

TEACHING UNIT V

**“AND THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH;
AND HE PITCHED HIS TENT AMONG US” (JN 1:14)
Spirituality of Incarnation - Incarnation of Spirituality**

I. OBJECTIVES

- a. To deepen our understanding of spirituality
- b. To analyze the fundamental elements of a Christian spirituality
- c. To develop a Scalabrinian Spirituality of Incarnation in a world of human Mobility

II. OPENING PRAYER

III. INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY

- ❖ **Choose a Saint - Discuss**

IV. SHARING GOD’S WORD

- a. Micah 6:6-8
- b. Questions

V. STUDY SESSION

- a. Insufficient concepts of spirituality
- b. A holistic concept of Christian spirituality
- c. The fundamental elements of Christian spirituality
- d. The Journey of Spirituality in Christian history
- e. Elements of Scalabrinian Spirituality – Small group discussion
 - i. Redovino Rizzardo
 - ii. Gino Dalpiaz

VI. HOMEWORK

VII. EVALUATION

VIII. CLOSING PRAYER

The Scalabrinian Creed

I believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen. We give you thanks, God, Father of all, who love to pour out the abundance of your gifts. Open our hearts to receive them and, like you, may we spread them among migrants, especially the poorest: they are like sorrowful seeds scattered across the earth bearing your future for the Church and the world.

I believe in Jesus Christ, Son of God, Word who has pitched his tent among us, sent by the Father as pilgrim and migrant in order to save humankind. I believe in the living presence of Jesus Christ in our midst, who sends us a missionaries to serve migrants. I believe in Jesus Christ who sanctifies us so that we can be prophets and healers in the Church and in the world. I believe in the power of the Eucharist, which fortifies the Scalabrinian families journeying on the Exodus road: true manna, which transforms them into food for migrants. I believe in Jesus, who is love, who helps us recognize his features in today's migrants.

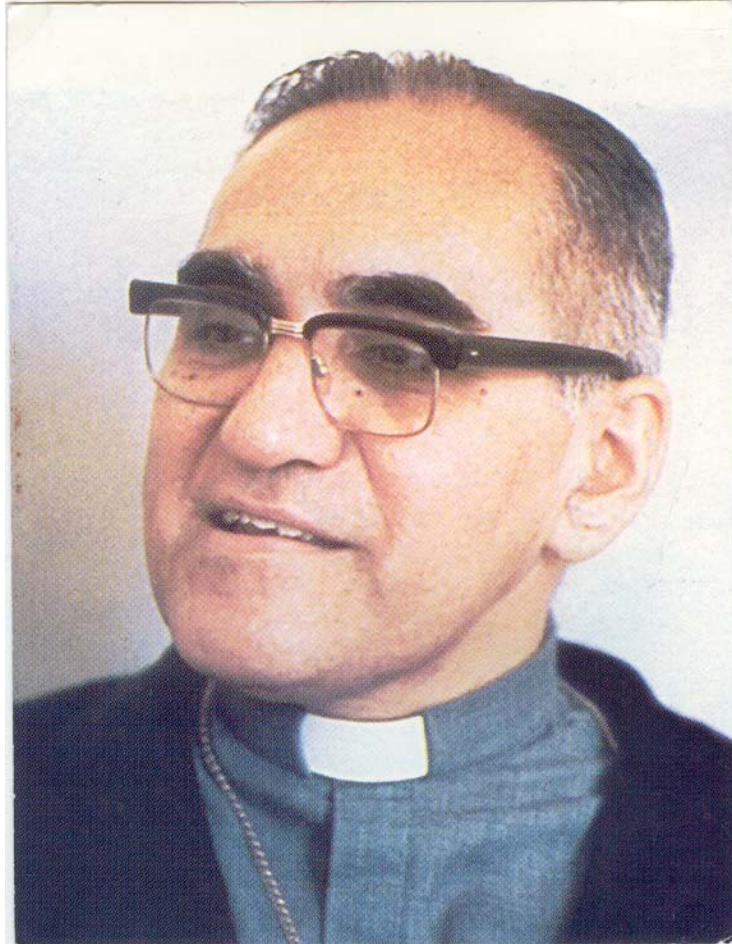
I believe in the Holy Spirit, Spirit of freedom and creativity, gift offered to all, Creator of communion and fraternity and yet cherishing the precious identity of each one of us.

I believe in the Catholic Church, made of many people and races and intended for all, a Church which lets herself be challenged by migrants who remind her that here we do not have a permanent dwelling, and must search for the future city. I believe in a Church that gives up even her cloak, and is happy to go more than a mile with the believers of other religions in order to build up God's dream of a more just and fraternal world, while awaiting new heavens and a new earth.

III. INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY

Unit V

1. The group will be given five minutes during which time each participant chooses a saint, in heaven or on earth, and prepares a short presentation on why he/she thinks this person is a model of spirituality.



Mons. Oscar A. Romero

2. Synopsise the results of the presentations.

IV. SHARING GOD'S WORD

Unit V

Micah 6:6-8



With what shall I enter Yahweh's presence and bow down before God All-high? Shall I enter with burnt offerings, with calves one year old? Will he be pleased with rams by the thousand, with ten thousand streams of oil? Shall I offer my eldest son for my wrong-doing, the child of my own body for my sin? You have already been told what is right and what Yahweh wants of you. Only this, to do what is right, to love loyalty and to walk humbly with your God.

Questions:

1. The message of the prophet is that God is not pleased with sacrifices and burnt incense.
 - Worship does not equal spirituality. Why?
2. What does it mean "to walk humbly with your God?"

1. INSUFFICIENT CONCEPTS OF SPIRITUALITY

- a) Spirituality as opposed to the physical and the material reality
- b) Spirituality as practice of religious devotions
- c) Spirituality as the relationship between me and my God (individualistic spirituality)
- d) Spirituality as contemplation vs. action (Martha and Mary, Lk 10)
- f) Spirituality as the time set apart for the things of God

2. A HOLISTIC CONCEPT OF CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY

“Spirituality is life in the Spirit, living by the Breath of God. By Spirit the Bible means most of the time not the human soul but the Holy Spirit of God. Spiritual is what the Holy Spirit creates, initiates, inspires, gives, guides, sustains, blesses, approves, animates, accepts and rejoices over. All creation then is radically spiritual: the earth and the sky, birds and beasts, women and men are all spiritual from their foundations and in their essential openness to the Spirit's influence. This perception is vital for all authentic and holistic understanding of spirituality, which would avoid all dualist and docetist pitfalls. This view provides a necessary horizon for all further interpretation and application of spirituality. But it has its limitations too. It spells out the Spirit's role and activity rather than the part we, humans, are to play in the history of our life in the Spirit. It needs to be supplemented; or, rather, this rich description of spirituality spoken from the side of the Spirit needs now to be told from our side. That may be done by stating that to be spiritual is to be open to reality and responding to it relevantly and as adequately as possible. From the perspective of human praxis, life in the Spirit is defined in terms of openness and responsiveness to reality. Reality is to be understood inclusively: it embraces everything from sand and grass, through singing birds and tigers 'burning bright in the forests of the night'; through the solar systems and the furthest constellations in an expanding universe, through the complex and structured universe within each molecule, to the world of thought and grief and love and brokenness in the depths of human hearts, to the hunger and misery and tears of women and men, to the experience of forgiveness, and on to the Ultimate Mystery of life and love we call God, Brahman, Allah. To be spiritual is to be open to these realities, to all of them, to any of them, and to all further possibilities, rejecting none, shutting out nothing. Openness means listening to the other, to the depth and the silence of things and events, refusing to close the door to possibilities however unfamiliar, unpalatable, challenging and disturbing. Openness means being ready for the surprise of history and of the cosmos. Materialism is a prejudiced option for narrowness while fairy tales affirm that nothing given within our experience exhausts the possibilities of the real. To be open is to let reality come in all its beauty, ugliness, wonder, terror; let it come, invade our life, touch us in depth, affect us, awaken us, gladden us, wound us, and move us to joy, to song, to sorrow, to tears, to anger, to action. To relevant action, action that responds to reality and its actual condition, affirming, fostering, negating, resisting, subverting, transforming as the case may require. 'Response-ability' will address not only reality's present but its

past as well and its future; it will speak to the personal no less than to the structural. To be spiritual is to be open and responsive to the reality of the earth, of history, of life, of people, of the Spirit. The parable of the Samaritan (cf. Lk 10:29-37) could illustrate the point. Two men of religion, two cult persons, a priest and a Levite, came along, saw the traveler lying on the roadside, stripped, robbed, beaten, bleeding to death; they saw and passed by. Then came along a non-Jew, a non-believer, a Samaritan, someone the cult persons despised. He too saw what the priest had seen, and he responded in a way the priest had not. Moved with compassion he went up to the dying man, bandaged his wounds, lifted him on to his own mount, took him to the nearest inn and arranged for him to be looked after unto health and wholeness at the Samaritan's own expense. That was openness, showing his ability to respond; that was neighborly love, and authentic faith and true religion and spiritual worship. It was a more relevant response than the priest's even if we imagine that the priest was perhaps hastening to the temple to pray for the bandits' victim. The priest was not open: he did not respond. What the Samaritan did was. And Jesus said to the learned Jews, "Go then and do the same" (cf. Lk 10:37), follow the Samaritan, take a lesson in religion from him.

Samuel Rayan, *A Spirituality of mission in an Asian Context*, in <http://www.sedos.org/>

3. THE FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENTS OF CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY

a) **The encounter with the living Jesus .**

"The gospels relate many meeting between Jesus and the men and women of his day. A common feature of all these narratives is the transforming power present and manifest in these encounters with Jesus, in as much as they initiate and authentic process of conversion, communion and solidarity. (John Paul II, *The Church in América*, Post-Synodal apostolic Exhortation, 1999, # 8.

"To encounter the Lord is before all else to be encountered by the Lord..."

(Gustavo Gutierrez, *Drinking From One's Own Well*, p. 63)

b)... **within the context or our earthly reality...**

"The experience of God neither presupposes nor occasions any escape from history on our part. Rather it demands of us, and inspires in us, a greater and better entry into that history...". Spirit and practice must join hands. Without spirit, practice can always degenerate. Without practice, spirit will remain vague, sidelined, even alienating."(Jon Sobrino *"Spirituality of Liberation" Towards Political Holiness*, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, New York, 1985, Pp. ix, 58.

c) ... **becomes an experience of faith...**

"Although the meaning of the term 'experience' is quite difficult to pin down, there is a strong conviction that human experience is the very 'stuff' of spirituality. 'Experience' is a term used to describe whatever enters into the actual living of our lives, whether it be religious, mystical, theological, ethical, psychological, political, or physical".

d) ... **which leads to the following of Jesus, each one according to one's own call.**

"As the body is one having many members and all the members while being many, form one body, so it is with Christ. All of us, whether Jews or Greek, slaves or free, have been baptized in one Spirit to form one body...The body has not just one member, but many...Now, you are the body of Christ and each of

you individually is a member of it. So God has appointed us in the Church. First apostles, second prophets, third teachers. Then miracles, then the gift of healing, material help, administration in the Church, and the gift of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Can all perform miracles, or cure the sick, or speak in tongues, or explain what was said in tongues?

(1 Corinthians 12:12, 14, 27-30)

e) The discipleship of Jesus is a life according to the Spirit... (Rm 8:14)

“*Spiritual*’, then, refers to the whole of our existence as Christians, as filled with the Spirit of Christ. We are filled so much with this Spirit that Paul can say, “I live no longer I, but Christ lives in me” (Gal 2:20). As Christians, we follow Christ, we share his death and resurrection (Phil 2:10), we breath with his breath. Christian spirituality deals with the progressive transformation of our whole lives by the power and presence of Christ’s Spirit. Obviously the, spirituality does not refer only to our interior lives nor primarily to mental and rational activity ...While it surely includes these, it involves my whole person and our whole life... No one lives “Christian spirituality” in the abstract. We all live at specific and particular moments in space and time; in other words, we live in definite historical and cultural context ... The concrete and changing circumstances of our lives cannot but affect the way we live out our Christian spirituality. It is on this secondary level that we can speak of different Christian spiritualities, that is, different styles, modalities, or modifications of the one common Christian call to holiness.

Michael D. Guinan, *To Be Human Before God. Insight from Biblical Spirituality*, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota, 1994, P. 3-5

f) ... in a community of faith.

“At all times and in every race, anyone who fears God and does what is right has been acceptable to him (cf. Acts 10:35). He has, however, willed to make men and women holy and save them, not as individuals without any bond or links between them, but rather to make them into a people who might acknowledge him and serve him in holiness” (*Lumen Gentium*, 9)

4. THE JOURNEY OF SPIRITUALITY IN CHRISTIAN HISTORY:

“In the history of the Church, certain charismatic leaders have emerged who spearheaded religious renewals during their lives, and who, through the power of their lives and examples, attracted followers down through the centuries: e.g., St. benedict and St. Scholastica, St. Francis of Assisi and St. Clare, St. Dominic, St. Angela Merici, St. Ignatius of Loyola. Certainly none of these individuals set out to found new “schools” of spirituality. They wanted simply to live the gospel life, to follow Christ fully and seriously to the best of their ability and in response to the needs of their times. Their examples inspired others down through the ages to follow Christ as they did, and thus we speak of Benedictine, Franciscan, Dominican, Ursuline, Ignatian styles (or “schools”) of spirituality.”

Michael D. Guinan, *To Be Human Before God. Insight from Biblical Spirituality*, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota, 1994, P. 6

5. ELEMENTS OF A SCALABRINIAN SPIRITUALITY

Leader: Have the group take a few minutes to write down their personal answer to Question (a.) and proceed as directed.

- a. According to what you have read and learned so far about Blessed Scalabrini and your own experience, which elements of spirituality would you consider fundamental for those who today care for the migrants?
- b. Divide into groups and share your answer to the previous question. Then read one of the following texts and try to further clarify the aspects of a Scalabrinian Spirituality.
- c. In the large group sharing, compare and exchange your findings towards a definition of Scalabrinian Spirituality

1. The Spirituality of Scalabrinians in Latin América, by Redovino Rizzaredo

Proceeding of the International Symposium on Scalabrinian Spirituality, pp.116-120

Those who receive the grace of discovering its beauty see Scalabrinian spirituality as one of the most beautiful and attractive existing in the Church today, for basically it means taking on Jesus' own mission as expressed in his "priestly prayer": That they may all be one; even as thou, Father, are in me and I in thee, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that thou has sent me" (Jn 17:21). The Scalabrinian undertakes to give his life for the transformation of the world, taking the Trinity as model, in other words through relations of equality, fraternity, and freedom in a Church and society that respect and appreciate diversity.

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

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

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

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

The first component is that of "becoming migrants with migrants", which covers the missionary spirit, the sense of availability, feeling-and making others feel-at home everywhere, and being always on the move, like God who always goes beyond our hopes.

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

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

2. The Spirituality of Scalabrinians in North America by Gino Dalpiaz

Proceeding of the International Symposium on Scalabrinian Spirituality pp. 149-156

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

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

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

At the root of Christian life is conversion. So it is with inculturation or incarnation, especially for Scalabrinians. Conversion is the *conditio sine qua non* of inculturation, of incarnation, conversion in all its dimensions: intellectual, affective, moral and religious. The heart of conversion is the total, conditionless, and permanent self-surrender to God. This fundamental act, which is the gift of the Holy Spirit, changes one's way of choosing values, shapes one's feelings, and transforms one's mental perceptions. With respect

to inculturation, one of the results of intellectual conversion is the overcoming of cultural biases and prejudices. These, learned through ethnocentric thinking, are often used to buttress one's sense of self-esteem, to legitimize socio-economic exploitation, or to maintain ethnic identity. Socially, they are expressed in all forms of discrimination, be it gender, class, racial, or religious. Prejudice and discrimination in any form constitute the most basic obstacles to a genuine inculturation, to a genuine incarnation.

To understand an alien culture and to appreciate its positive as well as negative features, a fundamental virtue to be developed is the ability to accept the other as genuinely other. Perhaps it may be assumed that encountering an alien culture and seeing it as other are synonymous. In fact, however, this is not the case. There is a well-entrenched tendency in all of us to deny otherness to others. (...) This must not be so for the Scalabrinian missionary. Scalabrinians cannot demonize, colonize, trivialize, homogenize or vaporize the migrants. For in our Rules of Life (n.6) we read: *"We hold in high esteem the spiritual heritage of thought, tradition, culture and religion the migrants bring along from their place of origin, as well as the heritage of values of the new place wher they come to live."*

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

A commitment to remove unjust and oppressive structures and traditions in both culture and church and to bring about peace, justice, human dignity to all is an essential part of the inculturation process. Inculturation is not a process entrusted to intellectuals (...), rather it is a task imposed upon the entire Church which is called to be in solidarity with the victims of oppression and injustice who not infrequently are members of ethnic groups and to struggle for their liberation. Inculturation without commitment to social and ecclesial transformation is nothing more than aesthetic dilettantism or archeological nostalgia.

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

In the document, A Letter to All Confreres, the General Administration talks about "a return to the dimensión of itinerancy...which is a feature of our spirituality." Scalabrinians, in other words, are not a sedentary religious family. We do not take a vow of stability like the Benedictines. On the contrary, we are always "on the move." Hence , we must be ready to pull up stakes, fold our tent and move on. This is inherent in our vocation of apostolic service to the migrants "For here we have no lasting city" (Heb 13:14). This point was brilliantly illustrated by Bro. Gioacchino Campese, C.S., in his recent paper, "Yahweh, the God of the Tent: a Theological Reflection on the Scalabrinian Mission". (see under selected readings)

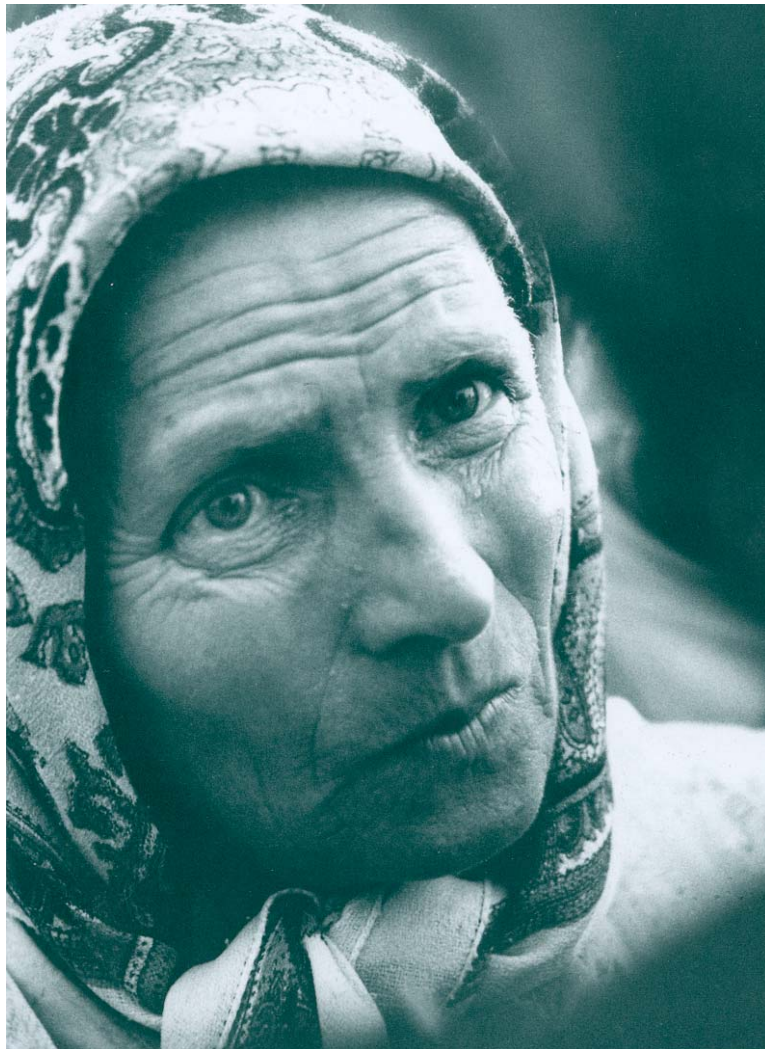
VI. HOMEWORK

Unit V

- a. Interview a Scalabrinian Missionary on the characteristics of Scalabrinian Spirituality

OR

- b. Interview a recent migrant on his/her spirituality. Include: a) popular religiosity b) cultural traditions c) experience of exile d) experience of living their spirituality in a new culture and in the local church.



1. Very pleased**2. Pleased****3. Not pleased**

1. General evaluation of this unit.

1 ... 2 ... 3

2. Prayers

1 ... 2 ... 3

3. Introductory Activity

1 ... 2 ... 3

4. Sharing God's Word

1 ... 2 ... 3

5. Study Section:

a) Presentation of the topic

1 ... 2 ... 3

b) Group Discussion

1 ... 2 ... 3

6. Impressions of the day.

7. Expectations, which were not met.

8. Other comments.

VIII. CLOSING PRAYER

Unit V

Let us thank God for allowing us to meet his faithful servant, Blessed John Baptist Scalabrini as we walk along our pilgrimage on this earth.

We give you thanks, Lord, for Blessed John Baptist Scalabrini, a man of faith and prayer; he teaches us to put you above any concern and do always do your will.

We give you thanks, Lord, for Blessed John Baptist Scalabrini, a man of heroic and boundless love; he teaches us to give our lives in the service of migrants, especially those most in need of your and our love.

We give you thanks, Lord, for Blessed John Baptist Scalabrini, who inspires men and women to place their lives in the service of migrants, people of all races, nationalities, and cultures.

We give you thanks, Lord, for Blessed John Baptist Scalabrini, who exhorts us to listen to the cry of migrants, to listen to them in love, and to seek justice.

We give you thanks, Lord, for Blessed John Baptist Scalabrini, who reminds us that our home is not here and that we must always strive to our true homeland.

We give you thanks, Lord, for Blessed John Baptist Scalabrini, who implores us to look to Our Blessed Mother, who is a sign of hope and consolation for us and to ask for her maternal protection.

Blessed are you, God, Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who makes all of us into a people consecrated to you. Help the hearts of all to open up to hospitality, help government leaders to issue just laws, pour out on all migrants the abundance of your blessings, give many young people the grace of listening to your voice as it invites them to walk and serve you in migrants, help the three Scalabrinian families and all the lay people to live the charism of Blessed John Baptist Scalabrini calling down heavenly blessings on us.

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