



BLESSED SCALABRINI AND HIS VIEW OF MIGRATION



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METHODOLOGY

1. Initial moment of recollection (prayer or singing)

2. Handbook 7 Objectives:

- Who was Giovanni Battista Scalabrini?
- How has Scalabrini become interested in migration?
- What are the main points of his teaching?
- What were Scalabrini's main initiatives regarding migration?

3. Framework of The Handbook.

The facilitator can encourage reflection on some ideas of Scalabrini's social thought advising to update them and compare them to today's migratory phenomenon:

- Value of personal experience in understanding migrations
- Collaboration with all those engaged in emigration
- Importance of legislative involvement
- National and international dimension of migration
- Migration as a necessity - law of nature
- The causes of migration then and in our day
- What does global assistance to migration mean
- The Church's commitment towards migration

4. Final sharing can revolve around the following questions:

- which aspects of Scalabrini's personality and action impressed me the most?
- what was Scalabrini's originality in his involvement in migrations?
- what still remains valid in Scalabrini's teaching?

6. To learn more

Tomasi S. e G. Rosoli (edited by), *Scalabrini and modern migrations*, Torino, SEI, 1997.

Terragni G., *Scalabrini e la Congregazione dei missionari per gli emigrati. Aspetti istituzionali, 1887-1905*, Autorinediti, 2014.

7. Evaluation

Fill in the short form that is distributed

8. Conclusion with a prayer or a song.

1. WHO WAS BISHOP J.B. SCALABRINI

Biographical notes

Giovanni Battista Scalabrini was born in Fino Mornasco (Como, Italy) in 1839. After high school at the Gallio lyceum in Como, he entered the seminary and was ordained a priest in 1863. He manifested his desire for the missions of PIME (Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions), but his Bishop charged him with teaching history and Greek in the minor seminary, of which he later became rector. From 1870 to 1875 he exercised pastoral ministry in the city parish of St. Bartholomew, in which, due to the crisis of the silk mills, numerous faithful were forced to emigrate. Pius IX appointed him Bishop of Piacenza and in February 1876 he entered his diocese. During his episcopate, he made five Pastoral Visits to his vast diocese, he called three diocesan Synods, he organized and promoted an extensive network of catechists and also prepared the first National Catechetical Congress in Piacenza in 1889. Already over 60 years of age, he undertook two trips, one to the United States (1901) and the other to Brazil (1904), the first Italian Bishop to cross the ocean to visit the Emigrants. On May 5, 1905 he sent to the Holy See a “Memorandum” for the establishment of an central coordinating body for catholic emigrants of all nationalities. He died in the same year.

Man of Faith

Scalabrini had a religious view of human existence that starts from God and to God returns. A solid faith based on union with God and on following Christ present in the Eucharist (3rd Synod, 1899), as well as on the saving mystery of the Cross. Not an abstract spirituality, but one embodied in everyday life, ready to get involved with daily challenges. In his writings he often uses the expression “salvation of souls” which implies both evangelization and human promotion. In the succession of human events, and in particular in those related to the migration of individuals, Scalabrini sees the mysterious design of Divine Providence which guides history towards the unity of the human family. “While races mingle, extend and interact, through the noise of our machines, above all this feverish work, of all these gigantic enterprises, and not without them, a much larger, much nobler, much more sublime work is maturing on the face of this earth: the union in God through Jesus Christ of all men of good will” (Address to the Catholic Club of New York, 1901).

Man of Action

The basic motivations urging Scalabrini to take an interest in emigrants and to establishing initiatives in their favor are closely linked to the concern for safeguarding the faith of so many compatriots who emigrated

in lands where Catholicism was a minority or where religious services were poor or lacking. He writes: "So many generous efforts are being made to convert the infidels and are we to let our already Catholic compatriots perish?"¹ He is convinced that the future growth of Catholicism would happen within the folds of migrations and, therefore, he urges the Holy See to intervene urgently. Returning from his trip to Brazil in 1904 where he visited the emigrants, Scalabrini informed Pius X about the need to set up a central body in the government of the Holy See to coordinate religious assistance to Catholic emigrants of all nationalities. He writes: "Most Holy Father, now when the Church with the admirable Institution of Propagation of the Faith spends a lot of money and invests many priests to spread the faith among the infidels, will she not do anything to favor the preservation of the faith among the emigrants of all nations and catholic regions: Italians, Germans, Spanish, Portuguese, Canadians, etc.?"²

Due to his intense activity, Scalabrini can be counted among the bishops and "social saints" of the second half of the 19th century. He does not close himself in his diocese but actively participates in the serious issues that attack the civil and religious society of his time: the Roman question and the difficult relationship between State and Church in Italy after national unity; the labor issue and the industrialization process between the liberal and the socialist movements; finally, the migration issue which he includes within the framework of the previous ones. And he tried to find a solution for them with a series of practical initiatives. He held that "speculative and intellectual Catholicism and a religious neutrality, are absurd, and almost equivalent to a betrayal, while in society the most vital issues are being talked about and debated. It's an easy transition from concealing one's faith and losing it."³

He invites all, clergy and laity, to actively live the "life of the people, drawing closer to it with the press, with associations and committees, with mutual societies, public conferences, with congresses, with workers groups, with shelters for children, with every work of private and public charity."⁴ He urges his priests to keep in touch with the workers, he says: "... Nowadays it is almost impossible to bring the working class back to the Church unless we maintain an ongoing relationship with it outside the Church. We must leave the temple, venerable Brothers, if we are to do a saving work in the temple. Go out but to sanctify. We must also be men of our time... My dear ones, the world is moving ahead and

¹ Scalabrini G.B., Letter to Card. Simeoni, Piacenza, 11.01.1887, AGS / BA 01, 02, 01.

² Scalabrini G.B., Letter and Memorandum to Pius X, São Paulo (Brazil), 2.07.1904, AGS / AB 01, 04, 41b.

³ Scalabrini G.B., Pastoral Letter, *Union, Action and Prayer*, in " Scalabrini Pastoral Letters" edited by O. Sartori, SEI, Turin 1890, 469.

⁴ Scalabrini G.B., Pastoral Letter Centenario di S. Luigi, 1891, Piacenza, AGS/AP 02-04-02.

we must not remain behind because of formalities or dictates of misunderstood prudence..."⁵

Man of Will

To his missionaries he indicates the icon of St. Charles Borromeo as a model to be followed: "Man of action, who is not divided and never pulls back, a man of energetic will and fearless constancy."⁶ He anticipates of the work that awaits them: "Vast and borderless is the field opened up to your zeal. There are temples to be built, schools to be opened, hospitals to be erected hospices to be founded; there is the worship of the Lord to be organized, there are children, widows, orphans, poor sick people, failing old men and, in short, all the miseries of life that need the healing benefit of Christian charity."⁷

Father to the Migrants

For his life and spirituality, for his works in favor of the poor and the marginalized, for the social and religious commitment for the migrants, on November 9, 1997 Pope John Paul II proclaimed him "Blessed" and pointed to him as an authentic Father to the Migrants. "Bishop Scalabrini - the Pope stated- sought to heal the material and spiritual wounds of so many brothers and sisters forced to live far from their homeland. He supported them in defending the fundamental rights of the human person and wanted to help them to be faithful to the duties of their Christian faith. As an authentic Father to the Migrants, he endeavored to sensitize communities to a respectful, open and supportive welcome. In fact, he was convinced that, by their presence, migrants are a sign of the catholicity of God's family and can contribute to the indispensable premises for that authentic encounter between the peoples, which is the fruit of the Spirit of Pentecost."⁸

2. HOW DID SCALABRINI BECOME INTERESTED IN MIGRATIONS?

Scalabrini, together with Geremia Bonomelli, the Bishop of Cremona, was among the first European bishops to show concern in an organic and structural approach for the migration phenomenon. In assisting migrants, he acted on two fronts: the religious and the social. He believed, in fact, that emigration was presenting an opportunity for Italian Catholics to break the political silence which had been imposed on them by the "non expedit", (the 1868 prohibition to take part in the political elections

⁵ Ibidem, 10.

⁶ Scalabrini G.B., Circular Letter to his Missionaries, 15 March 1892.

⁷ Scalabrini G.B., Discourse to the departing missionaries, Piacenza, 12.07.1888, AGS / AR 04-01-03.

⁸ John Paul II, Homily on the occasion of the beatification of Scalabrini, 9.11.1997.

and therefore in the national political life). At his urging many men of good will chose to collaborate with him and, for the first time after the unity of Italy, Catholics and Liberals are united by a common project.⁹

In November 1887 he founded the Congregation of the Missionaries of St. Charles Borromeo for Italian emigrants and in 1895 that of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo. In the meantime, he set up in many Italian cities the Committees and Associations of Patronage, counting on the work of the laity, and in the 1889 he took up the model of the St. Raphael-Verein, founded by Peter Paul Cahensly for German emigrants. This inaugurates the St. Raffaele Society for Italian emigrants, which was primarily active in assisting their compatriots in the ports of embarkation and arrival and in the legislative debate in Italy and the United States.

Scalabrini's main writings on the migration issue: "Italian migration to America. Observations" (1887); "The law on Italian Migration" (1888); "About assistance to national emigration and about the Institutes that provide for it. Report to the 1891 Palermo exhibition"; "Italy abroad". Conference held in Turin (1898); "The emigration of Italian workers. Report to the 1899 Catholic Congress of Ferrara"; Memorandum "pro emigratis catholicis" (1905).

Following the foundation of his institutes and the publication of his first writings on emigration, Scalabrini increasingly became the point of reference and the main interlocutor on migration issues. He remains in constant written contact with the Holy See, especially with the Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith, with the Italian, European and American bishops, thus helping to open between the two sides of the ocean the way to co-responsibility and episcopal collegiality ante litteram for the pastoral care of emigrants. Scalabrini was also in contact with various Italian Parliamentarians in order to propose and improve laws for the benefit of migrants.

Personal experience

In founding his work for the migrants Scalabrini followed a methodology that has as its starting point his personal experience. He saw three of his brothers leave for Latin America; he witnessed many of his parishioners in Como take the path of emigration; almost 12 percent of his faithful in Piacenza were emigrating. He then documented and studied the issue at the Italian and international levels. He then shared his conclusions through books and conferences. Bishop Scalabrini drew a comparison, without confusion, between the analysis and socio-economic-political reading of emigration, and the values and beliefs born

⁹ See De Rosa G., "Introduzione", in AA.VV., Scalabrini tra vecchio e nuovo mondo, CSER, Rome 1989, pgs. 1-13; See De Rosa, 237-252.

of faith and pastoral concern. We could say that he reads from within a phenomenon already in full progress, based on pastoral criteria that demanded urgency and rapid of intervention. He, therefore, deals with the problem at the specific level of the interventions. A significant moment that shook his soul and prompted him to intervene was when he observed hundreds and hundreds of poor emigrants gathered on the halls of Milan railroad station waiting to leave for the ports of Genoa or Le Havre and then embark for the Americas.

Milan railway station

"In Milan several years ago, I was a spectator of a scene that left an impression of deep sadness in my soul. As I walked through the station, I saw the vast waiting room, the side porticoes, and the adjacent piazza filled with three or four hundred poorly clad people, separated into different groups. Their faces, bronzed by the sun and furrowed by the premature wrinkles of deprivation, reflected the inner turmoil convulsing their hearts at that moment.... They were emigrants... They were preparing to leave their country which they had grown to know only through two despised realities: taxes and the military draft.... I left there deeply moved. A flood of melancholy thoughts brought a lump to my throat. ... how many, though securing the food for the body, will be without food for the soul, which is no less necessary than the former, and in a materialistic way of life will lose the faith of their forebears?... Faced with this lamentable situation, I have often asked myself: how can it be remedied? ... and I ask myself again: what can be done for them?" (Scalabrini G.B., *L'emigrazione italiana in America*, 1888).

Collaboration

In forming his project Scalabrini did not act alone, but sought out the active collaboration of all, Holy See and Government, clergy and laity and all people of "good will ... for charity knows no political party."¹⁰ He was convinced that no valid human force, even if at odds with Catholic thought, should feel alien to the work of assistance to national migration. At his invitation, many people of good will committed themselves to collaborate with him in this great work of "redemption of the emigrants"¹¹. In his project to assist migrants, he includes the participation of the laity and calls for their active collaboration. He states: "Therefore, o lay people, understand the nobility and greatness of your mission, and make sure to embrace it worthily. Today, you can do a great deal; you can enter where we, due to vulgar prejudices, do not have access;

¹⁰ Scalabrini G.B., *L'emigrazione italiana in America*, (1887), o.c., 8.

¹¹ Idem, 10.

you can carry out with success many undertakings that we, due to the present sad state of affairs, cannot. So be, therefore, mediators of God.”¹²

Legislative activity

Scalabrini entered into the heart of the parliamentary debate to improve laws to protect Italians both at home and abroad. He strongly contested the 1888 proposed legislation, which allowed the harmful operations of emigration agents and subagents, who were craftily deceiving with false promises the poor people into migrating, “enticing” them to leave for the El Dorado of the Americas, where, often, they became prey to greedy fraudsters and professional swindlers, or, in the case of Brazil, they were caught in the clutches of black slaveowners to replace the work of the recently freed black slaves in the coffee plantations of the fazendas. Most of Scalabrini’s proposals were accepted by the Italian Parliament and included in the 1901 Law, which Scalabrini called “our law”, to whose draft a valid contribution had been given by Fr. Maldotti, one of Scalabrini’s missionaries at the port of Genoa, by the Marquis Volpe Landi and by Scalabrini himself who subscribed to it .

Scalabrini’s pastoral project

Fr. Luigi Favero, Superior General of the Scalabrinian Congregation from 1992 to 2000, referring to Scalabrini’s religious and social activity for migrants, wrote: “In summary, using today’s terminology, Scalabrini’s pastoral project brings together evangelization and human promotion: it announces God’s plan, hidden in migrations, and through catechesis leads from the self-isolation of the tower of Babel to the open interfacing of Pentecost; it defends the human rights of the migrant, promotes justice and highlights cultural heritage in building a bridge with the welcoming community. It seeks to bring migrants into communion with the welcoming society and the local churches; it solidifies in space and time, in departure and arrival, memory and project, mediating the passing of ‘perennial memory’ along the generations, from fathers to children. All this aims at forming of all peoples one people, of all families one family.”¹³

3 - WHAT ARE THE IMPORTANT ELEMENTS OF HIS TEACHING?

National and International Dimension

In the two-year period (1891-92) Scalabrini traveled the entire Italian peninsula to raise awareness in public opinion on the seriousness of the

¹² Interview given to the director of “Colonial Italy”, Genoa, Dec. 1901, in “Trent’anni di apostolato”, (edited by Angelo Scalabrini), Roma 1912, p. 589-590.

¹³ Favero L., Pastoral timeliness of Bishop G.B. Scalabrini, article p.m., s.d. in AGS.

social and religious problems, connected with emigration. In addition, his determination to solve the problem of migration at the international level motivates him to promote some conferences, such as the Liège and Lucerne conferences of 1890. In his writings Scalabrini demonstrates a good knowledge of national laws and international migration issues. He considers it important that the State guarantee the emigrant forms of protection by means of a bilateral agreement between the States involved.

A necessity

“Emigration- says Scalabrini - is not a pleasure, but an inevitable and “last resort” option”. The immense majority of those fleeing Italy do not leave because they dislike work, but because it was not available. The development of agricultural capitalism and the beginnings of the Industrial Revolution forced farm workers to emigrate. For this reason, “the emigration must be discouraged as much as possible, unless it is dictated by absolute necessity; it must be informed and directed, when it is inevitable, giving the poor emigrant all those suggestions and moral comforts that serve him/her as a viaticum on the painful journey, and to protect him/her against the troubles and envies that await him/her far from the home”.¹⁴ Scalabrini understood that emigration, in many cases, is a painful necessity for survival, capable of changing the territorial and ideal concept of homeland: “to the dispossessed, the homeland is the land that gives him bread.”¹⁵ The Bishop was aware, therefore, that the mass migrations of the second half of the 19th century caused profound implications in the social life of peoples, effecting their future “and that this huge increase in our emigration is not a passing phenomenon, [...] but the sincere expression of a permanent state of affairs, and this we learn from the numerous and continuous departures for America”¹⁶.

The causes

Among the many causes that drive poor people to emigrate, Scalabrini lists some of them: population growth, the inability of a country to feed all its citizens, the mismanagement of public administration that imposes excessive taxes, the agricultural crisis, the development of the ease of transport, the desire to improve one’s own existential situation.

Global assistance

In the analysis of the migration phenomenon, Scalabrini affirmed the importance of considering all aspects that interact in the migration issue:

¹⁴ Scalabrini G.B., *Il socialismo e l’azione del clero*, (1899), o.c., 187.

¹⁵ Scalabrini G.B., *The emigration of Italian workers. Conference in Ferrara (1899)*, o. c., 140-141.

¹⁶ Scalabrini G.B., *Italian Emigration in America*, 1887.

“since in everything related to emigration, religious, civic and national, public and private interests cannot be separated without doing damage.”¹⁷ He also believed that assistance should be provided at all stages of the migration process, from recruitment, to ports of departure, but also on ships during the ocean crossing; arrival in the new lands; the presence of missionaries in places of settlement is also necessary.

Law of nature

Scalabrini clearly proclaims that emigration is a natural inalienable right, which can become a good thing or an evil for the individuals or nations, depending on the manner and conditions in which it takes place, therefore, on a practical level it is necessary to proceed with extreme prudence. The government has a duty to direct and regulate the flow of migration and not to abandon it to itself “without advice and without guidance.” In fact, by preventing emigration, a sacred human right is violated because human rights are inalienable and therefore man can go to seek his well-being “wherever it’s more profitable”; abandoning it to itself, it becomes ineffective because “emigration is a centrifugal force that can become, when it is well directed, a very powerful centripetal force.”¹⁸

In any case, emigration cannot be prevented. In fact, all obstacles placed by governments on migrants serve only to increase clandestine departures. Instead, the freedom to emigrate, while opposing the compulsiveness of emigrating should be upheld. Government and private entities, however, must work for prevention, increasing the social and economic development of the country, improving, at home, the living conditions of workers and peasants, with governmental laws adequate to the needs, with the implementation of incisive reforms and preventing the propaganda of the agents of emigration. In particular, they must promote associations of social security and mutual aid, to ensure just wages for workers, combating usury, setting up production and consumption cooperatives, as well as banks and rural financial institutions that provide small farmers with the necessary capital.

“Seeds migrate on the wings of the winds, plants migrate from continent to continent brought by the currents of the waters, birds and animals migrate and, most of all, human beings emigrate, at time collectively, or as individuals, but always instruments of that Providence which presides over human destinies and guides them, even through setbacks, towards the final goal, which is man’s perfection on earth and the glory of God in the heavens”¹⁹.

Positive Aspects

¹⁷ Scalabrini G.B., *Il socialismo e l’azione del clero*, Piacenza, 1898, 159

¹⁸ Scalabrini G.B., *L’Italia all’estero*, conference in Turin, 1898, Tip. Roux Trassati, Torino, 1899, 127

¹⁹ Scalabrini G.B., *L’emigrazione degli operai italiani*, Conference of Ferrara (1899).

Scalabrini sees in migration not only sufferings, sorrows and tragedies, often described with a great deal of detail by the press and even by some documents of the Holy See of the time (Cf. *Quam aerumnosa*)²⁰, but also captures the positive aspect of well-being for the individual, for the family unit, for the country of departure and for that arrival. He writes: "I don't want to be misunderstood or seem pessimistic. The sad things mentioned cannot be said of all our emigrants. Quite a few of them have found sufficient bread in the hospitable countries; many found well-being, and some even wealth, and as a whole, form colonies for which motherland can be proud²¹ [...]. Emigration is almost always a human good, since it opens new avenues to trade, facilitates the dissemination of the discoveries of science and industry, merges and perfects civilizations and broadens the concept of homeland beyond the material boundaries, making one's homeland the world."²²

Safeguarding cultural heritage

Scalabrini is convinced that the rich cultural and religious heritage that the migrant carries with him should not be lost or dispersed. He believes in fact that it is important that the immigrant, at least in the early days, maintains the religious, cultural and linguistic identity, "elements necessary for the preservation of one's faith."²³ However, he warns the compatriots of the danger of being locked in a dangerous form of nationalistic ghettoization, rejecting the host society. He, therefore, invites immigrants to enter the social fabric of the new country, by respecting the laws of the place: "Observe the customs of the country and comply with them as much as possible. Learn to speak their language, but do not forget your sweet mother tongue."²⁴

The Church's universal mission

Scalabrini considers the assistance of emigrants to be the task of the whole Church because she does not identify with any culture, but respects and transcends all cultures. He wrote: "The Church of Jesus Christ, who sent gospel workers among the most barbaric nations and in the most inhospitable lands, has not forgotten and will never forget the mission she was entrusted with by God to evangelize the children of

²⁰ Leo XIII; Letter *Quam aerumnosa* to the American Bishops, 10.12.1888, ASS., XXI, 1888, 258-260.

²¹ Scalabrini G.B., *Italy abroad*. Conference in Turin (1898), o. But c., 127.

²² Ibidem.

²³ See Interview with the Director of Colonial Italy, Genoa, December 1901, in *"Trent'anni di apostolato"*, edited by Angelo Scalabrini, Rome 1912, 511.

²⁴ Interview with "The Post Dispatch" newspaper in St. Louis, October 3, 1901, in *Thirty Years of Apostolate, Memorie e documenti* (edited by Angelo Scalabrini), Rome 1912, 470-471

misery and labor [the migrants] ... Yes, O Gentlemen, because where the people are working and suffering, there is the Church."²⁵.

Final vision of emigration

Scalabrini sees in the geographical dispersion of individuals and whole peoples the slow movement of human history towards the unity of one family: "... This is my hope; yes, O gentlemen, this is my hope: For while the world is dazzled by its progress, while man exults in his conquests over matter and lords it over nature, disemboweling the earth, yoking the lightening, cutting isthmuses to mingle the waters of the oceans, eliminating distances; while nations fall and rise and renew themselves; while races mingle, spread, and fuse; above the roar of our machines, above all this feverish activity, over and beyond all these gigantic achievements and not without them, a much vaster, nobler, and more sublime work is taking place: the union in God through Jesus Christ of all people of good will."²⁶.

4. WHAT WERE SCALABRINI'S MAIN INITIATIVES TOWARD MIGRATIONS?

Among the religious and social works Scalabrini carried out are the foundation of the Institute of The Deaf and Mute (1879), the initiative to help women workers in the rice fields (1903), the support to the St. Antoninus Catholic Bank, and, the founding of two religious Congregations, the Missionaries of St. Charles Borromeo (1887) and of the Missionary Sisters (1895), the St. Raphael benevolent association (1889), the Committees for emigrants in numerous Italian cities with their consultation and assistance offices.

The Congregation of the Missionaries of St. Charles Borromeo

As he begins to study the migration phenomenon, Scalabrini decides to work with the most important Vatican entities, the Secretariat of State and the Propagation of the Faith, and on January 11, 1887 he wrote about it to Card. Simeoni, prefect of Propagation, suggesting to intervene as a Church on behalf of migrants. The availability of the Bishop of Piacenza was appreciated by the Holy See and the Pope instructed Scalabrini to prepare a project to assist migrants. In close collaboration with the Propagation of Faith the Institute of the Missionaries of St. Charles was then founded, which provides for the preparation of missionaries in Piacenza and their being sent to the Americas. Scalabrini instituted his Congregation on November 28, 1887 in the Basilica of St. Antoninus with the

²⁵ Scalabrini G.B., Italian emigration to America. Observations. Piacenza, 1887.

²⁶ Scalabrini G.B., Address to the Catholic Club of New York, 15.10.1910, in "L'Araldo Italiano-The Italian Herald", New York, 24.10.1901.

presence of the first two missionaries, Fr. Giuseppe Molinari and Fr. Domenico Mantese. The dynamics of the collaboration between Scalabrini and Propagation of Faith not only led to the founding of the Institute, but also to its subsequent evolution, as Scalabrini himself acknowledged in a report to Card. Ledochowski, new prefect of the Vatican dicastery²⁷. The Congregation, with five-year perpetual religious vows, spread especially in the United States and in Brazil.

The Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo.

“The work of the missionaries - Bishop Scalabrini wrote to Card. Ledochowski, - would be incomplete, especially in South America, without the help of the Sisters.”²⁸ On October 25, 1896 the Bishop of Piacenza welcomed in the Chapel of his episcopal palace Fr. Giuseppe Marchetti who introduced to him four ladies, Carolina Marchetti, Assunta Marchetti²⁹, Angela Larini and Maria Franceschini, coming from the province of Lucca, eager to dedicate their lives to the assistance of the orphans of São Paulo (Brazil). Scalabrini gave them the missionary crucifix before their leaving for Brazil.

On that morning, the foundation stone of the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles, was laid, initially called “Handmaidens of the orphans and destitute”.

St. Raphael society

Alongside his Institute for Religious Assistance of emigrants, Scalabrini also promoted the work of religious and civil assistance by the St. Raphael society, which he established in 1889. Formed by lay people, it carried out its activity through the “Benevolent Society” in numerous Italian cities under the presidency of the Marquis Volpe Landi of Piacenza. The main purpose of this benevolent society is to provide for the spiritual and material welfare of the emigrants and Scalabrini lists its main tasks: “1. Rescue the migrants from the shameful speculations of certain migration agents who, in order to make money, physically and morally ruin the poor people who fall into their networks; 2. Set up an office to prepare what is needed for the placement of emigrants, who have landed in the ports of America, so that whenever an Italian turns to the Association, the latter could surely promise him a useful employ-

²⁷ Scalabrini G.B., Report to Card. Ledochowski: “It is clear from these facts and documents that the foundation of this Apostolic Institute of Piacenza can be said to be the foundation of the Holy See, and it is, as expressed by your most worthy predecessor in his Circular letter of 27 February 1889, “almost an appendix” of this same Sacred Congregation», Piacenza, 10.08.1900, AGS / BA 03- 04-01

²⁸ Ibidem

²⁹ Mother Assunta Marchetti, together with her brother Giuseppe, is co-founder of the Scalabrinian Sisters. She was proclaimed Blessed on October 25, 2014 in São Paulo, Brazil.

ment or, on the contrary, discourage him from emigrating; 3. Provide emergency help in case of disaster or infirmity, both during the voyage and after the landing; 4. Wage an implacable war to the -allow me the expression -, “merchants of human flesh”, who do not shy away from resorting to the most sordid means, *turpis lucri gratia*; 5. Provide religious assistance during the crossing, following the landing and in the places where the emigrants will settle; 6. Putting pressure on governments to improve health measures for migrants on ships and where they will settle, and to take care of their education.”³⁰ This effort succeeded and led to the above-mentioned 1901 legislation.

CONCLUSION

Many things have changed since Scalabrini’s time. Migration today reveals a new and more complex face. We are witnessing a reshuffle of different peoples, cultures and religions. There has been a remarkable increase in refugees and exiles. All this manifests the multifaceted reality of human coexistence and not without misunderstandings and tensions. Scalabrini’s call for respect for, and recognition of, the inalienable rights of the human person points the way forward in a society which, often only in words, proclaims itself respectful of human rights. Emigration reminds us that we all live in one global village where the destiny of the individual is the destiny of all. Not “*homo homini lupus*” as the English philosopher Hobbes proclaimed, but “*homo homini frater*”, as Scalabrini invoked ³¹.



³⁰ Scalabrini G.B., Italian emigration to America. Observations. Piacenza, 1887.

³¹ Ibidem

MEMORANDUM

FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A CENTRAL ENTITY FOR ALL CATHOLIC EMIGRANTS

Bishop. Scalabrini had founded in 1887 a Congregation mainly for assistance to Italian emigrants, then “the most numerous and the most abandoned”. After almost twenty years, through the news received from his missionaries scattered in the Americas and with his personal experience in direct contact with emigrants in the United States (1901) and Brazil (1904) Scalabrini comes to the conclusion that emigration is a global and unified social fact that cannot be considered in pieces because it involves all nations. Therefore, religious and social assistance must also address all emigrants through an entity of the Holy See that could provide coordination and human promotion. On May 5, 1905, a few weeks before his death, he sent to Cardinal Merry del Val, the Vatican Secretary of State, a “Memorandum” for the establishment of a Central Congregation of The Holy See to coordinate and organize the religious and social assistance of Catholic emigrants of any nation.

““Most Eminent Prince¹,

I have the honor to present in the high mind of your Eminence, some considerations and proposals regarding the present and future conditions of Catholicism in the two Americas. Such observations and proposals are the result of long studies carried out on location and even more from the experience of worthy missionaries and illustrious prelates who have devoted their whole lives to the spread of Catholicism in those regions. Never before, in writing about this topic, have I felt taken up by greater emotion and I have invoked with greater intensity of affection the lights of Heaven.

Even there, it is now the time to restore all things in Jesus Christ.

The migrations of the various nationalities all need, from the point of view all of religious dangers, the watchful and mature care of the Church. Poles tormented by schism, Canadians in constant agitation against episcopal authority, South Germans (where the Jesuit Fathers are not present, as in Rio Grande do Sul) call for priests of their same nationality, the Ruthenians and the Italo-Greeks with the burning question of the celibacy of their priests and with that of their Rites, Syrians and other minor migrations scattered a bit everywhere and abandoned or almost etc. etc. etc. But Italian emigration, the most threatened by the Protestant sects in the North and the South, deserves special attention. [...] In my recent trips to those regions, I say it again, I have witnessed manifestations of faith such as to make one week with emotion and I have collected facts and anecdotes that make me blush as an Italian and bishop at the thought that the abandonment in which so many souls were left could have happened and that for 2 many still continues today!

¹ Scalabrini sent the Memorandum to the Pope Pius X's Cardinal Secretary of State, on May 5, 1905, AGS / AB 02,02,08 b-c;

To new phenomena, new organisms, adapted to the need

And, in my opinion, the first remedy lies, as I mentioned above, in a intelligent organization of the work of apostolate precisely in the Americas, and this organization should emanate from the Holy See, an authority not only undisputed and indisputable, among all catholic clergy, but universal in its nature, and which consequently embraces all nationalities ... Isolated instructions and provisions, as wise as they may be, are not enough, since it is only human that one and the other without an organism that gives them validity and keeps them forceful, count for little... The phenomenon of emigration is universal, and universal for its authority and central in its position is to be the Commission desired. The action of individual Bishops, unaware of each other's initiatives can be resolved in a dispersal of forces. [...] Only a Commission emanating from the Holy See will be able, without jealousy of the Governments and of the American Episcopate, to provide effectively for the religious needs of the various nationalities[...].

The purpose and task of the Commission..

Its purpose should be to provide spiritual assistance for the emigrants in the various contingencies and stages of the phenomenon, especially in the Americas, and thus to keep the Catholic faith alive in their hearts. Its task is to study the complex and very serious problem of emigration, preparing first of all a questionnaire regarding it and keeping itself well informed on the Catholic migratory movement [...]. It would be up to the Commission to monitor the great migratory flows, to classify the colonies, from the largest of the hundreds of thousands of members, to the smallest; to number the churches, the priests dedicated to their care, and to demand that care be given where it has not been provided, coming to the aid of the Bishops with advice, with exhortations, with sending them good priests, with urging the Religious Congregations to contribute their valid help. [...]

The collaboration of all religious denominations..

I will end with the following very important words by (President) Theodore Roosevelt, taken from the latest issue of the Paris Revue: "It is serious and dangerous for anyone to tear himself from the land and from the region of his forefathers where his family's roots have been fixed, and be transplanted into a new country. There the immigrant must receive all the help he needs, which cannot be provided to him more effectively than by those who are in a position to welcome him in the name of spiritual brotherhood. Therefore, better than any other, the Church can contribute to the elevation and progress of so many people who come among us. I believe and am convinced that the Church's first duty is to ensure that immigrant, and especially the old-world immigrant (coming from Scandinavia, Germany, Finland, Hungary, France, Italy and Austria) is not driven to ruin, without a friendly hand reaching out to him; without all religious confessions work together to save him and help him".

