivian with the Bolivians.

God was his sole wealth. His spirituality was rooted in poverty, meditation on the Word of God, long hours of prayer before the Eucharist, and evangelical service of migrants. The message of his life can be summed up in words he often used to repeat: “If we want to evangelize the poor, we have to live like them, suffer what they suffer, eat what they eat, sleep as they sleep, and be beside them in their work. Only then can they be evangelized.”

In order to ensure the success of his long and exhausting apostolic journeys among migrants – journeys he called “exodus missions” – the indispensable conditions to which all the 10 or 12 participants submitted, regardless of whether they were priests, religious or lay people, were long periods of personal and community prayer, the experience of poverty, the sharing of goods, and team work.

As participants in a Scalabrinian Spirituality Symposium, we shall certainly not be afraid of accepting and implementing within the Congregation the words that Father Tarcisio addressed to a group of priests and religious in Mendoza in 1982, a year before his death: “Our community is very like the Cana community. We may not have the wine of joy, the unity of participants, the interest of the guests, but we should have no fear! The Mother is always with us, with her eyes open and her heart overflowing with tenderness. She is aware of the emptiness that has taken possession of the jar of our spirit, and thus leaves us the legacy of her last words: “Do whatever my Son tells

you.» And Mary's Son tells us that we must be one in friendship: «Call one another friend.»

We walk together united in the migration of this world of God (St. Augustine) because in Christ our friend «we have Father, homeland and heritage.»

His very death, which occurred in the high mountains of Calilegua in Jujuy Province while he was at prayer, fulfilled a dream and a message that had been close to his heart for a long time: «If I don't come back one day,» he used to say, «it's because I've decided to settle in the highlands, flying like the condor toward the snow-covered peaks, and I shall stay there, contemplating my Bolivians from above, as they pray and dance with the *quena*, the *charanga* and the *taica*.»

5. Conclusion

I started my contribution by quoting a comment from Father Francesco Tirondola, written during a journey to Brazil and Argentina in early 1938 when the Congregation had just completed its first fifty years of life. I should like to conclude by taking my cue from another of Scalabrini's great disciples, Massimo Rinaldi. Although from different positions, they had a similar understanding of the Lord's plans for the Congregation, and both knew and witnessed the history, difficulties and successes of the first Scalabrinian missionaries more closely than almost anyone else.

In 1937 the Congregation celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of its foundation with great rejoicing. On the request of Father Giovanni Battista Sofia, on August 15 Bishop Rinaldi wrote some reflections on the celebrations for the review *L'Emigrato Italiano*, including a brief portrait of the first Scalabrinians: «Even before I entered the new-born Scalabrinian family, I felt irresistibly drawn to it. The years I had to wait before I could join this noble and admirable institution were years of anxiety and longing for me, so that the model bishop, a wise man with deep knowledge of hearts, told the privileged sons who lived in his Scalabrinian institute in Piacenza: «He – referring to me, as I arrived and left again – has made his noviciate in the bishop's residence.»»

Although I was still too young, in the full enthusiasm of my heart I already felt the beauty of the Scalabrinian ideal so strongly that my

love for the apostolate for religion and homeland surpassed that for my family.

Without any shadow of vanity I remember that I lived that doubly sacred fire with an ardor drawn also from the heart of the generous bishop, and that I lived it even more strongly, both when living alongside the Scalabrinian pioneers, and also because of the circumstances of time and place.

Nobody better than the first disciples, of whom I am proud to be one, could write some truly wonderful pages on the first battles of our Institute and the example left to us by our Father and Teacher – partly because certain historical events were such powerful experiences that no tongue or pen could ever really convey them. While this great truth is bound to be a consolation to the souls of the Scalabrinian veterans who experienced the first difficulties of the Institute, which has today grown so enormously, we hope that it will also act as a strong spur to the young missionary confreres, encouraging them to cover the long road travelled by the great Apostle of Emigration and his first followers and disciples” (*L’Emigrato Italiano*, October 1937, pp. 25-26).

The early Scalabrinians were struck and fired by the heritage and spirit handed on to them by the Founder, and were fulfilled as priests, as religious and as Scalabrinians, taking on and transforming the Latin-American situation. At the end of this second millennium, this situation no longer seems as uniform as it did in the past: “Latin America and the Caribbean constitute a multiethnic and multicultural continent on which indigenous, African American, and *mestizo* peoples and those descending from Europeans and Asians live together. Each has its own culture, which provides it with its own social identity in accord with each people’s world vision, but they seek unity on the basis of their Catholic identity” (*Santo Domingo Conclusions*, n° 244).

It is a more complex situation, with more challenges, but for this very reason more enriching. The Scalabrinian charism’s incarnation in Latin America gave it a fresh impetus, which helps to renew the Congregation constantly.

If “the Church is essentially mystery and communion” and if “sharing in the trinitarian communion can transform human relations, creating a new model of solidarity,” as John Paul II wrote recently in the Apostolic Exhortation *Vita Consecrata*, is the Latin-American mission not perhaps identified with fraternal service, sharing, justice, in

other words with the discovery of the poor as the path to personal and community conversion and evangelization?

And if communion is the first keynote of the spirituality of modern times, and if it flows always and exclusively from contemplation and loving search for the Lord's face, how does this face appear in Latin America?

"Discovering the face of the Lord in the suffering faces of the poor (cfr. *Mt 25:31-46*) challenges all Christians to a deep personal and ecclesial conversion. Through faith, we find faces emaciated by hunger as a result of inflation, foreign debt, and social injustice; faces disillusioned by politicians who make promises they do not keep; faces humiliated because of their culture, which is not shown respect and is sometimes treated with contempt; faces terrorized by daily and indiscriminate violence; anguished faces of the abandoned children who wander our streets and sleep under our bridges; suffering faces of women who are humiliated and disregarded; weary faces of migrants, who do not receive a decent welcome; faces aged by time and labor of people who lack even the minimum needed to survive decently" (*Santo Domingo Conclusions*, n° 178).

(original text in Portuguese)

The spirituality of Scalabrinians in North America

GINO DALPIAZ, CS

In this paper my task is to identify “the spiritual traits that have characterized the work of the Scalabrinian Family in North America and have caused our confreres to give pride of place to certain forms of piety, to develop certain ascetical practices, to make certain pastoral decisions: fruit of the lived charism and of the inspiration coming from the Founder and the *Rules of Life*.”

Is there a North American Scalabrinian spirituality?

Is there a North American Scalabrinian spirituality? I would be tempted to answer yes and invent one. But one of my confreres, a veteran of the North American missions and a priest for 55 years, wrote me the following strong admonition: “Too bad we cannot gather much from any meaningful tradition and practice by the Fathers concerning the common prayer and spirituality in our single missions and parishes. There is no tradition of real value of this most basic and necessary root of spirituality on which our Founder insisted so much. Therefore, avoid inventing. The crude reality must be confessed, so that the Convegno may come up with effective conclusions....” Concerning “a common program of community prayer” this same confrere writes: “It will be hard to register any practical tradition of real meaning and impact. I am afraid that you will find it difficult to construe a systematic vision of what has been done in this regard in our small parish communities.” Hence, I will follow my confrere’s advice and not invent.

Through the years I have heard some confreres ask: "Why can't Scalabrinians have a distinctive spirituality like every other self-respecting religious Congregation?" I have often asked myself this question. And a second question is this: "is there a distinctive North American Scalabrinian spirituality? And, if so, how is this North American Scalabrinian spirituality distinct from the Scalabrinian spirituality in Europe, Latin America, Australasia or Africa?" I lived in Rome for eleven years and spent some time in our Scalabrinian missions in Europe. Frankly, I am not aware of a distinctive Scalabrinian spirituality, much less of a Scalabrinian spirituality that is different in the various countries where we work. Ignatian spirituality, for example, is the same the world over, in Italy, Germany, England, France, India, the United States, Argentina, South Africa, etc. In fact, the director of the Ignatian Institute of Spirituality in Rome is an Indian Jesuit, Fr. Herbert Alfonso.

Knowledge of the Founder

I am convinced that eventually a specific Scalabrinian spirituality will flow inexorably and spontaneously from a deeper theological insight into our specific mission and a greater knowledge of the Founder. However, for many years, through all kinds of vicissitudes and mortal dangers, there was little of both in our Congregation. Scalabrinians simply "worked" in the missions and didn't worry about the theology of their mission. Moreover, for the first decades of the Congregation knowledge of the Founder was meager and was even discouraged. During those precarious years, Scalabrinians were more concerned with survival and with their mission than with speculation about Scalabrinian spirituality.

A little story will illustrate the lack of knowledge of our venerable Founder. Many years ago, when in 1930 Card. Raffaello Rossi became our superior general, Fr. Giulivo Tessarolo, then a young seminarian, who later became superior general himself, asked the Cardinal: "Your Eminence, why don't we hear more about our Founder, Bishop Scalabrini?" The Cardinal answered: "*Figliuolo*, the less we say about Scalabrini, the better it is." Those were the days when Scalabrini was not well accepted in Vatican circles from the very top down. Scalabrini was considered too liberal and progressive. Like most prophets, he was way ahead of

his times. Card. Rossi must have undergone a conversion, because, a few years later, he gave a famous talk on Scalabrini in the Church of San Carlo al Corso in Rome, extolling the virtues and the deeds of the Bishop of Piacenza. He also wrote a long and incisive article in the *L'Osservatore Romano* on Bishop Scalabrini. It took courage for anyone, especially an influential cardinal like Card. Rossi, to praise Scalabrini at that time. For many years we were like orphans who knew little or nothing of their father and now find it hard to recover his living image, his spirituality. Our Founder died unexpectedly and did not have time to spiritually mold his missionary Congregation as he would have liked. Moreover, for many years the Congregation was on life support, often in danger of being suppressed or of dying out due to an insufficient supply of well-formed missionaries, for example during and after the First World War.

On both those fronts – namely the theology of our specific mission and knowledge of the Founder – conditions have changed for the better, especially since the Second World War. So, the time is ripe for Scalabrinian spirituality to develop naturally and spontaneously.

**“Letter to all Confreres”:
Magna Charta of Scalabrinian spirituality**

For me the *Letter to all Confreres*, issued on Nov. 28 1995, by the General Administration is the *Magna Charta* and foundation of authentic Scalabrinian spirituality. I have read and reread that marvelous document many times and believe it touches most of the chords of Scalabrinian spirituality. I believe much study and prayer went into that document. Hence, I don't believe we must re-invent the wheel. That doesn't mean that the *Letter to all Confreres* has supplanted or marginalized this Symposium on Scalabrinian Spirituality. On the contrary: this Symposium must flesh out the bare-bone guidelines of this document. However, a veteran confrere cautioned me: “I hope we don't get too many documents (from this Symposium), too many rationalizations, too many theologisims. Rather, we want a strong message that, flowing from the solid theological principles animating our Founder, will guide us concretely to a genuine return to his spirit.”

How can the Scalabrinian be at once a disciple and an apostle?

First of all, I must say that the spiritual life of us Scalabrinians has been beset by an ancient dichotomy, a dichotomy that has plagued apostolic religious like us from time immemorial. Our charism, like that of the Jesuits and other missionary orders, is the active apostolate. Yet there always has been tension between discipleship and apostolate, between "Stay with the Lord" and "Go out and preach." How do we harmonize the two basic underpinnings of our life, mission and religious consecration? From this apparent dichotomy came the question often asked in the past (a question based on what I consider a false premise): "Are we first religious and then missionaries? Or are we first missionaries and then religious?" How do we harmonize prayer and action? Do we follow St. Thomas' idea: *contemplata aliis tradere*? In effect, doesn't this mean that prayer is more important than the apostolate, that we give only the overflow of our prayer life and contemplation to the people we serve? In the Nov. 28, 1995, *Letter to all Confreres* the General Administration referred to this tension between prayer and action: "The dimension of action represents one of the most serious temptations for an "apostolic family" such as ours.... Scalabrini would never have dreamed of dividing pastoral commitment from devotion to the Lord. If action does not spring from love, it is worth nothing." But one might say the same thing about prayer: If prayer does not spring from love, it is worth nothing. In that same letter, the General Administration referred once again to this tension when it said that this tension "is common to all religious families of apostolic life, which have 'the task of fostering the growth of both the "disciple" who must live with Jesus and with the group of those who follow him, as well as the "apostle" who must participate in the Lord's mission."

How to synthesize prayer and action

St. Ignatius, a master of prayer and action, never had this problem, this tension. In fact, he was called *contemplativus in actione*. St. Ignatius wanted every Jesuit religious to be a *contemplativus in actione*. For Ignatius the harmony between prayer and action, the

synthesis between “staying with the Lord” and “going out to preach to the whole world” was based on something deeper, namely on what he called *discreta charitas*, on a free heart, on the will of God. For Ignatius, *discreta charitas* or “discerning love” determined whether and how much one prayed, whether and how much one engaged in the active apostolate. Since my heart is free, this love is able to discern the will of God for me at any given moment. What is important is not whether I engage in prayer or in action but what God wants from me at this moment. It could be prayer, it could be action, depending on God’s will at this time. It is this attitude of heart, this freedom of heart – and not necessarily more prayer – that unites me more and more to God. We might recall that Bishop Scalabrini was known as a man “boundlessly free” (Antonio Fogazzaro).

In the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, the purpose of prayer is to lead to a discerning experience. For Ignatius prayer was a means, not an end. That is why Ignatius never laid down a rule for how much a formed Jesuit should pray every day. *Discreta charitas* or discerning love was the only rule: Each Jesuit determined how much to pray. Ignatius was convinced that a formed Jesuit was on fire with *charitas* and with this *charitas* could discern whether God wanted him to pray or wanted him to act and how much.

For Ignatius more important than meditation were the two daily examens (not to be confused with the examination of conscience), which no Jesuit was allowed to skip. The Jesuit could skip meditation, but never the two daily examens, because for Ignatius the examens were discerning exercises. What is important is a free heart, a heart free of self-will, free of self-interest, free of self-centeredness, a free heart that unites us to God and makes us accept his will in all things.

Ignatius put more emphasis on self-denial and self-abnegation than on prayer, because self-denial and self-abnegation made for a free heart. When a Jesuit once said to St. Ignatius that Fr. so-and-so was a prayerful priest, Ignatius remarked: Fr. so-and-so is a mortified priest. By that he meant that Fr. so-and-so was prayerful because he was mortified; he was prayerful because he was a man of self-denial. He used to say that a mortified man can pray better in a quarter of an hour than a non-mortified man in an hour.

One of Ignatius’ greatest insights was this: “to see God in all things and all things in God.” Hence, God is in prayer and God is

equally in action, and all prayer and all action are in God. When the superior in Portugal wanted to add more prayer to the schedule of the Jesuit scholastics, Ignatius became very angry when he heard of this and scolded him. He told him that the duty of the scholastics was to study. In this they should find the will of God; in this they should find union with God. He said that for one to study out of obedience when he would prefer to do something else is more fruitful than the exercise of prayer. Of course, he expected his Jesuit scholastics to pray, too. They needed to pray in order to be able to “discern” God’s will in their lives, to empty themselves of self, to free their hearts and open them up to the will of God.

Perhaps religious formation in Scalabrinians novitiates and seminaries should focus not so much on prayer as on freedom of the heart, on self-denial, on personal “kenosis,” on self-emptying. But, of course, this is a hard saying, because it means dying to self: “mortificare”. Perhaps this why in formation houses we often avoid the topic of self-denial, mortification of the heart, dying to self. It’s easier to focus on prayer. But prayer without self-denial, without self-abnegation, without a free heart is not worth much. Perhaps there should be less psychology in our houses of formation and more conversion experiences like those that come from the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. At the risk of seeming anti-intellectual I would – in our day and age – put much more emphasis in our houses of formation on “kenosis” – on dying to self – than on programs of studies, important as they may be.

Distinctive virtues, attitudes and spirituality of Scalabrinian missionaries

I have spent some time discussing the spirituality of people engaged in the active apostolate, especially with the help of St. Ignatius of Loyola, because Ignatius introduced into the Church the charism of religious engaged in the active apostolate. By vocation Scalabrinians are active apostles, not cloistered monks. Perhaps now, after laying the foundation of authentic spirituality in general, we can proceed to discuss Scalabrinian spirituality in particular. In the next few pages, I will rely heavily on the thinking of Peter D. Phan (*Lovain Studies* 19, 1994, pp. 195-211).

Spirituality of incarnation or inculturation

Scalabrinian spirituality must be a “spirituality of incarnation or inculturation,” after the example of Christ who “by his Incarnation bound himself to the particular social and cultural conditions of the people among whom he lived” (*Rule of Life* 1, quoting *Ad Gentes*, n. 10). In the United States especially, which is a land of cultural pluralism, Scalabrinian spirituality must be genuinely ethnic yet transcultural. What are the main characteristics of this emerging spirituality? Suffice it to enumerate some of the ways in which cultural pluralism, like that in the United States, has privileged certain virtues or habits of Christian living. For all practical purposes, I will be using the terms “incarnation” and “inculturation” interchangeably. Incarnation has a theological connotation, while inculturation has a sociological one.

By inculturation is meant the integration of the Christian experience of a local Church into the culture of its people, in such a way that this experience not only expresses itself in elements of this culture, but becomes a force that animates, orients and innovates this culture so as to create a new unity and communion, not only within the culture in question but also as an enrichment of the Church universal. Essential to this process is the *mutual* criticism and enrichment between the local culture and the Christian faith. Both faith and culture are changed as the result of this process.

That the United States as well as the American Catholic Church is a multicultural society is a sociological truism. Both societies are quintessentially “institutional immigrants.” A stroll down Main Street in any mammoth metropolplex and attendance at Masses in mega-dioceses such as New York, Chicago and Los Angeles will witness a bewildering variety of languages, ethnic restaurants, and social customs. To a casual observer, there seems to be unity amidst plurality, peaceful coexistence among diverse competing cultures. But a more careful look will reveal severe fissures that threaten to tear apart the many pieces that make up this beautiful social quilt.

The new Church and the new society in the United States

Far from being satisfactorily resolved, the multicultural issue has become even more urgent, given the demographic configurations to

be expected in the first quarter of the next century. Sociological studies have suggested the following changes in the shape of the American Catholic Church in the next generation. First, the church in the U. S. will be highly diverse in ethnicity and culture. Second, the new ethnics, i.e., Hispanics, Asians and African Americans will become the majority in the church. Third, despite being the minority, the old ethnics (e.g., Irish, Italian, German, Polish) will still maintain at their disposal the bulk of social, economic, and educational resources and will continue to hold a greater number of ecclesiastical offices. Fourth, since the church of the new ethnics will be served percentage-wise by a smaller number of ethnic clergy, more Anglo clergy will be called to minister to these new ethnic Catholics, and hence there is an urgent need for them to be acquainted with the new ethnics' languages and cultures. Unless some long-term planning is made to meet the challenge of the presence of these new ethnic Catholics, the American Church runs the risk of bifurcating into two groups deeply alien to one another culturally, socially, economically and spiritually. Unique as this situation of the American Church is, it also mirrors the predicament of the universal church.

Bereft of racial homogeneity and fed by a steady stream of immigrants, the United States has been able to bond these diverse ethnic groups together into a nation. This unity is in part the outcome of American democratic political and legal structures, as Alexis de Tocqueville has shrewdly observed. But it was also due to the *e pluribus unum* (melting pot) social policies whereby newcomers were socialized into the American way of life as much as possible to constitute an integrated society. Recently, however, this Americanizing process has come under heavy fire from advocates of multiculturalism. These multiculturalists want to replace the allegedly oppressive melting-pot model with the pluralistic "salad-bowl" paradigm in which the flavor of each ingredient is preserved and at the same time enhanced by that of others' cultural pluralism, in this view is not to be suppressed but revelled in and celebrated; it is to be fostered in all areas of life especially in education and curricular reform.

In a multi-cultural society like that in the United States and Canada, the Scalabrinian spirituality of incarnation calls for specific Christians values, distinctive virtues, certain attitudes of mind and heart. I believe that, *mutatis mutandis*, this spirituality of the incarnation, this North American Scalabrinian spirituality, if you will, is equally applicable to the "global village", to most countries in the world, to

those in Europe, for example. Though Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Switzerland etc., may not be as multi-cultural as the United States or Canada, they still share many of the features found in the migrant situation in North America. It must be noted that this spirituality of incarnation or inculturation is not and cannot be something utterly new.

At its core, the Scalabrinian spirituality of incarnation or inculturation is nothing but a process of "*imitatio Christi*". It is an appropriation of the divine movement of self-emptying and incarnation in which God chose to communicate his inner life to us in ways that we can understand and accept.

Incarnation or inculturation requires conversion

At the root of Christian life is conversion. So it is with inculturation or incarnation, especially for Scalabrinians. Conversion is the *conditio sine qua non* of inculturation, of incarnation, conversion in all its dimensions: intellectual, affective, moral and religious. The heart of conversion is the total, conditionless, and permanent self-surrender to God. This fundamental act, which is the gift of the Holy Spirit, changes one's way of choosing values, shapes one's feelings, and transforms one's mental perceptions. With respect to inculturation, one of the results of intellectual conversion is the overcoming of cultural biases and prejudices. These, learned through ethnocentric thinking, are often used to buttress one's sense of self-esteem, to legitimize socio-economic exploitation, or to maintain ethnic identity. Socially, they are expressed in all forms of discrimination, be it gender, class, racial, or religious. Prejudice and discrimination in any form constitute the most basic obstacles to a genuine inculturation, to a genuine incarnation.

Accepting the other as genuinely other

To understand an alien culture and to appreciate its positive as well as negative features, a fundamental virtue to be developed is the ability to accept the other as genuinely other. Perhaps it may be assumed that encountering an alien culture and seeing it as other are synonymous. In fact, however, this is not the case. There is a well-

entrenched tendency in all of us to deny otherness to others. Robert Schreiter has described well the seven ways in which otherness is subtly suppressed. We can demonize the other, treating the other as someone to be feared and eliminated if possible. We can romanticize the other, treating the other as far superior to ourselves. We can colonize the other, treating the other as inferior to ourselves. We can generalize the other, treating the other as non-individual and denying him or her personal identity, we can trivialize the other, treating the other as different from ourselves but only in unimportant matters, we can homogenize the other, claiming that there really is no difference. Finally, we can vaporize the other, refusing to acknowledge the presence of the other at all.

This must not be so for the Scalabrinian missionary. Scalabrinians cannot demonize, colonize, trivialize, homogenize or vaporize the migrants. For in our *Rules of Life* (n. 6) we read: “We hold in high esteem the spiritual heritage of thought, tradition, culture and religion the migrants bring along from their place of origin, as well as the heritage of values of the new place where they come to live.”

Ascesis of listening

To be able to recognize the other as other, a spiritual discipline, which Schreiter calls the “ascesis of listening,” is required.¹ Listening to a culture is by no means a passive undertaking; rather, it demands an active participation in it. The ascesis of listening entails developing empathy, openness of mind and heart, intellectual humility, a willingness to be taught, a sense of trust, and the courage to try the new. Anthony Bellagamba speaks of “listening with the heart,” that is, affective participation in the culture of other peoples and “listening with the Spirit” that is, with the willingness to risk, to try to attempt, to experiment because the ways of the Spirit are unpredictable.

Struggle for justice and peace

Listening, however actively and empathetically, is not enough. A commitment to remove unjust and oppressive structures and

¹ Robert Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*, 45.

traditions in both culture and church and to bring about peace, justice, human dignity to all is an essential part of the inculturation process. Inculturation is not a process entrusted to intellectuals nestling in their ivory tower or to the cultural elites born to privileges who are commissioned to devise ways to make Christianity relevant to contemporary culture. Rather it is a task imposed upon the entire Church which is called to be in solidarity with the victims of oppression and injustice who not infrequently are members of ethnic groups and to struggle for their liberation. Inculturation without commitment to social and ecclesial transformation is nothing more than aesthetic dilettantism or archeological nostalgia.

Our Scalabrinian *Rules of Life* (n. 7) stress the importance of the struggle for justice on behalf of the migrants: "Besides spiritual assistance we give the migrants our human, social, and cultural help, and denounce the causes of the evils that afflict them. We struggle to stamp out these causes and to foster the migrants' fellowship and involvement."

Reconciliation

Concomitant with (not instead of) liberation, there is also in inculturation or incarnational spirituality the task of reconciliation because ours is a culture wrenched by hatred and violence. A glance at the current socio-political situation in the former Yugoslavia (where atrocities are camouflaged under the euphemism of "ethnic cleansing"), in the former Soviet Union, and in the Middle East will reveal that our civilization is one that is written in blood. Schreier has argued that violence is essentially an attempt to destroy other people's identity and sense of security by suppressing their stories that define and sustain their identity and substitute them with what he calls "narratives of the lie."² If this is true, then part of inculturation as liberation and reconciliation is to construct for both the victims of violence and their oppressors another narrative based on the story of God's reconciling love as enacted by Jesus of Nazareth.

² See his *Reconciliation*, 34-36.

A civilization of love

Only in this way can we build up what Pope John Paul II has termed “a civilization of love” which is the ultimate goal of inculturation. Such a task requires a great deal of knowledge of diverse cultures and the dynamics of social change, theological expertise, intellectual humility, spiritual discernment, courage, prudence, and patience. It is not something that can be successfully carried out by human resources alone. The assistance of the Holy Spirit has been promised and granted. Nevertheless, our contribution, though not sufficient, is necessary. We must harness our best resources for the task since the stakes are very high indeed.

Scalabrinian spirituality is communal

Finally, Scalabrinian spirituality has yet another dimension, the communal dimension. Our Founder wanted us to be a religious family, a family of brothers. We are religious, not diocesan priests. As such, we must confront our specific mission not as individuals but as a community. As the General Administration says in its *Letter to All Confreres*, the religious community is the *schola amoris* where we learn to move from *I* to *we*, where the individual’s shortcomings are not impediments but provide the elements to celebrate the festival of reconciliation and forgiveness, where forgiveness is given and received not with an alchemist’s scales or accountant’s double-entry system, but because we are immersed in the Father’s mercy and freely given gift of love.” And again: “If we are truly to accept our brethren, we must have the experience of how much we ourselves have been accepted. We, our communities and our migrants need joy and love.” And they add: “We must acknowledge that the dimension of mystery is the foundation of our community life and cannot be replaced by the contribution, albeit useful, of the human sciences.”

The *Letter to All Confreres* indicates that one of the components of the Scalabrinians’ specific asceticism is “inherent in our purpose of bringing diversities into communion in order to manifest the Pentecostal fraternity of the Church. We want to be not only proclaimers but also forerunners of this fraternity, through the witness of a community life in which each of the components becomes «a sign of liberation and salvation to migrants» precisely because he is capable

of accepting diversity and highlighting its value. We know how easy it is to progress from difference to division and from division to antagonism: the proliferation and continuation of pastoral positions or projects drawn up and carried out individually in the course of history and even today are sometimes the fruit more of this easy movement than of the wish to respond to migrant's needs."

"Unity is a martyrdom, especially if it has to highlight rather than hide the wealth of its different components, and this is why the religious community becomes a sign not only of the possibility of living Pentecostal fraternity, but also of «the price that has to be paid for building up any form of fraternal life.» If the movement from diversity to division is diabolic in character, or the work of sin, the contrary movement – from diversity to unity that absorbs but does not confound – can only be the work of that dynamic of death and resurrection found in the paschal mystery, the pain-and-love of Christ, the One who makes himself marginalized by all (rejected by men and smitten by God) so that nobody will ever be marginalized again."

In this context we must insert the question of Scalabrinian community prayer. If we are a brotherhood, a family, must we not sometimes pray together? For many years, a source of constant pain and friction has been our inability to come together to pray to the one and same Father, in one and the same Spirit. As I was preparing this paper, some of my confreres told me in no uncertain terms that our inability to pray together occasionally as Scalabrinians is not a good sign, not what our Venerable Founder would approve of. Surely, Scalabrinian spirituality must permeate not only the individual Scalabrinians but communities themselves. I don't know the answer, but something has to be done, perhaps during this Symposium on Scalabrinian Spirituality, to encourage and promote community prayer among Scalabrinians.

Dimension of itinerancy or the God of the tent

In the document *A letter to All Confreres*, the General Administration talks about "a return to the dimension of itinerancy... which is a feature of our spirituality." Scalabrinians, in other words, are not a sedentary religious family. We do not take a vow of stability like the Benedictines. On the contrary, we are always "on the move." Hence,

we must be ready to pull up stakes, fold our tent and move on. This is inherent in our vocation of apostolic service to the migrants. "For here we have no lasting city" (*Heb* 13:14). This point was brilliantly illustrated by Bro. Gioacchino Campese, C.S., in his recent paper, "Yahweh, the God of the Tent: a Theological Reflection on the Scalabrinian Mission." He writes: "God accompanies the people of Israel in their history through good and bad times. Yahweh is primarily a God who walks with his people...." Campese quotes Brother John of Taizé: "One thing makes this god (Jahweh) different from the divinities found just about everywhere in those days. All those deities were linked to particular places – mountains, rivers, cities, regions – whereas the god that speaks to Abraham is a god who is not tied down to one spot. This god is a sojourner god, a pilgrim God" (*The Pilgrim God. A Biblical Journey*, Washington, D.C., Pastoral, 1985, p. 13). Campese continues: "Yahweh is not a static, sedentary God, but a migrant God who is always present in the journey of his people... Yahweh is the true Leader of the journey (through the desert), the Presence who gives a sense of orientation and direction." That is why Yahweh initially resisted the building of the Temple in Jerusalem by King David. Yahweh never asked for a Temple made of cedar. He preferred living and moving about in a tent, as he had done for generations. "God's objection to the building of the temple represents a fundamental refusal of a static religion, a refusal on the part of God to live in a temple, a fixed, static space, because God wants to continue to be the God of the tent, the traveler God who always walks with Israel on its journey. God wants to be free to come and go with the people of Israel." Yahweh is the God of the tent! This reasoning of Bro. Campese echoes the suggestion made by the General Administration in "A Letter to All Confreres", a suggestion felicitously expressed by the phrase "the return to the dimension of itinerancy;" in a word, the return to a Scalabrinian spirituality of the tent. Campese concludes that Scalabrinians are missionaries, not pastors.

Conclusion

As we come to the end of this paper, we can perhaps better understand the conversion experience that is required of the true Scalabrinian missionary. A whole new mentality, a host of specific Christian virtues is required to work and pray like a true Scalabrinian,

to be a follower of the Venerable John Baptist Scalabrini, Father to the Migrants, a man of prodigious work and prayer. This conversion requires a *kenosis* from us, a self-emptying, like the *kenosis* of the Son of God who became man in the Incarnation; this conversion calls for a dying to self. Only time, good will, and the grace of the Holy Spirit will bring about a genuine Scalabrinian spirituality. As we said, our houses of formation have a critical role to play in this matter.

Unquestionably, a Scalabrinian spirituality is beginning to emerge. It is based on two pillars: 1) on the specific mission for migrants entrusted to us by the Church and 2) on the life and writings of our Founder, the Venerable John Baptist Scalabrini. The asceticism, the characteristic Christian virtues, the prayer life of Scalabrinians will basically be the same all over the world. True, this spirituality may have slightly different variations or nuances in different countries, given the cultural, political, demographic and religious conditions of these countries. But, basically, Scalabrinian priests, brothers, or sisters in North America are not spiritually different from those in South America, Europe, Africa or Australasia. Their *imitatio Christi* has basically the same features, the same scent, if you will. A Scalabrinian does not pray or work like a Jesuit or a Franciscan or a Maryknoll missionary. He prays and works in his own distinctive way, because his work and his prayer flow from "a Scalabrinian spirituality."

Toward a study of North American Scalabrinian spirituality*

DR. MARY ELIZABETH BROWN

This short sketch of North American Scalabrinian spirituality is based on a longer study of the Scalabrinians in North America from 1887 to 1934. As a base for a general study of Scalabrinian spirituality, that study has some limitations. It covered only the period from the founding of the Scalabrinian community until its permanent adoption of perpetual vows; the Scalabrinians have been affected by many events in the institute and in the world since 1934. The study covered a small geographic area by today's standards. Between 1887 and 1934, the Scalabrinians worked in large ports such as New York, in industrial cities such as Chicago and in one-company mining towns such as Iron Mountain, Michigan. However, the Scalabrinians worked in only two Canadian towns, and they had not yet begun their work on the West Coast, in the Southwest, or in Washington, D.C. Finally, the archival records are sporadic. The Province of Saint John the Baptist is missing many of its records from before 1927, the year in which Beniamino Franch became provincial superior.

Can these limited sources be used to identify some important influences on early North American Scalabrinian spirituality? The first important point seems to be that the pioneer Scalabrinians joined the community and quickly departed for the mission field. For example, Giacomo Gambera had already been a priest for ten years when he joined the Scalabrinians. He spent five months at Piacenza, some of which he spent helping Bishop Scalabrini organize a catechetical conference. He then sailed for the United States. Pio Parolin entered the

* This article, not presented during the Symposium, is published as a historian's contribution to the study of Scalabrinian spirituality.

Scalabrinians as a young man with a vocation to the priesthood and received all his priestly training at the Christopher Columbus Institute in Piacenza. As he wrote in his memoirs: "Here I must say that the studies I went through during my lifetime were not like those undergone in other institutes or seminaries, but they were rather accelerated and even though pursued with scrupulous attention, they were very abridged and concise. The need for workers in the Lord's vineyard was so great that it was necessary to compel the students to complete their courses as soon as possible so that they might run to the aid of the other missionaries, who were constantly clamoring for new priests." The speed with which Scalabrinians were sent into the missionary field meant they did not have much time for a novitiate, for community formation and for early practice in how to live and worship in a community setting.

Thus, and this is the second point, the Scalabrinians could not draw on their experiences in the seminary or in community life for nourishment for their spiritual life. Perhaps instead they drew upon their lives as laity and as individual Catholics. Nineteenth-century northern Italian lay Catholics had a variety of devotions available. Besides going to confession, hearing mass and receiving Communion, on any given day they could recite the rosary or wear a scapular or light a candle to a patron saint. Other devotions followed the calendar: First Fridays, the thirteen Tuesdays of Saint Anthony, Marian devotions in May and October. Unfortunately, it is hard to document which of these practices Scalabrinian clergy in North America followed, or whether they followed any of them. On the one hand, the priests seldom wrote about their devotional practices, and, on the other hand, the superiors in Piacenza and in Rome constantly wrote to encourage greater attention to spiritual life. One must conclude that the Scalabrinians frequently neglected devotional practice.

Yet, there are small, scattered pieces of evidence to the contrary. For example, the Scalabrinians were aware that there was a fairly new shrine to Our Lady of the Rosary at Pompei, for they named numerous parishes in honor of Our Lady of Pompei, and they were the ones who brought that title for the Blessed Mother to the United States. A visitor to one of the churches dedicated to Our Lady of Pompei, the one in Greenwich Village, noticed that the Italians preserved their particular religious customs; this was the only church in the neighborhood in which the parishioners lined up to pass

before the Christmas creche and kiss the statue of the Christ Child. To this day, that parish preserves a devotion once common in the mezzogiorno, in which a statue representing Christ taken down from the Cross is carried into the church by pall bearers and lies before the altar during a memorial service. Also, elderly clergy did describes rounds of devotions. In 1928, after forty years in the mission field, Giacomo Gambera took up residence at Our Lady of Pompei in Greenwich Village, where, he noted, the pastor, Antonio Demo, did schedule community devotions. In 1954, Pio Parolin also took up residence at Pompei, where he made up a busy daily devotional schedule: morning rosary, noon mass, participation in the perpetual novena of the day, reading his breviary and visiting the Blessed Sacrament.

The third important influence on Scalabrinian spirituality came from events in Italy. Professor Cataldo Naro has described the situation more fully; one point is significant here. In the nineteenth century, Italy's parliament adopted policies befitting a nineteenth-century liberal state. Most of these policies were *laissez-faire*. However, the more the state limited its activities in order to permit greater freedom in human actions and in the marketplace, the less it regulated, and the more it left the poor vulnerable to exploitation and to neglect. A host of saints, such as Giuseppe Benedetto Cottolengo (1786-1842), Vincenzo Pallotti (1795-1850), Maria Giuseppa Rossello (1811-1880), Maria Crocifissa Di Rosa (1813-1855), Giovanni Bosco (1815-1888), and Francesca Xavier Cabrini (1850-1917) arose to organize institutes of religious and institutions dedicated to the care of the poor and to their protection from exploitation. Bishop Scalabrini may soon be recognized as one of their number. Bishop Scalabrini is particularly interesting because he was active during a period of intense conflict between Church and state in Italy. Some in the Church took the position that almost any activity in the world represented a compromise with modern forces of liberalism and secularism and particularly a compromise with the Italian government. Bishop Scalabrini knew that the Gospel mandated special attention to the poor, and that such attention was undercut by a political stance which avoided involvement with modern problems. Not every person whom Bishop Scalabrini recruited for his missionary society was as articulate as he was, but, in general, they all tended to act in ways which made the bishop's philosophy active in the world.

A fourth and final influence on the pioneer North American

Scalabrinians was that they themselves were immigrants. The importance of the migrant missionaries will be developed further as we take up the next question. Given this background – their lack of formation for the spiritual life of a religious institute, their previous experience as Italian laity, their stance on the Italian political questions of their day and their experience as migrants – what can be said about how these men understood their spirituality?

First, for the Scalabrinians who wrote about it, their spirituality started with their priesthood. This may seem ironic given the brevity of their seminary training, but it reappears in numerous records. Giacomo Gambera was so impressed by his own ordination that he was unable to sing his first Mass. Pio Parolin was awed by the idea that however personally unworthy he felt himself to be, he was a priest forever. Antonio Demo took his priesthood seriously enough that he was scathing in his criticism of those who did not measure up to his high standards. In writing to a colleague, he commented: “As to the haughty and meddlesome priests which you indicated, I consider them failures who confuse jealousy with zeal for souls. They find satisfaction in failures like themselves. They are the tares of which the Gospel speaks (see Matthew 13:24-30) and should be denounced... They don’t respect the poor people, they take them by the neck and strangle them and when they are successful in claiming for the sheepfold of Jesus Christ a stray, they believe to have compensated for the numerous ones lost forever by the blows of their false zeal and impudence.” Among those who wrote less, the one hint about how they felt was the attention they paid to anniversaries of ordination. The early Scalabrinians celebrated anniversaries with such enthusiasm that as his twenty-fifth anniversary of ordination approached, Giacomo Gambera pleaded with his provincial superior to be allowed to celebrate it quietly. (The actual event was quite a celebration, with Father Gambera being brought to Boston, one of his favorite missions, for a reunion with his former parishioners at Sacred Heart, and he was quite happy with all the attention showered on him.)

Modern readers might note a certain hierarchical aspect to the Scalabrinians’ concept of the priesthood. They thought of the priesthood as a dignified position, and has having a sort of precedence over the laity. One has to see the priesthood as the Scalabrinians at that time saw it. The priesthood was an exalted position, but any superior person carried extra responsibility for the weak and vul-

nerable. Thus, and this is the second point, Scalabrinian spirituality was a pastoral spirituality, with particular attention to the work the priest did among the faithful.

Scalabrinian pastoral care was comprehensive; this was the third point. In the days before the Scalabrinians emphasized rotating missionaries among various positions, some Scalabrinians became thoroughly identified with one parish, as Beniamino Franch was with Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Melrose Park. Within their parishes, the Scalabrinians did everything they could think of for their parishioners. They celebrated the sacraments, of course, balancing Italian custom with what the youngsters were learning in the United States and with what the Church required for valid liturgical practice. They constructed facilities, such as churches, rectories, schools, convents and community centers – Louis Toma was at Saint Lazarus in East Boston for so long that he lived from the era in which people walked to church to the era in which the parish needed to build a parking lot. They provided for the needs of parishioners of every age group: day care centers, parochial schools, athletic and dramatic programs for adolescents, sodalities for adult men and women, and, in Chicago and Rhode Island, homes for senior citizens. What they could not do themselves, they found elsewhere: Antonio Demo familiarized himself with the social services of Greenwich Village, the Archdiocese of New York and also the city and state, so that he could direct troubled parishioners to hospitals, special schools, job opportunities, and other places that might serve their needs.

Fourth, the Scalabrinians' spirituality aimed at what we might call – what Father Joseph Visentin has called in another paper – assimilation. Another way to put it is to say that the Scalabrinians followed Paul's advice in Thessalonians 5:21, "Test everything and retain what is good." If one reads their writing, one might conclude, along with historian Peter D'Agostino, that they were "missionaries in Babylon," determined to hold on to their ancient faith in the face of a modern secular society that they distrusted. However, over the years, they developed a distinctly Italian-American faith. One historical anecdote might make this clearer. Bishop Scalabrini was convinced that language saved faith, and when he visited the United States in 1901, he announced to his missionaries that he intended to use Sacred Heart parish in Boston for an experiment. He would send a community of sisters known as the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, who would conduct an Italian school for the parish. The pastor of Sacred

Heart, Giacomo Gambera, was extremely troubled. On the one hand, experience taught him that Bishop Scalabrini was usually correct. On the other hand, experience had also taught him that his parish did not have the financial resources to support a school, and that the parish children needed to have their lessons in English, a language they were learning on the streets and playgrounds. Father Gambera resigned rather than challenge Bishop Scalabrini directly. However, the Scalabrinians' attitude toward language was probably closer to Father Gambera's than to Bishop Scalabrini's. The early Scalabrinians made heroic efforts to learn English while they were already at work in the mission field, and they kept reminding the superiors in Rome to adequately prepare seminarians and young priests in the languages they would need in the mission field.

These four characteristics – an emphasis on the priesthood, on the pastoral aspect of the priesthood, on a comprehensive form of pastoral care and on selective assimilation to the surroundings in which they carried out their mission – are fairly clear from the records in the Scalabrinian archives. There is one final question that is more complex. Did the pioneer Scalabrinians value their own parishes over their religious institute? The question comes up partly because of the renewal of the Scalabrinian community beginning in 1924. At that time, one complaint frequently raised was that the missionaries had fallen away from the founder's vision and lacked community spirit. Also, if one considered the missionaries' position, one might conclude there were reasons why the missionaries might feel more loyal to their parishes than to their institute. The Scalabrinian institute had been reorganized several times before 1924. Bishop Scalabrini introduced simple perpetual vows in 1894; Domenico Vicentini altered these to oaths of perseverance in 1908. Meanwhile, the structure of parochial life remained the same. It must have been disheartening to step backward from perpetual vows to the oaths, to cease electing superior generals and to accept direction from the Consistorial Congregation. By contrast, parishes showed slow but steady improvement, with new buildings, more cohesive congregations, more complex parish programs and better bank accounts.

The historical records indicate the center of Scalabrinian unity did not lie with the Scalabrinian superiors in Italy. The three Scalabrinian superior generals between 1887 and 1924 were all known in North America. Every member who entered the community before 1905 met

Bishop Scalabrini. Domenico Vicentini had served in the United States in the 1890s, most notably in Boston and in New York. Pacifico Chenuil had served from 1905 to 1919 at Holy Guardian Angel in Chicago, and had been provincial superior from 1907 to 1919. However, in another sense, the superior generals were distant leaders. They were far way in Piacenza or in Rome. They sent directions only occasionally. They had no mechanism for enforcing their directions.

However, the historical record indicates another center of Scalabrinian unity. The Scalabrinians' ties to their institute ran through their confreres. The missionaries trained together, crossed the ocean together, and worked "together," albeit in different places. Missionaries frequently wrote each other. They did not send birthday cards, but they observed the feasts of the saints for whom they were named; Antonio Demo, for example, was born on April 23 but received far more mail on June 13, the feastday of Saint Anthony of Padua. They sent get-well wishes, they practiced their English on each other, or they just wrote about the news at their missions. The older missionaries made it their job to learn about the younger ones so that the new missionaries could be placed in appropriate positions as assistants or as pastors. One of the reasons we know so much about unworthy Scalabrinians was that good and dedicated Scalabrinians kept an eye on them, reported on their wrongdoings, and tried to limit the damage they did to the institute's reputation. When Pius XI asked for an investigation of the Society of Saint Charles, the American Scalabrinians conspired to try to figure out how to make the inquiry reflect favorably on them.

The evidence, then, does suggest a certain kind of collegiality, rooted in a common mission and common formative experiences of travel and work in a mission field. This is the observation that stays with the person privileged to read the records and peek over the shoulders, so to speak, of the pioneer Scalabrinian missionaries in North America. The early Scalabrinians took to heart the question in James 2:14, "My brothers, what good is it to profess faith without practicing it?" They lived in a time when the government was professedly and proudly *laissez faire*, they had a large scope for their charity, and they were charitable. They had a incarnational spirituality, in the sense of making real the words they read in Scripture and said in their prayers.

Bibliographical Note

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The spirituality of Scalabrinians in Europe

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Introduction: the source of our spirituality

Like all our confreres, we – Scalabrinians of Europe- “discover the sources of our own missionary spirit” (*RoL* 3) in the thought and action of our Founder and in the migration theology, which helps us to read God’s plan along the path people travel. Additional significant spiritual inspiration comes to us from the contact with “Scalabrinian shrines” (Como, Piacenza, Milan) and from the testimony of various Missionary figures who have roused and animated our vocation; as has above all, the life and traditions of our Congregation which has now reached a century of Scalabrinian history and has made a deep impression in our *Rules of Life*. Concretely:

- the theology of migration has trained us to discover in the suffered history of human migration the work of the Spirit, which guides humanity towards its final destiny in God. Therefore: 1. to reread the migratory adventure of our people in the light of the dynamism of the Exodus; 2. to see in this migratory experience the beginning of that new “people of God”, which is always migrant, that is in march towards its true homeland.

- Our Founder’s example and the history of our Congregation have filled the numerous initiatives carried out by our European Provinces during this short span with Scalabrinian spirit.

In all of them, in fact, we can find characteristic elements, which are by now an integral part of our spirituality: the care and the understanding of the migrant; the ability of “being close” to all migrants, especially the poorest, sharing their life and their problems; the desire

to walk with the most humble, working to defend their human, cultural and religious values; the dedication to daily charity and through more permanent structures (nursery schools, canteens, old people's homes, press, study centres); the search for dialogue with the local Church; the opening to different migrant groups; the promotion of vocations, the formation of lay people...

These are the "places of our history." They constitute some of the themes which will be briefly developed in the following pages.

1. The "spirituality of Scalabrinian traditions and places" in Italy

Italy has the privilege of possessing many important "Scalabrinian shrines." Their custody is entrusted to the Sacred Heart Province, whose job it is to make them known and loved. The following are the most important:

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|----------------|---|
| Fino Mornasco: | - Giovanni Battista Scalabrini's birthplace. |
| Como: | - The Seminary of St. Abbondio, where Scalabrini was student, professor and rector.
- Church of St. Bartholomew, where Scalabrini had been parish priest (from 1870). |
| Piacenza: | - The Cathedral, where Scalabrini was bishop (1876-1905) and where his tomb is located.
- The Basilica of St. Antonino, where his first two missionaries took their oath (1887).
- The Mother-House with the church of St. Carlo and the Scalabrini Museum.
- The shrine of Our Lady of Grace in Rivergaro and that of Bedonia.
- The railway station, from where the faithful left to go abroad. |
| Milano: | - The Cathedral with the tomb of our patron St. Carlo.
- The central railroad station, where Scalabrini, on the arrival of a large group of immigrants, decided to start his missionary work. |

All Scalabrinians love these "shrines", from which the spirituality

of their Founder still springs forth. They are loved as they are the roots of their vocation, knowing full well that- as the proverb says “one doesn’t know where one is going to, if one doesn’t know from where one comes.” The Scalabrinians of Europe, in particular, carry in their hearts these “shrines” where they once saw their missionary vocation emerge and grow.

Let us consider the House in Piacenza: for decades this was the real Mother-House, as it had the job of recruiting, training and sending the Scalabrinian Missionaries throughout the world; it was there that, normally, the religious profession, the priestly ordination and the moving ceremony of the giving of the cross to departing missionaries took place; it was there that the songs which celebrated our missionary ideal were born; it was there that the missionaries returning from America filled us with enthusiasm with their words during the time set aside for spiritual reading.

Or let us consider the shrine of Our Lady of Grace in Rivergaro (Piacenza). It was one of our Founder’s favourite shrines. It was erected by him in 1902, and he had a crypt dug out in which he wanted to be buried; twenty days before his death, he led a large pilgrimage there and delivered his last sermon on the Virgin defined as his “swan’s song”. Having been entrusted into our care in 1927, the shrine became the first pastoral position to be accepted by the Scalabrinians in Italy.

2. The spirituality of “being close-by”

We intend to apply the expression “being close-by” to all the initiatives, which our missionaries undertook in order to be near the migrants and to approach them one by one so as to understand their problems and share their lives.

As far as the Immaculate Conception Province is concerned, we find that our Missionaries took upon themselves this motto of “closeness” wherever they went from the very beginning (from 1936 on) in all the tasks entrusted to them: whether with the workers in the suburbs of Paris, amid the workers of the smelting-furnaces at Hayange (Moselle), amid the peasant population of Agen (Lot-en-Garonne), amid the miners of Luxemburg or in Belgium, amid their fellow-countrymen housed in the former concentration camps, in the *cités* full of Italian families or in the *cantines* reserved for men only.

That long period was dominated by a activity called – more or less appropriately – the “Bonomelli method”. It was centered on intense religious, charitable, educational and cultural activity. But, above all, it occupied the Fathers in numerous and difficult flying missions.

Let us consider, for example, Paris, which together with its suburbs counted 150,000 Italians. The flying missions began in September with a large popular pilgrimage of thousands of people to the cathedral of Notre-Dame.

In 1936-1937 48 of these missions were carried out. Each one lasted a week. All the families of the poorest districts of the city and of the *banlieue*, where our countrymen lived were visited systematically and rapidly; then, from the Thursday to the Saturday, there were three evenings of preaching; everything was concluded by the Sunday morning with Mass and communion for all.

These flying missions were exhausting, especially for the less young, however the hard work was usually accompanied by well deserved satisfaction.

Our Missionaries did all they could in the spirit of the teachings of our Founder. Did not Bishop Scalabrini create his Congregation “to evangelise the children of poverty and work?” Here were the Scalabrinians preaching the Gospel amid the poor and the isolated, to those who had to be reached at home, if they really wanted to get to know these people.

This missionary style of our Missionaries, therefore, wasn't a consequence of a particular pastoral method, but more the expression of an original interior dimension: the Scalabrinian spirituality which pushed them into “being close-by” everyone, and in particular to the poor and the abandoned.

The Scalabrinians in Germany, the future Saint Raphael Province, also knew the difficulty of “being close-by”, especially during the Second World War. The stipulation of the Rome-Berlin axis included a treaty of expatriation of the so called “voluntary” workforce for seasonal work in the *Reich*. Hundreds of thousands of Italians left to work in Nazi Germany: there were already about half a million in 1942.

It was then that the Italian military Ordinariate asked the Scalabrinians for chaplains of work for our fellow-countrymen. The request was accepted by Card. Ross, who was our Superior General and a number of Scalabrinians immediately left for Germany: Fr. An-

tonio Ferronato, Fr. Remo Rizzato, and Fr. Giuseppe Zanatta in 1941; Fr. Vittorio Michelato, Fr. Guglielmo Ferronato and Fr. Luigi Zonta in March 1942; later Fr. Aristide Pagani and Fr. Gino Macchiavelli (1942); Fr. Martino Bortolazzo and Fr. Adolfo Centofante (1943).

These fathers were very young missionaries very recently ordained and sent into danger without an adequate knowledge of the German language, alone, into vast territories to visit the Italians on their country farms, in their small and medium sized industries, and in the work camps. It was a difficult and challenging task, to which the missionaries were tied day and night.

In his *memories*, Fr. Luigi Zonta¹, remembers the moments of anguish and fear, the drama of solitude, the immense workload, the frenetic running from one camp to another, the improvised liturgical celebrations, the interminable talks, but also the great apostolic satisfactions of those times.

Those Scalabrinians didn't have an organised pastoral ministry; they were frontier priests, sustained by the compassion of the good Samaritan. They felt the need "to be close-by" their brother in need, to make him feel a little warmth and hope, to awaken a flicker of human dignity in those desperate people.

These are facts which happened a long time ago. However some of the aspects of that way of life have remained inside the spiritual veins of the Fathers of the future St. Raphael Province: that of looking for the immigrant, talking and listening to him, the capability of the missionaries to adapt to the most varied situations, the joy of improvising, the courage in facing even the most difficult circumstances and finding the adequate solutions for them.

The same Scalabrinian spirit of "being close-by" their immigrant brothers animated also our Missionaries, who operated in the different centres entrusted to us in Switzerland: Basel (1947), Rorschach and St. Gallen (1952), Naters and Brig (1953), Solothurn (1955), Lausanne (1962), Fribourg (1965). So, we find the Scalabrinians present from the very beginning wherever there were even small groups of Italians: in the factory-workers' slums, and in the builder's yards of the seasonal workers; in the pensions, where factory girls were crowded together by the tens; in the districts inhabited by Italians.

¹ Fr. Luigi Zonta, *Il camminatore. Cinque anni di avventura di un Missionario Scalabriniano*, Cassola, Tipografia Moro, 1991.

The aim of the Scalabrinians has always been not to leave their fellow-countrymen alone with the difficult process of adapting to the new society, to break their isolation, to be near them with human warmth and with a word of hope. In this way they put into practise the Scalabrinian motto: "Bring comfort and faith and the smile of the homeland wherever an Italian migrant is to be found."

This missionary presence in various nations of the three European Provinces would have been incompleting without the precious contribution of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles – Scalabrinians. Their role and their activities have not yet been fully studied.

3. The spirituality of walking with the lowest, working to defend their cultural and religious values

A problem which the Scalabrinians had to face in the Immaculate Conception Province from the very beginning of their mission, and which was to get more serious in the following decades, can be summarised with this dilemma: should the missionaries operate to safeguard the values (religious and cultural) of the countrymen in their care? Or should they work towards integrating them rapidly into their host country?

This second hypothesis was favoured mostly by people who feared that immigration could change the characteristics of the French nation; but there were also parish priests who would have preferred to see the immigrants fill their churches instead of the mission chapels.

Our missionaries came up against many difficulties in this area and they have left us plenty of written evidence. But together – and quite rightly – they were convinced that the integration of the Italians into the French Church needed far more time than most parish priests thought necessary.

It was in fact proved that, in those days, the old Italian immigrants had managed, in a way, to integrate into the new society. The new arrivals, instead, were very often quartered in slums or in the *cantines*, with no contact with the French parishes. So, for the first as for the last arrivals there was a need for ethnic Missions, at least for the time being, which could reach them more easily and transform itself gradually into "a bridge" towards the local Church.

Amidst all this the Scalabrinians remained faithful to the spirit of

their Founder, who as he had already done in his *Memorial* sent to Card. Merry Del Val on May 5th, 1905 (less than a month before his death) insists that the children of the immigrants learn the “language of the country which is their new homeland and the language of their country of origin, as language is the arcane way of preserving faith.”

Moreover, as was later to be confirmed, in this Scalabrinian perception were the official documents of the church: the apostolic constitution *Exsul Familia* (1952) of Pius XII, which urges a specific religious assistance for the immigrants through the institutions of the missions *cum cura animarum* and in particular Paul VI's Motu proprio *Pastoralis migratorum cura* (1969).

From the very beginning of their apostolate our missionaries had applied this clear pastoral norm: respect the immigrant's identity and know how to wait patiently through the long periods needed for a true and positive integration. This was the evangelical way, strictly Scalabrinian, fruit of a precise spirituality which was received from the Founder.

The Scalabrinians in Switzerland and Germany didn't find any particular difficulty in their specific pastoral ministry. They too developed an intense pastoral activity in favour of the lowest, in particular in the sector dealing with catechism, which was so dear to Bishop Scalabrini.

The situation of the Italians in their care in the 60's was characterised by various aspects: dispersion, high mobility and, therefore, lack of continuity.

The faith of the emigrants, who came mainly from the south, had particular characteristics: it was based on a popular pity and on a Christian culture which was often steeped in tradition or even superstition.

In answer to this precise situation, the Missions in Switzerland and Germany turned to a “pastoral ministry for emergency situations” based on traditional activities: in the central position the celebration of Mass (often accompanied by a film projection as a means of aggregation), catechism in preparation for the sacraments, then the care for the sick (with the help of volunteers), visiting the collective housing and the prisons, pilgrimages and outings.

With Vatican Council II (1962-1965), a radical pastoral renewal has been underway. Especially at the end of the 60's and the beginning of the 70's, the Missions move on to a more articulate pastoral plan, in which “new directives” emerge: the organisation of Christian

groups and the renewed catechism in preparation for the sacraments (for both the young and their parents).

There are still a few obscure areas: at times religious education hesitates to impose itself, some social classes remain detached, there is difficulty in starting a real pastoral plan for the working classes.

However, at the beginning of the 70's, the maturity to face the next step in the migratory pastoral for the Italians was reached above all in helping the "lowest" to move forward.

4. A spirituality in "the dimension of social work"

A long chapter which still has to be written, deals with the Sacred Heart Province, which has worked with incredible enthusiasm at the service of new migrants, both in the cities or out in the countryside. One only has to think of the shelters organised around Rome station, of the tomato picking work camps in the southern Italy, of the shelters at Bassano, of the initiative of *Casa a Colori* (Rainbow House Cooperative). All of which are worthy of the best traditions of our Congregation.

This spirituality – like the care for the needs of the poorest, the dignity of the human being, the aim towards a greater justice and answering to the needs through basic social work – has always been alive also in the Immaculate Conception Province.

All the missions – along the course of their history – have lived out the mandate of charity. Even amidst the many different activities, they felt particularly committed to the assistance of the poorest, the elderly and the sick.

The meeting place of the poor was above all the mission office. Fr. Rino Amabiglia, – for example – remembers the social secretariat of Paris – Rue de Montreuil, put into his hands by Fr. Vittorio Michelato just after the war and writes: "That office was an education in life. In that live contact with the humiliations of those humiliated, with that obvious need for help... I began my missionary life."

In 1954 the Château d'Écoublay at Fontenay-Trésigny (in the suburbs of Paris) was purchased to help solve the problem of the aged. For about forty years this old people's Home for elderly women was a significant example of the obligation that the Immaculate Conception Province felt towards a category of people who were in great need of medical care and kindness.

The visits to the sick in hospital were also of primary concern for our missions. The hospitalised were taken care of by the Fathers themselves or by voluntary groups. It is a well known fact that the hospitals – especially in the large French cities – have an enormous number of Italian patients along with the sick that arrive directly from Italy for special medical care (cancer, transplants, cardiac surgery).

One sector, which was neglected – unfortunately, for a long time – is the working class sector – known as ACO and JOC in France, with the *équipes ouvrières* in Belgium. But even this isolation began to break up with the arrival of ACLI which in Belgium found a real protagonist in Fr. Giacomo Sartori. The task wasn't easy. It meant giving a worker's mentality to thousands of Italian miners, mostly former farm workers; it was necessary to make them see that the Church wasn't only interested in their Sunday duties, but also in their human and union rights.

This social work gradually extended to all the missions in the Province. So much so that in Paris, in 1964, Fr. Silvio Pedrollo was nominated coordinator of ACLI in France. The working class world moreover inspired other initiatives among our missionaries: priests at work, *vicaires missionnaires*, training courses for pastoral workers, and involvement in specialised sectors, such as ACO and JOC.

In all this “being close-by” the needy (the unemployed, the sick, the elderly, the workers who were often exploited) we can easily discover an aspect of that pastoral need, which had inspired our Founder and which had brought him to set up diverse social work, and promote the associations of the new working class in his diocese. Once again we can recognise here reflection of authentic Scalabrinian spirituality.

Another particular sector is that of the Study Centres and the press. The Scalabrinians of France found themselves at the heart of the problem. The first involvement with the media began on January 7th, 1944, when the founder and editor of the weekly paper *Il Corriere* was assassinated and his place taken over by Fr. Giovanni Triacca. With the transfer to the Mission of Marseilles, the weekly continued to have commercial success, reaching 13.000 subscriptions but when it was finally transferred to Paris (St.-Maur-des-Fossés) in 1962, declined rapidly and closed down in 1972.

It was substituted by a number of monthlies: *Missione-Migrazione* in Belgium (from 1948), *Voce Italiana* in the Lyons region (1971), *Nuovi Orizzonti Emigrazione* in the Parisian region (1972). The three

monthlies in 1995 merged and became *Nuovi Orizzonti Europa*.

We should not overlook the editorial activity (the studies and history of emigration) undertaken by Fr. Benito Gallo in Luxemburg, Fr. Abramo Seghetto in Belgium and Fr. Antonio Perotti in France.

To Fr. Antonio Perotti also goes the merit for the growth and development of the Migration Study Centre in Paris. He began in 1973 with the migration documentation Centre, entrusted to Fr. Luigi Taravella. Later it was to have great success and official recognition. Recently, under the new initials CIEMI (*Centre d'Information et d'Etudes sur les Migrations Internationales*), it has specialised in three different sectors: a documentation service (with a library open to the public); the bimonthly magazine *Migrations-Société*, and the training and editorial activity sector. All this research and information on the problems of migration correspond perfectly to the ideal and initiatives of our Founder, as well as to the directives which come from numbers 27-29 of our *Rules of Life*.

It is, however, Switzerland in particular that impresses us with its incredible quantity of social work.

From the very beginning of the century Geneva had been the city preferred by the Bonomellian priests (don Luigi Motti and don Adolfo Dosio). These fathers had gradually initiated work of great social value: the Italian Chapel (1902), the workers' Welfare Organisation (1904) the orphanage at Grand-Saconnex (1916), the old people's home at Petit-Saconnex (1921) and *La Provvidenza* at Carouge (1936).

At the end of August 1939, the Scalabrinian Fr. Enrico Larcher arrived in Geneva and, after the death of don Dosio (14th October 1942), became responsible for the work of the Bonomellians in France.

So, through Fr. Enrico Larcher, Scalabrinians in Switzerland took on the important inheritance of the Bonomellian priests: this consisted in an extraordinary sense of help attitude towards the needy and masterful coordination of social and religious work; this was later to mark the Missionary work in the centres which would have been put into Scalabrinian care.

In the 50's and 60's a typical Swiss Mission centre was equipped for social work, with welcoming structures (bar, canteen, nursery) and with a Chapel around which catechism was organised.

At the beginning of the 60's, some Missions even provided a school (Bern, St. Gallen, Thun, Basel), thereby taking upon themself-

ves even the work of the emigrant children's scholastic education. This marked the beginning of the Mission schools and it is one of the most glorious and painful chapters of their history. On the one hand it revealed the Scalabrinian sensitivity towards the preservation of one's original culture and on the other the desire to offer its service to the children and their families.

The Missions in Germany also wrote glorious pages in those hard years after the war (the 50's and the beginning of the 60's). They were confronted by an emigration which was often lacking in everything and with serious conditions of isolation (slums and communal housing); an emigration broken up into territories which were quite vast and marked by a high turn-over.

As the Italian Missions were not supported by the *Caritasverband*, they had to undertake a vast activity of human, Christian and social promotion, often in an improvised and fragmented way. It was supply-work, but it was vital for our countrymen who were in need of everything. Later in the 70's the German Missions too dealt with the issue of a school for emigrant children. This turned out to be a very critical problem. The CSER survey in Germany showed that amongst the immigrant population there was a large number with very little scholastic education, while others had dropped out of secondary school in Italy because they had emigrated. For all these people and for all those who wanted to improve their cultural and professional condition, evening classes for lower and higher education were started in 1970. The most famous being the school housed in the Mission of Cologne, thanks to the work of Fr. Giancarlo Cordani and later of dr. Corcagnani (1972). The evening classes in Cologne gradually consolidated until they became the current *Istituto Scolastico Italiano Scalabrini* (ISIS), which is recognised by the diocese and the German authorities.

This work began thanks to the priests, who had no experience of running schools but who were animated by a strong desire to render a service to emigration. It was a necessary initiative to create a culturally prepared nucleus to animate an Italian isolated and alienated population. In fact the young people who came out of ISIS became themselves teachers of the Italian language and culture, quite capable of confronting a leading German culture.

Therefore from the love for emigration, so alive in the hearts of our Missionaries, sprang both the ISIS and the courage of a great cultural adventure.

5. A “spirituality of incarnation” as dialogue with the local church

The Italian Sacred Heart Province has undergone a pastoral turning-point in these last decades. We have seen how the first religious assignment was the Shrine of the Our Lady of Grace at Rivergaro (1927). The second was the parish of the Most Holy Redeemer in Rome (1950).

But the real pastoral turning-point comes in the 60's. In order to promote vocational activities other positions were accepted: in 1966 the Parish of St. Andrew at Manfredonia and the Parish of St. Mary Queen at Siponto; in 1976 the Parish of St. Bartholomew at Osimo and in 1977 the pastoral area of Briatico, in Calabria. Two missionary centres were also opened in the Milan region: in 1977 at Cinisello Balsamo and in 1979 the Parish of St. Mary of the Mt. Carmel in Milan; in 1984 *Associazione Scalabrini per Profughi, Emigrati e Rifugiati* (ASPER) was founded; lastly the Parish of St. John the Baptist in Brescia (Stocchetta), once our presence in Farfengo and in Manebio had been terminated.

Diverse and fundamental events have led to a turning point in pastoral ministry.

Above all comes the “europeanization” of the Congregation, which from 1936 took on Missions in France, Germany, Switzerland, Luxemburg, England. In this way a significant step was taken allowing European and Italian Missionaries, to meet often and exchange reciprocal help.

Then comes diligent and important migration work, such as the directorships of migration work in Italy of the Pontifical Migration College, and of the chaplains on board ship.

The decisive factor, however, came about in the 80's and 90's when Italy changed from a country of emigrants to a country of immigrants: the Sacred Heart Province then took on particular parishes, opened centres of assistance and offered qualified staff to the national and diocese organisations for emigrants. All this was approved by the Holy See in 1966 and was carried out with the intent of expanding the Congregation.

A distinctive feature is also the presence of the Scalabrinians in England: here our missionaries chose to be present as a liaison between the local church and the mission. Our residences in Bedford, Peterborough and London consist of centres with all the parish struc-

tures; but, at the same time they consider themselves temporary missions trying to create a real community of faith in the various countries.

Furthermore the Scalabrinians in England helped establish many associations (like FAIE, FASFA and AIFL) and together promoted information through a weekly publication, first called *La Squilla* and *L'Italiano*, then *La Voce degli italiani*.

Other Scalabrinian Provinces in Europe during the 60's and 70's were marked by deep forces of renewal: first the Vatican Council II (1962-1965), then the Motu proprio *Pastoralis migratorum cura* (1969) and finally the celebration of the special General Chapter.

The Immaculate Conception Province made this enthusiasm for renewal its own starting from the Assembly held at the abbey of Maredsous (Belgium) on the 15th-19th February 1965. The need was then felt to break away from the pastoral method of the "parallel churches" and to establish a real dialogue with the local Church. Many significant experiences were then undertaken, above all through taking charge of French territorial parishes in which many foreigners lived: Carrières-sur-Seine (1962), Réveil Matin (1966), St. Charles-Haucourt (1967), Cité Bosment (1973), Fuveau Provence (1968), Marseilles-Le Canet (1989), Sérémange (1989).

An example to point out is the experience of Carrières-sur-Seine, where the three different components (French parish, Italian mission and Portuguese mission) don't function as "parallel churches", but as a single larger community of the local church. The same can be said for the city of Marseilles, in which four different entities interact: the Italian Mission with Fr. Marcello Bertinato, the interethnic group *Enfants d'aujourd'hui, Monde de demain* encouraged by Fr. Elia Bortignon, the parish of Canet with Fr. Francesco Danese and that of Tholonet with Fr. Lino Celeghin.

The Province of St. Raphael also underwent a deep evolution in the 60's and 70's. Having got over the first phase of basic assistance (bar, canteen and lodgings), our Missionaries felt the need to move on to a more organic pastoral, addressing the family and all its members. It was in this way that a parish type ethnic pastoral model was born which wasn't limited only to the liturgy in preparation for the sacraments, but based on more solid structures: catechism for children, youth groups, training for pastoral workers (teachers of catechism, group entertainers, pastoral council).

This work continued into the 70's, with the intent of creating

more lively Christian communities to be actively engaged in pastoral life. Together a more "political" view of the migratory phenomenon was promoted with the intent of saving the integral man. Lastly, the work to involve laity in the structures and pastoral activity of the Mission was examined more closely, in order to offer our collaborators a theological and cultural formation and to give priority to evangelization.

These are the characteristics of the Scalabrinian spirituality in the Province of St. Raphael: characteristics which are in our *Rules of Life* number 7.

If we then look towards the 80's, we can see that the same Province has always moved forward. It is felt that in the relationship between the local Church and the Italian Missions in Switzerland, the deanery meetings, the meetings with the commission and the councils or even the participation in the local pastoral structures are not enough. One can perceive that in this way one always remains an outsider, even though one enjoys the cordial hospitality of the local Church. Perhaps even the concept of an "ethnic pastoral ministry" is no longer satisfactory; there is the need to take a real step forward towards building a single Church in a pentecostal perspective.

Up until now only timid tentatives have been made: think of the Basel Mission, which was established as a "personal" Italian parish in 1995; or the Parish of St. Redempteur in Lausanne, where a closer collaboration with the Italian Mission is foreseen.

What is really needed is a real "Pentecostal" Church. This is the challenge for the future, and the Scalabrinian Missions, within their limits, are called upon to become "pentecostal yeast" in today's Church.

A similar argument can be made for the Scalabrinian Missions of Germany. In recent years, the old idea of "integrating = assimilating" the immigrant has become outdated. We are becoming more increasingly aware that our society is in fact "pluriethnic" and "pluricultural"; and it is going to become "interethnic" and "intercultural".

Keeping this situation in mind, ecclesiastical thinking tends to abandon the concept of a "parallel community" to make room for communities which meet and interact and which feel an integral part of a single Church. From a theological and pastoral point of view this is the "Pentecost" season of today's Church.

It is in this perspective that with the taking on of the territorial parish of St. Andreas in Munich at the beginning of the 90's, an inter-

ethnic pastoral character becomes more evident: a territorial German Parish, an Italian ethnic Mission, and a Portuguese ethnic Mission. Three complementary forms of Scalabrinian presence in the same territory.

Cologne, instead, has an articulate presence in the Italian ethnic Missions, Youth pastoral Centre and ISIS; Stuttgart points to the formative aspect: Italian ethnic Missions, ASTEA and Spiritual Centre for Young People.

6. Spirituality as “fraternity between the different ethnic groups”

We have already presented the pastoral turning point of the Sacred Heart Province: how it opened its doors to different immigrant groups in Italy in these last decades. The same phenomenon can be found in the other European Provinces with a higher or lower degree of intensity.

The Immaculate Conception Province undertook this path years earlier opening quite a few Catholic Portuguese Missions: at Carrières-sur-Seine (1966), the Parish of Amora in Portugal (1971) followed by the Parish of Telões in 1983 and the Parish of Pardilhó in 1988, the Portuguese Mission of Esch-sur-Alzette (1976) and that of Schieren (1984) in Luxemburg, which was opened also to the Italian community.

This innovating initiative developed further with the arrival in the Province of Italo-Brazilian and Brazilian confreres. This fact gave rise to a particular spirituality which regards “the values of nationality, culture, national boundaries and ethnic belonging as more relative..., while rediscovering the values of fraternity, companionship and listening” (write the Fathers of Carrières-sur-Seine).

Furthermore, facing other groups which are still living the experience of migration in its most painful and discriminatory aspects, some confreres have taken on the work of sharing, promoting and being a testimony of faith, dialogue and inter-religious exchange.

Perhaps the best comment on the opening to the Portuguese world was given by Fr. Sisto Caccia, who on 9th April, 1981 wrote, “In this it seems that we can see a revealing sign of the capacity of our Congregation to carry out Bishop Scalabrini’s perception, which, starting from the Italians, intended to open the doors to migrants of other nationalities” (in *Collegamento*, n.76, pg. 2).

The Province of St. Raphael also undertook this path in the 90's. We have already mentioned the Portuguese ethnic Mission in Munich; another similar one is in Bern.

However, the one which draws more attention is the one in Geneva. To that city, with an invitation by the diocese, came Fr. Pietro Granzotto in 1989, a veteran of the Portuguese Missions in Luxemburg and France. He was assistant Vicar to don Bartolo Pereira, whose place he was to take in 1991. This was the beginning of an important Scalabrinian Mission in the canton of Geneva with 30,000 Portuguese speaking migrants. This was a significant happening for the Province of St. Raphael.

7. Scalabrinian spirituality in promoting vocation and in the formation of laypeople

The Scalabrinian presence in the Sacred Heart Province greatly extended itself in the 30's with the opening of many Seminaries: in Bassano del Grappa (1935), at Cermenate-Como (1938), at Rezzato-Brescia (1947).

Then, to cover the vocational crisis, other positions were accepted in the centre and south of Italy: Loreto-Ancona (1964), Siponto-Foggia (1966), Carmiano-Lecce (1974), Farfengo-Brescia (1981).

So, by the end of the 70's the Province had kept its role of large seminary of the Congregation. Then the process of restructuring began in the 80's. Within a decade (1979-1989) four seminaries were alienated (Cermenate, Rezzato, Crespano, Farfengo) and two others were closed (Carmiano and Loreto).

Notwithstanding these "losses", the Sacred Heart Province still considers its primary task as that of vocational promotion. Furthermore it can always work in the training of staff for seminaries favouring the rediscovery of our specific Scalabrinian spirituality.

It should be noted that – as a precious instrument of study and information – the magazine *L'Emigrato*, founded by Scalabrini himself in 1903, belongs now to the Sacred Heart Province. In addition there exists a vital link with CSER (*Centro Studi Emigrazione-Roma*), the first Scalabrinian study-centre, created in 1963.

From the very beginning the Immaculate Conception Province was involved with the vocational problem. This is proved by the fact that it has already given the Congregation a number of Missionaries.

But its systematic intervention in this field only began with Fr. Bruno Zannini, who in February 1970 founded the Youth Community of Strasbourg, from which came three missionaries, apart from other layman staff working in different ecclesiastical sectors.

Then, in 1971 began the experience of the Portuguese parish of Amora, assigned to the Immaculate Conception Province in 1976. Following an appropriate vocation sensitization effort, a house of formation for young candidates was opened in 1980; and, in 1991, a formal thirty room seminary was inaugurated. Until now it hasn't given the results hoped for. However, it has filled the Missionaries dedicated to vocation promotion with Scalabrinian spirit and has infused at least a minimal amount of interest in all the Scalabrinians of the Province.

The activities for the training of laymen is also being fully developed. Almost every Mission has biblical or theological workshops for adults. The Province also runs a *Centre d'Accueil* in the Château d'Ecoubly at Fontenay-Trésigny (near Paris) which is open to study groups, spiritual retreats, and workshops, and to all nationalities: and therefore corresponds "to the Scalabrinian spirit and to the mission that enlivens us in coming together and in the encounter of men from different cultures." There is also a Provincial Commission for the formation of adults which has been promoting meetings for four years now. The meetings are held at the Château d'Ecoubly and at other locations in France, Belgium and Luxemburg, and they are open to all our Missions in the Province.

It is all a training programme which "goes back to our Founder's aim, of making the layman the strong point in missionaries activities" and which corresponds to what is called for in our *Rules of Life* n. 37.

As far as the Province of St. Raphael is concerned, we find the CSERPE at the forefront in the training of laypeople. Founded in 1972 as a Pastoral Centre, it immediately participated in great sociological surveys in collaboration with CSER. Then, after the pressing requests made by the Missions, it developed especially the sector for the training of adults in the work of the Fathers Tino Lovison, Gildo Baggio, Tarcisio Pozzi and Beniamino Rossi.

In 1982 with the arrival of the new director, Fr. Silvano Gugliemi, the CSERPE is re-launched as a pastoral centre with special emphasis on Christian theological training. In this way different training activities are organised: Courses in theology for pastoral work, Courses for ongoing formation, area meetings, days of training for the engaged couples and other categories. Members of religious Con-

gregations as well as 147 lay people attended the courses from 1979-1995.

There are other formation organisations influenced by Scalabrinians: for example, at Stuttgart there is the ASTEA and the *Centro di Spiritualità per Giovani*, run by Fr. Gabriele Bortolamai in collaboration with the Scalabrinian Secular Missionaries. This Centre was founded in 1982 through the initiative of the diocese of Rottenburg-Stuttgart (where Scalabrinian spirituality is held in high esteem), in collaboration with the Province of St. Raphael. Its purpose is to accompany young people through various different initiatives towards discovering their own personal vocation in life. With the assistance of German priests and other Scalabrinian missionaries, the *Centro di Spiritualità* has really flourished during its fourteen years of existence: it has welcomed 13,800 people, from among whom there have been 61 vocations to the priesthood and to religious life, both male and female.

In 1981, under the initiative of Fr. Rino Frigo, the Linus Roth Haus was founded in Reutlingen.

One of the most interesting aspects of this period of the St. Raphael Province was the presence of training courses for pastoral workers (catechists, pastoral Councils and parish collaborators). These courses were particularly developed in Cologne under the direction of Fr. Sandro and Fr. Beniamino Rossi (1986).

Then in the 90's there is an injection of new enthusiasm in the field of pastoral work for young people. With the arrival of Fr. Mario Toffari, the youth pastoral work involves not only the Scalabrinian Missions, but also all the other Missions in the area.

By the beginning of the 90's we can say that our Missions had reached the summit of the work of evangelization and formation. But already we feel the need to take a step further.

Although still lagging behind the Swiss, the German Missions feel that the time has arrived for the "Pentecost challenge".

Finally, a subject which merits to be widely developed is that of the involvement of the laypeople who are sensitive to the Scalabrinian charisma. In the 60's AMSE was founded. Then in March 1967 the bishop of Basel recognised the Scalabrinian lay missionaries as a Secular Institute: an event without precedent. It was, without doubt, founded thanks to the enthusiasm, the dynamism and the spiritual strength of the Missionaries (first amongst them Fr. Gabriele Bortolamai), who in those years were an example to those new vocations as secular missionaries.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this is where we Scalabrinians find the sense of our spirituality. It is made up of various elements: the care of the migrant, sharing his life and his problems, being close-by him in concrete situations, our presence like yeast in the heart of our community, the discovery of the Spirit in the suffered history of the “children of misery”, seeing in our experience the prototype of the people of God migrant towards the true homeland and in the migratory adventure the dynamism of the exodus.

Well, the three Scalabrinian Provinces throughout sixty years of history, have tried to live according to this Scalabrinian spirituality. Of course, none of its single members can reproduce in himself all the impulses of the Scalabrinian spirit. But together, as a group, it can.

This is the reality that history asks us to face. If we do so with serenity, we will be able to see that each one of our European missionary's work shines with at least one ray of the Scalabrinian spirit. And that all together our confreres form a complete Scalabrinian rainbow.

This recognition is an act we owe our Provinces. And when we have the courage to do it with conviction, we feel more united, more like brothers, more Scalabrinians.

(original text in Italian)

The spirituality of Scalabrinians in Australia and Asia

GIUSEPPE VISENTIN, CS

The province of Australia, St. Francis Cabrini, had its origins in 1952, with the arrival of four Scalabrinians: 3 priests and 1 missionary brother. All four were coming from the United States and naturally carried with themselves the experience and values they had acquired during their early years in Italy and in the United States (one of them was American born) and during the years of ministry in the States. Many of these values still continue to form part of the spirituality and practice of religious life, like precise financial administration, sense of an effective parish and mission organization, ability to maintain good contacts with Bishops and local clergy, etc.

Two of the first four missionaries were accepted in the Diocese of Wollongong and two in the diocese of Cairns, over two thousand kilometers away from Wollongong. This initial dispersion, plus the arrival within a few years of several young priests, some of whom did not have the same American experience of the original four, led to a pervading individualism, which has accompanied the development of this province.

This individualism had undoubtedly some positive aspects. The work accomplished by the early Missionaries, which set a tone for those who followed and for which the Scalabrinians are much appreciated in Australia and lately in Asia, was possible mainly because of this rugged individualism and personal initiative. The fact that most Scalabrinians continued to work effectively notwithstanding their dispersion may also be attributed to their strong personal character. Even the much good that had been done and in part still continues to be done by the so called "flying missions" has been possible thanks to the sturdy individualism of our Missionaries.

But this individualism had also several negative effects, like rivalry, dissension, lack of coordination and of a strong community life. A note which existed already in the early years and continues to some extent to the present is the lack of sustained community prayer and community pastoral planning. A Bishop who otherwise had great esteem of our Missionaries remarked that, whenever he visited our missions, he found us always very pastorally active, but never at prayer. We have found and still find difficult to plan and evaluate our pastoral work as a community. This has repercussions also on our Scalabrinian spirituality. Each one does his own planning, together of course with the lay people he is working with, and gets involved into a rather hectic pace of pastoral work. But he does not find the way to study and reflect and to share in a systematic and complete way his work with the community and to let himself be confronted and enriched by the experience of the other Confreres. Even less frequently the superior of the community is considered also the superior for the pastoral work. Perhaps this lack of community prayer and community planning and evaluation may have contributed to some extent to the defections our province suffered in the past.

In 1982 our province extended its work to Asia with the beginning of our presence in the Philippines and in 1994 to Taiwan. At about the same time our province began also to deal with the presence of Spanish-speaking migrants in Australia. In due time the province began receiving Missionaries of other cultures, Latin Americans and lately Filipinos. The Italian culture, which still remains the culture of the majority of the members, began to find itself in direct cooperation and at times confrontation with other cultures. Hence, the need of mutual understanding and appreciation and the need to accept, together with the strengths, also the weaknesses present in every culture. The traditional spirituality of the majority of the province Confreres is beginning to receive, even though still rather weakly and confusedly, new impulses, both from the younger missionaries and from the missionaries of different cultures. This more diversified cultural composition of our province will undoubtedly be of great help also in our pastoral work among migrants, migrants of different ethnic origins called to cooperate with one another and with the local majority.

It is difficult to foresee where all these new impulses, in their interplay with more traditional ways, will lead us. It is hoped that they will lead us toward a Scalabrinian spirituality which will reflect the

common heritage of our Founder, the fact of our being migrants with migrants and the rich elements coming from the emerging spiritualities of the countries where we are working.

The following report on Scalabrinian spirituality in Australia and Asia, limited and incomplete, waits to be enriched and developed both by the reflection of the members of the province after the Symposium and by the contributions of all other Symposium delegates. Meanwhile, it intends to offer a few characteristics a Scalabrinian spirituality in Australia and Asia needs to base itself on and develop.

Christian spirituality in Australia and in Asia

At present, according to most experts in this field, Australia does not to have a precise Christian spirituality of its own. It is still depending mostly from the spirituality of the so-called West (Europe and America). True, Australia has been inhabited for over 40,000 years by diverse tribes of people, the so called Aborigines, with their own rich cultures and spiritualities. But these people have not unfortunately so far greatly influenced Australian life and spirituality. Lately non-Aboriginal Australians, all of them migrants of the last 200 years, are beginning to show more interest in the Aboriginal people, their beliefs, their great attachment to the land, their way of life and their rites, and are trying to derive elements for an inculturated Australian spirituality. But, perhaps even before or at the same time that this process will take place, Australia finds itself more involved in Asia and in Asian cultures and spiritualities.

Even though Australia has officially abandoned its white policy only just over 20 years ago, already more than half of the annual intake of immigrants comes from Asian countries. At first commercially, then politically and culturally, Australia will forge its future no longer in the Western cultural world, but in the Asian one. Some experts extend this trend toward Asia to the rest of the planet earth and predict that the 21st century will be the century the Asianization of the world.

Taking into some account this global view, we can see that in Australia the Western and the Eastern world could truly meet, in a mutual enrichment and growth. While the East will be able to share the rich characteristics of its own cultures and religions, Australia, together with other countries, can contribute its own positive ex-

perience of many races, many nations, many religions, many cultures living and interacting together.

No need to explain that when we speak of Scalabrinian spirituality, we do not mean only the spirituality our Founder left us, a spirituality substantially reflecting the current spirituality of his times, even though infused with special emphases of his own. But we mean a spirituality that through contextualization and inculturation in the different geographic scenes is being shaped somewhat differently in different parts of the world.

I venture to say that in our members in Australia and Asia the desired contextualization and inculturation has not yet visibly taken place, partly because there do not seem to be at present sufficiently developed Australian and Asian Christian spiritualities into which to inculturate and partly because our theological reflection in our province upon the local realities and spirituality has been so far, with a few exceptions, absent.

Models and dimensions of spirituality

Spirituality is the way of living out the values and the challenges of the Gospel of Jesus in one's own context and culture.

According to experts, Christian spirituality throughout the centuries has been functioning with two basic models: the eschatological or heavenly model and the incarnational or earthly model.

In order to reflect both the spirituality of the Founder and the spiritual world of migrants as well as the emerging spiritualities of Australia and Asia, the Scalabrinian spirituality in our province will have to refer more seriously to the incarnational model.

In our past spiritual formation and studies and to a degree also in our present pastoral work, it is the eschatological or heavenly model which prevails. Being a model which is totally versed on the idea that the spiritual life is a life of the spirit, a "non-material life", it seems to be a model unsuitable both to our being heirs to the spirit of Scalabrini and to our life among migrants. Speaking of migrants in particular, we know that, notwithstanding their wanderings in foreign lands, they remain very rooted on the land they come from and have such a marvelously natural quality, characteristic of the original Australian and Asian and not only Asian cultures, of knowing that somehow the Transcendent lives in this life and in this world which He has created.

The incarnational model is the model which has inspired our Founder in his spirituality and in his action. It is the model of Vatican Council II and of the recent documents of the Church. It is also the model that migrants can appreciate and identify with, for it is totally open to contextualization and inculturation.

At the beginnings of evangelisation of Asia a few centuries ago, and particularly of China with Fr. Matteo Ricci and of India with Fr. Roberto De Nobili, a great effort had been done to introduce a contextualized and inculturated Christian theology and spirituality in the Asian world. But the experiment did not continue. It may be also for this failure at inculturation in the Asian world that Christianity remained up to this day a very small minority in this vast continent.

In Asia and also in Australia a fresh new interest is being shown toward the development of a theology and of a spirituality which is contextualized and inculturated.

To be “contextualized”, our Scalabrinian spirituality needs to know and insert Gospel values in our present situation as Scalabrinians in Australia and Asia and in the situation of the migrant people we are serving. It needs to take into account our own real life and the real life of the people among whom we live and with whom we are evangelizing and being evangelized. It needs to consider our own real needs, problems and aspirations and the needs, problems, aspiration of the migrants. Then it must go on to reflect on the Gospel and challenge ourselves and migrants to shape our present and future life in the light of these gospel values. The full manifestation of these values is found in the person of Jesus. Jesus lived in a definite historical period and as part of a people with definite social, physical and spiritual hopes, life, needs and problems. What He brought was not simply words, but who He was: the Living Word of God enfleshed. To be faithful to this living Word who is Jesus, our spirituality and with it our evangelisation must be incarnated in our own real life and in the life of the migrants of our own times, in their hopes, needs and problems. Only then will have an authentic contextualized and evangelizing spirituality, a spirituality which is listening to the Spirit who speaks to us in the signs of the times.

To be “inculturated”, our spirituality must reflect the reality of Jesus, who transcends all cultures, living in the particular cultural mode of the migrants we are serving in Australia and Asia.

Culture is the totality of one’s way of life in a particular setting. It is “an organized way of life which is based on common traditions

and conditioned by a common environment. It is the sum-total of a nation's thinking and living, transmitted for a long period of time so as to form a tradition capable of influencing society" (Christopher Dawson, *Religion and Culture*, p. 47). The Indian writer Amalorpavadass provides a similar view of culture: "Culture is not only art, music, dance and drama, but a whole way of life. It includes thought and action and speech, food and clothing, love and friendship, beauty and enjoyment, sport and pastime, the pursuit of knowledge and happiness and the attempt to discover meaning of life. Culture is how an individual expresses himself and the sum total of how all members of a society express themselves."

Because culture is the sum total of a particular people's ways of life, spirituality, which is by definition a way or style of life, will be necessarily connected with that culture where the Christian person and the Christian community roots itself. The history of Christian spirituality is nothing but the history of human efforts to express the experience of the Gospel (Revelation – Faith) in historical, cultural actions. An authentic Christian spirituality, in order to be faithful to Christ and to the very vision of the world given by Him, sees this same Christ present and working in a particular culture, offers affirmation of the works of God in that culture and at the same time challenges that culture (every culture has sinful elements) to a clearer, optimistic, integral vision of life.

When we do not have an inculturated spirituality, we have a "split-level" spirituality. In this type of spirituality some aspects are inculturated, even though only partly or superficially, while other aspects are not inculturated. It is difficult to come fully to grips with the practical implications of inculturation in the practices and beliefs of the people and of the missionaries working with them, like popular religiosity, devotions, religious celebrations, processions, fiestas, wearing medals, etc. Every devotional practice contains elements of truth which may contribute to a truly inculturated Christianity.

It would be extremely profitable to the Christian process of inculturation to take a serious look at various tribal people, be they Aboriginal in Australia, highlander Filipinos or tribal groups of other Asian nations. Even though these tribal groups may have distant origins from other lands, they have lived in a particular land for many centuries. The land on which they live had its effects upon them. Their sense of the sacred, their closeness to the land, their rites and festivals could possibly reveal the cultural heart of the whole nation.

At the same time it would be most useful for the inculturation of our Scalabrinian spirituality in Australia and in Asia to take a serious look at the kind of spirituality the various migrant groups we are sent to serve take along with them as they go to another country.

How much inculturation is there in our Scalabrinian spirituality in Australia and in Asia? On the positive side, we can say that, even though often not as the result of any definite planning, some inculturation has taken place. The very closeness to the migrants and to the local Church which has characterized since the beginning our apostolate had some influence on our prayer life, our liturgies, our preaching and our pastoral counseling and our social action.

But on the negative side we must admit that our spirituality has remained mostly the spirituality we absorbed from our own natural families and from our years of formation in the seminaries. The permeation of the cultures into our spirituality is still incomplete.

Contextualization and inculturation are not, however, the only characteristics which are partly reflected and partly needed in our Scalabrinian spirituality.

Our spirituality, together with the whole of Christianity, revolves around the central fact of the Incarnation of the Word of God in Jesus Christ. By becoming man God affirms the essential goodness of creation and teaches that he is forever with humanity and speaks and acts in and through the whole of the created reality. Thus He is already establishing His kingdom in the full development of that same humanity.

By becoming human like all persons in all things but sin (*Heb* 4:15), God is saying that all that is good, noble and true in humanity (*Pb* 4:8) is not only worthwhile, but must be developed. The process of creation must continue. All the dimensions, aspirations and potentialities of the human person are to be developed. Whatever makes the human person more complete, more wholly human, is part and parcel of being Christ alive today. To become one with God and to be transformed into Him is to be totally human. Injustice, hatred, greed and selfishness go against the potentials of all human beings. Hence, all these sinful elements are to be replaced by justice, love and compassion. Justice, love and compassion which Christ not only confirmed by becoming man, but assumed in his very living out of a full humanity. The link established by the Incarnation between God and the human person is so radical and profound that what is done to one's fellow human being is done to Christ. It is in their fellow

human beings and in the happenings of history that we meet Jesus. Authentic spirituality will be found only in the conscious living out of God's presence in ourselves and others. This means that spirituality is not something only of the spirit. It entails the whole person, body and spirit. Whatever contributes and is part of any true human development must be affirmed and brought into existence.

However, if we stopped here, we would end up with a truncated and hence inauthentic Christian spirituality. Spirituality would concern mostly the individual. Instead, every true Christian spirituality is always "communitarian, ecclesial".

While the Church is evidently institutional, it is, equally and much more so, community. And implied in this is co-responsibility. There is an authentic equality among all members of the Church in the common effort to build up the Body of Christ. The Spirit lives in the whole People of God and it is necessary that even in its institutional structure both the hierarchy, our Scalabrinian congregation and the laity dialogue and work together as the one Body of Christ, which is totally convened by the one Spirit of God.

Our Scalabrinians in Australia and in Asia have worked to eliminate the distance that many lay Christians have been experiencing in their daily lives between the authorities in the Church, "they", and themselves the ordinary people, the "we". Our missionaries did and do not remain behind comfortable institutional walls, but are mixing amicably with the people they are serving. With them, by listening to them and by living with them, they try to discover together the workings of the Spirit in every person, in every group, in every culture, in every religion; and challenge themselves and others to develop a world where all may live in justice, love, peace and compassion. Whatever is that makes the human person live a life that is more integrally human is part of salvation, whether that be better housing, complete medical care, education, nutrition, art, music, religion, liturgy, formal and informal prayer or whatever else.

Contextualization, inculturation and community dimension will not, however, have sustained and continue to sustain our spirituality without a serious "commitment to the person of Jesus Christ". The thing which in fact implants and gives life to Christianity in any culture is the depth of personal commitment: individual missionaries and individual Christians, single religious communities and Christian communities committed to the person of Jesus Christ in such a way that they engage themselves in a process of living Jesus in their time.

The Christian is not someone who accepts doctrines or follows a set of practices or rituals, but rather who gives himself to Christ to live together with Christ in faith and love a full life. This sharing of the life of Christ necessarily involves a real contribution to the development of society. A Christian cannot truly be such by living some ethereal life. It is living out Christ's love and justice here and now, searching always for the full development or salvation of the human community that one's personal salvation is effected by God. This commitment, so essential to Christian life, is at once a personal choice of Christ and a social choice of the integral good of humanity as a whole. The committed Christian is drawn into a dynamic community – the Church – which has but one mission: to pour out God's light and life on all the dimensions of man's personal and social existence.

Contextualization, inculturation, commitment to Christ and to society lead to concrete "involvement". God and the Good News He gives in Jesus are concerned with establishing, here and now, a world of justice, love and peace. Therefore, commitment to Jesus is necessarily involvement in bringing about this world. Scalabrinian spirituality as lived in Australia and Asia includes a concrete involvement in action for a truly human world. It is not seen as simply an involvement in prayer, liturgy, preaching, and catechesis separated from life, but it was and is lived in full awareness of the God-with-us, who desires whatever makes us whole human beings. It is not merely humanism nor merely spiritualism. God pervades the whole reality. And this reality "groans with pain, like the pain of childbirth. But it is not just creation alone which groans; we too, who have the Spirit as the first of God's gifts, groan within ourselves as we wait for God to make us His sons and set our whole being free" (*Rom 8:22-23*).

Conclusion

These are then the basic parameters, partly present and partly to be developed, of our Scalabrinian spirituality in Australia and Asia. They are not unique to our part of the world nor are they in any way a fully achieved reality.

Prayer with its contemplative, Eucharistic and Marian emphases; asceticism, based on the specific charism of our congregation to be migrants with migrants; and the main specific features of our aposto-

late are undoubtedly more completely presented in other presentations of this Symposium.

What this paper is trying to say is that prayer, asceticism and apostolic work will have to be further deepened within the general principles of contextualization, inculturation, commitment and involvement.

Asia's great religions and the religion of the Aboriginal people of Australia are reflections not only of God working among his people – humanity – but they are the graced results of His love incarnated in the Asian peoples and in the original inhabitants of Australia. The great mystical religions of Buddhism, Hinduism, Confucianism, and Islam and the traditions of the Aborigines of Australia reveal that these people are deeply religious and contemplative. Therefore, a Scalabrinian spirituality which is truly incarnated and inculturated in the Australian-Asia world will need to be a contemplative and at the same time incarnational spirituality, with commitment to Christ and to migrants.

The contemplative dimension joined with liberation theology can be a fruitful venture for us and for the migrants we work with. Prayer and action: but both must be incarnated, imbedded in our flesh and the flesh of migrants.

Part Three

MEDITATIONS

Christian prayer

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Identity of Christian prayer

I wanted to underline the adjective “Christian”, because, of course, prayer is a religious phenomenon that is found in all religious experiences. And yet Christian prayer must have its own identity. Why? Prayer is dialogue with God, but depending from the idea or image a person has of God, even his way of entering into dialogue or relationship with him will differ.

Since Jesus Christ gave us a particular revelation of the face of God, Christian experience and Christian prayer will have a precise identity on the basis of such revelation. Let us try to see it in concrete.

In the Gospel of Matthew we read these words: “When you pray, do not imitate the hypocrites: they love to say their prayers standing up in the synagogues and at the street corners for people to see them. In truth I tell you, they have their reward. But when you pray, go to your private room, shut yourself in, and so pray to your Father who is in that secret place, and your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you. In your prayers do not babble as the gentiles do, for they think that by using many words they will make themselves heard. Do not be like them; your father knows what you need before you ask him. So you should pray like this (*Mt 6:5ff*)” and the “Our Father” follows. In what does Jesus distinguish the prayer of his disciples from the prayer of the Pharisees and pagans? What is the difference?

In the first place, Christian prayer differs from the prayer of the pagans because it has the full acknowledgement of the freedom of

God. The pagan concept of prayer is that prayer is an action which has in itself its own efficacy. We may say that prayer for the pagans is a magical thing. In magic I must put the supernatural powers at my disposition; and how do I do this? I find the key to enter into the world of the supernatural powers and by using this key I put these powers at my disposal. It is for this reason, says Jesus, that pagans think that they are given what they pray for by using many words. That is, they are convinced that by using the technique of prayer they will obtain the result of prayer, that is, receiving what they are asking for, the efficacy of prayer. But all this is not Christian. Why is it not Christian? Because God is a free God. God gives his answer as he sees fit and not in accordance with the technique I use. It is not prayer which produces the result in a mechanical way, but it is the love of God who freely responds to the prayers of his children. I am sure, in accordance with the logic of the Gospel, that God will listen, God will grant me what I am asking; but the granting remains his free response. I do not produce it by my prayer, by multiplying prayers so as to multiply the efficacy. I produce it simply by placing myself before the Lord in an attitude of son or daughter and giving God all his freedom of a Father. Do you understand the difference between magic and Christian prayer? The magical formulas which produce the effect and Christian prayer which leaves the fatherly answer to God.

Secondarily, even in reference to the Pharisees, Christian prayer has its own characteristic. For the Pharisees, prayer is a reality which produces or seeks a human result. Jesus says, "They love to say their prayers standing up in the synagogues and at the street corners for people to see them." Their prayer has a social dimension and it is contained all in this dimension: to earn an approval or an esteem. It is a prayer being presented as a merit to gain. Christian prayer is not so: "But when you pray, go to your private room, shut yourself in, and so pray to your Father who is in that secret place." Of course, this does not mean that you should not pray in public, should not pray in the temple; but it means that, wherever you pray, you are before God, not before men; even if you pray in a crowd, even if you pray next to many people, your heart must look at God and not at others. It must seek the approval of God and not the approval of others. Prayer must be therefore an intimate rapport with the Lord, so deep a rapport with Him that the social or cultural context or whatever other context in which your prayer is done becomes secondary. Therefore, Christian prayer is a prayer which differs from the

prayer of the pagans because it respects the freedom of God. It differs from the prayer of the Pharisees because it lies only under the gaze of God.

But then what are the positive characteristics of Christian prayer? I would say that Christian prayer must be a prayer which is humble, inasmuch as a creature needs to be humble before the Creator, but full of trust, inasmuch as trustful can be the prayer of a son before his father. And Jesus taught us this through his words, his teachings and his life, his experience and his example.

If you bear with me, I like to begin from this point, namely from the prayer that Jesus made, which, says St. Augustine, was done to give us an example. Now in the prayer of Jesus there are three interesting aspects.

Prayer as conformity to the Father

The first aspect is the connection between Jesus' prayer and his mission. Try to recall the times the gospels tell us about the prayer of Jesus. Jesus prayed at the time of his baptism, Jesus prayed before choosing the Twelve, Jesus prayed at the time of his Transfiguration, and he prayed at the time of his passion. What does all this mean? That every time in the life of Jesus there is an important, decisive change, there we find the prayer of Jesus. By his baptism Jesus begins his public life, begins his mission to the people. And Jesus begins it with prayer. When he chooses the Twelve, Jesus establishes the foundation of his community, the new People of God. Before choosing the Twelve he "spends the night to pray," says St. Paul. At the time of the Transfiguration, Jesus lives the beginning of his journey toward his passion. It is the first time that Jesus directs his steps with awareness toward his passion. He begins by going to a mountain alone, to pray; and this is even clearer at the time of his passion. Jesus' prayer at the Gethsemane is the prayer which establishes the behaviour of Jesus and explains it. Thus whenever Jesus needs to make decisive choices regarding his mission, he prays.

And why does he pray? What is the need for his prayer? The best example is the prayer of Gethsemane. Mark narrates it as follows: "They came to a plot of land called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples: «Stay here while I pray». Then he took Peter and James and John with him. And he began to feel terror and anguish. And he said

to them: "My soul is sorrowful to the point of death. Wait here, and stay awake." (*Mk* 14:32-36) You may recall that a similar phrase is found in Psalm 42: "My soul is sorrowful to the point of death." And going on a little further he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, this hour might pass him by. "Abba, Father!" he said, "For you everything is possible. Take this cup away from me. But let it be as you, not I, would have it." (*Mt* 14:36) Here we have the core of the experience of prayer of Jesus. Jesus is facing his passion, and how is he facing it? In fear and anguish. Fear and anguish are the immediate, instinctive reaction of the man Jesus of Nazareth in front of suffering, in front of the drama of his death on the cross. He enters into prayer this way, with fear and anguish, and prays. First he has an address. "Abba, Father". That "Abba" wants to express all his trust, his confidence, his submission to the Father; and it is basic; it means that he enters into prayer as a son; he does not enter into it in any way, but as a son. "Abba, Father", therefore means the submission of a son, but, as we were saying, a submission full of the confidence of a son. "For you everything is possible." And this is a prerequisite for prayer. It is possible to pray only when we are convinced that our life and the life of the world are under the control of God. In fact, if the world continues on its way by itself and God has nothing to do with the world, prayer becomes merely a verbal exercise. Prayer supposes that God is the efficient Lord of history, that everything is in his hands. In this case, it is in the hands of God even to cancel the death of Jesus. Nowhere it has been said that the decrees of God are fixed once for all, so that, once they are expressed, they cannot be changed. God has his own freedom, and full freedom at that! If he wants, he can exempt Jesus from death; if he wants, he can save the world in some other way. Truly, indeed truly "For you everything is possible"! It is still in his hands. The decree of God is still under his control. "For you everything is possible! Take this cup away from me!"

We need to keep this part of Jesus' prayer. We cannot cancel it. We cannot say only, "Your will be done". We need to begin by saying, "Take this cup away from me". We must begin from the concrete situation which we are living. Jesus lives his fear and anguish, he begins from his fear and anguish; and since these are realities that man wants to take away from his life, I ask, "take this cup away from me!". And then he continues: "But let it be as you, not I, would have it." This means embracing the will of God. Of course, by saying these

words this way, they are simply words of the gospel, words we can say in a few seconds; but you must think that the prayer of Jesus lasted half hour, one hour or two hours, we do not know; but it was a prayer which was a true journey of getting closer to the will of God. The goal is the will of God, "Not my will, but Yours". However, the departing point is my will, I cannot depart from something else. If I depart from something else, I make a prayer of fantasy, of imagination, not of reality. I must depart from my desire, from what I am, and then undertake a journey of getting closer to the will of God. I depart with my will and I arrive at His will.

In between there is the whole drama of prayer, the struggle of prayer. Prayer has an aspect of struggle. This is common in the Christian tradition, starting from the struggle of Jacob at the river Jabok. And Christian prayer is in the image of a man who struggles with God in order to have at the end the blessing of God, in order to embrace the will of God. But this will is being embraced slowly and with fatigue. I mean to say: if I pray only the last part "let it be as you, not I would have it" I make a very beautiful prayer, which however risks to pass over my head. If I make only the first part of the prayer "Father, take this cup away from me," I make a sincere prayer, which however does not change my life, does not transform and convert my life. Instead this is what prayer intends to obtain: it wants to place my life on the same wavelength of the will of God. This is what Jesus did. Jesus took a humanity like mine and like yours, says the letter to the Hebrews, and made it perfect. How did he make it perfect? He made it to agree with the will of God. "During his life on earth, he offered prayer and entreaty, with loud cries and with tears, to the one who had the power to save him from death, and, winning a hearing in his reverence, he learnt obedience, Son though he was, through his sufferings; when he had been perfected, he became for all who obey him the source of eternal salvation" (*Hebrews 5:7-9*). This vision of the Letter to the Hebrews is marvellous. Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane prays, he prays God, with loud cries and tears, to be freed from death and his prayer has its effect. What effect? He learned obedience through his sufferings. By his passion Jesus learned to obey his Father and in this way he has perfected his humanity. Humanity has become a docile instrument in the hands of the Father. Through this manner he reached life in the resurrection. Through his glory he has conquered death, but in the way his Father wanted, and not instinctively as our humanity would have wanted it.

Jesus prayed in the decisive moments of his life. For what purpose? To bend his will to the will of the Father. In this way, prayer has moulded the humanity of Jesus, a humanity made of flesh and blood, therefore weak as our own humanity. He made it become a docile instrument of the holy will of God. Prayer effects this transformation and has effected this transformation in Jesus.

There is however a second aspect or element. Jesus' prayer is more than a functional prayer for his mission. The prayer of Jesus is necessary to express and to live his identity. I explain. We read in the prologue of the gospel of John: "The Word became flesh, he lived among us (*John* 1:14)." Says St. John, "the Word became flesh". We can understand this statement only if you begin with the presupposition that Word and flesh are on the opposite sides of the experience. The Word is eternal, the flesh is mortal. The Word is incorruptible, the flesh is subject to decay. The Word knows all things, the flesh is ignorant. Therefore between the Word and the flesh there is an immense, infinite distance. "The Word became flesh" means that the Word has distanced himself from God, but remains that Word who, as the first verse of the Prologue says, is continuously oriented toward God. "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God," (*John* 1:1) the Word was oriented toward God. The Word was God, he did not stop being with God. He is in the flesh, but he is oriented toward God, he is close to God.

How can this mystery of closeness to God be expressed in the being so distant because he became flesh? Through prayer Jesus is in every place oriented to God. Jesus walks among men and meets a leper. In reality his heart is oriented to God, and for this reason he sees the leper with the eyes of God and meets the leper with the power of God, with the saving power of God. The Prologue ends with these words, "No one has ever seen God; it is the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known" (*John* 1:18). No one has ever seen God; but the only begotten Son who is turned toward the heart of God has seen him. God is invisible, invisible not only to the eyes, but also to the intellect. Our intellect, even if developed, is and remains a poor intellect before the mystery of God. Therefore God is inevitably invisible; but the only Begotten, who is turned toward the heart of the Father, revealed Him to us. We have seen the Son him because, as we said, He is flesh, has become flesh; and flesh can be seen. Thus we have seen Jesus of Nazareth. But when we have looked at him, we have seen him turned toward God,

he was continuously turned toward God; and thus we had to contemplate in him the mystery of God. Wherever he passed, he was turned to God. Whatever he did he was turned to God. Do you understand this constant bond of Jesus' humanity with the Father from whom he had come? This is the mystery of the identity of Jesus: a man, but continuously turned to the Father. As a man he expresses his reality through thoughts, desires, words, behaviour. But because he is turned to the Father, whatever he thinks, says, does, decides, carries the image of the Father, the seal of the Father. Thus we can say that Jesus is never truly Jesus as when he prays, because when he prays this relationship with the Father is being expressed in a human way, precisely and fully. Of course, Jesus is always with the Father, even when he planes the wood in his father's shop, if we suppose that he planed wood. Even then he is turned to the Father. But because this turning to the Father is human, it needs to be expressed in a human way through explicit and human gestures. Prayer is this expression. Prayer is the re-discovery, the external human, concrete expression of that relationship with God which is the essence of Jesus' identity.

So, Jesus prays, first, because his will must enter into the wavelength of the will of God; secondly, because his unity with the Father needs to be expressed in a human manner, needs to be translated into human experience. Prayer is the translation in human gestures of the unity with the Father, of the communion with the Father, of being turned to the Father. Do you now understand the problem? Then why do I need to pray? For the same reasons, precisely for the same reasons. I must pray, first, so that my human will may be conformed to the will of the Father; secondly, because my Christian identity of a son of God may be expressed.

So, first, in order to do the will of God, remember the beginning of chapter 12 of the Letter to the Romans, "I urge you, then, brothers, remembering the mercies of God, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, dedicated and acceptable to God; that is the kind of worship for you, as sensible people. Do not model your behaviour on the contemporary world, but let the renewing of your mind transform you, so that you may discern for yourselves what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and mature". (*Romans* 12:1-2). Then your life must become an offering to God, namely such a beautiful offering that, when God looks at it, he smells its perfume. The sacrifices are those realities which ascend to God as a perfume of

sweet odour; and thus God is pleased with them. I want your life to be a sacrifice of sweet odour, so that when God looks at the way you live, he is pleased with the Christian community; or when he looks at the way you work, he is pleased; or when he looks at the way family life is lived, he is pleased. Christians must transform everything into something which pleases God and before which God can say, "It is a good thing". There must be the approval of God. But to obtain this, Christians must transform their mind, namely their way of judging things, must take on the thinking of God, must make a journey of getting closer to God, must begin with their mind but mould it according to the mind of God. They must begin with their thoughts, but slowly must take on the thoughts of God. This is the journey of getting closer to God, and this is what prayer obtains, brings about. Prayers begins with the listening of the Word of God. The beatitudes are proclaimed and I listen. But it is not sufficient that the beatitudes be proclaimed. It is necessary that I place them inside of me and I make them my own, my beatitudes, my mind, my desire.

Prayer wants to achieve exactly this. Prayer puts me before God in a dialogue of friendship, so that I accept the word of the Lord as a friendly word, I respond to this word with thanksgiving or petition and only when I respond I have truly listened the word. Keep it well in mind. The word always wants to establish a dialogue; so, we truly listen to a word if we respond to that word. If I listen and then stop there, the process is incomplete. If I listen and then I say thanks or I respond with a talk, it is sufficient even to say thanks as a response, but there must be response which is mine and free. Prayer leads me into this direction. Apply it the decisive moments of our life we were talking about, to those fundamental choices which are being asked of us and that we must learn to make, not as our own whim would suggest or our interest would make us evaluate, but which we must learn to make in accordance with the logic of God. This requires to be constantly on the wavelength of God. I explain. If I want to understand the will of God, I need prayer, but not so much in the sense that prayer gives me that kind of charismatic illumination which makes me understand what I must do, the choice I need to take. Sometimes this also happens. It happened often to St. Theresa of Jesus to have locutions, through which the Lord was telling her to found a monastery or things like that. But this is not what normally happens. What normally happens in prayer is that, by the constant listening to the Word of God and the constant responding to the

Word of God with our freedom, slowly a conformity with the Lord is created, conformity with his thoughts, and when there is this conformity, the choices we make are made beginning with a regenerated, renewed heart and therefore we make them in conformity with the project, the will of God.

Prayer as the expression of our identity of God's children

There is however a second aspect which is equally important. We need to pray not only in order to do the will of God, but, even before we do the will of God, we must pray in order to be authentic children of God. "You must see what great love the Father had lavished on us by letting us be called God's children – which is what we are" (*1 John 3:1*). "Which is what we are!", says St. John; we are called God's children, and that is what we are! If you are a son of God, I want to see this bond you have with God expressed and expressed not only in a mysterious way in your innermost, but I want to see it expressed in your concrete thoughts, in your desires, in your projects, in your words, thus in your life. Prayer does this. Prayer is that constant orientation toward God, which is our identity as children of God. We have this identity received in our baptism and continuously we receive it from Him. If we are sons, we live our life before God and always before God. And if we are sons, the goal of our life is He, it is the love of the Father. Then we must try to express this constant relationship. And we express it precisely through prayer. I don't say that we express it only through prayer, by heaven's sake; we express it through the whole Christian life when it is obedience to God. I mean that a part of this journey is prayer, in a conscious, explicit way, since human existence includes word, dialogue, communication. The relationship with God must be expressed through the word, through dialogue, through communication. Think of St. Paul when he says in Romans 8, verses 26-27: "The Spirit too comes to help us in our weakness, for, when we do not know how to pray properly, then the Spirit personally makes our petitions for us in groans that cannot be put into words; and he who can see into all hearts knows what the Spirit means because the prayers that the Spirit makes for God's people are always in accord with the mind of God". There is then a prayer which the Holy Spirit arouses inside our heart and which places us before God in the correct attitude of sons, of sons who have the Spirit of God, who are therefore led by the Spirit of God. It is this con-

stant relationship with God, and not so much the external things we accomplish, which expresses our identity.

So we have said about the prayer of Jesus and about our own prayer two things: the first is that in prayer our will becomes conformed to the will of God and therefore prayer is a journey of getting closer to the will of God. The second is that in prayer our identity becomes expressed, the identity of Jesus as the Son of God, our identity as sons of God through Jesus; and if we take away prayer, there is a mystery in our life, the fact of being sons of God, which does not become expressed, that does not have a human realisation. I do not say that there is no ontological sonship. Through baptism we are and remain sons of God; but it is necessary that this ontological reality be translated into human experience, moulds human experience; and this happens through prayer.

Intercession for humanity

I want to say a third thing that is dear to me, even though it would need a longer reflection.

Among all the typical elements of the prayer of Jesus, besides those we spoke about already, we should place the prayer of Jesus as “intercessor”. At least, this is what is being said in the letter to the Hebrews: “He lives for ever to intercede for them” (*Hb* 7:25). So also says the Letter to the Romans by placing Jesus Christ next to the Father, “Jesus Christ who died – yes and more, who was raised from the dead and is at God’s right hand – and who is adding his plea for us” (*Rm* 8:34). What is the meaning of “intercessor”. The original meaning is only an image: an official intercedes when he opposes the decision of another official. There is, for example, the decision of a judge who condemns So and So to death. There is someone who places himself in between the sentence of death and So and So and blocks the sentence, annuls it, makes it null and void.

Jesus is this kind of intercessor. There should have been a sentence condemning humanity, but Jesus stepped in between; he stepped in with his humanity, so that the sentence now must fall not on humanity in general but on humanity which is now together with the humanity of Jesus. There is Jesus there in the middle with his humanity and before the humanity of Jesus the sentence is voided, is blocked, is no longer effective. In short, intercession is a choice of

solidarity. Jesus enters into solidarity with men and makes their destiny his own. But if Jesus makes his own our destiny, it ends up that his destiny becomes our destiny. It is true that our destiny should be a destiny of condemnation, but the destiny of Jesus cannot be a destiny of condemnation. He is the Son of God. And since his destiny has become our destiny, our destiny becomes then the destiny of the children of God, together with Him.

There is this aspect of intercession which is beautiful. When then you pray, remember that there is an intercessor. He is for you and stands before God, and for this reasons your humanity has taken on the configuration of his humanity. Perhaps we should say that even Christian prayer has an aspect of intercession. When we pray, we place ourselves before God. How? As I am, with my hands, my eyes, my body, my humanity, which is precisely the humanity of So and So, So and So and So, that is the humanity of the Italians, French, Africans, etc. It is the same humanity. I present myself before God with my one humanity and I present myself before him with that bond of solidarity which unites me to all others. So in this manner the intercession of Jesus widens in my intercession, not because I am especially good, but simply because in my humanity I have taken on the characteristics of Jesus and I bring to God the entire humanity with the features of Christ and bring to God the entire humanity with the features of the Son of God, of the sons of God.

This other aspect we find in the prayer of Jesus, the aspect of intercession, is found also in the prayer of Moses. Do you remember the time when God wanted to destroy is people on account of the sin of idolatry? Moses places himself before God an says: I and my people are only one thing. Either you destroy me together with the people or you forgive my people together with me. And God chooses to forgive Israel on account of Moses (cf. *Ex 32*). It is the same thing that Jeremiah did and the servant of Yahweh does. It is first of all the same that happens in Jesus Christ. So even this dimension enters into the dimension of Christian prayer.

Thus, here we have the three aspects of Christian prayer: conformity to the will of God, expression of our identity as children of God, intercession for the entire humanity which is present in every man and therefore in each one of us while we pray.

(transcription from tape not revised by the author)
(original text in Italian)

Communion

✠ LUCIANO MONARI
Bishop of Piacenza

Experts say that the word “communion” is being used in the New Testament with four different meanings, where the adjective different does not mean obviously without any connection among them.

Communion means first of all the spiritual bond which unites the believer to God, through Jesus Christ, and unites the believers among themselves in a communion which is precisely communion in the Spirit.

But this communion, found at a deeper level of the person, needs to be expressed in a material communion, which is the availability to share one’s goods, goods in the widest meaning, and to share one’s life and the things necessary to one’s life, from the material as well as from the psychological viewpoint.

Then, the word “communion” is being used by St. Paul in the First Letter to the Corinthians to express the concrete and particular experience of the Eucharist. The Eucharist is communion in the Body and Blood of the Lord.

Lastly, the word “communion” is used again by St. Paul to express the collection, that collection which St. Paul gathers in the churches of Greece for the Christian community of Jerusalem.

Therefore, “communion” has a spiritual meaning, a material meaning, a Eucharistic meaning and we can add, strangely because referring to the collection, an ecclesial meaning.

Bon which unites the believer to God

The departing point is obviously the deep communion which

develops in the existence of the believer, communion with God and with the brothers. In the First Letter of St. John, the prologue says: "Something which has existed since the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our own eyes, which we have watched and touched with our own hands, the Word of life: that life was made visible; we saw it and are giving our testimony, declaring to you the eternal life, which was present to the Father and has been revealed to us. We are declaring to you what we have seen and heard, so that you too may share our life. Our life is shared with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. We are writing this to you so that our joy may be complete (*1 John* 1:1-4)." There is then a basic communion which unites the Father and the Son in the full sharing of love and in the total gift of oneself. This is very clear in the letters and works of St. John: Jesus and the Father are one thing and the Father has nothing which he did not give to the Son and the Son does nothing except what he is being told to do by the Father. There is between them a perfect communion, which is an ontological communion, but is also a communion of thoughts, feelings and actions. Man is made to share in this communion. Therefore God is not a God who is jealous of his life, of his joy, afraid of the greatness of man. To the contrary, the joy of God is to give joy to man. The life of God is to make man share his life. The whole meaning of the Incarnation, according to St. John, is here: since God cannot be seen and cannot be reached, God became flesh in order that, by reaching and seeing God in Jesus Christ, we could enter into communion with him. "Declaring to you the eternal life, which was present to the Father and has been revealed to us." Eternal life, our flesh, "so that you too may share our life. Our life is shared with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ." Therefore, the life of faith is sharing of the very life of God and is naturally the forming of a bond of brotherhood among all believers who share the same life of God, and in so far as they share the same life of God they are obviously in communion among themselves, with one another. It is always St. John who continues in his First Letter: "This is what we have heard from him and are declaring to you: God is light and there is no darkness in him at all. If we say that we share in God's life, while we are living in darkness, we are lying, because we are not living the truth. But if we live in light, as he is in light, we have a share in another's life, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin" (*1 John* 1:5-7).

This way of talking of St. John is interesting. Therefore, he says,

God is light. The experts explain: he does not mean to say what God is in himself, but what God is for us. To say that God is light means that he has enlightened our life, that he has taken away the darkness of our ignorance and our lack of proper orientation. God has enlightened our life! And how did he enlighten our life? He made himself to be known! And how did he make himself to be known? He made himself to be known as the God who loves! It is the love of God which has enlightened our life. Since we became aware that God loves us with an infinite and fatherly love – that very love that we have seen in Jesus Christ – since we have understood this, than our life has become enlightened. The love of God has enlightened the world!

Then it is a question of walking in the love of God, walking in this light. Now, if we walk in the light, that is, if we let our life be enlightened by the revelation of the love of God, we are in communion with one another. The purpose of everything is exactly this: communion, communion with God but also brotherly communion. In the communion with one another the mystery of God becomes history, where men love one another and live the authentic communion, live that kind of love we have received from Jesus. Wherever this takes place, history receives a mysterious but authentic presence of God.

And this, you know it, is the purpose of everything. John recalls the priestly prayer of Jesus the day before he died: “I pray not only for these but also for those who through their teaching will come to believe in me. May they all be one, just as, Father, you are in me and I am in you, so that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe it was you who sent me. I have given them the glory you gave to me, that they may be one as we are one. With me in them and you in me, may they be so perfected in unity that the world will recognise that it was you who sent me and that you have love them as you have loved me (*John* 17:20-22).” The purpose is this: that the love of God, that love with which the Father loves the Son and the Son loves the Father, may regenerate humanity and make men capable to love one another with the same love. For this Jesus gave men the glory of the Father. “I have given them the glory you gave to me”, which means: the beauty, the splendour, the holiness, the power, which are typical of God, have been communicated to men. There is therefore a descending communion that from God through Jesus reaches men and builds a horizontal communion of brotherhood. We can read the same kind of talk also in St. Paul in different

ways, with a different vocabulary and expressions, but basically with the same meaning.

It is interesting to observe how St. Paul used and at times coined a whole series of words, of verbs composed with the Greek preposition "syn", which means "with". Greek is a language with which one can easily form new words with prepositions and St. Paul makes frequent usage of this possibility. For example, he translates the verb "to live together with", or the verb "to suffer together with", into the verbs "co-live", "co-suffer". Or "to be crucified together with" becomes one verb "to be co-crucified". The same applies to "to be killed, to die together with", "to be buried with", "to rise together with", "to receive new life together with", "to be glorified together with", "to be heir together with", "to reign together with". They are all verbs coined or used, some definitely coined, by St. Paul. And what do they express? The participation of the Christian to the mystery of Christ. That is, Christ is not merely the Son of God made man, but he is that human space into which the believer through faith enters and the moment the Christian enters into this space he shares the very same life of Jesus, his mystery and in particular the paschal mystery. Paul insists clearly on this. It is a question therefore of sharing the sufferings of Christ, the cross of Christ in order to share his glory and his divine heredity. It is necessary to insist on this. It suffices to think about all the times St. Paul uses the expression "in Christ". Christian life is a life in Christ where there is the precise idea of Christ as a space. It is only a way of saying, but a space into which our existence enters to share its vital experience. But of course, as we were saying, sharing together the experience of Christ means to have a bond of brotherhood, of communion of one with another; and here we find all the exhortations of St. Paul. We could recall those exhortations to brotherly love as the fundamental rule of our existence. If you like to have some texts, for example, take the second chapter of the Letter to the Philippians. In verses 6 to 11 there is the famous hymn, but before them there is the exhortation to brotherly love; the Second Letter to the Corinthians 8:29; the Letter to Philemon in verse 17; and so on.

Communion as availability to share

There is a second meaning. This spiritual communion which

makes us one thing only in Christ needs to be expressed also in a material communion. Recall the famous text of the Acts of the Apostles, where St. Luke describes the structure of the original Christian community. At that time, the day of Pentecost when Peter has made that great proclamation of the gospel that you remember, the listeners asked him: "What are we to do?" (Acts 2:37) Peter invited them to convert and on that day about three thousand people were baptised and about three thousand people joined them. And what did these three thousand people do once they joined the group of the apostles? "These remained faithful to the teaching of the apostles, to the brotherhood, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers" (Acts 2:42).

This community is being described therefore with these four basic attitudes or modes of behaviour: listening to the teaching, the *koinonia* or communion, the breaking of the bread, namely the Eucharist, and prayer. We cannot explain everything. But St. Luke explains the meaning of communion, the second term, in the continuation of his narration since he says: "And all who shared the faith owned everything in common; they sold the goods and possessions and distributed the proceeds among themselves according to what each one needed." (Acts 2:44). And in the second summary in chapter 4, verse 32: "The whole group of believers was united, heart and soul; no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, as everything they owned was held in common." Here we understand what Luke wants to say: it is the known communion of goods. But he also highlights that "they were united, heart and soul".

The communion of goods is the expression of that brotherhood, of that deep communion that by now unites them in their Christian existence. Christian existence is a true re-birth, a new birth; and precisely because it is a new birth it brings about new true ties of family relationship. "My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and put it into practice" (Lk 8:21). There is indeed a new bond which is being formed, because faith is a new life and is not only a lace to cover a piece of furniture to make the house look more beautiful, but it is a restructuring of the whole Christian existence, is a new genetic code which is inserted in the existence and moulds it. And if there is a new genetic code, there are new family relationships. The family relationship among believers is exactly the result of their adhering to the Lord. And the communion of goods is the expression of this new mystery of brotherhood. In a family the

communion of goods is there instinctively, natively. It is precisely what Luke wants to say. It is of course not question of introducing a new economic rule, that is, an article of canon law. The communion of goods is not a rule, is not a law; but it is the expression of a new spirit, is the expression of a new way of looking at others, which resembles in some aspects the typical way of friendship. And in the ancient, Greek, Aristotelic tradition, friends are recognised also by the fact that they place in common whatever they possess. Possessing together does not mean they have lost the right of ownership, but it means that gladly and easily they share it together, it means that they do not find difficult to share their goods with their friends. This is proper of that trust, of that joy which is found and is expressed in friendship. This is exactly what Luke wants to say.

Let us keep in mind something else. In the Christian community it is said that there was no needy person. Luke says, "No one of their members was ever in want, as all those who owned land or houses would sell them, and bring the money from the sale of them, to present it to the apostles; it was then distributed to any who might be in need" (*Acts* 4:34-35). I underline the phrase "none of their members was ever in want". I underline because this phrase comes from the Book of Deuteronomy, chapter 15, verse 4, where the sabbatical year is talked about. Israel is about to enter into the promised land. The Lord gives him some basic rules which need to be kept in this promised land and, among many things, it is said: "There must, then, be no poor among you. For Yahweh will grant you his blessing in the country which Yahweh your God is giving you to possess as your heritage, only if you pay careful attention to the voice of Yahweh your God, by keeping and practising all these commandments which I am enjoining on you today." Therefore there is a promise, a promise about the land into which the Lord will make his people enter. If the people of God are faithful to the commitments of the Covenant and therefore also to fraternal solidarity, God guarantees and promises that in that land there will be no poor among them. Do you understand what St. Luke wants to say? He wanted to say that this is really true! that this has come to realisation! that in the Jerusalem Christian community the promises of God have become reality. Of course, it means that that community is not an ordinary community, but is the messianic community, the community of the end times. The community that God has promised and that man, Israel, has dreamed about and desired since all times. And this is the

second meaning of the word *koinonia*. There are other things we could say, which you can find for example in the *Didaché* when it speaks about the availability to share material goods, but I like to tie it in with the last two meanings.

Eucharistic communion

The Eucharistic meaning – First Letter to the Corinthians, chapter 10, verse 16: “The blessing cup, which we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ; and the loaf of bread which we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ? And as there is one loaf, so we, although there are many of us, are one single body, for we all share in one loaf.” Here it is said that the Eucharist is true communion with the Lord, with his body, with his blood, but it says that thus the Eucharist builds up the body of Christ and builds up a true communion among all believers who become members of the one body, the one body of the Lord. The idea which lies behind these words is that when something is alive, when a reality is alive, it transforms what it receives. And since I am still alive, thanks be to God, when I sit at the table and eat, I transform what I eat into my blood and therefore into my life, into my cells, into all these things here.

Jesus Christ is alive, is extraordinarily alive. Jesus Christ is so alive that when he enters into the life of the believer, he is not absorbed, but it is He who absorbs, it is He who transforms and makes the life of the believer enter into his experience. In the Eucharist this is what exactly happens, the contrary of what happens at table. According to St. Paul, instead of I being the one to absorb the bread, it is the Body of Christ, that bread which is the body of Christ, which assimilates us and makes us become cells of his body. But this means that Jesus introduces us into a new experience, as we were saying before, he gives us a new genetic code. By entering into the experience of Christ through the Eucharist, I enter into a different kind of logic of growth, which is not of this world, but is divine, the logic of Christ. I enter into a logic according to which growing does not mean making more money or having more authority, but means growing in love and in service.

It means growing in the giving of oneself, in the offering of one's life. This is the new genetic code which is being transmitted to me and I receive in the Eucharist and unites me with all other believers

in a deep communion. One body, because there is one bread. We, though many, form one body only. We can read about the consequences of this in chapter 12 of the First Letter to the Corinthians or in chapter 12 of the Letter to the Romans where the image of the body is a little further explained or in chapter 4 of the Letter to the Ephesians where there is something similar.

Communion as collection

The fourth and last meaning, the one that surprises us, is the collection. St. Paul collects money in the communities of Greece for the mother church of Jerusalem. The matter is that when he talks about it, he does not talk so much about financial support or almsgiving, but interprets this gesture as a religious gesture, namely a gesture of communion in the deep experience of faith.

In the Second Letter to the Corinthians (8:1-4) we read, "Next, brothers, we will tell you of the grace of God which has been granted to the churches of Macedonia, and how, throughout continual ordeals of hardship, their unfailing joy and their intense poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. I can testify that it was of their own accord that they made their gift, which was not merely as far as their resources would allow, but well beyond their resources; and they had kept imploring us most insistently for the privilege of a share in the fellowship of service to God's holy people." So Paul had a generous collection in Macedonia. Even though the churches are poor and suffering, they are happy to be Christian and their extreme poverty has become their wealth. The English translation says "in the fellowship of service to God's holy people", but the text says, "the grace and the communion of service." The *koinonia* of service, which we are living, is a work of *koinonia*, a work of communion. The same concept is taken up again in chapter 9, verses 12 and 13, where Paul invites to be generous because the gift one gives becomes an ever greater richness for him. "For the help provided by this contribution not only satisfies the needs of God's holy people, but also overflows into widespread thanksgiving to God; because when you have proved your quality by this help." The text says "sacred service". Sacred service is the translation into English of *leiturgia*. Then what we are doing is a liturgy, we are collecting money, we are doing a liturgical action, a sacred service. "For

the help provided by this contribution (the fulfilment of this sacred service) not only satisfies the needs of God's holy people, but also overflows into widespread thanksgiving to God, because when you have proved your quality by this help (sacred service, liturgy), you will give glory to God for the obedience which you show in professing the gospel of Christ, as well as for the generosity of your fellowship towards them and towards all."

In fact, recall the problem. Paul needs to receive from the Church of Jerusalem the acknowledgement of full authenticity of the churches he has founded and which are churches made up of pagans, uncircumcised and therefore churches which could seem of a second class. For Paul it is necessary that the Jerusalem church acknowledges the value of these other churches and for this reason he picks up the collection. He gathers the collection not to pay for the acknowledgement, but because the acceptance of the collection is meant to proclaim communion. If the church of Jerusalem accepts a collection coming from the churches of Greece, in this very gesture it manifests a communion of faith with the churches of Greece. Then the collection is an ecclesial action. It is not only an almsgiving in a human sense and it is not even a gesture of Christian charity only. This is also true, of course! It is a gesture of communion, it a gesture of manifestation of the authentic bond of faith that unites one church with another.

Put all together these meanings: the spiritual meaning of communion between God and us and among us, at the level of the life of faith, at the deeper level. The meaning of sharing of material goods, because if we have in common the goods of the spirit, if there is truly a brotherhood among us, if we share in the only life of God, this needs to be expressed in the way we use and manage material goods. The sharing of these goods is nothing but the acknowledgement of the communion of faith. The Eucharistic meaning, where these dimensions are expressed sacramentally, that is in the eating and drinking the body and blood of the Lord. There we express communion with Him. There is no gesture that expresses so intensely communion as this one of assimilating a reality like that of bread and wine. We express all this, we express that communion of brotherhood that comes from the Eucharist; and because of this the Eucharist has communion as its law. It is a gesture of communion made by the Lord who has given his life for us, who gives himself in the sign of the bread and the wine and is the source of communion

in the Christian community. This is also expressed even in the concrete manner of the collection, interpreted however not only as a gesture of economic support, but as an expression of deep communion of life, of which the gesture of financial sharing is precisely a translation, an external expression.

I think that what is important is to put together these four meanings. The word *koinonia* is one single word, which implies all four them. They are of course distinct realities, but are not separate realities. If Christian life is not a schizophrenic life but a well balanced life, these dimensions are lived and integrated together; otherwise we have spiritual schizophrenia in which a person on one side has for example extraordinary experiences in the sacramental life, but then he remains cold and insensitive before the daily reality of life. This is not possible, as well obviously not even the opposite is possible. It is necessary that Christian life integrates harmoniously all these dimensions.

(transcription from tape not revised by the author)
(original text in Italian)

Remember

STELIO FONGARO, CS

Remember, o Scalabrinian,
that you were conceived
and were born
under the canopy of a train station.

This is your “shekinah”,
and the steam engine’s smoke
is your pillar of fire
on the desert journey,
and the cloud in which you were baptized.

Remember
that a train station speaks of leaving
of passage, of uncertainty, of uprootedness, of pulling away:
it speaks of dying.

But, remember:
a train station also means getting there,
“greeting from afar the lasting city”:
it means Exodus to freedom.

So, remember, o Scalabrinian:
just like the vessel’s mast,
you too are a tree without roots.
Yes! You are a tree without roots,
just like the tree of the Cross!

PROGRAM
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Program

Sunday 8 September

“Stay with us because evening comes” (Lk 24,29)

Arrival, registration

Prayer

Monday 9 September

Pilgrims in time

Morning

“Migration has marked my spiritual life”

Personal witness of 4 laypersons

“J. B. Scalabrini has marked my life”

Three men religious, one woman religious and

one Scalabrinian secular missionary will share their reflections

Afternoon

At the core of spirituality and culture: “You are”

(Maria Campatelli, Aletti Center)

Tuesday 10 September

Inspirational sources for our journey

Morning session

Spirituality during Scalabrini’s time (Prof. Cataldo Naro)

The Spirituality of John Baptist Scalabrini,

Bishop and Founder (Bishop Lawrence Sabatini)

Afternoon session

The spirituality of Scalabrinians in Latin America (Fr. Redovino Rizzardo)

The spirituality of Scalabrinians in North America (Fr. Gino Dalpiaz)

Wednesday 11 September

Rules of Life, guide for our journey

Morning session

The spirituality of Scalabrinians in Europe (Fr. Benito Gallo)

The spirituality of Scalabrinians in Australia and Asia (Fr. Joseph Visentin)

Afternoon session

Working groups

Scalabrinian spirituality as it stems from our Rules of Life, n. 1-19

Sharing in the general Assembly

Thursday 12 September

Difficulties and challenges in our journey

Morning session:

Working groups

Late afternoon

Sharing in the general Assembly

Friday 13 September

Itineraries

Morning session – afternoon

Working groups continue:

“The path to follow – what laypersons ask of us”

Late afternoon

Sharing in the general Assembly

Saturday 14 September

“I saw a new heaven and a new earth” (Rev 21, 1)

Morning session

Prayer and meditation:

The Christian Prayer (Bishop Luciano Monari)

The communion (Bishop Luciano Monari)

Afternoon session

Sharing: “I was hoping for...”

“During the Symposium I was struck by...”

“I take home with me...”

Closing remarks by the Superior General

Pilgrimage to the Scalabrinian shrines

Sunday 15 September

“Walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6,8)

- * Visit to the Church of St. John the Baptist in Florence
- * Pilgrimage to the tomb of St. Charles Borromeo in Milan
- * Eucharistic Celebration at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Basilica in Milan

Monday 16 September

- * Eucharistic Celebration at St. Charles Church in Piacenza
- * Fino Mornasco: visit to Bishop Scalabrini's birthplace, renewal of our baptismal promises
- * Como: St. Abbondio Seminary, St. Bartholomew Parish, Cathedral
- * Rivergaro: Consecration to Our Lady

Tuesday 17 September

- * Visit of the Scalabrinian Museum at the Mother House in Piacenza
- * St. Antonino: the missionary mandate
- * Eucharistic Celebration in Piacenza Cathedral
- * Prayer at the tomb of Bishop Scalabrini

List of participants

1. Albini, Luciana
2. Ambrózio, Cláudio, cs
3. Antonelli, Lilian
4. Antonelli, Sauro
5. Azzola, Marina, mss
6. Azzolin, Rino, cs
7. Battaglia, Pio, cs
8. Battistella, Renato Graziano, cs
9. Bentoglio, Gabriele, cs
10. Bernardi, Francisco J., cs
11. Bertinato, Marcello, cs
12. Birollo, Isaia, cs
13. ✠ Braido, Jacyr F., cs
14. Bretón, Judith
15. Brown, Mary Elizabeth
16. ✠ Caliaro, Marco, cs
17. Calza, Sérgio, cs
18. Carron, Mario
19. Casaril, Diógenes, cs
20. Cauzzi, Maria Ana, mscs
21. Cecconi, Dino, cs
22. Ceresoli, Domenico, cs
23. Cervellin, Sante, cs
24. Corso, Giovanni, cs
25. Da Silva, Pedro Rui Manuel, cs
26. Dalpiaz, Gino, cs
27. Dall'Agnese, Sergio, cs
28. Dalla Valeria, Luciano, cs
29. Dalla Zuanna, Giuseppe, cs
30. De Recalde Russo, Carmen
31. Di Pietro, Renato
32. Di Sciacca, Enza
33. Dornelas, Sidney M., cs
34. Favero, Loris, cs
35. Favero, Luigi, cs
36. Firetti, Adelia, mss
37. Fongaro, Stelio, cs
38. Fregonese, Enrico, cs
39. Fugolo, Giuseppe, cs
40. Fumagalli, Anna, mss
41. Gallo, Benito, cs
42. Garbossa, João, cs
43. García Bibiana, Cecilia
44. García Reyes, Jesús M., cs
45. Giroto, Emídio, cs
46. Gonçalves, Alfredo J., cs
47. Guglielmi, Silvano, cs
48. Guizzardi, Rovilio, cs
49. Izzo, Peppino
50. Kleinubing, Norma, mscs
51. Korniewicz, Julie
52. Lazzarato, Mauro, cs
53. Lubos, Christiane, mss
54. Luise, Maria Grazia, mss
55. Magno, Fidel A., cs
56. Malvessi, Alda Mônica, mscs
57. Marin, Umberto, cs
58. Marzoli, Carlo, cs
59. Mello, Giovanni, cs
60. Meneses, Adalid Lopez
61. Mollicone, Giuliana
62. Moscato, Angelo, cs
63. Mouro, Lucy
64. Parolin, Enrico
65. Parolin, Gaetano, cs
66. Pettenà, Maurizio, cs
67. Pettenon, Ermelinda, mscs
68. Pravatà, Angela
69. Prencipe, Lorenzo, cs
70. Pretto, Ivo A., cs

APENDICE

71. Rizzardo, Redovino, cs
72. Roldán, Martha
73. Rosoli, Gianfausto, cs
74. Rossi, Beniamino, cs
75. Ruffinoni, Alessandro C., cs
76. ✠ Sabatini, Lawrence, cs
77. Santillo, Mario Miguel, cs
78. Sbaraini, Agenor, cs
79. Scopa, Joseph, cs
80. Silva, Nivaldo F., cs
81. Silvestri, Anna Maria
82. Slongo, Paolo
83. Solzi, Tilde
84. Stella, Livio, cs
85. Tapparello, Antônio, cs
86. Tassello, Graziano, cs
87. Teixeira, Ivonete
88. Tessari, Costanzo, cs
89. Torresan, Dino, cs
90. Touzin, Yves, cs
91. Vanoli, Antoinette
92. Viglione, Raffaele
93. Visentin, Giuseppe, cs
94. Volpato, Darciolei, cs
95. Zaupa, Roberto, cs

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