



HISTORY OF THE

SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOLUME II

THE SCALABRINI FATHERS IN NORTH AMERICA 1888 - 1895



THE SCALABRINI FATHERS IN NORTH AMERICA

1888 - 1895

by Mario Francesconi, c.s.

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The Scalabrini Fathers in North America, 1888-1895

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CHAPTER I

"THE ITALIAN BILL ON EMIGRATION"

While the first Scalabrinian Missionaries, sent to the United States to help Italian immigrants, were beginning their work amid numerous difficulties, Bishop Scalabrini continued to struggle to eradicate some of the worst evils facing Italian Emigrants. In early November 1888, he published a sixty-page booklet entitled "The Bill on Italian Emigration - Observations and Proposals of Bishop John Scalabrini, Bishop of Piacenza." The booklet took the form of an open letter addressed to Paolo Carcano, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Finances and the Author's schoolmate at the Liceo Volta of Como.¹

The Bill had been introduced as a "special law" in the Chamber of Deputies by the Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior, Francesco Crispi on December 15, 1887. One provision of the Bill was that all immigration agents had to obtain a government license and furnish bond before beginning operations. It also imposed a penalty on all persons illegally engaged in emigration operations and in enrolling migrant workers without permission. The Bill recognized the freedom of all citizens to emigrate, except when they had not yet served in the armed forces and they were about to emigrate at the age of military service. At the same time, it empowered the Minister of the Interior to limit the enrollment of migratory workers.

On May 3, 1888, a Parliament Committee presided over by Rocco De Zerbi introduced a counterproposal intended to modify the government bill. "In a more liberal sense, it substantially aimed at establishing the freedom of choosing and promoting emigration. This proposal judged the agents' work less harshly. It allowed them the freedom to encourage migration and to enroll migrants, while lessening the penalties for violations."²

The Bishop of Piacenza intervened a month before the debate was to begin in the Chamber of Deputies in December, 1888. The result of the debate was that Zerbi's bill, slightly changed, became law.

Bishop Scalabrini, "a Bishop who is interested in social affairs and in parliamentary bills," as he characterized himself, was more favorable to Zerbi's counterproposal, and criticized the original bill for "considering the great cosmic and human migration phenomenon as an abnormal event rather than as a natural right."

"The Bill reveals more than anything else the preoccupation of the Minister of the Interior who looks with regret at the fields abandoned by a great number of peasants, which increases every year, sees agricultural production and property

¹For a wider treatment see: Antonio Perotti, "La Società Italiana di Fronte alle Migrazioni di Massa," Special Issue of Studi Emigrazione, V. 11-12 (1968), pp. 36-54. The same volume contains the entire booklet by Bishop Scalabrini, "The Italian Bill on Migration" (Piacenza, 1888) on pp. 231-257. We have preferred to quote the booklet from this special issue of the above-mentioned magazine rather than from the original edition, because it is more readily available to our readers

² Fernando Manzotti, La polemica sull'emigrazione nell'Italia unita, (Milano, 1962) p. 86.

diminishing, and our agricultural crises worsening. But rather than showing the foresight of the statesman who looks far ahead and does not hinder the migratory movement, he directs it instead, so that it becomes a source of well-being and power for our country."³

In other words, Bishop Scalabrini continued to uphold the freedom to migrate while opposing "*the freedom to make other people migrate in order to exploit them.*" For this reason, he strongly criticized even the counterproposal, which became law, because it "*allowed the agents to enroll migratory workers.*" "*I believe,*" he explained, "*that this concession, perhaps justified in theory, becomes very detrimental in practice, to the point of invalidating many good provisions of the same law.*"⁴

He would have allowed the agents to be nothing more than middlemen between the shipping companies and the migrants, and the agencies nothing more than information offices. He would have even tolerated that they "should try to convince the doubtful."⁵ In practice migration agents fitted the definition he had formulated about them: "*They are more vile than thieves and more cruel than assassins, since they push to ruination so many desperate people.*"⁶

Agents were in fact enrollers, and "*the enrollment of migrants is substantially an evil thing, since it alters the function of the social phenomenon called migration, and makes it deviate from its natural purposes and goals. Migration, like all selection, must be spontaneous in order to be helpful: if not, instead of being an improvement of the social organism and a beneficial centrifugal and centripetal movement giving impulse and equilibrium to wishes, it becomes a tiring effort and a consuming fever.*"⁷

The Bishop was reproached for making "*an abstract and moralistic distinction*" between spontaneous migration (considered good) and stimulated or artificial migration (considered bad).⁸ But he himself did not intend to make an absolute distinction:

*"Social events are rarely entirely good or entirely bad; but they can be good or bad according to circumstances. Thus it may be that the enlistment of migrants, bad and condemnable in general, can become good in certain cases But what can be good as an exception, can be bad as a norm."*⁹

He was judging facts: "I am more inclined to believe facts than beautiful words."¹⁰

Just because he upheld "the freedom to migrate" as against "the freedom to induce people to migrate," one cannot reproach him for not taking into account the fact that as Manzotti says, "*even from what is irrational in the spirit of adventure, positive consequences may derive.*"¹¹ Manzotti however immediately

³ Giovanni Battista Scalabrini, *Il disegno di legge*, etc., p. 234.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 235

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Cfr. Fernando Manzotti, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

⁹ Giovanni Battista Scalabrini, *Il disegno di legge*, etc. pp. 237-238.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 238.

¹¹ Fernando Manzotti, *op. cit.*, p. 89

added: "*But Scalabrini's principal merit consists in adding practical interests to theoretical ones. He fervently imparts intelligent direction to a valid work of protection.*"¹²

We wish to underline this merit not only for his "work of predilection," that is, the work of the Congregation of the Missionaries of St. Charles and of the Society of St. Raphael, but also for his practical suggestions for eliminating the evil of migrant enrollment - one of the most painful of our migration practices until the law of 1901 was enacted. But,

above all, for having provided on a world-wide basis protection for the immigrants once they reached their destinations.

*"Even a good law is not enough," he said, "to see to it that this great and complex migration problem fulfills the worthy social ends of Divine Providence, unless it is supported by all those wise public and private institutions and by all those civil and religious provisions which have produced excellent results among the people for whom they were established."*¹³

*"Spurred on by these considerations, I began to work so that my poor word, corroborated by my example, would be more efficacious.... It was for this reason that, in less than a year, under the glorious name of Christopher Columbus, I created in my dear Piacenza (for the first time in Italy) the Institute for the Italian immigrants in America. Thus during July of this year, twelve Missionaries, eight priests and four lay members sailed from Genoa and Le Havre for New York and for the interior of Brazil where requests for Missionaries had been more insistent, and where the needs to be satisfied were more urgent."*¹⁴

Having remarked that "*there the new Missionaries would also perform the role of registrars (which is not a small advantage for our poor immigrants who do not know the language of their new country,*" Bishop Scalabrini, always guided by a total vision of the services to be rendered to the immigrants continued:

*"But my Institute, born so rapidly, thanks to an admirable fusion of religious and patriotic sentiments, would partially fail in its aims, and could not overcome the thousands of obstacles it encounters, nor satisfy its many moral and material needs without the constant help of many good people. My dear friend, I call your attention, and through you, the attention of the government and of all those who are interested in the public welfare, to this work so dear to my heart, not only because I see in it an efficient means of performing my episcopal duty toward so many helpless people (some of them from my own Diocese), but also because religion and country are united in this task which - to my way of thinking - is a practical means, a beginning, of that purification of consciences which is always one of the most burning desires of my soul."*¹⁵

The above statement places in their proper order the values which inspired Bishop Scalabrini. First, the performance of his episcopal duties, born from an eminently pastoral impulse, and, second, his conciliatory aim. We should not, I believe, give too much importance to this agreement between State and Church

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Giovanni Battista Scalabrini, *Il disegno di legge, etc.*, p. 247.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 252

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 253

as a political event. He was speaking to a public particularly sensitive to the religious-political problem of the day, and he did this with extreme sincerity. But we must not lose sight of the precise motive for his conciliatory desires. It was a religious motive - not a political one, one demonstrated by his action in the field of migration. He called his motivation the "*salvation of souls*", and gave it the same dimensions as he gave the term "*man*", with all his completeness. In fact, after the above quotation he mentions many letters he had received from numerous heads of families, especially in Brazil:

"These letters ... showed a great need for priests and teachers - a need that became all the more pressing as the material prosperity of the colonies became greater. All the letters ended with the desolate words of the poor Venetian immigrant: "We are living here like beasts: we live and die without the assistance of a priest, without teachers and doctors," the three forms under which a civilized community visualizes the poor.

It is precisely to satisfy these three great human needs that I have organized my Institute. Its goals are: 1) to keep alive in their hearts the faith of their ancestors, by reviving the immortal hope of a life after death and by educating them to elevate their moral sense. For we must not forget that our peoples only ethical treaty is still (fortunately) the Decalogue; 2) to teach them, together with the first notions of arithmetic, their mother tongue and some of their national history so as to keep kindled within them the flame of love for their country, and a desire to see it again; 3) to teach our Missionaries, during their novitiate, how to prepare and use the most common and effective medicines in order to establish small drug stores in their houses. It is a little thing in itself, but it means a lot when one thinks of the impossibility of obtaining medical assistance on the immense American prairies."¹⁶

It is to be noted, that these tasks were assigned to all the Missionaries except to the St. Raphael Society, of which the Author later speaks.

Returning to the subject of schools, Bishop Scalabrini recognized that "school construction is the most difficult part of his program to execute",¹⁷ "mainly because Missionaries cannot take care of everything" and often there is a scarcity of adequately prepared lay teachers willing to live a hard life abroad.

Today it is natural for us to think of lay teachers as chiefly responsible for education. But Bishop Scalabrini, who also attributed great importance to lay teachers, considering the work of the Missionaries incomplete without them, did not consider their preparation sufficient enough, especially in the spiritual sense, to induce them "to submit themselves to a life of sacrifice abroad."¹⁸

Therefore he submitted this proposal:

"Young seminarians who are called for military service in Italy are about one hundred a year. Now, what harm would there be to our military forces if young priests, willing to be Missionaries among the Italians in America, were exempted from military service? What law of equality among Italian citizens regarding military obligations would be violated if young men studying for the priesthood,

¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 253-254.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 255.

¹⁸ Ibid.

would spend five years in the service of our immigrants in America, working for their religious and moral redemption - as soldiers of the Church and, therefore, of the State - instead of serving for three years in the armed forces?"¹⁹

Unfortunately this proposal was rejected primarily because of preconceived political notions.²⁰ Some of us might side with Bishop Scalabrini's critics since his ideas seem to be against the modern concept of the Church's "secularization" and her universality "which cannot admit any limitation of race, nation or age"²¹. However, we must distinguish between substance and method, between the goal and the means regarding his ideas and its realization. These ideas must be considered in relation to their time. For example, at that time work with immigrants, more necessary than even today, was considered a minor part of the Church's mission which, "while taking advantage of the initiatives of others, claims for itself all work of charity as its proper duty and inalienable right."²²

Undoubtedly, the mission that Christ entrusted to His Church was not of a political, economic or social nature, rather it was religious in nature.

Yet, it is precisely from this religious mission that the work of enlightening and strengthening souls contributes to building and consolidating the community of man in accordance with Divine Law. Thus, when necessary, according to the circumstances of time and place, the Church can (or rather must) through its charitable works promote initiatives which benefit everyone, but especially which benefit the needy."²³

This is precisely Bishop Scalabrini's idea.

The same can be said about the question of preserving the immigrants' language and culture and love for the homeland. Let us remember the conditions prevailing at that time: illiteracy, the social inferiority of the people forced to emigrate, the confined world of the little villages from which the emigrants departed and the whole complex of the traditional encrustations which surrounded the piety of the poor, who often lacked the most elementary religious education. A sudden jump to foreign places, impenetrable to those who lacked a cultural basis through which to communicate beyond the elementary necessities of life, could not but provoke psychological, social and religious traumas which became incurable in the immigrants and which traumatized their descendants until they could gradually insert themselves into the life of the new country. Therefore the first phase of work had to necessarily contemplate giving the immigrants at least an elementary education. This was possible only if their language, their culture and, in a certain measure, their ancient customs were preserved during their whole period of acculturation.

From the same point of view, we must also evaluate Bishop Scalabrini's other idea which he expressed in the booklet we are discussing but in a more

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Cfr. Antonio Perotti, op. cit., pp. 50-53.

²¹ Vatican Council II, *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, 10.

²² Ibid., *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, 8.

²³ Ibid., *Gaudium et Spes*, 42.

detailed manner in his other writings - an idea which he constantly recommended to his Missionaries:

He envisioned agricultural colonization as the ideal form of emigration.

*"What shall we do in the meantime? If charity, equality and fraternity are not empty words, we must, my friend, try something to keep these poor people away from such terrible conditions. Great causes, as you well know, cannot triumph unless some individuals sacrifice themselves entirely for them. I have found the man who is ready to sacrifice himself for the cause I am promoting. He will soon leave for an overseas inspection tour and will personally examine locations best suited from every point of view for establishing our colonies. Then to all those (including many members of the clergy who have at heart the future of their flock) who ask me where to best send the migrants. I could firmly answer: over here, or over there, or over there."*²⁴

The idea of transplanting emigrants overseas and surrounding them with their old traditions and culture until they could become part of the new country, is transferred here from the individual to the community. It did not contemplate the creation of those "Little Italies" and "slums" which arose through an instinct for social defense, but of creating communities with Italian priests and Italian schools, the preservation of the mother tongue; hospitals; Italian organizations and even Italian finances.

A world such as today's, which is both levelling and pluralistic, which has lost the concept of country as a primitive value after two World Wars, does not generally accept such an idea. But at that time it was a practical and valid idea. Its validity was demonstrated by the fact that where colonies were established according to Bishop Scalabrini's plan, as for example in the State of Rio Grande do Sul, in Brazil, we saw the gradual development, of an Italian population which peacefully and deeply transformed themselves into an integral part of Brazil's civil and religious society.

If Scalabrini's ideas remained in large part only a plan, it was mainly due to the myopic politics of the Italian government which did not tolerate any interference in its migration affairs by the clergy. It opposed "intransigent" Catholics, fought against any form of collaboration between Catholics and the ruling political class. This contemptible clerical and anticlerical prejudice strangled his great apostolic and human initiatives. Here in the barriers raised by the Roman Question before his dream of Conciliation we find the roots of Scalabrini's suffering.

What is left after considering these elements which were conditioned by time and historical circumstances is the meeting of Bishop Scalabrini and his Missionaries with the immigrant. To them, the immigrant was a man with rights and needs, and therefore to be loved. Vatican Council II later defined these rights and needs as the "dignity and integral vocation of the human person, as well as the well-being of the entire society"²⁵, which transcended the watertight compartments into which man and society were about to be placed

²⁴ Giovanni Battista Scalabrini, *Il disegno di legge*, etc., p. 245.

²⁵ Vatican Council II, *Gaudium et Spes*, 63.

in the name of ill interpreted "autonomies", and the distinctions which keep people away from true human and social realities.

CHAPTER II

THE FIRST YEARS OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE
MISSIONARIES OF ST. CHARLES
(Scalabrinians)

1. The General Government

Until the end of 1888, Father Francesco Zaboglio functioned as the Vicar General of the Congregation founded in Rome by Bishop Scalabrini¹. At the beginning he was Secretary General², and in October 1890 he was appointed Vicar General of the Congregation.³

On November 19, 1892, Father Bartolomeo Rolleri succeeded him as Vicar General, while in March 1891 the Abbot Alphonse Villeneuve, an American priest who had headed his Congregation's French-Canadian parish in Albany, N.Y., and who was no longer a member of the Congregation, was named its Procurator General to the Holy See⁴.

2. The Management of the Mother House

With the first missionary expedition on July 12, 1888, the Mother House remained practically empty; but in a short while it was completely occupied again. From that date to the end of 1889, sixteen priests or seminarians soon to be ordained priests and fifteen lay brothers entered the Congregation. Of the first sixteen, twelve sailed for various Missions and four retired. Of the fifteen lay brothers, seven entered the Missions and eight retired or were not judged suitable.

Applications for admission were numerous, but Bishop Scalabrini did not approve them readily. "*The Mother House*," he declared, "*is filling. At the present time we have four priests, two seminarians studying theology and six lay brothers. I have sent home several from each of the three groups.*"⁵

We must note, however, that, despite his good-will, he often let himself be influenced by the insistent requests sent him by the Missionaries who were not sufficiently numerous to perform their difficult yet necessary work.

Nevertheless he continued to do his best not to leave any Missionary isolated. "*I think I have set a wise rule: an isolated priest amid a clergy which, at least at the beginning cannot befriend him, would find himself in an awkward position*

¹ Cfr. Mario Francesconi. *Inizi della Congregazione Scalabriniana (1886-1888)*, Roma, 1969, p. 18.

² Cfr. Letter by G.B. Scalabrini to Father F. Zoboglio, Piacenza, December 3, 1888 (Arch. Seminario Maggiore di Como).

³ Cfr. *L'Amico del Popolo* (Piacenza), October 25, 1890.

⁴ Cfr. *L'Amico del Popolo* (Piacenza), April 8, 1891.

⁵ Letter by G.B. Scalabrini to Father F. Zaboglio, Piacenza, postmarked October 17, 1888 (Arch. Seminario Maggiore di Como).

*and would soon lose courage. He must have at least one companion."*⁶

To Father Zaboglio's requests he replied:

*"In each mission there should be at least two priests and a lay brother. I insist on this point for the reasons I have already given you. But you Missionaries are a little strange: It seems that you think that the Congregation has existed for twenty years, whereas it is only one year old! I must try the Missionaries before sending them out."*⁷

The Missionaries' preparation was often rushed and inadequate due to the urgency of the requests for more of them, and because of the scarcity of trained educators for them. Bishop Scalabrini worried about this. It seemed that none of the Superiors at the Mother House satisfied him entirely. He tried to solve the problem by asking the Jesuits to send him a priest capable of directing the Congregation but they never did⁸, except for those periods when they provided lectures on spirituality⁹. Meanwhile, he had already decided to replace the First Superior, Father Bartolomeo Rolleri, who, in addition to being old, was too rigid and too narrow-minded to train those people already advanced in age, for a missionary life which required solid and deep preparation and complete resilience in their methods and programs.

Bishop Scalabrini insisted in his request sent to the Vicar General of the Company of Jesus:

*"I would like to entrust the direction of the Institute to a member of the Company of Jesus but more precisely to good Father Cossi, who helped me with the foundation of the Congregation, who was its Spiritual Director for some years, and who is highly esteemed by it.... I therefore beg you, Most Reverend Father, to assign him to me for the position I have mentioned... I am asking you this also in the name of His Eminence Cardinal Simeoni, Prefect of the Congregation of Propaganda Fide, who authorized me to write to you in his name, and in the name of the Holy Father, who congratulated me on this idea, and who encouraged me to carry it out."*¹⁰

At the end of July, he went to Modena to see the Provincial Superior of the Jesuits in order *"to ask him once more to send one of their excellent Fathers to be placed at the head of the Institute so as to be sure, as I told him, that the same would be properly managed."*¹¹ But he did not succeed, and his request was denied again at the end of 1893,¹² and once more at the end of 1894.¹³

Being unable to obtain help from outside, Bishop Scalabrini took advantage of

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Letter by G.B. Scalabrini to Father F. Zaboglio, Piacenza, November 9, 1888 (Arch. Seminario Maggiore di Como).

⁸ Letter by Father Franceschini, S.J., to G.B. Scalabrini, December 12, 1890 (Arch. G.S., 541/5).

⁹ Cfr. Letter by G.B. Scalabrini to Father F. Zaboglio, Piacenza, January 1, 1891 (Arch. Seminario Maggiore di Como). "Father Rolleri," adds Bishop Scalabrini, "has received, like the saint he is, the notice that soon he must give up his position."

¹⁰ Letter by G.B. Scalabrini to Father A.M. Anderledy, S.J., Piacenza, May 27, 1891 (Arch. G.S., 541/6).

¹¹ Letter by G.B. Scalabrini to Cardinal G. Simeoni, rough draft without date, written in August 1891 (Arch. G.S., 5/1).

¹² Cfr. Letter by L. Martin, S.J., to G.B. Scalabrini, Fiesole, December 5, 1893 (Arch. G.S., 541/8).

¹³ Cfr. Letter by Father P. Colbachini to G.B. Scalabrini, Bassano, October 9, 1894 (Arch. G.S., 541/8): "On the reverse you will find a letter which I received yesterday from Rome (sent by the Undersecretary of the Sacred Congregation of Extraordinary Affairs. Ed. Note), in which Your Excellency is advised to write directly to His Eminence, the Secretary of State, to obtain two Fathers of the Company to assume the direction of your Institute. I have no doubt that Your Excellency, more than myself, aware of the convenience of this provision, will not lose time to obtain it."

Father Zaboglio's return to Italy, to entrust him, toward the end of 1892, with the direction of the Mother House. While Father Rolleri was nominated Vicar General and Administrator of the Congregation on November 19, 1892.¹⁴

As Vicar General, Father Rolleri limited his work to transmitting Bishop Scalabrini's orders, and acted as little more than a corresponding secretary. Even as Administrator, his tasks were very limited. He did nothing more than solicit, receive and register the requests for the celebration of Masses, and the requests sent by the Missionaries together with their contributions for the support of the Mother House. As a matter of fact, he remained in Piacenza, and Father Zaboglio, who had to absent himself for several months for reasons of health, was compelled to direct the Institute through Father Rolleri.

Thus new confusion arose because each had different ideas. It was also a paradox that a Vicar General should act as the vice-director of one of his subordinates.

In the meantime, Father Giuseppe Molinari who, because of his poor health could not adapt himself to the climate abroad, returned from his Mission. He replaced Father Zaboglio who had gone to Genoa on December 31, 1893, to start a mission there.¹⁵

Soon after, Father Rolleri wrote to Father Zaboglio somewhat haughtily:

"The Institute is no longer ad instar religiosorum, but is in fact religious. There is perfect adherence to the Regulations, and those who cannot accept them leave, or are sent away There is a sharp separation between priests, seminarians and lay brothers. Father Molinari is very respectful, and submissive and shows the proper attitude for his work. There is harmony."¹⁶

Father Giuseppe Molinari remained Rector of the House until March 10, 1900, when he resigned because of his ill health. He died on May 31, of the same year.

3. The Mother House of Via Francesco Torta

The seat of the Piacenza Institute had been, since March 1888, in the ancient Pious Retreat Center near the Church of St. Teresa; but now it had become inadequate.¹⁷

Bishop Scalabrini thought of buying a nearby property from the Urban Seminary, the former convent of the Capuchin Sisters or of St. Paul, in Via S. Paolo (later renamed Via Giuseppe Nicolini and now Via Francesco Torta).

"Bishop Scalabrini thought of adapting it for his new Congregation of the Missionaries for Italian Immigrants. Therefore, having obtained permission from the Sacred Congregation of the Council (June 1, 1892, letter No. 26091/13 A.S.), and authorization from the Ministry of Grace and Justice (Decree of March 12, 1892), he made an agreement with the Seminary by which it would transfer the

¹⁴ Decree by Msgr. G.B. Scalabrini, November 19, 1892 (Arch. GIS., 6/2).

¹⁵ Cfr. Letter by Father G. Molinari to Father O. Alussi, Piacenza, December 12, 1893 (Arch. G.S., 541/8).

¹⁶ Letter by Father B. Rolleri to Father F. Zaboglio, February 7, 1894 (Arch. G.S., 541/8).

¹⁷ Cfr. Letter by Father B. Rolleri to Father F. Zaboglio, May 4, 1891 (Arch. G.S., 541/6).

former convent to Father Roller, Rector of the Institute of the Missionaries, who in turn would build a new addition to the Seminary. This was done, although the transfer of the property was never registered Bishop Scalabrini, as Superior of the Institute, modernized the old convent for sixty thousand lire."¹⁸

The convent of the Capuchin Nuns, built in 1616, was occupied until it was suppressed by Napoleon in 1810. Since then it had been the diocesan Seminary. The Church of St. Charles, attached to the convent, had been built in 1614. It was closed to the faithful in 1810, and reopened as a public oratory in 1853. Since 1887 it was directed for a time by Msgr. Masnini de Cornati who opened an ecclesiastical college in the old convent which the Seminary had leased to him.¹⁹ It was restored by Bishop Scalabrini and rededicated on October 22, 1893.

The members of the Institute occupied the former convent in July, 1892. Bishop Scalabrini named the House after Christopher Columbus because that year marked the fourth centenary of America's discovery.

*"I decided to open here in Piacenza a House named after Christopher Columbus - a House where the Missionaries wishing to dedicate themselves to the assistance of Italian emigrants can come from every part of Italy, and where the new apostles for our faraway brothers can prepare themselves. The House is also destined to greet those foreign-born Italians who, having embraced the Sacred Ministry, wish to live for some time in Italy in order to know the country and to make it better known and loved by our countrymen who have gone abroad."*²⁰

4. Plan for an Italian-American Seminary

The last words of Bishop Scalabrini's letter referred to his plan to found an Italian-American seminary for the children of Italian emigrants who wished to embrace the priesthood and dedicate themselves to a ministry among them.

In the very first "Project of the Institute of Missionaries" he expressed his intention of establishing it "in an American city for the formation of an indigenous clergy dedicated solely to Italians."²¹ Later, he changed his idea: the Institute he was about to create in Piacenza was also dedicated to the

¹⁸ Pro-memoria by Father D. Vicentini, without date (Arch. G.S., 541/66). Regarding the transfer of property, Bishop Scalabrini wrote On January 24, 1898 to Cardinal Ledochowski: "The location of said Institute has not yet been registered. A privately written agreement was made between the Missionaries and the Seminary, to which it belonged, and thus we went on until this day in order to avoid the expense of a contract" (Arch. G.S., 541/71), and he added the proposition that it could be registered in the name of Propaganda Fide, but nothing was done about it, and the Bishop died before the formalities could be carried out. A quarrel was in progress for a long period between the start of Piacenza Seminary and the Christopher Columbus Institute, and ended only in 1909, with the sentence pronounced by the Sacred Congregation of the Religious during the General Congregation of January 19, 1909: "Allatis rationibus hinc inde mature perpensis, ex hactenus adductis non constare de iuribus Curiae Placentinae" (Arch. G.S., 541/71), and with a transaction of 3,500 lire on a bond of 10,000 lire not paid by Bishop Scalabrini, between the Superior General, Father D. Vicentini, and the administration of the Curia Piacentina Can. Antonio Saletti, on October 26, 1909 (Arch. G.S., 541/71).

¹⁹ Cfr. the typewritten memoir of Father C. Molinari: "The Mother House of the Scalabrinians in Piacenza" (Piacenza, 1952) Arch. G.S.; 541/1).

²⁰ Letter by G.B. Scalabrini to Abbot A. Villeneuve, Piacenza, April 1, 1891 (Arch. G.S., 5/2).

²¹ G.B. Scalabrini, Project for an Association to provide for the spiritual needs of the Italians emigrated to America, February 16, 1887 (Cfr. M. Francesconi, 22. cit., p. 29).

instruction "of those young men of the Italian colonies who showed an inclination to embrace the priesthood."²² The Pope approved this project on November 14, 1887.²³

On December 16, 1887, the Archbishop of New York, Michael A. Corrigan, suggested that Bishop Scalabrini accept some young men at the Piacenza Institute who, once ordained, would exercise their ministry among Italian immigrants in New York. He would pay for their seminary education or they would study theology for two years in Piacenza and spend another two years in New York where they would learn English and acquaint themselves with American society.²⁴

As we already know, five seminarians were sent by the Bishop of Hartford, Connecticut, to become diocesan priests. They arrived in Piacenza in 1890.²⁵ But this was an isolated episode. There was no plan (in Piacenza) for preparing priests who were to dedicate themselves to the immigrants. Instead they would be attached to the American diocese from which they came. Bishop Scalabrini saw in this process a loss of strength and personnel, practically useless for the work envisioned. In fact the five priests educated in Piacenza did not fulfill his ideal of forming "an indigenous clergy" dedicated solely to Italian immigrants to become members of the Congregation. The first Missionaries had already taken some steps in this direction, and in October 1888, Father Morelli wrote to Bishop Scalabrini:

"I am submitting to Your Excellency the following project. When teaching christian doctrine we chose some boys whom we think possess a peaceful character and are inclined to ecclesiastical life. They are already working well in our church in a praiseworthy manner. Although they are poor, they should have no apparent difficulty in paying two hundred and fifty three hundred lire per year for their education. Could Your Excellency open an American House in Piacenza, or accept them in one of the diocesan seminaries? I am sure that they could all pay almost three hundred lire in advance, after which I could send Your Excellency others who would in time constitute an Italian-American clergy attached to our Congregation. With the expectation that Your Excellency will accept our plan, we have already begun to gather about ten such boys and are teaching them Latin in our evening classes. If we find adherents to this idea we could enlarge it, and send Your Excellency a goodly number of young men each year. This work will be greatly appreciated in Italy. The young men whom we would send speak English quite well, and perhaps they might be useful to Italy in this regard also. If Your Excellency approves our idea, please send us about twenty copies of the first book of Latin."²⁶

Bishop Scalabrini penned the following note on this letter: "*I approve and praise your work. I shall send the books.*" His thought on this matter can be found in a letter he sent to Father Zaboglio on January 20, 1891, in which he

²² Letter by Bishop Scalabrini to Cardinal G. Simeoni, Piacenza, September 21, 1887 (Cfr. M. Francesconi, *op. cit.*, p. 51).

²³ Cfr. M. Francesconi, *op. cit.*, p. 26).

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 66

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 137. Cfr. letter by G.B. Scalabrini to Cardinal G. Simeoni, Levico, July 11, 1890 (Arch. G.S., 541/5).

²⁶ Letter by Father F. Morelli to G.B. Scalabrini, New York, October 10, 1888 (Arch. G.S., 551/1).

declared that the Provincial Superior in the United States had done well in buying property on Staten Island, near New York, because there a seminary could be built for the young Italian-Americans. There they could finish their college education, study philosophy, and later study theology in Piacenza. He received a request to accept two priests who had been professors in the seminaries of Bergamo and Brescia, and who wished to continue teaching. He also received a request to accept two students ready to begin their philosophical studies. If there had been a suitable location which could be made ready, he would have sent them immediately. Thus, with four or five other young Americans, the project could have begun.²⁷

Father Zaboglio remarked that the property acquired by Fr. Morelli was "*nothing but dry land and woods,*" and that of the three thousand and seven hundred dollars it cost, only seven hundred fifty dollars had been paid. "*This debt, together with other debts, puts the school, for the time being, in dreamland.*"²⁸

Nevertheless Scalabrini insisted that one of the two priests - who later entered the Congregation - once arriving in New York, should be charged "with the instruction of those boys who showed a vocation for priesthood. Before sending them to Piacenza it is necessary to try them in America. They should come to Piacenza only when more mature and after acquiring a goodly knowledge of Italian and Latin so that there, they would begin to study philosophy and theology."²⁹

Father Zaboglio first put forward the financial difficulties involved: "*We cannot think about seminaries here as long as in New York alone we have debts exceeding two hundred thousand dollars.*"³⁰ Bishop Scalabrini, for the time being, resigned himself to the situation: "*Let us not talk about the New York seminary for the moment. When all the debts for our various foundations will have been paid we shall talk about it again.*"³¹ But he soon returned to this issue. On December 21, 1891, Father Zaboglio felt obliged to advance other objections against the establishment of a seminary in New York. He thought that it should be established in Italy where it would be under the direct supervision of Rome and the Superior General. Experience had taught him that the best American priests had been educated in Italy or elsewhere in Europe, and that in Italy it would have been much easier to find good teachers. Moreover, training boys for the priesthood there would be less costly.³²

Scalabrini replied, on March 4, 1892, that he did not think it convenient (at Piacenza) to keep priests, seminarians and servant girls in the same home as though it were Noah's Ark.

²⁷ Cfr. Letter by G.B. Scalabrini to Father F. Zaboglio Piacenza, January 20, 1891 (Arch. Seminario Maggiore di Como).

²⁸ Letter by Father F. Zaboglio to Father B. Rolleri, New York, February 20, 1891 (Arch. G.S., 550/1). That property was sold by Father Morelli at the end of 1892 for \$8001 (Cfr. letter by Father F. Morelli to G.B. Scalabrini, New York, without date, toward the end of 1892. Arch. G.S., 551/4).

²⁹ Letter by G.B. Scalabrini to Father F. Zaboglio, Piacenza, March 1, 1891 (Arch. Seminario Maggiore di Como).

³⁰ Letter by Father F. Zaboglio to Father B. Rolleri, Boston, Mass., March 7, 1891 (Arch. G.S., 550/1).

³¹ Letter by G.S. Scalabrini to Father F. Zaboglio, Piacenza, March 29, 1891 (Arch. Seminario Maggiore di Como).

³² Cfr. Letter by Father F. Zaboglio to G.B. Scalabrini, New Orleans, La., December 21, 1891 (Arch. G.S., 550/1).

His idea, shared by the Pope, was that young Italian-Americans should first take courses in America and then complete their studies in Italy. Thus their vocation would be proved, they would not lose precious time and the Congregation would not face heavy sacrifices with little probability of obtaining positive results. He would soon send Father Francesco Beccherini to begin teaching, "*and thus start as best we can the little seminary of which we have spoken so many times.*"³³

Two months later he repeated: "*I urge you to think about the seminary affair. I repeat, that sending boys still too young to the seminary is neither useful nor convenient. If we can begin with this idea, then let us discuss plans, make a decision and proceed cautiously.*"³⁴ But at that time, as we shall see, conditions of the Scalabrinian Missions in New York were financially deteriorating. Therefore, both because of a lack of funds and a scarcity of personnel, Bishop Scalabrini had to abandon his project and limit himself to opening "a small apostolic college" for boys in a wing of the Mother House which was partially built for this purpose in 1896. Some children of Italian immigrants residing in the United States and Brazil entered this college, but their number was always small in relation to the number of Italian-born boys who wanted to enter the seminary, small, that is, until Bishop Scalabrini's plan to erect seminaries in America was realized many years later.

5. Perpetual Vows

We have seen that Bishop Scalabrini, agreeing with the Holy See, had given his Institute the name "Pious Society" or "Religious Congregation". This designation, however, was improper because its members took temporary vows for five years, after which they were free to renew their pledge or leave the Congregation.

During the Congregation's first years Bishop Scalabrini and his more zealous Missionaries realized that their temporary form of association, although suitable for attending to the most urgent needs of the Missions, was not adequate for its greatest demands: "*Show always that your zeal is equal only to your unselfishness, that all your hopes are placed in God, that you expect a recompense from God alone and that you will never stop your missionary work so long as there are unhappy people needing consolation, ignorant people needing instruction, poor people needing evangelization, and souls needing salvation.*"³⁵

Some members of other religious orders were consulted, among them were Father Francesco Saverio Rondina, S.J., editor of Civiltà Cattolica and formerly a Missionary for many years in the United States; Father Cossi, S.J., who had followed the birth and the development of the Congregation, and a Carmelite, Father Gerardo di San Giuseppe who loved to be considered a member of the

³³Cfr. Letter by G.B. Scalabrini to Father F. Zaboglio, Piacenza, April 3, 1892 (Arch. Seminario Maggiore di Como).

³⁴ Letter by G.B. Scalabrini to Father F. Zaboglio, Piacenza, May 3, 1892 (Arch. Seminario Maggiore di Como).

³⁵ G.B. Scalabrini, speech to the Missionaries about to leave, December 30, 1890 (Arch. G.S., 3018).

Scalabrinian Institute. When, on September 1894, Father Rondina preached the spiritual exercises to the seminarians of the Istituto Cristoforo Colombo, Bishop Scalabrini announced the introduction of perpetual vows. Although the 1888 Regulations had been approved by the Holy See, he wanted to act at this time on his own, as an experiment, before presenting the new Regulations for Pontifical approval. However, he immediately informed the Cardinal Prefect of the Propaganda Fide:

"I wish to inform Your Eminence that the good Jesuit, Father Rondina, preached the Spiritual Exercises to the young men aspiring to the Missions in America. The results have been excellent. I conferred with him regarding the reform of the Regulations, and I think that it is necessary to introduce into the Institute simple but perpetual vows. This and other important changes that I shall soon submit to Your Eminence through the same Father Rondina in their proper form, have already been easily accepted by said young men - the latter to my great satisfaction. It is therefore extremely necessary to recall those who have already left without taking these vows so that they be replaced by those who, having made their regular novitiate, offer us a moral guaranty of success."³⁶

In a rough copy of a letter addressed by Bishop Scalabrini to Father Domenico Vicentini, at that time Provincial Superior in the United States, we find this notation:

"Almost all the young ones approved enthusiastically. On the 15th of October, they will begin a kind of novitiate, and on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception they will pronounce their perpetual vows. I found them very happy about it. As for me, it is the first time that I have had such great faith in the future. I find in this, deep consolation. As soon as the Regulations are printed as modified, and accepted by the Holy See, they will be made available to the other Missions, so that those who wish to be admitted will, if accepted, be permanently bound to the Institute. Those who do not wish will be replaced by these young men whom Father Rondina considers the best in possessing the elements of a saintly disposition."³⁷

Other interesting news is found in a letter addressed to Father Rondina on October 12, 1894:

"I wanted to be sure that the willingness of our young men to accept the new Regulations was not the result of temporary fervor aroused in them by the words they had heard and considered at the time of the Exercises. After twenty days, I therefore questioned and examined them one by one. Then I questioned and examined them once more before coming for a Visit. I have seen that, except for the two or three you have mentioned, all the others are firm in their resolve. Let us hope for the best. I received letters from my secretary informing me that the draft of the Regulations which you revised and corrected, have arrived. I shall attend to the rest as soon as this Sacred Visit is over."³⁸

On the morning of December 8, 1894, half an hour before going to the Church of San Carlo to receive the first perpetual vows in the Institute, Bishop

³⁶ Letter by G.B. Scalabrini to Cardinal M. Ledochowski, Piacenza, September 26, 1894 (ArCh. G.S., 7/2).

³⁷ G.B. Scalabrini, rough draft without date (Arch. G.S., 7/2).

³⁸ G.B. Scalabrini, rough draft, Castel S. Giovanni, October 12, 1894 (Arch. G.S., 5/2).

Scalabrini jotted down this note in his diary:

"December 8, 1894, 7 A.M. I am going to receive the perpetual vows of the Missionaries. I expect them to conduct themselves like those who join the Capuchin Order. During the first four years they are to remain faithful to the Congregation, but the Congregation can reject them. Thus their vows would be annulled without requiring a dispensation. To be dispensed from their vows they must have a special reason, approved by the Superior, such as no longer being properly motivated, being ill, having to support their parents, or other reason approved by the Superior General. Holy Immaculate Virgin, bless them all:

+ G.S. Bishop."³⁹

Soon after writing this note, the Bishop assisted by Msgr. G.B. Vinati and Msgr. Costa went to the Church to celebrate Mass. After the Gospel he asked the future Missionaries to recite aloud the apostolic Symbol, and he based his speech on the Creed, on the identification card, on the password of the Apostles and on the faith which is the highest virtue of the Missionaries. At the moment of Communion, five priests, eleven seminarians and a lay brother expressed their vows of perpetual profession to their ministry. The priests were: Fathers Giuseppe Molinari, Oreste Alussi, Ermenegildo Battaglia, Francesco Brescianini and Faustino Consoni. The seminarians were: Riccardo Lorenzoni, Bartolomeo Marenchino, Antonio Seganfredo, Natale Pigato, Marco Simoni, Luigi Lango, Pietro Dotto, Stefano Franco and Antonio Demo. The lay Brother was Pietro Pugnetti.⁴⁰

The new Regulations were promulgated on January 20, 1895. At the conclusion of his speech, exhorting the Missionaries to observe the Rules for the strength and the development of the Institute, for this reciprocal help, for their comfort in suffering and for divine reward, the Founder said:

"This is the ardent wish of a man who, after deep reflection, and with the help of wise and pious men, has established these Rules approved ad experimentum under the loving auspices of the Immaculate Virgin, of Her pure Spouse Saint Joseph and of the glorious St. Charles to whom the Congregation is particularly devoted.

A.M.D.G. Piacenza, January 20, feast of the Holy Name of Jesus, 1895.

+ Gio. Battista
Bishop of Piacenza,
Superior General."

Evidently the approval ad experimentum was only an Episcopal one, so that for a certain time two sets of Regulations were actually in force in the Institute: the Rules of 1888, observed by those members who had expressed an intention to renew their pledge after five years, and those of 1895⁴¹, approved by the Bishop for the members who took perpetual vows. As we have already seen, Bishop

³⁹ Arch. G.S., 7/2.

⁴⁰ Cfr. Chronicle of the Mother House (Arch. G.S., 7/2).

⁴¹ Regola della Congregazione dei Missionari di S. Carlo per gli italiani emigrati (Piacenza, 1895), p. 85.

Scalabrini expected to gradually replace all those members who had pledged their service for five years with those who had taken perpetual vows; but in reality, the need of the already established Missions, which could not be abandoned in any case, induced him to make many exceptions to his plan. He therefore accepted, though regretfully, till the end of his life, the coexistence of two sets of regulations in his Congregation.

It seems that he occasionally hinted to some priests, who appeared hesitant to pronounce total and perpetual vows, that it would not be too difficult to dispense those vows, and that he had allowed dispensations in lieu of the Preamble to the Perpetual Vows, as indicated in the note written in his diary on December 8, 1894.⁴²

But this does not question his intention. In fact, when the Prefect of Propaganda Fide asked him why perpetual vows were not contemplated in the Rules of 1888, Scalabrini replied:

"I am sending the clarification you requested regarding perpetual vows for our Missionaries.

"These simple perpetual vows are what bind the individual to the Congregation and not viceversa.

"The Rules of the Congregation itself were approved by the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide ad experimentum for a five-year period on September, 1888 (No. 3441). Therefore they ceased to be in force, or rather to be official, on September, 1893. Yet they continued to be observed and are observed as before, except that the vows instead of being renewed for five years, became perpetual, as I mentioned. The change was suggested by experience, and advised by wise and virtuous men, among whom I am happy to include the worthy and illustrious Father Francesco Rondina, S.J., who spent a great part of his life in the American Missions.

"The results have demonstrated the wisdom of the change, since the Congregation has derived many advantages from it.

"The Sacred Congregation may wish to reconfirm these changes and approve the Regulations which I am dutifully submitting to you, and which are in substance the same that had been approved in 1888. I wish however, that this time the approval were also ad experimentum, and that it be extended for a period not to exceed ten years."⁴³

Cardinal Ledochowski promised to submit the new Regulations for examination.⁴⁴ They were presented to Cardinal Francesco Satolli, President of the Commission for the Examination of the Rules of New Institutes, on August 21, 1900.⁴⁵

The opinion of this Commission however was not favorable.

"The Commission, after careful examination, has expressed the opinion that it would not be convenient to approve the new Regulations, which differ in some parts from the original ones, especially regarding the vows to be pronounced by

⁴² See above, p.16

⁴³ Letter by G.B. Scalabrini to Cardinal M. Ledochowski, Piacenza, March 23, 1898 (Arch. G.S., 7/4).

⁴⁴ Cfr. Letter by G.B. Scalabrini to Cardinal M. Ledochowski, Piacenza, June 8, 1900 (Arch. G.S., 129).

⁴⁵ Cfr. Letter by Msgr. L. Veccia to Cardinal F. Satolli, Rome, August 21, 1900 (Arch. G.S., 129).

the members of the Congregation. These vows, instead of being valid for five years, are to be perpetual. The perpetuity of the vows is not only contrary to the nature of the Institute which, providentially created for the assistance of Italian emigrants, would cease to exist when migration ceased, or would be transformed into something different, but also contrary to the kind of life which the majority of the Missionaries must lead; away from their Superiors and isolated in a foreign land.

"The Commission, in the interest of the Institute whose importance and necessity it recognizes, is of the opinion that said Institute, in order to better accomplish its purposes, should put aside not only perpetual vows but also temporary ones. It suggests that, for the above-mentioned reasons, the members of the Society bind themselves to the Institute by a simple determination to persevere, as do those of the Society of Foreign Missions, or even by an oath as done in the Society of African Missions, and subject themselves as much as possible, to the Superiors of the places where they go, not only for the benefit of the individuals themselves, who will be isolated and away from their Superiors, but also for the benefit of the parochial ministry they are called to exercise among the imutigrants."⁴⁶

Bishop Scalabrini replied:

'As for the observations made by the Commission on the approval of the Rules, I dare only say that I would very much dislike to change what has already brought about the growth of the Congregation. At any rate, once I have expounded my reasons, I shall always be devoted and obedient to my Superiors' orders."⁴⁷

On January 23, 1901, the Cardinal Prefect of the Propaganda Fide wrote the following notation at the bottom of the letter: "Expectantur ulteriora"; and therefore he postponed a final decision until the matter was again examined. This was agreeable to Bishop Scalabrini.

From the documents in our possession, it does not appear that Bishop Scalabrini had given his reasons in writing, but it is certain that he spoke personally to Cardinal Ledochowski on his return from a visit to the United States Missions. This is demonstrated by the following letter dated January 8, 1902:

'As per our verbal agreement, I am sending to Your Eminence the names of the Missionaries of St. Charles who had taken vows for five years, and who at the end of that period had obtained from the Sacred Congregation the patent of Apostolic Missionaries with the attached faculties. They have now permanently entered the Congregation of St. Charles with a sworn pledge to dedicate themselves to the spiritual care of Italian immigrants, to the Superior General and to the local Superior, according to the Rules of the Congregation. They therefore need the patent of beneplacitum with the usual faculties assigned by the Holy Apostolic See."⁴⁸

From the tone of this request prepared by Bishop Scalabrini, after a verbal agreement with the Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda Fide, we can infer that the

⁴⁶ Arch. G.S., 129

⁴⁷ Letter by, G.B. Scalabrini to Cardinal Ledochowski, Piacenza, January 21, 1901 (Arch. G.S., 9/2).

⁴⁸ Letter by G.B. Scalabrini to Cardinal M. Ledochowski, Piacenza, January 8, 1902 (Arch. G.S., 9/2).

Sacred Congregation, through its Prefect, gave a de facto juridical value to the vows of the Missionaries of St. Charles, according to the Regulations of 1895, and hence implicitly gave its approval to the Rules. The Missionaries, in fact, for whom the patent of Apostolic Missionaries was requested, were the same who earlier had taken the vows ad quinquennium It is now said that they have permanently entered the Congregation of St. Charles which implies a perpetual tie, since no permanent aggregation is allowed without a permanent cause. What is the nature of this permanent tie? In the letter it is indicated as a sworn promise: an expression that could refer both to an oath to persevere and to fidelity through perpetual vows. In our case the sworn promise seems identifiable with a permanent adherence to religious vows.

"In fact it is said that Missionaries entered the Congregation of St. Charles permanently 'with a sworn promise according to the Rules of the same Congregation'. Now, the Rules of the Congregation establishing permanent incorporation are those of 1895, (art. 3 of Chapter IV), that is, those which the Commission created for examination but failed to approve. Therefore when the Sacred Congregation, on January 25, 1902, accepted Bishop Scalabrini's request, it implicitly ratified, in a way, what the Orator had said. The question assumes an even greater importance because Bishop Scalabrini's request was communicated in an audience with the Holy Father. In fact at the end of the letter which the Pope sent to the Congregation of Propaganda Fide, there is the notation: "Aud. 13 Jan. - Presbyteris memoratis conceditur decretum missionarii apostolici ad honorem cum facultatibus propria missionarium instituti a S. Carlo."⁴⁹

That the Founder had not changed his intention is confirmed by the "General Rules of the Mother House of the Congregation of the Missionaries of St. Charles for Italian Emigrants," approved by him on February 4, 1904. These Rules describe the principal purposes of the novitiate, which were:

"to always ascertain more and more, both for the Novice and for the Community, that the Missionary has a religious vocation, and to prepare him through study and through convenient tests for living the three perpetual vows of Chastity, Obedience and Poverty, by which he remains bound to the Congregation for life."⁵⁰

6. The Patron Saint and the Cardinal Protector

On March 15, 1892, Bishop Scalabrini sent a circular letter "to the Missionaries for the Italians in the Americas" - a fifteen-page booklet which is one of the most important documents on the spirit of the Congregation which the Founder wished to impart to his Missionaries.⁵¹

Congratulating them for the good work which they had already done in less than four years, he urged them to persevere along the path they had entered

⁴⁹ Marco Caliaro, *La Pia. Società dei Missionari di San Carlo per gli italiani emigrati* (Rome, 1956), pp. 77-79.

⁵⁰ Regolamento Generale per la Casa Madre della Congregazione dei Missionari di S. Carlo per gli emigrati italiani (Piacenza, 2904), Appendice Seconda, No. 3°, p. 24 (Arch. G.S., 134/1).

⁵¹ G.B. Scalabrini, Ai Missionari per gli italiani nelle Americhe il Vescovo di Piacenza (Piacenza, 1892).-

toward the vocation they had received from God. They would succeed by always remaining united to Christ through piety, faith and grace. Their union with Christ and their consequent brotherhood were to be the supreme principles from which their lives would be formed, and their actions derive their efficacy. This union would be reached through humility, meekness and reciprocal acceptance, by an effort to preserve spiritual unity through the bonds of peace. They were to also promote this peace, the fruit of charity and observance with other priests: loving them, respecting them and profiting by their experience. Obedience was the main rule of the Missionaries - obedience, first of all, to the Bishops, who were responsible for all apostolic activity. No enterprise should be started without their approval if they wanted to obtain God's blessings. They had to educate the immigrants to obey their Bishop especially through their own obedience, which was to serve as an example. Through this union with their Bishop, their union with the Pope (from whom their mission had derived) would also be strengthened.

*"Great abnegation on your part, great love for discipline, complete, generous and continual obedience to your superiors, and above all to the Roman Pontiff - this is what constitutes the beauty, the honor, the strength of the humble Congregation of which you are the first members."*⁵²

The Founder continued then to impart instructions to the Provincial Superior who had to send to the Superior General a detailed account every six months, watch over the observance of the rules, periodically visit individual Houses, and gather the local superiors together once a year in order to discuss with them the problems of the Missions, and agree on a unified pastoral method of action. Local Superiors had the primary task of "cultivating and increasing in their subordinates the spirit of Our Lord Jesus Christ - a spirit of humility, sacrifice, meekness and charity."⁵³

He then urged the Missionaries to keep alive in the immigrants love for their homeland, avoiding at the same time "anything that could keep them apart from their new fellow-countrymen or from any other followers of the faith."⁵⁴

Following a warm exhortation to perform their sacred ministry even to the sacrifice of their lives, he extolled as their model, St. Charles Borromeo, the Patron of the Congregation.

He closed with a new exhortation to unity, repeating the thought of St. Paul: *"Act as the Gospel of Christ demands, so that if I should come and see you, or should hear about you from afar, you be constantly in a single spirit, in a single soul."*⁵⁵

In a subsequent short circular sent to the superiors in all the Houses, he decreed that the feast of St. Charles be celebrated in all Missionary

⁵² Ibid., p. 8.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 10.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 11.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 15.

communities and churches and with the greatest solemnity.⁵⁶

On September 30, 1892, Pope Leo XIII nominated Cardinal Agostino Bausa, Archbishop of Florence, as first Cardinal Protector of the Congregation of the Missionaries of Saint Charles.⁵⁷

7. The Departure for the Missions

The second expedition of Missionaries for the emigrants was took place on January 24, 1889, six months after the first expedition on July 12, 1888. The ceremony of giving a crucifix to each Missionary was celebrated by Bishop Scalabrini in the Basilica of St. Antonino. After Mass, the Bishop received the pledge from the Missionaries: Fathers Giuseppe Martini, Luigi Paroli, Giacomo Annovazzi, Oreste Alussi, and Brothers Angelo Armani, Carlo Villa, Giacomo Borsella and Vincenzo Arcelli. He then made a farewell speech, to which Father Luigi Paroli replied in the name of all the departing men. After receiving the crucifix and the Bishop's embrace, they went to the railroad station to go to Le Havre where they embarked for the United States.

Towards the end of the same year, a third expedition to the United States was prepared. The ceremony took place in the Church of St. Raymond on November 20, 1889. Msgr. Domenico Costa celebrated the Mass, and Bishop Scalabrini gave the crucifix to Fathers Giacomo Gambera, Antonio Gibelli, Angelo Chiariglione, Lodovico Martinelli and to lay Brothers Angelo Svanera and Luigi Snider.

The fourth expedition had to wait more than a year. On December 10, 1890, also in the Church of St. Raymond, the crucifix was given to Fathers Domenico Vicentini, Paolo Riva, Pietro Lotti, and to lay Brothers Pietro Marinoni and Giovanni Depiazza. Present at the ceremony were also the first two Scalabrinian Missionaries, Domenico Mantese and Giuseppe Molinari who had had to leave Brazil for health reasons. The other eight Missionaries were accompanied to the United States by the Vicar General, Father Francesco Zaboglio.

On March 20, 1890, Father Luigi Wagnest and Brother Camillo Chiassoni left for the colony "La Agricoltora" of Balvanera (Entra-Rica) in Argentina. This Mission, as we shall see, was short lived.

On March 18, 1891, Father Pietro Bandini with five Sisters of St. Anna who were to staff an Italian hospital inaugurated by Father Felice Morelli, left for the port Mission at New York.

Another group of Missionaries sailed for the United States on September 9, 1891. It was composed of Fathers Ferdinando Santipolo, Beniamino Bertò, Felice Sandri, Giuseppe Strumia, Vincenzo Sciolla, and lay Brothers Giuseppe Defacis, Pietro Defacis, Benedetto Riva and Abbondio Tanzi. On December 15, 1891, they were joined by Fathers Carlo Bertorelli and Vittorio Sovilla. On May

⁵⁶ Cfr. Letter by G.B. Scalabrini to Father B. Roller, Piacenza, October 7, 1892 (Arch. G.S., 6/1).

⁵⁷ Letter by Cardinal M. Rampolla to G.B. Scalabrini, Rome, September 30, 1892 (Arch. G.S., 6/1).

4, 1892, Fathers Giuseppe Pandolfi, Giuseppe Beccherini and Antonio Franchi also left for the United States.

While the ranks of the seminarians were increasing, the influx of priests began to diminish, so that the sailings took place at longer intervals during the years 1893-1895. They became more frequent in 1896, when Missionaries began to depart for Brazil. Until then, after the first expedition of 1888, only Father Giuseppe Marchetti, who sailed at the end of 1894, and Fathers Faustino Consoni and Francesco Brescianini, who sailed on July 19, 1895, were assigned to Brazil.

Among the Missionaries assigned to the United States, we must remember also Fathers Giovanni Chmielinski and Pietro Riva, who sailed on April 24, 1893; Father Ermenegildo Battaglia and Brother Pietro Pugnetti who sailed on February 19, 1895, and Fathers Giuseppe Quadranti and Bartolomeo Marenchino who left on the 25th of September of the same year.

Requests for Missionaries were very numerous. One regarding assistance to Italians living in Eritrea is particularly interesting. On October 2, 1890, Bishop Scalabrini wrote to Cardinal Simeoni:

"Because the present incompetent government does not want to hear about Missions and Missionaries, Colonel Barattieri asked me once more, through others, if I would like to send priests to the Italian soldiers there. I have replied that at the present time I could not make a decision, but that I would have to think about it for a while longer. I am therefore submitting the matter to your wisdom. It is you who must decide. I am inclined to say yes, since it would be easy to obtain the necessary personnel in this case and we could do a lot of good. However, I believe that jurisdiction should be taken from the French Apostolic Delegate, so that the Missionaries should rely directly on Your Eminence as the Prefect of Propaganda Fide or on me."⁵⁸

Cardinal Simeoni answered that nothing could be done on this matter and that it was better to leave things as they were.⁵⁹ Bishop Scalabrini renewed the discussion on July 18, 1891:

"The Italian Government has officially made a proposal which I feel duty-bound to submit for Your approval. The Italian Government would like to replace Father Piscopo, the Military Chaplain and Director of the Orphanage of Massaua (recently discharged for some infraction of military orders with two priests of such knowledge, zeal and integrity of life as to be an example and a spur of worthwhile action in that colony.

One of them would reside permanently near the church that is being erected, and would direct an orphanage which already hosts a goodly number of boys. They risk being dispersed among protestant missions after Father Piscopo (and they would be if we did not take action now) the second priest would be with the troops.

The proposal seems worthwhile, and would be acceptable to me. What is your Eminence's opinion?

⁵⁸ Letter by G.B. Scalabrini to Cardinal Simeoni, Piacenza, October 3, 1890 (Arch. G.S., 4/1).

⁵⁹ Cfr. Letter by Cardinal G. Simeoni to G.B. Scalabrini, Rome, October 22, 1890 (Arch. G.S., 4/1).

I am told that this could be the first step toward the realization of a goal which I have so much at heart: exempting our seminarians from military service, so that they may be Missionaries to the Italian emigrants.

This well-founded hope alone would be enough to raise the proposal to first-grade status, and to induce us to accept it joyfully.

As soon as we send these Chaplains, a church could be built and a permanent orphanage founded. These two things would not only glorify God and the Church in those regions, but would benefit many poor orphans.

Moreover they would refute the accusation, now strengthened by the recall of the Capuchins from Tunis, that the Vatican and the Propaganda Fide favor one nation to the detriment of others. It would be a dutiful denial of a rumor which disturbs many people, and diminishes the high purpose of this great catholic institution (among others). I would be very happy to send Italian priests to Massaua, and to see the erection of churches and orphanages in that city included among the noble and useful works performed through the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide now under your auspices."⁶⁰ (60)

The Prefect of Propaganda Fide replied:

"Although convinced of your good intentions, I must state that the project cannot be initiated because of the grave difficulties it would encounter. You know that Massaua and its territory are part of the Vicariate of Abissinia, which existed there many years before Italian colonization, and which was entrusted to the French Lazarists. Any change of the status quo would cause irritating complications which must be avoided. Under the present circumstances, we have provided for the spiritual needs of the Italians residing there, especially for their military personnel who reside there and in the best possible manner. In addition to sending Fr. Bonomi as Military Chaplain to Massaua, we have ordered that the Apostolic Vicar to Abissinia have among his religious Missionaries Italians capable of exercising their ministry among their countrymen."⁶¹

Bishop Scalabrini replied that he was always glad to obey and that he had prudently related to the Government's Representative the Holy See's negative response.⁶²

8. Sensitization Work

In order to procure assistance for the greatest possible number of emigrants, Bishop Scalabrini dedicated himself to the insistent task of sensitizing the Holy See, the Bishops, the clergy and laity to his work.

We have already seen that on December 7, 1888, he had asked the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide to send a circular to the Italian bishops in order to encourage them to send priests to his Congregation, or at least not to hinder those who wished to join it.⁶³

⁶⁰ Letter by G.B. Scalabrini to Cardinal Simeoni, Piacenza, July 18, 1891, rough draft (Arch. G.S., 5/1).

⁶¹ Letter by Cardinal G. Simeoni to G.B. Scalabrini, Rome, August 13, 1891 (Arch. G.S., 5/1).

⁶² Cfr. Letter by G.B. Scalabrini to Cardinal G. Simeoni, Piacenza, August 20, 1891, rough draft (Arch. G.S., 5/1).

⁶³ Cfr. M. Francesconi, 22. cit., pp. 134 and 137.

The circular, printed on February 27, 1889, said:

"Illustrious and Most Reverend Sir:

I am sure that you are aware of the miserable conditions in which hundreds of thousands of Italian immigrants live in the Americas, and of the grave dangers to which their faith is continually exposed, because of the lack of religious care.

This Congregation has worried more than once about the fate of these unfortunate people, and in its solicitude, it has looked for the best means to alleviate their present suffering and to prepare them for their eternal life.

I could not but joyfully greet the founding of the Congregation of the Missionaries for Italian Immigrants in Piacenza a short while ago, since I believe that it is the most suitable organization for that double task. It has its own rules, recently approved ad experimentum for five years by this Congregation of Propaganda Fide to which the rules in Piacenza have become almost an appendix.

While I have the pleasure of giving you this information, I wish to declare at the same time, that the Holy Father desires that no obstacle be placed before those priests who would like to join the Piacenza Congregation. Rather, they should be helped by the Bishops in any way that their Eminence thinks best.

The example set by some very zealous Bishops who have already recommended this work of God to their clergy would be followed, I hope, by everyone, so that the Holy Father might rejoice in seeing an enterprise which He has so much at heart being fully realized. This enterprise is very welcomed by us. It greatly honors our Religion and pleases so many souls, a goodly number of whom, perhaps, belong to your Diocese, and who would derive great benefits from it."⁶⁴

In October of the same year, Bishop Scalabrini wrote to Cardinal Simeoni that he had heard that some Bishops in Northern Italy had not received this circular, and he feared that it might not have reached Bishops elsewhere. Therefore he asked the Cardinal to send it again to the Bishops, changing a few words and its date.⁶⁵ A few days later he wrote again to Cardinal Simeoni:

"The Sacred Congregation of the Council recently sent a circular to all the Bishops of Italy which forbade them from releasing dimissory letters to priests who wish to go to America. A wise, and opportune measure; many priests believe that it might also apply to those priests who enter our Congregation. It would be good, rather necessary, to send another circular in which it were openly declared that this rule does not apply to priests wishing to belong to the Congregation of the Missionaries for Italians abroad, and that it is rather the wish of the Holy Father that the Bishops not hinder their desire to enter it."⁶⁶

In the answer he received, he was instructed to turn to the Sacred Congregation of the Council itself in order to obtain the declaration he requested.⁶⁷ He repeated his request complaining, that in one diocese, a permit to emigrate had been denied "to some good priests" who had requested

⁶⁴ Printed circular letter by Cardinal G. Simeoni, Rome, February 27, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 3/1).

⁶⁵ Cfr. Letter by G.B. Scalabrini to Cardinal G. Simeoni, Piacenza, October 2, 1890, rough draft (Arch. G.S. 4/1). From the Protocol No. 629 of the Secretariat of Propaganda Fide, it appears that the letter was changed, with the date of October 27, but we do not know whether it was sent or not, due to the difficulty which arose later, as we narrated in the text.

⁶⁶ Letter by G.B. Scalabrini to Cardinal G. Simeoni, Piacenza, October 12, 1890 (Arch. G.S., 4/1).

⁶⁷ Cfr. Letter by Cardinal G. Simeoni to G.B. Scalabrini, Rome, October 25, 1890 (Arch. G.S., 4/1).

permission to enter the Piacenza Congregation for the fifth time. Yet that same diocese was one that contributed most to emigration. He then concluded:

*"And since the Bishop of that diocese had not received the circular, I beg Your Eminence to see to it that it is sent to all the Bishops, according to the assurance that you gave me in your recent letter."*⁶⁸

Cardinal Simeoni promised to send the circular to the Bishop in question, but remarked that the circular contained only an exhortation and not an order.⁶⁹ Still undaunted, Bishop Scalabrini returned to this question at the beginning of 1891⁷⁰ and, finally, a second circular was sent to the Italian Bishops on February 2, 1891. In it we read among other things:

*"This exhortation is now renewed more eagerly, inasmuch as the work in favor of our emigrants, though seemingly a godly thing, is not welcome by certain American Bishops, who do not consider it as they should, i.e., as one of the best forms of the Catholic apostolate in our century, destined to bear, as it has already borne, many fruits for the advantage of the Church and the good of souls. It must not be forgotten, that the care given to those poor people rebounds also to the single dioceses whence they came, because, by keeping alive in their hearts their ancient faith, they will return as exemplary Catholics."*⁷¹

In 1892, Bishop Scalabrini asked the Holy See, through Cardinal Bausa, to institute an annual Lenten collection of money for emigrants. But his first attempt, as shown in the following reply, failed:

"I am reporting the result of the mission you entrusted to me. The Holy Father has shown himself very sympathetic toward the Missions for emigrants, but he has not seen fit to directly support with an Act of his own your request for a special collection. He has given me his reasons, which I must respect without question.

*His Holiness thinks that the Congregation of Propaganda Fide is doing enough in this regard. I can assure you however that the Prefect of the same is favorably inclined to your request."*⁷²

A few months later, following the issuance of the Apostolic Letter, Quarto abeunt saeculo on July 16, 1892, Bishop Scalabrini sent Leo XIII a letter signed by the Metropolitans of several regions of Italy and by fourteen Bishops, again asking him for a collection of money for his institute:

'We dare to beg you, Holy Father, to decree that on the third Sunday of October, following, your venerable letter, and every year thereafter, on the third Sunday of Lent, a collection be taken in all the Italian Churches for said Organization which is working to abolish white slavery, a collection which you have already initiated for an Organization whose goal is to abolish black slavery. The monies so collected could be sent, if you wish, to the Cardinal Protector of the Congregation of the Missionaries for Italian emigrants, which has its principal seat in Piacenza. He could administer and distribute this money according to the needs of said Congregation In this manner the Christopher Columbus

⁶⁸ Letter by G.B. Scalabrini to Cardinal G. Simeoni, Piacenza, November 12, 1890 (Arch. G.S., 4/1).

⁶⁹ Cfr. Letter by Cardinal G. Simeoni to G.B. Scalabrini, Rome, October 3, 1890 (Arch. G.S., 4/1).

⁷⁰ Cfr. Letter by G.B. Scalabrini to Msgr. D. Jacobini, Piacenza, January 7, 1891 (Arch. G.S., 5/1).

⁷¹ Printed circular letter by Cardinal G. Simeoni, Rome, February 2, 1891 (Arch. G.S., 5/1).

⁷² Letter by Cardinal A. Bausa to G.B. Scalabrini, Florence, March 18, 1892 (Arch. G.S., 6/3).

Institute would have a stable and secure existence and would bear better fruits, and in greater abundance. We would be more at ease regarding the fate of our distant brothers. In addition to this, many other enterprises such as churches, schools, hospitals, etc., so urgently needed by them would be developed.

Many priests and lay brothers would feel inspired to fly to their help, and the Congregation of Propaganda Fide itself would derive from this collection important financial and moral benefits in that the future of Catholicism in the young American nations would be assured."⁷³

Not even then was Bishop Scalabrini's appeal, supported by principal Italian Archbishops and Bishops, accepted. It seems that the Holy See had decided to leave everything to the personal responsibility of the Bishop of Piacenza, authorizing him to send to the Italian Bishops the following circular, the second letter he wrote after the circular of 1888⁷⁴:

"Most Reverend Excellency:

I turn to you once more in the hope that you will forgive me if I seem to dare too much.

The Institute of the Missionaries for Italian Emigrants, born five years ago in Piacenza under the auspices of the Holy Father and the Episcopate, has produced, thank God, abundant fruits. Your Excellency is cognizant of the spiritual, moral and material difficulties of our emigrants, scattered in the large forests of Brazil, in the Argentinian Pampa, and among the protestant populations of the United States. They encounter great and often insurmountable obstacles in performing their religious practices, and in preserving the faith of our fathers. Therefore, our poor emigrants either fall into an absolute brutish indifference, or else desert their Catholic banner.

All the Italian Dioceses have given a greater or less number of souls to this painful exodus, and all of these Dioceses, I am happy to say, have contributed to their redemption by furnishing them with material aid and with priests animated by the highest spirit of sacrifice. With this cooperation, we have been able to establish an Institute for Missionaries in Piacenza, and to complete religious programs in several American states, in North America and wherever large groups of Italians are found. But whatever has been accomplished, although considerable, in view of the shortness of time and the scarcity of our means, it is still small in comparison to what remains to be done, and that we cannot do, because we lack greater means and the workers who could replace those who have fallen, or are too exhausted to continue. What has been done must not perish. Other very urgent enterprises, such as the opening of offices for supervision and information at least in the principal ports of embarkation and landing, both in America and in Italy must be started. I must state too, that I frequently receive requests for help from new Missions, and I don't know how to meet them.

I beg Your Excellency to help me in a task too big for my little strength, by asking the clergy to recommend this work to the faithful in their Lenten sermons, and by any other means which you consider appropriate. I address to you this prayer in the name of so many of our distant brothers who, because they lack

⁷³ Letter by G.B. Scalabrini to Pope Leo XIII, rough draft without date (Arch. G.S., 6/3).

⁷⁴ Cfr. M. Francesconi, 92. cit., pp. 70-71.

religious assistance, are constantly in danger of losing their souls. I am sure that Your Excellency, whose zeal is well-known, will deign to grant my request."⁷⁵ (75)

Bishop Scalabrini's idea was moderately accepted by the Holy See only in 1908. Then the Secretariat of State, during the reign of Pius X, permitted all Italian parishes to take a collection on the first Sunday of Lent (and from then on, every year) to help the Society for the Migration Missionaries of St. Anthony of Padua. This Society founded in 1905 by Msgr. Giangiacomo Coccolo, aided emigrants at port sites and during their ocean crossings. Later, with the Motu Proprio *Jam pridem* of March 19, 1914, Pius X ordered that these funds should, hence forward, be dispersed to all the institutions that assisted emigrants.⁷⁶

Regarding the sensitization of the laity toward his word, it is sufficient to mention the successful lectures given by Bishop Scalabrini in Genoa, Rome, Florence, Milan, Lucca, Palermo, Pola, Treviso and Pisa during 1891 - 1892. The purpose of these lectures was to organize local Committees of the St. Raphael Society in various Italian cities.⁷⁷

In 1891 he published a report which he had prepared for the Exposition at Palermo, entitled "On Assistance to National Migration, and on the Institutions Created to Help It." It was a twenty-three page booklet, which during the first year of its circulation had four printings. In it, the author considered emigration as "*part of a complex social question which agitates this century.*"⁷⁸ Having outlined the work done by his Missionaries during the first three years of his Congregation's existence, he observed:

*"An ecclesiastical Institute alone, would not be sufficient to completely assist Italy's emigrants."*⁷⁹

For this reason, he founded an "Association to Assist Italian Migrants", later called the "St. Raphael Society". Its aim was

"to provide proper direction and help to those who have decided to migrate, 1) by informing them about the most fertile land areas and the areas most suitable for employment; 2) to provide religious and civil assistance; 3) to offer them free services at the ports of embarkation; 4) to direct them to the National Committee organized overseas, and to a delegate or correspondent who would receive them at a port of landing and who would help them in the foreign land through the charitable works made all the more necessary by the new dangers to which they were exposed."⁸⁰

He then planned for branches of the Society in principal Italian and American ports, as in Genoa and New York:

"In the future I shall also provide for the emigrants to Brazil and to the Republic

⁷⁵ G.B. Scalabrini, circular letter to the Bishops of Italy, Piacenza, March 13, 1892 (Arch. G.S., 7/1).

⁷⁶ Cf. Antonio Perotti, *Il Pontificio Collegio per l'emigrazione italiana* (Rome, 1970) p. 23.

⁷⁷ Cfr. Antonio Perotti, *La Società italiana di fronte alle prime migrazioni di massa* (Rome, 1968) pp. 92-95.

⁷⁸ Giovanni Battista Scalabrini, *Dell'assistenza alla emigrazione nazionale e degli istituti che vi provvedono* (Piacenza, 1891), pp. 3-4.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

*of Rio de La Plata, by sending Missionaries who, in addition to giving religious assistance, will organize Committees of Assistance especially at ports of landing."*⁸¹

At a time, when Italian Catholicism was officially and rigidly intransigent, Bishop Scalabrini's liberalism urged "*citizens at every social level, and those with different viewpoints to maintain their universal esteem and warm love for their country, and for an illuminated charity*" and to join the St. Raphael Society. That they did what he asked was remarkable indeed. This fact must be emphasized.

It is sufficient to have mentioned the founding of the St. Raphael Society. Bishop Scalabrini considered it an essential addition to his Congregation which attempted to completely assist Italian emigrants. Of this Society much more is said in Father Antonio Perotti's volume: "*The Italian Societies Facing the First Mass Migration*"⁸², which readers are invited to consult.

⁸¹ Ibid., pp. 17-18.

⁸² Ibid., p. 14.

CHAPTER III

THE FIRST SCALABRINIAN MISSION IN NEW YORK

1. The Church of the Most Precious Blood

The Scalabrinian Missionaries, Fathers Felice Morelli and Amos Vincenzo Astorri, and Brother Pietro Pizzolotto, reached North America in the summer of 1888. They landed in New York on July 22¹, and in obedience to Bishop Scalabrini's directives, they rented a few rooms on Grand Street, in order to be independent from any American parish and thus have complete freedom of action.

"Because New York rents were extremely high they could not afford a more convenient and comfortable residence. They had to be satisfied with a few poor rooms in a tenement house, unsuitable - in the opinion of the world - to their priestly dignity, but in conformity with the evangelical poverty which they had embraced. Those so-called apartments were really huts, with rooms so small that only a bed, few chairs and a little table could be used. Air and light rarely entered through windows that were little more than holes. They often moved from one such apartment to another, and lived in them for several years, while in New York, and Boston."²

They also rented a warehouse on Grand Street and transformed it into a temporary chapel which they called the Chapel of the Resurrection. It was opened to the faithful on August 5, when the first baptism in this parish of San Gicchino (St. Joachim) was recorded.³

The Italians, living in that section of New York finally felt at home in a barren little chapel, which soon became too smelly for its numbers. The Missionaries,

¹ Cfr. M. Francesconi, *op. cit.*, pp. 127-128.

² Father Domenico Vicentini, *L'Apostolo degli italiani emigranti in America* (Piacenza, 1909), p. 36.

³ Cfr. Mario Ciuffoletti, *1888-1938. Storia della Parrocchia Italiana di S. Gioacchino in New York* (New York, 1938) p. 23.

It is interesting to read the first report by Father F. Morelli, which in a certain sense sums up the difficulties and the results which characterized, from the beginning, the activity of the Scalabrinian Missionaries in the United States: "As we reached New York, we immediately tried to have an audience with the Archbishop, but he was away. After four days, we saw his Vicar who put the visa to our credentials, and gave us the faculties usually given to parish priests. We asked his permission to open a temporary Church in a store front - a room thirty by sixty feet long, which an Italian banker, Mr. Cuneo, purchased for us. He granted this request. On the 2nd, we were received by the Archbishop who welcomed us with exquisite kindness and paternal affection. He approved what the Vicar had done, and asked us if we needed anything, to which we replied that we had with us most of what we needed, though confessionals, a baptistry, and lamps, etc., were missing. His Excellency told us to buy what we needed and to send him the bill. We bought several things which in Italy would have cost no more than one hundred and fifty lire, but which here cost five hundred and fifteen lire. We sent the bill to the Archbishop, and he sent us a check to be cashed at the bank.

"The following day, we transformed the store into a Church, and while the workingmen were cleaning and repairing the room we visited some influential people in order to obtain their protection. On Sunday the 5th, we solemnly inaugurated our basilica! Four Masses were celebrated, and four sermons were delivered. At 10:30, I, assisted by the Fathers Zaboglio and Astorri, celebrated Mass. On the previous day, we had bought a harmonium and an Italian gentleman is providing us an organist for a month. The first Mass was accompanied by music; my sermon was: 'Faith and Country'.

"The Church was so filled during our four Masses, that a larger place able to contain thousands of people would not have been large enough. There were about one hundred and fifty people. The collection was good. In the evening two-thirds of the faithful who came were unable to enter. And yet news of our Church's opening had been spread only by word of mouth. What will happen now that the press has written about us?

"The American press sent seven or eight reporters who wrote favorably about us in the following day's papers. Even the Italian Press wrote favorable articles about us and our work. We had visited them the previous day, when we gave them Your Excellency's book on migration. In the Italian community there is enthusiasm which we hope will increase. Our Mission is beginning well. The opposition has found a firmness and a spirit of independence in us, which has compelled it to lower its banners. Your Excellency can never believe what cunning and intrigue they had resorted to! They would have liked to Americanize the Italians, and to have them suffer slavery and humiliation which is not a virtue. They, therefore, hate the Italian clergy for interfering in American affairs. Their hatred grows as we try to preserve the faith, nationality and patriotism of our fathers. They attempted to remove the Italian clergy. Now, however, seeing a more favorable concern by the Curia for Italians, and a greater awareness among the Italians themselves, they have changed methods. They are no longer trying to dominate everyone with villainy, but rather with wiliness and Machiavellian politics of which they are masters. Your Excellency will understand everything from Fr. Zaboglio's report. He will realize that they wanted us to be servants and bootlickers; but our rather proud attitude has left them scorned! Now we have an exclusively Italian church, for all Italians without distinctions. Does Your Excellency know why I say, 'for all the Italians without distinction?' Because our enemies have tried to create discord among the Italians themselves. They spread rumors through the press that our concern is for the Northern Italians only. We asked one paper to print a denial, which it did; and in order to cancel every doubt, I returned to this subject in my Sunday sermon.

Now the people understood us. Last Sunday, I performed this new parish's (Resurrection Parish) first baptism. I asked and obtained the parents' permission to give the child Your Excellency's name. I have also recorded our first marriage. Though we are independent, and have thus won our first victory, we give our unlimited submission to the Archbishop. "Yesterday, we visited the Consul General, who greeted us very cordially and granted us the right to act as state officials in marriage ceremonies. We are now having a novena to the Assumption of Mary at the church, which is always fully attended. (Letter by Fr. F. Morelli to G.B. Scalabrini, New York, August 10, 1888. Arch. G.S., 551/1).

encouraged by this first success, began to look for another building which might be used as a church. They rented a protestant hall which for many years had been a warehouse. They opened it to the faithful with midnight Mass on Christmas Eve, 1888. It was this second chapel that was named St. Joachim, in honor of Pope Leo XIII, whose name was Giacchino. This humble building was located on 22-32 Roosevelt Street, and belonged to a man named Mitchell A. C. Levy.

While the Superior, Father Felice Morelli, officiated in the Chapel of St. Joachim, Father Astorri continued his ministry in the Chapel of the Resurrection and, as invariably happens at the beginning of Missions for Italian immigrants, he began his work by dividing the people into categories: i.e., fathers, mothers, sons, and daughters. He organized the the first Catholic Society named after the Patron Saint of Piacenza, St. Anthony the Martyr.⁴

Initially, Father Morelli wanted to unify the parish around St. Joachim's Church. But both chapels were necessary, not only because they were small, but also because dissension soon arose between Northern Italians (who had arrived from the provinces of Genoa, Piacenza, Parma and Pavia), and Southern Italians. This dissension had already troubled Fr. Marcellino Moroni's first experience in New York.⁵

The Chapel of the Resurrection was located in a district populated by Southern Italians, who wanted a church of their own at the center of their neighborhood, and separated from the Church of St. Joachim where they felt unwanted. They made many promises to Father Morelli who became prey to their enthusiasm. At the end of November, 1888, several heads of families met in the Chapel of the Resurrection. Among them there was a typical Southern "capo", Mr. Antonio Cuneo, "leader of the meeting and of the future committee". Father Morelli expounded the necessity of "opening an Italian church, free and purely national" and of organizing a committee. Mr. Cuneo was nominated chairman of this committee by acclamation, and he asked the people to pledge contributions which amounted to one thousand dollars. He contracted a one hundred thousand lire loan, without interest, for one year.

*"When the acclamations ceased, everyone pledged a donation. Almost a thousand dollars was subscribed that evening. The money was collected by Mr. Cuneo who, still collecting it, gave the contributors a receipt. Thus, as you can see, we assumed no responsibility. The committee nominated active and honorary collectors. The following Sunday at subsequent meetings they organized committees of mothers, young men and young ladies."*⁶

Father Morelli put too much stock in the responsibility of the subscribers, and naively, without consulting the Archdiocesan Curia, took the risk of purchasing a house worth sixty thousand dollars. He collected three thousand dollars and numerous pledges during his first meetings, and was thereby compelled to borrow money to pay the considerable mortgage installments when they became due.

In that building, located on Mulberry Street, he refurbished a chapel which was opened to the people on Christmas Day 1889. But in a few months, it was evident that he could not continue to hold services in a place still too small for the twenty thousand Italians of that district, two-fifths of whom frequented it. Father Morelli then sold this Mulberry Street property, and bought another building at 113-117 Baxter Street, costing eighty two thousand, five hundred dollars. As usual, he could pay only a few thousand dollars cash, taking a mortgage on the balance.

"The property consisted of three lots. Father Morelli wanted to build a church on two of these lots and a tenement house on the other. But, his confreres and parishioners urged him to build a church on all three lots. He, who should have known that he actually had not completely paid for the property, did not explain his difficulties. Swayed by the promises of the others, and by the hope that a

⁴ Cfr. letter by Father A.V. Astorri to Father B. Rolleri, New York, December 14, 1888 (Arch. G.S., 1869). Attached to the handwritten memoirs "Le mie Missioni nell'America del Nord", Vol. I, p. 4.

⁵ Cfr. M. Francesconi, *op. cit.*, pp. 86-91 and 97.

⁶ Letter by Father A.V. Astorri to Father B. Rolleri, November 28, 1888 (Arch. G.S. 665).

new larger church would produce enough money to pay for everything, he agreed to have a church occupy the three lots. He came to an agreement with the Archbishop and with his intervention he entered into a contract with the builder (Mr. Deeves) to construct the basement, at the net cost of thirty three thousand dollars. He then signed another ruinous contract with the same builder for the monthly mortgage payments. Yet he always had faith in the future, and believed that he could pay for everything on time!"⁷

An idea of the parochial activity of the Church of the Most Precious Blood, can be had by looking at two brief statistics for the year 1891. One concerns the first quarter: one hundred fifty baptisms, thirty-eight marriages, and satisfactory attendance at the sacraments.⁸ Another concerns the last quarter. During this period there were thirtyseven marriages. Baptisms had risen to two hundred and thirty nine. About twenty thousand Italians were served by the church, of which eight thousand were active members.⁹

Behind the figures, we can get a glimpse of the activities of the Missionaries by reading a letter written by Father Giuseppe Molinari, who had earlier spent a few years as a Missionary in Brazil. The letter refers to the period during which the Chapel on Mulberry Street was still functioning:

"I have been in New York for a month. I am in charge of a Neapolitan Church, taking care of no less than thirty thousand people. Although there is with me a good Neapolitan priest (a certain Father Desanti, Ed. note), I have been alone since the first Sunday of Lent. I preach every evening, teach catechism to the children for one hour a day, hear confessions, baptize, and care for the sick. On Sunday, the Chapel is always full, and therefore I have to celebrate two masses and preach two sermons, in addition to teaching or preaching in the evening. Marriage celebrations and baptisms take place on Sunday, which means that the whole day must be spent in Church, since my residence (at 128 White Street, Ed. note) is quite distant. The Italians here, generally travel more than those living in Brazil

Every week no less than twelve babies are baptized. Many Italians live too far from our church, and have to travel half an hour or an hour to reach it. They therefore frequent American, Irish or French churches. In addition to the Neapolitan Church here, there is a Genoese Church so-called because the majority of the faithful are from Genoa. It is under our jurisdiction

The Neapolitans' Church (for the time being) is a converted beer hall. A new church (costing one hundred and fifty thousand dollars) is being built. Hopefully, we may be able to begin our services there, in the basement."¹⁰

The basement of the Baxter Street Church was really opened to the faithful on September 27, 1891. It was dedicated to the Most Precious Blood, because it had been the seat of a confraternity by the same name founded by Father Giulio Arcese, O.F.M. in 1878.¹¹ But unfortunately, it was short lived due to its insufficient financial base, and poor administration.

The Church's income, once the first enthusiasm waned, was much below expectations. In order to pay the mortgage installments when due, Father Morelli was forced to borrow always larger amounts of money and at higher rates of interest. When he realized that he couldn't go on this way, he turned to the Curia for help. At the beginning, it gave him financial assistance and a guarantee. With the realization however that the situation was continually worsening, it began an investigation into the Church's finances. Having examined Father Morelli's administration, the Curia realized that he was beyond salvation: he was a zealous priest, but an inept administrator. The Curia asked Bishop Scalabrini to transfer him. The Bishop hoped to remedy the situation by replacing him with Father Domenico Vicentini, rector of St. Joachim's Church. Father Vicentini began a drastic curtailment of expenses. Depriving himself of everything, he only managed, (but not always), to pay the interest on the enormous debt now grown to fantastic proportions: one hun-

⁷ Cfr. Appendix No. 3, pp. 259 ff.

⁸ Cfr. Letter by Father G. Molinari to Father B. Rolleri, New York, April 2, 1891 (Arch. G.S., 665).

⁹ Cfr. "Statistics of the Church of the Most Precious Blood opened on September 27, 1891 in the New York Mission" (Arch. G.S., 664).

¹⁰ Letter by Father G. Molinari to D. Carlo Molinari, New York, March 3, 1891

¹¹ Cfr. M. Francesconi op. cit., p. 83

dred fifteen thousand dollars on the property, and another fifteen thousand dollars in loans. It seemed that the Curia was satisfied. But the insistence of the creditors who wanted a gradual amortization of the principal, and the conviction that the Missionaries of St. Charles were incapable of administering a parish (a conviction born from their first unhappy attempts) probably induced the Archbishop to make a drastic move: to sell the Church. It was the first time that such a thing had happened in the Diocese, and it created a scandal.

On August 29, 1893, Archbishop Corrigan, wrote to the Bishop of Piacenza:

"This morning, I decided to sell the Church, since it cannot pay its debts. The Curia has already spent several thousand lire, to no avail, on this affair. I deeply regret having to tell you this. It is the first time that such a disgraceful thing has happened during my episcopal life. The responsibility falls on Father Morelli, who never wished to perform like other diocesan rectors."¹²

Bishop Scalabrini replied on September 9:

"The great affection I have always felt for Your Excellency has now redoubled, as I think of the pains you must have suffered during these past years because of Father Morelli. I have never written to you about it, because I did not want to influence you in any manner in the decision you thought best to make in this regard. But now that you have told me about it, in such a delicate way, I thank you for everything, and I wish to express my gratitude for what you have done. Your news has grieved me; but I find some consolation in thinking that God will turn this evil into something good. I am more and more convinced that the Missionaries must depend on the Bishops in whose dioceses they are admitted. They must depend on the Bishops for everything, in conformity with one of the key points of our Rules; and Father Morelli, by failing to observe this, burdens all of us with the damage he has done. I am resigning myself to God's Will. I hope that what happened to him, will be a lesson to all others, and that Vicentini will never do anything more without your consent. If my Missionaries cannot have the basement, they can use a room, a wooden chapel, anything, if Your Excellency will allow them to continue in that part of our Mission. Anything will suffice, as long as they do good, and save souls."¹³

As is evident, Bishop Scalabrini at the beginning tried to arrive at an agreeable solution, and showed highest respect for diocesan authority. But the situation became worse, in part because Father Morelli expected to remain in New York and be responsible for the debts he had incurred, especially those to be paid to other Italians, and in part because the Curia in New York could not find any explanation for a twenty five thousand dollar deficit.¹⁴

At the same time, the Curia, instead of accepting the peaceful solution proposed by Bishop Scalabrini, brought the matter directly before the Pope and the Secretariat of State. In fact, on November 23, 1893, Cardinal Rampolla complained about the matter to Bishop Scalabrini, saying at the end of his letter:

"Although we have no doubt that the matter is already known to Your Excellency, I cannot neglect recalling your attention to it, since the Holy Father has expressed the wish that you find the necessary remedies, in order to prevent a repetition of the above facts."¹⁵

Bishop Scalabrini continued to be patient, until he learned that the Archbishop had decided to give the Church of the Most Precious Blood to the Franciscan Fathers. Previously, the Curia had refused to allow Father Vicentini to keep the church by paying a fifty dollar weekly rent. He had hoped to make a small profit in order to pay his creditors, and to open a chapel in the neighborhood, in order to be free from the lay management about which the Curia had

¹² Letter by Archbishop M.A. Corrigan to G.B. Scalabrini, New York, August 29, 1893 (Arch. G.S., 549). For the refusal to incorporate the Church on Baxter Street with the Curia, Father Morelli offered the following justification: "Another difficulty consists in its ownership. The people want it to be incorporated in the name of the Italian community so that being exclusively Italian, it will not, as happened before, pass into the hands of the Irish! The Archbishop objects because there is no such danger, but the Italians unconvinced refuse to contribute anything! (Letter by Father F. Morelli to G.B. Scalabrini, New York, March 3, 1889). Arch. G.S., 551/2).

¹³ Letter by G.B. Scalabrini to Archbishop M.A. Corrigan, Piacenza, September 9, 1893, (Arch. G.S., 549).

¹⁴ Cfr. Letter by Archbishop M.A. Corrigan to G.B. Scalabrini, New York, November 22, 1893 (Arch. G.S., 549).

¹⁵ Letter by Cardinal M. Rampolla to G.B. Scalabrini, Rome, December 13, 1893 (Prot. N. 15232 of the Secretariat of State, Arch. G.S., 664).

complained. This proposal had been rejected too, and the second Vicar General, Father Mooney, declared that the Diocesan Council was of the opinion that it was no longer "prudent or convenient to rebuy, and to reopen the Church already sold."¹⁶

Now instead, the same Curia entrusted the Church to others, and in addition, wanted the Scalabrinian Fathers to pay the Italian creditors the fifteen thousand dollars they had advanced to them for building the Church. Finally, the accusation that Father Morelli had taken twenty five thousand dollars once again surfaced.

The Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda Fide asked Bishop Scalabrini if he objected to assigning the Church to the Franciscan Fathers.¹⁷ The Bishop protested that such a move would be unfair and detrimental to his Congregation, inasmuch as it would confirm the suspicion that wrongs had been committed by his Missionaries, and that it would also damage the Church of St. Joachim which was near the other.

The best solution, he thought, would be to return "*that Church which cost them so much work and so many pains, and over which they had unquestionable rights to the Missionaries of St. Charles. This would also compensate them for the grave injustices done to them, and give them back the honor, peace and spiritual serenity which they needed for their good works.*"¹⁸

The Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide asked Archbishop Corrigan if he was willing to return the Church to the Missionaries. We don't know the answer given by the New York Archbishop, but we can guess it from a letter he sent to Bishop Scalabrini on January 22, 1894. In it he stated the following "undeniable" points:

- 1) the Church had been sold by the municipal authorities following a regular trial started by the mortgagees, despite the fact that the Curia had given them fifty five thousand lire for the unpaid interests;
- 2) the Church of St. Joachim was threatened to undergo the same fate; 3) even the St. Raphael Home would be sold if the Archbishop did not pay ten thousand lire. "*I cannot allow,*" he continued, "*that this series of errors and failures, never committed by other Italian churches or churches of other nationalities, begin again.*"¹⁹

Cardinal Ledochowski, on the basis of this information, ended the matter, by declaring that the New York Curia acted "*not only in keeping with its rules, but also with great forbearance toward the said Missionaries;*" and therefore, these "*could not claim any right over the Baxter Street Church given to the Franciscan Fathers.*"²⁰

Bishop Scalabrini had already given up the matter in view of a better solution. Father Vicentini had kept him informed of the developments and especially of his own attempt to prove, with documents, that Father Morelli had not diverted any money from the Church administration but, on the contrary, had spent over four thousand dollars from his own finances. Father Vicentini's resolute attitude obtained a pledge from the Curia to pay the money owed to the Italians. This freed the Missionaries from a pledge they could not keep because they had been deprived of the Church which was their only source of income. On May 21, 1894, Father Vicentini sent Bishop Scalabrini a cable saying: "*Debts paid.*"²¹

Thus ends the story of the Church of the Most Precious Blood, closed to the faithful on January 8, 1894, after only twenty-seven months of activity,²² bought soon after by the Franciscans, and reopened to the faithful on February 25, of the same year.

¹⁶ Report by Father D. Vicentini, New York, February 2, 1894 (Arch. G.S., 664). Cfr. Appendix No. 3, p.259 ff.

¹⁷ Cfr. Letter by Cardinal M. Ledochowski to G.B. Scalabrini, Rome, February 23, 1894 (Prot. No. 6114 of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide, Arch. G.S., 664).

¹⁸ Letter by G.B. Scalabrini to Cardinal M. Ledochowski, Piacenza, February 26, 1894 (Arch. G.S., 664).

¹⁹ Letter by Archbishop M.A. Corrigan to G.B. Scalabrini, San Leone, Florida, February 22, 1894 (Arch. G.S. 664).

²⁰ Cfr. Letter by Cardinal M. Ledochowski to G.B. Scalabrini, Rome, May 17, 1894 (Prot. No. 7428 of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide, Arch. G.S., 664).

²¹ Cfr. Letter by Father D. Vicentini to G.B. Scalabrini, New York, May 22, 1894 (Arch. G.S., 664).

²² Cfr. the complete documentation in Appendix No. 3 pp. 259 ff.

2. The Church of St. Joachim

a) National Parishes

When the Church of the Most Precious Blood on Baxter Street was closed, the Scalabrinian Missionaries had to be satisfied with the Church of St. Joachim, which at the beginning, went through an almost similar stormy period, but which managed to survive through many sacrifices.

This Church was considered the principal seat of the Italian parish of the same name, and in its rectory resided the Missionaries in charge of the Chapel of the Most Precious Blood (often called a church), which, was an outgrowth of the Centre Street Chapel, and had always been considered the second seat of this parish.

It had been born in the typical surroundings of Italian immigration in that period of North American history. The community was a "Little Italy", with characteristics that distinguished it from other communities. It was restless, both because of the uncertainty of the immigrants in permanently settling in their new land, and because of old-world regional quarrels which in this new environment became more exasperated, and because, they lacked a unifying factor apart from their common destiny as foreigners and victims of discrimination.

Mass immigration had begun between 1870-1880. Italian immigration into New York began with the arrival of the first political exiles from the fall of the Roman Republic in 1849. Among the first seventy four Italian refugees to New York was Giuseppe Garibaldi who was to be the guest of Antonio Meucci in Staten Island, N.Y. Between 1855 and 1860, natives from Liguria began a lucrative shipping business between Genoa and New York. In 1888, there were seventy three thousand Italians in New York City, and one year later its Italian population doubled.

Generally, these first groups consisted of men who, once settled, sent for their wives and children. When the Scalabrinian Missionaries arrived, the numerical disparity between northern and southern Italians was not as considerable as it was to become later. In 1909, there arrived in America eighteen thousand four hundred men and six thousand three hundred and six women from Northern Italy, and one hundred thirty five thousand men and thirty thousand one hundred sixty eight women from Southern Italy.

It is well-known that the Italians at that time were easy victims to massive exploitation. They did not speak English (and most of them could not learn it because they were illiterate), they had no professional or social preparations and they were completely neglected by Italy. Furthermore, rather than organizing into a single association, they split into numerous small associations dominated by foolishly ambitious men.

From a religious viewpoint, their condition was equally desperate. There were numerous Catholic Churches in downtown New York, but Italians frequented them only with a feeling of inferiority. They were discriminated against by the predominant catholic population which considered them an inferior class, dangerously competitive in the economic field because they labored for lower wages and at any type of work. Thus economic discrimination was extended to a humiliating discrimination even in church.

This first great wave of Italian immigrants invading the lower East Side of Manhattan, in a zone centered around Mulberry Street, soon created a "Little Italy", a typical small Italian city within the city of New York. At the beginning, the Italians of the East Side frequented St. Patrick's Cathedral.

The second "Little Italy" was established on the West Side, near Thompson, Sullivan and Houston Streets. Here, Franciscan Fathers, four years after their arrival from Italy in 1855, erected the Church of St. Anthony which in 1866 was reorganized into a mixed parish.

A third "Little Italy" established in the Northeastern part of Manhattan island, in East Harlem, had more modern living conditions. The Pallottini Fathers, the

first two of whom arrived in New York in 1884, opened the Church of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary in 1885, and laid the foundation for Mt. Carmel Church on East 115th Street, near the East River in 1887.

It is worth noting, that in 1887, the first Catholic Church had not yet existed in New York for a century. The old Cathedral of St. Patrick had only been built twenty nine years earlier. Only seventy five years had passed since the consecration of the first New York bishop, and only twenty nine years since Archbishop Conally, functioning as New York's first Bishop but officially its second, effectively entered the city.²³

For Italian immigrants, just as for German immigrants, it was deemed necessary to establish national or ethnic parishes. Their coexistence with Irish parishioners, easy and peaceful at first, soon became difficult because of contrasting interests, languages, mentalities, customs and social conditions.

Two typical expressions of this conflict were first, the Italians dislike of paying for a seat in church, and second, a pattern of not contributing for the upkeep of parishes as the Irish were doing. The latter therefore confined Italian parishioners to church basements. There were also enormous cultural differences in the manifestations of the same faith.

The New York Archbishop maintained that there were already numerous churches for Italians. In reality, however, he was referring to mixed churches only:

*"Italians know that the churches which he enumerates are in reality open to them only for baptisms and marriages, and not for any other service. It is not his fault. He is zealous, and his intentions are pure. The fault lies with the Irish clergy."*²⁴

*Daily experience makes us realize how inconvenient mixed churches for Italians and Irish are. For the former, nothing is done except baptism and marriage celebrations. We never hear a word spoken in Italian. Italians therefore, do not go to confession, and yet the bishops obstinately continue to have mixed churches in the hope of americanizing them, by erasing their nationality. In other letters, I told Your Excellency, that the Archbishop of New York intended to keep the Italian Missionaries divided, assigning them as assistants to Irish pastors. He makes our Missionaries entirely dependent on them in order to remake them into other Irishmen. It is his intention not to give us any independence nor any parochial positions."*²⁵

Father Lynch, on the other hand,²⁶ describes, as though scandalized, an Italian procession in 1892, in a letter to Archbishop Corrigan:

"The procession of St. Donato took place last Monday accompanied by noisy brass bands, and fireworks It passed in front of the Church of The Transfiguration at about ten o'clock. A priest (in cassock and surplice), and four choir-boys followed. After them, came the statue of Saint Donato carried on the shoulders of four men. Women and children held lighted candles. Finally male members of the Society walked concluding the procession.

*To ascertain if this demonstration originated at the Church of the Most Precious Blood, I visited the Church shortly after twelve o'clock, and saw that the procession had ended then, and that the statue had been returned to its usual place in front of the altar. Priests from Piacenza (the Scalabrinian Missionaries. Ed. Note) I noticed, had also taken part in the procession. The Church itself was decorated with festoons. And an Italian girl, who was selling religious objects at its entrance, gave me sufficient information to prove that those Italian priests had disobeyed your orders."*²⁷

From this scene, which describes the more colorful aspects of the religious conflict between the Italians and Americans or the Italians and the Irish in New York, one may penetrate into the deeper causes of the so-called "Italian problem" in the Catholic Church. These causes can be briefly described as

²³ Cfr. Domenico Pistella, *La Madonna del Carmine e gl'Italiani d'America* (New York, 1954).

²⁴ Letter by Father F. Morelli to G.B. Scalabrini, New York, January 29, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 551/2).

²⁵ Letter by Father F. Morelli to G.B. Scalabrini, New York, October 6, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 551/2).

²⁶ Cfr. M. Francesconi, *op. cit.*, pp. 84 foll.

²⁷ Letter by T.F. Lynch to Archbishop M.A. Corrigan, New York, August 10, 1892 (Arch. of the New York Archdiocese), quoted by S.M. Tomasi in "The Ethnic Church," in S.M. Tomasi - N.H. Engel, *The Italian Experience in the United States* (New York, 1970) pp. 179-180.

follows:

- 1) The sudden arrival of a great number of immigrants who were mostly without religious education, or else were strongly anchored in established cultural pattern in which religion was an integral part;
- 2) Different political-religious concepts by which Italians, then involved in the Roman Question, were considered enemies of religion by the Irish;
- 3) A scarcity of priests capable of understanding not only the language, but also the mentality of the immigrants;
- 4) The lack of churches in which religious functions could be performed. Italian immigrants were poor and discriminated against in areas other than their own;
- 5) Ethnic conflicts;
- 6) Protestant proselytism.²⁸

We cannot separate the total vision of the "Little Italies" in the first of which the parish of St. Joachim had been organized, from the religious aspects of "the Italian problem." There, in the ghetto of the great American metropolis,

"Italian immigrants found themselves bewildered: in the midst of a crowd whose language they did not understand, whose bureaucratic machinery frightened them, and whose social and religious behavior clashed with their traditional way of life. The dream of fast economic ascent became a nightmare, as they struggled for survival. The painful experience of being outcasts, induced them to join family clans, to unite with other families originating from the same towns or provinces and to join with people with whom they had a common dialect and common saints, in order to find in these groups, strength and personal security. In the absence of any occasions by which they could insert themselves into the social life of their new country, the immigrants were compelled to resort to the only form of social experience they had known in their hometowns: the parish. Lacking any experience in political manipulation, ignorant of the methods and customs of large commercial enterprises, and moreover, handicapped by their illiteracy, the Italians in the United States found themselves, at the beginning, unprepared to face the future by means of any new institutions "Little Italy" came into being as an attempt at a temporary substitute for the community in which they had lived in the old world. It gave them their familiar superstitions, odors, expressions and, above all, institutional structures which made the world understandable to them."²⁹

In these "Little Italies" there had to be, as a first and necessary solution for the "Italian Problem," ethnic parishes. These were the most important institutional organizations helping the immigrants in their encounter with surrounding groups and with the powered classes. This last consideration applies also to the Irish who dominated the ecclesiastical hierarchy, and who did not tolerate any "invasion" of their territory by poor Italians.

"The national parish must be considered both an instrument of power for the immigrated groups, and as a sub-system in the stratification of the larger society. The strength of the ethnic community represented a guaranty of future integration. Its power derived from its social solidarity, which protected the immigrant from anonymity, and established a basis for his dealings with the rest of society The net of the Italian parish was instrumental in preserving his ethnic personality by organizing familiar, religious and cultural symbols of his native country around him, and by keeping his way of life unchanged.

In the rural communities of Southern Italy, future emigrants acquired their ethnic identity in terms of concrete and particular symbols, and for them, religion fused itself with all the social roles and institutions of the town. It was a way of life rather than a catalog of beliefs and practices. In America, the immigrant farmer knowingly reconstructed his old way of life, at the same time as he adapted to the conditions of urban living. Thus, the immigrants transplanted to America, not only their religion, but also those aspects of their ancient life-styles which, in their home-towns had been supported by

²⁸ Cfr. Nicholas J. Russo, "Prelates and Peasants: Italian Immigrants and the Catholic Church," in: *Journal of Social History* (Spring, 1969), pp. 217-368.

²⁹ S.M. Tomasi, *op. cit.*, pp. 165-166.

institutions. They celebrated festivals, belonged to parochial societies, and saw in their ethnic parishes symbols of their families, and of their world. The Italian immigrant did not worry about legal and religious structures until he had been made certain of symbolic presences in his surroundings. He took them for granted. Thus, ethnic parish was not only an efficient instrument of social control, but it also allowed gradual cultural changes within the ethnic community - a necessary condition for its proper functioning as a sub-system of the national society. If we consider ethnic stratification as a progressive process rather than as a structure, we can assert that the ethnic parish guided the change of the community from a communal society into one of associations. It was a necessary instrument of transition for the immigrants' social mobility and for their integration into the larger society."³⁰

b) A Difficult Beginning for the Parish

As previously indicated,³¹ the parish of St. Joachim had its official seat in a second chapel opened by the Scalabrinian Missionaries in New York on Christmas Eve in 1888.

Its first rector was Father Felice Morelli who was assisted by Father Amos Vincenzo Astorri and by Brother Pietro Pizzolotto. On February 3, 1889, Fathers Giacomo Annovazzi and Oreste Alussi joined them.

The parish's population, the total number of Italians who spiritually depended on it, was over twenty thousand. In 1889, five hundred and eighty three babies were baptized, and two hundred and seventy seven children were confirmed. They were all children of Italian immigrants.

In the spring of 1889, difficulties with the Curia arose when the associations which had advanced five thousand dollars for the construction of an Italian church asked the Archbishop for complete reimbursement.³² Because Bishop Scalabrini asked the Archbishop for an explanation, the latter replied that, having been appraised of the intentions of those who had lent their money, for the Church, he thought it wise to repay them immediately. He reprimanded the behavior of Father Morelli who as an administrator had acted without consulting the Curia and, because of inexperience, had exposed himself to the speculation of unscrupulous men. Furthermore, he deplored the discord between Northern and Southern Italians:

"From the first day, I begged your priests never to mix regionalism with the salvation of souls. I am not reproaching them, but last Sunday the police had to intervene to calm a tumult during the Church services. Nothing like this had ever happened. The seeds of discord produced bitter fruits.... I don't know how to get out of the difficulties existing between Southern and Northern Italians. Some zealous priests acceptable to the Southern people should be sent here. They would do a lot of good. I know that this is an old sore existing long before the arrival of Father Marcellino. He always spoke to me about this subject. Before him, Father Giulio, a Franciscan from Naples, worked successfully for eleven years with these Italians. Boys attended our schools, their parents were religious. Later, these same people frequented the Church of the Resurrection. Your new Missionaries obtained everything they needed for a successful apostolate. I am happy that the future looks brighter. And I congratulate Your Excellency for your efforts.

Perhaps I may see you some day here in the United States. I am pleased with your clergy who work hard, and enthusiastically, daily acquiring that experience which they now lack."³³

In April, 1889, the Missionaries celebrated their first Easter with the New York Italian community, and soon began their "flying Missions", considered very important by both Bishop Scalabrini and Archbishop Corrigan. Here is part of a report sent to Bishop Scalabrini on April 30, 1889, by Father Oreste Alussi:

"I am sending you a report on the Holy Week services which we celebrated in our two churches On Thursday morning, we celebrated High Mass, at the

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 185-187.

³¹ See above, p. 32

³² Cfr. Letter by G.B. Scalabrini to Archbishop M.A. Corrigan, Piacenza, April 13, 1889. (Arch. G.S., 949).

³³ Letter by Archbishop M.A. Corrigan to G.B. Scalabrini, Newburgh, N.Y. May 5, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 549).

end of which, there was a Procession to the Holy Sepulcher. Thousands of Italians and Americans came. In the afternoon, the Churches were so crowded that guards at the entrance had to beg those who had come earlier to leave in order to make room for others. On Saturday, we celebrated all the prescribed ceremonies, and heard confessions until midnight. Early on Easter Sunday, many took Communion, and during Mass, the Church was again so crowded that many of the faithful could not enter. About fifty young men and women members of this Italian community sang at the Mass.

During the entire week we collected four hundred dollars.

Finally, on April 25, 1889, we signed the deed for the Church [it was the Church of St. Joachim. Ed. Note] for eighty two thousand five hundred dollars and also paid twenty nine thousand dollars as the first of three installments on the mortgage.

"As you can see, Italians are very generous. Before we came, they were considered miserly, and it was thought that they did not want to give anything for their Church It was also said that Italians were a burden on other parishes. But now that we are here, other priests would do anything to have them. Hence these priests are hostile to us for this very reason Since May 5, two of us together have gone on Missions, in order to conduct spiritual exercises in nearby towns and cities and on the countryside where Italians are scattered, so that they could celebrate Easter. Bishops and Rectors frequently send us requests for similar Missions. Please send priests ready to perform this apostolic work to New York, whenever you can."³⁴

Father Astorri wrote more extensively about these "flying missions" in a report dated May 14, 1889:

"The first city which took advantage of our Missions was Paterson, New Jersey, a half hour train trip away from New York,³⁵ where two thousand mostly Southern Italians live and who have a difficult time earning a living. Their continuous struggle to subsist, the impossibility of finding Italian priests, and a phenomenal disregard of their souls, have reduced them to a deplorable state We were called by the zealous Provincial of the French Fathers of Mercy, Fr. Porsile. We went to the Church of the Madonna of Victory on Bridge Street on May 5, to begin this Italian Mission. Father Morelli who gave an introductory speech, was very much surprised when he realized that only about thirty Neapolitans had come to hear him We then decided to personally visit the homes of all Italians in that district, in order to invite them to come to church. I and Enrico Degronne (the future rector of the Italians of Paterson, whom neither I nor Father Felice can praise enough for his zeal) took us to all their homes, huts really, and cabins. We used all the eloquence we possessed to induce them to come to church. Affectionately greeted everywhere, we shook their hands as they promised to come. They kept their promises, and hundreds of people attended services Every evening at eight o'clock, Father Felice imparted clear instructions to them on the necessity and method for making confession. I spoke about meditation, and counseled them to make their meditation brief in order not to tire their minds. At the end of the Mission, we heard confessions and thus prepared many for communion, which was imparted to them on Sunday the 12th by newly arrived Father D. Ludovico Martinelli, who had come from New York to replace Father Felice.

In order to continue their good work, Father Provincial is planning to establish two Catholic Societies among the Italians in America Today, I shall leave for Pittsburgh, more than four hundred miles away, to prepare other Italians for our visits. Father Superior and Father Martinelli will join me within three days."³⁶

As the news that there was a Church for them where they were sure to be welcomed and understood spread, Italians began to rise from their torpor, caused not by ill-will, but by unfavorable prevailing conditions. Father Antonio Gibelli narrates that, in the imminence of Easter, of 1890, many Italians traveled fifty to eighty miles in order to confess themselves and take communion. "They say that they would confess and go to Mass frequently, if only

³⁴ Letter by Father O. Alussi to G.B. Scalabrini, New York, April 30, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 665).

³⁵ Mentioned in Archbishop Corrigan's letter to Bishop Scalabrini: "Father Morelli is now conducting a Mission in Paterson, twenty miles away from New York, in my old diocese of Newark. I have asked him to go during the week also to Saugarties, one hundred miles away, where there are also many Italians." (Letter by Archbishop Corrigan to G.B. Scalabrini, Newburgh, N.Y., May 8, 1889. Arch G.S., 549).

³⁶ Letter by Father A.V. Astorri to G.B. Scalabrini, New York, May 14, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 665).

there were Italian churches and confessors."³⁷

The same Missionary estimated that on Maundy Thursday, the Holy Sepulcher prepared in the Church of St. Joachim in a manner dear to Italians but incomprehensible to the Irish, was visited by nearly eighty thousand people. He added that only five thousand communions were imparted at Easter time, because the few priests they had there, could not hear more confessions.³⁸

The religious situation, as noted by the second Rector, Fr. Domenico Vicentini, seemed promising. To that humble place, Italians rushed in great numbers to attend services, to hear sermons, and to receive the sacraments. "*It was a real consolation for us, which remained even during this mission's most critical periods.*"³⁹

Financial help, however, was meager, not only because poor Italians could contribute little from their small earnings, but also because Father Morelli was an inept administrator. During the first year, personally and at the Church, twenty-two thousand dollars were collected. Half of which was spent for repairs and supplies, and the other half for the initial payment on the eighty-two thousand dollars needed to buy the church. "*But we could not expect the Italians to make this same sacrifice every year. If the administrative ability of Father Morelli had been equal to his zeal, the parish would have been more fruitful, both spiritually and economically.*"⁴⁰

Already in July, 1890, Father Astorri foretold the financial ruin of the Church of St. Joachim. Father Morelli's independent attitude made him deaf to the advice of the Curia and his confreres, and he rushed into useless initiatives. He established a printing plant, and published a newspaper, "L'Armonia," which was excessively polemical, and ready to accept writings by priests unsuited for that mission.⁴¹

There was also another difficulty, especially during their first years: interference from Associations.

Associations had been formed to preserve traditional religious celebrations. Their principal activity consisted in preparing for the feasts of patron saints, by soliciting funds from among their members and from the inhabitants of their ethnic district, in general, then administering these funds in anticipation of the annual festivities, which were then organized and directed by a special committee of the Association.

Often they became mutual aid societies and played an important role in "Little Italies" religious and social life. They often dismissed or fought parish priests who did not follow their will: a will that was often capricious and contrary to the directives of the Curia.

At the Church of St. Joachim, for example, one of these Societies⁴², whose members had contributed to its first fund-raising drive, exercised pressure on the building's owners and mortgage holders to transform the Church into a hospital devoid of both priests and nuns⁴³. "*Fortunately,*" said Father Gibelli "*through the efforts of some Genoese women, we were able to incorporate the Church under the Archbishop's jurisdiction, as are other Churches in the United States.*"⁴⁴

Toward the end of 1890, Bishop Scalabrini ordered Father Morelli to cease all his parochial duties, and to dedicate himself solely to his position as Provincial Superior. He placed Father Domenico Vicentini as Rector of the Church of St.

³⁷ Letter by Father A. Gibelli to Father B. Roller, New York, March 21, 1890 (Arch. G.S., 665).

³⁸ Cfr. Letter by Father A. Gibelli to G.B. Scalabrini, New York, April 10, 1890 (Arch. G.S., 665).

³⁹ Father D. Vicentini, *op. cit.*, pp. 33-34. Cfr. Letter by Father F. Morelli to G.B. Scalabrini, New York, May 18, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 551/2): "The Archbishop is surprised at our progress, especially because he did not expect so much from Italians. Seeing how crowded our churches are, that we average five hundred communions a week - something that had seemed impossible to him - he has decided to defend us against our enemies. He misjudged our situation. He thought that we were well cared for, but he now realizes that nothing was being done for us. In Paterson, for instance, not a single Italian had gone to confession since leaving Italy because there were no Italian priests in that city."

⁴⁰ Father D. Vicentini, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-35.

⁴¹ Cfr. Letter by Father A.V. Astorri to G.B. Scalabrini, Boston, Massachusetts, July 26, 1890 (Arch. G.S., 665).

⁴² Probably the so-called "Comitato coloniale per l'istruzione e l'educazione". Cfr. Letter by Father G. Strumia to G.B. Scalabrini, New York, June 4, 1895 (Arch. G.S., 665).

⁴³ Cfr. Letter by Father A. Gibelli to G.B. Scalabrini, New York, October 14, 1890 (Arch. G.S., 665).

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

Joachim.⁴⁵ Therefore, as of January 1891, its pastor was Father Vicentini. But Father Morelli, with his domineering character, continued to consider himself Rector of the Church⁴⁶, and in this, he was supported by a group of parishioners who exalted him for having founded the Church of the Most Precious Blood in so short a time.⁴⁷

Following Fathers Zaboglio and Vicentini's complaints, Fr. Morelli tendered his resignation as Provincial Superior, but Bishop Scalabrini refused to accept it, explaining that, as Provincial Superior, he should direct the work of all the Missionaries.⁴⁸ From Bishop Scalabrini's statement, Fr. Morelli drew unjustified conclusions. He continued to interfere unreasonably in the affairs of the parish, and, because of his strange and independent character, was constantly at odds with his confreres, and with the Vicar General, Father Zaboglio.⁴⁹

Bishop Scalabrini was worried about such a "dualism", and wrote to Father Zaboglio:

"It is necessary that every shadow of disagreement between you and Father Morelli disappear. Accept any sacrifice to reach this goal. For nothing is more detrimental to a new institution than discord between its leaders.⁵⁰ Perfect agreement between both of you regarding actions and directions to be taken, would represent the honor and the strength of our small Congregation, and would be my greatest consolation."⁵¹

Father Vicentini, discouraged by all his troubles, begged Bishop Scalabrini to relieve him of his position. But the Bishop comforted him:

"Perhaps you wondered why I did not answer your first letter in which you expressed the wish to be exempt from your position as a Superior. You might have complained, too, about my silence. I first wanted to hear the opinion of people who might have enlightened me before answering you. The Archbishop wrote: 'Father Vicentini is doing very well, and I am very pleased with him;' another person wrote: 'I see no reason why Father Vicentini should resign. He is doing very well in his Church. People love him very much, and by his prudence he has acquired the friendship of even that faction which wanted Father Morelli to remain as Rector.' These opinions have made me happy. Father Zaboglio has the same high opinion of you, which I share with all my heart."⁵²

At the same time, the Bishop of Piacenza continued to ask Father Morelli not to start any new enterprises before paying the debts for those already begun,⁵³ and not without first consulting the Archbishop⁵⁴. But Fr. Morelli continued to work independently. On the one hand he put forward new and more grandiose projects, and on the other, he struggled as much as he could amidst debts and creditors, convinced as he was that the responsibility for payment was his alone, because he was the one who had borrowed the money. The Archbishop had to take strong measures to distance him from New York. In reality, Father Morelli had apparently compromised himself in his personal transactions with his creditors and never having been able to run an orderly administration, was now at their mercy.

Furthermore, Father Vicentini had two other concerns: one was his preoccupation with the Cristoforo Colombo Hospital, which by the middle of 1892 was about to be closed, and the other was the parochial school, whose closing was also imminent because he did not have the money to pay Mother Cabrini's nuns⁵⁵. Meanwhile, the situation at the Church of the Most Precious Blood worsened, so much so, that Father Vicentini was charged by Bishop Scalabrini to assume full responsibility for it, as a desperate attempt to save it.

⁴⁵ Cfr. Letter by G.B. Scalabrini to Msgr. M.A. Corrigan and to Father F. Zaboglio, August 12, 1891 (Arch. G.S., 549 and 550).

⁴⁶ Cfr. Letter by Father D. Vicentini to Father F. Zaboglio, New York, July 3, 1891 (Arch. G.S., 665/2).

⁴⁷ Cfr. Letter by Father D. Vicentini to Father B. Rolleri, New York, July 3, 1891 (Arch. G.S., 665/2).

⁴⁸ Cfr. Letter by Father D. Vicentini to Father F. Zaboglio, New York, July 7, 1891 (Arch. G.S., 665/2).

⁴⁹ Cfr. Letters by Father D. Vicentini to Father B. Rolleri, New York, December 3, 1891 and by Father L. Martinelli to G.B. Scalabrini, New York, July 20, 1891 (Arch. G.S., 665/2).

⁵⁰ Letter by G.B. Scalabrini to Father F. Zaboglio, Piacenza, September 11, 1891 (Arch. Seminario Maggiore of Como).

⁵¹ Letter by G.B. Scalabrini to Father F. Zaboglio, Piacenza, November 12, 1891 (Arch. Seminario Maggiore of Como).

⁵² Letter by G.B. Scalabrini to Father D. Vicentini, Piacenza, November 23, 1891 (Arch. G.S., 3023/2).

⁵³ Cfr. Letter by G.B. Scalabrini to Father F. Zaboglio, Piacenza, October 8, 1891 (Arch. Seminario Maggiore of Como).

⁵⁴ Cfr. Letter by G.B. Scalabrini to Father F. Morelli, Piacenza, October 10, 1892 (Arch. G.S., 665/2).

⁵⁵ Cfr. statements by Father F. Morelli, G. Lippi and G. Poggi, New York, August 30, 1892 (Arch. G.S., 665/2).

Father Morelli returned to St. Joachim's Church to the greatest joy of his "faction", and, by employing the usual pretext of responsibility toward his creditors, he opposed the nomination of Father Paolo Novati as its director.⁵⁶

Even worse, on the evening of November 1, 1893, an hour before the services for commemorating the dead were to begin, a fire started in the Church's basement, making the Church inoperable for some time. *"To such misfortunes,"* remarked Father Vicentini, *"we must add the most painful one, that is, that the Curia mistrusts us entirely because of our debts."*⁵⁷

"Truly, these sad reports," replied Bishop Scalabrini, *"follow each other in rapid succession. What shall we do? Should we lose heart? No. God is trying us by putting us through the fire of tribulation, and we should always praise Him.*

*Let us meditate on the text: Recogitate eum qui tale sustinuit contradictionem et ne fatigemini animis vestris, deficientes. Let us take courage and have faith in Him."*⁵⁸

On the same day, November 11, 1893, the Archbishop advised Bishop Scalabrini that he had dismissed Father Morelli from the spiritual and material administration of St. Joachim's Church, replacing him with Father Giuseppe Strumia. The latter, however, refused this assignment until his predecessor left. But Father Morelli insisted on remaining until the Archbishop assumed responsibility for all the debts of the Parish. *"This shall not do,"* said the Archbishop. *"I cannot assume responsibility for debts about which I know nothing Other Missionaries are doing well, but Father Morelli's administration lacks experience."* As proof he cited that both the Church of St. Joachim, and the Church of the Most Precious Blood, were about to be auctioned because interest on their mortgage could not be paid.⁵⁹

Father Strumia tried to remove the impasse. He attempted to sell Parish property in order to decrease its indebtedness. He tried to build a school for the thousands of abandoned Italian children.⁶⁰ But his moves were continually hampered by "factions" for or against Father Morelli, who, in 1893, the first year of his administration, boasted that he would pay the forty thousand dollars on the mortgages. Because he could not, however, the mortgagees agreed to sell the Church. Father Strumia barely managed to obtain a few months respite. Father Morelli himself had suggested to the mortgage holders that they convince the parish "trustees" to transfer the title to the Archbishop. They agreed. But then, Father Morelli induced the trustees to withdraw their consent. Meanwhile, the Archbishop encouraged Fr. Strumia to continue his ministry, which despite everything, remained alive and growing. He said that the Curia would do its best *"to keep the Church property by regulating its affairs according to diocesan rules."*⁶¹

The Church's trustees (G. Carraro, G. Lippi, G. Poggi), under Father Morelli's influence, agreed to transfer the Church to the Curia on condition that its present clergy be replaced by others. Bishop Scalabrini procrastinated, stating that he would do his best to fulfill their demands, when he had other Missionaries to send to New York. The trustees had to be content, unwillingly, with this half-promise and with an interim administration under Father Novati. Finally, they consented⁶², and on October 26, 1894, the deed was transferred to the Archbishop.⁶³

At the end of the year, Father Strumia wrote to Bishop Scalabrini that he had eliminated the discord between the parish's "factions", paid the debts incurred by Fr. Morelli, and thereby no longer feared having to sell the Church:

"With God's help, and the consent of the New York Archbishop, I incorporated the Church. I hope that in a few days the court will render a favorable decision

⁵⁶ Cfr. Letter by Archbishop M.A. Corrigan to G.B. Scalabrini, New York, July 29, 1893 (Arch. G.S., 549).

⁵⁷ Letter by Father D. Vicentini to G.B. Scalabrini, New York, November 3, 1893 (Arch. G.S., 665/2).

⁵⁸ Letter by G.B. Scalabrini to Father D. Vicentini, Piacenza, November 22, 1893 (Arch. G.S., 2023/2).

⁵⁹ Letter by Archbishop M.A. Corrigan to G.B. Scalabrini, New York, November 22, 1893 (Arch. G.S., 549).

⁶⁰ Cfr. Letter by Father G. Strumia to G.B. Scalabrini, New York, June 4, 1894 (Arch. G.S., 665/4).

⁶¹ Cfr. Letter by P. G. Strumia to G.B. Scalabrini, New York, July 19, 1894 (Arch. G.S., 665/4).

⁶² Cfr. Letter by Father F. Morelli to G.B. Scalabrini, Meriden, Connecticut, August 30, 1894 (Arch. G.S., 1962) and declaration by Father F. Morelli, G. Carraro, G. Poggi and G. Lippi, New York, September 18, 1894 (Arch. G.S., 665/3).

⁶³ Cfr. Declaration by G. Carraro, G. Lippi and G. Poggi, New York, November 3, 1894 (Arch. G.S., 665/3).

against the few liberals who want to transform it into a theatre."⁶⁴

In fact, until 1890, some Italian creditors had constantly threatened to sell it, and in 1893, had actually started legal action. Finally, "the court controversy which for two years had continued between the Church and the so-called 'Colonial Committee for Instruction and Education,' was resolved in favor of the Church."⁶⁵

Many Scalabrinian Missionaries exercised their ministry at St. Joachim's Church during its first six years. Some, coming from Italy, remained there while awaiting a more permanent assignment. Besides its Rectors, Fathers F. Morelli (1888-1889), D. Vicentini (1890-1893) and G. Strumia (1894-1898); Fathers A. Astorri, O. Alussi, L. Martinelli, A. Gibelli, A. Chiariglione, G. Annovazzi, F. Lotti, G. Molinari, G. Pandolfi, F. Sandri, G. Gambera and D. Mantese, must also be mentioned.

Father Mantese died there, on June 12, 1881. In ill health, he had worked at Christopher Columbus Hospital. But, on June 5th, he heard confessions in the Church of the Most Precious Blood until 10:30 at night and on the following Sunday celebrated Mass and preached at St. Joachim's Church. That evening, he developed acute pneumonia, and in a few days he died. He had been the first Scalabrinian Missionary together with Father Giuseppe Molinari to give his name to the Congregation, and its first member to be called to heaven.⁶⁶

3. The Arrival of St. Francis Xavier Cabrini and Her Nuns

March 31, 1881, was an historic date not only for St. Joachim's Parish and Italian immigrants, but also for the American Church. It was on that day, at 7:00 P.M. that the French liner Bourgogne docked at the North River Pier, and from it landed Mother Francesca S. Cabrini and six nuns from the Order of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, at that time called the Salesians.

On March 18th, they had gone to Piacenza to receive a blessing from Bishop Scalabrini, who had been the principal architect for the change which Mother Cabrini imposed on her Congregation by now opening Missions in America. The Bishop greeted them in his chapel, and after a moving speech, blessed them, promising them that on the following day he would travel to Codogno for their departure ceremony.

The following day, the feast of St. Joseph, they went to the Chapel of their Mother House in Codogno, and there Bishop Scalabrini, assisted by Msgr. Antonio Serrati, Rector of Codogno and the Spiritual Director of the Congregation, gave crucifixes to the seven Missionary sisters, and delivered a farewell sermon.

The sisters' help had been requested by the New York Missionaries from the beginning. They realized that a school and a hospital were needed by the Italian immigrants, if only to counteract protestant proselytizing. It is useful to read Father Morelli's letter to understand some aspects of the religious situation in which the immigrants found themselves:

"It is impossible to fully describe the tricks and artifices protestants employ to convert Italian Catholics to them. Having spent so many millions of pounds in Italy and America, regretfully they now realize that Italian Catholics are faithful to the Pope or to Mazzini, are rationalist or Catholic, but never Protestant, and, if they must believe in Christ, they prefer to believe with the Pope rather than with the Queen of England. Therefore, protestants are happier when they convert one Italian rather than ninety-nine people of other nationalities Industrious and cunning, they often erect a booth in a public square, gather a group of people as for a circus, and scream and gesticulate like men possessed by the devil. Often this is done by a sole woman who, without a job, and not knowing how to make a living, is happy to be salaried for cursing the Pope and Catholicism in public.

⁶⁴ Letter by Father G. Strumia to G.B. Scalabrini, New York, December 28, 1894 (Arch. G.S., (665/4).

⁶⁵ Letter by Father G. Strumia to G.B. Scalabrini, New York, June 4, 1895 (Arch. G.S., 665/4).

⁶⁶ "Our Mission has lost a Saint. He removed his cilice before retiring...Resigned to God's Will, he died happy to have performed his duty, to have worked only for the Glory of God. His zeal was unlimited. He was always ready to work, and his obedience was unique." (Letter by Father F. Morelli to G.B. Scalabrini, s.d. Arch. G.S., 551/3). Cfr. Letter by Father G. Molinari to Father F. Zaboglio, Pittsburgh, Pa., June 17, 1891 (Arch. G.S., 1571) and L'Amico del Popolo (Piacenza, July 1, 1891).

Riff-raff rather than ministers so preach. In front of their churches, however, they place well-dressed men, well-behaved, and fluent in Italian, who invite passersby to enter, rest, and frequent the Church if for no other reason than to hear excellent music. They courteously add that this a truly Catholic Church, is the Church of Christ; which helps the needy, assists the sick, and which requires no entrance fee, but only a promise to frequent it a certain number of times each month, to belong. The ministers meanwhile, accompanied by their pretty Giacominas, each day visit the most needy Italians in their parish, give them some money, leave clothing, and coupons for fire-wood, coal, flour or food, invite the children to frequent their schools, and give them clothes if they are ill-dressed to do so. In order not to frighten their parents, they tell them that they will teach them catechism, and the Pater Noster or other prayers.

In Brooklyn, in order to deceive Italian Catholics, a protestant minister hung sacred images in his church, encouraged his congregation to recite the rosary, and performed other Catholic services. Thus he managed to seduce many Italians, until his bishop visiting the Church, seeing the images and hearing the rosary recited, released him.

More efficient means of seduction were adopted by a protestant hospital which as soon as it learned that there was a sick and poor Italian, accepted him for care. If he was not very ill or if he was convalescing, they would send him to a wonderful rest home furnished with baths, games, and many other comforts. Often the air there was very healthy. If the illness was grave, they would send him to a city hospital where, at the beginning, he was treated well. But then, slowly made to understand that in order to remain he would have to become a protestant; he would have to submit, or be put out without mercy even if he was on the brink of death!

.... I must say, however, something which redounds to our Italians' honor, to their faith and to their country. Notwithstanding the means at the disposal of protestantism, its propaganda and its numbers, despite all its seductions, and despite all the religious neglect in which our Italians have been left for so long, protestantism cannot be too proud of its accomplishments. Here in New York where there are three protestant churches for Italians, less than three hundred Italians have embraced that religion. The Church of the 'Five Points', where a former Catholic friar now serves, and, which he confessed in a city newspaper, has managed to gather only two hundred parishioners in seven years. The two other churches combined have attracted only one hundred Italians. Moreover, no one joins them because they are convinced about Protestantism, but because protestants distribute money to them. Among the Italian adults, protestants cannot make converts; greater havoc is being wrought to the children who frequent their schools.

If we do not quickly establish kindergartens and schools to prevent our children from falling into their hands, the future of our community, its faith and national character, will be destroyed. It is for this reason, that we have begun to build a school near our church. If we could have, in addition to teachers, two or three nuns, we would be able to draw children away from protestantism and they would accomplish much for our faith and our country."⁶⁷

In another letter without date, written perhaps during October or November of 1888, Father Morelli asks Bishop Scalabrini to send him nuns for a kindergarten which Countess Maria Reid, wife of Count Luigi di Cesnola, founder and director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art of New York, wished to establish for young Italian girls:

"His Excellency, the Archbishop, advised me to visit Countess di Cesnola, wife of the Italian General. She collected eight thousand dollars to begin a kindergarten for young Italian girls who would be trained to work for wealthy families as maids, wardrobe mistresses, and embroiderers, etc., so that they might then have well-paying jobs. He gave me a note of introduction, and I was greeted with exquisite kindness. Yesterday, I, together with Fr. Zaboglio, revisited her. She asked us for three Italian nuns for this venture. If Your Excellency would send them, you would greatly favor this pious woman who, though an American, loves Italy, Italians, and our Congregation. You would also favor the Archbishop who would have the nuns under his jurisdiction. Since it takes so long to receive mail, please wire the answer, whether affirmative or

⁶⁷ Letter by Father F. Morelli to G.B. Scalabrini, New York, October 12, 1888 (Arch. G.S., 551/1).

negative; and if affirmative please indicate the month they will arrive, so that we may purchase a building for them."⁶⁸

The project was going well. The Archbishop agreed fully with it, and Bishop Scalabrini obtained Mother Cabrini's consent by employing all his powers of persuasion both on her and on Leo XIII. But just when the plan matured in Italy, disagreement arose between Countess di Cesnola and Archbishop Corrigan in America, so that when the nuns arrived, they did not find the welcome they had expected from the Scalabrinian Missionaries.

Since Mother Cabrini's biographers conjectured about her welcome we think it necessary to publish the documents at our disposal which shed much light on the matter.

The most objective version of their welcome appeared in a biography written by Mother Cabrini's Superior General, Mother Antonietta Della Casa, from positive written and oral depositions, such as the Memorie on the chronicles of various Houses of the Congregation of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, and on letters written by Mother Cabrini herself:

"Courteously greeted by the good Scalabrinian Fathers, they were spontaneously invited by them to dinner served in the joyous atmosphere which prevails among Italians living abroad.

The sisters, who just arrived from a tranquil yet stormy ocean to the deafening noise of a great metropolis, begged to be permitted to retire to their convent. Evasively and embarrassed, the Scalabrinians told them that, that evening, they had to sleep at a hotel. Whoever wrote Bishop Scalabrini that a convent was prepared for them (in order not to concern him, and not to delay the nuns' voyage to New York) had only a wish Thus, the nuns were led, late at night and in a beating rain, through the dark and narrow streets of 'Little Italy' to a depressing hotel, (Memorie) which we can easily visualize in black colors if we but realize that it was located at the center of the Italian-Chinese quarter into which an American lady would never have ventured. Since the news given her was not at all pleasant, Mother Cabrini prayed rather than rested.

The Scalabrinians told her that serious dissension had arisen between Archbishop Corrigan and Countess di Cesnola over an Italian kindergarten. Authorized by Archbishop Corrigan to begin her project, the Countess, had rented a house three months before in an aristocratic quarter of the city, so that the sisters could be closer to the society women from whom she hoped to obtain funds for an orphanage. The Archbishop, not approving this location, refused to open the kindergarten. He also sent a letter to Rome asking Mother Cabrini to postpone her voyage. But the letter had not arrived in time, and she sailed for New York.

A building now occupied, and needing many repairs, adjacent to the Roosevelt Street Church could be converted into a school in due time, but it was still occupied by tenants and needed many repairs. Presently they must teach in the church. As for these sisters, Providence would have to care for them. The priests could do little to help. The Italian community was poor. They could not rely on charity, nor could they rely on the cooperation of the clergy, who were ill-disposed toward every Italian. Mother Cabrini perceived the difficulties she was to face. However, spending her first night in New York in prayer she accepted these difficulties with calmness and hope.

Early the next morning, more tired than they were the previous night, yet full of determination, the nuns attended Mass at Italian Church on Centre Street - though a former warehouse, it now was the House of Christ. Having spent eight days without Communion, they took the Blend which restored them, removed their apprehensions and erased the memory of their tribulations. Then they went to St. Joachim's Church, which was for the poor immigrant the House of his Heavenly Father, and the center of his religious life. They saluted it with reverential affection, and at the base of the Tabernacle renewed their determination to dedicate themselves to the well-being of the Italians in America.

Having performed her religious duties, Mother Cabrini thought of paying a visit to the Archbishop of New York. He greeted her with paternal benevolence and kindness, without however, hiding his embarrassment. On the question of

⁶⁸ Letter by Father F. Morelli to G.B. Scalabrini, New York, s.d. (Arch. G.S., 551/1).

the orphanage, he frankly declared that the plan of Countess di Cesnola to start an orphanage in New York, where there were already more than enough, was absurd. He could not allow a new one to be established in an aristocratic section of the city, such as the one chosen by the Countess. At the most, one, could be established downtown, in the Italian quarter, and only if the Institute would have its own building. His conclusion was more or less the same as that reached in Rome by Cardinal Parocchi who had written: *'I see no better solution than this, Mother, that you and your nuns return to Italy.'* At this point the *Memorie* narrates: *'It was a dramatic moment. Mother Cabrini paled while we murmured: "What? Must we cross the ocean again?"* - However, despite the fear of having to return to Italy, if Mother Cabrini had not been with us we would have packed immediately But our saintly Mother, with a courage and a calm that only Christ could have given her, said: *'This we shall not do. I have come here by order of the Holy See, and here I must stay.'* She then presented a letter of recommendation written by Cardinal Simeoni to the Archbishop. He read it carefully, and with visible satisfaction. But more than the recommendation of the Prefect of Propaganda Fide (as he stated later) he was impressed by Mother Cabrini's firm and proud attitude. He realized that he was facing an uncommon woman, who had courage, and great dedication to God. *"Very well, he said, stay here. But forget about the orphanage and think only about the schools.'*

And since he learned that the Fathers had not prepared a house for them, he himself accompanied Mother Cabrini and her nuns to the convent of the Sisters of Charity who were in charge of the Cathedral. He asked them to lodge Mother Cabrini and her sisters, and recommended them heartily to the Sisters of Charity."⁶⁹

Father Alussi's statement seems too optimistic: *"The nuns are very happy. They live in a very comfortable house which is certainly much better than ours."*⁷⁰

True, the Sisters were lodged in better quarters than the Missionaries, who gave them their apartment and went to live in some depressing little rooms away from the Church. But the nuns did not share his opinion about their apartment's beauty and comfortableness!

Twelve days after her arrival in New York, Mother Cabrini wrote to the Bishop of Piacenza:

"I am happy to be able to give you some pleasant news about our schools and the progress of our little affairs, perhaps, thus consoling your heart which desires to see our Mission flourish.

His Most Excellent Archbishop managed to have us lodged, as you already know, in the convent of the good Sisters of Charity. Their Mother Superior, obeying his orders, often took us to visit their various settlements, orphanages and colleges in order to give us an idea of how they are run here in New York. Often His Excellency accompanied us, showing his paternal goodness and graciousness.

The schools at our Missions have already begun to function and our nuns are working with real pleasure and missionary enthusiasm, showing no fear of the difficulties which always arise at the beginning of any great enterprise. I am sure that the Lord will bless our work, considering the great concern these good Missionaries show these poor Italians.

Reverend Father Morelli is very zealous. We have witnessed this often, but especially last Sunday during his catechism class. In a few weeks he has accomplished very much.

The other day Archbishop Corrigan imparted a special blessing to us, so that we might also be encouraged to start an orphanage. We have already bought some furniture, and hope to be able to enter the little building in about eight days. It seems that the Archbishop's protection is particularly helpful to us in all our tasks, and so is the blessings which You, undoubtedly, are sending us from our country.

Please continue, Excellency, to pray for me and for our Missions for the prayers of a Father and a Pastor are omnipotent.

With this letter I am renewing the wishes I have always expressed for You, and

⁶⁹ *Mother Francesca Saverio Cabrini* (Torino, 1928), pp. 96-99.

⁷⁰ Letter by Father O. Alussi to G.B. Scalabrini, New York, April 30, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 665/1).

thank You for what You have done for me."⁷¹

That same day she wrote to Msgr. Serrati, who relayed her letter to Bishop Scalabrini:

"Today I received a letter written by Mother Cabrini from New York. She gave me news about the beginning of her charitable work for Italian immigrants. They have begun registering pupils who will frequent the school, and by the 8th of this month they will already have registered one hundred girls. They are preparing a House provided by Countess di Cesnola for orphan girls.

The Fathers of the Christopher Columbus Institute are very cooperative with the good nuns, and I beg Your Excellency to thank them for me. Archbishop Corrigan has greeted them well, and is helping them with his paternal solicitude, and has determined that they keep the Blessed Sacrament in the orphanage. Mother Cabrini however, complains that the nuns she took with her are too few, considering the amount of work to be done, especially since they must work in two centers: the orphanage and the school. She has therefore asked me to send three other nuns as soon as possible."⁷²

Following these letters Bishop Scalabrini wrote to Cardinal Simeoni:

"The good Sisters of the Sacred Heart have reached New York. To the great chagrin of the Masons, they have opened an orphanage and a school for Italian girls, both with great success, as you can see from the enclosed letter which I received yesterday. Now the Superior General asks me to send other nuns as soon as possible. They will sail from Naples in early May. The Vice-Superior will present herself to Your Excellency to receive your blessings and also to ask for some financial help."⁷³

A few days later, Archbishop Corrigan sent a more detailed and realistic report to Bishop Scalabrini about what had happened at the beginning of the Mission:

"The Sisters are not too satisfied because they have no decent residence and no fixed salary, only the promise that they will lack nothing. I shall try to arrange things with Father Morelli. We must assign them to a healthy, clean and comfortable residence. Moreover, I would like to give them a fixed salary as is the custom with all the nuns in the diocese. I hope I can do so. I do not wish to complain, I merely wish to relay the facts to you.

I think it would be proper if I added a few words to explain myself better. I disapproved the idea of establishing an Italian orphanage, because I thought it premature, and because I justly feared that I could not support it. But, without waiting for my answer on this matter, Mother Superior arrived in America. I personally explained to her all the difficulties ingrained in this project, but since five thousand dollars had been collected for it, I allowed her to begin and try, as long as the money lasts.

When they arrived here, the Sisters were lodged in our orphanage attached to the Cathedral.

They could stay there until Father Morelli could find a convenient residence on the recently bought property which he hoped to have ready for them by May 1st. In fact, he showed Mother Cabrini some rooms promising her to have them cleaned and put in order for her. Later, however, he decided to rent these rooms and to give the Sisters two very small rooms with a low ceiling, quite dirty and barely large enough for two persons, let alone for five. Mother Cabrini refused to live there. Then he promised to give them the house where he himself lived. In two or three months he could have some rooms built for them. Mother Cabrini, realizing that Father Morelli's ideas were not too clear, feared that these rooms would also be unsuitable for her Sisters. Those holes, as you called them, had ceilings so low that Father Morelli could not stand up without removing his hat.

*When the Sisters remain at school all day where the air is foul, at night they should be able to breathe pure air and not sleep in two small rooms. Therefore, I have the duty of providing them with suitable quarters. Later all will be well, but at the beginning one must expect some difficulties."*⁷⁴

Father Morelli testified, however:

"They thought that they would find convents here and large gardens, not

⁷¹ Letter by Mother F. S. Cabrini to G.B. Scalabrini New York April 12, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 102).

⁷² Letter by Msgr. A. Serrati to G.B. Scalabrini, Codogno April 24, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 102).

⁷³ Letter by G.B. Scalabrini to Cardinal G. Simeoni, Piacenza, April 28, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 102). The letter that was enclosed is the one addressed to him by Mother Cabrini on April 12, 1889.

⁷⁴ Letter by Archbishop M.A. Corrigan to G.B. Scalabrini, Newburgh, N.Y., May 8, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 549).

knowing that here every square yard of land costs five thousand dollars. Before the arrival of the Sisters, Countess di Cesnola had prepared a magnificent apartment, luxuriously furnished, for them. I had prepared a very decent four hundred ninety lire a month house. As soon as they arrived, we signed the lease for the property under the two houses attached to the Church. We agreed with Mother Superior not to rent the first house but to remodernize one of the houses near the church, while for one month the nuns could live together in the apartment rented by the Countess. But, unfortunately, the municipal building inspector delayed his survey for twenty five days, and without this survey we could not start work. Now it is finished, and in a few days they will occupy the apartments prepared near the church.

In less than two months I spent one thousand dollars, whereas I haven't spent that much for us in eight months. Our furniture costs less than one hundred dollars, but for theirs I have spent three hundred and forty dollars."⁷⁵

Father Morelli added that the Sisters were pressuring the Archbishop so that each of them would obtain three hundred dollars a month salary with lodging. It was calculated that the pupils at the school, who each paid a dollar a month, would have furnished two hundred dollars a month, which, according to Father Morelli, should have been sufficient for them; however, the Missionaries would have paid the difference if necessary. But the Sisters' expectation to be treated like the Sisters of the other congregations long established here was ill founded. They were just beginning their work. Moreover the priests work without pay.

Finally, here is another deposition by Mother Cabrini who, on June 10, just a day before Father Morelli wrote, sent a long letter to Bishop Scalabrini:

"May the Good Lord bless Your Excellency, and may the excellent work of the Congregation you have founded continue to prosper and help the innumerable souls which, left to themselves, had forgotten God and their religious duties, never thinking of their eternal salvation. The abundant crop we are gathering here speaks of your zeal and heaps upon you many heavenly blessings.

We have still to organize schools for the benefit of so many Italian children who are practically abandoned. I hope that through your exhortations, Father Morelli will hurry to put together the necessary things which, if not gotten by us now during the vacations, will be unobtainable later because the protestant and the Irish schools will try - as they are already trying - to obtain them for themselves. You asked me not to be querulous, but if you were here I am certain that you would ask me, in the contrary, to be more insistent, and to complain more often, in order to encourage Father Morelli to do what must be done. Father is a good man, he has many excellent qualities and I have a high opinion of him; but when it comes to providing for my Sisters, or thinking of our schools, he always tells me yes, but nothing is ever accomplished. At the beginning, he prepared two small rooms in a building attached to the Church. They were more suitable for a pantry than for our bedrooms, with barely enough space for two small beds instead of six. Later, he rented a house which was suitable but which your priests wanted for themselves. They are again furnishing for us the rooms adjacent to the Church. They want us to go there at the end of the month, but I foresee that they will not be ready and that we shall not have everything we need. Therefore, I would like to refuse to go there for the time being because I am certain that if they will not do now what must be done, they will not do it after we occupy them. I am happy to have our Sisters living near the Church so that they may keep it in order, something your priest cannot do. Nevertheless I think it is my right to expect that my nuns have what they need.

Perhaps, Father Morelli is influenced by his subordinates each of whom wants to have his way. There are some who say that we nuns are very ambitious. In truth we ask only for what is necessary and not for what is convenient.

If Father Morelli would place everything in order, he himself would benefit. For when our pupils begin paying for their lessons, we might earn some money, and he would not have to pay us anything. There are many protestant schools, which not only charge nothing but which give gifts to their pupils. Yet if our house were soon put in order, my Sisters might attract many students to it once school begins.

⁷⁵ Letter by Father Morelli to G.B. Scalabrini, New York, June 9, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 551/2).

At the present timed classes are held in the Church. Before winter comes perhaps Father Morelli might find another site. I am not requesting this now, I would be satisfied with a house for my Sisters, so that I might return to Italy without this concern.

"I rejected the Archbishop's proposal, though flattering, because I realized that if I accepted it, I would have harmed your work. I preferred to suffer, in order to reach the goal for which Your Excellency sent us here, but now I am eager to see our home completed so that I might return to Italy as now I must. I hope that they will satisfy this request at your urging. Your priests do not lack the means to accomplish it. The Church is insured and future payments will be made by the rents they collect from the tenements and by the monies they will earn in abundance."⁷⁶

Later Mother Cabrini wrote to Msgr. Taggiasco, in charge of Cabrinian finances in Rome, that her main difficulties had been overcome through Bishop Scalabrini's intervention:

"I wrote to give you some news about myself and to tell you my feelings since I feel closer to you than to anyone else. However, though I asked that you not speak to anyone about them, you did well in informing the Bishop of Piacenza. He immediately ordered his priests to properly lodge my Sisters near the Church, where they might continue the work already begun at our temporary house. The house from which I now write."⁷⁷

The following passages from Mother Cabrini's biography explain the above letters, and show the development of her work which, unrelated to the Scalabrinian Missions are nevertheless useful:

"Being eager to dedicate themselves to the care of their countrymen, the Sisters began their Mission on the first Sunday after they arrived in New York, watching the children while Mass was being celebrated in the Church of St. Joachim, and returning there in the afternoon for catechism."⁷⁸

Mother readily understood the needs of these poor people; she guessed their moral, spiritual and material misery and saw the necessity of helping them soon without appealing to their empty purses.... The enemies of the soul had to be fought on their own ground. A Church alone was not enough - they needed schools, orphanages, hospitals.... She had no illusion: very little could be expected from the Scalabrinian Fathers who, in fact, had declared that they could not pay them the small salary which every parish priest in the United States pays to his parochial school. To hope for assistance from the Americans, as the Archbishop wanted, was not practical if he wished to avoid hurting certain sensibilities, and clashing with certain racial and partisan rivalries which were often masked by the pretext of trying to avoid damaging the interests of other institutions. There is no scarcity of rich people among the Italians. Their efforts, together with the activity of the nuns, could have reached the goals that should be reached by salaried people; but, as can be easily understood by those who are familiar with the life of our communities, it was useless to hope for such harmony and fusion of forces. The flower of the community, if we can thus call the cultured and rich class of the same, had greeted Mother coldly. Even the Consul, Signor Riva, who more than an one else should have cared for the interests of our countrymen, had told her that he could not support her plans because he had other plans for the future of the community.

Mother Cabrini had perceived in Archbishop Corrigan a sincere desire to help the Italians, and she was sure that he would have been happy for her success. At the same time, however, she realized that he was in a delicate position, having to face the hostility of so many people, including the clergy, who either by conviction or by deliberate ill-will would have created difficulties for her work. She realized that he would have found it difficult to extricate himself from the fears that such parties create, and from the political influence they have, in the event that he did too much to help her when in trouble.... For the moment, what she needed was patience. Although the dissension between the Archbishop and Countess di Cesnola was then at its peak, Mother Cabrini, who had gained the sympathy of the countess, managed to obtain the decisive

⁷⁶Letter by Mother Cabrini to G.B. Scalabrini, New York, June 10, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 102).

⁷⁷Letter by Mother Cabrini to Msgr. Taggiasco, New York, June 23, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 102).

⁷⁸Mother Francesca Saverio Cabrini, cit., p. 99.

Meeting on June 10, when consent was finally given."⁷⁹ (79)

As for classes, which the Missionaries held in the Church of St. Joacbhim, Mother Cabrini's biography says:

"The children, numbering more than two hundred, were instructed in the Church itself... The Sisters who would have had to travel daily for half an hour to be there...temporarily lived in a house on White Street, which lacked every convenience, until the building adjacent to the Church was rehabilitated."⁸⁰ (80)

On January 3, 1889, Bishop Scalabrini received a telegram which read:

"Nuns' House ready. Mme. di Cesnola."⁸¹

But, Archbishop Corrigan raised objections to opening an orphanage in a letter which he wrote to the Bishop of Piacenza on February 5:

"The Sisters are welcome. I am certain that they will do much good, but I have no clear vision of the means to be employed in order to obtain financial help for them. We have only twenty five thousand lire which is too small an amount to open an orphanage in New York. The Countess not being a bishop, and not feeling the weight of responsibility for this affair is still confident. We must rely on our money alone and not hope to receive help from the government, which, by law, is forbidden to finance religious institutions of any kind. How the Sisters can earn a living, I don't know. We shall do our best."⁸²

Archbishop Corrigan's sudden change in attitude was not attributable either to Bishop Scalabrini or to his Missionaries. Father Zaboglio wrote: "Another thing that surprised us, was that the Archbishop whom Father Morelli, other Missionaries, and I heard requesting Sisters for Countess di Cesnola, annulled his permission when they arrived, though he was happy when the orphanage functioned."⁸³ (83)

Mother Cabrini's nuns ceased working St. Joachim's school and left their house in August, 1892, when the Missionaries could no longer pay them a salary. This failure was attributed to Father Morelli whose zeal Mother Cabrini praised, but whose administrative ineptitude was well known. Also, she preferred educational activity, and wrote to Fr. Zaboglio:

"Pray, Most Reverend Father, for our schools. Not permitted by the Archbishop to solicit money, I relinquished part of the convent and thought that our financial problems were settled. But now, Father Vicentini has placed everything in doubt. I have more positions to fill than nuns. Churches compete to have them. But, if they are removed from here, the Church will suffer. Please attempt to make your voice heard about this also."⁸⁴

Mother Cabrini was also involved in the first Italian hospital founded by the Scalabrinians in America.

4. The Cristoforo Colombo Hospital

One of the first projects proposed by Father Morelli was a hospital for the Italian immigrants. He began by organizing a committee which presented the project to Bishop Scalabrini, who approved it and expressed the hope that it would become "a permanent symbol of unity and peace. For in matters of charity every disagreement must cease, and every initiative must be taken without exclusion or preference without consideration of parties and without distinctions of any kind. It is with these hopes, that I gladly urge my worthy Missionaries to support your charitable and pious plans."⁸⁵

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 101-103.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 107-108.

⁸¹ Telegram by Countess di Cesnola to G.B. Scalabrini, January 3, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 102).

⁸² Letter by Archbishop M.A. Corrigan to G.B. Scalabrini, New York, February 5, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 549). It is the answer to Bishop Scalabrini's letter dated January 23rd: "The nuns chosen to go to New York are the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart - a recently organized Order, but strong and well-versed. The Superior General, being sick, will sail a little later in the hope of coming to an agreement with Your Excellency, and with Countess di Cesnola about what has to be done. The question of nuns is a very delicate one, and I wish that the decision taken will be well considered and mature enough to insure that we shall succeed in our noble enterprise." (Letter by G.B. Scalabrini to Archbishop M.A. Corrigan, Piacenza, January 23, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 549).

⁸³ Letter by Father F. Zaboglio to G.B. Scalabrini, New York, April 4, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 549/3).

⁸⁴ Letter by Mother F.S. Cabrini to Father F. Zaboglio, New York, July 8, 1892 (Arch. G.S., 102).

⁸⁵ Letter by G.B. Scalabrini, Florence, December 10, 1890, quoted in: *Mons. Giovanni Battista Scalabrini, Trent'anni di Apostolato, Memorie e documenti*, (by Angelo Scalabrini), Rome, 1909, pp. 357-358.

The Archbishop informed Father Morelli that his plan was approved by the New York Diocesan advisors on December 3, 1890, that he was to purchase a building, to select a congregation of nuns to which to entrust it, and present himself to the Curia in order to receive proper instructions and "*come to an agreement regarding the nuns and the manner of collecting funds for the project's upkeep.*"⁸⁶

Father Giuseppe Molinari wrote this letter about the proposed hospital:

*"During Easter we shall inaugurate a hospital free of charge for Italians with a 200 bed capacity. At the beginning only sixty beds will be available in one of four wings. And though it faces the street, it will lack no necessity. Its income, however, is in the hands of Providence. It will suffice that nuns who are highly respected here shop for everything they need for the sick and the orphaned, and people of all classes and faiths will give in for charity."*⁸⁷

Father Morelli narrated its beginnings:

"Bishop Scalabrini made the proposal for a hospital to his Missionaries, who despite opposition from the Italian Home collected ten thousand dollars within a week. They purchased ten lots at 109th Street on which stood the hospital of the British Sisters of St. Joseph, for fifty thousand dollars.

We incorporated it under the name of "Christopher Columbus Hospital" with the late Archbishop Corrigan, its President, and Bishop Scalabrini, Count di Cesnola, Dr. Eugenio Villari, who represented the medical staff, and the Mother Superior of the nuns its Board of Directors."⁸⁸

From the Venerable Rosa Gattorno, Bishop Scalabrini obtained five Sisters of St. Ann, who left Piacenza on March 18, 1891⁸⁹ and who, at the beginning of April, were "*installed in a small hospital which, in time, may become larger.*"⁹⁰ On June 1, a second group was to arrive. But the Sisters of St. Anne were forbidden by their rule to solicit money for the hospital and Father Vicentini wrote: "*If they do not solicit contributions, our only resource, the hospital, must be closed. All hospitals do the same.*"⁹¹

Bishop Scalabrini wrote to the Sacred Congregation of Bishops to obtain an exemption for the Sisters, but, Mother Gattorno, fought against it, saying that she preferred to recall her Sisters from New York. Then the bishop asked Mother Cabrini if she would send some of her nuns to New York.

*"She replied that nothing could be done without knowing under what conditions they were to work and live... Perhaps we have rushed things, she said. I praise and admire your work, your zeal, and your desire to accomplish as much good as you can, but we must be sure of what we do and never forget that he who wishes to live long avoids excesses."*⁹²

Mother Cabrini, after all the things that had happened to her with Father Morelli wished to avoid another bitter experience. Father Morelli, favored having the hospital administered by the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, but did not favor having it directed by Mother Cabrini. He had purposely excluded this possibility from the beginning. Now he had to turn to her. Bishop Scalabrini wrote:

*"Concerning a change I have already written to Mother Cabrini who, despite the humiliations she suffered when not nominated director of the hospital, is willing to accept it now and to take charge of soliciting money. She is a virtuous woman with great heart. However, I have made no agreement yet."*⁹³

To Bishop Scalabrini's insistence was added the exhortation of Cardinal Simeoni:

"The Saint went to New York, and although she knew the hospital's grave financial problems, she accepted its Directorship. She was encouraged by a dream during which she saw the Madonna taking her place and making the

⁸⁶ Letter by Archbishop M.A. Corrigan to Father F. Morelli, December 3, 1890 (Arch. G.S., 664/1).

⁸⁷ Letter by Father G. Molinari to D. Carlo Molinari, New York, March 5 1891 (Arch. G.S., 664/1).

⁸⁸ Memoire written by Father F. Morelli for Il Cittadino in 1912 (Arch. Center for Migration Studies, New York, Scalabrini Fathers Papers).

⁸⁹ Cfr. Letter by G.B. Scalabrini to Archbishop M.A. Corrigan, Piacenza, March 17, 1891 (Arch. G.S., 549).

⁹⁰ Letter by Father D. Vicentini to Father B. Roller, New York, April 4, 1891 (Arch. G.S., 665/2).

⁹¹ Letter by Father D. Vicentini to Father B. Roller, New York, May 10, 1891 (Arch. G.S., 665/2).

⁹² Letter by G.B. Scalabrini to Father F. Morelli, Piacenza, May 1891 (Arch. G.S., 3023/2).

⁹³ Letter by G.B. Scalabrini to Father F. Zaboglio, Piacenza, May 18, 1891 (Arch. Seminario Maggiore of Como).

beds for the sick."⁹⁴

The Sisters of St. Ann left New York in July, 1891, and were immediately replaced by Mother Cabrini and her nuns who accepted the assignment on condition that they be permitted to keep half of the sums they would collect. Father Vicentini found this unacceptable.⁹⁵

In a letter dated December 23, 1891, Mother Cabrini complained to Bishop Scalabrini that his Missionaries had not given her the money they had promised in exchange for her assistance at the hospital. Money which was to be used to send nuns to Nicaragua:

*"I cannot now assure you that we can remain. Too much money was spent for the travels and upkeep of the nuns of St. Ann. These expenses were never repaid. Our nuns pledged their help, and I believe that they already have done enough. They live each day and pay past debts with their collections."*⁹⁶

The hospital continued for several months. Its finances were always precarious. By the middle of 1892, Mother Cabrini wrote to the Bishop of Piacenza:

*"With the help of God I am able to tell you, for your peace of mind, that your Missions are prospering; but your hospital's situation has deteriorated. I do not have the heart to see it close. It would be a disgrace. Therefore, having faith in Providence, I have assumed full responsibility for it, and I hope that on returning to Italy, I can give you better news."*⁹⁷

Father Morelli, unable to care for the hospital himself, begged Mother Cabrini to take charge of it. She wrote: *"I did not feel capable of assuming that burden, but finally rather than seeing the property auctioned and come into hands of others, because Fr. Morelli was unable to keep his promises, I began to think of doing some small, but sure thing."*⁹⁸

Father Morelli also expected the Sisters to pay interest on the mortgage. She wrote. *"Father Morelli wanted me to promise him that I would pay one hundred dollars a week, and two thousand dollars a year in mortgages, which is absolutely impossible."*⁹⁹

Because of this, she obtained permission to manage the hospital from another building, and to begin Ex Novo. And on October 17, 1892, she ordered the hospital moved from 109th Street to 19th Street, where the large Columbus Hospital, known as Cabrini Medical Center, is now located.

About the relationship of the Scalabrinian Missionaries with the Cabrini nuns, Bishop Scalabrini commented:

*"About the nuns at the hospital, and the schools, I don't know what to say. We tried to do some good, and perhaps we failed. But Humiliamini sub potenti manu Dei, ut vos exaltet in tempore opportuno: omnem sollicitudinem vestram projicientes in eum: quoniam ipsi cura est de nobis."*¹⁰⁰

⁹⁴ Cfr. La Madre Francesca Saverio Cabrini, cit., pp. 150-151.

⁹⁵ Letter by Father D. Vicentini to Father F. Zaboglio, New York, July 7, 1891 (Arch. G.S., 665/2).

⁹⁶ Letter by Mother Cabrini to G.B. Scalabrini, Nicaragua-Granada, November 23, 1891 (Arch. G.S., 102)

⁹⁷ Letter by Mother F.S. Cabrini to G.B. Scalabrini, New York, June 14, 1892 (Arch. G.S., 102).

⁹⁸ Letter by Mother F.S. Cabrini to Father F. Zaboglio, Piacenza, August 5, 1892 (Arch. G.S., 102).

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Letter by G.B. Scalabrini to Father F. Zaboglio, Piacenza, August 5, 1892 (Arch. Seminario Maggiore of Como).

CHAPTER IV

THE BEGINNING OF THE BOSTON, PITTSBURGH,
PROVIDENCE, NEW HAVEN AND NEW ORLEANS MISSIONS

1. The Parish of the Sacred Heart in Boston, Massachusetts (1888-1895)

The year 1888, when the Scalabrinian Missionaries began to arrive in North America, marked the opening of the Parishes of the Sacred Heart in Boston, Massachusetts, and of St. Joachim in New York.

Boston was one of the largest ports of disembarkation in the United States for Italian immigrants. Many Italians remained in that city, so that in 1870, there were eight thousand Italians, mostly from Genoa, and by 1910, fifty thousand Italians, mostly from the South of Italy.

At first, they frequented the Franciscan Church, St. Leonardo, on Prince Street which had been opened for them in 1873. But soon its pastors, who did not dedicate themselves exclusively to Italian immigrants, adapted themselves to the customs of the Irish majority which made the Italians uncomfortable and humiliated them because their poverty did not allow them to contribute very much to the maintenance of their church.

Thus the Genoese in Boston, like the Italians in New York, organized a "Società Cattolica Italiana", later called, "Società San Marco". They told Father Bonifacio Bragantini, OFM, (Ordine dei Frati Minori), Rector of the Church of St. Leonardo, that the Italians needed a church of their own. He agreed, and suggested that they buy a former Baptist church in North Square after incorporating and issuing shares. One of the difficulties of practically all beginning Scalabrinian parishes was that the immigrants did not trust the ecclesiastical administration, which was subject to the Curia, and therefore to the Irish. Hence, they wanted administrative control of the church for themselves. The Missionaries, on their part, were not prepared for an American custom which required that Rectors be the financial administrators of their church.

Father Bonifacio rejected any conditions for administrative interference presented by the Italian Society and disengaged himself from the project. The Society at a meeting on April 27, 1884, nominated a committee to purchase the former Baptist church on North Square. It then contacted Archbishop Williams of Boston requesting ecclesiastical recognition of the San Marco Society, and his permission to open the new Church to the faithful. But having been forewarned by those opposed to the Society he refused their request.

Then the Society tried to obtain an endorsement of such Italian prelates as Msgrs. Martinelli and Schiaffino, a good friend of Bishop Scalabrini. On Sundays its members attended Mass in American churches, then gathered in the North Square church for the Gospel, for prayers, Vespers and the rosary, always under the guidance of lay preachers. Because of this some considered them heretics and schismatics.

When, in July 1888, the first Scalabrinian Missionaries reached New York, the San Marco Society Directorate contacted them, and convinced Father Zaboglio to travel to Boston to speak with the Archbishop.¹ Father Zaboglio had heard about the situation from an Italian woman from there, who spoke to him on July 17th. He immediately informed Bishop Scalabrini, adding that he thought it would be useful to try to do something for immigrants there.² The Bishop of Piacenza urged him to confer with the Archbishop of Boston and to tell him that the Italian Catholics had asked for some priests from his Congregation, but that before sending them he wanted to ask the Archbishop's opinion.³

¹ Cfr. Venticinque anni di missione fra gl'immigrati italiani di Boston, 1888-1913, by Father Vittorio Gregori (Milano, 1913), pp. 55-82.

² Cfr. Letter by Father F. Zaboglio to G. B. Scalabrini, New York, July 19, 1888 (Arch. G.S., 549/4).

³ Cfr. Letter by G.B. Scalabrini to Father F. Zaboglio, Piacenza, August 16, 1888 (Arch. Seminario Maggiore di Como).

Negotiations with the Archbishop were lengthy and difficult. He ordered the North Square Church closed so that a hall could be opened as a temporary chapel. The Italians, reluctantly accepted⁴. Bishop Scalabrini then wrote to Father Zaboglio:

*"After so many hopes, and so much work, the Church of San Marco is not to be opened: Let us accept God's Will, and trust Him to care for these many abandoned souls. I do not know if it is prudent to inaugurate a chapel in a hall as we did in New York, without the Archbishop's request for our Missionaries. Without his sincere and public help, we could not operate freely. Our Missionaries would be our enemies' targets, and perhaps even be slandered: Let us not insist too much, therefore - let us not try to break down the doors. I believe the time is near when they will ask for us and we, forgetting the wrongs we have suffered, will only think about Jesus Christ and the souls he has redeemed."*⁵

The Society finally rented a hall at 86 Beverly Street:

*"It was nothing but a squalid, narrow shop reached by a small, narrow stepladder. Not even a twentieth part of the Italians who frequented it could find room. Because of the poor ventilation it soon became difficult to breathe there. Yet the Italians, through innumerable discomforts and sacrifices, perseveringly gathered in that humble place for a year and a half."*⁶

On December 12, 1888, Father Zaboglio cabled Bishop Scalabrini that the Archbishop had finally given him permission to administer the temporary chapel, effective December 23rd. Bishop Scalabrini promised to send him two priests and two catechists in January⁷. At first, Father Zaboglio would officiate in this chapel, dedicated to the Sacred Heart:

*"The inauguration of this Church was heralded as the opening of a new parish even by the diocesan newspaper. I began my work as Rector on the 23rd. December 23rd and 25th were joyful days for the Italian community in Boston, as one thousand two hundred people crowded into the Church for Mass and Vespers. Many more could not enter but had to attend outside, or leave (...). Your Excellency cannot imagine the enthusiasm of the people, already discredited and insulted by a renegade friar."*⁸

A month later, Father Zaboglio confirmed that things were progressing well.⁹

On February 7, 1889, the Missionaries promised by Bishop Scalabrini, arrived, and were warmly received. They were Father Luigi Paroli, Father Giuseppe Martini, Brother Giacomo Borsella and Brother Vincenzo Arcello.¹⁰

On April 13, 1889, Father Zaboglio wrote the following about the first Italian Church on North Square:

*"As for the Church of San Marco, everyone is now practically convinced that we can open it without detriment to anyone. Even the Vicar General has become convinced, despite the fact that, though he likes us, he favors the Franciscans and protects them. Anyone acquainted with local conditions knows how necessary this church is. When the Archbishop granted us permission to open a church, he added that we would have to think about dividing the two parishes on other than street designations. I replied that each parish might keep a register of its parishioners. But he said: 'We shall see. One thing at a time!' Why could these parishes not be separated by street designations? The parishioners are intermingled. Many of our own parishioners live near the Franciscan Church. This difficulty will exist as long as the two churches exist. There is no way of separating them except by keeping an appropriate register, but once this is done, no other obstacle will exist between us and the Church of San Marco. Should the two churches be superimposed on each other, no damage would accrue to the Franciscans."*¹¹

On April 14, 1889, Archbishop Williams imparted Confirmation to two hundred

⁴ Cfr. *Venticinque anni, etc.*, cit. p. 82; and letter by Father F. Zaboglio to G.B. Scalabrini, Boston, November 16, 1888 (Arch. G.S., 549/4).

⁵ Letter by G.B. Scalabrini to Father F. Zaboglio, Piacenza, November 20, 1888 (Arch. Seminario Maggiore di Como).

⁶ *Venticinque anni, etc.*, cit. p. 83.

⁷ Cfr. Letter by G.B. Scalabrini to Father F. Zaboglio, Piacenza December 12, 1888 (Arch. Seminario Maggiore di Como).

⁸ Letter by Father F. Zaboglio to G.B. Scalabrini, Boston, January 1, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 549/3).

⁹ "Prejudices together with the calumny of that scoundrel Father Bonifacio, who dishonors the name of the saint of Assisi are disappearing even in Boston." Letter by Father F. Zaboglio to G.B. Scalabrini, Boston, January 31, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 549/3).

¹⁰ Cfr. Letter by Father L. Paroli to G.B. Scalabrini, Boston, February 20, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 573/1).

¹¹ Letter by Father F. Zaboglio to G.B. Scalabrini, Boston, April 13, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 549/3).

and forty Italian children¹², and soon the Missionaries began to teach catechism for First Communion. They began with the adults, and divided the candidates into groups of one hundred.¹³

On July 2, 1889, Fathers Paroli and Martini asked the Archbishop's permission to open the Church of San Marco on North Square, or if he wished to avoid trouble with the Franciscans, to allow them to use it temporarily while a new church be built at a more distant location.¹⁴ The Vicar General replied that he would study a way of fixing the territorial boundaries of the two parishes.¹⁵, assuring them that the Church of San Marco would be part of the Scalabrinian parish, so that it could be opened to the faithful.¹⁶ The San Marco Society affirmed its willingness to transfer title to the Church immediately and irrevocably to the Archbishop, and to call it the Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.¹⁷

Speaking personally to the Archbishop on September 6, 1889, Father Zaboglio

*"proposed a territorial division similar to one adopted in New York by which an individual or a family belonging to one parish could become a member of the other parish by renting a pew in the Church. Thus, all conflicts could be avoided, and the parishioners would be free to select their parish. The Archbishop considered the proposal, and then said that it might be adopted, but that he would have to think about it a little longer, and then he would give his answer."*¹⁸

Meanwhile, Father Paroli had been sent to open the Mission in Providence, R.I. He was succeeded as Superior and then as Pastor by Father Giuseppe Martini.¹⁹ On November 24, the humble chapel on Beverly Street was visited by the Apostolic Delegate Msgr. Satolli, who assured the Missionaries that the Archbishop would soon decide about the Church of San Marco.²⁰

On April 21, 1890, Archbishop Williams told Fathers Zaboglio and Martini that they could open the Church of San Marco as the Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and as the parish Church of the Italians.²¹

On May 25, 1890, the Feast of Pentecost, Father Zaboglio solemnly blessed the Church. Reporting this to the Bishop of Piacenza, he repeated that it was blessed "*by order of the Archbishop*" so that Bishop Scalabrini could counteract any eventual complaint by the Franciscans to the Holy See. He said that the Italians in Boston numbered about ten thousand, and that it was impossible for the Franciscans to care for them in a church smaller than even the hall on Beverly Street.

During 1889 the Missionaries administered two hundred and ninety four baptisms and sixty eight marriages. But the Church could no longer be used since it had no fire exit and was therefore unsafe. Moreover, it was difficult to hear confessions and to perform services because of the noise coming from the machinery above and the streets below. "The Archbishop had charged Father Zaboglio to inform Bishop Scalabrini that the separation of one parish from the other, even in the special form suggested by Father Zaboglio, was not feasible *'unless it be a division that is not a division,'*²² or a kind of national shrine at the same time.

Soon after, Fathers Martinelli, Desanti and Astorri preached missions there. For eight days, the first Mass, followed by meditation, was celebrated at 4:30 A.M. in deference to the workers. At 7:30 P.M. rosary was recited and religious instruction imparted ("*for a half hour in order not to wear the patience of the congregations and to permit meditation*"). At the end of the missions, which had to be extended for another week due to the constant influx of people, the first

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Cfr. Letter by Father L. Paroli to Father B. Rolleri, Boston, May 5, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 573/1).

¹⁴ Cfr. Letter by Father L. Paroli to Father F. Zaboglio, Boston, July 15, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 573/1).

¹⁵ Cfr. Letter by Father G. Martini to Father F. Zaboglio, Boston, July 19, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 573/1).

¹⁶ Cfr. Letter by Father L. Paroli to G.B. Scalabrini, Boston, July 19, 1889, and to Father F. Zaboglio, Boston, July 23, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 573/1).

¹⁷ Cfr. Petition by the Fathers F. Zaboglio, L. Paroli and C. Martini to Archbishop F. Williams, Boston, August 12, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 573/1).

¹⁸ Letter by Father F. Zaboglio to G.B. Scalabrini, Boston, September 7, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 549/3).

¹⁹ Cfr. Decree by G.B. Scalabrini, Piacenza, November 19, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 573/2).

²⁰ Cfr. Letter by Father G. Martini to G.B. Scalabrini, Boston, November 26, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 573/2).

²¹ Cfr. Letter by Father F. Zaboglio to G.B. Scalabrini, Boston, April 23, 1890 (Arch. G.S., 573/2).

²² Letter by Father F. Zaboglio to G.B. Scalabrini, Boston, May 27, 1890 (Arch. G.S., 573/2).

patronal Feast of the Sacred Heart was celebrated. On that occasion Mother Cabrini was present.²³

In September 1890, Father Martini announced that an "industrial school" and a new vestry were ready. Simultaneously, the Curia proposed a formula for separating the parishes of St. Leonardo and the Sacred Heart. It stated that the geographic territory of the two parishes was the same; but within six months the parishioners had to choose though not irrevocably one of the other churches for their ordinary attendance, contributions, sacraments and funerals.²⁴ The statement on irrevocability was later deleted.

The "industrial school" or the school for sewing, was opened on October 18, 1890, under the direction of two American women.²⁵ It was attended by one hundred girls, and then one hundred and fifty girls, assisted by twenty teachers. It held classes once a week.²⁶

In 1892, an "Apostolate of Prayer" was instituted; an evening school for boys inaugurated, and the Chapel of St. Lazarus opened in Orient Heights. A Missionary officiated there almost every Sunday, while during the week he taught catechism to children from forty two Italian families. The Italians in Readsboro, Vermont, and in Canada, were encouraged to build chapels. Missionaries visited Italian communities in Springfield and Milford, Massachusetts, seven hundred Italians in Quincy, Massachusetts, and for several years Fr. Astorri visited four hundred Italians in North Adams, Massachusetts.²⁷

Since 1889, the Confraternity of Christian Mothers had been organized and the Association of the Daughters of Mary. Meanwhile, the Catholic Associations of Mutual Aid of Boston annually celebrated the feast of their patron saint in the Church of the Sacred Heart. In addition to the San Marco Society, there was the Society of St. Anthony of Lapio, founded in 1893, the Society of St. Michael the Archangel, founded in 1892, and the Military Society of "The Sons of Italy" organized in 1890.²⁸

In 1894, five hundred and forty baptisms and ninety seven marriages were performed while sixty four First Communions were imparted.

Father Giuseppe Martini was Pastor until June 12, 1894, when he was replaced by Father Vicentini. Father Martini returned to Italy because of ill health and urgent family matters. Bishop Scalabrini later appointed him Pastor in Salsomaggiore, and after regaining his health he was sent to a Mission in Brazil. From January 17, 1895 to November 12, 1901, Father Giacomo Gambera was the Pastor.

We cannot close the history of the first years of the Scalabrinian Missions in Boston without mentioning the Polish Father Giovanni Chmielinski who was sent there in 1893.

He was born in Poland in the diocese of Plock in whose seminary he entered in 1887. For unknown reasons, he went to Italy in 1889, and continued his studies at the Seminary of Ventimiglia until 1890, when, following the example of Fr. Gibelli, he entered the Congregation of the Missionaries of St. Charles. Bishop Scalabrini ordained him to Holy Orders in 1892.

He left for the United States in April 1893, and was assigned to the Boston Mission. Interested in the numerous Polish immigrants there, he despite his youth (for he was only 25) planned to build a Church for them.²⁹ The Archbishop approved his project and promised to procure a protestant church for him. Meanwhile, he officiated in the basement of a German church until the end of 1893, living away from the Boston community from which he juridically

²³ Cfr. Letter by Father A. V. Astorri to G. B. Scalabrini, Boston, June 16, 1890 (Arch. G.S., 573/2).

²⁴ Cfr. Letter by Father P.G. Martini to Father F. Zaboglio, Boston, September 22, 1890 (Arch. G.S., 573/2).

²⁵ Cfr. Letter by Father G. Martini to Father F. Zaboglio Boston, October 21, 1890 (Arch. G.S., 573/2).

²⁶ Cfr. Letter by Father G. Martini to Father F. Zaboglio Boston, November 26, 1890 (Arch. G.S., 573/2).

²⁷ Cfr. "Relazione Brevissima delle opere intraprese dalla Casa di Boston nel 1892" (Arch. G.S., 573/2). Cfr. also "Le mie Missioni nell'America del Nord," manuscript by Father A.V. Astorri, Vol. I, pp. 24-32 (Arch. G.S., 1669).

²⁸ "In 1913 the Catholic Mutual Aid Societies of Boston will be 29." Cfr. *Venticinque anni, etc., cit.*, pp. 197-198.

²⁹ Cfr. Letters by Father G. Martini to G.B. Scalabrini, Boston, September 26, 1893; and to Father F. Zaboglio, Boston, January 29, 1894 (Arch. G.S., 573/2).

depended.³⁰

Both Fathers Giuseppe Martini and the Provincial Superior Domenico Vicentini, and perhaps the Vicar General Father Zaboglio, did not favor this unforeseen activity.³¹ But, they preferred to let him do as he wished, realizing how useless it would be to try to stop him, especially since the Archbishop had taken the responsibility of a Polish Mission for himself.

Bishop Scalabrini visited the Polish Church of the Madonna of Czestochowa on Dorchester Avenue in South Boston in 1901, and declared that Father Chmielinski had acted with his consent: "*As you know he had my permission to dedicate himself to his countrymen and he succeeded in building a beautiful Church and rectory.*"³²

2. The Parish of St. Peter in Pittsburgh, PA (1889-1894)

The beginning of Scalabrinian activity in Pittsburgh, PA., and its surroundings, among the numerous Italians working in the coal mines and in the factories started in May, 1889, when Fathers Morelli, Martinelli and Astorri invited by the Bishop, preached their missions with unforeseen success. The Bishop and Vicar General offered the Cathedral basement as a temporary church; following the Missions, however, five hundred families agreed to found an Italian Church, and formed a committee to collect funds. Father Astorri was asked to remain a while longer, in order to support the movement.³³

But when the permanent committee began to collect for the Church, results were less than expected. Of the four thousand Italian immigrants in Pittsburgh few were Genoese or Piacentini, and the majority had come from Southern Italy. Mass attendance also poor, was no more than one hundred people.³⁴

In July 1889, the end of his temporary mission, Father Astorri was replaced by Father Giacomo Annovazzi. By the end of that year a contract was prepared for the purchase of "*a beautiful Church at the cost of thirty five thousand dollars to be paid in four years*"³⁵, but the contract was rescinded because of a defect in form. They then thought of buying a parcel of land on which a new Church might be built.³⁶

In late 1890, Father Domenico Mantese and later Fr. Giuseppe Molinari were sent to help Father Annovazzi. Construction on the new church began only in May 1891 because the committee wanted to be independent of the Missionaries while the Bishop insisted that the Pastor be the responsible administrator.³⁷

Meanwhile attendance at the Church was increasing. In 1890, fourteen marriages were performed and sixty children were baptized. In 1891, the figures rose to nineteen marriages and one hundred and forty five baptisms, yet this was small in comparison to the nearly six thousand souls in the city and four thousand in the suburbs.³⁸ But the immigrants, anxious for economic advancement in a strongly industrial area, were neglected by everyone. They earned sufficient money, but forgot their religion.³⁹

In the beginning of 1892 it was thought necessary to start a school, especially because an Italian protestant minister had already opened a church and a school for the immigrants.⁴⁰ Father Zaboglio informed Father Molinari that towards the end of April Mother Cabrini would be in Pittsburgh. The occasion was a good one to convince her to open a school in the "*city of smoke.*"⁴¹

On April 14, 1892, when the basement was completed, the cornerstone for the Church was laid in place.

³⁰ Cfr. Letters by Father G. Martini to Father D. Vicentini, Boston, November 9, 1893; and to Father F. Zaboglio, Boston, January 29, 1894 (Arch. G.S., 573/2).

³¹ Cfr. Letter by Father G. Martini to Father D. Vicentini, Boston, without date (Arch. G.S., 1779).

³² Letter by G.B. Scalabrini to Mons. C. Mangot, Boston, September 10, 1901 (Arch. G.S., 1779)

³³ Cfr. Letter by Father F. Morelli to G.B. Scalabrini, New York, June 8, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 551/2).

³⁴ Cfr. Letter by Father A.V. Astorri to Father B. Roller, Pittsburgh, July 10, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 666/2).

³⁵ Letter by Father G. Annovazzi to Father F. Zaboglio, Pittsburgh, December 12, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 666/2).

³⁶ Cfr. Letter by Father G. Annovazzi to Father F. Zaboglio, Pittsburgh, June 10, 1890 (Arch. G.S., 666/2).

³⁷ Cfr. Letter by Father G. Molinari to Father F. Zaboglio, Pittsburgh, April 19, 1891 (Arch. G.S., 666/4).

³⁸ Cfr. Letter by Father G. Molinari to Father F. Zaboglio, Pittsburgh, May 15, 1891 (Arch. G.S., 664/4).

³⁹ Cfr. Letter by Father G. Molinari to G.B. Scalabrini, Pittsburgh, December 15, 1891 (Arch. G.S., 666/4).

⁴⁰ Cfr. Letter by Father G. Molinari to Father F. Zaboglio, Pittsburgh, March 17, 1892 (Arch. G.S., 666/4).

⁴¹ Cfr. Letter by Father F. Zaboglio to Father G. Molinari, Cincinnati, April 4, 1892 (Arch. G.S., 666/4).

"On Sunday in Albis, the Bishop, in the presence of an immense crowd of every nationality, blessed the cornerstone of the new church. It must be noted that in America this function takes place after the basement has been built, as it was done in Pittsburgh. The basement is made of stone and the church proper of brick. Before the ceremony a great parade marched along several streets of the city, and at the appointed hour stopped in front of the construction.

The Italian societies on foot, followed by thirty men on horseback and then cars with the most influential Italian families, with brass bands, and people carrying the standard of St. Peter and many American and Italian flags which had been ordered in New York and the Bishop escorted by forty American Knights of St. John, formed an impressive parade to the construction site, before the ceremonies began. Father Bandini delivered a speech in Italian and the Diocesan Chancellor delivered another in English.

On the following Monday, the work resumed, so that the Church will be finished in a few months. Fathers Molinari and Sciolla, are doing well, and liked by everyone."⁴²*

*Records seem to indicate that a Rev. Vincent Sciolla, born June 14, 1863 in Dronauro(?), Italy; ordained in Piacenza on July 19, 1891, was also pastor of St. Michael Italian church in New Haven, CT, in 1897; was assistant at St. Mary church in Newark, NJ in 1909; was pastor in Raywick, KY in 1932. Died June 26, 1938 and is buried in "St Louis Cemetery"(location unknown). .

Finally on December 18, 1893, the Bishop of Pittsburgh solemnly blessed the completed church.⁴³

In April, Father Giacomo Gambera replaced Father Molinari as Pastor of St. Peter's Church, and started a school in the Church basement. The lessons, given in the afternoon "for the children who attended public school, were especially meant for the numerous shoeshine and newspaper boys."⁴⁴

Because it was impossible to work with the Committee and pay the Church's debts, the Scalabrinians abandoned Pittsburgh in October 1894 and relinquished the parish to the Franciscans.

3. The Parish of the Holy Ghost in Providence, R.I. (1888-1894)

The first steps to open a Mission in Providence, R.I. were taken one month after the Scalabrinians arrived in the United States. On September 19, 1888, Father Zaboglio wrote to Bishop Scalabrini:

"This morning I saw the Bishop of Providence... He would like a priest, who, having his own residence would be the pastor of one thousand, five hundred Italians in this city. Believing that their numbers will soon grow, he would like to start a parish now."⁴⁵

Bishop Scalabrini approved the idea on condition that a small religious community be established there:

"Providence seems to be a good place. Two priests and a catechist would be sufficient for a growing community of one thousand five hundred Italians. I would like to speak about it with that worthy prelate. Our rule is a wise one: an isolated priest amidst an unfriendly clergy cannot do much. There should at least be two of them."⁴⁶

Meanwhile, Father Zaboglio wanted to get a better idea of the situation by visiting Providence himself:

"On the 16th, I went to Providence...In that city and around it within a radius of three miles the Italians amount to about three thousand more certainly than the Bishop had calculated. I spoke with many of them, and they would temporarily rent a location for a chapel, a residence for the clergy, and provide for their support, in order to have priests. The Bishop is permitting us to use the Church basement; he has also indicated other places which may be rented for a chapel. I believe that the Italians would prefer the latter. I also believe that such would be a better choice."

Father Zaboglio wrote that a Missionary would be uneasy in the Bishop's residence. *"If he had his own apartment, the poor man would feel less*

⁴² Letter by Father F. Zaboglio to G.B. Scalabrini, Cincinnati, May 3, 1892 (Arch. G.S., 550/1).

⁴³ Cfr. Letter by Father G. Molinari to D. Ernesto Molinari, Pittsburgh, December 30, 1892 (Arch. G.S., 666/4).

⁴⁴ Letter by Father C. Gambera to Father D. Vicentini, Pittsburgh, November 27, 1893 (Arch. G.S., 666/5).

⁴⁵ Letter by Father F. Zaboglio to G.B. Scalabrini, Boston, August 19, 1888 (Arch. G.S., 549/4).

⁴⁶ Letter by G.B. Scalabrini to Father F. Zaboglio, postmarked October 17, 1888 (Arch. Seminario Maggiore di Como).

embarrassed to become more friendly with him."⁴⁷

Bishop Scalabrini also urged Father Zaboglio to obtain a chapel and an apartment of their own because it would be more suitable to their communal living and their religious rules.⁴⁸

Father Zaboglio obtained this freedom for both the Missionaries in Providence and New Haven, Connecticut:

*"Our negotiations are ended. In both cities our Missionaries will have their own Church and residence. In New Haven a Church is ready; in Providence, if we do not rent the old Church which I mentioned to you, the Bishop has another building selected. In both cities, we could rent some rooms for the Missionaries, a few days before they arrive."*⁴⁹

During January of 1889, Father Zaboglio received a letter from two Italians in Providence who said that some of the community now preferred that the Missionaries not come:

*"Because one of the most respected members of the colony passed away, and a parish priest from the city behaved improperly without being reprimanded in any way by the Bishop. Many community members, therefore, believe that even an Italian priest so dependent on the Bishop, would have the ill-will of the Curia directed toward him, an ill-will created by the Irish who detest Italians... because of this, we the undersigned feel compelled to revoke our decision to support an Italian Church and Clergy. There are however, many townsmen, such as Vincenzo Buffalo of 116 Square (?) Street, who would support a parish in their area, dedicated to St. Rocco. Contact him."*⁵⁰

When sending this letter to Bishop Scalabrini, Fr. Zaboglio indicated that one of the two writers was considered by Bishop Matthew Harkins of Providence, as one of the best Italian-Catholics of Providence, and he added: *"The Bishop realizes that Italians have been mistreated by the Clergy. The matter has now reached an acute stage."*⁵¹ He supported the Provincial Superior's request that a Missionary be sent before matters worsened.⁵² Only in August, 1889, however, were Missionaries sent to preach in lieu of opening the parish.⁵³

Six hundred Italians decided to setup a permanent committee to oversee the construction of the Church. Father A.V. Astorri remained there for a short time, and was later replaced by Father L. Paroli. At first, he was the Bishop's guest⁵⁴ and was permitted to use the old cathedral.⁵⁵ Fr. Paroli, still officially a parish priest in Boston, would have wanted to have two strings to his bow, but Bishop Scalabrini asked him to forget Boston and to establish himself definitively in Providence. In October 1889, Father Paroli was able to write to the Bishop of Piacenza that all was going well, that a few lots had been bought at the junction of Knight Street and Atwells Avenue and that the attendance of the flock was satisfactory.⁵⁶

The old cathedral was used only for a few days, and on the 22nd of September a temporary chapel was opened on Brayton Avenue. Meanwhile, a Missionary visited every family, registered their religious status⁵⁷ and organized the Associations of the Guardian Angel, St. Louis, and of the Immaculate Conception. On April 21, 1890, the foundation for the new church was begun,⁵⁸ and on August 17th the church was opened to the faithful after a solemn inauguration by Bishop Harkins. To please both main "parties" it was dedicated to the Holy Spirit (Holy Ghost), while the parish was placed under the protection of St. Rocco.⁵⁹

⁴⁷ Letter by Father F. Zaboglio to G.B. Scalabrini, Boston, October 19, 1888 (Arch. G.S., 549/4).

⁴⁸ Letter by G.B. Scalabrini to Father F. Zaboglio, Piacenza, November 9, 1888 (Arch. Seminario Maggiore di Como).

⁴⁹ Letter by Father F. Zaboglio to G.B. Scalabrini, Boston, December 12, 1888 (Arch. G.S., 549/4).

⁵⁰ Letter by G. Rabbino and T. Mancini to Fr. F. Zaboglio, postmarked January 16, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 591/2).

⁵¹ Letter by Father F. Zaboglio to G.B. Scalabrini, Boston, January 31, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 549/3).

⁵² Cfr. Letter by Father F. Zaboglio to G.B. Scalabrini, Boston, February 20, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 549/3).

⁵³ Letter by Father F. Zaboglio to G.B. Scalabrini, Boston, August 5, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 549/3).

⁵⁴ Cfr. Letter by Father F. Morelli to G.B. Scalabrini, New York, August 29, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 551/2).

⁵⁵ Cfr. Letter by Father L. Paroli to G.B. Scalabrini, Providence, September 3, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 591/2).

⁵⁶ Cfr. Letter by Father L. Paroli to G.B. Scalabrini, Providence, September 3, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 591/2).

⁵⁷ Cfr. Letter by Father L. Paroli to Father F. Morelli, (or to Father B. Roller?) Providence, January 24, 1890 Arch. G.S., 591/2).

⁵⁸ Cfr. Letter by Father L. Paroli a G.B. Scalabrini, Providence, 21.8.1890 (Arch. G.S., 591/2)

⁵⁹ Cfr. Letters by Father L. Paroli to G.B. Scalabrini, Providence, August 8, 1890; and October 13, 1890 (Arch. G.S., 591/2).

Distance was one of the reasons why the two groups were divided.

*"The population is divided into two sections, each on a hill separated from the other by a wide valley. The Church is located on Federal Hill, where most of the population lives. But now Smith's Hill is populated almost as much as the other, and so distant from it that we are thinking of building another church, at least a subsidiary one, and another rectory, on Smith's Hill; hence, the necessity of having another Missionary."*⁶⁰

Little by little the division generated dissension. During June of 1892, Father Antonio Franchi, aided by Father Francesco Beccherini, succeeded Father Paroli as Pastor of the Italians living on Smith Hill. The people decided to build their own church and refused to contribute to the Church of the Sacred Heart which had not yet been fully paid.⁶¹

Eventually this second church was built and the Confraternities of St. Rocco (for men) and of the Virgin of Pompei (for women) were organized.⁶² The following year a third faction from Charles Street also wanted its own church; but since the Bishop declared that he would not grant them his permission until they had completely paid for the lots, the enraged Italians stopped attending and contributing to the Church.⁶³ At the end of 1893, the Bishop suspended the project for a third church.⁶⁴

In February 1894, Father Paolo Novati, became Pastor of the Church of the Holy Spirit, and during the last years of his ministry in Providence saw this promising parish develop.

4. The Parish of St. Michael the Archangel in New Haven, Connecticut (1889-1895)

In 1886 there were in New Haven, Connecticut, about one thousand five hundred Italians who asked the Bishop to allow them to erect a church. The Bishop entrusted their care to the clergy of the Church of St. John. One of them, Fr. Bray, who, having studied in Rome, knew Italian, took a deep interest in the Italians. Halls were used for religious services until 1888 when they managed to collect three thousand dollars for a small wooden Protestant Church, which they dedicated to St. Michael the Archangel.

Its first rector was Father Riviaccio, who did not remain long because the parishioners were unable to support him. During this period a priest advised Father Zaboglio that the New Haven immigrants had a church but not a priest.⁶⁵ On October 19, 1888, Bishop Lawrence MacMahon of Hartford, Connecticut, asked Father Zaboglio for a priest for that colony which had already increased to two thousand five hundred souls⁶⁶ and a few days later, wrote to Bishop Scalabrini:

"There are several thousand Italians in my diocese who live in very deplorable spiritual conditions. So far I have been able to do very little for them because I have no priest who speaks their language. Recently, I have heard about the Congregation founded by Your Excellency for spiritual assistance to the Italians scattered in the United States. In Connecticut, there are several thousand Italians constructing railroads, houses and factories. The majority of them are illiterate, without spiritual guidance, and living without the sacraments. In New Haven there are at least two thousands of them, for whom I have bought a church which is still without a pastor.

*I hope that Your Excellency will consider my petition with benevolence, and assign at least one priest to my diocese who would work for the souls of this destitute and isolated section of Jesus' flock."*⁶⁷

Bishop Scalabrini was willing to help the Bishop immediately, but it was only in August 1889, that he could assign Father Astorri to New Haven. The Italians

⁶⁰ Letter by Father L. Paroli to P. B. Rolleri, Providence, 7.12.1391 (Arch. G.S., 591/2).

⁶¹ Cfr. Letter by Father F. Beccherini to G.B. Scalabrini, Providence, June 30, 1892 (Arch. G.S., 591/3).

⁶² Cfr. Letter by Father F. Beccherini to Father B. Rolleri, Providence, August 22, 1892 (Arch. G.S., 591/3).

⁶³ Cfr. Letter by Father A. Franchi to Father D. Vicentini, Providence, September 27, 1893 (Arch. G.S., 591/3).

⁶⁴ Cfr. Letter by Father A. Franchi to Father D. Vicentini, Providence, December 12, 1893 (Arch. G.S., 591/3).

⁶⁵ Cfr. Letter by Father F. Zaboglio to G.B. Scalabrini, Boston, September 19, 1888 (Arch. G.S., 549/4).

⁶⁶ Cfr. Letter by Father F. Zaboglio to G.B. Scalabrini, Boston, October 19, 1888 (Arch. G.S., 549/4).

⁶⁷ Letter by Msgr. Lawrence MacMahon to G.B. Scalabrini, Hartford, October 30, 1888, (Arch. G.S., 582/2)

had already prepared a house for him⁶⁸ who, eagerly helped by Father Bray, found the beginning of his Mission comparatively easy.⁶⁹

Soon, however, the Church of St. Michael seemed too small. In November of 1889, work was started to enlarge it⁷⁰ and on the subsequent Feast of the Epiphany the parishioners were happy "to hold the procession of the Child Jesus in their new Church, made now twice as large and at a cost of one thousand one hundred dollars."⁷¹

In 1890, Father Astorri was replaced by Father Oreste Alussi who remained there as rector until August 1894.

After a few months, Father Alussi said the following about his parish:

*"Eight years ago there were only fifty Italians here...now there are four thousand, nearly all Neapolitans, who live away from the Church. I shall perhaps distribute one thousand five hundred Communions a year. Since January, I baptized one hundred and twenty babies, and celebrated twenty six marriages."*⁷²

Two years later, the Italian population was four thousand five hundred. In 1892, two hundred thirty seven babies were baptized, and fifty three marriages were celebrated. In addition there were thirty two first Communions, and twenty adult Confirmations. Four associations existed:

St. Michael's for the men, with two hundred and fifty members; the Madonna of the Rosary, for women, with two hundred and sixty members; the Madonna of Mt. Carmel, with four hundred and forty five members, and the Society of St. Louis, just organized, with thirty four boys. The parish cared for fourteen orphans.

In his report, Father Alussi remarked that the economic resources of the Church were meager, because of the Church's size. However, he added, in three years he had managed to pay many of its debts.

*"Without holding dances, picnics or fairs, in which there is always sinning...though here, Irish Catholic Churches are kept alive by such means. But, in truth, it must be said that they dance with modesty, the Irish not being as ebullient as the Italians. Moreover, I do not put too much stock in the coldness of the Irish, the British, etc."*⁷³

On October 12, 1892, the fourth centenary of the discovery of America, the Italian colony in New Haven, under Father Alussi's guidance and support unveiled a bronze statue of Columbus.⁷⁴

Here is another brief report regarding the year 1893:

*"In 1893 we celebrated thirty five marriages, baptized two hundred and seventy babies, and had thirty First Communions. While immigration in the city has stabilized, the Italian community composed entirely of poor workingmen from Southern Italy now number about six thousand five hundred. The majority of their children of both sexes up to 13-15 years of age and often 20, do not know the Hail Mary or the Our Father, and many are the couples who come to us to be married without knowing these prayers."*⁷⁵

On August 16, 1894, Father Francesco Beccherini was appointed Rector of the Church of St. Michael, and Father Alussi was made his assistant.

The presence of the two priests inflamed hostilities between two opposite factions. The Bishop, not satisfied with Father Beccherini, transferred him to the Mission at Meriden, Connecticut.⁷⁶ The Italians then threatened to kill Father Alussi, believing him responsible for Father Beccherini's transfer. Father Alussi went away waiting for the storm to subside and was temporarily substituted by Fr. Zaboglio in August or September of 1895.⁷⁷ He returned to New Haven toward the middle of October:

⁶⁸ Cfr. Letter by Father F. Morelli to G.B. Scalabrini, New York, September 29, 1889 (Arch., G.S., 551/2).

⁶⁹ Cfr. Letter by Father A.V. Astorri to Father F. Zaboglio, New Haven, September 4, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 582/2).

⁷⁰ Cfr. Letter by Father A.V. Astorri to Father F. Zaboglio, New Haven, November 16, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 582/2).

⁷¹ Cfr. Letter by Father A.V. Astorri to G.B. Scalabrini, New Haven, January 7, 1890 (Arch. G.S., 582/2).

⁷² Letter by Father O. Alussi to Father B. Roller, New Haven September 30, 1890 (Arch. G.S., 582/3).

⁷³ Cfr. Report by Father O. Alussi to G.B. Scalabrini, 1892 (Arch. G.S., 582/3).

⁷⁴ Cfr. Letter by Father O. Alussi to G.B. Scalabrini, New Haven, October 20, 1892 (Arch. G.S., 582/3).

⁷⁵ Letter by Father O. Alussi to G.B. Scalabrini, New Haven, February 9, 1894 (Arch. G.S., 582/3).

⁷⁶ Letter by Father O. Alussi to Father B. Roller, New Haven, March 22, 1895 (Arch. G.S., 582/5).

⁷⁷ Cfr. Letter by Father F. Zaboglio to Father O. Alussi, New Haven, September 15, 1895 (Arch. G.S., 582/5).

"The other day, the Bishop of Hartford agreed that Father Alussi should return, but that I should continue as Pastor of the parish. Thus, he returned last Wednesday. Both he and the parishioners seem satisfied with this arrangement."⁷⁸

5. The Mission in New Orleans, LA.(1889-1894)

Bishop Scalabrini was informed of the conditions of the Italians of New Orleans by Msgr. Gaspare Lancia dei Duchi di Brolo, the Archbishop of Monreale (Palermo, Sicily), who had sent him a report he had received from the Canon Atanasio Schiro, "Latin Vicar" of the town of Contessa Entellina. This is a town in the Province of Palermo one part of whose inhabitants follow the Latin rite, and the other part the Greek-Albanian rite, which is typical of the Southern emigrants during the second half of the last century, this is the report of Canon Schiro:

I

*Contessa Entellina,
September 1888*

*To His Excellency
Domenico Gaspare Lancia dei Duchi di Brolo
Archbishop of Monreale*

Most Reverend Excellency:

In obedience to your respected orders, given to me orally, I submit to you this general information concerning emigration to America which continues as intensely as before. From 1885 to August 5, 1888, one thousand four hundred and eighty two individuals of both sexes and different rites, out of a population of little more than three thousand souls, emigrated to America.

On the 18th of this month, seventeen people (nine females and eight males) left to join their compatriots, and another more numerous group is preparing to leave during October.

They sell their animals, small plots of land, their household implements and everything they possess. They either sell their little homes or take a mortgage on them. If they don't have enough money for the voyage, they borrow it and leave. Most men go alone or take a son with them. Others take their families along, giving a farewell to the land where they were born and suffered, carrying with them their burning love for their native land, but not knowing whether they will ever return. Often they think their emigration will be temporary, but in reality it becomes permanent due to many unforeseen circumstances. The majority of them are farmers, day laborers, craftsmen, mostly vigorous young men able to do heavy work.

They are directed to New Orleans, the largest city of Louisiana. Some who live there have already been to Mexico, Los Angeles, California, and Texas.

II

WHY PEOPLE EMIGRATED

The migratory movement from Contessa Entellina, partial and temporary at first, soon became general and permanent.

Before 1860, America was unknown to these illiterate townspeople who had never lived elsewhere. After the political events of 1860 and the praise for the American way of life by adventurers returning from New Orleans after a few years, several people decided to emigrate.

Later, many others including whole families followed them despite the cost of the voyage, the dangers and the length of the crossing, which, by sailboat took three or four months.

After 1870, steamboats took less time but in that year yellow fever claimed many victims from among these immigrants. This caused a pause in emigration but soon after many other emigrants left the town every year for New Orleans.

⁷⁸ Letter by Father F. Zaboglio to G.B. Scalabrini, New Haven, October 20, 1895 (Arch. G.S., 550/3).

At one time two hundred of them left together.

This movement was caused by poverty, high cost of living, meager earnings, scarce agricultural production and above all by the wish to improve their conditions. The town has a vast territory made of extensive estates, but the farmers themselves possess only small plots of land, hence they are forced to rent the land from the big landowners paying a high price for it in crops which are often meager. Crushed by debts and taxes, they abandon their fields in order not to starve, heedless of the worse fate they may encounter in a foreign land.

In 1878, New Orleans was struck by another epidemic of yellow fever which took the lives of three hundred and sixty immigrants from this town. This disaster was deeply felt here, but after a while, when sanitary conditions in New Orleans improved, emigration was resumed with the old alacrity.

The urge to emigrate was greatly influenced by the example of those whose fare was paid by supporters in America, who upon leaving were penniless, but who either remitted money to relatives in Italy or who returning, appeared prosperous, modernized their old homes or bought new ones. In addition to all this, there were migration agents who did their utmost to promote the movement, speculating on the cost of the tickets. Every year a great number of people left the town, often without being really forced to do so by their financial conditions, but by the desire to emulate the others. At times it seems that an obscure and inexorable law compels the people to breakup their families and to leave. Now it is the husband who leaves his wife and children, often without any means of support; now a young man on whose earnings his elders' life depends, now a young, timid virgin who abandons her home under the guidance and protection of a relative or a friend and goes to New Orleans to marry a young man who had left earlier. This exodus which causes tears, anxiety, fears and suffering would seem incredible if it were not painfully true.

It was enough, that a telegram sent from New York on September 18th, announced a yellow fever epidemic in New Orleans, to cause fear and sorrow in the whole town, since there is not a single family which does not have at least one relative there.

III

THE ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF THE EMIGRANTS FROM CONTESSA

It is impossible, from the few emigrants of this town who have returned from America and have shown that they earned good money there, to have an adequate idea of the economic conditions of those who are still overseas.

In fact, if for nostalgic reasons many emigrants had returned to their native land during the past twenty years, when their savings were exhausted they emigrated again, this time with their families.

Reports indicate that not everyone finds the riches and the well-being they had hoped to find in America. Many remain unemployed, although others find work as shoemakers, barbers, carpenters, vegetable and fruit vendors or grocers.

Farmers, who represent the majority of the emigrants, find work in sugar refineries or in cotton mills out of town. Occasionally they return to the city where their families live.

Some, importers of oil, cheese and other products live comfortably. The majority, however, are satisfied to live a slightly better condition than they had in their native town.

There is a laudable solidarity between the old and the new immigrants. The latter who need help and guidance in their new countries since they may be ignorant of the local languages, laws and customs are often welcomed into the homes of the older immigrants who also helped them find a job.

This solidarity finds expression in a Mutual Aid Association which has more than three hundred members, its own band, a large hall pompously decorated and even a cemetery.

The newspaper IL PROGRESSO ITALO-AMERICANO of New Orleans often praises this help for others from Contessa Entellina, and expresses great satisfaction that this organization is one of the strongest among the Italians in

New Orleans.

IV

MORAL AND RELIGIOUS CONDITIONS

The following is the most important section of this report, and might more directly interest Your Excellency's known pastoral zeal. The people from Contessa, born and educated as Catholics under the tutelage of Mary whom they invoke with the title of Madonna of all Graces, normally called Madonna of Favara, place themselves under Her protection. They never start a voyage without confessing and taking Communion during solemn Mass celebrated in Her honor and being blessed by God under the eyes of the Divine Mother.

I have always witnessed their anguish when they depart from the sight of their beloved statues of the Madonna. They leave with a broken heart, comforted and encouraged by little sermons to have faith in the protection and assistance of their Heavenly Protectrix, to always keep their faith and piety intact and to lead a virtuous life, seeking in it only those moral comforts and satisfactions that cannot be found outside of religion. When they leave, they carry Her sacred image, which they request even from America. They invoke Her in their adversities and needs, having faith in Her, and showing their gratitude to Her when they receive Her favors. In fact, they often ask that sung Masses be celebrated at Her altar, for which they send money, or other gifts both to make necessary repairs or to embellish the Church where the Madonna is venerated and they also make special collections for the celebration of Her feast on September 8th.

The Mutual Aid Society which they organized in New Orleans is dedicated to the Virgin of Favara, whose image is imprinted on their membership cards. They celebrate Her feast every year in a very solemn manner and the press, particularly IL PROGRESSO ITALO-AMERICANO refers to Her as the Madonna of the Contessioti (as the people from Contessa Entellina are called).

While these manifestations of piety nourish religious and patriotic sentiments, these people usually neglect their religious duties and practices. They baptize their children, if possible, three or four months after birth, and celebrate their marriages in an American or French Catholic Church, but with few exceptions, especially among the women and during Easter, they usually do not go to Church for Mass or the sacraments, and do not hear the Word of God which might enlighten and urge them to live according to Christian virtue. They have no Catholic schools for their children, and consider themselves very lucky if on the point of death they can be assisted by a priest.

Often this does not come from ill-will. They live either isolated or in small groups, away from each other, scattered in this great city or in the factories around it. It is said that they earn more money on Sundays, and on holidays, and therefore are not free to attend religious services.

Even if they were religious and wanted to attend church, they must walk a long way before finding one. In the center of the city, near the largest market, there is the Church of the Immaculate Conception, which the Contessioti often frequent; but since it has American and French priests, who do not understand Italian, much less various Italian dialects, our immigrants cannot approach them for religious comfort.

However, there is an exclusively Italian church dedicated to St. Anthony of Padua, situated in a rather remote location, and built by a Sardinian priest, G. Manoritta, who officiates there and who expects adequate contributions.

It is known that in America, churches are entirely supported by parishioners and receive nothing from the State. Our Contessioti, unfamiliar with this custom, cannot adapt themselves to the idea of having to pay for christenings and marriages, and I have heard some of them complain against their priest, whom they call greedy and selfish. Therefore, they prefer to have their children baptized and married in American churches, especially in the Church Of the Immaculate Conception.

I must now inform Your Excellency, with deep regret, that some of our immigrants have been seduced by Protestants and Masons, who do everything in their power to take them away from the Church of Jesus Christ. They are very hostile to our Catholic clergy, and detest our religious practices. I have also

heard that some couples get married before a magistrate, often making false statements. It is no wonder that things like this can take place in a crowded city, populated by people of all nationalities and of all religious creeds, a city continuously invaded by European immigrants among whom, as one can easily imagine, are many heretics and haters of Catholicism.

This explains why some of our poor immigrants have abandoned their religion. We must consider that they were left to themselves, without the comforts of the Sacraments, without the paternal vigilance of pastors ready to take care of their spiritual health. However, we must confess that all of those who have, even for a short time, returned to Italy after a more or less long residence in the United States, have resumed their religious practices, going to confession and taking Communion with fervor and humility.

I have always tried to exercise my small influence on my countrymen. Corresponding with their most influential members, I have reminded them about their religious duties, urging them to preserve their faith, and to always remain devoted to their Divine Protectrix, the Virgin of Favara.

Taking advantage of my influence I convinced the members of the Association organized in New Orleans among the immigrants from this town to insert in their by-laws a clause by which the organization pledges itself to have a Pastor impart, at its expense, the last religious comforts to every member. Your Excellency may verify this by reading the enclosed letter sent to me by one of the secretaries in the name of the Society, and which I beg you to return at your convenience.

Recently, the Contessioti have opened an Italian school, supported by their Association and I have learned that in that school they also teach the first elements of our faith. The lack of proper schools is perhaps the worst sore of immigration. What will happen to the children of the immigrants who only attend public schools, see their parents unconcerned about religion and never hear the Word of God spoken by a priest? Undoubtedly, we will have a generation possessing all the superficial embellishments of modern society but a heart devoid of every religious sentiment. Moreover, I have noticed that children growing in such a society, when brought to Italy by their parents, cannot accustom themselves to our traditions and mores. They desire only to return to America as many of them have done soon after their arrival.

Such religious and moral damage must produce a sense of anguish and pain in every Christian heart. This was already expressed in 1886 in a memoire printed in New Jersey (T.H. Carbone Printing Shop) by Msgr. Gennaro De Concilio, who lived in America for twenty-eight years, and who had a vast knowledge of the miserable spiritual and material conditions of the Italian immigrants who lack every religious comfort, and who were in danger of losing their soul and their eternal salvation. This cry of anguish found an echo in the generous and charitable heart of Pope Leo XIII, who, among other qualities, has a genius for great initiatives, vast plans and ready execution of the same. In fact, encouraged and financially helped by the Holy Father, the illustrious and zealous Bishop Scalabrini of Piacenza, has already realized a great plan. Helped by many bishops in Italy, he founded the Istituto Cristoforo Colombo in order to furnish well-trained priests for our countrymen who are forced to live abroad.

I pray that these priests will soon be sent to America. With their zeal and spirit of sacrifice, they would greatly help many hundreds of thousands of Italians who lack religious support. So that shaken from their deplorable indifference they might awaken in their breasts a more lively desire to preserve the faith of their ancestors together with the pride of being sons of that Italy which had the privilege of being the center of the true religion, and of the apostolic unity and doctrine whose light is spread throughout the world. I hope that some of these pastors may soon be sent to New Orleans. They seem to possess the secret of gaining the esteem and affection of their compatriots, of creating intimate relationships born out of love for their country and religion, of mingling with them, and satisfying their spiritual needs.

With the help of these immigrants, they could build exclusively Italian churches and create Schools and other Catholic institutions which are the only ones capable of molding youth through true knowledge and social life. I have no doubt that the Contessioti in America will gladly welcome these apostles of truth and Christian morals. Religion is deeply rooted in their heart and this, together with their devotion for the Madonna, make me certain that they would greatly

appreciate the noble work of Catholic Missionaries, who, leaving their country, their families and their way of life, cross the ocean, face many dangers and sacrifices, in order to help their countrymen. The immigrants cannot but welcome and love them. I believe that in this case, too, they will unanimously repeat: Quam pulchri sunt pedes evangelizantium pacem.

Canon Antanasio Schiró,
Latin Vicar of Contessa Entellina.⁷⁹

Bishop Scalabrini replied immediately to the Archbishop of Monreale:

"Piacenza, October 17, 1888

Most Reverend Excellency:

I have your esteemed letter of October 10th together with the report of the good Canon Schirò which you included, and I cannot tell you how I have appreciated both the one and the other.

I am glad that Your Excellency has our poor immigrants at heart. Appreciation coming from as an esteemed and virtuous prelate as Your Excellency is a great comfort to me in this enterprise which is too big for my strength. After confiding in God, I trust in the help of my venerable confreres of the episcopate. It is a work that will be useful to the most neglected part of their flock. I read Canon Schirò's report which is veritable proof of the situation prevailing among our immigrants. Millions of Italians are scattered on the vast American continent, and all sicut oves non habent pastorem. Almost every day receive moving reports which end by imploring me to help by sending some priests.

I have sent some of my Missionaries there and I shall send more within a month. I shall not forget your exhortation, Monsignor, but I need help, personal help. If Your Excellency, with your great influence, would say a few words about these needs to the Sicilians, whose faith is so ardent, I am convinced that some priests willing to assist our poor immigrants, would be found even there. For this purpose, I shall send you copies of our Regulations. It would also be helpful if Canon Schirò suggested to his parishioners in New Orleans that they request Missionaries and teachers from me after coming to an understanding with their local Missionary. I would be happy to satisfy this request as soon as possible.

I close by recommending myself to your prayers, and begging you to convey my regards to Canon Schirò.

*Of Your Most Reverend Excellency,
very affectionate confrere,
+Gio. Battista, Bishop⁸⁰*

A month later, it was the same Archbishop Francis Janssens of New Orleans who turned to Bishop Scalabrini with a letter written in French which we reproduce here in translation:

"Permit me to write to you about the twelve thousand Italians living in New Orleans. We have an Italian Church, but for certain reasons Italians do not frequent it. We had another, which thrived for a while, but which was later sold. This happened before my arrival here as Archbishop. There are many Italians here, who, if we don't find a priest dedicated to them, will lose the faith within a few years. Parents do not go to Church, and children do not go to Catholic schools."⁸¹

The "certain reasons" mentioned by the Archbishop concerned most of all the attitude of the Reverend Gioacchino Manoritta, Rector of the Italian Church of St. Anthony of Padua, inaugurated in 1875. The Italians blamed him for his excessive insistence in asking for cash contributions from his parishioners.

⁷⁹ Report by Canon Atanasio Schiró to Archbishop D.G. Lancia dei Duchi di Brolo, Contessa Entellina, September 1888 (Arch. storico del Centro Studi Emigrazione, Roma). Archbishop D.G. Lancia dei Duchi di Brolo belonged to a noble family of Piedmontese origin, who settled in Sicily at the time of Frederick II of Swabia (1194–1250). He was born in Palermo in 1825, after entering a Benedictine monastery in Monreale, he was ordained a priest in 1848. In 1884 Pope Leo XIII named him Archbishop of Monreale. He used much of his family's wealth to help poor families. He wrote the history of the Church in Sicily from the first centuries of Christianity. He died in 1919.

⁸⁰ Letter by G.B. Scalabrini to Archbishop D.G. Lancia dei Duchi di Brolo, Piacenza, October 17, 1888 (Arch. G.B. Scalabrini, Manoscritti).

⁸¹ Letter by Msgr. F. Janssens to G.B. Scalabrini, New Orleans, November 10, 1888 (Arch. G.S., 553/1).

At the end of 1888 he wrote to Bishop Scalabrini expressing his satisfaction for having learned that the Bishop of Piacenza, "an apostle and patriot" was interested in Italian immigrants. He advised him that fifteen months earlier he had written to Cardinal Simeoni offering a scholarship to a young Italian who would dedicate himself to work with immigrants. Cardinal Simeoni suggested that he write to the Collegio Piano but the offer was rejected. Father Manoritta then wrote to Cardinal Celesia, Archbishop of Palermo, asking him if he could send some priests to New Orleans. He had also made the same request to the prelates of Corleone, Contessa Entellina and Naples, but always without results. He now turned to Bishop Scalabrini, hoping to obtain two clergymen for the Italians in New Orleans who numbered twenty thousand and were increasing at the rate of seven hundred to eight hundred a month.⁸²

Manoritta wished to have two assistants for his parish but Father Zaboglio asked that the Archbishop have a separate parish, though not excluding the possibility of helping him:

*"We shall accept the parish offered us by the Archbishop, but Father Manoritta would like to have an assistant for himself. We should make an exception and consent, but only with clear conditions, so that later on he might give up his church. For the moment I cannot say more. There is time to reflect and make a decision after Your Excellency has seen the Archbishop who will probably be in Italy in September. However, from what I have heard, I believe that no assistant would be able to remain with Father Manoritta long, though he has been kind to me and has done me more than one favor."*⁸³

The last agreements were concluded directly between the Archbishop of New Orleans who had gone to Piacenza and Bishop Scalabrini. At the end of 1889, the first Missionaries, Fathers Giacomo Gambera and Angelo Chiariglione, and Brother Luigi Snider and Angelo Svanera arrived in New Orleans. Here are their first impressions:

"On December 16, 1889, Father Chiariglione, two lay Brothers and I with some provisions of food and money took an express train to New Orleans. It was an interesting thirty hour trip, through changing landscape.... We reached our destination tired, dirty, sleepy, yet in good health and high spirits....

The Archbishop was still in Europe. The Provost of the Cathedral, Msgr. Mignon, and the Chancellor, greeted us and took us to our residence where they had prepared a fine supper.

We visited the chapel, attached to our residence, to thank God and to see if it had all the necessary items.

In a large square building on one side was the Seminary, on the other side, the Church of Santa Maria. The Archbishop's residence faced the street; there was a garden in the middle.

We had at our disposal the first floor of the Seminary, with a kitchen, a dining hall, a reception room and three bedrooms; but aside from the beds, two tables and a few chairs, the large apartment lacked many things....

Our arrival was announced to the Italian community, and on the following Sunday it was announced in all the churches and in the papers. However, this publicity had no results. The Italian community remained completely indifferent. During Mass and the Sermon, we noticed a few old women, and we were visited by very few people. Frankly, we found that colony entirely different from New York; at the beginning we were downcast and worried, especially because some Southern women complained that we did not speak their dialects.

The following data was given to us about this colony: it was composed of from fifteen thousand to twenty thousand people, most of them from Sicily and the rest from Parma and Liguria. There were four or five professional men and a dozen fig tradesmen, some of them owners of merchant ships in the commerce of tropical fruits. The rest owned small vegetable or fruit shops or kept carts in public markets scattered in various sections of the city. Others owned boats for fishing oysters, and several men formed the crews of large commercial boats. Various families, scattered on the countryside, cultivated fields abandoned by the French after the abolition of slavery. Barbers, newsboys, the shoe-shiners were almost all Italians. On the whole, the colony was industrious, and dire

⁸² Cfr. Letter by Father G. Manoritta to G.B. Scalabrini, New Orleans, December 18, 1888 (Arch. G.S., 663/1).

⁸³ Letter by Father F. Zaboglio to G.B. Scalabrini, Genoa, Wis., August 19, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 549/3).

poverty did not exist.

It must be added, that the commerce of tropical fruits such as bananas, pineapples, and coconuts, etc., was almost entirely owned by the Italians. For the cotton or sugarcane harvest thousands of Sicilians came directly from Palermo on the ships of the Florio-Rubattino Line. Some of them returned to Sicily with a large cargo, while others remained. The colony could have had a fruitful future if it had not been corroded and rent by destructive germs.

I was told that the religious conditions of the colony were in a deplorable state. Practically no members of the congregation went to church except for baptisms, marriages and funerals. I observed that this was justified in a people living in a foreign land, ignorant of its language. But they replied that these Italians ignored even the most elementary principles of our religion, and that nobody frequented the Italian Church which they had built.

In truth there was a so-called Italian Church built over forty years before, but I was assured that the well-known Sardinian priest who managed it preferred to attend to the Creoles because they were more generous and more faithful. He had become rich by smuggling during the Civil War; owned the Church and the attached house and the land next to it. Moreover, he was considered greedy and a miser.

Because he was old and incapable of active parochial service, I asked him, at the suggestion of the Archbishop, if he would sell his Church to us. He refused disdainfully and was so enraged by our presence (or rather by our competition) that he resorted to all kinds of ignoble intrigues against us. Not even the insistence of the Archbishop could budge him, since he owned the church. It was the first time in my life that a priest had shown enmity towards me.... The behavior of the Pastor had kept the Italians away from religion, especially because our countrymen cannot be convinced that they have to contribute to the support of priests and the churches. Their hostility towards us, too, made our work very difficult.

Since our chapel was too small, the Archbishop permitted us to use the cathedral for solemn services, festivities, marriages, funerals, and for a Mission. Gradually, by appeals, patience and God's help we made some progress, but we are still far from satisfied. This state of affairs arises also from other causes which keep the colony divided.

Everybody knows that one of the worst colonial evils is division. There are here as many separate groups as there are regions, provinces and even towns in Italy.

These divisions became more accentuated when criminal elements infiltrated the community. Then hostility between Northerners and Southerners became passionate, making our work more difficult, and almost sterile.

Our first task was to take a general census of the Italian population, then to make ourselves known to them, and try to collect money to build a church and a school: this project was announced in the parishes by letter from the Archbishop.

One of our Missionaries, accompanied by a lay Brother and an Italian who was acquainted with the section they visited, spoke to Italian families in all parts of the city. This took two months. We found few well-intentioned and generous Italians. Many offered us miserable amounts which one would give to a petulant beggar. Others refused to contribute at all.

From this painful pilgrimage, I learned that some well-to-do families frequented the French Church since French is still spoken by many in Louisiana.

Ninety percent of our people do not attend church. The most frequent answers to our questions included: 'The priests do not speak our language - we have to pay for everything, priests, the Church, Mass, baptisms, etc.

Others would say: 'Our saints are not in the Church: St. Rocco, St. Lucia, St. Rosalia, the Virgin, etc.'

If we said: 'We are Italian priests and will prepare a church for you with your saints and your Madonnas, and build a school for your children if you help us with your contributions,' their usual reply was: 'We are poor and cannot give you anything. Aren't you paid by the Pope?'

From the better class we heard this complaint:

'Dishonest people and criminal elements have infiltrated our colony, and they blacken the honor and damage the interests of all of us.'

If we responded that the church and the school would help improve conditions, they would reply: 'There are enough Catholic churches and schools for those who want to attend them.' Others declared: 'I shall never give a penny to these people who dishonor and ruin us. I know where to go and where to send my children.' At other times, they added: 'To purge and to improve this colony we need the gallows rather than a school and a Church.'

Expressions of this sort, uttered by serious but unpatriotic and unchristian people, disgusted and discouraged us. The path of our apostolate was very thorny and refractory. Criminality increased rather than diminished, increasing the contempt and the disdain of the most laborious and honest of our countrymen."⁸⁴

After this first encounter with the Italians, Father Gambera sent out a circular and invited them to a meeting in order to discuss plans for building a church for the Italian colony:

"You are very cordially invited to attend a meeting to be held on May 12th at 7:00 P.M. at 'Unione Italiana' kindly put at our disposal, in order to discuss how best to build an Italian Catholic Church in this great city, which hosts so many thousands of our compatriots."⁸⁵

This first meeting produced no results. Father Gambera repeated his attempt in October, when a better season for the tradesmen began.⁸⁶ The Archbishop supported this initiative by publishing the following letter in the Catholic paper of New Orleans:

"We wish to erect another Church for the large Italian population of our city which should be built exclusively for the Italian community. The most esteemed and learned Bishop Scalabrini of Piacenza, has sent us a priest who, having resided for one year at the Archdiocese, has demonstrated his worth and zeal as a pastor. He has been charged to build a new Church. Though burdened by the heavy debt of the diocese, we gladly contribute two hundred dollars and appeal to all Italians and to all those who have their interest at heart to make some contribution."⁸⁷

The Missionaries were very eager to have a church of their own in which to begin their Mission. The Church of St. Francis, where the Archbishop permitted them to perform daily services held only sixty or seventy people. The Italians insisted on owning and administering the projected Church; they also wanted the right to accept or reject its clergy. The religious situation continued to present grave difficulties due to long neglect, religious ignorance of the people, active propaganda from Evangelists and Masons and finally, the attitude of Father Manoritta whose faults, however - declared Father Gambera - should not have been exaggerated. All immigrants were anxious to earn a living; they therefore neglected all other duties. Sicilians in particular, were sensitive. It was sufficient to make a slight remark to become their enemies, and to dispel a conviction that priests were motivated by personal gain, Father Gambera permitted his parishioners to offer whatever they could or wanted for a seat in Church, and the reception of the sacraments. This method, said Father Gambera, while not arousing any suspicion of exploitation, often left the Missionaries without money for bread.

At the end of his report, from which we extracted the above information, Father Gambera mentions, for the first time, the events that made the Italians of New Orleans infamous throughout the world:

"It is generally believed that criminality has found its niche here. For this reason our colony is considered the scum of the earth, hated by foreigners, authorities, and the clergy. The recent assassination of Chief of Police Hennessey, attributed to Italians, two hundred of whom were jailed, and nineteen accused of murder, has put our colony in the worst possible light."⁸⁸

Father Gambera's Memoirs recall the lynching of thirteen Italians on March 14, 1891:

⁸⁴ Memoire by Father G. Gambera, pp. 19-22 (Arch. G.S., 1558/3).

⁸⁵ Circular by Father G. Gambera, New Orleans, May 1, 1890 (Arch. G.S., 663/1).

⁸⁶ Cfr. Letter by Father G. Gambera to G.B. Scalabrini, New Orleans, August 26, 1890 (Arch. G.S., 663/1).

⁸⁷ Letter by Archbishop F. Janssens, November 27, 1890, published by *L'Amico del Popolo* (Piacenza) on December 20, 1890 (Arch. G.S., 663/1).

⁸⁸ Letter by Father G. Gambera to Father F. Zaboglio, New Orleans, January 6, 1891 (Arch. G.S., 663/1).

"One evening toward midnight, Policy Chief Hennessey was killed by thirty bullets in the back while returning home. That same evening, he had been honored at a banquet offered him by distinguished Sicilians for his worthy services. After the banquet, he was accompanied a few steps to his home.

At that instant a small cart loaded with cabbages appeared. Under the cabbages were hidden armed assassins. They shot him and fled.

A few months earlier ten Sicilians had been killed in an ambush while returning from work on such a cart. It was thought that the killers of these ten men were members of a rival trade gang, and that the police were on their trail. Police Chief Hennessey was killed, it was said, to halt his investigation.

The ferocity of the crime aroused fury and terror in the population of the city. Many Italians were arrested, and thirteen were held as suspected killers or accomplices. Their trial was long and stormy. The richest Sicilians spent large sums of money. There were threats, blackmailing and corruption. The trial ended in a general acquittal of the thirteen indicted men.

They were returned to jail, to be released the following morning. But the same evening some prominent citizens and journalists called a general meeting in the central square, and invited the crowd to return there the following morning, all armed, to take action. It was clear that a lynching of the acquitted men and of the jurors was planned, and that some were even contemplating a massacre in the Italian colony.

As news spread, the Italian Consul, Cortes, searched during the night for the Mayor and the Governor, but could not find them. The jail was barricaded. The Italians whose conscience was not clean disappeared, the innocent ones waited in trepidation for something terrible to happen.

Because I lived away from the center of the city, I knew nothing about what was going on, and in the morning at nine o'clock, going to the post office, I noticed to my great surprise that Italian houses and shops were shut. I met the Chancellor and he said to me: 'Father, go back home. A mob has stormed the jail, and perhaps, at this moment, a lynching is going on.'

I replied that I would go to the jail to try to do what I could but he said: 'No, it would be useless and dangerous. Go back home and pray for those poor victims.'

Just at that moment, newsboys were yelling the headlines: 'Jail assaulted. Cells invaded eleven men killed. They had taken refuge in the dog kennels. Caught and dragged to the square. Abandoned to popular rage and injustice.'

I froze from shame and horror. Terribly upset, I ran to the Archbishop's residence, but he was not in. In the chapel we prayed more with tears than words.

Soon strong protests were sent by our government, and reparations were asked for the victims' families. American authorities replied: 'We could not do anything against mob action. The jail was guarded; magistrates and jurors were threatened and perhaps were corrupt. The lynched men were guilty of these and other crimes. The deplorable methods of perjury, intimidation, suppression and "omertà", are intolerable, they hinder justice and must be eradicated from our society. These citizens executed the guilty men in order to clear out our city and set an example for others like them. Honest Italians are respected, but professional killers are not.'

To these justifications the Italian government replied: 'Even if guilty, those men had been tried and acquitted by your courts. If there were threats and bribes, blame your people who were so weak as to forget their duty. Therefore, either we obtain dignified redress, or we shall send our battleships to the Mississippi.'

Fortunately, this threat was not carried out, for in those moments of turmoil, Prime Minister

Crispi might have provoked a massacre on a much larger scale, as the Italian people were quite capable of doing.

After much discussion indemnity was awarded to the families of the victims whom I knew very well, since I had visited them twice in prison.

Two days later, I received a telegram from Bishop Scalabrini in which he deplored the atrocities which had occurred, expressed his sorrow and begged me to present his condolences to the Archbishop.

And the good, humble Pastor observed: 'Yes, the first crime was very serious, but the remedy was extreme. This chain of crime is hateful to the people,

damaging to the colony, dishonorable for Italy, and if this lesson doesn't produce the necessary results, more radical actions might follow.'

I am writing these words thirty-six years after these events occurred, yet crime in our colonies, instead of diminishing, has increased, and has infested other nationalities, so that at the present time, in such large American cities as New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, etc., more crimes are committed in one month than occur in Italy in one year.

A few days after this horrible lynching, a ship arrived with one hundred workers and farmers from Palermo, who had come for the sugar cane harvest. The people wanted them expelled, but the authorities would not consent. There was fear of hostility at their landing, but the police promised to protect them.

The Consul begged me to board the ship with him in order to protect these compatriots against any eventuality. I willingly accepted, in performance of my Christian duty; but I was horrified when the authorities, searching pockets, sacks and suitcases collected an arsenal of all types of firearms and daggers.

Rather than a crew of workingmen, it seemed as though a battalion of soldiers was landing to fight against another army or going into a forest filled with wild beasts. However, everyone landed freely, and being informed about what had happened, behaved wisely. The crowd, restrained by the police, limited itself to throwing some stones and yelling some insults. I felt sorry in seeing those innocent workers so saddened and humiliated!

I need not tell you that after this brutal event the colony sank into a state of dejection, and that honest Italians were so ashamed that they would have preferred not to be Italians. They preferred banishment, but there was no need for it now since the criminals and suspected criminals had already voluntarily disappeared."⁸⁹

A few days after the lynching, Father Gambera wrote to Father Rolleri:

"The grievous events which occurred here on March 14th have not yet come to an end. They are reaching an acute state. The city appears calm, but passions are boiling under the surface. The barbaric crime committed in such a manner and under such circumstances could not have been more horrifying. Cannibalistic cruelty was shown by the lynching mob. Some of the victims were repeatedly beaten and shot even after they were dead.... What I disliked more was not the savage action of the mob - for a mob may become a wild beast in a moment of intense passion - but the following circumstances:

- 1) The authorities permitted, and I would say, favored, the lynching;*
- 2) Hatred is increasing against the Sicilian colony;*
- 3) The fate of the victims' souls, which perhaps did not even have an instant for an act of contrition;*
- 4) The fear of even worse tragedies;*
- 5) The sorrow of seeing that everything seems to hinder our Mission."⁹⁰*

Upset, Father Chiariglione asked to be transferred elsewhere. But, as the situation normalized, Father Gambera resumed his work on the erection of a Church:

"I have been visiting one family after another, to obtain signatures for the new Church, and so far I have been able to collect only a little over one thousand dollars.

Soon I shall buy land and hope that this colony will open its heart and purse when it sees that we are working in earnest.

...Sicilians here are involved in mafia societies as shrewd and secret in their business transactions as they are in their plot. They avoid the Church and are ignorant and indifferent to their religion."⁹¹

To these religious difficulties, he added another danger:

"Two Sundays ago an Italian Evangelist church opened. It is subsidized by other non-Catholic churches; and has two Italian pastors, each well paid and having large families, doing their utmost to convert these simpletons."⁹²

The first statistics of parochial activity appeared in the 1891 annual report: one

⁸⁹ Memoirs by Father G. Gambera, pp. 22-23 (Arch. G.S., 1558/3).

⁹⁰ Letter by Father G. Gambera to Father B. Roller, New Orleans, April 5, 1891 (Arch. G.S., 663/1).

⁹¹ Letter by Father G. Gambera to Father F. Zaboglio(?), New Orleans, June 25, 1891 (Arch. G.S., 663/1).

⁹² Letter by Father G. Gambera to Father F. Zaboglio (?), New Orleans, September 22, 1891 (Arch. G.S., 663/1).

hundred and forty christenings, eighteen marriages, one thousand five hundred communions, between five hundred and six hundred people attending mass on Sunday. This report emphasizes the difficulty of having a small, temporary chapel.⁹³ Financial difficulties are augmented since the Archbishop, who in 1890 allowed us to freely use the chapel, in 1891 asked that it contribute ten per cent of its income, as all other churches, to the Curia, and that it pay twelve dollars a month for house utilities. "*Unable to contribute this sum*", concludes Father Gambera, "*I stopped using gas and we try to manage by using some small discarded candles.*"⁹⁴

At the beginning of 1892, a contract to purchase land was signed, but because of the precarious financial situation, it was decided to delay construction of a church until the lots were paid in full.⁹⁵

But more than with opening a church, the Missionaries were concerned with opening a school:

"I didn't know what path to choose nothing can be obtained from adults and the elderly. It is best to appeal to the new generation that a school is more useful than a church, to prepare a better colony for the future.

But with what means? Through a collection and a bazaar I had put together six thousand dollars, which at that time was a goodly sum, but absolutely insufficient for building or buying a church or a school. And besides, where could I find Italian nuns to teach in it?

On my arrival in New York, I met Mother Francesca Saverio Cabrini who had just arrived to start her new institutions in our communities. I knew that she had already opened a hospital in New York, and was sending her nuns to teach in the school at the Church of St. Joachim...She had been in Nicaragua to open an orphanage and a college for girls.

I turned to her, describing the conditions of our colony, emphasizing the necessity of having a school, remarking that New Orleans was a good central location for her work with the North and the South, and I begged her to come as soon as possible. If she accepted my proposition, I said that I would tell her my plan, declaring that the Archbishop favored it very much.

A month later this good, wise Mother was in New Orleans. In a few days we bought a house suitable for the nuns' residence, for the school and for the orphanage. I promised her I would procure the necessary furniture, and prepare the chapel. Three months later, eight nuns gathered together orphan girls, began to teach catechism, and organized an Oratory for their education and recreation. Within a few years, they built a great orphanage, and the first parochial school.

Both of these are still flourishing. A sanatorium will soon be added.

During their first months, the most serious problem was the support of the nuns, who worked without compensation. The Archbishop permitted them to collect money from Italians only; even those in public markets. But the donations and food they collected were so scarce, that for a time I had to contribute to their necessities.

After three months, I explained the situation to the Archbishop who then allowed the nuns to collect money from the entire city, except in parishes whose rectors disapproved. From then on, their work progressed satisfactorily."⁹⁶

Mother Cabrini had been in New Orleans for the first time in April of 1892,⁹⁷; her first three nuns had arrived on July 13th,⁹⁸, and finally four other nuns, accompanied by the Founder, had joined the first at the beginning of August⁹⁹. An English-Italian school was opened, with the Archbishop's blessing, at the beginning of the school year, 1892-1893. It was attended by one hundred pupils - and it was the only thin thread of hope for the betterment of our colony, as Father Gambera remarked: thin because economic difficulties were so grave there that many families couldn't even pay a modest one dollar a

⁹³ Cfr. Report by Father G. Gambera, 1891 (Arch. G.S., 663/1).

⁹⁴ Letter by Father G. Gambera to Father B. Rolleri, New Orleans, February 23, 1891 (Arch. G.S., 663/1).

⁹⁵ Cfr. Letter by Father G. Gambera to Father B. Rolleri, New Orleans, January 15, 1892 (Arch. G.S., 663/1).

⁹⁶ Memoir by Father Gambera, pp. 25-26 (Arch. G.S., 1558/3).

⁹⁷ Cfr. Letter by Father G. Gambera to Father B. Rolleri, New Orleans, January 15, 1892 (Arch. G.S., 663/1).

⁹⁸ Cfr. Letter by Mother F. S. Cabrini to Father F. Zaboglio, New York, July 8, 1892 (Arch. G.S., 550/2) and by Father G. Gambera to Father F. Zaboglio, New Orleans, July 8, 1892 (Arch. G.S. 663/1).

⁹⁹ Cfr. Letter by Father G. Gambera to Father F. Zaboglio, New Orleans, August 10, 1892 (Arch. G.S., 663/1).

month.¹⁰⁰

From the 1892 report, it appears that in May of that year, the Confraternity of St. Francis of the Sacred Stigmata was organized with two hundred members who pledged to contribute toward the construction of a church. Each member was to contribute five or ten cents a week. During October the Oratory was opened and was attended by seventy girls. There were one hundred and ninety christenings, sixty marriages, and six thousand Communions.¹⁰¹ (101)

Religious services were still scarce. Father Gambera focused his attention on the causes:

"Our most sacred institution and most venerable monument of our immigrants is the Church. It is the first and most authoritative school for religious and social duties. It is the heart of Christian and civic virtues. It is a most intimate and fraternal union, the house of God and the people, where domestic and national customs are sanctified.

Moreover, the Church helps to elevate the prestige and the esteem of the foreign communities, whether Catholic or not. A colony is all the more appreciated by ecclesiastical authorities if it appears faithful to the practices of its religion which is rightly considered the most efficient mold for the highest known human education.

Unfortunately, in our colonies, with very few exceptions, the most fortunate and the most cultured class, the class of so-called 'prominents', including representatives of our government, give a general example of lack of religious practice.

On a Sunday it was and still is a rare exception to see in church a banker, a rich merchant, an industrialist, a doctor or a magistrate of our race. Very few of these individuals were interested in our national religious institutions.

Moreover, Italian newspapers professed and propagandized a skepticism which derided the Divine Mysteries of our faith. First among these papers and the most favored by Italian workers, was that lurid sheet entitled 'Asino'!

This unfortunate religious indifference by the best elements in our colonies certainly did not serve to stimulate respect among the Americans and the foreigners and much less did it help unify and better our immigrants.

Worse, however, is that the better class became the model of the lower class. I often heard people say: 'My countryman, doctor so and so, or that lawyer, or the president of the society, or that crook who became rich, or my boss, or so many others luckier than I, or even the Consul, do not go to church. So why should I - just a worker, the father of a family - go to church and give my money to a priest, when I am so poor?'

The irony is that no other community spends as much as ours on vain feasts, bands, fireworks, flowers, parades, processions and funerals. In a few hours, it squanders monies that might maintain churches, schools, and orphanages, for days.

Americans, seeing that Italians spend so much on noisy celebrations rather than on public religious and cultural institutions say: 'Italians are crazy.'

Our immigrants in these great cities have the example of Irish, German, Polish, Slav, Belgian Catholics etc., who maintain and attend splendid religious and national institutions.

They are well organized, led by their most eminent citizens, and united in supporting the apostolate of their clergy; yet this edifying example has not helped in any way, and even now eighty per cent of the Italians, including 'prominent' ones, do not attend church.

This has produced a rift between Catholics and Protestants. They criticize, accuse and despise one another and say: 'Italians who come from the center of Catholicism and Christianity, and who should give an example of education and a Christian spirit, instead give scandal to the faithful, by their ignorance and lack of religion.'

Perhaps these accusations are unjust and exaggerated, but our people act in such a way as to provoke them. Let us remember that our immigrants are like a disorderly, divided, disbanded flock, without influence and generally rough and

¹⁰⁰ Cfr. Letter by Father G. Gambera to Fathers B. Rolleri, New Orleans, November 28, 1892 (Arch. G.S., 663/1).

¹⁰¹ Cfr. Father G. Gambera, Report from January to December 1892, New Orleans, January 16, 1893 (Arch. G.S., 663/1).

illiterate. Therefore, more than any other group exposed to many moral and material dangers, they are in dire need of wise guides and good examples. And if the better class, influential because of its authority and position, had united with the Missionaries, our colonies would have grown more secure and disciplined; and would have been furnished with beneficial educational institutions. Their descendants would have inherited the language of their fathers, and would have grown more attached to their religion and to their mother country. Instead, all those who should have been the first in exercising their power and their duty, refused to help our cause. They left us alone in our churches, with a minority of parishioners and with its poorest members. Thus we have remained at the end of the line. In almost all our colonies, we are forced to appeal to foreign institutions, which at times help us and at times do not. The greatest part of our youth has lost its love for and even its memory of our faith, our language and our fathers' blessed land, often it feels antipathy and hatred for it.

For lack of good example and guidance our exiles tried to provide for their own protection by founding mutual aid societies, each for the immigrants from the same town. There was a disastrous fractioning of strength. Worse still, they were usually chaired by people devoid of the most elementary qualities necessary to morally elevate their members, and at other times by shrewed rascals capable of any dishonest exploitation.

Many of these associations were named after a patron saint from its members' hometowns, who celebrated their feast day year after year with costly and clamorous parades, with a Mass and even a panegyric; yet only rarely did these associations come to church. Everything was begun and ended in the open.

Their religious practices consist only of this open-air comedy.¹⁰² (102)

On April 16, 1893, Father Gambera was replaced by Father Luigi Paroli, who imparted to this Mission a totally different course from that projected by Father Gambera. The latter, recalling that his departure from a previous Mission had caused him so much suffering, wrote:

"The school, the orphanage and the oratory were functioning well, but we needed a larger, worthier Church which would be ours. We proposed that a tent be erected temporarily for worship on the lots we had bought. This was usually done at the beginning of a Mission, until the architectural drafts and contracts were ready. Before leaving my first Mission, however, it is my duty to remember the merits of the people who helped and comforted me because even if everything else was pitiful, there were eminently kind people:

First of whom was the illustrious Archbishop Janssens. Of Dutch origin, he was our first benefactor, zealous for everyone's health and welfare. He spoke very often about Italians and Blacks. Frequently, he called me in the evening to learn some Italian, often he wanted me to accompany him on his visits to rural parishes, either to assist some Italian family or as a distraction. During the fourth centenary celebration of the discovery of America he asked me to deliver the first of the day's speeches in Italian, while others followed in French, English and German....

Precious friends were the Italian Provincial of the Redemptorists, Father Ravina, who gave me benches and an altar from his old church for the nuns' chapel; the Superior of the Giuseppine nuns, the Roman Mother Bentivoglio, sister of a general, who gave me some candelabra and linen for the Church; the Consul Cortes, always very active and kind; the aged Rocchi, a Milanese, called the Father of the Colony, who suffered great loss when one of his ships loaded with cotton burned; the rich Marinoni family from Brescia, owner of large cotton plantations, and founder of the Banca Popolare; Signora Marinoni who helped me furnish the nuns' residence. Her eldest son is a well-known lawyer, and her father, is the glorious patriot, who avoided Austrian execution after the Novara disaster by escaping under a batch of furs.

I must mention Doctor Formenti, an illustrious physician, who took care of nuns, orphans and ourselves without compensation; also Signor Astredo, a Neapolitan, owner of the most popular restaurant on the lake, famous for his turtle soup for which he kept a turtle pond; his five children, from the oldest to the youngest, played musical instruments; and his home was enlivened by concerts....

¹⁰² Memoir by Father G. Gambera, pp. 27-28 (Arch. G.S., 1558/3).

I also remember the Vaccaro and the Cusimano Brothers, Sicilians, wealthy fruit traders; Bevilacqua and Monteleone, both Neapolitan, merchants of high quality shoes; Mazzei from Parma, a contractor of woodwork; Signora Bacigalupo, an importer of food products; Furich a Dalmatian with an Italian soul, a wealthy dealer of oysters; a good-hearted Sicilian old lady who was happiest when she brought to us plates of macaroni she had cooked although we could not understand a single word of her old dialect; and many, many others."¹⁰³

A few days after his arrival, Father Paroli wrote to Bishop Scalabrini that he "planned" with the Archbishop to abandon building an Italian Church. Instead he would live with the rector of the cathedral in order to care for the Italians in the nearby country parishes.¹⁰⁴ Bishop Scalabrini was perplexed, and urged him to follow the Archbishop's advice who was the only one to decide policy.¹⁰⁵

In reality Archbishop Janssens did not share Father Paroli's ideas of changing everything thus neglecting the work already done, and the orders of the Curia¹⁰⁶. But the Missionary continued to do as he liked, declaring that, since it was impossible to continue as before, it was necessary to try another path.¹⁰⁷ He closed the Chapel of St. Francis; started to attend the nuns' chapel, and began to work with Father Manoritta, "incurring of whose enmity was the greatest mistake of the past regime at the Mission."¹⁰⁸

Having concluded his five-year period of vows, for a while Father Paroli continued to be a chaplain for Mother Cabrini's nuns, getting more and more interested in the Italians who frequented their chapel,¹⁰⁹ until 1906, when he entered the Benedictine monastery at St. Benedict, LA.

After the chapel of St. Francis was closed, the Italian colonists attended the Churches of St. Anthony, St. Patrick and St. Mary. The latter became a national Italian parish in 1921, three years after the Monks of the Immaculate Conception arrived in New Orleans.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, pp. 29-31

¹⁰⁴ Cfr. Letter by Father L. Paroli to G.B. Scalabrini, New Orleans, May 3, 1893 (Arch. G.S., 663/2).

¹⁰⁵ Cfr. Letter by Father L. Paroli to G.B. Scalabrini, New Orleans, June 16, 1893 (Arch. G.S., 663/2).

¹⁰⁶ Cfr. Letter by Msgr. F. Janssens to Father D. Vicentini, New Orleans, July 11, 1893 (Arch. G.S., 663/2).

¹⁰⁷ Cfr. Letter by Father L. Paroli to Father D. Vicentini, New Orleans, June 19, 1893 (Arch. G.S., 663/2).

¹⁰⁸ Cfr. Letter by Father L. Paroli to G.B. Scalabrini, New Orleans, August 7, 1893 (Arch. G.S., 663/2).

¹⁰⁹ Cfr. Letters by Father L. Paroli to G.B. Scalabrini, New Orleans, May 22, 1894 (Arch. G.S., 663); and August 8, 1901 (Arch. G.S., 1894).

CHAPTER V

**THE BEGINNING OF THE MISSIONS IN BUFFALO, CINCINNATI,
BRIDGEPORT, CLEVELAND, KANSAS CITY, OUR LADY OF POMPEI IN
NEW YORK, HARTFORD, MERIDEN AND ERIE**

1. The Parish of St. Anthony of Padua in Buffalo, N.Y. (1890-1893)

The first of the known Italians in Buffalo, N.Y. played an important role in the birth of the city. He was the Milanese Paolo Busti, Director of the Holland Land Co. of Philadelphia, which had obtained from the American Government vast territory west of the Genesee River for colonization. It was Busti moreover who, in 1802, ordered that a new city be planned at the mouth of the Buffalo River.

Towards the middle of the last century, two Genoese arrived in Buffalo and began the Italian colony which in 1870 had a population of two hundred, mostly Genoese, a few Tuscans and Lombards. Soon they were joined by immigrants from Basilicata, and from other Southern regions. In 1880 there were already one thousand Italians, and in 1890, they numbered six thousand five hundred.

Just before 1888, the immigrants began to organize an Italian parish, helped by the Hungarian Father Kofler, who spoke Italian, and by Bishop Ryan. Some initial results were obtained on November 18, 1888 when, under the leadership of Father James Quigley (later appointed Bishop of Buffalo, and still later Archbishop of Chicago), a meeting of Italians was held, during which a Committee was elected to collect the necessary funds to build a church. Meanwhile, the Bishop assigned a chapel behind the cathedral to them.

In February 1889 the Committee bought the required land at the junction of Court and Morgan (now Elmwood) Streets. On October 23, 1890, the first Scalabrinian Missionary, Father Antonio Gibelli, arrived in Buffalo¹ and went to live with Father Quigley, rector of the cathedral.

The chapel assigned to the Italians by the Bishop could not hold more than three hundred people and on Sundays it was always crowded during the celebration of three Italian Masses. Father Gibelli immediately started to take a census of the Italian population which had been fluctuating. During the summer it consisted of about three thousand people, but in the winter, it reached nearly seven or eight thousand people. This is explained by the fact that the kind of work most Italians did was seasonal and lasted for only seven months. For the next five months they could not work because of the cold weather. Hence, they moved from place to place in order to find work.²

The critical financial situation of Buffalo's first Italian immigrants is described in this letter from Father Gibelli:

"Some immigrants from Northern and Southern Italy are financially comfortable. But the great majority, especially from Sicily, lead a hard life. Many have nothing to eat, and cannot find work. After the New Orleans massacre, Italians now called Mafiosi, are unwanted. Yesterday, for example, a strong Sicilian came to see me. He fell on his knees, and implored me in the name of God, to help him, because he could no longer stand not having eaten for days. He told me that he was living with five other men who could not leave the house because they were starving, having given their last dollar to a man who promised them a job, but had never returned."³

On June 10, 1891, a contract to erect a new church dedicated to St. Anthony of Padua, was signed and the following day, work was begun. The blueprint had been drawn by the architect, M. Sheenan. On August 2, 1891, the cornerstone was laid and blessed by the Bishop.

On December 7, 1891, a school for Italian children was started⁴ and on

¹ Cfr. Chiesa di S. Antonio da Padova (Buffalo, N.Y., 1921), pp. 3-12

² Cfr. Letter by Father A. Gibelli to G.B. Scalabrini, Buffalo, November 7, 1890; and annual report by the same, perhaps written in 1891 (Arch. G.S., 575/1).

³ Letter by Father A. Gibelli to Father B. Rolleri, Buffalo, May 23, 1891 (Arch. G.S., 575/1).

⁴ Cfr. Letter by Father A. Gibelli to Father F. Zaboglio, Buffalo, August 31, 1891 (Arch. G.S., 575/1)

December 20th, Archbishop Ryan blessed and opened a two-story building, whose ground floor was for the school and a temporary residence for the pastor, and the second floor for the church. At the beginning of 1892, Father Gibelli, quite ill and exhausted because of the hard life and the sacrifices he had endured up to that time, obtained the assistance of Fr. Giacomo Annovazzi and of Brother Benedetto Riva⁵. During the school year of 1892-1893, the parochial school already had enrolled three hundred seventy-four pupils.⁶ At the end of 1893, Father Gibelli returned to Italy for a short time and was replaced by Father Ludovico Martinelli, who remained as pastor until 1901.

2. The Parish of the Sacred Heart in Cincinnati, Ohio (1889-1895)

The first negotiations for opening a Scalabrinian Mission in Cincinnati, Ohio, began in the summer of 1889, as shown by the following letter written by Father Zaboglio:

*"I have already written to Your Excellency that Archbishop Elder of Cincinnati, had asked me to visit him to see if we could do anything for the three or four thousand Italians in his city; so I went there. Following his advice, I visited about twenty families, accompanied by a certain Signor Cordaro. Most of the Italians I spoke to complain strongly about the late Archbishop Purcell, but then they promised they would contribute toward the construction of an Italian church. Archbishop Purcell, together with his brother, also a priest, owned a bank which ended in bankruptcy and lost four million dollars. Many Italians had deposited their hard-earned money into their bank and were now left penniless! The old Archbishop and his brother died of broken hearts and so did many Italians who had thus been robbed of the fruit of their work and hardships. Your Excellency can imagine the sad consequences, material and spiritual, of this terrible event. Yet it is to be hoped that, through the help of Archbishop Elder, an old yet zealous pastor, something might be done for the Italians of Cincinnati."*⁷

Archbishop Elder wrote directly to Bishop Scalabrini, remarking that of the more than three thousand Italians of Cincinnati, only a few received the sacraments, and these only occasionally. Fewer still sent their children to Catholic schools. The calculation of the number of Italians was approximate, and the Archbishop himself said that these might be twice as many.⁸

The first Italian immigrants had reached Cincinnati at the beginning of the nineteenth century; some came even earlier by traveling up the Mississippi River from New Orleans. Most of them were Genoese merchants and they, through a spirit of initiative, played an important part in the birth and development of the city. During the last decade of the past century many Sicilians joined them.

The first attempt to establish an Italian church there was made in 1867 through contributions pledged by seventy-five immigrants; but the project began to materialize only in the month of July, 1890, when a Scalabrinian, Father Angelo Chiariglione arrived there.⁹

This priest was welcomed kindly by the Archbishop, who made him stay at his residence, but was received very coldly by the Italians who told him that he had come to live at their expense. Father Chiariglione put himself at their disposal publicly declaring that he would not take a single penny for his work. Luckily, he was helped by the Jesuits, by two feminine institutions, and by a generous Irish family.¹⁰

Father Chiariglione began to celebrate Mass for the Italians in the chapel of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart situated at 140 Broadway. It was blessed by Archbishop Elder on November 8, 1890, before five hundred Italians.¹¹

It looked like a propitious beginning, but the Mason dominated Società Unione

⁵ Cfr. Letter by Father A. Gibelli to Father B. Rolleri, Buffalo, March 22, 1892 (Arch. G.S., 575/1).

⁶ Cfr. Letter by Father A. Gibelli to Father B. Rolleri, Buffalo, February 24, 1893 (Arch. G.S., 575/1).

⁷ Letter by Father F. Zaboglio to G.B. Scalabrini, Boston, August 5, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 549/3).

⁸ Cfr. Letter by Msgr. G.E. Elder to G.B. Scalabrini, Cincinnati, October 21, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 625/1a).

⁹ Cfr. Diamond Jubilee, 1891-1968, Sacred Heart Church, (Cincinnati, Ohio, 1968).

¹⁰ Cfr. Letter by Father A. Chiariglione to Father B. Rolleri, Cincinnati, Ohio, January 19, 1892 (Arch. G.S., 625/1b).

¹¹ From a newspaper clipping (Arch. G.S., 625/1b).

e Fratellanza, which had promised a loan without interest for him to purchase a rectory and land for a church, never did give money.¹² It also seems that Father Chiariglione was a *persona non grata*. With the arrival of the young Father Vincenzo Sciolla, at the end of 1891, things began to move.¹³

Seeing that the Committee nominated by the Società Unione e Fratellanza was postponing action indefinitely, the two priests, who were temporarily joined by Father Giuseppe Strumia, formed a smaller committee which began to work immediately:

"A few days ago, we bought two houses for eleven thousand dollars. They will now be demolished, and a church will be built in their place. Two good Italians, Enrichetto and Girolamo Arata, aware that nothing was being accomplished, agreed to buy the houses in their name. They offered them to the Congregation (as the parish is called here) at the same price, plus expenses for the transaction. The Congregation accepted them, and now the lawyer for the Diocese will prepare the deed. The Archbishop is named as the buyer or representative of the Congregation, and the above-named gentlemen as the sellers. For payment, the Congregation already has six thousand dollars and another three thousand dollars has been pledged. Then, the houses will be demolished and a church will be built. Money will come. Everyone is enthusiastic, an enthusiasm brought about by Father Strumia's sermons and exhortations. The parishioners wanted Father Strumia to replace Father Chiariglione who is losing his memory because of old age and illness; but, Cleveland needs Father Strumia even more than Cincinnati does, and he himself wished to return there as, in fact, he did.

We agreed to find twelve Italians, each of whom would pay the twelfth part, about nine hundred dollars, of the price of the house. Six benefactors have already been found. At present, the Missionaries are continuing to perform their ministry in another chapel."¹⁴

Father Sciolla opened a small school of English for the children who must learn it in order to live with other Americans.¹⁵

Soon Father Pietro Lotti, who was to head the Mission until 1897, arrived. Finally in June of 1892, both houses were demolished, and the Church was begun. The blueprints were prepared by the architects Riggant and Marty. The church was planned to be built in the Romanic style.¹⁶ The cornerstone was solemnly blessed by Archbishop Elder on Columbus Day, October 12, 1892, exactly two years after the Italians, with Giuseppe Zanone presiding, first met in the home of Mariano Cancellieri.

The church was finished in less than a year, and blessed on August 27, 1893, by the Apostolic Delegate, Msgr. Satolli, who celebrated the Pontifical Mass and was assisted by the Archbishop of Cincinnati and the Bishop of Covington. This was followed by a traditional parade of Catholic societies from Cincinnati and from some nearby cities, whose members wore uniforms. It included the participation of the representative of Irish and other national parishes.¹⁷

In Cincinnati, there was a problem similar to one which had arisen in New York. In 1895, Father Zaboglio planned to send Father Quadranti to Cincinnati "because the Archbishop has asked for another priest to celebrate Mass in the Sicilian quarter, since they will not frequent the Italian church which they call the Church of the Genoese."¹⁸

We believe that the Scalabrinian Missionaries deserve praise for having done their utmost to unite the Italians from the various regions of Italy.

"Before their coming, we had groups of people from the same town or province who hated each other, often because of stupid local rivalries. We had in various American cities a replica of each of the several regions of Italy; but when the Italian churches were built, the air of superiority of the people from the North

¹²Cfr. Letter by Father A. Chiariglione to Father F. Zaboglio, Cincinnati, without date but written in July 1891 (Arch. G.S., 625/1b).

¹³ Cfr. Letter by Father F. Zaboglio to G.B. Scalabrini, New Orleans, November 21, 1891; and letter by Father V. Sciolla to Father F. Zaboglio, Cincinnati, January 2, 1892 (Arch. G.B., 625/1b).

¹⁴ Letter by Father F. Zaboglio to G.B. Scalabrini, Cincinnati, May 3, 1892 (Arch. G.S., 550/1).

¹⁵ Cfr. Letter by Father V. Sciolla to Father G. Molinari, Cincinnati, April 28, 1892 (Arch. G.S., 625/1b).

¹⁶ Cfr. Letter by Father V. Sciolla to Father B. Roller, Cincinnati, June 16, 1892 (Arch. G.S., 625/2).

¹⁷ Cfr. Letter by Father D. Vicentini to G.B. Scalabrini, New York, September 11, 1893 (Arch. G.S., 552/1).

¹⁸ Letter by Father Zaboglio to G.B. Scalabrini, New Haven, October 9, 1895 (Arch. G.S., 582/5).

*and the center of the peninsula (more pronounced among the Ligurians and the Tuscans) towards their Southern compatriots, began to vanish."*¹⁹

3. The Mission of Bridgeport, Connecticut (1891-1896)

The Bishop of Hartford, Connecticut, was one of those who was more persistent in asking Bishop Scalabrini to send him Missionaries for the Italians. He repeatedly urged Father Morelli and Father Zaboglio to assign other priests to Father Oreste Alussi who was already in New Haven, so that one of them could be sent to Bridgeport, a city half an hour away by train, on the coast.

Father Zaboglio thought of sending another Missionary who might live with Father Alussi and who might also travel to Bridgeport to take care of the approximately one thousand Italians living there both on feast days and on all other necessary occasions until a church and a house could be provided for him.²⁰

This task was entrusted to Father Pietro Lotti who began his mission in Bridgeport in May, 1891, and who temporarily officiated in a chapel for the nuns. A few months later, he fell ill and was replaced by Father Carlo Bertorelli.²¹

The Italians' response to these beginnings was not encouraging. Only ten per cent of the Italian population went to Church, and this number was halved when the railroad work there was completed.²² Father Bertorelli continued to celebrate Holyday Masses in Bridgeport until July 1892, after which Fr. Morelli ended this Mission because of a lack of priests.²³

Later, services were resumed by Father Beniamino Bertò who at the beginning went to Bridgeport, but was supported only by a good Irish priest and not the Italians.²⁴

He remained there until the end of his five-year pledge in 1896. We have no further news of what happened until 1903, at which time Father Gaetano Cerruti organized the parish of the Holy Rosary from a little church formerly dedicated to the Madonna of Pompei.

4. The Parish of the Sacred Rosary in Cleveland, Ohio (1891-1896)

In 1889, the Bishop of Cleveland, Ohio, wrote to the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide and asked if it would send him a young Italian who had completed his study of philosophy, and was willing to take courses in theology and English in Cleveland. The Bishop would then assign him, when ordained, to preaching in Italian and in English at various places of the diocese. Cardinal Simeoni, Prefect of Propaganda Fide, asked Bishop Scalabrini if he could comply with Bishop Gilmour's request.²⁵ The Bishop of Piacenza replied that he could not, but offered "to send some Missionaries there who had sufficient knowledge of English". He asked the Cardinal to deal directly with the Bishop of Cleveland.²⁶

At the same time Bishop Gilmour had sent another request for help to Bishop Scalabrini through Father Capitani, pastor of the Church of St. Anthony in Cleveland, specifying:

*"You must not forget that Italian boys, born and educated in America, do not speak Italian, and that, therefore, it is extremely important to explain the Gospel to them in English, while the Italian language must be used for the new immigrants."*²⁷

When Bishop Scalabrini replied that he was willing to send him two

¹⁹ Manlio Ciuffoletti, "Importanza sociale delle parrocchie italiane in America", in *L'Emigrato Italiano*, XVIII (1924) No. 4, p. 3.

²⁰ Cfr. Letter by Father F. Zaboglio to G.B. Scalabrini, New York, March 20, 1891 (Arch. G.S., 550/1).

²¹ Cfr. Report by Father O. Alussi (Arch. G.S., 648); and letter by Father C. Bertorelli to Father F. Zaboglio, New York, without date, probably written in February 1891 (Arch. G.S., 648).

²² Cfr. Letter by Father C. Bertorelli to Father B. Rolleri, New Haven, June 30, 1892 (Arch. G.S., 648).

²³ Letter by Father C. Bertorelli to Father F. Zaboglio, Pittsburgh, August 26, 1892 (Arch. G.S., 648).

²⁴ Cfr. Letter by Father B. Bertò to G.B. Scalabrini, Bridgeport, without date (Arch. G.S., 648).

²⁵ Cfr. Letter by Cardinal G. Simeoni to G.B. Scalabrini, Rome, April 6, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 651/1).

²⁶ Cfr. Letter by Cardinal G. Simeoni to G.B. Scalabrini, Rome, April 29, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 651/1).

²⁷ Cfr. Letter by Cardinal G. Simeoni to G.B. Scalabrini, Rome, April 29, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 651/1).

Missionaries, and also two catechist Brothers, with the usual conditions (that is, provided they could live a communal life and be independent of the parish priests in their ministry among the Italians) Bishop Gilmour replied:

"I have received your letter of May 2, and I thank you very much for the information you have given me regarding the Regulations of the College of Piacenza, as well as for your offer to send me two priests and two catechists to work in the Cleveland diocese.

However, the conditions set down by Your Excellency are such that their coming would not be helpful to me. On the contrary, they would be a burden that I would not like to have. I am also afraid that few other Bishops of the United States would accept them.

Last week I communicated your proposal to ten Bishops of our provinces assembled in provincial council, and all of them declared that your conditions cannot be accepted.

Your Excellency proposes that the priests and the catechists sent here live by themselves, and that they be legally subject to Italian ecclesiastical direction.

It is not for me to change the basis on which you have founded your College, nor to hinder, in any manner, the good work you have begun; but if Your Excellency will allow me, I would like to say a few words on this subject.

In every place where there are Italians, we also have immigrants of other nationalities, more numerous and as civilized as their compatriots in Europe. Italians are scattered all over the United States: a dozen here, fifty there, two or three hundred elsewhere, many of whom are without a permanent residence, are always on the move and in search of work.

In several large cities there are many Italians, who also have a fixed residence, and are generally poor. And since they are not used to contributing to the support of their Church and priests, many years of sacrifice and deprivation are necessary before we can provide adequate churches for them.

Now, under such conditions, two priests cannot live communally, because of the work they have to do, neither can the catechists, who would be a burden to the people and a source of discord for the Bishops.

What we do need for the Italians is precisely what we needed for all other immigrants, that is, priests who are capable of submitting themselves to the deprivations and sacrifices required of a Missionary, zealous enough to begin their work in poverty....priests who through poverty and suffering managed to build Churches in America. We need priests who willingly carry a portable altar with them and who will go wherever there are Italians, gather them together, celebrate Mass in a poor home, hear confessions and give them instructions. Where there are not too many Italians they could impart the first elements of our religion to groups of boys and girls. For this work, Missionaries should be satisfied to obtain from the people only enough money for traveling. It was thus that priests of other nationalities began their work here among the immigrants from their countries, and then they managed to gradually build Churches and schools.

We cannot make an exception for the Italians. The prevailing conditions in this country do not change for them. Italians and their priests must accept the conditions they find here. The few Italian priests who came here did not understand that they had to accept these conditions, and it was for this reason that nothing, or very little, was done to save Italian immigrants.

Italians are just like other immigrants, who in their own way, are loyal to the Church. By caring for them as we cared for the immigrants of other nations, it will be possible to gradually form parishes just as the others are forming them. However, to reach this goal, it will be necessary for Italian priests to come here, to become accustomed to local conditions, and not come with the conviction that America is like Italy, or that the Italians in this country must remain Italian. These young priests must learn English in order to teach their religion.

I have written all this to you so that you may be aware, somehow, of the prevailing conditions here, and know what your priests must do.

I am sure that the plan proposed by Your Excellency for your Missionaries cannot match the needs of the Italians in America, nor do I believe that the American bishops look favorably upon priests directed from Italy. As far as I am concerned, I shall not receive into the Cleveland diocese priests who are dependent on another diocese.

The case is different when a priest belongs to a religious order, for then he is subject to his order, and both he and the order are subject to the laws of the Church. But a secular priest, who exercises his ministry in a diocese, and is at the same time under the authority of another diocese, creates an abnormal situation which I do not wish to discuss, much less introduce into this diocese.

It is difficult enough to manage foreign priests, and it would be more difficult to govern them in the manner proposed by Your Excellency.

About the catechists, I would say that they would be useless, and a burden, who would increase the difficulties here.

After all this, Your Excellency might ask me, 'What would you propose?' Here are my suggestions: 1) When the American Bishop cannot, for lack of financial means, train young men for the priesthood, they could send them to be trained in your Piacenza College. In due time, they could be sent wherever the Bishops need them, and under the jurisdiction of their dioceses who, like any other priests, are subject to the Ordinary Bishop, and have equal rights and duties. 2) When a Bishop can afford to train some young men for the priesthood, either in his own seminary or in your College, these students should be under his jurisdiction.

Thus these young men would be identified with the diocese and share its fate. Only in this manner, I believe, can we obtain the best results in our spiritual work with the Italians in America."²⁸

In this letter, based on a misunderstanding (since the Scalabrinian Missionaries are priests in a religious congregation, and just those mentioned in the case were contemplated and approved by Bishop Gilmour), Father Capitani added this "confidential note":

"Allow me to tell you that the letter you will receive from Bishop Gilmour was translated by me, literally into Italian, according to his wishes. I am afraid that its contents regarding the good work you have so courageously initiated in favor of the spiritual well-being of our poor immigrants will not appear very encouraging to Your Excellency. Although I must agree in part with the Bishop, in that your priests will not be accepted by the American bishops (I know the American spirit well enough to doubt that your priests will thus reach their goal), I also realize that the conditions offered by Bishop Gilmour to the Italian priests are too harsh, and therefore even on this account, I don't think they would be willing to come to America. I see that his letter accomplishes nothing. It only multiplies the difficulties. Now, the best thing for me to do would be for me to come to Italy to confer with Your Excellency, and to explain to you the true situation here. I can explain it to you only verbally. At the same time, I can suggest several courses of action.

I am taking care of all the Italians of the Diocese of Cleveland, which is one-fifth the size of Italy. I have to attend to twenty-five missions, and have no prospect of getting any help. If I came to Italy, we could arrange a way of providing for the many Italians and non-Italians who live here without a church or a priest, and for the many others who will arrive every year."²⁹

After this letter, all negotiations were halted. No other solution could be expected from the Bishop of Cleveland; but other difficulties were caused by Father Capitani himself, who was at the head of a mixed parish and expected the Italians to conform to Irish customs. Above all, he was rigid regarding taxes, charges and financial contributions to the Church. For this reason, many Italians became hostile to him, and wanted a Church only for themselves.

In the meantime, Bishop Gilmour had died, and the administrator of the diocese, Bishop Boff, seemed well disposed toward this group of Italians. At the end of 1891, Father Zaboglio wrote:

"When I went to Cleveland about a month ago, Bishop Boff asked me if we would assign him a good priest for the Italians in that city and would try to find another post for Father Capitani. I promised that I would send him a priest, if I had your consent, and you sent Father Giuseppe Strumia. Yesterday, Bishop Boff, after having repeated what he had told me previously (that is, that Father Capitani was not helping the Italians) added that if he were the bishop, he

²⁸ Letter by Bishop Gilmour to G.B. Scalabrini, Cleveland, June 7, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 651/1).

²⁹ Letter by Father Capitani to G.B. Scalabrini, Cleveland, June 7, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 651/1).

*would remove him from his post immediately; but since he was only the administrator, and the nomination for a new Bishop was imminent, it was better that a decision be made by whoever was appointed. Meanwhile, Father Strumia would conduct some Missions in the diocese....On my part, I assured Bishop Boff that Father Strumia was to be assigned to the Italians of the Diocese of Cleveland in place of Father Capitani."*³⁰

Bishop Boff intended to build a Church in East Cleveland.³¹ The Italian Committee, presided over by Signor Giuseppe Carabelli, after long deliberations accepted the proposal, procured a hall where Father Strumia could temporarily celebrate Mass³² and bought property in East Cleveland, a suburb where over eight hundred Italians lived whose numbers were constantly growing, and where the Irish inhabitants were willing to help them.³³

In April, 1892, Father Zaboglio reassessed the situation:

"I was there on Ash Wednesday. The Italians had bought the lots, and were planning to build a Church, but in the meantime, our Missionary was compelled to celebrate Mass in distant churches. I told the congregation that it was not proper to leave their Missionary without an adequate place for his ministry, and that, therefore, they should at least rent a hall for a chapel until the Church was built. They looked but could not find a suitable place for it. Then Mr. Carabelli suggested that a wooden chapel be built on a corner of the land they had bought, leaving free that part of the property where the Church was to be built. The proposal was accepted. Several carpenters were hired, and on Holy Thursday, work was begun. It was finished on Saturday afternoon, and put at our disposal. Because we could not immediately have everything we needed, I sent a telegram to Father Paroli asking him to bring along a portable altar. And while we waited for him, some nuns loaned us the other necessary items for celebrating Mass.

Thus on Easter Sunday, we celebrated two Masses in this Italian chapel in East Cleveland, the second of which was a sung one, and which was accompanied by an Italian group, and many people from Cleveland itself. There were forty members of the Bersaglieri Society in uniform who, half an hour before Mass, marched along the main street, and at the appointed time, were in the chapel acting as honor guards. The captain and the lieutenant of the Bersaglieri collected donations which amounted to forty-nine dollars, one quarter of the cost of the chapel.

*You can imagine the joy of the Italians, and the surprise of the Americans. These are peculiar American reactions, but good and comforting none the less. Now, the Italians want a permanent Church, and will build it in a short time. After the Church is built, the wooden chapel will be used as a school, or for some other proper purpose."*³⁴

In July, 1893, Father Strumia advised the Provincial Superior, Father Domenico Vicentini, that the Church, dedicated to the Holy Rosary was finished, but that the affair regarding Father Capitani had not yet been resolved, with a consequent split among the Italians. At the end of that same year, Father Strumia was replaced by Father Pietro Riva, and the latter in turn was replaced by Father Antonio Gibelli in 1894.

The East Cleveland mission always had a meager existence, because of the few Italians there, poor financing, and above all, we think, Father Gibelli's administrative ineptitude. When he died, in 1907, the Bishop assigned the Church to a diocesan priest.³⁵

5. The Parish of the Holy Rosary in Kansas City, Missouri (1891-1895)

The first Italians arrived in Kansas City, Missouri, towards the middle of the last century, to work on the Midwest railroads. At its completion, they settled in the city, especially in its North Side, joining those small traders who had been there already for some time. Before the arrival of the Italian priests, they

³⁰ Letter by Father F. Zaboglio to G.B. Scalabrini, Youngstown, Ohio, November 1, 1891 (Arch. C.S., 550/2).

³¹ Cfr. Letter by G. Carabelli to Father F. Zaboglio, Cleveland, October 6, 1891 (Arch. G.S., 550/2).

³² Cfr. Letter by G. Carabelli to Father F. Zaboglio, Muskegon, Mich., November 1, 1891 (Arch. G.S., 550/2).

³³ Cfr. Letters by G. Carabelli to Father F. Zaboglio, Cleveland, December 14, 1891 and January 28, 1892 (Arch. G.S., 550/2).

³⁴ Letter by Father F. Zaboglio to G.B. Scalabrini, Cincinnati, March 5, 1892 (Arch. G.S., 550/1).

³⁵ Cfr. Letter by Father A. Demo to Father D. Vicentini, New York, March 21, 1907 (Arch. G.S., 651/4).

frequented St. Patrick's Church, where only English was spoken, and where the sacraments were administered to them with the help of an interpreter.

On December 30, 1888, Bishop John Joseph Hogan, of Kansas City, wrote to Bishop Scalabrini asking him if he could send some priests for the two thousand Italians of his city, now spiritually and materially poor.³⁶ Bishop Hogan's wish was fulfilled only in 1891. The intermediary for the last agreements with the Bishop was the "Apostolic Missionary" Father Giuseppe Ascheri, parish priest of Holden, Missouri, who on February 6, 1891, wrote to Father Zaboglio:

*"As soon as I received your welcomed letter of January 29, I had a talk with Bishop Hogan, and told him that Bishop Scalabrini was sending a Missionary priest for the Italians of Kansas City. He replied, 'I am very glad to hear that Bishop Scalabrini is planning to send us an Italian priest for the Italians of Kansas City, since, if we don't do something soon for them, they will end up by losing their faith: Make Father Zaboglio understand that I will do everything I can to help the Missionary he will send. However, Bishop Hogan did not do anything for the Italians of the city because he was always waiting for the Missionary promised by Bishop Scalabrini. I understand that there are numerous Italians in Kansas City, and that a good number of others are scattered here and there in the diocese. Therefore, I think that it would be better if Bishop Scalabrini sent two priests there instead of one. I am also sorry to say that the Episcopalians in Kansas City are doing everything in their power to attract the Italian children to them, and that if Bishop Scalabrini does not send a Missionary soon, many of these children will lose their Catholic faith. The Italians of the city are well-intentioned, and I believe that a priest could do much good.'"*³⁷

The first Missionary arrived in Kansas City at the end of October, 1891. He was Father Ferdinando Santipolo. During the first days, he lived in the Bishop's residence and then in the home of Signor Giovanni Battista Ghio who procured a store for him at the corner of Fifth and Forest Streets as a temporary chapel.³⁸ A few months later, the Mission was transferred to another store on Independence Avenue, and a little later, to a third store on Fifth Street which was used until the end of 1895.

The first few years were very difficult. In the beginning, the Italians had promised to contribute enough money to build a Church. But in reality only the poor gave a few coins, whereas the well-to-do were insensitive to the idea. In fact, it was not even possible to set up a committee until 1893. But, not even then was it possible to do much, because of general unemployment among the immigrants. Only in September 1894, did Father Santipolo dare to buy a small plot of land at the junction of Missouri Avenue and Campbell Street. Here a wooden Church was built³⁹ and opened to the faithful on November 10, 1895⁴⁰ by Bishop Hogan. The dedication sermon was delivered by Father J.J. Glennon, who was later appointed Cardinal-Archbishop of St. Louis, Missouri.

6. The Parish of Our Lady of Pompei in New York (1892-1896)

The history of the first years of the parish of Our Lady of Pompei in New York, is bound to the vicissitudes of the Società San Raffaele, extensively narrated in the book, La Società italiana di fronte alle prime migrazioni di massa, by Father Antonio Perotti, published in 1968, by Centro Studi Emigrazione, Rome.

Father Pietro Bandini, who was president of this Association, had planned from the beginning to make a chapel in its meeting place at 113 Waverly Place, not far from the port. "*When we shall have a house,*" he wrote to Bishop Scalabrini in July 1891, "*it would be better if I had two other priests with me. Our Church or chapel will be our parish.*"⁴¹

It seems that the chapel, dedicated to the Madonna di Pompei, was opened to

³⁶ Cfr. Letter by Archbishop J.J. Hogan to G.B. Scalabrini, Kansas City, December 30, 1888 (Arch. G.S., 628/2).

³⁷ Letter by Father G. Ascheri to Father F. Zaboglio, Holden, Mo., February 6, 1891 (Arch. G.S., Non-membri, Ascheri).

³⁸ Cfr. Letter by Father F. Santipolo to Father F. Zaboglio, Kansas City, November 3, 1891 (Arch. G.S., 628/3)

³⁹ Cfr. Letter by Father F. Santipolo to Father B. Rolleri, Kansas City, October 4, 1894; and December 9, 1894 (Arch.G.S., 628/3).

⁴⁰ Cfr. Letter by Father P. Santipolo to Father B. Rolleri, Kansas City, October 23, 1895 (Arch. G.S., 628/2).

⁴¹ Letter by Father P. Bandini to G.B. Scalabrini, New York, July 21, 1891 (Arch. G.S., 110/10).

the faithful on the first Sunday of May 1892. What we know for sure is that it was blessed, together with the San Raffaele Home, on September 24, 1892, by Archbishop Corrigan.⁴²

It was a rather modest place, five yards wide and twenty yards long, and always crowded⁴³:

"On Sunday the services begin at 5:30 A.M. In the morning we celebrate four Masses and deliver four sermons. In the afternoon one of the priests takes care of baptisms, benedictions and sick calls. We have nine catechism classes with over two hundred pupils enrolled (there is no room for more). At the end of catechism lesson and after blessing the children, we have one or two meetings with the various societies, and then Vespers and Benediction. Once a month, always on Sunday, after Benediction, we have a meeting with the heads of the families."⁴⁴

During 1894, they planned to transfer the seat of the parish of Our Lady of Pompei to a more suitable place.

"The Chapel at Waverly Place was no longer sufficient for the needs of the parishioners, whose numbers were growing. It was not easy to find a proper place, and some thought that the best thing to do was to borrow money from a bank, buy the necessary lots, and build a church and a rectory.

It was easy to say, but the expenses for such projects would have been enormous. Neither would the diocesan authorities allow us to borrow more than what was consonant with the strength of our parish.

The first immigrants had come to America to improve their economic conditions. Since they were poor and had large families, we could not rely on their contributions to cover the cost of building a new church. Fifty or sixty years ago wages were not as high as today. In those times most Italians made a living as shoe shiners, blacks, barbers, cooks, tailors, or worked at the construction of ports, railroads, subways, etc.

A laborer did not earn more than ten, fifteen or at most eighteen, dollars a week. This was barely sufficient to support a family.

A look at the income of the church during the first eight years of the life of our parish surprises us, because it was really meager. Father Bandini registered contributions of four thousand two hundred and seventy dollars and twenty cents for the first four years, a little more than one thousand dollars a year. During the next four years, Father Zaboglio was able to register an income of eighteen thousand and nine dollars. During the whole eight year period, the total income of the parish amounted to twenty-two thousand, two hundred and sixteen dollars and the deficit was about eight hundred dollars. This is eloquent proof of the population's financial conditions which contributed to the maintenance of the Church in a very limited way, because it could not give more.

Even the Missionaries were affected by the poverty of their parishioners. Recently, recalling the past, some of the Missionaries said: 'When we arrived in America, we often had just a plate of soup for dinner, and some bread and cheese for supper. If a parishioner paid us for a Mass or for some other service, we had a kind of celebration in our home.'

Since these were the conditions of the times, Father Zaboglio and the other priests obtained the Archbishop's permission to rent an abandoned Protestant Church at 218 Sullivan Street. The Missionaries lived in a house near the Church."⁴⁵

It was Father Bandini who, remembering the financial difficulties of the parish of St. Joachim, had the illusion of being able to overcome his difficulties by borrowing money from a bank:

"If I had not been ill these past few days, perhaps I would have signed the contract for the Church and house that I had considered buying, urged as I was to do so by the Delegate. However, I wanted everything to be done properly, and especially with the full consent of the Archbishop. My memorandum was approved by the Archbishop, who presented it to the Council of the Vicars and

⁴² Cfr. Letter by Father P. Bandini to Msgr. Mangot, New York, August 11, 1892 (Arch. G.S., 110/10)

⁴³ Cfr. Letter by Father P. Bandini to G.B. Scalabrini, New York, April 13, 1893; and April 11, 1894 (Arch. G.S., 110/10).

⁴⁴ Letter by Father F. Bandini to G.B. Scalabrini, New York, January 16, 1895 (Arch. G.S., 583/2).

⁴⁵ Costantino Sassi, *Parrocchia della Madonna di Pompei in New York* (Marino, 1946), pp. 30-31).

they, in turn, having made no objection to it, presented it to a meeting of the Diocesan Counsellors. They advised me to rent the place at the beginning of the year, and therefore, I am preparing the contract in such a way as to have the option of buying the church for fifty-two thousand dollars. If I succeed in this, as I hope to, it would be the largest Church of the Congregation. It is two stories high. The first floor will be used for celebrating the children's Masses, for their catechism school and for the societies, etc. The second floor will be the Church proper. It is fourteen feet wider and twenty feet longer than the Roosevelt Street Church.

*If I succeed in this, neither I nor those who will come after me will have the difficulties that we all have had with the builders of our other churches, for the simple reason that I shall accept contributions from the Italians, but I shall not borrow money from them, since it is much easier and more advantageous to borrow from American banks. Therefore, if I succeed, one could say it would be the only church really owned by our Congregation, since all the other Churches belong, in one way or another, to local Italian communities which can get rid of us at any time they wish."*⁴⁶

The rented church was blessed and opened to the faithful in April 1895.⁴⁷ Two months later, Father Bandini was writing this laconic report:

*"The new Church is getting along well enough as far as attendance is concerned, but very slowly, financially. (It is summer, and the times are bad)."*⁴⁸

In 1896, at the end of his five-year vow period, Father Bandini left the Congregation, abandoned the work he had started in New York, and went to take care of an Italian colony in Arkansas. Bishop Scalabrini wrote to Father Zaboglio that he had to replace him.

*"Father Bandini has concluded his five-year pledge, and is free. I never did like his way of doing things. He may go, but only after having put the affairs of his administration with the Archbishop in order. He has never given an account of his affairs to me, nor to Vicentini, claiming that he, as secretary of the St. Raphael Society, depended only on the Archbishop. Let him therefore deal with the Archbishop. I am of the opinion that Bandini's church, burdened with debts, should not be accepted. The Archbishop can assign it to a person he trusts, as he says in the enclosed letter."*⁴⁹

Father Zaboglio told the Archbishop that it was impossible to continue to keep the church. But, the Apostolic Delegate Msgr. Satolli insisted that the Missionaries not abandon it. Bishop Farley, the Auxiliary Bishop of New York, was of the same opinion; and in addition, a benefactress, Ms. Leary, offered financial help. The Archbishop proposed taking another nearby church which, up to that time, had been used by the Blacks.⁵⁰

On May 5, 1896, Father Zaboglio telegraphed Bishop Scalabrini that he had decided to keep the Church, and in a letter, he explained:

"The Church would have been closed if we didn't keep it. After our refusal, the Archbishop offered it to others. Cardinal Satolli begged other people to take it, but he couldn't find anybody who wanted it, or could take it. To close it would have been a shame for the immigrants in the Italian community of other nationalities, and for the St. Charles Missionaries, especially because the memory of what had happened to the Baxter Street Church was still fresh in our minds. And, what's more important, it would have been immensely damaging to their souls. A proof of this is found in the fact that Cardinal Satolli, the Archbishop, and Bishop Farley, were very anxious to find a successor to Father Bandini. But Our Lady of Pompei, to Whom the Church is dedicated did not want to be closed, but wanted it to remain in our hands. A few days after having sent a telegram to our lawyer Bartolo Longo, asking him to make a novena, things changed. I took courage and Ms. Leary spoke very frankly, promising that she would pay the debts incurred by Father Bandini (over one thousand two hundred dollars), and that she would give me a monthly allowance for current expenses....One of many obstacles, the financial one, has thus been overcome. Our Lady of Pompei will help us overcome the others,

⁴⁶ Letter by Father P. Bandini to G.B. Scalabrini, New York, January 16, 1895 (Arch. G.S., 583/2).

⁴⁷ Cfr. Letter by Father P. Bandini to G.B. Scalabrini, New York, April 4, 1895 (Arch. G.S., 483/2).

⁴⁸ Letter by Father P. Bandini to G. B. Scalabrini, New York June 12, 1895 (Arch. G.S., 583/2).

⁴⁹ Letter by G.B. Scalabrini to Father F. Zaboglio, Piacenza, February 25, 1896 (Arch. Seminario Maggiore di Como).

⁵⁰ Cfr. Letter by Father F. Zaboglio to G.B. Scalabrini, New Haven, Easter Eve 1896 (Arch. G.S., 583/3).

including a deficiency of parishioners."⁵¹

The Church on Sullivan Street, now demolished, was the seat of the parish of Our Lady of Pompei until 1898.

7. The Mission of Hartford and Meriden, Connecticut (1892-1898)

We have no exact record of when and how the Mission of Hartford Connecticut, was started. The first letter sent by Father Chiariglione from Hartford is dated October 21, 1892. In the second letter, dated December 30, 1892, the Missionary said that he had requested to be transferred:

"I am not pleased by the smallness of the place. To fit fifty people in the chapel we would have to pack them like sardines in a barrel. Moreover, some Italian capitalists, taking advantage of our situation, hoped to enslave me by sending me this proposal: 'Father, four of us are willing to buy a building for an Italian Church, but we do not want a committee, and we shall not allow a Missionary to meddle in the affairs of our society. We are willing to pay him a salary of thirty dollars a month....The society, by giving him a salary, must have the right to take in all the income of the church, and the Missionary will have no right to know how we will use it'....

*Thinking about it calmly, I decided not to have anything to do with those gold worshippers, and to try instead to evangelize the poor. I rented a chapel which could hold from one hundred and twelve to one hundred and twenty people, large enough for the Italians of Hartford, mostly Calabrians, who were very ignorant about their religion. It is now a month since I have taught catechism every evening."*⁵²

Six months later, the Missionary declared that the donations were not even sufficient to pay the rent, which amounted to one dollar a day. Therefore, he made an agreement with the Bishop of Hartford, by which he would have celebrated one Mass on Sunday in the city, and another in Meriden where the Italians were already collecting a fund to buy a church. Whenever the church would be ready, he would transfer himself to Meriden.⁵³ From there he would care for the eight hundred Italians of Hartford, the one hundred of Windsor Locks, the four hundred of Middletown, five hundred of Waterbury, the three hundred of New Britain, the three hundred of West Norfolk and the five hundred of Danbury, in addition to the four hundred of Meriden.⁵⁴

In 1894, Father Felice Morelli went to help Father Chiariglione, and completed the Church of Meriden which was blessed by the Apostolic Delegate, Msgr. Satolli, on May 13, 1894.⁵⁵

In 1895, Father Francesco Beccherini was appointed pastor of the Church of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel in Meriden, but he was soon replaced by Father Vittorio Sovilla, who remained there until the closing of the Mission in 1898.

8. The Mission of Erie, Pennsylvania (1891-1894)

At the beginning of 1893, Father Antonio Gibelli, who was in Buffalo, was asked to contact the Italian community at Erie, Pa.

*"I spoke with the Bishop and the Vicar who wish to have an Italian Missionary in Erie. If possible, they would like one who speaks some English so that the Bishop could assign various tasks to him...In Erie there is the St. Paul Society with sixty members, but I am not sure about the number of Italians. Some people say there are six hundred, others eight hundred, and still others over one thousand. One should take a census. A small church has already been built."*⁵⁶

Following these contacts, Father Francesco Beccherini was sent there on March 17, 1893. This first Missionary described the situation as follows:

"I am living in the home of a German priest and my board will be paid, for at

⁵¹ Letter by Father F. Zaboglio to G.B. Scalabrini, New York May 7, 1896 (Arch. G.S., 583/3).

⁵² Letter by Father A. Chiariglione to Father F. Morelli, Hartford, December 30, 1892 (Arch. G.S., 660/3).

⁵³ Cfr. Letters by Father A. Chiariglione to Father Morelli (or Father D. Vicentini ?) Hartford, June 5, 1893 (Arch., G.S., 660/3).

⁵⁴ Cfr. Letters by Father A. Chiariglione to the Provincial Superior, Hartford, June 20, 1893; and June 30, 1893 (Arch. G.S., 660/3).

⁵⁵ Cfr. Letter by Father A. Chiariglione to Father D. Vicentini, Hartford, June 15, 1894 (Arch. G.S., 660/3).

⁵⁶ Letter by Father A. Gibelli to Father D. Vicentini, Buffalo, February 14, 1893 (Arch. G.S., 574/1).

*least six months, by the Bishop of Erie. This priest speaks neither Italian nor French, and lives according to the customs of his country, not entirely suitable to us Italians. But he is a good priest, very kind, saintly, quite old, and generous. He advises and guides me. The parish is very poor, the Mission and the Church are just beginning to function - and therefore we need much help from many people."*⁵⁷

As a matter of fact, the Bishop paid the Missionary's board for three months only, and then told him that if the Italians wanted a priest they would have to support him themselves, if not, he could pack and go away.⁵⁸ Father Beccherini was thereby forced to face new expenses and to borrow money, building a wooden house for himself, helped more by the Germans and the Irish than by the Italians, who were few and poor. The modest life is evidenced by the report covering the period March 17, 1893 - December 31, 1893. It lists sixteen baptisms, four marriages, five funerals, ten confirmation, eight first communions, eighty-nine Easter communions, fourteen catechism pupils, twenty-eight members of the Confraternity of the Sacred Heart of Mary, and forty-two members of the Charity Association of St. Paul.⁵⁹ The Missionary did not believe that the Italians under his jurisdiction numbered more than three hundred.⁶⁰

This situation induced the Scalabrinians to abandon the Erie Mission in July 1894.

⁵⁷ Letter by Father F. Beccherini to G.B. Scalabrini, Erie, Pa., May 4, 1893 (Arch. G.S., 656).

⁵⁸ Cfr. Letter by Father D. Vicentini to G.B. Scalabrini, New York, July 14, 1893 (Arch. G.S., 552/1).

⁵⁹ "Report of State of the Congregation of St. Paul's Church", Erie, Pa. (Arch. G.S., 656).

⁶⁰ Cfr. Letter by Father F. Beccherini to G.B. Scalabrini, Erie, Pa., April 23, 1894 (Arch. G.S., 656).

**History of the
SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION**

VOLUME 2

APPENDIXES

(Documentation)

APPENDIX No. I

**Correspondence between Bishop Scalabrini
and Father Zaboglio**

from

September 19, 1888

to

December 28, 1896

N.B. Bishop Scalabrini's letters to Father Zaboglio are kept in the Archives of the Major Seminary in Como; Father Zaboglio's letters to Bishop Scalabrini are kept in the Scalabrinian General Archives in Rome.

1. FATHER ZABOGLIO TO BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI

Boston, Mass., September 19, 1888

Most Reverend Excellency:

Having little else to do at this moment, I wish to communicate to Your Excellency what my intentions are, as soon as the question of the parish is settled.

Last night a Capitular meeting, presided over by the Archbishop, was held to discuss building a new parish for the Italians and to assigning it to our Missionaries. I still don't know the outcome, but I believe it was favorable. Before mailing this letter I hope to know the result, and communicate it to Your Excellency.

I should like to immediately assume the administration of the parish, so that Your Excellency might send one or two priests, as the Archbishop suggests.

The reason why I should like to assume the administration of the parish now, is that there could be a periculum in more of disagreements and regrets on the part of the Franciscans, and perhaps quarrels among the partisan friars, whom, however, I believe are very few.

I mentioned that the Missionaries should come as soon as possible, so that I might be free to visit other areas, and also because my health does not permit me to administer a parish for too long a period.

To the information about the Church of San Marco previously given to Your Excellency, I shall add that it is well furnished with holy vessels and the vestments for Mass and sacred functions. Therefore, it is not necessary that the Missionaries bring anything except what they need for their personal use, such as clothes, religious books and sacred relics.

It would be well if each of them would bring two or three Missionary suitcases containing everything needed to celebrate Mass (which I hope have already been sent from Rome). We shall divide the objects among ourselves, according to our needs. I believe that one of the suitcases should be destined for me, since I am the one who must travel more than the others.

Now to something else.

This morning I saw the Bishop of Providence, a city located half-way between New York and Boston, as Your Excellency can notice looking at the enclosed map. He would like to have a priest, whom he would lodge in his own residence, and who would be the parish priest for the Italians in his city. They are only about one thousand five hundred Italians, but His Excellency thinks that their number will increase, therefore, he would like to start the parish on a firm basis now that they are few. Nothing in particular was settled, and he told me he will write to Your Excellency, and invited me to stop at his residence again. If this question is settled, and I believe it will be settled soon, the priest destined for Providence could come together with the ones destined for Boston. The location of Providence, between New York and Boston, could be a very

convenient one for our Missionaries, since they could meet one another quite often. Bishop Harkins of Providence, speaks French and some Italian, in addition to English, of course. He said that it was Archbishop Gibbons who spoke to him about our Society.

A priest told me that in New Haven, (see the map) the Italians have built a church, but they have no priest.

As for the New York Archbishop's plan of building another church there, I believe (as Father Felice believes) that it will be necessary to do so later, but first we must consolidate the one we already have.

Boston, September 25th

Until now, I did not know the Italians' condition. This morning, I finally went to see the Archbishop. I found him more gentle than ever, and from our conversation, I deduced that things will surely be settled as we desire. To confirm my belief, and to increase my joy, his secretary later came here, (incidentally, he told me the other day that he doesn't want anyone to know that I have spoken with him) and he told me that the Chapter met only today and that everything will be settled in a few days, and that its decision is favorable.

Among the many questions the Archbishop asked me, one was this: Could I assure him that he will have a priest as soon as everything is ready for the opening of the church. I answered him affirmatively, being certain that Your Excellency will soon answer with facts.

Last week, Father Felice came to see me, and I was very happy to see him. He brought me a letter he had received from Your Excellency.

Since the Archbishop of New York has written so favorably to Your Excellency, about Father Felice Morelli and Father Vincenzo, I have nothing to add to his words. I can only say that both are acting very well, and are an asset to our Congregation. He also told me that lately even Father Peter (Lotti) has behaved better. Who knows?

Today, I received a letter from Father Morelli in which he tells me that on returning home, he found Father Peter (Lotti) busy packing and ready to go away. I believe that he has written or will soon write to you about it also. But, if Your Excellency will allow me to be frank as in the past, I shall say that incidents similar to those concerning Father Degreene and Father Peter will be repeated as long as our Institute, the first among the first, will be headed by a man who, though very pious, neither knows the people with whom he deals nor can he know them, because, among other reasons, he prevents them from expressing their opinions.

I wish to God that I were wrong.

When Father Felice came, he approved my plan, as did the Archbishop, that I stay here until the Missionaries from Piacenza arrive.

In conclusion, as soon as things are definitely settled, I think in a few days, the

Archbishop and I shall ask Your Excellency to send one or two Missionaries. I believe it would be better to also send a catechist; but I don't know whether Your Excellency believes that one priest and one catechist will be enough. But if you could make an exception to the rule (and this is the case), I wish that you would send two Missionaries, unless the Archbishop believes that one will do.

May I add that if you have priests or catechists at your disposal, you could either send them as a reserve, (as was done in New York), letting me know where they might be assigned to exercise their ministry on certain days. For example on feast days, as is done here for economic reasons, or by residing there permanently. Thus, the Missionaries coming to Boston could be used extensively.

I shall try, and hope to succeed, to collect some money, and send it for the Missionaries' voyages.

Finally, Father Lambertini, who welcomed Father Felice and his companions to Paris, has left for military service to Italy. I don't know to whom our new Missionaries in Paris might initially turn.

I beg your pardon if I have expressed these poor opinions, to which I have given much thought. Send me your benediction, and give my regards to our confreres in the Institute, and to your secretary.

Kissing your sacred ring, I am of Your Most Illustrious and Most Reverend Excellency,

Your very devoted son in Christ,
Father Francesco Zaboglio

P.S. I had just finished this letter when the President of the San Marco Society came. He sends you his homage and thanks in his name and in the name of the entire society.

2. BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI TO FATHER F. ZABOGLIO

October 17, 1888

Dear Father Francesco:

First of all, let us thank God together for the visible help He gives us. If things would proceed this way we might do much good for souls, and thus increase God's glory, despite the immense difficulties that the *inimicus homo* puts across our path.

As soon as you and the Archbishop will say so, I shall send two Missionaries to Boston (and a catechist). You must insist that there be two. With unusual promptness, the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide has approved our Regulations, and it wishes that there be at least two priests. I don't think there

will be any opposition.

I think Providence will be an excellent location. Two priests and a catechist would not be too many for a population of one thousand five hundred souls whose number is ever increasing. I would speak, in this sense, with the Bishop of Providence. I don't think it is wise to have an isolated priest among a clergy which, at least at the beginning, cannot be friendly to him. What could he do alone? He would lose courage. There should be at least two together so that they might attend celebrations wherever necessary.

About our confreres who have gone to Brazil, the news is not good. Greeted by the immigrants like angels descended from Heaven, they have begun their ministry. The two destined for Corityba joined Father Pietro Colbacchini, who has entered our Congregation, and are working without much difficulty. The other three, destined for the Province of Spirito Santo, are not greatly helped by the Bishop; they also have, even if not overt, the hostility of the parish priests against them. They live among people practicing concubinage who refuse to unite in matrimony. But enough of this. I have written again and again to Rome. But no answer ever comes promptly from there. Yet I hope they will do something. The Mother House will have new priests. For the moment we have four, two theology students and six lay students. I have rejected several applications of the former and the latter.

Give my respects to the Archbishop of Boston. Yesterday I received another letter from the Archbishop of New York; in it he praises our Missionaries, and sent me two thousand lire. *Laus Deo*.

I embrace you *in Domino*, and bless you.

Affectionately in Jesus Christ,
+ Gio. Battista Bishop

P.S. In a few days, another of my booklets on migration will be published. I shall send you some copies.

3. FATHER F. ZABOGLIO TO BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI

Boston, Mass., Oct. 19, 1888

Most Reverend Excellency:

Some time ago, I wrote to Your Excellency that I had seen the Bishop of Providence who requested a priest for the Italians in that city, and invited me to visit him there. Also, Father Felice again wrote me from New York, saying that this same Bishop had gone there for the same reason. Therefore, on the 18th, I went to Providence, one hour and a half away by train. There are three thousand Italians in that city living within a radius of three or four miles. This figure, given to me by well-informed persons, is larger than the Bishop mentioned. I saw several Italians who appeared ready to do what is necessary

to have a priest; that is, rent a place where services could be held temporarily, and provide an apartment and support for the priest.

As for the place of our functions, the Bishop is willing to allow us the use of a church basement, and has also mentioned a few places that could be rented in case the Italians preferred to do so (I think this is the best solution). As for the priest's lodgings, the Bishop told me the first time I saw him that he was willing to permit him to stay in his own residence. Of this we must be very grateful; however, if I were to live in a Bishop's house, I would be unable to breathe, and unable to resign myself to its etiquette. Perhaps some of my confreres from Italy share my opinion. There is also the fact that American and Italian cuisine differs a great deal. Moreover, I believe that if an Italian priest has his own home, the poor would feel less restrained to visit him, have more confidence in him, and become more affectionate with him, and of this there is dire need!

The Bishop told me that the Italian community in Providence is increasing, and he is eager to take care of it, beginning right now, so that the newcomers will find themselves among Catholics. The same thing was said to me by the Bishop of Hartford, of whom I am going to speak now.

I believe I told Your Excellency that in New Haven, a city between New York and Providence, the Italian community has a church of its own, but without an Italian priest. Today the Bishop of Hartford came here (New Haven depends on him also), and he, too, asks Your Excellency to send a priest. He said that the New Haven Italian colony, also on the increase, now numbers about two thousand souls, and that the church they now have was formerly Protestant. He wishes to have an answer.

I think that perhaps we must be satisfied to occasionally send a single Missionary to a given locality like those I have mentioned, accompanied by a good Brother, in order to help as many groups as possible. To this good priest of Providence who has studied in Rome, speaks Italian well, loves our people and ardently wishes that an Italian priest be sent there, I said that a priest, when alone, might go wrong. He replied that this is often the case in a big city like New York, but not so in a comparatively small city like Providence (which has a population of one hundred and twenty thousand people).

I hope that Your Excellency will give my opinions (past, present and future) any consideration they may deserve.

Here in Boston, everything moves slowly. The last time I saw the Archbishop, he told me that he cannot walk faster than the law: "*Je ne puis marcher plus vite que la loi.*"

I believe, however, that the day he will give us the Church of San Marco is not too far away, and I hope to be able to soon dispel the inertia that bores me so much.

I, therefore, beg Your Excellency to soon let me know if and when priests will sail for Boston. As soon as things here are settled, I shall write to you. In addition to sending one or two priests to Boston, you might send one to Providence, and one to New Haven, so that I could give an answer to their

respective Bishops, unless Your Excellency prefers to write to them directly, in which case, I would beg you to inform me for my own tranquility. In addition, it would be well to send three Brothers, one to each city. If I receive an affirmative reply from Your Excellency, I shall immediately go to each of the other cities to make the necessary agreements and preparations.

I think that it would be a good sign for the future of all the Italians in the United States, if our Missionaries held, so to speak, the four forts of New York, New Haven, Providence and Boston, all seaports, and in States where Protestantism was once much more intolerant.

Before ending this letter, I wish to clarify what Father Felice and I meant when we wrote that we needed good preachers. We did not mean that we needed great orators, but simply that they be good breakers of the bread: preachers of the Word of God, in a simple and humble manner.

I beg Your Excellency to bless me and, kissing your sacred ring, I declare myself

of Your Illustrious and
Most Reverend Excellency
Your devoted son in Christ,
Father Francesco Zaboglio

P.S. I received a few copies of Your Excellency's booklet, and I thank you very much. I am enclosing ten dollars as a contribution for its reprint. I wish to inform you, for your convenience, that last year in Paris and in Rome the dollar exchange was at five, fifteen.

A new Vice-Consul, a certain Count Revel, has arrived here. Could he be related to, or is he, perhaps, the son of, the general by that name?

I wish to make one last observation which I have withheld from you, but which is not a new thought. I have noticed that German Catholics living here (not to mention other national groups), do not go around asking each other if they are Germans from Prussia, or Austria, or Bavaria or Tyrol, etc. It is enough that they speak German to be considered brothers. They go to the same church and rely on the same priest. Italians too, do not ask if they come from Lombardy, or Tuscany or Ticino or Tyrol. Do they speak Italian? Therefore they are brothers.

They do not go to the same Italian church because they have none; but if they did have one, it would be attended by the Neapolitans, the Piedmontese, the Tyroleans and the Ticinesis. Therefore our Mission, purely religious, will serve not only the Italians of the Kingdom of Italy, but also all other Italian-speaking Catholics. All of them could help us, and an appeal to this end could be launched for men and money, not only among the subjects of the Kingdom of Italy, but also among the people of other nations where Italian is spoken.

4. BISHOP G. B. SCALABRINI TO FATHER F. ZABOGLIO

Piacenza, November 9, 1888

Dear Don Francesco:

I received with great pleasure your letter of October 19, and I am waiting for the definitive decision of the Archbishop of Boston. As soon as I learn that this great amount of dissension has ended, I shall send two Missionaries and a lay Brother to you. I might manage, too, with some efforts, to send a Missionary to New Haven, and another to Providence. I therefore urge you to begin the necessary arrangements with the excellent Bishops of those two dioceses. I beg you to see to it that the Missionaries have freedom of action in their ministry, and a home of their own so as to be able to observe the Rules of our Congregation as much as possible. There should be in each city at least two priests and a lay Brother. I insist on this point for the reasons I have already mentioned.

But you Missionaries are a little peculiar! You consider the Institution, or so it seems, as if it had been in existence for twenty years instead of one! Its members must be tried at least a while before they are sent to their destinations. North America is foremost in my thoughts, since I noticed that its bishops, unlike those in Brazil, understand the necessity of assisting many thousands of abandoned souls.

I hope that you received my new booklet on migration which I published. If you need more copies let me know. Let us pray God that our work will produce some fruit. Things here are moving on satisfactorily. There are not many who have the necessary calling, but the priests we have, seem very firm. There is no scarcity of requests for admission, but one must be cautious before granting it. If in time we could train some sons of our emigrants for the priesthood, we would have many reapers for an abundant harvest.

May God, in whose name I bless you, help us.

Embracing you in *osculo sancto*, I am,

Affectionately in Jesus Christ,
+ Gio. Battista, Bishop

P.S. With the first Missionaries who arrive I shall send you the suitcase you want. It is only one, and it is for you. Regards from my secretary.

5. FATHER F. ZABOGLIO TO BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI

New York, October 28, 1888

Most Reverend Excellency:

The other day, after an absence of over a month and a half, I came to visit my

confreres. They are all well and happy. Fortunato Peirano keeps them company.

I shall return to Boston on Tuesday. The question of the church there has not yet been settled, but we hope it will soon. However, nothing can be known with certainty, because the Archbishop is extremely reserved.

Father Morelli and I have seen Archbishop Corrigan. I hope that when Your Excellency sends the two priests requested by him, and one or two priests to Boston, you will also send one to Providence and one to New Haven, according to my previous request, thus pleasing the bishops of Providence and Hartford. If, however, you cannot satisfy the four colonies immediately, I would suggest the following sequence which Father Morelli and I have discussed, and upon which we have agreed. The Boston church should be provided first, and then the two priests for Archbishop Corrigan; after that the one for Providence, who requested it first, and the one for Hartford. At any rate, I beg Your Excellency to tell me now what I should say to those two Bishops.

I said "one or two priests" for Boston because some time ago, the Archbishop of Boston told me that one would be enough; but he might change his mind at the last minute, for, as far as I can judge, I don't think one would be enough.

Should the Boston Archbishop delay his decision, Your Excellency could even send the priests immediately, including one for Boston who could wait here in New York until he could be assigned there.

Father Morelli agrees with me that it would be good if one of the two priests for New York was a Neapolitan. However, he should have such character and virtue as to be able to always agree with Father Felice and be submissive to him as his superior. I say this because of the well-known diversity of character between the Neapolitans and other Italians.

Today Father Felice and I paid a visit to the Countess di Cesnola who is opening, with the Archbishop's approval, a home for abandoned Italian girls. Father Felice will write you himself today about this in detail. As for the request of sending three nuns, I can only say that if Your Excellency can send them and they are capable of performing the tasks for which they are requested, the reply should be affirmative, without putting forward too many conditions. The reason for this is that the Home would be under the protection of the Archbishop; and of a pious and great lady. Just as the latter would do her duty, so would the Archbishop never fail to give his protection to them and see that they would be treated properly.

As for their support, it is well-known that here, public charity never fails to support pious institutions when they are under the patronage of influential and worthy persons. As for the nuns requested for the Italian hospital, nothing has been done yet.

Professor Biavaschi and his wife have arrived. It is hoped that he will be able to open an Italian school in Boston and thus be of great service to the Italians of that city.

I kiss your sacred ring and, asking for your blessing, I declare myself,

of Your Most Illustrious and
Most Reverend Excellency,
Your humble and devoted son in Christ,
Father Francesco Zaboglio

6. FATHER ZABOGLIO TO BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI

Boston, Massachusetts
88 Boylston Street
November 3, 1888

Most Reverend Excellency:

On the eve of All Saints Day the Archbishop told me that he was determined that the Church of Saint Mark would not be opened.

There seems little hope in being able to open a hall as in New York.

At the same time there are many baptisms being done privately, many marriages which go unblest, people who die without the Sacraments, youth who are not prepared for First Communion and who grow up without religious education!

I hear that only few Italians and a few Irish women go to the Friars (I believe that they are of the Order of Friars Minor). May the Lord help us!

The news was like a bolt of lightning for me and for the few Italians who knew about it already. After so many hopes! So many souls, who are in danger of being lost and who would be excellent Christians if they had a priest and a church, which would have nothing to do with the Franciscans.

It might be obstinacy in not wishing to turn to the Friars, but who has pushed Italians to acts of desperation if not the insolent way they were treated and the subjection to worst actions by Father Bonifacio (now appointed Provincial) and of the other Friars?

In these days I have suffered enormously, more than I have in many years.

Your Excellency, pray for me and for the poor Italians.

Reverently kissing your sacred ring, I profess myself to be
the most humble son in Christ
of Your Most Reverend and Illustrious person.
Fr. Francesco Zaboglio

P.S. I am still of the opinion that if Your Excellency sent the Missionaries, one should be always reserved for Boston. In case there is nothing to do here, (quod Deus avertat), then his assignment could be changed. Anyway, in New York they would learn the ways and the practices of the American Church.

7. BISHOP G. B. SCALABRINI TO FATHER F. ZABOGLIO

Piacenza, November 20, 1888

Dear Father Francesco:

After so many hopes and so much work, the Church of San Marco is not to be opened! Let us accept God's judgment, and let Him provide for so many poor abandoned souls. I don't even know if it would be prudent to rent a hall as was done in New York in case the Archbishop himself will not ask for our Missionaries. Without his public support we could not operate freely. Our priests would be a target for our enemies and might even be subject to calumnies: Let us, therefore, not insist too much; let us not force the doors. I think the time is near when they will ask for us, and we, forgetting the wrongs done to us, will think of Jesus Christ and of the souls He has redeemed.

I have replied today to Bishop MacMahon of Hartford, who wrote me a beautiful letter. I am preparing two Missionaries for New Haven, and will send them soon. Employ therefore your zeal and good works there. In agreement with the Bishops see to it that the church bought by the Italians is furnished with a few necessary things and that the home, though a modest one, has the necessary furniture.

When everything is ready, let me know and I will send the priests. But I urge you not to rush things. "*Festina lente*" is a golden maxim. Together with the two Missionaries for New Haven, those for New York will also sail. We might thus satisfy the Bishop of Providence by putting into action a certain plan proposed by Father Felice, from whom you have the explanation. If it could be realized, I would be satisfied. As for Boston, you should say to our poor immigrants and to the Archbishop that, despite what happened, we shall always be ready to comply with their requests if we have Missionaries to send, but that for the present time, those destined for Boston are being sent elsewhere. As for your sadness, use the remedy: *Si niteremur sicuti viri fortes, stare in proelio, profecto auxilium Domini super nos effulget de coelo.*

I embrace you in *osculo sancto* and I bless you.

Affectionately in Jesus Christ,
+ Gio. Battista Bishop

8. FATHER F. ZABOGLIO TO BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI

Boston, Massachusetts
88 Boylston Street
November 16, 1888

Most Reverend Excellency:

It is my duty to inform you of what is happening here.

After the Archbishop told me that he had decided against the opening of the Church of San Marco, a good priest advised me to see the Vicar General. I did, and he said that he believed the Archbishop would give us permission to rent a hall, but probably on condition that the Italians sold the Church of San Marco. This would not be a remedy but rather a worsening of the situation since the Italians would refuse to sell it. I therefore tried to explain to the Vicar General the uselessness of the proposal. But last Monday, he told me that the Archbishop insisted even more on this condition. He then advised me to confer with the Archbishop, but he will be absent all this week.

What frightened me a few days ago was the fact that the Italians, irritated by the Archbishop's decision, might no longer listen to reason and might reopen the church in their own way, and do worse than before. However, thank God, the leaders are becoming convinced that they should be satisfied with a hall. I am saying the leaders, because the people in general are still unaware of the latest decision.

Father Morelli, as soon as he heard the news, sent me a telegram, and then urged me by letter to try to obtain a hall. This also helped to keep the Italians quiet.

I received Your Excellency's letter dated October 17th. I would say that here in the New England States, the clergy are generally more sensitive and not as proud as many of the priests in New York. There is a good priest here, and another in Providence where I have been twice, who studied in Rome, speak Italian well and are two of our best friends. They are among the few priests who speak well of Italian immigrants, who love them and, admit that they have been unjustly treated by many bad Italian and Irish priests and friars.

The Bishop of Providence is a very courteous man. He insisted that I lodge with him, and he was very kind to me.

Rather than leaving the two cities of Providence and New Haven without adequate religious assistance, however, could we not send a Missionary to each city very soon, and send another one later on? In this way we would not violate the substance of the Rules approved by Propaganda Fide. Moreover, Providence is only one hour and a half away from Boston, and New Haven only two hours away. Therefore, our priests could see each other often.

Forgive me for these suggestions, which Your Excellency may approve or otherwise disregard.

As for the Archbishop of Boston, if he will allow us to rent a hall, he will also consent to our having two priests. But, if he insists on only one priest, we should be satisfied for the following reasons: 1) this Archbishop, to say it in one word, is a strange person (I am not the only one to say it, I have heard many others say it); 2) if you did not send any priests at all because he would not want two, the consequences would be grave, causing us to lose many souls. Later things could be better settled.

It is also possible that the Archbishop, due to his strange character, will not send a written request to Your Excellency since it seems that he detests

writing. In that case, I think Your Excellency should be satisfied to have my request only. Probably I will send you a telegram.

When I was in New York at the end of October, Father Felice expressed the idea of sending some young boys to Piacenza to be trained as Missionaries. I think it is a good idea.

Perhaps it is not necessary to advise Your Excellency that a Missionary to any one of these cities should disembark in New York.

Kissing your sacred ring and begging you to bless me, I am,
of Your Most Illustrious and Most Reverend
Excellency,
very devoted and very humble son in Christ,
Father Francesco Zaboglio

P.S. If Your Excellency has already answered, or will directly answer the Bishop of Hartford regarding New Haven, I beg you to inform me. I am not speaking about affairs in New York, the Italians there have a good patron in Father Felice. Besides, I wrote about it to Your Excellency from New York.

The last Missionaries sent here brought several stamps and seals with them. I believe they are useless expenditures. In New York they are never used. Only the parish seal is used.

9. BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI TO FATHER F. ZABOGLIO

Piacenza, December 3, 1888

My dear Father Francesco:

Your zeal and your activity move me deeply, and every day I pray God that He may always protect you. I, however, urge you not to force the doors in Boston, and to conform yourself to the spirit of my previous letter. If the bishops do not request Missionaries from us, it is dangerous to enter their dioceses. If the New York Archbishop had not asked us for our Missionaries, we certainly would have forgotten about that city.

I am enclosing a letter sent me by the Archbishop of New Orleans. I answered that I would arrange to send him two priests and one or two catechists, and that in order to have the proper persons it would be necessary to wait about a year. "In the meantime", (I am quoting my own words) "I shall write to Father Zaboglio, General Secretary of the Congregation, that as soon as he concludes his dealings with the venerable Bishops of Hartford and Providence, he should come to see Your Excellency to make the proper arrangements. See him, Monsignor, listen to what he has to say, use his services and make a definite decision to establish a house there. When I shall be informed about this, I shall set a definite date for the priests' departure and shall immediately inform Your Excellency."

Here we have, my dear Francesco, a new field of action. From fifteen to twenty thousand Italians live in New Orleans. Even the Archbishop of Monreale, in Sicily, has written, fervently exhorting me to think of the many Sicilians living there. You must write to the Bishop of New Orleans, and go to see him as soon as possible. What a long trip, poor son! But take courage, God will reward you for everything. I embrace you in Domino and affectionately bless you.

Yours in Jesus Christ,
+ Gio. Battista Bishop

P.S. The thirty Masses about which you wrote to Father Camillo, who sends you his regards, were celebrated about a month ago.

10. FATHER ZABOGLIO TO BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI

Boston, Massachusetts
88 Boylston Street
December 8, 1888

Most Reverend Excellency:

We have found a hall, twice as large as the one in New York. But will the Archbishop like it? Yesterday, I asked him if he would give me his permission to rent it. He said that he would give me his answer on Tuesday.

If he doesn't like this one, we must look for another. I don't think he will take back his word, for he had already consented that I rent a hall.

Yesterday, I received Your Excellency's letter of November 9th. You ask me to make the proper arrangements with the Bishops of Providence and Hartford (for New Haven). They have been concluded. The Bishops have agreed in both cities, our Missionaries will be pastors for the Italians, and that they will have their own churches and homes. In New Haven the church is ready, and in Providence (in case we don't rent the old church of which I wrote you) the Bishop has another place ready. The only thing we shall have to do now is rent rooms for the Missionaries in each city; but this may be done in a few days before their arrival, since it is not wise to pay rent for a house that has to remain empty for a long time. As for support, I am certain that our priests will not suffer. It suffices to inform me one or two weeks before their arrival in New York, so that in each city they will find everything ready. In Providence and in New Haven we shall not encounter the difficulties we had in New York and in Boston.

The most important thing is that our Missionaries come as soon as possible. The Bishops of Providence and Hartford would like to know when they are coming. I wrote them to say that your letter did not specify the date, in fact, not even the approximate period, but that from the context of it, I deduced that they will arrive soon.

I am enclosing, herewith, a note I received from Bishop MacMahon of Hartford. As soon as the affairs here in Boston are settled I shall send you a telegram. May God allow, through the intercession of the Immaculate Virgin, that they be settled before this letter reaches you.

I have not received the new pamphlet published by Your Excellency. However, Father Felice wrote me that he will send me some copies from New York.

As soon as things are settled here, I shall go to Chicago, as I told Your Excellency before leaving Italy, to see my brother and, if possible, to see Archbishop Ireland of St. Paul. If Your Excellency has some special task to entrust to me for those states or in any others, before my return to Italy, please let me know.

I am in good health, thank God. The climate in general is not too harsh, but it is changeable, and once in a while, we have terrible weather. It is really not too cold, or at least we suffer less than in Italy, I believe, because in every home there is a good stove with wood and coal in abundance. When we go out, we wear clothes that would protect us even in the polar regions.

Bless me, Excellency, and I, kissing your sacred ring, declare myself
of Your Most Illustrious
and Most Reverend Excellency,
very humble son in Christ,
Father Francesco Zaboglio

P.S. The new Italian Vice-Consul of Boston is a certain Revel. Could he be a relative of the General by the same name who is, I think, President of the Società di Soccorso di Missionari Italiani?

If he is, a letter of recommendation from General Revel for our Missionaries would be a help.

At the first opportunity I shall beg Your Excellency to send me a crucifix for the Missionaries, since I do not have any.

11. BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI TO FATHER ZABOGLIO

Piacenza, Oct. 12, 1888

My dear Father Francesco:

I have just received your telegram, and I am answering it. During the month of January two Missionaries will be in Boston. You must prepare everything, come to an understanding with Propaganda Fide, and make arrangements for their spiritual exercises. We shall need some time, even if we rush things at American speed. It would be well to allow me a longer period of time to send Missionaries to our other Missions, so that we might accomplish our tasks with calm and after due reflection. Together with the two priests, I shall also send you two catechists: one for the House and the other for the Church. I hope you have provided lodging for our men and have obtained freedom in their ministry.

In the meantime do what you can.

I think that you should stay a while longer in order to install our confreres, and to give them the necessary instructions. I believe that they will not need Church implements and other things, as you wrote me. If they do, let me know immediately. I urge you to insist that the conditions under which our priests will operate are clearly agreed. Today I shall write to Propaganda Fide for its permission. With the priests for Boston, I shall also send two Missionaries and two catechists for New York; later we can think about supplying other places. But let's not rush: *festina lente*.

Give my affectionate regards to the Archbishop.

I bless you with the usual affection and I embrace you *in Domino*.

Affectionately yours in Jesus Christ,
+ Gio. Battista Bishop of Piacenza

12. FATHER F. ZABOGLIO TO BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI

Boston, Massachusetts
January 1, 1889

Most Reverend Excellency:

I have Your Excellency's letter of December 12th. A complete freedom of ministry is guaranteed. The opening of our church has been announced even by the diocesan newspaper, and the church has been called our parish. I have begun to perform my ministry as a pastor since the 23rd of last month. That day and the 25th were joyful days for the Italian community of Boston. During Mass and Vespers, one thousand two hundred people crowded the church, not counting those who were compelled to stop on the stairs and on the sidewalk or to go away. Here they want sermons and sermons. On Christmas Day, I delivered four sermons and last Sunday three; one for each Mass (since I celebrated two) and one at Vespers. Your Excellency cannot imagine the enthusiasm of these people, already discredited and insulted by a renegade priest. We are baptizing even 7 and 8 year old boys and girls. It is the custom here to make a collection on Christmas Day which is offered to the parish priest as a gift for the holiday. It was made for me too, and amounted to one hundred and fifty-one dollars and fourteen cents, the equivalent of a little over seven hundred and fifty-five lire. I hope that some of this will be left over for the expenses of the Institute.

I now come to the reason for this letter. A ladies' association would like to have a white chasuble worth about one thousand lire. They have already given me five hundred lire, and are ready to give me the rest at any time, whatever it will be. Now, if the Missionaries have not already left when Your Excellency will have received this letter, these ladies would like to beg Your Excellency, and I with them, to order one such chasuble costing one thousand lire (more or less) and ask them to bring it with them. This way we would not only save duty

taxes, but also mailing costs. Priests do not pay duty on sacerdotal vestments, and this could pass as one of their own. This money would immediately be sent to Your Excellency.

I think that one of the first things our Missionaries must do is to give a series of Missions. They can prepare themselves for it whenever they want, and at their arrival, they will find everything ready to begin. Many people have not gone to confession for three, four, or five years, not counting those who have been away from a Church for ten, fifteen or twenty years. I have heard confession from many of them myself. Here they need sermons and more sermons. People rush to Church to hear them, and we catch “small and big fish.”

The Boston Mission will become, I believe, one of the most flourishing of our Congregation. I have gone to live nearer to the Church, but since this is not my permanent residence, please continue to address the mail to 88 Boylston Street.

We are preparing for the Missionaries. I beg Your Excellency to bless me, and I, kissing your sacred ring, declare myself,

of Your Most Illustrious
and Most Reverend Excellency,
very humble son in Christ,
Father Francesco Zaboglio

P.S. An English Professor will translate what the Boston Herald, perhaps the most important newspaper in the city, has published about our church. I beg you to think about Providence and New Haven. They should each have, even if temporarily, a priest and a lay Brother. I shall willingly go to New Orleans. I shall stay there as long as necessary. For in these days I have really had proof of how properly God "consolatur nos in omni tribulatione nostra" and truly "superabundo gaudio". May God be blessed and thanked!

13. BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI TO FATHER F. ZABOGLIO

January 1889

My dear Father Francesco:

Be satisfied with these few words as if they were a volume of joyful and cordial things. May God assist you and keep you in His custody always. I fervently recommend to you Father Luigi (Paroli) and Giuseppe (Martini) both good and zealous priests, and the two Brothers who will attend to the Home and the Church. Stay with them for a while and instruct them precisely even in writing, if you will, de modo tenendi.

I consider the New Haven and Providence affair concluded. You may inform the Bishops that, as soon as I can, I shall comply with their requests. I remind you again of your projected New Orleans trip. Try to reach an agreement with the

Archbishop. Apropos of this, I received a letter from New Orleans (enclosed?) to which I have not replied for reasons of prudence, since the Archbishop has not indicated whom the parish priest will be. Once there, you may speak to the Archbishop about him and try, if possible, to make good use of the laudable intentions manifested by Signor Manoritta.

Archbishop Ireland of St. Paul has written a magnificent letter to me. If you see him before he receives my answer, thank him for me, and present to him my humble and affectionate homage.

I embrace you *in Domino* with the usual affection and, blessing you, I declare myself,

Affectionately in Christ,
+ Gio. Battista Bishop

14. FATHER F. ZABOGLIO TO BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI

Boston, Massachusetts
January 31, 1889

Most Reverend Excellency:

I am enclosing herewith a letter in order to keep Your Excellency informed about what is happening in Providence. Please note that Tommaso Mancini was indicated to me by the Bishop of Providence as the man who could help us more than anyone else, and as one of the best Catholics of that city.

Note also that when I was in Providence the Bishop himself admitted that the Italians had been mistreated by the priests. Now it seems that the situation has reached an acute stage.

Meanwhile, I have written to Signori Rabbino and Mancini urging them to continue to give us their support.

As for Father Felice's plan of sending two Missionaries from New York or from Boston to Providence for only one month each, I disapprove because neither of the Missionaries could accomplish anything in so short a time, since they do not know the Italians of that city. I would rather insist that a Missionary accompanied by a lay Brother be sent there (as well as to New Haven), and that later another Missionary be sent to join him.

If a Missionary in four or five months cannot manage to do what he has to do just because he is alone, he is not an efficient man. On the other hand, I do not think that it is difficult to find lodging and support for a Missionary and a catechist. He could prepare everything that is needed for the Missionaries who will come later, whereas things become more complicated when several Missionaries are sent at the start.

Here things are going well, thank God. The Archbishop neither helps nor hinders us. It doesn't matter. God will help us. Prejudices, together with the calumnies spread against us by that rascal Father Bonifacio, who is a dishonor

to the Order founded by the Saint of Assisi, are beginning to vanish even from Boston. Perhaps we shall have the Church of San Marco also. We are impatiently waiting for the Missionaries, to whom we wish a safe crossing.

Bless me, Excellency, while I, kissing your sacred ring, declare myself,

Your very humble son in Christ,
Father Francesco Zaboglio

P.S. I have received the booklets, and I thank Your Excellency. Father Felice Morelli was here to deliver a sermon. Perhaps he has written to you.

15. FATHER F. ZABOGLIO TO BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI

Boston, February 20, 1889

Most Reverend Excellency:

Things here are proceeding well enough, thank God!

I think it would be well to adopt Father Felice's latest plan regarding Providence, that is, that Father Vincenzo (Astorri) be sent there. Soon I shall write to you about other matters.

The Missionaries have given me your letter, and I thank you very much.

I kiss your sacred ring and implore your benediction.

Of Your Most Illustrious
and Most Reverend Excellency,
Your humble son in Christ,
Father Francesco Zaboglio

16. BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI TO FATHER F. ZABOGLIO

March 25, 1889

My dear Father Francesco:

I heartily thank God that Fathers Paroli and Martini are fulfilling your expectations and those of our immigrants. May God allow us to do some good for them. As for the Church of San Marco and your relationship with the Franciscans, I urge you to read the letter I wrote to Father Paroli, because I thought that you had already left. Now I give these suggestions to you calling your particular attention to them. I hope that with the calmness, prudence and zeal you have always shown, you may succeed in providing good service to our cause. I do not think that it is convenient to admit young Aglovari to our Congregation. He would not be suitable for us. Therefore give him his freedom.

The name that our Missionaries must assume is: Members of the

Congregazione dei Missionari per gli Italiani emigranti. The name of Cristoforo Colombo is the title of the Mother House, not that of the Congregation. This distinction must be made clear to the Missionaries in order to avoid confusion. Yesterday, I wrote to Father Felice about which he will speak to you, and with which we could satisfy the Italian colony in Providence. Be advised that within four or five months, I hope to be able to send two Missionaries and one or two lay Brothers to New Orleans. Therefore, advise me as soon as you have concluded the arrangements. I urge you also to keep in mind our poverty. This economic question deserves much consideration. If you can obtain something for traveling expenses, so much the better. Our Mother House is taking in several members and the requests for Missionaries are increasing. One request was recently sent by the Bishop of Costarica, and it was directly transmitted to me by the Pope. Let us hope that some vocations will arise even from among the sons of our emigrants in America. Apropos of this, a few months ago, I sent a package of school books to Father Felice Morelli. Ask him if he received it, and if so, advise me for my peace of mind. Did you receive the suitcase? Is your health still good?

I embrace you in *osculo sancto* and I bless you. I also bless our Priests and Brothers, and for all of them I implore God's favors.

Very affectionately yours in Jesus Christ,
+ Gio. Battista Bishop

P.S. My secretary, who is always grumbling about the prolonged absence of the Secretary of the Congregation, sends you his best regards.

17. FATHER F. ZABOGLIO TO BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI

Boston, Massachusetts
137 Endicott Street
April 13, 1889

Most Reverend Excellency:

I have Your Excellency's letter of March 25th, and Father Paroli has received your letter of the 27th.

I hope to be able to go to New Haven towards the end of this month, or the beginning of May. I have spoken about that city to several people who know it well, and they advise me not to send Missionaries there during the summer because, they say, they might get sick.

At the end of March, I went to New York, as Father Morelli desired. The Archbishop, who had repeatedly promised to give our Missionaries the five or six thousand dollars collected years ago among the Italians for the building of an exclusively Italian church, seemed reluctant to keep his promise, and is inclined to give us only part of this sum. When I left New York, however, this

affair appeared nearer to a settlement.

Another thing that surprised me was that the Archbishop, who originally wanted the nuns for Countess of Cesnola, as Father Felice and other Missionaries had said, and as I myself had heard him declare, as soon as they arrived, tried to spoil the whole thing. In the end, however, he was glad that the House founded by the Countess was opened with the nuns. But, I think you have heard about this from Father Felice and from the Sister Superior.

On my way back to Boston, I stopped at New Haven, Hartford, and Springfield. Father Felice accompanied me to New Haven. The property there consists of a small wooden church (once belonging to the Lutherans), and an attached house where four people can live comfortably. In time, a big and beautiful stone and brick church could be erected there. At the present time, the Italians of New Haven are cared for by an Irish priest and his assistant. Both studied in Rome.

According to the law, the custom and the wish of the bishops of this country, a parish priest is the administrator of the Church. But, it seems that our Missionaries, on arriving here, are reluctant to assume this burden. Nevertheless, they must resign themselves to it. This was one of the first things that the Archbishop of Boston requested, and the advice repeatedly given by Father Edwards, by Msgr. De Concilio and by the best priests of New York and Boston, that is, that we do not let the cashbox of the Church slip from our hands. Not long ago, in New Haven, an Italian priest who let the administration of the church fall into the hands of laymen, became the slave of his parishioners. He had to leave town in a bitter mood. He had become the slave of his parishioners because the Neapolitans (who are the majority of the Italians in New Haven), although more civilized and better-off than those in New York and Boston, are more demanding and it seems that in church affairs they want to dominate more than the Northern Italians do.

One of the first things that the Irish priests, who are now taking care of Italians, do, is to get hold of the ledgers and the safe of the church. I should remark here, incidentally, that priests who have studied in Rome are more kind and just towards Italians. Having learned what Christian charity is, something that many Irish priests do not know.

To go back to administration: we have kept it in our hands both in New York and in Boston. Italians dislike being deprived of this privilege which the laity enjoys in Italy, but here it is necessary to take it away from them, and our Missionaries should be informed of this before they leave Piacenza.

In Hartford, I saw the Bishop who said that he would gladly accept into his diocese not only one, but even four or five priests. I think, however, for the present time, two would be enough, since Italians in other places are without any.

The Bishop of Springfield granted our New York Missionaries permission to come anywhere in his diocese, in particular to North Adams, where there are three or four hundred Italians. The pastor for the French-Canadians of that

city, asks that once in a while one of our priests go there to hear confessions, and to evangelize those poor Italians whom he describes as living in very degrading conditions. Father Paroli and I have already visited that city.

I must also remark that foreign priests here, especially French and the German, are still generally well-disposed towards us. One of them told me that the fight in which we are now engaged against the despotism of many Irish priests was their battle before we came, and it is now one to have in common.

I must render due justice to these Boston priests who have shown sympathy for us. Those of the French parish church gave us advice and encouragement. The Jesuits, whose Church is just across the street from our home, love and encourage us. The Jesuit, Father Romano, a Neapolitan, is our confessor. Even the Irish priests of this city are much better than those in New York with whom we have had and still have to deal.

Father Bassi, born in Morcote (Canton Ticino), who came here as a boy, studied and was ordained here, is now a pastor in one of the suburbs of Boston. He loves and helps us a great deal.

I haven't gone to Providence for some time, but the Bishop and the Italians there are waiting for the Missionaries. From Father Felice I still haven't heard anything regarding what Your Excellency had written him on this subject, but he has at heart the fate of the Italians there, and will provide for them.

As for the Church of San Marco, everyone here is already convinced that we can open it without damaging anyone, and of this the Vicar General himself is also convinced. He, although sympathizing with us, protects the Franciscans more. Anyone who is familiar with the peculiar conditions of this place can be convinced of it.

When the Archbishop allowed me to open a church with parochial rights, he added that later on each of the two Italian priests had to think about a method of distinguishing his parishioners from those of the other, because, he went on, it is impossible to separate the two parishes by streets as borders. I replied that perhaps each parish could list its parishioners in a register, and he said: "We shall see; one thing at a time."

Why couldn't the parishes be separated by a street as a border between the two? Because the parishioners are intermingled and, moreover, many of our parishioners live near the Franciscan church. This difficulty will last as long as the two churches will last. Therefore, there is no other way than separating them by listing the families in a register. Once this is done, what other obstacle could there be in the way of assigning the Church of San Marco to us? And even if the two churches were superimposed, one upon the other, what damage could this do to the Franciscans? This is why almost everyone is now convinced that the Church of San Marco can be assigned to us without detriment to the Franciscans, and I think that the Archbishop will solve this question to everyone's satisfaction. After all, we haven't made a move without the consent of the Archbishop to whom we show submission and obedience.

The Father General of the Franciscans says that Father Bonifacio is a godly

man. If he said the same about the present parish priests, Father Atanasio, or about his assistant Fr. Camillo, I wouldn't object. But, since he says it about Fr. Bonifacio, it is clear that Father General, though a pious and venerable man, doesn't know him.

He could commit such a blunder if he spoke to those who live in Italy, but not when he speaks to me or to Father Paroli, or to Father Martini, or to Father Morelli or to anyone who has lived even for only fifteen days among the Italians of Boston.

If Father Bonifacio is a good clergyman, what name could one assign to a bad priest other than that of monster, a thousand times worse than Judas? If the Father General wishes to know who Father Bonifacio is, let him go to the offices of Propaganda Fide in Rome and take out the folder of complaints sent by the Boston Italians against him.

Within it are written some of the infamies committed by this infamous man. Let the Father General at least look at the records and ascertain whether they are true or not. If Fr. Bonifacio is a good clergyman, my teachers in the seminary should have saved their trouble. But enough of this!

April 15

Yesterday we had a beautiful ceremony, the most solemn held so far among the Boston Italians. The Archbishop came to our little church for Confirmations. About two hundred and forty children were confirmed. Some of them were not children, but boys and girls over eighteen years old. There were also husbands and wives, some of them with their children. But of this Your Excellency will hear more from Father Luigi (Paroli). Soon we shall administer First Communion to them.

While the church bought by the Italians in New York is large and beautiful, it is still not entirely adequate, and soon they must think of buying another one.

In New York I have noticed a lacuna. Among our Missionaries we still don't have one from Naples. Our poor Neapolitans, thousands and thousands of whom crowd around our Church of the Transfiguration, and who are more numerous than in the most lurid quarters of Naples, are still neglected. The governmental inquiry of last year, of which all the newspapers were filled, was made precisely for the Neapolitans on Mulberry Street, which is part of our parish and its neighborhood. Few of them come to our Church, and not many go to the other churches. Poor people! The Archbishop of New York and Msgr. DeConcilio have both said that a Neapolitan Missionary is needed. Father Morelli generally agrees, but he is afraid that he could not get along with a Neapolitan priest. But is it not possible to find among the Neapolitans a saintly and obedient priest? Were St. Alfonso M. de' Liguori and Father Lodovico da Casoria Lombards?

Father Vincenzo (Astorri) and Father Oreste (Alussi) had to go to Newark for a Mission when I left New York. The diocese of Newark is next to that of New York and its Bishop favors the independence of various nationalities regarding

parish affairs. I think he is in Rome now.

I shall write to Father Felice advising him about the title of our Congregation and ask him if he received my books.

I shall give freedom to young Agloaro. I received the suitcase and I thank Your Excellency. My health has been a little shaken by the pains of the past months, but I am recovering, thank God.

I am enclosing herewith a check for one thousand three hundred and thirty nine lire in payment of the debt of our Italians for the vestments. They thank Your Excellency and Father Rolleri for your trouble, hoping to be able to request more vestments in the future.

We are very happy to help the Mother House, but we can only help here when we have a regular salary as agreed upon by our Italians. But this cannot be done until we have a real church. Now we only receive what we collect during Mass. Nevertheless, Father Paroli hopes to be able to send something soon.

I beg Your Excellency to tell your secretary that I hope to be able to come in June. I am thinking of coming while my two-way ticket is still valid, and thus he will stop complaining. To him and to the confreres of the Institute we all send our regards.

I beg Your Excellency to accept the homage of the other Fathers and Brothers who are behaving excellently, but especially the homage of one who declares himself,

of Your Most Illustrious
and Most Reverend Excellency,
very devoted and humble son in Christ,
Father Francesco Zaboglio

P.S. Perhaps it would be good to establish uniform rules for the Missionaries called to assist sick people. There is a system adopted in the diocese of Como, and I believe even in Piacenza; and there is a system now followed in Rome, which requires that a priest spend whole days and nights at a patient's bedside. I don't think that this last rule is necessary, and certainly it can be harmful to the Missionaries in those places where they are few and have too much work to do. If such a system is adopted somewhere, it could be abolished later without trouble and popular recriminations.

Even in the liturgy, our Missionaries, coming from every part of Italy where there are different customs and where some abuse occurs, do not always agree. A unique text should be adopted and adhered to by everyone.

18. FATHER F. ZABOGLIO TO BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI

Genoa, Wisconsin, June 29, 1889

Most Reverend Excellency:

I am once more giving you an account of my travels.

The last time I wrote you I was in Louisiana. I sent you a report on what the Archbishop of New Orleans had planned to do for the Italians and for us Missionaries.

I remained there longer than I had expected, because a First Communion ceremony and a kind of Mission were to be performed in another city in my uncle's parish, and that parish priest asked me to wait in the hope that the few Italians living there would come for Easter. In fact, they did.

I returned to New Orleans, and I was asked to remain until the 18th, on which day the new Bishop of Natchez was to be consecrated in the presence of several bishops. In fact, seven bishops came. There was also the Archbishop of Cincinnati, Ohio, who asked me to stop at his city on my way back to New York.

At the consecration of the Bishop of Natchez, Father Defendente Monti was present. He is the spiritual director for a girls' boarding school managed by nuns, situated in a city which I crossed on my way North. Therefore, after leaving New Orleans, I spent a few days in the secluded and cool woods at the school.

Still traveling North, I came upon St. Louis, and stopped there. As far as I was able to learn, five to six thousand Italians live in that city: they have a church, originally managed by the Friars and later on by a secular priest. A few years ago, the Italian pastor left, and the Church was sold. I could not learn why. It seems that the Archbishop, who is very old, had had some trouble because of the Italians. I went to see him to have my *celebret* signed. He greeted me very kindly, but when I mentioned the Italians, he shut up like a clam, and I did not speak further about them.

The farthest point of my travels to the North is St. Paul, Minnesota, where I shall be next week. From there I shall go East and, after stopping in Cincinnati, I shall go straight towards the Atlantic.

One more word about New Orleans. We shall accept the parish there offered us by the Archbishop. But, Father Manoritta might still request an assistant priest. Shall we assign one to him, making an exception to the rules, specifying our conditions very clearly, especially in the hope that he might give us his Church in the future? For my part I have no answer to this question at the moment, but we have time to think about it, and can make a decision after Your Excellency speaks with the Archbishop who will come to Italy in September. From what I have been able to find out, however, it seems that few assistants could last long with Father Manoritta. Yet, he was very kind to me and did me more than one favor.

In St. Louis, I became more than ever convinced of the danger of leaving the temporal administration of the churches in this country to laymen instead of conforming to ecclesiastical law, and to local custom. Father Orfei, who was the last Italian pastor and is now an assistant in another parish, had left the

church administration entirely in the hands of laymen and the church was sold, in spite of all the opposition from ecclesiastical authorities. I learned this from him. It made me think of the event that took place in New Haven and of which I wrote to Your Excellency. In that city, the last Italian parish priest had to leave town in bitter sorrow because he had abandoned the till of the church to laymen. After he had left, the Irish priests to whom the care of the Italians was entrusted, rushed to take hold of the safe and the accounting books of the church, and thus all quarrels came to an end. For us Missionaries the administration of the church is a burden, but a necessary one.

Please accept my sincere and filial regards which I hope to present to Your Excellency personally soon. My brother Alberto, whom Your Excellency knew as a boy in the seminary of St. Abbondio, joins me in sending his homage. I beg Your Excellency to give my regards to the Secretary and to my confreres at the Institute.

Father Francesco Zaboglio

19. FATHER F. ZABOGLIO TO BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI

Boston, Massachusetts
139 Endicott Street
August 5, 1889

Most Reverend Excellency:

I reached Boston last week.

I think I have already mentioned to Your Excellency the conditions of the Italians in St. Louis.

From that city, where I spent two weeks with my brother Alberto who begged me to send his homage to Your Excellency, I went to St. Paul. Unfortunately, Bishop Ireland was away. I learned from his secretary, however, that there are only twenty-five other Italian families there. But in the wintertime several hundred laborers who, during the good seasons work on road, canal, and railroad construction, etc., go there. Last winter there were about three hundred such workers, all Calabrians. The secretary, who studied in Rome, and who speaks Italian very well, was charged by Bishop Ireland with the spiritual care of the Italians, and from what I was able to learn during a tour of that city, it seems that he does it with paternal affection, and that our compatriots love him.

I also went to Chicago, where there is one of the few principally Italian churches in the United States, large and beautiful. It really lends prestige to our community, and is administered by three Servite Fathers. Father Felice, an exemplary parish priest whom I first met during my previous trip to America, was the one who had it built. I am happy to say that the Servite Fathers are well deserving of our religion among the Italians of Chicago, who number ap-

proximately fifteen thousand. The Archbishop of Chicago was also absent. Near Chicago there is the little city of Streator, built around the coal mines, where some of my former parishioners from Grossotto live, and I went to see them. It was a good occasion to give them some spiritual help, and to hear confessions in the Church for the Hungarians.

I have already written to Your Excellency that Archbishop Elder of Cincinnati, had invited me to see if anything could be done for the Italians of his city. I went to see him. It is calculated that in Cincinnati there are three or four thousand Italians. Following the Archbishop's advice, I visited about twenty families together with a certain Signor Cordaro. Most of the Italians I spoke with were bitter about the late Archbishop Purcell, but they promised me that they would help in building an Italian church. I learned that Archbishop, together with a brother of his, who was also a priest, had a bank which failed, losing four million dollars. Many Italians had deposited their hard-earned money in their bank, and were left penniless: The Archbishop and his brother had both died of broken hearts. The same fate had befallen many of the poor Italians who had lost their savings. Your Excellency can imagine the sad consequences, spiritual and material, of this terrible event. However, we hope that with the help of Archbishop Elder, a very zealous and old pastor, something could be done for those Italians. Archbishop Elder has perhaps written about this to Your Excellency. I add my humble voice to his, in begging Your Excellency to try to help the Italians of his city.

From a letter by Father Morelli sent to me at Cincinnati, I learned that Father Astorri was in Pittsburgh. Therefore, going through that city, I went to see him. He is in good health, but, speaking about the Italians, he said that very few of them frequent the Church. When I reached New York I learned that on the day I left Pittsburgh, Father Annovazzi was going there to replace Father Astorri.

In New York our parish is doing very well, though difficulties are never lacking. The school and the orphanage are also doing fine.

During this week, some of our New York Fathers should be in Providence to conduct Missions and to start a parish. I have heard that things are progressing.

Now, a very important observation. All over the United States, wherever there are Italians, all the bishops and the priests (Italian and non-Italian alike) are greatly surprised at the incredible, phenomenal religious ignorance of the Italians who come to America, especially the Italians from the old Kingdom of Naples. The clergy ask in wonder: *'What in God's name are the priests and bishops of that region doing?'* I am not judging anybody, I am just relating facts. I also spoke with the Archbishop of New Orleans concerning this; he told me he would write to the Pope about this situation. However, I think it would be useful if others also speak to the Holy Father regarding this deplorable condition.

Father Morelli could give Your Excellency a list of the dioceses which distinguish themselves for the inexplicable ignorance of religious notions

prevailing there. According to him, those from Naples are not the most ignorant!

Another thing that I noticed during my trip, certainly painful for an Italian priest, is that everywhere, even in the smallest cities, new national Catholic Churches are coming up continuously, not only German churches (of which there are a great many) but also French, Canadian, Polish, Bohemian, and Hungarian, whereas Italian churches are very rare. This fact makes even more unexplainable the attitude of certain New York parish priests who are hostile to our Italian church. Why must one deny to the Italians a right enjoyed by the immigrants from all other European nations, a right established by ecclesiastical law, and for which there exist in Rome exact rules? How strange is the attitude of certain proud and arrogant Irish priests!

As for Boston, we are presently awaiting a decisive answer from the Vicar General, since the Archbishop is absent. I am planning to leave for Italy a few days after we receive it, whatever it will be. In the meantime, Your Excellency can rest assured that we have never done anything contrary to the wishes of the Archbishop, and shall always conform to them in the future. The Archbishop and his Vicar can testify to our past and present attitude.

Let me add, that the Protestants, who have established a Mission in the most populated Italian quarter, are always becoming more energetic in their work of converting our countrymen. But you will hear about this from Father Paroli.

Please accept my homage together with that of my confreres. Asking for your blessing, I kiss your sacred ring.

Of Your Most Illustrious
and Most Reverend Excellency,
very humble and devoted son in Christ,
Father Francesco Zaboglio

P.S. Bishop Spalding of Peoria, should be in Italy at this time. He published a pamphlet on Catholic colonization in which he speaks favorably about Italians. He could furnish much useful information and throw light on everything concerning the establishment of Catholic colonies.

20. FATHER F. ZABOGLIO TO BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI

Boston, Massachusetts
139 Endicott St.
September 7, 1889

Most Reverend Excellency:

Yesterday I went to see the Archbishop, and he was very kind. I asked him to allow Father Paroli to remain a few weeks in Providence (as I had written to Your Excellency) and also to authorize Father Raffaele Cavicchi to exercise his ministry here in Boston. He granted both requests without hesitation. Later on,

he himself mentioned the letter we sent him (in which we had asked his permission to open the Church of San Marco and which was signed by three of us and dated August 12th), and said that he realized that we only wished the salvation of souls, which was a praiseworthy thing. Nevertheless, he said he had to take other things into account, and could not give us the Church of San Marco unless we found a convenient way of separating the parishes. It is obvious that a strictly territorial separation cannot be made, because our parishioners and those of the Franciscans are intermingled. Such a division would cause trouble. Therefore, I proposed to the Archbishop a territorial separation exactly like the one adopted in New York, and perhaps in other dioceses of the United States. On the basis of this system, an individual or a family residing in our parish would belong to the parish of the Franciscans simply by renting a pew in their Church, and vice versa. In this way all conflicts would be avoided. We trust we can convince our parishioners to follow this practice, leaving everyone in our territory free to turn to the Franciscans if they so prefer.

The Archbishop meditated for a while, and then said that this is feasible, that he would think about it a while longer, and then he would give us an answer. After leaving the Archbishop, I went to see the Vicar General. Our project appeared good to him also, even though in the past he had placed so many obstacles in the way of our opening the Church of San Marco. The only objection he made this time was that he had heard that the Church floor was not strong enough to support a large crowd. To this I replied that we could have an expert examine the floor and have it reinforced if he found its supports insufficiently strong. Therefore, this is not a valid obstacle.

The question of the Church of San Marco has therefore entered a new phase. It hinges on finding a convenient method of separating the parishes, a method that can be easily found if the Franciscans, wishing the salvation of souls as we do, will seek peace and harmony as we also do. If not, they would harm themselves, by increasing the hatred which some Italians harbor for them, and by losing income, since they would have a smaller number of baptisms, marriages and funerals if things remained as they are now. By separating the parishes as I have proposed, they would have nothing to lose.

Let us hope that Your Excellency's prayers will help us find a solution soon, so that once we have a church in the Italian quarter, very near to the Italian Protestant Mission, we could nullify the work of the latter, and exercise our ministry in a more decent place than the one we have now.

Father Paroli comes to see us once in a while. He came last night too, and stayed with us practically all day today. He did not reveal his intentions for the future to me, and only in the beginning, when he went to Providence, did he speak of spending a few weeks there. To the others, however, he expressed the wish of remaining in Providence as a parish priest, while continuing to be a priest here and the Superior of this House. To tell you the truth, no one here thinks that Father Paroli is needed, and for my part I think he had better stay

away. Father Martini, helped by a good assistant, would do much better than Father Paroli as Pastor.

As I have always said, Father Paroli is a very active man; he is not a good leader. To govern a parish, especially one like ours, we need a man who doesn't change his opinions from one day to the next, who is not struck by first impressions, in short, one on whose word one can rely. In a word, we don't need puppets. Between Father Paroli and Father Martini, now that I know them well, I prefer the latter a hundred times more. Providence is a good parish, relatively small, with few difficulties, and Father Paroli could do some good there.

Of Father Raffaele (Cavicchi) I cannot but speak well. He is assiduous at the confessional and a rather good preacher. People are satisfied with him. Let us hope that they will continue to be so.

Trusting that God will help us settle the Boston affair soon, and that I may return to the Mother House after having taken this thorn out of my flesh, I, together with the confreres, kiss Your Excellency's ring, and implore your blessing on all of us and especially on the one who declares himself,

of Your Most Illustrious
and Most Reverend Excellency,
very humble and devoted son in Christ,
Father Francesco Zaboglio

P.S. If God wills that the Archbishop assign us the parish of San Marco (which would be named the Parish of the Sacred Heart of Jesus) it would be proper to immediately think about a kindergarten and a school, both run by nuns. If we cannot have San Marco we shall have lost three or four years of work. In San Marco we would have ample space. In fact, last year it was used as the parochial school for the Irish church of St. Stephen. But, we cannot think about beautiful enterprises if we don't have an intelligent and capable parish priest.

21. FATHER F. ZABOGLIO TO BISHOP G. B. SCALABRINI

Boston, Mass.
139 Endicott Street
September 25, 1889

Most Reverend Excellency:

Last week I was in New York to confer with Father Felice about our affairs. It was agreed that one of us should see the Provincial Vicar of the Franciscans who lives about five hours away from New York by railroad. Father Felice chose to go himself. Of Father Leone, the Provincial Vicar, I had heard that he is considered a saintly and zealous clergyman. In fact, he greeted Father Felice very cordially, expressed his regrets about the difficulties in Boston and finally concluded: "*Whatever the Archbishop will do is well done. He doesn't need our consent. If, however, he would like me to take positive action, I cannot, for our*

rules forbid that a Vicar take action in the absence of the Provincial, who is in Rome. But I think that if the Archbishop himself doesn't make a decision immediately, things could be settled among ourselves to everyone's satisfaction."

After this, Father Felice and I decided that as soon as I reached Boston I should confer with the Archbishop. If he made a decision, so much the better; if not, I should immediately sail for Italy just the same.

I arrived in Boston last Monday, but as soon as I reached my home, instead of going to the Archbishop, I remained in bed, not feeling well at all. I am writing this from bed, though today I feel better, thank God.

The main reason that I am writing this letter is to inform Your Excellency of the above matter and to thank you for having entrusted our Missions in the United States to Father Felice (Morelli). It was a necessary thing to do. We need a Superior for the various houses, as a Vicar of Your Excellency. Otherwise, we run the risk of living in confusion. For urgent matters, we cannot turn to Your Excellency, who is so far away. To the letter Your Excellency sent to Father Morelli, I think, a regular appointment should be added and should be circulated to the various houses. Perhaps I am wrong, but I speak for our welfare.

Why, for instance, does Father Paroli want to always have his own way? How is it that Father Felice (Morelli) and I have always gotten along fine, but the same doesn't happen with Father Paroli? How is it that Father Martini always gets along fine with us, but not Father Paroli? It may not be his fault if he is a bit crazy. But things would be a little different if Father Paroli were bound by obedience to a local superior.

I end this letter by begging Your Excellency to confirm Fr. Martini as pastor in Boston. Father Paroli is not the man for Boston, whereas Father Martini would do well.

From my sick bed, I kiss Your Excellency's hand and I ask for your blessing.

Very devoted son,
Father Francesco Zaboglio

P.S. Please don't think I am very ill. The doctor told me it is only a cold, made worse by weakness. The cold is gone and the weakness is on the way out.

22. FATHER F. ZABOGLIO TO BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI

Boston, Massachusetts
139 Endicott Street
October 18, 1889

Most Reverend Excellency:

If I had not been ill, perhaps by this time I would have been in Piacenza, or at

least on the way. But God willed differently. Only the other day, I began to take little walks outside, except for Monday when I went by carriage to the Archbishop.

Being unable to go there now, I thought about informing Your Excellency, in a more detailed manner than before, about the San Marco church affair, and of our extreme need for a church always trusting in God's Will and in that of Your Excellency. Therefore, I beg Your Excellency to deign to read the translation of a petition we sent in French on August 12, to the Archbishop, and a few remarks I made upon a letter sent by Father Paroli to Your Excellency in May.

I wish, above all, that Your Excellency might be convinced that I have never done and I never want to do anything against the will and even the wishes of the Archbishop. Of this the Archbishop himself can be witness; and Your Excellency can infer it from my past letters. It is also confirmed by my last visit to the Archbishop.

During the penultimate (which was the first after sending the petition dated August 12) the Archbishop, who greeted me very kindly, told me first of all, that he had not answered because it was difficult to deal with certain problems in writing. The Church of San Marco, he then added, he could not assign to us unless we found a proper way of separating the parishes.

I replied that the separation must be done in such a way as to avoid a quarrel between the Franciscans and us (I meant to refer only to the priestly emoluments). He said yes, it was natural. Then I proposed that the separation be done in the same way as it was done in New York, that is, territorially, with the clause that if a parishioner belonging for residential reasons to a parish, rents a pew in the church of the other parish, he belongs precisely for this reason to the other parish. The Archbishop said that this method could be adopted and that he would have to reflect upon it. Later, he asked me if I knew the new Provincial of the Franciscans (who is Father Anacleto, pastor of the Church of St. Anthony in New York) personally, and I replied that I did.

I asked him if the Boston Franciscans could act on their own and he said that they had no authorization to do so, but that Father Anacleto must have left his representative in Boston. Finally, I asked him if we should approach the Franciscans in that city or if he would do it. He said he would do it himself. After that, I asked permission to leave.

Soon after I went to see the Vicar General and expounded the plan to him which I had proposed to the Archbishop. He said that although that method is not used in Boston as yet, it could be adopted as an exception.

Although the Archbishop had said that he would have thought of approaching the Franciscans himself, nevertheless while in New York before becoming ill, Father Felice (Morelli) and I agreed to befriend the Franciscans and to learn who was the representative of Father Provincial. Father Morelli went to the Church of St. Anthony, and found Father Giulio there. He is the acting pastor in the absence of Father Anacleto. He expressed his ardent wish that our conflict with the Franciscans here in Boston could be settled soon. Then he

informed Father Felice that Father Anacleto would stay in Italy for about two months, and that the Provincial Vicar is Father Leone, pastor in Winsted, Connecticut, about five hours from New York by railroad.

Father Morelli went to see him and was greeted very courteously. Father Leone said that it was his fervent desire to see the question solved for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. He showed him the statute of the Order which prohibits the Provincial Vicar from doing anything positive, in the absence of Father Provincial, that could change the present status of things. He added, however, that the Archbishop does not have to ask the Franciscans what should be done; that the flock is under his guidance, and that it is up to him to decide what should be done.

Now I come to the visit which I made to the Archbishop. I asked him if he could tell me anything about his decision regarding our church and he replied: "Not yet." I remarked that towards the end of the year we have to renew our lease, and he said: "There is time before the year ends." Then I spoke about the visit of Father Morelli to Father Leone, and, having listened with evident satisfaction, he said: "Father Leone is a very wise man who knows the world well." I finally asked him if I could return in a few days for an answer; he said yes, but that in any case if there were new developments, he would advise us himself.

I shall now explain to Your Excellency the reason for the clause I proposed regarding the territorial separation mentioned above. There are some families which are very attached to the Franciscans and would never come to us for baptisms, marriages, etc.; but on the other hand, there are other families on our side which would never go to them. This is why a precise territorial division was thought impossible and considered a source of infinite quarrels.

We can now ask: Would a territorial separation, even if made in the manner I proposed, be materially advantageous to us or to the Franciscans? The pecuniary advantages derived from eventual sacerdotal services would go to the Franciscans, and would represent a loss for us, since, once we make the separation, we would no longer have, in less than ten months (from December 23 to this day) two hundred and fourteen baptisms and fifty-three marriages.

But we would have a Church of our own, and ample space for the youth (at the present time in our shop we don't know what to do to teach catechism to about three hundred boys and girls); we could outdo the Protestant Mission church which is near the Church of San Marco, and we could attract to our Church a great many of the thousands of Italians who do not go to any church! If the Superior General of the Franciscans only knew what amount of good could be done, and how much spiritual damage could be prevented if we could open that church!

If I were able to see him, I would implore him, with tears in my eyes, to say the good word! Have we by chance come here to make war against someone? No. We have come to save souls. We want the Franciscans to save as many souls as they can, and we can save many ourselves. Why could we not work in

harmony and do, sooner and better, what is done only for the glory of God and the salvation of the souls?

I come now to a conclusion. Either the Archbishop should make a decision right away or still postpone it. If he acts now, God be thanked! If he delays, it must be thought that he does so in order not to displease the Franciscans. Now, since this last hypothesis may be the true one, I implore Your Excellency to try to settle this affair as soon as possible with the Superior General of the Franciscans and with the Provincial Superior of the United States, Father Anacleto. I am sure that the latter, with whom our New York Missionaries get along well, and the former, whom I have reason to believe is a saintly man, would not refuse to come to an understanding with us, so that we can have that church which we need so much.

I beg Your Excellency to consider that the end of the year is not too far off, and that if by that time the matter is not settled, we must renew the lease on our shop (if they still want to rent it to us) for a whole year, paying seven hundred ninety-eight dollars - a good part from the income of our Congregation, while mice happily scurry in the Church of San Marco!

I ask Your Excellency's pardon if this letter is badly written. I have written it in separate periods during three whole days, because my head is spinning.

Pray for me and bless me. Kissing your sacred ring, I am,

Of Your Most Illustrious
and Most Reverend Excellency,
very humble and very devoted son in Christ,
Father Francesco Zaboglio

P.S. Because I cannot think of leaving for Italy at this time, since I cannot even go to church to celebrate Mass, I think it useful to make the following remarks about the Missionaries who are coming here:

- 1) I have been told that in New Orleans, in addition to the good people, live the worst scoundrels that can be found in all the Italian communities in the United States.
- 2) As for assigning or not assigning an assistant to Father Manoritta, Your Excellency must have heard by this time the opinion of the Archbishop of New Orleans.
- 3) When our Missionaries live in the United States they, in my opinion, (I am rather deeply convinced of it) would do well never to touch, either publicly or privately, any question concerning Italian politics and leave to their own business Vittorio Emanuele, Mazzini, Garibaldi and others. Here we are standing on a volcano, and by speaking of these men we are sure to touch substantial and important interests, thus putting road blocks in our own path. Some of our Missionaries are full of fervor....Let them do what they are supposed to do: preach the Gospel, administer the sacraments, save souls!

I am renewing my two requests (which Your Excellency, in his wisdom, is able to judge better than I) regarding the formal appointment of Father Morelli as

Vicar of Your Excellency and Superior of all our houses in this country, and regarding the appointment of Father Martini (a wise and judicious man) as head of this Boston parish, leaving Father Paroli in Providence, where he can do well, since that parish is smaller and less important than this one.

Finally, (Your Excellency must be tired, but will forgive me) I inform you that Father Neagle, Chancellor of the Boston Curia, left for Italy a few days ago, and perhaps will come to see you. From him you will have more details about things in Boston.

23. FATHER F. ZABOGLIO TO G.B. SCALABRINI

Boston, Massachusetts
130 Endicott Street
May 27, 1890

Most Reverend Excellency:

We thank Your Excellency for your telegram. I have conveyed your thanks to the Archbishop.

As I said in my telegram, on Pentecost Day I blessed (with the authorization of the Archbishop) the Church of San Marco, which the Archbishop wants to be called The Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which is the title of the parish. The blessing was followed by a High Mass. The ceremonies were very solemn and performed before a great number of people. The parish priest of the French-Canadian church and Father Romano of the Jesuits were assistants. A Portuguese pastor was unable to come, and sent us a gift for dinner. I mention here, incidentally that the French-Canadian and German priests and the Jesuits (especially the non-Irish) have always been good to us, and have helped us as much as they could. I cannot say anything about the Portuguese because they are few, and I have not had occasion to meet them.

What follows is written by order of the Archbishop whom I saw yesterday.

He said that the Franciscans protested against the opening of the Church of San Marco, and it is probable that they will write formally to the Holy See. He asked me to let Your Excellency know that we needed this church. I believe Your Excellency is already convinced of this, and I can only repeat what I have written in my letters, especially since the beginning of August.

I shall only remark that from the report of the Vice Consul, Thaon di Revel made to the Italian Government, at the end of 1889, or the beginning of 1890, it appears that there are in Boston about ten thousand Italians. Now, as the Archbishop said, how could two Franciscan priests alone take care of so many people? As far as our churches are concerned, the Franciscan church is very small, about one-half as big as the chapel we had on Beverly Street. Not even the two churches put together, ours on Beverly Street or that of the Franciscans would be large enough for so many people. Add to this the fact that, although last year we thanked God for having given us that warehouse to

start our work, it is absolutely unsuitable as a place of worship because the ceiling is very low, the entrance is narrow, and we have to climb a long and narrow stepladder, so that in case of fire or panic, undoubtedly hundreds of people would die or be wounded. On weekdays, moreover, the continuous noise made by the machinery above and around it makes the performance of our services very difficult. It is difficult to hear confessions, and impossible to hold Missions, of which there is urgent need.

I indicated to the Archbishop that almost everything that could be said on this subject I had already made known to Your Excellency, but he was happy when I promised him that I would write to you again.

Speaking about the separation of the parishes, he asked me to tell Your Excellency that a real separation is impossible. It was I who, some time ago, for love of peace and for the good of souls, proposed such a separation to him, about which I have already written. But it seems that the Archbishop does not approve of this division because our parishioners and those of the Franciscans are intermingled, and live on the same streets and in the same houses.

I have written this, I repeat, by order of the Archbishop who asked me to write as soon as possible, and I believe it is his intention that this matter be brought to the attention of the Holy See through Your Excellency.

I am now giving you the good news that next Sunday we shall begin that Sacred Mission (which we could not hold on Beverly Street), and that the preachers will be Fathers Martinelli, Desanti and Astorri.

I also inform Your Excellency that the Archbishop told me that an American lady, Madame Nathan Matthews, who has been converted to Catholicism, will come to see us. She is eager to do something for Italians, but especially for their youth. In fact, she came with a note from the Archbishop and said that it was her intention and that of several other American ladies, to open a school (mostly for sewing) for Italian girls, a thing already realized for the Italians by two Protestant missions, one of which is very near our new church; but she needed a suitable place and people to help her. I replied that she could get help from the Salesian Nuns of the Sacred Heart, whose Superior General was in Boston a few days ago, and who will probably return soon, and that the school could be opened on the ground floor of the Church of San Marco where last year the Irish pastor had his school, having rented the room from the Society of San Marco.

When I told her that the Superior General will probably return soon, she said that she would like to meet her, and therefore, I am going to write to her.

We know another American lady (also a convert from Protestantism) who is also well-intentioned towards the Italians. She has paid us several visits. Her name is Mrs. Dean. She lived in Florence for some time and speaks Italian well. We thank God. The opening of the new church will mark the beginning of a new era for the Italians. It is to be noted that here in Boston the Americans sympathize a lot with Italians, whereas I don't think there is another place their sympathy is not turned towards the Irish. People of almost every

nationality, beginning with the true Yankees, Canadians and Europeans, are sympathetic towards the Irish; and they are greatly justified.

Regarding the Italians, their churches and their pastors, I end by referring to my previous letters, since I see that this one is already too long.

I will try to come as soon as possible.

I implore Your Excellency's blessing for myself and for my confreres, kiss your sacred ring and am happy to be,

of Your Most Illustrious
and Most Reverend Excellency,
Father Francesco Zaboglio

P.S. Your Excellency can have an idea of the number of Italians in Boston by considering that last year we performed two hundred and ninety four baptisms, and sixty nine marriages. This year, until yesterday, we baptized one hundred twenty babies and celebrated thirty one marriages, without counting the marriages now being announced. These figures do not include baptisms and marriages performed by the Franciscans, which number I do not know.

24. FATHER F. ZABOGLIO TO BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI

Boston, Massachusetts
139 Endicott Street
June 26, 1890

Most Reverend Excellency:

On the 15th of this month, we ended in our new church the Missions held by the Fathers Martinelli and Astorri. Thank God, a great many people came, and the good done was immense.

Before leaving us, Father Martinelli expressed his intention of getting out of our Congregation because he feels he can no longer remain in New York. I then thought of asking him if he would remain in the Congregation in case he were transferred to Boston. He replied that he would be happy to do so, adding that he would even take the vows. I would regret him leaving the Congregation, since he is one of the best preachers we have, and does a lot of good. I beg Your Excellency to see if a remedy can be found.

On the other hand, if Father Martinelli left New York, it would also be damaging to the Congregation because even there a good preacher is needed for the Roosevelt Street church. Perhaps Your Excellency could find a solution and let me know.

It seems that things in New York, from what I have heard, are not going well. I believe that great harm has been done by that quarrelsome sheet called L'Armonia. I, too, am of the opinion that in the United States a good Italian Catholic paper is needed, but it is not L'Armonia that can fill the void.

Here in Boston, thank God, things are going very well. But what is happening

in New York is not good for us.

I believe that Your Excellency will get this letter while I shall be on my way to Italy.

Please pray for our Missions and for me in particular. Kissing your sacred ring, I declare myself,

of Your Most Illustrious and Most Reverend
Excellency,
very humble and very devoted son in Christ,
Father Francesco Zaboglio

We have received Your Excellency's telegram on the opening of the church. Thank you.

25. FATHER F. ZABOGLIO TO BISHOP G. B. SCALABRINI

Grosio, Sondrio
September 18, 1890

Most Reverend Excellency:

I have some hope of inducing my brother Don Agostino, Vicar of this town and a doctor of theology, to join our Congregation. I believe that it would be a precious gain for us if he did. I am not saying this because he is my brother, but because in addition to being a scholar and a pious man, he is a capable educator and a good leader. This can be confirmed by the Collegio Clementino of Rome, run by the Somaschi of which he was Prefect; by the seminary of Como, where he was minister for several years, and by this parish. If I could convince him to join us, and if Your Excellency would approve, I would make of him a duplicate of myself, that is, I would put him at the head of our house which would thus be in good hands, and I would be able to go around, even in Italy, to promote our cause, going abroad once in a while to see our Missions. Occasionally I could send him, especially since he knows French and English well, and has been in North America once before. He would be the strongest arm we could get in case of need.

I cannot yet say that I have convinced him since he wanted some time to think about it, but I have hopes. One difficulty would be that of obtaining the Curia's consent, but I think it could be overcome.

I beg Your Excellency to be so kind as to give me your opinion on this matter as soon as possible, even if briefly, especially since if he sees that Your Excellency approves, he might be induced to say yes.

I think I shall leave Grosio next Wednesday, and come there after making a few stops.

Bless me, and I, kissing your sacred ring, declare myself,

of Your Most Illustrious
and Most Reverend Excellency,

very humble and devoted son in Christ,
Father Francesco Zaboglio

26. BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI TO FATHER F. ZABOGLIO

Piacenza, September 21, 1890

My dear Father Francesco:

I have just received your letter of the 19th, but not the one from the previous day. I would be very glad to have your brother here and I am convinced he would be of great help to us; but we would have many difficulties with the Curia which could not be easily overcome, although there shouldn't be any as shown by the enclosed circular of Propaganda Fide. Let us pray and hope.

Affectionate regards to Don Agostino and the others. I bless you all.

Affectionately yours,
+ Giov. Battista
Bishop of Piacenza

27. BISHOP G. B. SCALABRINI TO FATHER F. ZABOGLIO

Piacenza, December 8, 1890

My dear Father Francesco:

Here is the request of the bishop, a poor bishop, we forgot him. We must resume the work and satisfy him as soon as possible. Read the letter concerning DeSantis carefully. Do the best you can so that the steps to be taken will not resound unfavorably. If he must be relieved it will be well to do it through the Archbishop. May God assist you, my dear Father Francesco. May He comfort you, and multiply His blessing upon you, and make your zeal and labor bear fruit. Oremus pro invicem.

I embrace you in osculo sancto and bless you with deep affection.

Yours in Domino,
+ Giov. Battista Bishop of Piacenza

Father Paolo is coming. Assign him to a place where he will be comfortable. He has made me many good promises. Observe the additions to the ceremonial.

28. BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI TO FATHER F. ZABOGLIO

Piacenza,
January 20, 1891

My dear Father Francesco:

I have your letter of January 2, and I thank you for the news, although not all

of it is happy.

I hope that by this time the good Father Felice (Morelli) who is succeeding very well, as you say, in doing things in a grand manner, while sometimes neglecting small things, has done what I asked him to do recently, and that Father Vicentini has begun his ministry as pastor. The Archbishop wrote that he has been favorably impressed by him, and that he has great hopes for him. I shall do as you say about the nuns and your brother Don Agostino.

You ask me if Father Felice (Morelli) has done well in buying property on Staten Island? I think he has done very well and here is why. Early this month I meditated on how to realize the Pope's idea of founding an Italian-American School for the sons of Italian immigrants willing to enter the priesthood. Undoubtedly, it would be an excellent thing for us to do. In such a School the students would study Latin and Philosophy and then study Theology here at the Mother House.

I think that God really wants this because just in these days, while I was thinking about it, I had a visit from two good priests who were professors for several years in their respective dioceses, and who are anxious to dedicate themselves again to teaching. I am waiting for a third priest, also a professor. Moreover, two young students, one of whom has finished the fifth year of Latin, and the other has studied Philosophy, have asked to enter the Institute. Therefore, we have personnel ready, sufficient at least, for a beginning. Later on, we could add Lotti and someone else to the staff. What do you think? If you have the place, and can furnish it with the necessary things, I shall send these new apostles without delay, and with them four or five young laymen from America, in order to begin the School with a certain number of students. My request to the General of the Jesuits for a Superior from their Mother House has been rejected for lack of personnel. The Jesuits, however, would come there for lectures. In Rome I shall speak to the applicants from Como and Naples, and we shall see what can be done. Father Rolleri must have already received, as the saint that I believe he is, the advice that soon he must give up his assignment....

I have received the first issue of La Fenice. To reduce a great enterprise like ours to a person is not a thing that pleases me. Let us look at things from above. Besides, please don't bother with journalistic affairs. A newspaper is a great thing, but still greater and more saintly is our ministry. Convince DeSantis that he should leave our house as soon as possible, and of his own will. Next Sunday I shall deliver a lecture on our work in the Church of the Maddalena in Genoa, and from there I shall go to Rome. Fr. Villeneuve will be there also.... Apropos of this, obtain information on what type of a man he is. I have great esteem for him but nowadays it is easy to be deceived! Father Morelli would want me to obtain from the Pope an honor for the Bishop of Scranton. Shall I do it? And if I obtained it for him, why not for others?

Cordial greetings to Father Felice (Morelli), to Vicentini and to all the other good Missionaries. May God bless them and keep them always in His Grace. I return

the good wishes from Father Giacomo (Annovazzi) and from Father Oreste (Alussi). Also regards to the Brothers. I shall pray for you all.

I embrace you in Domino, dear Father Francesco, and reaffirm myself,

Affectionately yours,
+ Giov. Battista
Bishop of Piacenza

N.B. The priests teaching in the little seminary of Staten Island could go to New York on feast days, leaving just one person at the community.

P.S. In Rome, for your information, I shall stay until Lent. If you see the Archbishop give him my best regards, and tell him that I shall do everything I can to please him about his request for a priest for the Albanians. Best regards also from Msgr. De Concilio.

29. BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI TO FATHER F. ZABOGLIO

Piacenza, March 13, 1891

Dear Father Francesco:

As I informed you by telegram, six Sisters of St. Ann will arrive there the day before Easter to work in the new hospital. I think they are perfectly suitable for such work, and I hope you all will be happy. They will leave from here on the 18th. Their compensation will be discussed later. For the moment we have agreed that they should receive food and lodging and some money for their clothes. If things go well, we shall try to improve their compensation somewhat. For the time being, as I have said, what I have just mentioned is enough.

With the six nuns two good priests from our Institute will come. One is Father Pietro Bandini who knows English well, and who is to be assigned to the port Mission about which you wrote. The other is Father Paolo Manenti who would be glad to direct the projected School, and whom you can assign to teach those boys who would like to study for the priesthood. Before sending these boys to Piacenza it is necessary to train them there.

I spoke about your brother in Rome, warmly favoring his cause. Propaganda Fide is willing to please us but is annoyed by the attitude of Merizzi with whom it doesn't want to have anything more to do. It was decided to wait for the appointment of the new Bishop, which should take place soon.

I am thinking about a better organization for our Institute, but I am looking for a good man, and I hope I can find one.

As for the hospital, I approve everything that the Archbishop and you have approved. It doesn't matter whether I am part of it or not. Do as you think best for the common welfare.

In Rome, I also spoke about the faculties of which I wrote you last year from St. Paul. We had a long discussion. I hope I shall soon receive the writs which I shall send you as soon as I get them.

The Pope, Propaganda Fide, etc., were very satisfied with our work. I was urged to deliver lectures in various Italian cities as in fact I have begun to do, with good results, at least moral results, thank God.

I know about the rumor spread in New York by interested persons....These are trials that produce benefits. Let us trust always in God, and go forward! Today I shall leave for Turin to deliver a lecture there for the same purpose. The prospects are very favorable.

How is your health and that of the confreres? Take care of yourselves.

Give my regards to good Father Felice (Morelli) to Vicentini, Lotti, and to all the others. To the latter I shall write as soon as I have a little time. In the meantime I thank him.

I embrace you *in Domino* with the usual affection and I sign myself,
Affectionately yours in Jesus Christ,
+Giov. Battista
Bishop of Piacenza

P.S. Please tell the good Archbishop that I have received his beautiful article for the *II Catechista Cattolico*. It will be published as is in the next issue. Meanwhile, give him my sincere congratulations and thanks.

30. BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI TO FATHER F. ZABOGLIO

Piacenza, March 18, 1891

My dear Father Francesco:

This letter will be delivered to you by Father Pietro Bandini, a good Missionary from our Institute, who is coming there to accompany the nuns for the hospital and who is to be assigned, as I wrote you earlier, to the port Mission. He also has in mind to establish a colony of his own. You may help him if you think it convenient. It is, however, very important that a Missionary be at the port every time Italian immigrants arrive.

Father Paolo Manenti, who was supposed to come together with Father Pietro (Lotti) has been compelled to stay at home (at least that is what he says) by his parishioners who do not want him to leave. I believe this is due in part to his fickleness. Enough. We shall see later on.

There are only five nuns for you at the present time; but others are willing to come when requested.

I am sending you a beautiful chalice, a gift from the Holy Father for the Church of St. Joachim. It would be well to send him a letter of thanks.

I embrace you with a thousand hearts and salute you.

Affectionately in Jesus Christ,

+Giov. Battista Bishop

P.S. My secretary sends you his best regards. I bless you all.

31. FATHER F. ZABOGLIO TO BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI

New York, 128 White Street
March 30, 1891

Excellency:

A few days before I went to Boston, we had a visit from Father Callaghan, rector of the Irish Mission for Assistance to the Immigrants, and he convinced us of the necessity of always having an Italian priest at the landing for Italian immigrants in order to assist them. Trying to do the little that we could at that time, we attempted to save the poor twenty-six Neapolitans who had come illegally, in violation of the contract labor law, but we did not succeed.

While I was in Boston, the Archbishop called Father Morelli, and insisted on the necessity of assisting the Italian immigrants on landing.

- Having considered this necessity, and after having heard the insistence of good Father Callaghan, who promised us his cooperation together with that of Father Reuland, rector of German House of St. Raphael, and above all at the insistence of the Archbishop:
- Considering that the priest charged with this task must know English, and since among our Missionaries we have no one who knows it, unless we choose one who does, but occupies another position;
- Considering that I don't think I can leave the United States before several important matters are settled, as I wrote to Your Excellency in my letter from Boston, and that in particular we must provide for the security of the hospital property, of the church of the Neapolitans and of the Staten Island property, all registered in the name of Father Morelli and which for various reasons we have not yet been able to transfer;
- I have decided to take upon myself the care of the Italian immigrants upon their landing, until I can find another Missionary to take my place. I have therefore spoken to the Archbishop, who approves my plan, and tomorrow he will give me a letter of introduction to the authorities at Castle Garden (a new Barge Office) for authorization to enter.

Yesterday, I was happy to receive a letter from Father Bandini in which he tells me that Your Excellency wishes that he should be assigned to the port Mission. Therefore, if he is capable of performing this task, as I believe he is, I shall assist him at the beginning, and then let him do it alone. This task, besides knowledge of the English language, requires charitableness, patience and also sagacity and business ability.

We have received Your Excellency's telegram announcing the coming of the nuns, and we communicated it to the Archbishop, who was very happy to hear

about it.

Among other things which I have recently discussed with the Archbishop was the transfer of the properties registered in Father Morelli's name, so that, through his authority, we may see to it that everything is done properly.

When I left Boston, Father Riva was feeling much better and behaved well. Now, however, he has given us proof of his strange character. For our return trip from Italy he loaned us over five hundred lire (the money we had was insufficient, considering that we carried heavy luggage). He had thirty-nine dollars left, and gave them to Father Morelli before going to Boston. But now, even before I had a chance to speak to Father Morelli, we received a letter from Father Riva ordering us to give him back the money immediately, or he will sue us. We shall send it.

He would like to go to Kansas City. But can we send him there, where nobody could help him? It is a three or four day journey from New York by railroad. At any rate, we shall do whatever Your Excellency says. At the beginning, he was happy to be in Boston, now he is not. And to think that he could do so much good in the nearby towns. In Milford, for example, he remained a week performing Missions very well among the six or seven hundred Italians, mostly Lombards, who live there and who would never otherwise go to church.

The good Portuguese priest of Boston, a friend of ours and a neighbor, hopes to obtain through Your Excellency the card of Apostolic Missionary about which I had written to Your Excellency.

I trust that soon we shall find a wise man to place at the head of our Institute. Then we could send several good young men, some of whom are ready with others to be found.

(In parenthesis, I jot down an idea, whether good or worthless: in case we thought of opening another Institute, would it not be better to open it on the Ligurian Riviera, where the air is much better, especially during winter?).

In a few days, I shall send you a detailed list of our enormous debts here in New York, which in Italy would be much bigger.

On my way from Boston, I stopped to see Father Oreste (Alussi) who has moved heaven and earth for his scruples and for having another priest to hear his confession. I suggested that he come to New York and change places with Father Molinari. After thinking a while, he went for advice to his director (in the Church of San Giovanni there are two good priests who speak Italian well), and decided to remain where he is. He appeared calm.

Half an hour away from New Haven there is the city of Bridgeport where there are about one thousand Italians. It is part of the diocese of Hartford. The Bishop of Hartford has repeatedly asked Father Morelli and me to send other priests there, one of whom would be stationed in Bridgeport. I had thought of sending Father Oreste (Alussi), with another priest who would live with him and then travel to Bridgeport when necessary, until we would have a Church and a rectory there.

I thought of Father Lotti who, under the guidance of Father Alussi, would be a good Missionary. Speaking of Father Lotti, I can say that he has shaken off his timidity, and is now preaching well enough. On this New Haven and Bridgeport affair, I ask Your Excellency's opinion.

I beg your pardon for the style of this letter, perhaps somewhat strange at the start. I implore your blessing and I kiss your sacred ring.

Of Your Most Illustrious and Most Reverend
Excellency,
very devoted and affectionate son in Christ,
Father Francesco Zaboglio

32. BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI TO FATHER F. ZABOGLIO

Piacenza, March 29, 1891

Dear Father Francesco:

Many of the things you ask me about in your last letter have already been accomplished. I believe the good Sisters of St. Anna have already assumed the direction of the hospital, and I trust they will do well. If two more sisters are needed, let me know. They are ready. In the meantime, I repeat it to you too: who will pay for this expedition? You must urge Father Morelli to think about it, and to get together with the Committee. Both of you should know in what hot water we are here!

Let us not speak about the Italian-American seminary for the time being. When all the debts of the various foundations are paid, then it will be time to talk about it. I suppose you have received the chalice sent by the Holy Father. It is for the Church of St. Joachim.

Two important things:

- 1) Tell Father Felice (Morelli) that he must absolutely request that the accounts of the houses and the churches be kept with scrupulous precision, and that he must be firm about this. The Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide has been particularly emphatic about it.
- 2) Tell every member of the Congregation that they must not, in any way, have anything to do with newspapers, and must not tie themselves to any of them, whether good or bad. I have written to you about this previously more than once. I have been told, apropos of this, that they want to go to court regarding their known quarrel with L'Armonia. It would be a grave scandal which must be avoided at any cost.

Nothing is true about the Buffalo boy: what is true is just the opposite. How things went was explained to Father Antonio.

I am enclosing the New York expense account, and a letter sent to me from Cleveland. You can hear about this from the Bishop of that diocese. My lectures have gone well so far, from a moral point of view, but not from a material one.... Let us hope for the future. The telegram sent from Rome which

motivated the furious articles of Il Progresso (which, however, left me cold) was not exact. I did not speak at all about the economic conditions of our emigration to North America, which I believe is better than elsewhere. But there must be something wrong since I have received painful news which I am not publishing for prudence.

I bless you all from the bottom of my heart, and you in particular.

Affectionately in Jesus Christ,
+ Gio. Battista Bishop

N.B. Father Felice (Morelli) thinks he has lost our trust. We must encourage him. A Superior must correct his dependents, but not discourage them. The trust of a Superior represents a great strength for those in his trust. We must be lenient in judging those under our orders. Who is without defects? Those who act may err, and to criticize is much easier than to act. May God help us. Within a month or so we can send an expedition to you.

Farewell.
+ Gio. Battista Bishop

33. BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI TO FATHER F. ZABOGLIO

Piacenza, April 9, 1891

Dear Father Francesco:

Father Riva is an eccentric, but a good and conscientious man. I think that he could do well alone. If you want to, you may send him to Kansas City. Let us put him to the test. I also approve the new assignment for Father Lotti. He has everything to gain with Father Oreste (Alussi). During the year I can send six or seven Missionaries, therefore, you can think of where to place them. If another position is offered us, you may accept it. You must, however, reinforce the existing Missions.

I believe that the hospital and the port Mission have been started. I am waiting for news about them.

As soon as the Bishop of Como is named, we will think about Father Agostino (Zaboglio) and the others. Two already chosen for that mission have refused it. We shall see who will be the third.

I bless and salute you.

Affectionately in Jesus Christ,
+ Gio. Battista Bishop

34. BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI TO FATHER F. ZABOGLIO

Piacenza, May 18, 1891

My dear Father Francesco:

Let me start with the distressing affair concerning the nuns. After I received Father Morelli's telegram, I wrote to the Superior General of the Figlie di S. Anna (Daughters of St. Anne), but I don't know whether the Congregation of Bishops and Major Superiors would change its attitude. If not, we must resign ourselves to employ other nuns. I would regret having to spend money for their return; but what else can we do? I already spoke of the possibility of the change to Sister Cabrini, Superior of the Salesians, who, despite the humiliation suffered in seeing the direction of the new hospital taken from her, is willing to assume it now, and to take care of the collections as well. I have realized that she is a very virtuous and generous woman. However, we have made no agreement regarding the hospital or anything else. It would be well to first hear from the Archbishop. As for the Missionaries, I would send four or five, but a little later... let us say September! One of them, about fifty years old, could very well have the Kansas City Mission, but he should have a companion with him. You can assign the others according to the needs.

During the day I shall write to Boston regarding the affair of which you wrote. I am happy that the port Mission has been started so well. It is a very important work greatly appreciated here, especially by the laity, and it would be well to take good care of it. It is therefore necessary that Father Bandini has some freedom of action and not be burdened with other duties. Tell Father Morelli that he shouldn't saddle him with the usual Sunday services and inadvertently take him from his particular tasks.

It might be necessary in exceptional cases that he sleep away from the community. In view of this, you and Father Morelli, and Bandini himself, could prepare a few special guidelines for the Missionaries assigned to the port Mission. Bandini, however, must always have at least one lay Brother with him, whom I hope to be able to send soon.

As for the expenses already incurred and the tuition for the boys please ask Father Morelli to be precise. I know the difficulties of his position, but he must consider that ours here is perhaps more difficult. It is necessary that the mother not suffer, so that the children may not suffer either. Give him my particular regards.

I also beg you to let Father Oreste (Alussi) know that I received his money order for seven hundred and twenty-one lire which he sent me last February, and that I thank him very much. I really thought I had written him about it.

I am very happy about the news concerning Father Lotti. May God help and bless him. As you may have learned, the Bishop of Guastalla has been assigned to Como. It was a good choice. With him I hope to be able to settle questions of which you are familiar.

Give my regards to Fathers Vicentini and Bandini, etc. I bless you all, try to stay well, and don't be afraid to tell me the whole truth, even when it is bitter. You will always please me since we must think above all of the general welfare.

I embrace you *in Domino*

and confirm myself,
Affectionately in Jesus Christ,
+ Gio. Battista

P.S. My secretary, who has scribbled this letter, sends many affectionate greetings.

My dear Francesco:

This is the confidential part of this letter. What I added in the P.S. above was neither an accusation nor a reproach, but a simple warning, suggested by your way of doing things. At times, you are too brusque in judging others. You know that I place in you my most ardent hopes, and therefore I dare to call your attention to shortcomings which perhaps do not exist. Therefore, let us agree, we must try to acquire perfection. If you and I do not become saints, our work will be useless.

I am sending you a letter by Father Marcellino, surely exaggerated as always. Could you not go to Brazil before returning to Italy? I am not at ease. We have sent Missionaries there who are not the best and we have almost abandoned them to themselves. If nothing else, we could recall Father G. Venditti, and assign him to the Neapolitans of New York or elsewhere.... Think about it, pray and make a decision.

Again! *Oremus ad invicem.*

Affectionately yours,
+ Giov. Battista Bishop

35. BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI TO FATHER F. ZABOGLIO

Piacenza, June 17, 1891

Dear Father Francesco:

A sincere friend of our work has written me the following, which causes me deep sorrow. "*Father Morelli is very active, etc., and if he may have erred, I don't think it is either right or honorable to speak about him with strangers, lay or priests, much less to accuse him. Moreover, I think he shouldn't have been accused before the Archbishop, especially because it is said that two of the most grave accusations against Father Morelli have been found false by the Archbishop, which certainly does not redound to anyone's credit. What is sure, in addition, is that the consequences of this outburst, if remedies are not taken immediately, will create a scandal. There are rumors of jealousy, antipathy among the people, etc.*"

What is true in all this? If, unfortunately, something bad happened, as soon as you have read this, visit the Blessed Sacrament and then, whoever is right or wrong, go to see Morelli, arrive at an understanding with him, and make peace in *osculo sancto*. A Superior never loses if he lowers himself first. But I hope that when this letter reaches you, everything is over.

I would also like you to examine yourself well, to see if you have the defect of

expressing unfavorable opinions about your confreres. If you find that you possess this defect, as I think you do in a small way, make a firm resolution to get rid of it.

Try to calm down Father Morelli, who, they say, is very annoyed, and almost ready to leave the Congregation. He has not written to me and I trust that the storm will subside, and perhaps has subsided already. Are you going to Brazil? Will you visit the house that Morelli could not visit? Do everything in agreement with him, please.

Father Vicentini has sent me a petition for a marriage dispensation. It is a matter for the New York Curia, and I would not like to be accused of usurping the rights of the Bishops of America. Even in Rome they would ask me a lot of explanations. So it is better that the matter goes back to the Archbishop.

Write me soon and about everything. I bless you in *nomine Domini*. Pray for me.

Affectionately yours in Jesus Christ,
+ Gio. Battista Bishop

36. BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI TO FATHER F. ZABOGLIO

Piacenza, September 13, 1891

Dear Father Francesco:

I have received your letter, and I thank you for what you have done and written. It is however very important that every shadow of friction between you and Father Felice (Morelli) disappear. Accept therefore any sacrifice in order to reach that goal. Nothing can be more detrimental to the wellbeing of a growing institution than discord between its leaders. You know how much I esteem and love you, and how much I rely on your industrious and intelligent work. Therefore you must never, not even in thought, resent my telling you what they write to me. Take things simply, and everything will help our cause. But enough of this.

Father Martinelli writes me that he would like to dedicate himself to the port Mission, helping Father Bandini. If you think him suitable, and after hearing Morelli's opinion, you may agree, naturally after the arrival of the new confreres.

To Father Paolo (Riva) say that I received his letter, that I exhort him to be patient and to persevere, and that if he really wants to leave the Congregation, he should return to Italy, otherwise he would immediately be suspended and excommunicated as decreed by the Holy See. Later, I shall write him myself in this sense.

Tell Father Bandini that I thank him for his beautiful letter, and that he should carefully try to reduce the enormous debt of the Mission. Read to him the following lines written to me by a high-placed person who wishes to remain anonymous:

"Father Morelli is a very zealous and charitable man; but I think he is running too fast

without foreseeing the consequences. The Italian Mission is at the present time in quite difficult conditions. It has many debts, and is unable to pay them. I think it would be prudent not to contract new debts before paying the old ones. It is impossible to have an Italian hospital in New York... and useless. It is impossible because etc., etc.. It is useless because New York City is well equipped with hospitals, etc. Moreover, Father Morelli would like to start building one, but I inform Your Excellency that the location he chose is not a healthy one, and therefore unsuitable for a hospital."

What shall we do? Go to see the Archbishop, and do what he will tell you to do. I think this is the only advice I can give you.

I don't think I have anything else to add. I embrace and bless you with the usual affection. I greet and bless everyone. *Oremus pro invicem.*

Affectionately yours in Jesus Christ,
+ Gio. Battista Bishop

P.S. I received the five hundred lire money order from Bishop Hogan. If only everybody did the same!

37. BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI TO FATHER F. ZABOGLIO

Piacenza, October 8, 1891

My dear Father Francesco:

One of the six confreres in the new group of Missionaries will deliver this letter to you. The oldest of them, Santipolo, is assigned to Kansas City; Sciolla to Pittsburgh to help Fr. Molinari; and Strumia to Cleveland, if everything is ready there. If another one is needed in that city, you may send Sandri, otherwise the latter and Berteau will stay in New York. Of the lay Brothers, the worst-looking one, Rauzi, is in reality the best in piety and culture. He writes well, is familiar with paper work, and could be a good corresponding secretary. If he didn't have such physical defects, I wouldn't have any difficulty in ordaining him. He could be very helpful to Father Bandini. Do with the lay Brothers what you think best. They are all young men of goodwill.

Try to get together on this with Father Morelli, and see to it that the assignments I have made are carried out.

I urge you as much as I know how, to do everything in your power in order to preserve and strengthen the harmony between the confreres. I know that even the appearance of discord has damaged our work. Apropos of this I shall repeat to you what I am writing to Father Morelli: do not start anything else in New York until all debts for the previous works have been paid.

Cardinal Simeoni has written to me a confidential letter in which he tells me that one of the confreres has expressed political and religious opinions, and has taken part in celebrations contrary to Catholic spirit. I think it is one of the usual calumnies. At any rate you could, if you think it useful, write even in my name to the bishops from whom our men depend, asking them for a certificate

on their attitude and conduct, which you would then send me and I, in turn, will send it to the proper person. Meanwhile, I urge everyone to be cautious, and to be sincerely obedient to the Holy See. I have written other things to Father Morelli and he will relate them to you.

I am sending you three chasubles. The red one is for Providence; the two white ones are for New Orleans and New Haven. As soon as I can, I shall send you a few more for other Churches.

If you see Father Villeneuve give him my regards. Greetings to Vicentini, Bandini and all the others. Recommend me to the Lord, write soon, be well and believe me,

Affectionately yours in Jesus Christ,
+ Gio. Battista Bishop

P.S. My secretary sends his regards. I haven't received Archbishop Corrigan's photograph yet. Couldn't we have a large one for the Institute?

38. FATHER F. ZABOGLIO TO BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI

Youngstown, Ohio
November 1, 1891

Most Reverend Excellency:

Yesterday I went to Cleveland, and I saw the Administrator of the diocese, Msgr. Boff. As I had written to Your Excellency, when I went to Cleveland about a month ago, Msgr. Boff told me that if we could promise to send him a good priest for the Italians of his city, he would have tried to assign Father Capitani to another position. I promised him I would satisfy his request, naturally with Your Excellency's consent, and you sent Father Giuseppe Strumia.

Yesterday, Msgr. Boff, after having repeated what he had said the other time, that is, that Father Capitani is not doing anything good for the Italians, added that if he were the Bishop, he would remove him immediately; but since he is only the Administrator and since the appointment of the new bishop is imminent, he thinks it better to let the new bishop decide. If he himself removed Father Capitani, he would have against him the priests who befriend Capitani. However, he will advise the bishop to remove him.

I was told that the stronger supporter of Father Capitani is the Irish pastor of the cathedral, Father Thorpe. According to a well-informed priest, Father Thorpe supports Capitani because some of his patronizers in Rome are friends of the latter. Perhaps this is bound to what Msgr. Boff told me the other time, that is, that Capitani has a friend in Rome, a Monsignor whose name he mentioned, but which I have forgotten. It seems that the bishops here fear that someone in Rome might get them in trouble.

At any rate, this time Msgr. Boff spoke differently. He told me that it would be better if the Missionary came soon because between waiting for a new bishop

and gathering the necessary information, things might change.

He also has offered Father Capitani a French parish in the city of Toledo, but Capitani refused it.

In conclusion, Msgr. Boff will advise the new bishop to remove Father Capitani and in the meantime Father Strumia will hold the Missions in the diocese. When Father Strumia will be tired he will take refuge in Pittsburgh with Father Molinari. I assured him that Father Strumia is assigned to the Italians of Cleveland in place of Father Capitani and will go there when requested.

Msgr. Boff has developed a great esteem for Father Strumia who lodged with him at the cathedral for several days, and I am sure he will love him more when he will see him in action.

At the present time, Father Strumia is holding Missions with success in Youngstown, where there are four to five hundred Italians, in addition to the many who live in the suburbs and who come here for confessions and sermons. On the 8th of this month, he will start another Mission in a suburb of Cleveland, called East Cleveland, where there are about seven hundred Italians.

I don't know if I am right, but I would like to implore Your Excellency to try to get Propaganda Fide interested in this affair so that, as soon as a new bishop is appointed, it would advise him to intervene.

If, on the other hand, the appointment is delayed, or if the new Bishop does not take office immediately, then the same Msgr. Boff could act. From what I have heard, what prevents him from acting is his fear of the Irish priests, of the cathedral, and of Capitani himself, due, as I have said, to the supposed influence of Capitani in Rome.

Father Capitani doesn't know how to attract the Italians to the church. On the contrary (perhaps unconsciously) he does everything to keep them away. His church, which is very small, is attended by very few of the three to four thousand Italians who live in Cleveland, and by some Irish and French parishioners. The Italians are very angry with him and if a solution is not found soon, I am sure there will be trouble, so much so that in Cleveland the example of the Slavs who got rid of their priest by force is still fresh.

I implore Your Excellency's blessing and, kissing your sacred ring, profess myself

of Your Most Illustrious and Most Reverend
Excellency,
very humble son in Jesus Christ,
Father Francesco Zaboglio.

39. FATHER F. ZABOGLIO TO BISHOP SCALABRINI

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

**History of the SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION – VOLUME 2
APPENDIX I**

November 2, 1891

Most Reverend Excellency:

On October 27th, Father Santipolo, Father Sciolla and I left New York and came here. Father Sciolla accompanied me to Father Molinari and the following evening continued for Cincinnati. Father Santipolo, instead went to Kansas City (three days away from New York by railroad), because he wanted to be there on All Souls Day.

Father Molinari has willingly deprived himself of Father Sciolla's company in order to please the confrere in Cincinnati who is ill. Father Sciolla has already written from Cincinnati saying that Father Chiariglione is still tormented by pains in one leg so that he has trouble standing up.

From Pittsburgh I went to Youngstown to see Father Strumia, and then went to Cleveland to confer with Msgr. Boff. I went back to Youngstown and then returned to Pittsburgh.

I warmly recommend Your Excellency to find a solution to the Cleveland affair. I don't know what else could be done after the repeated statements of Msgr. Boff about the necessity of removing Father Capitani from the Italian church of Cleveland. And why did this man not accept the parish of Toledo offered him by the same Msgr. Boff? In Cleveland, not too long ago the Slavs chased away their priest by canning him. Must we wait for the same thing to happen among the Italians, with grave damage to religion and immense scorn in the eyes of the Protestants?

The day I left New York Father Vicentini came to my room and firmly declared that the same day he would have sent his resignation to Your Excellency.

I see no reason why he should resign. He is very useful in his church, is loved by the people, and has even become friendly with the group which originally disliked him, and which wanted Father Morelli to continue to be the pastor of his church. I therefore believe that Your Excellency should not accept his resignation. If he should insist, perhaps Your Excellency could ask the Archbishop, who loves him, to try to dissuade him and at the same time enumerate his complaints so that the Archbishop might find a remedy. But it may be that by this time he has changed his mind. If so, so much the better. It would be well if Your Excellency wrote him a few words of encouragement.

I believe that a certain Father Girimondi writes to Your Excellency once in a while. I don't think he says anything bad against anyone, but I must inform Your Excellency, that this man is a drunkard and that therefore is very much disliked. After all, the Archbishop of New York could let Your Excellency know what type of a person this man is, in case Your Excellency would want to hear the Archbishop's opinion.

Father Molinari is in fair health, but it would be well to assign an assistant to him as soon as possible.

From here I shall go to Cincinnati and then to New Orleans, since I still haven't visited that Mission.

I have nothing else to add at this moment. Therefore I kiss your sacred ring and implore your blessing.

Of Your Most Illustrious
and Most Reverend Excellency,
Very devoted son in Christ,
Father Francesco Zaboglio

P.S. I thank Your Excellency for the photograph you kindly sent me. I have already written to Your Excellency that, from what I was told in Pittsburgh and in New York, it would seem that Father Annovazzi has little zeal and enthusiasm. Nevertheless the Boston confreres would gladly take him with them, and I believe that in their company he would do better.

What happened about the permission asked of Rome since last year, such as the faculty of blessing the Via Crucis, etc.?

40. BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI TO FATHER F. ZABOGLIO

Piacenza, November 12, 1891

My dear Father Francesco:

Today I received your letter of October 26th and I am answering right away. I thank you for the map you sent me. It will be very useful, and I shall have it framed, so that I can follow with my thoughts the steps of our good Missionaries, whom I always accompany with my heart. In this map the Hartford Mission, which is to be opened soon, is not marked. That good Bishop was here a few months ago, and begged me to send him two priests whom he would love and protect. I promised him I would send them, and I cannot break my word.

On December 11, the Fathers Bertorelli, Annovazzi, Soville and perhaps another will sail from Genoa for New York. Could you not, as I think I wrote to you before, send Father Paroli to Hartford? He is quite active and resourceful. Could you not send Father Lotti to Providence? Is he suitable for that place and can you trust him? You are there on the spot and can judge better *in Domino*, in agreement with the Provincial Superior. The perfect agreement between the two of you in action and direction will represent the honor and the strength of our small Congregation and will give me great consolation. I fervently exhort you to watch over the internal order of the houses, seeing to it that everything is done according to the will of the Superior of each house, that the rules are rigidly respected and that everyone spreads the Word of Christ.

Our house here is now functioning well. Recently a good priest from Crema, the Canon of that cathedral, and for the past twenty years professor of dogmatics in the seminary joined us. He is doing very well, and I shall keep him here for our needs.

If you see Father Villeneuve, tell him that I received his letter a little late because I was away; that I bless him affectionately and that I am waiting for

him. If he had stopped in America for the same purpose, however, it would have been much better.

I embrace you in *osculo sancto* and bless everyone heartily.

Affectionately in Jesus Christ,
+ Gio. Battista Bishop

P.S. Particular regards to the good Father Morelli.

41. FATHER F. ZABOGLIO TO BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI

New Orleans, La.
27 Ursuline Street
December 21, 1891

Most Reverend Excellency:

I arrived here on the 15th and I am now giving you a brief report on our affairs. I shall begin with the most important: the future Mission of St. Louis.

From Cleveland and Pittsburgh I went to Cincinnati where I learned from the Archbishop that he would come here for the jubilee of the Archbishop of St. Louis. I begged him to say a word to that prelate in our favor and he promised that he would.

At the end of November, I was in St. Louis with Father Ascheri who introduced me to one of the most influential pastors of the city. The latter, in turn, introduced me to the Vicar General, who welcomed our proposal to establish an Italian Mission in that city, and who promised us that he would favor it in speaking with the Archbishop. However, he added that he would introduce me to the Archbishop after the jubilee.

After the festivities (which were splendid) I went to the Archbishop who greeted me warmly (two years before he had greeted me coldly), and said that he was very glad that we establish an Italian Mission in his city. I promised him, in Your Excellency's name, that we would send a priest there within three or four months, more or less. I did not mention an earlier period, because I wanted the idea to take root among the Italians; neither did I mention a later date, because then the project would have seemed too vague. The meeting took place on the feast of the Immaculate Conception. I have no doubt that the Virgin will help us with her powerful intercession.

After this visit, I went to see many of the most influential Italian families of the city who promised me their support and cooperation. I must say that I now found more sympathy than I expected because of the painful things that had happened there years ago, when the Italian church, partly paid, was auctioned. This event, however, compels us to send a priest of exceptional qualities to St. Louis.

I must add that the two priests who assist the Vicar General (who is also the pastor of St. John's), are excellent young men. Both studied in Rome and speak

Italian fluently. They assured me that they would do what they can for us, especially Father Lang, who accompanied me on my visits.

Our Missionary, however, must resign himself at the beginning to live with a family or with a priest. Later on he should rent a house and furnish it with the help of the Italians, after which we could send him a confrere, as we are doing in Kansas City.

In Kansas City, Father Santipolo has aroused the sympathy of that Italian colony as was to be expected. I should rather say that he has aroused enthusiasm. But of this he himself has written to Your Excellency. I will only add that on Sunday, November 27th, he had to transfer his temporary church to a centrally located place more convenient for the Italians, larger than the former, for which they pay \$27.00 a month rent. The Bishop had promised to go there on Sunday, December 6th, to preach a sermon during high Mass. As for Pittsburgh, I think I wrote to Your Excellency that work on the Church has been resumed.

In Cincinnati, where I stopped during the first half of November, Father Chiariglione was still ill because of varicose veins, and partly with rheumatic pains. He was forced to spend most of his time in the hospital. Although the money pledged by the Italians in that city has reached the good sum of eight thousand dollars, nevertheless they still haven't been able to buy a suitable place and our Missionaries continue to perform their ministry in a very small chapel put at their disposal by the nuns. I believe, however, that Father Sciolla, young and strong, will give a new impulse to the Mission. We had agreed that Father Strumia would have gone there to hold a Mission in a church of the Jesuits and I believe this has been done.

Now, about New Orleans. As I have written to Your Excellency before, I believe that this colony (consisting of fifteen or twenty thousand Italians) is the worst in all the United States and that a Mission here will have a rough time. Father Gambera has managed to collect subscriptions for two thousand dollars, including two hundred dollars pledged by the Archbishop. Recently he bought a piece of land in a central location, valued at three thousand nine hundred dollars with the proviso that one thousand dollars be paid within a month, and that interest be paid on the balance until it is paid in full. Yesterday, he began to go around to collect the money pledged and I believe that within a month he will have the one thousand dollars to be paid cash.

I think that this Archbishop is the third American bishop to have spent something for us. On the land in question, there are buildings which must be demolished before the church can be built. In the meantime they produce a certain amount in rent. The functions are still performed and the Missionary and his confrere live in rooms put at their disposal by the Bishop.

Father Gambera is very active, and is doing his utmost in this difficult field. He is well-liked by the Archbishop and by the Italians.

Father Chiariglione's strange behavior and errors have done a lot of harm to this Mission. He had done well everywhere except here, so much so that one is

forced to believe that when he was here he had lost his mind. Things were made worse by the crooked priest from Parma, Father Luigi Bruni (not a priest at all in spirit and conduct), sent here from New York to assist Father Gambera. Undoubtedly Father Gambera has been very unlucky in this.

I haven't heard from Buffalo recently, but the new church must have been finished by this time and things are going on well. The same, I think, can be said about New York, except for the debts which are crushing us but, which I hope we can manage to pay if we don't think of anything else but the church. Father Vicentini has received Your Excellency's letter, and it seems that he has decided to stay.

The Cleveland matter is still unsettled. I have a great esteem for the Administrator, Msgr. Boff. But he is an old paralytic man and I believe his hesitations and fears are due to this condition. Even if he couldn't remove Father Capitani immediately, he could have informed us when I wrote him that our Missionary had arrived in New York. Instead, he asked me to send the Missionary immediately that he would assign him to his field of work. Yet, despite all this, I hope that we can provide for the needs of that unfortunate Italian colony which is eagerly waiting for its pastor. Your Excellency would please me very much with an affirmative reply. Just one word from the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide would dispel Msgr. Boff's fears. I believe that recently the Italians of Cleveland wrote to Propaganda.

But of this Cleveland affair, I have written enough to Your Excellency in this and in previous letters.

In the meantime I have asked Father Strumia to go temporarily to Pittsburgh to give a hand to Father Molinari and to hold Missions wherever necessary, until the time of his permanent assignment.

At the conclusion of my visit to this Mission of New Orleans I believe it will be time to comply with Your Excellency's suggestion of a year ago when I was in Italy to return there as soon as possible. I will come with pleasure, especially because I have several important things to tell Your Excellency. Then, I will either remain there or will go anywhere Your Excellency will order me to go. However, I don't believe I shall sail before I receive from Your Excellency some good news regarding Cleveland, as I ardently wish. I don't know whether I have acted well or not in that city. I only know that I have lost too much time, but not through my fault.

I was at this point when I received Your Excellency's letter of November 12th which went to Kansas City first. Concerning Hartford, Your Excellency made a promise to that Bishop and will have to keep the promise. If you had not made it, I would first have preferred to assign an assistant to the Missionaries who are alone in cities with four, five or even seven thousand Italians and keep at least three Missionaries in New York for the New England states and other Missions so as to help as much as possible the many thousands of our compatriots for whom we cannot have stable Missions. I would do this rather than assign even a single priest to the Bishop of Hartford who already has two

and who, in addition to those of New Haven and Bridgeport, has no other important Italian group except that of Hartford itself, which consists of less than one thousand souls. It is to be noted, that in Hartford there is also the Bishop's secretary who speaks Italian very well. But I shall do my duty, which is to obey.

As for Father Paroli, I too think that we can now satisfy his desire to be transferred elsewhere. However, I am not yet convinced that it would be convenient to put Lotti in his place and to leave him alone. Lotti is good and preaches well, and in Providence, where but he is well-known, he will be well received, but he is still young and lacks the necessary maturity. But of all these things I shall speak with Father Morelli as soon as I shall return to New York, and we will try to do the best he can.

Even the Bishop of Wilmington, Delaware, asked Father Morelli since last winter to send him a priest. Perhaps I will stop there on my way to New York. But allow me to express once more the opinion which I have already expressed to Your Excellency in a previous letter, that is that we should pause before accepting parishes. We must, for the moment, reinforce those we already have. In addition to giving us other advantages, this pause would allow us to help the Italians living in the suburbs and in the mining towns around the big cities where we have Missions. In Pennsylvania, whose center is Pittsburgh, we have only one priest. That state, which is a mining district, is full of Italians who could be taken care of from Pittsburgh. The same can be said of the states of New York, Massachusetts, Louisiana and others. Moreover, we must absolutely have a corps of flying Missionaries headquartered in New York, like the Passionists, the Jesuits, the Redemptorists, etc. These were Your Excellency's ideas, too, and I believe the time has come to put them into action. I think this is better than accepting other parishes here and there. After St. Louis and, perhaps, Wilmington we should pause a little.

I thank God and Your Excellency that we finally found a good Superior for the Mother House of Piacenza. The joy of a mother is shared by the children, and her well-being is also theirs.

I saw Father Villeneuve last October, I think. I believe he left for Italy. I would have gladly come with him; but then I would have had the remorse of having skipped the New Orleans Mission.

Your Excellency will forgive me that I did not send my Christmas and New Year greetings on time. I was travelling, but I did not fail to pray instead for Your Excellency's welfare.

I implore your blessing and, kissing your sacred ring, profess myself

Of Your Most Illustrious
and Most Reverend Excellency,
very humble son in Christ,
Father Francesco Zaboglio

Your Excellency told me that whenever I had an idea in my head I ought to jot

it down. Here are a couple of them.

It would be a good thing to hold in all our Houses an annual, solemn celebration (never held so far) in honor of the principal protector of our Congregation. Now, who is this protector? Is it the Regina Apostolorum? Is it St. Francesco Saverio? Or St. Peter Claver?

For my part I would exclude the latter (I hope he will forgive me) as our principal protector. First, because, if I am not mistaken, he has been chosen as protector of the Society of Missionaries organized in England when ours was begun, by Bishop Salford, mainly for the conversion of American Negroes. Second, because, as the New York Archbishop wrote to Your Excellency, in many parts of the United States the Italians are placed on the same level as the Negroes. Now, if we assumed St. Peter Claver as our protector, we would somehow reinforce this prejudice and I am sure the Italians would object because, naturally, they don't like to be considered Negroes.

Wouldn't it be better to choose as our protector Our Lady under the title of Regina Apostolorum (in which case we would have a protectress), or St. Francesco Saverio who, if I am not mistaken, worked more for the Portuguese immigrants than for the Indians? Or some other saint?

We must, at any rate, choose a protector in heaven and establish a solemn, annual celebration in all our Houses.

After choosing the protector, I would like our Congregation to be called Congregation (or Society) of the Missionaries Regina Apostolorum (or St. Francesco Saverio, or another saint) for the Italians Abroad.

The Society of the Missionaries for the Negroes is called Society of the Missionaries of St. Joseph for the Colored People, which is abbreviated as Society of the Missionaries of St. Joseph, and the Missionaries are called "*Giuseppini*."

The Institute or Mother House can be called Cristoforo Colombo, but not the Congregation. Why give the Congregation the name of one who is expected to be sanctified instead of one who is a saint? Besides, I think that the American Catholics would prefer the name of a saint already on the altars.

Another thing. I have heard that one of our brothers died recently in South America. It would be proper to celebrate special Masses for his soul. When a confrere dies the news should be officially sent to all the Houses. Since, in this case, the confrere was in South America, the official announcement should be sent from Piacenza. Therefore, I pray that we begin with the present case (although it is late). The news of his death should be sent officially with the name, date of death, etc., to the Provincial Father who would send it around or directly to the houses, as you think best. It would also be proper to indicate what kind of prayers should be offered for the deceased Brother. For the late Father Mantese, here in the United States, a solemn funeral was celebrated in every house, and every Missionary celebrated a Mass. But there should be some differences in the case of a lay Brother.

I would like to speak about the Italian-American school in America, against

which I think I have valid objections and which I would prefer to see established in Italy. But, I will speak about it another time.

About all this Your Excellency will do what is best. About this topic I now realize that I have time for a few more words.

I cannot say that my opinion is correct, since the matter must be well examined and discussed, and all opinions pro and con must be expressed. I haven't been able to evaluate them properly, but I have thought about the matter for some time.

Now, I think that the proposed school should be established in Italy rather than in America, for the following reasons:

1) In Italy it would be under the direct supervision of Rome or of the Superior General. The supervision by the latter offers a better guarantee than that exercised by the Provincial Superior since it must be assumed that the Superior General is the most eminent man of the Congregation, for wisdom and piety.

2) The good priests I have met here are mainly those who have studied in Italy and in the rest of Europe. Among the Irish priests in general, the best are those who studied in Rome. Even the bishops send the best of their students to Rome. In Louisiana I have met many who were, generally speaking, better than those I met in New England, and they all come from France, Belgium and Holland. In America, one usually does not find priests possessing the same knowledge and piety of those of Europe.

3) In Italy it is much easier to find good teachers and professors than it is in America.

4) The upkeep of the teachers, professors and superiors costs much less in Italy than in America. The same can be said about the erection of the necessary buildings.

5) The parents of a student could support him in Italy with less than one lira per day, whereas here they have to spend one dollar, that is five times as much.

6) It may be objected that the parents would prefer to pay more but have their children near rather than pay less, but be away from them. I can answer that the Italians here are considered not only thrifty but almost misers. And I do not think I err in saying that when the parents would learn that they would need only one hundred dollars a year to keep a son studying in Italy, whereas here they would spend from four hundred to five hundred dollars, they would prefer saving three hundred to four hundred dollars a year to having the pleasure of being near to their children.

For all these reasons, I believe that it would be better to have the Institute in Italy rather than in the United States. But, above all, I prefer that it be opened in Italy because something tells me that Italy would produce for us better priests than America would.

The decision is up to the wisest, and especially to Your Excellency.

42. FATHER ZABOGLIO TO BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI

New Orleans, La.
27 Ursuline Street
February 12, 1892

Most Reverend Excellency:

Father Gambera has told me that Your Excellency was kind enough to write to him last month.

Last Sunday we began the Sacred Missions, held by Father Martinelli whom we asked to come from New York. The Archbishop allowed us to use the cathedral because the chapel was too small. Many people came but not in sufficient number in proportion to the Italian population of this city which amounts to fifteen to twenty thousand souls. Since the great majority of these Italians are from Sicily, it is necessary, and the Archbishop himself says so, to have a good Sicilian priest.

When we are through with the Missions, we shall hold a great benefit fair under the patronage of Italian and American ladies. Last January one of these ladies who contributed very much to the success of the fair, died of pneumonia. She was a Danish Protestant converted to Catholicism. We have reasons to believe that she got sick because of the work she did for the fair when it was very cold.

Your Excellency will remember that Father Manoritta had asked for a Missionary as his assistant. Having examined the matter carefully, I decided against it, because Father Manoritta is disliked by the community and because none of the various assistants he had lasted very long, apparently through his fault. The last doubts I had were dispelled by the Archbishop who advised me not to assign an assistant to Father Manoritta. I have advised Father Provincial of this, because some time ago Father Manoritta turned directly to him. To Father Manoritta, whom I saw before going to the Archbishop, and who questioned me about an assistant, I replied that it was difficult to assign him one because we want our Missionaries to be independent. When I see him again, I shall be more frank.

I am thinking rather that we would do well to assign an assistant to Father Gambera as soon as possible.

We have met a good young man, an American-born son of Sicilians, who would like to come to Piacenza to study to be a Missionary. A German lady has declared that she is willing to support him with five hundred lire a year. He speaks sufficient Italian, but speaks English better and this could be very useful to us, because if the Italian language is helpful to us for starting a Mission, the English is absolutely necessary to continue it.

After the Missions and the fair, I shall pay a short visit to an uncle of mine who lives not too far from here. Then I shall resume my travels to the North.

During the last few days, I have made my spiritual exercises, of which I was badly in need, with the Lazarists, among whom there are two good Italian priests named Verrina and Acquarone.

Your Excellency has not said anything to me in recent letters about St. Louis. I hope you haven't forgotten it and that you will send a good Missionary there in a few months.

I am afraid we must recall Father Chiariglione from Cincinnati, sending someone else in his place, for the following reasons:

1) Despite the fact that he has obtained pledges for eight thousand dollars (a sum never collected by any other Mission) he still hasn't bought the land for the church, and the pastor told me that Father Chiariglione is not a business man, as one has to be, more or less, to build a church in the United States.

2) It seems that he is starting in Cincinnati the same trouble he got into in New Orleans. I would be happy if my fears were unfounded.

I believe that in St. Louis and in Cincinnati Father Paroli would be suitable to the Italian community, and I think Father Morelli shares my opinion, at least from what I have heard when anyone speaks about Father Paroli.

I have a doubt. Could we leave Father Vincenzo Sciolla alone in Cincinnati? I believe that a strong and healthy man who has also the necessary qualifications would be enough there, at least for the time being.

In Cleveland, while waiting for the Capitani affair to be settled, Father Strumia thought it proper to give in to the repeated requests by Msgr. Boff, throwing himself into the project of building a new church in East Cleveland, where there is a growing Italian colony of about eight hundred souls. Father Strumia has written me that he already bought the land and collected about one thousand five hundred dollars. Thus, if Fr. Capitani should be sent away, which I hope will happen soon for the sake of those poor Italians (unless he should change entirely) we would have in Cleveland two Missions instead of one, and we would have to send another Missionary there. On my way back to the North I will stop, if I can, in Cincinnati and in Cleveland.

Father Molinari writes me from Pittsburgh that he is very pleased with Father Soville whom Father Morelli sent him when he fell sick. He is feeling better now.

Your Excellency must have been informed that Father Lotti, who has been ill with pneumonia, was advised by his doctor to return to Italy. It would be a misfortune to lose this young priest who has passionately dedicated himself to preaching and has succeeded so well. But let us hope that, having regained his health in his native climate, he might soon rejoin the Missionaries on this side of the Atlantic.

Even Father Cibelli, in Buffalo, has been very ill, according to what I have heard from Father Martinelli.

Your Excellency has not yet told me anything regarding our request advanced years ago, such as the faculty to bless the Via Crucis even in those places

where there are Franciscans, and the naming of Father Serpa, pastor of the Portuguese in Boston, as Apostolic Missionary, etc.

Since Your Excellency has told me that the Cristoforo Colombo Institute now has a good director, when I return to Italy I will try to take along with me two or three boys from New York who want to study to be Missionaries, in addition to the young Sicilian mentioned in my previous letter.

I am planning to be in Piacenza in April or May. Therefore, I may still receive another letter from Your Excellency.

Father Gambera and Martinelli join me in asking for your blessing. Pray for me and believe me

of Your Most Illustrious and
Most Reverend Excellency,
very humble son in Christ,
Father Francesco Zaboglio.

43. BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI TO FATHER F. ZABOGLIO

Piacenza, March 4, 1892

Dear Father Francesco:

The other day I received your letter of February 12, and I am losing no time in answering your several questions. First, I must say that I would be happy if the laudable wishes of the good Father Giacomo (Gambera) were realized, since he has done so much good, and has sacrificed himself for the poor Italian colony of New Orleans. To this end, the support of the Archbishop would be very useful. Let us not talk of Father Manoritta any longer. He doesn't enjoy the esteem of the Archbishop and, therefore, he is not for our cause and it is not convenient to be tied to him in any way. It is likely that after Easter I shall resume my travels to the Italian cities to make our work known. God willing, I shall go as far as Palermo where I shall do my best to find a Sicilian priest to send to New Orleans to help Father Gambera. Tell him to pray and hope.

As for the boys of whom you wrote, I must warn you that to put priests, theology students and boys together in the Institute is a very serious business which viewed from all angles, is not convenient at all. Experience has demonstrated that we cannot have another Noah's ark, which accomplished its purpose and cannot be duplicated. Moreover, we must consider the economic side of it, thinking about the enormous cost of providing the Institute with teachers. Finally, we cannot lose sight of the most important thing: decorum and purpose. My idea and that of the Holy Father is that the boys of Italian immigrants who have a vocation for the priesthood should be taught Latin and Italian in America, and sent here to Italy when they are ready to begin to study theology or at least, philosophy.

This way we can be certain of their vocation and save them precious time, avoiding us heavy sacrifices without deriving any advantage. How can you rely

on a ten or twelve year old boy? Those who came here years ago were all good boys, but will they succeed? God only knows. In the meantime, I have put them in the seminary so that they can continue their regular studies, and, should they realize that the priesthood is not for them, they can follow another career.

To help Father Bandini I will send Father Francesco (Beccherini), a young priest full of energy who would gladly prepare these boys as best he can and then send them here in due time, thus starting the small college of which we have spoken so many times in the best possible manner. When you get to New York speak about this very seriously to the Fathers Bandini, Morelli and Vicentini, and then let me know what all of you have decided. Father Lotti has arrived here in fairly good health and has written me from his hometown, that he is improving, and that soon he hopes to be able to go where love attracts him: where God's angels count and sweat drop by drop. Let us hope that his wishes and ours will be fulfilled by God, and that he may return with the first expedition.

As for the permits of which you have written several times, be informed that I did write to Rome for them and that some were granted, but as yet not the one regarding the Via Crucis. I must, therefore, go there too and try to solicit them and to inform the new Prefect of Propaganda Fide, who took the place of the late Cardinal Simeoni, who loved us and whose loss we lament.

I embrace you *in Domino* and bless you together with Father Giacomo (Gambera) and all the others.

Affectionately yours in Jesus Christ,
+ Gio. Battista Bishop

P.S. Do not forget the promise I made to the Bishop of Hartford. He wrote me recently, urging me to send him at least one Missionary. He enclosed some money which is very welcome. You may visit him, when you can, and try to satisfy him. Farewell.

44. FATHER F. ZABOGLIO TO BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI

Jennings, La., March 7, 1892

Most Reverend Excellency:

I am in the countryside, where I came to see a relative of mine and to hear confessions of some Italians who, for a long time, have not seen a priest, who speaks their language. During the week, I shall return to New Orleans. Father Gambera will begin his spiritual exercises next Sunday evening, and when he is through I will go North. The benefit fair he held produced one thousand forty dollars, and some other money, still owed, has to be collected.

On my way North I will stop briefly in Cincinnati and Cleveland as those Missionaries wish me to visit them, and then I shall go to Pittsburgh and, perhaps, to Buffalo. I shall also go to Wilmington, Delaware, whose Bishop asks for Missionaries, and where I shall gather the information to send to Your

Excellency. They want me in Boston and Providence, too, although those Missions are near to Father Provincial who undoubtedly will help them as much as he can.

I am enclosing herewith a letter by the good Father Mantese who has been very upset and disappointed for not having obtained the third Missionary. We should try to help him. Fr. Annovazzi was sent to Buffalo by Father Provincial when Father Gibelli was sick, and he is still there.

Father Bandini would like to have Father Paroli in Castle Garden (Father Carlo Bertorelli is no longer there, I think, or works little there for reasons I ignore, and on Sundays goes to celebrate Mass in Bridgeport).

I would like to suggest, if I may, that if Father Paroli were removed from Providence, he be assigned to St. Louis or to the Louisiana settlements as a traveling Missionary. In Louisiana many groups of Italians are scattered here and there, each group consisting of several hundreds, up to a thousand (altogether they are several thousands). They never go to church. Basically they are all good people, not yet contaminated by city vices. But their children grow without education. The Archbishop would like to have a Missionary for those Italians whose task would be that of visiting the various settlements.

This part of the country is like Brazil, and Father Paroli would find just the place he has been looking for. Although somewhat strange, he has many good qualities. He is beyond suspicion as far as morals are concerned; has a strong physique and an inflexible character and could live here with almost nothing. In St. Louis he would feel at home with his good knowledge of the English language, since this is a rather ancient colony where English is used more than elsewhere. Your Excellency had planned to send him to Hartford, but allow me to remark that for that city a less strong Missionary than Fr. Paroli and one not endowed with his qualities, would be sufficient, since that Italian colony is composed of only seven or eight hundred souls. Moreover, Hartford is not too distant from New York and therefore the Missionary could always be surveyed and assisted by Father Provincial, whereas this is not the case regarding St. Louis and the various settlements of Louisiana.

I am saying all this because Your Excellency wishes to know our opinions; but of course you will decide as you think best.

At the end of my travels to visit the various houses, I consider my mission to the United States completed, and shall return to Piacenza. Meanwhile, I implore your blessings and, kissing your sacred ring, declare myself

of Your Most Illustrious
and Most Reverend Excellency,
Your very devoted son in Christ,
Father Francesco Zaboglio.

45. BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI TO FATHER F. ZABOGLIO

**History of the SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION – VOLUME 2
APPENDIX I**

Piacenza, May 3, 1892

Dear Father Francesco:

I believe this letter will reach you in New York, where I wish you to remain until the new Missionaries will be firmly settled in their respective places, as directed in my letter of March 19.

Take care of the Hartford Mission. Go there to see the Bishop, and settle this matter. I gave him my word.

Father Ludovico Martinelli wishes to be transferred. If it cannot be avoided, try to please him, in agreement with the wishes of Father Provincial, and the two new Councilors. Think of your School project. I repeat, that to send boys here who are still too young, is neither useful nor convenient. If it can be started there cautiously, discuss a plan and make a decision.

I went to Lucca to give a lecture, and the Archbishop urged me to think about San Francisco, California, where many people from his diocese live. Could you not begin discussions with the Archbishop regarding the establishment of a Mission there in due time in the future?

I embrace you tenderly, recommend you to God's protection and bless you.

Affectionately in Jesus Christ,
+ Gio. Battista Bishop

46. FATHER F. ZABOGLIO TO BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI

117 Broadway, Cincinnati, Ohio
Feast of the Finding of Holy Cross, 1892
May 3, 1892

Excellency:

Since April first, the day I left New Orleans, I have done nothing but travel. From Cincinnati I went to Cleveland, and then, because the Bishop was out of town, went to Buffalo; then back to Cleveland and again to Cincinnati. Perhaps I cannot do much, but at times an occasional word, a suggestion, an advice may help. Sometimes a wrong can be easily corrected.

Regarding the four cities mentioned above, I am sending you a separate short update.

About New Orleans, I shall only say that Father Gambera desperately needs another Missionary, and I pray God that Your Excellency may find not only one, but several good priests in the Naples region and in Sicily. However, a new Missionary cannot go to New Orleans before September, because only then, according to the Archbishop, can he acclimatize himself without damaging his health.

From Cincinnati I will return to Cleveland, trying to do some good there; then I will go to Buffalo, and to Boston and from there to Providence, New Haven, Bridgeport and New York from where I shall sail, God willing.

**History of the SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION – VOLUME 2
APPENDIX I**

Your Excellency will forgive me if I haven't answered your letter of last March. I am answering it now.

Regarding the boys who would like to come to Piacenza, I shall do as Your Excellency says. As for the School, I shall speak with the Fathers named by Your Excellency.

As soon as the new group arrives, I shall try to assign a Missionary to the Bishop of Hartford.

I hope that with this new group a Missionary for St. Louis will also arrive, where he is awaited by that large Italian colony.

I pray God that He will accompany Your Excellency in the sacred mission which you have probably already begun in Italy, and that he may keep you strong and healthy.

We have received with great pleasure Your Excellency's circular. It is the dear and pleasant voice of a distant Father, and it will do us a lot of good.

We thank you especially for having given us a Protector in heaven in the person of the great St. Charles, so that from now on we shall be proud to call ourselves Missionari di San Carlo.

Fathers Chiariglione and Sciolla join me in sending our most humble regards, and in kissing your sacred ring. We implore your blessing.

Of Your Most Illustrious
and Most Reverend Excellency,
Your Very humble son in Christ,
Father Francesco Zaboglio

P.S. Please see if you can send me a new portable altar with the arriving Missionaries.

**AN UPDATE ON THE MISSIONS OF
CINCINNATI, PITTSBURGH, BUFFALO AND CLEVELAND**

Cincinnati, Ohio
May 3, 1892
Feast of the Finding of Holy Cross

Cincinnati. Through the apostolic work and the unselfish cooperation of Father Angelo Chiariglione, and through the prudence and wisdom of Father Vincenzo Sciolla (helped by Father Strumia who was asked to come here for a few days from Cleveland) they were recently able to buy two houses for eleven thousand dollars which will be demolished to make room for a church. To be more specific, two good Italians named Brichetto and Girolamo Arata, seeing that nothing was being accomplished, together with the Missionaries, and a few other worthy Italians, bought the houses in their name, and offered them to the Congregation (as the parish is called here) for the same price plus the

transaction expenses. The Congregation accepted them, and now the Curia's lawyer will prepare the deed in which the above named gentlemen Bricchetto and Arata are the sellers, and the Archbishop, the buyer, as a representative of the Congregation. They already have six thousand dollars and another three thousand dollars has been pledged. After the deed is signed the houses will be demolished and the church built. The money will come. There is much enthusiasm, aroused by the sermons and exhortations of Father Strumia. The Italians wanted the latter to remain here rather than Father Chiariglione, who is losing his memory I think because of old age and sickness. But Father Strumia is needed in Cleveland more than in Cincinnati, and besides, he himself wanted to return there, as in fact he did.

As proof of the good intentions of the Italians, I shall say that some of them planned to find a dozen people each of whom would pledge to pay a twelfth part (or nine hundred dollars) of the cost of the houses, and then give the houses to the Congregation as a gift. Six donors have already been found.

For the time being, the Missionaries are performing their services in another chapel.

Pittsburgh. On Sunday in Albis, the Bishop, in the presence of a large crowd of people of every nationality both Catholic and Protestant, solemnly blessed the cornerstone of the new church. In this country this function is performed after the so-called "basement" is finished, and so it was done in Pittsburgh. The basement is constructed of stone, and the church itself will be made of brick. Before the blessing, a parade marched along the main street and at the appointed hour stopped in front of the church.

At the head of the parade were members of various Italian Societies. They were followed by thirty men on horseback and by many cars with the most influential Italian families. In the parade there were several brass bands and someone carried the standard banner of St. Peter (to whom the church is dedicated). This and several Italian and American banners also carried in the parade were ordered from New York. The Bishop was escorted by forty American Knights of St. John. The members of the Societies, and the Knights wore their gala uniforms. A speech in Italian was delivered by Father Bandini, and another was delivered in English by the Chancellor of the Diocese.

Your Excellency must have already known about this by reading the American newspapers we sent. But the papers did not say that the honor of carrying the St. Peter's standard banner for the first time was auctioned and produced the goodly sum of one hundred dollars paid by Mr. Monteverde, the highest bidder. Are not these things really consoling for the poor Missionaries and Your Excellency, their beloved superior?

On the following day, work was resumed and the church will be finished in a few months. The Fathers Molinari and Sciolla are doing very well and are loved by everyone.

Buffalo. At the end of last year the new church, dedicated to St. Anthony of Padua, was blessed. It has a magnificent basement, well lighted and ventilated, and it will be used as a school when the nuns arrive. Both the basement and the church are heated. But, since Your Excellency must have received minute reports on this, I turn to something else.

Father Annovazzi has captivated the sympathy of the Italians in Buffalo. Father Gibelli needs some rest. He says that he had too many things to think about and his brain is tired. I advised him to spend a few weeks elsewhere in one of our Houses and I think he will do so.

Cleveland. As I have already written to Your Excellency, the Administrator Msgr. Boff, being unable to remove Father Capitani without trouble, did not want to act with authority, and left it to the Bishop to decide, when he arrives. In the meantime, he advised Father Giuseppe Strumia to try to erect a church in East Cleveland. I was there last Wednesday.

The Italians of East Cleveland had bought land and planned to build a church. But our Missionary was compelled to celebrate Mass here and there in distant churches. I told the people that it was improper to leave their Missionary without a place in which he could perform his duty, and that they should at least rent a hall to be used as a chapel, until they could build a church.

They looked around but could not find a suitable place. Then Mr. Carabelli proposed to build a wooden chapel on the land they had bought, leaving the space for the church untouched. The plan was approved. They hired many carpenters who began to work on Maundy Thursday, and gave us the chapel ready on Saturday at noon. I sent a telegram to Father Paroli asking him to send me a portable altar (since we could not have everything we needed), and while we waited for it some nuns lent us what was necessary to celebrate Mass.

Thus, on Easter Sunday, two Masses were celebrated there, the second a high Mass. We had the Italian musical group of Cleveland, and many people from that city came. Forty members of the Bersaglieri Society in uniform marched along the main streets half an hour before Mass, and at the appointed time were in the chapel acting as a guards of honor. The captain and lieutenant collected the donations which amounted to forty-nine dollars. This covered one quarter of the cost of the chapel. You can imagine the joy of the Italians, and the surprise of the Americans. These are peculiar customs for the immigrants, but good and comforting.

Now the Italians want a permanent church, and they will build one. When it is ready, the chapel will be used as a school or for some other worthy activity.

The first time I went to Cleveland, last month, the bishop was absent. The second time I went there I spoke to him, and he told me that Msgr. Boff had not said anything regarding the Italian Church of St. Anthony and Father Capitani. He told me that when Msgr. Boff returns (he was absent), he would question him; that in the meantime Father Strumia should perform his ecclesiastical duties in East Cleveland, and that if Father Capitani were

removed, Father Strumia would be assigned to the Church of St. Anthony, from which he could also go to East Cleveland until that church would be erected. I learned that Msgr. Boff was in Cincinnati, and I went there to see him. He explained to me the reasons why he had not yet spoken to the Bishop, and promised me that he would speak to him on his return to Cleveland, the same day. This took place a few days ago.

Father Francesco Zaboglio,
of the Missionaries of St. Charles

47. FATHER F. ZABOGLIO TO BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI

Buffalo, NY,
July 15, 1892

Most Reverend Excellency:

I had written the previous letter, which I sent registered mail, when I received the enclosed letter from Mother Cabrini, which was sent to Cincinnati and reached me here.

I am sending it to Your Excellency so that you may be informed of everything. I haven't learned anything from our Missionaries regarding our hospital and the school.

I implore your blessing and, kissing your sacred ring, declare myself

Of Your Most Illustrious and
Most Reverend Excellency,
Your very devoted son in Christ,
Father Francesco Zaboglio

48. BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI TO FATHER ZABOGLIO

Piacenza, July 30, 1892

My Dear Francesco:

I received your letter of the 12th, and I thank you for all the news you gave me. It seems that the worst affairs are those in New York, and to them you must dedicate your attention. First of all, try to get together with Father Provincial, and with the two Councilors. Discuss everything with calm and charity, and leave the most important decisions to me, explaining all the reasons pro and con about everything. We must always hear what the Archbishop has to say, and must show him all possible deference.

Father Martinelli wrote me that he would like to be transferred to another Mission. Try to satisfy him, or better still, to pacify him. Talk to Vicentini and Bandini, so that no one can say that we are moving in two different directions, creating a dangerous dualism which would paralyze every good enterprise.

Apropos of this: is there such a dualism? Is it true that the Missionaries are divided into two groups, one headed by you and one by Morelli? If this were true, it would cause me great sorrow. If there existed even a shadow of such evil, see that it is eliminated, and do not leave New York before peace, unity and harmony are established.

During your stay in New York, examine the situation carefully. Ask the Archbishop and the new Brooklyn Bishop for their advice; take notes, pray and then tell me what you propose to do in order to remedy the situation.

I have celebrated a Mass for your father's soul. To him the glory of Heaven; to you my sincere condolences.

Write soon regarding the school and the hospital. *Omnis propter Deum et secundum ordine fiant.*

I embrace you *in Domino* and bless you.

Affectionately yours in Jesus Christ,
+ Gio. Battista Bishop

49. BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI TO FATHER F. ZABOGLIO

Piacenza, August 9, 1892

Dear Father Francesco:

I would regret Father Gibelli's leaving the Mission. I know of no agreements; the agreements made with me are the vows, and a Missionary cannot leave his place before five years have passed. You must tell the good Father Antonio (Gibelli), that I urge him to continue his work with his usual alacrity, making himself always worthy of praise before God and men. I hope that he will comply with my desire, and that he will wait for me in Buffalo. We shall decide what to do when we meet. Write him in this sense.

I believe that the negotiations with Father Giuseppe Abbo have been concluded. After a trial period, I shall send him to Father Gibelli. You may assure the latter now. Assuming that this letter will reach you in New York, I urge you to see, together with Father Provincial, if Father Paolo Novati can be assigned to the port Mission together with Father Bandini. He desires this assignment, as he wrote me, and I have no objection. I will let you decide.

Father Martinelli, too, asked my permission to come to Italy. I don't think this is either opportune or prudent. I have asked for news and I am convinced that it is better that he remains there for the time being. Tell him that he must consider my refusal as proof of my sincere affection for him. Poor son: I have never been able to satisfy his desires as I wanted to do! Try to comfort him if you can, send him elsewhere as he wished in the past.

Tell Father Provincial that I received his last letter. I am happy to hear from him that there is no dualism of any sort; that you two are in agreement, etc. Let us thank God. I write very frankly about what I consider useful for you to

know, and if the bad news I receive is not true, so much the better. To you and to him, I shall never cease to say that you both must seek unity of mind and heart in Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Apostolic Vicar of Abyssinia asked me to send him two Missionaries for Massaua. Nothing has been concluded yet, but I expect him here shortly. Father Rolleri has written that the dear Father Vicentini is willing to go to Massaua. If we could take him away from New York without upsetting things, he would be just the man for the post because he knows the country, and also the language, I think. Meanwhile thank him for me.

Regarding the hospital, the nuns and the schools, I can only say that we have tried to do some good and we may have failed. So what? *Humiliamini sub potenti manu Dei, ut vos exaltet in tempore opportuno: omnem sollicitudinem vestram projecientes in eum: quia Ipsi cura est de vobis.*

With this wish I embrace and bless you affectionately together with the Father Provincial and all the Fathers and Brothers.

Affectionately yours in Jesus Christ,
+ Gio. Battista Bishop

P.S. I am changing the envelope and sending this to Boston, because from a letter by Father Martini, I have learned that you returned there. Tell him, therefore, that I received his last two letters; that I have taken notice of their contents; that I exhort him to act as in the past, that *patientia vobis necessario est ut reportetis repromissiones*; and that he must continue with noble alacrity to perform his duty. You must induce Vincenzo (Astorri) to change, for I have been told that he is a burden to everyone and displeases the faithful, always on account of his brother. Try to speak to him through the heart, for he is tender-hearted, and will gladly receive *monita salutis*. I bless *ex corde* the whole community: Fathers and Brothers. Farewell.

+ G.B. Bishop

50. FATHER F. ZABOGLIO TO BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI

Genoa, (Italy), January 27, 1895

Most Reverend Excellency:

I am finally able to give you a report on my trip.

On the feast of St. Anthony the Abbot, toward evening, we reached the port of Genoa; but because we were coming from a place where there had been an epidemic, we were allowed to disembark only on the afternoon of the following day.

The trip was rather difficult especially on the way back. However, I did not suffer at all, thank God, except for a cold on arriving here due to the change in temperature. Just think that from the Canary Islands down the thermometer

always indicated about thirty degrees centigrade.

Now, however, I feel fine and the voyage has done me good.

We touched the ports of Santos, Rio de Janeiro and Bahia. In Rio and Santos I went ashore. In the latter city I went twice to visit my former parishioners in the Immigrants Shelter which is a large wooden shed built on an island, partly in the countryside, and which can hold about three thousand people. The immigrants are kept there for one, two, or three days and then taken by train to San Paolo in another great shelter of stone and brick, from where they are scattered to the four winds, according to each of their destinations. Those poor immigrants, who had begun to love me, greeted me joyfully in their temporary residence.

There I found a good Italian man, an old-time Christian who is a kind of factotum in the shelter. He is always busy doing some service for those people, and is, above all, a rigid guardian of morality. Among other things he ordered his soldiers to punish a sailor from the ship *King Umberto* who had dared to go there and commit indecorous acts. In the evening, I saw in the officers' room the back of that sailor full of pitiful bruises. I am sure he will remember his visit to that immigration shelter in Santos for a long time.

I would like to beg Your Excellency to send a small gift to that good employee with the next Missionary you send there. He has with him his wife, mother-in-law, and two brothers-in-law also employed in the shelter, all good Italians. His name is Santiago Maurizi, interpreter in the Santos Immigration Center.

He and many others spoke with enthusiasm about dear Father Marchetti. I could not go to San Paolo because of the short time of the stopover.

On Christmas Day we were in the port of Rio de Janeiro. Having celebrated Mass aboard ship, I went to visit the Salesian Fathers in Nichteroy. They greeted me well and I stayed there until the following day.

I haven't seen any of the bishops.

Aboard ship I celebrated Mass on all holydays and several times on week-days, always saying a few words.

Four babies were born aboard ship and I baptized them. Four others died, in addition to the mother of one of them. The four babies were buried at sea, and the woman who died on the quarantined island, was buried in a little cemetery where the body was taken by an officer in a boat. In the cemetery about thirty crosses mark the last resting place of other passengers and sailors.

Now to something else.

Father Teofilo (Glesaz) and I will move at the beginning of February, going to live near the office of the "Patronato", between the station and the port. We shall also relinquish the use of the St. Teodoro chapel and shall take another in San Giovanni di Pré. The place where we are now, at the edge of the city, is not suitable for our Mission.

I have the pleasure of confirming that Father Teofilo (Glesaz) is doing well. I am certain that the Abbot of St. Teodoro, when we leave the chapel, will miss him

very much.

Of the work of Father Maldotti, and of the good he is doing, I am certain Your Excellency is well informed. How much he has castigated certain hotel owners can be gathered from the complaints they have recently presented to the Prefect, as mentioned in Il Cittadino of the 20th of this month. Let us thank God.

Kissing your sacred ring and imploring your blessing, I am happy to declare myself

Of Your Most Illustrious
and Most Reverend Excellency,
Your very devoted son in Christ,
Father Francesco Zaboglio

51. BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI TO FATHER F. ZABOGLIO

Piacenza, February 4, 1895

My dear Father Francesco:

I greet with joy your return from Brazil, and I am happy for the good work you have accomplished. I am sure God will bless our work if we become worthy of his love by living a saintly life and by having faith in Him. Father Agostino (Zaboglio) offered me one hundred fifty lire, and I was happy to learn that he has been named Rector of the Theological Seminary. May God bless and help him in that important position. I know the zeal of Father Maldotti and I thank God for it.

As for Father Teofilo (Glesaz), he no longer belongs to our Congregation. It would be almost ridiculous if he were accepted in one of our Houses after having been dismissed from the Mother House. However, as I told you verbally, you could keep him with you, and if he acts well you could use his work. Later on we shall decide what to do.

When you move you must study the best way of remaining all together. A move would be a good thing from every point of view. I bless you from the bottom of my heart, and with you I bless Father Maldotti and Father Teofilo. I beg you to pray for me and reaffirm myself

Affectionately yours in Jesus Christ,
+ Gio. Battista Bishop

52. FATHER F. ZABOGLIO TO BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI

Genoa (Italy), Via Pre, 76
April 9, 1895

Most Reverend Excellency:

Yesterday I went to see Signor Tommaso Canepa, of whom I have already

spoken to Your Excellency. He has not yet made a decision, but he is inclined to establish in his home a school of Missionaries for the emigrants. He added that he is planning to buy an old convent which is located in an excellent position. Probably, as soon as he can, he will come to Piacenza to confer with Your Excellency; but first he will write to make sure you will be in town.

Should you come to an agreement, it would be very advantageous for our Congregation and for the poor Italians abroad.

I advise Your Excellency that it is very difficult, not to say impossible, to have a Mass celebrated at 12:30 on Sunday in Albis. Yesterday, I visited many churches to request it, and I shall visit others. But if I cannot find a church for Mass at that hour, a priest must be sent from there, so that I may be able to leave on the 18th, since it is a question of justice and consideration towards a very worthy pastor. At any rate, I will write again.

I implore your blessing, and kissing your sacred ring, declare myself

Your very devoted son in Christ,
Father Francesco Zaboglio

P.S. Regarding Signor Canepa's affair, I haven't said anything to anyone, except hinting it to Father Molinari.

The address of said Signor Tommaso Canepa is Vico Biscotti 8, interno 10, Genoa.

53. BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI TO FATHER F. ZABOGLIO

Piacenza, Maundy Thursday 1895

My dear Father Francesco:

Very well. If God wants to give you the help of Signor Canepa I bless this gentleman with all my heart.

Yesterday I received a letter from Father Vicentini who said that he has again assumed the post of Provincial Superior, that he will assemble the Councilors, and that he will do what I asked him to. I think, therefore, that your departure should be postponed until a later date. In the meantime some, if not all, of the matters will be settled and your task will be easier. Therefore, for the moment stay where you are.

I send you my best wishes and I bless you.

Affectionately yours in Jesus Christ,
+ Gio. Battista Bishop

54. FATHER F. ZABOGLIO TO BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI

Genoa (Italy), April 30, 1895

Most Reverend Excellency:

I have related to Signor Canepa, who is at this moment near me, what Your Excellency wrote in the last letter.

He says that he would like Your Excellency to make some comments on the things he proposed and that afterwards he would come to Piacenza. He would like to see the project started and would be happy to comply with your Excellency's desires even if they are contrary to his ideas. Once the project is begun, he would be willing to withdraw from it if his presence is not necessary. In that event he would only reserve for himself the right to get back whatever he has given, without any harm to the good functioning of the institution. He has said these last things for our mutual peace and tranquility. If Your Excellency should find another way of insuring such peace and tranquility for the present and for the future, he would let Your Excellency's decisions prevail.

He begs Your Excellency to write to him indicating the day, possibly between next Saturday and Monday, on which you could receive him in Piacenza.

Signor Canepa and I kiss your sacred ring, and imploring your blessing, I declare myself

Your very devoted son in Christ,
Father Francesco Zaboglio

55. FATHER F. ZABOGLIO TO BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI

April 30, 1895

Most Reverend Excellency:

I have just finished a letter to Your Excellency dictated by Signor Canepa.

Perhaps Your Excellency dislikes the last condition expressed in that letter, that is, that he reserves the right to be reimbursed, etc. But I think that we could find a way of getting together on this. What he especially wishes is to avoid any eventual change in the purpose and use of his property.

As for the other minor things mentioned in the letter, he admits that since his purpose is that of founding an Institution for Missionaries, we cannot do everything as he does now with the young men whom he takes care of.

I believe we will come to an agreement, which will be to our advantage. At any rate, it is better to make all conditions clear.

Since he wishes it, Your Excellency might, I believe, write him a word of encouragement, after which he would come to Piacenza.

He told me he has informed the Archbishop of this affair and that the Archbishop approves it. I shall see the latter today or tomorrow and I will mention this.

Kissing your hand in a hurry I declare myself,

Your very devoted son,
Father Francesco Zaboglio

56. FATHER F. ZABOGLIO TO BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI

Genoa (Italy), May 1, 1895

Most Reverend Excellency:

Today I saw the Archbishop and I spoke to him about the Canepa affair. He said that it would be a good thing and he would be pleased if it came to a happy conclusion. He added that he would enjoy a visit from Your Excellency in Genoa, especially since Your Excellency has promised it already. If you came you could see the House. For this reason and because he must leave town for a while, he told me that he will be in the city on the 10th and 11th and from the 13th to the 18th.

I implore your blessing and, kissing your sacred ring, declare myself,

Your very devoted son in Christ,
Father Francesco Zaboglio

57. FATHER F. ZABOGLIO TO BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI

Boston, Massachusetts July 4, 1895

Most Reverend Excellency:

Father Astorri may sail for Italy next Saturday on a French liner. He had wished to be assigned to Cincinnati with Father Lotti on condition that he would remain there as Pastor when Father Lotti returns from Italy, which he thinks will be soon. Naturally, we cannot grant him this request. Your Excellency must have heard enough about this priest from Father Vicentini, and therefore I will not say more, except that unfortunately he is exceptionally stubborn, and usually stubbornness is associated with a good dose of pride. It is probable that he will ask to be sent back to the Missions, especially to the United States. We must not delay any longer. Although at the beginning he acted properly, nevertheless he has failed.

Now I must substitute for him at the Sunday Masses.

Now, concerning Father Sandri. When I reached New York, the following conditions prevailed: the Archbishop told him that, if he did not obey his orders, he would be suspended in July. What could we do? I consulted with Fathers Vicentini and Bandini (there was no time to speak to the other Councilors), and to Father Strumia as a parish priest. We all agreed to beg the Archbishop to hold the execution of his threat. One reason for this was to have time to examine the affair carefully and to see if we could find a different solution. Another was that at the Roosevelt Street church a priest is needed to supplant him, and we have none. It is easy to say: let us get rid of such and such a priest. But, when we get rid of a priest, how can the other two take care of such a large population? Moreover, by eliminating one priest, we eliminate

two Sunday Masses (since almost all of them celebrate two Masses on Sundays), and by eliminating two Masses the church loses a good sum of money on that day, which is a heavy damage for that church and which endangers it to the point of forcing its closure just when it is doing well. What I have said about this church applies to all the others, more or less.

We are now missing a priest in Boston. If we take Sandri from New York, there will be one less priest there. Hence, we need a priest for Boston, and another will be needed for New York. In Boston, I can replace the missing priest on Sundays, but if I have to stay here for too long a time, I shall be unable to go on visiting.

Could not Your Excellency at least send Riccardo (Lorenzoni) soon, since you had promised me to send him for Pentecost?

I don't know whether Father Vicentini advised Your Excellency that Father Beccherini is in Syracuse. I asked Father Vicentini why he had sent him there, when we need more priests at the existing Missions, and he replied that when they refuse to obey we must let them go wherever they wish.

Please continue to address your letters to Father Vicentini who will give them to me.

I implore you once more to send me some priests, at least one now and others as soon as you can. With God's help I believe that things will improve.

Accept my homage and that of the other Fathers including the Polish Father, and bless me.

Your very devoted son in Christ,
Father Francesco Zaboglio

58. FATHER F. ZABOGLIO TO BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI

Boston, Massachusetts July 24, 1895

Most Reverend Excellency:

Since we are near the end of July, I think it proper to send Your Excellency the monthly report on the Missions.

Here in Boston things have calmed down although Father Astorri has done plenty of damage. Having heard that he intends to return to the United States, I again pray Your Excellency the prayer of preventing this at any cost. Among other things, it will be a deserved punishment for him, and an example to the others.

Fathers Vicentini and Alussi are here in Boston. The latter tells me that things are better in New Haven, and that Father Sovilla is doing well in Meriden.

About New York, when Fathers Vicentini and Bandini arrived from Italy, I questioned them regarding the projected transfer of Father Strumia, and they both were against it. Father Vicentini reaffirmed his conviction saying that the

energy shown by Father Strumia's zeal was instrumental in adjusting our problems there. As for Father Sandri, I cannot do anything until I have a priest at my disposal, and I trust Your Excellency will send me one soon.

Father Beccherini wrote me from Syracuse saying that he has difficulties, and would like me to visit him. I have replied that I cannot go because we need three priests here. A few days ago, Father Novati came here and said that things are going well in Providence.

Up to now I haven't been able to bring all the Councilors together. Therefore, I limit myself for the time being to hearing their opinions as I see them individually.

I beg Your Excellency, as I did verbally, not to give any assignments to the Missionaries, either verbally or in writing, because it may happen (as it has happened already) that due to changed circumstances, the assignments indicated by Your Excellency have to be altered, and the Missionary on the strength of the assignment received from you does as he pleases. I would prefer that if Your Excellency wants to assign a Missionary to a particular place that you would inform me privately. I add that it would be useful, in sending me a new Missionary, to give me all possible information regarding his character, attitude and other things which would help me in assigning him to a place for which he is best qualified.

Perhaps, by this time Signor Canepa has come to Piacenza from Genoa to see Your Excellency. I think it is advantageous to befriend this man. Even if nothing could be settled with him at present, perhaps we could come to an agreement later on. Unquestionably, he has shown the inclination to change certain conditions that our Congregation cannot accept.

Father Vicentini tells me that in New York, some of his letters were not delivered to him or were opened and read. Therefore, if Your Excellency has to write to me now, it is better to address the mail to Boston at 228 North Street. As soon as Father Vicentini returns to New York he will rent a Post Office Box so that no one can read his mail except the person who has the key. Please pray for me and bless me.

Kissing your sacred ring, I declare myself,

Your very affectionate son in Christ, Father
Francesco Zaboglio

P.S. If we hadn't had so many troubles here, I would have tried to obtain some money from the church or from the Society of San Marco to pay for the passage of a Missionary; but at this time, it is impossible. Father Gibelli has thanked me for the one hundred and fifteen dollars. He appears willing to take vows.

59. BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI TO FATHER F. ZABOGLIO

**History of the SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION – VOLUME 2
APPENDIX I**

Piacenza, July 28, 1895

My dear Francesco:

I have received your two letters. Thank you for the news, although unpleasant. But one goes to Heaven through the path of Calvary. When Astorri arrives he will get what he deserves. He has no chance of being reaccepted. He has shown his true colors. As for Sandri, examine everything with calm. I would be very happy to know that he is not as bad as I thought! But if he shows himself to be what I believe he is (and with cause), out he goes without delay. Tell Father Vicentini that I have received his letters, and that for the moment it is inconvenient to change anything. The Superior is the Visitor. Let him help you with his work and advice. That is enough. A title, after all, doesn't carry much weight. Before leaving for Italy, do as I told you regarding the provincial set up. To Fr. Gambera, besides giving my affectionate greeting, say that calm, patience and trust in God are powerful weapons and that *desiderium peccatorum peribit*.

In September, I shall send Father Riccardo Lorenzoni and Father Giuseppe Quadranti. The former is ready, but Giuseppe has not yet finished his studies. I shall send him because of our extreme need and in the late part of September they will come together. We must think about the travel expenses. Perhaps Father Bandini could obtain some travel tickets at a discount. Let me know how you have found things in general, if you have spoken to the bishops, etc. I embrace you tenderly, and bless you together with our Fathers and Brothers. Reaffirming myself,

Affectionately yours in Jesus Christ,
+ Gio. Battista Bishop

60. FATHER F. ZABOGLIO TO BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI

Providence, R.I. August 1, 1895

Most Reverend Excellency:

I am writing you from Providence, where I arrived yesterday to see Father Novati and I will return to Boston tomorrow or the day after.

Last Saturday, July 27, a gentleman from New York, Mr. Carrara, came to see me in Boston. He is a former church warden, and came to obtain nothing less than the removal of the Fathers Vicentini, Strumia and Sandri from the Church of St. Joachim.

He must have had valid reasons to ask for such a thing and I asked him to tell them to me. His accusation against Fr. Vicentini was that the latter had written or told Father Morelli "to go to Central America if he wanted to, but that New York (of the Roosevelt Street church) was no longer the place for him." Nothing else.

About Father Strumia, he said that although he is good when celebrating Mass

or delivering a sermon, he is too authoritarian about church administration, does not save money and doesn't know how to give orders. As proof that Father Strumia spends too much he said that often this priest removes from the altar candles that have been lit only for a short time, and that too many half burned candles are sold. That was all I could extract from this man in four long hours during which God gave me the patience to listen to him.

As for Father Sandri he said nothing because he was in a hurry to return to New York. However, he found the time to expound the other reason for which he wants the three Fathers removed, and that is that Your Excellency, according to him, had promised this to him and to his associates. When I asked him to show me Your Excellency's letter with this promise, he said that he has nothing in writing, but that Your Excellency had made this promise through Father Bandini.

He added that if the three priests are not removed, he would write to Your Excellency.

I think Your Excellency has already weighed the shortcomings of the Fathers Vicentini and Strumia. Regarding the latter, Father Vicentini has repeatedly assured me that Father Strumia is a good administrator and that it was due to him that the affairs of the Church of St. Joachim have been settled. Even Father Bandini, as I have already written to Your Excellency, said that it was not convenient to remove Father Strumia. All the confreres say that he is a good administrator and Carrara himself said that he is good "at the altar and on the pulpit". What more does he want? If there is some truth in what Carrara said, we shall find out and then take the proper measures.

I think it superfluous to add that I don't believe that Your Excellency made such a promise. At any rate when Father Bandini comes I shall hear from him how things are. I have felt it was my duty to tell Your Excellency this much.

As far as I am concerned, I shall insist that Fathers Vicentini and Strumia stay where they are, and I think we shall have peace especially since reasonable people favor Father Strumia, while only a group of gossipers and ignoramuses is against him and these will soon realize there are wrong.

The situation is more difficult regarding Father Sandri. But, as I have already said, I cannot do anything until I have other priests. As soon as I have them, I shall try to remedy the situation.

A word about Syracuse. Father Beccherini has repeatedly written me and then sent a telegram asking me to go there. Being unable to go I asked Father Vicentini to go and he did, but I still don't know the results of his visit.

As for Beccherini himself, I have reasons to believe (also on the basis of what I have heard since my arrival) that despite his good natural qualities he is a bad priest, and the sooner the Congregation gets rid of him, the better it will be for us. But, I shall get better information.

In Boston things are well.

As for Providence, I still haven't received news myself because I have just

arrived. I believe that soon Father Novati will send a report. I shall see the Bishop tomorrow.

Soon Your Excellency will receive from Father Vicentini the Post Office Box number to which all his mail and mine must be addressed. For the present, please address mine to Boston.

I implore your blessing and, kissing your sacred ring, I reaffirm myself

of Your Most Illustrious
and Most Reverend Excellency,
very humble son in Christ,
Father Francesco Zaboglio

61. FATHER F. ZABOGLIO TO BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI

Boston, August 21, 1895

Most Reverend Excellency:

I have received with pleasure Your Excellency's letter of July 28, and with greater pleasure I have learned that during the second half of September you shall send me two Missionaries.

The travel expenses will be paid by our confreres here, since Father Gambera has already promised me more than one hundred dollars, Father Strumia another one hundred dollars and fifty dollars have already been given me by Father Chmielinski. I will send the money in a few days.

Father Novati would have liked to give me something too, but he had to pay a deposit for a piece of land bought next to the church, a very good thing to do. But he will send his contribution later.

As soon as I see Father Bandini, I hope during the next week, I shall ask him if he can obtain a ticket at discount. However, the German liners sailing from Genoa are already giving our Missionaries a 30% discount. This discount is obtained through Father Maldotti or, if he is absent, through Father Teofilo (Glesaz) or the Marquis Volpe Landi.

Father Strumia came to Providence a few days ago to deliver a panegyric for St. Rocco and thus he came to see me in Boston. From what he told me it seems more and more unavoidable that we get rid of Father Sandri. He is glad to remain for a while with only Fathers Vicentini and Tremé. The latter is really half crazy, though morally and materially harmless. Next week, after mature consideration, and after conferring with the New York Archbishop, if we find it really necessary, with God's help, we will send Father Sandri away. In New York I shall obtain more information about the other things and I will write to Your Excellency.

I will relate to Father Vicentini what Your Excellency has written for him.

Of the bishops, I have seen only those of Providence and Boston. The latter

expressed his satisfaction regarding the departure of Father Astorri and on seeing that now things are better.

From the talk I had with the Bishop of Providence in the presence of Father Novati, it seems that the latter is somewhat slow. Let us hope that he becomes more active. He has plenty to do if he wants to work, considering that he has to take care of five thousand Italians in the city, and two or three thousand in the suburbs. For the moment I shall say only that according to Father Novati himself, a great many of them die without the sacraments. In another letter I shall explain to Your Excellency why it would not be convenient to take Father Novati away from Providence.

I know that Father Vicentini has already written to Your Excellency how his mail and mine must be addressed from now on. However, I am enclosing the new address again.

I implore Your Excellency's blessing and, kissing your sacred ring, I declare myself,

Your very humble son in Christ,
Father Francesco Zaboglio

62. BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI TO FATHER F. ZABOGLIO

Piacenza, August 31, 1895

Dear Francesco:

It is true that I have informed the St. Joachim church wardens that if all the obstacles in settling things and avoiding the necessity of selling the church, lay with Fathers Strumia and Sandri (Vicentini doesn't enter into this), then we would transfer them in due time and only with the approval of the Archbishop. But if the majority is satisfied with Strumia, and if the Archbishop wants him to stay, so be it. He is the only judge, and the decision is his to make.

This must be understood by everyone. As for Sandri, we have already decided what to do. During the second half of September, I shall send you three Missionaries: two for Boston and one for New York, but I would recall Father Giuseppe (Pandolfi), the good man from Bergamo, to place him at the head of the little college of the Missions which we shall inaugurate in September with about twenty students. He was already a professor at the seminary in Bergamo, and I don't think he will have any difficulty whatsoever, and will do very well. Speak to him about it. As the Missionaries will arrive he will come back to Italy. What do you think? I earnestly urge you to adopt community prayers, if possible: meditation, reading from Sacred Scripture, a Visit to the Blessed Sacrament, the Rosary. Start this in Boston if you haven't done it already. When the new priests arrive everything must be done according to our Rules, and in the continuous exercise of our ministry. This is very essential.

The Missionaries sent to Brazil write me very consoling letters full of fervor,

affection for the Congregation, desire to be saintly in the observance of the Rules and in the constant exercise of their ministry. These letters uplift my heart and I have someone read them aloud to the community for the edification of all.

May God bless those good sons, who do their best to recompense me for the bitterness caused me by others. Let us pray, my dear Francesco, and let others pray a lot so that God's designs be fulfilled in us and in our children. I embrace you *in osculo sancto*. Remember me with affection to the Fathers Gambera, Vicentini, Lotti, Novati, Bandini, Oreste (Alussi), Ermenegildo (Battaglia) and all the others whom I bless with all my heart.

Affectionately yours in Jesus,
+ Gio. Battista Bishop

63. FATHER F. ZABOGLIO TO BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI

New Haven, Connecticut August 30, 1895

Most Reverend Excellency:

I am enclosing herewith a draft for fifty-two pounds and seventeen shillings, equal to \$260.00, of which:

\$100 given to me by Father Gambera;

\$100 by Father Strumia and

\$50 by Father Chmielinski.

\$10 dollars are for a silver ciborium for the New Haven church if Your Excellency will be so kind as to ask Father Rolleri or Father Molinari to buy it. They can send it with the coming Missionaries. If it should cost more than ten dollars (fifty lire) I shall send the rest.

Being sure that a note by Your Excellency will be appreciated by said Missionaries, even if only a calling card, indicating that the money has been received, I am enclosing three self-addressed envelopes so that Your Excellency will have no other trouble than inserting the cards in them and have them mailed.

The other day I saw in New York for the first time the Archbishop and I spoke to him about Fathers Strumia and Sandri. He said that he is very satisfied with the former. This being the case, and because the accusations against Father Strumia are unfounded and silly, (Carrara repeated them in writing, after he came to Boston and they were just as baseless), I am of the opinion that we have to suppress the daring of a few rebels who would like to send Father Strumia away and get back Father Morelli. This can be accomplished by making them understand without equivocation that the Church's pastor is Father Strumia, and that he will not be removed. If we acted otherwise, we would please the gossip mongers and the discontented, who are always at work and who would cause continuous trouble. And besides, what would the Archbishop say now if we removed Father Strumia?

As for Father Sandri, we agreed that I should try once more to bring him to his senses. If I should not succeed we would send him away. At any rate, New York is no longer the place for him. In the meantime, we asked our confreres in Boston and New Haven to pray for a special grace, this Sunday and next Sunday.

Father Sandri did not speak because he was upset after his brother was bitten by a wild cat. I will soon explain why I am in New Haven. Meanwhile let me say that I trust things will be settled to everyone's satisfaction.

In the other Missions everything is well. In Boston all is quiet.

I expect two Missionaries to arrive in September. I beg Your Excellency to send them to Father Vicentini and not to Father Bandini. The former must be advised by telegram of the departure date of the Missionaries from Genoa, so that he and I may meet them at the port.

Please bless me. Kissing your sacred ring, I declare myself,

Your very humble son in Christ,
Father Francesco Zaboglio

64. BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI TO FATHER F. ZABOGLIO

Piacenza, September 21, 1895

My dear Father Francesco:

I have received the fifty-two pound draft, and I thank God, you, and the donors, to whom I shall send a note of thanks.

All right - let Father Strumia stay where he is if the Archbishop is pleased with him. As for Father Sandri, we must be careful. He is shrewd and with his smooth talk he might trap you into committing an error. I would not approve of your assigning him to New Haven. To put him together with the others there would be dangerous. Would he not be suitable as a helper in Providence or Cincinnati?

I approve of what you write me about Providence, and I shall do as you suggest regarding Novati. Father Oreste (Alessi) needed a lesson, and perhaps our merciful God has imparted one to him. Thus he will learn to do his duty with humility and purity of intention without speaking or worrying about popularity, whether true or imagined. You would help him if you lived with him in New Haven which I think is the proper thing to do. Thursday, three, not two, priests will sail from Genoa, because, as I wrote you earlier, I need Father Pandolfi here. Father Astorri arrived and began his spiritual exercises immediately.

I wish now to exhort you as forcefully as possible to begin doing community prayers, especially meditation, according to our Rules. You must insist *opportune et importune*; give orders when exhortations fail but be absolutely sure that the Rules are observed. Meditation and annual spiritual exercises are an essential part of priestly life, and must be practiced at all costs. If you

succeed in this holy task, with God's help, you will be highly deserving of our work. I see with great satisfaction that God blesses our Mission and your firm, calm and prudent actions; and I trust that you will act in such a way as to revive in our men a spirit of piety, harmony and obedience.

I can say for myself that this is our most tranquil period. Therefore, I thank you with all my heart. I exhort you to take all possible care of your health, and I bless you with my usual affection.

Affectionately in Jesus Christ,
+ Gio. Battista Bishop

65. FATHER F. ZABOGLIO TO BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI

New Haven, Connecticut
September 3, 1895

Most Reverend Excellency:

I started to write my monthly report for September, but I cannot finish it because I must go to Syracuse. Therefore, I am writing just a few lines, and shall finish it after I return. It is the second time that I am going to Syracuse.

I went there first a few days ago because of the repeated requests of Father Beccherini, the last of which was a telegram saying: "If you don't come, I will leave."

It seems that after my visit there they bought a church. In fact, I received another telegram asking me to go again, saying that services will be held in the new church next Sunday.

Father Oreste (Alussi) is still in Boston. In my report I shall explain why he hasn't returned. I believe we shall send him away as soon as the new Missionaries arrive. I think, however, that this is no longer the place for him, and that he must be transferred, after allowing him to remain a while longer in order not to give the impression that we are acting under other people's pressure.

I have difficulty in drawing Father Sandri to New Haven. He has been here for four or five days, and will be back next Sunday. I hope, however, that these trips will persuade him to stay here permanently.

I received Your Excellency's letter. You are very kind in asking my opinion about the projected transfer of Father Pandolfi to Piacenza. Thus I take the liberty of saying that this is not the time to take from me the best Missionaries like Father Pandolfi. I think that soon there will be many changes in Boston, because Father Gambera has been there only a short time, and Father Pandolfi also; Father Astorri has left and we already have a new Missionary. I do not think this is the time to upset the Boston parish after so much was done to normalize it. If we take Father Pandolfi away from it now, we would create the wrong impression to the Archbishop and the parishioners. I also believe that

although Father Pandolfi is a good professor and a good priest, who performs his mission well, his character is such that he would not be a good school teacher. This opinion is shared by other confreres whom I have consulted.

Moreover, I think that with a priest like Father Pandolfi here we could earn enough to pay the salary, if necessary, of a school director who would easily be found there, where there are many good priests who, though unwilling to cross the ocean, believe that they are doing some good in Italy.

I am compelled to say these things, badly, and in a hurry but they are true. Your Excellency doesn't help me by taking away from me my best Missionaries. Moreover, it is now time to make some changes in Boston.

I implore Your Excellency's blessing. I kiss your sacred ring, while I gather some money and a breviary, and leave for Syracuse.

Your devoted son in Christ,
Francesco Zaboglio

P.S. To go to Syracuse I must stop in New York. I shall tell Father Vicentini that, according to Father Molinari's notice, the Missionaries must have left Genoa on the 25th, should I not be in New York when they arrive.

66. FATHER F. ZABOGLIO TO BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI

New Haven, September 5, 1895

Most Reverend Excellency:

I am now writing about New Haven.

The other day when I was in Boston, Father Alussi wrote me that he had heard from some prudent people that Italians had sworn to kill him soon after he arrived in Boston. I thought that it would be best to leave him there and go to New Haven myself. The person who revealed the above-mentioned plot to Father Alussi is in truth a cautious person worthy of trust, but I cannot say whether the individual who spoke to this person said the truth or whether the story was invented in the hope that it would reach Father Alussi's ears and frighten him into running away. There is no doubt that here there is a strong group which would like to have Father Beccherini return and which blames Father Alussi for his departure.

I have tried, and I am trying to convince everyone that it is impossible for Father Beccherini to return and I am endeavoring to pacify everyone. I told them that Father Alussi is attending spiritual exercises, and that in a few days he may return.

Meanwhile I am trying to settle some things at the House and at the Church. In a previous letter, I said that I would present the reasons why it is not convenient, in my opinion, to transfer Father Novati from Providence, and here they are:

The first permanent pastor of Providence was Father Paroli, who, half crazed, did many foolish things. Next came Father Beccherini who was transferred by the Bishop, for sound reasons. After him we had Father Franchi, during whose tenure the church was almost empty. I can't be sure about the latter, but I am certain about the others. Now, for nearly a year, there has been a pastor who has gained the sympathy of the people. The Bishop likes him, but he would want him to work a little harder, and visit the suburbs and the surrounding countryside, where many people are abandoned. What is left for us to do, except to urge Father Novati to respond to the bishop? To transfer him after a single year would not seem proper either to the Bishop, or to the population, because of all that has occurred. They would say we are crazy. Moreover, we must put an end to the mania of going elsewhere after being in a certain place for a while.

They say that there is nothing to do in Providence. How is that possible with a population of nearly seven thousand souls? Talking about these things, Father Novati told me recently that he cannot do anything without the company of another Missionary. We could consider assigning him one, but in the meantime he should do what he can.

This is my opinion about Providence. Soon I shall write about Father Sandri and the New Haven parish.

Meanwhile, I implore your blessing, and kissing your sacred ring, confirm myself,

Your very humble son in Christ,
Father Francesco Zaboglio

P.S. An idea came to my mind, that I dare communicate to Your Excellency: in writing to Father Novati, Your Excellency might praise and encourage him, and at the same time send him some good biography of a great and saintly Missionary, such as St. Alphonse, St. Peter Claver or someone else, exhorting him to read it often. I think that for this gesture of special consideration, he would be very grateful, would read the book, and would profit from it very much.

67. BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI TO FATHER F. ZABOGLIO

Piacenza, September 23, 1895

My dear Francesco:

Today three Missionaries are sailing from Genoa and when you get this letter, you will have already greeted them. I think that Riccardo (Lorenzoni) and Bartolomeo (Marenchino) could be assigned to Boston, while the third would be sent to New York in place of Sandri. I recommend them to you, and I beg you to see that they keep faithful to the spirit of their vocation. It is therefore necessary that both in Boston and in New York the Rules be observed, especially those concerning prayers in common and above all meditation. It is

imperative that these two houses be a model and an example to be imitated by the others.

Today I wrote about this to Fathers Gambera and Strumia, who will see to it that these instructions are followed, in conformity with our Rules. However, I call your special attention to this extremely important subject. In both houses the Rules must be enforced so that newcomers may continue to lead the same life they led in the Mother House. I don't think there are any difficulties. At any rate you must advise, watch, exhort, and if necessary, order. It is such an essential thing that to obtain it, any sacrifice would be a small price to pay. As I have already told you, God is blessing your work and we have seen again that *vir obediens loquetur victoria*. But the greatest victory, in my opinion, will be the observance of the Rules started in the two houses I have mentioned, so that this observance can be introduced in all the others where there are at least two priests. It is agreed then: *Labora sicut bonus miles Christi*, and God will repay you. Write me about this as soon as you can. Pay attention to the annual Spiritual Exercises, and to daily confession. You may request the certificates and send them to me.

I embrace and bless you.

Affectionately yours in Jesus Christ,
+ Gio. Battista Bishop

68. FATHER F. ZABOGLIO TO BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI

New York, October 4, 1895

Most Reverend Excellency:

To go to Syracuse I had to pass through New York where I stopped for a time. I spoke with Councilors Vicentini, Bandini and Novati (who is here to deliver sermons) about the proposed transfer of Father Pandolfi to Italy. The three agreed that Father Pandolfi is not the man to preside over a school, even a small one. Fathers Novati and Bandini suggested Father Vicentini for that post (assuming that he will return to Italy as he seems determined to do), and in this I think they are right.

Father Vicentini is liked by the young whereas Father Pandolfi is rude, perhaps impatient and not very kind, or - if we want to use a French expression - unsociable. I forgot to consult Father Strumia, but I think that he previously expressed the same opinion as the three named above.

This much I felt I had to tell Your Excellency, in concluding my letter of yesterday. I am leaving for Syracuse tonight at 9:00 o'clock in a hurry.

Your very devoted son,
Father Francesco Zaboglio

P.S. Today, Father Bandini told me that he would like to have one of the two new

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Missionaries. I don't think it is advisable to place a young priest, just out of the seminary, in the same house with Bandini. But of this I shall speak later. For the moment, I only wanted to alert Your Excellency. I do not want to "add fuel to the fire."

69. FATHER F. ZABOGLIO TO BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI

St. John's Cathedral
Syracuse, NY - October 7, 1895

Yesterday the first Mass was celebrated in the former Lutheran church, which is now the Italian Catholic Church of St. Peter.

The benediction was simple, because it seems that Father Beccherini wishes to have the church solemnly blessed by Cardinal Satolli and the Bishop, after some small necessary repairs are made to it. There was a large crowd, and everyone was greatly pleased. The Church is made of brick, isolated yet beautiful. It was bought for twelve thousand dollars, but only one thousand dollars was paid in cash when the deed was signed.

As in my previous visit to Syracuse, I had a better impression of Father Beccherini than when I saw him in Providence, or when I heard about him last June, on my arrival to America.

I would like to beg Your Excellency to write him (especially because he says he has not received any answers to his letters), in which you could, first of all, praise him for his work and then (without hinting that I am suggesting it) impart to him some admonitions of the kind usually given to priests and Missionaries, exhorting him in particular to recite the divine office and to meditate daily, demonstrating briefly their necessity.

I have said "without hinting" etc., because if I work quietly, and don't give the impression that I am acting as a spy, I may accomplish something: otherwise I cannot. I am doing what I can, and am acting cautiously. But we need time and prudence and at times one must keep silent to avoid a break.

It seems that the new Missionaries will arrive in New York tomorrow. I think I shall be there.

Bless me as I reaffirm myself,

Your very humble son in Christ,
Father Zaboglio

P.S. Father Beccherini is still without a home and lives with the priests of the cathedral.

In a few days I hope to be able to send a small contribution to you.

70. FATHER F. ZABOGLIO TO BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI

New Haven, Connecticut October 9, 1895

Most Reverend Excellency:

I realize that I have no time now to send a detailed report. Therefore, I shall limit myself to inform you briefly about what is happening.

I have received Your Excellency's letters of the 21st and the 22nd of September. As for Meditation and the other community practices, I have always urged everyone to observe them and now I shall insist even more.

I reached New York Monday evening and found the three Missionaries. They had a good voyage.

I left Marenchino in New York so that he could replace Father Sandri; I took the other two with me to New Haven, where they will stay until I can place them.

Next week I shall send Riccardo (Lorenzoni) to Boston. I expect to send Quadranti to Cincinnati because Father Lotti and the Archbishop have asked me for another priest for a High Mass to be celebrated in the Sicilian quarter, and to take care of the Italians scattered in the outlying countryside and in small villages. I say "a Mass in the Sicilian quarter" because these people rarely frequent the Italian church which they call "the church of the Genoese."

Moreover, a protestant minister recently came among them and is proselytizing. Fr. Lotti wrote me the other day: "The Archbishop told me last Saturday when I went to see him: 'Here we need two priests in order not to lose the Sicilians'."

I said I expect to send Father Quadranti to Cincinnati, but I meant to say that I shall do so unless I find it more convenient to exchange him with someone else.

The reasons why I decided on such assignments are: Quadranti is the strongest of the three and I think that I can trust him in a distant place; Lorenzoni, as the least resistant, perhaps will be suitable for Boston, at least for the present, since our house in Boston is more regular than the house at the Roosevelt Street church where I left Marenchino.

As for Father Pandolfi I hope that, having read the valid reasons expounded in one of my recent letters, Your Excellency has abandoned the idea of re-calling him to Italy. All the Councilors, whom I have consulted on this matter, are against his return both because this is not the time to take him from Boston, and because they don't think him capable of holding the post you mentioned. It is one thing to be a professor, another is to be a school master, even if small. Moreover, the Boston waters have calmed down, and it would be a mistake to agitate them again.

Therefore I shall not send him to Italy unless I receive a direct order, which I trust will not be sent, from Your Excellency after you have received my letters written at the beginning of this month. However, I am ready to obey.

I have no time now to write about New Haven. I say only that this is not the place for Father Alussi, and that my opinion is shared by all the confreres I

have been able to question. Tomorrow, if I can, I shall go to Hartford, and ask the Bishop what he thinks about it. I believe that it would be good to have Father Alussi come here for some time, in order to show him that we are not bending under popular pressure, and then transfer him quietly to another post. He would be a good reserve soldier. I shall inform Your Excellency of the decision taken by the Bishop.

The other day, Father Sovilla had one of his usual brainstorms which I am not relating. I hope that he will not repeat it a second time. I think that he acted more from lightheadedness, than from anything else.

We must keep in mind that for many Missionaries their five year period will soon be over. Among others, both Father Vicentini and Father Bandini declare that they want to return to Italy. If the former returned we would suffer a loss. If Father Bandini returned, and left the Congregation, it would be a good thing, judging from what I know so far. But, I don't think he means it. I will get more information about him as soon as I can.

Although I did not want to write a report, I see that I have written several things anyway. Begging Your Excellency to bless me, I kiss your sacred ring.

Your devoted and humble son in Christ,
Father Francesco Zaboglio

71. FATHER F. ZABOGLIO TO BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI

New Haven, Connecticut
October 20, 1895

Most Reverend Excellency:

The other day the bishop of Hartford and I agreed that Father Alussi should return here, but that I should continue to head the parish. He returned last Wednesday, and seems pleased with this solution. Also the parishioners seem to be satisfied. Everyone loves Father Alussi, but many more than he thought do not want him any longer as pastor.

For the present, therefore, things are quiet, and I hope that they will remain so for a long time. In time, if I am able to continue to run the parish, we shall see what can be done.

Recently Father Battaglia's scruples have increased. I hope it will pass.

As I have already written to Your Excellency, I left Marenchino in New York, sent Lorenzoni to Boston and Quadranti to Cincinnati. Father Gambera wanted two of the new Missionaries. He also wanted to keep Father Pandolfi. That is a little too much!

Regarding the recalling of Father Pandolfi, I remember that already four years ago the Archbishop of Boston urged me to avoid changing our Missionaries too often. Those who know him well, consider him a serious and severe man who doesn't like to see his words go to the wind. But I hope that we shall not have

to speak about this project anymore.

I implore Your Excellency's blessing and, kissing your sacred ring, declare myself,

Your most humble son in Christ,
Father Francesco Zaboglio

72. BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI TO FATHER F. ZABOGLIO

Piacenza, October 25, 1895

My dear Francesco:

I reflected on the reasons you expounded regarding Father Pandolfi, and I accept your decision. Let him stay in Boston. For the college I have already found someone.

If Sandri doesn't obey, proceed rapidly. Nobody could accuse me of having been excessively severe, but rather of having been too lenient. The Rules must be distributed. I wrote Father Gambera and Father Strumia that when the new Missionaries arrive they should follow the Rules. Gambera answered that he felt it was his duty to do so, but that he hadn't received them yet. Therefore, hurry. See that he gets them soon, and urge everyone to observe them. I don't know why Strumia has not answered: I think he wants to get rid of Sandri first. There is little to be hoped from the latter.

I bless you with all my heart, and with you I bless all the Fathers and Brothers.

Affectionately yours in Jesus Christ,
+ Gio. Battista Bishop

P.S. About Father Alussi, act according to the advice of the Bishop of Hartford.

73. BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI TO FATHER F. ZABOGLIO

Piacenza, November 29, 1895

Dear Father Francesco:

To govern men is difficult, and the cross of command is a heavy burden. This is what I thought on receiving your last two letters. But it is true that *omnis possum in eo qui me confortat*, and this happens always when we are worthy of it: *Dominus astitit mihi et confortavit me*. Have courage then, be calm, and have faith in God.

Sandri, as I told you, is a bad news. He sent me a telegram asking to be dispensed from the vows. I had Father Molinari answer him (because the telegraphic reply had been paid) that he must obey, return to Italy, and then we shall do what he wishes. Therefore we are at a standstill. You did well to

answer Vicentini as you did. A dispensation would have been worthless. If he had employed a little more energy at the beginning, things would not have reached this point. The fear of something worse made him close one eye or perhaps two eyes, without thinking about the *necesse est*, with what follows. A Superior must be strong, when duty requires it, and must not fear the consequences. Prudence and strength are necessary to govern. This is what I pray God for, every day for you. Proceed, therefore, *in nomine Domini*.

I hope that Alussi has calmed down. I pity him, too. He becomes upset each day for very little reason, forgetting that every day we say: *bonum mihi quia humiliasti me*. Tell him to repeat this verse daily, and he will derive comfort and help from it. Things at the Mother House are good. We have opened our little school, but poverty is our constant companion. Try to send a little subsidy soon. I embrace and bless you with all my heart. I embrace and bless the confreres and recommending myself to your prayers, reaffirm myself,

Affectionately yours in Jesus Christ,
+ Gio. Battista Bishop

74. FATHER F. ZABOGLIO TO BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI

New Haven, Connecticut
January 12, 1896

Most Illustrious and Most Reverend Bishop:

Enclosed please find a draft for fifty pounds, nineteen shillings, the equivalent of \$250.00, of which:

\$200.00 comes from Father Gambera, and

\$50.00 from our house in New Haven.

Please send Father Gambera a receipt for the two hundred dollars and, as he says in the enclosed letter, a few words of thanks to the people.

I would send more if I could. To Father Molinari, and perhaps also to Your Excellency, I have explained why I can't send more. I have sent fifty dollars to Father Alussi for his relatives, in accordance with an understanding he says he had with Your Excellency.

It was said that Father Sandri was in Newark with Father Morelli, but now it seems he is not there and I don't know where he is.

Your Excellency should also be informed that Father Bandini had Father Sandri preach the Christmas novena in his Church. Father Bandini tried to excuse himself by saying that since Father Sandri lived in Newark he was no longer in the Diocese of New York; but on the contrary both Father Strumia and Father Alussi told me that when Sandri preached the novena in Father Bandini's church, he was still living at our Roosevelt Street House. I shall not dwell upon the canonical aspect of his excuse.

The Missions, as far as I know, are doing well and this should console Your Excellency. Father Bandini's Mission is not among these. I am afraid that in addition to being morally weak, Father is also financially weak. Of him and of his affairs I shall write again in a few days to Your Excellency. Meanwhile, I inform you that Father Vincenzo Sciolla left Father Bandini's house because of the maid, Carolina, about whom I have already written, and he is here with me. I am keeping him to have a priest ready in case of an emergency, and so that in the Spring he could substitute for me as I continue my visits.

I warn Your Excellency against the tales which Father Bandini might tell you regarding the Italian colony in Arkansas, which he wants to visit this week. Do not believe anything he says unless what he says is confirmed by upright and reliable people who cannot be deceived by him. He is no more trustworthy than the most foolish woman of the lowest class. Add also that he is so shrewd when speaking that, even people who think themselves cautious and intelligent, are fooled.

I would like to know who authorized Father Bandini to become involved in the affairs of the Italian colony in Arkansas, while his own parish needs all his attention. He puts forward the name of Cardinal Satolli, but I shall soon discover how true this is.

I went to Washington to see Cardinal Satolli, who apparently holds him in some esteem, and then I wrote to him twice. I made him understand what type of a man Bandini is. If necessary I shall do the rest. I think it is my duty to unmask this swindler who can cause me so much harm. I repeat that Father Bandini is a man we must be rid of as soon as possible. But then who will take over his enormous debts? This is a serious business. May God help us!

But is Father Martini coming? And others? I remind Your Excellency that this year many Missionaries will end their five-year period. Father Rolleri may give you their names.

I have said that the Missions, as far as I know, are doing well. Those in Boston, Roosevelt Street and also Providence are progressing. I hope that Father Novati will be satisfied to stay in Providence, on condition that he has an assistant. He needs one very badly. I believe that if he receives one, he will regain his courage and will do a lot of good. The Bishop appreciates him, and the people love him. See if you could assign him a helper.

I think it useless to repeat what I have said before, that Father Martinelli, in Buffalo, also needs an assistant.

From a letter by Father Molinari received yesterday, I learned that Your Excellency has been ill. I offer you my sympathy, and I hope that by this time you have recovered your health.

I received Your Excellency's letter of November 29th concerning Father Sandri. I believe that the measures taken for this poor priest will be profitable.

Imploring Your Excellency's blessing, I kiss your sacred ring declaring myself,
Your humble and devoted son in Christ,

Father Francesco Zaboglio

P.S. If Your Excellency happens to write to Father Alussi I beg you to encourage him. By this time he must feel humiliated enough. Perhaps he needs some encouragement and uplifting. It would be good to make him understand that he could do a lot of good where he is now, more than anywhere else, as a pastor. But, he should stop always praising and speaking of himself.

75. FATHER F. ZABOGLIO TO BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI

New Haven, Connecticut
January 23, 1896

Pay attention, Excellency, to what I am about to write. I call your special attention to my words, so that no one might say one day that I have not sounded the alarm.

We are in great danger of a new catastrophe. The church on Sullivan Street is crushed by enormous debts. This is certain and Father Bandini is trying to wash his hands of it.

There is no other remedy except that Your Excellency send two good priests immediately (without ignoring the needs of the other churches). I shall summon the Councilors together and discuss what could be done. If you cannot send two, send at least one, even one who has just finished his studies, and we shall try. I am sorry to cause sorrow to Your Excellency, but I have thought a lot before writing this half page. I see no other way of avoiding a catastrophe. I am not alone: all the other Missionaries are deeply concerned about the church on Sullivan Street.

Father Francesco Zaboglio

76. BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI TO FATHER F. ZABOGLIO

Piacenza, February 25, 1896

My dear Francesco:

I have had an attack of influenza which has kept me idle for a few weeks and which has prevented me from answering your various letters. I am answering all of them with the present one. Father Morelli does not belong to our Congregation any longer, and what he does is his own business. Father Bandini has terminated his five-year period and is free. I never did like his way of doing things. He may go, but only after he has settled the affairs of his administration with the Archbishop. He has never presented an accounting to me or to Vicentini, with the excuse that, as secretary of the St. Raphael Society, he depended only on the Archbishop. Let him, therefore, deal with the Archbishop. I am of the opinion that we should not accept Bandini's church

with its debts. Let the Archbishop give it to someone he trusts, as he says in the letter I am enclosing for your information. We have no priests, my dear Father Vicentini left for Brazil this morning. It is useless to think about Martini. We have very few Missionaries at our disposal, and those few have already been promised to the Brazilian Missions. In time, however, we shall send one to the United States. Hence, the necessity of streamlining our work. We erred in expanding too much.

Tell Father Strumia that I received his letter and that I shall answer it soon, but I don't think this is the time for him to abandon his parish, when he has so many things to do and when a parish house has to be built.

I exhort you again to remind everyone of the needs of our Mother House. I don't think they take into due consideration our sacred purpose of providing for the needs of future Missionaries. Other Congregations act differently. Their houses in America provide in large measure for their seminaries in Europe. Why shouldn't we do the same?

I embrace you in Domino, and bless you and all the others.

Affectionately yours,
+ Gio. Battista Bishop

77. FATHER F. ZABOGLIO TO BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI

New Haven, Connecticut March 13, 1896

Most Reverend Excellency:

I returned from New York. Before receiving Your Excellency's letter of February 25th, I gathered the Councilors together once more. Having calculated everything carefully, we realized that if we had taken Father Bandini's church, our expenses for it (rent, upkeep, food, etc.) would have exceeded our income by over one hundred dollars a month. We decided that, if we did not obtain some extraordinary help (we had received some from a good American lady, but it vanished), we would not take the church.

Then Your Excellency's letter came.

Therefore yesterday, I informed the Archbishop and Father Bandini of the situation, and thus we no longer have anything to do with the church. Undoubtedly we are not looking very good in all this, but not as bad as when we lost the church on Baxter Street. This time we did not buy the church but rented it and then leased it to Father Bandini without anyone else being mentioned in the lease. Moreover the debts, relatively speaking, are not so heavy, and I trust we can pay them without selling the church's sacred objects. Father Bandini is a swindler, but he was an expert in making money.

At any rate, we have ridden ourselves of a heavy burden, and of a thorn in our flesh.

Now we are breathing freely. I only hope that we shall not have any more troubles like those we have had.

We must think now about keeping and managing the places we have.

Hence it is necessary that Your Excellency allow me to keep our Missionaries, or at least send one as you had promised. Father Strumia and Father Lotti want to take a trip to Italy, and so I need someone to replace them. Father Novati declared more than once that, if he doesn't receive an assistant he will leave his parish. We shall think about it seriously, and must satisfy him soon.

Father Giovanni Gastaldi, now with Bandini, is not wanted by anyone. I offered him to all the Missionaries here, and they have all refused him. I myself wouldn't want to have him. He says he wishes to return to Italy, and I think that this would be best for him.

The Missions are doing well. Complaints come only from Kansas City. After Easter, I hope to be able to go there and see whether these complaints are justified or not.

Presently we are conducting Sacred Missions in New Haven and Boston with great success.

Trusting that God will make the future better, I kiss your sacred ring and implore your blessing.

Your very humble son in Christ,
Father Francesco Zaboglio

78. FATHER F. ZABOGLIO TO BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI

New Haven, Connecticut
Easter Eve of 1896

Most Reverend Excellency:

I received several letters directly and through Father Molinari.

At the moment the most pressing matter is that of Father Bandini's church. Circumstances have changed radically since I last wrote to you. Here are the facts.

As I wrote to Your Excellency, I notified the Archbishop and Father Bandini that we could not take the church. Knowing that Cardinal Satolli had that church at heart, I thought of going to Washington to inform him about its true condition, but especially to counterbalance eventual false information. Among the first things he said to me was this: "You have arrived in the nick of time; but first have a cup of coffee so that your stomach won't be upset." Then he exhorted us to take the Church, insisting forcefully. With deep sorrow, I had to answer repeatedly that I could not accept the Church because its expenses were too great. And so I returned to New York.

There I found a letter from the Vicar General of New York, Bishop Farley, which

said: "Come to see me on Friday the 20th, at 10:00 A.M. if possible. I am eager to talk to you about a matter of great importance to you, and to your community and in which His Eminence Cardinal Satolli takes a great interest." I went to see him, and he, too, insisted that we take the Church. I proved to him with exact figures that we could not afford the expenses. He asked me to call Fr. Bandini, but he had left for Arkansas.

Fortunately at the Missionaries' House was a good and rich lady who had helped the church and who, seeing that I was upset, asked me what was troubling me. Being full of sorrow and bitterness, I told her the whole story adding (as I had said to Msgr. Farley), that if we did not take the church it would have to be closed. She insisted on coming with me to Msgr. Farley, and they both urged me to take the church while she declared that she would help me financially, as much as she could. I asked her for time to think.

I then spoke to Father Strumia and we decided to call Father Beccherini who is one of the Congregation's best businessmen (in Syracuse he held a benefit fair that netted one thousand four hundred dollars), and is well-liked by Cardinal Satolli. We considered that if we bought the church we would save from six hundred to seven hundred dollars a year, since money can be borrowed from a bank at five percent or even four percent interest whereas Father Bandini, who had only rented the church, was paying six and one-half percent of its value.

We communicated this to the Archbishop, and to the Vicar General. The Archbishop told us that the matter would be discussed at the next meeting of the Vicars General and indicated to us the day in which we should go to see him for an answer. Beccherini and I went to see him on the day he mentioned. The Archbishop and the two Vicars told us that they had decided to close the church, and to give us another one nearby which is now used by the black community. They would speak to the pastor of the Church and would let us know the outcome within a few days.

Yesterday I received a letter from Msgr. Farley asking me to see him again on Thursday at 4:00 P.M.

This is how things stand now. I add that the woman I mentioned earlier (Mrs. Leary) promised us six hundred dollars for next May, and more money later. A few days ago, I sent a telegram to the attorney, Bartolo Longo, asking him to have a novena held in the Shrine of Pompeii. Father Bandini's church is dedicated to the Madonna of Pompeii, and She must help us.

The fact is that if the church is closed (without replacing it with another) it would be a very damaging thing for the souls and a great scandal. Hence, the insistence of the Archbishop, of Msgr. Farley and of Cardinal Satolli. It is clear that the Archbishop cannot find a trustful person, as he said in his letter, except among us.

By the time Your Excellency receives this letter, I believe that a definitive decision will have been taken. Will we have a church? God will help with priests. In the meantime, we shall manage. In Bandini's church, Father Giovanni Gastaldi and Father Ermenegildo Battaglia are officiating temporarily.

Here, together with Father Vincenzo Sciolla, I have a good Sicilian priest who had held a Mission in Bandini's church, preaches very well and attracts many people. Since his coming, even the donations have increased. While I was writing these words he entered my room; I read them to him and he asks me to implore Your Excellency's blessing. They might say: "But that priest does not belong to your Congregation."

I would answer: "*Necessitas non habet legem.*" Let them put themselves in my place, and see what they would do! If Your Excellency knew how much I have suffered in these days and how many nights I have remained awake! Let all this be for God's love! I pray that this be the last of our troubles. After Easter I hope to be able to send a contribution.

Accept, Excellency, my regards, those of Father Sciolla and the Sicilian priest, and bless us.

Your very devoted son in Christ,
Father Francesco Zaboglio

P.S. Please do not fail to allow me to keep the one priest you promised me!

79. FATHER F. ZABOGLIO TO BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI

New Haven, Connecticut April 12, 1896

Most Reverend Excellency:

I am enclosing herewith a draft for \$150. Of this, \$25 or for a debt which I am paying to the Institute: Father Molinari knows.

Here is the latest news regarding Father Bandini's Church.

On the 9th of this month, I saw the Archbishop and the two Vicars General of New York. They said that they would give us the black community's church (as I mentioned before) but on condition that we pay interest on \$70,000 (the value of the church). I replied that since we cannot pay the interest on \$52,000 (the value of Father Bandini's church) obviously we could not pay the interest on \$70,000. The conclusion was that, at the end of this month, we shall not have anything to do with Father Bandini's church, and we are almost certain that it will be closed.

They added that we must pay Father Bandini's outstanding debts, (which he said amounted to \$1200, plus those which will come to light later); that in other Congregations the communities help each other, etc. I answered that we live with whatever comes in, and we have no salary, and that the only things we can give are the furniture and sacerdotal ornaments of the church.

This is a very sad business, but we must hope and see to it that a rascal like Bandini never again belongs to our Congregation.

I shall write again soon. Bless me and, kissing your sacred ring, I declare myself,

Your very devoted son in Christ,
Father Francesco Zaboglio

80. FATHER F. ZABOGLIO TO BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI

New York City
Mission of Our Lady of the Rosary, 214 Sullivan Street
May 7, 1896

Most Reverend Excellency:

I am explaining the telegram I sent the other day. I am a little late because I have been busy, and also because I wanted to be able to give you more information.

I told you in my telegram and I accepted Father Bandini's church.

If we hadn't taken it, they would have closed it. After our refusal, the Archbishop offered it to others, and Cardinal Satolli begged others to take it, but they could not find anyone who would or could take it. To close it would have been a great scandal for the Italians in the city, and to those of other nationalities, and a great set-back for the Missionaries of St. Charles. The memory of the Church on Baxter Street is still alive in everyone's minds. And there would have been a great damage to the souls. A proof of this is the anxious search by Cardinal Satolli, the Archbishop, and Msgr. Farley for someone to succeed Father Bandini. But, the Virgin of Pompei, to whom the church is dedicated, did not want it to be closed and wishes us to take it over.

A few days after sending a telegram to attorney Bartolo Longo asking him to have a novena held in Pompei, events changed.

I took courage and Mrs. Leary frankly promised me that she would pay the debts left by Father Bandini (over \$1200) and would provide a monthly subsidy for daily expenses. The Vicar General assured me that Mrs. Leary, a rich woman who dedicated her life to promoting religion and to charitable works, and who paid for a church now being built, would keep her word.

Thus, one of our greatest difficulties, a financial one, has been overcome.

Our Lady of Pompei will help us overcome the others, that is, our deficiency of priests. God and the Virgin of Pompei want this Church. They will send us priests.

Mrs. Leary gave me one hundred dollars last Saturday, and I began to pay the most eager creditors. Next Saturday she will give me more money. Moreover, she is organizing a concert which would bring a few hundred dollars.

People regaining their faith in us, are helping us. In six days, between Masses, donations, etc., I collected \$120.

When people see that the Church is well managed, and well served, when they will see that it is not a "pigsty" (as one of our Missionaries called it,) and when I will know that women will attend it solely because they need to, there will be

more help at Masses, with donations and other offerings. Humanly speaking, we have moral certainty that the life of the church is assured and, looking at things through the eyes of faith, I clearly perceive the intervention of Divine Providence.

Let, therefore, Your Excellency's heart be consoled. You have been spared another blow. Moreover, if Piacenza causes you great sorrow, these Missions give you great consolation.

Boston is in peace, and so is the Church on Roosevelt Street. This church promises to do well. What else can we ask for?

Let us thank God and the Virgin of Pompei. I beg Your Excellency to pray for me and to bless me. I kiss your sacred ring, and declare myself

of Your Most Illustrious
and Most Reverend Excellency,
Your very humble son in Christ,
Father Francesco Zaboglio

P.S. I am remaining here in New York because Father Beccherini did not feel like taking the church. I left Father Vincenzo Sciolla and Ermenegildo Battaglia in New Haven. Therefore, please address mail to 114 Sullivan Street, New York. In a few days I shall again write you. What the Madonna has done so far indicates that priests will be found. Meanwhile, please do not cease to look for a good priest for here. Father Gaetano Orlando, who two months ago conducted the Missions, and is now celebrating May services, asks your blessing.

81. BISHOP G. B. SCALABRINI TO FATHER F. ZABOGLIO

Piacenza, May 23, 1896

My dear Francesco:

Just two words, because I have just recovered from angina which kept me idle for several weeks.

Let us thank the Madonna for the future of our Missions which seems bright, and for the success you had regarding the Church abandoned by Father Bandini. I thank you for the zeal with which you are directing our affairs. Sandri asks to be dispensed from the vows and if you think it convenient, I authorize you to consent. He is a poor soul, and we must be indulgent when our indulgence is not detrimental to our general welfare.

I embrace you with great affection, and heartily bless you and everyone.

Affectionately yours,
+ Gio. Battista Bishop

82. FATHER F. ZABOGLIO TO BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI

New York, July 30, 1896

Most Reverend Excellency:

I have not written to you for some time and I am now to inform you about our affairs. Thank God the Missions are doing well. Only from Kansas City have I received some complaints. I should go there to see what is going on, but how can I leave this Church of Our Lady of Pompei just now?

Our Lady has helped us and I hope She will continue helping us. So far not only have I not borrowed any money, but I have paid about one thousand dollars of Father Bandini's debt. These summer months, however, are bad, and collections are meager. Even that good lady who has helped us so much, has gone to the country, and will not be back until September. But, the Our Lady will not abandon us.

I don't know whether Your Excellency is aware of the fact that the church was never bought, contrary to what was printed in a newspaper about a year ago. We only rented it. Even when I came, we wanted to buy it. It would have been profitable to do so, but the Archbishop and Msgr. Farley did not allow us to buy it because they did not trust us. Now they seem satisfied with us and will trust us if we administer the church properly.

Now to something else. In September the five-year period will come to an end for Fathers Santipolo, Beniamino Berta, Giuseppe Strumia, Vincenzo Sciolla and Giovanni Gastaldi.

I don't know whether Father Santipolo intends to remain or not. However, if he remains, I think we shall remove him from Kansas City and send him elsewhere.

As for Father Beniamino, perhaps he will remain somewhere in the diocese of Hartford. But if he leaves, not much will be lost. He cannot and does not want to live with other Missionaries because of his temperament, and he cannot remain alone.

If Father Vincenzo Sciolla left we would suffer a loss since he is doing well in New Haven. However, he is willing to stay only on the following conditions: 1) that we give him an annual subsidy of eighty to one hundred dollars for his mother; 2) that we give him a certain sum (I think one hundred dollars) which his house maid had given him for safe-keeping when he was here in New York, and which was stolen, so that he could not give it back to her; and 3) that he receive permission to visit Italy, when he could be substituted. I have spoken with Fathers Strumia, Gambera and Novati about these conditions, and they said that due to the scarcity of priests, We should accept them.

As for his housekeeper's money, we could see if she would accept less than the entire amount.

Father Strumia, whom I should praise to the sky, wishes to visit Italy, but is willing to return here. I beg Your Excellency to use all Your influence when he is in Italy, to induce him to return.

Father Giovanni Gastaldi has asked me to write to Your Excellency so that: at the end of his five-year period, he would remain with us for a time (from two to six months or even longer) on condition that he be exempted from the obligation of returning to Italy, and that he be permitted to seek a position in the United States. My Councilors are unanimous in maintaining that this request should be rejected, and that he should be recalled to Italy. Even Father Sciolla who knows him well, shares this opinion. I beg Your Excellency to give me a prompt reply.

Father Lotti, who has already terminated his five-year period, wants to leave this month, but is willing to return. While in Italy, I beg Your Excellency to do the utmost to make him return to the United States.

And now my usual request: we need priests. Please try to find priests, and to send them to me, even if for two or three years only. Later, new priests will come, and the posts will be filled.

Meanwhile, I warn Your Excellency that if I happen to see a good secular priest willing to come with me, I shall take him. In New York we already have one in Father Sciolla, a virtuous and learned man who does very well, but we have to pay him thirty dollars a month plus lodging and board. However, we cannot do without him, so long as we don't have a sufficient number of priests sent from Italy.

Father Francesco Zaboglio

83. BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI TO FATHER F. ZABOGLIO

Piacenza, August 12, 1896

My dear Francesco:

I, too, ardently wished to have news about our affairs and to send you my heartfelt greetings as I am doing now in answering your letter of July 30th.

Father Beccherini wrote me somewhat irritated, but I hope to calm him with my reply.

You must question all those who have terminated their five-year period to know definitely if they will remain. I think that Strumia will remain, according to what he wrote to me.

I approve your decision about Sciolla, but I do not approve in general that the Mission give grants for relatives. However, *necessitas non habet legem* and you can do what you deem proper *in Domino*. I do not approve at all that Gastaldi remains in America on his own. Either he stays with the Congregation or he returns to Italy. This is one of the Rules which must be enforced. If you happen to meet a good secular priest, receive him, but please keep your eyes wide open. Past events must teach you many things.

My health has improved, thank God. What about yours during this heat wave? Take care of yourself and trust in God. I salute and bless you together with all

the others. *Oremus ad invicem.*

Affectionately yours,
+ Gio. Battista Bishop

84. FATHER F. ZABOGLIO TO BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI

New York, September 4, 1896

Excellency:

I was about to write to Your Excellency a rather long letter, when I realized that I didn't even have time to write a rough draft.

Tomorrow Father Gastaldi will leave for Italy. He is fundamentally good (or at least not too bad), and he manages to make people love him. But, he is far from being a model of virtue. About him I have already written to Your Excellency either when Father Bandini was still here or when he left his Church. Some of the solitude during which God speaks to men's hearts, good spiritual exercises, and good books to read will help him a lot.

Father Gastaldi wishes to return to the United States as a free secular priest. I do not oppose it, on the contrary, I would let him return, but I wish he would become more saintly.

I received Your Excellency's letter of August 12th. I wrote to Santipolo, asking him if he wants to remain in the Congregation. If he should answer no, I would suspend him immediately, but who is going to take his place in Kansas City? I think I shall try to buy time. Meanwhile, please send me instructions, and if you can, some priests, which would be much better.

I also need, immediately, an officially written declaration of suspension, in Latin, to present to the Bishops should someone need to be suspended ipso facto, when at the end of his five-year period, he doesn't renew his vows, and doesn't return to Italy.

Father Strumia tells me that there is a circular of Your Excellency for such a case, but I cannot find it.

Father Beniamino wanted to remain as a secular priest outside the Congregation. I advised him, and the Bishop of Hartford of his suspension. Now he told me that he has written to Your Excellency. I am waiting for instructions.

A question: Let us suppose that Father Beniamino (I don't think it will happen) or someone else refuses to obey and a bishop received him into his diocese, as happened with Father Bandini, shall I advise such a bishop of the suspension which the Missionary has incurred?

That of Father Bandini was a bad precedent. He disobeyed his vows and, according to Your Excellency's declaration, was suspended ipso facto; yet he was not punished, and found a bishop who accepted him into his diocese.

Note: The Archbishop of New York told me that Father Bandini's position is irregular.

I thought he had the backing and implicitly dispensation from Cardinal Satolli, because from Father Bandini's words and letters, it seemed as if he was to go to Arkansas following the Cardinal's wishes or at least his encouragement. However, the last time I was in Washington, I questioned Cardinal Satolli and he replied with these exact words: "I never encouraged Father Bandini to go to Arkansas. On the contrary...." I also heard from the Curia of New York that when Father Bandini left he had received no documents. Father Beniamino is using this as a precedent, and others may do the same.

If we have any discipline, Father Bandini must be punished, at least to set an example. Why must he be exempt from the rules?

Once Father Molinari wrote me that Your Excellency would have indicated to me how to act concerning Father Bandini, but I haven't heard anything.

I shall write again soon.

I shall only add that during Father Strumia's absence from the Church on Roosevelt Street, Father Beccherini will replace him. In place of Beccherini in Syracuse I shall put the Sicilian, Father Gaetano Orlando, who was in New Haven (in Syracuse they are almost all Neapolitans). To New Haven I shall send Father Battaglia to help Father Sciolla. I shall keep the two new priests, Father Lorenzoni (who I hope will stop at least for a while his monastic reveries) and Father Longo. Father Gambera in Boston has with him Fr. Pandolfi and a secular priest (and so we have two secular priests, but how long will they stay?) The latter is a good young priest, but Father Gambera, though happy to have him, would also like to have another priest from our Congregation. This drives me crazy! And then there is Father Novati who wants an assistant! Father Pandolfi declared that in the Spring he will leave. Please, Excellency, send me priests, soon!

Bless me and I, kissing your sacred ring, declare myself,

Your devoted and most humble son in Christ,
Father Francesco Zaboglio.

85. BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI TO FATHER F. ZABOGLIO

Piacenza, October 10, 1896

My dear Father:

In 1898, a great exhibition of Sacred Art will be held in Turin by the Missions of other Catholic institutions in order to emphasize the various and beneficial actions of the faith in the fields of art, apostolate and charity.

I have been asked to participate regarding the work of our St. Charles Congregation for Emigrants, and I have gladly accepted.

Therefore, you will receive from the Executive Committee of the Exposition an invitation to cooperate with it. I urge you to take into consideration the questionnaire you will receive, especially the part concerning emigration, and to answer the various questions, although this may be an imposition and a bother.

Send the answers and all correspondence to the Rev. Canon Giovanni Grossi, Via Milano 3, Torino. He is my representative.

I salute you affectionately, and impart to you my pastoral blessing.

Affectionately in Jesus Christ,
+ Gio. Battista Bishop
and Superior General

86. BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI TO FATHER F. ZABOGLIO

Piacenza, December 11, 1896

My dear Francesco:

I feel the need of writing and sending to you and to all the Missionaries my affectionate greetings and a blessing which is as vast as the sea. This year which is closing has given me many crosses, but perhaps at the same time, thanks to be to God, it has been the most productive in saintly work. It is true that *in Cruce vigor, in Cruce robur*, with what follows.

I have been a little negligent in corresponding with you all. At the beginning of the year, first the influenza and then my pastoral visit to fifty parishes prevented me from doing what I wanted to do. I hope to be able to change this way of doing things in the future, *Deo dante*.

How is everything there? How is your health? How have you distributed the Missionaries? Who has remained? Who is returning? As for assignments, I warmly urge you to place together those priests who have taken perpetual vows. Thus, they may be able to observe the Rules better, and be at ease. A house with them alone would be good to have. Think of it, and act *secundum ordinem*.

Now we must take care of the accountings which every house must send to you, and you send to me. It is important to change our administrative system, and to know how and why money is spent. Here we are very poor; I more than our House. It is, therefore, imperative to keep in mind the needs of the Mother House and to send here as much money as possible. Christmas is the proper time for this. I exhort you to think about it carefully. It is a duty, and an act of charity. I am sure you agree.

I received comforting letters from the bishops of Brazil who are pleased with the work of our men; but I am grieved about poor Marchetti who is very ill. If he should die, I don't know how we could take care of the two Italian orphanages he founded. But let us pray and hope.

I am enclosing an anonymous letter concerning Riccardo (Lorenzoni). Investigate it and let me know if there is anything we should do. Anonymous letters are always written by cowards, but at times they can serve as a norm and a way of governing.

Give Father Ferrante's certificate to Signor Cavalli, if you know him.

I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Pray for me and receive my blessing *ex corde*.

I embrace you in *osculo sancto*.

Affectionately yours in Jesus Christ,
+ Gio. Battista Bishop

87. FATHER F. ZABOGLIO TO BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI

218 Sullivan Street, New York
December 4, 1896

Excellency:

The Curia of New York wishes to know whether the suspension of Father Felice Sandri is censorship or simply punishment, and whether Your Excellency is thinking of absolving him of the irregularity he committed in celebrating Mass. To these questions by the Curia, I add my prayer that he be entirely absolved and rehabilitated.

I take this occasion to tell Your Excellency that yesterday, Father Sandri showed me the following paragraph of a letter by Father Vicentini dated January 2, 1896: "I have expounded to Bishop Scalabrini the question of the vows, and he asks me to tell you that he, as a Superior General, will exempt you from the vows that bind you to the Congregation of the Missionaries of St. Charles for the time still remaining before you finish the five-year period."

To tell you the truth, I do not understand whether this is what Your Excellency wrote to me on May 23, 1896, that is: "Sandri asks me to be dispensed from the vows and if you think it convenient I authorize you to consent. He is a poor soul and we must be indulgent when our indulgence is not detrimental to our general welfare."

While, as I have said, I beg Your Excellency to rehabilitate him, I inform you that for various reasons I have not given any dispensation to him, also because, according to Father Ferrante, Secretary of the Archbishop, the Curia considers Father Vicentini's letter a document of dispensation.

Father Strumia is sailing for Italy tomorrow. He will give you a report on our affairs. Meanwhile, I inform Your Excellency that during the meeting of my Councilors, held a few days ago, it was decided to assign Fathers Paolo Novati and Francesco Beccherini to the Church of St. Joachim together with Father Bartolomeo Marenchino who is already there. It is understood that Father

Giuseppe Strumia remains the pastor of that Church, where he must return when he comes back, which we know will be very soon. We have decided to send Fathers Oreste Alussi and Riccardo Lorenzoni to Providence. I will keep Father Luigi Longo with me and the Sicilian priest who just arrived from Italy, who seems to have the intention of entering the Congregation and with whom, so far, I have been very satisfied.

The Missions, on the whole, are doing well, and I hope they will do better in the future. Of course, there are deficiencies, but is there anything without deficiencies?

May God help us to eliminate as many of them as we can.

I don't know whether any other letters of mine will reach you before Christmas, since time is getting short. Hence, I send now to Your Excellency my best wishes for Christmas and for the New Year, together with those of all the Missionaries on this side of the ocean.

I implore Your Excellency's blessing and, kissing your sacred ring, declare myself,

Your devoted and humble son in Christ,
Father Francesco Zaboglio.

P.S. I hope that during the holidays our Missionaries will send you some contributions.

88. BISHOP G.B. SCALABRINI TO FATHER F. ZABOGLIO

Piacenza, December 28, 1896

My dear Francesco:

My sincere best wishes to you and to all the others for the New Year. May God bless you all *de rore coeli et de pingudine terrae*, and may He keep you in His holy custody.

As for Sandri, of whom you spoke in your last letter, what can I say? The question of his vows ended with the end of his five-year period, and I do not remember having asked Vicentini to write to him in the terms you mentioned. Perhaps, there was some misunderstanding. However, nothing is needed from this side.

As for his suspension, it was not censorship, but simply a punishment. Knowing the stubbornness of the man and having consulted Rome, I have mitigated, in his case, the rigidity of the Rules and I, therefore, punished and did not censor him. At any rate, the Archbishop may decide for himself.

I embrace you *in Domino*, and blessing you all in a hurry, I reaffirm myself,

Affectionately yours in Jesus Christ,
+ Gio. Battista Bishop

APPENDIX No. 2

Correspondence between:

BISHOP SCALABRINI

and

ARCHBISHOP CORRIGAN

N.B. Bishop Scalabrini's letters to Archbishop Corrigan are in the Archives of the Archdiocese of New York and Archbishop Corrigan's letters, in Italian, are in the Scalabrinian General Archives in Rome.

1. BISHOP G. B. SCALABRINI TO ARCHBISHOP M. A. CORRIGAN

Piacenza, June 1, 1888

Most Reverend Excellency:

Allow me to introduce to Your Worthy and Venerable Excellency Father Francesco Zaboglio, General Secretary of the Congregation of the Missionaries for the Emigrants. He is full of ardor for our work, endowed with the best qualities of mind and heart, and has my complete trust.

I have assigned him two tasks. First, to study the organization of the Patronage Committees for Immigrants established by other nationalities, especially the Irish and the Germans, and the way they function, so that, with God's help, something similar might be done in favor of our needy Italians. Through this work we also wish to satisfy a desire repeatedly expressed to me by Cardinal Simeoni.

The other task is to obtain from Your Excellency information about the conditions of Italian immigrants in the United States, to deal with you in my name (since Father Zaboglio is my special representative) and - if possible - to come to an agreement regarding the establishment of our Missionaries there.

I have no doubt that Your Excellency, so zealous for the salvation of souls, and so sympathetic towards the cause of the unfortunate Italians, will help and advise this my representative who has been rigidly instructed to follow Your Excellency's orders and wishes.

The Italians of the United States send me continuous requests for priests who are willing to submit themselves to any sacrifice. I have answered them only once urging them to have full faith in Your Excellency and to rely on you as on a loving father moved by the most ardent charity for their welfare and their spiritual improvement. I am aware of the difficulties that Your Excellency may face, but, having faith in God, I dare to express the hope and the desire that our work will be successful.

Accept the thanks I send you from the bottom of my heart, and the expression of my highest consideration.

Of Your Most Reverend Excellency,
very devoted and affectionate
servant and confrere,
+ Gio. Battista,
Bishop of Piacenza

2. ARCHBISHOP M. A. CORRIGAN TO BISHOP G. B. SCALABRINI

Church of the Most Holy Mother,
Ellenville, Ulster Co., N.Y.
June 21, 1888

Most Reverend Excellency:

Forgive me. The enclosed draft is addressed to you instead of to the Director of the *Il Catechista Cattolico*.

Because I am now on a Pastoral Visit and cannot correct the errors, I beg you to pardon me for the inconvenience I may cause you.

As for our dear Italians, an agent of mine is now trying to buy a large building in New York to be used as a Church and a Rectory for the priests from Piacenza. This building will cost three hundred fifty thousand lire: in truth a frightening sum, but we have no alternative.

Some friends of mine will lend us the money on condition that the Italians promise to repay it later. Personally, I cannot do anything because I haven't the necessary means.

I hope you can send me two or three priests soon.

I would have a lot to say about Msgr. De Concilio's booklet, but for the moment I have no time.

My secretary, Don Carlo, sends you his regards and homage, and I ask you to pray for me. I confirm myself,

Of Your Most Reverend Excellency,
very humble and devoted servant,
Michael Augustine,
Archbishop of New York

3. BISHOP G. B. SCALABRINI TO ARCHBISHOP M. A. CORRIGAN

Piacenza, July 12, 1888

Most Reverend Excellency:

I have your venerable letter of June 21 which gave me great consolation.

You wrote that you would soon like to have two or three good priests sent from here. The immense gratitude I owe you for what you have done and are doing for our people does not allow me to lose a minute in satisfying your wish, which is also mine.

Therefore, I am sending Fathers Felice Morelli and Amos Astorri accompanied by a lay catechist. They all come from my Institute and are moved by a truly Christian spirit.

Convinced as I am that they will be free to observe the Rules of their Congregation, I put them at the disposal of Your Most Reverend Excellency. Place them for the present time wherever you can, and use them as you wish. I hope that they will do well. In case you need another priest, I shall try to send you one as soon as possible. They could promote among the Italians a real love of God. We hope in His help!

Your Excellency must have seen Father Zaboglio. He fears that he will encounter grave difficulties, but I believe he has been influenced by someone,

perhaps by the author of that known booklet. I want my priests to depend solely on the bishops. The most scrupulous respect for the hierarchy represents the strength of our ministry and the token of sure victory.

I recently went to pay homage to the Holy Father who spoke to me about Your Most Reverend Excellency with rare praise and satisfaction. This gave me great pleasure, and I am sure you will be happy to know about it.

May God bless you and make you prosperous. Pray for me and believe of Your Most Reverend Excellency that I am,

Your very devoted and affectionate
servant and confrere,
+ Gio. Battista
Bishop of Piacenza

4. ARCHBISHOP M. A. CORRIGAN TO BISHOP G. B. SCALABRINI

492 Madison Avenue New York, N.Y.
August 10, 1888

Most Reverend Excellency:

As a Bishop with a paternal heart you may realize better than anyone else my happiness and gratitude at the arrival of two new Missionaries for Italian immigrants. Last Sunday they celebrated Mass for the first time in an impoverished church. As they must have written to Your Excellency, they temporarily rented a warehouse and built an altar there. They celebrated four Masses and are now holding a novena for the feast of the Assumption. Last Sunday the collection amounted to three hundred lire, and another fifteen to twenty lire were collected every night. Therefore, Monsignor, although this place is very humble and small, people are beginning to come and it seems that initially, at least, the Mission is functioning well. This, I am sure, will bring you as much pleasure and consolation as it has brought me. Gradually we may acquire the sympathy of our immigrants and bring them to the Lord. I think that we should open other chapels so that the flock may at least attend the celebration of Mass and hear the Word of God. There is plenty of room for many more Italian churches and therefore Your Excellency would do me a great favor if he sent me another priest as soon as possible.

On October 15th, five Pallotine Nuns should leave Rome to staff the Church of Mt. Carmel. This church is about five miles away from the church run by the priests from Piacenza, and the Rector told me, a few days ago, that if he had the necessary assistants he would open another church.

I thank you very much for your letter of July 12, and recommend myself to your benevolence and to your prayers. Meanwhile, I am as ever,

Your very devoted and affectionate servant,
Michael Augustine,
Archbishop of New York

5. BISHOP G. B. SCALABRINI TO ARCHBISHOP M. A. CORRIGAN

Piacenza, September 7, 1888

Most Reverend Excellency:

From my Missionaries residing in New York, I learned that you greeted them with affection and have efficaciously helped them in their holy but arduous enterprise.

I thank Your Excellency as much as I can for your goodness. I assure you that neither my gratitude nor that of my Missionaries who rightly recognize in you not only their superior but also their father and benefactor, will ever cease.

I also thank you, dear Monsignor, for your last venerable letter which gave me great consolation. New York is a very important center and thanks to its worthy Archbishop, I feel a particular attraction for it. Hence within a few months, if Your Excellency could provide another church, I could send at least two more priests who are readying themselves by studying at the Mother House at Piacenza. May God bless our common efforts for His honor and glory.

Renewing the expression of my deepest veneration, I reaffirm myself with sincere affection,

Your very devoted and affectionate confrere,
+ Gio. Battista Bishop of Piacenza

P.S. Affectionate greetings to Don Carlo (Father Charles Edward McDonnell, future Bishop of Brooklyn).

6. BISHOP G. B. SCALABRINI TO ARCHBISHOP M. A. CORRIGAN

Piacenza, September 27, 1888

Most Reverend Excellency:

The bearer of this letter is Professor Giacomo Biavaschi, a former dear colleague of mine at the Seminary of Como. He is a learned man, knows several languages and, what's more, possesses a culture accompanied by strong and deep piety.

He has decided to leave Italy and to take up his residence in the United States. I wish to recommend him to Your Excellency's protection and I assure you that you will not have any occasion to regret having accorded him this favor. I am even convinced that if some Institute would employ him as a teacher it would benefit from him. I would consider any favor bestowed on him as a favor bestowed on me.

I am waiting, Most Reverend Excellency, for your reply to my last letter so that I may be able to prepare priests to send there in time for the opening of the new parish.

Renewing the feelings of my affectionate veneration, I am happy to reaffirm myself of

Your Most Reverend Excellency,
very devoted and affectionate confrere,
+ Gio. Battista
Bishop of Piacenza

7. ARCHBISHOP M. A. CORRIGAN TO BISHOP G. B. SCALABRINI

452 Madison Avenue New York, N.Y.
October 4, 1888

Most Reverend Excellency:

I have the pleasure to inform you that I received your valued letter of September 7th and of assuring you that your Missionaries residing in this diocese are full of zeal, and give me great comfort and consolation. Our Lord, Father of Mercy, is visibly helping them.

They are planning to build a large church, with my full consent. The only doubt I have concerns its location. Naturally, they want the church to be centrally located so that it can be reached by all the Italian immigrants.

As for me, I am now engaged in a personal visit and haven't a free moment for myself.

I am enclosing herewith a draft for two thousand lire for the Institute Cristoforo Colombo. I hope that it will serve to promote your good work and to be a sign of my gratitude to Your Excellency.

Don Carlo offers you his homage and respect and I recommend myself to your prayers.

Of Your Most Reverend Excellency,
very humble and devoted servant,
Michael Augustine
Archbishop of New York

8. BISHOP G. B. SCALABRINI TO ARCHBISHOP M. A. CORRIGAN

Piacenza, October 26, 1888

Most Reverend Excellency:

I have your letter of the 4th together with your new offer of two thousand lire for my Institute.

What can I say, Most Venerable Monsignor? Your kindness leaves me confused. My obligations towards you are growing daily, and I am unable to satisfy them. I shall try to repay you by sending, whenever you wish, some new workers for your vineyard. I always find consolation in satisfying any of your wishes to whom my Missionaries owe so much and for whom I have asked public

gratitude in a little booklet which you may have received, for you have given with such love to our Institute.

May God grant you prosperity and preserve you for many years for our gratitude and affection, for the gratitude and affection of your diocese which has really manifested *plebs sacerdoti adunata et Pastori suo grex adhaerens*.

Congratulating you and renewing my sincere thanks for everything, I reaffirm myself with particular veneration of Your Most Reverend Excellency,

Your very devoted and affectionate
servant and confrere,

+ Gio. Battista

Bishop of Piacenza

9. ARCHBISHOP M. A. CORRIGAN TO BISHOP G. B. SCALABRINI

Archbishop's House 452 Madison Avenue
New York, New York
November 9, 1888

Most Reverend Excellency:

I would be happy to have some of the Nuns of the Order of St. Ann to teach the girls and perform other charitable work and, therefore, I beg you to send me some Nuns of your Institute.

Your most humble and devoted servant,
Michael Augustine Archbishop

10. BISHOP G. B. SCALABRINI TO ARCHBISHOP M. A. CORRIGAN

Piacenza, January 23, 1889

Most Reverend Excellency:

I am introducing to you two new Missionaries assigned, in agreement with the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide, for the Italian immigrants in the United States. They are accompanied by two good lay catechists who will work at the House and Church.

I fervently recommend them to the pastoral benevolence of Your Excellency. They are good priests, of average intelligence, but full of piety. Father Giacomo Annovazzi has left the comforts of a rich family in order to dedicate himself to our work. He is a very good young man.

They will depend entirely on you, their good Father and Pastor, and will consider it their duty, nay, their glory, to humbly bow to your smallest wish.

The Nuns destined for New York are the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, a recently founded Order, but already strong and tried. The Superior General is now ill, but will later come to plan with Your Excellency and with the pious Signora Cesnola what should be done. Dealing with nuns is a very delicate

affair, and I wish that everything be done after mature consideration so that we are sure to reach that noble goal.

I send cordial greetings to your dear and faithful Don Carlo.

May God bless you, Venerable Monsignor, and preserve you for many long years for the welfare of the souls and the dignity of the episcopate.

Kissing your sacred ring, with deep veneration, I reaffirm myself

Of Your Most Reverend Excellency,
very devoted and affectionate
servant and confrere,
+ Gio. Battista
Bishop of Piacenza

11. ARCHBISHOP M. A. CORRIGAN TO BISHOP G. B. SCALABRINI

Archbishop's House,
452 Madison Ave., New York
February 5, 1889

Most Venerable Monsignor:

The two Apostolic Missionaries, Giacomo Annovazzi and Oreste Alussi, came to me this morning with your favored note of January 23. I thank you very much for the goodness you have shown towards me and towards the Italian immigrants in New York.

Father Felice (Morelli) is very hopeful for the future, and everything is going well.

As for the Nuns, they will be welcome, and I am certain that they will do much good, but I must confess to Your Excellency that I don't see how we can obtain the necessary means for their support. At the moment we have only twenty-five thousand lire, which is nothing when it comes to establishing an orphanage in this city. Signora di Cesnola is full of confidence, but she is not a Bishop and she does not know the heavy responsibility of this work. We must count solely on our own money and not on any eventual governmental subsidy, since the law forbids assigning grants to sectarian institutions (as they are called here), such as Catholic and other religious groups. However, the Nuns can always manage to live somehow; but precisely how I cannot say. We shall do our best. I like the Missionaries very much. They are zealous, faithful to their duty and are loved by the people. Besides, the clergy is much respected here, more than in France or in Italy.

I have learned with pleasure that other priests are coming in September to hold Missions throughout the country. Our clergy will receive them with open arms. Don Carlo thanks Your Excellency for having thought of him and sends you his sincere homage.

I am always in the midst of a stormy sea and therefore I recommend myself to

your prayers. However, I deserve a more severe chastisement and I must learn to suffer in silence and in peace.

Meanwhile, my Monsignor, believe me, I am

of Your Most Reverend Excellency,
very humble and devoted servant,
Michael Augustine Archbishop

12. BISHOP G. B. SCALABRINI TO ARCHBISHOP M. A. CORRIGAN

Piacenza, April 13, 1889

Most Reverend Excellency:

I received several complaints and threats of rebellion from Italians in New York over money which they say was collected, the Curia holds in its possession, and which is supposed to buy a church. They also spoke about legal registration of the property, and I fail to understand what this is all about.

I wouldn't have mentioned all this if from a letter by Father Morelli I hadn't realized that something big is in the air. In fact, he wrote: "I am worried that some serious disagreement might arise between the Italian colony and our beloved Archbishop. You could not believe the grief I feel in thinking how much he might suffer on account of this. Pray for us Excellency, and ask others to pray also."

Perhaps these fears are exaggerated. Nevertheless, I beg you, Most Venerable Monsignor, to try to settle this matter so that the wishes of the Italians are satisfied. I beg you, who began with so much zeal and courage to help our unfortunate immigrants to continue to be their father.

I am aware of the difficulties you must encounter when governing a diocese where there are people of many nationalities and where there must be so much competition; however, they cannot fail to recompense you for the charitableness you have shown towards those of your children who are most in need of help.

I hope that my Missionaries have not done anything to be undeserving of your benevolence. Nevertheless, I wish you would keep me informed.

Accept my affectionate regards, recommend me to God and, believe me

of Your Most Reverend Excellency,
very devoted and affectionate
servant and confrere,
+ Gio. Battista Bishop of Piacenza

13. ARCHBISHOP M. A. CORRIGAN TO BISHOP G. B. SCALABRINI

Church of St. Patrick
Newburgh, N.Y.

**History of the SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION – VOLUME 2
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May 8, 1889

(Confidential)

Most Venerable Monsignor:

In due time I received your letter of April 13, but I have been so busy at home and so often away that I could not answer it sooner.

Concerning funds already collected to build an Italian Church there was no opposition to the church in principle. Doubts concerned the intentions of those who donated the money. We had to know if it was given for an Italian Church within their parish. When this was affirmed, I immediately ordered that the funds be transferred to Father Morelli. This was before I received your letter.

No one intended to seize the money, nor to steal it. Needless to say threats concerning what would happen to those who would do not impress me.

Permit me to confide two things to you. First, Father Felice (Morelli) innocently erred when he bought the Church which he now has. I advised him that through a friend I could purchase it for sixty-three thousand dollars and therefore he should proceed slowly. Unfortunately, when he dealt with some Jews, he was so eager to purchase the site that they re-priced it at seventy-three thousand dollars. We thereby lost more money than we had saved these many years: more than the sum of money about which so much has been made. Father Morelli erred because of his Christian naiveté and lack of experience in dealing with the Jews.

The second is more serious. Discord between Northern and Southern Italians has been sown here also. I regret to tell you (also confidentially) that the main reason lies with Father Marcellino. He never ceased debunking the Neapolitans or praising Northern Italians, I haven't mentioned this to you until now because I hoped that his practice might cease. Since the arrival of the first Missionaries, I begged them to avoid personal preferences when working to save souls. I do not reproach them: however, last Sunday, I had to call the Police Department in order to calm a fight inside the Church while services were being held. This had never happened before. The seeds that were sown produced their bitter fruit.

The Salesian nuns are not happy because they have no convent and because they do not receive a salary. They had a promise that they would lack nothing. I shall try to arrive at a settlement with Father Felice (Morelli). They should have a comfortably clean and healthy residence. Moreover, they should be salaried as are the other nuns in the diocese. I believe that it is better to follow the customs prevailing in this country. I do not wish to complain, but rather to inform you about what is happening.

And, so, I declare myself

of Your Most Reverend Excellency,
Very affectionately in God,
Michael Augustine, Archbishop

14. ARCHBISHOP M. A. CORRIGAN TO BISHOP G. B. SCALABRINI

Church of St. Patrick
Newburgh, N.Y.
May 8, 1889

Most Reverend Excellency:

Having hurriedly written you I think that it is proper to now write a more complete explanation of my previous letter.

1. Regarding the Salesian Nuns, I opposed an Italian Orphanage which I thought would be premature. I feared that we would not be able to support it. But without awaiting my advice, Mother Superior came to America. It was then that I personally explained to her the difficulties which I foresaw. But since five thousand dollars had been collected for it, I relented and permitted her to remain until the above was spent.

The nuns were temporarily lodged in the orphanage attached to the Cathedral until Father Felice (Morelli) found for them a suitable residence which he hoped to have for May first in the property recently purchased. In fact, he showed some rooms to the Mother Superior promising her to have them cleaned and put in order for the five nuns. Later, he decided to lease these rooms and to give to the Sisters two miserable holes, dirty, with low ceilings, narrow, barely large enough for two persons instead of five. The Mother Superior refused to go there. Then he promised to give them the house where he himself was living, at least for two of three months, until he could have a few rooms built for them. The Mother Superior, seeing how impractical Father Morelli is, fears that these rooms will also be unsuitable for her nuns. The holes, as she called them, are so low that Father Morelli could not stand up without taking his hat off.

When the nuns stay all day in the school, breathing foul air, they should at least be able to breathe pure air during the night and not be forced to live in very small rooms. It is, therefore, my duty to remedy the situation. Later on everything will go well. At the beginning, one must expect some difficulties.

Father Morelli is now holding a Mission in Paterson, twenty miles away from New York, in my former diocese of Newark. I begged him to go during this week to Saugarties too, one hundred miles away from New York, still in my diocese, where there are many Italians.

2. I don't know how to extricate myself from the antagonism existing between Northern and Southern Italians. Some zealous priests who are personae gratae to the Southerners would perform a lot of good. I know that this is an old sore which existed even before Father Marcellino arrived; but he never ceased to talk and to write to me about it. Before him, Father Giulio, a Franciscan from Naples, worked for eleven years among the Italians with success. The children came to our schools and

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their parents came to our churches and partook of the Sacraments. Later on, all these people attended the church of the Resurrection. The new Missionaries had everything ready for them. Now things seem promising for the future. I am happy for it and very grateful to Your Most Reverend Excellency.

I hope to see you some day in the United States.

I am very pleased with your Missionaries. They are in good spirits and work very hard. They only lack the knowledge of the local customs; but they are learning daily. The nuns will be of great help to them.

The Pallottine Sisters arrived recently. They teach in the school of the Church of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel whose parish embraces nearly 5,000 Italians.

There are also many Italians in New York who belong to the Masonry and I am very sorry to have seen thousands of them in recent festivities.

Recommending myself to your prayers, I am, dear Monsignor,

Your most humble and devoted servant,
Michael Augustine, Archbishop

15. ARCHBISHOP M. A. CORRIGAN TO BISHOP G. B. SCALABRINI

American College,
Via dell'Umiltà, Rome
May 2, 1890

Most Reverend Excellency:

As Your Excellency must have known already, I am here for the visit ad limina, and I would regret to return to the United States without personally meeting Your Excellency and talking a little about our immigrants.

I will probably remain in Rome for the entire month of May. Meanwhile, allow me to inform you of this visit of Don Carlo and myself and to always declare myself with deep gratitude and homage of Your Excellency,

Most devoted and humble servant
Michael Augustine,
Archbishop of New York

16. BISHOP SCALABRINI TO ARCHBISHOP M. A. CORRIGAN

Piacenza, June 24, 1890

Most Reverend Excellency:

For some time now my health has not been too good. Since the beginning of this month I should have gone elsewhere for a cure ordered by my doctor, but I have postponed it because I was, from day to day, hoping to have the pleasure of a visit from Your Excellency. Now a telegram from the Superior of the

Seminary informs me that Your Excellency will still be in Rome for some time, and therefore, to my deepest regret, I must forsake the great honor of having you here in Piacenza as my guest, because to delay much longer my cure would really jeopardize my health. I am leaving tomorrow for Levico, in the Trentino, where I will take the thermal cure.

Could not Your Excellency stop there on the way back? Instead of taking the Bologna-Piacenza train, you could take the Bologna-Verona-Trento train. I would consider myself very lucky if I could meet you and express to you my gratitude and veneration. I realize that mine is a daring request indeed; but I have thought that taking the waters for a few days would be also helpful to Your Excellency and to Don Carlo, both so tired. Please do come, Monsignor.

Meanwhile, please accept my most affectionate wishes and believe me

of Your Most Reverend Excellency
Most devoted and affectionate
servant and confrere,
+ Gio. Battista
Bishop of Piacenza

17. ARCHBISHOP M. A. CORRIGAN TO BISHOP G. B. SCALABRINI

Rome, June 27, 1890

Most Reverend Excellency:

I am very sorry to hear that Your Excellency is ill and that he has waited so long for my visit to Piacenza. To tell the truth only in these last few days was I able to plan my departure from Rome; I am here against my will. A rebellious priest has caused me great sorrow. As I reached Rome on February first, I presented to Cardinal Simeoni a short written report of my disagreement with this priest. Nothing was done until after my return from the Holy Land on April 10. Propaganda Fide did not write to this priest until May 3, giving him a period of 35 days to obey or to defend himself. He refused to perform any act of submission. Then they began the procedure for his suspension, but distributed it only on Monday of this week and until then I did not know when I could leave. Now the General Congregation of Propaganda will be held on May 30 and after that I must wait for the decision of the Holy Father, which will be issued during the audience of Sunday, July 6. Don Carlo and I will leave the day after and we hope to reach Levico on the 15th. This, dear Monsignor, is our program. Truthfully, until these last few days everything was uncertain and I was unable to plan my itinerary, including my visit to Piacenza.

From Milan we shall go to Verona and from Verona to Trento.

If Your Excellency will give me the Levico address or any other pertinent information, I shall appreciate it. But I hope this will not inconvenience you in any way.

Hoping to have the pleasure of meeting you soon and wishing you a prompt

recovery, I recommend myself to your prayers and am

of Your Excellency,
very humble and devoted servant
Michael Augustine,
Archbishop of New York

18. BISHOP G. B. SCALABRINI TO ARCHBISHOP M. A. CORRIGAN

Levico, July 1, 1890

Dear and Venerable Monsignor:

Your last letter, fixing the desired moment of our personal meeting, has brought me great consolation.

I am not surprised at all at the reasons that have delayed your coming since I know Rome very well.

My health is gradually improving.

The doctor here orders me to go to Rabbi, a resort not too far from Levico, but a little higher. I shall go there next week. I think it will be better also for Your Excellency and for Don Carlo. There we can be together for about a week in complete freedom and without too many troubles.

The itinerary is the same as the one I have indicated, that is, Milano-Verona-Trento-San Michele. From San Michele you reach Rabbi by carriage. I will have one waiting for you if you will send me a telegram indicating the time of your arrival in San Michele.

It will be well to take your baggage with you with a shipment receipt to Ala which is on the border and where the Austrian custom guards examine it.

Kindly indicate as soon as possible the approximate period you expect to stay in Rabbi so that I may reserve a room for you in time. We shall plan together our return to Piacenza.

I am happy about the honor conferred to Don Carlo and I send him my sincere congratulations.

I embrace you, Venerable Monsignor, in *osculo sancto* and recommending myself to your prayers, I am with sincere gratitude

of Your Most Reverend Excellency
very devoted and affectionate
servant and confrere
+ Gio. Battista
Bishop of Piacenza

19. ARCHBISHOP M. A. CORRIGAN TO BISHOP G. B. SCALABRINI

New York, November 14, 1890

Most Reverend Excellency:

When I was in Rome I wrote to the Director of *Il Catechista Cattolico* asking him to send me the bill. I haven't received it as yet. Now I can't remember the exact number of the issues I received nor the period of time for which I have to pay; and therefore, I am sending you a draft for 1,000 lire begging you to send it to the proper person and then to let me know if there is still a balance to be paid.

After a happy crossing, Don Carlo and I arrived home on September 10. Since that day I have been extremely busy with a pastoral visit, confirmations, etc. I haven't forgotten my promise to tell you something about our method of teaching the Catechism; but up to this time, my dear Monsignor, I haven't been able to find a free moment.

The Missionaries are doing well. Now they want to buy a new and better location for a second church, at the cost of 410,000 lire. Yesterday they brought me the papers for my approval.

I have many things to tell you but I have no time because tomorrow, too, I will be on a pastoral visit and tonight I have many letters to write.

Recommending myself to your prayers, I am

of Your Most Reverend Excellency
very humble and devoted servant
Michael Augustine, Archbishop

20. BISHOP G. B. SCALABRINI TO ARCHBISHOP M. A. CORRIGAN

Piacenza, December 8, 1890

Most Reverend Excellency:

Many thanks for everything. My heart wouldn't have allowed me to let the Missionaries leave without sending you a few lines in order to renew the expression of my respectful affection. You, my dear and venerable Monsignor, may read in them a world of pleasant and happy things.

Father Zaboglio will give you this note and will explain our project of making a few necessary changes for the wellbeing of our Congregation. Father Morelli, as Provincial Superior, must visit the houses and thus absent himself for long periods from his church. His place will be taken by Father Domenico Vicentini, one of the best priests I have known, who hides his good qualities behind his modesty and humility.

To the same Father Zaboglio Your Excellency may communicate all his wishes and the new workers will always be at your orders.

I have received the draft for 1,000 lire but I haven't been able to see the director of the Catechist because he has been absent, and to pay your debt if there is one (probably very small). What shall I do with the rest of the money? Shall I give it to the Mother House of the Missionaries which is always in need, as a generous offer from Your Excellency? I shall do so if I don't receive your

advice to send it back.

Any writing by Your Excellency regarding the Catechism will always be precious for us. You write Italian very well. Nevertheless, only to encourage you, I promise you that I will go over your work, only regarding the style. Thus, you may have no worries about it.

The short (too short) time I spent with you and Don Carlo did me a lot of good, and to say it with a verse of Dante, “*Ancor da me non si partí il diletto*”.

Please accept, Monsignor, the little gift that Father Zaboglio will offer you in my name, at the conclusion of the festivities for your blessed jubilee.

My secretary, the Canon Mangot, sends his best wishes to you and to your colleagues.

Recommending myself to your prayers, I embrace you *in Domino* and reaffirm myself

of Your Most Reverend Excellency
very affectionate friend and confrere
+Gio. Battista
Bishop of Piacenza

21. ARCHBISHOP M. A. CORRIGAN TO BISHOP G. B. SCALABRINI

New York, January 9, 1891

Dear Monsignor:

Your Excellency is loading me with kindness and benefits. How can I thank you for the beautiful stoles you sent me as a gift?

The Missionaries, thank God, arrived in good health. I like Domenico Vicentini very much. I believe the others are going elsewhere.

There are many Albanians here. What can I do for them? They tell me that they cannot speak either Italian or English. Besides, the Sacred Congregation of the Council, according to the latest circular, excludes in any case the priests of the Greek Rite. Could it be possible to obtain some Liguorini or Jesuits or other clergymen from those parts of Italy who could impart the sacraments to these poor people? Or, still better, could Your Excellency find a Calabrian priest who speaks their dialects?

Later on, I must write to Your Excellency at leisure. For the moment I am extremely busy and I don't have a free minute.

Meanwhile, I thank you again and I thank God for the good done by the Missionaries and the nuns.

I recommend myself to Your Excellency, to Canon Mangot and to the whole clergy of the seminary.

Your very devoted servant
Michael Augustine, Archbishop

22. BISHOP G. B. SCALABRINI TO ARCHBISHOP M. A. CORRIGAN

Piacenza, March 18, 1891

Most Reverend Excellency:

The bearer of this letter is Father Pietro Bandini who is coming there to accompany the Sisters of St. Anna destined for the direction of the Columbus Hospital. I see that this enterprise is being hindered, and that means that God wants it. I hope that the Missionaries, with your help, will succeed.

I have received your beautiful work on Catechism. It will be printed in the next issue. In Italy they will be surprised to see that the Archbishop of New York writes Italian so well, better than a learned Italian writer. I compliment you with all sincerity.

In Rome, where I went in January, we spoke a lot about you and I found out with great pleasure that you are very much liked and esteemed and that they appreciate your great apostolic zeal.

I embrace you *in Domino*. Pray for me.

Of Your Most Reverend Excellency,
Very affectionate confrere and friend
+ Gio. Battista
Bishop of Piacenza

P.S. Affectionate greetings to Don Carlo (Father Charles Edward McDonnell, future Bishop of Brooklyn).

23. ARCHBISHOP M. A. CORRIGAN TO BISHOP G. B. SCALABRINI

New York, April 3, 1891

Most Reverend Excellency:

The day after Easter Father Pietro Bandini gave me a letter from Your Most Reverend Excellency and on that same day I had the pleasure of seeing the Sisters of St. Anna with Fr. Zaboglio. Very pleased with the work of the Missionaries from Piacenza, I must promote and encourage their enterprises and I shall do my best for the welfare of the Italian colony.

I thank you for your congratulations regarding my report on the teaching of the Catechism, and for the honor you bestow on me by publishing it in your periodical. When I will have received that issue, I will keep my promise of sending a second article, or rather the second part. Sending you my homage, and embracing you, I reaffirm myself

Of Your Most Reverend Excellency
very affectionate friend
Michael Augustine, Archbishop

24. CIRCULAR BY ARCHBISHOP M. A. CORRIGAN

Archbishop's Residence,
New York,
July 10, 1891

Reverend Sir:

The continuous and growing Italian immigration in North America requires (as it did require already a long time ago) serious measures on the part of those who rather than profit have at heart the spiritual and material well-being of the poor immigrants. Unfortunately, unpleasant events took place because of the shrewdness of some individuals who took advantage of the credulity and often of the needs of the unfortunate immigrants.

These conditions, from which honesty was absent and which were contrary to the standards of the times, had to cease. Due to the initiative of the Fathers of the Missions for the Italian immigrants, the Società di S. Raffaele for the Italians has been solemnly organized. In its spirit and purpose it is similar to the one already existing in our city for the Irish and the German immigrants.

An organization to which the well-being and the future of the Italian colony are entrusted deserves our support and protection because as Pastor of this Archdiocese we must take care of everyone without discrimination and because we had the honor of being named president of this association.

Therefore, while we announce to you the birth of this organization, we feel it our duty to ask for your cooperation and to pray that you announce it to the faithful next Sunday and to see to it that through your authoritative word the Italians entrusted to your care evaluate its importance and contribute to the support of such a charitable enterprise.

In order that you may act according to the By-laws of said Society, we inform you that the members are divided in two groups - one composed of active members and one of advisory members. The first pay three dollars a year or twenty-five dollars only once; the second pay twenty-five cents per year. Thus even the poorest can contribute to the support of the Society.

Soon we shall send you a copy of the By-laws so that you may have a clear idea of the purposes of the organization, and also a few leaflets to be distributed among the Italians in order to make the Society known. Membership may be accepted by yourself or by Reverend Bandini at the office of the Society, 7 Broadway.

Trusting that Your Reverence will execute this wish of ours, we impart to you our Pastoral Blessing.

M. Augustine,
Archbishop of New York

25. BISHOP G. B. SCALABRINI TO ARCHBISHOP M. A. CORRIGAN

Piacenza, August 10, 1891

Most Reverend and dear Excellency:

I have just returned from my Pastoral visit and I have found here the beautiful circular which Your Excellency has sent to the parish priests of your diocese regarding the St. Raphael Society.

This gesture greatly honors Your Excellency and I have no doubt it will be of immense advantage to the Italian colony.

I congratulate you with all my heart, dear Monsignor, and thank you very much in my name and in the name of my Missionaries who are very happy to have found in you a real Father who, after God, is their greatest helper for whatever good their work is producing.

I thank you also for your kind letter of July 10.

To tell you the truth the hospital affair has always worried me, but I have always thought that everything was done with your consent and under your directives, that being the order I had imparted to my Missionaries. From such a distance I wouldn't know now what should be done. On the other hand, I am reluctant to do anything that might be construed as an interference of mine in other people's homes. Therefore, I shall urge Father Morelli to go slow, not to contract other debts before paying those already made, because, as I have heard from well-informed persons, it is impossible to have an Italian hospital, and it is useless. I shall suggest to him to confer with Your Excellency and to hear your opinion. Be very frank with him and then let me know your opinion which I shall unreservedly approve.

(Bishop Scalabrini)

*(N.B. The rest of this letter appeared in Volume I: **Initial Phases of the Scalabrinian Congregation**, Rome – New York, 1969).*

26. ARCHBISHOP M. A. CORRIGAN TO BISHOP G. B. SCALABRINI

Most Venerable Monsignor:

I thank you very much for your kind letter. I could not write the article on Catechism: it was written by the good Italian secretary Father Gerardo Ferrante.

I also thank you for the kind expressions spoken in my regards by the Superiors in Rome, expressions of which I am not worthy. The Superiors have always been personally gentle with me. Only on a few occasions I have complained that they did not act firmly against the enemies of the Church in this diocese, against some rebellious priests and laymen. But now, thank God, things are going on well enough. I place my hopes on the encyclical of the Holy Father against social errors.

Meanwhile I recommend myself to your prayers.

Archbishop M. A. Corrigan

27. ARCHBISHOP M. A. CORRIGAN TO BISHOP G. B. SCALABRINI

New York, August 31, 1891

Most Reverend Excellency:

I have your cherished letter of the 10th of this month, and I thank you for what you have said in my behalf regarding the foundation of the St. Raphael Society. Your Excellency knows me quite well now and on my part I am convinced that I am acting for the welfare of the immigrants in the same way as I am acting for the Americans.

Regarding the hospital, I think it wise to postpone any decision. From the latest information received it appears that for the moment everything is going on well and the poor patients are taken care of by charity. In the past, things were described to me in unclear terms and I wrote to Your Excellency when I feared a catastrophe.

I have learned with dismay that the Messrs. Cahensly and Volpe-Landi have felt mortified by my letter; but I believe that, more than they, the American bishops should be mortified by the conduct of these gentlemen. Forgive me, Monsignor, but one doesn't dare address to the Holy Father a memorandum in which the entire American Episcopate, if not each member personally, is morally offended. And what is worse is that the memorandum was sent to the Pope by people who have never been in America, who have learned about the suffering of the immigrants only through the narrative of some novelist or a newspaper correspondent who cares more for elegant words than for truth.

Before teaching the American Episcopate how to take care of the spiritual welfare of the immigrants, they should know America and then, confidentially, suggest something to the bishop who, presumably, cares for the souls more than lay people do. I believe, Monsignor, that you would not approve that a lay committee suggested to the Pope a method of directing the diocese of Piacenza in a manner different from the one you have adopted. It was, therefore, reasonable to expect the expression of my ideas and resentment.

Your Excellency says in his letter that those gentlemen did not intend to create a double jurisdiction but only that the various European Nationalities have representative, in the American Episcopate: not a foreign-born representative but an American one. Then Your Excellency asked: "Is not this the method now adopted?" Allow me, Monsignor, to ask in turn, "If this method is already functioning in the United States, why did Mr. Cahensly send a petition to the Holy See?" It is a mental lapse, I believe, to ask for something that was already granted and has been in existence; and since I know for sure that Mr. Cahensly knows what he is doing, I must conclude that his intention was a different one. This is confirmed also by Cardinal Simeoni's reply when he frankly said that

Mr. Cahensly's project cannot be realized. Therefore, the intention was another. Mr. Cahensly's remarks (who was in America for a month or so) are not accurate as they originate from suspected sources who did not have sufficient time to properly judge the American Episcopates' work with immigrants. The St. Raphael Society's Committee for German Immigrants, for example, headed by Bishop Vigger of Newark, also of German extraction, vehemently protested this project and Mr. Cahensly's memorandum. Undoubtedly he wouldn't have reacted publicly against one of their own nationality, if everything he had said was true.

Monsignor, the question of United States immigration can only be resolved within the context of the American character and life. One must live at least a few years in America in order to understand what might elude a traveler's superficial judgement. A nation cannot be studied in a month. The American people advance in Catholicism as they progress in freedom, but when they enter the Church, they do not leave outside the doors the idea of national independence. The American Episcopate must be vigilant that such independence not enter the realm religion as it might cause very serious damage. A people formed by such consciousness cannot tolerate being submissive to a foreign Bishop. If Mr. Cahensly's ideas were put into practice, American and Italian Catholics would quarrel and envy and discord would result to the detriment of Catholicism and to the advantage of Protestantism.

Moreover, Cahensly's ideas are unacceptable to me because they require that a Bishop be selected on the sole criteria that he be foreign or a representative of a foreign nation. On the contrary, the American Episcopate wants capable Bishops, whether American or foreign, who will represent them and not a foreign nations. This is what a Bishop should be. He is the pastor of his flock, and must care for all his sheep without distinction. And even if we should admit (an absurdity) the existence of foreign Bishops, no good would result from it. Rather there would be unavoidable conflicts between Bishops and among the people.

Believe me, I am moved by no other sentiment than what my conscience dictates to me. My sentiments grow from a long and matured experience, and I express them frankly and sincerely to Your Excellency. And so, if I, a friend, am the only one to express to you his resentment to Mr. Cahensly, do not be surprised. No other Bishop feels the weight of immigration more than I do, since they'll come to New York.

In the expectation that my frank and sincere words will strengthen our old friendship, I send you my respects and reaffirm myself

of Your Most Reverend Excellency
affectionate friend,
Michael Augustine, Archbishop

Confidential

Concerning the possibility of double jurisdiction: The Canadians, the Italians,

the Greeks and the Polish have all asked for their own Bishops.

1. The Canadians, several years ago, asked for a Canadian Bishop for the Canadians scattered throughout New England, in what is now the Boston province.
2. More recently, influenced by a certain Msgr.'s pamphlet which was printed in New York, the Italians wanted a Bishop of their own. His booklet was sent to the entire Italian Episcopate and to the Sacred College.
3. The Greeks also sent a petition to the Holy Father last year.
4. The Polish this year asked that Msgr. Kayniewiski, of Wilna, be consecrated and that two other Polish priests, now in the United States, be made Apostolic Vicars. I know this because the Holy See sent me these requests and asked my opinion about them.

When Your Excellency comes to the United States you will see these things clearly and will be of the same opinion as that of

Your very affectionate friend,
+ Michael

28. ARCHBISHOP M. A. CORRIGAN TO BISHOP G. B. SCALABRINI

New York, November 11, 1891

Most Reverend Excellency and dear Friend:

Your Most Reverend Excellency furnishes me continuous proofs of his attention in my regards. I am happy to have found in you so sincere a friend and affectionate brother. I read your pastoral letter dated October 15, with pleasure. Thank you for this gift with so many beautiful thoughts and it, expressed with great erudition and in so elegant a style. I especially noted your ideas on the Episcopal dignity and the consistency expressed on the various subjects with which you have dealt.

Wishing you every happiness, let us pray God for his help in making your work fruitful. I embrace you and reaffirm myself

Of Your Most Reverend and
Most Illustrious Excellency,
very devoted servant and affectionate friend,
+Michael Augustine,
Archbishop of New York

29. ARCHBISHOP M. A. CORRIGAN TO BISHOP G. B. SCALABRINI

New York, March 17, 1892

Dear Friend:

I thank you for the copy of your Pastoral Lenten Letter. Congratulations on the

ideas which you developed on the foundations and necessity of the priesthood. Such a subject is well chosen at a time when, because of ignorance, rather than malice, there is little sympathy for priests.

I pray God that your work, dear friend, bears fruit, especially for those who do evil and know not what they do.

Please accept my cordial greetings and remember me during Mass.

Always your friend,
+ Michael Augustine,
Archbishop of New York

Best regards from Don Carlo (Father Charles Edward McDonnell), who was named Bishop of Brooklyn, which is almost a separate city, divided from Manhattan by only a river.

30. ARCHBISHOP M. A. CORRIGAN TO BISHOP G. B. SCALABRINI

Archbishop's House
452 Madison Avenue, New York
August 29, 1893

Most Reverend Excellency:

Yesterday I had the pleasure of receiving your telegram "ad multos annos," and although I answered it by telegram, nevertheless I think it is my duty to thank you also by letter.

A week ago Reverend Father Vicentini gave me your June 21st letter in which you ask for news about the Missionaries of St. Charles.

I didn't know what to say about Father Morelli.

But, today I read in the newspapers that the Courts ordered him to pay debts amounting to 10,000 lire. In addition, debts for the Church of the Most Precious Blood amount to 625,000 lire, even though only its basement has been completed. This morning we agreed to sell the Church since we cannot possibly pay for it. The Curia has lost several thousand lire and for what reason?

I regret speaking about these things. It is the first time in my Episcopal life that I have had to sell a church building. The fault lies with Father Morelli who never acted like the other diocesan rectors.

With this ever impending disgrace, I have not written you prior to your visit to the United States. If, and whenever, you will come, even this year, I will be very happy and very grateful.

Father Vicentini is very obedient and gives us much satisfaction. As far as I know, all the other Missionaries are doing good work.

I beg you to pray for me and I reaffirm myself with sincere veneration.

Your very devoted and affectionate servant,
+ Michael Augustine, Archbishop

31. BISHOP G. B. SCALABRINI TO ARCHBISHOP M. A. CORRIGAN

Piacenza, September 9, 1893

Most Reverend Excellency:

The deep affection which I have always felt for Your Excellency has now deepened as I think of the sorrow and annoyance which you must have felt during these last years because of Father Morelli. I did not wish (in any way) to influence your decision about this unfortunate affair. Now that Your Excellency has informed me, in such a delicate and respectful manner about its unhappy conclusion, I did not wish to delay thanking you for everything you have done.

The news did, in fact, cause me great sorrow, but I console myself with the thought that God will turn evil into good. I am convinced that my Missionaries must totally rely on the Bishops in whose diocese they are admitted. It is also one of the main points of our Rule and by failing to observe it, Father Morelli has suffered and has made us suffer as well. God's Will be done! I hope that this will be a lesson to others. I pray that Father Vicentini undertake nothing without your permission. If the Missionaries cannot use the basement of the church, could they use a room or a wooden chapel to continue their Mission? To work for the people's welfare and thereby to save souls, even this would suffice.

Confidentially speaking, however, I am still worried about Father Bandini. He says that he is entirely obedient to Your Excellency. Yet, we still don't know exactly the real financial conditions of the St. Raphael Society, of which he is the secretary. If you compelled him, therefore, to clarify his financial status, I would be most grateful. I am certain that he does obey Your Excellency as indeed all the others must, but I would not want this to be a pretext for him to depart from both of us, turning to us only when he couldn't find a solution for his wrongdoings.

Remember me with reverential affection, if you can, to your former secretary, now a Bishop, and tell him that if he comes to Italy (as I have heard he expects to) I would gladly see him.

In closing, I recommend myself and my Missionaries to your prayers reaffirming myself with particular veneration,

of Your Most Reverend Excellency,
very affectionate confrere and friend,
+ Gio. Battista Bishop of Piacenza

32. ARCHBISHOP M. A. CORRIGAN TO BISHOP G. B. SCALABRINI

Archbishop's House
452 Madison Ave., New York
September 29, 1893 (Feast of St. Michael)

Most Reverend Excellency:

Your precious letter of the 9th arrived a few days ago. I saw your friend, Professor Grassi of Milan, who will give you my greetings. He seems to be both a good Christian and a very intelligent man.

Father Bandini arrived yesterday and because he mentioned financial affairs, I took the opportunity to ask him for his accounts which he promised to give me without delay.

The Church of the Most Precious Blood will be sold on October 2. Perhaps after it is sold we could rent it. Nevertheless the affair with all its ramifications is very painful.

Father Vicentini told me yesterday that Father Novati will be made Rector of St. Joachim's Church. It was believed that Father Morelli, who lost this office, would leave willingly; instead he pretends that he will be able to assume full responsibility for his and his parish's debts, though he can offer no accounts nor any guarantee.

Today the Church sings "*Auctor pacis, Michael.*" Truly this glorious Archangel has brought peace to the diocese. The errors, which have caused us grief for so long, are now condemned by the Holy Office and the Pope. The priests involved publicly confess the truth. I hope that they will have the graciousness to obey the Holy See. Then we surely shall have peace.

Recommending myself to your prayers, I am,

of Your Excellency Most Devoted Servant,
+ Michael Augustine, Archbishop

P.S: Don Carlo (Charles Edward McDonnell, Bishop of Brooklyn) sends you his best regards.

33. ARCHBISHOP M. A. CORRIGAN TO BISHOP G. B. SCALABRINI

Archbishop's House
452 Madison Ave., N.Y.
October 5, 1893

Most Reverend Excellency:

Father Bandini sent me the accounts of the St. Raphael Home for the last six months:

**History of the SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION – VOLUME 2
APPENDIX 2**

Expenses		Income	
Taxes	\$ 190.75	From the Chapel	\$1,105.94
Interest	\$385.00	Concert	\$379.25
Furniture	\$497.96	Gifts	\$147.90
Food, etc	\$500.46	Other sources...	<u>\$499.91</u>
Telegrams	\$506.97	<u>Total</u>	\$2,133.00
Stolen	<u>\$39.00</u>		<u>(\$2,212.14)</u>
<u>Total</u>	\$2,120.14	<u>Balance</u>	\$12.86

The accounts are in American dollars and the dollar is valued at five lire. From it, it is evident that Father Bandini's income is insufficient to get by and much less to pay the debts which amount to over \$20,000. There is also a note for twenty thousand lire on which I personally paid six hundred and twenty five lire interest in July and which is not included in the above accounts. The annual interest amounts to one thousand two hundred and fifty lire.

The Church of the Most Precious Blood was sold this week for \$60,000. Its mortgage alone amounts to \$72,000, and there are other large debts.

I am planning to build another Church, but for the moment I can do nothing. The Missionaries will have to be satisfied with the Church of St. Joachim.

I do not know how to dismiss Father Morelli. He asks for too many things which I cannot grant him. I think that I must soon revoke my permission for him to act within the Diocese.

I regret having to write about these matters, but Your Excellency knows how difficult the life of a Bishop is.

The Bishop of Brooklyn is in good health and sends you his regards.

I am, Venerable Monsignor,

Your humble servant,
+ Michael Augustine,
Archbishop of New York.

34. BISHOP G. B. SCALABRINI TO ARCHBISHOP M. A. CORRIGAN

Piacenza, October 22, 1893

Most Reverend Excellency:

I have the letter you recently sent me and I thank you very much for it.

Father Morelli's affair has caused me deep concern principally because it has caused much suffering to you too, for whom I wanted everyone to give nothing but pleasant consolations.

The promoters of evil will use this incident to spread the vilest attacks against my Missionaries residing there. Your Excellency would therefore greatly favor

me if you sent me a written declaration stating that the Missionaries are good priests, and that you are pleased with the work which they have so far performed in your Archdiocese.

As for Father Bandini, I implore you to delay for a while longer the grave measures you now contemplate. Is there anything we can do to help him? If possible, he could be substituted by someone else to keep the Church open and reduce its costs.

I do not speak about Father Morelli. Perhaps, the great harm he has wrought was not done with evil intentions. Let us have patience. And may God help us! I recommend myself to your prayers and with deep veneration reaffirm myself,

Your very devoted and affectionate confrere,
+ Gio. Battista Bishop

35. ARCHBISHOP M. A. CORRIGAN TO BISHOP G. B. SCALABRINI

Archbishop's House
452 Madison Avenue, N.Y.
November 22, 1893

Most Venerable Monsignor:

The affairs of the Church of the Most Precious Blood are at a standstill. The proprietor has re-possessed it and the Missionaries cannot remain there much longer.

As for Father Morelli, I thought it proper to deprive him of the spiritual and material administration of the Church of St. Joachim and have replaced him with Father Giuseppe Strumia. Father Vicentini told me that Father Strumia would go there and that Father Morelli would soon leave. But now, Father Strumia refuses to go until his predecessor leaves, and Father Morelli refuses to leave until I assure him that assume full responsibility for his debts. This I not do! It is asking too much. There is a deficit of \$25,000 which cannot be explained. I do not accuse him, but I cannot assume debts of which I know nothing.

The other Missionaries, from what I have heard, are doing some good. However, they lack financial expertise. For example, both the Church of St. Joachim and the Home of Saint Raphael were about to be sold at auction because the mortgage interest could not be paid. This should never happen, especially after the unfortunate affairs at your other Church. Three imminent sales in one month and all of them without justification. I did not say this to Father Bandini, but I paid \$2,000 out of pocket in order to avoid a threatened disgrace which had not occurred here in three hundred years.

Excuse me, dear Excellency, for this painful series of events. Your Missionaries are to act in temporal affairs as our priests do and under the direction of the

Diocese, and all will be well.

I am, Most Reverend and Venerable Monsignor,

Your humble and devoted servant,
+ Michael Augustine, Archbishop

36. BISHOP G. B. SCALABRINI TO ARCHBISHOP M. A. CORRIGAN

Piacenza, February 5, 1894

Most Reverend Excellency:

I am compelled to write to you this time with the deepest sorrow. I wouldn't ever have believed, although a Prelate had warned me not to trust the New York Curia, that sooner or later it would have betrayed me. It seems, unfortunately, that these sinister forebodings have materialized. Recently I received numerous protests over closing the Church on Baxter Street, protests that can be summarized in the words of a non-Italian priest, "*The Archbishop committed a wicked action and grave injustice.*"

I was determined not to write anything more about the affairs of your Diocese, because when Cahensly begged me to furnish him with some explanation about what had happened there, you answered me in such a way as to make me think: "*Archbishop Corrigan tells me that he is my friend, but only in words....one does not answer a friend as he does.*" Now I must break that determination, in order to send you, as I am doing, my protest in a strongest form, and in order to protect my violated rights. The honor of a whole Congregation has been blemished.

Having carefully read Father Vicentini's letters sent to you on December 27, 1893, and January 2, 1894, your wicked action and injustice appear evident. A documented history of the truly disloyal way with which this affair has been treated, would undoubtedly project a sinister shadow on its authors, all the more so if this action were compared with the letters Your Excellency sent me during these past years, in which, highly praising the work of my Missionaries, you stated that you would always support and protect them. And you confirmed this later verbally, knowing that I always worried about Father Morelli's risky enterprises. The latest phase of the sad drama, let me say it clearly, is more worthy of the merchants of the British Company than of the Diocesan Council. In fact, the closing of a Church is ordered, sacred rights are violated, a promise is given to pay all its debts (including those contracted by the Italians), a Superior without means is induced by false promises to take upon himself a debt made for that Church and, once the goal is reached, he is sent from pillar to post, or as we say, from Herod to Pilate. The former almost sneers at the request and the latter washes his hands of it!

Where are we, dear Excellency? A Masonic lodge could not have done worse.

I said a Superior without means. In fact while the Missionaries of other American dioceses sent to their Mother House money for their passage, as it is

usually done, those in New York have never been able to perform this duty. But for me it is a question of souls and decorum - not money. I stop here, therefore, protesting again, in the hope that I shall not be compelled to publish, together with your letters, other documents, which I would gladly publish in order to expose this matter.

Your Excellency must not think that my frankness diminished the affectionate veneration which I personally have for you. On the contrary, I beg you to answer as frankly as I have, because I love truth above everything, and I am in possession of sufficient material to answer to everyone about this matter.

At this time I preferred to dictate my letter to you than to write it myself in order that I might have a witness to what I am saying and to rid myself of this disconcerting subject as quickly as possible.

I kiss your hands with deep respect and reaffirm myself, of

Your Most Reverend Excellency
very devoted confrere,
+Gio. Battista Bishop

37. ARCHBISHOP M. A. CORRIGAN TO BISHOP G. B. SCALABRINI

St. Leone, Florida February 22, 1894

Most Reverend Excellency:

My doctor advised me to leave my diocese for a few days. Last night I received your letter of the 5th.

Your Excellency will excuse me if I do not answer for the moment to the unjust accusations of which I have been the target, because I do not have with me the necessary documents. However, I beg you to consider a few undeniable facts.

1. Neither from me nor through my initiative, but through municipal authorities has a regular trial been started, and the Church of the Most Precious Blood sold. Those responsible are those who failed to keep their word, who neglected their duty and who compelled the mortgage holders to take the only possible legal step. Meanwhile, in order to pay the interest, thus far incurred, the Curia had to disburse 50,000 lire, and also tolerate a disgrace which had never taken place in the history of this diocese, the suspension of services in a Catholic Church.

2. Even the Church of St. Joachim, at the same time and for the same reasons, was put up for sale in the newspapers. This was the second misfortune.

3. If I had not paid 10,000 lire out of pocket, missionary property would have been sold. Legal steps have already been initiated. They now complain because I will not allow the recurrence of this series of errors and failures, which never before took place in any other Italian Church in any nation.

Allow me to say, Excellency, that I never promised, "to remedy everything." How

can I, for example, pledge myself to pay the debts on the Church on Baxter Street which alone amounts to 600,000 lire?

If Your Excellency thinks that it would be better to remove the Missionaries from here and send them to where their financial difficulties would not be so bad, perhaps this would be the best solution. Meanwhile, I have entrusted the Church of the Most Precious Blood to other priests who know more about finances.

The difficulties of the Church of St. Joachim are almost beyond repair. For the Home of St. Raphael I see no other solution than to give it to some Americans to administer.

Recently eleven thousand Italians begged Msgr. Satolli to make me open the Church at Baxter Street. I replied: "If all of you eleven thousand petitioners were to give one dollar each in advance in order to free the Church from its debts, I will take your appeal into consideration." Verbum sat. Having failed in America, the liars now run to Italy.

I have done for the Italians more than I have done for any other group, and this is the thanks I get. "Dilexi justitiam ... propterea morior in exilio".

I am

of Your Most Reverend Excellency,
very humble servant,
+ Michael Augustine,
Archbishop of New York

38. BISHOP G. B. SCALABRINI TO ARCHBISHOP M. A. CORRIGAN

Piacenza, August 17, 1897

Most Reverend Excellency:

Please forgive me for delaying this answer. I waited for Father Giuseppe Strumia to return, as you asked me to, but his family's affairs, and then his illness, have prevented him from coming sooner.

It is now with great pleasure that I am able to send you this letter with my cordial respects through him. I must add my sincere thanks for the assistance you are still giving to the Italian Missions. I dare once more to recommend to your protection the poor priests of the Congregation of St. Charles, who want to do their best to support Your Excellency's charitableness and zeal.

The feasts of St. Augustine and St. Michael, Your Excellency's names, are near and therefore I am sending you my heartfelt congratulations, imploring from God every possible prosperity for you. Ad multos annos. Despite the passing of some small clouds on our sky, I am sure that Your Excellency's noble soul is still the same as before, just as mine is.

It was very painful for me to hear about the accident in which Father Zaboglio was involved, together with the other two men who died. We must accept God's

judgments and repeat with the utmost resignation: *Fiat Voluntas tua.*
I recommend myself to your prayers and with the highest esteem and
veneration declare to be

of Your Most Reverend Excellency,
very affectionate and humble servant
and confrere,
+ Gio. Battista Bishop of Piacenza

39. ARCHBISHOP M. A. CORRIGAN TO BISHOP G. B. SCALABRINI

New York, October 1, 1897

Most Reverend and Most Illustrious Excellency:

Yesterday I received your welcomed letter of August 12th. Thank you very
much for your wishes for my name days and for remembering me when
celebrating Mass on the feasts of St. Augustine and St. Michael.

Your Excellency makes allusion to some small clouds which have passed over
us, but believe me I am as I was before. They did not, as far as I am concerned,
obscure our sky.

My secretary and I well know that they were caused by someone who had little
affection for me. For myself I neither remember the event nor the person; and
since everything about it was false, I concluded that it would soon vanish. I am
now happy to see that Your Excellency's letter proves that my foresight was
correct.

I have not seen Father Strumia. I hope to see him soon to urge him to think
about the finances at the Church of St. Joachim. I do not think that things
there are advancing as well as I wished they would.

Reverend Father Zaboglio is improving daily. He has already begun to celebrate
Mass, and I am certain that he will soon be well.

With respectful regards and veneration I have the honor of reaffirming myself

of Your Most Reverend and
Most Illustrious Excellency,
very devoted servant,
+ Michael Augustine,
Archbishop of New York

APPENDIX No. III

**Documents of the Events Regarding
the Church of the Most Precious Blood in New York
(1893 - 1894)**

N.B. The documents gathered by Father Domenico Vicentini are kept in the Scalabrinian General Archives in Rome. The documents concerning the second part are kept in the General Archives of Franciscan Friars Minor Observants in Rome.

I. DOCUMENTS GATHERED BY FATHER VICENTINI

Most Reverend and dear Father Rolleri:

I am sending you through Father Martini a copy of my correspondence with the Archbishop and the Curia of New York concerning the affairs at the Church on Baxter Street. Some letters are missing, but from the ones I am sending you, one can easily realize how this affair gives me so much trouble and so many worries. I hope that now this matter will be settled as far as the debts with the Italians are concerned; and in a few days matters at the church on Roosevelt Street will also be settled. Thus, I can calmly retire from my post, as Bishop Scalabrini has promised he will allow me.

From Father Martini you will learn many other things about us. I recommend myself to your prayers while I respectfully sign myself of Your Reverence

Your very devoted servant,
Father D. Vicentini

**Concerning the Missionaries of St. Charles
for the Italian Immigrants in New York**

Towards the middle of 1888, Father Morelli and another Missionary were sent to New York by the Most Rev. Monsignor Scalabrini, Bishop of Piacenza, following a request from the Most Reverend Archbishop Corrigan, and certainly with his approval, to give spiritual aid to its large Italian community. On August 5th a chapel was begun on Centre Street. The Italians greeted the new Missionaries with enthusiasm and soon the chapel was found to be too small to contain the large numbers of people who attended it. Moreover, they willingly contributed to have a church of their own.

They bought the Church of St. Joachim on Roosevelt Street, which was attended by the immigrants from Northern Italy who would not mingle with those from the South. On the other hand, the latter were so numerous that a church for them (located at the center of the section where they resided) was considered necessary. Father Morelli, always daring in his enterprises, bought a sixty thousand five hundred dollar house on Mulberry Street. He paid three thousand dollars cash and obtained a mortgage for the rest. This money was from a loan; later he borrowed more money to pay part of the mortgage. Within the house he constructed a chapel which was consecrated on Christmas 1889, but it was insufficient for the number of Italians living in the district, who wanted a better and larger church. In November 1890, Father Morelli, with the approval of the Archbishop, bought some property on Baxter Street for eighty two thousand five hundred dollars. He again bought on credit and paid only a few thousand dollars at the signing of the deed.

The land consisted of three lots. Father Morelli wanted to build the Church on two lots, and a house on the other which then would be leased; but his

confreres and the people urged him to use the three lots for the Church. Fr. Morelli, who must have known that actually he had paid nothing for both properties, did not make his difficulties known, instead deceived by the hope that a new large church would produce enough revenue to pay not only the interests but also a good part of the mortgage, decided to have the Church built on the three lots and signed a contract with the builder, Mr. Deeves, for constructing a basement costing three thousand dollars.

The same Father Morelli then signed a disastrous contract with the same builder indicating the time within which partial payments would be made. He always hoped that the income would allow him to make the payments on time. His hopes were shattered, however, because income from the Church was greatly below his expectations. When time for payment came he found himself in trouble; he sold the house on Mulberry Street and although he made a three thousand five hundred dollar profit, it was no help because the enormous expenditures of the house had swallowed all the income. He tried to take courage and to keep going by borrowing more money at a high rate of interest. He acted on his own as long as he could, but when he realized that he had put himself in a hole, he turned to the Archbishop for help explaining his situation. The Curia gave him some help and offered some guarantees, but when it realized that things were getting worse, it asked for more details especially because the church was ecclesiastically incorporated.

The Curia found the situation too entangled and Father Morelli's administration very inefficient. Therefore it told him that he was unable to continue and at the same time the Archbishop, through the undersigned, begged Msgr. Scalabrini to send Father Morelli away from New York. This presented some difficulties because Father Morelli was personally involved in the debts and therefore his transfer could not be done immediately. At the beginning of February the Vicar General, Msgr. Farley, proposed to the undersigned to take the place of Father Morelli, whose administration had become more and more entangled.

I accepted unwillingly. Father Morelli took my place in the church of St. Joachim on Roosevelt Street. Because the builder and the Italian creditors were becoming more demanding, the Curia decided to sell the church. I was repeatedly questioned by Msgr. Farley who asked me if I thought I could pay the interests on a debt of one hundred fifteen thousand dollars represented by the mortgage and the loans. I told him more than once that I could not pay anything on the capital, except perhaps one or two thousand dollars; and he seemed satisfied. I was hoping that the Curia would not let the church be closed on account of the debts. I don't know the reason for which it later decided to sell it, neither why it did not allow me to continue to rent it, after it was sold, as I had done for a while paying fifty dollars a week. I could have kept it and made a little profit which would have enabled me to pay the creditors, especially because the owner was willing to lease it to me and to wait for better times when we could pay it back.

I want to emphasize the fact that more than once I asked both the Archbishop and Msgr. Farley if, in addition to the question of the debts, there were other

reasons for their having decided to sell the church. They assured me that there were none. However, one day the Archbishop hinted at the necessity of eliminating the unjustified interference of lay people in the church affairs. I asked him to open a chapel in the neighborhood without such interference and to start all over again. He said no. He made me hope (or certainly hinted) that he would have given us the church of the Transfiguration.

When the Diocesan Council decided without further discussion to close the church, Father Mooney told me that the Council was of the opinion that it wouldn't have been prudent and proper to buy back the church that had been sold. And yet the Curia itself bought it or allowed the Franciscans to buy it, and in addition to this expected us to pay the debts to the Italians which amounted to over fifteen thousand dollars, debts that were contracted for that church as can be seen from the enclosed correspondence.

This is the simple history of the events. They wanted to chase Father Morelli away as the author of this financial disaster; and it seemed to them that everything would have ended then and there, but instead our Congregation was wronged in being deprived of a parish in order to give it to others who will reap the harvest we had sown.

Finally I must not forget to mention another circumstance. It seems that the Curia was induced to this extreme measure by the suspicion that Father Morelli has taken money from the church for himself. This suspicion was based on rumors circulated by ill-intentioned people and on Father Morelli's reticence in furnishing a clear accounting of his administration. At times the Curia hinted at this, but only vaguely and in such a way as to infer that it did not give any weight to it.

Lately, however, when I insisted that the Curia or whoever took our place in the church of the Most Precious Blood pay the debts contracted by Father Morelli for that church, I was given an accounting that seemed bizarre since it listed the income but not all the expenses. The accounting showed that a large sum had disappeared. I immediately searched for documents in order to show the error of the Curia and to destroy the suspicion.

If however this was the reason why the Curia chased us away, I ask if there is prudence, charity and justice in condemning an individual and, worse, a Congregation without first hearing his defense.

New York, February 28, 1894

Rev. D. Vicentini

Provincial of the Missionaries of St. Charles

To His Most Rev. Excellency
The Archbishop of New York

New York, November 4, 1893

Most Reverend Excellency:

Several times, but especially yesterday, the Most Reverend Msgr. Farley has told me that we should give up our enterprise and our church and start all over again. He explained this idea saying that fundamentally we could be tolerated

in our work for the Italians only if we were assistants in American parishes. This because we are supposedly incapable as financial administrators. Past events in this city favor this bad opinion they have of us. I say “us” because, as it has been said, that what one member of our Congregation does is blamed to the entire Congregation.

I believe, however, that this sinister opinion must not be considered as perpetually inherent to the Scalabrinian Congregation. It can be eliminated and at the same time I don't believe that the Congregation can be accused, with cause, of such scandals as those that take place everywhere. In general I approve the idea of using the Italian priests as assistants in the American parishes, either because the Italians don't know how or do not want to support their own churches, or because of the prevailing idea that the Italians must be Americanized. This is a natural thing for those who come to live in these States, but I don't think it is practical and advantageous to adopt it (from the religious and moral point of view) in a great center like New York, where there are thousands of Italians. Many Italians do not attend churches with mixed congregation because they feel they are despised by the Irish and because in such churches the American priests and even the Italian ones prefer to take care of the Irish. We are only men and few of us are capable of avoiding discrimination.

It might be said that, if the Italians do not take advantage of churches with mixed congregation, it will be too bad for them. Certainly it is, but apart from the evangelical charity which commands us to go after the lost ones, I say that it would be worse for the Irish because, whether we want to admit it or not, those Italians who grow up without religion among the Irish whose language they are learning, would infuse in them their scorn for religion and for its ministers and would destroy the simplicity of their faith. Therefore, I believe that here in New York we should make every effort to keep and support a parish solely for the Italians. This would not be necessary for the young people who attend catholic schools, but it is necessary for the adult masses and for the children who still do not attend school.

If we are not capable of opening and supporting a big church, we are certainly capable of supporting a hall converted into a chapel according to the idea expressed to me by the Apostolic Delegate. As for our willingness to work in administering the Sacraments, in performing all the ecclesiastic functions, in assisting the sick, in adapting ourselves to the people's ignorance and poverty, I feel that we have been second to none in this country and that we perhaps failed in this by excess rather than by lack of piety.

We worked with the greatest disinterest, since in addition to having lived in poor quarters and without being able to save any money, I assure you that our Missionaries in New York were never able to pay for their passage, which was mostly paid for by Bishop Scalabrini out of his own income. Neither do I regret this inability of ours, for I am always ready to deprive myself of everything in order to help the Italians of this country.

Undoubtedly even the Scalabrinian Missionaries have their defects, but I repeat that no grave scandals occurred, as far as I know, among them or through

them, except the question of the debts.

If this was the reason, as it seems, why we were almost banished and if the fault lies with only one man, Your Excellency has the power to transfer this person. Bishop Scalabrini and I have done what we could. Your Excellency can do the rest without fear of hurting Bishop Scalabrini whose will on this subject is well-known to you. I beg Your Excellency to let me know very clearly and frankly his wish and I assure you that you will never find in me (and I hope also in my confreres) either a MacGlynn or a Burtzell or a Fr. Corrigan, or others of the same stuff. I have never fought against the Authorities and if God keeps his hand on my head, I will never fight despite the fact that someone has accused me of being too weak or too obsequious.

Do you want us to definitely close this church? We shall close it. Will you allow us to open a chapel in the same section? We shall open one. Do you refuse our services entirely? If so, we shall pack up and go. But I beg Your Excellency not to keep me in suspense which hurts us and takes away our energy and our courage to do some good.

Waiting for your decision, accept, Excellency, my deepest respects. Kissing the sacred ring I declare myself

of Your Most Reverend Excellency
Very humble and devoted servant,
Rev. D. Vicentini
Provincial of the Missionaries of St. Charles

To Msgr. G.B. Scalabrini, Piacenza

Rome, November 23, 1893

Most Reverend and Illustrious Sir:

The Holy See has been informed that recently a church built in New York for the Italian immigrants has been sold and this event, as one can easily understand, has caused a deep impression due to the discredit thrown upon the Catholic Church in those regions and also to the damage caused to the Institute founded by Your Excellency!

It is known that the event must be attributed to the scarce sagacity of the Superior of the Italian Missionaries residing in that city, who had started the construction of said church without first making sure of the means to finish it. Although we have no doubt that the matter is already known to Your Excellency, nevertheless I cannot neglect calling your attention to it since the Holy Father has expressed the desire that you adopt the necessary means to avoid a repetition of events like those indicated above.

I am pleased to confirm myself with sincere esteem,

of Your Most Illustrious and Reverend
Excellency Servant
M. Cardinal Rampolla

New York, December 27, 1893

Most Reverend Excellency:

I beg you to remember the story of Abraham when he pestered the Angel of God to obtain God's Grace for the inhabitants of Sodom. Don't be angry if I, too, perhaps with the same results, pester you once more regarding the affair of the Italian church of Baxter Street.

Your Excellency ordered me not only to close this church but also not to open another in any place. If I didn't have to account to anyone for what I do and if the immediate closing of this church did not cause great damage to our Congregation, I would obey immediately. But Your Excellency knows that I have a Superior to whom I must account for my actions, especially because this event dishonors our Congregation before the bishops, the clergy and the people and puts us in financial difficulties which we cannot, for the moment, overcome in any way. My confreres complain to me and they think that I take a matter of such importance too lightly, since they have no clear understanding of the reason why we are ordered to close this church and forbidden to open another.

I must state first of all that when Your Excellency was in Florida last March, the Most Reverend Vicar General Msgr. Farley induced me to leave the St. Joachim parish and to come to this one in place of Father Morelli. I told him at that time that I would not earn from this church more than Father Morelli had earned and that neither could I improve by myself the financial situation of the church. In obedience to the Authorities, I left the St. Joachim church (where I was satisfied to stay) and assumed the responsibility of this one, under the illusion that the Curia would have helped me.

The Vicar General asked me more than once if I thought I could pay the interests on the one hundred fifteen thousand dollar mortgage with which this property is burdened. I told him that I thought I could, believing that the church would not be closed just on account of the debts. But my transfer, which was not profitable to this church, was detrimental to the other. The party that opposed Father Morelli woke up, created the known trouble through meetings and newspaper articles, and started legal proceedings that made the church's situation worse. It is said that that party would have kept quiet if Father Morelli had never gone there; but if the Curia wanted to close this church, why did it allow it to fall in Father Morelli's hands? Why let me bear the burden of this hateful affair? And if the Curia did not intend to close it, what made it decide later on to sell it?

The determination to close this church was motivated by the fact that the church had been administered badly. But once the guilty person was taken away from it, there should have been no reason for closing it.

Another reason that was put forward was that lay people without experience in church affairs had unduly intruded themselves in the administration exercising certain functions not allowed in the diocese. But if certain abuses have been committed, they can be eliminated gradually, as we have done entirely by

closing this church and by wanting to open another. Therefore, even this motivation falls flat.

I am often told that we spoil the trade, sit venia verbo, by charging very little for several functions and for funerals. This is true, but why do we charge little? We do so because the poor cannot afford to pay more. I have often told the faithful that we would perform the funeral service and even Celebrate Mass for the dead without charge.

We were sent here to help the poor and have never treated our sacred ministry as a business. Often we have baptized babies and celebrated weddings for free because otherwise there would have been no christenings and no church weddings.

I believe that our Congregation is entitled to some consideration just because it has performed good deeds in this city. Many Italians who for many years had never entered a church began to attend one only after we came. It may be said that even before we came there were priests who took care of the Italians and that there was an Italian priest in the Transfiguration church, another in St. Patrick's, etc.: but how can anyone compare the number of the Italians who went to church before we arrived with the number of those who attend now? How is it that during many feasts (and not only on Easter and Christmas) three or four priests in any of our churches are not enough to satisfy the needs of the people? All this without counting the people who come to confession either once a week or once a month; those who profited by the Apostolate of Prayer and the Guard of Honor and the Societies of the Madonna of the Rosary, of St. Joseph, of St. Catherine, of St. Agnes, of St. Louis, which were organized in our churches.

Before the coming of our Missionaries who took care of the children who did not attend parochial schools? It is true that many Italians are not very generous in their offerings to the church, but the good done to the souls cannot be measured with the money that comes in. For many Italians who are poor, ignorant and mistrustful of the priests, we should act as the missionaries act among the infidels, attracting them more by giving than by asking. This is how the Protestant missionaries sent here to New York act, as Your Excellency well knows.

It is also very painful for us (and a thing that should be well considered) to be deprived of our field of action, a field we had prepared with so many hardships and sacrifices, and to see it given to others, just when we are prepared to correct the errors committed for lack of experience. The plan to give the Transfiguration church to others (as Msgr. Farley hinted) would not only leave without spiritual care the Italians now living on Canal and Prince Streets, but would damage the church of St. Joachim and perhaps ruin it entirely because it is too near to those streets.

Finally, I wish to submit to Your Excellency's consideration a fact that perhaps concerns justice. Father Morelli, in establishing this church, contracted (and it was an illusion on his part) many debts, including one for sixteen thousand dollars, with a great number of Italians. That these debts were made in order to build the church is easily demonstrated; and even if on account of his bad

administration and especially because of the exorbitant interest, he has squandered a few thousand dollars, he never squandered the church money, but the money of our House. I have positive proof of this. Father Morelli's great error was that of having thrown himself unadvisedly in enterprises that were too big for his means and for the means of the Italians.

The debts contracted with the Italians, though arbitrarily made through simple notes signed by him, were made for this property which I was told had been incorporated. Therefore, as Msgr. Farley admitted, although the Italian creditors have no ground to start a suit against the church and the corporation, we (he declared) are bound to repay them.

Even Your Excellency admitted this when he sent the Reverend Ferrante here to announce to the people the closing of this church adding that the Archbishop would have opened another for the Italians and then we would have thought of satisfying, in equity and justice, the creditors who loaned the money to Father Morelli.

This promise is too vague and almost useless for the majority of the creditors who are poor and ignorant people, and so they continue to persecute Father Morelli and are persecuting me.

Your Excellency made me understand very clearly that Father Morelli had to go; however, he was determined not to leave unless his creditors were reassured. To put an end to it, as a Superior of the Missionaries, I had to pledge the payment of those debts, little by little, giving each creditor the little that we have managed to save. I promised to pay those debts on a pro rata basis in two installments on January 2 and on July 1.

Now, so long as these creditors consider us as their debtors and so long as nobody else promises to pay them, I cannot understand, in justice's name, how anyone can resolve to deprive us of the only means by which we might keep our promise. On January 2 I shall begin to pay the creditors as I have promised, giving them the little that I have been able to save here and what I was able to obtain from the other Houses outside of New York. This money is the fruit of our work (we have no salary), it is food taken from our mouth, money subtracted from the comforts and the luxury which the secular and even the religious priests display, money taken from the necessities of our Congregation which after all has the right to be helped by its members in order to continue to prepare new missionaries for other places where they are needed.

Who can assure me that the missionaries to whom our church will be given will free us from the molestation of these creditors and will reimburse me the \$800.00 that I will give the creditors on January 2, not counting the money I have already given them?

Most Reverend Monsignor, I am writing all this not to fight against the Authorities but to perform my duty, as Superior, of defending my Congregation. I beg Your Excellency to read this letter without bias, before God and your conscience. Independently of every formal regard I beg you only to consider the sacrifices and the tears of Bishop Scalabrini, who has always shown affection, veneration and trust in Your Most Reverend Excellency.

I beg you to give me an answer so that I could show it, together with a copy of this letter, to my Superiors.

Please accept the expression of my deep veneration with which I kiss your sacred ring and declare myself

of Your Most Reverend Excellency
Very humble and obsequious servant,
Father D. Vicentini
Provincial of the Missionaries of St. Charles

Most Reverend Excellency:

I hope that Your Excellency did not consider my letter of December 22 contrary to my previous declarations of obedience; and as a matter of fact, the doubt makes me uneasy. But I beg Your Excellency to send in writing the order you gave me verbally of closing this church and of not planning the opening of another. This written order will be sufficient for my justification before my Superior General, before my confreres and before the people. I will obey immediately.

I have been thinking about the action I am forced to take; about the consequences; about the fact that I have no written order for my justification and about the fact that a priest (an Irish one) said that the Curia is considering to force us to close the St. Joachim church, too. I cannot believe such malignancy possible, but in reality the facts indicate that such a goal does exist at least indirectly if, when this church is closed, other priests will reopen the Transfiguration church for the Italians. Against this I protest.

At any rate, for the moment I leave this matter aside. I only wish that Your Excellency will be so kind as to give me in writing the order you gave me verbally. The other matters will be dealt with by others, if Bishop Scalabrini will accept my resignation. Please accept the expression of my deep respect and kissing the sacred ring, I declare myself

of Your Most Reverend Excellency
Very humble and obsequious servant
Father D. Vicentini
Provincial of the Missionaries of St. Charles

In reply to the Archbishop's letter of January 4, 1894, and to the decision of the Diocesan Council, I wrote as follows:

New York, January 5, 1894

Most Reverend Excellency:

I have received your venerable letter of the 4th and I fully accept your decision and that of your Diocesan Council. But I once more implore Your Excellency to

tell me in writing, in any manner you deem proper, what you told me orally, for the reasons expounded to Your Excellency in my letter of yesterday which I believe you have received; and I promise that there will be no opposition of any kind on my part.

Waiting for this favor, I declare myself with deep respect of Your Most Reverend Excellency

Very humble and obsequious servant
Father D. Vicentini
Provincial of the Missionaries of St.
Charles

Having received no answer by Sunday, I decided to announce the closing of the church and wrote the following letter to the Archbishop:

New York, January 7, 1894

Most Reverend Excellency:

I inform Your Excellency for your peace of mind that tomorrow morning this church will be closed, in obedience to the decision taken by Your Excellency. Some conscientious people advised me to wait for your written order (a proper thing in such an important affair) but my conscience tells me that your order is clear enough and therefore I obey entrusting to God the consequences that I may suffer personally for the lack of a formality on the part of the ecclesiastical Authorities.

I only dare to maintain that what I wrote to Your Excellency on December 27 is the simple truth without any exaggeration. I think that I have always had the defect (which however is very dear to me) of being too sincere. I have always dealt with the Authorities with the candor and the trust of a son towards his father in the hope that I would be helped in building and never destroying. At times, in fact, I believe I have been helped. But I deceived myself and I must have patience! God sees inside the heart.

I now would like to know two things: first, to whom I must give the church objects such as vestments, chandeliers, pews, etc.; second, that Your Excellency assures me that he will rid me of the creditors to whom I, as Superior, and in order to execute Your Excellency's order (and also for a moral necessity) had to promise that the debts would be repaid. Trusting that you will grant me this favor, I am

Your very humble and obsequious servant
Father D. Vicentini

Having closed the church and having transferred the furniture, I wrote the following letter to the Archbishop:

New York, January 17, 1894

Most Reverend Excellency:

Last Friday I handed to the Curia the keys of the church of the Most Precious Blood and yesterday I also handed in the registers of the christenings and the marriages. The sacrifice has been done. I am glad that I have obeyed, but at the bottom of my soul remains a great bitterness because I cannot understand why I have been wronged and why Bishop Scalabrini's Congregation has been wronged even more. I cannot understand why we were not allowed to officiate in that church so long as the owner allowed us and to whom I could pay rent, as I did. I cannot understand the reason why we had to be deprived of a parish in a section like that of Baxter Street, and be substituted by others who, if they were so zealous, should have thought of having a church there six or seven years ago. This is a mystery.

It cannot be said that we did not want to submit to the laws of the diocese since we have shown, I think, our willingness to correct whatever errors were made. I respect the decisions that were taken with the approval of Your Excellency, but allow me to express my conviction that the move did not originate with Your Excellency, but with others who perhaps are not as charitable as Your Excellency.

There is another thing that grieves me and which I wish to call Your Excellency's attention. Your Excellency wrote me that regarding the debts contracted with the Italians, I should turn to the Curia, with which one must deal regarding financial church affairs. I spoke about it to the Reverend Father Mooney and he replied in substance that this is not the Curia's business and that the Italian creditors should turn to Father Morelli. I thought I was dreaming, for I can't believe this manner of dealing with such matters.

When Father Ferrante came to me with Your Excellency's order to close the church and said that Your Excellency was thinking of opening another, he also declared that after that the Curia would have thought of satisfying with equity and justice the Italian creditors. It is true that he did not say that these debts would be paid by Your Excellency or by the diocese, but if that was not the case, why did he make that statement?

I might consider that Father Ferrante (as Father Mooney seems to think) overstepped his bounds and that he considered that declaration as the proper and necessary consequence of the order to close the church, thus depriving us of the means to pay our debts. But aside from Father Ferrante's declaration, what counts more is the statement made by the Vicar General Msgr. Farley. One day I was in his residence on 37th Street, in the company of Father Morelli. The latter had advanced two proposals. One was rejected by Msgr. Farley; the other was that Father Morelli would immediately leave New York on condition that I assumed full responsibility for the debts contracted with the Italians or rather that the Curia would assume this responsibility. Msgr. Farley

said no, but added that I could assume that responsibility as Father Morelli's successor in the parish. Father Morelli objected that my signature would not have been sufficient to reassure the creditors. Then Msgr. Farley added that I could give them a written declaration saying: "I (Father Vicentini) with the permission of the church authorities, pledge myself, etc."

Thus I assumed this obligation towards the creditors, but now the church Authority steps back and in addition deprives me of the means by which I could keep my word, which was given with its permission.

Monsignor, I am not a lawyer, but it seems to me that anyone can see that there is something irregular here, even without being a lawyer. I beg Your Excellency to ask the Curia to examine these reasons and to let me have a written reply which is necessary to me, as Your Excellency in his equanimity can easily realize.

Please accept the expression of my deep respect and kissing the sacred ring, I declare myself

of Your Most Reverend Excellency
Very humble and obsequious servant
Father D. Vicentini
Provincial of the Missionaries of St. Charles

In reply to my letter of December 27, 1893:

New York, January 4, 1894

Very Reverend dear Father:

Your letter of December 28 was submitted yesterday to the members of the Diocesan Council at their regular meeting. They unanimously advised me to adhere to the decision already communicated to Your Reverence.

I am, very dear Reverend Father,

Faithfully yours,
M. A. Corrigan, Archbishop

A reply to my letter of January 7, 1894, handwritten by the Archbishop:

New York, January 8, 1894

Most Reverend Father Provincial:

Regarding the furniture, etc., you must get together with the Vicar General Father Mooney. As for the debts, you must deal with him because all these financial matters go to the Chancery.

I reaffirm myself of Your Reverence

Most devoted servant
Michael Augustine

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In reply to my letter of November 4, 1893:

Archbishop's residence,
452 Madison Avenue, N.Y.
November 6, 1893

Most Reverend Father Vicentini:

Having been very busy during the past two days I was unable to answer your letter of the 4th. Early tomorrow morning I will be leaving for Buffalo but on my return, either Thursday night or Friday morning at the latest, I would be very glad to see you. In the meantime, you and all the other missionaries can work without worries. Recommend me to the Lord.

I am, Most Reverend Father Provincial,

your very humble and devoted servant
Michael Augustine, Archbishop

New York, January 8, 1894

Rev. Father Vicentini:

In reply to your kind letter of the 5th I must inform you, to my deep regret, that on account of the debts of about \$120,000, which weigh on the church of the Most Precious Blood on Baxter Street, the church must be auctioned. Following the sale I must declare that the church will be closed to the cult.

Sending you my regards and imparting to you my Pastoral Blessing, I reaffirm myself,

Your very devoted servant
Michael Augustine
Archbishop of New York

Handwritten reply of the Archbishop to my letter of January 2:

New York, January 8, 1894

Most Reverend Father Provincial:

I have the pleasure of frankly declaring that having seen in Your Reverence a simple, sincere and frank demeanor, I have been equally sincere and frank with you.

Moreover for the second time I must declare that I have never had any intention of taking away from the Missionaries of St. Charles the church of St. Joachim, notwithstanding the things said or not said by those who do not tell the truth or ignore it.

And with this, I confirm myself,

Your humble and devoted servant
Michael Augustine, Archbishop

New York, February 16, 1894

Most Reverend Excellency:

This morning I received your venerable letter in which you mention the strong protest sent to the Archbishop against his unqualifiable way of acting. I am sorry that the Archbishop is not in New York, for he left last week for Florida, where he will remain for two or three more weeks; but I think your letter will reach him there during his spring break and will make him think a little more. Recently the thought occurred to me that the reason for all the abuse heaped on us lies in the conviction that Father Morelli appropriated about \$14,000.00 of the church income; and therefore for over two weeks I have racked my brain to try to unravel the coil of Father Morelli's administration of the Mulberry Street Chapel and the Baxter Street Church. I think I have succeeded in demonstrating that Fr. Morelli, rather than usurping money for himself and for the Congregation, had spent at least \$4,000.00 of the Congregation's money for the churches.

This morning I brought to the Curia, together with a quite strong letter, the accounting of the income and expenses. But over there they have hearts of stone. The Vicar General Father Mooney read the letter without blinking an eye and told me that he could do nothing by himself and had to speak to the Archbishop on his return. I am making a copy of the letter and will send it to him.

In the meantime, we are uneasy because of those debts. I presented to the lawyer of the three principal creditors your declaration regarding my pledge to pay the debts. He accepted it but wants me to pledge the annual payment of 20% of the capital, otherwise he will start a legal action against Fr. Morelli and will make the affair public here and in Italy. It is vile blackmail, but I cannot pledge the impossible. I shall see if I can induce him to accept the proposal I made to the others.

The other day I consulted the Councilors about several matters.

Please accept my best regards, and, kissing your sacred ring, I declare myself of Your Most Reverend Excellency

Very devoted and obsequious servant
Father D. Vicentini

Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide

February 23, 1894

Protocol No. 6114 Rome,

Most Illustrious and Reverend Sir:

I have learned of the sale of the new church of the Most Precious Blood in New York, which was partially built for the Italian immigrants there by the Father of the Piacenza Institute presided over by Your Excellency. That sale has caused many inconveniences and the church has been closed to the cult. Now, however, thanks to a petition presented by 11,000 Italians and to an offer made by the Franciscan Fathers Minor Observants who would assume the responsibility of the debts of said church, I am willing to grant them permission to take over said church which could be opened to the cult and be once more a means of great spiritual benefit for those immigrants.

I thought it proper to inform Your Excellency in advance and to ask if you have any objections against this plan.

I take this occasion to express my satisfaction for the completion of the church built in Piacenza by the Missionaries of St. Charles, of which even I was kindly informed by telegram in due time.

Meanwhile, I pray the Lord that he may preserve you for a long time and give you prosperity.

Of Your Lordship
Most Devoted Servant
M. Cardinal Ledochowski, Prefect

Piacenza, February 26, 1894

Most Reverend Eminence:

In reply to your venerable letter of the 23rd, No. 6114, of which I thank you, I have the pleasure of sending you copies of a few documents concerning the Baxter Street Church in New York.

From these documents Your Excellency will easily see that the New York Curia has committed a grave injustice.

What I especially want to point out to you is the fact that Father Morelli never took a step without the consent of the Archbishop and that my missionaries and myself did our best to keep the church open. It was the Archbishop who wanted it to be closed and he managed to close it in a manner that is truly anything but correct.

Now, to give that church to others even in the supposition that they will pay the debts (but I doubt it very much), would mean to approve a very reproachable affair, which would leave the Missionaries of St. Charles open to the suspicion of being guilty of Lord-knows what crimes, whereas (as the Archbishop himself and Msgr. Satolli have testified) they have always acted as true clerics dedicated to apostolic life, living in poverty and making enormous sacrifices.

I must add that if the Baxter Street church were given to other priests, our Missionaries, if only because they would be too near, would be forced to close

the St. Joachim church too, where they now are. And, perhaps, this is the goal of the Diocesan Council.

Last month a committee of Italians came from New York to Piacenza to complain about the closing of the church: an event that grieved that community greatly. Naturally, I answered very cautiously and made them understand that the final decision was up to Rome.

I believe this was the reason for the petition sent to Your Excellency, a petition that is undoubtedly a protest against the New York Curia and the eloquent expression of popular sentiment, even if roughly manifested, voiced on the day of the closing of the church. Now the New York Curia evidently tries to direct the resentment of the Italians of New York against the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda, for the purpose of reaching its goal directly or indirectly.

And now, Eminence, I want to relate to you a piece of news that will perhaps explain many things. The members of said committee told me that some American priests consider the Missionaries St. Charles in New York as spies of the Holy See and active partners of the Apostolic Delegation. Hence, the reaction of the Curia which sought to take revenge against the Italian priests whom the American priests considered as imposed upon them. I did not put too much stock in this story, but I must confess, Eminence, that the calumnies launched since that time against the missionaries have induced me to suspect that some dark secret has really influenced the souls of some of the American clergy there.

The only solution, therefore, is to order the Missionaries of St. Charles to re-open that church which cost them so much work and sorrow and on which they have acquired indisputable rights, and also to order them to resume the caring of the souls canonically entrusted to them and arbitrarily taken away from them. This would also serve as reparation to the grave injustice done to me and to give them back their honor and the peace of mind they need for their work.

The missionaries attached to that church are still united with their confreres of New York and at Easter time, if Your Eminence gives the order and at the same time imparts the proper instructions to the Curia, the Baxter Street church could resume its functions, with great advantage to so many poor souls.

It is superfluous, Eminence, to call your attention to the fact that our Missionaries are willing, as they have often declared, to pay the debts they have contracted, seeking in this the help of their confreres in the various cities of the United States, thus coming out of their difficulties by themselves as best they can, as in fact they have started to do, submitting themselves to all sorts of sacrifices.

Kissing the sacred vestments, I reaffirm myself with the deepest veneration, of Your Eminence

Most devoted and Obsequious Servant
+ Gio. Battista Bishop of Piacenza

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(Note of an officer of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide: February 28, 1894 In Congressu. March 7, 1894 wrote to Msgr. Corrigan asking him if he had any objection to the restitution of the Baxter Street church to the Missionaries of St. Charles).

Piacenza, March 5, 1894

Most Eminent Prince:

During the last few days I have received several letters from New York which confirm what I wrote you last week regarding the church taken away from the Missionaries of St. Charles. The petition to the Sacred Congregation, signed by thousands of Italians, was sent to the Apostolic Delegate and to the Archbishop of New York.

The Italians want their former Missionaries. These were the first who thought about them and it is natural that the Italians feel very grateful towards them. I take this occasion to enclose an article that appeared in the New York Sun, which seems to have been inspired by the Curia, regardless of what the author says.

From it Your Eminence will see what subtlety is used to induce the Holy Father to recall not only his Delegate but also the Apostolic Delegation. It is natural that the first step taken by Msgr. Satolli in absolving the priest McGlynn, or at least the manner with which the step was taken, had to arouse the sensitivity of many people. Msgr. Satolli may have erred (a thing that can happen to anyone new to the customs of these cities), but the illation that the author of the article derives from it, namely that the Apostolic Delegate is not necessary, is an enormity bordering on schism.

For the rest of the affair that concerns me, being now in Your Excellency's hands, I am at ease, as are the poor Missionaries to whom I have written about it.

Renewing my deepest regards, I reverently kiss the sacred vestments and reaffirm myself

of Your Most Reverend Eminence
Very humble and affectionate servant
+ Gio. Battista
Bishop of Piacenza

New York, March 11, 1894

Most Reverend Excellency:

Your letter of protest to Msgr. Corrigan doesn't seem to have moved him much, according to what Father Bandini writes me. The Archbishop said that if Your Excellency knew what he has done for us, you wouldn't have written that letter! He says that he has spent \$10,000.00 for the Baxter Street church. The sum

was really \$9,500.00, but let us forget about that. But the generous Curia, by giving the church to the Franciscans, wanted to be sure to get back this money and the money to pay the debt with the builder. Moreover it seems that it has not given a thought to the money owed to the Italians, a debt which unjustly weighs on our shoulders. I demonstrated to the Curia that the more than \$15,000.00 owed to the Italians are there, in that church. But the Curia never gave me a satisfactory answer. When the Archbishop returned from Florida I made him aware of the grave error of the Curia in supposing that over \$25,000.00 had disappeared through Father Morelli's administration. I sent him a copy of the accounting sent to the Curia and I ended my letter with these words: "I hope that the Curia will clarify everything to Your Excellency, so that we will not proceed in this affair with preconceived false notions." The Archbishop answered me the following day saying that he had read my letter carefully, and added: "I must repeat that the accounting regarding financial affairs must be sent to the Chancery and not to the Curia."

To this letter I replied immediately as follows on March 7, 1894:

"Most Reverend Excellency:

I have your venerable letter of yesterday. I have already done what Your Excellency suggested, but it seems that the Chancery Office is unwilling to give us any satisfaction. I did not expect that Your Excellency would answer to me personally. Now I understand. We have been abandoned by everyone and are in God's hands; but it is well to know (and for my part I have no doubt) that the blood of the poor is in that church, together with the \$17,660.30 owed to the builder Mr. Deevey and the \$9,500.00 spent by the Chancery. I beg your pardon and I promise not to bother Your Excellency any longer. Please accept the expression of my deep respect and kissing the sacred ring I declare myself of Your Most Reverend Excellency

Very humble and obsequious servant

Father D. Vicentini

Provincial of the Missionaries of St. Charles"

I don't know what the Curia expects me to do.

Yesterday I received Your Excellency's letter in which you mention the letter sent to Your Excellency by the Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda Fide. Too late! The Curia had told me that the church should not be reopened; but when it saw the petition with all those signatures, it hurried, it seems, to give the church to the Franciscans. I don't know who sent those signatures and the petition to the Prefect of Propaganda Fide. It cannot have been the Curia, for I have no evidence that this was among its plans and it would have waited for an

answer before giving the church to the Franciscans. I believe it was Msgr. Satolli's idea. However, the fact is that the Franciscans have pledged to pay the debts to the Curia and to the builder, but not those contracted with the Italians.

The other day I went to Boston in answer to a call from Fr. Martini who is on pins and needles because of Father Astorri. I don't know with what intentions this priest returned to America. He has exaggerated pretensions and such a violent character that is really nauseating. He was going around saying that Father Martini has finished his five-year term, has ceased to be Superior and therefore nobody is under his authority, and that he was tolerated and kept in Boston. I explained to him that Father Martini is still a member of our Congregation and that he had stopped in Boston at my request at the end of his term and had spontaneously declared to me that he still feels bound by his vows until his return to Italy. To the same Astorri I mentioned Your Excellency's letter regarding the presumed equality of the Missionaries and their independence from their superiors. He interprets that letter as he sees fit and sees in it only what he is personally interested in.

One source of trouble in that home is Astorri's brother, who seems unsatisfied to be there. If Father Martini should return to Italy and Father Astorri remain in Boston as Superior, I don't think anyone would want to stay with him.

Father Martini wanted to leave after Easter. I begged him to have a little more patience and he said he is very unhappy because he cannot get along with Father Astorri on account of the latter's brother.

Father Gibelli went to Cleveland and Father Riva returned here to Roosevelt Street, but I believe that here, too, he will get tired soon. He is too fickle.

Apropos of Cleveland, Father Riva told me that he had heard this story: \$100.00 were sent to Your Excellency to procure a student to be placed in the Cleveland seminary, but Your Excellency, unable to find one, wrote that he had deposited the money in a bank at the disposal of the person who had sent it. I don't know if the story is true, but at any rate, it proves the greed of these people who think of nothing but money and do not consider that instead of a student Your Excellency sent a priest here. This indicates what little consideration they have for our priests. They want them to be free from any attachment that is not of diocesan origin.

I wrote this letter on the date indicated at the top, as I mentioned in my letter from Pittsburgh. Now I am adding something else.

New York, April 1, 1894

To this date I have had no answer from the Curia regarding its intentions. It seems that they don't give any importance to our requests. As if the rest did not count at all, they have repeated their request to have the things that belonged to the Baxter Street church. First I got a letter from the Vicar General Mooney. I wrote him the letter that you have found in the correspondence I

have sent to Your Excellency. I had substantially told him that those things belonged to us since we paid for them with our money, at least so long as others don't show up to assume the debts of the church.

Lately the other Vicar General, Msgr. Farley, sent me a lady who had donated a chalice to the church, with a note asking me to give it back to her because it was for the other church. Today I answered him with a strong letter which I have no time to copy, but in which I substantially said that that lady has no right to take the chalice back since it does belong to the church and that if she or other people had any right to what they had given to the church, the Italian creditors have a much bigger right to their money, since they had not given it to the church but had only lent it. I asked him to remember what he himself had said more than once: namely, that although the Italian creditors could not legally sue the church, we are obliged to recognize their credit, and that he had asked me to assume Father Morelli's obligations as a successor of his in the church. Hence I begged him to give me a written statement declaring that he or the Curia or others expected to free us from this obligation. When I will receive this declaration, or a negative one, I will deliver the chalice asking for a receipt from the Curia or from the parish priest to whom I will give it if the Curia indicates one to me.

I am sorry that this affair is taking so long to settle and which can be terminated only by Propaganda Fide. However, I must declare that if it is not settled by the end of June, I will find it impossible to remain in this place since I would be subjected to great pressure from the creditors to whom I cannot pay an adequate amount, according to the promise I made them. I have no way of saving any money. The houses which could give me something are very few and, on the other hand, in Piacenza the needs are pressing. Add to this the fact that someone may need money to return to Italy. I see no way of getting out of this honorably.

Now, to other things. Father Martini has terminated his five-year term and would like to return to Italy for a while to regain his health which is quite poor. Who must take his place? Father Astorri? The decision is up to Your Excellency. The permission to let him keep his brother in the Home creates bad feelings among our men, and in part they are right. Too much was said about this in the past and it would be worse if he would let his family come to the United States. In addition to arousing the jealousy of the others in the house, it would create a bad impression among the people. You can be sure of this. Father Franchi wishes to return to Italy too. I don't know what kind of vows were taken by those who were part of Father Franchi's expedition. Some say they took vows for one year, others for five years and still others for an indefinite period, that is, for as long as they please. This is cause for much criticism. Even the other day there was much arguing about it which I tried to stop by saying that everyone must think of keeping the pledge he had made, without thinking about the others. But, it was useless. They say that the pledge must be the same for everyone or there must be no pledge by anyone. Even the question of the five-year vows has come to the fore. They say that according to this rule once one has finished the five-year term, he must return

to Italy and resign from his position if he has one. Hence, if he is a parish priest and a Superior of a house, he loses both titles and the others are not bound to obey him. This, they say, applies to Fr. Martini and to Father Oreste (Alussi).

Even Father Chiariglione has finished his term and I know that he has asked for an independent position. If he has not left yet it is because he hasn't found and will not find one to stay with, since he can't do much alone. And, what about Fr. Paroli? There are also two lay Brothers who have finished their term: Brother Vincenzo from Boston and Brother Angelo from New Haven. What shall be done?

I beg you to give me an answer.

I especially wish to know if Propaganda Fide is taking care of the debts matter.

I send you my respects and kissing your sacred ring, declare myself

Of Your Most Reverend Excellency

Very humble and obsequious servant

Father D. Vicentini

New York, May 4, 1894

Most Reverend Excellency:

Yesterday Father Ferrante told me confidentially that he has written to Rome by order of the Archbishop and that the Curia will take care of the debts of the Baxter Street church taking this responsibility away from us. Moreover, as soon as the Roosevelt Street church will be incorporated, the Curia will help it by leaving it to us. Father Ferrante was surprised that this decision has not been communicated to me as yet. Let us hope that they will soon advise me. It wouldn't be an adequate recompense for the damage caused to us, yet it would be enough to satisfy us. After this I would be happy to resign from my post and therefore I, in my prayer, ask to be freed from this burden.

Yesterday one of the Pallottini Fathers who have several Houses here told me that the Holy See has ruled that a Visitor residing in Rome will supervise them, and that, therefore, their Superior General cannot dispose of the priests here and change them around without the permission of the Visitor, who is a Passionist and a very strict one. I wouldn't want anything of the sort to happen to us some day.

As soon as I receive from the Curia the communication mentioned by Father Ferrante, I will inform Your Excellency. It will be a relief for the Congregation, which needs help so badly.

Please accept my deepest regards and kissing your sacred ring, I declare myself

of Your Most Reverend Excellency

Very humble and obsequious servant

Father D. Vicentini

Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide
Protocol No. 7428

To Msgr. Corrigan
Archbishop of New York

Rome, May 17, 1894

Most Reverend Excellency:

I have read with particular interest the complete report sent to me by Your Most Illustrious and Reverend Excellency on the 20th of last month regarding the church of the Missionaries of St. Charles called the church of the Most Precious Blood, and the other news sent on the 27th of the same month concerning the church of St. Joachim.

I thank Your Lordship for the information which describes the situation from the beginning and which could be the basis of an adequate judgment of this unpleasant affair.

I have admired the charitableness and the generosity of Your Excellency towards those Missionaries, who have nothing to complain about, nor can they have any claim to the church of the Most Precious Blood. I fully approve what the New York Curia has done. The Franciscan Fathers may peacefully remain in possession of said church. Finally, I cannot hide from Your Excellency my pleasure in reading the mild and benign expressions you have used for those who, perhaps, due to an excessive stirring of their fantasy, had not properly evaluated their own expressions.

Meanwhile, etc.

Cardinal Ledochowski, Prefect

Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide
Protocol No. 7428

To Msgr. Scalabrini,
Bishop of Piacenza

Rome, May 17, 1894

Most Illustrious and Most Reverend Sir:

In your letter of February 27, 1894, Your Lordship, complaining against the action of the New York Archiepiscopal Curia in closing the Baxter Street church of the Missionaries of St. Charles, claimed their right to that church and declared that they were willing to satisfy the creditors. I have investigated this unpleasant affair to reach the truth and to learn the history of all events from the beginning. Now from the information sent to me it appears that the New York Archiepiscopal Curia has acted not only with perfect equity but also with much indulgence towards said Missionaries.

Regarding their willingness to satisfy their debts I don't see how this can be reconciled with the other recent event concerning the St. Joachim church which is also to be sold because the Missionaries are not paying the interests

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on their loans and do not succeed in finding money anywhere to avoid its sale. I must therefore conclude that the Missionaries of St. Charles cannot claim any right on the Baxter Street church, which has been given to the Franciscans. To my regret I must therefore conclude that the expressions used by Your Lordship regarding the Archbishop of New York and his Curia are without foundation.

I pray the Lord to preserve you for a long time and give you prosperity.
Of Your Lordship Very Devoted Servant
M. Cardinal Ledochowski, Prefect

New York, May 22, 1894
26 Roosevelt Street

Most Reverend Excellency:

You must have received my telegram saying "debts extinguished," which means that we are no longer responsible for the debts of the Baxter Street church. Having been unable to have an audience with the Archbishop, I wrote him the following letter:

New York, May 18, 1894

Most Reverend Excellency:

For the third time this morning I tried to see Your Excellency but Your Excellency was either out or too busy. I beg you, in the name of God, to let me know either directly or through the Curia if you expect to take care of the debts contracted with the Italians. The thought that within a little more than a month I will be assailed by the creditors who expect at least a part of the promised payment, keeps me in constant anguish. Believe me that if I wrote to Your Excellency or to the Curia in somewhat strong terms, it was because I was pushed to desperation by these financial affairs and by the consciousness of my duty and of the responsibility from which I repeatedly begged in vain to be relieved.

Regarding this subject, Msgr. Scalabrini wrote me on April 28: "When the New York affair will be closed, somehow, even with our complete humiliation, we will discuss it again. For the time being remain at your place. I do not hesitate to say that this is God's Will." Msgr. Scalabrini added: "If you find a way of getting together with the Archbishop, I will be happy. Try to take this thorn out of my flesh."

Monsignor, I will add nothing to this and leave the rest up to your heart. Please accept, etc.

Father D. Vicentini

The same evening the Archbishop replied:

"....Now I have the pleasure of informing you that some priests have generously promised to pay the debts to the Italians on the same conditions you had

stipulated, that is, so much per year, without interest, until the entire amount is paid. Moreover, I too urge and encourage you to exercise with patience your function of Provincial."

After mentioning the confirmation to be performed in the Roosevelt Street church, he concluded: "Therefore, be cheerful and let us hope to be able to go ahead with God's help."

This morning I went to the Curia to try to come to a practical conclusion. I found the Vicar General Mooney and he told me that this matter is in the hands of Msgr. Farley (who is the first Vicar General); that what the Archbishop has written is the substance of the matter, but that not everything has been definitely settled as yet. I wouldn't want to see them make any changes later on, but at any rate we will be relieved. I don't know who these generous priests are who promised to pay the debts, but I think this is a subterfuge to avoid declaring openly that they are offering us charity; but in substance the charity is made in favor of the Franciscans who keep the church for which the money lent us by the Italians was spent. However, whether directly or indirectly, this is good for us and I wrote to the Archbishop to thank him. Later I will go to Msgr. Farley to make things clear. Meanwhile, I beg Your Excellency to think about my successor.

Last Saturday Msgr. Satolli came here together with Father Bandini on his way back from Connecticut where, in addition to blessing the new church of Meriden, he visited the several localities where there are Italians, such as Waterbury, Hartford, Danbury and Milford. Msgr. Satolli was very pleased with his visit; but Father Bandini told me that he had a few things to tell me about Father Morelli on the part of the Bishop of Hartford and other people; but I was unable to see him again because he accompanied Msgr. Satolli to Trenton. The same Msgr. Satolli urged me to send, if possible, one of our priests to the Scranton diocese where there are many Italians, after having asked the Curia to turn to us. But, how can we send anyone there when we cannot even attend to the missions we already have, especially now that Father Martini, Father Franchi and Father Alussi want to return to Italy? Why doesn't Father Molinari return, with someone else?

Please accept my deepest regards, and kissing the sacred ring, I declare myself of Your Most Reverend Excellency

Very humble and obsequious servant
Father D. Vicentini

N.B. The documents reproduced above are kept in the Scalabrinian General Archivs, 552/2 and 664.

To complete the above documentation which we have published in the same order used by Father Vicentini, we add the following rough copy of a letter written by Msgr. Scalabrini in reply to Father Vicentini's letter of May 4, 1894

(Scal. Gen. Arch. 3023):

If what Father Ferrante has told you is true, I am happy. Yes, it is time that this tribulation comes to an end. Go to the Archbishop and reach an understanding telling him that I accept his proposal and thank him. I have already told you that I regret very much to have annoyed the Archbishop for whom I have a great and affectionate veneration. Poor bishops! Often they have to climb Calvary weighed down by a heavy cross and find out that the gold cross that hangs from their neck is in reality a cross of rough iron which lacerates their souls. Tell him that I take back any word that may have offended him and that it was not directed to his venerable person, but to the method by which I thought his officials were treating our cause. Let us forget the past: *veniam damus petimusque vicissim*.

When everything will be settled we shall speak about your wish to leave your position as Provincial. But whom shall I substitute you with? Martini? Gambera, or who else? Give me your opinion.

I bless you....

II. DOCUMENTS KEPT IN THE GENERAL ARCHIVES OF THE FRANCISCAN FRIARS MINOR OBSERVANTS IN ROME

Having seen the Scalabrinians' version, it seems right to us to glance also at the reverse of the medal by reading and reporting the documents kept in the Franciscan Friars Minor Observants In Rome, Custodia Immacolata Concezione, Volume IV.

Father Bernardino da Portogruaro
To Father Bonifacio Da Verona

Rome, St. Anthony
March 6, 1889

Most Reverend Father:

I am writing to inform you that, following the presentation of the last complaint of the Boston affair, Propaganda Fide called Msgr. Scalabrini, Bishop of Piacenza, who is now in Rome, and showed him all the documents.

Msgr. Scalabrini came to see me this morning and I was truly pleased to talk to him. He assured me that he did not know that the Italian parish in Boston was ours, otherwise he would have written to me and would have dealt directly with me. He added that Father Zaboglio (who never wrote a word against us either to him or to Propaganda Fide) went to Boston only at the insistent requests of the Italians, and to question the Archbishop on what he should do; that the Archbishop, who at the beginning appeared indifferent, finally, three months later, and on the advice of his clergy and in order not to favor the designs of

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those schismatics, gave his consent to Father Zaboglio's plan of inaugurating a church in the hall that is now temporarily used for the cult. Msgr. Scalabrini concluded that he himself would write to the Archbishop and his priests, as you rightly suggested, that that parish should be in a distant location in order to avoid friction and antagonism. He also asked me to beg you (since this move could not be made immediately) to have patience but to be sure that it would be made. The Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide was satisfied with this understanding and hopes that thus all cause for worry will be eliminated. So much for your tranquility. I bless you and am
Affectionately in Christ,
Father Bernardino

Very Rev. Father Bonifacio P.S. Fr. (Catt. Co.) Allegany, N.Y.
St. Bonaventure College

Father Atanasio
To Father Bonifacio da Verona, Provincial or Custodian

Boston, March 30, 1889

Very Reverend Father:

I have the letter addressed to you by Father Bernardino on March 6, 1889, and if on the one hand we find consolation in learning that they will remove their parish from our territory, on the other hand we cannot help being painfully surprised in seeing that things were made known to the Superiors in Rome differently from the real situation is.

In the first place, even disregarding the insistent requests, etc., which we cannot believe if we consider what Madame Solari told us about this subject, we wonder if you realize that the purpose and the circumstances of Father Zaboglio's coming were twisted? How can he conscientiously say that he came to Boston only to question the Archbishop about what he should do, when, after more than a month spent here in arousing the dissatisfied people against us, he had not seen the Archbishop. In fact, the Archbishop said: "I know there is a priest in town, but he hasn't made his appearance."

Why did not Father Zaboglio write to his Superior that after having come to Boston in agreement with the leaders of the schism, and without pressure, and after having secretly planned to betray us and our parishioners, he went to the Archbishop and told him that all the Italians would have been ruined if the Archbishop did not consent to the opening of a church for them? Why did he not write that he did this for the purpose, which he managed to accomplish, of completely ruining our parish morally and financially? Can he deny this? The facts are the following:

Father Zaboglio came to Boston to destroy and build upon the ruins. To this end he mingled with the rebels and without seeing any of the priests who took

care of the spiritual needs of the Italians to get information and to learn the truth. He put himself at the head of the rebels, proclaimed that he would come out victorious, and so he incited even many good people to revolt, prepared the ground, obtained the Archbishop's recognition and established a parish inside our own, with the result that our ruination soon became evident.

Natural curiosity procured him many followers and others went to him just for the pleasure of belonging to a victorious party inimical to the priests. The knowledge that the Archbishop had abandoned the Franciscans and had allowed the San Marco Society to enjoy all the parochial rights and privileges induced our parishioners to believe that the ecclesiastic authorities had forgotten us and that the new priests were the only ones our Superior recognized and favored. Our people thought that we had betrayed them and put them in the hands of our enemies. Thus, the support we had vanished and we were reduced to the humiliating and discouraging position we are now in. Perhaps it might be said that Father Zaboglio was not aware of all this and acted in good faith and that the damages we suffered were praeter suam intentionem. But, I ask, can we believe this when we consider the speeches he made in the homes he visited and still visits, and publicly from the altar denouncing us and inducing others to denounce us as enemies of the people, cruel tyrants, people incapable of managing a parish? Were these the instructions and teaching imparted to him by the Archbishop when he went to see him and asked what he should do? And the consequences that derived from all this, do they not perhaps show the evil of their origin? How can one believe anything differently when one considers, for example, that out of about 120 children who came to church every Sunday to learn the catechism from more than 25 teachers, now, after the zealous work performed by the Reverend Zaboglio, I have only 25 children and six or eight teachers chosen after the others had abandoned me? And if so many children came every Sunday to learn the Christian Doctrine and were so good at studying that 175 were confirmed in the month of November of last year, and if their parents came to listen to the comments on the Gospel, where was the precipice?

Reverend Father, you know better than I do that Msgr. Scalabrini's idea to send priests here for the care of the poor abandoned Italians was a saintly one, and that the Holy Father's approval was equally saintly; but on the other hand, it is also true that the Scalabrinian missionaries were not authorized to establish new churches within the confines of the old parishes or to destroy Congregations already established and kept through untold sacrifices. No, they were not authorized to do so, and neither were they authorized to assail and insult priests with a good reputation before their bishop and their Superior; and above all they were never authorized to start a war against a religious order. Our Archbishop was not authorized to install a new parish at the center of one he had already established. It seems that the Boston Archbishop considers this action of his as an experiment among the Italians. It was an unjust, silly and unholy experiment.

It has caused and continues to cause scandal. Cries have risen spontaneously from my heart in reading the letter of Rev. Bernardino when he repeats that the

letter of our beloved Superior General has brought me consolation; but on the other hand, when I think of the moral and financial damage we have suffered, are suffering, and will have to suffer through the fault of those who preach the word of God, I cannot find peace. Supposing that Father Zaboglio will go still further, who will erase the bad impressions and the pernicious effects of the animosity and the hatred aroused among the people against us by the new missionaries? And who will recompense us for our financial loss?

May God in his infinite goodness give us the necessary strength and patience to carry so many crosses and bear so many tribulations, and to our Superiors may he give the light to learn the truth and make justice prevail.

Accept my respects and believe me

Your humble and obsequious subject
Father Atanasio, O.S.F.

Bishop G. B. Scalabrini
To The Minister General of the Minor Franciscans

Very Reverend and dear Father General:

Father Atanasio's letter, which I am sending back, has not given me, to be truthful, the best of impressions. It shows a passionate man who interprets with hostility even the simplest actions. With the best of intentions people like him are bound to cause a conflict.

As for Father Zaboglio, he too may have committed some imprudence, but I can assure you that he is a mature and intelligent young man, very pious, who desires nothing but what is good and just. He went to Boston not on his own, but due to the insistent and repeated requests of the Italians of that city.

Through numerous letters and petitions sent to Italy and through a committee sent to New York, those Italians begged him to go to Boston. I have reasons to believe that once there, he did not wait a month before seeing the Archbishop, but I cannot verify this because I was out of town on a Pastoral Visit; and I cannot consult the letters which narrate in detail the talks he had with the Archbishop and the agreements reached with him.

At any rate, dear Father, I am ready to do anything to spare the least grief to anyone and especially to my dear Franciscans. I must, however, call your attention to the fact that the missionaries sent there are really good priests and that I sent them after I received an urgent request from the Archbishop in whose hands I placed them so that he could use them as he thought best. Finally, he is the best judge of what is necessary and suitable to the welfare of his flock, and we accept his judgment.

I have already written twice, according to our verbal agreement reached in Rome, and now I shall write again. However, we need time and we cannot expect things to be rushed at the speed of an express train. Am I not right? Even the Archbishop, as we know, cannot do and undo things without due consideration of all the facts.

Meanwhile, in order to tranquilize Father Atanasio at least in part, I have arranged to send Father Zaboglio, the bete noire, elsewhere. He has either already left or is about to leave.

I hope that things will be adjusted, but please, dear Father, urge the good Father Atanasio to find a way of getting together with the missionaries, who have been ordered to come to an understanding with him so that they will all work in harmony for the people's welfare.

I take this occasion to recommend myself to your prayers and to renew my particular esteem and veneration, declaring myself of Your Most Reverend Paternity

Very devoted and affectionate in Jesus Christ
+ Gio. Battista Bishop of Piacenza
S. Polo, April 30, 1889

Verona, Vicolo Pomo d'Oro,
4 November 21, 1889

Most Reverend Father:

Cardinal Canossa and Msgr. Scalabrini used the expression "many cordial things" in addition to many others by the latter which I would prefer to express verbally because then they would be more comprehensible. He has such affection and veneration for you. On my way back from Rome I went to Loreto and celebrated Mass at the altar of the Holy House. Then I went to Quaracchi to greet those Fathers who were very happy and grateful that I represented them at your jubilee. I went to Parma to kiss the hand of the General Superior who treated me with great affection and was glad of my attention. Then, as I had promised you, I visited Msgr. Scalabrini who is a very righteous man but a little too worried about Father Zaboglio whom he thinks as righteous as he is, but who is not.

Although I don't know him and have never met him, yet from his conduct towards us in Boston and with the dissidents there (a conduct described by Father Atanasio and myself and of which the bishop must have read in the communications you sent him) I cannot judge him differently from what I already have. The bishop cannot realize that a man who was very scrupulous in Italy can act differently in America. At any rate, he had a good impression of myself, he said that I have the face of an honest man and I was favorably impressed by his frankness and loyalty. He asked my opinion about the possibility of mending up the Boston affair and I gave him in writing the same that I gave to the Boston Archbishop.

He told me that he would act on that basis. I also mentioned to him the difficulties he would encounter and the reasons why he shouldn't depart from that base of operation. He did not dwell too much on it because he had read my plan in a previous report. He was even willing to take his missionaries away from Boston if necessary. I told him that this would be very risky and might cause greater troubles.

He realized that I was honest in my intentions, but I added that the dissidents should be allowed either to open the place that they had bought without the Archbishop's authorization (or rather against his orders which I had made public from the altar) or stay in the North End of the city where they are now without delimitation of their parish, in which case an undeserved injustice would be committed against us.

It seems that the bishop was convinced of what I said, which is no more and no less than what I said in the petition that you presented to the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide, which in turn sent it to the bishop. Since then the latter should have convinced himself.

When I asked him if he had read the petition he said yes and added that it seemed the composition of a young man. He expressed the same opinion to you, he said, and you answered that on the contrary it seemed the work of a mature man. I assured him on my word of honor that although the petition might have been strong and resentful, nothing in it was untrue or exaggerated and that if I had to write it again I would write it with the same heat and energy.

The bishop doesn't realize how much we have suffered, although in addition to my writings he has read or should have read those no less strong and logical of Father Atanasio, which however are apparently more phlegmatic than mine. It seems to me that both Propaganda Fide and the bishop have taken the matter too lightly and nonchalantly. If the latter had worked for the Italian immigrants as much as I have and if he had been compensated as I have been, he would have lost his head on account of the many injustices we suffered from the Italians and from the ecclesiastic authorities.

What is left to us is to pray that God will let us hold on to our heads in the future while thanking Him that we did not lose them in the past. The ecclesiastic authorities certainly gave us reasons for losing them. Let us hope that similar occasions will not occur in the future.

Do you know what the Bishop did insinuate? Precisely what I told you in my confidential letter, namely, that everything that happened was the Archbishop's fault. In other words, the Archbishop betrayed us. Bishop Scalabrini said: "Listen, Father Bonifacio, do you believe that the Archbishops and the bishops of America are as conscientious, loyal and honest as ours in Italy?" I replied with equal candor and honesty expounding him my doubts, and to convince him that these doubts were not new or an echo of his own, I told him in detail what I wrote you on January 1889 in my confidential letter. I told him that the conduct of the Archbishop towards us was the result of the Omaha affair, probably communicated to him by the bishop of that city, and that everything was an act of reprisal.

The Bishop of Piacenza did not think I was unreasonable. Nevertheless I condemned Father Zaboglio's conduct. He is a rascal. Consider his actions before the Archbishop sent the telegram to Bishop Scalabrini asking him for two more missionaries. The telegram was sent on December 28th. Father Zaboglio secretly worked against us in Boston since September. He kept his Bishop unaware that we were caring for the Italians. The Bishop believed, in

fact, that the pastor had left his congregation without a priest. Bishop Scalabrini then understood that Zaboglio was a fox, who, with the Archbishop, worked for our ruin. How this benefited souls cannot easily be imagined. The Italians who instigated the discord, believe that the matter is not religious but one concerning private interests. Let us hope that Bishop Scalabrini will seriously and honestly work for a peaceful solution to this problem. This is required by justice. If there is justice in the world, then it was previously detrimental to me. You recall the verdict when I was brought before eleven Protestants and a judge in Boston's Civil court, rather than being permitted a hearing in an ecclesiastical court.

After my conversation with Bishop Scalabrini, he invited me to lunch and put his carriage at my disposal for a tour of the city. I left greatly impressed by him. I told him that I would soon leave for Jerusalem and he urged me to visit him again on my return and stay in his palace for a couple of days. Naturally, I promised him that I would in the hope of finding out what turn our affair would have taken then and of being able to help our cause with some suggestions; but I did not want to decide anything without your approval. Besides, my visit to him would be a matter of little importance with not too much loss of time because leaving for Jerusalem from Trieste together with Father Luigi, Vice Commissioner for Venice, early in January, I should return with him to Trieste and it would be well that I took advantage of the occasion to try to help our Boston Mission. A few lines from you about this would make me decide pro or con.

Kissing your hand, I remain,

Your affectionate son in Christ,
Father Bonifacio O.S.F.

Bishop G. B. Scalabrini
To the General Minister of The Minor Franciscans

Piacenza, January 14, 1890

Most Venerable Father General:

I hope that you will forgive me if, due to any pressing matters, I haven't been able to reply sooner about our troubles in Boston.

I wrote several letters there and urged the interested parties to find a solution to their controversy keeping in mind the advice given by Father Bonifacio and Your Reverence.

I, Venerable Father, cannot do more. The matter is entirely in the Archbishop's hands and I am certain that his decision will satisfy both sides. He is a learned, prudent and pious man.

One Missionary wrote me that he had spoken with the acting Franciscan Provincial who assured him that when the Provincial returned, the matter would be satisfactorily settled. I believe that this controversy has been exaggerated by (?) and that there is little reason to fear. Besides, I shall soon

come to Rome at which time we can discuss it again.
In the hope of being able to greet you personally, I reaffirm myself with affectionate veneration.

Devotedly yours in Jesus Christ,
+ Gio. Battista Bishop of Piacenza

From a letter by Father Anacleto of the Minor Franciscans
To the Minister General:

New York, February 2, 1894,

.... The priests sent here by Bishop Scalabrini will soon possess a Church. They will also buy the land and basement which for nearly three years they have used as a chapel, and on this foundation construct their rectory. Because of poor administration and their inability to satisfy their financial obligations, the mortgages on their previously held property was sold to the mortgage holder.

Their Church has been closed for over a month, it is for sale to anyone and for any purpose....

....Father Giulio and I spoke about the Delegate: Recommendation that the Franciscans should have bought the church; and in the belief that he and Archbishop Corrigan would be pleased, we purchased it without delay fearing that it would otherwise be bought by someone else.

Having taken this first step, and seeing that it was approved, I called a meeting of the Custodial Directorate to discuss my proposal. We agreed to ask the Archbishop for his approval also so that our Order might have the Church for the spiritual needs of the Italians in that district.

The zealous Archbishop ordered his Vicar General to write the following to me on the 30th of last month:

"Dear Father Anacleto:

The Archbishop accepts and is very pleased with your proposal regarding the Church of the Most Precious Blood. He prays that no other obstacle will delay your priests from reopening the Church.

*Sincerely yours in Christ,
Joseph F. Mooney, Vicar General*

In another letter dated March 10, 1894, Father Anacleto stated that the Church was bought on February 13, 1894, and that it was re-opened on February 25th.

THE ITALIANS IN NEW YORK¹

Bernard J. Lynch

THE first question one is apt to ask about the Italians who are now arriving among us in such large numbers is, Where do all these dark-eyed, olive-tinted men and women come from? From the old Neapolitan States and southern Italy for the most part, though there are many from the neighborhood of Genoa and some from Lombardy. Do they come to stay? The answer must now be emphatically, Yes. When the immigration first began the intention was almost invariably to go back home and enjoy the savings of the American sojourn. But that day is past. Our visitors have brought their knitting, and we are going to have them as an element in the make-up of the American commonwealth. Many who went home in former years have returned again. They bring their families with them, their young folks marry here, their little ones grow up speaking English mostly and a little very bad Italian; and they are putting their savings into real estate - this last a most significant evidence of stability.

What are their traits of character?

There is first the difference in race-traits between the northern and southern Italians. The northerners, from Venice, Piedmont, and Lombardy, have much of the energy and vivacity of the French, springing in great part from the same original stock, though possessing much of the steadiness of the German. The Neapolitans and Sicilians, being of a more southern type, are voluble and expansive. As to general characteristics, the Italians have one American trait in conspicuous fullness - money-getting, a trait stimulated by the change from the old to the new order of existence. Thirty, forty, and fifty cents a day for the hard, long-houred labor of a grown man in Italy is changed by a cheap steerage passage into from a dollar to two dollars and a half in America. No wonder they think that you can "pick up gold in the streets" of America. And this is literally the case with many of them, for they are the most skillful rag-pickers among us. They are becoming the only rag-pickers in New York. And, too, they are picking up gold in the streets as bootblacks, and their children as newsboys. The traditional Irish apple-woman is in every direction giving place to the Italian corner fruit-vender. Many are grocers, druggists, moneychangers, beer-sellers, sign-makers, barbers, candy-makers, and a vast army of sinewy and dark-browed men are taking the place of the Irish laborers. In the lower part of the city there are several labor-bureaus which send Italian laborers by the thousand to all parts of the country. The result of all this eager struggle for the "bounties of Providence" is, of course, the accumulation of money. The savings-banks know them, and they are beginning to have some such institutions of their own. They are beginning to be fruit-merchants and regular confectioners, and no doubt soon will be boss-contractors, etc. They are not, as a class,

¹ *The following is an article which appeared in the Magazine CATHOLIC WORLD in April 1888*

intemperate, nor over-expensive in dress, nor careless of the main chance in any way. One of the parishes which has been most largely invaded by the Italians, and where a systematic effort is being made to give them religious care, is the Transfiguration, whose church edifice is at the corner of Mott and Park Streets. Here their activity in real-estate operations is most apparent. This parish is being depopulated of the Irish by the sub-letting of tenements by Italians, and their finally getting the fee of the property. An Italian can secure from Italians a rental fifty per cent. in advance of what any mortal can get from the Irish, or perhaps from any other race. Does the reader ask why? Because more Italian humanity can be packed into the cubic yard than any other kind of humanity, the Chinese, perhaps, excepted. They can sleep anywhere; if there are no chairs they will sit contentedly on the floor and lean against the wall; they will pack into rooms as thick as sardines they are a living demonstration that the "cold figures" of the Board of Health are a delusion, for they flourish in robust health where hygienic science proves that they should drop into their graves. Where no man can live, according to scientific theory, the Italian waxes fat, according to actual reality. This trait enables the thrifty among them to acquire, by sub-letting, first the leasehold and then the ownership of tenements. The whole people seems thrifty, shrewd, prodigiously saving, immensely industrious. Nor should it be forgotten that their children are bright, talented, fond of study.

But they lack, as yet, some other traits of American character, especially what we call spirit. They are not high-spirited. They for the most part seem totally devoid of what may be termed the sense of respectability - not on all scores, by any means, but certainly on the score of personal independence and manliness. An American or an Irishman will almost starve before asking charity, and often really does starve. Not so the lower-class Italian. He is always ready to beg. Men with money in the bank will commit their children to an institution of public charity, and wait until they are very easily situated before taking them out. The shame of being thought a pauper is almost unknown among the Italian people of this quarter. It is this lack of what are known as the manly qualities that makes a profound difference between them and all the races who have hitherto contributed to the making of the American population. Still, they are very amenable to our civilization. The boys and girls, as they grow up, take on all the American externals of dress and manner of life, and will doubtless develop the other characteristics. The primacy of Italy in art, in music, in literature, and, during previous centuries, in war, gives a solid hope of better things among our Italians. The two or three hundred years that the race has spent under petty tyrannies, especially that meanest of them all, the Neapolitan Bourbons, cannot have quite extinguished its native nobility of character. Some conspicuous social virtues they have, such as obedience to the laws, absence of public prostitution, the custom of early marrying, and the like. As to politics, the Italians of New York are now a factor, and the political boss is represented among this nationality.

And now as to the delicate question of religion. The Italians in the jurisdiction of Transfiguration parish - and in all this question mention is made

only of ascertained facts - come to America the worst off in religious equipment of, perhaps, any foreign Catholics whatever. There are thousands of Italians in this city who do not know the Apostles' Creed. Multitudes of men and women of this people do not know the elementary truths of religion, such as the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Redemption. This ignorance of the most necessary doctrines is, it must be borne in mind, not exactly common to emigrants from all localities in Italy. From observation, and from the best information, it would seem probable that the North Italians are a fairly instructed people, the Genoese and Lombards in America having a good name for intelligent knowledge of the truths of religion. There are many, let us hope the greatest number, from the south with at least the rudiments. But the old Neapolitan States are daily sending to all quarters of this hemisphere grown men and women who are not well enough instructed to receive the sacraments; if the priest should administer them they would be invalidly administered for want of knowledge on the part of the recipients. The evidence of this state of things is so complete, comes from so many different sources (not less from all grades of Italian priests than from other quarters), is seen to be so palpably true upon actual contact with this people, that the fact is established beyond question.

What, then, has been their religious life at home? Some peculiar kind of spiritual condition fed on the luxuries of religion without its substantial. "Devotions," pilgrimages, shrines, miraculous pictures and images, indulgences, they have been accustomed to, together with, in all too many cases, an almost total ignorance of the great truths which can alone make such aids of religion profitable.

Now, what is the matter in southern Italy? How shall we explain this lamentable state of things? Excellent judges say that the fault is in the civil status of the people; the old tyranny of the Bourbons and the new tyranny of the atheists - the aim of the latter being, as an excellent Italian priest described it, *destructio entis moralis* - have prevented the proper action of the clergy. Any one who has read the life of St. Alphonsus, or who knows the methods of the present Italian government, may readily believe that there is much truth in this explanation. One may really exclaim, "What Catholics these people would become if they only had the qualities fitting them to be good Americans!" For the lack of these qualities the political and civil difficulties in Italy are much to blame.

Another reason assigned is the confusion of parochial and conventual ministrations: the friction occasionally felt from this cause in America, and the consequent injury to religion, lead to the belief that indiscriminate and unregulated care of souls by bodies of clergymen, working under different and practically independent canonical jurisdiction, in the same locality, has had something to do with the low state of religious instruction we are considering. What is anybody's business and everybody's is apt to be nobody's. The poverty of the people in out-of-the-way places and in barren rural districts, and under the Italian system of landlordism, which is only not worse than that in Ireland, is another cause assigned. Some say that the climate is so enervating as to

provoke a shiftless, ignorant state of things; but the Italians here are the most busy people in America: there isn't a drone in their hive.

But, when all other causes have had due weight, the miserable truth is that the people have been neglected by their priests. There are many good priests in southern Italy, and the parish clergy of the city of Naples are well spoken of, and that by severe critics. But somehow the duty of even rudimentary instruction and training in the principles and practices of the Christian religion has been grossly neglected by large numbers of parish priests; the state of ignorance among this people cannot otherwise be accounted for.

The apathy of the clergy in instructing the people is sometimes explained by the fact that they have fixed revenues, independent of the people, and fixity of tenure for life. They would be more energetic in imparting religious knowledge if they drew their income from the people, and their positions or promotions depended on their exertions.

And now, you may ask, what can be done for them? First procure good Italian priests for them, and gather them in as annex congregations to the already established English-speaking parishes. The difficulty of forming annex congregations is not so great, once good Italian priests are secured. The Transfiguration parish has had what is considered a successful experience of it. The basement of the church is the place of worship of over two thousand Italians regularly organized, with four Masses, and Vespers, every Sunday and holyday of obligation, with a good and hopeful start of a Sunday-school. They are served by two priests of their own nation, have their own ushers, and indeed a complete outfit for a parochial establishment except a school.

This is called an annex congregation because it is so; and it must be so. This is proved, first, by the total break-down of every autonomous Italian church in this section of the country. It begins Italian and it ends Irish - except in the personnel of the clergy - who, like the Normans in Ireland, sometimes become *Hiberniores Hiberniis*. It is further proved by experience. For with careful prudence, with every known appliance of raising funds applicable to them, this Italian congregation, two thousand strong, being a fair average of the whole population, give a revenue every week of but about forty-five dollars. It began with their giving pretty much nothing for revenue. Then a few seats were set apart next the statue of the Madonna, five cents being charged; after a while the pay area was increased, and now it embraces the centre rows of pews, no seat costing more than five cents, and all the side-rows of pews - being about half the sittings - entirely free; and with the above result.

The truth is that this people will not give up sufficient money for church purposes, though doubtless their children will. To support, let alone to build, a church, more than Italian generosity is needed. Here, with two excellent Italian priests - as good as any in America, no matter of what nationality - popular with their people, using every expedient that experience and prudence suggest, only enough is got to pay their salaries of five hundred a year each and their board - not a cent for repairs, cleaning, furnishing sacristy and sanctuary, starting a school, buying a site for a church, or anything else. Of stipends for Masses there are very few, and the revenue from baptismal and matrimonial

fees is not much. This is the top notch of a long and labored movement, reached under the highest pressure. There is a good set of Italian ushers who serve every Sunday for nothing and are excellent men.

The objection has been made that if they had the whole church, or a church of their own, six thousand instead of two would come, etc. Besides the answer given by the notorious failure of separate parishes noted above, it may be said that the persons among them who object to the basement are not numerous. The Italians as a body are not humiliated by humiliation. As a body: there are numbers, chiefly Genoese and Lombards, who object to the basement, and join the Irish-Americans upstairs, and do as well for religion financially and otherwise as the best. But the bulk are not like that.

The fact is that the Catholic Church in America is to the mass of the Italians almost like a new religion. There are no endowed churches, no pilgrimages, and no free food at the convent gates. They have got to readjust themselves to a religion lacking many things of a kind that to half-instructed people makes up pretty much the whole religious apparatus. It is not likely that the old folks will ever be readjusted. They must tag after the Irish, and little by little their children will do great things for God in America: their forefathers have been foremost in the history of God's heroes.

Our hope is in the children. The Irish and the Italians do not easily mix at school, but they can be brought together. One reason why the Irish move away from a tenement-house is the moving in of a family or two of Italians. They are almost of a different civilization. And so the Irish will not send their children readily to a school which Italian children are beginning to frequent. For example, there has always been a large class of some ninety little children in the Transfiguration school, ranging no higher than eight years of age. Originally all were of Irish parentage. Some Italians were admitted a few years ago, and things were let work their own way, with the result that the class is now almost completely Italian.

An effort must first be made to secure good Italian priests to work with the American clergy in duplex parishes. This has, up to the present, been a matter of no small difficulty, but measures are now being taken which promise to furnish a supply of the right kind of material for this work. The good Italian parish priest stays in Italy, and the Italian missionary goes to the heathen. The bishops of the eastern part of the United States would be glad to get a supply of competent Italian clergymen, but hitherto have not known where to look. Within a few months a practical move has been made by Bishop Scalabrini, of the diocese of Piacenza, for the supplying of Italian priests for Italian emigrants to the New World. He has already established a house for these missionaries, and five priests in the institution are now awaiting a call to America. They are from his own and neighboring dioceses of northern Italy. Bishop Scalabrini has had this project in mind for years, and has collected facts concerning the condition of Italian emigrants to South America, and published a book on the subject. With the aid of the Bishop of Cremona and the blessing of Leo XIII, contained in a brief approving his new project, he has now formed a national association for the support of the new missionary house. A considerable sum of

money has already been contributed by the Italians in Italy to the project, and a permanent fountain has been opened for the supply of zealous and well-equipped Italian priests for missions in America. Bishop Scalabrini expects these priests to act as auxiliary or assistant priests in parishes where Italians are to be found in numbers. The Bishop of Cremona, in addition, intends sending a certain number of students to complete their last year of theology in American seminaries, and then to serve as assistants in duplex parishes.

Finally, and above all, an effort must be made to get the children into Catholic schools. It is a work of instant necessity. It is the children of the Neapolitans who go to the Five Points House of Industry and the City Mission on the opposite side of "Paradise Park." These institutions, up to recent times, were mainly occupied in making Protestants of the children of intemperate Irish parents. At present they are doing the same work by wholesale with the children of Catholic Italians.

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