

Rome, June 1st, 2020

Prot. n° 086/2020

Subject: Feast of our Blessed Founder
Giovanni Battista Scalabrini

*“To work, to fatigue, to sacrifice in every way to expand the Kingdom of God on earth and save souls. To kneel, I would say, before the world to implore the grace to do it some good.”
(Scalabrini, Pastoral Letter, 15.02.1892)*

Dear Sisters, Candidates, Scalabrinian Lay Missionaries,

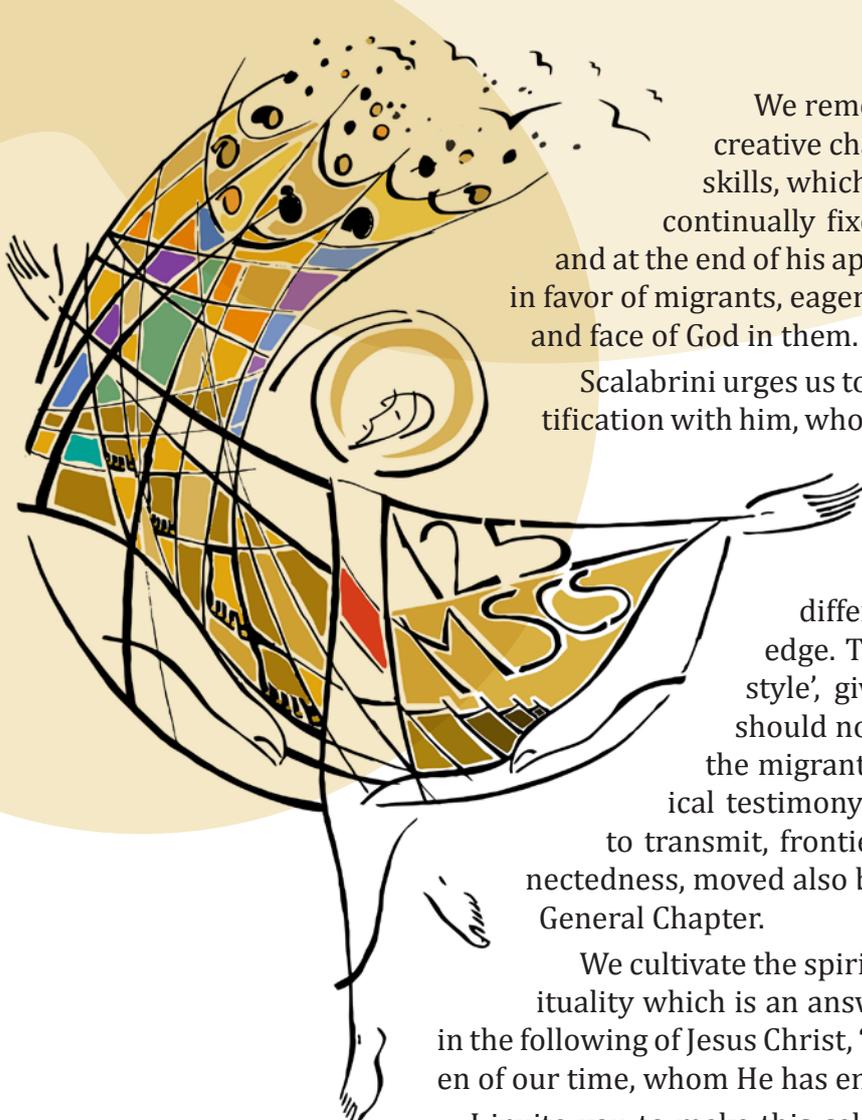
It is with immense joy that we turn to you, through this message, on the day in which we celebrate the Feast of our Founder, Blessed Giovanni Battista Scalabrini. And we join together to offer, with one only voice, a joyful hymn of thanksgiving to God, hymn of gratitude for the gift of Blessed Giovanni Battista Scalabrini, our Founder, from whom we have received the gift of the Scalabrinian Charism at the service of migrants and refugees. When we think of Scalabrini, we see in him a man of action, a spiritual, passionate, dynamic man, living an incarnate spirituality: a man who continually contemplated the Son of God who became human to reveal the love of the Father and to bring back to the Father the redeemed humanity.

All his options, all the criteria for his choices, all the motivation for his actions are closely connected with his experience: *“he only feels his God, lives of his God, thinks, speaks and works with his God”*¹. He perceived the most urgent needs of his time, and entered, with his missionary passion, deep into the hopes, the struggles, the contradictions of his time. The Founder knelt before the world, to ask the favor to do it some good.

This year, the Feast of the Blessed Giovanni Battista Scalabrini is marked by two events. The first event is the special joy for the grace of the 125th Anniversary of the Foundation of our Congregation, which leads us to remember the faithful gift of self of each Scalabrinian Missionary Sister, who contributed to weave our congregational history and who have always nourished, with their life of prayer and apostolic action, the Scalabrinian prophetic spirit.

The second event, which marks today's feast, is this time in which all humanity is experiencing the contagion caused by the coronavirus, and which has put every social and ecclesial reality on the same boat, exhorting the Church and also the MSCS Congregation to be on the front line, to live solidarity and the universality of prayer at all times, to be close to the victims of this scourge, and support those who are in deep pain or accompanying those who pass away, as the Blessed Founder did when a very serious famine hit the province of Piacenza in the winter of 1879-1880. Besides his works during times of great calamities, we have to recall his daily, generous and hidden charity to the many people in need, to the point of being called 'prince of charity'.

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



We remember his strong and gentle, concrete and creative character, his intelligence, his organizational skills, which he had acquired because he kept his gaze continually fixed on the One who was at the beginning and at the end of his apostolic action, a great act of love especially in favor of migrants, eager and attentive in recognizing the presence and face of God in them.

Scalabrini urges us to continually grow in our charismatic identification with him, who nourishes our journey and our daily vocational response, and who invites us to dwell in the hearth of migration, as a resource and an opportunity to generate intertwining relationships between different people, cultures, religions, and knowledge. To (If we are to have) have a 'Scalabrinian style', giving a feminine face to the charism, we should not repeat what Blessed Scalabrini did with the migrants of his time, but inspired by his evangelical testimony we have a mission to preserve, a legacy to transmit, frontiers to be inhabited as places of interconnectedness, moved also by the spirit of the recently celebrated XIV General Chapter.

We cultivate the spirituality inherited from our Founder, a spirituality which is an answer to our times, always to be reinvented, in the following of Jesus Christ, 'always on the way' to meet men and women of our time, whom He has entrusted to our care.

I invite you to make this celebration an opportunity to make Blessed Giovanni Battista Scalabrini and his always relevant work known, and to awaken the devotion to him. Through the intercession of Blessed Scalabrini may our Congregation be blessed with new missionaries at the service of migrants, who can draw from Blessed Scalabrini inspiration, hope and passion for the proclamation of the Gospel to migrants, in a path of creative fidelity to the Scalabrinian charism.

Our Congregation, which celebrates its 125th jubilee, was born in the heart of the Church, so loved by our Founder, and it is at the service of the Church, mother of all vocation. We ask our Blessed Founder the gift of new vocations, and to welcome them as new resources, new seeds of hope and creativity which will enrich our beloved congregation. Let the passionate words that Pope Francis addressed to us echo in our hearts: "*I encourage you to put your charism more and more at the service of the Church*"². This expression makes us feel in the heart of the Church and confirms once again, our mission in the Church.

Let's become *all things to all people!* This was the commitment of Blessed Giovanni Battista Scalabrini and is our commitment in serving the world according to the will of the Father.

Happy Feast Day!

Sr. Neusa de Fátima Mariano, mscs

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Superior General, General Councilors and Secretary