

In this first volume of the history of the Missionary Sisters of Saint Charles – Scalabrinians that covers the period of 1895 – 1934, Sister Lice Maria Signor dedicates herself patiently in giving an attractive and documented form, the historical path of the MSCS Congregation and does it under diverse aspects: social, economic, political, cultural, ecclesial and religious. It is evidenced her determination in looking at the elements to construct our history and to show how the existence of the MSCS Sisters Congregation, is a historic/missionary path of evangelic service to the migrants, that become the incarnation of the words of Jesus Christ: *“I was a stranger and you welcomed me” (Mt. 25,35)*.

“Seeds emigrate on the wings of the wind, plants emigrate from continent to continent, carried by the water currents, birds and animals emigrate, but more than all, man emigrates, now in a collective form, now in an isolated form but always an instrument of that Providence that presides over the destiny of humans and guides them, also by catastrophes, for the final goal, that of perfecting man over the land and the glory of God in the heavens” (Scalabrini).

Lice Maria Signor

**Missionary Sisters of Saint Charles
Borromeo -
Scalabrinians**

1895-1934

Volume I

**CSEM – Centro Scalabriniano de Estudos Migratórios
(Scalabrinian Center of Migratory Studies)
Brasilia/DF – Brasilia/Federal District**

Original Title:

Irmãs Missionárias de São Carlos, Scalabrinianas 1895-1934

Volume I

Published in 2005 by

CSEM – Centro Scalabriniano de Estudos Migratórios

SRTVN 702 Conjunto P

Ed. Brasília Radio Center – Sobrelojas 1 e 2

70719-900 – Brasília/DF – Brasil

Email: csem@csem.org.br www.csem.org.br

Tel.: 0055. 61. 3327 0669

Translator: Sister Melanie Marie Hester, mscs

Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of Saint Charles Borromeo – Scalabrinians

Via Monte del Gallo, 68 00165 - Rome – Italy

www.scalabriniane.org

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PRESENTATION

That which is preserved from the several vital, cultural and spiritual gifts handed down by ancestors constitutes a person or a group. The memory, when exercised in the horizon of faith, becomes surrender and abandonment to the Word that nourishes life, to the love, which penetrates it, and to the truth, that enlightens it; and the gifts, begin to be considered as expressions of the generosity and gratuity of God. In recalling the history of the Congregation, we do not only remember the past events but also bring forth a vital dynamism which causes it to move on and inspire a future permeated with hope because “the *memory is a organ of the future*” (St. Augustine).

In this first volume of the history of the Missionary Sisters of Saint Charles – Scalabrinians, which includes the period of time from 1895 to 1934, Sister Lice Maria Signor patiently, dedicated herself to put together the historical journey of the MSCS Congregation, in an attractive and documented way. She does so under the social, economic, political, cultural, ecclesial and religious aspects. Her diligence is revealed in the search for elements to build our history and show how the existence of the Congregation of the MSCS Sisters is a historical missionary journey of evangelical service to the migrants, which becomes the incarnation of the words of Jesus Christ: “*I was a stranger and you welcomed me*” (Mat 25, 35).

With a diligence of her own, Sister Lice searches for the data in the congregational historical sources and wisely records the life and mission of the Congregation of the MSCS Sisters in the beginning of the Female Scalabrinian Institute. This publication, in Portuguese, occurred during the Scalabrinian Year, when the Scalabrinian family celebrated the centennial of the death of the founder John Baptist Scalabrini (1905-2005), and the MSCS Congregation completed 110 years of foundation. Throughout these years, the loving and providential presence of God the Father who follows and guides the evolution of the Congregation is perceived, in *which the power of the charisma that sustains its continuity through time is evident*.

The elements, which emerge from this work, illumine, in a particular way, the congregational life and mission in its *becoming a migrant with the migrants*. The experience, the perseverance and the audacity, which marked the life of our sisters who made history until 1934, continue even today to encourage and motivate the Scalabrinian Missionary Sister to search for creative ways of fidelity in the following of Jesus Christ and of living the Scalabrinian charisma. Looking back retrospectively we are motivated to thank, to contemplate and to recover oneself; in this manner, renewing the dialogue between charisma and reality and opening oneself to the new and relevant challenges of the migration phenomenon which makes them a new areopogus for the Church’s mission.

Assuredly, the congregation has always been in God’s plans, loved and wanted by Him and this leads us to thank Him for having inspired and guided the paths of the founder John Baptist Scalabrini and the co-Founders Mother Assunta Marchetti and Father Joseph Marchetti. The continuation of the Congregation’s existence in the Church is a sign of God’s love and mercy in favor of his dispersed children who walk in the ways of the world. We ask the One and Triune God for his loving protection on all those who share with us the Scalabrinian charisma. Together with Mary, the migrant Mother who migrates with the migrants, we lift our hymn of thanksgiving for the marvels the Lord has done in our history.

Sister Maria do Rosario Onzi, mscs
General Superior

INTRODUCTION

This text, the first of three volumes, shows why in the 19th century among so many new institutes of religious life, diverse in their form and solidarity in their apostolic action come to be. The Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo – Scalabrinians are included, and how the congregation developed in Brazil during the first decades of the 20th century.

The foundation of the MSCS Congregation and of other institutions concerned with the Italian migration cause, which, at the time, reached high numbers and opened the church to a new and broad pastoral field resulting, in this context, the incorporation of John Baptist Scalabrini, Bishop of Piacenza. The openness to the social dimension of faith, the transforming ideal that moved the Bishop and his vision of the migratory reality of that time are transformed into a work that continues to be revealed as authentic prophecy in our days.

There is a provocative question related to the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute that had two siblings as co-founders: Father Joseph Marchetti and Mother Assunta Marchetti, which is main concern of this study and a major question regarding its historical evolution: has the MSCS Congregation continued to be throughout time a prophetic answer to John Baptist Scalabrini's socio-pastoral project? The charismatic character of the Scalabrinian project is in its appeal to incarnate in the history of the church and of mankind St. Mathews' Gospel 25, 35 in the light of which the present investigations are oriented.

The objective is to verify the pastoral orientation followed by the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute and the MSCS Sisters' concrete answer to be able to identify the criteria of its apostolic choices and convergence points with the model proposed by the ecclesial project and to know the effective contribution of the congregation and facilitate renewed answers within the pastoral field, which is the reason for its existence.

Based on the theology of consecrated life and on the teachings of the Church that orients religious families to remain faithful to the primary inspiration of the institute, highlighting the requirements of continued adequacy to pastoral activities related to the daily appeals of the original charisma, we judge it necessary to know the MSCS Congregation's historical evolution over more than one hundred years of pastoral presence and the responsibilities that are derived from its mission within the Church and in the world today,

Taking up the previous study of the Feminine Scalabrinian Congregation's history proposes a basic hypothesis: the conjuncture that characterized the transitional stage from the 19th century to the 20th century, especially in the Italian and Brazilian contexts, was a decisive factor for the emergence of the Institute as a necessity to complement Scalabrini's socio-pastoral project in the Brazilian territory where, in its apostolic itinerancy among Italian immigrants it settled in Sao Paulo and in Rio Grande do Sul where the MSCS sister's physiognomy took shape. Between 1895 and 1934, the Congregation grew and consolidated, developing suitable pastoral activity in tune with the local church and interacting in the face of the challenges proper to the society of the period. Only a few pastoral choices of this period strayed from the original intention and had little expression regarding the Scalabrinian work.

To prove the hypothesis, we organized the first forty years of the Congregation's history in three parts, each one developed in three units. In the first, we deal with aspects of the world conjuncture that were characteristic of the period under study. Thus, setting the institute's historical evolution within a broader context, highlighting instances of human mobility in the same context

because they constitute a priority issue in the Scalabrinian apostolic choice, and the pastoral field where the MSCS sister undertakes her non-transferable mission.

We analyze, in Part 1, the period between 1895-1907 that sets the initial stage of the founding process of the institute, the circumstances in which the Sister of St. Charles lived her missionarity and shaped her religious-pastoral identity as well as the convergent points with the Scalabrinian project and with the ecclesial model of that time. The MSCS Congregation began its apostolic path in the Christopher Columbus Orphanage in Sao Paulo, Brazil, when the country still lived in a time of transition from the imperial regime toward the republican, which included the separation of church and state, an event that had repercussions in the relationship between the political class and the clergy. The foreign missionaries, for their part, in addition to problems created by the new reality, faced difficulties within local churches due to the different ways of understanding the migratory reality and the immigrant's integration process.

Part 2 deals with the period of 1907-1920, the beginning of the institute's internal reorganization after overcoming several difficulties and the celebration of the 25th anniversary of foundation of the congregation. Once reorganized, the institute lived a period of relative missionary expansion, significantly contributing to the promotion of the Italian immigrants and their descendants settled in the Brazilian territory.

Part 3, as the previous ones, is comprised of the period between 1920-1934, develops a triple approach: the international context between the two world wars; a new internal crisis that caused the intervention of the Apostolic See in the institute; the MSCS Sister's religious-pastoral answer in forty years of presence in Brazil, and the consolidation of the institute, which was declared to be of Pontifical Right in January, 1934.

This text of narrative-chronological character, above all, is a result of research in historical archives. Given the organization of the institute, centralized then, the principal choice was the general archive. Other records of the MSCS Sister's presence in the Christopher Columbus Orphanage and some fragmented information in the record books as well as history works used in the preparation of conjuncture summaries and research on the migratory movement of that time, also helped. The years of the Apostolic See's intervention of the MSCS Congregation resulted in important documents that were obtained together with the Pontifical Council's Pastoral for Migrants and Itinerants archives. .

We are very aware that this text leaves many pages in blank. To fill them, particularly those related to the historical path of the MSCS Sister's pastoral action, it is necessary to better evaluate the expression of the institute through time, and find new ways toward the transforming potential of the Scalabrinian charisma, always capable of foresight to see the rich unfolding future.

Part I - 1895-1907

THE FOUNDING PROCESS OF THE CONGREGATION

PHYSIOGNOMY of the MSCS SISTER

The founding process of the congregation

Physiognomy of the MSCS Sister

This first part of the history of the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo goes from 1895 to 1907. It is comprised of three units: the conjunctural elements that characterize the period, the initiative to found the institute was a required complement of the socio-pastoral project of John Baptist Scalabrini, Bishop of Piacenza, and destined to assist and promote Italian emigrants in the Americas; that are the features of the Scalabrinian Missionary Sister's identity.

This study starts with the background of the foundation, and it deals with the aspects connected to the economic picture, political changes, cultural processes and the social transformations in a context, which kept the Bishop of Piacenza alert. The combination of conjunctural factors resulted in new facts and among them the Italian exodus that motivated the founding of the Scalabrinian Institutions. The objective of these foundations was evangelical service among the Italian immigrants, who, during the second half of the 19th century, went in mass to the Americas.

The founding act of the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles took place on October 25, 1895 in Piacenza, Italy. John Baptist Scalabrini, who had founded in 1887 the priestly Congregation of The Missionaries of St. Charles Borromeo, and also established the Society of Saint Raphael, in 1889, was the founder of the feminine institute, *spring of vocation and spirit, akin to his personal charisma*, determining its objective, spirit, and way of life. Father Joseph Marchetti, associated with Scalabrini's work, had an *active role in organizing and managing the empirical institute of the new foundation*, and who left his own mark on it¹⁶. This missionary and his sister, Mother Assunta Marchetti, who *safeguarded its original charisma* when crises threatened the continuity of the institute, were *in essence the co-founders* of the Feminine Scalabrinian Congregation¹⁷.

To the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute was confided, in the beginning, the complementary mission of the socio-pastoral action elaborated by the Missionary Priests of Saint Charles in favor of the Italian immigrants established in Brazil. Soon hundreds of orphaned girls and boys were sheltered by the MSCS Sisters in the Christopher Columbus Orphanage, founded by Father Joseph Marchetti, in São Paulo.

During this period, heroically lived among daily vicissitudes, conflicts and uncertainties, common in the history of religious institutes, the MSCS Sisters' physiognomy was shaped. Soon, the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles understood the meaning of their identity. Challenged, aware of their conquests brought about by their courage, they preserved their identity, which, beyond their collective and personal witness of the Gospel, made possible the dynamic continuity of a charisma given to the Church in benefit of human society.

¹⁶ LOZANO, Juan. M. *Lettera a Luce Maria Signor*. Chicago, 2-2-1985 (AGSS – Archivio Generale Suore Scalabriniane 1.4.4).

¹⁷ ANTONELLI, Francesco, *Fondatore e Confondatori delle suore scalabriniane per i migranti o missionarie di san Carlo Borromeo*. Roma, 2000 (AGSS 1.12.2).

1.1 Conjunctural aspects of the founding period of the Institute

1.1.1 The economic picture

The founding process of the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo - Scalabrinians coincided, in general terms, with the transition of the 19th century to the 20th century. Europe, at the time, held economic supremacy in the international context, but the conjuncture outlined a new but less favorable one for the old continent. To understand this change it is necessary to go back in time and situate it in connection with the preceding realities.

In the feudal epoch, which lasted throughout the Middle Ages, land meant prestige and wealth. The remnants of this regime were liquidated. The Modern Age, a historical period that had just started in St. Charles Borromeo's time, considered everything as old that was related to the feudal regime. The process of becoming a rich person was put up for debate, thus setting up the transition from feudalism into pre-capitalism:

When most of the wealth is in the hands of great property owners, when the principal wealth is land, those who do not own land are left to vegetate on government owned land, poor and without a place in the unstable urban nuclei. They are the ones who make up the major human currents that migrate from Europe to try their luck somewhere else, from where many returned rich³.

The above-mentioned reality, repeated in other historical contexts is evident. For now, our interest lies on the economic sector that would soon predominate the capital that resulted from trade and manufacturing activities, which would be installed. Assets other than land started to over shadow real estate.

Starting in the 16th century principles were developed and economic measures taken in view of obtaining precious metals as a means of wealth. The adopted set of principles and practices constituted mercantilism; a name derived from a stronger valorization of mercantile activity, considered the major factor in the accumulation of gold and silver and now considered the basis of wealth and power. The so-called trade revolution consisted in the strengthening of the exchange of goods, but also included plundering, slavery, and territorial conquests. The possession of colonies took a special importance at the time of mercantilism:

the colony exists to serve the metropolis; its only function is to provide raw material so that the metropolis can profit and grow. It is an international division of labor that stipulates natives are to plant, to extract the riches of the soil or from the underground; the metropolis is constituted of a superior people, and it should profit from delivered material, using them as they please.⁴

The shaping of the bourgeoisie is connected to mercantilism, which imposed the colonial system. The new social class, in which traders, manufactures and financiers stood out, becoming owners of capital. The means developed by the bourgeoisie to accumulate capital were the concentration of the means of production and the money obtained from trade, agriculture, manufacturing, contraband and even from the trafficking of slaves. The accumulation of capital and liberation of manual labor were preconditions of the industrial revolution. It took place in the 18th century during which mercantilism wanes, the industrial revolution meant the solidification of the capitalist means of production. The mechanization of industries began in England. Only around the middle of the 19th century, would this process would reach other countries.

³ IGLÉSIAS, Francisco. *História e ideologia*, 2. ed. São Paulo, Perspectiva, 1981, p. 67-8.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

Since the invention of the steam machine that marked the beginning of industrialism, the industrial revolution has evolved a lot, having gone through many phases. The first phase took place between 1760 and 1870; the second, between 1870 and 1945; and the third phase in 1945, which coincides with the accelerated increment of change, which differentiated productivity among the developed countries of the North and the non-developed countries of the South⁵. The striking phenomenon in the last decades tends to maintain an increasing higher productive ratio per capita in the North regarding the South. Paraphrasing Helio Jaguaribe's, it can be said that the change which differentiated productivity between North and South was nonexistent during St. Charles Borromeo's time, but was already taking shape at the time of mercantilism and it ballooned during the time of John Baptist Scalabrini.

The international economic picture at the time of the foundation of MSCS Congregation was characterized by a growth in industrial activity that, by then, had already reached France, Germany, the United States, and Japan. Between 1889 and 1910, Italy, also, lived a period of major economic growth, fostering its industrialization process.

The economic realm was affected in a particular way by the use of electricity and oil as new sources of energy. Changing iron into steel favored civil construction and made possible the multiplication of railways as well as innovation in transport and communication in general. Simultaneously, an increase in industrial production and in productivity, and the division of skilled labor, and a progressive concentration of businesses took place. In summary, it was industry that *shaped the economy of the century, stamping new features and imposing, directly or indirectly, changes in every sense*⁶.

1.1.2 Political changes

The transformations caused by the industrial revolution, directly or indirectly, also include those related to politics. To identify them, it is necessary to take into consideration, even briefly, the changes that happened in Europe in terms of the economic infrastructure since the Middle Ages, which determined changes in the political framework of the Modern and Contemporary Ages.

Favorable environmental conditions together with the Crusade Movement and Christian expeditions to Palestine, which were intended to expel Muslims from the land of Jesus and the places that He had been, provided European society since the end of 11th century with a period of commercial prosperity that benefited, above all, traders from Italian cities, among them, Venice in a particular way. This stimulus yielded a successful trade with an interest in precious metals, which became a need in the face of the later depression period. Patronage of seafarer entrepreneurial activities by monarchs needing resources to set up the modern national state was a major factor for the maritime expansion that took place in 15th and 16th centuries.

Actually, the setting up of the modern national state required human and financial resources to which the bourgeoisie contributed, interested in the advantages of alliances with the monarchies. The medieval structure of feudalism, with its imposition of duties and a variety of currencies and with diverse legislation made trade activities difficult to which bourgeoisie was attached. Thus, decentralization, a characteristic from the feudal regime when the King did not exercise power, was replaced by political and territory centralization. So, from the self-sufficient feud system where land was the major source of wealth, agrarian in its essence and with submission to the feudal lord, it slowly

⁵ JAGUARIBE, Helio. *Novo cenário internacional*. Rio de Janeiro, Ed. Guanabara, 1986, p. 365.

⁶ IGLESIAS, Francisco. *História e ideologia*, op. cit., p. 74.

turned into the modern national state system. Germany and Italy were exceptions in this political evolution, remaining divided in smaller states until unification took place in the second half of the 19th century.

The process of centralization of the power of the kings and the territorial unification evolved into absolute monarchism in many states that characterized the Modern Age, as we have seen, a transition period from feudalism to capitalism. The socioeconomic context of that time, in reality, conditioned absolutism. The fact that kings belonged to nobility, of feudal origin, limited alliances between monarchy and the bourgeoisie.

Feudal-absolutist order where feudal and capitalist relations co-existed constituted the so-called old regime, which was contested by successive liberal revolutions that had begun in the last quarter of the 18th century, lasting until the early 19th century also had repercussions in Latin America. It was the English colonies in America, which started this revolutionary political process, which had its major expression in the French Revolution of 1789-1799

The liberal revolutions represented, on the political realm, what the industrial revolution meant on the economic realm. While economic liberalism preached the right to individual property, political liberalism defended representative and constitutional governments. The bourgeoisie conquered coveted political power through the liberal revolutions, putting an end to the old regime. The congress of Vienna, 1814-1815, had the intention to restore the old regime. The holy alliance, undertaken in the name of religion by the monarchs of Prussia, Russia and Austria was also an attempt to stop the liberal movements' progress. Later, England and France reinforced the holy alliance block that went as far as to authorize armed intervention where liberal and nationalist revolutions had taken place.

Liberalism and democracy defended, during a century rich in new ideas, the socioeconomic interests and the political aspirations of the bourgeoisie. The principles of liberalism applied to a nation gave rise to nationalism, another idea that imposed itself during Scalabrini's days. With the advent of socialism, the bourgeoisie was concerned with keeping its socioeconomic conquests, favored the politics of nationalities. The idea of nation was embodied during the 19th century, bringing political unification, between 1833 and 1870, to Germany and Italy. John Baptist Scalabrini was 30 years old when Italy completed its political unification. On the other hand, Mother Assunta Marchetti, born in August of 1871, from birth was raised in the new political reality of her country.

The context in which the Scalabrinian Institutes were founded was furthermore characterized by the imperialist expansion. Colonization was its instrument. For colonial politics, extremely interventionist, the welfare of people did not matter. What mattered most were the profit and the wealth of the state. From the mercantilist period until World War I, 1914-18, eleven countries became colonial powers: Portugal, Spain, Holland, England, France, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Russia, the United States and Japan.

Imperialism is explained by its political connection with the universe of finances and with the military forces. Although contested by intellectuals and by political leaders and economists, the politics of colonial acquisition expanded. In the last two decades in the 19th century and in the beginning of the 20th century, annexations, conquests and agreements were multiplied in the growing eagerness for political domination by the great powers of the time. Despite the intense mobilization, the majority of people did not even suspect a world war was in the makings, but Scalabrini's vigilant mind intuited the fragility of that context, which soon would usurp the apparent safety and certainty of a long lasting peace.

1.1.3 Cultural process

Cultural development has close ties to the economic and political process although usually *determined by its own dynamics whose pace tends to be slower than that of other processes*⁷. The 18th century cultural reality, analyzed from its background or considering its evolution in time, revealed an accelerated progress in science and technology allowing, at the same time, the *identification of an enormous amount of private values that had credibility, in the absence of universally valid alternatives, capable of restoring the meaning of life*⁸.

When the MSCS Congregation began its historical path towards the end of 19th century, an accrual of invents and accomplishments surprised European society in a particular manner, giving many a feeling of abundance. In this ambience, John Baptist Scalabrini also observed without illusions and up to date regarding the development of the *dismal indications of an impending storm* and warned about the need for a new ethic, open to *good and truth*, to revert the situation and to turn the end of the century into a *placid decline, a sign of a more serene and calm dawn*¹⁸⁹.

The fact that the transformations on the socioeconomic infrastructure level provoked changes in the political and ideological mainframe made it possible for a comeback of the Modern Age and searches within humanism the roots of the progress and crises of values during Scalabrini's days.

The humanist movement broke with the cultural patterns of the medieval period, and it became part of a broad and complex process, explainable by changed historical circumstances. Humanism meant the passage from a theocentric world vision, characteristic of the Middle Ages, to an anthropocentric vision. Individualism replaced the collective spirit. The changes in the structure of thinking lead the Modern Age man to choose the path of discovery and of scientific explanation of phenomena, and of the laws of nature and of the universe. Divine revelation was no longer a source of knowledge. Reason, and not faith, would guide humanity.

The major expression of humanism was the Renaissance with its artistic manifestations, diverse literary and philosophical productions and with its scientific discoveries that changed the European civilization. Among so many novelties of the Renaissance period, the perception of nature and of the universe in constant movement had deep consequences on the historical evolution of humankind. Thus, the notion of the universe as a static reality was overcome and the immobility of institutions and principles based on tradition was questioned.

The Reformation, initiated by Luther, is a product of this ambience. The Catholic Church responded with the Counter Reformation, which had in the Council of Trent, 1545-1563, an opportune accomplishment and in which St. Charles Borromeo acted as an inspired protagonist. Between 1565 and 1584, from Milan where he lived, Charles Borromeo was a strenuous and tireless promoter of the Catholic Reformation. At the time, besides Saint Charles, other saints and new religious orders, such as the Jesuits, facilitated the needed renewal of the Catholic Church undertaken in accordance to the spirit of Trent.

Another major precedent of the cultural process, characteristic of the 19th century, was the Enlightenment, a movement of intellectual order based on the scientific revolution and philosophic

⁷ JAGUARIBE, Helio. *Novo cenário internacional*, op. cit., p. 14.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁹ SCALABRINI, Giovanni B. *Il socialismo e l'azione del clero*. Piacenza, 14-4-1899. In: *Scritti*, v. 12, p. 346. *Scritti* is John Baptist Scalabrini's writings published and unpublished, gathered in 14 volumes under responsibility of the general archivist of the congregation of missionary priests of St. Charles – Scalabrinians, Mario Francesconi. The published writings were reproduced by photocopy of the originals. The non-published writings were transcribed from archive documents. The work was done in Rome, in 1980.

currents of the 17th century. The basis of the bourgeois liberal ideology and the preparation of the revolutionary path that put an end to the ancient regime are the work of the 18th century enlightenment thinkers. Therefore, due to *economic and political reasons there is a broadening of ideas to overcome ancient regimes: reason postulates freedom*¹⁰.

With the arrival of the Contemporary era, technology takes hold; the pace of development grows *in such way that within one year there were more changes than in the previous decades or centuries*. The milestones of the 19th century are the new discoveries, greater importance given to chemistry, the use of science for industrial production, the innovation in transportation, the exploitation of new lands, and the more detailed knowledge of the planet.

On the other hand, colonialism engenders subordination even in the realm of thought. In the ideological level, Europe *translates these expansionists' interests into a rationalization of behavior*. Structuring society into classes justifies domination of one state over the other, which is considered as inferior. At this point of the cultural process, *evolutionism strengthens European pretensions to superiority. The continent had created cultural standards that are considered the highest*¹¹.

In midst of cultural and racial superiority bias, western society saw the growth and consolidation of capitalism, a fact that contributed to the emergence of new ideas throughout the 19th century. Liberalism, the predominant ideology of the 19th century expresses the longings of the bourgeois. The bourgeois class relies on democracy that ensures the natural rights of individuals, including the right to private property. Socialism, another ideology produced in 19th century, proposes a deep change in society. The proletariat searching for an equalitarian society looks for support in socialist ideas.

Above liberalism and socialism, ideologies that oppose each other, social Catholicism expresses the Catholic Church's commitment to look to the Christian teachings for solutions to the social problems that come from capitalism. Pope Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum*, published in 1891, an encyclical letter that exposed the Catholic Church's social doctrine, which John Baptist Scalabrini's thought and socio-pastoral work identify with, strengthened Christian socialism. On the *Rerum Novarum*, the Bishop of Piacenza would make personal considerations, as is evidenced in the pamphlet, *Il socialismo e l'azione del clero*, April, 1899. Leo XIII, the *Pope of the Workers*, was a well-educated and cultured man, with a broad view who illustrates with his teachings the relationship between the Church and culture, fostering in Catholics an active political, social and cultural participation.

Despite the social conquests and the recognized moral authority of the pontiffs and other leaders who honored the human family with their concept of life and the world, despite the intellectual revolution of the preceding centuries and the apex of science that characterized the period of 1830-1940, the transition of the century ended up with the phenomenal development produced by the human spirit and at the same time the degradation of the idea of liberty and democracy. Between 1894 and 1914, a time in which the first decades of the history of the MSCS were unfolding, Western Europe was enjoying an exceptional prosperity. The era of the *belle époque*, that deluded so many and gave way to the thought that the world was in harmony, of complete security, all of which was already preceded by the clarity of what the new century projected. The cultural process, however, was not able to transcend humanism and showed its incapacity to encompass all of the aspirations of mankind. At this historical moment, many lacked the outlook of faith of the most profound meaning of mankind's conquests and the conviction that the concept of civilization has much to do with how men and nations

¹⁰ IGLÉSIAS, Francisco. *História e ideologia*, op.cit., p. 69.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 73-103.

relate to each other. Those who were more perceptive would not have their voices muffled and were the ones who gave their tribute to an effective change in human society. Among whom was John Baptist Scalabrini. In 1901, in his speech given in New York during a trip to the United States, although highlighting the progress of his days, Scalabrini emphasized the higher objectives of humanity's path:

While the world in a foggy agitation because of its progress, while mankind boasts about his conquest over material things and how mankind commands nature, gutting the soil, subjugating lightning, taming rivers, confusing the ocean waters with canals carved out of the land thus shortening distances; while people succumb, arise and are renewed; while races mix, dissipate and fuse together; through the noise of our machines, beyond this feverish activity of all these gigantic works and not without them, a much larger work is maturing, much more noble, much more sublime: a union in God, through Jesus Christ, and of all men of good will¹².

1.1.4 Social changes

Throughout the 20th century, new and old currents of thought searched to build a new type of civilization. Liberalism, Socialism, Marxism, and Communism made people believe in the transformation of society by placing God aside, but the union of men among themselves, peace and solidarity are not sustained without the union of men with God.

A retrospective analysis of the western world shows that a renewal in the cultural realm, the work of humanists, preceded by a broad picture of economic and political changes with the consequent transformation of the western social fabric, did little to benefit the masses. Despite its anthropocentric stand, targeted for the glorification of humankind, the humanist movement opened limited possibilities for improvement of the quality life for the majority of people.

From a legal standpoint, during the Modern Ages, European society maintained a division of classes: clergy, nobility, and people. Among the people, little by little, the bourgeoisie established itself as an entrepreneurial class, altering the composition of western society.

The slow rise of the bourgeoisie resulted in the expansion of trade: from local to national and later international. With the expansion of the market, the middleman surges between the producer and the consumer, with an eye on the commercial activity. The trade revolution replaced the somewhat static economy of the Middle Ages by a dynamic capitalism of traders, shipbrokers and financiers. In the beginning, as we saw, it was in Italian cities that the number of successful bourgeois in trade increased. With the great sea travels, the bourgeois are found among traders and, later on, manufacturers and financiers. These new groups, focused on work and preoccupied with profit, became owners of the means of production and accumulated capital, knocking down the old regime.

Accrual of capital by the bourgeoisie was large, having been processed in the mercantile sector and, most importantly, in the agriculture and industrial sectors. Capital and work became the basic elements in implementing the capitalist system.

The affirmation of capitalism and the strengthening of the bourgeoisie are mostly results of the industrial revolution preceded by the agricultural revolution with which it was closely connected. Capitalism grew stronger in urban centers where the manufacturing industry grew and in the rural areas where great innovations in methods and techniques of cattle ranching and farming took place.

¹² Scalabrini, Giovanni B. Discorso al Catholic Club di New York, 15-101902. In: Scritti, op. cit., v. 2, p.235

The transformation in agriculture started in England and later on reached continental Europe. It intended to increase land productivity, aiming at greater profits. This was a time of great interest for industrialized agriculture products, which favored changes in the rural sector.

In its social dimension, the agriculture revolution meant the end of the village community, a characteristic of the Middle Ages, where groups undertook farming in accordance to a system that prevented individual initiatives.

It began in England, still in the 16th century, by fencing in fields in areas destined for sheep herding with wool production in mind. In 18th century, fencing got a renewed emphasis, now with the objective of expanding areas for the planting of cereals. Many rural landowners expanded their estates with the suppression of communal lands and by the expulsion of renters.

Fencing fields changed the structure of property making it possible for the bourgeoisie and higher classes of society to take control of inherited or bought land, and to decide on the removal of renting farmers, causing a rural exodus. Forced to leave the land, farm workers started to become a part of the low paid workers in the developing industries.

In some countries in Western Europe, the liberal bourgeois revolution formed an association of farmers with rights to lands that previously belonged to the lords. In Eastern Europe, on the contrary, farmers were free of servitude, but they did not become landowners, the land remained in control of the nobility and of the bourgeoisie.

While slavery persisted in America throughout 19th century servile work in Europe, which was a characteristic of the feudal system, which was replaced slowly by paid workers thus, forming the proletarian class. The proletariat incorporated previous farmers and artisans of the urban centers, who were connected to trade corporations that went bankrupt due to competition of the manufacturing industries. The industrial revolution gave rise to the bourgeoisie and the proletariats who became the basic classes of the social structure. However, the proletariat remained dependent; they had neither land nor the means and instruments of production.

Thus, the industrial revolution is connected to the so-called social issues. The term, social issue, summarizes the problems that involved the proletariat starting with bad working conditions, low salaries, workloads of up to 18 hours per day, no rights to a vacation, and no assurances during sickness, disabilities or old age. The class struggle intensified in such conditions.

The demographic increase was an important aspect that should also be taken into consideration in the social realm during the transition from the 19th to the 20th centuries. In Europe, the population grew from 180 million to 460 million in about a century. This unprecedented growth is due, in a good part, to the effects of the trade and agricultural revolutions that allowed an abundant and variable alimentation for the population; to medical science conquests and the multiplication of children's and maternity hospitals; to progress derived from the industrial revolution that made a better quality of life possible. Another consequence of the industrial revolution in conjunction with demographic growth was a growing urbanization. Motivated in part by the attractiveness of urban life and by the mechanization of agriculture, urbanization was accentuated in Germany and England, later on increasing at a slower pace in other countries.

In a time of inventions and profound and continuous transformations, the life of mankind assumed a complexity that had until then been ignored, opening up to new ideals on the social front that, in turn, fostered ambitions, gave rise to divergences, provoked tensions and conflicts, but also produced positive advances. The exodus from rural areas, urbanization, the increase in the population, internal and international migrations, along with the struggle of the class, social aspects that were

characteristic of Scalabrini's days, in face of which the Bishop of Piacenza behaved as a conscientious shepherd, capable of adequate initiatives face of the new reality.

1.1.5 Italian-Brazilian reality in the context of the eighties

A brief study of the historical evolution of the Western World shows how each era has its own peculiarities, even though societies present diverse pace and forms of development. The replacement of slave work by salaried work, for example, was intensified in Brazil only during the second half of the 19th century, while slavery, as such, in Western European countries did not exist since the Middle Ages. Brazilian interest for salaried labor coincided with the intensification of the European migratory movement, mainly between 1870 and 1914 that migrated in larger numbers to the United States, Canada, Argentina and Brazil. This fact helps to identify the specific elements that relate to the foundation of the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles - Scalabrinians, within the 19th century context both in Italy and in Brazil, respectively, country of origin and of development-consolidation, respectively, of the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute.

The economic development stands out among the aspects that come from the study of the Italian reality at the end of 19th century and the beginning of 20th century, particularly during 1889 – 1910, a period when the country began to boost its industrialization process. The fact that the Italian unification movement started in the North, a region of growing industrialization, and later on exploding throughout the whole Peninsula, is significant.

The political history of Italy, as in Germany, is an exception in the European Modern Age context. The Peninsula remained oblivious to the modern national state model; a process that had developed, by then, in the majority of the nations in Europe. Instead of opting for political centralization and for territorial unification, until the middle of the 19th century, Italy remained fragmented in seven smaller states, The Kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia to the North, Pontifical States in the center, The Kingdom of the Two Sicilies to the South, the region of Lombard-Venice under Austria, The Great Ducat of Toscana, The Ducat of Parma-Piacenza and The Ducat of Modena, under the House of Habsburg.

In forming the Kingdom of Italy, the bourgeoisie and the aristocracy were united in the name of nationalism, an idea that characterized the European political scene since 1848, which was *transformed into an active movement toward national pride and the right of each people united by cultural and ethical bonds to decide their own destiny*. In the Italian Peninsula, patriots had dreamed for years of resurgence understood as the *revival of the Italian spirit that would restore the nation back to its glorious sovereignty that it had enjoyed of old and during the Renaissance*¹³. To achieve this goal, the whole Peninsula would have to constitute a single state.

There were three tendencies aiming at Italian unification: the neoguelfist, under Vincenzo Gioberti's leadership, who proposed a confederation of states under the leadership of the Pope, the monarchists, inspired by the writings of Cesare Balbo and Massimo d'Azeglio's which intended to create a single united state under the leadership of the House of Savoy, ruling in Piedmont; and the republican, the alternative defended by Giuseppe Mazzini, an outstanding representative of the liberal forces in Italy. The constitutional monarchists' tendency prevailed. Piedmont became the center, which advocated liberal nationalist ideas.

In 1849 Carlos Alberto, the King of Piedmont, tried to expel the Austrians from the Lombard-

¹³ BURNS, Edward. M. *História da civilização ocidental*. Porto Alegre, Globo, 1974, p. 711-34.

Venice region. Defeated, he abdicated in favor of his son, Vittorio Emanuele II. His defeat, in part, was a consequence of capitalism still finding its way into Italy, which reduced the potential of the revolutionary forces.

The 1849 attempt made the Italians aware of the need to consolidate political unification; the support of a foreign power was also indispensable. Count Camille Benso de Cavour, main executor of the Italian unification project, was convinced that it was the correct path; entered into an agreement with Napoleon III of France, a power at the time. In exchange for its support, France would receive Piedmont, Nice and Savoy. Piedmont, on its turn, would annex the Lombard-Venetian territory. Austria, being provoked, started a war in 1859. The victories of Magenta and Solferino, in Lombard, meant their annexation to Piedmont. John Baptist Scalabrini, born in Fino Mornasco, Northwest of Lombard, was then 20 years old.

Soon after, Napoleon III stopped providing support to Piedmont. Cavour needed other ways to conclude the unification of Italy. With his obstinate will and Giuseppe Garibaldi's revolutionary action, other annexations took place that made the Proclamation of The kingdom of Italy possible, a fact that occurred in Turin in February 18, 1861. At the same time, the liberal capitalist society was implemented in Italy.

In 1865, the capital was transferred from Turin to Florence. The transfer of the capital to Rome occurred in 1871, the same year that Mother Assunta Marchetti was born. The Quirinal Palace became the residence of the king of Italy. In successive epochs other areas of Italy, as it is today, were annexed to its territory. Pope Pius IX and his successors manifested themselves to be against the loss of the Pontifical States. The Roman Question was settled only in 1929 when Mussolini, Victorio Emanuel III and Pius XI signed the Treaty of Saint John Lateran and the Vatican state was created.

When the MSCS Congregation was founded in 1895, Italy had been unified for 34 years, and still with much to do. The kingdom lived a period of double transition, from an old to a new situation, both nationally and internationally. On the internal level the Italian nation was being set up, a process in which the masses should also be protagonists. Actually, the kingdom continued divided and national pride was still fragile. The Roman Empire itself, at its height during Christ's days, was built without the need for cultural homogenization of the Peninsula. In the Middle Ages, regionalism that Rome had suppressed took hold. It was normal that internal divisions were maintained when unification is achieved without the expressive participation of the masses, Different languages, currencies, armies and legislation persisted in the Peninsula. The conflict between the Church and the Italian State continued without a perspective for a solution. Among the population, there were many resentments and even rancor.

With immense sacrifices, Italy was be able to balance its finance, but the population in general remained deprived of essential public services such as schools, roads, and hospitals. About 30 million people lived in the Peninsula of which 20 million were poorly fed rural workers, subject to epidemics such as cholera and malaria that provoked up to 400 thousand deaths per year. This situation ended up in mass migration.

The passage from rural to urban society resulted in the great Italian exodus, that is, a fact that also occurred in other countries in Europe in the 19th century. Italian emigration *took the country by surprise. No one was prepared: not the government, the parliament, the church or the parties.* The Peninsula that had in other times exported artists and constructors to all of Europe, during the time of Scalabrini and Father Joseph Marchetti it *exported its poors*¹⁴. The dimension of the Italian exodus was

¹⁴ VILLA, Deliso. *Storia dimenticata*. Romano d'Ezzelino (VI), Ed. ADVE, 1991, p. 38-45.

astonishing:

A history of Italy that ignores immigration is an incorrect history. To know how the Country grew, to understand how Italian capitalism developed, it is indispensable to remember that millions of rural farmers were expelled from their lands, and other millions of workers preferred to spontaneously choose, frequently as an act of protest, a new homeland¹⁵.

Since the second half of the 19th century, Brazil was chosen by thousands of Italians as their adopted homeland. Socioeconomic and political-cultural changes undergone in the South American country during this period explained the large Italian migration in the Brazilian context of that time. Empress Teresa Cristina de Bourbon, daughter of Francesco, King of the Two Sicilies, and Maria Isabel, child of Spain, born in Naples in 1822 incentivized Italian migration to Brazil, a country that she deeply loved. Teresa Cristina married Pedro II, Emperor of Brazil, in 1843.

At the time, due to foreign pressure, the abolition of black slave trafficking was underway in Brazil and it strengthened the abolition of slavery movement. Simultaneously, agrarian aristocracy, slaver owners, the Northeast sugarcane plantations, and the coffee plantations in Paraíba do Sul Valley were weakened. The economy fell into the hands of the coffee bourgeoisie in the Western region of the State of Sao Paulo, linked to the development of capitalist relations in Brazil. The bourgeoisie was interested in the salaried workers and in foreign immigration. This emerging class in the country started to guide the Brazilian migratory policy, opening a large space for the excessive Italian population. Thus, immigration as an alternative for the solution to the Italian socioeconomic problems fit the interest of the coffee bourgeoisie, also favoring the colonization projects in some vacant areas of some of the Brazilian provinces. The Brazilian bourgeoisie, owner of economic power, soon took over political power supporting the republicans in the same way that agrarian aristocracy had supported monarchy in Brazil. Adhesion to the republican cause on the part of the army and urban middle class, as well as a conflict between the Church and the empire also influenced the political change that, in 1889, instituted the republican regime in Brazil.

In this process of changes, undergone in the country in the last decades of 19th century, the formation of national awareness influenced the repudiation of slavery, and made it impossible to stop the abolitionist movement. On the other hand, preference for European labor to replace slave work had been interpreted as a racist tendency, advocates of the superiority of the Arian work force. The truth is that, Europeanized, Brazil imported culture and prejudices. The federalist ideal that made the country a republic was imported from the United States. With the new regime, Brazil maintained its condition of foreign dependence, both economically and culturally.

The republican regime maintained the immigration project that made it possible for thousands of Italians to enter the country. The immigrant, who settled in coffee plantations that transformed into enterprises, along with those occupying land targeted for colonization, underwent social discrimination and all sorts of privations, including those of the religious order. The presence in Brazil of the Missionaries of St Charles – Scalabrinians, both men and women is connected to this reality.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 47.

1.2 Foundation of the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Scalabrinians

1.2.1 John Baptist Scalabrini's Socio-pastoral Project

Human history records throughout all time, along with other conjunctural aspects, successive migrations; facts connected to human mobility, diverse in situations and expressive in statistics. When tracing his apostolic project of service to the Italian immigrants, complementing it with new and broad initiatives, John Baptist Scalabrini revealed absolute conviction regarding the universality and permanence of the migratory fact through time.

Although statistic data is not always available, but based on archeological studies and linguistic maps, it is possible to identify in time-space important migrations that go back thousands years before Christ. Examples of this are the intense movements of Arians from Iran to India, Greece, and Italy; the repeated incursions of the barbarians to the Nile delta, the invasions of Canaan and Syria, the waves of Hittite refugees, the Hebraic peregrinations, the refugee movement of the Ionians and Eolians expelled from European Greece, the Etruscan migrations, colonizers of the island of Elba and then the neighboring continental coastal line, the colonizing experiment of the Phoenicians, founders of other cities, such as Cartage, the massive migrations organized by the Hellenists people, following sea and inland routes, searching for cultivatable land.

An important fact, the Hellenizing caused by Alexander of Macedonia's conquests can be seen as a positive reading of the migratory fact. The great conqueror acknowledged and admired the way the Persians ruled their empire, which was conquered in 323 BC, during the epoch composed by several nations that kept their own cultural identity of which the Jews are a testament. By proposing that his officers marry Persian women, Alexander solidified, somewhat, the ideal of the *fraternity of the human races*, even if such unions were not maintained¹⁶.

In previous times, the migrations of barbarian people to areas of the decadent Roman Empire, as the Romans also had undertaken a vast and consistent colonization of the old continent; the movement of the Mongols toward Russia; the holy wars with consequent Islamic influence in the Middle East and North Africa, and Iberian Peninsula invasion where Muslims transplanted elements of their Arabic culture which have been taken hold there, were all very important.

Since the discovery of the Americas until the French revolution, in modern times, the Portuguese-Spanish, English, Dutch and French expansions, among others, took place. Migrations of the Modern Age include the intense traffic of Africans to the Americas. It was a period of gradual Europeanization of the planet.

In this study, human mobility situations that marked the 19th and 20th centuries have a particular meaning. The 19th century Europe, which held the political and economical hegemony over the rest of the world, sent to the poorer countries engineers, geologists, agronomists, veterinarians and skilled workers. However, the mass migrations, marked by the unemployment of unskilled workers, a result of the development of industry and technology, are the reason, which motivated the specific pastoral initiatives of John Baptist Scalabrini.

¹⁶. TOYNBEE, Arnold J. *Helenismo, historia de uma civilizacao*. Rio de Janeiro, Zahar. 1995. p. 118-32.

Between 1815 and 1914, millions of Europeans settled in the Americas along with an expressive number of those who settled in some regions of Africa and Oceania. Also revealing are the continental European migrations that occurred during the same period.

The total number of immigrants that settled in the United States during the second half of the 19th century adds up to around 17 million, out of which 15 million were Europeans that came from Germany, Ireland, Great Britain, Italy, Austria-Hungary, Russia and Poland. During the same period, Canada welcomed more than 2 million Europeans, mostly Anglo-Saxons. To Brazil and Argentina moved, in larger numbers, migrants from southern and eastern Europe, specially, Spaniards, Italians, Portuguese, Russians and Polish. In these two Latin American countries, immigration was intensified starting from 1870. Still, during the second half of the 19th century, Australia and New Zealand welcomed 1 million immigrants, mostly British. Transoceanic migratory movement reached exceptional figures during the decade of 1880-1890. Included in this picture, during the same time, is an intense Asian migratory movement, mostly from India, China and Japan who settled in larger numbers in the United States, Brazil and Argentina, The Antilles and Oceania.

Even though they do not reflect the totality of migrations, the above data show their breadth. The challenges faced by the majority of migrants, throughout time and from everywhere, have been many and, generally, the role they performed was of major importance in the many regions where they have settled. This statement written by Jean Roche gives an idea of the different dimensions of the migratory phenomenon in 19th century:

The most complete disorientation after forty to fifty weeks of a voyage by boats moved by sails, the fight against the Indians and against the virgin forest, the poetic existence of firm ground of Robinson, under tropical palm trees, the conquest of vast areas where the pioneers harvested their first crops, the settlements, the factories and cities, the gold gilded adventure of the splendor of a new El Dorado. All of this is an epic summary of the History of humanity and it all represents the German colonization in southern Brazil in the beginning of the 19th century¹⁷.

At the time, it was as if European countries were possessed with colonizing fever, they felt uncomfortable in their old limits, attempting to broaden their circle of influence, occupying pacifically or conquering with iron and fire the barbarian and unexploited worlds pouring their population surplus and industrial productivity into them¹⁸. Italy, like Germany, also participated in this policy despite having arrived late:

Italy, thought of ancient Carthage, but the French beat them to the conquest. To face this adversary and others, it had to ally itself to Germany and Austria. It has its eyes in North Africa, takes Eritrea in 1870, and Somalia afterwards. Entered into a war of conquest in Abyssinia (Ethiopia) in 1896, but was defeated. Tripolitania and Libya were deferred for the 20th century. They were acquisition of little or no profit, but rather affirmation of its anxiety for political power rather than efficient business¹⁹.

In John Baptists Scalabrini's mind, the fact that Italy, which had been for centuries queen of the seas, did not have colonies in areas of significant immigrations, meant in some way for the Italians, an inferior status in relation to the immigrants of countries that had them.

The Englishman, the Frenchman, the Spaniard or the Portuguese that migrates, abandoning his

¹⁷ ROCHE, Jean. *A colonização alemã e o Rio Grande do Sul*. Porto Alegre, Globo, 1969, p. 1-2. Original title in French: *La colonisation allemande et le Rio Grande do Sul*, 1962. Translated by Emery Ruas.

¹⁸ SCALABRINI, Giovanni B. *L'emigrazione italiana in America*. Piacenza, 1887. In: *Scritti*, op. cit., v. 1, p. 27.

¹⁹ IGLÉSIAS, Francisco. *História e ideologia*, op. cit., p. 81.

*homeland, crossing the seas knows that he would find a beach, an island, a continent where he would be protected and judged by the laws of his country, where his mother tongue is spoken, where his flag is unfurled, which he might have defended in battle fields and where altars were erected of the same religion that smiled on him since his childhood*²⁰.

By making human mobility his issue, both in his writings and actions, Scalabrini approached the theme in profundity, he connected the causes and the consequences of the migratory phenomenon, warned about its harmfulness, risks, and possibilities of human migrations, he understood its dimensions, and was firmly convinced of the migratory continuity throughout time. But, who was John Baptist Scalabrini?

In Scalabrini's life, pastoral zeal and sensibility for the social have always coincided. Due to the profound changes that took place in Italy, he remained alert, working in a manner coherent to his time. The future *apostle of migrants* was born in Fino Mornasco, ten kilometers from Como, Northwest of the Lombard region, on July 8, 1839. His family was of sound Christian principles. The Italian peninsula still had not achieved political unity. John Baptist spent his childhood in an environment already characterized by a growing aspiration for independence, with attempts to free themselves from Austrian domination and the strengthening of the idea of territorial unification. He was 10 years old when Charles Albert, King of Piedmont, unsuccessfully tried to ban Austrians from the Lombard-Venice region. In the decade of 1849-1859, the Peninsula continued to struggle for the formation of a single national state. Before he turned 22 years old, The Kingdom of Italy was proclaimed in Turin. Political change, the victories and conflicts, including the flight of Pope Pius IX to Gaeta in the Kingdom of Naples and the confiscation of church goods would be reflected in the young Italian generation of that time.

In 1852, John Baptist Scalabrini attended the Liceu Volta in Como. Five years later, in 1857, he entered Saint Abondio Seminary, in the same city, having finished his philosophical studies. Subsequently, he entered the major seminary where he completed his theological studies. On May 30, 1863, he was ordained a priest. In the following years, he was a teacher and the rector of the minor seminary in Como. This period is included among the most critical of the Italian history. In 1870, he was nominated Parish Priest in the outskirts of Como. At that time, industrialization had reached the North of Italy. Within the scope of his parish, he pointed out the working force's problems to which he was not indifferent. Bishop of Piacenza, 1876-1905, period of great intensification of the European exodus to the Americas, he focused on the Italian and the world migratory reality with particular solicitude. His thoughts, translated into actions, produced long lasting pastoral works.

Scalabrini's remarks concerning human mobility resulted from reflection and research done by him to *gather statistical data and facts that would serve as a basis* for the text: *Italian emigration in America* that he wrote. In his contacts, in *conversations with families*, Scalabrini found a great *confusion of ideas over the issue even among journalists and those dedicated to the public services*. The study lead him to go over some aspects that he judged timely since the objective of the work was not to prevent emigration, which he considered as a *sacred human right, but to help it, illuminate it and guide it through action and guidance in order to revert it to the advantage of the emigrant and to the honor of Italy*. Thus, according to Scalabrini,

*Homeland and national ideas do not fade away beyond the seas; rather they are strengthened by the continuous contact with teachers, religious and priests who have the same holy affection for God, for the Church and for the Homeland in common with the migrants.*²¹

²⁰ SCALABRINI, Giovanni B. *L'emigrazione italiana in America*. In: *Scritti*, op. cit., v. 1, p. 33-4.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 25-36.

While denouncing the guidelines used by Italian migratory policy and the abuses connected to clandestine emigration, the Bishop observed:

How much more human, more civilized, more patriotic, more in line with the duties of the ruling class, above all, more Christian, to counsel, to guide and to prevent those unfortunates from the dangers that waited for them during the long and painful exile²².

One of the most significant texts written by Scalabrini on human mobility is that prepared for the 16th National Catholic Congress in Ferrara, which took place in 1899 and where the Bishop of Piacenza participated as a lecturer. We transcribe parts of the lecture that shows the positive side of migration within nations and their relationship with each other.

The physical world as well as the human world is subjugated by this mysterious force that moves and mixes, without destroying, the elements of life that transport organisms that came were born in a determined place and sowed them, changing them, perfecting them in such a way that the miracle of creation is renewed at every instance. Seeds emigrate on the wings of the wind, plants emigrate from one continent to another, taken by the water currents; birds and animals emigrate, and more than all others, men emigrate; sometimes collectively, other times isolated, but always as an instrument of that Providence that guides the fate of all humans and that guides us, also through catastrophes, toward the ultimate goal, which is the perfecting of man over the earth and to the glory of God in heavens.

This Divine revelation tells us, this is what modern history and biology teach us, and only by truly reaching this triple source of truth that we shall deduce the regulatory laws of the migratory phenomenon, and establish precepts of practical wisdom that should discipline in all of its rich variety of forms.

They tell us that migration is a natural and inalienable right, which is an escape valve that establishes a balance between the riches and the productive power of a people, which is the source of well being for those who part and those who remain. Thus alleviating the soil from a super population, and valorizing the manual labor that stayed. This could be, after all, good or bad for the individual or for the nation, depending on how and under what conditions it is realized, but usually is a human asset. Therefore, it opens new paths for trade, facilitates the dissemination of scientific and industrial discoveries, melts and improves civilizations and broadens the concept of homeland beyond any material borders, making the world the homeland of mankind²³.

For John Baptist Scalabrini, who defended the right to emigrate, but who vehemently denounced the *right to force emigration*, it was the duty of the state to remove the causes of mass migration, to broaden the labor market and therefore, if need be, favor internal migration.

As for external migration, the state, according to the Bishop, should protect the emigrants through an adequate legislation and through international agreements that would enable the country, without conquests by war, room for the development of non-dependant colonies from a political viewpoint and where the immigrants could maintain ties with the homeland and preserve, with their cultural values, the inherited faith of their ancestors. To men and women of his days, Scalabrini proposed to reinforce the ties of solidarity with compatriots who emigrated. For him, religion and homeland are *two great loves inserted by God's hand into the heart of humanity*. Based in this certitude, he disapproved the attempt made in the United State to *Americanize* immigrants of various European nationalities. Only one people, Scalabrini stated in a conference in Turin, *knew how to resist the violent attempt of assimilation, and it was the one, which had written on its flag: our church, our*

²² Ibid., p. 27.

²³ SCALABRINI, Giovanni B. *L'emigrazione degli operai italiani*. Presentation at the XVI Italian Catholic Congress held in Ferrara, in 1899. In: *Scritti*, op. cit., v. 2, p. 153-4.

school, and our language²⁴.

Thought and action form an eloquent unity in John Baptist Scalabrini. Original in interpreting the migratory phenomenon, he also was daring in his initiatives in favor of the migrants. It is important to return to his reminiscences, those in the first pages of his already mentioned work: *Italian Immigration in America*, before referring to the concrete steps of his socio-pastoral project. In our understanding, it constitutes the deep meaning; the seed of the Scalabrinian work in the migratory field. A scene that he saw in Milan involving Italian emigrants leaving for America developed in the Bishop of Piacenza's spirit an inner dynamic restlessness. The memory of this fact caused him to associate with a permanent attention to the migratory reality of his country:

I saw a scene in Milan, some years ago that left in my spirit an impression of deep sorrow. Going through the station, I saw a large room, the lateral porticos and the contiguous plaza invaded by three or four hundred poorly dressed individuals, separated into diverse groups. On their faces, tanned by the sun and, marked by the precocious wrinkles that deprivation generally imprints, the turmoil of affections that agitated their hearts at that moment was apparent. Old men bent over by age and tiredness, men in their prime, women that carried children in their arms or behind them, adolescents and young people all with just one thought, and one common goal.

They were emigrants. They belonged to various provinces from upper Italy, and they waited anxiously for the steamship that would take them along the Mediterranean coast and to distant America where they hoped to find a less adverse fate and a land less ungrateful to their sweat.

They departed, those poor unfortunates; some following the call from relatives, who had proceeded in a voluntary exodus, others didn't even know where they were being taken, attracted by that strong instinct that makes birds migrate. They went to America where, they had heard so many times, well-paid work for those with strong arms and good will.

However, not without tears did they say farewell to their native village of which they had so many sweet memories. Without lamentation they were ready to leave a homeland that they didn't know, except in two hateful ways: recruitment and the tax collector, and because for the disinherited, homeland is the land that provides him bread, and there, far away they expected to find bread, less scarce or, at least, less sweated.

I departed touched by the scene. A wave of sad thoughts embittered my heart. Who knows the accrual of deprivation and disgraces, I thought, what makes them see as sweet such a painful step...How many delusions, how much new pain awaits them in an uncertain future? How many will end up victorious in their struggle for existence? How many will succumb to the city's turmoil or in the silence of unpopulated plains? How many, even among those who found bread for the body, will lack the bread of the soul, not less needed than the first. Will they succumb to a completely material life, and loose the faith of their parents?

Since that day, my mind frequently took me back to those unfortunates, and that scene always reminds me of another, not less disheartening, not present myself but able to read between the lines of the letters of friends or by reports of travelers. I can see those unfortunates disembarking in a foreign land, amidst people who spoke a language that they did not understand. They are easy prey for inhuman speculations. I see them soaked with their sweat and tears that run down their furrowed faces, a land that exhales sickness, broken by fatigue, consumed by fever, sighing in vain for the skies of their distant homeland, and for the miserable old hovels and to finally sink so low that the longing for their dear ones no longer brings solace, the word of faith unable to show them the prize that God promised to the good and less fortunate. And those who triumph in the tough struggle for existence, are, ah, isolated and forgetting all notion of the supernatural, all of the Christian moral precepts,

²⁴ SCALABRINI, Giovanni B. *L'Italia all'estero*. Conference held at the Sacred Art Exhibit space in Turim, 1898. In: *Scritti*, op. cit., v. 2, p. 135-44.

losing more and more the sense of religion, not alimented by pious practices, letting brutal instincts take the place of higher aspirations.

I have frequently questioned myself in the face of such a regrettable state of things: how to remedy it? And every time that I read in the newspapers about a government rule placing authorities and the public on guard against the astuteness of some speculators, who plunder them and make of them white salves, who compel them, as blind instruments of covetous greed, to go far from their homeland with the illusion of easy and abundant earnings. Then, from the letters of friends or from travel reports, I note that the excluded of the emigrants are Italians, and that the most vile services, as if it vileness that exists in work, are done by them, who are the most abandoned and, thus, the least respected They are our fellow citizens, in the thousands and thousands our brother lives without the defense from the homeland, so far away. The object of prepotencies not always punished, without the comfort of a friendly word, then, I confess, my face gets blushed, and I feel humiliated both in my condition as priest and as Italian, and again I ask myself: how to help them?

Also, a few days ago a distinguished young traveler brought me greetings from many of the families who were from the Piacenza mountains, camped on the banks of the Orinoco River: tell our Bishop that we always remember his council, to pray for us and to send us a priest because here one lives and dies like animals...

That greetings of my children from so far away fell on my ears as a reprimand, and the question, which I frequently asked myself, manifested in these observations that I now make public and have written as my heart dictates.

I call to the attention of the Italian clergy, of Catholic laymen and of all men of good will, that Christ's blood makes us all brothers in one faith and hope making us debtors to all of them, since charity and a real truce with God, does not know parties²⁵.

From the experience lived by Scalabrini in Milan, an inspiration took shape, becoming a socio-pastoral project that was completed gradually as an answer to a triple concern, regarding emigrants' fate: loss of faith, a consequence from lack of religious formation; annihilation of national feelings, resulting from lack of stimuli; risk of economic ruin, as frequently emigrants were prey of speculations. It is interesting to stress that religion, for the majority of Italians, was the support of their cultural identity. Scalabrini started to turn his thoughts into actions to decisively offer a sound contribution capable of providing better living conditions for the emigrants, a more humane treatment, and the preservation of their cultural values.

The Bishop of Piacenza presented in a letter dated February 16, 1887 to Cardinal Simeoni, the prefect of the Congregation for *Propaganda Fide*, an outline for a project targeted to help the Italian emigrants in the Americas²⁶. To Pope Leo XIII, in a letter of June 13 of that same year, Scalabrini communicated: *the idea to come to the aid of the emigrants was ripe*²⁷.

Four years later, in his first conference on emigration, given in Rome, Saint Andrea della Valle, John Baptist Scalabrini affirmed: *Trusting in God and in his Providence, I dared to try something*. Under the circumstances, he describes his project like this, thus constituting two societies, the Congregation of the Missionaries of Saint Charles, founded in 1887 and an association under the patronage of Saint Raphael, founded in 1889:

...one comprised of priests, the other of laymen; one religious and the other civil, two societies that

²⁵ SCALABRINI, Giovanni B. *L' emigrazione italiana in America*. In: *Scritti*, op. cit., v. 1, p. 19-22.

²⁶ SCALABRINI, Giovanni B. *Lettera al cardinale Giovanni Simeoni*. Piacenza, 16-2-1887. In: *Scritti*, op. cit., v. 1, p. 5.

²⁷ SCALABRINI, Giovanni B. *Lettera a Leone XIII*. Piacenza, 13-6-1887. In: *Scritti*, op. cit., v. 1, p. 72.

help each other and that are mutually complementary. The first being a congregation of missionaries, mainly aiming for the spiritual well being of our compatriots who have emigrated, and the second aiming for their material welfare. The first working on its objective of founding churches, schools, orphanages and hospitals. As priests, united as family, with religious vows of chastity, obedience and poverty, ready to fly to where they are to be sent, apostles, teachers, nurses, all in accordance to the necessity. The second, dissuading emigration when advisable, watching the work of agents so that they don't surpass the limits of legality, counseling emigrants and guiding them towards a good goal when they are not able to get anything else²⁸.

The need soon demanded the founding of a feminine religious congregation that complemented John Baptist Scalabrini's socio-pastoral project.

1.2.2 Demands of complementarity

Up to now, we saw the circumstances that characterized John Baptist Scalabrini's epoch; we have shown the frequency of migration in human history to salient the Bishop of Piacenza's vision and the motivations for his intervention in the migratory field, as an answer to a particular historical situation of his time. From John Baptist's gradual action in favor of immigrants, a pastoral project was designed, which was translated into service for the church and for the world. Scalabrini's experience would be transmitted to men and women, who were called to keep his charisma alive, providing perennial visibility to it through an effective presence within the scope of human mobility. Without losing sight of Scalabrini's work as a whole, we shall broach the background that led to the foundation, development, and consequent configuration of the physiognomy of the MSCS Congregation itself.

The genesis of the new foundation started could be seen in the reading between the lines of the writings of the Bishop of Piacenza and the initiative became real as it imposed itself as a new alternative for a socio-pastoral answer to the migratory problematics at the end of 19th century.

A text written by John Baptist Scalabrini, of January 11, 1887, among others gathered in two volumes dealing with migrations that treat migrations and the works that he founded in benefit of the migrants, express his disposition to initiate, even in the *most minute proportions*, a service that had as its objective spiritual assistance to the Italian immigrants on American soil, having in mind to guarantee a more dignified and Christian future²⁹. The determination to start a work supposes the intention to complete it during one's lifetime.

The project of an association of priests having in view the spiritual well being of Italian migrants was, in Scalabrini's view, just the beginning of a work that should expand. In a letter to Father Francesco Zaboglio, his former student at Como's seminary and his first collaborator, Scalabrini communicated, still in the beginning of 1887: *The Pope blesses our project and incentivates me to greatly amplify it*. The Pope was Leo XIII, the pontiff of *Rerum Novarum*.

Complementarity and amplification, in fact, characterize Scalabrinian works. Two years after the foundation of the Congregation of the Missionaries of Saint Charles, as we have seen, Scalabrini founded the Association under the patronage of Saint Raphael that aimed at the material welfare of migrants. According to the Bishop, the two foundations should mutually help and complement each other. The pastoral proposal that Scalabrini sent to Cardinal Simeoni, in February of 1887, represented for the Bishop a mere possibility to *shed light where there was none, and on how to provide apostolic*

²⁸ SCALABRINI, Giovanni B. *Prima conferenza sull'emigrazione*. Roma, S. Andrea della Valle, 8-2-1891. In: *Scritti*, op. cit., v. 1, p. 301-2.

²⁹ SCALABRINI, Giovanni B. *Lettera al cardinale G. Simeoni*. Piacenza, 11-1-1887. In: *Scritti*, op. cit., v. 1, p. 3.

action, *and to prepare the way for other missionaries*, in accordance to God's inspiration, in keeping with the times, that reflection and experience would teach³¹.

Since Scalabrini entrusted to the Congregation of the Missionary of St. Charles the foundation of churches, schools, orphanages and hospitals aimed at providing better living conditions and a more dignified future for thousands of immigrants and their descents, it would become indispensable to expand the cadre of collaborators in the apostolic project that was recently initiated. Giving the dimensions of the endeavor, experience would soon require a new complementarity, having as indicator the need of a feminine pastoral presence in the day-to-day Scalabrinian mission.

While John Baptist Scalabrini strove to ensure a structure providing more soundness to the two newly founded associations, those of St. Charles and St. Raphael, still very limited both in human and material resources, his priests insisted on the urgent need to count on the collaboration of a congregation of religious women in the churches, schools, orphanages and hospitals founded in benefit of migrants in countries of intense immigrations. Certainly, a more complete realization of Scalabrini's soci-pastoral project depended on the contribution of a feminine congregation, that would act in a parallel manner to the male congregation but that did not mean the immediate foundation of the new institute. Despite the fact that initiative had been postponed for a few years, the need was always admitted by Scalabrini and by St. Charles's missionaries, who had previously searched for other alternatives to overcome the need.

The first attempt was to solicit the collaboration of Mother Francisca Xavier Cabrini, founder of the Congregation Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Mother Cabrini had chosen the Orient as the preferential address for the apostolic activity of the Congregation she had founded in 1880. Thanks to the providence of God, Scalabrini concerned with the status of immigrants who had settled in the Americas, and because of the insistence of the priest that he had sent to New York in mid 1888, the apostolic activity of the Congregation of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Jesus had its first major impulse in the West. During a speech made in March 19, 1889, during the ceremony of giving the crucifix to Mother Francisca and her companions who were leaving for America, Scalabrini made a few considerations about women's role in the church and in society:

...the work of the priests would not be fulfilled without your work, venerable sisters. There are initiatives in which only you can be successful. God placed in the heart of women a particular gift, which has a mysterious power over minds and hearts, therefore, I trust that you will correspond to the Grace of God who calls you to a distant land, a sublime mission of religion and civism³².

Arriving in the United States, the religious encountered thousands of Italian adults and children who were outcasts and who, the missionaries made some of them dedicated sisters and of others dedicated mothers. The Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, during their presence in the United States, founded girls' schools and crèches, took over the management of an orphanage and of a hospital founded by the Scalabrinian missionaries in New York.

Ten years after that departure in March 1889, Scalabrini had the same conviction regarding the importance of sisters' cooperation to his project, but acknowledged that the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Jesus' pastoral activity did not fully identify itself with the Scalabrinian mission. In 1900 report, the Bishop made a statement to this regard: *I opened the doors of America to them where they*

³¹ SCALABRINI, Giovanni B. *Progetto di una associazione allo scopo di provvedere ai bisogni spirituali degli italiani emigrati nelle Americhe*. Piacenza, 16-2-1887. In: *Scritti*, op. cit., v. 1, p. 8-9.

³² SCALABRINI, Giovanni B. *Appunti del discorso alla Madre Cabrini e 6 compagne nella consegna del Crocifisso a Codogno*, 19-3-1889. In: *Scritti*, op. cit., v. 1, p. 235.

*are doing very well, but not the good that our congregation proposes*³³.

In the second attempt to respond to the need to complement his pastoral project with a feminine participation, Scalabrini appealed to the daughters of Saint Anne, a foundation of Rosa Gatorno, also a contemporary of the Bishop of Piacenza. The daughters of Saint Anne took over the Christopher Columbus Hospital founded by the Scalabrinian Father Felice Morelli, in New York. The house of health offered free assistance to Italian immigrants, and because of its beneficent work, they depended on resources obtained from public charity. The religious would be responsible for this task. The incompatibility between the Congregations of the Daughters of Saint Anne's statutes, where the practice of collecting alms was not permitted, prevented the continuity of service provided by the religious in Christopher Columbus. The founder herself, Rosa Gatorno, decided to withdraw her sisters by mid 1891, just a few months after having taken over the hospital, being substituted by Mother Francisca Xavier Cabrini's missionaries.

Despite the setbacks, the Scalabrinian presence disseminated with uncommon speed. In 1891, the Missionaries of St. Charles's in the United States were already present in New York, New Haven, Providence, Boston, Buffalo, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, New Orleans, and Kansas City. In New York, the Scalabrinians, established in three missions, had founded parish schools, one orphanage, Christopher Columbus Hospital, the Saint Raphael Society and the Barge Office, an immigration service installed near the harbor to provide assistance to Italians who arrived there. In other cities, they founded churches and chapels. In Boston, they even established a technical school. The works undertaken by the Missionaries of St. Charles, after 1891, in favor of the immigrants were numerous, and not only in the United States.

In the report submitted to the Congregation of the *Propaganda Fide* in middle of the 1900's, Scalabrini affirms that if not everything had been done for the immigrants; certainly much was done for them. In the same report, the Bishop states that, at first, he had chosen North America, preoccupied with the Protestants, and because it seemed to him that, the greatest necessities were there. However, he took care to always send missionary expeditions both to North America, where immigrants were concentrated in masses in towns, and to South America, especially to Brazil, where they lived in small groups, isolated in *immense territories*. Still in the report of 1900, highlighting the importance of the action developed by the sisters with immigrants, Scalabrini reaffirms his conviction expressed in 1889: *The work of the missionaries would not be complete, mainly in South America, without the sisters' help*. He added, *I solicited, therefore, several existing congregations, but without success*³⁴.

The distance between the years of 1887 and 1900, respectively, the foundation of the Congregation of the Missionaries of St. Charles and the report on the Scalabrinian work submitted by the Bishop of Piacenza to the Congregation of *Propaganda Fide*, permitted a broad evaluation of the apostolic activities developed until then in the benefit of the Italian immigrants in the Americas, including the feminine participation, which is the topic of this study. The need to have sister working with the brethren in the condition of mobility led to alternatives that, although not having the expected success and taking into account the unarguable good undertaken, favored a clearer awareness of the importance of an institute with its own identity to complement the Scalabrinian socio-pastoral project.

Two approaches by Scalabrini on the idea of a feminine foundation, connected to his work, have a particular meaning because of some aspects that, according to him, should characterize Scalabrinian missionaries in their life-action among migrants. One of them is in the report of 1900; the

³³ SCALABRINI, Giovanni B. *Relazione dell'opera dei Missionari di S. Carlo per gli emigrati italiani*. 10-8-1900. In: *Scritti*, op. cit., v. 2, p. 182.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 180-2.

other, that had preceded it in time, is part of a letter from the Bishop to Father Pietro Colbachini, a missionary in Brazil, dated February 15, 1899. In the letter, after considerations and communications, Scalabrini states the special reason for it:

Now, I submit to you, for your opinion on an important issue of which I ask you to dedicate your most serious attention.

I spoke to you many times about the need to have our sisters, dependent on our Fathers of which some have written to me, showing the conviction that they would do much good. It is not a matter of founding convents, but as they are put to use, with a great advantage, in all of the dioceses of France. The Sisters should live in their own small houses, in groups of three or four and give some classes, be dedicated to our churches, maintain in order the missionary priests belongings, catechizing young girls, assist the sick, even in the home when it can be done without danger, etc...

A certain number of good souls have offered themselves for this work, and they are anxiously waiting to start the novitiate that should be made exactly according to the canons. . But I am undecided due to some circumstances that I would call providential. It seems to me that God also wants to impose this cross on my shoulders, heavier than so many others.

Pray, think, reflect, and later give me your thoughts on this. I also wrote to Father Vicentini and to others, more serious and mature, on this issue³⁵.

In the report of 1900 to the *Propaganda Fide* to inform it on the collaboration provided by the sisters, after other affirmations that we already referred to, Scalabrini takes up again the content of the letter to Colbachini in the previous year:

We needed sisters like those throughout the dioceses of France, who adapt to living in only four and without any pretensions teach in elementary schools, teach catechism, and where possible, assist the sick with all the precaution that prudence and experience suggest. Even though the missionary priests insisted and were violent to my heart in order to have such sisters, I have always opposed it, feeling an extreme repugnance in taking on this new work.

Next, in the same document, Scalabrini informs the Congregation of the *Propaganda Fide* on the Apostles of the Sacred Heart; an institute still in the experimental stage:

But, after some years, an accumulation of providential circumstances made me acknowledge that this is the will of God, and now we have the Apostles of the Sacred Heart, also dedicated to assist emigrants, particularly in America. In brief, after two years of tests, a dozen will depart, six around the middle of this month to Sao Paulo; another six, by end of September, to Curitiba. The others will depart successively in very short time as we have had more than one hundred requests. At the moment all this is being done as an experiment. If God blesses, as I hope, also this endeavor at the opportune time I will send the rules to this Holy Congregation³⁶.

Next, we will situate, between two moments, that of 1887 and that of 1900, providential circumstances done by the action of God, from which the physiognomy of the Female Scalabrinian Congregation took shape as a new form of ecclesial presence together with the numerous migrants, collaborating to realize the prophetic mediation: *where the people are, that is where the church is, because the church is mother, friend and protector of the people, and for them they will always have a word, a smile and a blessing³⁷.*

³⁵ SCALABRINI, Giovanni B. *Lettera a P. P. Colbachini*. Piacenza, 15-2-1899. In: *Scritti*, op. cit., v. 2, p. 151-2.

³⁶ SCALABRINI, Giovanni B. *Relazione dell'opera dei Missionari di S. Carlo per gli emigrati italiani*, 10-8-1900, op. cit., p. 182-3.

³⁷ SCALABRINI, Giovanni B. *L'emigrazione italiana in America*. In: *Scritti*, op. cit., v. 1, p. 66.

1.2.3 Father Joseph Marchetti

When, by mid 1900, Scalabrini sent to the Congregation of the *Propaganda Fide* the report on the work of the Missionaries of St. Charles for the emigrants, he included the Missionary Sisters of Saint Charles, a small community of missionaries now almost five years in which they offered the contribution of its pastoral activity to the church and to the society of Sao Paulo, honoring the name to which they identified themselves: the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles. Father Joseph Marchetti was instrumental in its founding. The circumstance, that led the new congregation, was included among those considered as providential by John Baptist Scalabrini. Equal to biblical moments, although in a micro history dimension, a child in the context of an exodus, taken in by an exceptional missionary, is the origin of the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo - Scalabrinians, as Scalabrini himself tells it:

On board a ship, on which a missionary traveled, Father Joseph Marchetti (then a teacher at the seminary of Lucca) a young wife died leaving a small orphan and a husband alone and in despair. The missionary, to calm down that poor soul, who threatened to throw himself into the ocean, promised him he would take care of the baby boy, and as he promised, he kept the promise. Upon arriving in Rio de Janeiro, carrying the innocent creature in his arms, he presented himself along with the child to His Excellency Count Pius of Savoy, general consul in that city in those days. He could only give to the young missionary nothing more than words of encouragement, but it was enough for him, going from door to door, until he finally, was able to leave the poor orphan in the care of a doorman of a religious house. From that moment, the idea of founding in Sao Paulo (where he had arrived) an orphanage for the children of Italians filled his mind, and with immense sacrifices, he was actually able to found it. It is now six years old with 200 orphans and has a martyr who prays for them in heaven, as the undertaking of such great burdens cost the life of this pious and zealous missionary. May his soul rest in peace, ready for Heaven at thirty years of age³⁸.

Scalabrini would manifest support of the work of the Missionaries of St. Charles in Sao Paulo on other opportunities, stressing the Christopher Columbus Orphanage, conceived and realized in this city by Father Joseph Marchetti, between 1894 and 1895. The name was given to the foundation in a time in which the festive climate of the celebration of the IV centennial of the discovery of America carried out by Christopher Columbus, born in Genoa, Italy, was in the air. Also, the motherhouse of the Congregation of the Missionaries of St. Charles, located in Piacenza, would receive this name. The expression Colombians, with which Father Marchetti identified the future Sisters of St. Charles, took its name from the name given to the motherhouse in Piacenza, where it became common among its citizens to call the Missionaries of St. Charles Colombians. The fact that Father Marchetti had given to the orphanage that he had founded in São Paulo the name of Christopher Columbus and in particular to identify the missionaries assigned to work there as Colombians, shows the articulation of his initiative with the Scalabrinian project.

The episode of the orphaned child, being the origin of the orphanage and of the MSCS Congregation, sprouted from concrete reality, produced in a determined historical moment. In that epoch were many children became orphans in foreign lands, the originality of the event is in the providential mediation of Father Joseph Marchetti, a missionary who dared to dream in that circumstance. Supported by faith and impelled by the love for his fellowmen, he minimized obstacles, removed barriers, committed his life and gave his dream form.

Father Joseph Marchetti was 25 years old when, in 1894, he undertook his first trip to Brazil. The missionary was born in Lombrici, a district of Camaiore, Lucca, in October 3, 1869. Second

³⁸ SCALABRINI, Giovanni B. *Relazione dell'opera dei Missionari di S. Carlo per gli emigrati italiani*. In: *Scritti*, op. cit., v. 2, p. 181-2.

among the children of Angelo de Antonio Marchetti and Carolina de Giovanni Domenico Ghilarducci, Joseph had ten brothers and sisters, Mother Assunta being one of them.

In Lombrici, next to the Romanic Church of St. Bras, a construction of the 12th century, a mill operated that, for many years, was the means of subsistence for the Marchetti family. When Joseph was about 10 years old, his family left Lombrici and settled down close to a mill that belonged to the Marquis Giovanni Battista Mansi. *The Mill Factory*, the new residence for the Marchetti was, at that time, the last house in the parish of St. Mary Assunta, a church with a school in Camaioire³⁹.

Joseph Marchetti attended the school of Canon Regular Nicolas Santucci of Camaioire, and at 12 years of age, he was admitted as an external student in the St. Michael Seminary in Foro, Lucca. In 1884, thanks also to the help of Marquis Giovanni Mansi; he could enter the Diocesan Seminary of Lucca. Throughout his entire formation, he distinguished himself by his good character, uncommon tenacity and intelligence of which he took excellent advantage. He was ordained priest in April 3, 1892 and nominated the spiritual advisor of Compignano, a mountain village with around two hundred inhabitants. A brilliant student, soon he would be nominated the French and Math teacher in the Seminary of Lucca.

One can presume that, a lecture on Italian emigration given by John Baptist Scalabrini, in Lucca, during the spring of 1892, the surrounding emigration reality, the experience lived among the villagers of Compignano, half of which had immigrated to Brazil, were the factors that contributed to Marchetti's decision to join the Scalabrinian work.

In September of 1894, Father Joseph Marchetti accompanied the emigrants of Compignano to the port of Genoa. Accepted by Scalabrini in the quality of an external missionary, in this same year, between October and November, he undertook his first trip to Brazil. In a letter to Scalabrini, Archbishop Nicola, of Lucca, observed some time later:

After making the sacrifice of freeing Father Marchetti for this work, I am happily hopeful that he will do well in the mission that your Eminence has entrusted to him. However, he is still very young, but under the great guidance of your Eminence, he certainly, with plenty of zeal, will be able to cooperate, with success, to the health of souls⁴⁰.

Sure of his vocation and impelled by missionary zeal, Father Joseph Marchetti undertook a second trip to Brazil, which was decisive in his life. The dream of founding in Sao Paulo an orphanage for the children of Italian immigrants became part of his larger ideal that persecuted him, ready to pay any price to make it real. After just a few days in Sao Paulo, Marchetti organized an incredible activity:

...he started the construction of the orphanage, organized a committee of women, chaired by the Consul's wife, the countess of Brichanteau, gave lectures and regularly exercised his ministry. The environmental scene was foreign to him, a different climate, diverse cultures, but the state of his spirit and vivacious demeanor and Christian charity diminished the obstacles.⁴¹

Father Joseph Marchetti who, in his own family, had lived the experience of losing his father, leaving him and his siblings as orphans undertook with uncommon enthusiasm, the construction of the Christopher Columbus Orphanage. In a letter to Scalabrini, dated January 31, 1895, he reported:

³⁹ MARCHETTI, Franco. *Vita e opere di padre Giuseppe Marchetti, da Camaioire, e la sua morte prematura*. In: *Nuovi Orizzonti*, Camaioire, Anno X, n. 1, marzo 1983, p. 3.

⁴⁰ GHILARDI, Niccolò. *Lettera a G. B. Scalabrini*. Lucca, 26 dicembre 1894. In: *Alcuni scritti inediti per richiamare ed approfondire la figura di padre Giuseppe Marchetti, cs.* Roma, 1993, p. 66 (Collana Centenario - Laura Bondi, 3).

⁴¹ SIGNOR, Luce M. *João Batista Scalabrini e a migração italiana: Um projeto sócio-pastoral*. Porto Alegre, Pallotti, 1986, p. 163.

I write you under pouring rain, I cannot express myself as I want, I am sure you will pardon me. Everything gets wet.

Your Eminence,

Soon you will know through Father Maldotti some things about me: now I will finish telling you all. I prostrate myself, then, and knelling I implore the holy blessings from my Superior, and I ask you to hear me.

I tell you, thus, that the environment in which I should undertake my action is very difficult, and I shall owe it to Providence if I am able to be in good graces of the Bishop of Sao Paulo. I told him of my mission; he listened to me was interested and if we had twenty missionaries they would not be many to take care of the most urgent needs. The idea (...) of the orphanage pleased everyone, the Bishop, the Consul, etc. The Bishop provided me with a place to build, very adequate and of great value. It is located on the top of a hill, on the outskirts of the city of Sao Paulo. It is appropriate for a house, a garden, for everything. Deo gratias! Just as I had dreamed. What's more, he gave me property with a house and a chapel on the same grounds to be the residence of the missionary who over sees all of the construction and that will serve very well as lodging for the missionaries. It is beautiful! God wanted an orphanage; I see it, I feel it, I know it. Deo gratias! I organized a ladies committee, and nominated the Consul's wife, the countess of Brichanteau, to be president. I give lectures to the committee, and they cry when I report certain scenes!! Moreover, there is no lack of money. I go door to door, I ask for work, I preach, I confess, I exhort, but I am alone. The harvest is plentiful. If only you could see it! The walls go up, and in two months, I hope, the structure will be finished. Providence, after all, wanted to crown my hopes, my vows and, perhaps, also yours. Immigrants! Orphans! Everything has been seen to. However, the debilitated poor, the poor sick Italians, abandoned on the plantations! Deo gratias! Also being taken care of. Here in Sao Paulo an Italian hospital has almost been finished it was the work of congresses, of The Tribune, of masonry, but it was never finished. This cross was necessary. I myself carried it. The Italian Consul begged me to be the director, the over seer of the work, gave me the consent to accommodate the sisters there. Here is a new nest for my Colombinas of Jesus! Deo gratias! I have them ready for the novitiate; when the orphanage is opened, the more robust Colombinas will attend the sick Jesus. The same house will be the novitiate⁴²...

As can be seen, in the measure, that Father Marchetti became aware of the local migratory problems, he searched for solutions and expanded the missionary work. Just as Scalabrini, Marchetti also considered as indispensable a feminine collaboration to complement the priest's work among the migrants. The initiative of the missionary, in this sense, was what determined the emergence of the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles - Borromeo, Scalabrinians.

Well before October 25, 1895, the date of the foundation of the MSCS congregation, and just having started the construction of the Christopher Columbus Orphanage, Marchetti envisioned orphans becoming sisters; and he indicates to the Scalabrinian family a prospective universal missionary, reserving an intense schedule for him:

...many of the orphans will become sisters. Jesus will be blessed. We shall go to Minas, to Rio, to Santa Catarina, inland in Brazil, to Argentina, everywhere! Deo gratias! The harvest is plentiful. Send missionaries. In Santos, everything is already ready for the Missionary of Immigration. If the missionary is ready, fine otherwise send someone. Two or three thousand emigrants are suffering there in those shacks. In Santos there are thirty thousand inhabitants, and just one priest and he smokes!! I am going now to Rio, to prepare the Ilha das Flores⁴³.

In March 1895, Marchetti, who anxiously waited for a letter from Scalabrini, revealed himself

⁴² MARCHETTI, Giuseppe. *Lettera a G. B. Scalabrini*. S. Paulo, 31 gennaio 1895. In: *Alcuni scritti inediti per richiamare ed approfondire la figura di padre Giuseppe Marchetti*, cs, op. cit., p. 16-17.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

astonished with his own success and he wrote to the Bishop, “*it can be seen that your Eminence prays, I even feel that in my head it is not me, but the ways of God who serves of me without me being aware of it.* However, he was worried about the situation *of the orphans, of the abandoned, of the unassisted.* The building of the future orphanage of Ipiranga still was at the finishing stage, and Marchetti had already started the building of a new facility, in Vila Prudente, to house orphan girls. The missionary dreamed, above all, to keep the minors from delinquency and prostitution.

Mostly, the missionary dreamed of keeping the youth from delinquency and prostitution:

*I think that I will accomplish this through the institutions that I have already founded. Among the girls, some will become, teachers who afterwards will go to the colonies to teach, educate, etc., and some will also become sisters to help our sick, etc, etc. Among the boys some will become artists, teachers, missionaries, laymen, etc., who will assist the settlers and will educate them*⁴⁴.

Marchetti showed progressive knowledge of the reality and much haste in his initiatives in the other letters sent from Brazil to Scalabrini, written between March 1895 and October 1896. The respect for his Superior and a boldness related to the proposals presented to him, his identification with the Scalabrinian work, and the dynamic fidelity for the committed mission, his boldness in dreams and disposition to undertake and expand it at any price, the awareness of his limits and absolute trust in Providence, and a permanent thanksgiving and plenitude in giving himself to God and to brothers are present in his letters.

1.2.4 From Camaiore to Piacenza

We have examined so far, both the remote and the recent backgrounds of the foundation of the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo - Scalabrinians. A complex framework of the contemporary reality, characteristic of 19th century, caused deep transformations with a major impact over Western society. An expressive phenomenon of this context was the massive Italian migration to the Americas, which occurred from the beginning of the second half of the 19th century. Determined to provide spiritual and material assistance to the migrants, John Baptist Scalabrini founded, to this end, two societies, one of priests and another of laymen. Since the beginning, Scalabrini and his missionaries understood the need of collaboration of religious women to complement the work on behalf of the migrants. Pressed by the circumstances and subordinated to Scalabrini, Father Joseph Marchetti intervened, convinced that a new foundation was indispensable. His initiative to gather in Camaiore the first group of missionaries and to go with them to Piacenza where, he performed a touching departure ceremony, he gave form to the process of the founding of the Feminine Scalabrinian Congregation.

The role undertaken by Marchetti was influential in the origins of the pioneer group of MSCS Sisters. In Camaiore, a small town in the province of Lucca, in the privileged Toscana, in central Italy, rich in history and natural scenery, Father Joseph Marchetti started to prepare the pioneers for their mission in Brazil. Whoever travels the few kilometers on the provincial road that connects Lucca to Camaiore can admire the ever changing and beautiful panoramas:

...looking to the sides from the road on sees, plowed fields, cypress and olive trees covering the hills; below, the valley, stretching to the sea of Liguria in Tirrean, the beauty of the area; ahead, the road lined with Tiliac trees that leads to the community house; very near the Apuan mountain chain with its

⁴⁴ MARCHETTI, Giuseppe. *Lettera a G. B. Scalabrini*. S. Paulo, 10-3-1895. In: *Alcuni scritti inediti per richiamare ed approfondire la figura di padre Giuseppe Marchetti*, cs, op. cit., p. 19-20.

*peak, where torrents come from that have for centuries moved the indispensable and disputed azenhas*⁴⁵.

In this unmistakable scenery Joseph and Assunta Marchetti were born. The same baptism registry book, S 1867-1883, of St. Mary Assunta's Church school, at the community hall, on page 45, number 208 registers the baptism of Marchetti, João Maria Jeronimo Jose Atilio, son of Angelo de Antonio of the first mill and of Carolina de Giovanni Domenico Ghilarducci, of legitimate matrimony, born on October 3, 1869, and on page 75, number 191, this record:

Day August 16, 1871

*Marchetti, Maria Assunta Caterina, daughter of Angelo de Antonio de Lombrici, and of Carolina de Giovanni Domenico Ghilarducci de Viareggio, of legitimate matrimony born on the 15th at eleven o'clock, and baptized on the above date by Fr. Domenico Giannucchini. Godfather, Antonio Ghilarducci and Godmother, Caterina Ghilarducci*⁴⁶.

Jose and Assunta Marchetti were 10 and 8 years old, respectively, when near the end of 1879 their family left Lombrici to settle next to another mill that Father Franco Marchetti, great nephew of Father Joseph and Mother Assunta, identified as being The Mill Factory located on the outskirts of Capezzano, another district of Camaiole. According to the same Father Franco, the Marchetti family never lived in Capezzano.

At this new address, Assunta filled her daily tasks with skill; she was her mother's right hand. She helped her father in activities connected to the mill. The status as the eldest daughter, the numerous younger siblings, her mother's poor health, the economic hardships, and the responsibility at a very young age shared in family, prepared Assunta for the mission that God had reserved for her.

As the years went by the young Assunta felt the growing desire to become Carmelite. Once she manifested her intention, her father agreed, but her mother's poor health forced her to postpone the realization of that dream. When her mother's condition allowed her to leave, her father's death in 1893 required a new postponement.

While Assunta waited for a favorable time to follow her desired vocation, her brother Joseph, already a priest in mission in Brazil, kept Scalabrini informed about his activities, particularly in Sao Paulo. He oversaw the construction of the Christopher Columbus Orphanage; he went on pilgrimages across plantations where he exercised with extraordinary zeal his priestly ministry among the immigrants. He minimized hardships that were many; he made contact with the authorities, collaborators, and press; planned new trips; recruited and prepared new members, having in view the Scalabrinian mission in its globality. More than a simple executor of orders, he behaved as a creative missionary in pastoral action, everything he realized or intended to realize he communicated to Scalabrini, his superior, with respect, enthusiasm and lightness. The mentioned text, *some unpublished writings to evoke and delve further into the person of Father Joseph Marchetti, CS*, precious in its content, and fundamental to better know the heroic missionary, and to facilitate a comprehension of the founding process of the MSCS Congregation, which had in Camaiole and Piacenza its initial steps.

Father Marchetti's letter to Scalabrini in April 4, 1895 has a special importance for the Feminine Scalabrinian Congregation that is transcribed here. Some aspects that were approached by the missionary and his thoughts are manifested concerning the future sisters, identified by him as *our Colombinas*:

Deo gratias! I am trying to place our Colombinas also in Umberto I Hospital that I will be opening

⁴⁵ SIGNOR, Lice M. *Joao Batiata Scalabrini e a migraçã italilana: um projeto soco-pastoral*, op. cit.p. 160.

⁴⁶ BAPTISMS from 1867 to 1883. In: *Archivio Parrocchiale della chiesa di Maria Assunta*. Camaiole, Lucca.

*soon. Sick immigrants will be placed there. Why should not our Columbinas not take over their care? Thus, our mission will be accomplished. To receive the immigrants, send them off, accompany them during the crossing, welcome the orphans with a smile and comfort the sick, guide them to a job, to visit them, dry their tears, and guide them back to the homeland. Deo gratias!*⁴⁷.

This paragraph in Marchetti's letter shows that he is in tune with the thinking of John Baptist Scalabrini regarding the complementarity aspect, of which we have already addressed. Just like Scalabrini at the beginning, the missionary thinks of the future feminine congregation as a branch of the Masculine Scalabrinian Congregation. In another paragraph of the same letter, Marchetti refers to the Colombinas and expresses, although cautiously, optimistic certainty that the new foundation corresponds to the Divine will:

*...for now, they will be ladies of charity, when they have shown their aptitude, they will, in fact, form a congregation. They are much needed and I feel that Jesus wants them to remove an evil in immigration that priests are not able to remove.*¹⁹⁴⁸

Marchetti's statement states the same thing as Scalabrini's, of March of 1889, when the crucifix was given to Francisca Xavier Cabrini and her companions and suggests a comparison between the two texts and others already transcribed, that documents when the need for a feminine Scalabrinian foundation was necessary became apparent to them.

It was the realization of the need of the help of a feminine institute, identified with John Baptist Scalabrini's socio-pastoral project, that motivated Father Joseph Marchetti's initiative to bring together the first group of missionaries of the future Congregation of the Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo - Scalabrinians. Still in the letter of April 4, 1895 Father Marchetti communicates to Scalabrini, with expectation, a prevision and the first steps of the newly born institute:

*They will leave with the expedition of July, my mother, with the sisters and two novices that are in Florence to exercise the spirit of sacrifice and love for God; two are here so we will have 7 or 8. Deo Gratias! We will think about the habit. What happiness it will be for me when I will be able to have with me eight missionary priests and eight missionary sisters. Oh, my God, please speed up this day for the joy of your servant!*⁴⁹.

The pioneers of the MSCS Congregation, among them Assunta Marchetti, left Camaiore in October and not in July, as Father Marchetti had foreseen. The return to Italy of the missionary and his presence in Camaiore aimed at organizing a small group of missionary women to whom he would entrust the direction of the Christopher Columbus Orphanage in Sao Paulo. On October 23, 1895, candidates recruited by Marchetti, wearing the postulant's habit, headed for Piacenza where they arrived in the afternoon of that same day.

The four missionary women lodged in the institute for the deaf and dumb in Piacenza, in the company of Father Domenico Costa, Father Eugenio Benedetti and of Fr. Joseph Marchetti, they were introduced to Scalabrini who encouraged and blessed them. On the 25th, the act of the founding the Feminine Scalabrinian Congregation would take place. Father Eugenio Benedetti, parish priest in Capezzano, preserved the history of this event in writing.

Father Eugenio Benedetti, the first historian of the MSCS Congregation, wrote to *L'Esare*, the Lucca newspaper the farewell of Marchetti and of the missionaries departing for Brazil. *L'Esare* published the article in its issue of October 30, 1895, of which we obtained a copy from the library in

⁴⁷ MARCHETTI, Giuseppe. Lettera a G. B. Scalabrini. S. Paulo, 4-4-1895. In: Alcuni scritti inediti per richiamare ed approfondire la figura di padre Giuseppe Marchetti, op. cit., p 28

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 31.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 31.

Lucca in 1981.

Father Eugenio Benedetti narrates that, before leaving Camaiore, Father Joseph Marchetti wanted to celebrate a funeral service for the soul of his father. During the ceremony, which moved the local population, the missionary addressed a word to the superior of the expedition that, due to *singular design of the Divine Providence, was his mother*. This small group was composed by:

*Carolina Marchetti, superior, Assunta Marchetti, Maria Franceschini and Angela Larini. The last two were educated apostolic spirit by the same Marchetti when he was the spiritual advisor, in Compignano and had finished his preparation in Florence monasteries*⁵⁰.

Brevi Cenni, a document written by Giuseppe Zioni, refers to the goals of the pioneers meeting with Scalabrini, in Piacenza, on the days of October 24 and 25, 1895.

*...to deposit in the hands of that honorable Prelate, as protector and founder of his new congregation, their vows and aspirations, and to make use of his wise advise and his clear teachings in order to preserve their vocations, and to live out the preset goal: the high mission of Christianly protecting and educating the abandoned and poor orphans*⁵¹.

John Baptist Scalabrini would assume Father Joseph Marchetti's initiative, because it coincided with the goals of his socio-pastoral project. Thus, the personal charisma of Mother Assunta and her companions, as well as of the MSCS Sisters of all times, would give visibility to the Scalabrinian charisma.

1.2.5 The founding act of the Institute

Since the beginning, the apostolic path of the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo unveiled itself as broad and sinuous. To leave Camaiore was for the pioneers the first stage of a path that would become heroic. In their passage through Piacenza, in the autumn of 1895, *the servants of the orphans and abandoned abroad* as they were then called, were protagonist of a memorable fact in the history of the Feminine Scalabrinian Congregation. October 25, 1895 was the beginning of an experience that has been prolonged through time. The lack of formal elements, which characterized the founding act, did not prevent that the initiated experiment remained alive and would overcome the test. A gradual regularization, however, took place through a slow and at different moments painful process. This dimension of the cross, on the other hand, resulted in a spiritual fecundity that enriched the newly born institute and the church.

Given its importance to MSCS Congregation's history, we transcribe Father Eugenio Benedetti's narrative, a witness of those moments in October in Piacenza:

I also boarded the vehicle and went with them to Piacenza. There, truly new emotions waited for me. I saw Marchetti hugging Bishop Scalabrini, seeming to me like St. Francis de Salles, embracing his beloved apostle. Those two hearts, full of ardor, understanding each other as if they spoke the language of the apostles: the meaning of the conversation was deduced from the tears glimmering in their eyes...

⁵⁰ BENEDETTI, E. *Partenza di D. Marchetti*. In: *L'Esare*, Lucca, 30 Ottobre 1895. Anno IX, n. 249, p. 1, 3c.

⁵¹ *BREVI CENNI sulla fondazione e lo sviluppo della congregazione delle suore missionarie di s. Carlo, anteriormente denominate "ancelle degli orfani e dei derelitti all'estero"*, 1931, p. 2 (AGSS 1.4.4). *BREVI CENNI* is a historical record and has trusting memories, especially of mother Assunta Marchetti. The document was presented to the Consistorial Congregation in 1931. Giuseppe Zioni, the author, married Marietta Marchetti, mother Assunta's and father Joseph Marchetti's sister. Giuseppe and Marietta are the parents of d. Vincent Angelo Joseph Marchetti Zioni, bishop of Botucatu, state of Sao Paulo, Brazil from 1968-1990. He died In August 15, 2007.

At the same time, from the institute for the deaf and dumb, where they had lodged the new servants of the orphans and abandoned they were taken to the Episcopal palace. The welcoming was one made by a saint thirsty for the glory of God. He spoke with the Superior, assuring her that the institute of her son, with their work, would be providential for and the salvation of those distant populations. Finishing the meeting, he confirmed and increased Marchetti's faculties and invited them for the next day, at 7:00 o'clock, in the private Episcopal chapel, to pronounce their vows. They were all in the chapel at 7:00 o'clock sharp. The Bishop puts on the liturgical vestments for the sacrifice. The missionary and missionaries put themselves in deep contemplation until the master of ceremonies intones the Confiteor. Then, the zealous Bishop turning around with the most Holy Sacrament in his hands said: Ecce Agnus Dei and then silence. Our Father Joseph prostrated himself in front of the most Holy Sacrament and touched, with a clear voice more or less said these words: I, Joseph Marchetti, called to the honor of the Catholic apostolate, in front of God almighty, present here under Eucharistic species, make my vows of perpetual chastity, obedience and poverty. Oh, Jesus, bless me and make these vows, that you have inspired in me, to be my strength in life, my comfort in death and my crown in eternity. The Bishop gave communion to the servants and finished the mass. Afterward, he put on his precious miter, blessed the crucifixes, and gave a short speech to the missionaries. One of them, also with an emotional voice, says in the name of all: Although, we are not worthy, we Carolina Marchetti, Assunta Marchetti, Maria Franceschini and Angela Marini, called by Divine Providence to honor the Catholic apostolate, vow faithfulness to our celestial bridegroom, making temporary vows of chastity, obedience and poverty. And You, oh Jesus, truly alive and present here, immortal and glorious, make that these vows be our strength in life, our comfort in death, and our crown in heaven, Amen. The Bishop, moved to tears, blesses the crucifixes, and turning around says: "Here is your inseparable companion in the apostolic endeavors, your comfort, your strength and salvation", and places them on the neck of the new brides. Then, he accepts the promise of obedience, blesses them crying, and gives them a volume of the life of Perboyre as an example, a hug and a kiss for Marchetti, completing the ceremony. A meal is served in the Episcopal palace; they get in a vehicle and go straight to the train. The happiness that came from the bottom of their hearts put a celestial smile on their lips, dangers disappear the travelers are enthusiastic. A young lady asks to become a part of the servants of orphans and the abandoned, a parish priest is anxious to consume his life in the new apostolate, an ocean star guides them; over the noise of the locomotive the cry of Hail Mary echoes stronger. With this cry of joy, they arrived in Genoa. The mass of immigrants became happy for the good company. Soon, orphans will exult as well as those abandoned to the great plagues of Brazil⁵².

In the *Memoirs on the foundation of the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo - Scalabrinians*, written by Ettore Martini, and based on statements of the older sisters, especially by sister Carmela Tomedi, we have the *unforgettable paternal farewell that Scalabrini said to the four pioneers: Go trustingly, my daughters, I will send you other co-sisters later and you will return for formation and delve deeper into the religious spirit*⁵³.

In addition to Benedetti's chronicle and Martini's memoirs and the *Brevi Cenni*, written by Joseph Zioni, above all, the trustworthy testimony of Mother Assunta Marchetti, contributed in preserving the memory of that historical beginning.

*Father Marchetti obtained from Scalabrini the faculty to receive the renewal of the vows, professed by those sisters for another six months and at the end of that period, the renewal for a whole year. Also, he should compile the statutes with the rules to be observed by that newly born congregation, taking them from the constitutions of the Visitation Sisters*⁵⁴.

⁵² BENEDETTI, Eugenio. *Partenza di D. Marchetti*. In: *L'Esare*, op. cit., Lucca, 30 ottobre 1895, p. 1, 3c.

⁵³ MARTINI, Ettore. *Memorie sulla fondazione della Congregazione delle Suore Missionarie di San Carlo – Scalabriniane* (AGSS 1.4.4).

⁵⁴ *BREVI CENNI*, op. cit., p. 3.

The private character of the religious profession of the four first sisters, with their constitutions not yet compiled, and the novitiate to be made, the circumstance, after involving the foundation of the Feminine Scalabrinian Congregation showed the experimental condition of the same and, as foreseen by Marchetti: *...for now, they will be ladies of charity, when they have shown their aptitude, they will, in fact, form a congregation*⁵⁵.

The new institute, which started its path without fulfilling canonical procedures of that time, offered to the first sisters the provisionality of almost everything, even the name that identified them. Aware of the experimental character of their institution, the pioneers understood that the continuity of the work, including an eventual change of name, would have to be a conquest of overcoming the difficulties. Not completely formed yet, the newly born religious family took the mission as the essential element and, according to the dynamics of the Gospels, the missionaries translated Jesus Christ's words into pastoral presence inserted in the context of migration, dedicating themselves, in those earlier days, in full service to the brothers in mobility on the way to Brazil.

⁵⁵ MARCHETTI, Giuseppe. *Lettera a G. B. Scalabrini*. S. Paulo, 4-4-1895. In: *Alcuni Scritti inediti per richiamare ed approfondire la figura di padre Giuseppe Marchetti*, *cs*, op. cit., p. 31.

1.3. MSCS sister's physiognomy

1.3.1 The first pastoral works on the Genoa-Santos crossing

Strengthened by the intense celebration of October 25, 1895, and having in mind the prophetic affirmation of the founder, John Baptist Scalabrini, *that their work would be providential and the salvation of that distant population*, the Scalabrinian missionaries, accompanied by the cofounder, Fr. Joseph Marchetti, departed in the true meaning of the word. Upon arriving at the port of embarkation, to leave their native land to go to the encounter of the orphans and the abandoned in a foreign land meant to have arrived at a high level of proof showing their aptitude. Already on the high seas, having ample time for the pastoral during the Genoa-Santos crossing, and later in Sao Paulo, the verification of how much was learned, favored by the strength of the charisma reached even higher indicators. The course of events that make up the history of the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo - Scalabrinians were not always clear-cut, but the blessing of that beginning would remain throughout time. The physiognomy of the MSCS Sister since its beginning shaped in the apostolic path together with the brothers on the move would legitimize the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute, assuring continuity, expansion and consolidation.

On the afternoon of October 27, 1895, Father Joseph Marchetti and the pioneer Scalabrinians embarked in the *Fortunata Raggio*, which on this day departed from the Port of Genoa to Brazil. Between the cradle of the newly born congregation and the first mission that they were sent to, there was the Atlantic. The crossing was a time of firsts for them. *Blessed the mission over the ocean*, Marchetti wrote a few months earlier⁵⁶. After three weeks of travelling, on November 17, they arrived at the Ilha Grande that at the time was the port of entry to Brazil for immigrants. Ilha Grande, on the Rio de Janeiro coastline, on this day was the scenery for a new moment special for Father Marchetti and for his four Scalabrinian missionaries:

Having participated in the Holy Mass, celebrated by Father Marchetti, who gave first communion to 83 children that were prepared during the long cruise, as well as to other faithful who wished to take part in the Holy Mass in thanksgiving to our Lord, who had protected them throughout that long and dangerous journey, the four sister, with humbleness, but happy, received the monastic veil that had been blessed by Scalabrini, replacing that of silk⁵⁷.

Taking up their journey again, they arrived in Santos during the morning of November 20, 1895. By the afternoon of that same day, they were already in Ipiranga, in Sao Paulo, capital city, lodged in Ms Paradisa Giorgi's house, their compatriot, who gladly received them. In the next two days, they were guests of the St. Joseph Sisters who worked in Holy House of Mercy in Sao Paulo.

On November 22, the missionaries participated in the requiem mass for the soul of Bishop Luigi Lasagna' of the Salesian Congregation, who had died in a railway accident when he was only 45 years old. The religious ceremony was celebrated at the Sacred Heart Church. Bishop Lasagna, 1850-1895, who was the founder of the Salesian work in Uruguay, Brazil and in Paraguay, promoted progress and peace, and through his correspondence, he left precious information on the social, cultural and political realities of these three countries in South America.

Afterwards, the missionaries, servants of the orphans and of the abandoned in other countries, were presented to Bishop Joaquim Arcoverde de Albuquerque Cavalcanti, the diocesan bishop, who later would become the Archbishop of Rio de Janeiro, and the first Cardinal of Latin America.

⁵⁶ MARCHETTI, Giuseppe. *Lettera a G. B. Scalabrini*. S. Paulo, 29-3-1895. In: *Alcuni scritti inediti per richiamare ed approfondire la figura di padre Giuseppe Marchetti*, cs, op. cit., p. 24.

⁵⁷ *BREVI CENNI*, op. cit., p. 4.

The two scheduled commitments deserve a triple consideration: being present at the religious ceremony reveals openness to the surrounding reality, which anticipates the manner in which the participative, beneficial and evangelic pastoral would present. The meeting with Bishop Joaquim Arcoverde, although brief, shows the disposition to develop an apostolic action in harmony with the orientation of the local ordinary, and integrated with the diocesan pastoral. On the other hand, to attend that ceremony as a group and to present themselves to the diocesan bishop denoted internal cohesion, an essential condition for the success of the apostolate.

After being guests for two days with the St. Joseph Sisters, the pioneers returned to Ipiranga and settled in an old house, owned by Dr. Jose Vicente de Azevedo, remaining there for about one month. The building was next to where the current is Paulista Museum located.

After verifying that the construction of the orphanage was going well, they moved in while the building was still unfinished. *Brevi Cenni* records this major event:

On the day of Immaculate Conception, December 8, all of the sisters went to visit the orphanage and understood that the moment to assume the direction had arrived; since then, they took care of those few little orphans that the exuberant charity of Father Marchetti had taken in, keeping them together and protected⁵⁸.

In a report on the expenses regarding the construction of the orphanage, dated January 12, 1896, Father Marchetti wrote:

In December 8, 1895 the first orphanage was inaugurated, and entrusted from that day forward to the superior of the servants of the orphans and of the abandoned abroad, the most reverend lady Carolina Marchetti, mother of the founder and collaborator in the founding⁵⁹.

A few days after the opening of the orphanage on December 12, 1895, Marchetti wrote to Scalabrini informing him about the repercussion of the event and on the new congregation's good reception by local authorities, both civil and religious. In the same letter, he requested the Founder to send him the documents authorizing and specifying his attributes in the mission as well as for the servants and future missionaries. In addition, Father Joseph asked Scalabrini the *ratification and approval of the growing congregation with the obligation of first vows for one semester, and later for a year, and finally perpetual vows*. The co-founder justified his request by explaining that lack of documentation could raise difficulties and bring problems⁶⁰.

One month later, in January 12, 1896, Father Joseph Marchetti, already in poor health, desired earnestly for news from his Superior, and again insisted on the documentation:

I do not have documents to present neither for myself nor for the servants! I do not have letters that authorize my faculties, be it regarding myself as an apostolic Missionary of St. Charles or regarding the servants. Send them soon; send them as soon as possible⁶¹.

In a letter to Scalabrini, dated January 31, Marchetti lamented again the lack of correspondence: *What bitterness, however, not to have a letter from my Superior! I have a great need of it! If the Bishop calls me, what shall I present⁶²?* Finally, on March 17, 1896, Marchetti could write to Scalabrini:

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 5.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 6.

⁶⁰ MARCHETTI, Giuseppe. *Lettera a G. B. Scalabrini*. Ypiranga, 12-12-1895. In: *Alcuni scritti inediti per richiamare ed approfondire la figura di padre Giuseppe Marchetti*, cs, op. cit., p. 39-41.

⁶¹ MARCHETTI, Giuseppe. *Lettera a G. B. Scalabrini*. S. Paulo, 12-1-1896. In: *Alcuni scritti inediti per richiamare ed approfondire la figura di padre Giuseppe Marchetti*, cs, op. cit., p. 45.

Deo gratias! How I lamented without reason! It was negligence by the post office, and what negligence! However, now I have received the letter and I am very content, and so is the Bishop. It is not necessary for me to continue to tell Your Eminence that things are going well, because you know that the undertaking is of God, therefore it goes...⁶³.

It is a pity that the historical archives of the MSCS Congregation do not possess, not even a copy, of the precious documentation that John Baptist Scalabrini sent to Father Joseph Marchetti between the end of 1895 and the beginning of 1986. In this case as well as in others, it is important to persist in the investigation, because there is always a possibility to localize lost historical documents, independently of the reason that caused their misplacement.

We know about the first steps of the pastoral journey of the institute in São Paulo, through Fr. Marchetti and from other sources, that the sisters welcomed with solicitude the small orphans that the missionary brought to them in an ever-increasing number. These beginnings of the historical development of the emerging congregation were characterized by a dynamic faithfulness to the charisma of its founding. Together with the intensive apostolic activity, taken beyond his limit of physical energy, Fr. Joseph Marchetti gave continuation to the formative process of the pioneers. With words and with witness even more eloquent, the Missionary continued to form in the first group of Scalabrinian Sisters the first inspiration.

1.3.2 Christopher Columbus Orphanage, Sao Paulo

The Congregation of the Sisters of St. Charles started as an experiment, would be acknowledged as an institute of pontifical right around four decades later. Between that moment in Piacenza-Genoa of October 1895 and the pontifical acknowledgement that occurred in January of 1934, it set out on a path that besides taking time was difficult, although fertile from the pastoral point of view. To return to those early days implies the need to know a little more of the history of the Christopher Columbus Orphanage in Sao Paulo, which, as we have seen, is linked to the origins of the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute and to a good portion of events of its historical evolution.

The idea to build an orphanage in Sao Paulo for the children of the Italian immigrants, we know, by Father Joseph Marchetti's motivated, above all, by the death of a young mother who left behind a small child and a desperate husband. The event that took place during the ocean crossing and which moved the missionary led him to take the initiative. To undertake that idea, Father Marchetti counted on the collaboration of a Jesuit, Father Andre Bigioni, who facilitated the contact between the missionary and Count Jose Vicente de Azevedo. The Count supported immediately the idea of the orphanage, and offered the missionary, in addition to a lot located in Ipiranga, a small chapel dedicated to St. Joseph and 50 thousand bricks, becoming the great benefactor of the work. On February 15, 1895 the cornerstone of the Christopher Columbus Orphanage was laid, which was inaugurated 10 months later, on December 8, which now began to function with two sectors, masculine and feminine.

Before completion of the building in Ipiranga, Father Joseph Marchetti started the construction of a second one in Vila Prudente, on a lot donated by Ms. Maria do Carmo Cypariza Rodrigues and by the Falchi brothers.

The construction of the whole work always counted on God's providence, and on the

⁶² MARCHETTI, Giuseppe. *Lettera a G.B. Scalabrini*. Brodoski, 31-1-1896. In: *Alcuni scritti inediti per richiamare ed approfondire la figura de padre Giuseppe Marchetti*, op. cit. p. 49.

⁶³ MARCHETTI, Giuseppe. *Lettera a G. B. Scalabrini*. Ypiranga, 17-3-1896. In: *Alcuni scritti inediti per richiamare ed approfondire la figura di padre Giuseppe Marchetti*, cs, op. cit., p. 50.

collaboration of many other people. Father Marchetti also organized a multinational committee comprised of Italian, Brazilian, German, Portuguese and Spanish ladies, in charge of finishing the building destined to shelter orphan girls. In a letter to Scalabrini, dated March 10, 1895, the missionary informed him on the costs of the two buildings: *the girls had cost around sixty contos (150,000 liras) and the boys, three hundred contos (750,000)*. Marchetti finished with:

*Eh! And what is much for God's providence? I don't give up. After all, the men work and I do not have to do anything but to pray, to confess and preach go door-to-door asking for what is needed. Whoever gives me money, I receive money, whoever offers me humiliation, I receive humiliation, and those are also good things. However, resources arrive and the walls go up*⁶⁴.

While the walls went up, Father Marchetti provided for the subsistence of the orphans and maintenance of the works. He promoted, to this end, a broad participation that encompassed the Brazilian, Italian, German, Spanish and Portuguese governments, understanding that it was better to receive orphans of immigrants from all nationalities. It was his plan to establish in every colony one collaborator for the works, having in mind the assurance of bread for the orphans, and at the same time, to make better the relationship between the settlers and the missionaries. He intended to get monthly bread, coffee and meat from business in the urban area, and thus ensuring their contact with the missionaries. For the girls and the very young, Marchetti foresaw alternative work that would be a font of income by making clothes, shoes, furniture and crafts. Determined to provide a qualified formation for the orphans he elaborated the program: *The Christopher Columbus Orphelinato School of Arts and Crafts*, which we will transcribe below in its original orthography as we consider it important because of the proposed model and by the historical elements contained in it:

**THE CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS ORPHELINATO
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND CRAFTS**

The Boys' Section at "Villa Prudente de Moraes", and the Girls' at "Ypiranga"

The undersigned Apostolic Missionary for The Immigrants, sent by the "Christopher Columbus" Congregation came to promote in S. Paulo the founding of the Orphelinato School that shall educate and make good workers and citizens out of the orphans of unhappy immigrants who have died on the ocean or in the colonies, leaving their young children without a means of survival. In the face of such a scandalous repugnancy from which these children come from, and that raised generous feelings in Europe, we hope that the following be well accepted by this people.

PROGRAM:

The Orphelinato will be established according to the bases and models of establishments of the same kind, and within this construction, a work and moral ethic with precautions for comfort and hygiene will be brought together. In proportion to the funds, it will start by stages under the norm of the general plant, and shall be ruled by the following statutes:

I.

1. The funds of the institution, coming from donations, offerings and help of all kind will be published monthly during the first year, and then yearly in a bulletin to be distributed, with the actual amounts of

⁶⁴ MARCHETTI, Giuseppe. *Lettera a G. B. Scalabrini*. S. Paulo, 10-3-1895. In: *Alcuni scritti inediti per richiamare ed approfondire la figura di padre Giuseppe Marchetti*, cs, op. cit., p. 20.

each donation, etc., etc., names of the donors, and a report of expenses and on the use of these donations.

2. All cash resources will always be employed for the greater development of the local institution.

II.

3. The orphanage will be divided in two sections: one for males and one for females. The boy's facility is to be built in Villa Prudente de Moraes, and the girls in Ypiranga.

4. The Orphans will be admitted at any age; children under 6 years of age will be lodged in a separate section in the girls' section, and will be under the care of the Director of that said section.

5. The boys will receive an elementary education and learn arts and crafts according to the personality and disposition of the students, preparing them to be hired as able teachers and professionals.

6. The boys, once admitted, will not be handed over to anyone wanting them except to relatives or those holding competent authorization. Upon reaching the age of maturity, the Direction will make all efforts to find a good place for them.

7. Boys who, after ten years of age, who had been in the Orphelinato for nine years, will receive upon their departure a suitcase with two cashmere suits and three of cotton with the necessary white clothes and accessories, a tool box, books on the crafts and 500\$000 in money, all to total the amount of 1:500\$000rs

III.

8. The girls section will be in the hands of the Sisters and Ladies of Charity of the same congregation, under the guidance of a superior. Only the Director will be in charge of religious offices and the temporal and external management.

9. The orphan girls will be given the necessary instruction for a practical life aiming at forming good artists, hard workers, good housewives and mothers of families.

10. Teachers and directors who are better qualified in the different manual works will be hired.

11. The placement of adult girls will be exclusively in the hands of the committee of the Ladies of Charity presided by the Superior who will harmonize the demands of age with the will and disposition of the girls.

12. Girls who were in the Orphelinato, from the age of ten to 17, will receive a trousseau and a dowry in the valor of 1:500\$000rs.

IV.

13. Orphans of other origin will not be refused as well as those who are not orphans, but who were abandoned to vagrancy and hunger and brought by competent authorities.

14. The buildings will be open at any time to the authorities and to visitors at scheduled dates and times.

Sao Paulo, March 10, 1895.

Prof FATHER JOSEPH MARCHETTI,

Around the middle of June, 1895, while waiting for the presence of a missionary in Sao Paulo, who would substitute him during his trip to Italy, at some moments, Marchetti questioned himself: *I do not know what I have done by creating these Orphanages since, although my conscience and unanimous public opinion console me, I am bitterly concerned because I have not yet heard the voice of my venerable Superior...* Meanwhile, not giving up, during his stay in Brazil, Father Marchetti formed his convictions regarding the best way to realize the Scalabrinian mission in the country. Based in his own experience, the missionary suggested pastoral conduct and fulfilled them with the awareness of a forerunner: *Providence, before the crucifix - I consulted Him not having my Superior present- inspired these reflections, and gave me the courage to open the way; the result was even greater than expectations*⁶⁵. In his correspondence with Scalabrini, Marchetti insisted on the need of Scalabrinian missionaries, just like other congregations, *that proceeds as a compact body, and hierarchically organized*. The missionary wrote, *"we exist to do true good for souls, and this only happens through missions, and not through disputes among agents"*⁶⁶.

Father Marchetti's socio-pastoral action was of extraordinary importance for the contemporary reality of the Scalabrinian work realized for the Italian migrants. The orphanage, however, conquered the sympathy of the population in general and of the authorities due to the urgency of the initiative and by the quality of the service rendered to it. On the day of its inauguration, December 8, 1895, the Christopher Columbus at Ipiranga admitted the first 20 orphans, a number that increased gradually. By March 1896, they were 50. Father Marchetti's death, in December 1896, interrupted the construction of the Vila Prudente Orphanage. Its inauguration only took place on August 5, 1904, at which Scalabrini was present, who was, at that time visiting, the Scalabrinian missions in Brazil. Until this date, the building in Ipiranga maintained the two sections, male and female. In August of 1904, the building in Vila Prudente was inaugurated and the number of children admitted in both houses added up to 242. Until that date, 802 minors had gone through the orphanage receiving human warmth, studies, a profession, and formation, in short, a dignified and Christian life. When, in 1945 during the celebration of its golden jubilee, the Christopher Columbus Orphanage totaled 4654 registrations. In the history of the orphanage, there were years of greater movement, as between 1918-19 when the *Spanish Flu* reached Sao Paulo, and during 1924-1925, period of the *tenentismo*, a revolutionary movement. From December 8 of 1895 to December 8 of 1970, 7173 children had been sheltered in the Christopher Columbus of Sao Paulo.

A letter from Scalabrini to Pius X, of July 22, 1904, confirms the above data and it includes other information on the Missionaries of St. Charles' activities in Sao Paulo, especially of the Christopher Columbus Orphanage:

There are in this diocese over 2,000 farms that the Missionaries of St. Charles go to defenseless, like true apostles, often as possible, but certainly no more than once a year, even though they are 12. However, it is necessary to increase their number, to better assist these important charity works, created by them more than ten years ago. All Italian orphans ended up in repulsive conditions. The first missionaries sent here recognized right away the need of an Italian orphanage: they

⁶⁵ MARCHETTI, Giuseppe. *Lettera a G. B. Scalabrini*. S. Paulo, 14-6-1895. In: *Alcuni scritti inediti per richiamare ed approfondire la figura di padre Giuseppe Marchetti*, cs, op. cit., p. 45-7.

⁶⁶ MARCHETTI, Giuseppe. *Lettera a G. B. Scalabrini*. Brodoscki, 31-1-1896. In: *Alcuni scritti inediti per richiamare ed approfondire la figura di padre Giuseppe Marchetti*, cs, op. cit., p. 59.

courageously set to work, and God came to their help. There are 802 boys that were already received; they are taught and placed with a trade in hand; there are 242 children here at the moment, separated in two large buildings, well located in the outskirts of the city, who study, pray and learn a trade, here in the house preparing to become good Christians. They live off the alms that the missionaries collect in their continued apostolic excursions. What surprises me most is that they do not have large debts. It is God who sees and provides⁶⁷.

Scalabrini's letter to Pope Pius X does not make a specific reference to the group of missionary sisters that were present in the orphanage since the beginning of its activities, in December 1895. We know by other statements and because it is easy to understand how much this presence meant, above all, to the children sheltered in the cozy environment of the Christopher Columbus. Countless written statements, old and new, prove the importance of the feminine presence in developing pastoral activities that were part of Scalabrini's project, realized in the common Scalabrinian vocation-mission. Among others, we highlight that of Father Domenico Vicentini in a letter to the Bishop of Piacenza of March 1896. Father Vicentini, a Scalabrinian missionary, was categorical in evaluating the performance of the pioneers among the orphans in Sao Paulo: *without them, certainly, nothing would have been done for these little ones*⁶⁸. By stating that without the missionary women *nothing would be done* for the orphans may be an overstatement, but it is fair to acknowledge that, under such conditions, the work of priests would not have had the hoped for success without the effective collaboration of the MSCS Sisters.

To evaluate the significance of the socio-pastoral action of the MSCS Sisters in at Christopher Columbus it is necessary to detain ourselves in the details of the events, ordinary or not, recorded in the daily routine of the houses of Ipiranga and of Vila Prudente. More than a historical description of the Scalabrinian Missionary Sisters' presence, this heroic path deserves profound contemplation. The older children got up early, they were accompanied to the toilets, they prayed, then they had breakfast; a good number attended school and returned for lunch; after a period of recreation, they would do their school homework and other formative activities in accordance to the schedule, which were broad and involved human, religious, civic and professional aspects. One year after beginning its activities, Christopher Columbus sheltered 180 minors, which intensified the work not only of Marchetti but also of the still small community of servants.

Among so many to taken care of, each boy and girl was the apple of his eye, for Father Joseph Marchetti who counted on the daily collaboration, with the same solicitude, of the first missionary sisters beginning at dawn. Beyond executing the program, elaborated in March of 1895, the missionary wanted the orphans to have other opportunities, such as taking part in a band whose instruments he sent for in Verona, Italy, or to learn a hymn that they would sing during the long awaited visit of Scalabrini to the Orphanage. When this occurred, in 1904, Marchetti had died almost eight years before. Still, hundreds of the sheltered minors, who had been taken care of, educated, not always dressed as sailors as seen in pictures, were there to confirm the importance and actuality of the institution founded by the Scalabrinian missionary in Sao Paulo.

1.3.3 The religious-apostolic identity of the MSCS Sister

The Christopher Columbus Orphanage of Sao Paulo was for seventeen years, 1895-1912, the

⁶⁷ SCALABRINI, Giovanni B. *Lettera al papa Pio X*. S. Paulo (Brasile), 22-7-1904. In: *Scritti*, op. cit., v. 2, p. 385 (Minuta).

⁶⁸ VICENTINI, Domenico. *Lettera a Giovanni Battista Scalabrini*. S. Paulo, 25-3-1896 (AGS - Archivio Generale Scalabriniano 396/1).

sole pastoral space for the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles. The first MSCS Sisters shaped a good portion of their religious-apostolic identity within this reality. They faced enormous challenges that were overcome with the strength of faith; they consolidated the original belonging to the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute.

Established first in the area of the Ipiranga orphanage and later in Vila Prudente, the servants centralized along with the orphans and abandoned children, their daily lives together. In the beginning, as we saw, Carolina Marchetti assumed the internal direction of Christopher Columbus, and was the superior for the community of sisters. Assunta Marchetti was nominated as the economist of the house, Angela Larini the nurse, and Maria Franceschini was responsible for forming future servants of the orphans and of the abandoned abroad.

In a letter of April 26, 1896, Carolina Marchetti informed John Baptist Scalabrini about the first renewal of vows of the four missionary sisters, and she communicated Sister Maria Franceschini's serious disease and she wrote how the community of servants was doing. Sister Carolina said that, generally, all was fine, but they missed the Eucharistic celebration when Father Joseph Marchetti was attending the farms where he carried out his mission among immigrants. In the letter, Carolina Marchetti identified herself as a *daughter*, and she asked Scalabrini to bless *his current and future servants*. About the renewal of vows ceremony, she wrote:

This was a solemn day for us; even it left all of us on the cross. How fast the first six months went by! Certainly, the others will also fly by, that is why we are in haste to unite again with Jesus, our most sweet Spouse. However, the circumstance was not all propitious: our dearest Sister Maria do Santissimo Sacramento is sick, in bed and she may not recover⁶⁹.

Sister Maria do Santissimo Sacramento - Maria Franceschini who had left Italy already with poor health, bedridden with tuberculosis, lived five more years. She died on April 21, 1901, 28 years old. The zeal and the sense of duty characterized her short life. Sister Angela Larini, who tended to her in the first years of her disease with heroic dedication, from what we can see, seems to have contracted the disease and died on November 14, 1899, with only 24 years.

The death of the two servants of the orphans and of the abandoned abroad had been preceded by the *martyrdom* of Father Joseph Marchetti. Letters sent by the missionary since December 1895 to Scalabrini reveal, presumably, his intuition of his approaching death. On December 12, 1895, he confessed that he felt his physical strength decreasing, and he requested Scalabrini to send another missionary, to take over his night walks, after a long working day that he undertook to celebrate the Eucharist in the orphanage. He manifested to his Superior to have wished many times for a martyrdom of blood, but he would be happy if he were graced with a martyrdom of apostolic fatigue. One month later, on January 12, 1896, in a new letter, he wrote to Scalabrini, that during those days he had meditated on death. He had bought a horse because his legs no longer corresponded to the thoughts and wills of the heart, and that the members of his family, including his sister, had typhus, and his mother, even though worried and suffering, would not lose heart on her high mission. On March 1896, he assured Scalabrini that everything was going well, the workshops began to operate, and the house for permanent retreats was built, with the novitiate for sisters. In this and in other letters, his writings confirmed an unshakable faith, living hope, unlimited charity, and immeasurable apostolic zeal. During the hours spent in the Orphanage, the orphans and the abandoned, the servants and everyone connected to him could count on his constant abnegation. Ill, Father Marchetti, continued his mission on farms and in the city. In each letter, he renewed his request for help, and he repeated his endless *Deo gratias!*

⁶⁹ MARCHETTI, Carolina. *Lettera a G. B. Scalabrini*. S. Paulo, 26-4-1896 (AGS 103/3).

In this dynamic fidelity to the Scalabrinian charisma, Father Joseph Marchetti lived with extraordinary intensity the religious-apostolic commitment that he assumed, and fulfilled his role as cofounder of the MSCS Sisters and in the same spirit, contributed to forming the physiognomy of the new feminine institute.

In his ascetic-spiritual journey, Father Marchetti added to the vows chastity, poverty and obedience a fourth one, *always be a victim for my fellowman for the love of God*, and still a fifth one, *to waste no more than a quarter of hour in vain*. With the vow of charity, Marchetti committed himself to put his fellowmen in first place in everything: pleasure, health, and his own life⁷⁰. By placing his fellowmen before his own health and life, the missionary contracted typhus, which caused his death. He died on December 14, 1896, on the arrival of Father Natal Pigato in Sao Paulo, the help that he had waited for, for so long.

The death of Father Joseph Marchetti shook the Christopher Columbus Orphanage. Father Natale Pigato provisionally, replaced him. The Servants began to live a period of greater uncertainties and difficulties. In March of 1897, by designation of Scalabrini, Father Faustino Consoni, missionary of Paraná for two years, would assume the Orphanage of São Paulo, favoring above all the continuity of the work.

In the beginning of 1897, Carolina Marchetti left the Orphanage returning to Camaioire. Letters, that she wrote during this year addressed to Scalabrini and Father Consoni revealed the double pressure suffered by the Superior of the servants after the death of Father Marchetti. In the one hand, the family that, in 1895, had resisted immigrating to Brazil as proposed by Father Joseph, *now unhappy, wants to return to Italy, and they wish to leave this inhospitable land*. Caroline, herself, confirmed it in a letter to Scalabrini, dated February 12, 1897, when she communicated her decision to leave the Christopher Columbus Orphanage and the Institute of the Servants. What's more, Carolina Marchetti wrote:

God, who knows my heart, will forgive and bless me among my family still young. Sister Assunta will continue to render her services in this institute. We all shall pray for her prosperity and so that the sacrifices of my son will be blessings for so many little orphans⁷¹.

On the other hand, as the same Carolina wrote in a letter to Father Consoni, dated August 10, 1897, Father Pigato and Teophillus also pressured her to leave the orphanage. Caroline Marchetti departed, however, hopeful to be able to return and embrace the little orphans that she loved so dearly.

From Camaioire, over the year of 1897, with insistence Carolina Marchetti solicited Scalabrini's permission to return to Brazil to stay at the Christopher Columbus, if not as a sister, as a simple servant, still decided to collaborate in her son's work. She repeated in letters, more than once, that Father Joseph, before dying, had urged her many times to continue the work started in 1895. In August of 1900, Scalabrini authorized her admittance to the novitiate, if she so desired. It never happened. Carolina Marchetti, who had returned to Brazil by end of 1897, died in February of 1927, at the age of 77. In a letter to her sister Elvira, Mother Assunta communicated that their venerable mother had died as saints die.

Assunta Marchetti's decision to remain at Christopher Columbus, which was communicated to Scalabrini by her mother, Carolina Marchetti, in a letter of February 12, 1897, did not only mean the stability of the orphanage, but also assured the continuity of the newly born congregation, still in the

⁷⁰ FRANCESCONI, Mario. *Como um relampago - Padre José Marchetti (1860-1896)*. Passo Fundo, Tipografia Imperial, 1972, p. 44. Translated by Maria Luiza Trombetta.

⁷¹ MARCHETTI, Carolina. *Lettera a G. B. Scalabrini*. Ypiranga, São Paulo, 12-2-1897 (AGS 103/3).

experimental stage and in danger of extinction. With wisdom, Mother Assunta took up the role entrusted to her, of *co-founder in fact* of the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute, becoming an instrument of its permanence through time. The need to incarnate St. Matthew's' gospel 25, 35, *I was a stranger and you welcomed me in your house*, into the church and in human society, made her overcome all constraints, making the continuity and development of the MSCS Congregation possible.

Around the end of the 19th century, the Masculine Scalabrinian Congregation, founded in 1887, had not yet acquired the necessary soundness that would allow it to support the rising feminine institution, at first thought of as a branch of the masculine institution. Rules compiled by Father Marchetti, as ordered by Scalabrini and that never got approval, foresaw, in effect, a single general superior who would be responsible for the nomination of the mother superior of the Congregation of the Servants, while it was impossible for the sisters to convoke the general chapter. The rules established a radical dependence of the provincial superior regarding the administration of property and possessions, and they also determined that the superior of the servants would govern the feminine institute in obedience to the legitimate priest superiors, within the spirit of the constitutions approved by the general superior of the priests. In 1900, Scalabrini would say that after hearing the judgment of experienced persons on the issue had understood that it would be better to keep the two congregations autonomous. Father Domenico Vicentini, General Superior of the Congregation of the Missionaries of St. Charles after the death of John Baptist Scalabrini, always defended autonomy for the MSCS Sisters.

Despite different positions, the Scalabrinian Feminine Congregation during its first years was dependent on the masculine congregation, as is also evidenced by preserved documents, especially the correspondence Father Joseph Marchetti and Father Faustino Consoni with John Baptist Scalabrini.

In March 9, 1897, four days after assuming the direction of the Christopher Columbus, Father Faustino Consoni wrote to Scalabrini a letter, in which he made it clear, that for him the feminine institute, still in the process of its founding, was necessary to complement the Scalabrinian work among migrants. He noted the importance to *systemize the sisters*, and he requested the approval of the Rules written by Marchetti, proposing to print them in the Orphanage's print shop. In the same letter, he listed the names of a few young women who intended to be admitted in the congregation, and communicated to Scalabrini that he had spoken with Bishop Joaquim de Albuquerque Cavalcanti about the servants. The Bishop of Sao Paulo had asked him what did *those women* in the orphanage do; this questioning embarrassed the missionary somewhat. Finally, Consoni manifested to Scalabrini his desire that in the identification of the servants it would be stated: *founded by His Excellence Bishop Scalabrini, Bishop of Piacenza, for the Italian orphans and the abandoned abroad*⁷². On April 12, still in 1897, Scalabrini answered Father Consoni:

Regarding the sisters, there was a Regulation approved ad experimentum: if you are unable to find it, write me soon. We wanted to start with temporary vows: we will see what God shall desire. Meanwhile, you should also receive the young women that you wrote about, but be alert that all should be, as it must. Father Vicentini would be a distinguished director of the sisters.

*With charity and prudence, send away all intruders of the house. Father Marchetti's relatives, to whom nothing is due, cannot remain except two sisters, his sister and his cousin, if I am not mistaken. That was the only annoyance that the saintly missionary caused me, calling to himself his relatives when I did not know of anything. Certainly, God will have forgiven him of this error, and will have quickly crowned him as a martyr of charity. From heaven, he protects his work*⁷³.

⁷² CONSONI, Faustino. *Lettera a G. B. Scalabrini*. São Paulo, 9-3-1897 (AGS 496/3).

⁷³ SCALABRINI, Giovanni B. *Lettera a P. Faustino Consoni*. Piacenza, 12-4-1897 (AGS 3023/3).

Even if the letter from Scalabrini to Consoni, dated April 12, 1897, did not state the totality of the awaited answer, it brought, however, an essential opening to the new foundation: *we shall see what God wants. Meanwhile, you should also receive the young women that you wrote about, but be alert that all should be.* God wanted the Feminine Scalabrinian Congregation and he also manifested this by confirming the pioneers and calling new vocations.

On October 24, 1897, the day of St. Raphael the Archangel, in the Chapel of the Christopher Columbus Orphanage, dedicated to St. Joseph, after three days of preparation that included prayers and spiritual exercises, the five sisters Assunta Marchetti, Maria Franceschini of the Most Holy Sacrament, Angela Larini, Maria Bassi and Camilla Dal Ri emitted simple perpetual vows of chastity, poverty and obedience, according to the Rules of St. Charles. Father Faustino Consoni, delegated by Scalabrini, received the sisters' vows. In *Brevi Cenni*, there is a formula for religious profession that was adopted on this occasion by the *Servants of the Orphans of the Congregation of St. Charles*. Sisters Maria Bassi and Camilla Dal Ri, in formation, had been admitted by Father Joseph Marchetti as postulants. More than thirty years later, that October 24, 1897 would be remembered as a day of thanksgiving to the Lord, and of great contentment for the servants. The numerical growth of the Feminine Scalabrinian Congregation, however, was slow in contrast to the Orphanage that grew, requiring the maximum dedication of the still reduced group of MSCS Missionaries.

The five sisters, who had professed in October 24, 1897, believed to have, as they expressed three years later, a more tranquil path from then on. Sister Assunta Marchetti was nominated the superior of the religious community. The spirit that animated them was translated into enlightened dedication to Christopher Columbus, a work that they saw grow and be inhabited by small orphans and abandoned children who they sheltered, convinced that this was God's project, in regards to each of them. The first years of the missionary action of the sisters, oriented by the Rules that Marchetti had written were preserved as a document and as a way of life of the pioneers. The work, however, increased in the Orphanage, and the excessive fatigues shook the health of sisters. In a letter to Scalabrini, of May of 1900, Father Faustino Consoni showed concern with the intense sacrifices that the servants undertook to carry on the work.

The historical path of the Scalabrinian Missionary Sisters, that in a letter to John Baptist Scalabrini, of December 28, 1900, they called themselves the *Sisters of Charity of the Congregation of St. Charles, of Piacenza*, would continue to be marked by successive difficulties. The congregation, which was considered in the beginning to be a branch of the Masculine Scalabrinian Congregation, would add to the vicissitudes of the five-year period of 1895-1900 and the unheard of work at the turn of the century, other challenging uncertainties, including the threat of mischaracterization of the institute.

St. Charles Borromeo was indicated by John Baptist Scalabrini as the patron of the Masculine Scalabrinian Congregation already in 1892. We do not know if the first MSCS Sisters knew of the motivations that had led the Founder to entrust his missionaries to St. Charles' protection. However, it is certain that the name the *Sisters of St. Charles*, of which they were proud of, became for them an important element of their own identity, an asset to be preserved.

Due to its relevance, we transcribe here the feelings expressed by John Baptist Scalabrini when, on March 15 of 1892, three years before the foundation of the Feminine Scalabrinian Congregation; he communicated to his missionaries the decision to entrust them to St. Charles Borromeo's protection:

The moment has arrived, dear ones, to definitively place our congregation under the protection of a saint whose name, according to the desire that you have so many times expressed, shall serve to distinguish it, and to be like its banner and its emblem.

After having prayed to the Lord for this intention and having invoked the lights of the Holy Spirit, the figure of the great St. Charles came to mind, brighter and in a way softer than ever before. It seemed to me to almost to hear a voice saying: here is the patron, the support, and the model for your children! And, since that day, I decided to place you, your future, and all your things in his hands. Soon, the dear Saint gave a sign of being pleased, by making it possible to have a church dedicated to him. It will be the church that shall be built on the vast area that, I hope, with the help of good men and also yours, to be able to acquire soon.

Therefore, be honored in calling yourselves, from now on 'The Missionaries of St. Charles'.

St. Charles! He was, as has been well said, one of those men of action who did not hesitate, did not divide, never turned back; who put in each act all the force of his conviction, all the energy of his will, the integrity of his character, all of his being and he triumphed.

St. Charles! A wonderful example of fearless constancy, of generous patience, of ardent charity, of illuminated zeal, tireless and magnanimous in all those virtues that make a man a true Apostle of Jesus Christ. He is thirsty for souls. Desires nothing but souls, ask for nothing other than souls, wants nothing but souls: give-me souls, he repeats, take everything else from me; in effect, what he didn't do, what he didn't undertake, what he didn't say in order to gain souls for Jesus Christ, my God?

St. Charles! This is a name that a catholic missionary should never hear without feeling inflamed by the noblest and liveliest enthusiasm, without feeling profoundly touched. More than a glory for Lombard it is a glory for the Church; more than a light for Italy it is a light for the world; more than the honor of a century, it is the honor of all times, of all centuries.

Dearest ones, mirror yourselves in Him, recommend yourselves to Him, put all your trust in Him, and are sure of His protection⁷⁴.

Independently or not of the fact that the Scalabrinian Missionary Sisters may have had knowledge of Scalabrini's letter to his missionaries, from which we extracted the above text, the truth is that in two moments of the history of the feminine institute, as we will see, when renouncement of the denomination of the Sisters of St. Charles was imposed on them they sensed the congregation threatened, and they firmly opposed the change. We consider this attitude that made their name a conquest, a way to honor him and an indicator of the awareness that the MSCS Sister had of her own identity.

The first unexpected change in the name happened in 1900. Contrary to what the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles had foreseen in their historical horizon on October 1897, the time between June 1900 and September 1907 was of internal tension and it would also be a time of instability for the small institute during the following years.

Around the mid 1900's, the seven sisters, who at that time comprised the Feminine Scalabrinian Congregation, were surprised by the determinations of John Baptist Scalabrini, which included the change of the name that they so honored, the Sisters of St. Charles, for the denomination of the Apostolic Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, strange to them.

The unexpected changes imposed on the Sisters of St. Charles are connected to a critical moment of the history of the Congregation of the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, founded by Clelia Merloni in Viareggio, Italy, in the year of 1894. Five years after the foundation of this congregation of religious, still without diocesan approval and almost bankrupt due to the incompetence of its administrator they found themselves obliged to sell some houses and to depend on charity to survive.

⁷⁴ SCALABRINI, Giovanni B. *Lettera ai missionari per gl'italiani nelle Americhe*. Piacenza, 15-3-1892. In: *Scritti*, op. cit., v. 1, p. 394-6.

In the beginning of 1899, two Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Sister Nazzarena Viganò and Sister Gioachina Hein also asked Scalabrini for help. The Bishop welcomed the request and, by deduction, interpreted it as a providential circumstance and as a new manifestation of God's will, calling him to complement his socio-pastoral project in benefit of the migrants. In a letter to Clelia Merloni, of February 1899, Scalabrini spoke to her of a great work that he intended to undertake and he asked for prayers while he waited for God's hour.

From John Baptist Scalabrini's later steps, the intention of the bishop is evident to unite the sisters of Clelia Merloni's foundation of 1894, with the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles, an experiment that began in 1895, forming only one new institute of Missionary Sisters for the migrants.

At this time our attention is called to the different documents already mentioned, such as the letter to Father Colbachini and to Clelia Merloni, both in February 1899, and in the report sent to the Propaganda Fide in August of 1900, a repeated reference of Scalabrini to the *providential circumstances*, which seemed to him the manifestation of God's will favorable to the feminine foundation, which would complement his project of evangelical service among immigrants,

It also makes sense to have in mind a letter of Father Faustino Consoni, of March of 1897, soliciting Scalabrini for the regularization of the small community of the servants. The Bishop, in a laconic answer, showed himself to be open to the continuity of the 1895 foundation, meaning with that his intention to undertake in due time, if it be God's will, the systematization solicited by Consoni.

The attempt to unite the Apostle Sisters with the Sisters of St. Charles would be marked by the misunderstandings between Scalabrini and Clelia Merloni and to tensions among *old and new* sisters, as it shall be seen and which has to do, mostly, with the potentiality of the different charismas being preserved.

Still during the first semester of 1899, Scalabrini had provided a house, compilation of the Rules and what's more resources needed for the formation of sisters. The novitiate house was located in Piacenza at that time at via Nicolini 45, in front of the Christopher Columbus Institute, the Motherhouse of the Masculine Scalabrinian Congregation. He assigned Fathers Giuseppe Molinari and Carlo Molinari for the formation activities and he also obtained the collaboration of Sister Candida Quadrani, from the Congregation of the Daughters of St. Anne, in whom Scalabrini admired her open and modern spirit.

At first, due to the impossibility of housing all the Sisters of the Apostle of the Sacred Heart of Jesus available to start a new formative stage in Piacenza, Scalabrini limited to 15 as the maximum number for admittance. Twelve candidates were admitted. Until the end of 1899, the novices of the formation house in Piacenza signed their signatures as the Missionaries of St. Charles, as affirmed by historian Mario Francesconi on page 1076 in the referred text below.

Testimonies gathered by Ettore Martini state that, in a work already mentioned, which was not possible to confirm in older documents, Scalabrini opened the formation house at via Nicolini, 45, still in 1898. There, between June and December of that year, six candidates were admitted to postulancy by the Bishop himself in a ceremony that took place in the Church of St. Charles, close to the Christopher Columbus Institute.

Concerning the fusion attempt with the Apostles, documentation confirms the year of 1899 as the beginning of the experiment. In February of 1900, Scalabrini admitted other Apostles, including Clelia Merloni, housing them in the country in the Castelnuovo Fogliani a farmhouse that the Duchess Clelia Fogliani Pallavicino left at the disposition of the Bishop of Piacenza as a summer camp for the deaf and dumb of the Scalabrini Institute that he founded in 1881. In May 1900, six novices from

Piacenza joined those in Castelnuovo Fogliani, in order to prepare for the religious profession made on June 12, 1900 and were the *first time in history that the public profession of both the missionaries of St. Charles and the Apostles of the Sacred Heart were made*. Scalabrini had formalized the new foundation just two days before, giving the congregation the name of the Apostle Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. In the document, John Baptist Scalabrini explicated a special *desire to render homage to the Divine Redeemer at the dawn of a new century*⁷⁵.

The constitutions of the newly born congregation, approved *ad experimentum* for ten years on June 10 of 1900, aimed at reconciling two finalities: one targeted for apostolic service among migrants and the other aimed at the promotion of devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. In other words, with the new foundation established as such, he tried to find a way to integrate the commitments of the apostolic and religious life derived from two different charismas: one given by John Baptist Scalabrini and the other by Mother Clelia Merloni.

The result of these circumstances was that, between June 10 of 1900 and September 22 of 1907, the Sisters of St. Charles and the Apostles of the Sacred Heart constituted one single institution. The fusion of the two institutes caused, from its beginning, pain and tension, as well as an opportunity to resist change, especially against the new denomination as the *Apostles of the Sacred Heart* to which the Missionaries of St. Charles were firmly opposed.

The Sisters of St. Charles foresaw the mischaracterization of their institute and understood it as a threatened to their congregational identity as soon as the first six Apostle Sisters arrived in Sao Paulo, in September 1900. They were Antonietta Fontana, Carmella Tomedi, Agnese Rizzieri, Elisa Pederzini, Assunta Bellini and Maddalena Pampana, all from Clelia Merloni's congregation. The first three made their novitiate in Piacenza, with frequent contacts with Scalabrini, while the last made it in Castelnuovo Fogliani, with Clelia Merloni. In September of 1907, when the separation of the two institutes takes place, Sisters Antonietta Fontana and Carmella Tomedi would opt for the Scalabrinian Sisters of St. Charles - Scalabrinians.

The situation created with the arrival in Sao Paulo of the six new sisters can be deduced from the letter sent to John Baptist Scalabrini by the Sisters of St. Charles. More than anything, however, the document, which is a synthesis of the first years of the MSCS's history, evidences the awareness that they had about their identity.

On December 28 of 1900, three days before the beginning of the new century, the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles expressed in a letter sent to John Baptist Scalabrini what the fusion with the Apostles of the Sacred Heart meant for them:

Excellency,

The sixth year is already under way since the foundation, by Father Joseph Marchetti, in the city of Sao Paulo of the Christopher Columbus Orphanage, an orphanage that having reached a development and importance foreseen by its miraculous founder; today is found to be of high standards as a service that causes admiration and wonder to both nationals and foreigners. The humble below signed called to collaborate with his work in such charitable and important job answered the appeal and with the consent and approval of Your Excellence, accepted the veil and submitted to the Rules dictated to them by the deceased Father Marchetti and later renewed by his successor, the dignified Father Faustino Consoni, being denominating at the same time as the Sisters of Charity of the Congregation of St. Charles, of Piacenza. The Rules were inspired on those of St. Francis de Sales, by order and will of

⁷⁵ FRANCESCONI, Mario. *Giovanni Battista Scalabrini: vescovo di Piacenza e degli emigrati*. Roma, Città Nuova, 1985, p. 1081-3. For further information on the merge of the congregation of the missionary sisters of St. Charles with the apostles of the sacred Heart of Jesus we suggest reading of Mario Francesconi's work, above mentioned, p. 1074-93.

Your Excellency, and thus accepted and scrupulously observed by the most humble sisters who sign this document.

In almost six years, of life dedicated to the well being of the unfortunate little orphans and of prayer for the benefactors, and for the salvation of our souls, there is not one example, in which one of us could not deserve the esteem of our Superiors or had, for just only one instance, abandoned the working field, always pleasing to us, taken as a duty. One of our dear sisters lost her life in the hard accomplishment of her duty, and another one, you could say, lost her health. We never complained, never a recrimination, no anxiety expressed from any of our lips that intended a change or improvement of our life's. All that we did and faced was to fulfill God's will. Father Marchetti died and we all cried, Father Consoni succeeded him and we were called to renew our vows, making them perpetual, and it was on that occasion that three newly professed sisters united with us, after going through a long period of testing. Afterwards, it seemed that everything else would follow its course; the most humble of the below signed was nominated superior and never was there among us even a shadow of distinction or of preference in the exhausting tasks. Fathers Consoni, Simoni and Dotto can provide faithful testimonies to this since they have had more time to see the spirit by which we were always motivated and our dedication to the well being and prosperity of the institute.

It was in the middle of this year, that is about to end, we heard of the coming of our co-sisters from Italy, we received that news with satisfaction, what's more with enthusiasm both because a great help would come at an opportune time and because such an event was foreseen for the progressive development of the Orphanage, which we saw built, grow and become alive. Soon it was inhabited and, finally, become a dignified work to be admired and acknowledged by the whole world, after overcoming the constraints of hunger, of privations, of human incredulity, persecutions by the natives, etc., etc., etc..

In the month of September of this year, our new sisters arrived and it was pleasant to receive and embrace them with that fraternal affection that is the symbol of harmony and love bonded in the true spirit of sacrifice.

However, unfortunately, our happiness was of short duration. We received the orders of Your Most Reverend Excellency that wounded the dearest memories of the humble below signed; another superior among the newly arrived was soon imposed on them, dismissing from her post someone who never was ambitious or desired such distinction granted to her. The fact did not stop here: it is necessary, they told us, to change the old vows for new ones, making the novitiate again and changing habits and Rules. And here began the pain.

Excellency!

It is with heart torn apart by pain that we address to Your Most Reverend Excellency, prostrating ourselves at your feet and imploring your complete protection.

With what courage can or must we, after six year of our past life in the observance of our laws and with a name of which we honor and glorify, that is, the Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo, abandon and loose the memory of our work and the Rules by which we were called to be part of the congregation? With what spirit of justice can one expect that we, admitted and supported until now in our institute, renounce our entire past of love for the little orphans, and for the glory of our congregation?

With what human law can one impose a sacrifice, which would negate a thorny past, yes, but which was blessed by God and men, were we must face a future in the heart of an obscure family neither requested nor chosen by us?

Excellency!

Persisting in the orders given and continuing to demand that which is referred to us by our local superiors, that is, the renunciation of the Congregation of St. Charles, we cannot respond except by abandoning this Asylum to spend the rest of our lives in other charitable works. But, will this be a

secure path for us and could our future leave the conscience of the one that wants to put us at the mercy of chance tranquil

No: Your Excellency's justice shall make the fibers of your heart vibrate to protect, to help, and to let us continue to consume our lives for the well-being of the little orphans, to conquer the heaviest burdens, the cruelest sacrifices, the sharpest thorns and the peace and glory of the future life.

With such hope, we shall trustingly wait for Your Most Reverend Excellency's dispositions and as Father and our Supreme Superior, shall wish also to bless us⁷⁶.

The letter of December 28 of 1900 was by the following sisters: Assunta Marchetti, Maria Franceschini, Maria Bassi, Camilla Dal Ri, Maria das Dores, Angelina Meneguzzo and Clarice Baraldini. A postulant, Luigia Micheletto also signed the letter.

Becoming aware of the position of the Sisters of Saint Charles, Scalabrini in a letter to Father Consoni of February 4 of 1901 justified the attempt to unite the two congregations, saying that he had had in view the best for the *good daughters* of the Christopher Columbus from the beginning, as well as the continuity of their institute.

Since their arrival in Sao Paulo, on September 18, 1900, the six new sisters assumed the direction of the feminine section of the Christopher Columbus Orphanage in Ipiranga, while the *old* Sisters of St. Charles, by Scalabrini's determination, initiated a new formative period, a kind of novitiate and at the same time continued collaborating in the housework. Sister Elisa Pederzini was nominated superior of the community. Removed from her post, Sister Assunta Marchetti, now as a novice, assumed the service in the kitchen.

According to *Brevi Cenni*, Scalabrini believed that the fusion of the two congregations would proceed with ease. Tensions, however, soon arouse with evident influences in the routine of the orphanage, making it difficult to carry out the formative action proposed to the *old* sisters. Sister Maria Bassi, non-conformed with imposed changes requested dispensation of the vows, which was granted to her with a heaviness manifested by Scalabrini himself.

In March of 1901, even amid a less favorable environment, the young Italian women, Lucia Gorlin and Teresa Mantagnoli, were admitted as postulants. The latter returned as postulant once she had left for health reasons. Both, on February 15 of 1903, given the circumstances, received the veil of the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

In October of 1903, Sister Elisa Pederzini, superior of the community and director of the feminine section of the Orphanage in Ipiranga and her vice director, Sister Assunta Bellini were called back to Italy by Clelia Merloni. Provisionally, Sister Camila Dal Ri was assigned as Sister Elisa Pederzini's substitute. Uncertainties and vexations continued for many years to bother the daily routines of the sisters even after John Baptist Scalabrini's visit to the Christopher Columbus, undertaken in middle of 1904.

In November 1904, a group of the Apostles, including Sister Elisa Pedernini who had returned from Italy, assumed the Umberto I hospital in Sao Paulo, as Father Marchetti had dreamed for the *Colombians*. With John Baptist Scalabrini's death on June 01 of 1905, the difficulties among the Apostle Sisters and the Sisters of St. Charles increased, making the official separation of the two congregations inevitable, which occurred on September 22, 1907. The Apostle Sisters living in the Christopher Columbus moved to the Umberto I hospital.

Twelve years after the foundation of the congregation, the Sisters of St. Charles were few:

⁷⁶ MARCHETTI, Assunta. *Lettera a G. B. Scalabrini*. São Paulo, 28-12-1900 (AGS 103/4).

Assunta Marchetti, Camilla Dal Ri, Angelina Meneguzzo, Clarice Baraldini, Maria das Dores. In 1907, the five sisters of St. Charles were joined together with Sister Lucia Gorlin and the Apostle Sisters Carmella Tomedi, Antonietta Fontana, and Gertrude Toloni.

In December 1907, the nine sisters settled in Vila Prudente, which had now become the feminine section of the Christopher Columbus Orphanage. By order of Bishop Duarte Leopoldo e Silva, Bishop of Sao Paulo, to whom they had turned to, the missionary women renewed their vows according to the Rules of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Charles, realizing the aspiration stated in a letter to Scalabrini, of December 28, 1900.

A new reading on the fusion of the two congregations, over one hundred years later, raises some considerations. The attempt took place when theological studies on the charisma of institutes of consecrated life had not yet been intensely studied, as they were in the reflections of post Vatican Council II, which could justify the idea of a fusion at that time. Unsuccessful, the attempt showed how charismas, it could be said, take care of themselves in the strength of the Spirit that calls them into being due to a need of the church. The desire expressed by John Baptist Scalabrini to render homage to Jesus Christ by formalizing the fusion, we consider as an indicator of the importance given by the bishop to the feminine foundation, that can be now understood, took form as a complement to the socio-pastoral project designed by him, still with us today, and developed among immigrants of all nationalities. For the two female congregations, founded at the end of the 19th century, the fusion experience resulted in a greater awareness of their own identity, and of the privilege of having rendered homage, even if in a manner, to the Redeemer at the dawn of the 20th Century, during which both congregations developed, expanded, and took shape due to the charisma potentialities of each one.

1.3.4 Pastoral model of the Church in Brazil. The MSCS Sister's response

Knowing the circumstances in which the Missionary Sisters of Saint Charles Borromeo – Scalabrinians, were called to live their missionarity in the period of 1895 and 1907, there are some aspects connected to the pastoral orientation of the church in Brazil of that time that need to be gone over, such as the religious-apostolic response of the institute, in such a way to identify points of convergence with the Scalabrinian project and with the proposed model for the ecclesial project of the epoch.

Since the beginning of the 18th century, the church's pastoral activity in Brazil followed *the First Statutes of the Archbishop of Bahia*. It was a static pastoral and it was comprised of the teaching of doctrine, repression of heresy and the administration of sacraments. The statutes, in its five volumes and 280 titles, *presented an image of a sacral and hierarchal society characterized by accentuated tridentinism that the Iberian people had printed in their Catholicism; laymen have the eternal post of being incapable in them*. In truth, such constitutions, which according to Jesus Hortal could be called *the first code of the Brazilian Church, which did not have a pastoral plan, with concrete objectives to be met in the short or medium term*, which is understandable, because those were other times⁷⁷. When the first Scalabrinian Missionaries, Fathers and Sisters, arrived in Brazil near the end of the 19th century, they found themselves in a territory with continental dimensions with an immense missionary field. The challenges in this context, together with its rigid structures of few dioceses and urban parishes, made pastoral activity overwhelmingly difficult among the Italian immigrants, especially

⁷⁷ HORTAL, Jesus. *Instituições eclesíásticas e evangelização no Brasil*. In: *Missão da igreja no Brasil*. São Paulo, Loyola, 1973. V Semana de Reflexão Teológica, p.109-10.

those settled in almost 2,500 coffee plantations existing in the interior of State of Sao Paulo.

In 1889, when the Republic was established, there were twelve prelacies, six bishops, and only one archbishop that, according to some, would have favored unity awareness among the ecclesiastic circumscriptions of the country. In 1890, Pope Leo XIII created four new dioceses, and created the ecclesiastic province of Rio de Janeiro. The creation of the Archbishopric of Rio de Janeiro did not extinguish the primacy title of Bahia, recognized since 1780. The new division comprised two ecclesiastic provinces. One encompassed the northern region of the country and it was comprised of Salvador with seven depending bishops: Belem, Sao Luis, Fortaleza, Olinda, Goiás, and the two new dioceses of the Amazon and of Paraíba. The other, the Metropolitan See of Rio de Janeiro, came to have seven dependant bishoprics: Sao Pedro do Rio Grande do Sul, Sao Paulo, Mariana, Diamantina and Cuiabá, and two new other ones, Niterói and Curitiba.

The Brazilian Episcopate began to meet in 1890. These meetings resulted in a series of collective documents. The first pastoral collective, addressed to the clergy and to the faithful of Brazil, dated March 19 of 1890, and its content deals with the stand taken by the church regarding the republican regime established in the country in November of the previous year.

The goal of the conferences was pastoral coordination understood within the dictates of that time, according to Jesus Hortal, as a strengthening of existing ecclesiastic structure more than the realization of needed progress.

Since this period, the Catholic Church lived a new epoch in Brazil even though there were not any expressive changes in its pastoral model. With the end of the second empire and the advent of the Republic, the patronage system was extinguished with the separation of civil and ecclesiastic powers. Through the patronage system, the Holy See had granted rights and privileges to the sovereigns of Portugal and Brazil. The constitution of the empire, conferred by Pedro I on March 25, 1824, renewed previous dispositions about the relations between the church and the state. Catholicism continued to be the official religion. Members of the Clergy were public servants of the empire. The favors and privileges granted resulted in undue interference of the Crown in ecclesiastic issues. It is true that because of the patronage system, Catholicism enjoyed some advantages, but the disadvantages were greater during the period of union between the church and the state. State interference in issues related to religious worship and doctrine weighed heavily, political servility in exchange for favors. Religious liberty was compromised. The interference of the State affected religious orders in particular, preventing the entrance of new members. The separation of the church from the state preceded the arrival of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles in Brazil by a few years.

When the four pioneer sisters arrived in Sao Paulo around the end of 1895, the Brazilian constitution of 1891 was already in vigor, which confirmed the separation of church and state, realized by the Republican provisional government on January 7, 1890. The patronage system had been abolished, freedom of worship had been established, public school teaching became the task of laypersons and civil marriage was instituted as the constitutional bases of a family. Because of these changes the Brazilian Episcopate, through a collective pastoral letter, was able to impede that the suppression of the Jesuits be confirmed, a decision that the Marquees of Pombal had made in the 18th century.

The separation of church and state meant a true rebirth of Catholicism in Brazil. Religious life in general was favored by a notable flourishing of vocations. In the evaluation by John Becker, Archbishop of Porto Alegre who had housed, in 1915, the MSCS Sisters in his archdiocese, with the separation of church and state *a period of greater prosperity of the Catholic Church in Brazil was*

began⁷⁸.

In this favorable ecclesial context an adequate pastoral to deal with the reality lived in Brazil by the immigrants of various nationalities was lacking. John Baptist Scalabrini's intuition of the urgency of a mission among the current numerous Italian migrations to American lands led him to understand that the most efficient and long lasting answer would be a socio-pastoral activity rooted in consecrated life.

The pastoral of migrants in Scalabrini's perception presupposes two great aspirations of human beings: religion and homeland. The bishop considered catechism as the basis for a pastoral methodology, therefore, *to catechize immigrants became indispensable to re-establish communication with the civil society and with the ecclesial society, interrupted by the migratory event and by the conditions in which the immigrants were actually found...* The way to break the isolation and to create communion with the new local church would be the presence of missionaries capable to becoming themselves migrants with the migrants, example given by Jesus Christ who *became flesh to save mankind*⁷⁹.

Scalabrini left proposals for the church that are still valid today for the field of human mobility. The Bishop proposed a specific pastoral among migrants that would make it possible for the missionaries to have the necessary freedom of action in the exercise of ministry. His initiatives viewed the integral promotion of the immigrant. In relation to the huge exodus of Italians who had in the Catholic faith the support of their cultural identity, Scalabrini manifested a special preoccupation. The objective of the institutes he founded was to keep the catholic faith alive in the hearts of Italians who had settled in other countries, and to favor their physical, moral, intellectual, civil and economic well-being. Put in pastoral practice, his ideas and initiatives contributed to the alimentation of religiosity in areas of immigration, to confirm in the catholic faith Italian immigrants and their descendents, and to facilitate a progressive integration in the new land that took them in.

In Brazil, Father Joseph Marchetti, and after him, Father Faustino Consoni and the other Scalabrinian missionaries sent to the state of Sao Paulo directed their attention to two pastoral priorities: Italians settled on the coffee plantations disseminated throughout the interior of the state. They took tiresome missionary excursions to provided human-religious assistance, establishing vital communication with their roots and favoring, at the same time, a gradual integration of the immigrant with the adoptive homeland. The other priority undertaken by the Scalabrinian missionaries was assisting many orphans and abandoned children for whom the Christopher Columbus Orphanage was built. The minors were maintained with the help of benefactors and of Italian immigrants themselves, as Father Joseph Marchetti had determined from the beginning. The missionary had described, in a letter to Scalabrini sent from Sao Paulo on March of 1895, a little about the 'paulista' reality at that time: *Danger is everywhere, but in a particular manner in Sao Paulo and in the cities, because of the orphans, the abandoned and the marginalized. Young girls are taken from this class to fill the cafés... from this class come the vagabonds.* Father Marchetti felt the urgency to be worried about this class with the motive to revert such a situation.⁸⁰

The Christopher Columbus Orphanage, with the collaboration of the MSCS Sisters, became an instrument in the transformation of that reality. In their option for a Christian life, the Scalabrinian

⁷⁸ WETZEL, Herbert E. *O condicionamento histórico étnico-cultural da igreja no Brasil*. In: *Missão da igreja no Brasil*, op. cit., p. 46.

⁷⁹ FRANCESCONI, Mario. *Giovanni Battista Scalabrini: vescovo di Piacenza e degli emigrati*, op. cit., p. 966-7.

⁸⁰ MARCHETTI, Giuseppe. *Lettera a G. B. Scalabrini*. S. Paulo, 10-3-1895. In: *Alcuni scritti inediti per richiamare ed approfondire la figura di padre Giuseppe Marchetti*, cs, op. cit., p. 27.

Sisters, made the orphanage into a model proposed by the founder, which had a triple commitment: a search for personal perfection by following the chaste, poor and obedient Jesus Christ; fraternal life in community; evangelic service among migrants.

The first MSCS Sisters, introduced in the paulista ecclesial ambience, performed their mission for the orphans and the abandoned infants, who were sheltered in the Christopher Columbus. Within the environment of the orphanage, the rhythm was determined by the daily appeals of the children. The sisters adapted themselves to the new life style and without pretensions, aware that they existed for the mission they followed a model that was based very little on the rigid convent life. The name by which they identified themselves, Servants of the Orphans and of the Abandoned Abroad, fully corresponded to the pioneers' physiognomy and their vision of the church as a witness of Jesus Christ and of evangelic service to brothers. In the Rules compiled by Marchetti, according to Scalabrini's guidelines, this double dimension was stated in the introduction:

The distinctive character of the Servants of the Orphans and of the Abandoned Abroad must be the spirit of living faith, the spirit to be unfurled each day in the most loving Heart of Jesus...they must make the effort to form this spirit in the orphans and abandoned who are entrusted to them, in the young girls and boys on whom they pour out their work, to all of those that in any way participate in the work of the servants. In another part of this same document, it establishes that the religious women of the institute should always have in mind that they have dedicated themselves to the mission, to irradiate the good fragrance of Jesus among the most abandoned class and, in the other hand, the most exposed to the dangers of damnation. In light of this, they will do everything to make the external students those boys and girls who by lacking means could not attend public schools, comfortable with themselves and at their schools. In one word, the Servants shall always have in mind that the objects of their mission are the orphans and the unfortunate, particularly the girls⁸¹.

Trained in this spirit the MSCS Sisters performed the role of mothers, educators, nurses, evangelizers, in other words, becoming servants in the Christopher Columbus Orphanage in Ipiranga and Vila Prudente where they prepared the meals, took care of the clothes, had zeal for the cleanliness and order of the house. They were particularly solicitude in sheltering the minors, in dressing them, taking care of their wounds, and providing all with affection and well-being. Marchetti in a report to Scalabrini about the first steps of the Servants in the orphanage wrote: *My mother gained the Bishop of Sao Paulo's admiration with her simple, but practical way. Our little orphans love her very much. The other Servants are fine... the boys and girls dress like sailors⁸².*

Attracted by the missionary ideal the Servants had left their homeland, migrants among migrants, living with them in foreign land. Very involved in the church life in Brazil, they developed a new form of religious-apostolic presence, characterized by the spirit of service in the socio-pastoral dimension, contributing to the integral promotion of orphans, children of immigrants and abandoned minors, outcasts of the paulista social context. A more involved investigation could show other elements related to the way the MSCS Sisters interacted in the face of the challenges of the paulista society of that period, heterogeneous in many aspects, sometimes hostile. We know that, by the letter sent to Scalabrini at the end of 1900 that life was not easy for them in the beginning, but they were able to overcome, one by one the obstacles and give witnesses of their total dedication to the well-being of hundreds of orphans and abandoned minors.

The Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo's missionary activity, although still minuscule in its presence in Sao Paulo during the period between 1895 and 1907, contributed as a complement to John

⁸¹ BREVI CENNI, op. cit., p. 6-7.

⁸² MARCHETTI, Giuseppe. Lettera a G. B. Scalabrini. Ypiranga, 12-12-1895. In: *Alcuni scritti inediti per richiamare ed approfondire la figura di padre Giuseppe Marchetti*, cs, op. cit., p. 40.

Baptist Scalabrini's Evangelizing Project. Working in areas of Italian immigration, the Scalabrinian Project had to overcome difficulties and not only in Brazil. The Bishop of Piacenza's pastoral line orientated his missionaries to a real involvement in the different contexts of the dioceses to which they were sent, prescribing to them obedience to the respective bishops. Scalabrini, taking everything in to consideration, understood that *the missionary work, difficult and tiresome in itself would become impossible and fruitless where there was not total liberty of action*. That is why he judged it necessary to have parochial territories comprised of immigrants and to be independent from other structures or to have national or personal parishes, autonomous in relation to the local parishes. According to Scalabrini, *only in this way would it be possible to undertake a pastoral that would respond to migrants' needs, to their culture and to their poverty*⁸³. An ecclesial project for a pastoral of human mobility only became reality gradually during the successive decades and resulted in a good measure because of John Baptist Scalabrini's prophetic intuition.

1.3.5 Scalabrini's pastoral visits to the United States and Brazil

One aspect among many that places John Baptist Scalabrini ahead of his time was his vision of the migratory fact, which is involved in the act of immigrating and of being an immigrant. Based on the scene witnessed in Milan and later contacts with migratory realities in Italy and abroad, Scalabrini formed his thoughts, shared certainties, and suggested a pastoral model suitable to the peculiarities of migrations. Although, the convergence of ideas in the area of the human mobility reality were, and continue to be, conditioned by diverse factors, Scalabrini's conviction that by divine design the world walks toward union, lead him to work the present. At the church level, practices of his ideas were undertaken in stages, becoming completely evident during Paul VI pontificate when, in 1970, the Pope instituted the *Pontifical Commission on Emigration and Tourism*. Next, we gather the steps of this pastoral path toward overcoming nationalism and openness to the universalizing of migrations, result of a permanent movement of the people, which in its turn, confirms the unifying tendency of human society.

In years that followed the experience lived in Milan, Scalabrini kept an attentive eye on the spiritual and material needs of the migrants', not only of Italians, but also of all nationalities. The Bishop researched and divulged studies and statistics; he manifested certainties and concerns, manifested convictions and preoccupation; he communicated with politicians and with ecclesial authorities; he gave lectures and he was interviewed; he was present at boarding points and at the arrival places of migrants; he traveled through Italy and abroad; he anticipated with initiatives and proposals which have lasted through times, like the migratory fact itself.

John Baptist Scalabrini's bonds to human mobility allowed him to make a deep and broad analysis of the migratory phenomenon, both from the individual and collective point of view and from the political and religious-pastoral standpoint. This aspect is the core of the history of the institutes he founded in the same way that to be a shepherd was the core in the Bishop of Piacenza's life and work.

As already it has been said, Scalabrini understood migration as providential in its wholeness, considering it an instrument for changing and unifying human society. In the specific case of the Italian migration of his days, the Bishop paid more to the consequences than the causes of the phenomenon. He thought about the millions of Italians on their own in immigration territories, more on the losses that emigration represented to Italy. In his analysis, the Bishop saw the Italian exodus as good or as evil, depending on how the act of migration was processed. For him, in the Italy of his time

⁸³ FRANCESCONI, Mario. *Giovanni Battista Scalabrini: vescovo di Piacenza e degli emigrati*, op. cit., p. 968-9.

where misery prevailed for greater part of the population, to migrate was good because to let the excess population migrate meant, at the same time to favor those who remained in the country, and making better living conditions possible for those that had left for other countries. As a rule, he advocated *liberty to emigrate, but not forced to emigrate*. Still in his words: immigration is positive when spontaneous; and harmful if stimulated:

Good, if spontaneous, being one of the great providential laws that preside over people's destiny and their economic and moral progress. Good because it is a social escape valve, and because it opens the flowering paths of hope, and sometimes of wealth to the disinherited, because it civilizes people's minds by contact with other laws and costumes, because it takes the light of the Gospel and of Christian civilization among barbarians and idolaters, and elevates mankind's destiny, expanding the concept of homeland beyond material and political boundaries, making the world the homeland for humanity.

*It is evil, if stimulated, because it replaces a real need with greediness for immediate gains or a misunderstood spirit of adventure; because depopulating the homeland soil too much and without need, instead of being a relief and a security, it becomes harmful and dangerous, creating an even larger number of inapt and deluded persons*⁸⁴.

John Baptist Scalabrini energetically denounced the abuses of the immigration agents, and with equal firmness warned about the passivity of the State and the slowness of Italian politics in creating adequate legislation for the migration reality, which meant for Italy, *the most consistent phenomena of a social nature and of its post unity history*. The great Italian exodus, provoked by internal and external socioeconomic factors, had its beginning in the last decades of the 19th century. Already during the first years of the 20th century, Italy was the *major exporter of manual labor in the world*.

The period situated between 1880 and 1901 was the hardest in the history of Italian migration. From 1901, concrete advances in favor of the Italian migrants and a gradual melioration can be verified in the migratory politics of the country. The progressive change that led the Italian State to assume with determination the cause of the national migrant is due, in a great part to the Bishop of Piacenza's tenacity in action.

Scalabrini's bond with human mobility also favored a more effective approximation of the Catholic Church with the reality of migrations. In truth, the hierarchical church, as well as the state, delayed its presence in the life of millions of Italian in exodus. Nationalism that characterized the period and the Roman Issue, which distanced church and State, made it difficult at first for a political-ecclesial articulated action in favor of the migrants. During the Pontificate of Leo XIII, while the Italian Parliament debated over the effects of emigration on the national economy, the Pope suggested manners of social and religious activity among migrants, recommending, among other initiatives, the founding of philanthropic societies and the creation of national parishes in areas of immigration. The support provided by Leo XIII to John Baptist Scalabrini's innovative activity, and of his good friend, Geremia Bonomelli, Bishop of Cremona and founder of the *Work of Assistance for Italian workers who emigrated to Europe and to the East*, was decisive and guaranteed soundness to the progressive presence of the church in the field of migrations. In this sense, the Bishop of Piacenza's visits to his missionaries and to Italians settled on American soil had a special meaning.

Moved by a tireless apostolic zeal and based on defined pastoral proposals, Scalabrini undertook two trips to America. In 1901 and 1904 he visited, respectively, the United States and Brazil, countries of intense immigration, where the Missionaries of St. Charles had disseminated many

⁸⁴ SCALABRINI, Giovanni B. *Il disegno di legge sulla emigrazione italiana*. Piacenza, 1888. In: FRANCESCONI, Mario. *Giovanni Battista Scalabrini: vescovo di Piacenza e degli emigrati*, op. cit., p. 941.

social-religious works among Italian immigrants. Among them the Christopher Columbus Orphanage in Sao Paulo, the first pastoral space for the MSCS Sisters.

On July 18 of 1901, incentivated by Pope Leo XIII himself and with his blessing and instructions, John Baptist Scalabrini boarded the steamship *Liguria*, arriving the following day in Naples. On the 20th hundreds of Neapolitan emigrants embarked with him. The Bishop left important records in his travel diary, such as the Sunday Mass of July 21 celebrated on the deck of the *Liguria*, with the calm sea in sight; all the passengers who had boarded attended it. During the whole crossing, with a shepherd's solicitude, he dedicated a great deal of his time to the emigrants, his fellow passengers:

*July 28. A splendid morning! First communion and confirmations: I dress in liturgical garments, with crosier and miter, The altar set up on the high area of the deck of the ship and 1200 people are present. I preached before the mass. Many cried. We are in the middle of the ocean. I celebrate with vivid emotion. I speak two more times and my voice is heard by everyone and everywhere. When I indicate the abandoned motherland, there is a generalized sigh, but then I indicate, the celestial homeland and all with emotion look to the sky...Each day, from 4p.m. to 5 p.m. I explain catechism to some of the youth...*⁸⁵

The 1st of August attracts our attention, among other records, the aspects related to the status of women at the time, an issue that has currently raised some criticism on Scalabrini's position. In his diary, the Bishop wrote that on the previous day, he confessed many men, but women could not have the benefit of this *grace due to lack of an appropriate place and confessional*. Other than this detail, the crossing was characterized by a pastoral nature, which Scalabrini maintained on all the visits he made to numerous Italian missions in the United States.

The *Liguria* arrived in New York on the morning of August 3rd. John Baptist Scalabrini remained in United States territory for three months and ten days. During the first week, he spent time among his missionaries in St. Joachim's Parish, and on August 11, he went to New York, to the second Scalabrinian missionary parish, dedicated to Our Lady of Pompeii. On August 15th, he visited Italians in Newark and next, Jersey City, New Haven, Providence, Boston, Winthrop, Utica, Syracuse, Buffalo, Cleveland, Detroit, St. Paul, Kansas City, St. Louis, Cincinnati, Columbus, Washington, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Brooklyn, among others, including a brief stay in Canada. To visit some of these cities in the United States required, at that time, up to 20 hours of travel. Scheduled commitments were many and diverse.

On October 9, in Washington, John Baptist Scalabrini visited Theodore Roosevelt, who assumed the government of the country, succeeding President Mackinly, who died after an attempt he suffered in Buffalo on September 7, when the Bishop of Piacenza was in Boston. He returned to New York on October 13 where he confirmed 750 young Italians and on the 15th, at the *Catholic Club*, he gave in French the famous speech that we have partially transcribed. The reception in Brooklyn on November 3 was more extraordinary than the others, as well as the manifestation of the Italian immigrants of Newark on November 11 that led the Mayor of the city, of the Protestant Religion, to state that if he had to witness another spectacle the same as this one, he would become a catholic!

Everywhere, the program was intense and tiresome: visits, celebrations, inaugurations, speeches, interviews, spiritual exercises, priestly ordinations. Scalabrini's meeting with his missionaries, with the immigrants and with the American prelates, had a particular ecclesial meaning; it was opportune and fruitful, also because the bishops of the dioceses where Scalabrinian missionaries

⁸⁵ SCALABRINI, Giovanni B. *Lettera a Camillo Mangot*. Piroscavo Liguria, 2-8-1901. In: FRANCESCONI, Mario. *Giovanni Battista Scalabrini: vescovo di Piacenza e degli emigrati*, op. cit., p. 1160.

worked had favorably manifested support of the Bishop of Piacenza's visit.

Scalabrini's major preoccupation was the preservation of the Catholic Faith, professed by the Italian immigrants, in a country with a protestant majority. The trip showed him that his concern on this basic aspect was justified. In the same way, the Bishop of Piacenza confirmed the difficult conditions that the Italians were subject to when compared to the immigrants from other nationalities. A recommendation, which was repeated in different circumstances, was that parish schools should be established among the Italians, like those among German and Irish Catholics. On the other hand, John Baptist Scalabrini was comforted and surprised by the praiseworthy references made about his missionaries' apostolic work and the positive realities he found in the Italian missions in the United States.

Scalabrini's permanence in the United States would have been extended even more, if it depended on invitations and appeals, but the Bishop felt the need to return. On November 12, he said goodbye to his missionaries, and two weeks later, on November 26 of 1901 he disembarked in Naples. On the 29th, Pope Leo XIII, to whom he submitted an ample report of the trip, received him. The return to Piacenza represented the culmination of a succession of extraordinary moments.

Three years later, in the middle of 1904, John Baptist Scalabrini undertook a second great trip. This time, traveling to Brazil with a brief stay in Argentina where he visited his brother Pietro who had many years earlier settled in that country. Scalabrini's physical condition was not the same as in 1901. That is why family and friends tried to convince him to desist, but with Pope Pius X's incentives, the Bishop maintained his proposal and prepared for the long trip. He studied Portuguese and on June 13 of 1904, he left Piacenza. On the next day, he was received by Pope Pius X who granted him the requested faculties, and assumed a double commitment with him until his return: to remember him daily in his Eucharistic celebrations, and to send him every morning, at seven o'clock, a special blessing.

On the morning of June 17, Scalabrini boarded the *Città di Genova*, on his way to Brazil. As he had done on his trip to the United States, he left in his diary records worthy of notation. On Sunday, June 19, he wrote:

Today you could say that our mission began. The ship is similar to a monastery. I celebrate partly pontifical and I speak with emotion, 500 passengers are moved. The gospel was well suited: The Divine Master instructed the masses from a boat, and I from a deck, in the middle of the sea; Jesus Christ's 'duc in altum' brings to mind noble thoughts. One becomes eloquent even when one is not. Many approached the sacred table... It is a spectacle of paradise⁸⁷.

The incisive invitation of Jesus Christ *to go to deeper waters, which resulted in a miraculous catch*, which was renewed with extreme propriety by Pope John Paul II in 2001, and continues to be repeated many times today, enlightened John Baptist Scalabrini on his second crossing of the Atlantic, made the Bishop's historical visit to Brazil in 1904 fruitful,⁸⁸.

The maritime trip lasted close to three weeks during which a regular pastoral activity was developed, with daily instructions for adults, the youth and adolescents registered for First Communion and Confirmation, with which the missionaries on board occupied themselves. Young women and mothers also received needed instructions from the religious women. Scalabrini observed in his diary: the devoted and discrete ways of these sisters edified everyone. The celebrations of First Communion and of Confirmation took place on high seas, on the deck of the ship on 29 of June and on

⁸⁷ SCALABRINI, Giovanni B. *Lettera a Camillo Mangot. A bordo della Città di Genova, 23-6-1904*. In: FRANCESCONI, Mario. *Giovanni Battista Scalabrini: vescovo di Piacenza e degli emigrati*, op. cit., p. 1168.

⁸⁸ JOÃO PAULO II. *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 2001, cf. n. 1.

the 3rd and 5th of July.

On June 29, dedicated to St. Peter, the carefulness in preparing the environment for the Eucharistic celebration caught Scalabrini's attention. There were flags from all nations on display, one the color yellow that seemed to the Bishop to be the church's flag that caused him great satisfaction as he supposed it to be in its essence homage to Jesus Christ. The moment was propitious to pray for the Pope and to speak about the special blessing sent everyday by Pius X to him and to all passengers on the ship. On his knees, he received in his cabin the Pope's daily blessing, remembering his words that gave total security, which he did not experience on his trip to the United States⁸⁹.

During the second crossing there were difficult moments due to the agitated seas and the sultry weather, factors that made the programmed celebrations difficult, and that caused discomfort for all. In addition, tension and fights involving some passengers took place, perhaps because they were all stressed by the traveling conditions and by the obvious concerns regarding the future that awaited them a foreign land.

On July 7 of 1904, the *Città di Genova* arrived in Rio de Janeiro. Scalabrini, aware of all and of everything, saw the *most beautiful bay, with its grandiose port, unique in the world*. He described in a few words the landscape that he caught sight of: *Imagine an arm of the sea, full of small islands and surrounded in three fronts by hills, more or less high, in the heart of winter, all green and replete with houses and palaces*⁹⁰.

In the capital of the country at that time, John Baptist Scalabrini met the Archbishop of Rio de Janeiro, Joaquim Arcoverde de Albuquerque Cavalcanti who welcomed him as a friend. In the meeting, Scalabrini told him of his two pastoral priorities: assistance to immigrants near the port and an Italian church in the city, to which the Archbishop manifested himself as favorable to both.

Resuming the maritime voyage the Bishop arrived in Santos on July 8, the day of his 65th birthday, the last of his earthy life. On the 9th, he traveled to Sao Paulo, traveling for three hours in a special wagon put at his disposition by the S. Paulo Railways. The welcoming at the Ipiranga station, five miles from the city, had the presence of the orphans, boys and girls, from the Christopher Columbus who, on the platform had waited so anxiously for the distinguished visitor, acclaimed him with enthusiasm, which made that meeting with John Baptist Scalabrini even more touching.

The Bishop of Sao Paulo, Jose de Camargo Barros; Father Faustino Consoni; the General Consul of Italy, Count Gherardo Pio de Savoia, the abbot of St. Benedict's Monastery, Father Michele Kruze and other ecclesiastic and civil authorities, both Brazilian and Italian, and an innumerable number of persons waited at the Central Station for the Bishop of Piacenza's arrival. Two musical bands, one from the Salesian school and the other from the Christopher Columbus Orphanage, conducted by maestro Capocchi brightened the historic moment, as Father Marchetti had dreamed. Scalabrini, on this day, stayed at the St. Benedict's monastery for a few hours. That afternoon, he was taken to the Ipiranga Christopher Columbus Orphanage in a special carriage, being received with indescribable emotion. The Bishop of Sao Paulo and the Abbot of St. Benedict's Monastery offered him lodging, but the Bishop of Piacenza preferred to stay in Ipiranga with his missionaries.

The following day, he visited Bishop Jose de Camargo Barros who described the situation of

⁸⁹ SCALABRINI, Giovanni B. *Il viaggio di mons. Scalabrini in Brasile*. In: *Storia della congregazione scalabriniana: Le prime missioni nel Brasile (1888-1905)*. Roma, Centro Studi Emigrazione, 1973, v.3, cf. p. 265. Collana Sussidi n. 4. A cura di Mario Francesconi.

⁹⁰ SCALABRINI, Giovanni B. *Lettera a Camillo Mangot*. Da bordo, 7-7-1904. In: *Storia della congregazione scalabriniana: Le prime missioni nel Brasile (1888-1905)*, op. cit., p. 268.

the diocese, spoke to him about its extension being the entire State of Sao Paulo and of the high number of Italians who had settled there. For his part, Scalabrini spoke on opening a school for the deaf and dumb, of founding two missions in the interior of the State of Sao Paulo to provide assistance to the large number of Italian immigrants on the plantations, that were over two thousand, and of the possibility of his missionaries assuming the parish of Sao Bernardo do Campo. His brief contact with the city and its surroundings enchanted him with its nature, lavish vegetation, flowers and its colors of a winter very different from that of Northern Italy.

From the first moments lived in São Paulo, Scalabrini observed, examined and better understood the importance of the work developed there by his missionaries. In the Christopher Columbus he verified the quality of the formation given to the orphans and abandoned children, approved the international character of the institution, and his attention was caught by the high number of those who had been assisted by the house, adding up to over 800 youngsters. Many of them gathered, due to the opportunity of the visit, spoke to the Bishop of what that sacred house, which had sheltered them, meant for each one of them, providing them a dignified path for their lives.

A less positive aspect of Scalabrini's visit was the speculation, as evidenced by an article published in the *Estado de Sao Paulo* in July 16, 1904, polemically attributing political-nationalist objectives for the Bishop of Piacenza's trip to Brazil. Other interviews given by him to other periodicals clarified the public opinion, but the most eloquent answer to those insinuations was the intense apostolic program developed by John Baptist Scalabrini in the country. Far from being intimidated, the bishop of Piacenza continued on his itinerary, had insights and did not ban new apostolic proposals aimed at either the Italian migrants or the migrants from all nationalities.

Due to the Roman Question, a conflict that resulted from the political unification process of Italy, a partnership that aligned the church and state in a joint program to benefit the Italian migrants could have seemed daring, at the time. Scalabrini dared to indicate such path to his country that would also facilitate an expected reconciliation.

The Bishop proposed to the church with the same audacity the establishment of a *special congregation* to provide religious assistance to migrants of all nationalities, similar to the Propaganda Fide Congregation, which invested human and financial resources in the *dissemination of the Catholic Faith among nonbelievers*. Scalabrini understood that his proposal, inspired in the mission of the church itself, which is to take the Gospel to all nations, in reason of its universal character, would bring people closer to the Apostolic See and would *do much good*. Convinced of this, from Sao Paulo he sent a letter to Pius X in which, among other issues discussed, he exposed the idea to the Pope, that later would be translated into a project:

Now, allow me, Most Blessed Father, to present an idea of mine. Your Holiness has proposed a sublime and fruitful program: to begin everything in Christ. Now, the church with the admirable institution of the Propaganda Fide spends so much money and employs so many priests in the dissemination of the faith among the infidels, couldn't something be done to conserve it among the emigrants? Moreover, I speak of emigrants of all nations and from all Catholic regions: Italians, Germans, Spaniards, Portuguese, Canadians, etc., etc

A special congregation dedicated to this problem, the greatest of our century, would result in honor to the Holy Apostolic See, approximating all peoples to you, like a loving mother, being of immense good. In the United States of America the losses of Catholicism numbers in the millions. Certainly more numerous than the conversions of infidels undertaken by our missions in three centuries, and despite appearances, they still continue. Protestantism works there and works here to pervert souls. Now, a congregation that would place itself in relationship to the bishops from whom they depart and along with those where Catholic migrants arrive, and, if that was not sufficient, with the respective

governments, would study the hard and complex migration problem, taking advantage of ancient and modern studies, and in the name of the Holy Father, would take the required initiatives for the cause, becoming a blessing for the world, being enough to make your pontificate glorious.

Forgive me, Most Blessed Father, for my audacity, the audacity of a dedicated and grateful son who would give his blood and life for you and for your holy cause. Dignify me with your continued holy blessing, that I receive on my knees everyday with profound emotion, to always complete with Divine help the works for which I came and, thus, in the solemnity of the Saints, may I be found among my most dear people...⁹¹.

From a posterior exchange of correspondence between Scalabrini and Cardinal Raffaele Merry del Val, Secretary of State of Pius X, would result the *Memorial about the congregation or commission 'pró emigrants católicos'*, elaborated by the Bishop of Piacenza amidst his many activities, not long before his death. Merry del Val had determined that Scalabrini's project should be initiated without fanfare, following the movement of a mustard seed that grows and expands in its due time⁹². As we shall see, that would take place.

Two aspects, among others, would become significant for the proposal of the Bishop of Piacenza to Pope Pius X: having contributed to approximating the Church to the worldwide Italian migration reality and to have indicated to the Scalabrinian family the international dimension of its mission within the church and the world. Aware of having done his part, in Sao Paulo where he was, Scalabrini gave continuation to the program that he had proposed. In the last week of July, guest at St. Benedict's Monastery, he gave two lectures in Portuguese: one for the Benedictine students and another in the Salesian school where local authorities were also present. Days later, on July 30, he was already in the interior of the State of Sao Paulo, 250 miles away from the capital.

There are several records on the Bishop of Piacenza's visit to the many plantations located along the railway. In one of them, Santa Gertrudes, close to Rio Claro, then owned by Count Eduardo Prates had him as a guest for three days. As Scalabrini had put it, the plantation was one of the best. As a good catholic, Count Prates, who also was a benefactor of the Christopher Columbus Orphanage, had erected a church in the plantation, a place for prayers and where, every two years, during the missionaries' visit, the population gathered there listening to their preaching, received spiritual assistance and the comfort of the Catholic Religion. Contact with the reality lived in the interior made it possible for the Bishop to have a greater perception of the heroism of his missionaries who during months on end went from one plantation to another, fulfilling the mission for which they had been sent.

During his stay in Ipiranga, the Founder preached the spiritual exercises to the priests and sisters, remaining for three days among the Benedictines during the occasion of the Feast of St. Gregorius Magnus. He gave, then, lectures and presided over the ceremonies alluding to the celebration; he visited almost all of the religious houses in the city; received innumerable visits, accompanied the conclusive works of the orphanage building in Vila Prudente and the separation of the two sections in the Christopher Columbus. The feminine section, contrary to what Father Joseph Marchetti had thought, was transferred to the orphanage in Vila Prudente, while the male section remained in Ipiranga.

On August 5 of 1904, John Baptist Scalabrini inaugurated the orphanage in Vila Prudente, according to him a *magnificent establishment*. The Bishop blessed the chapel and every room in the house that is considered, in some aspects, by the MSCS Sisters as their motherhouse. In the chapel

⁹¹ SCALABRINI, Giovanni B. *Lettera al Papa Pio X*. São Paulo, 22-7-1904. In: *Scritti*, op. cit., v. 2, p. 323-5 (Minuta).

⁹² SCALABRINI, Giovanni B. *Lettera al Card. R. Merry del Val*. Piacenza, 5-5-1905. In: *Scritti*, op. cit., v. 2, p. 387.

dedicated do Our Lady of Lourdes, Scalabrini presided over the Eucharistic Celebration in which orphans, sisters, priests and dwellers in Vila Prudente participated. Also, members of the Fachi family were present at the celebration, donors of the land where the facility was built. Even before its completion, the Orphanage of Vila Prudente began its activities on August 7. A *solemn inauguration* was foreseen for December 8. Upon request of Father Faustino Consoni, Pope Pius X, sent his Apostolic Blessings for the circumstance dated September 01, 1904:

To my beloved sons, the missionary priests of the Congregation of St. Charles of Piacenza, and equally to the beloved benefactors who contributed to the construction of the Vila Prudente de Moraes Orphanage, supplicating Heaven, as a recompense, a token of our gratitude and of our special benevolence, offering our humble gift that we send from our heart, an Apostolic Blessing.

From the Vatican, September 1 of 1904⁹³.

Still in Sao Paulo, Scalabrini kept himself busy by reorganizing his institute, nominating inclusively the sisters' superiors. Of special importance the nomination of Father Faustino Consoni as Provincial Superior of the Missions of St. Charles in Brazil, replacing Father Domenico Vicentini who resided in Rio Grande do Sul and had exercised this function since 1898. Father Vicentini accompanied the Bishop during the visit, later returning to Italy to head the motherhouse of the Masculine Scalabrinian Institute. The decree nominating Father Consoni states in article 4: it is the *competence of the Provincial to zeal for the sisters' house, to choose the ordinary and extraordinary confessors, the preachers for the spiritual exercises and for the monthly day of retreat and to tend to the external matters so that everything is done with order and charity⁹⁴.*

For the MSCS Sisters, the presence of the founder in the Christopher Columbus, where they had worked for nine years, took place during a still difficult period. In 1904, the attempt to merge the Sisters of St. Charles and the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus still ruled internally in the Feminine Religious Institute. We do not know if Scalabrini answered the sisters' letter of 1900. We have knowledge from the documents that the subject was touched on in letters sent to Father Faustino Consoni and Father Vicentini, provincial of that time. A text by Ettore Martini affirms that when meeting with Mother Assunta and other sisters, the founder said to them: *do not fear, my daughters, you shall be Missionaries of St. Charles.* The affirmation contained a promise, but the unexpected death of John Baptist Scalabrini, taking place on June 10 of 1905, would extend for some time the obscure situation in which the Sisters of St. Charles lived in the Christopher Columbus Orphanage.

After inaugurating the Orphanage of Vila Prudente and having nominated the priests' superiors and the sisters' superiors Scalabrini considered as concluded his mission in Sao Paulo, but he was aware of the need for changes. On August 8, moved with emotion, he left Ipiranga and traveled to Niteroi in the State of Rio de Janeiro. He also intended to visit the State of Espirito Santo, where his missionaries had returned in the second semester of 1903, but he cancelled this trip and remained in Niteroi as guest of the Salesians who surrounded him with kindness.

In a letter to Father Consoni, dated August 10, the founder said he was grateful and already missing Ipiranga. He remembered the happy month he lived there amidst so many manifestations of affection. He recommended that *the much existing good be kept*, and that, *with prudent charity, defects be corrected* of which they had already spoken, by way of the proposed reforms and initiatives. He sent a *special and very kind blessing* to the Provincial and the other priests, a blessing *from the bottom*

⁹³ PIO X - Autograph. Dal Vaticano, 1 Settembre dell 'anno 1904. In: *Storia della congregazione scalabriniana: le prime missioni nel Brasile (1888-1905)*, op. cit., p. 157-8.

⁹⁴ *DECRETO DI MONS. G. B. SCALABRINI.* S. Paulo (Brasile) 4 agosto 1904. In: *Storia della congregazione scalabriniana: le prime missioni nel Brasile (1888-1905)*, op. cit., p. 288-9.

of his heart to the sisters, teachers, our young boys and girls of Vila Prudente, to all⁹⁵.

On August 11, he departed from Rio de Janeiro for Curitiba, where he arrived on the 18th. The agitated sea, on the first day of the trip, caused unpleasant feelings for all of the passengers. After five days on the ship, it arrived at sea port of Paranaguá. Another six hours trip, this time by train on a steep path, Scalabrini saw alternating between *horrible precipices* and extraordinary natural beauty. He admired the huge plateau and the Araucarias that someone had compared to chlorophyll glasses reaching toward the sky, considering everything as *one of the reserves of Providence*. The welcome at the railway station of Curitiba also had the presence of a musical and civil band, military and ecclesiastic authorities of the State of Parana. Contrary to what he had determined, John Baptist Scalabrini spent the night in Curitiba, and on the next day, in return he visited those authorities that had welcomed him the previous day. Afterwards, he went to Santa Felicidade, seven kilometers away from Curitiba, staying with the Scalabrinian Missionaries living there in a small and modest wood house.

Santa Felicidade considered as a model: *a beautiful and ample church, there were the sisters, schools, frequency of the sacraments and God's Word, as in the best parishes in Italy*. Amidst *innumerable demonstrations*, the Bishop of Piacenza visited all of the many colonies where each had its church founded by the first Scalabrinian Missionaries, *Colbachini, Molinari, and Mantese*. There, Scalabrini also experienced the irregularities of the climate. Between August 19th and 25th of 1904, the thermometer registered 28° Celsius, dropping to 8° Celsius on the 26th, that is, a drop of 20° Celsius as remarked by the visitor in a letter to Camillo Mangot, dated August 31st of that year⁹⁶.

During his trip to Parana, John Baptist Scalabrini was also concerned with the Indians of the region, *descendants of those whom the Jesuit priests had converted*. He visited some villages, where an Indian chief presented the Bishop with two metal cruets, which had belonged to the Jesuits, later donated by Scalabrini to Pope Pius X. *The visit of God's servant to this tribe pleased them very much and the chief supplicated the Servant of God that the Great Father (the Pope) would send them a missionary*⁹⁷. In a letter addressed to Bishop Duarte Leopoldo e Silva, among other approached topics, Scalabrini stated that he was ready to catechize the Indians of Parana, according to the will expressed to him by the Holy See. A fruit of these contacts would be that of pastoral presence Scalabrinian in Tibagi during the period comprising October 1904, to the end of 1911. Bishop Duarte, who had been consecrated Bishop in Rome in the month of May of 1904, and only assumed the Diocese of Curitiba in October of that year, entrusted to Father Marco Simoni the parish of Tibagi, as the Bishop of Piacenza had proposed.

Just as at his arrival in Parana so was his farewell. Scalabrini was a guest in the Episcopal Palace, but without meeting the new Bishop Duarte Leopoldo e Silva. The previous Bishop of the Diocese of Curitiba, which encompassed the states of Parana and Santa Catarina, was Bishop Jose de Camargo Barros, transferred to Sao Paulo a few months before Scalabrini's visit to Brazil.

The Bishop of Piacenza left Curitiba on September 3, at six o'clock in the morning, and after six hours of travelling, taking the same descending path of August 18; he arrived at the port of Paranagua. At 3:00 p.m., he boarded the coastal steamship *Santos*, toward the port of Rio Grande. On

⁹⁵ SCALABRINI, Giovanni B. *Lettera a P. Faustino Consoni*. Nicteroy, 10 agosto 1904. In: *Storia della congregazione scalabriniana: le prime missioni nel Brasile (1888-1905)*, op. cit., p. 291-2.

⁹⁶ SCALABRINI, Giovanni B. *Lettera a Camillo Mangot*. S. Felicidade de Curitiba, 31 agosto 1904. In: *Storia della congregazione scalabriniana: le prime missioni nel Brasile (1888-1905)*, op. cit., p. 294-5.

⁹⁷ SPALLAZZI, Carlo. *Sommario del processo di beatificazione del servo di Dio G. B. Scalabrini* (Roma, 1943), p. 27-8. In: *Storia della congregazione scalabriniana: le prime missioni nel Brasile (1888-1905)*, op. cit., p. 76.

September 5, the ship made a brief stop in Florianopolis, the state capital of Santa Catarina. There, he also had a fine welcome by the local clergy and authorities. Scalabrini commented in a letter to Camillo Mangot, dated September 9, *a most beautiful impression* that the President of the State had caused, he recorded it like this: *Blessed are the people who are honored by such similar leaders!*⁹⁸.

The successive letter sent by John Baptist Scalabrini to Camilo Mangot from September 1904, allows us to trace the Bishop of Piacenza's itinerary in Rio Grande do Sul, and to become acquainted with the environmental aspects and, in some cases, connected to his visit to gaúcho territory. Like the visits to other states, he had Carlo Spallazzi as companion and helper, the same valet that had been with him during his visit to the United States. From Parana on, he traveled in company of Father Marco Simoni.

On September 7, the 82nd anniversary of the independence of Brazil, the *Santos* arrived close to the town of Rio Grande in the state of Rio Grande do Sul. The ship ran aground at 7:00 p.m., with the port in sight, and it remained in this way until 7:00 p.m. of September 8, the day of Feast of the Nativity of Mary. In Rio Grande, Colonel Viana gave him a fine welcome, honored with the Bishop of Piacenza's visit as well as by earlier recommendations made by the Bishop of Porto Alegre. Completing this stage Scalabrini continued his trip on board the *Prudente de Moraes*, from where he could contemplate the green shores of the Lagoa dos Patos. He compared the climate to Italy at this time of the year. On September 10, at 10:00 am, he arrived in Porto Alegre. He was received by the General Vicar and the good Catholics, who conducted him to the Bishop's house. Bishop of the diocese, Claudio Jose Gonçalves Ponce de Leão, had traveled to Aparecida, to participate in the triennial Episcopal conferences. A government representative accompanied by a musical band should have been at the reception, but a storm fell over the town preventing the scheduled program. There was a concern regarding the Bishop, but according to him, the Lagoa dos Patos remained calm and the lake trip was tranquil.

On the following day in Porto Alegre, *among beautiful cities, the most beautiful*, a great feast was given with a warm reception for the Bishop of Piacenza, in which authorities, civil and military, clergy and laymen participated; there was the presence of the military musical band, speeches and toasts during the lunch offered in his honor. Scalabrini answered in the Portuguese language, what caused surprise and satisfaction to all. Before, he had preached to a good number of seminarians. Monday, September 12th, he visited the Holy House of Mercy and other establishments in the Gaúcho capital.

Tuesday, September 13th, at six o'clock, Scalabrini left Porto Alegre on a river trip through the Taquari River, on his way to Encantado. At 8:00 p.m., he arrived in Estrela where he spent the night at the parish house of a Jesuit priest. On September 14, now on horseback, he resumed his trip to Encantado. During this trip numbers groups of settlers coming from different settlements, riding horseback like him, and little by little changed into a larger entourage, accompanied him. At the main house, the crowd waited for the Bishop forming two rows, with reverence and a respectful silence. As he proceeded, young girls dressed in white marched in front of him throwing flowers of that historical spring along the way.

During his stay in Encantado, among many other activities, Scalabrini confirmed around two thousand people. On September 20, he blessed the new church in a solemn ceremony dedicated to St. Peter. Father Massimo Rinaldi had just recently assumed the direction of the mission in Encantado; the first Scalabrinian parish in Rio Grande do Sul. Pioneer of the mission, Father Domenico Vicentini had been there since 1896. The Bishop observed and described the landscape, highlighting natural beauty, the healthy climate and the fertility of the soil. He paid attention to his missionaries' pastoral

policy and to the aspirations of the immigrants and of their descendents. With a justified satisfaction, he affirmed that the Scalabrinian Missionaries were venerated, and like true apostles, they provided an immense well-being to that population. Each one of the missions had between 20 and 30 settlements, some as far as six hours away by horseback. Throughout the week, periodically and in an alternate fashion, the missionaries visited the settlements, preached, taught catechism and administered the sacraments. On Sundays, they would return to the main house.

In a description sent by Scalabrini to Camillo Mangot, the territory had three valleys formed by the Carrero, Antas and Prata rivers. The valley of the Carrero River corresponded to the missions of Encantado, Sao Lourenço, Figueira de Melo, Santa Teresa, Monte Belo, Monte Veneto, Nova Bassano, Sao Joao Batista do Herval, with over one hundred chapels in the colonial settlements. Two of the valleys, the Carrero and the Prata, constituted the pastoral space for the Scalabrinian Missionaries in Rio Grande do Sul. The valley of the Antas, always in accordance to Scalabrini's description, corresponded to the missions of Count d'Eu, Bento Gonçalves, Alfredo Chaves, Antonio Prado and Caxias, and constituted the pastoral space for the Capuchins and diocesan priests.

The Bishop of Piacenza left Encantado in September 22, and after five hours of horseback he arrived at Sao Lourenço de Vilas Boas (Coronel Pilar), which had 20 colonial settlements, each with its own chapel, and where Father Giuseppe Pandolfi worked. Everywhere that the Bishop went was a propitious occasion for celebrations, particularly to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation. In Sao Lourenço, one thousand and five hundred people of all ages were confirmed. At each visit, moving scenes were repeated: in addition to a joyful welcome and religious celebrations, the news from bishops, priests and acquaintances from the immigrants' hometowns, nostalgia for the homeland was bolstered.

On the way to Capoeiras (Nova Prata), *a crowd of men*, riding horseback like him, followed Scalabrini. Along the path, arches of triumph and exploding fireworks solemnized the passage of the Bishop who had a *magnificent* entrance in Count d'Eu (Garibaldi). He was welcomed by the Marian Brothers' pupils and St. Joseph Sisters' girls, and by a huge crowd, a band and festive bell ringing. Scalabrini's attention was caught particularly by pictures of Pope Pius X hanging on each arch. The consular agent, Luigi Petrocchi, resident of Bento Gonçalves was also present at the reception. The Bishop spent the night in the Capuchin priests' monastery.

Scalabrini left Count d'Eu on the morning of September 27, and three hours later, he arrived in Bento Gonçalves where he was conducted in triumph to the church and spoke to the crowd. Soon afterwards, he continued his trip with Carlo and Father Marco in a *primitive vehicle*, arriving at Alfredo Chaves (Veranópolis), under a torrential rain. As in Count d'Eu, he spent the night in the Capuchin Monastery. He arrived in Capoeiras at 10:00 am, on the 28th, a Scalabrinian mission under the direction of Father Antonio Segnanfredo, who was venerated by the population. He was lodged along with Carlo and Father Marco in a new wooden house. The Bishop's presence, who remained there for three days, was an opportune occasion for administering confirmation and a solemn blessing of the church, although it was unfinished, very beautiful, dedicated to St. John Baptist. The Bishop of Piacenza also blessed the church of Turvo (Protasio Alves) around end of September 1904.

On October 1, he went on horseback from Capoeiras to Nova Bassano. The trip took four hours on a path through virgin forest. Just half an hour away from the parochial house, after good weather, once again torrential rain caused havoc, preventing the presentation of the band, and made the welcome by the people less brilliant. The colony of Nova Bassano was large and comprised, at the time, 30 communities. It had been founded by Father Pietro Colbachini, who died there on January 30, 1901. The church, an accomplishment of his work and where the great missionary is buried, was

blessed with solemnity by the Bishop. Scalabrini described it as a beautiful construction in gothic style and with three naves.

The founder should have concluded his program in Nova Bassano, however, due to so many appeals he went beyond what had been foreseen. Even though he was feeling the weight of the endless trips, compelled by his apostolic zeal he visited other colonies, taking paths that in their majority were impractical. On October 5 he returned to Alfredo Chaves, being received in triumph, as everywhere else. During the happy days he spent with the Capuchins of Savoia, he visited various chapels and administered almost 5 thousand confirmations.

October 10, 1904, John Baptist Scalabrini was in Bento Gonçalves again, where, in a letter to Camillo Mangot, he recognized the visit to the Italian colonies in Rio Grande do Sul as being a *true inspiration*. In the letter the Bishop said it was impossible to describe the enthusiasm of the people upon his arrival, he manifested evident difficulties, missing the newspaper, saying that he was *as if out of the world!* From Bento Gonçalves, he sent a brief pastoral message to the members of his diocese, for the 50th anniversary celebration of the proclamation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception.

On October 16 in Conde d'Eu, he administered confirmation and conferred the minor orders on some Capuchins. He resumed his trip again, and on the morning of the 18th, he celebrated Mass in the Marian Sanctuary of Caravagio, where many people had spent the night waiting for the liturgical celebration. Scalabrini praised this gesture of faith by the local people in his correspondence. On the same day, the 18th, he arrived in Caxias, *the pearl of the Italian colonies*, which wanted to have a grandiose reception for the Bishop of Piacenza. From Pinheiro Machado Street until the church, on the Plaza Dante, streets were decorated with arches, branches and flags. The colony already had schools, churches, religious men and women, and had achieved a surprisingly high degree of development. It seemed to Scalabrini that Caxias of that time seemed to have been inhabited for a century. In the *large and most beautiful church*, the Bishop made a moving speech in Portuguese and conferred, on the 18th and on subsequent days, confirmation to many youth. Majestic demonstrations saluted him in farewell.

On October 21, after 40 days of intense pastoral activity in the Italian colonies of Rio Grande do Sul, John Baptist Scalabrini continued on to Porto Alegre. He traveled two more days, the first by land in a wagon, and the second by riverboat on the Caí River. In Porto Alegre, where he remained from October 23 to the 27th, the Bishop of Piacenza stayed with Bishop Claudio Jose Ponce de Leao with whom he treated the possibility of the Missionaries of St. Charles taking over some parishes in his vast diocese. Scalabrini had schedule for the 24th a speech to the Italians who resided in Porto Alegre. From the Gauchan capital, the Bishop returned to the town of Rio Grande where he waited for the ship that took him to Buenos Aires. He arrived in the capital of Argentina on November 9 for a short visit with his brother Pietro, who had established himself there, and whom he had not seen for 36 years. On November 11, he boarded the steamship *Sardenha*, back to Italy, arriving in Genoa on December 5 of 1904. On the next day, the Bishop was welcomed in Piacenza by a large crowd, gathered at the cathedral for the *Te Deum* to give thanks. Pius X congratulated the Bishop for the good realized during his apostolic visit to Latin America, and he sent a gold medallion along with a message requesting Scalabrini to come to Rome when it was possible. John Baptist Scalabrini, for his part, at the end of his visit wrote from Porto Alegre a letter to Camillo Mangot: *I think that I have done some good...May God bless the good seed thrown amidst continued sweatings!*⁹⁹ One hundred years later, the celebration of the Bishop of Piacenza's apostolic visit has become an eloquent sign of fecundity that Divine Grace made long lasting.

⁹⁹ SCALABRINI, Giovanni B. *Lettera a Camillo Mangot*. Porto Alegre, 23 ottobre 1904. In: *Storia della congregazione scalabriniana: le prime missioni nel Brasile (1888-1905)*, op. cit., p. 307.

Part 2 -- 1907-1920

**INTERNAL REORGANIZATION
AND EXPANSION OF THE INSTITUTE
PASTORAL CONTRIBUTION
OF THE MSCS SISTER**

Internal reorganization and expansion of the institute

Pastoral contribution of the MSCS Sister

In the first part of this study on the MSCS Congregation's history, which we have placed between the years of 1895 and 1907, we gathered conjunctural aspects that were characteristic of the transition from 19th century to 20th century, a period in which we find the beginning of the foundation process of the institute. This political, socioeconomic and cultural view in the context of that period wishes to make evident the interaction of the Scalabrinian work with the historical reality, to highlight the circumstances that led to the foundation of the Feminine Scalabrinian Congregation and, particularly, to focus on the physiognomy of the MSCS Sister.

John Baptist Scalabrini's apostolic visit to Brazil in 1904 coincided with one of the most critical moments of the MSCS's history. The congregation already existed for nine years, and was still in its founding process. The founder's unexpected death, on June 1 of 1905, postponed the solution for the problem created by the attempt to merge the MSCS Congregation with the Congregation of the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, prolonging the experimental stage in the historical evolution of the institute.

The timeline set for this second part of the first volume of the MSCS's history maintains internal motivations and placed between 1907 and 1920, the year the two congregations separated and the year when the 25th anniversary of foundation of the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo - Scalabrinians was celebrated, respectively. As in the first part, this second part is oriented by a triple field of research: the external and more ample context; the internal that addresses the reorganization and missionary expansion stage of the institute; the essential, in our perception, which investigates the MSCS Sister's contribution for the preservation of the catholic faith and the cultural integration of the immigrants in Brazil.

2.1 Historical context of the reorganization period and the beginning of the expansion of the institute

2.1.1 The world in the period of 1907-1920

In 1907, the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles - Scalabrinians began a new phase in its history, now under the protection of Bishop Duarte Leopoldo e Silva, Bishop of Sao Paulo since April of that year. The Feminine Scalabrinian Institute within its small scope started to reorganize itself, while human society year after year witnessed incomparable technical, economic and scientific developments. To understand the journey of the MSCS Congregation better, we have placed the period of study in this more ample horizon, remembering some conjunctural aspects lived by the human family between 1907 and 1920.

At the time, new facts connected to progress and socio-political changes linked themselves within a historical process that did not follow a straight line. The great powers, lined up in two unstable blocks, not paying attention to the promising progress within international rights, armed themselves and in their folly had recourse to a war without precedent.

Honorable peculiarities in the economic, social, intellectual and political fields, but also dangerous contradictions marked the context in which, in 1914, World War I broke out. In the economic sector, the second industrial revolution was going on that continued to surprise the world with technical perfection and new inventions. The extraordinary increase in steel production, used as industry's basic material, allowed for the expansion of railways, to multiply bridges, and for construction in general. Conversion of mechanical energy into electricity facilitated its broader use in industrial production. Use of automatic equipment and processes favored mass production, creating labor division in the manufacturing of goods, the first being positive under some aspects while the second still is currently arguable. In effect, the abundant production of goods made them cheaper and available to many. On the other hand, worker's specialization, still questioned today, submits the individual to a repetitive, monotonous activity, leaving little room for creativity that dignifies human being.

In the land transportation sector after a period of railway predominance, which in some countries was a qualified service, the use of cars, buses and trucks began to grow. Air transportation would have a greater expression from 1920 on, but a non-stop flight between Paris and London, realized in 1911, glimpsed the soon to be development of aviation. In the field of communications, Guglielmo Marconi's invention of the wireless telegraph opened the way for the development of radio, the wireless telephone and television, means that favored the divulgation of news and facilitated more and more long distance communications.

With the succession of invents, a new way of capitalist organization was concomitantly shaped with the development of finance capital that, slowly, got the advantage of industrial capital. From this reality of economic transformations, changes in the social realm took place. As we saw in the first part of this study, a considerable population increase and growing urbanization were the two characteristic phenomena of the West, which continued until the first years of the 20th century. Starting from 1914, the population growth rate changed. Limitation on migration and decrease in birth rates were the causes of the change.

In Western society composition, the bourgeois class maintained supremacy. Big bankers, industry and trade tycoons comprised the high bourgeois, which already inclined toward capital financing. Small businessmen, industrialists and liberal professionals comprised the small bourgeoisie.

The working class achieved major conquests little by little, also in the political field.

It is undeniable that the industrial revolution favored all of society, even if the distribution of its benefits were unequal as it still is. During this period Western European countries strengthened movements favoring social reforms that envisioned the regulation of child labor and the employment of women in industries; to protect the workers in case of an accident, unemployed or sick, to set a minimum wage for workers, to decrease the working hours; to institute a pension for elderly, including domestic and agriculture workers. In some countries, these movements for a new social legislation, which in part were from nationalist-paternalist inspiration, achieved at different times effective results and gradual conquests.

Latin America history, on the other hand, during the first two decades of the 20th century was marked by revolutions such as in Mexico that put an end to Porfirio Diaz's long dictatorship, as well as by successive North American military and economic interventions suffered by Nicaragua and other Central American Republics, which continued until more recent years. In this political scenario, popular masses emerged that would have active participation in the Latin American revolutionary movements.

The economy of the Latin American countries, still agrarian, initiated a process of manufacturing consumers' goods. Consequently, proletariat formation took place with the emergence of the workers' movement, in opposition to the United States interventionist policy, and questioning the way that production means were exploited.

A reading of the 1907-1920 contexts would be incomplete without a reference to the fundamental role played by science, in particular physics and chemistry, in the development of industry. In truth, sciences in general were the object of major interest in the time span between 1830 and 1914, identified as the *apogee of scientific progress*, if compared to previous periods¹⁰⁰.

Many of the discoveries and ideas produced by the human spirit during this period had a revolutionary character, while the immense cultural production of the time was recognized as a new intellectual revolution. Among the many causes are the industrial revolution itself, the search for greater comfort and improvement in the quality of life. It is significant that one of so many discoveries made during the vespers of World War I had been the vitamin, essential for individual growth and in preventing diseases.

Socioeconomic changes and scientific progress had evident influence in the philosophic, literary, and artistic movement of that time. Many works produced between 1907 and 1914 described realities, but also utopias that revealed and fed expectations for new conquests, capable of eliminating misery and suffering in human life in the face of progress and the use of technique. Literary realism as a protest against sentimentalism and romanticism described life based on revelations from science and philosophy.

Science influenced almost all philosophic movements at the beginning of 20th century. This is the case of evolutionists where the author of *the enigma of the universe*, German writer Ernst Haeckel (1834-1919) was outstanding. In the face of the uncertainties of science, many thinkers followed new philosophic trends, such as pragmatism, the widespread American philosophy, or neo-idealism, a school that had the following of the Italian, Benedetto Croce (1866-1952), or still neo-realism that admitted science facts as the only truth, even if incomplete, rejecting mystical trends and manifestations of faith.

¹⁰⁰ BURNS, Edward. M. *História da civilização ocidental - II*, op. cit., p. 792.

Also in the realm of the Arts, new forms of expression arose during the pre-war years of 1914-1918. Henri Matisse (1869-1954), broadened the use of painting deformations initiated by Paul Cezanne (1839-1906), a trend that Pablo Picasso, born in 1881 and the father of cubism, later developed even more both as a way to symbolize modern era chaos and as a reaction to the traditional ideas related to art conception. Fruit of this period was also the Futurism of Filippo Tommaso Marinetti and followers, which were enthusiasts of the machine and scientific discoveries, but despised the classic by proposing movement as the raw material for Art. Functionalism is the basis for architecture, an original style also known as modern or international style architecture characterized by simplicity and adopted currently in all industrialized countries.

Music, in its turn, counted on the realism of Richard Strauss (1864-1949) and Claude Debussy's (1862-1918) impressionism, which in his works rejected realism, preferring to move *in a fantastic world of dreams and shadows*, as Mcnall Burns puts it.

A glance over the world scenario on the eve of the 1914-1918 war reveals that it had a relative development, which influenced how the international organization was concerned. In the last decades of the 19th century, the International Postal Union and the International Telegraphic Union were established. In 1899, the first Hague Conference was realized, during which the Permanent Court of the Hague was created and began to act as an international arbitration court. The second Conference, of The Hague like the first one, was undertaken in 1907, formulated new principles in international law. The Court of The Hague, made up of a body of judges, obtained significant successes until 1914. However, the progress in international law was not capable of finding suitable answers for the challenges of the period to ensure a lasting peace for society.

Each of the powers of that time tried to defend their national interests. Germany wanted to expand to the East, while France understood it necessary to stop Germany's progressive strengthening and wanted to retake the Alsace-Lorene region, in addition to conquering Morocco. Austria had ambitions to take the Balkans and Russia intended to control the straights that link the Black Sea to the Mediterranean. Great Britain was interested in keeping its status quo and, above all, to guarantee free communication with the distant areas of the empire. Italy had territorial ambitions that included Tripoli, under Turkey's power; Trieste and Meridian Tyrol were still in the hands of Austria. In addition to the European powers, two others, Japan and the United States, had grandiose aspirations, impelled, like the others, by economic issues and for reasons of power. Agreements made at this time between the American Government and the Japanese Empire favored both: Japan regarding its interests in Korea, and the United States that wanted to have its rights over the Philippines acknowledged.

This game of interests and of old and recent rivalries involved the most powerful nations in a risky competition, which gave origin to the anarchic status in which World War I is rooted. It points out the contradictions of this reality when economic, social, intellectual-artistic progress is placed side by side with an absurd and savage war such as the 1914-1918.

In truth, the years that proceeded the world conflict was a time of democracy, but of a new imperialism as well. The concentration of wealth and super production guided the capitalist powers toward a policy of annexations in search of markets. *Armed peace* was believed to be the answer, the fruit of an armament race and of militarism, seen as a form to maintain balance and peace. An aggressive nationalism expanded, supported by movements like Pan-Germanism and Pan-Slavism that were, in truth, the spread of expansionists pretensions, and these respectively of Germany and of Russia which formed a Triple Entente and Triple Alliance that lined up in two antagonist blocks of the powers of that time. Within these blocks, other internal blocks were formed and tensions and crises

created contra alliances.

When Archduke Francisco Fernando, heir to the throne of Austria, was murdered on June 28 of 1914, the war became unavoidable, and the alliance system expanded the conflict. The Triple Entente nations, England, France and Russia, later Italy and the United States, had the better deal, if that can be said of a war. The Triple Alliance was made up of Austria, Germany and Italy. The latter remained neutral at the beginning of the war but later supported the Triple Entente.

The 1914-1918 war was fought in the trenches, mobilized 65,000,000 men and it is estimated that 10 million people died. Among other consequences of the conflict are uncountable social and economic problems, the strengthening of nationalism, the degradation of democratic ideas, besides the gradual hegemony of the United States and the progressive decline of Europe.

Another fact with historical consequences taking place during this period was the 1917 Russian Revolution, which was preceded by innumerable demonstrations of dissatisfaction by the common people, above all the low paid labor class, of whom too much was demanded and who were aware of its situation. Since the end of 19th century, the industrialization process in Russia was accelerating. Until 1917, political power in Russia was in the hand of the Czar. The rural aristocracy made up the political regime that had the support of the Orthodox Church. Despite the strong repression of Czarism, general dissatisfaction involved the proletariat, agricultural workers, soldiers, sailors and members of the bourgeoisie in a revolutionary movement that constituted the first concrete challenge to capitalism. The people wanted bread and they opted for a republican regime, and demanded the withdrawal of Russian troops from battlefields. With the triumph of the October 1917 revolution, internal opposition to participation of Russia in the war increased. In reality, the country abandoned the world conflict.

2.1.2 The church and the world circumstances

World War I meant, if the phenomena connected to it and their causes and consequences are considered, a *turnaround* in the entire history of humanity, including the ecclesiastic. The conflict pointed to *the explosion of serious social and spiritual crisis that for very a long time had been taking shape*, and for which some more astute minds, such as that of John Baptist Scalabrini, pointed out at time. On the other hand, the war *exerted a great influence on the new political, social, economic, cultural and religious-ecclesiastic condition almost in the entire world*¹⁰¹.

A result of the 1914-1918 war, as has already been said, was the changes in the international power structure. During the first years of 20th century, Europe's domination over the world reached its zenith, while the gradual rise of the United States was evident. Since the end of the 19th century, this country accelerated its economic-military expansion over Latin America starting in the Caribbean and Central America. England kept its hegemonic position in South America until the first years of 20th century. After the first decade of the new century, the situation changed, with the cessation of British predominance. England, involved with serious internal problems, is no longer capable of maintaining its power over Latin America, which led the way for North-American hegemony.

Weakened in its political, economic and military power Europe was upset by its decline which was expressed in its self-destruction caused by the 1914-1918 war and included the loss of ten million human lives and millions of wounded, incalculable sacrifices and privations, hate and resentment, desolation and ruins that have lasted through time.

¹⁰¹ BIHLMEYER, Karl & TUECHLE, Hermann. *História da igreja - Idade Moderna*. Volume Terceiro. São Paulo, Paulinas, 1965, v. 3, p. 604.

Even though since 1915, during the time of war, the Western political powers had excluded the Apostolic See in the negotiations for peace and limited ecclesial action to spiritual assistance, the Catholic Church could not remain indifferent to the hard reality, and in particular to the spiritual disintegration and the collective psychoses, the moral decay and social perversion, the break of the family and distancing from the church by a large number of the population, the absence of authority and public life being torn apart due to partisan disputes that did not envision the common good.

Along with the delusions and the non-belief in the capacity of technology and reason to respond suitably to the challenges of the times, a living desire for lasting values was awakened among the human family. The mission of facilitating the concretization of these legitimate aspirations of so many was reserved for the Papacy.

The historical period under study has to do with two pontificates: Pope Pius X and Pope Benedict XV. Pius X, who succeeded, in 1903, Leo XIII, imprinted religious-pastoral guidance to his pontificate that lasted until 1914. Pius X, a great reformer, fought modernism and he was concerned in preserving the Christian doctrine in its integrity. He restructured the Roman Curia and took actions for reviewing and the compilation a new Canon Law, as well as for an edition of a revised text of the *Vulgata*. He dedicated himself to a better pastoral service as well as to religious teachings and clergy formation. He promoted the deepening of bible studies and the foundation of a Pontifical Athenaeum, the Biblical Institute, annexed to the Gregorian University. He favored reforms in the cult and in liturgy. He supported initiatives in favor of migrants. He encouraged frequent communion for children and during his pontificate in many countries International Eucharistic Congresses were celebrated.

Regarding modernism, considered *a synthesis of all modern errors*, it appeared in the beginning of the 20th century in France, England, Italy and Germany as a rationalist current within the area of catholic philosophy and theology. *Modernists raised an individual religious conscience as wisdom above revelation and church, and considered dogmas as mere mutable symbols of religious truth unrecognizable in itself...* In the *Pascendi dominici gregis* encyclical, dated September 8 of 1907, Pius X exposed modernism in a systematic way, condemning it as the *collecting vase of all heresies*. In September 1910, the same Pontiff established that all priests destined to teaching and do soul healing, as well as all candidates to priesthood, before receiving the higher orders, should make *a special anti modernist oath*¹⁰². The Pope's fight against modernism obtained the hoped for success. Pius X died on August 20 of 1914, just at the start of the war that he had seen coming for some time

To his successor, Benedict XV, 1914-1922, was left the need to conduct the church during the world conflict and immediate postwar time. Elected in September of 1914, the new Pontiff had the appropriate formation and rich experience in the area of diplomacy and ecclesiastic government, aspects of major importance for the historical moment. During the four years of war, he maintained the necessary rigorous impartiality, not always understood by the warring parties of both sides. He tirelessly called for peace and, at the same time, he was solicitous in his service to the prisoners, the dispersed, the deported, and the civil population affected by the war. His tireless action and exhortations in favor of peace and reconciliation among the peoples conferred on his papacy a notable ascendance in the world scenario. During his pontificate, Benedict XV maintained himself aware of the religious-pastoral duties, and he gave continuity to Pius X's initiatives within the internal life of the church, among which was the elaboration of a new canon law published in 1917.

The diligent religious and pastoral attention of Pius X and Benedict XV had indirect influence in the history of the local churches on all continents. Particularities were overcome, strengthening the universal episcopate, the trend to centralism confirmed, a characteristic of the Catholic Church that had

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 578-9.

been being accentuated since the second half of 19th century. As John Baptist Scalabrini had foreseen, the loss of temporal power was a providential event in the sense that it expanded the papacy's spiritual power, provided the Holy See authority and prestige that it did not have before. The new situation facilitated his overcoming delicate moments such as the separation of church and state, which had already occurred in some countries, among them Brazil during the pontificate of Leo XIII, and France and Portugal during Pius X's pontificate.

In relation to Brazil, still the only country where the MSCS Congregation worked, some ecclesial events and delays had special meaning. A decree from the Vatican of December 28 of 1903, made the crowning of Our Lady of Aparecida possible in a ceremony that only took place on September 8 of 1904. Brazil was placed under the patronage of the Immaculate Virgin on this occasion. The church grants such privileges only to images that are known for their prodigious signs.

During the month of December of 1905, the same pope, Pius X, honored Brazil by giving it a cardinalate, the first in Latin America, conferred on Bishop Joaquim Arcoverde de Albuquerque Cavalcanti, Archbishop of Rio de Janeiro, previously the Bishop of Sao Paulo between 1894 and 1897, and protector of the Christopher Columbus Orphanage. In 1895, he welcomed in his diocese the first MSCS Sisters.

Due to the quality of the diplomatic relations between the Vatican and Brazil, Brazilian representation at the Holy See was elevated to the status of embassy in 1919.

Also interesting in the history of the MSCS of the period the fact that WWI stopped the migratory flow, and prevented the sending of European missionaries to Brazil, which led the local church to search for new alternatives in its pastoral activity.

Another relevant ecclesial fact of the church's history in Brazil of that time was the creation of new ecclesiastic archbishoprics, that of Sao Paulo in 1908, and several bishoprics, prelaties and apostolic prefectures and paying attention to the distant localities of the Brazilian territory. Due to the vast extent of the Brazilian territory, national Episcopal meetings that followed the first one in 1890, in Sao Paulo, were realized by observing the division of the country in ecclesial provinces, in the beginning, Salvador in Bahia and Rio de Janeiro.

After the realization, in Rome, of the Latin American Plenary Council of 1899, the period of reorganization of the judicial-institutional and pastoral was completed with the publication, in 1915, of the Brazilian Episcopate Collective Pastoral. The periodic realization of the Episcopal conferences of the Brazilian regions was interrupted after 1915 in the South, and after 1919 in the North. Only around twenty years later, would there be another meeting, the First Brazilian Plenary Council of 1939. In Jesus Hortal's evaluation, pastoral guidance at the time lacked a social dimension: *the inspiring pastoral theme seemed to be more conservation than of conquest; the spirit of serving men had been ignored. Hortal recognizes that these were defects unique of the period and that nobody has the right to criticize, with the actual mentality, the situations of the past*¹⁰³.

It would be important to compare such guidance with the pastoral practice developed by the MSCS Sisters, in Sao Paulo since 1895, and among Italian immigrants and their descendants in Rio Grande do Sul, since 1915.

¹⁰³ HORTAL, Jesus. *Instituições eclesíásticas e evangelização no Brasil*, op. cit., p. 104.

2.1.3 Human mobility, statistics and ecclesial initiatives

Human migration, a constant phenomenon in the history of the peoples since the most ancient times, reached high figures during the last two centuries. The theme has a privileged importance and, in this study, three motives give it a greater sense: the historical material that gave birth to the Scalabrinian work, including the MSCS Congregation, the repetition of the migratory event in the history of human society sustains the continuity of the institute throughout time and the different situations of human mobility open new pastoral horizons to the MSCS's mission in the church, which is of pilgrimage and a call for action on all the continents together with the diverse ethnical-cultural realities of the planet. Looking back at the migratory movements before the first two decades of 20th century aims to show the gradual intensification of the phenomenon and to place within this context the initiatives of the church, which benefited the migrants and how it was opportune for the expansion of the MSCS Institute.

In all ages, human migrations of historical significance have been recorded, but only in the 19th century, such movements achieved immense proportions. In the modern age, besides the exodus of African slaves to the Americas, of greater importance among others, intercontinental migrations of pioneer groups, of deportees and settlers, that is those who transferred themselves or who were transferred from Spain, Portugal, England, France, Holland, and Belgium to their respective colonial territories in Africa, in the Americas and in Asia.

Since the beginning of 19th century, once again, the European migratory flow populated extensive areas in the Americas, in Africa and in Oceania. During the first half of the century around 4.5 million immigrants coming from Northwestern European countries, Great Britain, Ireland and Germany entered the United States.

The industrial and technological development, the population growth, the progress of the means of transportation, specially maritime, characteristic of the second half of the 19th century, resulted in new migratory currents, now also from Southern and Eastern Europe with the United States, Brazil, Australia and New Zealand as destinations. Exemplifying this, always during the second half of 19th century, in the United States alone 17 million immigrants were admitted, out of whom more than 15 million were Europeans from Ireland, Great Britain, Germany, Italy, Austria-Hungary, Russia and Poland. During the same period, Asian currents from India, China and Japan, in larger numbers, went to the United States, Brazil, the Antilles and the Hawaiian Islands. In Oceania, Australia and New Zealand admitted around 1 million immigrants, British in their majority. In Latin America, mainly after 1870, Argentina and Brazil received millions of immigrants, with numeric prevalence of Spaniards and Italians, and in lesser numbers Portuguese, Russians and Polish. The intercontinental flows during the decade of 1880-1890 were surprising.

Estimates for Brazil at the end of the 19th century show that almost a third of the population in the State of Sao Paulo was comprised of Italian immigrants, according to 1897 statistics. In the city of Sao Paulo, out of the 260,000 inhabitants, 112,000 were Italian nationals. In addition to Sao Paulo, other Brazilian states received numbers of Italian immigrants: Rio Grande do Sul, Espirito Santo, Minas Gerais and, in lesser members, Parana and Santa Catarina, as well as states in the Northern and Northeastern regions of the country. Excluding those who had become naturalized, data from 1910 show that there were 1,264,000 Italians in Brazil

However, in the history of human mobility, the movement, verified in the first decade of the 20th century, was exceptional. Between 1901 and 1910, the United States received more than 8 million Europeans, which represented double the number of entries that took place in the country during the decade of 1881-1890.

During the five years period of 1911-1915, around 1 million and 600 thousand foreigners entered Canada. The entering of immigrants in Argentina and Brazil reached maximum figures, during the periods of 1906-1910 and 1911-1915, respectively. Together both countries, then goals for European migration toward South America, admitted during this period more than 5 million Europeans, a third of who were Italians¹⁰⁴.

We highlight, from statistics related to Brazil, that show the immigration flow in the country at the beginning of the 20th century the larger groups that went to Sao Paulo and Rio Grande do Sul, states where the MSCS Congregation carried out its pastoral activity at the time. In Sao Paulo, according to CSER data, between the period of 1905-1909, 38,567 Portuguese; 63,595 Italians; 69,682 Spaniards; 825 Japanese; 23,870 Germans and other nationalities entered. During the following five years, 1910-1914, the number of Portuguese admitted added up to 111,491; Italians 88,692; Spaniards 108,154; Japanese 14,465; Germans and other nationalities added up to 40,096. During 1915-1919 in Sao Paulo 21,191 Portuguese; 17,142 Italians; 27,172 Spaniards; 12,649 Japanese; 5,530 Germans and other nationalities were admitted

Rio Grande do Sul, the state where the MSCS Congregation began its activities in 1915, admitted, during the period of 1900-1904, 1,036 Germans; 2,336 Italians; 466 Polish; 1,344 immigrants of other nationalities. During 1905-1909, 2,068 Germans, 1,687 Italians, 6,498 Polish, 2,640 immigrants from other nationalities were admitted in the state. During the five-year period of 1910-1914, new admittance of foreigners in Gaúcho soil added up to 6,491 Germans; 2,256 Italians; 17,327 Polish; 5,661 immigrants of other nationalities. It is important to keep in mind that Italian immigration to Rio Grande do Sul reached figures much higher between 1875 and 1899.¹⁰⁵

The extraordinary increase of migratory flows would lead countries, previously favorable to immigration, to review their policy concerning the admission of foreigners. Since 1907, some aspects of the phenomenon were questioned, especially in the United States. The posterior adoption of restrictive norms, aiming at controlling and regulating the admittance of immigrants would provoke significant changes within the scope of human mobility.

At the same time when countries with larger numbers of admitted immigrants began to question their immigration policies, and began, to defend what was most convenient to their national socioeconomic interests. The church, true to its universal mission and convicted of the importance of being present among the social movements in the history of humankind, searched for new forms of pastoral activity within the field of human mobility. As we saw, the high figures that characterized the Italian exodus between 1880 and 1914, a typical period of mass migration, greatly revealed the contours of the phenomenon.

Still, during the pontificate of Leo XIII, of opportune intervention in the social sector, was the triple intention of promoting social justice, of guaranteeing the dignity of the person and to Christianize human society, an ecclesiastic orientation that became official and, amplified by his successors, to the point of being, in time, considered as a doctrine in the pastoral field of human mobility.

In many circumstances, Scalabrini expressed his acknowledgement to Pope Leo XIII, who from the start supported his work, favoring it with a liberality that characterized the Pontiff, enriching it with special privileges, praising it, according to the Bishop himself more than he could want and blessed it and facilitating its ecclesial path, which time consolidated.

¹⁰⁴ TASSELLO, Graziano G. *Lessico migratorio*. Roma, Centro Studi Emigrazione - CSER, 1987, cf. p. 107-11.

¹⁰⁵ DE ROSA, Luigi. *L'emigrazione italiana in Brasile: un bilancio*. Roma, Centro Studi Emigrazione - CSER, 1987, p. 175-304.

On November 15th of 1887, Pope Leo XIII, , two weeks before the foundation of the Pious Society of the Missionaries of St. Charles, approved the idea of an institute that had as its objective religious assistance and the well being of the Italian emigrants, above all in the Americas. The same Leo XIII, later on, sent to the American Bishops the letter *Quam aerumnosa*, published on December 10 of 1888, prepared with Scalabrini's collaboration, in which he communicated the foundation of the institute, giving them support for their work, initiated in 1887. The faithfulness of the bishop and his followers to the received charisma would lead to projects, which would bear fruit in the church that is on a pilgrimage through history.

The memorial sent by Scalabrini to the Holy See on May 5 of 1905 summarizes this pastoral journey in the field of human mobility, the emotions felt during his trips to the United States and to Brazil, the direct contact with his missionaries and immigrants who settled there. The Bishop saw, on sight, the religiousness that sustained them, the assiduous and hard work, the peaceful character that oriented them in the search of a dignified life for themselves and their families in another land. He was comforted with the certainty that his project was necessary and it was worth amplifying and giving it continuity.

Therefore, Scalabrini proposed the institution, to the Holy See, of a central agency in the church, *Pro Emigratis Catholicis*, which finality would be providing religious assistance to the immigrants, above all in the Americas as to keep alive the meaning of Christianity and the Catholic faith in their hearts.

Representatives from many nations, among those with the strongest immigration, who should have knowledge about the migratory phenomenon, would form the agency and be competent to undertake the project and to realize their proposals, which included:

- to preserve immigrant's faith and culture;
- to guarantee in the host countries the presence of priests and zealous missionaries for the well being of immigrants, who speak or who have a reasonable knowledge of the language spoken by the immigrants;
- to provide spiritual assistance to immigrants of all ethnics;
- to facilitate for the immigrants a dignified life as a citizen and as God's children;
- to study the human mobility phenomenon, and to maintain itself updated on the Catholic migratory movement;
- set up schools for the children of immigrants so as to facilitate the learning of the language of the receiving country - this mission to be entrusted to the sisters;
- to set up a medication dispensary next to the school, to be entrusted to the sisters or to the priests;
- to keep the immigrants from being proselytized by the sects;
- to create national or personal parishes;
- to facilitate ways for the immigrants to form associations;
- to contribute to the unity of Christian peoples and to serve as an edification for non-

Christians¹⁰⁶.

Immigration Special Service, created in 1912 by Pope Pius X, originated from Scalabrini's proposal, and much later Pope Paul VI established The Pontifical Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrations and Tourism in 1970.

The Immigration Special Service, attached to the then Sacred Consistorial Congregation, was the first official agency of the Holy See to provide spiritual assistance to immigrants. Another one of Pius X's initiatives was the institution of a college aimed at preparing priests to work among Italian immigrants. Located in Rome, the college began to function after WWI, being denominated The Pontifical College of Immigration. Pope Benedict XV, in turn, instituted *The National Immigrants Day*, an opportunity to collect donations for the Catholic assistance works among Italian immigrants.

2.1.4 Brazil: Reflections on events of the times

A brief synthesis of the events involving Brazil during the first two decades of the 20th century aims at understanding clearly the historical circumstances along the path of the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute, which took place in the context of the period. Also by focusing on the Brazilian socio-economic reality, in order to prevent losing sight of the domestic evolution of the country, which was the pastoral space for the congregation, even if more limited due to the reduced number of MSCS Sisters.

Historical data extracted from the *Statistics of the 20th century* from the IGBE *an ample, although non-continuous*, picture of Brazil, a country that initiated the new century with an agriculture exporting economy that recently had left a slavery work regime, and would in a gradual form, consolidate its industrialization and democracy. Brazil during the first years of 20th century, made up a *constellation of regions* with different development levels and, consequently, was characterized by a marked social heterogeneity, just as it is today.

Socioeconomic problems of the country, which generally were the same for all of Latin America, intensified at the beginning of the last century. Despite the industrial spurt, the Latin American economies remained agrarians, maintaining a latifundium regime that made survival difficult for small and medium size farmers. Large extensions of land belonging to the state and to the church, vacant land, became private properties. The confiscation of land that belonged to the indigenes communities also resulted in new latifundiums. This kind of ownership implies, almost always, the expulsion of agriculture workers from rural areas. Settled in the cities, they became cheap and available manual labor, used in industry.

In the ambit of the Latin American Nations, the working class began to be established at the end of 19th century. The first years of the 20th century were the stage for the movements of the labor masses connected to industry, mines, and railways. There were general strikes, here and there, in Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, and Brazil, in addition to elections and parliamentary struggles, insurrections, and terrorist acts. The period of 1907-1920 that we are looking at now, without generalizing, was of labor class upheaval when governments rigorously repressed general strikes. This period of social oppression, which provoked revolutionary movements, led in a simultaneous manner to the establishment of dictatorships in many countries of Latin America. The First World War of 1914-1918 and the 1917 Russian Revolution contributed to the creation of an appropriate climate for such movements that, on the other hand, resulted in progress concerning social questions.

¹⁰⁶ SCALABRINI, Giovanni B. *Memoriale sulla congregazione o commissione "Pro Emigratis Catholicis"*. In: *Scritti*, op. cit., v. 2, p. 388.

The Golden Law of 1888 in Brazil abolished slavery, but left serious social problems unsolved such as unemployment and underemployment, illiteracy and non-skilled professionals, prejudice and misery, making the effective exercise of citizenship for the former slaves difficult.

The substitution of slave labor by paid labor stimulated immigration to the country. Up to World War I, Europeans and their descendents composed most of the labor force in the emerging Brazilian industry. The industrial growth provoked in a large measure by the war would also mean a gradual increase of Brazilian workers, who later would become predominant in the country.

The working class was concentrated in cities where factories were located. Italians were the most numerous in Sao Paulo, and the Portuguese in Rio de Janeiro. Along with immigrants, new ideologies arrived in Brazil, among which was Anarchism that prevailed until 1917 when socialism began to be stronger. In that year, a general strike that took place in Sao Paulo had repercussions in the whole country. The government repressed the anarchist manifestations. Since the beginning of the century, foreigners involved in political questions were punished and were expelled from Brazilian territory. There were, however, reactions to the situation, mostly due to the influence of Italian and Spanish Immigrants. United to defend their most urgent interests, they organized groups, set up mutual help savings institutions, founded newspapers that led to the creation of unions, which were legally recognized already in 1907.

The working and living conditions of the laborers, in truth, were very harsh: long working days, low wages, filthy, dark, humid, and overheated environments; half of the labor force was under 18 years old, while a third of it was women. The majority of these workers had worked on the coffee plantations. In Sao Paulo, the living conditions were deplorable slums that characterized the workers districts, such as Bras or Mooca. It would be interesting to know if the MSCS Sisters that worked in Ipiranga, Vila Prudente, at the time, had contact with immigrants and their descendents who settled in the ghettos of Sao Paulo.

In a society as unequal as the Brazilian society of the first years of the 20th century, a brief description of its dominant class, of urban middle class and rural population is suitable. The agriculture exporting aristocracy, especially the one connected to coffee, continued to be the dominant class. The urban middle class had a significant increase, and was made up of public servants, liberal professionals, elements of the clergy, businessmen, small industrialists and military officers, which still did not have active participation in the political process of the country. Elections were fraudulent, held by mechanisms of electoral manipulation. Contrary to what went on in other Latin American countries, it was not military forces that maintained power, but the coffee growers together with other rural classes that governed the country and obviously did it in self-interest:

It was like a pyramid in which the apex was the president of the republic and just below him the Paulista Republican Party and the other republican state parties. At the base of the framework, the colonel and his family, friends, relatives and dependents, composing the well-known state oligarchies, small states within the State... Illiterates who, sometimes learned, to sign their names so they would be able to cast a vote, but could not read the name that was written. If they could, it would be the same thing¹⁰⁷.

In the beginning of the 20th century, Brazil had a population of 17 million habitants, and 52% of the working population was in rural areas in misery and abandoned by the government. Illiterate, victims of illnesses, under the control of overseers, the rural population lived without a perspective things getting better.

¹⁰⁷ BASBAUM, Leôncio. *História sincera da república. De 1889 a 1930*. 4. ed., São Paulo, Alfa-Ômega, 1981, v. 2, p.189-191. In: *HISTÓRIA 2* Ricardo Adhemar-Flávio, Belo Horizonte, Lê, 1989, v. 2, p. 141.

The social and economic structures, inherited from the colonial period, were under questioning in all Latin America since the end of the 19th century without, however, achieving expressive changes. In Brazil, under certain circumstances, the manifestations of revolt of the rural population against oppression of the large landowners had some connection with movements like the Messianic Movement, and were silenced by the authorities who continued to be insensitive to the dramas of the rural population. Canudos is an example of a movement against the agrarian structure in the *sertão** that occurred in Bahia between 1893 and 1897, under the leadership of Antonio Conselheiro. In the book “Os Sertões”, by Euclides da Cunha, there is this note on the rebellion of Canudos: *Those poor rebels were very weak. They required another kind of reaction. They forced us into another fight. However, we sent this single unique, supreme and moralizing argument: the bullet.*¹⁰⁸

Another typical messianic movement took place on the plateau of Santa Catarina, in Southern Brazil, about 15 years after Canudos. It is known as the Contestado Revolt, 1912-1916, which resulted in thousands of victims. During the *first republic* or the *old republic*, which, ran from 1889 to 1930, governmental incapacity to provide suitable answers to legitimate claims of the population in need of health services, schools, churches, and better living conditions was notorious.

Some aspects of the economic condition of the country deserve remembering. During the first decades of the 20th century, in addition to the activity of the coffee sector, rubber extraction and exportation stand out and provoked important changes in the Amazons. Manaus and Belem became more developed; the exodus of the Northeasterners headed for that region; Acre was incorporated to Brazil, which saw its credibility grow abroad with the increase of its national reserves in London; a period of expansion began; ports were modernized as well as public works in the capital, Rio de Janeiro.

The period between 1907 and 1920 was of economic growth in Brazil, thanks to the good performance of the coffee sector, and to the progress of the country’s industrialization process. In 1907, 3,258 industrial establishments guaranteed employment for more than 150 thousand workers, 30% of them were in the cotton textile sector. There were other industries in the lumber, furniture, clothing, shoes, hides, soap, candles, matches, hats, and tobacco sectors. Between 1907 and 1920, around 10,000 new industrial firms were established, 60% during the five years period of 1915-1919. The time of world conflict was critical to the economical development due to the boost given by the substitution of imported goods. Production fell short from lack of available imported machinery, but on the other hand, the industrial boom of Brazil was an evident reflection of the conjuncture of conditions derived from the 1914-1918 War.

2.1.5 Feminism, demands and conquests

Other influences of the war appeared after 1918. The climate of fear and hopelessness spread in the post-war era, and the general feeling that the world was not the same any more were factors that caused substantial transformations in human society. For some, delusion translated into a tremendous existential challenge. The belief in rationalism and liberalism, the generalized enchantment in the face of progress, the optimism that had characterized the years preceding the 1914-1918 War, gave way to perplexity and many looked to the pleasures of life for their reason of existence. The levels of mental structures to the changes were profound. Simultaneously to the strengthening of the United States

* Specially arid region in the Brazilian interior, far from agriculture areas, of urban center and of the costal areas (n.d.t.).

¹⁰⁸ CUNHA, Euclides da. *Os Sertões*. Rio de Janeiro, Laemmert, 1903, p. 208. In: *Missão da igreja no Brasil*. Beno Brod. *Os messianismos no Brasil*, p. 122.

hegemony, the American life style spread and took hold. Western European high classes, mostly, abandoned their traditional behavior and chose the American lifestyle. In this context, although limited to the large urban centers, one aspect began to call attention: women of all social classes began to give themselves a new importance. Feminism, as a system capable of generating a special interest, received a decisive impulse. The inclusion of it in this study aims at inciting a reflection on the topic, to project some light concerning the possible causes for the repetitive constraints also lived by the MSCS Sisters in this field; to evaluate, in due time, the Feminine Scalabrinian's contribution of the movement among immigrant women.

The gender issue, understood as *a way of being in the world* and its articulation with feminism described as the *expression of women becoming aware, aware of their historical condition of being seen and not heard and of oppression, thus from the active and organized resistance to this situation*, achieved remarkable relevance in our days¹⁰⁹.

Feminism, understood in the strict sense, had its origin in the liberal revolution, connected to the context of the second half of the 19th century. The work of John Stuart Mill, *The Subjection of Women*, 1869, is seen as the *first manifest of feminism* that, in its arduous historical process, summed up the conquests that were not rigorously cumulative as history is not always linear¹¹⁰.

The event of March 8, 1857 when a group of women in a textile factory of New York went on a strike against the workload of 16 hours per day and low wages is well known. In the event, 129 women burned to death as a consequence to the owner's order to set the building on fire. In homage to them, March 8 became the official *International Women's Day* after a proposal presented during The Second International Women's Conference in Copenhagen in 1910.

Pope John XXIII's encyclical *Pacem in terris*, more than one hundred years after the March 8 event, published in April 11, 1963, identified *women's entry into public life* as one of the three great signs of the times, along with the gradual rise of the working classes, and of the so-called third world countries:

*...the fact of women's entrance into public life is all too well known, perhaps more stressed in Christian civilization nations; much later, but already on a considerable scale, in other nations with other cultures and traditions. As women become more and more aware of human dignity itself, they will no longer be treated as an object or instrument; they demand their rights and responsibilities suitable to their dignity as a person, both in family and in social life*¹¹¹.

Between the tragic event of March 8 and John XXIII's significant acknowledgement, the feminist movement conquered some consistent spaces that once had been considered a male's world. Gradually, first in urban centers, later in peripheral and rural areas, women were present in this path searching for an indiscriminate participation in the social realm of their time.

Important steps on this path were the result of profound modifications reduced by capitalism that, in the 19th century, resulted in the proletarianization in Europe and in the United States, forcing women to search for work out of their homes. The technological advances invaded the home with inventions such as the sewing machine, electricity and electric household appliances, freeing the middle class women from certain chores many of whom found new interests and looked for other activities outside their homes. There was a proliferation of women's clubs in the United States of a

¹⁰⁹ FREITAS, Maria Carmelita de. *Gênero / Teologia feminista: interpelações e perspectivas para a teologia - Relevância do tema*. In: *Gênero e Teologia, Interpelações e perspectivas - SOTER Sociedade de teologia e ciências da religião*. São Paulo, Loyola, 2003, p. 17-8.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

¹¹¹ JOHN XXIII. *Encyclical Letter Pacem in terris*, 1963, n. 18.

cultural character at first, but later turning to social causes and politics.

Still in the United States liberalism had, for some time, facilitated elite women's access to university. The first university for women was founded in 1865. They soon were also able to attend universities for men. The qualification obtained ensured women the possibility to be independent professionals.

However, in Latin America, although some countries achieved a relative capitalist development with a strong presence of liberalism on the ideological level, feminism manifested much later. During the first decades of the 20th century, Latin American women, in general, still did not participate in political life. Their role was of wife, mother, and *queen of the home* as it is said. Actually, they did not have a saying not even regarding their children's education. Women, who worked outside their home to help increase the family's income, received wages lower than men, a fact that even today repeats itself.

A major impulse, which made the women's emancipation movement more complete, occurred during WWI. In that circumstance, thousands of North American women would closely follow the conflict, serving among the troops as nurses or developing other types of supporting activities. In Europe, in all social classes, women conquered a certain degree of independence when they replaced men in factories, offices, and in the fields.

After the war, in the larger European urban centers, many women allowed themselves to frequent bars and saloons, to smoke in public and go out alone, to dress with a certain freedom, to have short hair, and to abandon old social conventions and restrictions, which meant a sudden breaking away from the standards of the period.

At the same time, women's rights defense organizations were established, having in mind the increase of female participation in social, cultural, political, and union life. Joane d'Arc International Alliance, an organization founded in England in 1911, as a Catholic Feminist Movement, was for many years the only voice of women's aspirations. The International Union of Catholic Women's Leagues appeared in 1918, and in 1922, the Female Youth Movement.

Women's participation in the Catholic Action was, according to many, the pastoral proposal of greater ecclesiastic expression in the first half of the 20th century. The space opened to women in the Catholic Church, however, remained limited.

In countries like Brazil where the MSCS Sister worked, there was between 1907 and 1920, and still today, a marked domination over the female population, independent of age, race, social class or life standard. The MSCS history also shows reflexes of this reality in the Feminine Scalabrinian Congregation in its daily routines.

Feminism as an ideological movement, which proposed to fight against discrimination and the subordination status imposed on women, was manifested in Brazilian society through initiatives favorable to the abolishment of slavery and to the republican ideal and, in later times, through revindications related to workers rights, to the right to education and women's right to vote.

In the year of 1910, Deolinda Dalho founded the Feminine Party and in Rio de Janeiro organized a march in which only a small group participated, only around 100 women, but with an important revindication: the right to vote that would only be conquered in February 24, 1932. Another initiative, now of Bertha Lutz, was the creation of the *Brazilian Federation for Female Progress*, which gave a great impulse to the campaign for women's voting rights in the country.

Since the beginning of the 20th century, along with struggles for voting rights, Brazilian women

demanded the reduction in daily working hours, maternity leave, equality of wages and the end of night shifts for women and children. The first strikes in Sao Paulo were initiatives of the sewing women who did not conform to the conditions imposed on them.

The 1920's in Brazil, as we shall see, was rich in movements for change, including a more expressive participation of women in the nation's life. Without venturing for an answer or judgment, and based on a hypothesis, we will search, at another time, to identify some form of participation of the MSCS Sister in the Brazilian Feminine Movement in the Paulista context and in areas of Italian colonization in Rio Grande do Sul.

In general, the conquests of the Feminist Movement advance in the more developed countries, toward a lucid understanding of the essentiality of values, such as the capacity for teamwork, in contraposition to individualism, the power of persuasion and dialogue instead of authoritarianism; cooperation instead of futile competition. In the measure that this new perception took hold, all of society was enriched and walked toward the plenitude of being.

2.2 Internal reorganization and belonging to the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute

2.2.1 Reorganization of the Feminine Scalabrinian Congregation

At the end of the first decade of the 20th century, there were signs of major historical importance that, in truth were already underway, but not perceivable by the majority of people at first glance. The annexation politics leaning towards Africa and Asia was about to reach its peak while the most powerful nations were heading toward a world war that would have unforeseeable consequences in all realms of human society. The Catholic Church centralized and conservative but conscious of the essentiality of its spiritual mission, reinterpreted its pastoral practices, and procured to adequate itself to modern times, orientating the clergy and people to a less traditional, but more authentic religiosity. International circumstances diversified the situations of human mobility and universalized the migratory phenomenon. In America, the United States was becoming a capitalist power and at the same time that revolutionary movements occurring in Latin American countries were reacting against the socioeconomic structure inherited from the colonial period. In Brazil, the predominance of oligarchies supported by the colonel system continued and, as in other Latin American countries, industrial production gained significance. In this context, in which the world was transforming, the MSCS Congregation, still very small, also began to overcome its state of immobilization caused by adverse contingencies to which it was subject. Bishop Duarte Leopoldo e Silva was a providential patron of the reorganization of the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute.

When, on September 22 of 1907, the separation of the Sisters of St. Charles and the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus was decided, in Sao Paulo, a new chapter of the Scalabrinian Missionary history began. Once the separation of the two groups became effective, Mother Clelia Merloni's sisters were under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Alessandria, Italy, and the Sisters of St. Charles were under the protection of the Bishop of Sao Paulo, Brazil, at the time Bishop Duarte Leopoldo e Silva.

In April of 1907, Bishop Duarte became the successor of Bishop Jose de Camargo Barros who had been a victim in the sinking of the ship *Sirio*, which occurred in Mediterranean waters on July 8th in 1906, when the bishop returned from an *ad limina* visit. In the year of 1908, with the transformation of the Episcopal seat into an Archdiocese, Bishop Duarte became the first Archbishop of Sao Paulo. Along with the responsibilities pertinent to his ministry, the Archbishop undertook a rigorous restructuring of the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute, respecting its original objective.

In its early days the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute, was thought of by Scalabrini and Father Joseph Marchetti as a second order aggregated to the Pious Society of the Missionaries of St. Charles. Father Faustino Consoni, director of the Christopher Columbus orphanage since March of 1897, thought the same and, as Father Marchetti, proposed a closer link with the Masculine Scalabrinian Congregation.

Also, the constitutions of the congregation, approved on June 10, 1900, but only printed in 1902, resulting in the merge of the Sisters of St. Charles and the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, stated in Article 1, third chapter: the new institute would remain dependant on its founder, John Baptist Scalabrini and on his successors or of the ordinary diocese where the motherhouse was located. The congregation would have, therefore, a general superior for the apostolic activities and other eventual circumstances – external affairs – and a mother general responsible for the discipline of the feminine institute – internal affairs.¹¹²

Scalabrini in a letter to Father Consoni on this issue, dated October 25 of 1900 attributed to

¹¹² REGOLE DELLA CONGREGAZIONE DELLE SUORE APOSTOLE DEL SACRO CUORE DI GESÙ. Piacenza, 1902, p. 7-10.

himself the right to be the founder, and he clarified that the sisters depend on the general superior for destination, but remained subordinated to the superior of the house for anything else. The superior would receive orders and carry them out. Another responsibility of the mother general would be the visit to be undertaken in the future.

Father Faustino Consoni, still the director of the Christopher Columbus Orphanage at the time of the separation of the two religious groups in 1907 defended the idea that the link between the priests and sisters of St. Charles be kept in some form. Consoni's position diverged from that of Father Domenico Vicentini, general superior of the Missionaries of St. Charles. Father Vicentini always defended autonomy for both Scalabrinian Congregations. According to the general superior, the sisters should have their independence concerning internal discipline and a certain amount of autonomy on external affairs. From the general superior's point of view, the Missionaries of St. Charles as well as the clergy, in general, should help the sisters, but to avoid a closer commitment with them.

Father Faustino, the director of the orphanage, who had accompanied the MSCS Sisters day-to-day life for about ten years, had witnessed their preoccupations and uncertainties regarding the future of the institute, persisted in the proposal to vitalize the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute. Around the end of 1908, the missionary justified the reason of his insistence and dared to persuade his superior, Father Vicentini:

... otherwise, it would be giving victory to Mother Merloni that from our congregation they had gotten life, and ours, death. Inform yourself with Bishop Duarte who made the division among the sisters, and of good mind, he promised to support them, and try in every way to continue the work initiated by Bishop Scalabrini¹¹³.

Bishop Duarte Leopoldo e Silva provided effective support that insured, under those circumstances, the continuity of the Scalabrinian foundation of 1895. In terms of numbers, the situation of the institute was of worrisome concern, and this aspect speaks in favor of Bishop Duarte, of Father Consoni, and of other Scalabrinian Missionaries and of the sisters themselves, who believed in the possibility for the congregation to be itself. Only Mother Assunta Marchetti remained of the four pioneer sisters. Carolina Marchetti had left in the beginning of 1897. Maria Angela Larini and Maria Stella Regina Franceschini had died, in 1899 and 1901 respectively. In 1907, at the time of the separation from the Apostles, there were only nine MSCS Sisters. Out of those, Sister Gertrude Toloni requested, not too long afterward, permission to be admitted into the Congregation of the Sister of St. Joseph. Bishop Duarte dispensed Sister Maria das Dores, during the canonical visit to the institute by the archbishop in 1910.

An important determination made by Bishop Duarte was that all MSCS Sisters, now under his jurisdiction, should make the regular novitiate. The sisters began this formative period in April of 1910. The Archbishop named Sr. Fulgência Huysmans, a Belgian religious of the Congregation of the Sisters of Saint Vincent de Paul, from Penh, Sao Paulo, as superior and mistress of novices, and the Redemptorist Father, Lourenço Hubbauer, chaplain of the Sisters of St. Vincent, as the spiritual director of the Sisters of Saint Charles. Bishop Duarte delegated the same Father Lourenço as his representative among the Scalabrinian Sisters.

At the conclusion of the formative phase, the sisters made public perpetual profession in a ceremony that took place on January 1, 1912 in the Chapel of Our Lady of Lourdes, in the feminine section of the Christopher Columbus Orphanage. An existing report in the archives of the Metropolitan Chancery of Sao Paulo, which confirms the book of minutes of the perpetual profession of the MSCS

¹¹³ CONSONI, Faustino. *Lettera a Domenico Vicentini*. São Paulo, 11-12-1908 (AGS 396/9).

¹¹⁴ *BREVI CENNI*, op. cit., p. 23.

Congregation, 1912-1934, registers the name of six sisters that were admitted to perpetual profession by Bishop Duarte Leopoldo e Silva on this date: Assunta Marchetti, Camilla Dal Ri, Carmela Tomedi, Antonietta Fontana, Angelina Meneguzzo, Lucia Gorlin. The register book of the congregation which has some imprecision's also relates the name of Sister Clarice Baraldini, which would bring to seven the number of MSCS Sisters that would have professed the first of January of 1912.

Brevi Cenni states that after having heard the favorable evaluation of Sister Fulgência Huysmans and of Father Lourenço Hubbauer, Bishop Duarte conceded that 1 January of 1912 the sisters *could pronounce new vows and could receive the ring of the brides of Christ, according to the Rule of the Sisters of Saint Charles.*¹¹⁴

Among other actions taken by the Archbishop of Sao Paulo with the idea to reorganize the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute, three had special meaning: the nomination of Mother Assunta Marchetti as the general superior of the congregation for the six-year term, 1912-1918; the elaboration of a new constitution for the institute; the establishment of the novitiate of the MSCS Congregation. We will address the new constitution and Mother Assunta Marchetti's six-year term at a later moment.

Concerning the novitiate, Father Faustino Consoni's support to make it happen must be recognized. Instituted on the day of St. Charles, November 4 of 1912, the formation house welcomed as the first candidates former students of the orphanage. Installed in one of the dependencies of the feminine section of Christopher Columbus, the novitiate was vital to the continuity of the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute. Vila Prudente became the seat of the general government of the congregation.

Before as well as after the reorganization, which was an accidental moment, but of absolute necessity in the historical evolution of the institute, October 25, 1895, always was recognized as the beginning date. The Archdiocese of Sao Paulo ecclesiastic bulletin in its 1909 issue has, among other data related to the MSSC Congregation, its address as Christopher Columbus Orphanage, Vila Prudente; the name of the superior, Sister Assunta Marchetti; the year of its establishment in Sao Paulo, 1895.¹¹⁵ No less important than recognizing the beginning date, it maintained the founding intentions in the constitutions of 1914 and in its pastoral practice in the successive years.

2.2.2 The Constitutions of 1914

1. The importance of the constitutions for a religious congregation is obvious, and Canon Law itself is the authorized voice on it. In the second book, part three, canons 573 to 746 that address the institutes of consecrated life and the societies of apostolic life, the actual code, published on January 25 Of 1983, makes innumerable references to the laws unique to each institute, and determines rigorous fidelity to the founder's intensions, as is read in canon 578 that establishes:

*The mind and the objectives of the founders, approved by competent ecclesiastic authority, which concerns the nature, the finality, the spirit and the character of the institute, as well as its traditions, all this constitute the heritage of this institute, an be it faithfully preserved by all*¹¹⁶.

The constitutions of the MSCS Congregation approved by Bishop Duarte Leopoldo e Silva on April 16 of 1914, three years before the publication of the Canon Law of 1917, preserved the essential

¹¹⁵ *BOLETIM ECCLESIASTICO*. São Paulo: Orgam Oficial da Archdiocese de São Paulo. Mensal. Livro 14. Anno IV (7/8): 169, Janeiro/fevereiro 1909.

¹¹⁶ CANONIC RIGHTS CODE. Promulgated by pope John Paul II, 1983.

elements of the heritage of the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute.

The reorganization of the institute made under the jurisdiction of Bishop Duarte determined that, as we have seen, besides a new novitiate and new vows, also new constitutions for the MSCS Congregation. The compilation of the new code was entrusted to Father Lourenço Hubbauer and Sister Fulgência Huysmans who successfully completed the assignment.

Given the situation of the institute, a new legislation was necessary, which, by the way the actual Canon Law also states in canon 587, paragraph 4 that foresees possible revisions and adaptations in accordance with the demands of the time and place. Thus, at that time, while in Rome, Cardinal Peter Gasparri, renowned canonist, led the endeavor of the new codification of the Canon Law, in Sao Paulo the new MCSC constitutions were elaborated and approved. Only about twenty years later, the institute's own constitution would be adjusted to the governing canonic legislation of the church at the time, that is, to the code of 1917.

According to Father Ludovico Nolan's viewpoint, dated May 5 of 1931, solicited by Cardinal Raffaello Rossi, the constitutions approved in 1914 had less than a tenth of the legislation in the code of 1917, concerning feminine institutions with simple vows. Due to this, instead of modifying and completing them, Father Nolan proposed that a new text to be compiled.

Friar Lazzaro d'Arbonne, consultant for the Congregation of the Religious, at the time, affirmed that, based on experience, it is basic to preserve already existing elements, whenever possible, when reorganizing an institute and to adequate its legislation text to the new reality.

To verify if the compilation of the constitutions of 1914 protected the vocation and the identity of the MSCS Congregation; it is good to go over the facts already registered in its history; to look over the previous legislation and to present the aspects regarding the nature, the finality, the spirit and the character as well as the fundamental norms referring to the regimen of the institute and look at the discipline of the members, the incorporation and formation, to the object of professed vows, as established in the actual Canon Law in canon 587.

The historical background of the congregation's own code goes back to October of 1895 when, in Piacenza, Father Joseph Marchetti received from John Baptist Scalabrini the task of compiling the Rules to be observed by the Servants of the Orphans and Abandoned Infants Abroad. By the Bishop's order, the new congregation's legislation should be extracted from the constitutions of the Visitation Sisters, a foundation of the 17th century. St. Joana Franca de Chantal, Baroness of Chantal and spiritual daughter of St. Francis of Sales, guided by him founded in 1610 the Visitation Order to provide assistance to the sick and for the education of the youth.¹¹⁷ Scalabrini had in St. Francis de Sales one of his models of life.

It is known that Father Marchetti in fact wrote with his own hand a part of the first rules of the Feminine Scalabrinian Congregation. We have seen, in part, the first of these writings, some aspects of its contents that we considered as basic. In addition, it we know that the letter of December 28 of 1900, sent by the sisters to Scalabrini in which the missionaries recalled that these rules were, of *the Bishop's order and will*, and that they were inspired on those of St. Francis de Sales.

John Baptist Scalabrini, therefore, *source of vocation and in common spirit with his charisma*, determined the finality of the MSCS Congregation and, still in general lines, prescribed norms for it indicating the life style by which a Scalabrinian Missionary Sister should identified¹¹⁸.

¹¹⁷ BIHLMAYER, Karl & TUECHLE, Hermann. *History of the church*, op. cit., cf. p. 96.

¹¹⁸ LOZANO, Juan M. *Letter to Lice Maria Signor*, Chicago, 2-2-1985 (AGSS 1.4/2).

Although there is not any explicit documentation proving that Scalabrini had initially prepared or somehow confirmed the rules of the MSCS Sisters, correspondence of 1897 between Father Faustino Consoni and the Bishop, is a significant hint on this matter. Father Consoni, four days after becoming director of the Christopher Columbus Orphanage, in a letter of March 9 of the same year, proposed to Scalabrini the approval of the rules of the newly born feminine congregation, and expressed his desire that it state the Bishop of Piacenza to be the founder of the congregation. In answer, on April 12, 1897, Scalabrini wrote to Consoni:

*Concerning the sisters, there were rules approved 'ad experimentum'; if you do not find it, write me right way. We wanted to start with temporary vows: we will see what God wants. Meanwhile, admit those young women, about whom you have written me, but take care that they are what they should be as they should be. Father Vicentini would be a distinguished director for the sisters*¹¹⁹.

The rules compiled by Marchetti strictly speaking, were not approved. *Brevi Cenni* states that on October 24, 1897, the *Servants of the Orphans of the Congregation of St. Charles* professed, making *perpetual vows of chastity, obedience and poverty, according to the rules of St. Charles... On that occasion, Father Faustino Consoni, by John Baptist Scalabrini's delegation, received the sisters' vows.*

Just over three years later in a letter of 1900 to Scalabrini, the sisters confirmed as the first rules of the institute those compiled by Father Joseph Marchetti, but they stated that Father Faustino Consoni had made them reformulate the rules, and since then the missionaries were known as Sisters of Charity of the Congregation of St. Charles of Piacenza. These rules, they accepted and observed scrupulously, and they rejoiced in and honored their name, which they wanted to preserve at all cost. Such was the objective of the letter of December 28, 1900 to John Baptist Scalabrini.

The MSCS Sisters, as we saw, felt their identity threatened with the arrival in Sao Paulo, in September of 1900, of the first *Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Sisters*, the congregation that resulted from the merging attempt of the institute of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles with that of the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and was during the period between June 10, 1900 and September 7 of 1907, they were one institute. Their constitutions, approved 'ad experimentum' for ten years, established: *This institution is placed under the protection of the Divine Heart of Jesus, with the objective of propagating its devotion, and dedicating themselves zealously to the great work of the missions, both abroad and in Italy*¹²⁰.

Everything indicates, Scalabrini's intention was to contemplate two finalities, that of the 1895 Scalabrini foundation of 1895 and that of Clélia Merloni's foundation of 1894. Before the end of the period of experience, the merging was undone. The vitality of the two charismas in question preserved the identities of the two congregations, which slowly consolidated themselves within the church.

As for the MSCS Congregation, on April 16, 1914, it had two new constitutions approved after overcoming several challenges in a difficult historical evolution. In the first part, the first chapter addresses the finality of the institute; the constitutions preserve in a substantial manner the original finality of its beginning. In its Article 1, the new constitutional text states: a total consecration to God through the simple profession of vows, but perpetual vows of *poverty, chastity and obedience*; following Jesus Christ, *imitation of the Divine Savior's virtues, specially of His charity and zeal for the well being of souls*; a stable communitarian life style. Article 2 determines:

Besides the sanctification of its members, the congregation seeks, with ardor, the well-being of their

¹¹⁹ SCALABRINI, Giovanni B. *Lettera a Faustino Consoni*. Piacenza, 12-4-1897 (AGS 3023/2).

¹²⁰ REGOLE DELLA CONGREGAZIONE DELLE SUORE APOSTOLE DEL SACRO CUORE DI GESÙ. Piacenza, 1902, p. 3.

neighbors through the works of zeal and charity according to the conditions and gender of its members. At this point, the Sisters of St. Charles will consider as their first priority their own and main mission to provide all support, and second, whenever possible and convenient, to support the zealous works undertaken by the Congregation of the Priest of St. Charles, founded by God's servant, Mons. J. B. Scalabrini, with the finality of preserving the faith and piety of the emigrants.

Article 3 has already accentuated the autonomy of the Feminine Scalabrinian Congregation in relation to the masculine congregation and establishes the pastoral field of the MSCS Sister:

Without placing themselves under the jurisdiction and dependence of the Superiors of said congregation and without committing to services less convenient to their condition and gender, the Religious Women of St. Charles, whenever possible, will dedicate their services in schools, asylums, and other charity establishments already founded or to be founded in favor of the immigrants. However, it is not forbidden to admit to said establishments others who are not emigrants when justified reasons require and the competent authority permits; as well as having sufficient motives and with the consent of the ecclesiastic authority, they may open houses of charity benefiting other classes of needy people¹²¹.

Less than one year after approval of the new constitutions by Bishop Duarte Leopoldo e Silva, the MSCS Sisters were already working in a new missionary front in the Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul.

2.2.3 Mother Assunta Marchetti, 1912-1918

The official separation of the two congregations, the missionaries of St. Charles and the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, undertaken in September 22 of 1907, thanks to Bishop Duarte Leopoldo e Silva's intervention, meant the *triumph of the justified claims of the Sisters of St. Charles*. However, it was not the immediate solution for all the problems that preoccupied Assunta Marchetti and her still small religious family¹²². The overcoming of difficulties that prevented the progress of the institute resulted in providential mediations, of the dynamic fidelity to the charisma of the foundation, of the spirit of faith that differentiated the MSCS Sisters, as proposed by Scalabrini and Marchetti. These were the vital elements, which during Mother Assunta Marchetti's term, 1912-1918, made possible a new point in time for the Feminine Scalabrinian Congregation. To know it within its context implies to start from facts already approached to achieve a thorough reading of the six years period.

Separated from the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus who were numerous, the original and reduced in numbers MSCS Sisters faced in addition uncertainties about the future of their institution and other challenges. Among those challenges, the lack of *direct protection*, like we saw in *Brevi Cenni*, of the general superior of the Congregation of the Missionaries of St. Charles, Father Domenico Vicentini who had always defended the autonomy for the Feminine Scalabrinian Foundation. In this climate, with the help of Father Faustino Consoni and some other Scalabrinian Missionaries, and having Bishop Duarte's support, the reorganization stage of the MSCS Institute began.

On December 19 of 1907, the MSCS Sisters who resided in the Christopher Columbus Orphanage of Ipiranga moved to Vila Prudente "under the direction of Sister Assunta Marchetti who had been nominated superior a few months before"¹²³. In April of 1910, almost 15 years after the foundation of the institute, they welcomed the determinations of Bishop Duarte, which changed their day-to-day lives. Therefore, between April 1910 and January 1912, the sisters intensified their

¹²¹ THE CONSTITUTIONS OF THE SISTERS OF SAINT CHARLES BORROMEIO. Sao Paulo, 1914, p. 5-6.

¹²² *BREVI CENNI*, op. cit., cf. p.16.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 21-2.

formation process without, however, neglecting the commitments in the Christopher Columbus Orphanage.

On January 1 of 1912, the Scalabrinian Missionary Sisters professed their vows according to the Rules of St. Charles, and they received the ring, symbol of marriage with the Lord. The minutes of perpetual profession of each sister was signed by each professed, by Father Lourenço Hubbauer as Bishop Duarte Leopoldo e Silva's delegate, and by the witnesses of the act, Father Faustino Consoni, Sister Fulgência Huysmans, Sister Lambertina and Sister Emeranda, Vicentines.

The Scalabrinian Feminine Congregation began to follow the orientation that, in the ultimate analysis, came from the Archbishop of Sao Paulo on whom they were now dependant due to the constitutions approved *ad experimentum* for ten years on June 10 of 1900. These same constitutions established that the institute would be subject to John Baptist Scalabrini and to his successors, or to the ordinary of the diocese in which the *motherhouse* of the congregation be located.

Having concluded her biannual term as mistress, *superior and visitor*, jointly with the Scalabrinian Feminine Congregation, Sister Fulgência Huysmans proposed to Bishop Duarte the name of Mother Assunta Marchetti to assume the governance of institute. During the six year period of 1912-1918, during which Mother Assunta exercised her term as general superior, the MSCS Sister lived a period of self-affirmation and progress in every sense.

On November 4, 1912, in a building of the Christopher Columbus Orphanage in the girls section, the novitiate of the congregation was established. In addition to being the Generalate, the Christopher Columbus Orphanage of Vila Prudente, began to house the new house of formation where, among the first postulants, were some young former students of the orphanage: Carolina Ferraresi, Maria Brasilina Grazia Oricchio, Maria Rosa Oricchio and Benedita Juliana de Camargo.

Another important step in the consolidation of the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute was the elaboration of the new constitutions; those approved by Bishop Duarte Leopoldo e Silva on April 16, 1914. The new constitutions, as we have seen, safeguarded the *unique mission* of the MSCS Congregation, without the anterior dependence on the Masculine Missionaries of St. Charles, which translated into collaboration with them:

Provide all support and to aid as much as possible and convenient, the zealous works undertaken by the Congregation of the Fathers of St. Charles, founded by the servant of God, Mons. J. B. Scalabrini, with the objective of preserving the faith and piety among the emigrants.

In this apostolic field, the six-year period of 1912-1918, became a historical landmark.

The missionary expansion of the institute began in 1913 when, on June 29, at the request of Father Francesco Navarro, a Scalabrinian Missionary, the sisters established a girl's day institute in the Parish of Sao Bernardo do Campo, currently in the *Paulista ABC*. The Parish of Sao Bernardo de Campo had been ceded to the Missionaries of St. Charles in 1904 by Bishop Jose de Camargo Barros, predecessor of Bishop Duarte, where Italians comprised the majority of the population. In that same year, the Sisters of St. Charles also began to work in the Home of Our Lady of Candelaria of Itu, and for a short period at the Holy House of Mercy in Sao Luiz do Paraitinga, both located in the interior of the State of Sao Paulo.

In 1915, the MSCS Congregation was even bolder. At the request of Father Enrico Poggi, a Genoan missionary who had worked in Brazil for almost three decades, Mother Assunta opened a school in Bento Gonçalves, an Italian colonization area in Rio Grande do Sul, an area that would aliment the continuity and missionary expansion of the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute. Father Poggi's request to Mother Assunta made through Father Carlo Porrini, a Scalabrinian, who for many years was

a missionary in Rio Grande do Sul. Having attended the authorization of Bishop Duarte Leopoldo e Silva and by Bishop John Becker, Archbishop of Porto Alegre, in the beginning of February of 1915 the General Superior sent to Bento Gonçalves five sisters who greatly contributed in preserving the faith in which Italian immigrants cultural identity was based. The pioneers in Rio Grande do Sul were: Sister Lucia Gorlin, Sister Josephina Oricchio, Sister Borromea Ferraresi, Sister Joana de Camargo and Sister Maria de Lourdes Martins.

The success of the new mission was immediate

the Sisters of St. Charles, by conquering the esteem and sympathy in general, as well as of Bishop Becker's support, who in addition to authorizing the opening of new houses, had manifested the desire and insisted also that in the State the Sisters of Saint Charles have their novitiate, since there were numerous religious vocations, principally among the young Catholics from the Italian colony¹²⁴.

Around mid 1916, Mother Assunta Marchetti visited the mission of Bento Gonçalves, from where she was able to return to Sao Paulo with five postulants to the religious life: Caterina Lunelli, Clotildes Caldieraro, Emilia Cherubini, Margherita Balsan and Santina Caldieraro. In Sao Paulo, other students of the Orphanage had been admitted to the novitiate. Among them: Maria Bosio, Elisa Ugatti, Rosa Mosca, Rita Grasti, and Etelvina de Mello. The increase in vocations, more numerous in the Italian colonies of Rio Grande do Sul, made it possible for the Sisters of St. Charles to undertake new pastoral commitments.

In the beginning of 1917, Mother Assunta Marchetti opened two other schools: one in Nova Vicenza, currently the town of Farroupilha, and another in Guapore, both in Rio Grande do Sul. In this manner, gradually, the Feminine Scalabrinian Congregation expanded its pastoral space among Italian immigrants settled in Rio Grande do Sul.

Another opportune initiative of Mother Assunta during the period of 1912-1918 was to give *judicial personality* to the MSCS Congregation. In a letter to Bishop Duarte, dated May 4, 1917, the General Superior at that time requested authorization from the Archbishop to begin such a process. Mother Assunta Marchetti, who attributed to God's Grace and to Bishop Duarte's protection the possibility for the congregation to be established in several location in Sao Paulo, and in more recent times in Rio Grande do Sul, the acquisition of real estates was understood to be convenient and necessary, which justified the request. The Daily Official of the State of Sao Paulo, in its issue of October 7, 1917, published the statutes of the *Educational, Instructional and Beneficent Society*, as we shall see.

Mother Assunta Marchetti's six years term extended until September 9, 1918, when Bishop Duarte nominated Sister Antonietta Fontana, at that time superior of Scalabrini School in Guapore, as the General Superior of the MSCS Congregation for the six years term of 1918-1924. Mother Assunta received a new destination, being nominated superior of St. Charles School in Bento Gonçalves. On September 18 of that year, she left Vila Prudente on the way to Rio Grande do Sul. *Brevi Cenni* states that, upon arriving in Bento Gonçalves, *for reasons that need not to be mentioned, she was unable to assume her new post and was nominated as local superior in Nova Brescia, a small and remote mountain town where on March 1, 1919 she inaugurated the Sacred Heart School for the education of the local youth¹²⁵.*

About the destination of Mother Assunta after her six year term of 1912-1918 and about the nomination of Sister Antonietta Fontana for the six-year term, internal interrogations and controversies

¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 25.

¹²⁵ Ibid., p. 26.

continued in the MSCS Congregation. The constitutions approved in April 1914 established that the general superior, her advisers and the general economist are to be elected by the general chapter to be convoked three months prior to its realization. The chapter should, therefore, also address other important issues of the congregation.

The year of 1918, in our understanding, was the opportune moment to realize the first general chapter of the institute. It would have been the moment to evaluate the path undergone by the congregation, its internal reorganization, and especially its missionary expansion. The motive for not realizing the general chapter and the designation of the new General Superior, Sister Antonietta Fontana, by Bishop Duarte Leopoldo e Silva on September 9, 1918 is unknown to us.

Concerning Mother Assunta Marchetti's destination, two controversial sources address the issue: Memorial of the Mission of Rio Grande do Sul, a document dated February 19, 1926, signed by Sisters Lucia Gorlin, Borromea Ferraresi and Vittorina Consoni. The second document, Informative, was written by Sister Afonsina Salvador, and has the date of July 11, 1977.

In the Memorial, it is written that after, Sister Antonietta Fontana taking the position of General Superior

They transferred Mother Assunta Marchetti, from Vila Prudente to Rio Grande with the order to choose between Bento Gonçalves and Guapore, or to open a house. Already having been promised, during Sister Assunta's term a house in Nova Brescia, and reconfirmed by Sister Antonietta Fontana, she preferred this.

In Sister Afonsina Salvador's version, Bishop Duarte Leopoldo e Silva *was forced to take Mother Assunta from the government due to her excessive involvement with her family. To distance her from relatives, the Archbishop and Mother Antonietta Fontana, sent Mother Assunta to Bento Gonçalves, Rio Grande do Sul, as the superior of the house, however, Mother Lucia, Sister Borromea and Sister Faustina did not accept her. The ex general superior went to the kitchen, and as soon as they could, she was sent to Nova Brescia to open a school without the authorization from Sao Paulo. Sister Afonsina states still that Bishop Duarte sent her and Sister Antonietta as a companion, to Nova Brescia to close the house. It did not happen because Mother Assunta asked the General Superior for the love of God leave her there because she was afraid to go back to Bento Gonçalves in the company of the three bossy sisters. Upon their return to Sao Paulo, they presented the request made by her to Bishop Duarte, and the Archbishop, in consideration of Mother Assunta, consented to leaving the house open*¹²⁷.

2.2.4 Administration and economy

The reorganization of the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute, which took place between 1907 and 1914, followed a relative growth in the quantity of its members and, therefore, a relevant missionary expansion of the MSCS Congregation. The opening of new pastoral fronts, in its turn, implicated other initiatives such the acquisition of judicial personality, providing the institute a legal means of acquiring, to own and to administer the assets of the congregation, necessary for the execution of its goal. The assets that constitute the material patrimony of the institute are the fruit of sisters' work and frugality, of the generous contribution of benefactors, and of an administration orientated, from the beginning, by a spirit of evangelical poverty, aware of the needs and of the formation of the MSCS Sisters in view of the unique mission of the congregation in the church and in the world.

¹²⁷ SALVADOR, Afonsina. *Informativo no 61º ano de Vida Religiosa*. Jundiaí, 11-7-1977 (AGSS 1.4.4).

The Rules written by Father Marchetti were imbedded deep within the spirit of the pioneer sisters, oriented to economize in everything, not allowing anything to be lost or unused and to keep in mind all that surrounded them should be used in favor of the orphans and the abandoned poor. About the administration of the possessions of the institute, the Rules established that: *the Congregation should never become rich, but should always preserve its character of poverty; and thus, making it easier to conserve the spirit of sacrifice and abnegation that should be the distinctive sign of the servants*¹²⁸.

The Rules of 1900, by which the congregation should have been guided from the middle of this year until September 1907, did not contemplate the regulations relative to the administration of its possessions. The service of the economist, foreseen in the sphere of internal direction, did not have explicit corresponding attributions. When addressing the vow of poverty, the Rules establish that the apostle, by professing, should remit all of her assets, possessions and real estates, into the hands of their superiors to take part in common ownership, along with the other assets of the congregation.

In the first two decades of its history, the MSCS Congregation was neither rich nor poor; strictly speaking, it did however accumulate material assets. The constitutions of 1914, in its turn, established that it was the duty of the general superior to administrate the assets of the institute, being helped with this function by the general economist elected by the general chapter. There was, therefore, in the institute a foreseen indication of a new trend in the administration of the economy.

In N° 80, the constitutions determined that the *possessions and real estate belonging to the congregation, as such would be administered by the general economist under the dependence and supervision of the general superior and her council*. n° 81 established: *In the house where the General Superior resides, in a secure place, there should be a safe with three different keys, one in the hands of the General Superior, another in the hands of the first councilor, and the third is kept by the economist*. In the strong box, N° 82 specified that,

they will be kept: property titles of the congregation, minutes of sale and purchase, transmission of ownership, etc...etc...; deposit certificates of banks; checks, either nominal or cashier's (titles); certificate of rent or leasing; money not needed to pay for current accounts.

According to N° 83, to open the strong box all *three religious women with the keys must be present*. If, one of them is prevented, she should entrust her key *not to the other two, but to one of the other counselors*. The general economist did the report of accounts every six months.¹²⁹

The constitutions N° 86, foresaw the administration of local assets. The community economist should report to the local superior and her counselors at the end of every month, and every six months she should submit to the General Superior a report of accounts of the past six months. At the end of each year, still according to N° 86, after the balance of the income and payments of the community, *a third part of the remaining balance should be sent to the a general administration as a contribution of each house for the general expenditures of the Congregation*¹³⁰.

The constitutions of 1914 entered in vigor about one year after the opening of new houses in the interior of the State of Sao Paulo, and one year before the missionary expansion of the institute in the State of Rio Grande do Sul started. The changed situation would have particular internal implications from the point of view of administration and economy of the MSCS Congregation. Some documents

¹²⁸ *PRIME REGOLE DELLE ANCELLE DEGLI ORFANI E DEI DERELITTI ALL'ESTERO*. Parte Seconda, Capo IV, cf. p. 18; Parte Ottava, Capo III, p. 50 (AGSS 1.4/1 - Manoscritto).

¹²⁹ *CONSTITUIÇÕES das Irmãs Missionárias de São Carlos Borromeo*, São Paulo, 1914. III Parte, V Capítulo, n. 80 e 83, p. 51-3.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, n. 86, p. 53.

from 1917 show aspects of this new reality.

In a letter Mother Assunta Marchetti reported to Bishop Duarte Leopoldo e Silva, dated May 4 of 1917, the General Superior exposed to the Archbishop the need for the institute to obtain juridical identity, or some other way to acquire, to own, and to administrate the assets of the congregation. Mother Assunta justified the request stating that in various places it would be convenient to acquire real estates and that, in Rio Grande do Sul, a Vicar wanted to donate a house to the MSCS Congregation. The manner indicated was that of juridical identity. On October 3, 1917, the Official Daily of the State of Sao Paulo published the *Statutes of the Educational, Instructional and Beneficent Society*, which we transcribe:

TITLE I
CONSTITUTION, GOALS AND DURATION

First Article – A society was constituted under the denomination of “*Educational, Instructional and Beneficent Society*”.

Second Article – *The goal of the Society is to educate children, to direct asylums, orphanages, and Houses of Mercy.*

Third Article – *The duration of the Society will be undetermined, and it shall subsist until it is capable to achieve its goals.*

Fourth Article – *The Society will be directed and administrated by a board comprised of one director and a secretary with attributions determined by the internal regiment.*

The director will represent the association, both actively and passively in Court and out of court in all relations with third parties.

Only Paragraph – *Beyond the attributions expressed in the internal regiment, it is the competence of the board the right to acquiesce in Court or out of it, to renounce rights, to alienate, to mortgage or to use as collateral the assets of the Society as long as the general assembly has given its consent to it*

Fifth Article– *The Director will be elected by the general assembly of its members in a time established by the regiment.*

Single Paragraph – *Any majority of members attending the general assembly may definitively decide on any topic regarding the Society, except for what is established in Article 10, referring to the existence of the Society.*

Sixth Article – *The undersigned are founding members, and other members shall be admitted by deliberation of the general assembly, which shall have power to expel anyone that shall be deemed by it as inconvenient.*

Seventh Article– *The members of the society do not respond subsidiarily to obligations that its representatives may contract, be it expressly or intentionally in their behalf.*

Eighth Article – *It is the duty of members to contribute with all their personal strength to achieve the social goals.*

TITLE II
Patrimony

Ninth Article– *All patrimony that the association may acquire for the undertaking of its goals shall*

constitute social heritage.

Tenth Article – *In case of dissolution, which may only be decided by unanimity of the members, the existing patrimony of the association will be liquidated in accordance to what will be decided by the general assembly.*

TITLE III

THE SOCIAL HEADQUARTERS

Eleventh Article – *The social headquarters for all legal effects will be in this capital city of Sao Paulo. Having agreed, the current statutes are signed for all legal matters.*

Sao Paulo, on October 3, 1917

*Assumpta Marchetti.
Cammilla Dal Re (sic)
Angelina Meneguzzo.
Lucia Tomedi,
Vicentina de Campos¹³¹.*

The sisters with enormous sacrifices, much caution and a justified, but uncomfortable dependence on the competent authority, above all in the beginning, acquired the possessions and real estate of the MSCS Congregation. A letter dated November 11, 1917 signed by Sister Antonietta Fontana, then superior of Scalabrinian School in Guapore, and addressed to Mother Assunta Marchetti, informs the General Superior of the purchase of the *house* and the perspectives of the mission and speaks about the distance that *complicates a lot*, and she justifies her procedure.

Having obtained the consent of Bishop Joao Becker, Archbishop of Porto Alegre, for the establishment in Guapore in the beginning of 1917; in common agreement, the sisters of the new mission opted for the real estate proposed by Father Enrico Pretti and the *Comissão Guaporense*, as the value and payment conditions were favorable. The owner, writes Sister Antonietta, renounced to a higher bid, and preferred to sell it to the sisters. Father Enrico, always according to the sister, had tried to buy the house himself, *if you were not in fact pleased*, however, it would become the property of the Fathers of St. Charles, *while we would remain always without a safe space anywhere*. Sister Antonietta also speaks on the acquisition of another lot and house next to where they already lived, as had been proposed by the *General Vicar of Porto Alegre*, so as to provide greater amplitude to the work, to offer new environment to pensioners, to keep a festive oratory for youth, to provide children with a larger area for recreation, as well as for cultivating a garden.

Always trusting in God, the sister goes on, *if in this year in which when we opened the house, I was able to save six hundred thousand reis that Father deposited in the bank, and with which we shall buy at the proper time a sturdy piano, it is not the case to wait for the best in future years, when we shall have a larger number of interns and the fortified lessons?*

At the end of the letter, the sister expressed doubt in having done the right thing: *Nevertheless, if my way of behaving deserves punishment, I submit myself to it, and I am ready, I repeat, to explain everything to Bishop Duarte¹³².*

The whole content of Sister Antonietta Fontana's letter is a sample rich in elements that

¹³¹ DIARIO OFFICIAL Estado de São Paulo. São Paulo, 3 de Outubro de 1917.

¹³² FONTANA, Antonietta. *Carta a Madre Assunta Marchetti*. Guaporé, 11-11-1917 (AGSS 1.5.4).

evidenced the hardship faced by the MSCS Sisters to provide for the congregation the material means needed to undertake its goals.

2.2.5 Belonging to the MSCS Congregation

A go over the path undertaken by the Feminine Scalabrinian Congregation until the period under study now, set between 1907 and 1920, suggests a brief focus on issue of pertaining to the institute during the heroic stage of the early days, and during the reorganization period and of the first MSCS expansion. The question is this: how could the pioneer sisters depart so confidently to a country, foreign to them, and once there, overcome the lack of resources and adverse conditions and survive as a cohesive group with no demands, and remain faithful to the original ideal and to intensely live the feeling of belonging to a small community committed to the orphans and abandoned infants, and to grow with them, qualifying themselves in spirit and maturing a common awareness of the mission that was entrusted to them?

The answer makes us go back to October 25, 1895 when, in the private chapel of the Bishop of Piacenza, members of a small group, already like family, they made vows moved by an authentic missionary vocation that had congregated them around John Baptist Scalabrini's social-pastoral project, idealized as evangelic service among Italian migrants of that time. Driven to Piacenza by the Scalabrinian missionary, Father Joseph Marchetti, on this date, four Italian missionary women received from the Bishop of that diocese, with the crucifix, the sending order and promise: *go confident, daughters, I will send other co-sisters, and you shall return for your formation and consolidate yourselves in the religious spirit*¹³³.

The words in this brief sending off message, must be taken cautiously as they are memories written several decades afterwards, the notion of belonging, in Pichon-Riviere's view

are characterized by a feeling of being integrated in the group, of identifying oneself with it and to include oneself and others into one's own internal world. Through belonging, it is possible to establish both the identity of the group and one's own.

It is important to note,

that through a process of interaction the members become inhabitants of the other's internal world, and go on to feelings of belonging to the group, acquiring identification with its proposal.

The result of this, always according to Pichon-Riviere, is a union not *only affective*, but articulated to the obtaining of a task because belonging is also an indicator of commitment¹³⁴. *The go confident, daughters, I will send other co-sisters, and you shall return for your formation and to consolidate yourselves in the religious spirit* is rich in elements of belonging in which the affective aspect and pastoral commitment are articulated.

To be part of a religious congregation, specifically to belong to the Scalabrinian family meant, as it still does today, to embrace a charisma that gives priority to the mission. The Bishop of Piacenza, by founding the Scalabrinian Institutes, proposed as objective a qualified service among the migrants. Scalabrini had the conviction that religious life was the most suitable way to ensure an adequate and continued pastoral presence within the migratory field. In reason of this, missionary vocations of the

¹³³ MARTINI, Ettore. *Memorie sulla fondazione della Congregazione delle Suore Missionarie di San Carlo Borromeo-Scalabriniane* (AGSS 1.4.4).

¹³⁴ GAYOTTO, M. L. C. & DOMINGUES, I. *Escala de avaliação do processo grupal*. In: GAYOTTO, M. L. C. & DOMINGUES, I. *Liderança: aprenda a mudar em grupo*. Petrópolis, Vozes, 1995, p. 87-8.

institutes founded by him are rooted in religious life. In the case of the MSCS Congregation, the **urgency of the service motivated improvisation, an aspect that marked the beginning of the institute**, and continues to be observed, even today under certain circumstances.

The religious profession of October 25, 1895, privately made for six months, did not follow the formalities of canonic praxis. The integrants of the tiny group, as has already been said, had not made the postulancy or the novitiate, they had not exercised communitarian life, and the constitutions still needed to be elaborated. The sisters did not have *family* models as concrete references. They were pioneers. Scalabrini *encouraged them to persevere in their holy and praise worthy proposal, and blessed them*. On that occasion, *each one received from the Bishop the crucifix that should accompany them on the long and tiring pilgrimage, as a symbol of faith and of the spirit of abnegation housed within their hearts*. Having concluded the crossing of the Atlantic, which made the sending even more solemn; they arrived at Ilha Grande in Brazilian territory, *humble and happy*. There, the four missionaries received their *monastic veil, blessed in advance by John Baptist Scalabrini, in substitution of the silk one, which they used to cover their heads*¹³⁵.

In the praxis of religious life, in general, belonging to an institute results in the process of admission into successive formative stages during which the person in formation defines their option of life. By this path of interaction, the person is given the possibility of identification that allows the postulant to the passage, or not, from *I into We* of a religious family.

The foundation of the MSCS Congregation, an event marked by the urgency of the mission, determined the initial formative process *sui generis*. The foreseen return to Italy to complete the formative process did not take place. However, this hole was filled, in another form in Christopher Columbus itself, an institution in which priests and sisters worked, each performing the activity that was confided to them by the director of the orphanage, in the beginning by Father Joseph Marchetti and after by Father Faustino Consoni, in the common Scalabrinian mission/vocation.

In the initial heroic presence in Sao Paulo, as we saw in the first part of this volume, Fr. Joseph Marchetti, the co-founder, orientated the sisters. Together with him, in contact with the Paulista reality of the end of the 19th century, the first steps of their religious-missionary identity took concrete shape. Sister Maria Stella Regina Franceschini was the first formator of the institute.

The quality of the presence in the Christopher Columbus Orphanage was conditioned by available resources, on both the human-spiritual and cultural-economic levels. The first sisters came from humble families as, that is, the majority of MSCS Sisters throughout the history of the congregation. Without greater intellectual preparation, but rich in Christian values, from very early on they were obligated, within their own family, to take on the responsibilities in the family household, which facilitated in some ways the passage to a life of self-denial and service in benefit to the migrants. The closeness with the Scalabrinian priests, who shared the same missionary ideal, helped to strengthen the ties of pertaining and of commitment with the community and the mission. In some way, as Scalabrini had proposed, they identified themselves with St. Francis de Sales, for whom the needy human being should be helped due to his human and divine dignity. The awareness of belonging to a group committed to the migrant qualified the first sisters in spirit and in action.

The manifestation of pertaining contained in a letter of 1900 to Scalabrini, written as a reaction to changes occurring due to the fusion with the Apostles, expresses the fidelity lived and a firm disposition of continuity, fruit of the existing profound ties between the MSCS Sisters and the pastoral objective of the 1895 foundation.

¹³⁵ *BREVI CENNI*, op. cit., p. 3-4.

During the reorganization phase done under the jurisdiction of Bishop Duarte Leopoldo e Silva, but not without new difficulties, Sister Fulgência Huysmans, of the Congregation of St. Vincent de Paul, accumulated the functions of superior and novice mistress, and collaborated in the elaboration of the constitutions of 1914. The new constitutions determined the return of the first Rules and the foundational intention of the institute. Of the first four sisters, only Mother Assunta Marchetti remained, the intimate link uniting past and present. Carolina Marchetti had left the congregation in the beginning of 1897, Sister Angela Larini had died towards end of 1899 and less than a year and half later, Sister Maria Franceschini died both still very young.

The sisters felt at home again after the reorganization of the institute, each one recognizing to have been called to take part in a group that continued to pertain, in the last analysis, not to itself, but to the children of migrants for whom it should grow and consolidate itself in the church. Like the pioneers, others who had a vocation embraced the religious socio-pastoral project of the institute, the soul of pertaining, which keeps it alive in each member of the MSCS Congregation.

2.3 Missionary expansion of the institute and the pastoral contribution of the MSCS Sister

2.3.1 Christopher Columbus Orphanage, 25th anniversary of foundation

With the institute reorganized and having its pertaining to the Scalabrinian family confirmed, the MSCS Congregation completed with discretion, in 1920, its 25th anniversary of existence. The Christopher Columbus Orphanage celebrated its silver jubilee as well, the reason for the institutes being, and was an opportunity to make it the target of just homage by local society and by the church. The acknowledgement of the human pastoral value of the institution was, in truth, constant during those first 25 years of the orphanage that had in its missionary men and women of St. Charles, as well as the vital support of numerous donors and of the public sector. The names of Father Joseph Marchetti, who founded the orphanage, of Father Faustino Consoni who consolidated it, and of Father Marco Simoni who dedicated his younger years to it, rise as artisans of origin and continuity of the work. On the other hand, it would be ungrateful not to acknowledge the work performed by the MSCS Sisters from the beginning. Without this presence in a special way, of Mother Assunta Marchetti, Christopher Columbus would have been less rich in its care to hundreds of its little orphans and abandoned children and who were welcomed and sheltered.

John Baptist Scalabrini had considered the Scalabrinian Mission, Christopher Columbus Orphanage, in the beginning of 1897 as the most important of the congregation, and according to the Bishop, should be maintained even at the cost of sacrifices. Father Faustino Consoni, who succeeded Father Joseph Marchetti as the director of the orphanage, always gave a great amount of attention to the work. Even after having been nominated by Father Domenico Vicentini at the end of 1908 as the Regional Superior of Sao Paulo, the solicitude for the young children kept Father Consoni focused on Christopher Columbus, which gave rise to general discontent among the Scalabrinian Missionaries who worked in the territory of Sao Paulo. According to the majority of them, it was important to make more visible the activity of the congregation in other pastoral areas with Italian immigration in the State of Sao Paulo, as not to give the impression of a presence only connected to the interests of the Orphanages of Ipiranga and of Vila Prudente.

At a commemoration on February 11, 1909, at Vila Prudente, Scalabrinian Father Corrado Stefanini, evoked the figure of Father Joseph Marchetti as an educator and *apostle of childhood*, who through his work was a true *triumph of Christian charity*. He offered to hundreds of orphaned children and abandoned infant's conditions to grow in virtues, and the possibility of experiencing the affection of a father and the coziness of a home.

On this day, the onomastic of Father Faustino Consoni, Father Stefani affirmed that Marchetti's work had found in the one being celebrated the same mind and heart of its founder, in the same way that the mantle left to his disciple Eliseu, Elijah continued to benefit his people. Father Corrado Stefani dared to affirm that *Marchetti's prodigious and charitable spirit had been transfused into a sacred inheritance in the soul of his successor*¹³⁶.

Father Marco Simoni, also, who ten years later in 1919 would succeed Father Faustino Consoni in the direction of the Orphanage, was highlighted in the celebration of February 11, 1909 by his co-brother as a *benefactor and humble worker*, who had dedicated to the orphans and abandoned infants

¹³⁶ STEFANI, Corrado. *Commemorando il R. Padre Giuseppe Marchetti nell'orfanotrofio Cristoforo Colombo, sezione femminile in Vila Prudente de Moraes, São Paulo, 11 febbraio 1909*, p. 16.

the most beautiful years of his life. Finally, Father Corrado invited everyone to *admire and give a most enthusiastic applause* for the Sisters of St. Charles, identified by him as

*heroines of charity, who in their love for children, had sacrificed the most pure affection, the happiness of a family, to consecrate all their existence in an unknown and secret sacrifice so as to become adopting mothers of so many little orphans who in them could feel their first mother's affection and smile...*¹³⁷.

On December 31, 1904, the year of Scalabrini's apostolic visit to Brazil, the Christopher Columbus Orphanage sheltered 232 orphans, 141 were boys and 91 girls. In a report sent by Father Consoni to the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs there were for this year, among other data, the nationalities of the interns: Italians: 81 boys and 51 girls; Brazilians: 40 boys and 31 girls; Portuguese: 12 boys and 3 girls; other nationalities: 8 boys and 6 girls. The ages: 1 to 5 years old: 28 boys and 16 girls; 6 to 10 years old: 36 boys and 29 girls; 11 to 15 years old: 38 boys and 32 girls; over 15 years old: 39 boys and 14 girls.

In the successive years, the orphanage maintained a movement adequate to the capacity of the institution, verifying a relative growth in the number of students. At the end 1918 and in the beginning of 1919, as a consequence of the *Spanish influenza*, an epidemic flu that shook the world and reached Sao Paulo. At the request of a commission presided over by Bishop Duarte Leopoldo e Silva and by the Secretary of Interior of the State, established to help orphans and widows, Christopher Columbus sheltered over one hundred other orphans needing protection. The total enrollment in 1918 was 412 students: 248 boys and 164 girls; in 1919, 478 students were enrolled, out of which 315 were boys and 163 were girls; in 1920, this number reached the amount of 389 students, being 273 boys and 116 girls.

One can imagine the preoccupation with the daily support of these children and youngsters, and with the general maintenance of an institution of this kind. We previously referred to the way Father Marchetti followed to provide support, later continued by Consoni and other Scalabrinian Missionaries. In addition to the help from benefactors, Marchetti wanted to commit immigrants themselves to sustain and educate the orphans and the abandoned children, as well as with the construction and maintenance of the Christopher Columbus.

Likewise, Father Consoni, director of Orphanage for more than twenty years, also identified by local press as the *Cottolengo of Sao Paulo*, continued to look for help from benefactors and from immigrants settled on the coffee plantations, which were visited with all possible periodicity and facing enormous hardships by him and the other Scalabrinian Missionaries who worked in Paulista Territory. The period under study now would still be even harder on Consoni and on all the Scalabrinian family from 1908.

The opportune creation of dioceses in various cities Paulista's required the creation of a basic patrimony, being indispensable the building of a diocesan cathedral and seminary, conditions established by the Holy See. The powerful rural bourgeoisie, because of certain advantages in the creation of an Episcopal See in cities in which they had control, contributed to ensure the new dioceses with the needed economic patrimony. The bishops in turn began to prioritize the obtainment of resources for their dioceses, a fact that reduced the collection of alms that were previously destined for the sustention of the Scalabrinian work. The Prelates intent was also to get help for the construction of chapels on the plantations. The initiative would facilitate the establishment of parishes, which would favor the people on the plantations, including the numerous Italian immigrants settled on them. However, the director of Christopher Columbus saw the difficulty grow in maintaining the two orphanages.

¹³⁷ Ibid., p.17.

In a letter sent to Cardinal Joaquim Arcoverde de Albuquerque Cavalcanti, Father Consoni remembered the previous support given by the prelate to the orphanage, and implored for his protection because he felt the survival of the two institutions, Ipiranga and Vila Prudente, threatened, which had as their principal source of income the receiving of alms. Without negating the real difficulties of Christopher Columbus, as is evidenced in correspondences and diverse reports, besides the collected alms from the plantations and donor's contributions, counted on subsidies from the Italian Government along the years, as well as from the Brazilian public sector, above all from state and municipal the governments.

A very sad event, the kidnapping of a child, for a very long time the situation of the orphanage indeed became critical in all senses. The kidnapping of a girl, which took place at Vila Prudente, shook the Christopher Columbus Orphanage and somehow damaged the good name of the orphanage. As historical precedence, it is stated that in October of 1905, Domingos Stamato, adopted father of siblings, Idalina of 6 years of age and Socrates of 8, had handed the two children to the Christopher Columbus, respectively in its boys and girls sections. Around two years later, in the middle of 1907, the kidnapping of Idalina took place, undertaken by a woman named Italia Forte or Maria Luiza, who presented herself as the girl's mother and requested permission to take the girl with her. The responsible of Vila Prudente did not grant permission for her to take the girl with her. The supposed mother went to Father John Capelli, ad interim director of the Christopher Columbus, who authorized the girl's leave. At the time, Father Consoni was inland on mission.

In the beginning of 1908, the adoptive father not finding the girl went to the police who started an investigation on the disappearance the minor. This event had strong repercussions in 1910 when the Scalabrinian Missionaries, victims of a conspiracy, suffered a difficult defamation campaign that denounced Fathers Corrado Stefani and Faustino Consoni. Father Stefani, who only arrived in Brazil in 1908, was accused of sexual abuse and Father Consoni accused of the murder of Idalina and of another student from Vila Prudente.

In such a painful instance, certainly of much suffering also for Mother Assunta and the other co-sisters, the Scalabrinian priests received innumerable manifestations of solidarity from benefactors, civil and ecclesiastic authorities, particularly from Bishop Duarte Leopoldo e Silva, and from all good Catholics who believed in the integrity of the accused. The divulgation of the slander obviously left scars. Father Faustino Consoni continued as head of the Christopher Columbus until 1919, maintaining a deep affection for both orphanages, even after being transferred to St. Anthony Church at Patriarch's Plaza, where he would die on August 12, 1933. There, during his wake, among so many people, Idalina showed up to give homage to the heroic Scalabrinian Missionary.

The last days spent in the Christopher Columbus were busy and committed for Consoni. As we saw, due to the *Spanish flu*, the orphanage sheltered, during the years of 1918-1919, over one hundred other children, most of them very poor, who only had the clothing they wore. To shelter them, the Director had to find another plot in Vila Prudente. The new section would shelter an overflow of children, minors under 8 years old, sheltered first at Ipiranga and then entrusted to the MSCS Sisters of Vila Prudente.

Amplified, the feminine section of the building became spacious, responding to the requirements of that time. The conditions were optimum; the environment was aired and well lighted, providing comfort, joy, and healthy lives for children and young girls. In their living quarters, the Scalabrinian Sisters of St. Charles had their general headquarters and until 1920 the novitiate of the congregation.

In the year of 1920, the Christopher Columbus Orphanage would celebrate its 25th anniversary

of foundation. The event was prepared with antecedence by Father Consoni, who received from the secretary of His Holiness Pope Benedict XV's, Cardinal Gasparri a significant message sent from the Vatican, dated December 1st, 1919. The cardinal communicated that the Pontiff had been informed, with satisfaction, of the jubilee celebration scheduled for February 15. It was the Pope's desire that this also be celebrated in *venerable memory of the pious founder of the Missionary of St. Charles, together with one of his most dignified disciples, the mourned Father Marchetti, who distinguished himself with his fruitful and laborious zeal in charity and in the apostolate*. Cardinal Gasparri wrote that the Pope had been informed of the circumstances that led the Missionary to found the orphanage, and the Pontiff also expressed hope that the Scalabrinian work would expand to *save souls and to recuperate the childhood of the children*. Pope Benedict XV pled for *an abundance of heavenly favors* for those who would cooperate in its expansion, transmitting his apostolic blessing to Father Faustino Consoni and *to his collaborators, to the donors, and to all the little orphans*¹³⁸.

2.3.2 Missionary expansion of the Feminine Scalabrinian Congregation

The feeling of belonging to a group, the capacity to build unity, and solidarity are essential elements in the life of an institution that intends to progress and to achieve the goals for which it was created. This happened with the Christopher Columbus Orphanage and with the Feminine Scalabrinian Institution, both existing since 1895. The MSCS Congregation was contemplated for and exists for a goal outside of itself. As in all institutions, it lives profoundness in the measure that it is oriented to a *collective thought*, capable of generating communion. *When an institution has this collective soul, in which all take communion, then this institution survives and marches throughout history*¹³⁹. In our understanding, the truth of this affirmation is proved also by the missionary expansion of the Feminine Scalabrinian Congregation that took place after the reorganization of the institute.

The MSCS expansion movement was late, having begun around eighteen years after the foundation of the institute. Until 1913, the Scalabrinian Sisters' missionary activity was limited to the orphanages in Ipiranga and Vila Prudente. The first work taken outside Christopher Columbus was a girls' school in Sao Bernardo do Campo, destined for educating girls.

By mid 19th century, Sao Bernardo was a modest village between the towns of Sao Paulo and Santos. The *Sao Paulo Railway* provided a growing expansion. In 1876, the government expropriated a farm that had been given to the Benedictines in the 17th century, and a group of Italian immigrants settled there, to whom the Scalabrinian Missionaries offered religious assistance. Sao Bernardo became, in few years, a flourishing village. In 1904, at the time of Scalabrini's visit to Brazil, its population was close to 40 thousand inhabitants. The parish was extensive, and two orphanages were located within it, Ipiranga and Vila Prudente. Bishop Jose de Camargo Barros, around the end of 1904, entrusted it to the Missionaries of St. Charles, nominating Father Francesco Dolci as Vicar of the first Scalabrinian parish in Sao Paulo.

In the year of 1913, for health reasons, Father Dolci moved to Christopher Columbus. In this year, on June 29 encouraged by another zealous Scalabrinian, Father Francesco Navarro, the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles, Scalabrinians, took over the girl's school in Sao Bernardo do Campo, where they would only remain until 1925.

Still in Sao Paulo, around the end of 1913, the Feminine Scalabrinian Congregation undertook

¹³⁸ GASPARRI, P. *Letter to father Faustino Consoni*. State Secretariat H. Holiness. The Vatican, December 10, 1919.

¹³⁹ ELVO CLEMENTE. *O espírito de uma geração*. In: *Filosofia: diálogo de horizontes*. Heloisa Pedrosa de Moraes Feltres & Urbano ZILLES, organizadores. Caxias do Sul, EDUCS - Porto Alegre, EDIPUCRS, 2001, p. 420.

the direction of the Asylum of Our Lady of Candelaria, in Itu. Four sisters were sent to that mission, with Sister Camilla dal Ri as superior. This time, although short lived, the MSCS were present in the Holy House of Mercy of Sao Luis do Paraitinga. Four other missionaries of St. Charles were sent to this mission. Sr. Lucia Gorlin was nominated superior of the community. Divergences among members of the new administrative council of the Holy House, and the non-compliance of some clauses of the contract were the reasons for withdrawing the MSCS Sisters from the institution.

Less than two years after its expansion in Sao Paulo began, as we saw in Mother Assunta's six years administration, during 1912-1918, the Congregation was even more daring by establishing itself in Bento Gonçalves in the State of Rio Grande do Sul, by invitation of Father Enrico Poggi, a zealous Genoan missionary who worked in Brazil for almost 30 years. It was as Vicar of Bento Gonçalves that Father Poggi requested the collaboration of the Sisters of St. Charles, and he did it through Father Carlo Porrini's intermediation, a Scalabrinian Missionary who worked in the *Gaúcho** territory since 1907. Bento Gonçalves, a hard working and flowering center of Italian colonization, opened up to the MSCS Sisters a new pastoral space that identified with the mission of the institute. After getting the necessary authorization from the Archbishops of Sao Paulo and Porto Alegre, Mother Assunta Marchetti sent five sisters to undertake the new mission. The missionaries' trip, paid by Father Enrico Poggi, began on February 4, 1915. On that date, the five pioneers left Vila Prudente to Santos where they boarded the steamship Itapuh that arrived in Porto Alegre in February 8, without any major problems.

The five missionaries' disembarkation in Porto Alegre was marked by their first unforeseen event. Father Poggi was, on this day, in one of the parish chapels, as he had not received the communication of the sisters' arrival. *Without any letter of presentation, neither to the Vicar nor to the Archbishop, tired from the trip, and not knowing where to go, they went to the closest hotel whose name inspired them with trust: the Savoia*¹⁴⁰.

After obtaining an audience with the Archbishop, Joao Becker, the sisters heard encouraging words from him. The Prelate advised them not to return to the Savoia and by his initiative, were taken to the Sevigne, a traditional school of the Sisters of St. Joseph, where they stayed overnight. After a brief stay in the Gaúcho capital city, the sisters continued their trip. The route, Porto Alegre-Carlos Barbosa was by train, and the stretch between Carlos Barbosa and Bento Gonçalves by coach. There, the five pioneer sisters whose names deserve repeating, Lucia Gorlin, Borromea Ferraresi, Josefina Oricchio, Maria de Lourdes Martins and Joana de Camargo, began to live among many privations the first moments of the new mission.

With a difficult start, the residence of the sisters was an old wooden house. In its interior, there were no chairs, but Mr. Paulo Pasquetti, who was the sacristan, soon provided some from the church. Supper on the day of arrival was at the Pasquali family's house, who invited the sisters through Mrs. Marieta Baldi. In the summer night, a storm deafened the noise of mattresses made out of cornhusks!

In this house, where the missionaries lived until 1915, there was also a school. At first 50 children were enrolled but the number increased to 60 during that year. Father Enrico Poggi acquired a lot where, soon in August, the construction of a building began that was suitable for operating a school and be the residence of the sisters. The priest even sold one of his colonies, and got a loan from the Pelotense Bank to cover the expenses. The bricks used in the construction were leftovers from a fire that broke out in Mr. Pedro Venturella's hotel, and whose friends freely transported them to the work site.

* Habitante do estado do Rio Grande do Sul (n.d.t.).

¹⁴⁰ *RIASSUNTO STORICO della fondazione della Missione del Rio Grande del Sud, 1915-1934*, p. 1-3 (AGSS 1.412).

On January 1916, the sisters moved in to the new building, still under construction. The dwelling, even unfinished, made the missionaries' lives easier, but there was no lack of other difficulties and privations. There was no electricity in the colonies. Work at night was usually done by candlelight because kerosene cost too much. Faith and the *missionary spirit, always ready to sacrifice*, as well as the comforting and encouraging words of Father Poggi, sustained the pioneers in their day-to-day existence.¹⁴¹

Father Faustino Consoni gave support in a delicate manner. In the very beginning of March of 1915, the missionary wrote two letters: one addressed to a missionary co-brother in the South, and another to the Vicar. To his co-brother he requested information regarding the five missionaries, from whom he only knew that they had had a good trip. He also solicited him to recommend them to the Vicar. In addition, he wanted his co-brother to find out, to calm Mother Assunta, if the sisters had made a good impression, and if Father Enrico Poggi and the population of Bento Gonçalves were pleased. He said that most of the sisters were young, very shy, and that they needed to be animated, encouragement and support.

Father Consoni, in the letter to the Vicar, justified his asking for information by stating – whoever is responsible desires to have news of the co-sisters as soon as possible. In a brief profile of the missionaries, he assured that, although they were not prominent personages, they had in compensation much good will and a notorious spirit for sacrifice, as they had well shown among the orphans, boys and girls, who in their majority were children of the settlers. He also wrote, without wishing to counsel him who had so much to give, in a confidential manner, and by having known the sisters for a longer time, a cheerful word would be of great help for them. The missionary women, according to Father Consoni, should be oriented in the observance of the Rule, a way for them to remain faithful to their vocation, and incentivated toward a living of understanding and charity among themselves. He recommended to the Vicar that he should cultivate their spirits with some instruction, and he should encourage them because most were very shy, and that as father and teacher he should do what he could to provide for their spiritual and material well-being.

He wrote to the five sisters, in May of 1916: *I remember all of you every day, even if I do not write much to you, in the Holy Sacrifice and in prayer so the Lord conserve you well, with fervor, zealous for His glory and for the well-being of the souls entrusted to you.* He mentions in the letter the 1914-1918 European war. He sent news of the sisters' relatives, asked about them, about Carolina, if she continued to be *always happy*, and he asked them to write him. He spoke of the motherhouse: *I will write to you from this motherhouse where I am almost every Monday.* He gave counsel to them, *you are called to a holy mission, which is educating the young, do your best to instill in those innocent young hearts and minds the holy fear of God;* he invoked Scalabrini and assured them that from heaven, the founder also interceded for them¹⁴².

In this same year of 1916, the General Superior visited for the first time the mission of Bento Gonçalves and became aware of the importance of the MSCS presence in that town. Back at the Motherhouse in Sao Paulo, together with the satisfaction of the positive findings, five young women from Rio Grande do Sul had accompanied Mother Assunta Marchetti, all from the Italian colony, candidates to the religious life in the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Charles. The success of the mission, and the increase in vocations made it possible for the institute to assume, during the period under study, three other works in Rio Grande do Sul, two in 1917, and another in 1919.

The second undertaking of the MSCS Congregation in Rio Grande territory was a parish school

¹⁴¹ Ibid., p. 7.

¹⁴² CONSONI, Faustino. *Carta às irmãs*. São Paulo, 22-5-1916 (AGSS 1.4.4).

in Nova Vicenza, today known as Farroupilha and located, like Bento Gonçalves, in the *Gaúcho* sierras in the area of Italian colonization. The request for Scalabrinian Sisters for the school was made by Father Luis Segale, Vicar of that area to Sister Lucia Gorlin who, at the time, was the superior of the Community of Bento Gonçalves. The request was sent to the competent authority and the *mission was undertaken through an agreement between the General Superior, Mother Assunta Marchetti, and the Archbishop of Porto Alegre, John Becker*¹⁴³.

The Parish School of Nova Vicenza started its activities in February 1917 with the arrival of other Scalabrinian Missionaries in the South from Sao Paulo. The first community was comprised of five sisters: Elena Lucca, Bernardete Ugatti, Josefina Oricchio, Maria de Lourdes Martins, and a few months later, Joana de Camargo. Sister Elena Lucca was nominated superior.

In the beginning, the Parish School, later called Gymnasium of Our Lady of Lourdes, was situated in the so-called Vicenza Velha. When the Matrix Church was transferred to Nova Vicenza, the school and the community of sisters also moved to the same area, settling in rented facilities. Only in 1943, would the building of the high school, located at 240 Tiradentes St, be inaugurated built on a lot acquired during the 1930s for this end. The construction became possible with the generous contribution and support of parents, under the leadership of Father John Pergher and of Father Adolfo Fedrizzi, then the assistant Vicar.

A new presence of the Feminine Scalabrinian Congregation in Rio Grande do Sul, now in Guapore, was almost contemporary to that of Nova Vicenza. On February 27, 1917, four Missionary Sisters of St. Charles arrived in that village sent to run the high school, with the name of Scalabrini, initiated in March its teaching activity with 75 enrolled students. To these four first sisters, Antoinette Fontana, Gertrudes Mileti, Carolina Grasti and Cecilia Mosca two more were added in September, Vittorina Consoni and Clara Pienaro.

During the first three months, the sisters were guests of Mrs. Marina Magnanti, a widow, who lived with her daughter and an adopted boy. The largest room of the house was transformed into a school. After this period, the sisters moved to a house that belonged to Mr. Julio Campos, that later was acquired for eight contos de reis. During his visit to Guapore, in October of 1917, Monsignor Mariano da Rocha, General Vicar of the Archdiocese of Porto Alegre, praised the progress of the school, then with 90 students, and in his evaluation, *Scalabrini* developed an adequate study program, benefiting all the neighboring areas.

As referred to previously, in August of 1918, Sister Antonietta Fontana left Guapore to assume the general direction of the MSCS Congregation. In January of the following year, Sister Pierina Caldieraro was sent to *Scalabrini* to help the community, overloaded with activities after the departure of Sister Antonietta, the religious very esteemed by the students and by the entire population. *Scalabrini* continued to progress, even though occupying modest facilities. As was the case of the Gymnasium Our Lady of Lourdes of Farroupilha, only in the 40's, both schools, St. Charles, in Bento Gonçalves and Scalabrini in Guapore, started to operate in modern buildings, which were built with sacrifices and with the collaboration of dedicated benefactors.

The fourth school undertaken by the MSCS Congregation in Rio Grande do Sul during the period of 1907-1920 was the Sacred Heart of Jesus, of Nova Brescia. About the presence of the Scalabrinian Sisters in this town, it is known that on January 20, 1919, two sisters, Assunta Marchetti and Borromea Ferraresi were in Nova Brescia to address the issue with the Vicar, of the Scalabrinian priest Giovanni Morelli, who had requested sisters for the parish established three years before. Once

¹⁴³ BARBIERI, Lia. *Desenvolvimento da Missão nas Américas, 1895-1975*, p. 58 (AGSS 1.4.4).

agreed upon the opening of the religious house, the two sisters returned to Bento Gonçalves while Father Morelli took all actions he deemed necessary. On the arrival of the sisters in Nova Brescia, in March of this year, the Registration book of the Parish recorded:

On the eleventh day of March of the year one thousand and nine hundred and nineteen, at eight o'clock in the morning, three Missionary Sisters of Saint Charles, Sisters Assunta Marchetti, Atilia Angeli and Justina Camargo, the latter a native of this state, left to open a high school together with the parish school which these people have intended for a long time to benefit their children, left Bento Gonçalves for Nova Brescia. They were accompanied by Mr. Joseph Zambiasi and Mr. Luiz Zanata and by Ms. Maria Borgioni and Ms. Ignez Daltoe. The distance from Bento Gonçalves did not allow a one-day journey to Nova Brescia so the sisters rested in Santa Teresa (...) the vicar, Father Negri, a Missionary of St. Charles welcomed them with much goodwill. On the following day, they continued the journey to Nova Brescia where the local people anxiously awaited them. Two hours before arriving in Nova Brescia, they encountered a group of 50 women and young ladies who had joyfully come to meet them on horseback. There were also many from Tigrinho in this group. Perfectly aligned, they continued their journey with enchanting conversation with the lovely women. Upon arriving at the top of Mount Borsato, from where Nova Brescia was perfectly seen, the whole group shouted an enthusiastic, 'viva Nova Brescia, viva the sisters', and the modest village responded to this greeting from far away with fireworks until the matrix church's square where men, women and children were gathered. Little girls offered beautiful and scented flowers. After they had taken some time for some friendly conversation with the crowd, they sisters said goodbye thanking them for their kind reception with such a celebration. I, the undersigned, Father Giovanni Morelli, at the same time give thanks to Our Lord for this benefit granted to these people, and I ardently wish that the work of these meritorious sisters gives much good fruit¹⁴⁴.

The same registration book has an entry by Bishop John Becker, dated March 21, 1919, in which the Archbishop of Porto Alegre praises the zealous Vicar, Father Morelli and those who had donated to the sisters *10 plots of land with house and classrooms*. He stated he hoped that the sisters would correspond to the *sacrifices undertaken by the parish people of Nova Brescia to maintain the new school*¹⁴⁵.

The school attended the aspirations and hardships of the population of Nova Brescia, but for the community of sisters difficulties were plenty, especially for Mother Assunta:

*The opening of the house, made with a simple signed permission, cost Mother Assunta many contrarieties, mortifications and humiliations that she knew how to endure with much calm and patience. Even with an afflicted spirit, she showed herself as always ready for duty and for the wellbeing of souls*¹⁴⁶.

This way of being of the co-founder of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Charles has been for the MSCS Sisters, throughout many decades, an example and perpetual incentive.

2.3.3 MSCS pastoral model

The new form of consecrated life that appeared in the first half of 19th century, later defined as *religious congregation*, allowed consecrated women to contribute to solve socio-cultural problems by work in the educational, health and social service sectors in general. The Feminine Scalabrinian Institute was one among more than a hundred new feminine institutes founded in Italy in the last three decades of the 19th century that adopted this form of religious life, established to respond to the social

¹⁴⁴ BOOK OF RECORDS, Saint John Baptist parish, Nova Brescia, v. 1, p. 7v- 8 (with spelling modifications).

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., *d. John Becker's Ordinance*, of March 21, 1919. Reg. L. 30 fl. 71v, n. 13, p. 8.

¹⁴⁶ *RIASSUNTO STORICO*, op. cit., p. 39.

urgencies of the time. By the informality of the act of October 25, 1895, it is possible that the MSCS Institute is not on the list of foundations of that period. We see that the MSCS Congregation was an answer to a new real necessity, unique to the social context of those days, which continues throughout time. Thus, the institute, with its social involvement, followed the *religious congregation model*, and acquired consistency in its development of activities, which responded to the migrants' concrete needs. It is possible to identify guidelines that were followed and gather elements that made it outstanding in its pastoral action in the period of 1907-1920 by the way the MSCS Sisters worked-functioned in the first 25 years of the congregation.

The Scalabrinian conception of a pastoral for migrations, fruit of its contacts with reality, presupposes concrete answers for the migrants' great spiritual and material needs in a foreign land that, in the time of John Baptist Scalabrini, they felt more than anything else a lack of priests, teachers and doctors. These urgencies, confirmed by letters received from immigrant settlers in the Americas, resulted in the Bishop's initiatives in the migratory field. The effective steps of the Scalabrinian work was to build churches and chapels, to open schools, to establish small pharmacies where it was impossible to count on a doctor's presence, which aimed above any other objective to preserve the Catholic faith in the emigrant's heart. Aware that the task was huge, Scalabrini proposed a joint action between Church and the Italian State, more than anything, he understood as a practical way of reconciliation for both. In a conference on Italian immigration given in Rome in the Church of *St. Andrea della Valle*, in February of 1891, he expressed this aspiration, among others:

Religion and Homeland: these two supreme aspirations of all gentile souls embrace and complete one another in the work of love and redemption that is the protection of the weak, and is based on an admirable accord. The miserable barriers raised by hatred and by ire disappear, the arms of all open in a brotherly embrace, hands tighten with affection, lips open into a smile and a kiss, and all distinction of classes of parties having been eliminated, there appears the embellished Christian truth that 'man is the brother of man'.

May these unpretentious words of mine be seeds of great works for the glory of God and His Church, for the well being of souls, for the greatness of the homeland, and for the promotion of the abandoned and the poor. May Italy, sincerely reconciled with the Apostolic See, repeat its ancient glories, and to add another one, immortal, that of guiding to the lighted paths of civilization and progress, as well as of its distant children¹⁴⁷.

John Baptist Scalabrini's charisma gave fruit in works, under some aspects grandiose, in order to promote the emigrant. Like the other foundations of the Apostle and Father of migrants, the Feminine Scalabrinian Congregation linked pastoral action with a particular social sensibility that brought the MSCS Sisters close to immigrants and their descendants, taking into consideration the spiritual and material reality lived by them so far away from homeland.

Since the beginning, migrant with the migrants, the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles made themselves a *comprehensive presence*, capable of favoring vital relations, proposed by Scalabrini and compared by him as a continuation of the incarnation of Jesus Christ, the Savior of humanity. To catechize was a basic element in John Baptist Scalabrini's pastoral methodology:

... now, to catechize emigrants it was first necessary to reestablish communications with the civil and ecclesiastic society, which had been broken by the fact of emigrating and by the conditions in which emigrants concretely found themselves, that is, 'in foreign countries where they do not know the language and traditions. They are in an isolation that frequently leads to death of the body and of the soul'. To brake such isolation, and to create a new local church, Scalabrini did not see a more

¹⁴⁷ SCALABRINI, Giovanni B. *Prima conferenza sull'emigrazione*. Roma, S. Andrea della Valle, 8-2-1891. In: *Scritti*, op. cit., v. 1, p. 301-2.

*effective way other than an understandable language and an understanding presence, which he did not hesitate to compare as a continuation of the incarnation of Christ, made man to save humanity. In the same way missionaries for the migrants' should become migrant with the migrants, to be poor among the poor, 'evangelical workers' to 'evangelize the children of misery and of labor (. . .) who are forced into isolation and slowly lose their parents' faith. Along with losing their faith they lose all Christian and civilized education'. The missionaries would aim to make one people of all peoples and one family of all families.'*¹⁴⁸

The missionary expansion that took place in the period of 1907-1920 allowed the MSCS Congregation to have permanent contact with other situations lived by Italian immigrants in Brazil. This new kind of presence favored a greater irradiation for the potentiality of the Scalabrinian charisma. Everything indicates three criteria guided the apostolic options at that time, faithfulness to their charisma, as considered in its two elements, spirituality and mission; the constitutions, which in Chapter 1 established as the *reason of the particular and main mission* of the congregation is to preserve the faith and piety among emigrants and the requests sent by institutions and local churches needing collaboration in pastoral action were served according to possibilities that were conditioned by the number and preparation phase of the members of the institute.

The MSCS Sisters' life style, in Sao Paulo as well as in Rio Grande do Sul, continued to be that indicated by John Baptist Scalabrini and lived by Mother Assunta Marchetti and the first sisters. They lived in a simple, humble and unpretentious manner with the disposition to live in modest houses and in small communities, by inserting themselves among the needy and keeping in tune with the local church.

In the Archdiocese of Sao Paulo, Bishop Duarte Leopold e Silva had established pastoral guidelines that reflected the Tridentine ecclesial model identified as ultramontanic. The prelate's orientation had two fundamental aspects: the orthodox view of the doctrine and of the sacramental practice. Bishop John Becker, Archbishop of Porto Alegre, for his part, was a prelate with a European mentality. In his recommendations and even in his ordinances, he searched to mold the religious women to European standards, which fortified the conventual life, less evidenced in the MSCS Sisters life style during the first days of the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute. The orientation of Bishop Becker and of the Brazilian Bishops in general, included the establishment of Catholic schools. Like the other institutes, the Feminine Scalabrinian Congregation also received this proposal from the Bishops, undertaking this main pastoral activity in diverse localities that, on the other hand, favored obtaining the resources needed for maintenance and development of the works of the institute.

In Sao Paulo, in addition to their presence in the Christopher Columbus Orphanage, the congregation took over during this period, as we have seen one school and one asylum and, for a short period, one of the Holy Houses. In the Vila Prudente Orphanage, the Sisters of St. Charles enthusiastically developed *an educational program suitable to that time and to the girls' conditions*, who were two hundred girls in a report of Sister Vittorina Consoni, in 1915. In the Vila Prudente building, *one of the largest architectural facilities of its kind existing in Sao Paulo* was divided in several sections, each admitting students according to their age, level of instruction, and teaching provided. Its primary difference was the joyful and harmonious living among girls, despite being from different backgrounds and nationalities. From this important report of 1915, we can conclude that the priorities of the institution were twofold: catechism, understood as *a set of religious and civil truths that constituted the basis of a proper education and shapes character, professionalizing courses given*

¹⁴⁸ FRANCESCONI, Mario. *Giovanni Battista Scalabrini: vescovo di Piacenza e degli emigrati*, op. cit., p. 966-7.

according to girls' modest conditions and/or the limited resources of the orphanage¹⁴⁹.

In Rio Grande do Sul, the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles' pastoral steps were innovative in some aspects, in the measure that their manner of evangelizing adapted to the reality of the colonial settlements. Schools and later hospitals did not constitute a closed pastoral space, exclusive to the Feminine Scalabrinian Mission. The missionary presence went beyond the institution to which they were linked, and becoming part of the evangelizing path of the local church. In this manner, the MSCS Sister was the protagonist of an opportune socio-cultural and ecclesiastic opening that identified her with the immigrant, adapting to the daily life of the hard working colonial communities, also participating in local pastoral activities.

The parish register books have valid information, although little, regarding the MSCS Sister's participation in the parishes. Vicars and bishops' evaluations regarding the Sisters of St. Charles' performance and initiatives makes us think of a profound symphony of the school, parish and diocesan animation during the first days of the mission in the South.

The existing parish model in the Italian colonial region in Rio Grande do Sul where the MSCS Sisters started to work in 1915 is related to parishes founded by Jesuit Missionaries in the German colony, in territory of the same state, in the second half of 19th century. The model, according to Jesus Hortal, is close to the rural European parish, while the Brazilian parish rises from urban settlements are of relative importance.

In a study about the German contribution to the Catholic Church in Rio Grande do Sul, the Jesuit, Arthur Rabuske, describes the Jesuits' parish structures by stating that they *sit, above all, as on a principle tripod, as such: construction of a church or a chapel, the parish school, and the organization of the cemetery*. About the parish schools, he writes that *they did for a long time that which the government did not do: alphabetize the children of the colony. Without them, German descendants would have vegetated, largely, without any instruction*. In his research, the Jesuit concluded that *these old parishes were a real and major contribution to the Catholic Church in Southern Brazil, and that the small ecclesiastic-scholar communities was the foundation on which the missionary could erect his pastoral action*. Rabuske still says, without detaining on the topic, that directly or indirectly Jesuit parishes helped to provide the parochial structure, and the Christian life of Italian communities in *Gaúcho* soil. The model favored avoiding *forced isolation, which Scalabrini also feared*¹⁵⁰. Arthur Rabuske states in the concluding remarks that:

*...The most beautiful, precious and characteristic monument of this community and parochial structure raised by the apostolic zeal of the Jesuits, and by the generosity of divine grace, was that of the vocations to the priesthood and sisterhood. We should see, because of them, during a determined time of history, their principal contribution, that which the German immigrants colonies brought to the Catholic Church, as a whole, in Rio Grande do Sul, renewing it and giving it a new image. This would be enhanced later by the incoming contribution of the Italian colony and, on a minor scale, the Polish colony*¹⁵¹.

2.3.4 The feminine in the Scalabrinian work

A study on the feminine contribution to the Scalabrinian work in the first decades of the 20th

¹⁴⁹ CONSONI, Vittorina. *L'Orfanotrofio Cristoforo Colombo in Villa Prudente - S. Paolo - Brasile*, 15 Dicembre 1915. In: *L'Emigrato Italiano in America*. Roma: Bollettino trimestrale, Anno X, 15 Marzo 1916, p. 43-7.

¹⁵⁰ RABUSKE, Arthur. *A contribuição teuta à igreja católica no Rio Grande do Sul* In: *Missão da igreja no Brasil*, op. cit., p. 71-5.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

century suggests a triple approach: of the mission of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Charles, identified with John Baptist Scalabrini's conception of the pastoral of migrations, which requires a permanent disposition to be a migrant with the migrants, to evangelize brothers in the situation of human mobility; of the things related to the topic and the questioning of the issue that come up within society, in general, and of the Scalabrinian family in particular, of the historical process of feminism, focusing on the aspects of the mentality of that time, of women's status, and the manner of actuating of the MSCS Sister between 1907 and 1920.

The Scalabrinian work amplified itself in a gradual form; it supplemented itself and kept itself dynamic to endure through time. Scalabrini's initial intention was to create an association of secular priests who, in a temporary character, would work among compatriots in areas of immigration. The idea soon suffered a profound modification, materializing into a Congregation of Priests called the Missionaries of St. Charles on November 28, 1897; into the founding of the patron association for emigrants, later called St Raphael, it was decided on April 12 1889, that the local committees could be supported by women who promoted beneficent activities to benefit the missions; into the foundation of the Congregation of the MSCS Sisters on October 25, 1895 and in the elaboration of the preparing of the project as a pontifical congregation for religious assistance to emigrants of all nations, which was thought of during the Bishop of Piacenza's stay in Sao Paulo in 1904, and sent to the Apostolic See on May 5, 1905.

Faithful to God and to the commitments taken as a Christian, a priest and bishop, Scalabrini remained aware of the social urgencies, above all the Italian exodus, and to what was being done at the time in other migratory contexts, such as the United States and, particularly, in Latin America, mostly between 1887 and 1905. He proposed initiatives, mobilized forces and realized apostolic visits, based on these and his own experiences, benefiting Italian immigrants, their descendants, and immigrants of all nationalities.

After the foundation of the Congregation of Priests, the Missionary of St. Charles and the St. Raphael Society, Scalabrini and the Scalabrinian Missionaries soon manifested the certainty that the apostolic activity of the priests and laity needed to be complemented by a religious women's pastoral action, imbibed with the same spirit, working side by side with the Italian migrants. We have already referred to the affirmation of the Bishop in a speech given on March 19, 1889 on the occasion of the ceremony of giving the crucifix to Francisca Xavier Cabrini and companions, departing for the United States: *There are endeavors in which only you can achieve success. God has infused into the hearts of women a very special gift, by which they exert a mysterious power over minds and hearts*¹⁵².

Scalabrini's acknowledgement of a *mysterious feminine power* proceeded by a century actual literature addressing the question of gender could constitute material for reflection for the more recent anthropological revisions related to the issue, also internally in the Scalabrinian family.

In the 19th century, the feminist movement searched for equality of rights while nowadays *feminism formulates a concept of liberation that prescind 'equality' to affirm the difference understood not as inequality or complementarily, but as a historical ascension of the feminine identity itself*¹⁵³. Complementarity, an expression that we used in previous pages, would mean a simple arrangement, a concession to evidence that *complements are just feminine!*¹⁵⁴.

Reflection on relations of this kind has brought about a profound comprehension of the

¹⁵² SCALABRINI, Giovanni B. *Appunti del discorso alla madre Cabrini e alle sue sei compagne nella consegna del Crocifisso a Codogno*, 19-3-1889. In: *Scritti*, op. cit., v.1, p. 235.

¹⁵³ TELES, Maria Amélia de Almeida. *Feminismo no Brasil: trajetória e perspectivas*. In: *Gênero e Teologia*. op. cit., p. 52.

¹⁵⁴ GEBARA, Ivone. *Entre os limites da filosofia e da teologia feminista*. In: *Gênero e Teologia*, op. cit., p. 160.

feminine condition in a patriarchal historical context that also involves religious life. The issue provokes questioning and provokes questions, some specific to the Scalabrinian work, before and during the period of 1914, as follows:

- If there was a dynamic integration of the male-female or if tensions predominated between the priests and sisters of St. Charles in the mission of the Christopher Columbus Orphanage during the first days of the institute;
- If attitudes of authoritarianism and subordination were evident, and if such a situation persisted after 1914 when new constitutions set greater autonomy for the MSCS Congregation;
- If priests and MSCS Sisters knew how to translate the principle of equality in diversity or if the Feminine Scalabrinian Missionary's role was one of auxiliaries in the day-to-day activities of the mission;
- If, after all, the MSCS Sister exercised that *mysterious power on minds and on hearts* when conjugating the diverse and if the joint pastoral action of the masculine and feminine missionaries resulted in a mutual enrichment and a timely innovation.

Scalabrini's affirmation shows the difference of woman and focalizes on the importance of interaction and sharing of power as an enriching feature in relationships between persons because, *every being needs some participation in power to affirm him before other beings*¹⁵⁵. This second affirmation can also be applied to the relationships between institutions. To arrive at this level of collective understanding a path needs to be taken both by the church and by society at general, facilitated, it's true, by an ongoing process although subject to progress and setbacks, which is not a contradiction.

The female condition in the beginning of the 20th century, we know, reflected an inherited mentality from the past that, based on *scientific* knowledge of the time, saw physical, psychic and intellectual differences between men and women. This said that, except for a few exceptions, they were weak, volatile, and not suitable for study, limited in deepening and affirming their own convictions, incapable to govern. Therefore, it was up to men to be head of the family and government of human society. The church, in its turn, refused to entrust hierarchal or liturgical roles to women, who also were prevented to teach and, if married, to be submissive to the husband¹⁵⁶.

Concerning religious life, as we have seen, a new female awareness brought about, during the first half of 19th century, another style of consecrated woman. The *religious congregation* focused on social issues, conquered space in the pastoral area in an innovative framework. Already at the end of the century, however, when the Feminine Scalabrinian Congregation was founded, the model will return to elements proper to religious-conventual structure to be recognized by the ecclesiastic authority.

In 1900, the Apostolic See, through *Conditae a Christo* and later by means of the Canon Code of 1917 granted *religious* character to the new congregations. The *Ordinances*, emanating from the then congregation for bishops and regulars, in 1901 and 1921, reinforced the *decency and propriety* criteria in relation to the works. The proposed feminine institutions were not allowed, among other activities, to take care of the sick, both men and women, at home or at night; to establish institutional

¹⁵⁵ FABRI DOS ANJOS, Márcio. *Relação de poder entre homens e mulheres na vida religiosa*. In: *Gênero e poder na vida religiosa*. São Paulo, Loyola, 1999, p. 18 (Série Psicologia e Vivência-CRB).

¹⁵⁶ ROCCA, Giancarlo. *Donne religiose*. Estratto da *Claretianum* 32. Roma, Paoline, 1992, cf. p. 62.

health care homes, asylums and hospitals for people of both genders, to provide domestic services in seminaries or in ecclesiastic houses; to teach in co-ed schools, to work in maternities. After 1915, congregations were governed by the code of 1917. It demanded, for instance, the presence of the local bishop for the election of the general superior; established a proper jurisdiction for the confessors of religious women. It did not allow a feminine institute to have a postulator in the Apostolic See; local bishops were to see that religious women did not leave the convent alone; it did not allow a sister to help at mass at the altar.¹⁵⁷

In this way, the *religious congregation*, since the end of the 19th century, was no longer itself. It had distanced itself from its origin, going back to the religious-convent structure movement; the sisters' residence and workplace were concentrated in the same building. The establishment had a chapel for the practices of piety for the religious who did not have to leave the house. Each community had its own rooms and the conventual model prevailed¹⁵⁸.

In the specific case of the MSCS Congregation, we know John Baptist Scalabrini's manifestation in a report from August 10, 1900, the same year as the *Conditae a Christo*, where he affirms his interest that the Scalabrinian's be like the

*Sisters who are similar to those spread out in several dioceses in France, who adapt to living in numbers of only four and, without pretensions, teach in elementary schools, teach catechism and wherever possible attend to the sick with all the precautions that prudence and experience suggest*¹⁵⁹.

We know that on the other hand, Scalabrini's more rigid positions had been established, during the diocesan synods, traditional paths, even discriminatory paths, by fixing *a clear separation of the sacred and of priesthood from the feminine world*. The Bishop of Piacenza

*H wanted songs for the youth to be taught by a woman and not a priest; that women's communion to be distributed in a place away from the altar; if communion was to be given outside of a mass, a man was required to recite the 'confeiteor' and, in the absence of a man, the priest was to respond to himself before allowing the intervention of a woman*¹⁶⁰.

A pertinent observation is that during the first quarter of the century of the MSCS history there was a greater symphony with style of life of the sisters with the model suggested by Scalabrini in 1900. In this period, the missionary women showed adaptability, living in modest houses, teaching catechism, teaching in elementary schools, living in small communities without lots of pretensions. Mother Assunta Marchetti let us know, in particular, that the communities where she passed, in Sao Paulo and in Rio Grande do Sul, she put Christian Charity ahead of the convent structure, and she facilitated ways of being present among of the sick that needed help, but without leaving behind her routine practices.

Everything indicates the Sisters of St. Charles welcomed the later dimensioning without any great resistance, in symphony with ecclesial guidance. Another aspect to be considered is the feminist movement, incipient then in Brazil, may not have influenced the MSCS Sisters' daily routines during the first quarter of century of the MSCS Institute's history. However, the Scalabrinian Missionary Sister contributed, as we shall see, to the advance of the historical process of feminism, for making access to formal education for girls and young women in areas of Italian colonization.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 205-39.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 188-9.

¹⁵⁹ SCALABRINI, Giovanni B. *Relazione dell'Opera dei Missionari di San Carlo per gli Emigrati Italiani*, 10-8-1900. In: *Scritti*, op. cit., v. 2, p. 182.

¹⁶⁰ ROCCA, Giancarlo. *Donne religiose*, op. cit., p. 190.

2.3.5 Contribution of the MSCS Sister in preserving the catholic faith and in the integration process of the Italian immigrant in Brazil

To evaluate the pastoral action of the Congregation of the Sisters of Saint Charles in the Christopher Columbus Orphanage and in the initial phase of missionary expansion of the institute and to be aware of the contribution of the MSCS Sister in the integration process of the immigrant it is opportune to have in mind the ecclesial path and methodology of John Baptist Scalabrini. These indicated to the missionaries, as an effective way, *a comprehensible language and a comprehensive presence*. We know that in pastoral practice, the MSCS Sister became a migrant with migrants, adapting to the different realities, identifying themselves with the population to be evangelized and participating in the pastoral initiatives and activities of the local church. In the missionary activity in Sao Paulo and in Rio Grande do Sul, between 1907 and 1920, Mother Assunta Marchetti and companions contributed in facilitating a Christian-Catholic life for the immigrant, and promoted a gradual integration for them, demonstrating that women always knew how to make themselves present in history, despite strong preconceptions of the time.

During the first decades of the 20th century, the Catholic Church began to take effective stands in face of the migratory reality but, more decades would need to pass before it arrived at a document such as Pius XII's apostolic constitution *Exsul Familia*, of 1952. This document addressed ordinances related to the immigrants' spiritual assistance and with the decree *Christus Dominus* that emanated from Vatican Council II that in article n° 18, recommended to the Episcopal Conferences a particular solicitude towards the human being in the status of mobility. *Christus Dominus* warned the national conferences of the importance in providing and favoring the migrant's spiritual care by means of a specific pastoral. The position of the church in this field would be reinforced with the instruction *De Pastoralis Migratorum Cura*, of 1969, which proposed the adoption of suitable pastoral methods, without attributing to the creation of ghettos and not to force the insertion of the national culture. With the *moto proprio* '*Apostolicae Caritatis*' of March 19, 1970 Paul VI would reorganize the pastoral for the migrants, instituting the Pontifical Commission for Migration and Tourism, annexed to the Congregation of Bishops. The above documents address the question of human mobility as an ecclesial problem, *but not in terms of the mission, but of belonging*.¹⁶¹

To belong to Jesus Christ's church that is a pilgrim in time and does not recognize foreigners, means to bind oneself to an individual and collective commitment with the essence of ecclesial life: the building of the human family unity, called universal communion. This was the line pursued by Scalabrini and indicated by him to his missionaries. The Bishop of Piacenza was ahead of his time, he considered the different aspects of migration and he recognized the importance of culture through which the migrant expresses himself, facilitating his growth in faith. To be church requires that the local community welcome the immigrant with openness and respect without pressing him to renounce his cultural heritage. The immigrant, on the other hand, should remain open to the cultural values of the welcoming society, without absolutizing the undeniable value of the cultural of origin.

In history of migrations, in particular Italian, there were institutions and some missionaries that pursued another pastoral line. *Italica Gens*, with which the Scalabrinian work kept close and deep ties, constituted an association or federation that had as its goal religious assistance to the transoceanic emigrants who searched a better life in the Americas and in Africa, with the proposal to provide them with material assistance. The Federation was characterized by a marked nationalist tendency. World

¹⁶¹ BEYER, Jean. *Fondamento ecclesiale della pastorale dell'emigrazione*. In: *Per una pastorale dei migranti*. Contributi in occasione del 75° della morte di mons. G. B. Scalabrini. Roma, Direzione generale dei missionari scalabriniani, 1980, p. 130.

War I weakened its action in the American territory. Since the world conflict, *Italica Gens* started to work in the East.

It is known that during the first days of the Scalabrinian presence in Brazil there were difficulties in the relationship between Scalabrini and the Missionaries Priests of St. Charles with prelates and other members of the Brazilian clergy due to their different pastoral views. A reason for special tension was the link between Catholic faith and *Italianality* which marked Scalabrini's thoughts, not always understood correctly, even by Italian missionaries and institutions. Scalabrinians, in their majority, followed the pastoral guidance of the Bishop of Piacenza convinced that by preserving the immigrant's culture meant to facilitate his growth in the Catholic faith, a support to his identity. It is also important to remember that John Baptist Scalabrini considered human mobility a providential fact, capable to congregate nations and to favor the enhancement of the human family.

In Sao Paulo, the relationship between Scalabrinian priests with the local Bishop changed when Bishop Duarte Leopoldo e Silva took over the diocese, as successor of Bishop Jose de Camargo Barros. The later contributed much for the implementation of the Scalabrinian work in Parana, where he was the bishop between 1894 and 1904, later in Sao Paulo until 1906, and the year of his tragic death. While Bishop Jose supported the Missionaries of St. Charles, concerned with the spiritual well being of immigrants along with their gradual integration into the Brazilian territory, Bishop Duarte advocated a national culture and advised for faster integration of the immigrants. The later establishment of new dioceses in the State of Sao Paulo and the formation of fixed nuclei of pastoral action among Italian immigrants decreased tensions and favored incorporation of Scalabrinian Missionaries in the local church.

Already in Rio Grande do Sul, a state where the MSCS Sisters began to work in 1915, Bishop Joao Becker, previously Bishop of Florianopolis, and from 1912 to 1946 Archbishop of Porto Alegre, defended the preservation of European cultural features in the areas of immigration. The vicar-general, Monsignor Mariano da Rocha, however, manifested some resistance regarding orientation followed by the missionaries from European nations, such as Father Eurico Poggi, parish priest of Bento Gonçalves.

It was due to Father Poggi that Bento Gonçalves was able to count on the temporary Scalabrinian Priests presence and with the pastoral contribution of the MSCS Sisters, who were present there since 1915. The dynamic missionary also was the founder of the newspaper *Corriere d'Italia*, written in the Italian language. Two reasons lead him to create the newspaper: opposition to the Masons and reaction to another newspaper published in Caxias, *Il Colono Italiano*, which due to its pro Austrian trend displeased many Italians. This newspaper, previously entitled *La Liberta*, founded by the parish priest of Caxias, Father Carmine Fasulo had another orientation. Due to financial hardships, it was sold to Father Franchetti who was an Austrian citizen. *Il Colono Italiano* had the support of the Capuchin priests, who later took over the newspaper, later giving it the name of *Staffetta Riograndense*, currently, the *Correio Riograndense*.

Regarding the *Corriere d'Italia* that counted on the Scalabrinian Father Giovanni Costanzo's collaboration from 1915-1918, a cultured man who worked as consular agent in Encantado and who, due to his ill health, looked for better environmental conditions in Bento Gonçalves. In 1918, Father Carlo Porrini, another Scalabrinian, who was nominated as Father Poggi's assistant, and with his competent action considerably increased the number of subscribers to the *Corriere d'Italia*. Father Porrini organized a mobile library and the Christopher Columbus Society, concerned with the promotion of the settlers and their descendants. The newspapers and the other initiatives of religious and socio-cultural characteristic contributed to the development of Italian colonization nuclei.

In this period, religious practices in Italian colonies had evolved a lot. In the beginning of the colonization, worship took place in private homes, an opportunity for families to gather to pray the rosary and pray in front of a picture or image brought from Italy by immigrants or by missionaries passing through. Soon afterwards, small roadside miniature chapels were constructed which became references and places for prayers. The next step was to build modest wood chapels, initiatives of the dwellers themselves who organized commissions or constituted societies with this or other goals. The chapels were located in different routes that united colonial lots. Slowly, next to the chapels of greater importance, settlements were developed, some of which would become flourishing villages. In the beginning, laymen assumed the religious leadership, but the immigrants began to request insistently, inclusively from the Bishop of Piacenza, for a permanent presence of priests. They were served in the measure that was possible.

Scalabrini presented, during and after his visit to Brazil, undertaken in 1904, as already mentioned, proposals to the church to solve the problems due to human mobility. The Bishop showed three alternatives to be undertaken first. The first one would be an organization of pastoral activities, an initiative that according to him should come from the Apostolic See, the universal authority capable of encompassing all nationalities. The second would be the presence of a priest in each colonial nucleus, with residence in an urban center and with conditions to travel periodically throughout the whole territory of the colony. The third a school where immigrants' children could learn how to read and write, to get notions of math and dominate the language of their new homeland as well as that of their origin, in so far as the cultural tie would favor preservation of the faith. Scalabrini proposed the contribution of the missionary sisters for the schools. This pastoral orientation of the Bishop envisioned a sensible integration of the immigrant, facilitated through the preservation of his religious identity. Like the Scalabrinian work, other institutions that dedicated themselves to the human mobility issue had a clear awareness of the importance of a school in immigrant's integration process.

The preoccupation with education was unanimous within the Brazilian ecclesial ambit of the time. In areas of foreign colonization, the omission of the state in this field made the immigrants, incentivized by the local church, to take over the education of their own children and their descendants by means of establishing catholic parish schools. Bishop John Becker's, Archbishop of Porto Alegre, ordinance that authorized the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles to establish a school in Bento Gonçalves, registered *applauses and compliments for the zealous vicar of the village* for his commitment in promoting *Christian teaching*. He recommended the new parish school to the families in the village with the certainty that their children would receive within its embrace *a sound education and good instruction, according to the norms traced out by the Holy Church*¹⁶².

In the contexts of German and Italian immigration, more expressive in the Southern and Southeastern regions of the country, the parish schools meant an invaluable gain for the church and for society because of the formation provided to the faithful and by the rise of being conscience of being citizens among the colonial population. Thus, thanks to the schools, *illiteracy was banned from more than one thousand rural nuclei; an unheard of fact in Brazil considering that education was a privilege of the elite and not of settlers – farmers – as the majority of immigrants were*¹⁶³.

The MSCS Sister was not present, from the beginning, among immigrants, having begun their mission in the City of Sao Paulo in 1895, in a context of relative progress. In Rio Grande do Sul, some colonial nuclei, where the sisters had been established since 1915, began to acquire importance as

¹⁶² BECKER, John. Porto Alegre, *Ordinance of February 25 1915* – Mons. D. Luiz Mariano da Rocha. Book of Records, St. Anthony parish, Bento Gonçalves.

¹⁶³ DEIFELT, Wanda. *Educação teológica para mulheres: um passo decisivo rumo à cidadania eclesial*. In: *Gênero e Teologia*, op. cit., p. 274.

working villages growing in development. The Scalabrinian Sister had a relevant role, both in Sao Paulo and in Rio Grande do Sul, in educating children and youngsters, who in their majority were Italian immigrants' children or descendants. In Bento Gonçalves in the beginning of the parochial school, in response to the Italian Consul, classes were given in the Italian language. There is a significant record in the registration book of the Parish of St. Anthony as it shows that during the second pastoral visit of Bishop John Becker to the city, in October of 1918, three girls from the St. Charles School greeted the archbishop in Portuguese¹⁶⁴.

In the Christopher Columbus Orphanage in Vila Prudente at this time, the MSCS Sisters developed an educational program in symphony with the demands of that time and the conditions of the orphans. In the school year of 1915 there were two hundred girls *divided in several classes according to their ages, study and diverse kinds of teaching*. Since their early age, all of them had training in singing, gymnastics, poetry recital both in the Portuguese and Italian languages, and they did it with spontaneity and grace. Many of them at the age of five knew how to read correctly. The older ones in the first section, in addition to reading, writing and composing sentences, *knew the elementary nomenclature of the human body, the first notions of geography of America, Europe, and particularly of Brazil and Italy*. Similarly, the girls in the second section had noticeable success in classes of *Italian and Portuguese languages, arithmetic's, geometry, advanced calculus, geography, physics and natural sciences*. Many were very successful in *geometric and decorative designing*. Necessity, however, demanded that a trade should be taught to the orphans, which they obtained gradually since they were younger in other sections of the orphanage as evidenced by the annual exposition of works that were admired by numerous visitors. The exposition *was always so successful that, for some, it seemed impossible that those little orphans had been able to produce such wonderful works*¹⁶⁵.

In those years, the feminist movement in Brazil struggled for access to formal education. In some aspects, the MSCS Sister anticipated the work of the State and had recognition for her participation in the changing process that characterized the first decades of 20th century. Like other religious women, some MSCS Sisters became qualified in the educational field, which allowed advances and renewal in teaching, especially after the later opening of teaching courses that would form successive generations of teachers. A sonnet dedicated to the first school of the congregation in Rio Grande do Sul shows the special contribution by MSCS Sister in the integration process of Italian immigrants in Brazil:

*Ó veneranda casa, que domina – Oh venerated house that dominates
Do alto da rua toda uma cidade! – From the top of the street an entire city!
Tu es a santa, a imensa claridade -You are a saint, an immense clarity
Que a alma nivea da mulher fascina.-The snow-white soul of a fascinating woman*

*Tu és de Deus a santa austeridade - You are from God holy austerity
Berçário de cultura que ilumina – Cradle of culture that shines
Tu és a luz do lar, a oficina – You are light of the home, the workshop
Onde nasce o amor, brilha a verdade.- Where love is born, truth shines*

*Se tu que dás, teu ensinamento - If you give, your teaching
Tem o frescor de vívido alimento – There is freshness of living food,
Qual o milagre bíblico dos pães, - As the biblical miracle of bread*

¹⁶⁴ BOOK OF RECORDS, St. Anthony parish, Bento Gonçalves, v. 1, p. 7.

¹⁶⁵ CONSONI, Vittorina. *L'Orfanotrofio Cristoforo Colombo in Villa Prudente*. In: *L'Emigrato Italiano in America*, op. cit., p. 43-7.

*E que florescem sempre as esperanças – And hope always blossoms
Por teu portal amigo entram crianças, - Through your friendly portal walk the children
Saindo mestras e futuras mães. – Leaving as teachers and future mothers.¹⁶⁶*

¹⁶⁶ FORNARI, O. H. *Colégio Medianeira. Avante, Órgão do Grêmio Estudantil Medianeira*. Bento Gonçalves. Edição especial, comemorativa do jubileu de prata da Escola Normal Nossa Senhora Medianeira, 1966.

Part 3 - 1920-1934

**IDENTITY CRISES AND THE APOSTOLIC SEE'S INTERVENTION
IN THE MSCS CONGREGATION**

**THE CONSOLIDATION AND DECREE OF RECOGNITION OF
THE FEMININE SCALABRINIAN INSTITUTE**

Identity crises and the Apostolic See's intervention in the MSCS Congregation

Consolidation and Recognition Decree of the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute

During the first four decades of the history of the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles – Scalabrinians, it grew and consolidated itself in the Brazilian socio-ecclesial context, working in its own pastoral field that was indicated to it by the competent authority. Since its foundation on October 25, 1895 until its recognition as a Pontifical Institute by Pius XI's decree on January 13, 1934, the congregation overcame internal crises, had a reasonable missionary expansion and worked, above all, among Italian immigrants and their descendants established in Brazil in the States of Sao Paulo and Rio Grande do Sul.

Like the two preceding parts, the third part of this volume is divided into three units. The first where the prevailing preoccupation is putting the history of the MSCS Congregation in the international contest of the time, with the conviction that *a socio-pastoral project would become clear in the measure in which they would have land, the landscape, and the environment in which and for whom it was thought for.*¹⁶⁷

In its globality, the MSCS Sister's pastoral response in the first 40 years of mission in Brazil was characterized by insertion in the local church, by its capacity of adapting in the face of challenges, unique to heterogeneous environments and by overcoming conditioning as a result of the mentality of that time, of the ecclesial praxis and of limited human, economic-cultural resources available; by interaction and looking for ways to understand the surrounding reality; by the pastoral methodology being utilized, of the commitment in harmonizing human mobility and the immigrant's cultural identity. Some apostolic options are questioned, for the period under study, for which it is important to know the criteria that have determined them.

It can be affirmed that, in a general manner, the expansion and consolidation of the MSCS Institute resulted from a faithfulness to the socio-pastoral project of John Baptist Scalabrini; to the tutelage of the original intent, expressed in the texts of the approved constitutions in 1914 that established, besides "personal sanctification" the procuring, with missionary ardor, the good of their neighbor through works of zeal and charity, considered as its *particular and principal mission and to be given all the support needed. Secondly, to support when possible and convenient, the zealous works undertaken by the Congregation of the Saint Charles Priests.* Founded by Scalabrini in 1887, *to conserve the faith and piety of the migrants;*¹⁶⁸ on the human-spiritual and cultural level of its ministry together with immigrants; to the Apostolic See's orientation that intervened in the life of the Feminine Scalabrinian Institution and facilitated its stability and gave it Pontifical recognition. The Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of Saint Charles Borromeo – Scalabrinians, owes above all its continuance in time to the potentiality of the Charisma.

¹⁶⁷ FRANCESCONI, Mario. *Prefácio*. In: SIGNOR, Lice. M. *John Baptist Scalabrini and the Italian migration: a socio-pastoral project*, op. cit., p. 8.

¹⁶⁸ *CONSTITUTIONS of the missionary sisters of Saint Charles Borromeo*. Sso Paulo, 1914. Capítulo I, p. 5-6.

3.1 Aspects of the international conjuncture in the MSCS Congregation's consolidation and Pontifical recognition period

3.1.1 The world between two wars

Two historical moments were responsible for the changes that took place in the social, political, economic and cultural life of many nations during the period comprised between 1920 and 1934: the First World War and the 1929 crises. The world lived a chaotic time in between the two wars in the political and economic realms, which deeply affected human society. In this period, ideals were threatened, the possibility for the survival of democracy was denied, totalitarian forms were justified, sinister omens were disseminated, and innumerable institutions failed. The result of a decade of inconsistent prosperity, and in October of 1929 an economic disaster fell over the United States and other countries, leading the world to the *great depression* that, in so many ways, contributed to the deflagration of the Second World War of 1939-1945. Science, amidst international anarchy, progressed in its revolutionary way and the arts bloomed with pessimism, while some signs of a better time sustained shaken humanity. Internally the MSCS Congregation, also underwent a serious identity crises in the decade of 1920, and once overcome the Institute received, in 1934, the pontifical recognition decree confirming the hope manifested by Mother Assunta Marchetti to the sisters in a memorandum of September 1927.

The condition of instability that affected the world economy in the period between the two great wars was marked by long inflationary years and by a deep crisis in agricultural and industrial production and in international trade. The European reality, in particular, was characterized by mass unemployment, by the exodus of the inland population to the large urban centers, by continental and intercontinental migrations, by the struggle for better wages and fewer working hours, and greater guarantees against the risks of life; by the strengthening of the unions' power and the great importance given to their leaders; by political ties of workers claims; by the new status conquered by women; by the growing number of divorces; by the interest in psychoanalysis; by false relativist theories regarding superiority of the white race; by weakening of religious convictions. Some of these aspects were clues to a worldwide crisis that would blow up in October of 1929 with the bankruptcy of the New York Stock Exchange.

The United States, the country that had most benefits from the 1914-1918 war, began to ascend as a world power in the second half of 19th century when it initiated its economic and military expansion over Latin America. At the end of the First World War, the United States was, among all nations, the richest and the most powerful one. *While European nations were in battlefields, the great American republic took over their markets, penetrating their fields of investment while hugely expanding its industry and agriculture. Thus, before the war the United States was in debt of around 3 billion dollars to European countries, was now creditor of the same countries of an amount of around eleven billion dollars. The United States, between 1922 and 1929, enjoyed seven years of plenty unregistered in any nation's history. The living standards of the population were the highest in the world. Always according to Burns, despite abundance, the country had a large portion of its foundations built in the sand*¹⁶⁹.

The United States adopted, after the war period, an isolationist policy towards Europe. The consequent reduction in North American loans to countries in the old continent decreased their purchasing power. Through high tariffs and exchange rates control, economic nationalism prevented

¹⁶⁹ BURNS, Edward. *História da civilização ocidental*, op. cit., p. 904-5.

them from recuperating trade and maintenance of traditional markets. England and Europe, in general, decadent, indebted and depending in foreign capital gave space to the North American hegemony. At the same time that old empires disappeared, new powers arose. In addition to the United States, Japan turns to Australia, India and Latin America.

The United States began to supply European countries with food, raw materials and manufactured products, broadening their area of influence over the Asian continent and ensured its domination over Latin America. The surplus capital, fruit of those years of plenty, was channeled to European nations. European countries with such loans, which were private capital, reactivated their industries and achieved a significant industrial recovery. In 1927, European production was higher than the figures before the 1914-1918 war, reconquering markets while North American production, despite having remained dynamic, lost space and revealed the inconsistency of the adopted model.

This economic fragility was due to, among other factors, the unequal distribution of prosperity, the profits that the millionaire greed increased in a much higher ratio than workers income; on the disordered industrial growth that led to overproduction and market saturation; the agriculture sector crisis in which mechanization increased production, leading to a drop in prices; government omission that did not facilitate yielding of overproduction; consequent indebtedness of many farmers who had to mortgage their land and loosing it to banks, in large measure responsible for the crisis; of exaggerated expansion of banking credit; untamed speculation; unequal trading conditions; simultaneity of crisis in the industrial, agriculture and trading sectors; rigid protectionism and govern tariff policy that almost ruined international trade.

The *great depression* initiated on October 29, 1929 with the fall of New York Stock Exchange that undid fortunes, left Wall Street in panic and the country perplexed, hitting the capitalist world either directly or indirectly, affecting almost all of Europe, Latin America and Japan, which at the end of the 19th century went from feudalism to capitalism. The crisis caused uncontrolled inflation, bankruptcies and mass unemployment, labor strikes and general non-satisfaction. The North American government due to the country's situation adopted a reforming policy based on the *New Deal*, which put an end to economic liberalism of the Republicans, and proposed to reorganize the domestic economy and national life, starting by controlling the excesses of capitalism.

The *New Deal* marked, in the United States, the passage of liberal capitalism to state monopolist capitalism and to a new model of society. Franklin Delano Roosevelt's socioeconomic recuperation plan reached in a large measure its objectives. The Democratic Party elected F.D. Roosevelt president three times, from 1933 to 1945. The monopolist capitalism expanded itself while the world economy saw the sterling pound hegemony-giving place to the US dollar hegemony.

In France and in England, liberal democracies faced challenges imposed by monopolist capitalism that had become consolidated by means of economic concentration, economic rationalization and assembly line production, measures that, in their turn, lead to the formation of trusts, joint ventures and international industrial complexes. To face the intensification of economic nationalism, the League of Nations, discredited, called for a *world economic conference* undertaken in London in mid 1933, but the initiative did not have the expected success.

The First World War caused the weakening of democratic institutions generating appropriate conditions for dissemination and consolidation of the Russian socialist revolution, and the organization of totalitarian regimes that took power affirmed in Italy, Germany, Spain and Portugal. International trade reduction, military expansion and deep antagonism between nations lead inevitably to the Second World War of 1939-1945.

The United States, throughout the decade of 1930, in their foreign relations assumed the *good*

neighbor role not only in relation to Latin America, but as well as with other nations, having in mind the nation's interests due to its critical internal situation and the international context that needed a stand capable to oppose warmonger intentions that threatened world peace. The *good neighbor policy*, launched by President Roosevelt, represented a radical change in the country's relations with the world.

Cultural manifestations in the period between the two world wars, in their turn, reflected the politic-economic trend of those days. Apart from the development of sciences, especially physics that achieved revolutionary discoveries, in biology that marked significant progress and the new times of conquests in the medical field, some ideologists disseminated irrationalism and contributed to the debilitation of democracy, justifying the reinforcement of totalitarian regimes. Philosophy, Arts and Literature, despite originality, were characterized by the pessimist trend in the majority of productions, becoming responsible for disorientation and threats to the noblest ideals of the human family.

3.1.2 Pius XI's Pontificate

The First World War provoked changes in the universal history and in the life of the church. With the end of the war, Pope Benedict XV, who tried in so many ways to guide nations to Christian ideals of peace and fraternity, committed himself with renewed energy, now to soften the evils caused by the world conflict and to contribute to a lasting reconciliation. Such efforts, as we saw, acknowledged by several nations, strengthened the papacy. Pope Benedict XV's successor, pope Pius XI, was entrusted with the administration of the Catholic Church throughout the entire period between the two world wars: 1922-1939. The new Pontiff guided himself with a programmed continuity of his predecessors' purposes, summarized in the significant sentence: *Pax Christi in regno Christi*, in his first encyclical letter, *Ubi arcano*, of December 23, 1922. During his pontificate, of innumerable and great undertakings, thanks to the Apostolic See's intervention, the MSCS Congregation overcame a serious identity crisis, and was recognized as a lawful Pontifical institute.

Pius XI was born in 1857, close to the city of Monza, Italy. He was the prefect of the Ambrosian Library in Milan and of the Vatican Library, Visitor and Papal legate to Poland just after the war, later nominated archbishop and cardinal of Milan. As pope, Pius XI distinguished himself by his edifying trust in God, noted wisdom, tenacity and optimism, giving broad visibility to the church's mission in the world.

His pontificate lasted seventeen years and includes the proclamation of the jubilee years in 1925, 1929, 1933, the introduction of Christ the King Feast Day; consecration of the whole human family to the Sacred Heart of Jesus; the creation of Catholic Action; canonization of many saints, among them Saint Theresa of the Infant Jesus, J. B. Vianney, Bishop John Bosco, Bernardete Soubirous, the creation of new archbishoprics, bishoprics, prefectures and apostolic vicariates; an increase in missions; strengthening of unity with the Eastern churches; the foundation of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences; the opening of innumerable colleges; incentive for the creation of catholic universities, preordination of philosophy and theology academic studies in accordance to the constitution *Deus scientiarum Dominus* of May 24, 1931 that aimed at greater uniformity of teaching programs and methods in this realm in the entire catholic world.

Pope Pius XI, studious in history and other sciences, on the fortieth anniversary of Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum* explained with his new encyclical, *Quadragesimo anno* of May 15, 1931 the *concepts for a righteous social order*. In addition to this encyclical, where he criticized socialism, Pius XI left the church another one in which he established the limits to fascism and socialism while condemning Nazism with the *Divini illius magistri*, of 1929, and *Casti connubii*, of 1930. The Pontiff

was against modern errors and claimed tutelage of education and of matrimony.

During Pius XI's pontificate, the Apostolic See signed timely agreements with some countries that contributed to putting into practice the 1917 code of canon law. In this field, the Pope counted on the competence of his Secretary of State, Cardinal Gasparri and on the latter's successor, Eugenio Pacelli. Pius XI, who was aware of the fragility of world peace, exhorted nations to avoid new warmonger actions, and incentivated the reconstruction of Europe, damaged in all senses by the 1914-1918 war.

A political-ecclesiastic fact of major importance that took place during Pius XI's pontificate concerns the Roman Issue whose solution was facilitated by fascism, a regime that into the practice Hegel's theory of the absolute state. With Benito Mussolini, fascism took over power in Italy opposed democracy, liberalism and Masonry, but maintaining pacific relations with the Catholic Church. The fascist regime restored mandatory religious classes in schools, exempted clergy from military service, gave back confiscated churches and convents, acknowledged Catholic festivities, and allowed crucifixes to be placed in schools, hospitals and courts.

The Lateran Pact of February 11, 1929 was comprised of two parts: the treaty and the *concordat*. The treaty restored the Pope's rule over the new state of Vatican City, in which the papacy recognized the state of Italy, with Rome as its capital. In its 27 articles, the treaty regulates, among other issues, the establishment of the new state in Vatican City, and it being *essentially neutral in nature*, including the extraterritoriality and immunity of real estates belonging to the Apostolic See. It sanctions the inviolability of the Pope, and deals with legal prerogatives of agencies and persons linked to the Catholic Church management. It restates an old principle, which acknowledges the Catholic religion as the sole religion of the Italian state, and it recognized the Apostolic See's sovereignty in international relations. The *concordat* has 45 articles and regulates the legal conditions of religion and of the Catholic Church in Italy¹⁷⁰.

The Vatican State was created on the *theological and historical basis of the Pope's absolute independence for the exercise of his ministry, supreme and universal*. The papacy's religious-pastoral mission was maintained as a priority regarding the political realm or other interests. Ten years after the signing the Lateran Pact, Pope Pius XI died on February 10, 1939. The adoption, by fascism, of the national-socialist Idea of the supremacy of the white race, incompatible with the Christian doctrine, made the last months of the Pontiff's life very painful. It is to him that the MSCS Congregation owes their recognition as a Pontifical Religious Institute¹⁷¹

Another of Pius XI's undertaking, already mentioned, suggested by the pope in his first encyclical letter of December, 1922 had a particular historical meaning: the establishment of Catholic Action, which developed in Benito Mussolini's popular-fascist Italy, and disseminated rapidly all over the world. For Enrique Dussel, Catholic Action, with its admirable organization, was *the great religious phenomenon of the new Christianity*, understood as the new model for the church, characteristic of Latin America's ecclesiastic history from 1930-1962, a time identified with *Latin American populisms*. The *new Christianity*, besides creating the numerous Christian centers, became linked to the Pontifical Catholic Universities established since 1937 in Bogotá and Medellín in Colombia, Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo, Porto Alegre and Campinas in Brazil, Cordoba and Buenos Ayres in Argentina, and Valparaiso in Chile.

In its time, populist states such as the Brazil of Getulio Vargas and, later, in Argentina of Peron

¹⁷⁰ BIHLMAYER, Karl & TUECHLE, Hermann. *História da igreja*, op. cit., p. 614.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 616.

allowed the church to *once again to conquer the streets and plazas of the cities, to promote Eucharistic Congresses, to teach the Catholic Religion in public schools – which had been forbidden since 1880 – and to influence all sectors of society*¹⁷².

The church, in its turn, supported mobilization of the laity in Catholic Action. In Brazil, Bishop Sebastian Leme, Archbishop of Rio de Janeiro, Cardinal in 1930, was an influential figure in the socio-religious sector of the country that in this period adopted the Italian model of Catholic Action. LEC was an ecclesial instrument of political activity during the 1930s that oriented voters, recommending candidates committed to the interests of the church. At the time, ecclesial sectors contributed to reinforce Integralism, and opposed Socialism.

Of particular merit of Catholic Action was the intellectual renewal inspired mostly by the neo-scholastic trend of Jacques Maritain and his disciples. Maritain and his followers took up again St. Thomas Aquinas' scholastics in which they tried to develop a Christian Culture capable of saving the world. Many contemporary thinkers, including in Latin America, were attracted by the neo-scholastic ideals that exalted reason, which, according to them, opened up to the plenitude of life. Jackson de Figueiredo, and later Alceu Amoroso Lima, among others, followed this line of thinking in Brazil.

3.1.3 Brazil: transformations during the period of 1920-1934

The years following World War I were of transformation, some profound others not so profound, on all continents. In Latin America, in general, the economic structure was not shaken by the world conflict, but from the beginning of the 20th century successive revolutionary movements showed a growing discontent among the local population concerning economic structures inherited from the colonial period. Despite revolutions and the fall out of the war of 1914-1918, Latin American economies remained agrarian, with large landowners that made the survival of medium and small farmers difficult. To the structural factors were added new preoccupations of a conjectural character, above all the United States interventionist policy that, to protect its interests, opposed all revolutionary manifestations, exercising an effective domination during the decade of 1920. The *great depression*, as we saw, forced the North-American Nation to adopt the *good neighbor policy* later in its relations with Latin American countries, and all other nations in the world. The year of 1934 marks the revocation of US special rights in Cuba and the withdrawal of marines from Haiti, as well as the death of Augusto Cesar Sandino, a symbol of resistance of the Nicaraguan people against aggressions from the North American Republic. Within this Latin American conjuncture, focus is set in the Brazilian context of the period of 1920-1934, characterized as the beginning of a process of changes and where during the same period the MSCS Congregation, reorganized, was recognized as a Pontifical Religious Institute.

World War I allowed some Latin American countries to have a relative industrial development and, consequently, the creation of a proletariat that began to vindicate for adequate conditions for work and better living conditions. The propagation of Marxist ideas favored the creation of communist parties in Argentina, Mexico, Brazil, Uruguay, Chile, Cuba and Peru. The Brazilian Communist Party was created in 1922.

Due to the prominence of coffee related activities linked to coffee growing, the 1920s provided Brazil with better conditions for changes in some sectors of the national life, but the dominant class continued to be the agrarian-exporting aristocracy. Resistance to the oppression of the large landowners, reaction to degrading conditions of the working class and the dissatisfaction of the middle

¹⁷² DUSSEL, Enrique. *A história da igreja na América Latina*. In: *História da igreja*. Porto Alegre, Instituto de Pastoral de Juventude, 1984, p. 43.

class were translated into revolts, strikes and new ways of organization such as BOC, which appeared at the end of the decade.

Brazil's rural population still lived, as at the beginning of the century, in misery and abandonment, victims of diseases, illiteracy, and paternalism of big landowners, and submissive to oligarchic powers that supported colonels, who in their majority were wealthy farmers. The working class complained, rightfully, of bad working environments and long working hours, low salaries, and the lack of union organization. The urban middle class, composed by liberal professionals, merchants, small industry owners, public servants, members of the clergy and military officers, among others, vindicated for an effective participation in the Brazilian political process. In this context, despite growing urbanization, Brazil was still a rural country, and reflected the original contradictions of the coffee oligarchic dominance in national life. The Brazilian population added up to 38 million people in 1930.

At this time, two basic elements characterized the economic situation of Brazil: predominance of coffee activity subordinated to the interests of the world capitalistic economy, and the growing industrialization of the country. The 1929 crises affected the coffee economy in a very particular way, creating a problem for coffee growers far more severe than previous crises due to over production. The world situation made consumers' markets shrink, creating difficulties in the 1929 crop production trade, which deeply shook the national economy and caused the end of the first republic or '*the old republic*', 1889-1930. Industrial growth, in its turn, undertaken in all of Latin America, was a reflex of WWI and of the 1929 crisis.

In Brazil, the coffee crises channeled capital into the new industrial sector. The industrialization process increased during this period in the Southeastern part of the country, the region of the coffee plantations. The crises factor reached the entire capitalist world; it favored the acquisition of second hand machinery that was sold at lower prices by bankrupt industries of the larger industrial centers of those days. Industrialization in Brazil aimed at, during the first years, substituting imports of consumption goods, mostly textiles and food. During the 1930s decade, the more diverse Brazilian industrial production gained even greater importance. The country changed, although slowly, with urbanization and industrialization.

The socioeconomic structures of Brazil, as we saw above, had not been altered when the country adopted at the end of 19th century the republican regime, resulting from articulation between agrarian sectors and high-ranking officers of the national army. Once the republic was proclaimed, federalism institutionalized the political hegemony of the oligarchy that remained in power by manipulating the election process. Given the frailness of the executive power, deriving from the federalism imposed on the country by the 1891 constitution, state politics remained controlled by oligarchies that counted with the support of colonels, who were almost always wealthy and influential landowners. Until 1930, this power structure was kept in Brazil, and it was known as *milk and coffee politics*, due to the dominance of two states of the federation: Sao Paulo and Minas Gerais.

In 1922 and in 1924 this situation was contested effectively within the armed forces. The so-called '*tenentistas*' revolts that involved a group of young army officers, among them Eduardo Gomes, Luis Carlos Prestes and Siqueira Campos, who were reformists, non conformed with the existing corruption in Brazil. The *tenentista* movement, also the voice for middle class vindications, had as its objective to break the corrupt Brazilian political system.

In the cultural field, the modernist movement also reacted, in its own way, against the obsolete standards and foreign cultural invasion, proposing a greater valuation of the Brazilian culture. The modern art week undertaken in Sao Paulo in February 11-18, 1922 is a milestone of the modernist

reaction. Conferences on art, painting and sculpture expositions, poetry reading, and music festivals were included in the historical week programming. These manifestations preceded the 1930 revolution, the same year that the Liberal Alliance was created as an attempt to modernize national institutions, as well as vindicating a greater popular participation in elections.

During President Washington Luis' succession campaign, Getulio Vargas was launched as the candidate in opposition to Julio Prestes. This later won the election, but the 1930 revolution handed to Getulio Vargas the presidency of the republic. The provisional government, 1930-1934, would be followed by the 1934-1937 constitutional government. The period of 1937-1945 would constitute the so-called "new state". The populist feature of the *Vargas era*, 1930-1945, would include manipulation of the masses and, at the same time, the realization of their older aspirations. All of them had their price.

The Sao Paulo constitutionalist rebellion took place in 1932. Some of the MSCS Sisters who lived that moment remembered it later with vivid and justified emotion. The National Constituent Assembly in 1933 prepared the liberal constitution enacted in 1934 that foresaw a party pluralism, and allowed state intervention in the economy. Supported by the urban masses, the liberal revolution developed a populist policy with an authoritarian slant; it gave amnesty to revolutionaries of 1922 and 1930; it created the Ministry of Labor, Industry and Commerce; established the minimum wage for workers; created legislation on retirement, daily working hours, employment stability, paid vacation and medical assistance; innovated union life. These changes were prepared by the events that preceded them. The period of 1920-1934, seen in its totality, was a time of profound transformations in different sectors of Brazilian life.

3.1.4 Post war human mobility

The importance of human mobility in each era of universal history, the identification of the major migratory currents in the period of 1920-1934 and the essentiality of the topic on the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute's life-mission is the reason for this new approach of the migratory phenomenon.

This text gathers some elements related to the migrations during the period under study, such as the internationality of the event, the heterogeneity or homogeneity of data; the changes in policy adopted by some countries, favorable or not to immigration; the Brazilian reality in the migratory context. Despite being partial, fragmented and non-continuous, the picture allows the evaluation of the aspects of the pastoral options of the MSCS Congregation post war.

During the first decade of the last century, the intense transoceanic migratory movement reached maximum figures. Data began to worry immigration countries, because of racist theories propagated in Europe and in the world at that time. Fears and caution resulted in policy changes that were adopted by some governments. Countries, which were previously open to the entering of foreigners, after World War I, created stricter legislation on the subject. Since 1921, the United States established a quota system through which it set the number of immigrants and its composition per nationality. The new policy excluded or limited the entry of foreigners coming from Asia and Africa, as well as from Southern and Eastern European countries.

In Latin America, almost *all constitutions granted equality between nationals and foreigners*. In 1928, in Havana, two texts were voted and accepted by the majority of American States: the *convention on foreigner's legal status* and *private international law* - the Bustamente code. The first document, article 5 establishes:

States should grant to resident foreigners or who are travelling in their territory all the individual

guarantees that they grant to their citizens and the enjoyment of essential civil rights, without prejudice in what pertains to the foreigner, of the legal prescriptions relative to the extension and modalities of the exercise of said rights and guarantees.

The second document in its 1st article determines: *Foreigners belonging to any of the signatory States shall enjoy in the other State's territory the same rights given to their own citizens*¹⁷³.

It is important to highlight that legal tutelage guaranteed to foreigners, at that time, in Latin America evidences the existence of immigration policies. On the other hand, they lacked *a harmonic set of rules, as these were created ad hoc as events took place within a liberal conception or, as stated by Fernando Bastos Avila, in the way of the laissez-faire.* In other words, in Latin America, *doors are open without directing currents; immigrants are received without concern to their characteristics*¹⁷⁴.

In Brazil, two decrees dated August 13 and October 22 of 1929 enacted respectively *the international private law and the convention on foreigner's legal status.* A previous decree of February 11, 1928 mandated the use of a passport for entering and leaving of foreigners. The Brazilian civil code, enacted in 1916, stated in Article 30th; the law makes no distinction *between foreigners and citizens regarding acquisition and enjoyment of civil rights.* The country continued to assure equality of treatment to citizens and foreigners during the decade of 1930. The 1934 constitution established a percentage of immigration using as a reference the last fifty years. In practice, however, there was not any change. The limitation had racist reasons and was *just a paper victory favoring those who wanted to do away with the Asian elements*¹⁷⁵.

The restrictive policy adopted effectively by the United States since the first decade of the 20th century guided intercontinental migratory currents to South and Central America, and to Australia, more open to the entrance of foreigners. Therefore, European flow towards the United States during the first half of the past century, although equivalent from the point of view of quantity in relation to the second half of 20th century, due to two world wars and the country's restricting policy, had a diverse composition: more than 7 million were from Central-Eastern Europe; about 5 millions from Northern-Western Europe; 4.5 millions from Southern Europe, 3.7 million being Italians. Canada received 4.5 million immigrants during the first half of 20th century, having admitted, between 1911 and 1915, 1.6 millions foreigners¹⁷⁶.

Immigration to Australia and New Zealand, although slow in relation to other countries, register higher figures between 1921 and 1925, receiving an average of 50 thousand immigrants per year. In the second half of 19th century, immigration to these two countries was very homogeneous and was almost exclusively British immigrants. In the more recent years, both Australia and New Zealand also admitted immigrants from other nationalities.

In South America, Argentina and Brazil, countries with the most intense immigration, received around 5 million Europeans during the period of 1900-1950, of which a third were Italian. Until WWI, the two countries were preferred by Venetian immigrants. Between the two world wars, before fascism decreed the closing of national borders, immigration of Italians to Argentina had a brief renewal. When in this country the perspective of an economic crisis arose, Brazil became an alternative. Therefore, both South American republics divided the preference of Italian immigrants, especially from Veneto. Between 1916 and 1925, Argentina received 421,625 Italians while Brazil, during the same decade,

¹⁷³ *ATTI DEL CONGRESSO EURO-BRASILIANO SULLE MIGRAZIONI.* São Paulo, 19-21 agosto 1985. A cura di Gianfausto Rosoli. Roma, Centro Studi Emigrazione, 1987, p. 102-3.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 95-106.

¹⁷⁶ TASSELLO, Graziano G. *Lessico Migratorio*, op. cit., p. 110-1.

received only 66,988 immigrants of Italian nationality.

Another aspect to take under consideration in the history of Italian immigration is the multiplication of associative institutions in colonial cities or nuclei where immigrants had settled down. In Brazil, dispersion proper to the 'paulista' interior, and isolation in the southern region of the country, among other factors, favored the formation of associations, in their majority as beneficent or for mutual help. These initiatives were much more numerous in the United States and Argentina. To have an idea, in 1923 Italian associations added up to 182 in Brazil, 412 in Argentina and 3,014 in the United States¹⁷⁷.

Still on the immigration movement in Brazil, with the exception of the Japanese, the contribution of other nationalities was much less during the decades of 1920 and 1930. Among the causes for the progressive reduction of the immigration flow are the 1914-1918 war that decreased population pressure in Europe, and the lack of interests of the European rural workers to work in the coffee plantations. After the end of the war, there was a renewal, but the immigration flow towards the country was to be maintained, decreasing sensibly afterwards. In the decennial of 1920-1929 the country received, 846,522 immigrants. In the decennial of 1930-1939 almost equivalent to the total for the period of 1910-1919 when the country admitted 821,458 immigrants. In the decennial 1930-1939, entrance in Brazil added up to 333,701 new foreigners.

At this time, the Brazilian population increased slowly, and domestic migration exceeded foreign immigration. Prior to 1930, the immigration movement was predominant in Brazil. Immigration flows from Italy, Spain, Germany, Poland, Portugal and Holland were the most numerous. The immigrants' contribution to Brazil was incalculable in agriculture, industry, commerce, culture and in their religious-pastoral with a high level of socio-cultural integration achieved by them in the country.

The year of 1930 was considered a milestone in the history of human mobility in Brazil. Starting from there, domestic migration predominated and along with it, the urbanization and industrialization process progressed in the country. Only 10 percent of the Brazilian population lived in urban areas in 1920. Urban and industrial growth added considerably to the increase of the working class.

Soon, Brazil would no longer be an empty territory, and it would become to be seen

As a regional mosaic, with empty spaces that demand and could absorb population, and full spaces, regions that needed them, inclusively to ensure their development, to sustain the population during an ongoing evasion. The regional management of the surplus population- badly located saw that immigrations are, above all, a solution rather than a problem.

These affirmations are from Carlos B. Vainer who concluded:

The Immigrants' old hostel of Sao Paulo, in Glicerio, is still standing, fulfilling its role as a redistribution platform for the working force, except that in its old rooms Italian and Spanish accents no longer echoes but that of 'mineiros' and northeasters¹⁷⁸.

In this context, it is relevant to verify the pastoral contribution of the MSCS Congregation in that period which saw the number of its member grows, and to evaluate its apostolic options in a

¹⁷⁷ TRENTO, Angelo. *La dov'è la raccolta del caffè: L'emigrazione italiana in Brasile, 1875-1940*. Università di Macerata - Pubblicazioni della Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia. Padova, Antenore, 1984, p. 262-3.

¹⁷⁸ VAINER, Carlos. B. *Migrações e políticas migratórias*. Uma proposta para a discussão sobre políticas públicas em migrações internas. Instituto de Pesquisa e Planejamento Urbano e Regional da Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro. Rio de Janeiro, IPPUR / UFRJ. Rio de Janeiro, 1991, p. 46.

country marked by profound changes, mainly in the social field.

3.2 Identity Crises and the Apostolic See's intervention in the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute

3.2.1 Mother Antonietta Fontana's six years term, 1918-1924

The opportune legal-pastoral initiatives that marked the six years period of 1912-1918 had opened paths and indicated to the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles new and possible advance. The following six years period, Mother Antonietta Fontana's term, was situated as in a crossroad where it was possible to follow that promising horizon or to detour following another direction under the impulse of changing circumstances. The second option would lead the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute to a gradual loss of internal unity with the consequent compromising of its fidelity to the founding charisma itself.

Mother Antonietta Fontana took over the general administration of the MSCS Congregation on September 9, 1918. Born in Monza, Italy, Sister Antonietta entered the congregation founded by Clelia Merloni and later became part of the *group* of the Apostles of the Sacred Heart that made their novitiate in Piacenza, having professed at Castelnuovo Fogliani on June 12, 1900. Her name is on the list of missionaries sent by John Baptist Scalabrini to Brazil in mid 1900. In 1907, at the separation of the two congregations, Sister Antonietta Fontana was one of the few Apostles that opted for the Congregation of St. Charles, established in Vila Prudente in the female section of Christopher Columbus Orphanage. There, like all the other Scalabrinian Missionary Sisters, she redid her novitiate and professed on January 1, 1912. In 1917, she was sent to Guapore where the congregation had opened Scalabrini School, in its first year and counted with the decisive contribution of the diligent missionary. Sister Antonietta, who also was the superior of the community and highly esteemed by the local population, remained for a short time in Guapore, was called to Sao Paulo in August 1918, to succeed Mother Assunta Marchetti in governing the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Charles.

The MSCS Sisters' constitutions, of 1914, established that the general superior, her councilors and the general economist of the congregation should be elected in a chapter during which other major issues of congregational interest would also be addressed. In 1918, Mother Assunta's six-year term was completed, and although it had been recommended in order to evaluate the recent expansion of the institute, the general chapter did not take place, as Bishop Duarte Leopoldo e Silva nominated the new general government himself as well making other internal appointments in the MSCS Congregation.

The acts of the general government's meeting on September 9, 1918, state that the change of the superiors in religious communities was a requirement of canon law. In addition, on this date, the acts state that the nominations made in the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Charles by the Archbishop of Sao Paulo were communicated to the Sisters by his delegate, Father Antao Jorge, in a ceremony undertaken in the general motherhouse of the institute in Vila Prudente. The general government of the congregation for the six-year term of 1918-1924 was, thus, composed by General Superior, Sister Antonietta Fontana; councilors, Sisters Angelina Meneguzzo, Carmella Tomedi, Camilla Dal Ri and Maria da Divina Providencia. On the same day, Mother Assunta Marchetti's transfer to Bento Gonçalves was decided, where she would assume the position of superior of the local community, having as councilors, Sisters Lucia Gorlin and Faustina Bosio.

On September 9, 1918 the following appointments were also made: Sister Borromea Ferraresi as superior of Scalabrini School in Guapore and as councilors, Sisters Vittorina Consoni and Gertrudes Mileti; Sister Carmella Tomedi as superior of the girls school in Sao Bernardo do Campo and as councilors, Sisters Ignez Oricchio and Maria Berckmans Grasti; Sister Maria da Divina Providencia as

mistress of novices and as assistant, Sister Afonsina Salvador. Sister Maria da Divina Providencia, now general councilor and mistress of novices would make her perpetual vows three months later, on December 17, 1918. In the same acts of September 9, it is stated that, appointments were made by Bishop Duarte Leopoldo e Silva, *because there were not yet sisters in the congregation that had perpetual vows to have a general chapter*¹⁷⁹.

In reading the acts of the general government's reunions that took place during Mother Antonietta Fontana's administration, elements are provided for a relative understanding of the apostolic path of the institute during the six-year period of 1918-1924, which had an expansion pace less optimistic than the previous one. There were five new openings in this period: Sacred Heart of Jesus School in Nova Brescia, Rio Grande do Sul, on March 11, 1919; Barao do Rio Branco Mendicancy Asylum in Jundiai, Sao Paulo, on March 19, 1922; Santa Cruz School in Nova Milano, Farroupilha, Rio Grande do Sul, on April 1st, 1923, according to *Brevi Cenni*; the Holy House of Mercy, Itatiba, Sao Paulo, on February 2, 1924; the Holy House of Mercy in Monte Alto, Sao Paulo, on May 14, 1924. Mother Assunta Marchetti again was once again a pioneer in Nova Brescia, as she would be in Monte Alto five years later.

Due to unreliable information involving Mother Assunta, but more so due to her fruitful pastoral action developed there by the co-founder of the congregation, the opening of Sacred Heart of Jesus School in Nova Brescia has special historic importance.

According to *Brevi Cenni*, as has been seen, Mother Assunta could not assume the position of superior in Bento Gonçalves to which she had been nominated on September 9, 1918. The following year, she began to work in Nova Brescia, an Italian colonization nucleus in Rio Grande do Sul, which had already solicited for some time the collaboration of the Sisters of St. Charles. Available documents diverge regarding the reasons for the change of destination for Mother Assunta Marchetti.

In the historical files of the school in Nova Brescia, it is registered that on her departure from Sao Paulo to Rio Grande do Sul, Mother Assunta received orders from Mother Antonietta as follows:

*'that she should see, observe and after, do as she felt best, chose to stay in Bento Gonçalves or in Guapore, or open a house wherever she judged best'. With this license and since there had already been a long standing request for sisters in Nova Brescia and since in Guapore, Sister Gertrude Mileti had already been nominated local superior, Mother Assunta thought that it best to open a house there where she stayed from February 1919 until July 1920*¹⁸⁰.

From the records in the book of acts of the general government meeting, you can see some tension in regards to the mission in the South. Two deliberations of September 26, 1918, in response to letters sent by the priest of Bento Gonçalves to the new general government just two weeks after Mother Antonietta and the council had taken office, call attention: the first states that, *having in mind the well being of the congregation and not of one house or one sister*, the superior must remain firm in the face of resistance to the appointments of September 9; the second is based on canon law and said it did not allow an institute to have two novitiate houses in one country and, it adds, *judging this division to be harmful for the unity of the congregation*.¹⁸¹ It was not possible for us to check the content of the above-mentioned letters nor do we know if they have been preserved.

As we saw, at this time, Bento Gonçalves had the presence of two missionaries, Father Enrico

¹⁷⁹ *MINUTES BOOK of the general administration meetings – Six-year period of 1918-1924. Minutes of 9-9-1918 (AGSS 1.12.1).*

¹⁸⁰ Collegio S. Cuore - Nova Brescia (AGSS 1.4.4).

¹⁸¹ *MINUTES BOOK of the general administration meetings – Six -year period of 1918-1924. Minutes of 9-26-1918 (AGSS 1.12.1).*

Poggi and his helper, the Scalabrinian Priest Carlo Porrini. Father Poggi, with apostolic zeal, after critical times lived by the parish, contributed much to change it into one of the best in the archdiocese of Porto Alegre. It was he who invited the MSCS Sisters to be established in Bento Gonçalves, facilitating their missionary expansion in Rio Grande do Sul.

Regarding the MSCS presence in Nova Brescia, another source registers, that in the month of January 1919, Mother Assunta Marchetti and Sister Borromea Ferraresi were there to see the place with the possibility of opening a new house. However, in the minutes of February 9 of the same year, among other deliberations of the general government, three refer to Rio Grande do Sul. Due to the difficulties presented by the sisters, Mother Antonietta would travel to the south to resolve as best as she could the situation, inclusive of being authorized to make all changes that she deemed necessary. In response to Father John Morelli's request and due to the fact that he was a Missionary of St. Charles, to send sisters to Nova Brescia as soon as possible. The conditions were a house for the religious community and a school close to the church, the titles to be given to the Sisters of St. Charles, monthly salary guaranteed for the sisters and paying the travel costs of the missionaries. Given the impossibility to send sisters from Sao Paulo for the opening in Nova Brescia, the only alternative left was to close one of the houses in the South, which would be that of Bento Gonçalves but, due to the ignorance concerning that contract, the superior herself would go to verify.

The disconcerting deliberation for closing the school in Bento Gonçalves was not undertaken, and on March 11, 1919, Nova Brescia welcomed with festivities Mother Assunta Marchetti and the sisters who together with her established a new Feminine Scalabrinian community there. It was even decided, in 1920, the closing of the house that had been opened a little over one year before due to difficulties presented by the sisters. Mother Antonietta Fontana in her visit to the South, undertaken during the first semester of this year, tried to withdraw the Scalabrinian Missionaries from Nova Brescia, but she faced strong opposition both from Bishop John Becker and from the sisters due to commitments they had undertaken in the parish.

It is known that those first years were difficult for the religious community in Nova Brescia. In a letter sent to Faustino Consoni, of January 1921, Mother Assunta says that she is happy and thankful to God, even *amidst crosses and tribulations*. She asks to be recommended to the Lord to get *the strength, courage and resignation to His holy will*, and trustingly, reveals a deep and special aspiration: *it seems to me impossible that the Lord does not answer my desires and does not let me die among the orphans*. However, she adds, *if the Lord does not listen to me, that is not reason for despair because I know that, by obeying, I am doing God's will*¹⁸².

Also, in 1920, it was thought of closing the school in Nova Vicenza, opened during Mother Assunta Marchetti's six-year term, in 1917. According to some sources, the missionary expansion of the Sisters of St. Charles in Rio Grande do Sul did not please Bishop Duarte Leopoldo e Silva who, because of this would forbid Mother Antonietta Fontana to send more sisters to Rio Grande do Sul. The Archbishop of Sao Paulo, on the other hand, by a written order, dated January 23, 1920 authorized the transfer of the novitiate of MSCS Sisters from Vila Prudente to Aparecida, which was done on February 2 of this year. In *Brevi Cenni*, it is recorded that the transfer had been advised by Bishop Duarte and incited by the Redemptorist Priests from Aparecida, mainly by Estevam Maria Heigenhauser. In 1919, the Archbishop appointed Father Estevam Maria director of the Sisters of St. Charles, with the intention, according to many, to put them far from the influence of the Scalabrinian Priests.

In regards to the novitiate, we found in the archives of the Metropolitan Chancery of Sao Paulo

¹⁸² MARCHETTI, Assunta. *Carta a padre Faustino Consoni*. Nova Brescia, 21-1-1921 (AGSS 1.3).

the record of the contract made by the Missionary Sisters of Saint Charles by which the building situated at Major Martiniani St, built on the site of the old Cemetery of Aparecida was handed over to them for the use of the same sisters and for an undetermined time. The MSCS Congregation paid, at that time *ten contos* destined for the construction of a house to welcome the pilgrims, in substitution the house was handed over to the sisters and now became the novitiate. We find recorded in the same source that the sisters spent, up to May of 1920, *a little more than twenty three contos* for the reforms realized in the house received from Bishop Leopoldo e Silva¹⁸³.

During the years of 1918-1924, the general government had manifested, since the beginning, justified concerns related to economic issues such as the maintenance of the novitiate, expenditures related to the missionaries' travels and with visits to the communities. As everything points out, a decision was taken and communicated to the sisters on December 15, 1920 because of the reflections and advice taken on the difficult living situation:

Taking into consideration the critical financial condition due to serious commitments and expenses that we face, particularly for the maintenance of the novitiate house, and the obligations and responsibilities concerning all affiliated houses of the Congregation, and being that such expenditures will be advantageous for all of the sisters, in accordance to our General Superior, his Excellency the Archbishop and all of the council, the following statement: that, henceforth, all affiliated houses will have to contribute in proportion to the number of sisters in each community to this Mother House with the monthly amount of twenty thousand reis; and, in case of non compliance, the house will be closed and preference will be given to the house that is able to contribute.

Due only to this needed and justified retribution; I am obliged to take the decision to make this declaration that shall be sent to all houses indistinctively.

Some aspects of this *declaration* could be commented on, especially of establishing a determined monthly contribution as criteria for the continuity or suppression of a community or a work. In truth, and despite notorious working capacity of the majority of MSCS Sisters, the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute reached its 25th anniversary of foundation without having its own general house, and with very few accrued assets.

It is a curious fact that during the last meeting for the six-year term, undertaken in September 25, 1924, Father Estevam Maria Heigenhauser was present and coordinated all scheduled works of the event, the first issue to be addressed was that of the assets of the congregation, computed then in 100:000\$000. According to records, there was the amount of 11:686\$500 in the bank, and 6:000\$000 was deposited in the Metropolitan Chancery of Sao Paulo. The congregations real estate listed in the minutes were as follows: Aparecida, novitiate house, a tract of land and the school buildings; Guapore, a tract of land and building; Nova Brescia, building and a tract of land; Nova Vicenza, tracts of land; for Bento Gonçalves, Sr. Lucia Gorlin's arrival was expected for clarification.

Mother Antonietta Fontana and the council, in which Sister Immaculada Mileti had become a part, left a request for the future general government of the congregation to commit to the acquisition of "the property and the contents of the house in Vila Prudente". In regards to this, Father Domenico Vicentini states in a letter dated December 12, 1914 and sent to Father Marco Simoni, who had himself suggested, some years ago, the donation of the house in Vila Prudente to the Scalabrinian Missionary Sisters but, at that time, the priests did not agree with the proposal. The donation, made several decades afterward, would require the overcoming of many difficulties to become a reality.

¹⁸³ ARQUIVO da Cúria Metropolitana de São Paulo. Livro 8, folha 113 v., 23 de março de 1923.

3.2.2 First General Chapter of the MSCS Congregation, 1924

The historical analysis of the period of 1918-1924, based on records of the acts of the general government and on diverse correspondences, shows the transition of the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles, from a time of relative progress to a tense situation. This was the result of the following orientation and, as everything shows, inadequate to the legitimate development of the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute. After a six-year period of more creative fidelity to the original charisma, with the opening of a new and promising time characterized by diversification of pastoral actions, and by the increase in the number of MSCS vocations, the congregation held itself back, showed signs of indecision and contained the boldness in its previous pastoral action. Three months before completion of the six-year term, on June 25, 1924, the First General Chapter of the congregation was called, and it would be undertaken on September 25-29 of this year. Some of its deliberations would confirm the introduction of inappropriate changes in the life of the institute.

The First General Chapter of the MSCS Congregation was preceded by two moments: convocation and preparation, both undertaken as established by the 1914 constitutions in vigor at the time. In nº 60, the constitutions of the institute determines the realization of a general chapter every six years, and establishes, that during the chapter the election of the general superior and her councilors, and the general economist should be made, as well as to address major issues of interest for the congregation. Nº 62 dealt with the convocation of the chapter, which should be made by the general superior by means of a memorandum sent to all the communities of the congregation three months prior to the event, and indicating its venue.

The general government meeting undertaken on June 25, 1924 under direction the of Father Estevam Maria Heigenhauser, as delegate of Bishop Duarte Leopoldo e Silva, addressed the convocation of the general chapter made on that date, and on the composition of the electoral colleges, in accordance to Nº 65 of the constitutions. For the success of the chapter, it was established that each community would offer a novena of communions in praise to the Sacred Heart of Jesus; two Eucharistic celebrations, one in praise to the Holy Spirit, and another for the souls; daily prayers made after a community celebration to be scheduled by the superior of the community; two days of fasting and abstinence, one day before the election day of the electoral college and the other on September 7, the day before the election of the general superior and council, foreseen for September 8, 1924.

Nº 63 of the constitutions stated that those participating in the general chapter would be as follows: the general superior, her councilors, the secretary, the general economist, all superiors of communities with more than 12 religious, and from each one of these communities, a sister who had already professed perpetual vows. The later, elected in a local chapter, should go along with the superior and jointly represent the respective community in the general chapter. In the local chapter a substitute delegate should also be elected, all the sisters had an active voice, including those with temporary vows. According to nº 65, the community composed of less than 12 professed sisters should join with another to complete the number established by the constitution, in this case, the one to attend the chapter would be the superior who had more years of profession¹⁸⁴.

In the meeting on June 25, 1924, the beginning of the preparations for the general chapter of the congregation, the electoral colleges that were thus constituted were addressed: the first, in Vila Prudente, the *motherhouse* as this community was called, with 12 sisters; the second electoral college

¹⁸⁴ *CONSTITUTIONS of the missionary sisters of saint Charles Borromeo*. Sao Paulo, 1914. III PARTE, II CAPÍTULO, n. 60-5 (AGSS 1.4.2).

combined the houses in Rio Grande do Sul, having as president, Sister Lucia Gorlin, the superior with more years in religious profession; the third electoral college comprised of Sao Bemardo, Aparecida and Itatiba, with Sister Maria da Divina Providencia de Campos as president, the oldest in religious profession; the communities in Jundiai, Itu and Monte Alto constituted the fourth electoral college, Mother Assunta Marchetti was president.

It was established in the same meeting that the elections of the electoral colleges should be undertaken by August 15, date and place to be determined by the president of the respective Electoral College. Like this, in due time, the following delegated sisters were elected: at the *mother house* in Vila Prudente, Sister Gertrudes Mileti; at the electoral college of Sao Bemardo, Aparecida and Itatiba, Sister Ignez Oricchio; at the electoral college of Jundiai, Itu and Monte Alto, Sister Josepha Soares. *Brevi Cenni* state that in the general chapter of 1924, not all legal provisions were observed *and it was not organized for the sisters on mission Rio Grande do Sul be regularly represented*¹⁸⁵. On September 7, always in 1924, Father Estevam Maria Heigenhauser communicated by letter to Bishop Duarte Leopoldo e Silva:

*I am respectfully communicating to Your Excellency that it was not possible to realize on September 8 the election of the new General Mother of the Sisters of St. Charles - Vila Prudente. First, the revolution made the elections very difficult in the respective houses, and second – and this is for me the major reason – it is not at all possible to realize an election in Your Excellency's absence. I am concerned that a difficulty might come up requiring prompt recourse to Your Excellence*¹⁸⁶.

Father Estevam Maria's concern was justified. Overcoming the first obstacle, the *tenentistas* rebellion that at the time troubled Brazil and there were manifestations of discontent of the Brazilian middle class with the corrupt institutions of the oligarchic republic, which left the second one, the internal and much more worrisome situation. Since 1919, the MSCS Sisters shared with the director some aspects of the reality lived within the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute where, among other difficulties, an inconsistent unity was growing.

In the same letter sent to the Archbishop on September 7, Father Estevam Maria expressed his view regarding two sisters. They were candidates to succeed Mother Antonietta Fontana: Maria da Divina Providencia de Campos, capable of following Bishop Duarte's guidance both *in relation to the formation of the novices and neo-professed and in relation to the South*; Lucia Gorlin, on mission in Rio Grande do Sul, who according to Father Estevam would have the support of the sisters *from the old formation following the orientation of some priests of St. Charles*, but *she would not be totally trustable*. Father Estevam Maria affirmed that he had reasons to think this way because he knew the Archbishop's proposal *regarding the formation and extension of the Congregation*¹⁸⁷.

In this climate, on September 25, 1924, Father Estevam Maria Heigenhauser, Bishop Duarte Leopoldo e Silva's delegate, declared the First General Chapter of the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo, Scalabrinians open. The religious conducted the chapter works, determined to execute the Archbishop's will and *not do anything on his own will*¹⁸⁸.

The general chapter, programmed for the beginning of September, was undertaken at the end of the month, from September 25-29, 1924. During the September 25 session, by acclamation Sister Maria Affonsina Salvador was voted the chapter's secretary and as scrutinizers, Sisters Gertrudes

¹⁸⁵ *BREVI CENNI*, op. cit., p. 27-8.

¹⁸⁶ HEIGENHAUSER, Estevam M. *Letter to Duarte Leopoldo e Silva*. Sao Paulo, 7-9-1924 (Archive of the Metropolitan Curia of Sao Paulo - Pasta n. 22). Of the Missionary Sisters of Saint Carlos.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, note 186.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, note 186.

Mileti and Ignez Oricchio. In the same session, the ten sisters present approved the name of Sister Vittorina Consoni as the representative of the sisters from the South. As we already have seen, by the constitutions in vigor at the time, Sister Lucia Gorlin should participate in the chapter along with a delegate sister, who should have been elected by the second Electoral College combining the sisters' communities in the Rio Grande do Sul. Waiting until the last minute, also due to the hardship of the trip, Sister Lucia Gorlin did not show up. Despite the inconvenience, the absence of the sister did not invalidate the acts of the First General Chapter of the MSCS Congregation.

On September 28, 1924, the chapter elected with eight votes Sister Maria da Divina Providencia de Campos as the general superior of the institute for the six-year period of 1924-1930. Also doing the voting, three of the capitulars present voted for Mother Assunta Marchetti for general superior. Sisters Angelina Meneguzzi, Immaculada Mileti, Lucia Gorlin and Maria do Divino Coração were elected as councilors on the following day and as the general economist of the institute, Sister Carolina. In the minutes of September 29, the surname of the sister was not included, but it is supposed that the sister elected as the general economist, with ten votes, was sister Carolina Grasti.

On this same day, September 29, Father Estevam Maria communicated the election results to Bishop Duarte Leopoldo e Silva, and requested that the names of elected sisters to be approved. Father Heigenhauser, Redemptorist, of German nationality, as read in *Brevi Cenni*, was an

*Exemplary and zealous priest who in the performance of his mission, in his ardent desire to do good in his interpretation of his superiors' orders, understood as his duty to provide a new orientation to the Congregation of St. Charles, be it by reforming their Statutes, be it by changing their denomination and preferring and desiring to call them Clementine Sisters so as to separate them completely from the Missionaries of St. Charles*¹⁸⁹.

During the realization of the chapter, which addressed disciplinary aspects and, above all, the spiritual life, this proposal was made: to extend throughout the entire congregation to *the practice of a spiritual life in the form and spirit as established in the novitiate, i.e., religious life in the spirit of St. Alfonse, the practice of the virtues recommended by the same saint, the continued reading of the ascetic works of Saint Alfonse*. In the session of September 27, the chapter addressed the subject of patron saints of the institute, adding a few more. In the minutes are, among others, *the Immaculate Conception, St. Joseph, St. Charles as patron of the congregation, and as second patron and master of spiritual life, St. Alfonse*. One of the saints chosen for the novitiate was St. Clement¹⁹⁰.

On September 29, right after the election of the general council and general economist, Father Estevam Maria closed the First General Chapter of the institute. In the minutes of the general government's meeting, of January 11, 1925, it is stated that Bishop Duarte Leopoldo e Silva nominated Father Estevam Maria Heigenhauser as ecclesiastic assistant to the MSCS Congregation. The six years term initiated in September 1924, would be interrupted two years later in consequence of an identity crisis that shook the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute.

3.2.3 Identity crisis and the Apostolic See's intervention

Having realized its First General Chapter and having completed only one year of her six-year term, Mother Maria da Divina Providencia of Campos the MSCS Congregation suffered an Identity

¹⁸⁹ *BREVI CENNI*, op. cit., p. 28.

¹⁹⁰ *LIVRO DE ATAS dos capítulos gerais*. Atas do Primeiro Capítulo Geral de 1924 (AGSS 1.12.2).

crisis that compromised the unity and threatened the life of the institute itself. As a consequence, even though the majority of sisters remained faithful to their origins, ten days prior to its 30th anniversary of foundation, the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute began to live a long period of intervention by the Apostolic See. In a letter of October 15, 1925, Cardinal Gaetano De Lai, Secretary of the Consistorial Congregation, communicated to Mother Maria da Divina Providencia de Campos the first intervention measures. The Consistorial Congregation, currently the Congregation of bishops, in reason of the *Motu Proprio* of August 15, 1912, Pope Pius X entrusted the *spiritual care of emigrants and because of its function, the Missionary of St. Charles for Italian emigrants abroad was in part*, proposed to *regularize and to provide discipline also to the Sisters of St. Charles*¹⁹¹. In order to understand the Apostolic See's intervention in the institute, its causes and consequences, it is important to start with the background and after to know the evolution of the process in three stages: that of preordination, consolidation and expansion, translated into a time of linear progress for the Feminine Scalabrinian Congregation.

Still during the six -year term of Mother Antonietta Fontana there was a subtle change in the orientation given to the congregation of the Sisters of St. Charles. The First General Chapter, undertaken in September 1924, confirmed the trend and elected Mother Maria da Divina Providencia de Campos, born in Alegrete in the State of Rio Grande do Sul, as the general superior for the six-year term of 1924-1930.

Already, as mistress of novices, Mother Maria da Divina Providencia introduced in the formation house spiritual practices that instilled the spirit of Saint Alfonse Maria de Liguorio in the novices. As the general superior, Mother da Providencia wanted to get the entire Feminine Scalabrinian Congregation closer to Saint Alfonse's spirituality, who was the founder of the Congregation of the Holy Redeemer or the Redemptorist Order. During her term, which would be interrupted, the MSCS Congregation lived a new time of testing that held back the consolidation of the institute.

The attempt to deviate the MSCS Congregation of its Scalabrinian origin had as precedents: Bishop Duarte Leopoldo e Silva's and Bishop John Becker's different pastoral views; Mother Antonietta Fontana's inhibitions and indecisions; the perplexity caused by the Archbishop of Sao Paulo's opposition to missionary expansion among Italian immigrants and their descendants settled in Rio Grande do Sul; the distancing of the Scalabrinian Missionary priests from the spiritual guidance of the MSCS Sisters; the transfer of the novitiate of the congregation from Vila Prudente to Aparecida, to which end Father Estevam Maria Heigenhauser worked a lot; the deliberations of the First General Chapter; the stand manifested by the Redemptorist, Father Estevam Maria, advocate of Sister Maria da Divina Providencia de Campos' election as general superior, who was considered, by him, as the sole sister deserving full trust; the appointment of Sister Affonsina Salvador as mistress of novices, who was another leader among the Clementines; Mother Maria da Divina Providencia's omissions regarding the part of the institutes mission in the South; the determination to abandon the direction of the Christopher Columbus' feminine section in Vila Prudente, which did not take place; the enforced deliberation to abandon the school in Sao Bemardo do Campo that, according to *Brevi Cenni*, a well guided work, and of great benefit for the local population, which counted with the approval and support of the parish priest, Father Francesco Navarro, a Scalabrinian Missionary.

In April 1925, the General Superior informed the sisters that the constitutions of the congregation had been renewed, and stated that she was following orders from Father Estevam Maria, and that Bishop Duarte would be taking them to Rome for approval. At the same time, Mother Maria

¹⁹¹ CONFALONIERI, Carlo. *Lettera a Idalina Baratter*. Roma, 10 luglio 1964 (AGSS 1.5.7).

da Divina Providencia communicated, through a letter, a decision that left the majority of sisters stupefied:

...The Reverend Father Capuchin, sent by the Holy See to visit the "Scalabrinian" work in Brazil, visited this Facility showing much satisfaction with our mission.

Leaving here, he went in search of documents referring to our congregation's beginning, and after getting all the respective information he said: that our Congregation did not have anything to do with Scalabrini's work and that of his own initiative, he added that 'bisogna cambiare il nome (the name needs to be changed)' because the Church already has a Congregation with the same name and, therefore, the name of St. Charles was changed to that of St. Clement. As for us, all we are can do is to obey the superior's orders...¹⁹².

Since the beginning of Mother Maria da Divina Providencia's term, there were notorious signs of changes in the life of the institute. In the general governments meeting on November 25, 1924, the first scheduled issue concerned the ownership of Vila Prudente. Without explaining why, the minutes state that all participants agreed on not making any more attempts on that issue. The new administration decided to purchase some real estate for the location for the general house. At that time, just when sisters working in Sao Bernardo were about to acquire a house with an exclusive title for the institute, the suppression of that community was decided. In interviews made in 1980, some still lucid sisters lamented the suppression of the community in Sao Bernardo, and they remembered the disappointment that this decision had caused the local population and the parish priest, Scalabrinian Father Navarro

In the general government's meeting of December 19, 1925, the purchase of some real estate for the general house was agreed on, and about one month later the congregation acquired an old building located in Pari, where in February 1926, the Santa Teresinha girls' school opened with an expressive number of students. The house in Pari was the general headquarters of the congregation and a refuge of the Clementines until intervention by the Apostolic See.

At this time, the tendency of a profound change in the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Charles manifested itself in the gradual distancing of the institute from Scalabrinian origins. This was seen in the approximation to the spirituality of Saint Alfonse Maria de Ligorio; in the elaboration of a new constitution and not a simple adaptation to the 1917 Canon Law; in the change of the name and goal of the institute. The congregation would be called St. Clement, in honor of Saint Clement Maria Hofbauer, a Redemptorist canonized in 1909. The Congregation of the Holy Redemptor, after the death of its founder – Saint Alfonse, received a strong push from Saint Clement Maria Hofbauer, who favored the Redemptorist order expansion in Poland, Southern Germany and Austria.

The reaction provoked by Mother Maria da Divina Providencia's communication in April 18, 1925, would culminate with the Apostolic See's intervention in the institute. It included a letter sent from Bento Gonçalves, without date, written as everything points to, in May 1925, and sent to Cardinal Camillo Laurenti, then the prefect of the Congregation of Religious, and preserved in the Archives of the Pontifical Council of the Pastoral Care for Migrants and Itinerants - prot.514/25, in which 18 missionary sisters in Rio Grande do Sul requested, as in the letter of 1900, the grace that the name and mission of the MSCS Congregation to be preserved.

Father Estevam Maria Heigenhauser, himself, who had been nominated by Bishop Duarte Leopoldo e Silva ecclesiastic assistant for the MSCS Congregation, in a letter of April 10, 1925, sent to Father Marco Simoni, justified his role in the case of the Clementines by stating that he had been a

¹⁹² CAMPOS, Maria da Divina Providência de. *Carta a Lucia Gorlin*. Vila Prudente, 18 de abril de 1925 (AGSS 1.5.3).

mere executor of written orders given by the Archbishop of Sao Paulo. Father Estevam stated in this letter that the proposals presented during the chapter of 1924 had had unanimous support of the 11 capitulars present, and he guaranteed that the feminine congregation had not changed its essence. The Redemptorist explained that the constitutions of the Scalabrinian Sisters did not mention any more Scalabrini's work because, according to him, the Canon Law forbade the statutes to mention the name of persons.

What, in truth, calls the most attention in this sequence of steps was the lack of measures capable of favoring the internal unity that was shaken, involving in a more strikingly way the general government and the sisters on mission in Rio Grande do Sul, accused of irregularities, such as the opening of two houses, that in Nova Brescia and that in Nova Milano, without the Archbishop of Sao Paulo's permission. Sisters Lucia Gorlin, Borromea Ferraresi and Vittorina Consoni responded to the accusation in the Memorial da Missão do Rio Grande do Sul, dated February 19, 1926 where, among other statements, they say that Mother Antonietta Fontana herself accompanied the pioneer sisters to Nova Milano when this mission was opened,¹⁹³.

Despite the repeated invitations made to the General Superior and to Father Estevam Maria as well, both refused to visit the houses in the south, making needed understanding difficult. On the other hand, it is known that there were disagreements between Bishop Duarte Leopoldo e Silva and Bishop John Becker, deriving from the different pastoral views of the prelates. The difference of ideas and methods, and the unequal guidance received from ordinaries of the archdioceses of Sao Paulo and Porto Alegre, where the sisters worked, had repercussions in the MSCS Congregation in which the Apostolic See intervened in 1925.

According to what we said at the beginning, on October 15, 1925, the Consistorial Congregation, informed of the crisis, proposed to *regulate and to discipline* the Feminine Scalabrinian Congregation. The Apostolic See's determinations, aiming at solving the conflict between the Charlists and Clementine Sisters, guided themselves by re-ordination, with preservation of the physiognomy of the institute. Based on this purpose, Cardinal Gaetano De Lai, secretary of the Consistorial, ordered Mother Maria da Divina Providencia to interrupt any initiative that would introduce changes in the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Charles.

On January 7, 1926, the Secretary of the Consistorial Congregation sent a letter to both Bishop Duarte Leopoldo e Silva and to Bishop John Becker with some deliberations concerning the regulation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo, Scalabrinians, whose identity should be maintained. To that end, Father Estevam Maria Heigenhauser would be removed from the direction of the MSCS Sisters. De Lai proposed that this responsibility of the Redemptorist be taken over by the Scalabrinian, Father Domenico Canestrini, but they were free to suggest another name.

The Secretary of the Consistorial still determined that the MSCS Institute to be comprised in two regions, one in the state of Sao Paulo, and other in Rio Grande do Sul, and sisters from each region should elect their respective regional superior and council, the later comprised of two sisters. The election of both regional superior and councils would take place in August, always in 1926.

Another 1926 determination was that of an apostolic visit to be made to the Missionary Priests and Sisters of St. Charles, for which would be nominated Bishop Amleto Giovanni Cicognani, the substitute of the Consistorial Congregation. From the visit to the MSCS Sisters, undertaken in the second semester of that year, Cicognani left a report that preserves many historical elements related to the Clementine crisis.

¹⁹³ *MEMORIALE della Missione del Rio Grande del Sud*, 19-2-1926, op. cit.

Cardinal De Lai wanted to hear other opinions: of Bishop Vincenzo La Puma, then Secretary of the Congregation of Religious; of Father Giuseppe Antonio de Persiceto, General-minister of the Capuchins; of Father Pacifico Chenuil, Scalabrinian. Before pronouncing his opinion, La Puma examined Father Faustino Consoni's pro-memoria, letters from Father Enrico Poggi and from Father Chenuil, as well as a report from Father Giuseppe Antonio de Persiceto. This later, on the contrary to what had been written, opposed the change of names imposed on the MSCS Sisters and warranted as true Father Consoni's historical narrative, who considered John Baptist Scalabrini as the founder of the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles. The originals of all these documents are preserved in the Archives of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People - Prot. 514/25.

La Puma's opinion was not indulging towards the Clementines. Bishop Vincenzo advised on the non-approval of a new institute as proposed because, according to him, the Clementines did not develop canonically, having originated from a schism and they persisted in a contradiction: they state to be in search of perfection, but did not show it in practice. Bishop Vincenzo La Puma's opinion, dated November 17, 1926, proposed: to place the MSCS Sisters far from the influence and power of the Archbishop of Sao Paulo, and to maintain the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute under the jurisdiction of an apostolic visitor whom the Consistorial trusted. He showed Apostolic See clemency towards the Clementines by inviting them to return to the original institute; to allow admittance in other institutes already approved or to be secularized if they did not opt to return to the MSCS Congregation, impeding the survival of the Clementines under any form, inclusively. The requested houses were not to be granted; the postulants were to be dismissed from the postulancy as well as the second year novices, who under the circumstances had waited a long time to be admitted to the MSCS Institute. They were to prepare as soon as possible for the election of a new general superior, this time through secret ballots to be sent to the Consistorial, which would decide on the appointment.

Bishop Vincenzo La Puma's strong opinion would be of major importance in a posterior decision taken by the Apostolic See to solve the crisis in the MSCS Congregation. The measures suggested by the Secretary of the Congregation of Religious and by the Apostolic Visitor Amleto Giovanni Cicognani, have prevailed, in general, being executed by the Consistorial Congregation in the re-ordination stage of the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute.

3.2.4 Amleto Giovanni Cicognani's apostolic visit

On the completion of its third decennial, the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute faced a profound identity crises that divided the congregation in two groups: a minority who chose to identify themselves with the Congregation of the Clementine Sisters, inspired by Saint Alfonse Maria de Ligorio's spirituality, and the majority who remained faithful to the origins, and identified with the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles and as such, considered, along with the Missionary Priests of St. Charles, members of one Scalabrinian Family. With the objective of solving the crisis, a visit was decided by the Apostolic See to be made to the Missionary Priests and Sisters of St. Charles, being nominated for the task Bishop Amleto Giovanni Cicognani, substitute of the Consistorial Congregation, and later Pope Paul VI's Secretary of State. Of the apostolic visit, undertaken in the second semester of 1926, Cicognani prepared a detailed report that seemed like *X-ray* pictures of the institute in the decade of 1920, based on which the successive steps of the Apostolic See would be taken in the intervention of MSCS Congregation.

A previous report requested by the Consistorial Congregation from Mother Maria da Divina Providencia, general superior, shows that on January 6, 1926 there were 31 sisters with perpetual

vows, 25 sisters with temporary vows, 10 novices and 5 postulants in the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute. Out of these 71 members, the largest number comprised the eight communities in Sao Paulo, and 22 sisters comprised the five communities located in Rio Grande do Sul.

In the State of Sao Paulo, the houses were located in Vila Prudente, counting with 9 sisters, including the members of the general government of the congregation; Aparecida do Norte with 3 sisters, plus novices and postulants, and where there was also a school for children of the town; Jundiai, Asylum of Mendicancy, 5 sisters; Itu, Asylum of Mendicancy, 5 sisters; Itatiba, in the Diocese of Bragança, Holy House of Mercy, 4 sisters; Monte Alto, in the Diocese of Sao Carlos do Pinhal, Holy House of Mercy, 5 sisters; Atibaia, Diocese of Bragança, Holy House of Mercy, 5 sisters; Santo Antonio do Pari, under the organizational stage, opened without knowledge of the Consistorial Congregation. Mother da Divina Providencia would justify the opening by stating to the Visitor that the commitment had been taken before knowledge of the determination from Rome that *forbid introducing novelties* in the institute, and that she had done so with the authorization of Bishop Duarte Leopoldo e Silva. Cicognani would note in his report that this opening took place simultaneously to the closing of the house in Sao Bernardo do Campo.

The communities opened until then in the State of Rio Grande do Sul, numbering five, were all located in the Archdiocese of Porto Alegre in areas of Italian colonization. They were as follows: Bento Gonçalves, a girls' boarding and day school, six sisters; Guapore, girls boarding and day school, 6 sisters; Nova Vicenza, currently, Farroupilha, day school, 4 sisters; Nova Brescia, day school, 4 sisters; Nova Milano, day school, 2 sisters.

This picture had not changed much at the time of Cicognani's apostolic visit, undertaken during the second semester of 1926. The total number of sisters had increase from 56 to 60, and another change was the transfers of the general motherhouse in Vila Prudente to the house of Santo Antonio do Pari, belonging to the sisters. Other houses had contributed in its purchase, comprising those from Rio Grande do Sul, as stated by the apostolic visitor, Amleto Cicognani's report. Still, according to him, the novitiate house in Aparecida do Norte had been acquired by the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles, and with contributions of the Scalabrinian priests through Father Simoni, amounting to *10 contos*. In Rio Grande do Sul, the house in Bento Gonçalves remained Father Enrico Poggi's property, but used by the sisters free, while that in Guapore was already the MSCS Sisters' property, toward which Sister Antonietta Fontana had worked hard for during her term as superior and house director.

The visitor's report, prepared several months later, repeats the above data and it adds, among others, the number of students lodged, and patients of each of the 13 houses of the institute: Vila Prudente lodged around 120 orphans in 1926; Santo Antonio do Pari, now the general motherhouse, kept a girls' day school called Saint Theresa of the Infant Jesus with 300 students enrolled; from the Asylum in Jundiai there is not an account in the number of interns; the Asylum in Itu sheltered 65; in the day school in Aparecida do Norte the number of girls was over one hundred; in the Holy Mercy House in Itatiba, on average, there were two admissions per day of patients; Atibaia had about 30 interns; the capacity in Monte Alto was of 48 beds.

In Rio Grande do Sul Saint Charles School in Bento Gonçalves had 150 students, girls in larger numbers; in Scalabrini School of Guapore there were 200 students enrolled, of which 31 students were boarders; Nova Vicenza had 90 students, of both sexes; in Nova Brescia enrolled students were 72, while in Nova Milano they added up to 160. In the five houses in the South, youngsters were taught music, painting, cutting and sewing and general manual work. Sisters gave catechism classes in the parish house and were also in charge of cleaning and preparation of the church.

The third topic in Cicognani's report addresses dissident sisters who he calls the Clementines. With the agreement of Bishop Duarte Leopoldo e Silva and in the presence of Father Lorenzo Lumini, a Benedictine from the Monastery of Saint Benedict, Sao Paulo, the Visitor questioned the sisters, one by one, and summarized in brief the data and information collected, and which we mention here the community, the sister's name, her nationality, her link with the institute, the sister's option, and a few other noted details:

Vila Prudente

- 1 – *Sister Maria do Sagrado Coração, Brazilian, temporary vows. "ad interim" superior, will not renew vows in June fearful to be among the Charlists. Clementine.*
- 2 – *Sister Carolina Grasti, daughter of Italians, perpetual vows. Charlist, request authorization to become a cloistered nun, Visitandine or Benedictine.*
- 3 – *Sister Immaculada Mileti, Italian, perpetual vows. Charlist.*
- 4 – *Sister Maria Tarcisia Barbara Battista, Brazilian, temporary vows. Clementine.*
- 5 – *Sister Clarice Baraldini, Italian, perpetual vows. . Charlist.*
- 6 – *Sister Odila Frigeri, daughter of Italians, born in Bento Gonçalves, RS, perpetual vows. Charlists. She had declared to be a Clementine, but later wrote saying that she had made a mistake and that she wanted to be a Charlist.*
- 7 – *Sister M. Marta Daltoe, daughter of Italians, born in Rio Grande do Sul, temporary vows. Clementine.*
- 8 - *Sister Antonia Fachini do SS. Coração, daughter of Italians, born in Caxias do Sul, RS, temporary vows. Clementine*
- 9 – *Sister Evangelista Rosseto, daughter of Italians, born in Rio Grande do Sul, eight months of temporary vows. Clementine*

Santo Antonio do Pari

- 1 – *Sister Maria da Divina Providencia, Brazilian, former general superior, house superior, perpetual vows. Clementine.*
- 2 – *Sister Caterina dalla Vecchia, daughter of Italians, born in Encantado, RS, temporary vows now for two years, but will not be renewing vows in June. Clementine.*
- 3 – *Sister M. Lambertina Silva, Brazilian, will not renew vows fearing to be among Charlist. Clementine.*
- 4 – *Sister Maria Andre, born in Brazil of Austrian parents, temporary vows. Clementine.*
- 5 – *Sister Lorenza Morelli, born in Sao Paulo of Italian parents, temporary vows. Clementine.*
- 6 – *Sister Maria Ciani do SS. Sacramento, Brazilian, born in Campinas, SP, Italian parents; will not renew vows fearing to be among the Carlist. Clementine.*
- 7 – *Sister Dorotea Tasoniera, born in Bento Gonçalves, RS, Italian parents, temporary vows. Clementine.*

Jundiai

- 1 – Sister Maria Raffaella Susin, born in Bento Gonçalves, RS, Venetian parents, superior of the community, perpetual vows. Charlist.
- 2 – Sister Fulgencia Mello, Brazilian, born in Sao Paulo, perpetual vows. Charlist.
- 3 – Sister Paulina Toscan, born in Rio Grande do Sul, Italian parents, temporary vows. Charlist.
- 4 – Sister Aparecida Suarez, Brazilian, born in Aparecida do Norte, temporary vows. Clementine.

Itu

- 1 – Sister Antonietta Fontana, born in Monza, Italy, former general superior, superior of the community, perpetual vows. Charlist.
- 2 – Sister Camilla dal Ri, Austrian, born close to Trent, perpetual vows. Charlist.
- 3 – Sister Josepha Soares, Brazilian, born in Taubate, SP, perpetual vows. Charlist.
- 4 – Sister Gemma Magrin, born in Curitiba, PR, Venetian parents, perpetual vows. Charlist.
- 5 – Sister Candida Lunelli, born in Rio Grande do Sul, Italian parents, perpetual vows. Charlist.

Aparecida do Norte

- 1 – Sister Afonsina Salvador, Brazilian, superior and mistress of novices. The Visitor asks, “Do you have perpetual vows”. Clementine.
 - 2 – Sister Estefania Barbosa, Brazilian, assistant, temporary vows. Declared herself neutral. She is thinking of becoming a Franciscan.
- There were in the novitiate 4 novices, 2 born in the state of Sao Paulo and 2 in Rio Grande do Sul.
- Two second year novices, both born in the South, were in other communities in Sao Paulo.

Itatiba

- 1 – Sister Angelina Meneguzzi, superior and provincial in Sao Paulo since August 1926, perpetual vows. Charlist.
- 2 – Sister Nicolina Balsan, Venetian, perpetual vows. Charlist.
- 3 – Sister Clementina Zini, born in Nova Vicenza, RS, Italian parents, temporary vows. Charlist.

Atibaia

- 1 – Sister Gertrudes Mileti do S. Coração, Calabrian, superior, perpetual vows. Charlist.
- 2 – Sister Anna Facchin, born in Bento Gonçalves, RS, Italian parents, temporary vows, not renewed since June 1926. Clementine.
- 3 – Sister Leopoldina Muneghel, born in Bento Gonçalves, RS, Italian parents, temporary vows, not renewed since June 1926. Clementine.
- 4 – Sister Maria de S. Jose G. de Castro, Brazilian, second year novice. Clementine.

Monte Alto

- 1 – Sister Assunta Marchetti, former general superior, superior of the community, perpetual vows. Charlist.

- 2 – Sister Francesca Perotta, perpetual vows. Charlist.
- 3 – Sister Juliana Mugnol, born in Rio Grande do Sul, Italian parents, temporary vows. Clementine.
- 4 – Sister Stanislava Cherubini, daughter of Italians, perpetual vows. Charlist.
- 5 – Sister Matilde Martins, Brazilian, born in Sao Paulo, second year novice. Clementine.

Bento Gonçalves

- 1 – Sister Lucia Gorlin, Italian, born in the province of Vicenza, superior and provincial in Rio Grande do Sul since August 1926, perpetual vows. Charlist.
- 2 – Sister Borromea Ferraresi, Italian, perpetual vows. Charlist.
- 3 – Sister Giovannina de Camargo, - or Joana- Brazilian, perpetual vows. Charlist.
- 4 – Sister Teresinha Muraro, Italian, niece of Sister Angelina Meneguzzi, perpetual vows. Charlist.
- 5 – Sister Chiara Pienaro, Italian, perpetual vows. Charlist.
- 6 – Sister Angelina Lunelli, - or Angelica - Italian, perpetual vows. Charlist.

Guapore

- 1 – Sister Vittorina Consoni, born in Milan, Italy, Father Faustino Consoni's niece, house superior, perpetual vows. Charlist.
- 2 – Sister Agnese Oricchio, – or Ignez – daughter of Neapolitans, perpetual vows. Charlist.
- 3 – Sister Bernardina Miele, born in Sao Bernardo do Campo, perpetual vows. Charlist.
- 4 – Sister Pierina Caldieraro, born in Rio Grande do Sul, Venetian parents, temporary vows. Charlist.
- 5 – Sister Gonzaga Sartori, born in Sao Paulo, Venetian parents, perpetual vows. Charlist.
- 6 – Sister Celestina Zancanaro, born in Rio Grande do Sul, Venetian parents, temporary vows. Charlist.

Nova Brescia

- 1 – Sister Elena Lucca, Italian, house superior, perpetual vows. Charlist
- 2 – Sister Cornelia Tomedi, - or Carmela - perpetual vows. Charlist.
- 3 – Sister Benedetta - ? - perpetual vows. Charlist.
- 4 – Sister Ignazia Faveri, - or Ignacia – temporary vows. Charlist.

Nova Vicenza

- 1 – Sister Maria de Lourdes Martins, Portuguese national, house superior, perpetual vows. Charlist.
- 7 – Sister Faustina Bosio, Italian, perpetual vows. Charlist.
- 8 – Sister Cecilia Mosca, perpetual vows. Charlist.
- 9 – Sister Maddalena - ? - Italian, - ? – Charlist.

Nova Milano

- 1 – Sister Giuseppina Oricchio - or Josefina - Italian, house superior, perpetual vows. Charlist.

Amleto Cicognani observes that in Nova Milano *two sisters promised but never arrived from Sao Paulo were waited for. Provisionally, two sisters coming from Sao Paulo were there until November 1926, when they would transfer to the hospital of Bento Gonçalves.*

The Visitor's research results show dissident sisters or Clementines totaled 19, in addition to the novices and one postulant from Aparecida do Norte. The majority of the sisters opted to remain Charlist, 18 of them composed the communities of Sao Paulo, and 22 worked in Rio Grande do Sul. Sister Estefania Barbosa declared herself neutral, decided to become a Franciscan and, therefore, she is not listed among the Clementines or the Charlist. Around 10 postulants who were waiting for authorization to begin the novitiate in the houses in the South also opted to be Charlist.

A timely verification of Cicognani was that those who declared themselves as Clementines were Brazilian and Italian nationals who had had Sister Maria da Divina Providencia or Sister Afonsina as novice mistress. Both, plus Sister Maria do Sagrado Coração, of Brazilian nationality, were leaders of the schism. Sister Gertrudes Mileti, Italian and oldest in profession was an exception, declaring herself Clementine.

The Apostolic Visitor, after hearing the sisters and those involved, detained himself on the causes of the dissidence, taking into consideration what he had heard and seen. The Clementine Sisters argued that the Charlist Sisters lacked religious spirit and justified their statement by saying that sisters did not observe silence, and they reduced the monthly retreat time, that the Charlist were influenced by the Scalabrinian Priests and they complained about the actions of some of the Scalabrinian Priest above all in the past, who had treated the sisters with carelessness in their religious formation, exaggerated commanding and ordering, lack of regularity in Eucharistic celebrations and in their confessions, non-compliance with schedules compromising in this aspect the discipline of the orphanage in Vila Prudente.

The fact is that in Rio Grande do Sul, where there was greater interaction between the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles and the Scalabrinian Priests or between MSCS Sisters and other Missionaries, the apostolic action of different ones, identified with John Baptist Scalabrini's charisma had, since its start, a proven pastoral success.

As it all indicates, both Bishop Duarte Leopoldo e Silva and Father Estevam Maria Heigenhauser aimed at strengthening the Sisters' religious spirit, however, in their manner of acting they evidenced attitudes interpreted as nationalistic and preconceived, particularly, against Italians. It was clear to the Visitor that the sisters were not orientated well by Father Estevam Maria. His way of doing things, in Father Lourenço Hubbauer's opinion, had *been a disaster*.

Justification for the schism promoted by the general superior herself, Sister Maria da Divina Providencia de Campos, was to increase the sisters' formation level, to put distance between the institute from the Scalabrinian Priests' influence and, according to some, to make the MSCS Congregation more Brazilian. The general superior, by withdrawing from Vila Prudente to stay in Pari among the dissident sisters, left the congregation headless. The Charlist Sisters, according to the Apostolic Visitor, felt like *lambs without a shepherd*. Pari became the *stronghold* of the Clementines. It was in this context that the Apostolic See intervened, having Pope Pius XI determine the visit for which Bishop Amleto Giovanni Cicognani was nominated.

With the intention of gathering opinions on which he would propose a solution for the situation of the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute, Cicognani questioned Bishop Duarte Leopoldo e Silva, all the

sisters that made up the communities in the State of Sao Paulo, some sisters from the communities of Rio Grande do Sul, the Redemptorist Father Lourenço Hubbauer, and the Archbishop of Porto Alegre. The Visitor summarized in his report the different opinions of those who had been questioned.

The Archbishop of Sao Paulo refused to leave his statements in writing, but expressed them verbally, stating that the union of Clementines and Charlist was impossible. He proposed that the Clementines be united in three houses: Aparecida do Norte, Pari and Atibaia, leaving the remaining ones to the Charlists; those from Sao Paulo could join with those in Rio Grande do Sul; he proposed that their novitiate return to Vila Prudente.

Father Lourenço Hubbauer was chaplain of the novitiate in Aparecida and knew in part the historical evolution of the MSCS Congregation. He affirmed that Father Estevam Maria did not have the intention of a crisis, but knew that his co-brother *was not reflective and had a fanatic personality*, had written to the General Superior in Rome, *requesting his intervention in what ended up being done by the Consistorial*. Father Lourenço found it *difficult to contain the upheaval*, but he still did not have a firm idea on how to proceed, should the Clementines remain united to Charlists or to authorize the first ones to be admitted to another congregation. He still stated that he did not have much trust in the MSCS Congregation because of the sisters' limited formation, unless that among the Charlist in Rio Grande do Sul there was a competent sister to take the responsibility as general superior and another to be the mistress of novices.

Sister Maria da Divina Providencia de Campos said that the division was necessary because it was a question of spirit that separated them; that the Charlist observed the constitutions in their own manner and in this they were different from one another depending on who had done their novitiate with the Charlist and who had done it with the Clementines. The Clementines wanted distance from the Scalabrinian Priests censoring above all, Father Faustino Consoni, Father Marco Simoni and Father Francesco Navarro who had treated them badly on some occasions. Her position was either division or option for another institute.

The difference in behavior between Clementines and Charlists during questioning called the attention of the Visitor. The Clementine sisters showed certain mistrust, presenting themselves as ready to face a battle going to the point of repeating the same words or sentences or they were naïve in their manifestations with the exception of Sister Afonsina who elegantly expressed her point of view.

Bishop Amleto Cicognani gave special importance to manifestations given by Sister Assunta Marchetti and Sister Antonietta Fontana, former general superiors, as well as to two sisters identified as provincials, Angelina Meneguzzi from Sao Paulo and Lucia Gorlin from Rio Grande do Sul. The Visitor noted that Charlist Sisters, although clearly expressing their thoughts, presented themselves with manifested humbleness, without pretensions and their unhappiness with the situation that had been ignored by many until recently. All of them assured him of their disposition in observing the constitutions and to work hard on the assumed activities and ask for help in the continuity of the institute Sisters, from Rio Grande do Sul mainly, requested that the MSCS Institute to be declared a Pontifical Institute. Sister Antonietta Fontana affirmed that Bishop Duarte opposed the admission to the novitiate of Italians and of Brazilians without distinction, who in reality wanted just Brazilians and that he never had liked the sisters and houses from Rio Grande do Sul.

Bishop Joao Becker, Archbishop of Porto Alegre, stated that he was *pleased with the Charlist sisters, that they do well wherever they work*, and that he did not intend to create difficulties for his colleague, the Archbishop of Sao Paulo. He asked about the possibility of joining the MSCS houses in Rio Grande do Sul as a diocesan institute of Porto Alegre. In his opinion, Sister Lucia Gorlin, superior in Bento Gonçalves, was capable of being the general superior.

After hearing opinions and suggestions, the Apostolic Visitor registered his concluding findings.

1. The division of the institute was inevitable, as it was deep and irreparable, and because it had a nationalist bias on the part of the Brazilian leaderships supported by the Archbishop of Sao Paulo and religious bias, given the conviction of the Clementine Sisters that they had a religious spirit, which was lacking among the Charlist Sisters, which made them believe that separation was a way to glorify God.
2. The Charlists, despite their imperfections and limits in their formation, were *good sisters*, they did not have either *instruction or culture appropriated to young women who were educated in convents of certain distinction*, but were prepared for their mission as teachers of the emigrant's children and nurses in hospitals, which they did with persistence and fidelity. They did not deserve, therefore, to see their institute divided. That would have been humiliation and would have reverberated as a public reprimand. Permission should not be granted to the Clementine Sisters to create a new institute, which would otherwise mean ratification of a non-loyal rebellion of a few leaders. Thus, there was no alternative left but to dismiss the Clementines and leave to the Archbishop of Sao Paulo the judgment to provide a destination for them.
3. The constitutions in rigor of the MSCS Institute need reviewing, but *substance was good, and should be kept intact*.
4. The determination to organize the institute in to two regions, one in the State of Sao Paulo, and the other in the State of Rio Grande do Sul, as it shall be seen, should be executed, and should be conveniently called provinces.
5. The dismissal of sisters would imply the need to close some of the houses, it was suggested that the Archbishop of Sao Paulo should indicate them: Pari, Aparecida do Norte and Atibaia. These three could be put at Bishop Duarte Leopoldo e Silva's disposition.
6. The Charlist sisters should make restitution of part of the contributions, be it the funds targeted for the purchase of a tract of land in Santo Antonio do Pari, or the amount of 10 *contos* that, through Father Marco Simoni, the Scalabrinian had given the Charlist Sisters for the purchase of a building in Aparecida do Norte.
7. Distances, climate and cultural diversity suggested, at the time, the opening of a second novitiate of the Congregation, which could favor the two provinces' greater commitment as well as of the two provinces in cultivation of vocations.
8. In Rio Grande do Sul the most appropriate place for the novitiate was Bento Gonçalves, next to St. Charles school. There was urgency regarding the opening of the novitiate in the South because some of the postulants had waited for a long time for this possibility.
9. In Sao Paulo, the suggest place for novitiate for the province was Vila Prudente, but it would need some feasible adaptations to be done.
10. After nominating the two provincial superiors, it was urgent to nominate the general superior of the MSCS Institute, as well as the mistress of novices. Sister Lucia Gorlin, who had been suggested by the Archbishop of Porto Alegre as capable to perform the role of general superior but in the Visitor's evaluation, she had limited instruction, but she was a *practical and energetic woman*, even though she might not please the sisters from Sao Paulo. It would be the general superior' decision regarding the site of the motherhouse, in

Sao Paulo or in Rio Grande do Sul. As mistress of novices in the South, Cicognani's proposal was Sister Borromea Ferraresi. In Sao Paulo, he preferred not to suggest names. Concerning election of the general superior, he proposed that the sisters should indicate her, through written and secret votes, which would be sent to the Consistorial, or to put in charge a local clergyman.

11. Finally, the Visitor approached the topic on how to provide the MSCS Congregation with better guidance than it had in the past, favoring its development. After valid arguments in this regard, Cicognani proposed a double alternative: to declare the institute of Pontifical Rights or to continue to keep it as it is for an undetermined time until it could do better under the guidance of the Cardinal Secretary of the Consistorial congregation¹⁹⁴.

In the reorganization stage of the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute, the topic that we shall deal with next, the findings of Bishop Amleto Giovanni Cicognani were taken into account, and most of suggestions of the apostolic visitor were put into action.

3.2.5 Reorganization of the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute

The limited comprehension of the different dimensions of the Scalabrinian vocation and the lack of harmony with the origin of the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles by the minority that tried to impose on the remnant sisters are among the causes of the Clementines' crisis, intensely jeopardizing the institute. The identity crisis, in its explicit manifestations, ceased after the apostolic visit of Bishop Amleto Giovanni Cicognani when, on November 27, 1926, Cardinal Gaetano De Lai declared the MSCS Congregation, as an institution founded for the evangelical work among migrants, dependant on the Consistorial Congregation, and under the jurisdiction of Bishop Egidio Lari, auditor of the apostolic nunciature in Brazil. A period of reorganization followed and during the decennial of 1925-1934, which would be for the Feminine Scalabrinian Congregation of rigorous dependence on the Apostolic See and would have beneficial resonances in the life of the institute.

From October 15, 1925, the date when Cardinal De Lai communicated to Mother Maria da Divina Providencia de Campos that the Consistorial Congregation had proposed to *regulate and to discipline* the Congregation of Missionary Sisters of St. Charles. Successive measures were taken by the Apostolic See aiming at the needed reorganization of the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute. The first step was to order the suspension of any initiative that meant a change in the way of life of the Congregation. The General Superior was requested to submit to the Consistorial a copy of the constitution in rigor in the institute as well as complete report on the sisters and the existing houses in the States of Sao Paulo and Rio Grande do Sul.

Other concrete measures characterized this phase of intervention by the Apostolic See from the beginning of 1926, therefore, before Cicognani's apostolic visit. In a letter dated January 7 of that year, De Lai communicated to Bishop Duarte Leopoldo e Silva and to Bishop Joao Becker some precise arrangements linked to the regulation of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Charles. As already seen, the first recommendation was that MSCS Sisters did not have to change the name or to deny the origin and goal of the institute.

To work out this arrangement, it was necessary to distance Father Estevam Maria from guiding the sisters and to nominate another priest capable to perform this task. Cardinal De Lai suggested Father Domenico Canestrini's name, being promptly accepted by the Archbishop of Sao Paulo who, in

¹⁹⁴ CICOGNANI, Amleto. G. *Brasile. Suore Missionarie di S. Carlo*. Relazione di Mons. Cicognani, Visitatore Apostolico, 1926 (AGSS 1.4.4).

February 1926, nominated the Scalabrinian as director of the sisters, a task that he had entrusted, years before, to the Redemptorist Father Estevam Maria Heigenhauser.

When informing the cardinal of his nomination, in a letter dated 23 February of 1926, Father Canestrini showed resistance in assuming the commitment alleging that, among other reasons, *not knowing the duties of such a title*. The Scalabrinian stated that Bishop Duarte mentioned his concern with elections already determined by the Consistorial. The Prelate saw many inconveniences for the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Charles if an eventual victory of the Charlist sisters occurred, saying that if that should happen, he would take back the house in Aparecida do Norte and would be uninterested in the institute, *displeased on seeing frustrated his work of so many years*.

In the same letter, Father Domenico mentioned to Cardinal De Lai the constraints of a trip undertaken in those days by three sisters from the South to Sao Paulo. Sisters Lucia Gorlin, Borromea Ferraresi and Vittorina Consoni, anxious for news after having talked to Bishop Joao Becker, decided to travel to Sao Paulo with the objective of better knowing Mother Maria da Divina Providencia's intentions and to know the plans related to the future of the institute. It is worthwhile mentioning that this trip happened in a moment of great tension between the Clementine and Charlist Sisters, which explained the cold reception they had in Vila Prudente.

It was in this atmosphere of animosity that the three Scalabrinian Missionaries looked for Father Canestrini, now director of sisters. The priest heard of their arrival through a telephone call made by Bishop Duarte. The objective of the trip, according to the Archbishop, was the elective chapter. The sisters declared to Father Domenico of knowing nothing about the elections nor had Bishop John Becker received any communication in that matter. Under this circumstance, they handed to Father Canestrini a copy of the *Memorial of the Mission in Rio Grande do Sul*, dated February 19, 1926, written and signed by the three sisters. In the *Memorial*, which Father Domenico Canestrini annexed to the letter that he sent to Cardinal De Lai a few days later, the missionaries affirmed that they did not want separation and that their purpose was to return to the South in harmony with the co-sisters of Sao Paulo, and to continue their mission according to the MSCS Congregation's principles¹⁹⁵.

Calmed down by the new director, they soon returned to Rio Grande do Sul, and presented themselves to the Archbishop of Porto Alegre, at this moment they became aware of a letter from Mother Maria da Divina Providencia de Campos, sent sometime before to the prelate. In the letter to Bishop John Becker, the General Superior wrote stating to no longer be interested in the missions in the South and that the Archbishop of Porto Alegre could nominate a sister of his trust to be the general superior of the sisters that composed the communities in Rio Grande do Sul.

We have previously referred to the letter dated January 7, 1926 in which the Consistorial Congregation determined the creation of two regions, one in the state of Sao Paulo and other in Rio Grande do Sul, from which would later result in the first two provinces of the MSCS Congregation. The intention was to create two regions, even Bishop Vincenzo La Puma, Secretary of the Congregation of Religious, understood that the institute lacked, at that time, some major elements to create provinces.

The delay of both archbishops in executing those determinations had different reasons: Bishop Duarte preferred to compromise, while Bishop John Becker would state that he had not received the Consistorial letter, therefore he did not know the arrangements set in the missing correspondence. The

¹⁹⁵ CANESTRINI, Domenico. *Lettera a Gaetano De Lai*. São Paulo, 23-2-1926 (Archives of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People. Prot. 514/25).

compromising attitude of one and the lack of information of the other motivated another letter from De Lai, on June 15, 1926 addressed to both prelates where the cardinal justified his insistence and ordered both to comply with the arrangements that had been communicated on January 7 of that year:

Permit me to insist this issue as it is no longer possible to postpone it any longer considering the state of things. Serious damage to the institute is resulting from this, many good vocations are being lost, so needed for the missions, and it is weakening the discipline and the spirit of obedience and sacrifice.

Therefore, I summarize the arrangements made by myself and already given so Your Excellencies and I recommend that you execute them without any delay, trying to overcome difficulties that might come up.

- 1. Form a division between the two regions, one in Sao Paulo and the other in Rio Grande do Sul, at the moment dependant on the respective ordinaries.*
- 2. The Sisters from the two regions shall elect the regional superior and her council that, for the time being, shall constituted by two councilors.*
- 3. The Regional superiors, along with their councilors, shall elect the general superior. However, in this regard you shall wait for the findings and arrangements that will be given after the apostolic visit, which shall not take too long to be realized...¹⁹⁶.*

The election of the regional superior, orientated by Mother Maria da Divina Providencia, was realized on August 7, 1926, being elected Sisters Angelina Meneguzzi for Sao Paulo and Lucia Gorlin for Rio Grande do Sul. Sister Angelina Meneguzzi had as councilors, Sisters Immaculada Mileti and Carolina Grasti, and Sister Lucia Gorlin had Sisters Borromea Ferraresi and Elena Lucca. The Consistorial Congregation confirmed the regional superiors.

After Amleto Cicognani completed his visit, the Consistorial dictated new measures indicated mostly by the apostolic visitor and by the secretary of the Congregation for the Religious, Bishop Vincenzo La Puma. The new steps aimed at the reorganization of the Feminine Scalabrini Institute just as the previous ones did. Among the two alternatives proposed by the Visitor, of declaring the MSCS Congregation to be of Pontifical Right, or to maintain it for an undetermined time under the direction of Cardinal Gaetano De.. Lai, the Consistorial opted for the second one, the first one would be postponed for about eight years.

On November 27, 1926, Cardinal De Lai declared the MSCS Institute was dependant on the Consistorial Congregation, under the jurisdiction of Bishop Egidio Lari, auditor of the Apostolic Nunciature in Brazil. Egidio Lari himself, on January 19, 1927, communicated to the archbishops of Sao Paulo and of Porto Alegre, as well as the bishop of the diocese of Sao Carlos, in the State of Sao Paulo, and to Father Domenico Canestrini that the *Apostolic See nominated him as Apostolic Visitor of the Institute of the Sisters of St. Charles*. On February 18th, Father Canestrini communicated to Sister Lucia Gorlin that, by orders of the Apostolic See, he would complete his task among MSCS Sisters and that, from then on, they depended on Bishop Egidio Lari for everything. He would facilitate the execution of the decisions taken by the Consistorial Congregation after Amleto Cicognani's visit, regarding reorganization of the institute.

One of the first deliberations of the Consistorial, suggested by Cicognani, was the opening of a second novitiate for the MSCS Congregation in the South. What's more, on December 2, 1926, in a

¹⁹⁶ DE LAI, Gaetano. *Lettera al Arcivescovo di São Paulo - e Porto Alegre*. Roma, 15-6-1926 (Archives of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People. Prot. 514/25).

letter to Sister Lucia Gorlin, Bishop John Becker communicated to her that he had received from the Apostolic Nunciature of Rio de Janeiro a telegram with the news that Cardinal Gaetano De Lai had given permission for the establishment of a novitiate for the congregation in Bento Gonçalves. The Archbishop said that, within his possibilities, he would be going to Bento Gonçalves to establish the novitiate himself.

The new formation house began its formation activities on January 16, 1927. The Sisters working in the South among Italian immigrants and their descendants counted on the support from Bishop John Becker. Like them, the Archbishop of Porto Alegre had also insisted on the opening in Rio Grande do Sul of a novitiate for the congregation. In his understanding, this initiative would benefit numerous vocations there; calming their parent's concerns with the distance to go to Sao Paulo at the time, in addition to favoring the institute itself that was not able to attend the multiple requests in this state.

Another step in the reorganization of the Institute of the Sisters of St. Charles was in regards to the internal administration of the congregation. On January 25, 1927, by order of the Consistorial, Sister Angelina Meneguzzi temporarily assumed and under dependence of the same Consistorial Congregation, the position of General Superior until election and appointment of the new superior for the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute.

A new appeal was made to the Clementine Sisters to return to the Institute of the Sisters of St. Charles. Some of the sisters accepted the invitation; others were admitted in other institutes. The three sisters that first responded to the call were Maria Daltoe, Anna Fachini and Juliana Mugnol. Up to February 18, 1926, three Clementine sisters had requested permission to enter in the Congregation of the Franciscan Sisters while eight other sisters opted for the Congregation of St. Vincent de Paul. Among these, Sister Maria da Divina Providencia de Campos, dismissed from the position as general superior two years after being elected for a six years period which was foreseen to extend to September 1930.

The organization of the MSCS Sister's Institute was, at the beginning, made difficult by some hostile manifestations by Bishop Duarte Leopoldo e Silva, displeased with the path taken by the crisis of the Clementine Sisters. In a letter to Cardinal De Lai, of February 1927, Bishop Egidio Lari showed perplexity and made a statement that he had heard from Michele Kruze, abbot of the Monastery of St. Benedict, Sao Paulo: *the Archbishop wanted to establish a diocesan congregation with the sisters that had left the Scalabrinians, and later for this institute to cease to exist.* On another occasion, the Archbishop declared to Lari *that he had struggled with all religious institutes in the archdiocese, both male and female, but had always won and that all had been submissive. This time, I was defeated by the worst in the archdiocese*. Lari, who was determined to collaborate with the reorganization of the MSCS Congregation, finished the letter by writing: *It is a pity that the Institute had the Archbishop as an adversary*¹⁹⁷.

A factor that contributed much to the MSCS Congregation's acquisition of the needed stability and to regain the path of progress in fidelity to the founding charisma was the election and appointment of Mother Assunta Marchetti as General Superior, a position that she would hold until 1935. The election process followed the orientation received from Rome, being undertaken in the first semester of 1927.

¹⁹⁷ LARI, Egidio. *Lettera a Gaetano De Lai*. Sao Paulo, 18 febbraio (Archives of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People. Prot. 514/25).

3.3 Consolidation, expansion and pontifical recognition of the congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles, Scalabrinians

3.3.1 Mother Assunta Marchetti, 1927-1935

In the year of 1927, the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles began to rise from the critical situation led by a minority of dissident sisters, who searched in a misguided way for the progress of the institute by breaking away from its legitimate identity. After the period of the Apostolic See's intervention began, the majority of sisters, faithful to the Scalabrinian project, waited for measures from the Consistorial Congregation that would ensure favorable conditions for the religious institute to grow in unity. The Consistorial deliberations aimed at the development of the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute, guided by essential criteria, starting with fidelity to its origins, in living the charisma among emigrants. The MSCS Sisters, on their part, when called to vote manifested trust in Mother Assunta Marchetti's charismatic strength, which would have a major role in this post crisis period. The co-founder, elected and nominated general superior, gave life to the institute during 1927- 1935, a period when the MSCS Congregation strengthened itself for a more solid progress.

One of the Consistorial Congregation's first arrangements spoke about the administration of the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute. On January 25, 1927, Bishop Egidio Lari, in charge of enforcing the Apostolic See's decisions with the reorganization of the MSCS Congregation in mind, communicated to Sister Angelina Meneguzzi the Consistorial's decision to begin the process of the election of a general superior of the institute. Voting took place between the months of February and April of 1927. In this period, without forming the chapter in accordance to guidance from Rome, 51 sisters voted, using individual standard ballots that were sent to the Consistorial Congregation. After a careful count of the votes, Mother Assunta Marchetti was elected with 30 votes out of the 51 voting sisters. Sister Angelina Meneguzzi, the second most voted, received 16 votes, including that of Mother Assunta. Sister Lucia Gorlin received 4 votes and Sister Antonietta Fontana 1 vote. Mother Assunta Marchetti filled in her ballot, and like the others, is preserved in the Archives of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care for Migrants and Itinerants:

Formola da sottoscrivere dalle

R. Suore Missionarie di S. Carlo

Io sottoscritta entrata nella religione il giorno 25 de outubro de 1895 e professa com voti perpetuos sin dal giorno 25 de outubro de 1897 intendo continuare a vivere fedelmente nella Congregazione delle Suore Missionarie di S. Carlo, e do il mio voto alla R. M. Irmã Angelina Meneguzzi per essere eletta Madre Superiora Generale Suor Assunta Marchetti Data: 5 de março de 1927.

Form to be filled by

Missionary Sisters of St. Charles

The undersigned, who entered religious life on the 25th day of October, 1895 and professed perpetual vows on the 25th day of October, 1897, intends to continue to faithfully live in the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles, and I give my vote to R. M. Sister Angelina Meneguzzi to be elected as the General Mother Superior, Sister Assunta Marchetti Date: March 5, 1927.*

Mother Assunta Marchetti was the superior of the community of the Holy Mercy House of Monte Alto in the State of Sao Paulo when, in mid 1927, when she received from Bishop Egidio Lari the communication that she had been elected general superior of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Charles.

* This text has been transcribed just as the original, without translation (n.f. t).

Bishop Egidio Lari wrote to Cardinal De Lai in September 17, 1927, saying he had received on July 21 a correspondence dated June 20 of this year, in which the secretary of the Consistorial Congregation ordered him to communicate to Mother Assunta Marchetti her election as the general superior. Bishop Lari's communication to Mother Assunta was made by letter dated July 30, 1927. The letter of nomination is dated June 20, 1927.

The new General Superior would be 56 years old on August 15. After praying and reflecting for a few days, Mother Assunta accepted to take the responsibility proposed and complying to Bishop Egidio Lari's order, she moved to the city of Sao Paulo. In a letter addressed to the Apostolic Visitor of August 7, she requested his kindness to assure that together with Father Domenico Canestrini's permission to make the general motherhouse of the institute in Vila Prudente, alleging that Pari did not have the facilities for this finality. From Vila Prudente she sent a circular to the MSCS Sisters transcribed below and dated September 8, 1927, Feast of the Birth of Mary:

Dear co-sister,

The peace of our Lord be with you.

Dearest and good co-sisters, with your vote, you have placed upon my poor shoulders an enormous responsibility. I would have wished so much weight removed from of me, aware of my absolute incapacity, but the Most Excellence Visitor's insistence, Bishop. Egidio Lari, who indicated me the voice of God through this election, he coerced me into accepting.

Thus, not under any circumstance and place has this most profound axiom showed to be so true: God uses the most inadequate and most limited instruments in his works.

All my trust I have put again in his sweetest Heart. For Him and in Him, here I am in this most delicate and thorny task.

What's more, with my acceptance, a great hope smiles upon me: the loyal, timely and generous cooperation of all of my good co-sisters and, above all, of the superior of each community.

Your most Reverend knows well from what terrible struggle our beloved congregation comes from. An indescribable torment tried to beat us down and engulf us. We were saved by a miracle, and we may say that in this hard dispute, which was a test of fire, the good Lord gives us a visible sign of his admirable protection.

Now, my concern is to unite us all on an affectionate bond of charity and, forgetting the sad past, take up our path, or better yet, restart a new life.

As far as I know, no novelty will be introduced. What our venerated superiors have been gently asking of us, yes, but emphatically the integral and faithful observation of the holy rule, and absolute and unconditional dependence on their authority.

Past experience counsels us to take the path with more discipline and obedience to those our most excellent superiors who, saved us from a most certain fall, dedicated their admirable efforts toward the progress of our beloved congregation.

So, based on this principle, my esteemed co-sister, I consider as a duty for the good governance of mine and of the Most Reverend, to notify you that any commitment of any kind whatsoever, not any modification or new thing, nothing can be done without license of the most Reverend Visitor of the Consistorial, to whom we only and directly depend.

Each superior, therefore, shall guide her community with such clarity and according to the holy rules and praxis of the congregation, as if she had to leave her position one day listening to the holy voice of obedience.

I, humbly call your attention to and with all charity on the very essential point of good order, so as not

to incur any painful misunderstandings and bitter delusions.

I depend a lot, my beloved co-sister, with your prudence, goodness and charity, and I congratulate your firmness and holy spirit of sacrifice. We all shall work for the glory of our Lord, for our own sanctification and for the true well being of our congregation.

May the good Lord bless us.

*Your humble servant in Jesus Christ*¹⁹⁸.

The sentiments expressed by Mother Assunta in the circular of September 8 are of trust in the Lord, of acknowledgement for the visible sign of His protection as well as of hope in the sincere cooperation of all the sisters, needed for a renewed endeavor in unity and in peace. Aware of her own limits, with humility, having in mind the glory of the Lord, the sanctification of her co-sisters and the progress of the congregation, the General Superior exhorted the observance of the constitutions and a rigorous obedience to the Apostolic Visitor's determinations, to which, in a direct way, it now depends.

The secretary of the Consistorial Congregation, Cardinal Gaetano De Lai, wrote a congratulations letter to Mother Assunta for her election in October 4, 1927:

you one of the first to respond to the call of the Founders and have dedicated your life for the spiritual well being of Italian emigrants will know, in the governing of the institute, how to transmit a spirit of sound piety, total sacrifice and obedience, to make it stronger and solid.

For the MSCS Sisters Mother Assunta was in fact a reference and in many circumstances, they said so. In the mid 1927s, sisters of the Novo Milano Community, Rio Grande do Sul, sent Mother Assunta an affectionate congratulations letter, for her feast day, praising the co-founder as the *first copious tree of virtues* and ask our Lord to allow all the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles to follow with fidelity *her admirable example*²⁰⁰.

As General Superior, Mother Assunta Marchetti continued being the first in the institute to be an example. During her term, with a prolongation, which was extended until March 1935, either by a letter or personally, without embarrassment she requested clarification from the Apostolic Visitor, and without restrictions, she maintained herself dependent on his authority.

In a letter of September 7, 1927, Mother Assunta asked Bishop Egidio Lari what was the dependence of the institute related to the local ordinary. The Visitor's answer, dated September 12 of this year, as in other instance, was harsh but precise: *I ask you to read all letters written by myself and sent to Sister Angelina Meneguzzi that are in the archives, in which it is stated that all faculties of local ordinary are temporarily transferred to the Apostolic Visitor'*. In other words, Lari wrote, *I am the ordinary of all houses of the Sisters of St. Charles in any diocese*. The General Superior for showing condescendence to Sister Afonsina Salvador, who had requested to return to the institute, Egidio Lari stated: *I do not know why you were so hasty in receiving her. In this way, it is useless to write to Rome. You have already received her. He added it is known in Rome that Sister Afonsina is one of the sisters that caused the crisis in the Congregation of St. Charles and she has not stopped.*²⁰¹.

The Visitor, in his turn, diplomatically extended reconciliation to those who, not too long ago, tried to deviate the institute from the Scalabrinian pastoral project itself. Bishop Egidio Lari brought the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Charles and the Redemptorist Priests back together by entrusting to them, once again, the spiritual guidance of the formatters and the novices in the

¹⁹⁸ MARCHETTI, Assunta. *Circular-letter*. São Paulo, 8-9-1927 (AGSS 1.5.4)

²⁰⁰ CAMARGO, Giovannina & MURARO, Teresina. *Lettera a Assunta Marchetti*. Nova Milano, 18-7-1927 (AGSS 1.5.4).

²⁰¹ LARI, Egidio. *Lettera a Assunta Marchetti*. Rio de Janeiro, 12-9-1927 (AGSS 1.5.4).

Aparecida novitiate. Bishop Duarte Leopoldo e Silva, himself, was also once again a zealous shepherd for the Missionary Priests and Sisters of St. Charles, Scalabrinians who worked in the Archdiocese of Sao Paulo.

Despite the atypical situation, just after taking her office, Mother Assunta undertook with the Apostolic Visitor the appointment of a general council whose names she proposed, and were thus composed: Sister Angelina Meneguzzi, Sister Lucia Gorlin, Sister Immaculada Mileti and Sister Camilla Dal Ri. In mid 1930, Sister Angelina Meneguzzi, who also accumulated the position of regional superior, identified now as provincial superior, left the council and Sister Ignez Oricchio now took part. The new councilor also took the position of General Secretary of the Congregation, which Sister Teresinha Muraro previously performed.

Mother Assunta, in the first years of her term, under the jurisdiction of Bishop Egidio Lari, gave continuity in the reorganization of the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute. Communication with the communities in Rio Grande do Sul was a special concern for the general government. Regarding the Province of Sao Paulo, the geographic closeness made frequent visits possible, and as consequence, faster answers to the needs of the sisters and communities.

A difficulty mentioned by Mother Assunta to the Visitor on November 1927 was her relationship with Sister Lucia Gorlin, provincial of the South. In a letter to the co-sister on October 15, the General Superior commented on the *crisis* taken by the institute, showed herself thankful to Divine Providence for received help and inviting her to write with greater enthusiasm and abnegation, for not only gratitude, but also aiming at completely healing wounds, to facilitate the full reconstruction and progressive development of the congregation. From the past, she wrote, what matters is *to learn the need of a sincere and cordial union*, a condition for everything to go well.

At this point, the general superior approached a topic, that everything indicates, painful to Sister Lucia Gorlin. Mother Assunta stated: *due to the sad past, the idea that the province in the South should not exist and form one province persists in the minds of a few co-sisters, that of Sao Paulo, as several members, but only one body, but rather, something altogether unattached and separated...* She recommended, thus, that Sister Lucia *be the most valid help and sincere support to the Mother General – who alone could not do much – and to find from within her love for the works, and in her zeal for the greater glory of the Lord a means to put an end to these false and mistaken ideas*²⁰².

In the same letter Mother Assunta solicited from Sister Lucia a detailed report on the general running of the missions in Rio Grande do Sul, specifying in three blocks information related to administration and economy; of the spirit and observance of the constitutions, of the formation of the sisters and especially of novices. The general superior concluded her letter to the provincial with other recommendation such as to visit the houses of the province as to become aware of the reality, and mostly to know if there was sincere and cordial union among superiors and sisters in the several communities.

Ten days later, in a letter of October 25, 1927, Sister Lucia Gorlin answered Mother Assunta by writing, among other things: that she had understood all that she had said; that she would have preferred a visit from the general superior, which she hoped would be as soon as possible. She said she was pleased with the news that the situation of the institute was improving, and in respect to the sincere union, *they had always worked and suffered for that*; that in her turn she would do *all possible to keep order and peace*; that she had visited the houses of the province in April, and that she found everything in order. Next, the provincial, addressed item for item, all the other requested information,

²⁰² MARCHETTI, Assunta. *Lettera a Lucia Gorlin*. Villa Prudente, SP, 15-10-1927 (AGSS 1.5.4).

but the report did not please Mother Assunta. In Sister Lucia's answers, more than bad will some understandable resentment prevailed, indications that the crisis had not been totally overcome²⁰³.

On November 12, 1927, Mother Assunta Marchetti communicated to Bishop Egidio Lari on the sending of the report, requested by him in a letter of October 26, received from Sister Lucia Gorlin, provincial of Rio Grande do Sul. The General Superior wrote that she had requested the report from the provincial with two objectives: to have a clear idea of the situation in the several houses of the South and, at the same time, to know what sister Lucia Gorlin thought. She had heard that she preferred to act independently, an attitude that Mother Assunta saw confirmed in the *persistent silence* of the co-sister regarding realities of the houses in Rio Grande do Sul. In her letter to the Apostolic Visitor, the general superior mentioned aspects of the report sent by Sister Lucia and, in her evaluation, the report was incomplete; that the provincial had shown contradictions; that when questioned about the relationships among sisters, she had stated to be very pleased, but in a reserved letter, also signed by Sister Borromea Ferraresi, spoke about disagreement and made unedifying comments.

In the same letter, Mother Assunta proposed to the Apostolic Visitor the appointment of Sister Raffaella Susin as the provincial superior in Rio Grande do Sul, and Sister Lucia Gorlin as the local superior of the house in Pari, Sao Paulo. The general superior informed Bishop Lari that the sister could resist the transfer because she had worked in Bento Gonçalves since 1915, and was a pioneer there, but affirmed that this change seemed necessary for the true union between the two provinces of the congregation.

In a second letter to the Visitor, written on the same date, November 12, 1927, Mother Assunta expressed her contentment with the optimistic prevision regarding the acquisition of the real estate in Pari. However, she also stated that she couldn't say anything positive regarding the finance situation of the houses in Rio Grande do Sul because the provincial, to one of her requests, answered in an evasive manner, proposing to send a report only at the end of the school year. In this letter, the general superior praised all the houses in Sao Paulo, on time in complying with their duties, while the houses in Rio Grande do Sul did not contribute with anything already for three years to the general motherhouse account. The maintenance of the novitiate also depended on this account. Mother Assunta said she questioned Sister Lucia where all the money had gone, but the provincial *did not know or did not want to reply*²⁰⁴.

During her term, Mother Assunta Marchetti made four visits to the South, two in 1928, the third between June 1929 and March of 1930, and the last one in the middle of 1933, preparing a timely report for each of them. The second visit, made in August of 1928, primarily to invest the new provincial superior, Sister Elena Lucca, who was Sister Lucia Gorlin's successor, removed for personal reasons and transferred to Sao Paulo. Besides continuing to be a general councilor, Sister Lucia was nominated as superior of the Saint Theresa day school.

Sister Elena Lucca remained for a short time as provincial superior in Rio Grande do Sul. She resigned near the end of 1929. Sister Borromea Ferraresi temporarily took the position. In March 1931, Sister Faustina Bosio was appointed as the new provincial superior. The province of Sao Paulo, throughout the whole term of Mother Assunta Marchetti, on the other hand, had, as it's only Provincial Superior, Sister Angelina Meneguzzi.

Mother Assunta was concerned with many factors in the period of 1927-1935, and they

²⁰³ GORLIN, Lucia. *Lettera a Assunta Marchetti*. Bento Gonçalves, 25-10-1927 (AGSS 1.5.4).

²⁰⁴ MARCHETTI, Assunta. *Lettera a Egidio Lari*. Villa Prudente, São Paulo, 12-11-1927 (AGSS 1.5.4).

contributed to the decline of her health: the dependence on the Consistorial Congregation; the uncomfortable trips; the difficult communication; the mistakes in the South, which forced the general superior to remain there for nine consecutive months, between June 1929 and March 1930, problems with the sisters health, such as the typhoid epidemic that, in 1934, made 11 sisters in Bento Gonçalves bed ridden; economic hardships, even because of the generalized crisis that reached the whole world at the time, which also influenced the number of enrollments in the schools of the congregation.

In April of 1933, three months before completing the six-year term, Mother Assunta submitted her request to step down as the general superior of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Charles. Requesting instructions in this regard, and having had consulted trusted persons, and having had listened to the advice of the Apostolic Nuncio in Brazil, Bishop Benedetto Aloisi Masella and that of the regional superior of the Scalabrinian Missionary Priests, the Consistorial Congregation reconfirmed Mother Assunta Marchetti as the general superior of the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute until the realization of the elections in the general chapter, to be celebrated according to the provisions of the new constitutions already under study by the Apostolic See. As we shall see, at the end of Mother Assunta Marchetti's term in 1935, the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles had acquired more stability, being better prepared for needed advances.

3.3.2 MSCS stability and missionary expansion

A few years after the Apostolic See's intervention in the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles, the signs of consolidation were already visible. Favored by the firm guidance of the Consistorial Congregation and by the actions of Bishop Egidio Lari and Bishop Benedetto Aloisi Masella, by the charismatic presence of Mother Assunta Marchetti and the MSCS Sisters collaboration the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute acquired stability and better conditions for progress, but not without hardships. Dependence on the Consistorial, itself, in certain aspects became uncomfortable. When, by mid 1930, Bishop Egidio Lari left Brazil, the congregation remained under the Apostolic Visitors auspices. The increase in the number of members, systemic formation of the MSCS Sisters combined with a relative professional preparation gave the congregation greater consistence and indicated a broader horizon of possible pastoral progress.

A report prepared by Bishop Egidio Lari in October 24, 1928 based on information related by Mother Assunta Marchetti and sent to the pro-secretary of the Consistorial, Cardinal Carlo Perosi, shows the institute still in the reorganizational stage and left out, among other issues, Sister Lucia Gorlin's personal status, the Provincial Superior of Rio Grande do Sul. In this year of 1928, the general superior visited the South two times, in May and in August, in order to check the reality at the locality, to listen to the sisters and to propose to the Visitor suitable solutions to the needs of the Southern province.

In his report, Bishop Egidio Lari concluded that the provincial, Sister Lucia Gorlin, could not remain in the post because she had become dependent on alcohol, besides being the opinion of Sister Borromea Ferraresi, who before defended the co-sister, it was also the opinion of other sisters and of the Scalabrinian Priest Giuseppe Foscallo. For Bishop Lari, Sister Lucia Gorlin could replace Sister Elena Lucca, who had been a missionary for several years in the south and that, on another occasion, had been elected to perform the role of Provincial Superior there.

The Apostolic Visitor dedicated a good portion of the report to Cardinal Perosi on the delicate issue involving the Provincial of Rio Grande do Sul and her transfer to Sao Paulo, informing him of the actions taken, of the unforeseen events that had occurred and of the destination given to Sister Lucia in Sao Paulo. Bishop Egidio Lari's initiative was to request Sister Borromea Ferraresi to assume

the governance of the Province after the departure of Sister Lucia, a measure that was meant to avoid an opportunity of a meeting of the former provincial with Sister Elena Lucca who, according to him, could have caused humiliation for one and embarrassment for the other.

Sister Lucia Gorlin resisted the transfer at first but finally accepted it, but a health problem made her postpone the trip, thus the former provincial arrived in Sao Paulo on September 22, 1928. Mother Assunta, in mutual agreement with the Sisters of Sao Paulo, proposed to send Sister Lucia to the community of Atibaia, entrusting to her the position of local superior. Bishop Egidio Lari proposed the community of Pari instead, as the destination for Sister Lucia Gorlin, as this she would be closer to the general superior who could then accompany her, and at the same time, the sister would continue to perform her role as general councilor of the institute.

The Apostolic Visitor's proposal, with which Mother Assunta agreed, had two motivations: to safeguard the image of authority, as Sister Lucia had been Provincial Superior in the South and to make it understood by her that there was not any intention on humiliating her, evidenced by her appointment as a general councilor. Regarding Sister Elena Lucca's appointment as Provincial Superior of Rio Grande do Sul the Visitor's expectations, expressed in the report of October 24, 1928, were changes that would contribute to strengthen harmony between the two provinces of the MSCS Congregation.

Mother Assunta, during her stay in the South, also solved, among other issues, two urgencies, that of counting on the collaboration of the Capuchin Priests of Garibaldi in the formation of the novices in Bento Gonçalves, and to put an end to the relative dependence on the contributions that the houses in the South owed to the general house. The debt was reduced, but kept in part for two reasons: not to empty the provincial account and to *demonstrate the dependence of the province on the general house*²⁰⁵.

Before finishing his report, Bishop Lari registered new data on the institute that manifested signs of growth from the quantity standpoint: the Province of Sao Paulo comprised 7 houses with 32 sisters, 2 novices and 7 postulants; the province of Rio Grande do Sul comprised 6 houses with 28 sisters, 4 novices and 16 postulants.

The Apostolic Visitor, attentive to the formative aspect, said that in general the two novitiates were doing well. He observed however, that in regards to the one in Aparecida that he had visited a little more than a month ago, the novices had two weekly conferences and the novices of Bento Gonçalves only had been given two monthly conferences, which left more to be desired.

Around the end of 1930, Cardinal Raffaello Carlo Rossi, the new Secretary of the Consistorial Congregation, since July of this year and a personality of the Church in the first half of the 20th century, was informed by Bishop Egidio Lari on the status of the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute, which was now animated *with a spirit of piety, obedience and sacrifice. All this made him expect a prosperous future for it*²⁰⁶.

Just over one year after sending to Cardinal Perosi the above mentioned detailed report, the Visitor elaborated a new report which was sent to Cardinal Rossi which allowed, in fact, to follow the positive evolution of the institute that had, in September 1930, 43 sisters with perpetual vows, 37 sisters with temporary vows, 12 novices and 12 postulants, and for the first time adding up to over one

²⁰⁵ LARI, Egidio. *Lettera a Carlo Perosi* - con 10 allegati - Rio de Janeiro, 24 ottobre 1928 (Archives of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People. Prot. 514/25).

²⁰⁶ ROSSI, Raffaello C. *Lettera a Egidio Lari*. Roma, 22-12-1930. In: LARI, Egidio. *Lettera a Assunta Marchetti*. Rio de Janeiro, 14-1-1931 (AGSS 1.5.4).

hundred members.

More than making reference to new quantitative data, Bishop Lari said to Cardinal Rossi that he closely observed *the spiritual ongoing status of the congregation* on the two visits made to the province of Sao Paulo in the months of January and July 1930; that in January he had been there during the annual retreat of the sisters and that he had spoken several times with all of them, getting information and giving them timely advice; that he had also been informed by Scalabrinian priests who attended the houses of Sao Paulo, by the Franciscans from Pari and by the General Superior; that he had noticed the good spirit and harmony among sisters and superiors; that he had visited the novitiate in Aparecida where all was in order.

From the Province of Rio Grande do Sul he said to have gotten information from Friar Candido of Caxias, the capuchins' provincial. The priest had made a canonic visit to sisters of St. Charles having also evidenced the good spirit of the sisters in the community of Bento Gonçalves, who found them united by brotherly charity bonds. Bishop Egidio Lari referred to the long stay of Mother Assunta Marchetti in Rio Grande do Sul during the year of 1929, and he spoke about the *consoling news* transmitted by the general superior.

Bishop Lari only informed him about the ecclesial presence of the MSCS Sister that the bishops in whose dioceses the Scalabrinian sisters developed their work were pleased with the missionaries, such as the Archbishop of Porto Alegre in Rio Grande do Sul, the bishop of Sao Carlos and of Bragança, inland of the state of Sao Paulo. The Archbishop of Sao Paulo, on the contrary, *continued not to show much sympathy toward our institute, even if he does not do anything against it*, said the Visitor.

The issue that follows was approached by Bishop Egidio Lari in the report to Cardinal Rossi regarded the heritage of the institute. After specifying features of each one of the two provinces, he wrote: *It really is necessary to thank Divine Providence for the visible way that it has helped and assisted the good sisters of St. Charles in their financial status, which some time ago was not too prosperous.* The report made on the new foundations and reference regarding review of the constitutions will be dealt later on.

Under the title, *renewal of positions*, the Visitor spoke on the performance of the sisters in the several commitments, proposing names for needed changes, mainly of the provincial superior in Rio Grande do Sul. Bishop Lari lamented that sister Elena Lucca did not correspond to the expectations of her. Of the unforeseen events, that between 1929 and 1930 caused the long stay of the General Superior in the South, he wrote: *this good sister did not correspond to what was expected from her appointment, either because of her personality or because of her health.* Shortly after her arrival in Bento Gonçalves, the sister *started to show that she was not prepared for her position.*

To succeed Sister Elena Lucca three names were proposed to the Consistorial Congregation: Sister Faustina Bosio, Sister Vittorina Consoni, and Sister Bernardina Miele. The Visitor presented for each one of them a biographic summary. The new provincial superior of Rio Grande do Sul would be Sister Faustina Bosio, former student in Vila Prudente, Portuguese language and music teacher, who had worked in Bento Gonçalves and in Nova Vicenza, *who had a lively intelligence and certain instruction, active, energetic and serious.* When she was appointed provincial superior, Sister Faustina was around 35 years old.

About the provincial superior of Sao Paulo, Sister Angelina Meneguzzi, Bishop Egidio Lari stated to be a good sister, of good spirit, very sweet and hard working, and that she played in perfect union and righteous intentions with the General Superior. About Mother Assunta Marchetti, the Apostolic Visitor said that she was *very well and that she was loved by the sisters.*

Bishop Egidio Lari mentioned, before finishing his report to Cardinal Rossi, the *future possibility to also administratively divide the two orphanages in Sao Paulo, in order to provide the sisters with free management of the female one in Vila Prudente, while the Scalabrinian priests would stay with the one in Ipranga*²⁰⁷.

Bishop Egidio Lari was the Apostolic Visitor of the MSCS Congregation until mid 1931 when he left Brazil. In the event, the Consistorial Congregation appointed as visitor the Apostolic Nuncio in Brazil, Bishop Benedetto Aloisi Masella. In a letter of June 16 of that year, that was attached to the appointment decree, Cardinal Rossi requested the new Apostolic Visitor to transmit to Bishop Egidio Lari the Consistorial's gratitude for all that he had done for the *rebirth of the institute*. In the same letter, the cardinal stated to Bishop Aloisi Masella that the situation of the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute required continuity of the apostolic visit regime as to facilitate its consolidation²⁰⁸.

On many occasions, the Consistorial Congregation praised Bishop Egidio Lari's performance as Apostolic Visitor of the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute. On August 31, 1931, Cardinal Rossi sent him a thankful letter for the vigilant care provided to sisters in performing their mission, and he stated:

Your most Reverend Excellence with wise prudence, united to a model stronghold, knew how to redirect the institute toward the goals dictated by its venerable Founder, giving it a strict discipline and a spirit of piety. You are interested, specially, with the spiritual formation of the postulants and novices, giving a new boost to the novitiate of Aparecida and by founding a new one, which is now underway and doing well in Rio Grande do Sul.

In the occasion of Bishop Egidio Lari's visit to Aparecida, the Redemptorist, Father Antonio Lisboa, made him aware that due to the rural background of the majority, the graduating sisters were not much instructed, and some of them did not even know how to write and read. In the report of October 24, 1928, sent to Cardinal Perosi, the Visitor wrote, *if we do not think of preparing some other masters, we shall not be able to keep schools open that are the source of income for the congregation*²¹⁰.

Even after leaving Brazil and before taking his new position in Persia, from Rome where he was, Bishop Egidio Lari was interested in the formation of MSCS Sisters and by the new constitutions of the institute, proposing them to be shorter, simpler and more practical. In a letter to Mother Assunta Marchetti, he communicated he had sent, as a memento, books for the houses, and for the novitiate in the two provinces, and recommending particularly the reading of martyrology, *which all houses should have as well as reading it before lunch was over, and in the novitiate*²¹¹.

In the first years of the decade of 1930, more than before, the congregation began to feel the urgency in sending sisters to a teachers' school, giving them the capacity to lecture in primary school. In a letter from Mother Assunta Marchetti to Sister Faustina Bosio, on April 23, 1932, the general superior mentioned to the provincial of the southern province the visit made by Bishop Aloisi Masella, and she communicated that, in the words of the apostolic nuncio, the Holy Father was very pleased with the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Charles. However, the Visitor, recommended suspension of new openings for the moment and required better formation of sisters by proposing teaching courses. To facilitate attendance of the MSCS Sister in courses and to reduce expenditures of such course, a

²⁰⁷ LARI, Egidio. *Relazione a Raffaello Carlo Rossi*. Rio de Janeiro, 29-9-1930 (Archives of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People. Prot. 514/25).

²⁰⁸ ROSSI, Raffaello C. *Lettera a Benedetto Aloisi Masella*. Roma, 16-6-1931 (AGSS 1.4.4 - copy).

²¹⁰ LARI, Egidio. *Lettera a Carlo Perosi*. Rio de Janeiro, 24 ottobre 1928 (Archives of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People. Prot. 514/25).

²¹¹ LARI, Egidio. *Lettera a Assunta Marchetti*. Roma, 31-10-1931 (AGSS 1.4.4).

house was opened in Caxias do Sul as a boarding house for young women, ladies, students or summer visitors. Some of the sisters that needed reinforcement classes counted on the collaboration of Ms. Geni Salvaterra, a severe but competent teacher, renowned master in Bento Gonçalves. In this way, the institute also strengthened itself regarding professional capacity building with positive reflexes in MSCS Sister's pastoral activity.

In 1934, the signs of stability were visible in the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute. In general, the sisters were in good spirits and demonstrated a higher level of satisfaction; the congregation had 22 houses, 9 in the province of Sao Paulo with more than 50 sisters, and 13 in the southern province where around 60 sisters worked. The novitiate of Aparecida had 5 novices and 2 postulants, and in Bento Gonçalves, there were 26 novices and 16 postulants. The requests for new openings were innumerable and fed the aspirations of greater expansion that Mother Assunta wanted to speed up; in economic aspect, despite some debts, the institute's heritage increased, but the General Superior and sisters aimed at even more progress for the congregation.

Mother Assunta Marchetti in her end of term report, along with the undertakings of the period of 1927-1934, jointly with the council recorded a double delusion: one referred to the general headquarters, and the other related to the province of Rio Grande do Sul. This later had only contributed with *five contos de reis for the general account in order to help the province of Sao Paulo with mortgage payments for the purchase of real estates where currently St. Theresa of the Infant Jesus school functioned in Pari, without providing one more cent to the general account of the congregation.*

In the same report, the general administration mentioned the urgencies of the southern province, among which the needed reforms in schools, the building of a mausoleum for deceased sisters and expansion of the real estate in Bento Gonçalves for the novitiate house. Then, it was thought on acquiring a lot in this city in the area of the *Planalto*, healthy and appropriate for summertime and where they intended to construct a new building for the formation house.

A special reason for unpleasantness was the fact that the MSCS Congregation did not have *its own house to be the Mother House and the residence of the general mother and councilors as was the expressed will of the co-sisters, and at the same time shelter and residence for the sick and invalid sisters.* The general administration with resignation admitted that hard times and lack of economic finance conditions, at the moment, *made impossible that justified aspiration*²¹². Despite that, in March 1935, Mother Assunta Marchetti would pass to her successor, Sister Borromea Ferraresi, a stable reality and promising perspective for missionary expansion of the MSCS Congregation.

3.3.3 Pastoral options of the MSCS Congregation

The apostolic activity developed by the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute since its foundation and the life style that distinguishes the Missionary Sister of St. Charles gave visibility to the charisma of the congregation, gradually expanding their pastoral area. In the first four decades of its presence in Brazil, the institute, which affirmed itself among multiple hardships, accepted some pastoral service requests, being impossible to attend all requests. Without debating the importance of MSCS Sister's pastoral activity in the period between the two wars, the changing phase in the realm of human mobility in world context, the reason for some options and not for others can be questioned. We understand discernment based on the orientating criteria that had always favored the pastoral option identified with the mission of the institute.

²¹² MARCHETTI, Assunta. *1927-1934 Report*, page 27 (AGSS 1.5.4).

The gradual consolidation of the MSCS Congregation largely favored its quantitative growth. Between the years of 1927 to 1934, the number of members of the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute grew more than twofold. Even in this period, mostly in the first years of the decade of the 1930's, the recommendation of the Consistorial Congregation had been for better preparation of the sisters, new houses were opened in Sao Paulo and in Rio Grande do Sul. Bishop Egidio Lari, himself, in his report to Cardinal Rossi, on September 29, 1930, communicated to the secretary of the Consistorial that the increase in the numbers of sisters allowed reinforcing the already existing foundations and to open new houses in the two provinces of the congregation. About the mission developed by the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles and her manner of being, we transcribe an article published in the newspaper *La Fiamma* in its March 28, 1935 edition:

Sublime, useful and holy is the objective of this Congregation. Its statutes are the same as those of other congregations that reconcile prayers and work.

The Sister of St. Charles is busy with schools, colleges, kindergartens, hospitals and asylums.

Angel of charity, she pours the treasure of her kindness and piety over all human misery and over the orphan children and the debilitated elderly.

Full of good will and the spirit of sacrifice, without any pretension, without uncalled for exhibitionism, not asking anything for herself nor for the congregation in parishes where they have opened schools, they are fruitful promoters and valuable collaborators of the religious movement. The parish priest, who is lucky to have their presence, soon sees the immenseness of their silence but efficient apostolate.

The hospital, the home for elderly managed by these religious women change into an oasis of peace, comfort and holy resignation, so much is the goodness and the kindness that glows from each of their acts.

Talk a little with these religious women. If you do not find "great heads", well-known teachers, rare intelligence, you will discover in compensation, a charming simplicity joined with that light modesty that is the most beautiful ornament of a soul consecrated to God²¹³.

Father Carlo Porrini, zealous Scalabrinian priest, author of the article, had seen in Bento Gonçalves and in Sao Paulo missions of the institute and the life style that characterized the Missionary Sister of St. Charles. Since the arrival of the four pioneers in Sao Paulo in November 1895, some institutions, as noted by the missionary, could count on the MSCS Sister's valid pastoral presence. Forty years after its foundation, the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute had 23 houses, 9 in the State of Sao Paulo and 14 in the State of Rio Grande do Sul. In January 1935, the outgoing general government prepared the state of *the houses and religious communities* that comprised, at the time, the two provinces of the congregation. We shall transcribe below, in chronological order and how it is in the original, the foundations in the province of Sao Paulo:

Feminine Section of the Christopher Columbus Orphanage in Villa Prudente - Sao Paulo – that has been transferred from Ypiranga started to operate in that building the fourth day of the month of August 1904. Mother Assumpta Marchetti is the superior. Auxiliary sisters: Immacolata Mileti, Camilla Dal Ri, Clarice Baraldini, Joannina de Camargo, Helena Lucca, Nazarena Machado, Carolina Valgoi, Dolores Pupo and Evangelina Rossetto.

Average boarding students: 80.

Sisters without specific function: Anna Facchin and Maria Cesarina Lenzini.

²¹³ PORRINI, Carlo. *Il Capitolo Generale delle Missionarie di S. Carlo Borromeo*. La Fiamma, São Paulo, 28-3-1935, p. 2. *Settimanale Cattolico Italo-Brasiliano*, Anno IV, n. 173.

Mendicant Asylum of Our Lady of Candelaria in Itu, December 9, 1913. Superior: Sister Angelina Meneguzzo, Provincial Superior. Auxiliary sisters: Margarida Pianaro, Theresa Fagundes, Martha Daltoe, Gonçalina Vasconcellos.

Average of invalid patients: 70.

Saint Charles Novitiate in Aparecida do Norte, founded on February 2, 1920. Superior, Sister Josephina Oricchio. Auxiliary sisters: Juliana Mugnol, assistant and Carmela Tomedi.

Novices: 5. Postulants: 2.

Holy Mercy House of Itatiba. February 2, 1924. Local Superior, Sister Theresa Muraro. Auxiliary sisters: Virginia Zini, Rosalina Scorciapino, Rita Grechi.

Patients: 24 beds.

Holy Mercy House of Monte Alto. May 14, 1924. Superior Sister Fulgencia de Mello. Auxiliary sisters: Carolina Grasti, Celina Barana, Catharina Vianna, Felicita Canale

Patients: 20 beds.

Holy Mercy House of Atibaia. June 14, 1925. Local Superior, Sister Gemma Magrin. Auxiliary sisters: Cecilia Mosca, Eufrosina Techio, Angelina Lunelli.

Average patients: 20 beds.

Saint Theresa of the Infant Jesus School in Sao Paulo- Pary. February 26, 1926. Local superior: Sister Ignez Oricchio. Auxiliary sisters: Filomena Parisi, Maria Ciani, Egydia Montalbano, Odila Frigeri, Annunciata Cunha, Dyonisia De Favero, Geraldina Brandao, Maria Jose Vasconcellos, Conceição Andre, Xavier Giacomet, Maria Filippina Rocha.

Average day students: 250.

Mendicant Asylum in Jaboticabal. July 20, 1930. With the Infantile Annex, attended 35 children of 6 to 12 years old – Coed school. In addition to assistance to the invalid elderly, they provide help and are sustaining 6 poor families with 14 members. Sister Mathilde Martins is the superior. Auxiliary sisters: Paulina Toscan, Affonsina Salvador, Seraphina Canale.

Invalid elderly: average, 20.

Holy Mercy House of Socorro. February 1, 1932. Local superior, Sister Raphaella Susin. Auxiliary sisters: Josepha Soares, Carmelita Borghi, Sao Luiz Valentini.

Average patients: 20 beds²¹⁴.

The foundations of the institute in the State of Rio Grande do Sul started in 1915 and along with them feminine Scalabrinian vocations multiplied. In the beginning of 1935, the congregation completed 20 years of missionary apostolic presence there. The greatness of a pastoral service *without pretensions*, as John Baptist Scalabrini proposed, is achieved with the good done among the immigrants and their descendants. The requests for new openings were insistent. Among them, that of Father Erminio Catelli who waited for many years, with a house ready, for the arrival of the Sisters of St. Charles in Anta Gorda, a blossoming nucleus of Italian colonization:

This Priest insisted very much on having the sisters and to open a school that is located on a lot belonging to the Archbishop of Porto Alegre. While the Mother General was in Rio Grande do Sul, she visited locations and noted the conditions, which were very good.

Therefore, the house was opened and it seems to have been particularly blessed by our Lord. The Superior Mother writes me, “we are pleased because here we can do much for souls. We have 109

²¹⁴ MARCHETTI, Assunta. 1927-1934 Report, page 8-9 (AGSS 1.5.4).

*students, including ten boarders, ten semi boarders, and one postulant. In catechism, on Sundays, we have 180 students. The children are good, the reverend father helps us a lot, and the people are good and, thus, if the Lord helps us, we shall be able to accomplish much*²¹⁵.

The example repeats common aspects to the stories of the openings and of the beginnings of the other foundations of the congregation in Rio Grande do Sul, already 14 in March 1935:

Saint Charles School in Bento Gonçalves, founded in 1915. Current Superior, Sister Irene Rizzi. Auxiliary sisters: Isabel Mioni, Amabile Nervis, Amelia Maldonado.

Students: boarding 4; day 100 (average).

Scalabrini School in Guapore, founded in 1917. Sister Bernardina Miele is the superior. Auxiliary sisters: Aparecida do Rosario, Gesuina Peroni, Edwiges Borghetto and Benedicta Zorzi.

Average number of students: boarding; day 140.

Our Lady of Lourdes School in Nova Vicenza, founded in 1917. The superior is the Mother Provincial Sister Faustina Bosio. Auxiliary, sisters: Vittorina Consoni, Gonzaga Sartori, Elidia Fanti, Josephina Cracco, Ambrosina Pegoraro.

Average number of students: boarding 6; day 170.

Sacred Heart of Jesus School in Nova Brescia, founded in 1919. Sister Clara Pienaro is the superior. Auxiliary sisters: Scalabrini Bacchi, Isaura Bombassaro, Ignacia De Faveri.

Average number of students: day 180.

Saint Charles Youth School in Nova Milano, founded in 1924. Sister Caetana Borsatto is the superior. Auxiliary sisters: Paulina Miotto, Noemia Soldatelli, Gertrudes Cracco.

Average number of students: day 100.

B. Tacchini Hospital in Bento Gonçalves, community founded in 1927. Sister Estanisla Cherubini is the superior. auxiliary sisters: Assumpta Nardini, Ofelia Basso, Agostinha Peroni, Alexandra Tafarel.

Average number of patients: 40.

Saint Charles Novitiate in Bento Gonçalves, founded in 1927. Sister Borromea Ferraresi is the superior. Auxiliary sisters: Maria de Lourdes Martins, Albertina Vezzano, Antonietta Scopel.

Novices: 26.

Postulants: 16.

Saint Theresa School in Anta Gorda, founded in 1930. Sister Brigida Frigo is the superior. Auxiliary sisters: Theresinha Cracco, Albina Crippa, Luiza Zanella, Eugenia Pozzer.

Average number of students: day 130.

Saint Joseph School in Roca Salles, founded in 1931. Sister Nicolina Balsan is the superior. Auxiliary sisters: Celestina Zancanaro, Veronica Mezzomo.

Average number of students: boarding 3; day, 50.

Roca Sallense Health Home - Hospital St. Camille de Lellis in Roca Salles, founded in 1932. Sister Francisca Mugnol is the superior. Auxiliary sisters: Clementina Zini, Candida Lunelli, Henriqueta Beltrami, Pasqualina Zini.

Average number of patients: 24.

²¹⁵ LARI, Egidio. *Relazione a Raffaello Carlo Rossi*. Rio de Janeiro, 29-9-1930 (Archives of the Pontifical Commission for the Pastoral of the Migrant and the Itinerary People. Prot. 514/25).

Pius X School in Mussum, founded in 1933. Sister Bernardete Ugatti is the superior. Auxiliary sisters: Benigna Bertolini, Emma Gualdi, Marcellina Broetto, Ignez Nicola

Average number of students: boarding 3; day 120.

Saint John Bosco Boarding house in Caxias, founded in 1933. Sister Antonia Facchin is the superior. Auxiliary, sisters: Rosa Gorlin, Idalina Baratter, Ursolina Scopel, Jacomina Veronese, Serafina Gasparin.

Saint Joseph Sanatorium Porto Alegre, founded in 1934. Sister Pierina Caldieraro is the superior. Auxiliary sisters: Esther Basso, Rosalia Zapello, Emilia De Lazzari, Adalgisa Ghizzi, Genoveva Scala, Nazarena Vicenzi.

Average number of patients: 46²¹⁶.

The 14th foundation was the Nova Vicenza Sanatorium, in Nova Vicenza, which started its activity on March 6, 1935, under the direction of the Sisters of St. Charles. The new House, which still did not have a superior when the general government's 1927-1935 report was completed, the sisters sent there were Antonia Facchin, Theresinha Cracco, Ersilia Mattiello.

In the areas of Italian colonization in Rio Grande do Sul, usually, the opening of a school followed with the opening of a hospital. This trend shows the importance given to education and the concern with health by the Italian immigrants and their descendants in the Southern Brazil. In one field as in the other, the MSCS Sister has given her valuable socio-pastoral contribution.

About the presence of the Feminine Scalabrinian Congregation in *gaucho* territory, Ettore Martini wrote that the Founder *had preceded her with fruitful travels of goodness, of sacrifices, of unmatched abnegation and of so precious a seed, the congregation would germinate and be a robust gigantic tree, from which abundant prodigious fruits would be harvested.* Actually, from Bento Gonçalves, as the irradiating center, the institute disseminated and affirmed itself among the Italian Immigrants in Rio Grande do Sul. *The blossoming Mission can be called the heart of Bishop Scalabrini's program*²¹⁷.

Even though late, the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute's expansion, as related above, took place in Sao Paulo and in Rio Grande do Sul. The Missionary Sisters of St. Charles that worked, at that time, in the southern province kept contact almost exclusively with immigrants and their descendants needing instruction, education, health, in other words help. In the Province of Sao Paulo, some pastoral options, although relevant, had lesser expression as a mission of the institute itself.

In the State of Sao Paulo, several openings resulted from proposals presented to the congregation by Bishop Duarte Leopoldo e Silva, such as the Holy House of Itatiba, the Holy House of Monte Alto, and the Mendicant Asylum of Jundiai. A request by Father Faustino Consoni to open a house for boys younger than 7 years old in Vila Prudente was not accepted because of the proposed conditions by the Orphanage director. The conditions presented by sisters were that the Priest assure them with religious assistance for the new house and to pay a monthly sum of 50\$000 for each sister destined to that work.

In Rio Grande do Sul, the congregation disseminated itself against the will of Bishop Duarte Leopoldo e Silva. The pastoral activity that the MSCS Sister undertook there, according to Bishop Amleto Cicognani, was due to their tenacity and to the help of a few zealous parish priests. In the report of a visit made in 1926, Cicognani stated that the Sisters of St. Charles were prepared for the

²¹⁶ MARCHETTI, Assunta. *1927-1934 Report*, page 7- 8 (AGSS 1.5.4).

²¹⁷ MARTINI, Ettore. *Memorie sulla fondazione della Congregazione delle Suore Missionarie di San Carlo Borromeo - Scalabriniane* (AGSS 1.4.4).

mission as teachers for the immigrants' children, as well as nurses in hospitals; that this was the pastoral work prescribed in the constitutions, in this way, the missionaries realized their own vocation and did so with fidelity and constancy²¹⁸.

In *Brevi Cenni*, it is stated that the number of MSCS Sisters was always insufficient to serve so many requests, proving how much the missionaries were loved in Rio Grande do Sul. To cite one, among others, we recorded the request made in October 1919 by Bishop Antonio Reis, at the time a priest in Canoas. Bishop Antonio requested, through Father Enrico Poggi, the Sisters of St. Charles for a school with a boarding school to be opened in that town and stated: *It would be a pity if the Sisters of St. Charles could not accept. Canoas has a unique future, preferred in all senses. Whoever lives shall see.*²¹⁹ Located in the Greater Porto Alegre, and currently unique in some aspects, Canoas would count on the MSCS Sister's presence only about seventy years later.

The opening and closing of houses, then as it still is today, were attributions of the general superior and of the council. During the Apostolic See's intervention stage, the general government also depended on the Consistorial Congregation for this. In the first forty years of the history of the institute, three houses of the congregation were closed: the Holy Mercy House of Sao Luis do Paraitinga and the School of Sao Bernardo do Campo, due to reasons already mentioned; the Barao do Rio Branco Mendicant Asylum, of Jundiai, as a consequence of the Clementines' crisis. The leaving of dissident sisters made the closing of the house inevitable, but other closings that were foreseen did not become a reality. After overcoming apprehensions and hesitations, the Saint Theresa day school of Pari, itself, was saved thanks to the sacrifices of the sisters and the contributions from other houses of the congregation.

In four decades of incorporation in the Brazilian society, the fields of choices of the MSCS Congregation comprised orphanages, asylums, parishes, schools, holy houses and hospitals where the Scalabrinian Missionary, identified as a Sister of St. Charles, developed social and promotional pastoral services recognized as having human-Christian meaning.

We do not find explicit criteria for apostolic options of the congregation parting from the constitutions. From reading the book of acts of the general government's meetings and from the correspondence related to the foundation of new houses in the period of 1913-1934. We can deduce that three criteria, among others, determined, at that time, pastoral options of the institute: availability of human resources; insistent requests for the MSCS presence among the Italian co-nationals and other immigrants needing help and favorable economic conditions offered by those who were interested.

In the Apostolic See's orientations there was an expressed concern related to the communitarian element. Still, in the first years of intervention, Cardinal De Lai, through Bishop Egidio Lari, reminded the sisters that the good way forward for the congregation and the success of their pastoral activity should be based on communitarian life. To favor the return to the institute after the Clementines' crisis, he insisted, among other recommendations, on two aspects: communities should be comprised of at least three sisters; that no new house should be opened without necessary members comprising it²²⁰.

It is also important to consider that after the crisis, the MSCS Sisters correctly wanted a better preparation and intended, to that end, to send more sisters to teaching school. The intention was to count on qualified sisters, and in the future to open schools and secondary level courses, aiming at

²¹⁸ CICOGNANI, Amleto. G. *Brasile. Suore Missionarie di S. Carlo. Relazione*, op. cit, p. 33.

²¹⁹ REIS, Antonio. *Lettera a Enrico Poggi*. Canoas, October 1919 (AGSS 1.3).

²²⁰ LARI, Egidio. *Lettera a Assunta Marchetti*. Rio de Janeiro, 5-12-1927 (AGSS 1.5.4).

educating in the learning facilities of the congregation, both day school students and young sisters, providing capacity building for them to become teachers.

On this point, the Consistorial's orientation coincided with the sisters' aspirations of having specific professional qualifications. In a letter to Bishop Benedetto Aloisi Masella, of February 8, 1935, Cardinal Raffaello Carlo Rossi wrote, "*I totally approve on what Your Excellence said, that is, for the moment no new foundations are to be accepted, but care, in a special way, for the sisters' religious and cultural formation*"²²¹.

The idea of holding back the apostolic expansion for some time to favor community life and religious-professional capacity building of the MSCS Sister was to be praised, but it frustrated expectations, including those of Mother Assunta Marchetti. The General Superior hoped for this and other aspirations such as taking over an asylum in Ribeirao Pires where the parish priest was the Scalabrinian Father Marco Simoni and a house in Sao Bernardo, from where the sisters had withdrawn in 1926. An exchange of correspondence between Mother Assunta, councilors and Sister Lucia Gorlin, of October 1933, reveals the will to speed up the progress of the congregation:

*...seeing how things are going in our congregation, we want to say, very slow and almost paralyzed, to be clear, one loses courage. As you know, no decision can be taken nor can anything be done: neither the house in Sao Bernardo nor the school in Nova Vicenza, nor the motherhouse; one sees, one feels the need to do something and one cannot; we are already tired; if we insist with our superiors, we always get the same answer: patience! Rome moves slowly! ... It is true that Rome moves slowly, but the Lord said 'help yourself and I'll help you'. We explain ourselves: as Sister Carmela insists that she wants to go to Italy, it was thought in allowing her, and with the excuse to accompany Sister Carmela, instead of any of us, the General Mother and you could go, and you could make yourselves understood by Father Poggi and Bishop Massimo, and afterward, who knows if you will have the possibility to kiss the Holy Father's feet and get, once and for all, understanding... What do you say to us? Wouldn't it be a good way out, wouldn't it? We thought that execution lays in God's will. We would like to see some progress in our beloved congregation before dying, wouldn't we? Meanwhile, we shall conserve ourselves always prepared to accept what our Lord may want from us all*²²².

In a letter of October 27, 1933, Sister Lucia Gorlin sent from Bento Gonçalves, where she was, a consolation letter to Mother Assunta and the councilors. She wrote, "*I tell you the truth, better than this no one could have thought. I agree fully with you, and as you know, this always was my will. It is really a true one, and if we do not move a little, nothing will ever be done. Moreover, in her own way, she added, "Let us place fear aside and let us arm ourselves with courage; let us do everything for the Lord's greater glory, and for the good of our beloved congregation. I assure you that when the issue is the progress of the congregation, there are no sacrifices that scare me.*"²²³

The true progress of the congregation is in the fidelity to the charisma, be it in the spiritual realm be it in the mission. In our understanding of the period between the two wars, a time of changes in the realm of human mobility and, at the same time, of the blossoming of new vocations, the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute lacked the setting of criteria that would guide their pastoral options and the missionary expansion of the congregation.

It is pertinent, in a certain sense, the orientation expressed in Raffaello Carlo Rossi's letter to Father Enrico Poggi, at the end of 1930, in which the cardinal communicated that from that moment on, the Consistorial Congregation could not take into consideration the proposal to found a house in

²²¹ ROSSI, Raffaello C. *Lettera a Benedetto Aloisi Masella*. Roma, 8-2-1935 (Archives of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People. Prot. 514/25).

²²² MARCHETTI, Assunta. *Lettera a Lucia Gorlin*. Villa Prudente, 17-10-1933 (AGSS 1.5. 4).

²²³ GORLIN, Lucia. *Lettera a Assunta Marchetti e consigliere*. Bento Gonçalves, 27-10-1933 (AGSS 1.5.4).

Italy for the Scalabrinian Sisters; that before, a definite the systemization of the institute was necessary in Brazil where it was born and where there was a remarkable working field and that, in this year of 1930, the General Superior had not been able to attend several requests due to the lack of personnel and that, therefore, it was not the case to found a house in Italy. Later, and if that was God's will, being the institute consolidated and more developed, the Consistorial Congregation would reexamine the proposal, as it did some years afterwards.²²⁴

3.3.4 Compilation and approval of the new constitutions, 1934

A more complete systematization and a greater development of the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute, factors that conditioned the authorization to open a house in Italy in the first years of the 1930's depended on another step, decisive in the consolidation process of the MSCS Congregation: the compilation and approval of the new constitutions. This measure had been needed for some time, and there were three determinant reasons. One reason was the adaptation of the constitutions of 1914, according to the 1917 code of canonic law. Another reason changed the reality of the congregation, that had expanded itself in two Brazilian states, and since the Apostolic See intervention it had been reorganized to have two provinces with two novitiates, and with the perspective of gradual growth; the new situations of human mobility in the world context, target of the institute's mission. The work of compiling the new constitutions would extend for some years. Approval of the new text *ad experimentum* for seven years took place on January 13, 1934 during an audience of Pope Pius XI with Cardinal Raffaello Carlo Rossi. The new constitutions would be delivered to the sisters by Bishop Aloisi Masella in a ceremony undertaken at the Christopher Columbus Orphanage in Vila Prudente on August 26, 1934.

One of the preoccupations manifested by Mother Assunta Marchetti and that was a particular object of her expectation since she had assumed the general governing of MSCS Congregation in mid 1927, regarded the review of the constitutions of the institute. In the report sent by Bishop Egidio Lari to Cardinal Rossi, with the date of September 29, 1930, the Apostolic Visitor stated that several times the General Superior had asked him if the compilation work of the new texts of the constitutions were completed. It is a significant fact that, once again, the re-elaboration of the constitutions of the institute would take place during the co-founder's term, Mother Assunta Marchetti.

The process of adapting the constitutions of the MSCS's Constitutions to the Code of Canonic Law and to the changed contexts took some time during which Cardinal Rossi heard many opinions, took initiatives and kept himself well informed on the status of the institute. Among consultants heard, Father Ludovico Nolan's opinion draws attention, on June 5, 1931. In a letter addressed to Cardinal Rossi on this date, Nolan communicated that, in accordance to the will of the secretary of the Consistorial, he examined the constitutions of the Sisters of St. Charles, having been printed 17 years earlier, and that he judged them too imperfect and so incomplete that they did not have even a tenth part of the code's legislation regarding feminine institutes, therefore, he understood as timely a new compilation instead of a change and complementation of the 1914 text. Nolan proposed that he himself would elaborate a new text based in the code for religious and the constitutions of the MSCS Sisters approved in 1914 and the information provided by the Consistorial Congregation on the nature and general state of the institute, at the time.

Friar Lazzaro D'Arbonne was another name consulted and who was in charge of compiling the

²²⁴ ROSSI, Raffaello C. *Lettera a Enrico Poggi*. Roma, 16-12-1930 (Archives of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People. Prot. 596/18).

new constitutions of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles, in a letter of March 19, 1932, addressed to Vincenzo Santoro, advisor to the Consistorial Congregation, requested documents and information, which he needed to prepare the text. D'Arbonne noted that although he understood as timely to insert abundantly current legislation in the constitutions, experience had taught him that it was also important to preserve, in almost its totality, the existing elements and, in this case, the text approved in April 16, 1914.

In later correspondence from Cardinal Rossi to D'Arbonne, on April 24, 1933, the secretary of the Consistorial communicated to the consultant Bishop Benedetto Aloisi Masella's concern with the formation of the young sisters of the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute of which he was the Apostolic Visitor. In reality, in a letter to Cardinal Rossi in March of this year, Bishop Aloisi Masella questioned about the convenience of establishing in the constitutions of the MSCS Congregation that young professed sisters dedicate two years of study in a good house, to be determined, before beginning their teaching activities in schools or before beginning to work in hospitals²²⁵.

In the same letter of April 24, 1933 sent to Friar Lazzaro d' Arbonne, Cardinal Rossi requested information on the course of the compilation work and a forecast of when he would be able to see the definitive text of the constitutions. In December of the same year, the secretary of the Consistorial sent him a check for 676,30 liras to pay for the expenses that added to 176,30 liras, in recognition of the compilation *so well done* of the constitutions. Father Fernandez Garcia, consultant to the Congregation for the Religious, also participated in the review of the constitutions. Both suggested the approval *ad experimentum* for seven years, that would be done.

In an audience conceded to Cardinal Raffaello Carlo Rossi on January 13, 1934, Pope Pius XI approved *ad experimentum* for seven years the constitutions of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo. Some time had elapsed before Bishop Aloisi Masella called the General Superior to the Monastery of Saint Benedict in Sao Paulo, an event that happened on March 18, 1934, at which time the Apostolic Nuncio and Visitor to the MSCS Congregation communicated to her to have received from Rome the constitutions of the institute, approved by the Pope. Bishop Aloisi Masella communicated the news, happily received with grateful manifestations from the sisters, by means of a document that we transcribe, dated March 19, 1934:

It is gratifying to me to notify Your Most Reverend that the Holy Father Pius XI, gloriously governing, in an audience granted on January 13 of the current year to Your Eminence the Most Reverend Cardinal Raffaello Carlo Rossi, Secretary of the Sacred Consistorial Congregation, decided to approve 'ad experimentum ad septennium' the constitutions of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo, in accordance to the new provisions of the Code of Canonic Law.

I applaud with the Most Reverend General Mother this new proof of assistance of the Lord toward this pious institute, I wish that such honorable benefit confirms the Sisters in the purpose of acquiring a perfection always greater in Christian virtues.

*I bless Your Most Reverend along with all the sisters and I underwrite as the most dedicated in Christ...*²²⁶.

Common formalities and text translation into the Portuguese language made the new constitution of the institute to be given to the sisters on August 26, 1934, *feast of the Sacred Heart of*

²²⁵ ALOISI MASELLA, Benedetto. *Lettera a Raffaello Carlo Rossi*. Rio de Janeiro, 28-3-1933. In: ROSSI, Raffaello C. *Lettera a Lazzaro d'Arbonne*. Roma, 24-4-1933 (Archives of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People. Prot. 514/25).

²²⁶ ALOISI MASELLA, Benedetto. *Lettera a Assunta Marchetti*. Rio de Janeiro, 19 de março de 1934. N. 11929 (AGSS 1.5.4).

Mary. On this date, Bishop Aloisi Masella himself handed over the original and a copy of the constitutions of the Institute of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles. The official handing over ceremony was preceded by an extraordinary spiritual retreat in preparation, starting on July 11 of this year and lasting until the 16th, the day consecrated to Our Lady of Carmel. From the retreat, directed by Bishop Aloisi Masella and preached by the Scalabrinian, Father Carlo Porrini, appointed by the Apostolic Visitor. The general government and the superiors of the communities of Sao Paulo participated in the retreat.

The Apostolic Nuncio sent, by the end of 1934, information to Cardinal Rossi about the August 26 ceremonies, which according to him, *was moving*, and performed in the *main hall of the Orphanage in Villa Prudente*. The General Superior and her council, the two provincial superiors, all MSCS Sisters that, then, lived in the city of Sao Paulo, and the superiors of the communities of the congregation in the State of Sao Paulo were present. In addition, Father Francesco Navarro, Provincial of the Missionaries of St. Charles, another Scalabrinian priest and the abbot of the Monastery of St. Benedict, of Sao Paulo were also present. Bishop Aloisi Masella wrote:

At the event, I, after having exhorted the religious women to render to the Lord the most vivacious actions of thanksgiving for the received benefits, rekindle in their memories the great personality of the founder of the institute, Bishop John Baptist Scalabrini and the services he rendered to the Church. I saw very clearly the act of special kindness of the Holy Father, submitting them to the S. Consistorial Congregation. Afterwards, I handed over the new Rules exhorting them in the name of Your Eminence, 'to demonstrate in each work of charity that they would be called to realize, to be fully filled with the spirit of the Institute of St. Charles, which is the total renunciation of worldly issues, and of perfect adhesion to God's will'.

The religious received it with holy satisfaction and they kissed, with true emotion, the Rules, which were presented to each one of them by the General Mother, requesting me to transmit their most deep recognition to Your Eminence for the care bestowed on their institute.

After the meeting, the religious went to the chapel to sing the Te Deum and they received the blessing of the Holy Sacrament given by Father Navarro, Provincial of the Scalabrinian Priests. I also attended this service.

On the following day, August 27, I returned to the Orphanage in Vila Prudente to celebrate the Holy Mass and to give communion to the sisters. Afterwards I spoke privately with each of the sisters, noting with satisfaction that all of them, encouraged by the new proof of the Lord's assistance to their pious institute, were animated with the best dispositions, desiring always to achieve greater perfection in Christian virtues²²⁷.

It is stated in the acts of the general government meetings that Mother Assunta Marchetti, who kissed them and passed them to each one of the sisters who were present, received the new constitutions on her knees. These, in turn, repeated the same respectful attitude showed by the General Superior.

An essential element to be highlighted in the text of the constitutions, approved on January 13, 1934, is that of the conservation of the original identity of the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles. Cardinal Rossi, who recognized the importance of the Scalabrinian mission, performed a relevant role in safeguarding the charisma given to the church for evangelical service among emigrants. The new constitution of the MSCS Congregation establish in the first and chapter n° 2:

...the Congregation has as its particular goal the instruction and Christian education of the youth put

²²⁷ ALOISI MASELLA, Benedetto. *Lettera a Raffaello Carlo Rossi*. Rio de Janeiro, 29-12-1934 (Archives of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People. Prot. 514/25).

*in shelters, kindergartens, primary and high schools; assistance and the education of orphans in schools, and, what's more, assistance to the sick in hospitals and in other facilities, besides assistance to the poor elderly in sanitariums and asylums, mainly to preserve and to awaken faith and piety among emigrants*²²⁸.

At other times, Cardinal Rossi approached the meaning of the approval of the constitutions of the MSCS Sisters by Pius XI in the audience that had been granted to him by the pope on January 13, 1934. In a document of July 23, 1939, the Secretary of the Consistorial observed that the Feminine Scalabrinian Congregation had an uncommon historical evolution and he questioned, among other aspects, if the institute should be considered as diocesan or pontifical rites. At the time, the Cardinal stated that if it were necessary to prove, by means of documentation, the status of the institute as being of pontifical rite, it would not be possible to do so. Two days later, on July 25, the same Cardinal Rossi signed the following statement:

*This Sacred Consistorial Congregation, on which depends the Institute of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles, Scalabrinians, declares that the mentioned institute is of pontifical rite since January 13, 1934, when the Highest Pontiff Pius X, of his magnanimity, decided to approve the constitutions of the said Institute. Rome, from the Sacred Consistorial Congregation, on the 25th day of the month of July 1939*²²⁹

Cardinal Rossi would come back to the topic in January 1947 answer to Cardinal Carlos Carmelo de Vasconcelos Motta, Archbishop of Sao Paulo, who had requested information from the secretary of the Consistorial Congregation about the Sisters of St. Charles and about the general superior, then, Mother Borromea Ferraresi. The Archbishop asked, among other issues, if the Institute was of diocesan rite or of pontifical rite. On this matter, Cardinal Rossi clarified:

The Holy Father, in reality, does not ever approve the constitutions of religious congregations of diocesan rites; the approval 'ad experimentum ad septennium' is granted only to the constitutions of sisters intending to be raised to the status of pontifical rite. Nor is the fact that the constitutions of our sisters that were compiled according to the regulations of being of diocesan rite constitute an impediment. The Holy Father's approval raises them ipso facto, I would say, to pontifical rite.

Two days later, Cardinal Rossi added to the acts of January 16, 1947:

*The Holy Father deigned to declare that the Institute of the Scalabrinian Sisters with the approval of the Constitutions made by the Sacred Consistorial Congregation became a pontifical rite and as such, therefore, is in fact and in law*²³⁰.

In the year of 1964, in a brief history on the dependence of the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute on the Consistorial, the secretary of this pontific congregation, then, Cardinal Carlo Confalonieri, would state that such dependence *became complete when, on January 13, 1934, the same Sacred Congregation approved 'ad experimentum ad septennium' the new rules and constitutions of the institute, which, thus, became a pontifical rite.*²³¹

3.3.5 Pontifical recognition of the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute

Three facts of singular importance in the history of the Scalabrinian Institute marked the last year of Mother Assunta Marchetti's term as general superior: the approval of the constitutions *ad*

²²⁸ *CONSTITUTIONS of the Missionary Sisters of Saint Charles Borromeo, scalabrinians*, 1934 (AGSS 1.4.2).

²²⁹ ROSSI, Raffaello C. *Statement*. Roma, 25-7-1939 (AGSS 1.4.1).

²³⁰ ROSSI, Raffaello C. *Lettera*. Roma, January 16 and 18 1947 (Archives of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People. Prot. 514/ 25). Minutes.

²³¹ CONFALONIERI, Carlo. *Lettera a lidalina Baratter*. Roma, 1-7-1964 (AGSS 1.4.4).

experimentum, as we already have seen, occurring under uncommon circumstances on January 13, 1934; the obtaining of the decree of recognition of the institute under the title of *Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo*, dated on May 19, 1934; the preparation and the undertaking of the Second General Chapter of the institute that, in March 1935, elected Sister Borromea Ferraresi as general superior of the MSCS Congregation for the six year term of 1935-1941. To hand over in order the congregation to her successor Mother Borromea meant for Mother Assunta the culmination of a successful service, undertaken between 1927 and 1935, the time of the Apostolic See's intervention during which the Consistorial Congregation reorganized the institute, favoring its consolidation.

The compilation of the new constitutions of the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles, approved in January 1934, brought to surface aspects connected to the origin of the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute that show the particularity of its founding process. The religious profession of the four pioneer sisters, undertaken on October 25, 1895, after the Eucharistic celebration in the private chapel of the Bishop of Piacenza, and which constituted the founding act of the institute, took place without the prescribed formalities.

When Friar Lazzaro d' Arbonne assumed the task of compiling the new text of the constitutions of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles, the consultant of the Congregation for the Religious requested, among other documents, a copy of the erection decree of the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute. Mother Assunta Marchetti, to whom the request was later forwarded by Bishop Benedetto Aloisi Masella, did not find in the *archives of the House and not even transcribed in the book of Records* the requested decree. On May 7, 1932, when informing the Apostolic Visitor about the result of her research, the General Superior added:

For your information, permit me to communicate to Your Excellency that my deceased brother, Father Joseph Marchetti, materially founded this Religious Institute in 1895. It can be considered legally founded according to canon law. By the intervention of the ecclesiastic authority, it was elevated to a diocesan congregation. It was formally constituted when Bishop John Baptist Scalabrini, Bishop of Piacenza, on October 25, 1895 received, in the chapel of his Episcopal palace, in that city the temporary vows pronounced by the humble undersigned and of her mother, Sister Carolina Marchetti, as well as of Sisters Maria Franceschini and Angela Larini, in the presence of Father Joseph Marchetti, founder of the Christopher Columbus orphanage. He was authorized by His Excellence the most Reverend. Bishop Scalabrini to compile our constitutions and to receive the renewal of our vows for another six months, and once they were completed, for a period of one year, before being admitted to perpetual vows²³².

Mother Assunta Marchetti's report arrived in the hands of Cardinal Rossi, secretary of the Consistorial Congregation, who in a letter to Bishop Aloisi Masella on January 19, 1934, just a few days after the approval of the constitutions of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles, gave the visitors instructions regarding:

Therefore, according to the time mentioned by the General Mother, it was not possible to find a formal decree of erection of the Pious Institute, with the goal of avoiding difficulties in the future. this Sacred Congregation gives Your Excellence the faculty to issue such decree and, more precisely, the recognition decree of the Religious Congregation of the Missionaries of St. Charles Borromeo, in obedience to the Institution 'Quod jam' NN II and III of the S. Congregation for the Religious, dated November 30, 1922(I).

Elements that may be useful to Your Excellence to mark, in the disposition part of the referred to

²³² MARCHETTI, Assunta. *Lettera a Benedetto Aloisi Masella*. São Paulo, 7-5-1932 (Archives of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People. Prot. 514/25).

decree, the `equivalent` approval of the religious congregation, are sufficiently presented in the annexed report of the General Superior, dated May 7, 1932 on pages 1, 3.

I trust that such new evidence of assistance of our Lord over the Pious Institute will confirm the good Sisters in the purposes of doing good for an ever greater perfection in the Christian virtues as in each charity work that they will be called to undertake. May they show that they are full to the brim with the spirit of the Institute of St. Charles that are of total renunciation of worldly issues and of perfect adherence to divine orders²³³.

To avoid, therefore, future difficulties since a formal erection document of the institute could not be found, on May 19, 1934, almost forty years after its foundation, complying with determinations of the Cardinal Rossi, secretary of the Consistorial Congregation, Bishop Benedetto Aloisi Masella issued the following decree of recognition of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo:

Benedetto Aloisi Masella, by God's grace and that of the Apostolic See, Archbishop of Caesarea, Apostolic Nuncio in the Republic of the United States of Brazil.

Recognition Decree of the religious Congregation of the Missionaries of St. Charles Borromeo.

The Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo was founded about 40 years ago by Bishop Joao Batista Scalabrini, Bishop of Piacenza, at the request of the priest Joseph Marchetti, of the Society of the Missionaries of St. Charles.

The Sisters of this Institute not only applied themselves to their own sanctification, but also to the Christian education of the youth, to serve the sick in hospitals and they looked, with all their strength, for ways to preserve and to promote the faith and good habits among the emigrants from Italy in Brazil.

They make simple vows, temporary annually at first to be renewed four times and perpetual after five years.

According to the will of the same Founding Bishop, in 1895, the sisters came to the Archdiocese of Sao Paulo in Brazil where, with the consent of the Ordinary, they have their general house.

With God's help, little by little they founded new houses, not only in the Archdiocese of Sao Paulo, but also in other dioceses of Brazil, dedicating themselves to the care of the sick or the elderly, or to educate the school age youth, in orphanages and in schools.

Not being possible to find the Decree of the first erection, considering everything, due to the particular faculties granted to us by the Sacred Consistorial Congregation, with this decree we declare it canonically erected. Therefore, as such we order it to be recognized as the Institute of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo, whose constitutions were approved by the Holy See in accordance to the new law for religious, healing the past in what is necessary, the lack of canonic erection.

We trust that the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles, recognized by this new divine benefit, will commit themselves with even greater zeal in the progress of all virtues. That they truly and only look for God in works of charity, in the total renouncement of the world and in perfect obedience to the commandments, searching for the glory of God in the salvation of souls.

Given in Rio de Janeiro, on May 19, on the vespers of Pentecost, in the year of our Lord of 1934²³⁴.

In the report at the end of the 1927-1935 term, the paternity of the foundation was looked at which Bishop Aloisi Masella's document attributed to John Baptist Scalabrini. In the concluding part of the report, the observation is that the decree of May 19, 1934 recognizes Scalabrini, Bishop of

²³³ ROSSI, Raffaello C. *Lettera a Benedetto Aloisi Masella*. Roma, 19 de janeiro de 1934 (Archives of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People. Prot. 514/25).

²³⁴ ALOISI MASELLA, Benedetto. *Recognition decree of the congregation under the name of Missionaries of Saint Charles Borromeo* (AGSS 1.4.4).

Piacenza, as the founder of the institute, at Father Joseph Marchetti's request.

Mother Assunta Marchetti's appeal to the sisters follows the observation: *after the declaration of the mentioned decree, we must abandon, I beg you insistently, to stop, if someone has so done, any investigation, which will only cause disagreement about the true founder of our congregation.* The request is accompanied to a brief historical description of the beginning of the institute, pointing out that the pioneer sisters were recruited by Father Joseph Marchetti. Finally, the General Superior asked the sisters to consider *the incident closed.* The report ends with an acknowledgement to Bishop Aloisi Masella *of his wise and happy action that favored the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles, above all for the recognition and approval of the institute and its constitutions*²³⁵.

The recognition decree of the congregation was read to sisters during the official delivery ceremony of the constitutions, on August 26, 1934. In the book of acts number 63 of the general government meetings records that, amidst *general upheaval*, Bishop Aloisi Masella proceeded with the reading of the decree and said that *it had been signed by him on the vigil of Pentecost imploring for the blessings of the Divine Holy Spirit, of his particular devotion.* At the event, the Apostolic Visitor also recommended to the sisters to develop devotion for the Holy Spirit.²³⁶

Mother Assunta Marchetti's mandate included, among so many initiatives, the undertaking of the Second General Chapter of the institute, for which preparations started during 1934. On July 7 of that year, Cardinal Rossi wrote a letter to Bishop Aloisi Masella, authorizing him to convoke the chapter:

Examining your letter of last May 30th, no. 12230, and while I manifest to your Most Reverend Excellence the feelings of deepest gratitude for the good that with so much kindness you provide to the Institute of the Missionary Sisters of Saint Charles, I communicate to you that nothing from this Congregation prevents the convocation of the Chapter, in accordance to the new constitutions, for the renewal of the various positions.

It would be, however, my desire that you, in the quality of Apostolic Visitor, preside over the Chapter; it is the first after the changes in the constitutions and, certainly, would be of capital importance for the life and development of the Institute. Anyway, I wish to tell you, in private, that this Sacred Congregation would not be pleased, due to the precedents between the Benedictines and the Institute, which cannot be ignored by Your Excellence, that the Abbot of Saint Benedict, in Sao Paulo, preside over the Chapter, even though he has just arrived from Europe, and is new in the environment.

*Your Excellence shall take to the sisters, when they are gathered in the Chapter, my large and fraternal blessing, with the wish that the Lord always lets the religious and active life of the institute prosper following the example of the Pious Society of the Missionaries of St. Charles that recently obtained the special privilege from the Lord of religious vows, capable to provide new life and to increase the Pious Institute. It is understood that, after the Chapter, Your Excellence shall continue your task as the Apostolic Visitor, passing this information to said Chapter and, if Your Excellence deem necessary, also to the most reverend local ordinaries where the sisters have their houses*²³⁷.

According to Bishop Aloisi Masella's advice, Mother Assunta Marchetti sent a letter to the sisters requesting prayers, fasts and sacrifices so that the Second General Chapter, which should take place in January 1935, is a success:

We are at a time where we need many prayers for the good success of the General Chapter. Therefore, I will indicate the following prayers:

²³⁵ MARCHETTI, Assunta. *1934 Report*, page 30 (AGSS 1.5.4).

²³⁶ *LIVRO DE ATAS das reuniões do governo geral: 1929-1934.* Ata n. 63, 1934 (AGSS 1.12.1).

²³⁷ ROSSI, Raffaello C. *Lettera a Benedetto Aloisi Masella.* Roma, 7-7-1934 (Archives of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People. Prot. 514/25).

1st - a novena to the Holy Spirit.

2nd - a novena to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

3rd - a novena to the Immaculate Conception.

4th - a novena to St. Charles.

5th - a novena to St. Joseph.

I ask you, during each of the novenas, to fast for one day, three small mortifications and sacrifices to attract our Lord's blessings.

Still abusing your great kindness in attending me, I ask you more

Send out to celebrate some Holy Masses.

One in praise of the Divine Holy Spirit.

Another for our deceased sisters so they can send from heaven the grace that we so much need and necessary illumination.

I ask you, together with my council, the tenderest charity among yourselves to obtain from God the grace to fulfill his Holy Will.

How you shall do the election chapter, I will not explain here. Your Reverend Provincial Mother will go to each one of the houses and she will explain how it is to be done.

For now, however, I tell you that the General Chapter will convene for the elections after the first half of January.

Once again, trusting in your great goodness and satisfaction in complying with requests that I have asked of you, I profusely thank you from my soul.

*I ask the good Lord to bless each one of you specially...!*²³⁸.

Despite taking steps, constraints arose that prevented the convening of the chapter in January of 1935. The outgoing general government report registers the reason:

*When we were about to undertake the chapter with the presence of all elected delegates and representatives of the Province of Rio Grande do Sul, His Excellence Reverend, the Apostolic Nuncio, not agreeing with the interpretation given by the Most Reverend Abbot of St. Benedict, your nominated Delegate, to the Constitutions on the item that refers to the election of the delegated sisters to intervene in the Chapter. Thus, requiring His Excellence, the Apostolic Nuncio, the maximum enforcement of those provisions as well as the presence of a larger number of voters, not taking into consideration the economic aspect, he ordered and we order to proceed with a new election, thus, delaying convening of the General Chapter*²³⁹.

The Second General Chapter took place on March 16, 1935, a Saturday, in the Christopher Columbus Orphanage in Vila Prudente, Sao Paulo, presided by Bishop Benedetto Aloisi Masella. The Chapter had 21 capitulary sisters: Mother Assunta Marchetti, General Superior; Sister Angelina Meneguzzi, Provincial Superior of Sao Paulo; Sister Faustina Bosio, Provincial Superior of Rio Grande do Sul; Sister Immaculada Miletì, Sister Camilla Dal Ri, Sister Lucia Gorlin, Sister Iñez Oricchio, General Councilors; Sister Borromea Ferraresi, Sister Josephina Oricchio, Sister Bernardete Ugatti, Sister Gemma Magrin, Sister Affonsina Salvador, Sister Josepha Soares, Sister Nicolina Bolsan, Sister Clementina Zini, Sister Joaninha de Camargo, Sister Maria de Lourdes Martins, Sister Vittorina Consoni, Sister Maria Jose Vasconcelos, Sister Elidia Fanti, Sister Scalabrina Bacchi.

²³⁸ MARCHETTI, Assunta. *Letter to Sisters*. Vila Prudente, Sao Paulo, 10-11-1934 (GSS 1.5.4).

²³⁹ MARCHETTI, Assunta. *1934 Report*, page 30 (AGSS 1.5.4).

The Chapter began with the Eucharistic Celebration in the chapel of the Orphanage. After the *Veni Creator*, the election followed. After election of scrutinizers, Sisters Faustina Bosio and Josephina Oricchio, and the secretary of the chapter, Sister Maria Jose Vasconcelos, the election of the general superior for the six years period of 1935-1941 followed. In the first count, Sisters Borromea Ferraresi and Lucia Gorlin got the largest number of votes. In second count, both received ten votes. After the third count, Sister Borromea Ferraresi received 11 votes and Sister Lucia Gorlin received ten votes. Sister Borromea Ferraresi, with this result, was acclaimed the General Superior of the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo.

The Second General Chapter elected, in later elections, four general councilors: vicar and first councilor, Sister Lucia Gorlin; second councilor and general secretary, Sister Josephina Oricchio; third councilor and general economists, Sister Josepha Soares; fourth councilor and superior of the community of Vila Prudente, Sister Gemma Magrin. Sister Angelina Meneguzzi, Provincial Superior of Sao Paulo, confirmed in her post a few days after the undertaking of the Second General Chapter by the new general government. Other posts were renewed, as follows: Provincial Superior of Rio Grande do Sul, Sister Immaculada Mileti; Novice Mistress, novitiate of Aparecida, Sister Ignez Oricchio; Novice Mistress, novitiate of Bento Gonçalves, Sister Maria de Lourdes Martins.

The newspaper *La Fiamma*, of Sao Paulo, in its March 28, 1935 issue, informing on the undertaking of the Second General Chapter summarizes the 40 years of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo, highlights *the joy of all the sisters on the happy choice of the new government* of the institute and gives a short profile of Mother Assunta Marchetti, the dear *mamma buona*, as well as of the other sisters who took over their above mentioned posts. Of Mother Borromea Ferraresi, it said that she was born in Mantova, Italy, 48 years ago, and that she had been educated in the Christopher Columbus Orphanage by the first MSCS Sisters. The author goes on:

The newly elected General Superior admitted to the Institute in 1911 and professed in 1913. She was the principal of the School in Sao Bernardo. In 1914 she was sent to the new house in Bento Gonçalves, opened in 1915.

During 20 years, Sister Borromea sprinkled in that cheerful little town all the treasures of kindness of her big heart. She was a Teacher and taught choir and embroidery – and since 1927 novice mistress, this tireless woman wrote her name in an indelible way in the civil and religious annals of that blossoming region. With an uncommon energy and activity, she did not know obstacles or fears when the glory of God and the well-being of souls were the issue. She had a lively intelligence and a magnanimous heart.

Energetic and active, most beloved in the Congregation and in the Orphanage where she had been educated, she will know how to govern her religious family well²⁴⁰.

The Second General Chapter, for its results and since its preparation, was as foretold by Cardinal Rossi, *of capital importance*, meaning a new and vigorous impulse *for the life and development of the Institute*.

During Mother Borromea Ferraresi's term, a time of the hegemonic presence of the United States over Latin America, which was undergoing a period of profound changes while Europe was no longer the center of the world, the congregation was daring in its missionary expansion. In addition to several new foundations in Brazil, in 1936 the institute established itself in Italy and in 1941 in the United States, resulting in the beginning of internationalization with two new provinces, one with headquarters in Piacenza, and other in Chicago.

²⁴⁰ PORRINI, Carlo. *Il Capitolo Generale delle Missionarie di S. Carlo Borromeo*, op. cit., p. 2.

The mission proposed by John Baptist Scalabrini is universal. He himself propelled by apostolic zeal goes beyond the limits of the diocese in Piacenza, as acknowledged Pope Benedict XV on the 10th anniversary of the Bishop's death. By evoking Scalabrini's virtues, the Pope stated that charity, above all, *moved him in such way that made narrow the borders of his huge diocese, and impelling him to look for new flocks among distant Italian emigrants*²⁴¹.

Called to develop its mission in the Scalabrinian way, the MSCS Congregation, now consolidated, with persuasion amplified its pastoral field. That is, this strong will for expansion had been manifested several times, inclusive in Father Francesco Tirondola's letter to Cardinal Rossi, dated August 5, 1935. In the letter, the Scalabrinian Missionary and great benefactor of the Feminine Scalabrinian Congregation expressed his *living satisfaction by the warm insistence and the serious proposal of the good Scalabrinian Religious women to desire to pitch their tents in Italy*²⁴².

Just after this proposal concretized, we have this other record in Book 1 of the history of the Province of St. Joseph, dated November 3, 1936, with its headquarters in Piacenza, Italy dated the 3 of November of 1936: *After so many years spent in missions, they returned from Brazil and settled in the place where the group of Scalabrinian Missionaries of St. Charles had departed*. Since the beginning of their presence in Italy, one notes in this and in other texts that sisters identify themselves as *Scalabrinians* and the mission that they developed is recognized as a *Scalabrinian work of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo*. These new steps and other that will follow will be the subject of profound study and posterior research. The study on the historical evolution of the MSCS Congregation, undertaken up to now, shows the potentiality of the charisma that sustains its continuity in time, more than its irregularities and unforeseen events.

²⁴¹ BENEDEITO XV. *Lettera a d. Vicentini*. Vaticano, 30-6-1915 (AGS3019/4).

²⁴² TIRONDOLA, Francesco. *Lettera a Raffaello Carlo Rossi*. Bassano del Grappa, 5 Agosto 1935 (Archives of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People. Prot.514/25).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The Italian exodus that characterized the days of John Baptist Scalabrini motivated the bishop to a broad and deep analysis on human mobility, both from the individual and collective standpoint, in its political and socio-cultural implication, particularly the religious-pastoral aspect, which sets the core of the mission of the institutes founded at the end of the 19th century as an answer to the urgency of the time and it continues until our days.

In the eighteen hundred's context, three factors made Scalabrini's work important: to have contributed to approximate the church and the migratory reality; to have alerted about the persistence of the mobility phenomenon through times; to have indicated to the Scalabrinian family the universal dimension of its non transferable mission in the church and in human society.

The ministry proposed by the Bishop of Piacenza to the institutions that he founded encompassed three levels: human, cultural and religious. Scalabrinian missionaries by assuming the proposed apostolic activity positioned themselves to creatively face the emigration challenges, they instituted works in the educational-cultural, sanitary and religious realms, developing a charitable, pastoral and spiritual action targeting the new picture yielding from the Italian exodus.

Fidelity to the charisma made the Scalabrinians integrate in the pastoral activities, in faith and in social commitment, which favored change in the society where they had incorporated themselves despite political constraints and the hardship created by different pastoral views of local churches in certain mission lands. The Scalabrinian Missionaries of St. Charles, priests and sisters, by living themselves the experience of exodus, contributed effectively in the immigrant's promotion and in the modernization of the societies in which they came into contact.

This research shows aspects on how, in a complementarity unique to the evangelizing activity, the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute contributed to making fruitful the prophecies of the socio-pastoral project of John Baptist Scalabrini. The Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles, with few exceptions during its forty years of existence, was a prophetic answer to the apostolic plan of the Bishop of Piacenza.

The MSCS Sister's religious and socio-cultural physiognomy took shape in missionary interaction with the context in which it has worked since 1895. In the Christopher Columbus Orphanage in Sao Paulo, and later inland in the State of Sao Paulo and in the State of Rio Grande do Sul, the Scalabrinian Missionary Sister developed a differentiated pastoral activity, aware of the integral promotion of the human being.

Even if Christopher Columbus orphanage was not the first institution to shelter orphans in Sao Paulo, the institution idealized by the Scalabrinian priest, Joseph Marchetti was innovative in the educational field due to the fine Professional capacity-building and family style environment, healthy and humanized that Mother Assunta Marchetti and the pioneer sisters helped to put in place.

Religious women with an active life by vocation, inserted in the social environment of Sao Paulo and later in the Italian colonization groups in Rio Grande do Sul, the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles, Scalabrinians acquired a religious-apostolic identity that was formalized in several normative texts that guided the life of the institute in the first four decades of its history.

Since October 1895, when Father Joseph Marchetti united the first sisters and went with them to Piacenza where the foundation of the institute took place, until January 1934, when Pope Pius XI approved *ad experimentum* the new constitutions of the congregation, the institution had relative progress, but it needed to overcome successive constraints. Pius XI's pontificate, rich in meaning for the church, was also rich in meaning for the foundation of the Feminine Scalabrinian Institute favored

by a papal decree that legitimized it as a religious institute of pontifical rite.

In general, in the exercise of its ministry, the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles, Scalabrinians showed the capacity for adapting and to interact with the Brazilian society, becoming an incisive presence, ready to face conditionings and to maintain in dialogue, capable to cause changes guided by the practice of faith and to the integral promotion of immigrants and their descendants settled in Brazil. On the other hand, under some circumstances, improvisation, an insufficient formation and internal crisis had slowed the development of the institute.

These and other findings, both positive and negative, are set in the conclusion: effectiveness of the pastoral activity of the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles undertaken between 1895 and 1934 amidst limited resources and innumerable challenges shows the undeniable strength of the Scalabrinian charisma.

MISSIONARY SISTERS OF SAINT
CHARLES BORROMEO – SCALABRINIANAS

Via Monte del Gallo, 68
00165 – Roma – Italia
www.scalabriniane.org

AUTOR

Lice Maria Signor, born on 02/02/1934 in Bento Gonçalves, RS, Brazil, is member of the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo, Scalabrinians. During the periods of 1983-1989 and 1995-2001, she was the General Superior of her Congregation. A History Professor, she graduated from UCS (University of Caxias do Sul), with a specialization in Contemporary History at UNISINOS (University of Vale do Rio dos Sinos) and a Masters degree in the History of Brazilian Culture at PUC – RS (Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul).

As researcher of the MSCS Congregation's history, the author wrote several texts on the subject, having published her Masters' Degree Dissertation: *John Baptist Scalabrini and Italian Migration. A socio-pastoral project*. The English translation was published in 1994.

Currently, she is a researcher of the history of the congregation and member of the Scalabrinian Center for Migratory Studies – CSEM team.