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A banner honoring Blessed Giovanni Battista Scalabrini is seen as Pope Benedict XVI leads th

A banner honoring Blessed Giovanni Battista Scalabrini is seen as Pope Benedict XVI leads the Angelus at the Vatican in this Jan. 17, 2010, file photo. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

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While their life journeys and the stages of their sainthood causes diverged, two men born in Italy are set to be canonized together Oct. 9: Blessed Giovanni Battista Scalabrini and Blessed Artemide Zatti.

Scalabrini founded the Missionaries of St. Charles Borromeo, commonly known as the Scalabrinian Fathers, and the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles in the late 19th century to minister to countless Europeans who migrated to North and South America.

He was beatified by St. John Paul II in 1997. Responding to a request from the Scalabrinians and from bishops' conferences around the world, Pope Francis dispensed the usual canonization requirement of a miracle attributed to his

intercession having occurred after beatification.

Zatti's cause, on the other hand, followed the normal process. In April, Francis signed the degree recognizing Zatti's intercession in the healing of a man in the Philippines who had suffered a stroke and a "voluminous" brain bleed.

Born in the northern Italian city of Reggio Emilia in 1880, Zatti and his family immigrated to Bahía Blanca, Argentina, when he was a child. At the age of 19, he entered the Salesians and began preparations for the priesthood. However, he was forced to abandon his studies after falling ill with tuberculosis.

After making a vow to Mary to serve the sick and the poor for the rest of his life if he was healed, Zatti made good on his promise and, after professing his vows as a Salesian brother in 1908, worked at a Salesian-run hospital, where he served for more than 40 years as a trained pharmacist, nurse and operating-room assistant as well as handling the hospitals budget and personnel. He died in 1951.

Scalabrini was born near Como, Italy, in 1839 and was ordained to the priesthood in 1863. He asked his bishop's permission to join the Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions, but the bishop assigned him to teach at the diocesan seminary instead.

Pope Pius IX named him bishop of Piacenza in 1876, when he was just 36. Visiting the parishes of the dioceses, he discovered that more than 10% of the people felt forced to emigrate, according to his Vatican biography. In fact, between 1875 and 1915, almost 9 million Italians emigrated, with most of them heading to Brazil, Argentina or the United States.

In 1887, Scalabrini founded the Missionaries of St. Charles Borromeo to care for them. He died in 1905.

In explaining the timing of the request to declare him a saint, the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints said, "Given the context of today's world" and Blessed Scalabrini's "work and dedication to migrants," the order "proposed their founder as a candidate for universal veneration by the church, as well as special protector and heavenly patron of migrants and refugees."

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