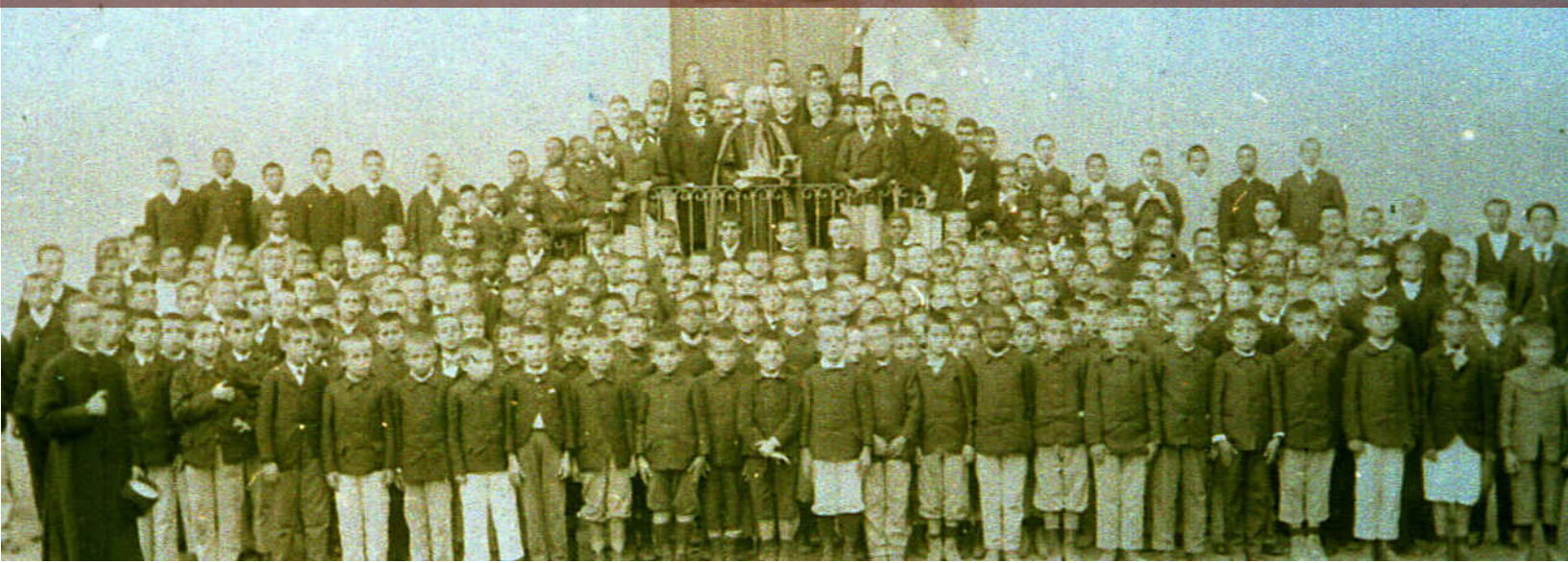




HISTORY OF THE

SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOLUME III

EARLY MISSIONS IN BRAZIL 1888 - 1905



HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION

by Mario Francesconi, c.s.

VOLUME III¹

EARLY MISSIONS IN BRAZIL

1888 - 1905

Translated by Martin Bortolazzo, c.s.

1983

Published by

**Province of St. Charles Borromeo Missionaries of
St. Charles - Scalabrinians Provincial Archives
Center for Migration Studies New York (CMS)
Scalabrini International Migration Network (SIMN)**

Copyright by

The Center for Migration Studies of New York, Inc.

All rights reserved.

No part of this book may be reproduced without written permission from the publisher.

¹ Volume III was reviewed and transcribed in digital format in August-September 2015 by Peter P. Polo, c. s. Please send comments and observations to NY PROVINCIAL OFFICE. Thank you.

CONTENTS

		Page
<u>Chapter I</u>	Emigration to Brazil and Emigrants' Traveling Conditions	
	1. Brief History of Immigration to Brazil until 1950	1
	2. First Act of the Drama	4
<u>Chapter II</u>	Scalabrinian Missionaries in the State of Espirito Santo (1888 -1908)	
	1. From 1888 to 1895	8
	2. From 1903 to 1908	12
<u>Chapter III</u>	Scalabrinian Mission in Parana (1887, 1905) and along the Tibagi	
	1. Pioneering Action of Fr. Colbacchini	21
	2. Santa Felicidade.....	40
	3. Rondinha and Campo Comprido.....	50
	4. The Mission in the Tibagi Region	52
<u>Chapter IV</u>	Italian Emigration to the State of São Paulo	
	1. Italian Migratory Inflow from the Beginning to 1906.....	62
	2. Italian immigrants in the "Fazendas" (Plantations)	67
	3. Italian Industrial Workers in São Paulo	70
	4. Religious Conditions of Migrants	73
<u>Chapter V</u>	The "Cristoforo Colombo" Orphanage of São Paulo	
	1. Fr. Giuseppe Marchetti, the Founder	83
	2. Fr. Faustino Consoni.....	100
<u>Chapter VI</u>	Beginnings of the Parishes of São Bernardo and Cascalho, Other Activities of the Missionaries in São Paulo	
	1. The Parish of São Bernardo	116
	2. Cascalho (Parish of the Assumption).....	118
	3. Ribeirão Pires (Parish of Saint Giuseppe)	121
	4. "Umberto I" (Matarazzo) Hospital	121
	5. The Most Important Work.....	122
<u>Chapter VII</u>	Italian Emigration to the State of Rio Grande do Sul (1875, 1905)	
	1. A Review of the Epic of Italian Emigration	127
	2. Religious Conditions	136
	3. A Report of Bishop Scalabrini	138
<u>Chapter VIII</u>	The First Ten Years of the Scalabrinian Missions in Rio Grande do Sul	
	1. Encantado	144
	2. Capoeiras (Nova Prata)	157
	3. Nova Bassano	160
	4. Protasio Alves	168
	5. São Laurencio de Vilas Boas (Colonel Pilar)	170
	6. Monte Belo.....	171
	7. Monte Vêneto (Cotipora)	171
<u>Appendix I</u>	Visit of Bishop Scalabrini to Brazil through his letters and the Press.....	173
	1. Autograph of Pius X to Scalabrini, Rome, June 5, 1904	174
	2. Scalabrini to Bonomelli, no date	174
	3. Scalabrini's Journal of his Voyage, On board ship, June 17, 1904	174
	4. Scalabrini to Can. Camillo Mangot, June 23, 1904	180
	5. Scalabrini to Can. Camillo Mangot, Rio de Janeiro, July 7, 1904, "Città di Genova"	181
	6. Scalabrini to Can. Camillo Mangot, São Paulo, Jul. 11, 1904	182
	7. Scalabrini to Can. Camillo Mangot, Jul. 14, 1904.....	184
	8. Interview Granted by Scalabrini to "Il Fanfulla" of São Paulo, Jul. 10, 1904	185
	9. An Article From the Daily "O Estado De São Paulo", Jul. 16, 1904 "National Life"	189
	10. Article of the Daily "Il Fanfulla" , Jul. 18, 1904 , Scalabrini In Brazil All Things In Order (With	

VOL 3 INTRODUCTION

Regard to Certain Article).....	193
11. Article from the Periodical "Estandarte Catolico" São Paulo, Jul. 30, 1904.....	195
12. Scalabrini to Pope Pius X , São Paulo, Jul. 22, 1904.....	196
13. Scalabrini to Can. Camillo Mangot and Fr. Francesco Sidoli, Monastery Of St. Benedict, São Paulo , Jul. 25, 1904.....	198
14. Scalabrini to Fr. Francesco Sidoli, Fazenda De Santa Gertrudes, Jul. 30, 1904.....	200
15. Decree of Scalabrini, of Piacenza, Superior General of the Congregation of St. Charles, Aug. 4, 1904	201
16. Scalabrini to Can. Camillo Mangot, Aug. 5, 1904.....	202
17. Scalabrini to Can. Camillo Mangot, Nicteroy, Aug. 9, 1904	203
18. Scalabrini to Fr. Faustino Consoni, Aug. 10, 1904.....	204
19. Scalabrini to Can. Camillo Mangot, Curitiba, Aug. 19, 1904	205
20. Scalabrini to Pope Pius X, end of Aug. 1904 (Minute).....	206
21. Scalabrini to Can. Camillo Mangot, Santa Felicidade De Curitiba , Aug. 31, 1904	207
22. Scalabrini to Duarte Leopoldo E Silva of Curitiba , Curitiba, Sept. 2, 1904.....	208
23. Scalabrini to Can. Camillo Mangot, Aboard Ship "Prudence De Moraes", Sept. 9, 1904	210
24. Scalabrini to Can. Camillo Mangot, Encantado, Sept. 15, 1904	211
25. Scalabrini to Can. Camillo Mangot, São Laurenço De Rio Grande Do Sul, Sept. 25, 1904	212
26. Scalabrini to Can. Camillo Mangot, Conde D'eu, Sept. 26, 1904.....	214
27. Scalabrini to Can. Camillo Mangot, Capoeiras, Sept. 28, 1904.....	215
28. Scalabrini to Can. Camillo Mangot, Nova Bassano, Oct. 2, 1904.....	215
29. Scalabrini to Can. Camillo Mangot, Alfredo Chaves, Oct. 9, 1904	216
30. Scalabrini to Can. Camillo Mangot, Bento Gonçalves, Oct. 12, 1904.....	217
31. Scalabrini to Fr. Faustino Consoni, Caxias Do Sul, Oct. 19, 1904	219
32. Scalabrini to Can. Camillo Mangot, Caxias, Oct. 18, 1904	220
33. Scalabrini to Can. Camillo Mangot, Porto Alegre, Oct. 23, 1904.....	221
34. Article From "O Cosmopolita", A Newspaper Of Caxias Do Sul, Oct. 24, 1904.....	222
35. Scalabrini to Fr. Faustino Consoni, Porto Alegre, Oct. 26, 1904.....	223
36. Scalabrini to Fr. Massimo Rinaldi, Porto Alegre, Oct. 27, 1904	224
37. Scalabrini to Can. Camillo Mangot, Rio Grande, Oct. 29, 1904.....	224
38. Scalabrini to Fr. Carmine Fasulo, Rio Grande, Oct. 29, 1904	225
39. Scalabrini to C.J. Ponce De Leão (undated minute).....	226
40. Article From "El Mensajero" of Bs As, Nov. 18, 1904, "Scalabrini and Italian Immigrants"	226
41. Scalabrini to Fr. Marco Simoni, Aboard Ship "Sardegna", Dec. 17, 1904	227
42. Article from "La Libertà" of Piacenza, Dec. 8, 1904: From Italy to Brazil and Back (Impressions and Anecdotes on Scalabrini's Journey).....	228
43. Telegram of Pope Pius X to Scalabrini, Dec. 5, 1904, (Autograph)	233
44. Autograph from Pope Pius X to Scalabrini, Dec. 22, 1904.....	233

Appendix II

Founding the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo (Scalabrinians)	234
1. A Complicated Story.....	235
2. The Initiative of Father Giuseppe Marchetti	238
3. The Group of Piacenza and the Sister Apostles of the Sacred Heart	
4. Canonical Approbation and Difficult Beginnings	253
5. Contrasts with Mother Merloni	258

Appendix II

Scalabrini to Ledochowski: Report to the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith on the Institute of the Missionaries of St. Charles for Italian Emigrants	267
1. The origins of the Institute.....	267
2. Growth of the Institute	268
3. The St. Raphael Association	268
4. The Mother House	268
5. The House in Genoa	268
6. Religious Assistance from Genoa to the American Ports	269
7. North America	270
8. Houses in North America.....	271
9. Brazil.....	271
10. Residences in Brazil.....	272
11. The Sisters	273
12. Conclusion and Documentation	274

Foreword

The original Italian version of this volume was published on the imminence of the centennial celebration of the Italian emigration to Brazil, which was to occur in 1975.

It follows the pattern of the other volumes of this History of the Scalabrinian Congregation.

It is not meant, therefore, to be an exhaustive study of Italian emigration, even as regards religious assistance, to which not only the Scalabrinian missionaries devoted their lives, but many other priests and religious communities, as well; rather, it is limited to the publication of documentary material from the "*Scalabrinian General Archives*" with the intent to provide a monographic contribution towards a more comprehensive history, such as may result from a wider range of documents, and from studies on other historic, social, and pastoral components of the phenomenon of Italian emigration.

It is our hope that other researchers and study teams may bring to good completion the various initiatives now in progress both in Italy and in Brazil, in order to reach an accurate evaluation of the historic, social, and religious movement that had its beginning with the Italian emigration to Brazil.

Mario Francesconi, C.S.

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL 3

CHAPTER 1

CHAPTER I

EMIGRATION TO BRAZIL. SAGA OF ITALIAN MIGRANTS

1. Brief History of Immigration to Brazil until 1950.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Brazil, then a Portuguese colony, had some four million inhabitants thus distributed: one million whites, about two million black slaves, three hundred thousand natives.

The Prince Regent Dom João, who had arrived from Portugal in 1808, following the invasion of Napoleon, ruled the colony. He liberalized trades, and acknowledged the right of immigrants to private ownership of land. It was then when non-Portuguese immigrants began to arrive.

In 1815 an end was put to the trade of black slaves from the northern coasts of Africa. In order to supply new laborers to replace them, Dom Joao accepted an offer of workers presented by the Swiss Confederation. In 1819, the first group of the two thousand and three Swiss immigrants arrived at Rio de Janeiro and went on to found Nova Friburgo. However, both this, and the rural colony of Santa Leopoldina, which had been settled on the basis of a law in favor of immigrants enacted through the efforts of Hipolito Jose' de Costa in 1819, failed.

In 1822, Dom Pedro, a son of Dom João proclaimed the independence of Brazil and founded the Empire. Concerned over the problem of the scarcity of population, he sought to entice European immigrants. The first Germans settled in Rio Grande do Sul in 1824, while others attempted to give new life to the colony of Nova Friburgo. In 1828, the Emperor had one hundred and forty Prussians to fix their residence at Pernambuco, to be joined by another one hundred the following year. At the same time, the German colonization of the State of Santa Catarina also began.

The failure of several of these enterprises raised a political issue in Congress causing immigration policies to undergo alternating phases consequent to the changing moods of Parliament. In fact, from 1830 to 1836 allocations for immigration were suspended. In the meanwhile, in 1831, Dom Pedro abdicated in favor of his son Dom Pedro II, who started a period of prosperity and of expansion of the migratory movement, encouraging it especially by delegating jurisdiction over it to the single states.

The rich landowner, Senator Nicolau de Campo Vergueiro had a number of Portuguese come to work his land as sharecroppers. This way he initiated for the landowners a system that was to grow ever more articulate with the beginning of 1847, and more so as the progressive abolition of slavery brought freedom to increasing number of slaves, while coffee plantations were making great strides. In 1842 the Council of State began to support the interests of landowners who championed an immigration policy of hired farm hands in

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL 3

CHAPTER 1

preference to one of independent farmers. They were pushing for a system by which land should be owned only through purchase in cash thus intending to prevent immigrants from becoming landowners. Thus, for all practical purposes, the large estate ownership reversed to the slavery system, or turned to hired farm laborers. In 1847 the State of Espirito Santo saw the arrival of a German immigration, which was destined to expand rapidly and to exert a beneficial influence on the economy of the State. Appearance of the yellow fever in 1849, however, caused a detour of a great part of immigrants toward Argentina, a healthier country, more attuned to the kinds of cultures dear to Europeans. Later on, because of the economic gains made through the courageous initiatives of Dom Pedro II, and of the consequent increasing need of hired farm hands, and due also to the progressive diminution of slave work, a great expansion of emigration began.

In 1875 there arrived in Rio Grande do Sul the first Italian immigrants who from 1877 on held first place in the statistics of arrivals. At the same time, the State of São Paulo began to supply financial help to immigrants and to facilitate their entry thus attracting half of the foreigners who were migrating to Brazil.

In the decade between 1875 and 1885, about twenty or thirty thousand foreigners entered Brazil each year. In 1886 there were 33,486 immigrants, but in 1887 the year that, for all practical purposes marks the end of slavery, they climbed to 130,056 units, while in 1888, the year when slavery was totally abolished, they increased still further to 133,253. In 1891, the quota of 200,000 units was exceeded. Some fourteen percent of all immigrants arrived in Brazil between 1887 and 1891. In 1895, 165,000 foreigners entered, but thereafter the trend leveled off to a yearly average of about 60,000 until 1914, when it reached again very high levels in the years 1910-1913. In fact, it climbed up to 190,000 in 1913. In 1908, the first Japanese entered.

WWI brought about a drastic decrease. After the war, the increase was remarkable, especially in the twenties, reaching the highest level with 118,686 in 1926. In this period, restrictions began to be enacted both on the part of the countries of origin, and of Brazil, where a nationalistic spirit began to take hold opposing entry to Japanese, and to Portuguese especially.

The great economic crisis, the disorders, and the revolution of 1930, brought about a policy of strong limitation to immigration; still the goal of containing unemployment failed. In 1945, at the end of the WWII, restrictions were somewhat relaxed, but the system of "fixed quotas", decreed by the Federal Constitution in 1937, remained in force; that is, only two percent of the sum total of immigrants of each country of origin were admitted to Brazil from 1884 to 1933. The main reason for this restriction was that of limiting Japanese immigration, which was actually the only one to fill the quota assigned to it, while the flow from the other large countries spontaneously decreased. Altogether, the immigrants were 18,140 in 1946, and 34,691 in 1950.

The countries that contributed greater numbers of immigrants to Brazil were

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL 3
CHAPTER 1

Italy, Portugal, Spain, Germany and Japan. Of the 4,685,366 immigrants, Italians are in first place with 1,505,585, equal to 32 percent. Except for 1881, between 1877 and 1903, Italy consistently provided the largest yearly contingent, often higher than half of the total.

In 1903 the Italian government prohibited the recruiting of migrants for the coffee plantations in São Paulo on account of the miserable conditions in which they were to work.

Consequently, Portuguese and Spanish immigrants took first place and then relinquished it back to the Italians in 1948.

Second, in order of importance, was Portuguese immigration, which reached the total of 1,317,765, equal to 28 percent. It had held first place until 1877, recaptured it in 1904 when it peaked to 76,701. It met with serious difficulties and limitations at some periods of prevalent anti-Portuguese sentiments; in 1939 it was even taken off the quota system.

At the same time 597,000 Spaniards entered, equal to 12 percent. The Germans represented 4,6 percent with 194,047 arrivals, of which many before 1884; and the Japanese 4 percent with 188,622 entries.

From 1878 to 1950, fifty-five percent of the immigrants, two million and a half, settled in the State of São Paulo, attracted by the rapid expansion of the coffee plantations for which slave labor was no longer sufficient. The State Government had recourse to hired immigrants, thus lessening the pinch for the loss of slave laborers compared to other states, while prospering more rapidly. The State of Rio de Janeiro, together with the Federal District, came second. There urban immigration prevailed, attracted by the Brazilian Capital.

In any case, immigration found the most favorable conditions in the States of Rio Grande do Sul, Santa Catarina and Paraná; this was made up mostly of colonists, that is, independent farmers.

When the first German colonists reached Rio Grande do Sul (1824), the native population was engaged in cattle raising in the regions of the south and on the high plateau of the northeast. Italians arrived in 1875, and settled on the high districts of the northeast. That Region, though only 8.5 percent the territory of the whole State, was home to 22.6 percent of its entire population, because it controlled the production of grapes and grain, and was highly industrialized. The colonization of the regions in the northwest began in 1889.

The demographic growth of German and Italian settlements brought about large movements of population west into the State of Santa Catarina, and north, as far as into Paraná, and further still, across the border with Paraguay. The first Germans reached the State of Santa Catarina in 1829, but the largest influx began in 1848 with the founding of Blumenau.

The colonization of the State of Paraná began in the oriental regions in the middle of the 1800s. Those arriving directly from Europe, especially from Poland, joined immigrants from the south. From 1920 to 1950 the expansion extended to the north of the State giving rise to a very rapid growth of that region. In 1850, 75 percent of the foreign population residing in Brazil was

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL 3

CHAPTER 1

concentrated in the four States of the south, which accounted for the most developed section of Brazil nation both demographically and economically. This can be explained in part by its climate and by the resources of the land; but immigration, attracted by environmental conditions, has undoubtedly provided a decisive contribution.

In other States the phenomenon had much more modest proportions, except for Minas Gerais, that experienced a flourishing period by the end of the nineteenth century; but then, for lack of outlets to the sea, it could not compete with the coastal states.

Dom Pedro II had given his support to the immigration movement for a vast program of demographic growth, but quite soon the despotism of financial tycoons seeking to protect their vested interests in the coffee trade took over the control of operations. In the State of São Paulo, the region of large estates and coffee plantations for exportation, hired immigrants represented dangerous competitors against slave labor. For some time the "fazendeiros" (landowners) did all in their power to oppose immigration and engage slaves; however, they had to give in eventually and employ immigrants as hired hands. Thus they contributed in the creation of the rural proletariat which inevitably moved into the cities, posing a heavy strain for the economy of the State.

In the three other States of the South, instead, the economic interests of the ranchers demanded the presence of small farmers to provide the basic products. The independent immigrant was able to settle and prosper in that region. The predominance exercised by economic interests was more effective since political power was also concentrated in their hands.

Consequently, it so happened that the fortunes of immigration experienced the ups and downs of the various administrations succeeding each other, and of the interests, often opposed to each other, which they represented. At times, a program of State controlled immigration was preferred; at others, it was all left to private initiative and trade agencies. Sometimes, the action of the government was almost completely absent; at others, State's interference was excessive. All this resulted in a form of quasi persecution on one side, and, on the other, a lack of a wise legislation favoring assimilation and the social and civil protection of immigrants. In spite of these conditions, however, all scholars of Brazilian immigration agree that the over-all final result was largely positive at least with regards to the period we have briefly examined.¹

2. The First Act of the Drama.

Many publications have come out on Italian emigration to Brazil. Many of them are devoted to giving prominence to immigrants who met with extraordinary success, accumulated riches, or, somehow succeeded in making their influence felt in the world of industry, finances, politics, and of the arts. They, however,

¹ In compiling this chapter, we made special use of Fernando Bastor de Avila's essay: "L'Immigration au Brasil. Contribution a une Theorie Generale de l'Immigration". (Rio de Janeiro, 1956) pp. 59-71. The author, in turn, based his study especially on the research works of Arturo Hehl Neiva, Fernando Carneiro, Henrico Doria, De Vasconcelos.

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL 3
CHAPTER 1

have ignored the thousands of Italians, who humbly and silently gave their essential contribution in the formation of modern Brazil by their work, and above all by their centuries-old civilization, their religion, love for work ever so humble, sense of thrift and moderation, all characteristics which helped emigrants to make the most serious sacrifices in order to obtain a secure future for themselves and their children.

In this volume, on the occasion of the first centennial of Italian migration, whose beginnings are conventionally placed in 1875, we speak of all these, though not exclusively, as of the real builders of Brazil. We too choose to forego many well-known facts already published, and delegating the general information on the conditions of our emigrants in the various states for the following chapters, we wish to emphasize the most human aspects of the grandiose drama of emigration, beginning with the first act, that is, with the journey which in the beginning lasted as much as three months, and with their arrival in Brazil.

"In the first years, transportation of emigrants was done by steamships, mostly French, many of which had previously transported slaves from Africa. Inside the holds, the rooms contained four bunks on different levels, each with mattresses only, almost always unkempt, no sheets, covers, or spreads. The space was very little because the number of passengers was always larger than the capacity of the steamer. The term "Passenger" was a mere euphemism; in fact, as soon as they embarked, emigrants were separated into groups of ten each with one in charge who would be responsible for ten pitchers, ten dishes, one large pot and a scoop, all kept in a sack.

At the stroke of a bell calling for the meal, the head-man of each group took his place in line with the large pot in hands, while another emigrant went with the sack to fetch the ill-famed "galletta", some kind of a stale and moldy biscuit. Into the pot lukewarm water was poured, with little rice in it, and almost no condiment, which the head-man distributed to the group. However, in the first days of the journey the great majority of migrants could rely on a personal stock of sausages and hams, provolone cheese, and salami. But they had the disadvantage of making them very thirsty. On board migrant ships there were generally only two enormous tanks of water, provided with a lead faucet: migrants, sometimes by the hundreds, took their turn waiting for hours on line before applying their thirsty lips to those filthy faucets.

Usually, Italian migrants were joined by the Spaniards at Barcellona, and by the Portuguese at the São Vicente and Canary Islands. Space, therefore, was becoming ever more restricted; but this did not stop bingo organizers from succeeding in securing a little place anywhere on deck where to gather around themselves players by the scores, who would pledge a bit to a game; this way they had to carry on almost a whole day before they could win or lose a few liras. The fifteen numbers of the card were marked with buttons, dough pellets, or bread crumbs, while the announcer shouted out in a loud voice: "Disgrace" (N. 17, bad luck), "Going your way" (N. 12, good luck), "Bad omen" (N. 48, the dead man speaks), etc...! At the crossing of the Equator, which the migrants (no one knows exactly why) used to call the "line of the sun", the head steward had a better meal prepared and distributed to the migrants using the occasion for having a sheet of

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL 3

CHAPTER 1

paper passed around and signed while they were taking their siesta. In it a declaration was contained testifying that treatment and food aboard ship were top quality.

Rio de Janeiro was the main port of call, and Italian migrants, who did not have other destinations, ended up in great majority with being crowded into the so-called "pig heads"; they were large hostels, though resembling more like stables, where hundreds of people were lodged together. The hostel most known to Italians was located on Rua do Areal 21. It was built around a square of elliptical shape, one hundred meters long and thirty wide; around it there stood about sixty hovels. A wooden porch hung all around with a veranda running along it to allow room for the innumerable guests. Covered areas provided parking space for stage coaches and handcrafts of knife-grinders at night. Here and there between the huts there stood some banana and bamboo trees. Puddles of stagnant water were everywhere under the lines drawn between the reed palisades on which women hung their wash to dry, blown full like sails in the wind. Clouds of mosquitoes injected yellow fever and malaria. There was also practiced a certain ritual to which every new arrival had to be subjected. The first day was employed in overcoming the dread of homesickness by drinking beer, which, due to its large quantity of foam was also called "soap water", or brandy. The following day, instead, was a day of penance. In order to get them used to conditions in the New World, the new arrivals were made to take a laxative as a means to break through into the new community, while "Americans", that is, Italians that had already been residing in Brazil for some time, advised them to walk back and forth without letting up, for a time, as an infallible remedy against aftermath feelings of vomit. Lastly on the third day, it was time for them to pass through custom offices and retrieve their baggage.

Relatives and friends who had been living there for some time, did not go to work that day because they had to perform the "investiture ritual". It consisted in muffling the "Italian" with a shirt that was more like a straight-jacket, so much was it stiffened with starch; it had a high collar, as hard as a piece of wood, complete with necktie and knot. A staff in hand and a "rat-killing" (strong) cigar were also considered a must. Thereafter, the "search" for a place under the sun began. While farmhands went to the farms in great number trying to make real their long cherished dream to become owners of lands, and of more or less vast plantations; there were other thousands of people with no definite occupation, who having benefitted of a free voyage would fade away into the city, at the first chance, in search for any job that might come along. Within a few years, one could come across Italian immigrants anywhere in the public squares of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo at any hour of the day, ever jolly and noisy, always willing to accept a job that would not entail the monotonous routine of hired workers in an annoying dependence on a landlord.

Due to their eminently latin individualistic spirit, urged on by an innate optimism, Italian immigrants welcomed at first any job, even the most humble and despised by others, because in their way of looking at things it represented a "beginning". Thus, far away from their own country, often also from their family, Italians that were not, or did not wish to be, farmers, did not hesitate to turn up as shoe-shiners, street vendors, sand-diggers, fish-mongers, organ grinders; in a word, anything that could bring in some money. The Italian vendor always ended up with having the best over his competitors because he knew better how to go about

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL 3
CHAPTER 1

*it, was more accommodating, gifted with a greater initiative that consented him to discuss, discover the qualities, and enhance the values of the plainest merchandise, leaving customers convinced and satisfied. Communications were then extremely insufficient. The "Dom Pedro" railroad did not reach at first the borders of São Paulo or Minas Gerais, hence the need for street vendors. It was through this type of trade to which Italians were especially committed that great fortunes were accumulated and innumerable important shops were opened by vendors who, after gaining a certain sum of money, became suppliers for new groups of street vendors. Through them the first Italian products began to appear on the Brazilian markets."*²

² Franco Cenni, "Italianos no Brasil" (São Paulo, 1958), pp. 219-223.

CHAPTER II

ITALIAN MISSIONARIES
IN THE STATE OF ESPIRITO SANTO
(1888-1908)

1. From 1888 to 1895

The first Scalabrinian missions of Brazil had their beginning in two places: in Curitiba, where Father Colbacchini, who joined the Congregation soon after it was founded, had been working since 1886; and in the State of Espirito Santo. In fact, the missionaries assigned to Brazil in the first send-off of the July 12, 1888 were distributed between these two missions.

Differently than for the United States, where the beginnings were patterned after a rational plan with opening the first missions in ports of entry for emigrants such as New York and Boston, in Brazil their start was discretionary, that is, it was occasioned by the presence of Father Colbacchini in Paraná, and of Father Marcellino Moroni in the State of Espirito Santo, where he had been exercising the ministry for three years. One must wait till the beginning of 1895 before discovering the Scalabrinian presence at the most strategic point of Italian emigration, that is, in São Paulo.

We have already seen¹ how a certain Louis Tomaselli, from the colony of Santa Leopoldina, had called in person on Bishop Scalabrini in 1887 to ask him for two priests to go to the communities of Espirito Santo. The Bishop promised to send them as soon as possible. Actually, Fathers Marcellino Moroni, Joseph Venditti, Remigio Pezzotti, and Brother Spada, left for the State of Espirito Santo on July 12, 1888.

Besides with the Bishop of Rio de Janeiro, Dom Pedro Lacerda², Scalabrini had sought to pave the way also with the Governor of the State of Espirito Santo pointing out to him the fact that his missionaries were not mercenaries.

"They are not to be classified with those fugitives who unfortunately bring disgrace on Italian clergy and nation in those regions: these are good priests; besides religion, they shall teach immigrants how to obey authorities who rule over them with so much wisdom, and to be thankful to the nation which hosts and shelters them. This way, Your Most Honorable Lordship, you will perform a deed pleasing to your noble Lord, His Majesty the Emperor. On the occasion of my visit to him in Milan, he was pleased to accord his protection and to take to heart the cause of Italian immigrants and Priests. You will equally appreciate the goodwill of His Holiness, the Supreme Pontiff, while all Italy will acclaim you well deserving of our nation!"³

At their arrival, when the missionaries presented their letters of introduction

¹ See Volume 1 - M. Francesconi, Inizi della Congregazione Scalabriniana, (Roma, 1969).

² See Volume 1 - M. Francesconi, Inizi della Congregazione Scalabriniana, (Roma, 1969)

³ Scalabrini to President of the State of Espirito Santo, Piacenza, June 27, 1888 (Arch. G.S., 409/1)

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL 3
CHAPTER 2**

and Scalabrini's commendation, the Bishop - so writes Father Moroni - "was very pleased with these conditions, that is, that they be subject to the Bishop, obedient to the diocesan laws, and to proceed along in accord with the Pastors. Only at this last condition he burst out laughing! Oh, this will be hard! In a word, the reception was not bad. And since my Bishop speaks out freely when in a good mood, so also I talked in the same vein to him, and in taking my leave I said: "I shall go, and as agreed I will be back the day after tomorrow to get the jurisdiction papers."

"Yes, yes, you may go", answered the Bishop with an inflection of voice that bespoke the responsibility he was about to assume in regard to the protection of immigrants."⁴

The missionaries were soon on their way to their destinations and in a day and a half they reached by steamer the port of Anchieta (former Benevente) where the resident pastor gave them a cool reception. There they chartered a canoe, and going upstream the Benevente River on August 11th they reached Alfredo Chaves at the end of another journey of one day and a half. Here, Father Venditti took his residence, while Father Moroni continued on to Nova Mantova, and Father Pezzatti to a locality known as "territory 5": they were practically abandoned, because the pastor went to visit them once or twice, or at the most three times a year, and even then only to administer Baptisms and bless Marriages.

These were registered in the civil records only upon presentation of the certificate undersigned by the pastor who took advantage of this service by exacting high fees⁵. To objections raised with little tact by Father Vinditti, the pastor answered that the Bishop had forbidden him to sub-delegate the faculty to administer Baptisms and Marriages.

*"I had difficulty with the civil law on account of the irregularity of the 'absent', that is, with the registration, since I had to baptize one here, and another there, and difficulty with the Bishop. In fact the pastor showed me the document of his new instructions (here they are given from year to year) and I read in it that the Bishop insisted he did not give me the faculty to perform marriages except for certain cases as is customary for just reasons in the diocese, and for no other. All this in a region where many settlers live some two or three days horse ride away, and the closest ones almost a whole day, on dangerous trails, with swamps to cross; and the pastor takes advantage of it."*⁶

Father Moroni had to address a tactful exhortation to Italian colonists inviting them not to baptize their babies themselves anymore except in danger of death, and to bring them to the missionaries who would always be available for the administration of the Sacrament in any emergency; and as to weddings, he intended to make use of the canon law that allows marriages also without the presence of the pastor or his delegate in cases when a month would elapse before he could come, or expected to come. "My Bishop knows this," wrote

⁴ M. Moroni to Scalabrini, Alfredo Chaves, August 20, 1888 (Arch. G.S., 409/1)

⁵ G. Venditti to Scalabrini, Alfredo Chaves, August 25, 1888 (Arch. G.S., 409/1).

⁶ Moroni to Scalabrini, Alfredo Chaves, August 29, 1888 (Arch. G.S., 409/1).

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL 3
CHAPTER 2

Father Moroni; then he continues: "What a cheater Father Marcellino is! But how could I do otherwise?! The pastor pretends to affirm and to have it said that these marriages are invalid, because he is thus called to task; but there is nothing he can do about it. In any case, an even more explicit law from the Holy See would do me much good."⁷

It was in the midst of such difficulties, to which we must unfortunately add the agreement between Fathers Moroni and Venditti, especially because of latter's impulsive temperament and imprudence, that the missions had their beginning in that territory.⁸

The residence was fixed at Nova Mantova, where a piece of land with four hundred coffee plants in it was bought, and a wooden church was built by Fathers Venditti and Brother Spada. Moreover, a little shrine, a small oratory, was also purchased, which was later enlarged. Father Pezzotti took up residence at Todos os Santos, and Father Moroni, unable to remain with Father Venditti, moved on to Santa Teresa, the center of the vast colony of Santa Leopoldina.

In order to have the freedom needed to exercise their apostolic ministry, everything was attempted to set up the vast circumscription, where the missionaries were working as in an autonomous parish, but it was in vain. Father Moroni offers the following explanation:

"The Brazilian Empire is patterned after the old system, that, professing itself Catholic, Apostolic and Roman, it claims the duty to protect the Church. To the Church the Cross, the sword to the Empire! But, the sword stands for ambition and abuse of power, and in alliances with people of this kind it often happens that the sword has the best of it. This is why concordats became necessary in order to avoid conflicts. Favoritism and politics prompted the granting of titles to the clergy causing its weakness; and worse yet, these went a step further; some ambitious men sought to emulate the government, and made friends with high authorities in order to top the dignity conferred upon them by the Holy Spirit with the titles of Count, Prince, to show off their civil decorations at public functions. Concordats gave Emperors and Kings the privilege to present candidates for dioceses, and even the names of canons, amongst whom Capitular Vicars are chosen. When the clergy has become subservient, and the civil servants corrupted, then politics take over, and the Holy See, to avoid greater evils, adopts a policy of accommodation. There exist laws which were good for their time; but now politics, strong on the letter of these laws and disregarding all reasonable interpretation, take advantage of them to the detriment of souls.

Thus, you have here an idea of the present conditions in Brazil. As an example, let us consider just one law from which so much evil comes to the colonists of all nationalities through man's dishonesty rather than on account of the law itself. Where there are no townships there cannot be parishes; the latter are located in the old territories. But, new land was opened through new colonization that does away with virgin forests and pushes natives further inland. The flock of

⁷ *Ibidem*

⁸ Cfr. Chapter III

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL 3 CHAPTER 2

Christ is being scattered all over this new territory, but the sheep produces wool, and here the wool pleases the pastors very much. The sheep attempt to have their bleating heard in the Vatican; some Bishops squirm off their slumber, the Holy Father searches for ways to come to their help; but the law stands firm, that is, where there does not exist a township the pastor is lord. The pastor is also a state official and only by him are Baptismal and Wedding Records legalized. One has but to conform to this law. Canon law states that when the parish extends, in case he should not ask for one himself, the Bishop should force the pastor to take an assistant and share retributions; but pastors are protected by the representatives of the government. They are supported by the party in power; should Bishops give orders, they threaten to resign the parish. What is then the Bishop to do? The most he can say is: let even thirty priests come in, but faculties to baptize and bless marriages I will not give. Let them have an understanding with the pastors. And what happens in the meantime? The bishops who sensed the needs of so many of their flocks that ignoring the conditions have migrated elsewhere, are worried, and now I have to hear from my most worthy Bishop that he has serious reservations about expeditions of priests into Brazil. From what I have said, most illustrious and reverend, Mons. Secretary, you can see how I could possibly convince the Bishop of Rio de Janeiro to change his mind. For one word that I may say to him, he has a thousand of his own! Did I not speak up to him a number of times? Did I not bring up the matter whenever he called me in during his pastoral visitation at Alfredo Chaves? He became so annoyed that he ended up by telling me: "Dear God, I call in Father Marcellino to chat a while, and he always comes up with this great problem of the immigrants. Father Marcellino is an old man, 60 years, and yet he acts still as a child that does not know men; he deals with them as they should be, not as they are. Oh my God, what did Rome do in choosing me as Bishop! The bishops of Italy do not know anything about Brazil!" This is the long tirade Father Zaboglio will hear repeated to him! And the Bishop will not add or detract anything in telling it!

Freedom, however, will soon come, but not from Rome. Now the liberal party is in power which is determined to fall in step with the European governments. There is talk already of civil marriages, which for Catholics means nothing else than the civil registration of their weddings. By this law the autocratic privileges of pastors will be eliminated, who refuse baptisms and weddings when they are not given the fees they ask for. This way what is a sore for Europe turns out to be a blessing for Brazil! But as of now, should the missionaries not be here, few weddings would be performed! In case the Bishop should act at variance with the canon law, I believe that the Pope ought to grant the faculties to insure the salvation of souls. In theory it may appear to be an evil, in practice, however, it is a remedy, and for the evil shepherds the punishment of the wrath of God."⁹

The prophecy of Father Moroni became true in part with the fall of the Empire and the proclamation of the Republic on November 15, 1889.

"For several months now, the pastor does not show up. After writing to me, while still under the old regime, that I was not in possession of the declaration of the Secretary that the parents made the civil registration, he declined all responsibility, and does not request either money or registers. Free to perform

⁹ Moroni to Mangot, Santa Teresa, December 10, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 409/1).

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL 3 CHAPTER 2

*without charge the weddings of poor people, such as free men and new immigrants, I have thus eliminated the evil of concubinage, and having reduced in half the fees for those who can afford it, my colonists are now much happier."*¹⁰

In 1891, both the colonists of Nova Mantova, and the people of Anchieta, as well as those of Santa Teresa, petitioned the Bishop of Rio de Janeiro to appoint Father Moroni pastor, and he made him pastor of Anchieta. Santa Teresa was made a quasi-parish.¹¹ Father Venditti, having antagonized the people of Nova Bassano, moved to Nova Estrela.¹²

In 1892, Father Moroni asked the Bishop to be relieved for reasons of health. He was replaced in August with another pastor of German extraction, and he went to the "territory 5", with the title "Missionary for the Colonies".¹³

In 1893 he was named pastor of Itapimirim, and on July 19th of the same year, his five year profession having elapsed, he withdrew from the Congregation, remaining in the State of Espirito Santo.¹⁴

Father Venditti, in turn, after being suspended for abuse of jurisdiction, returned to Italy in 1894; A petition was sent to the Holy Father requesting his return to Brazil, evidently inspired by him and signed by many people of Alfredo Chaves and Iiritimerim;¹⁵ but he was made to remain in Italy, and was later made pastor of Contigliano, Rieti.¹⁶

Brother Vincent Spada remained still for some time longer at Nova Mantova¹⁷, then he requested, and was granted, to go to Italy for studies, and was ordained a priest in 1902. About Father Remigio Pezzotti, we only know that he was no longer in the State of Espirito Santo by 1895; probably he withdrew from the Congregation also, when his five year vows expired, and died in São Paulo in 1913.

2. From 1903 to 1908

In the years between 1895 and 1908, the Italians of Alfredo Chaves continued to insist with Bishop Scalabrini and Father Faustino Consoni, Director of the "Cristoforo Colombo" Orphanage of São Paulo, to have Scalabrinian missionaries. Bishop Scalabrini gave orders to Father Consoni to start negotiations with the Bishop of Vitoria (a new diocese erected in 1895 in the State of Espirito Santo, with territory detached from the diocese of Rio de Janeiro), to obtain permission to reopen the missions. Bishop Correa Nery answered that his diocese was small and poor, and that the Italian priests he had were sufficient for the actual needs of Italians.¹⁸

¹⁰ Moroni to Rolleri, Santa Teresa, December 21, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 409/1).

¹¹ Moroni to Scalabrini, Anchieta, March 14, 1892. Moroni to Zaboglio, Anchieta, April 20, 1891. (Arch. G.S., 409/1).

¹² Moroni to Scalabrini, Itapimirim, May 12, 1892. (Arch. G.S., 40/1).

¹³ Moroni to Scalabrini, Alfredo Chaves, November 9, 1892 (Arch. G.S., 409/1).

¹⁴ Moroni to Scalabrini, Itapimirim, March 21, 1893 (Arch. G.S., 409/1), and July 19, 1893 (Arch. G.S., 1966).

¹⁵ *L'Amico del Popolo*, Piacenza, August 1-2, 1894.

¹⁶ G. Venditti to Molinari, Contigliano, November 24, 1898 (Arch. G.S., 2120).

¹⁷ Brother Spada to Scalabrini, Nova Estrela, December 15, 1895 (Arch. G.S., 1633).

¹⁸ Correa Nery to Consoni, Vitoria, March 20, 1899 (Arch. G.S., 409/2).

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL 3 CHAPTER 2

In 1902, Mr. R. Rizzeto, the Italian Consul of Vitoria, who had wanted to take stock of the situation, made himself the spokesman of the Italians:

*"Those colonists have need of missionaries who may offer the religious services, teach the children, and possibly, keep a small stock of medicines to sell to the people at a reasonable price. For lack of pharmacists and doctors these people are exploited by travelling vendors who claim also to be pharmacists and doctors. There are many Italian immigrants in those districts where no other language is spoken. They settled on a mountainous region, which I believe to be as vast as the Veneto region. Just and legitimate is to me their desire that priests should come from Italy to care for their souls, to teach their children, since for lack of means neither Governor nor Bishop can provide for them. All over the vast territory, through which one can ride a horse on a straight line over land a whole day without leaving the Italian colony, the colonists have constructed no less than 112 chapels with only one Spanish priest, a refugee from the Philippines, to serve them. Obviously, even with the best goodwill, he cannot fulfill the task which is beyond the strength of one man."*¹⁹

Father Consoni repeated the petition to reopen a Scalabrinian mission to the Bishop of Vitoria. The Bishop answered that he would do what he could²⁰ (20) objecting, however, that he could not remove from that region the Augustinians who had been called in shortly before under a regular contract by his predecessor. He could instead offer to the Scalabrinians the parish of Santa Cruz in the region of Pau Gigante; should the Augustinians leave, he would also be in a position to return the parish of Alfredo Chaves.²¹

Bishop Scalabrini answered to Consul Rizzeto who had informed him of his meeting with the Bishop of Vitoria in these terms:

"In compliance with your suggestion, this very day I have written to the Bishop of Vitoria, and as soon as I will receive his instructions, at the earliest possible I shall send some missionaries to assume the spiritual care of the colonies which will be assigned to them.

*Among them there is a young doctor, willing to suspend for some time his studies for the priesthood in order to give start to a pharmacy on behalf of our poor colonists according to the wish expressed to me by our Ministry of Foreign Affairs."*²²

The ministry, in fact, allocated Bishop Scalabrini six thousand liras, four thousand as an annual subsidy, and two thousand as an extraordinary grant towards helping schools and pharmaceutical dispensaries in Alfredo Chaves.²³

In August 1903, Fathers Ermenegildo Battaglia, Joseph Beltramello, and Eugene Medicheschi were sent to the State of Espirito Santo, followed immediately by Father Leandro dell'Uomo, and Brother Pierre Louis Jouffroy, a doctor.

"As soon as we reached Vitoria" - writes Father Beltramello ²⁴- "we were

¹⁹ R. Rizzeto to Consoni, Vitoria, December 18, 1902 (Arch. G.S., 409/2). Rizzeto to Scalabrini, same date.

²⁰ De Souza Monteiro to Consoni, Vitoria, April 17, 1903. (Arch. G.S., 409/2).

²¹ Rizzeto to Royal Legation of Italy in Rio de Janeiro, Vitoria, April 22, 1903 (Arch. G.S., 409/2).

²² Scalabrini to Rizzeto, rough copy with no date, in answer to letter of Rizzeto of April 22, 1903 (Arch. G.S., 409/2).

²³ G. Fusinato to Scalabrini, Rome, February 11, 1904 (Arch. G.S., 409/2).

²⁴ Consoni to Scalabrini, Sao Paulo, August 29, 1903 (Arch. G.S., 1694).

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL 3
CHAPTER 2

introduced to the Vicar General by the Consul. After kindly congratulating us, he told us that His Excellency the Bishop had telegraphed him from Cachociro to send us to Santa Cruz instead than to Alfredo Chaves, even though a delegation from that district had come to take us, because that parish is still cared for by two Augustinian priests. That same Saturday we started out for Santa Cruz, I with the assignment as pastor, and Father Ermenegildo, as assistant pastor, not only of the parish of Santa Cruz, but also of Linhares and Riacho, as well. As of now, we live in a rented house, intent in preparing the Feast of Our Lady of Penha, which is to take place on the 15th of September with great pomp, following a solemn novena. People here are by nature extremely indifferent, still they have cordially received us, and seem willing to respond to our efforts. After the Feast I will have to go back to Vitoria for an interview with the Bishop, who will probably entrust me also with the care of the parish of Pau Gigante, inhabited exclusively by Italians."²⁵

Soon after, the Bishop of Vitoria, His Excellency Fernando de Souza Monteiro, personally informed Bishop Scalabrini that he had provisionally assigned Fathers Beltramello and Battaglia to the parish of Santa Cruz, charging them at the same time with the care of Linhares. He expressed hope to entrust to them, by the end of 1903, the region of Pau Gigante settled exclusively by Italians, but had not immediately decided to do so "in order not to rush things and arouse certain elements in the diocese."²⁶

In the meanwhile, the two missionaries devoted themselves to the care of the natives; still more, Father Beltramello had acted as secretary to the Vicar General on a visitation to the northern section of the diocese, and to the Bishop himself on his visit to the parishes of the south, using the occasion for preaching missions to Italians.²⁷

On the conditions of Italians in the State of Espirito Santo in 1904, we are in possession of a report sent by Consul R. Rizzetto to the Italian Foreign Ministry. As to the religious situation he writes:

"As stated before, Italian Colonists, very numerous in many districts of this State, where no other language is spoken besides Italian, have always expressed the desire to have Italian missionaries; these last years, this insistence was so intensified in the district of Alfredo Chaves that the Consulate, with consent from the Bishop of Vitoria, solicited the services of the Foreign Ministry to have the missionaries of St. Charles, also called "Colombini", whose Superior General is Bishop Scalabrini, sent there from Piacenza.

German colonists (half of them Catholic, Protestant the others), who had settled a long time already in the districts of Santa Leopoldina and Santa Isabel, have always been provided with missionaries of their own nationality from Germany, and they were very much satisfied with them.

Justified was therefore the desire of our colonists to have Italian missionaries. The immigrants that arrived from Italy at these regions are almost all fervent Catholics. However, their children, born and raised here, so they say, are in great part members of a new religious sect, about which I am not in a position to

²⁵ Beltramello to Simoni, Santa Cruz, undated, probably August 12, 1903 (Arch. G.S., 409/2).

²⁶ Souza Monteiro to Scalabrini, Vitoria, October 12, 1903 (Arch. G.S., 409/2).

²⁷ Beltramello to Poggi, Linhares, January 24, 1904 (Arch. Gen. S. 409/2).

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL 3
CHAPTER 2

give any information because I do not know either its dogmas or its moral teachings. The present Bishop of Vitoria, His Excellency De Souza Monteiro must consider the danger quite serious, if in a recent pastoral visitation in the south of the State deemed it necessary to condemn from the pulpit the new religion, as a product of the American soil. Conditions of priests in care of souls in the State of Espirito Santo are difficult: parishes do not enjoy any canonical benefices, neither does the church always have a rectory. The immigrants' homesteads are spread so far and wide over mountains and valleys on such a vast territory that priests can hardly exercise their ministry in any chapel for more than two or three days at one time every two or three months. It follows that the religious instruction of children are reduced to almost nothing, and the sick almost all die without a priest's assistance. Deprived of ecclesiastic benefices, curates have to live on meager sources of income: masses, baptisms, weddings, funerals. The fees approved by the Bishops for such religious services are sufficient. It is said that some priests insist on them with too much rigor thus drawing complaints and protests on the part of the people. Besides, it is said these priests, when called upon to minister in any of the many chapels built all over this great territory, do not accede to such desire unless they are given a good retribution. This situation, while displeasing those priests that are imbued with a strong and sincere religious spirit, detracts from the prestige and credibility of all.

So far, the missionaries of Bishop Scalabrini could not have charge of parishes among Italian communities because they could not be found, since now the Augustinians are in charge of them,. Still, they have already been carrying out a ministry, rich with good fruits in almost all the colonies of the State, always preaching in Italian.

To give you an idea of the religious situation of the communities and of the great need of priests, it is enough to mention the following: in the district of Alfredo Chaves, so vast one could travel on horseback on a straight line for more than a day, no other dialect, except the Venetian, is heard spoken. It has, however, a population of just a little over ten thousand people. Now, then, these immigrants, who have built some eighty two chapels and churches in that one district alone, have had only one Spanish priest till now, a refugee from the Philippines. With the best goodwill, he could not possibly carry out a task that exceeds the strength of one man.

We must credit the German colonists of this State for exhibiting a certain superiority over the Italians in both fields of religion and commerce. In the twenty-five years since Italian immigrants first settled here they have not been able to create something like it.

When I arrived here two years ago, I discovered that the three most important Italian communities of the State did not have even so much as a school, or an Italian priest. For this reason, in order to correct the situation, the "Colombini" fathers were invited in. I am sure now that after finally setting foot in the State of Espirito Santo through so many difficulties, they will not be long in imitating the exemplary organization given the German colonies by the missionaries of the Divine Word. Besides running excellent schools where Portuguese is also taught, teaching religion, preaching in both languages, and taking care of souls, they play a little also the part of doctors, and dispense medicines sent in from Germany to poor colonists free of charge. The "Colombini" missionaries, too, will be able to supply these all important services, indispensable wherever doctors

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL 3
CHAPTER 2

and pharmacists are lacking, as soon as they will be given charge of Italian parishes and effectively supported by our home country.

In another Italian center of Santa Teresa, a vast municipality inhabited almost exclusively by immigrants from the regions of Trent and of the Veneto, there exists for some years a mission directed by the Italian Capuchins, now directed by three priests and two lay brothers. However, either because they are not enough for that immense territory comprising a large number of valleys all around Santa Teresa and various other localities, or because they do not have an interest in teaching considering more urgent to devote all their energies to the sacred ministry on behalf of that numerous population, poor and scattered over a region of steep mountains, or due to the reason that being Sicilian friars they cannot as yet identify with a population that speaks only Venetian dialect, or also because they are afraid to provoke the feelings of certain local people if they should try to preserve our language amongst Italians, the fact remains that their action as to instructing the immigrants is practically non-existent. They did not even reopen a small school they had founded at Santa Teresa, which was well attended, in spite of the interested insistence from the Consulate. One may very well fear that in this way the mission, though Italian, will do little in preserving our language among immigrants.

As is known, also in Pau Gigante, a municipality which is quite large and teeming with Italians, there are no Italian priests. Those churches and chapels are served by another Augustinian from Spain, also a refugee from the Philippines. His residence is in the mountains, and seldom comes around to our people with whom he does not seem to get along, I think. Here, too, Italian missionaries would be needed to organize after the pattern of German colonies, not only the exercise of the religious apostolate, but also a program of assistance and elementary instruction. In the extreme northern region of the State of Espirito Santo, between the Rio Doce and the Macury, there is a vast extension inhabited, as we have said, by many Italian families. No priest of Italian extraction is taking care of them, and the need for one is felt there also, as we shall see more in detail at its proper place.

One has to give credit to the young Bishop of Vitoria for his interest in a program of elementary education which is now totally lacking in the State of Espirito Santo. Of course, he would like to promote it through institutions of Catholic education. There is, therefore, reason to hope that the needed help will be coming soon also to the Italian Schools the "Colombini" Fathers will open."²⁸ (28)

By the end of the same year 1904, the Bishop of Vitoria thus wrote to Bishop Scalabrini:

"I am pleased to assure Your Most Reverend Excellency, that your missionaries, Fathers Beltramello and Battaglia, are working with constant dedication and zeal for the spiritual welfare of souls, to my great satisfaction.

Doctor Joufroy, also, is of great help for the work of the Priests with his unselfish action in the exercise of his profession. To top it all, the sister of Father Beltramello, Elisa, a teacher, is holding classes in Italian and Portuguese, and imparts religious education to some more than one hundred pupils, boys and girls. Father Beltramello has founded four more schools. As he already did, I

²⁸ *Colonizzazione Italiana nello Stato di Espirito Santo* (Brazil). (Italian Colonization etc...). Report of Cav. R. Rizzetto, Royal Consul of Italy at Vitoria; August 1904, *Bollettino dell'emigrazione*, 1905, N. 7, pp. 10-13.

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL 3
CHAPTER 2**

*would like to insist with you to send us four more missionaries as good and zealous as these two to help them in their immense field of apostolic work. The sooner they will arrive, the sooner I will be able to carry out the transfer of the missions of the Italian Colonies."*²⁹

In January 1905, also Father John Rabaioli, who was to remain a few months only, and Father Leonard del Bianco arrived at Santa Cruz; but the new Bishop could not as yet decide to give them the mission he had promised.³⁰

At last, by the end of 1905, on orders from the Bishop, Fr. Battaglia could write to Fr. Faustino Consoni:

*"He is in all urgency asking me to write to you to inform you that the moment has come at last for entrusting to the priests of our Congregation together with the parish of Santa Cruz - Riacho and Linhares, also that including Serra, Conde d'Eu and Pau Gigante, and the whole territory delimited within the orographic line and the coast. This territory is inhabited by the greater part by the Italian colony occupying the northern section of the State of Espirito Santo."*³¹

In 1906, when Father Battaglia withdrew from the Congregation to be incardinated into the diocese of Vitoria, Father Francesco Dolci was sent, to whom the Bishop entrusted the parish of Pau Gigante and Serra, while Father Beltramello remained in the parish of Santa Cruz, Nova Alameida, Riacho and Linhares.³²

All this took place in August; however, already in March 1907, for lack of personnel, the Bishop had placed others in charge of the parishes of Pau Gigante, Serra, Nova Alameida, and later of Santa Cruz, leaving only those of Riacho and Linhares in the hands of the Scalabrinians.³³

By that time only Father Beltramello was left, who moved his residence to Baumilha where he had opened an Italo-Brasilian school, directed by his sister. Shortly afterwards, Father Beltramello, too, left the Congregation. With him the Scalabrinian presence in the State of Espirito Santo ceased. Several former Scalabrinians remained there, as diocesan priests, such as Fathers Moroni, Battaglia, Dell'Uomo, and Canon Humbert Manzini.

Appendix

As to the schools founded by Father Beltramello at Baumilha we deem it opportune to report the following two documents (Arch. G.S., 409/2):

1. "To His Excellency Bishop Scalabrini Sup. General of the Missionaries of the Colombian Congregation, Piacenza

Vicenza, January 31, 1905

Most Reverend Bishop:

²⁹ Souza Monteiro to Scalabrini, Vitoria, Nov. 22, 1904 (Arch. G.S., 409/2).

³⁰ Beltramello to Consoni, Santa Cruz, January 3, 1905 (Arch. G.S., 409/2).

³¹ Battaglia to Consoni, Vitoria, December 27, 1905 (Arch. G.S., 409/2).

³² Dolci to Consoni, Pau Gigante, August 29, 1906 (Arch. G.S., 409/2).

³³ Souza Monteiro to Consoni, Vitoria, March 3, 1907 (Arch. G.S., 409/2).

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL 3

CHAPTER 2

I have the honor to inform Your Most Reverend Excellency that a Venetian Committee has been founded for the assistance of Italian migrants, small landowners, independent workers, living in the Brazilian States of Espirito Santo, Paraná, Santa Catarina, and Rio Grande do Sul, ninety-five percent of whom, as you well know, are of Venetian extraction. The Committee is divided in two branches, one at Padua, the other in Vicenza. The first has charge of the medical assistance, the second of schools and agrarian instruction; and now both intend to begin to their humanitarian activities in the State of Espirito Santo where the need is greater.

The Committee of Vicenza, which I have the honor of presiding, knows that Father Joseph Beltramello, head of the Scalabrinian mission in that Brazilian State, is responsible for a project for the founding of Italian schools there.

Our Committee, having realized the urgency for the Italian schools in the State of Espirito Santo, because the government had to close down all schools existing before for lack of funds, is well disposed to help, as much as possible, Father Beltramello in carrying out his plans by soliciting funds to this end, at least for the College he intends to open, from both the Migration Department and the General Inspectorate for schools abroad, as well as from the "Dante Alighieri Foundation".

This Committee has prepared for this purpose a "memorandum", a copy of which is here enclosed for presentation to whom it may concern in Rome. However, before doing so, I would like to know the opinion of Your Excellency as the Superior of Father Beltramello and has just made a tour of the States of Espirito Santo, on the opportunity of that Institution, of which I have no doubt, and on the minimum amount needed for its construction. Before taking any steps, therefore, I shall wait for an answer from Your Excellency, which I trust will arrive with the promptness the matter deserves.

Be pleased, Your Excellency, in the meanwhile, to accept the sincere expression of my deep respects.

The President
Antonio Fogazzaro"

"Memorandum"

We, the undersigned, gathered here together, in the city of Vicenza in a room of the City Hall, on January 26, 1905, under the chairmanship of Senator Fogazzaro, chosen for the office by our unanimous consensus, confirm, above all, the deliberation taken at the previous meeting held on the 19th of the last month of December to form in Vicenza a society to serve as a Committee for the assistance of Italian emigrants, colonists, and small independent landowners and laborers living in Brazil, 95 percent of whom, as is known, are of Venetian extraction.

They have acquainted themselves, besides, with the "memorandum" containing the well-motivated deliberations adopted by the Committee of Padua on November 23 last, declaring to be in full agreement with the ideas thereof expressed.

It is stated there that the Committee of Padua, for the time being at least, shall concern itself only with the medical assistance; however, since schools, as their document itself recognizes, constitute an equally urgent need of the Italian colonies in the interior of Brazil, the Committee of Vicenza has taken up for this second meeting the discussion on whether it should assume responsibility for the support of this service.

This division of tasks, by which medical assistance is assigned to the Committee of Padua, and the schools to the Committee of Vicenza, will bring forth, so it seems to the latter, good practical results. In fact, as well explained in the above-mentioned "memorandum", the immediate needs of the Italian migrants, small landowners, and laborers, living in the Brazilian States of Espirito Santo, Paraná, Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul, to provide for, are the schools, medical assistance, and cooperatives of consumers' goods and products. Since too many difficulties are opposed to the immediate creation of cooperatives, because any initiative of this kind requires risky employments of capital, we

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL 3 CHAPTER 2

must, for the time being, limit ourselves to providing, as far as possible, only for the needs of schools and medical assistance. The two Committees of Padua and Vicenza, independent of each other as to means and direction, but united in one Society towards the common goal of improving conditions of the colonists, are sufficient for the time being.

The previous idea of establishing committees in every provincial city of the Veneto was discussed but found impractical; in fact, should they actually be founded, due to the limitations demanded by the scarcity of funds of the Society, they would have to restrict their activity only to collecting contributions; various indications, and above all the scarce help Italy generally accords to the "Dante Alighieri", for instance, lead to the conclusion that even lesser would be the enthusiasm of private citizens and organizations of the Veneto in favor of our Society, at least until our goals will be made well known and popular.

Consequently, for the time being, and for a long time to come, perhaps, we must count above all on the material help of the Secretariat for Emigration, which has at its disposal funds that according to the decision of the Emigration Council mentioned in the "memorandum" of Padua must actually be used, in part at least towards reaching the goals the Society founded in the Veneto resolved to support for Italian emigrants in Brazil.

The Committee of Vicenza, provided its requests be accepted, shall begin to carry out its activity in the State of Espirito Santo, where the need is greater, because that government, on account of its current financial crisis, had to close down schools in the rural areas; should Rome supply you with the means, this Committee shall hasten to give its support to the apostolate of a missionary from Vicenza, a member of the Scalabrinian Congregation, who has taken up residence there a short while ago, and is already so well respected by the colonists. He has resented to the Royal Consul in Vitoria a plan for the creation of Italian schools in the State of Espirito Santo with a letter that carries the date of May 4, 1904, thus formulated:

"Back from a long tour, preaching missions in the State of Espirito Santo, while the Bishop of Vitoria was making the pastoral visitation, I realize the great need Italian emigrants have of schools. I could notice, in fact, that the children of colonists do not attend any school. They speak a language which is neither Italian nor Portuguese, are deprived of any most elementary education; hence, a youth without ideals. They do not even experience the holy inspirations of Religion and one's country. These people must, therefore, be educated and morally formed by teachers in schools, and by priests in churches. As to religion, in accord with the Ecclesiastical Authority a plan has been worked out that that Italians be assisted by Italian priests, and precisely by the "Colombini" (Scalabrinian) Missionaries, as the Consul has suggested.

As to the establishing of schools, which should not be less than ten each, to serve communities within the range of three square miles, the cooperation of the Italian government is needed because neither colonists nor "Colombini" (Scalabrinian) Fathers could alone afford such program.

In addition to these ten schools, there would be the need also of a small boarding school to be erected in a central location that could be attended by children of the better-off families for higher studies. Such school should be provided with an agricultural section supplied with modern systems for practical experimentation.

To accomplish all this, that is, ten schools and a college it would be necessary that the Italian government contribute each year a subsidy of fifteen "Contos" for the schools, and ten "Contos" for the College.

Through this program the intellectual and moral life of some forty thousand or more Italians living in the State of Espirito Santo will be guaranteed.

The Committee of Vicenza, therefore, unanimously decides to support the requests of Father Beltramello.

In case it were not possible to obtain immediately the sum needed, the Committee of

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL 3
CHAPTER 2**

Vicenza shall still try at least to provide the means necessary to open the projected small Italian College serving children of better-off Italians, and to support through scholarships the education of the poor ones, so that they may in turn teach the children of immigrants scattered throughout the many valleys of that mountain region.

To this end it charges Senator Antonio Fogazzaro, and Representative Teso:

1. To ascertain, above all, with the Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs whether there are any difficulties on the international level against carrying out the proposals of Father Beltramello;
2. To inquire, then, by the Royal Inspectorate for Italian schools in abroad, the Royal Commissariat for Emigration, and the President of the "Dante Alighieri" whether subsidies could be obtained to open immediately the Italian college, whose running cost would amount, according to Fr. Beltramello's estimation, to twelve thousand liras a year. As soon as a promise of subsidies should be secured, the Committee of Vicenza, following consultations with Bishop Scalabrini, shall write to Father Beltramello inviting him to submit in more precise terms his projects for schools and college. Thereafter he will be supplied with funds, personnel and equipment he will be in need of, within the limits of the means at our disposal, of course. For the time being, our request would be for a subsidy of two years!

From our part, should a grant of subsidy be assured, the Hons. Fogazzaro and Teso commit themselves in the name of the Committee of Vicenza to submit every year a complete report on the activities of the schools, to be founded with the funds received, to the General Inspectorate of Italian Schools abroad, to the Emigration Commissariat, and to the "Dante Alighieri" Society, while accepting, of course, the supervision and inspection over these institutions by the Italian Royal Consulate.

We the undersigned:

A. Fogazzaro, President

N. Marzotto

R. Rizzetto

G. Fabris

P. Marconi

Signed: Franceschini

Secretary

CHAPTER III

**FOUNDING OF THE SCALABRINIAN MISSIONS
IN THE STATE OF PARANÁ (1887 - 1905) AND
THE MISSION OF THE TIBAGI (1904 -1911)**

1. Pioneering Work of Father Colbacchini.

The topographic and climatic characteristics of Paraná, similar to those of Northern Italy, attracted into it the inflow of Italian farmers, especially Venetian. The State offered immigrants favorable conditions for continuing the agricultural system in which they had been engaged in Italy.

The first group of Italians arrived in 1875, and settled at Alexandra on the low and unhealthy plains along the coast. The colony had been founded by a certain Sabino Tripoti (Tripotti, Tripondi), a speculator who had secured a land grant from the provincial government. In fact, the provincial government of that time used to grant land to private firms which took it upon themselves to bring in the immigrants through contracts that would allow contractors not only the possession of lands, but also access to a certain amount of money for each colonist. Such a system encouraged speculation on the part of contractors. Actually, Mr. Tripoti was receiving from the government five hundred liras for each immigrant, while he did not spend more than a hundred to bring them in.

In order to attract Italians he had an open letter to his fellow Italians distributed by the thousands in Italy (dated July 19, 1873); an appeal promising the moon, which, later, at the contact with reality would bring other decisions and discouragement. Consequently, many Italians had to move from Alexandra to the region around Morretes and Paranaguá and to the high plateau of Curitiba.

In 1877 the provincial government cancelled its contract with Tripoti, and established the colony of Nova Italia at Morretes.¹ It was in that year that the first large contingent of eight hundred families, almost all Venetians, arrived. They were headed by Father Angelo Cavalli, a priest from Padua, who did not leave behind a good name for himself. The following years, more and more families came in to join them, so that by 1889 Italians in Paraná numbered about ten thousand. In ten years the government of Paraná spent about ten thousand "contos" (25 million liras of that time) on behalf of Italian and Polish colonization. But the Administration took advantage of the money in vast speculations exploiting the colonists:

"Ordinarily they are employed in building houses and roads for about two months or a little longer, but, besides being very low, their wages are paid to them in groceries of the worst quality at exorbitant prices. This dishonest speculation of the so-called "fornecedores" (contractors) is the reason why

¹ Cfr. Altiva Pilatti Balhana, Santa Felicidade: um processo de Assimilação ("A Process of Assimilation") - Curitiba, 1958, pp. 28-31.

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III CHAPTER III

farmhands do not receive wages sufficient to support their families. On the other hand, the government seems well disposed towards these colonies on which rests the future of the country. However, once the colonists are settled on their lots of land, the government does not take any further care of them, except when several years later, it will exact also forcibly the price of the land granted to them. The price, however, though small, turns out to be quite high for the conditions of many colonists.

*By their good luck, some colonists are located in the neighboring areas of cities or large communities where trades can be developed through good roads. All this helped them to prosper greatly in a short time, as is the case for those in the vicinity of Curitiba, in Paraná."*²

The mission field of Fr. Pietro Colbacchini, the Pioneer of the Scalabrinian missions in Brazil³, was exactly the region on a radius thirty miles wide all around Curitiba, the Capital of Paraná, where the great majority of Italian immigrants in the State had settled.

*"Some took their residence in the midst of already existing colonies, such as Argelina, Pilarzinho, Muricy, Orleans, Inspector Carvalho, Antonio Reboucas, Presidente Faria, Maria Jose', Balbino Cunha, and Antonio Prado. Here they settled down along with immigrants of other nationalities. Other colonists went to live in colonies founded for this purpose, like Alfredo Chaves, Santa Gabriela, and Novo Tirol. Many of them bought land from the municipality of Curitiba, thus giving life to the colony of Dantas. Still others acquired land from private owners, as at Santa Felicidade, Ferraria, Campo Magro, Bateias, etc. Lastly, many Italians took up residence in the city of Curitiba itself."*⁴ (4)

In Paraná the process of urbanization was slower and not as intensive as in other places. There, the rural population remained strong since ninety per cent of Italian immigrants were Venetians, who, through a system of small properties, could preserve and carry on their deeply ingrained agricultural traditions. At first, Father Colbacchini took care of Italian colonies along the coast: Morrates, Paranaguá, Porto de Cima, Alexandra, Maria Luisa, Rio Pinto, Rio Sagrado, Nova Italia, Perreira Esperanza, America, Anhaja, etc. In 1889 there were about 900 families, with very few chapels, and no religious assistance. They worked especially in the sugar cane plantations, but they were living under difficult conditions as they were not used to the tropical cultures proper to those climates. Besides, they lay exposed to the ailments that ravaged those places for lack of hygienic precautions. Father Colbacchini did much to convince them to move on to the high plateau and to dissuade the new arrivals from remaining there. To have an idea of the visits of the missionaries to these coastal communities, let us read one of his reports:

"Last Saturday, the thirteenth of this month, at 5:30 in the morning, I climbed up on my horse and rode to the station half an hour away. Few minutes past six, I

² P. Colbacchini, "Risposte ad Alcuni Quesiti Proposti da S.E.R. F. Spolverini, Internunzio Pontificio nel Brasile" ("Answers to Some Inquiries by Spolverini, Internuncio in Brazil on the Present and Future State of the Italian Colonies"), June 19, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 356/14).

³ Cfr. M. Francesconi, Inizi della Congregazione Scalabriniana ("Initial Stages of the Scalabrinian Congregation"), Volume I, Rome 1969

⁴ A. Pelatti Balhana, op. cit., pp. 31-32

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III

CHAPTER III

took the train for Piraguara. I arrived at seven thirty. I was carrying along with me a certain amount of vestments, books, religious articles, contained in three packages, all heavy enough. No one was there to meet me from the colony of Santa Maria Novo Tyrol where I was directed. I had to carry the whole load by myself to the house of a certain Italian without Faith, who was living some half a kilometer down the road. Half an hour later two colonists arrived on horseback. Upon their request, I stopped by the local church, which belongs to the parish of São José, to administer two baptisms, and then I was on my way to Santa Maria. It took me a two hour walk, even though they claim it to be a distance of only eight or nine kilometers.

On my horse it would have hardly taken me three quarters of an hour. On my arrival at the colony, the children, about forty, came out to meet me as they always do, and then a swarming in of people called out by the sound of the bell: the reception was sufficiently demonstrative, though only twenty days had elapsed since the visitation made to that community by Father Joseph.

They are all Tyrolean (Trent) from Primiero; good people, attached to their religion, but somewhat with a mind of their own. One must try to understand and treat them with prudence and moderation, "fortiter et suaviter".

I remained with them until Tuesday. I got up at three in the morning, at 4 I said Mass. The Church was almost full with people, some 300 persons. At 5, under a rain, coming down in the buckets, I left on horseback for Piraguara, where I arrived, still under the rain, a few minutes after seven.

I picked up the baggage I had left at that house, and then on again for Morretes. The rain kept me company all along the crossing of and the descent from the mountains with their sharp peaks projected against the sky. What ravines, deep valleys, and chasms, what a breathtaking view, terrifying even for the most courageous spirits! That is the most daring railroad in the world! It seems more like fiction than reality! For miles on end, it edges along over ravines, on rails kept up by retaining walls, and interspersed with bridges and tunnels. It descends about four or five meters each kilometer; in places the eye cannot single out objects lying at the bottom straight below the edge. Rain and waterfalls stirring up clouds of mist caused by their rushing down the rocky mountainside, were adding horror to horror.

The train arrived at Morretes at about ten o'clock. No one was there to welcome me because nobody expected me to leave Santa Maria with that kind of devilish weather!

I waited a while until a good man, a trader but still an honest Christian, arrived from Morretes. He immediately took it on himself to carry the baggage to the Pastor's rectory, who was waiting for me and welcomed me with much courtesy and joy. While we were having lunch two colonists arrived from the colony America, and then, later, two more from Rio Sagrado, where I intended to go. I waited until two o'clock in the afternoon, and then I hit the road for the next chapel, carrying the vestments. When I got out of the Rectory to reach for the horse, Silenus' style, another eight or nine men from the same locality came up to meet me, and together with these twelve men, the number of the apostles, I was up on my way to that colony. It is eighteen kilometers from Morretes, the road runs half through the mountains, and is kept in sufficiently good condition. The bridges, however, are all poorly constructed.

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER III

Without rain, thank God, we arrived at the edge of town at about 5:00 PM. A long line of children, and further on all colonists who for lack of horses or other reasons could not meet me in Morretes, were waiting for us. All streets were decorated with palm branches brought in from the woods, and adorned with arches and festoons made of leaves and flowers peculiar to that region; but best of all was the sincere and pure joy that transpired in all at having me among them. I had made two visits to this colony already last year when the church had not been built as yet, still these expressions of faith and of their love for me have since increased rather than diminished. Following my arrival and the praying of the Litany, I administered the sacrament of Baptism to a Brazilian child brought in from three miles away. Then, I walked over to my lodging quarters for a light meal; after dinner back to the church to teach catechism, and hear confessions until dark!

It began to rain when I arrived, and it continued so for three days without let-up until it was time for me to leave at 10:00 AM on Friday.

Early in the morning, in spite of the rain, the church could hardly hold some three hundred people, Italian and Brazilian, in attendance; there were 43 communions, 15 baptisms, 2 Italians and 13 Brazilians; afterwards, catechism for children and adults. At noon some food and rest and half an hour later, some more baptisms, catechism, sermon, rosary, and finally, confessions until 9:30 at night.

At 4:30 in the morning on Thursday, penitents were already there waiting for me. Communions were sixty nine; over thirty Brazilians were benefiting of this grace for the first time; then, baptisms, confessions, catechism, etc. At two in the afternoon, I had the joy of baptizing a Brazilian family with six children, who were still pagans. I acted as Godfather for the two oldest ones. In those three days I baptized more than ten children, all Brazilian, who were over five years old. In one day I performed the weddings of two really God-fearing Italian couples, besides blessing seven marriages of Brazilians, all except one living in concubinage. For one of them, no less than eight grown children, assisted at the marriage of their parents, age 50. On Friday, we had 405 communions; baptisms would have been about thirty if bad weather had not made impossible the journey for many that would have otherwise come down the mountains from distances five or more miles away! In that place about sixteen or seventeen families live. Many are my compatriots, who though illiterate, have still a strong faith. How often must I exclaim: "I have never found this much faith in Israel!" (Matthew VIII, 11).

On Friday, at 10, I started out for Morretes, arriving at one in the afternoon, and I had no other choice there but to satisfy my hunger, first. Then I paid my respects to the Pastor. I remained until three, to return afterwards back to Curitiba, and to Agua Verde, later at night. The journey went without incidents, but the afflictions brought upon me by insects, mosquitoes, cockroaches, fleas, and black beetles, are still with me two days later. My arms and legs are all riddled through with their bites; it is impossible to protect oneself from their attacks.

I am inclined to believe that people living beyond the mountains range are so pale and wan on account of these blood thirsty bugs that torment them night and day! Besides, there the heat is unbearable, humidity persistent, the land very rich, but health is very bad. My heart bleeds at the thought of so many

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER III

thousands of our Italians condemned to such miserable life either because of dire need or of greed for a sure gain. Some withdraw to Curitiba, but most of them love their miserable conditions.

*I cannot seem to be able to convince them to abandon these lands of death without endangering my apostolic work."*⁵

Later on, the missionaries had to limit their action to the colonies around Curitiba where in 1888 there were about one thousand Italian families, and some sixteen hundred in 1889. Father Colbacchini had arrived at Curitiba, then counting 24 thousand people, on May 4, 1886, immediately making the rounds of the colonies in the vicinity of the capital. The six thousand Italians who for ten years were deprived of religious assistance, were urged to build their own churches and chapels, and almost all had received the Sacraments. In October, he fixed his residence at Agua Verde, three miles from the city, and seat of the colony called Dantas. The people helped him with the construction of a wooden provisional chapel and house. On Sunday, he would say Mass in the city; during the week, he would move from community to community for a stay of eight to ten days each, preaching mornings and evenings, and teaching catechism twice a day to the children.

From the religious point of view, the overall situation was not promising:

"In missions of this kind there are serious difficulties, at times even greater perhaps than those in the missions among savages.

*In fact, we live here in a country that claims to profess the true Catholic faith while, except for a few cases, only the externals of it are practiced; there is jealousy and greed on the part of those who should provide the strongest support for the lazy nature of these people; Italian colonists themselves, the great majority uneducated people, are not susceptible to understanding certain things; worse, yet, intermingled with many good and simple people there came certain Italians, the scum of our country, who are corrupting Brazil. To this kind belong almost all those that make a show of a certain degree of education; fortunately, they live in the cities, and so give less cause for trouble."*⁶

The hint of the "jealousy and greed of those who should provide strongest support" touches on the most unfortunate aspect of the work of organization undertaken by Father Colbacchini, through difficult and painful negotiations with the Bishop of São Paulo, Dom Lino Deodato Rodrigues de Carvalho, then the Ordinary also of Curitiba, and with the Vicar General for the State of Paraná, Mons. João Evangelista Braga. To be sure, one has certainly to take into consideration also the little accommodating disposition of Father Colbacchini.

During the two months (August-September 1886) Father Colbacchini was devoting to the visitation of the communities of São Paulo, which he had served in the beginning, Father Braga had sent him a letter saying he could get along without him and would not approve of his return. Whereupon, following a two-day ride on horseback with the intention to see and talk to the Bishop, Father

⁵ Colbacchini-Scalabrini, Curitiba, October 20, 1888 (Arch. G.S., 356/4).

⁶ Colbacchini-Mantese, Curitiba, February 28, 1887 (Arch. G.S., 356/19).

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER III**

Colbacchini succeeded only in obtaining a five minute audience with him. However, the Bishop did not show any interest in being informed about the problems of the missions in Paran . The missionary then summoned some influential people together, and succeeded in obtaining again the necessary faculties from the Bishop.

On February 28, 1887, the Vicar General of Curitiba paid a visit to Father Colbacchini:

"He showed me all trust, and admitting his mistake when he had tried to prevent my return, he supports me now in all ways. He desires the arrival of other priests also. As for the pastor of the city, he is quite happy to receive the entire fee of baptisms and weddings I perform without having to work for it. There does not seem, however, to be in him enough kindness to thank me for it. Anyway, he respects me, and speaks well of me. With the arrival of other priests, it will be easy to obtain from the Bishop the separation of Italian communities from the jurisdiction of these pastors. The process must take its course.

*This way we shall be assured of better means for the necessary expenses, even though I do not bother much about these matters because we are the servants of a good Master."*⁷

Informed of these difficulties, Bishop Scalabrini, already busy about the preliminary negotiations with the Holy See for the founding of the Congregation, had this proposal presented to the Pope by the Prefect of the Propagation of the Faith:

"Regarding the Bishops of Brazil, it should be added that they grant directly the faculties to the missionaries, independently of the local pastor or vicars, even by dividing, if necessary, the territory of the Italian immigrants from the rest of the local parish."⁸

At the audience of the November 14, 1887, Leo XIII acceded to the proposal and approved a resolution on the matter:

"In regard to Brazil it shall be added that Bishops directly grant the faculties to the above-mentioned missionaries independently of the local pastors and vicars, even by dividing, if necessary, the territory inhabited by Italian immigrants from the rest, in order to form a parish of their own to be entrusted to the same missionaries."⁹

Even following this papal resolution which, however, had not the force of a law; the Holy See did not impose for the time being on the Brazilian Bishops the separation of jurisdiction or the creation of personal parishes. In the meanwhile, Fr. Colbacchini had begun negotiations with the Vicar General for the State of Paran ¹⁰, later appointed Secretary to the Bishop of S o Paulo and replaced by Father Antonio Joaquim Ribeiro, and succeeded in securing the

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ "Conclusioni del Congresso tenuto presso l'E.mo Prefetto da Mons. Vescovo di Piacenza e l'Arcivescovo di Tiro, Segretario, la sera del 9 Nov. 1887" ("Resolutions of the meeting held by the Bishop of Piacenza and the Archbishop of Tiro, Secretary to His Eminence, the Prefect"). Arch. G.S., 1/4).

⁹ Jacobini-Scalabrini, Rome, Nov. 15, 1887 (Arch. G.S., 1/4).

¹⁰ Colbacchini-Spolverini, Curitiba, Nov. 22, 1887 (Arch. G.S., 356/13).

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER III**

"Portaria" (Decree) on February 14, 1888. We quote here the main points:

- I. For ecclesiastical purposes, a chaplaincy for care of souls is hereby created by us, similar to those we established within our diocese in the province of Paraná for Polish Catholics. It extends to Italian immigrants and their children living in the following free ex-colonies of Dantas or Agua Verde, Santa Felicidade, Campo Comprido, Alfredo Chaves, in the Parish of Our Lady of Light in Curitiba; of Antonio Rebouca or Timituva, Judice Mendes, in the parish of Our Lady of Mercy at Campo Largo; of Santa Maria do Novo Tyrol, Mouricy, Zacharias, in the parish of São Jose' in Dos Pinhais; all located within the Ecclesiastical District of Curitiba, Paraná, of this diocese. This Chaplaincy shall have jurisdiction over those Italians who of their own completely free and spontaneous choice will juridically apply and register to belong to it (...).
- II. As it is absolutely impossible to fix a definite territory for this chaplaincy, as decreed by the Sacred Council of Trent, due to the fact that the Provincial Government has resettled the centers of the ex-colonies in other localities in the midst of Brazilians and other nationalities, the chaplaincy shall be formed by, and limited only to, Italians of the above listed settlements, who will register to belong to it. From then on they shall depend on it, remaining juridically separated from the parishes of which they were formerly a part."¹¹

Father Colbacchini raised several objections against this decree. In fact, about half of the Italian communities remained excluded, while the provisions should have held valid for all Italians; it was not admissible that it should belong to the Vicar General of the Province to divide the chaplaincy into districts and to assign the priests for them, decisions that had to be in the hands of the proper religious authorities; so also, the jurisdiction of each missionary must not be limited to the district assigned to him, because the missionaries had to serve each and all the communities.¹²

Actually, in virtue of this decree, Italians of larger communities could indeed freely join the Italian chaplaincy, but there were difficulties for those living elsewhere or in the city of Curitiba. There existed the danger conflicts between the two jurisdictions over the concern of the local pastors in regard to stole fees.

Father Colbacchini wrote about it to the Bishop who in turn recommended the Vicar General to grant him all facilitations.¹³

More specifically, Father Colbacchini asked the Bishop to extend the option to join the chaplaincy to all Italians of the parishes of Curitiba, San Jose' dos Pinhais, and Campo Largo¹⁴; but the modifications of the decree brought about by Father Braga were more of a hindrance than a help¹⁵, so much so that Bishop Scalabrini deemed it his duty to call once more to the attention of Card.

¹¹ Decree, February 14, 1888, signed by D.L. Rodrigues de Carvalho, bishop of Sao Paulo, and by A.J. Ribeiro, rural Pro-Vicar General (Arch. G.S., 356/14)

¹² Colbacchini-Spolverini, Itu', June 13, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 356/14)

¹³ Colbacchini-Spolverini, Curitiba, May 24, 1888 (Arch. G.S., 356/14).

¹⁴ Colbacchini-Bishop of Sao Paulo, Curitiba, Sept. 25, 1888 (Arch. G.S., 356/13).

¹⁵ Colbacchini-Roller, Curitiba, Nov. 29, 1888 (Arch. G.S., 356/20).

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER III**

Simeoni, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith what follows:

"However, I have to point out to you that in that blessed country our missionaries will never be able to carry on an effective apostolate and do any real good if the Holy See does not provide for the complete freedom of their ministry. But, about this, on another occasion, and I shall have you hear things that will make your heart bleed."¹⁶

The Holy See consulted the Apostolic Internuncio directing him to offer his services on behalf of Italian emigrants, and consequently, also of the Congregation of Bishop Scalabrini.

The answer of Archbishop Spolverini is rather disconcerting. Evidently, it reflects the complaints of the Bishops of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro at the demands of the Scalabrinian missionaries on the matter of the separation of jurisdiction, and the unfavorable impression, unfortunately not without cause, given by the first missionaries of the State of Espirito Santo which was under the diocese of Rio de Janeiro.

"With the most venerated letter (N. 5363) of October 12th, which arrived with some delay, Your Most Reverend Eminence is pleased to summon my assistance in providing for the spiritual welfare of Italian immigrants and of the natives of the most remote provinces of this empire, and to ask me about ways to help them, and how and where to send missionaries to establish missions.

From what missionaries have reported to me both by word of mouth and in writing, conditions of Italian communities scattered all over especially in the dioceses of Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, and Marianna, leave much to be desired both as to organization of the missions, and behavior of a few of the missionaries. The institute founded by the otherwise most zealous Bishop of Piacenza does not give evidence of being suitable for Brazil, at least in the actual exercise of the sacred ministry. Constant jealousies and criticism among themselves, disputes over territorial boundaries for the spiritual assistance to Italians, quarrels with the Brazilian pastors over retributions and jurisdiction's rights, scandalous conduct on the part of some of them either regarding morals or pride and ambition, loss of credibility with the Brazilians, and with the Italians themselves, and lastly, their boasting about the support of the Bishop of Piacenza as to supposed faculties received from him and Rome, render these missionaries very annoying and suspect to the Bishops. I have in my possession several letters of missionaries that present a miserable picture of the state of their missions. I spoke about it on a number of occasions with the Bishop of Rio de Janeiro, but he can hardly stand hearing about Italian priests.

The Bishop of São Paulo, otherwise so considerate with them, has told me that the Italian missionaries want to be independent of the Brazilian pastors, and pretend too much. I was told that no mention has been made of the Institute of Bishop Scalabrini to these Bishops to whom the missionaries have been sent. My opinion is that it would be necessary that:

- I. *he be more cautious in accepting candidates to the Institute, in ascertaining not only their good moral behavior but also that they do not come to Brazil to make money and then go back, later, with their load when their five year commitment to the*

¹⁶ Scalabrini-Simeoni, Piacenza, December 7, 1888 (Arch. G.S., 2/1).

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER III

Institute elapses;

- II. *they be sent here not by the Bishop of Piacenza as members of an Institute the Bishops do not know, but by "The Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith";*
- III. *"Propaganda" be always in touch with the Bishops of Brazil as to assigning the missionaries to the colonies. Besides, for the good of Italian immigrants in general, the Bishops of the diocese where they are in great majority coming from, should make all efforts in convincing their respective pastors to induce migrants to take along also a priest of their choice."¹⁷*

The observations of the Internuncio were brought to the attention of Bishop Scalabrini, who sent Card. Simeoni the following answer:

"As to the remarks of Archbishop Spolverini I take the liberty to point out that:

- I. *I could not, nor was it my duty to inform the Bishops of Brazil about what was being planned on behalf of Italian emigrants when the Sacred Congregation for the Propaganda of the Faith itself had decided to do so and exhort them to separate the territories inhabited by immigrants from the jurisdiction of the local pastors:*
- II. *The priests sent by me were only four: Fathers Molinari and Mantese, requested by Father Colbacchini, who had assured me to be in perfect accord with the Bishop of São Paulo; and Fathers Pezzotti and Venditti, insistently requested by Father Marcellino Moroni on behalf of the Bishop of Rio de Janeiro, to whom I wrote reporting what Fr. Marcellino had told me. To him I recommended the missionaries and he welcomed them in the manner previously described in another letter of mine to Your Most Rev. Eminence. He did not deign to give me an answer.*

And now allow me to provide you with some biographical notes of the priests sent by me, first of the two assigned to São Paulo, and then of the two sent to Rio de Janeiro.

1. *Father Joseph Molinari grew up under my eyes, was professor of languages in the seminary, and for many years a curate in the city. He is a true model of piety.*
2. *Father Dominic Mantese, somewhat scrupulous, is endowed with sound piety. He hails from Vicenza and has been a pastor there for a good many years.*
3. *Father Remigio Pezzotti, was also a pastor for a long time in the diocese of Como. Of him the Most Reverend Capitular Vicar has this to say: 'I take this occasion, etc ...*
4. *Father Joseph Venditti, once a pastor at Campolieto in the Diocese of Benevento, was admitted by mistake because believed to be a Roman for the reason that Benevento used to be a Roman province. Here he showed himself zealous, and intellectually well prepared, though with a boasting temperament: a Neapolitan. Against him I was sent the report I am herein enclosing. In it Your Eminence will find that his very enemies testify to his blameless moral character. Certainly, he will make mistakes! On several occasions he wrote me letters of fire and brimstone against those priests. But, for heaven's sake, how could anyone refrain himself at the sight of*

¹⁷ Spolverini-Simeoni, Rio de Janeiro, December 9, 1988 (Arch. G.S., 356/1).

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER III

such heart rendering conditions? Anyway, about this and other necessary measures I shall talk at length on my first visit to Rome.

On the basis of this information, Your Eminence is now in a better position to have a correct evaluation of the Most Reverend Internuncio. The priest who wrote to him accusing Father Venditti was Father Marcellino, a good man, but unstable, inconstant, unreliable in his judgements and quick reactions, and a victim of first impressions. A minor incident between Father Venditti and himself, between the Brazilian pastor and Father Venditti, led him to write to the Internuncio, to the Bishop, to me, to half the world! Still, he is a saintly man."¹⁸

The Holy See tried to intervene in a very diplomatic but hesitant way. Actually, however, the situation was serious especially on account of the sensitivity of the Brazilian clergy made wise by their sad experiences with a good number of Italian priests, and irritated by the Scalabrinians as pretending too much.

By the middle of 1889 the Holy See had the intention to send a visitor charged with studying the situation and working out a settlement with the Bishops. Father Colbacchini pointed out the difficulties against the plan resulting from distances, expenses, lack of experience with and knowledge of persons and places. In virtue of his office and experience the Internuncio himself had to be the best qualified for this task.¹⁹ Cardinal Simeoni requested also Bishop Scalabrini to send in a detailed report²⁰, by us quoted above²¹.

In his thank you letter, the Prefect of the Propagation of the Faith added:

"We shall take into consideration the observations presented by Your Excellency. The problem you insist on requires mature deliberation. It is now under study; decisions and provisions shall be taken in due time."²²

However, three months later, in his answer to another letter with which Bishop Scalabrini had submitted a "memorandum" signed by Italian migrants in Brazil, the Cardinal had no choice but to say:

"I agree with the observations presented by Your Excellency. Conditions in Brazil are indeed such as to require further study before we can take the proper decisions. Your Excellency, meanwhile, may freely send missionaries to those Bishops of the United States who have requested them."²³

To the difficulties posed by the Brazilian Hierarchy were added those born of the republican revolution of November 1889, and of the anticipations, quite sinister at first, about the relations of the new Republic with the Church. In January 1890 it declared the separation between Church and State, which improved, actually, the conditions of the Brazilian Church, even though the government was showing its opposition to anything that, had to do with religion.²⁴

In fact, in 1891, realizing that the republican government was not as black a

¹⁸ Scalabrini-Simeoni, Piacenza, January 18, 1889 (rough copy) - (Arch. G.S., 3/1).

¹⁹ Colbacchini-Spolverini, Curitiba, July 23, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 356/15).

²⁰ Simeoni-Scalabrini, August 30, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 3/1).

²¹ Francesconi, *Inizi della Congregazione Scalabriniana - Volume 1* (Rome, 1969).

²² Simeoni-Scalabrini, Rome, September 12, 1889. (Arch. G.S., 3/1).

²³ Simeoni-Scalabrini, Rome, December 31, 1889. (Arch. G.S., 3/1).

²⁴ Scalabrini-Simeoni, Piacenza, October 4, 1890 (Arch. G.S., 4/1).

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER III

devil as painted, Bishop Scalabrini continued to put pressure on the Holy See, and he could receive this answer:

*"About the difficulties the Missionaries of your Institute are confronted with in Brazil, I would like that Your Lordship give us a more detailed information in order to find out whether it be the case to address an official letter to the Secretariat of Ecclesiastical Affairs on which that region depends."*²⁵

But the suggestion of Bishop Scalabrini, as we have already pointed out in regard to many of his other initiatives and proposals which were afterwards adopted by the Church many years after his death, did not find a favorable reception. Fortunately, at the cost of great sacrifices, the missionaries knew how to handle the situation right from the beginning. Little by little, on the basis of the irreplaceable need and effectiveness of their apostolate, and through agreements with the successive Bishops of the Brazilian Hierarchy, they succeeded in reaching a more or less satisfactory *modus vivendi*.

Unfortunately, in the beginning, because of these difficulties and to comply with the desires of the Holy See, Bishop Scalabrini sent almost all his missionaries to North America; thus until the years 1895-1896 the Scalabrinian presence in Brazil had to be limited to Curitiba and to the missions of the State of Espirito Santo, also faced with the same difficulties. As soon as the "Chaplaincy" of Curitiba was erected, the missionaries began to receive, though on a small scale, the stole fees necessary for their livelihood. Actually, few were the families that paid the dues they had pledged for the support of the priests in the early moments of their enthusiasm. Each family was to pay eight "milreis" per year, equal to 20 liras of the time; however, for instance, the one hundred families of Aqua Verde had contributed only one hundred liras in eight months. So also, few were the Mass intentions (5 liras) and the fees for baptisms (6 liras) and weddings (17 liras). In order to have an idea of the ratio one must remember that a craftsman was then paid eight liras a day.²⁶ The "Decree" of 1888 was not of easy application.

*"As to the renewal of the ordinary faculties, after writing time and again, following the third temporary extension granted by the Vicar General of the Province, at last, about 20 days ago, a telegram of His Excellency the Bishop of São Paulo reached me extending the validity of the "Decree" of February 14, 1888, until a new one will be enacted. But, when? and how?"*²⁷

In 1891, the Bishop himself gave the Vicar General of Paraná full power even to abolish the "Chaplaincies" of Polish and Italian immigrants. Father Colbacchini ascribed this decision to the machinations of the Vicar himself. Fortunately, right at that time Archbishop Spolverini, the Apostolic Internuncio in person went to spend his vacations at Father Colbacchini's rectory His presence there was enough to have the impending provision suspended.

Soon afterward, the diocese of Curitiba was created (April 1892), and with the

²⁵ Simeoni-Scalabrini, Rome, December 11, 1891 (Arch. G.S., 5/1).

²⁶ Colbacchini-Röller, Curitiba, September 19, 1888 (Arch. G.S., 356/20).

²⁷ Colbacchini-Spolverini, Curitiba, September 9, 1890 (Arch. G.S., 356/16).

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III CHAPTER III

new Bishop Dom José de Camargo Barros, the difficulties were ironed out.²⁸ As already pointed out, Father Colbacchini at first took up his residence at Agua Verde in the vicinity of Curitiba. For the first months he was a guest of a certain Antonio Bonato, original from Nove (in the territory of Bassano del Grappa). He took possession of the new house built for him by the colonists in 1887.²⁹ The church was opened to the faithful on June 29th, 1888, and by a Bishop's decree it was declared the central quarter of Italian communities. Two thousand Italians participated in the festivities which lasted three days. The Church was dedicated to the Sacred Heart as was customary with Father Colbacchini, determined to spread this devotion together with the devotion to the Holy Eucharist, the "unknown God" of these lands.³⁰

Fortunately, from the very beginning he found a favorable support in the public authorities, especially in the President of the Province of Paraná, who, together with the highest members of his government, went to spend a whole Sunday with the community of Agua Verde, showing all his satisfaction and promising his whole support.³¹ The President, together with the Chief of Police and almost all other authorities, was present at the unveiling of the statue of the Sacred Heart on September 23, 1889³²; a little later, he named Father Colbacchini inspector of the schools opened and supported by the provincial government for the Italian communities, charging him also with the choice of teachers.³³

Father Colbacchini made good use of his friendship with the civil authorities in alleviating the sufferings of immigrants, of those especially who arrived in 1889:

*"During these last two months about one thousand immigrants arrived here. I have had my share of persistent and persuasive work with the authorities in order to urge them to provide help for these miserable people exposed to sufferings and almost on the point of dying of starvation. I myself had to send in some corn meal to supply them with food for one day, 180 people abandoned in the woods without supplies. It seems as though upon my strong and repeated appeals they have provided for that, and for the needs of other communities. On the part of the Government everything would be alright, were it not for the administrators with whom, instead, things seem to be going all wrong, very wrong! Apparently, they would fill their pockets at the expense of the sufferings and tears of these unfortunate ones."*³⁴

"The President of the Province deals with me as with a true friend. This relationship turned out very helpful for the new immigrants because it enabled me to secure favors and facilitations for them. However, their evils are such as to be almost beyond help. The main cause of their sufferings and death for some, and practically the only one, is having arrived at this time when the heat, quite exceptional this year, is most intense. Moreover, the last to arrive were those days stricken with yellow fever in Rio, where they had stopped for two or

²⁸ Colbacchini-Scalabrini, Curitiba, February 7, 1891 (Arch. G.S., 356/9).

²⁹ Colbacchini-Mantese, Curitiba, September 26, 1887 (Arch. G.S., 356/19).

³⁰ Colbacchini-Scalabrini, Curitiba, July 3, 1888 (Arch. G.S., 356/6).

³¹ Colbacchini-Scalabrini, Curitiba, September 7, 1888 (Arch. G.S., 356/6).

³² Colbacchini-Spolverini, Curitiba, September 23, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 356/15).

³³ Colbacchini-Spolverini, Curitiba, November 11, 1889, to Rolleri, Curitiba, November 11, 1889 (Arch.:G.S., 356/15).

³⁴ Colbacchini-Rolleri, Curitiba, February 6, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 356/21)

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER III

three days; out of two hundred, fifteen have already been infected with the deadly sickness, five of them are still in danger. It is hoped that once they reach, as they did already, a better climate, the epidemic will cease. No one ever heard of a case of yellow fever on this high plateau. A month ago, I sent an appeal to the Italian minister of Rio de Janeiro entreating him to delay the inflow of immigration until next April, due to the hardships the new arrivals are confronted with during this season. He seems to have given it serious consideration. In fact, he has sent instructions to the Director of Emigration, who, actually, was somewhat offended by my recourse.

We did all we could to help these some thousand colonists who had just arrived with the assistance we solicited from well settled immigrants. The sick were lodged where they could be taken care of. In order to preclude them from serfdom with Brazilians, boys and girls are housed with good Italian families, thus relieving their parents of the burden of supporting them. So, also, other measures are adopted, according to circumstances. To places farther off we have sent corn meal, wheat flour, poultry, etc. We do, and will do what we can. Once the difficulties of the first year have been overcome, they will be all right."³⁵

The Missionary, the object of so much attention on the part of the authorities, suspected that their hidden scope was to induce him to persuade Italians to vote for them. But he never wanted to meddle with politics, and very little interested in it were also the immigrants.³⁶

Personally, authorities continued to treat him well also after the decree of separation of Church and State, and they even asked him to hold the office of inspector of schools.³⁷

Relations continued to be good also when on July 4, 1891, Paraná was proclaimed a state, and Generoso Marques was elected President.³⁸

On August 8, 1888, the first three missionaries of the Scalabrinian Congregation, Fathers Dominic Mantese and Joseph Molinari, and Brother Victor Gabuardi, arrived to help Father Colbacchini:

"They are working already in the field, reaping this rather abundant harvest. In only two years the good Lord granted me to organize twelve, or more, of these Italian colonies after the pattern, if not better, of the religious practice of our communities (in Italy).

Everywhere, or so, there are churches, of wood or stone, supplied with the furnishing needed for the celebration of the Mass; houses, or rooms, to lodge the missionary, and here at Agua Verde, headquarters of the Italian colonies, there is a comfortable residence for the priests, and a church that can be compared with any church of the countryside parishes in our hometowns."³⁹

One year later, Father Colbacchini could add other consoling news:

"Considering the critical circumstances in which we are, we can and have to be satisfied with what the Lord has done and is doing through us for these

³⁵ Colbacchini-Rolleri, Curitiba, March 6, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 356/21)

³⁶ Colbacchini-Spolverini, Curitiba, January 13, 1890 (Arch. G.S., 356/16).

³⁷ Colbacchini-Spolverini, Curitiba, February 22, 1890 (Arch. G.S., 356/16).

³⁸ Colbacchini-Spolverini, Curitiba, July 5, 1891 (Arch. G.S., 356/17).

³⁹ Colbacchini-Rolleri, Curitiba, September 19, 1888 (Arch. G.S., 356/20)

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER III

Italians. In three years and in the midst of very serious difficulties, sixteen chapels were constructed, all provided with the necessary furnishings; the faith of our people revived from a state of death, piety returned, loose morals have been corrected, domestic harmony and for many a comfortable life has taken the place of vice and misery."⁴⁰

Of particular importance seems to us the following allusion, just one among many, that emigration - as Bishop Scalabrini was always saying - could become a providential instrument in the hands of Missionaries for spreading the faith:

*"Also many Brazilians, with permission of their pastors, come to us for baptisms, weddings, and funerals. They are not few, those, who spurred on by the example of Italians, come to us from time to time for the sacraments of confession and Communion; something never done before by anyone, except once by somebody on the occasion of a wedding."*⁴¹

In July, 1890, Fathers Mantese and Molinari returned to Italy, to leave again a few months later for the United States. Both were in poor health, and could no longer take the hardships of those long horseback rides under the sun or in the rain; but they had difficulties also with Father Colbacchini, a man strict with himself and with others as well, very zealous, but convinced that only his methods were right, and only what he did was good. The two missionaries were harshly judged by him, but appreciated by the people; in the few remaining years of their life, they gained the respect of all: in North America Father Mantese died in 1891, Father Molinari instead remained till 1893, and then moved to Italy where he was made rector of the Mother House until 1900, the year of his death. Bishop Scalabrini had understood their predicament, and he wrote to Father Molinari as follows:

*"I infinitely rejoice over your regained health, and wholeheartedly thank the Lord for it. If it is not possible to carry your ministry in Brazil, I will assign you to North America with the good Domenico. There are places there very suitable to both of you also for their climate, and Father Domenico will always have people of his trust there to whom he can present all his doubts. Your Superior is sorry to see you leave, but when it is a question of health, it is my desire that the Missionaries do not suffer. It will only mean that, as soon as possible, I shall send someone else to Brazil."*⁴²

However, five years had to go by, - and we have already considered the reasons - before others could arrive. In the meanwhile, Father Colbacchini had to carry on practically all by himself with the occasional help of Father Francis Bonato who had unsuccessfully applied to join the Scalabrinian Congregation on conditions considered inadmissible for a religious. Father Bonato had the direct care, independently of Father Colbacchini, of the region of Timbotuva until 1895, when he was assigned to the parish of Colombo (the former Alfredo Chaves). Realizing he could not continue alone, Father Colbacchini had his moments of discouragement, and of disappointment with the Congregation as

⁴⁰ Colbacchini-Roller, Curitiba, November 11, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 356/21)

⁴¹ Colbacchini-Roller, Curitiba, May 1, 1890 (Arch. G.S., 356/22).

⁴² Scalabrini-Molinari, Levico, July 12, 1890 (Arch. G.S., 3023/2).

well, so much so that he proposed to his friend the Internuncio Spolverini to have a community of ten Redemptorists placed in Curitiba: two Polish, one German, six or seven Italian, to take care of all the immigrants in that region.⁴³

Two years later, he illustrated in greater detail a proposal he intended to submit for approval of the new Bishop of Curitiba:

"(...) The Canonical institution of mixed (Italian and Brazilian) parishes located in the midst of colonial communities of Italians will indeed give rise to difficulties on the part of the natives who practice a religion of their own, but this solution will surely afford the means of salvation for many thousand Italians (probably 15 thousand) living in the territory of Curitiba. This way, little by little, also the religious conditions of these unfortunate natives who call themselves Catholics only because baptized as such, will improve. Without a plan like this, I do not see (even independently from my humble person) how this Italian mission could last so deprived as it is of means, and so much in need of shepherds. At the present time there is hardly anyone amongst these settlers aware of the opportunity and duty to share in the support of the missionaries, and I have to employ a thousand ways to secure (always from the few) their contributions for the expenses of the church. To tell the truth, parochial fees together with the mass offerings are sufficient to support a priest of modest pretenses, but they would not be enough for more (...).

With the income of mixed parishes of Italians and Brazilians, it will be possible to have sufficient means for the support of three or four missionaries, and the mission's future will be assured. My project will meet with the strong opposition of the pastors involved, but the salvation of souls should be placed ahead of their material interests."⁴⁴

The proposal remained on paper not so much for the opposition of the local clergy, rather, we believe, for lack of personnel. We must give him credit for continuing to remain at his post in spite of all the temptations and difficulties he experienced (not a few of them of his own making) not only on the part of the clergy, but of the authorities also, not excluding the Italian Consul and certain sinister individuals, also Italian, who threatened him, or worse, even tried more than once to kill him. Comfort and encouragement came to him from the colonies which he saw making progress from year to year, once the difficulties of the initial years had been overcome.

"The health of these settlers is very good. Among so many thousands one scarcely finds a sick person! Certain ailments so commonplace in Italy no one here has ever so much as heard of; in this respect, I would not know whether there is a climate more favorable to one's health than this. One must realize, however, that these healthy conditions are due in great part to the good material state of these families that abound in things necessary for life, and whose work is not as hard and compelling as it is in our country's home towns. Children grow as under a spell, and there are swarms of them in every colony. In a community of 150 families I could number as many as four hundred and eighty under the age of ten. Weddings take place very early in life, at 16 or 18 the girls,

⁴³ Colbacchini-Spolverini, Curitiba, March 10, 1891 (Arch. G.S., 356/17) to Scalabrini, Curitiba, February 16, 1891 (Arch. G.S., 356/9).

⁴⁴ Colbacchini-Scalabrini, Curitiba, May 16, 1893 (Arch. G.S., 356/11).

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER III

at 18 or 20 the boys; except for few exceptions, every union brings forth its fruit every year.

Divine Providence has created the earth for man and has multiplied here the generations to fill these still uninhabited wide spaces. We can truly say that hardly one thirtieth of the State of Paraná is populated. Except for two or three, the same can be said of the other states. Besides, the "Mato Grosso" is there, still ninety-nine per cent unexplored. Well organized on a vast scale, Italian immigration into Paraná would greatly benefit Italy whatever others, who look at things only from their point of view, might say to the contrary. Except for the disadvantage of lack of medical assistance, I would not find there any other; rather, I would discover very great advantages for immigrants in this state, provided difficulties be eliminated or reduced through opportune means and provisions as to transportation and employment. However, until governments decide to accept and act according their responsibility towards immigrants, left in the hands of evil men this will always remain a bleeding infected sore."⁴⁵

But, unfortunately, within a few months this idyllic vision was to turn into a tragedy causing all dreams for the agricultural colonization of Paraná to vanish. The revolt of the federalists from Rio Grande do Sul, begun in 1893, extended to Rio de Janeiro, where the fleet rebelled, and then to Santa Catarina and Paraná. This state was occupied by the federalists from November 1893 to March 1894; but in Curitiba the disorders still continued for some time because the city was retaken by the troops faithful to the government only on May 7th. It was because he had tried to keep Italians out of parties and political fights, Father Colbacchini was too was caught in the turmoil of the Revolution:

"At last, after a six month suspension caused by this fratricidal war that has devastated this State of Paraná, the mail is working again.

I hasten to give you some news about myself and the events that took place in this period of time. On the night of February 17, by incitement of an unworthy Italian banned from Italy, a colonel in the revolutionary forces, vicious and wicked, my residences of Agua Verde and Santa Felicidade were attacked with the intent to kill me because I was keeping Italians from enlisting under the banner of that scoundrel who had joined the revolution to have the opportunity to form a horde of criminals. First to enlist were some fifty Italian anarchists from Curitiba, all people fugitives from Italian justice who were waiting for their chance to plunder and do the worst crimes. That brute knew how to hold these ignorant colonists under his spell and to easily ensnare them into his net, were it not for me, who, sensing the danger, had warned them and opened their eyes.

I had to remain hidden in the thickets for two months under the protection of armed guards. The bandits' search to get me continued uninterrupted, but they did not succeed in their intent. I give thanks to God for saving me from such risks together with these colonists who, compared with the Polish communities and the natives themselves whose losses were enormous, did not suffer any damage. The Sacred Heart of Jesus to whom I had consecrated this mission of mine in the beginning has taken good care of us. Besides, in my seclusion I had the consolation to offer Mass every day, and you can very well imagine with what faith I kept repeating: 'Rescue me from the hands of the wicked, from the

⁴⁵ Ibid.

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER III

grasp of the criminal and the violent!" (Ps. 71, 4).

During that time I caught the flu which almost took me to the grave. It is a month, however, since I left my hide-out, and my health has much improved. The legal government has taken over from the hands of the rebels who coming as friends had instead treated this land as cruel enemies! Heads were chopped off just as asparagus shoots are cut off in May at my Bassano.

Levies were imposed and extorted in millions of liras, more than seven thousand horses, and at least as many heads of cattle and sheep were taken; not considering pillaging and vexation of all kinds. Imagine the panic of our beloved immigrants at the terror these assassins were spreading everywhere!

Now they have retreated from here pursued by the forces of the government. However, they have not totally left the territory of Paraná as yet and we are still afraid. The rebels are only five thousand but they are so ferocious as to withstand a well-equipped army of 20 thousand men. God help us! Should I avail myself of the wisdom of man, I would immediately take advantage of the opening, precarious perhaps, of the ports to move away to safer shores, and many reasons, my health especially, would offer me a obvious excuse; but now more than ever, I am resolved to remain at my post, so convinced am I that my presence here is becoming more necessary than ever for many thousands of our immigrants. My sacrifice is greater in proportion with the greater danger to which I find myself exposed, and this increases my hope to obtain more abundant mercies from the good Lord, who "humbled himself obediently accepting even death". (Ph 2, 8)

It seems as though the present government is willing to protect me, and I would have all the rights in the world to it, as I have contributed to its cause by preventing Italians from taking sides with the revolution. However, in these lands one cannot count on justice, honesty, or common sense, as almost always partisan interests and furious turmoil inspire and disturb both public and private life. I do not intend to be a prophet, but I would not be surprised if the day comes when I should be compelled, for reasons beyond my control, to leave this country. I have been able to save these settlers from the vexation with which they were threatened by one of their countrymen, but I could not save them from a government that should want to force on them the common duties of these places, such as military service now under consideration, even with all my being their only advisor!

Certainly, I will try to avoid the issue in order to have it both ways, but I am afraid that I would not be able accept the intentions of those who would impose burdens too heavy for our immigrants, without failing to be faithful to my vocation. I cannot give an idea on how deeply conditioned my ministry is here by external circumstances and the economic situation of these people. God help me, I shall try to do my duty.

It is eight months now since I last received your letters which I long for so much. Please inform Marquis Volpe-Landi that due to the actual critical conditions, and maybe never, will it be possible to start the process of founding the "Great Italian Colony" Doctor Carrero was dreaming about for the State of Paraná.

At the present time, following the upheavals that just took place, and in view of those that are foreseen, the mood in these States of Brazil is so contrary to colonization that I would not experience any qualms of conscience should I

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III

CHAPTER III

*discourage Italians from landing at these shores. Many that are here now would be happy to repatriate if they had the means. So, see how things have changed in the last two years, that is, since when I myself was giving you in all truth and clear conscience such promising descriptions of the very flourishing conditions of these communities in Paraná."*⁴⁶

Father Colbacchini turned out to be a prophet with his future. After the revolution, once again the liberal party prevailed, which had to settle accounts with the missionary since 1893, and Father Colbacchini had much to suffer for it in July 1894. But, let us listen to the account of Father Joseph Martini well informed by the eye witnesses:

"While many Italians upon arriving in Paraná settled in lands assigned to them by the government to colonize, or bought here and there a piece of land for themselves to cultivate, many others fixed their residence in Curitiba and found occupation in crafts and trades.

These considering themselves superior to the farmers perhaps because they were living by the schools and close to the rich of the city, thought they could control them at will.

The resounding names of a country and of men they called great should have helped the bosses in making them join the wagon so well supported by masonry. But, Father Colbacchini was the sentry keeping watch from the tower over the moves of the enemies. Under the pretext of mutual help, Italians from the city sought to attract to themselves the farmers, but the missionary opposed them with all means and won, succeeding in keeping the colonists from contracts with degenerate patriots, and from consequent moral and religious ruin. Hence, their anger and war, now open, and then hidden, on the Missionary whom they wanted at all costs out of the way. They would even have killed him if they had the chance to do so without risking to be jailed. And, unfortunately, the occasion for their plan with no danger to their freedom came soon.

When Emperor Dom Pedro was driven out in 1889, Brazil became a republic of confederate states. In the State of Paraná two parties, Federalists and Liberal, were formed, naturally fighting each other for power. In the capital Italians considered it to their advantage to take sides with the liberal party, and once again they began roaming around the colonies to urge people to join the party. Father Colbacchini saw the need that the colonists should remain neutral, but the recruiters kept insisting and bothering in order to reach their goal. Neither did they stop short of falsehoods and threats, as they did, for example, on February 2, 1893, at Campo Comprido where many Italians had gathered for the usual festivities. With all self-assurance they gave to believe that the members of the Liberal Party would not suffer any evil neither in their persons nor in their properties, as, instead, it would happen to the members of the other party. On the same day those imposters turned up campaigning at Santa Felicidade, but the Missionary let the colonists understand the deception unmasking those hypocrites, so that out of the eighty who had joined the party already, only a few remained in it.

Naturally, the liberals, extremely angered at the Missionary who was encroaching upon their plans, decided to do away with him. And this was the

⁴⁶ Colbacchini-Scalabrini, Curitiba, May 21, 1894 (Arch. G.S., 356/12).

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III

CHAPTER III

right time when the two parties had taken a turn towards a true revolution that would let even the most heinous crimes go unpunished, if not rewarded, perhaps. Luckily, while the plot was being planned and the person to carry it out chosen, there was a friend of the priest listening in, a certain Francis Busato of Vila Colombo. He took it upon himself to run over to the colony and warn him of the impending danger. Though late at night, the priest had in all haste a good horse ready, presented a crucifix to the housekeeper (Louise Micheletto) saying: 'With this do not be afraid of anything.' Then escorted by several colonists he took off in the direction of Vila Colombo.

It seems as though there was someone in the colony, who, like the liberals, was happy to see the priest done away with, because of conflicts over financial interests. He had opened a store and pretended that the priest patronized it by sending him customers. He also had a chapel built by his house with the intention of calling in another priest to say Mass there, but intending really to attract people to his store. Rumors say that he had hosted and treated to a hearty meal the killers before leading them to the priest's house. Once there, some of them remained outside to watch the exits, the others knocked to enter. The courageous lady opened the door, and immediately they began to ransack every corner of the house, but they did not find the priest. Then, under threats, they questioned the housekeeper where he could be. The lady, pointing at his room and his bed still all in order answered that the missionary had been summoned to a sick call to a distant place she could not remember.

And so, they turned around and went away scorned, enraged and resolved to look for him somewhere else. The priest had afterwards no choice but to remain hidden at Villa Colombo now by some house of colonists, and then in the woods, until it seemed safe for him to go back. About twenty days later he returned to his residence, but they did not leave him in peace. In fact, the commander of the liberals, informed of his return, had him called and imposed on him the formation of a garrison in the colony if he wished the safety of the colonists' lives and goods. The young conscripts were to remain in the community or in the city as reservists, but they were sent actually here and there with the others; our young men, however, chose courageously to leave their homes instead and take to the bush! Thus, he found himself once more in danger for his life, and though aware of being under the protection of his good colonists, he decided to leave for safety in Italy. There he could recuperate his shattered health and make plans with Bishop Scalabrini about sending other missionaries.

When Father Colbacchini departed in July 1894, this and other Italian colonies passed under the care of Father Francis Bonato who had resided in Timbutuva for the last six years, with jurisdiction over that colony and over the colonies of Rio Verde, Rondinha and Campina. He endured an overwhelming work for a whole year, that is, until the arrival of Fathers Francis Brescianini and Faustino Consoni on July 16, 1895. These priests, took over the care first of the colonies once held by Father Colbacchini, and then in the following November, also of other four colonies relinquished by Father Bonato, who in the meanwhile had moved to Villa Colombo in charge also of Capivary, Canguery, and Faria."⁴⁷

In order to have a complete vision of the pioneering action of Father

⁴⁷ G. Martini, *Origine e sviluppo della Colonia Santa Felicidade* ("Origin and Growth of Santa Felicidade"). Curitiba, 1908, pp. 24-29.

Colbacchini during his eight years in Paran , attention should be paid to his initiatives in giving life to a rational agricultural colonization promoted or supported by the Italian government. But for this matter we refer our readers to the volume "La societ  italiana di fronte alle prime migrazioni di massa" ('Italian Society and the First Mass Migration'), by Anthony Perotti, c.s., which deals extensively with it. One will find quoted there two reports of Father Colbacchini, one of 1892, the other of 1895, sent to the Italian Foreign Ministry exactly "on how to form an Italian Society for Emigration and Colonization of Brazil."⁴⁸

2. Santa Felicidade

The final religious organization of the Colony of Santa Felicidade took place in 1889 when Father Colbacchini transferred his residence there from Agua Verde.

We shall give a lengthy account of the beginnings of the colony of Santa Felicidade in order to provide some information about the vicissitudes to which our first immigrants were subjected.

On November 5, 1877, a steamer with nine hundred emigrants left Genoa. Almost all hailed from the Veneto, and were directed to Brazil. The following day they called at the port of Marseille where they were kept under quarantine because of several cases of diphtheria among the passengers. A few days later, when they were about to resume their voyage, rumors began to circulate that the company which owned the ship wanted to accommodate them on board a sailboat rather than a steamer, as agreed upon in the contract. When they could have evidence of the deception, emigrants had recourse to Italian and French authorities to vindicate their rights. An inspection ascertained that the sailboat could not safely bring to an end the long voyage. Besides, there was not sufficient storage for the supplies needed for the trip. The company was about to perpetrate one of the many incredible and appalling tragedies that afflicted the history of mass migrations. The company was told to get a steamer ready or to give the money back to the passengers. The company, however, was taking its time, so that the migrants had to depend on the charity of the people of Marseille who helped them generously. Someone was calling for justice, but the people responsible for the fraud disappeared. Finally, the Italian Consul could provide for their repatriation. When they arrived at Genoa on November 28th, some chose to go back home, while on December 11th the others embarked on the steamer "Sulis" which touched the port at Rio de Janeiro on January 2, 1878, and landed at the harbor of Paranagu  January 5th.

Thereafter they were directed to the colonies assigned to them by the government, that is, to Porto da Cima and to S o J o da Graciosa, where they were given a warm welcome, good food, and living quarters, at four hundred reis a day. But the region was marshy and unhealthy; their moral sufferings

⁴⁸ A. Perotti, *La societ  italiana di fronte alle prime migrazioni di massa* (Italian Society and First Mass Migrations), *Studi Emigrazione*, V, 11-12, (1968), pp.127-144; 325-341; 343-394

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER III

caused by isolation were made worse by the tormenting vexation of nail ticks that dug their way under the toenails to lay their eggs, of "bernes" a species of fly larvae that pierced through the skin and grew as large as silk worms, of mosquitoes, and trachoma. When they saw occasional herds of cattle being taken to São Paulo, the migrants inquired in what regions they were raised. Thus, they discovered that in the countryside of Curitiba they could find healthier land better suited for the type of cultures responding to their traditions.

The Provincial government attempted with all means to forestall the move; but the immigrants availed themselves of their right to change residence twice.

The little money they had saved during their stay by the coast enabled them to buy land at eighty milreis a 'alqueire' (24 thousand square meters) from Antonio, Arlindo, and Felicidade, Bandeira, brothers and sisters. It was exactly by this lady's desire that the colony took the name of Santa Felicidade, fifteen pieces of land in all, bought in November 1878, and immediately seeded by the first fifteen families. Another fourteen families acquired land that belonged partly to a Mr. Wolf, a German, and partly to Paulo Franca and João de Freitas, Brazilians.

Beginnings were not easy. Some families had to live in Curitiba or elsewhere for six months until they could have their homes built, while others adjusted for a time under trees or in huts made of branches. They had much trouble with protecting their seeded land from wild pigs, and endured shortage of food, until they could reap their first harvest. Generally, however, they found generous help in Brazilians.

Instances of violence were not lacking. For example, several Brazilian families were living already on the lands of João de Freitas claiming ownership rights and, refusing to honor the contracts stipulated with the owners by the Italian colonists, they pretended to be paid before clearing out. Naturally, Italians were in no mood to pay twice for their land. One day, a certain Anthony Bosa, together with twenty other armed Italians surrounded ten Brazilians who had entered his land to make hay. Following a day long siege, one of the Brazilians had them believe he was giving up, and asked to go home to get the money he needed to pay for the damages, but he returned with two hundred armed Brazilians headed by Freitas himself. The latter, however, when he realized that the Italians were numerically so much inferior, in a gentleman like manner tried to address himself to Anthony Bosa who was threatening him with a rifle, actually an empty one, and uncovering his chest cried out: "Shoot right here, kill me, but we are acting in our own right."

The Italian replied: "*No, the land is mine because I paid for it. Move back or I shoot.*" At that moment, the wife of Bosa, who had learned a little Portuguese, and the members of the family of Freitas began to mediate, and a compromise was thus reached: the Brazilians would keep the hay made and pay ten milreis for damages. For these and other minor incidents Italians had recourse to the government to help straighten things out.

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER III

Right from the beginning the colonists felt the need for a place to worship. On feast days they went for Mass to Curitiba seven kilometers away, but for lack of roads or because of inclement weather not all of them could always make the trip. For these reasons they began to gather together in a home to recite their prayers, listen to the reading of religious books, and teach catechism to the children. Later on they purchased a crucifix from an Italian in Curitiba and carried it in procession to the improvised oratory.

In the same year there arrived from Morretes and directly from Italy another twenty three families. By 1882 the families were seventy and the oratory was no longer sufficient. A certain Marco Mocellin donated a piece of land where a small wooden chapel was built. It was blessed by the pastor of Curitiba, Father José Barros, who said the first Mass there, but could not hear confessions because he did not understand Italian.

The first missionary ever to visit Santa Felicidade and preach the first mission in Italian was Father John Cibeo in 1885. He was a tireless Jesuit priest, who in spite of his advanced years and infirmities visited from time to time the colonies from the State of Santa Catarina carried on shoulders in a portable chair for lack of regular roads. In 1886, a month after the arrival of Father Colbacchini in Paraná', Father Cibeo blessed the cemetery.

The first colony to be visited by Father Colbacchini was Santa Felicidade itself: he preached a two week mission. At last, all Italians were able to receive the Sacraments, would stop cursing, for a time, at least, and began once more to greet each other with the customary: "Praised be Jesus Christ."

The first initiative launched by Father Colbacchini was the construction of a church made of stone. The missionary himself was its architect, master builder, and decorator while the congregation enthusiastically cooperated donating a large part of the material, freely contributing labor, transportation, and five per cent of their produce; even their children offered their services in loading sacks of sand. The Church was ready for Christmas 1891.⁴⁹ Father Colbacchini hastened to inform Bishop Scalabrini:

"So, on Sunday, the 20th of this month, in a devout procession of about two thousand people, a great part of them wearing cape and alb and of a long line of children, eighty boys in white alb and blue cape, ninety girls in white dress, blue veil with crowns of flowers on their heads, we made our way from the old Church carrying our large and beautiful frames of the Way of the Cross toward the new church five hundred meters away. As we arrived, welcomed by a volley of fireworks, I proceeded to the simple blessing of the church sprinkling it with holy water inside and outside, followed by the people chanting the "Magnificat". Then, on with the blessing of the Cross and Stations, and the canonical erection of the Way of the Cross, concluding the rites with a sermon fit for the occasion.

On Monday, Holy Mass and sermon in the old church in the morning; in the evening solemn procession with the statue of St. Joseph (beautiful, 2 meters tall, from Paris) that was placed in its niche after vespers, sermon, and benediction. On Tuesday, same services with the statue of the Blessed Mother, and so also

⁴⁹ G. Martini, op. cit., pp. 3-23.

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III CHAPTER III

on Wednesday with Saint Aloysius. On Thursday, at 9:00 in the evening, the usual procession started unwinding from the old church for the transfer of the Blessed Sacrament. The streets along the way were decorated with many arches and two lines of evergreen trees, lit up with many colored Chinese lanterns. Almost all of those taking part in the procession (over two thousand) were carrying a lighted candle in their hands; that devout silence, that darkness, and then the singing of hymns, the fireworks, and above all, when entering the church, the joyous choir of the silvery voices of so many children echoing through the vaults of the new temple, filled us all with deep strong emotion.

Sermon, then Matins followed by another homily and right afterwards our first Solemn High Mass. For the first time we had the opportunity to see for ourselves and admire the spaciousness of the sacred building which could hold more than one-third of the people present numbering more than two thousand. You can hardly imagine the happiness of all, and the wonder of all outsiders, both Italians and Brazilians.

The celebrations continued until past the following Sunday, and were concluded by a solemn rite of thanksgiving. However, what counts most in the whole week is that more than one thousand people received Holy Communion. As always, the Lord helped me almost miraculously, not only in overcoming very serious difficulties to build the church, but also in keeping me sufficiently strong in the midst of hard work that would seriously tax the strongest. As to expense, the building cost about thirty thousand liras (5 thousand of my own pocket, as I could not afford more), but we would have had to spend more than one hundred thousand if we were to pay for all the construction material and labor donated by the colonists. The fact is that experts in these matters say that no one could put up a building like this for less than eighty contos, that is, for less than two hundred thousand liras."⁵⁰

As we have seen before, when Father Colbacchini had to return to Italy in July 1894, Santa Felicidade and the other colonies were entrusted to the care of Father Francis Bonato, who had his residence for six years in Timbotuva, with jurisdiction also over the community of Rio Verde, Rondinha, and Campina.

We do not know how Father Bonato could carry the burden for a whole year, because Father Francis Brescianini and Faustino, appointed to replace Father Colbacchini, arrived at Santa Felicidade only on July 16, 1895, just on time to save him from a total physical breakdown.

"A strange thing happened to me yesterday! Father F. Bonato, who had gone to say Mass, fainted on the altar at Communion time. It was thought he would die! I had heard his confession only half an hour before, mind you. He was taken to the sacristy, and I continued the Mass for him. He came to, and now he is better."⁵¹ (51)

Work was extenuating especially because of the distance:

"Father Brescianini was two days at Campo Comprido to perform weddings and teach catechism. Last night, he was called from there to a distance of twenty kilometers, where he arrived at midnight to assist an old man who, unable to

⁵⁰ Colbacchini-Scalabrini Curitiba, December 29, 1891(Arch. G.S., 356/9).

⁵¹ Consoni-Colbacchini, Agua Verde, July 20, 1895 (Arch. G.S., 356/26).

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER III

speak Portuguese wanted an Italian priest, and had thus the comfort of going to confession to Father Brescianini. The missionary reached Santa Felicidade this morning at about noon, without being given a chance for some rest all night long.

*Tomorrow, I will say Mass with Homily and appeal for the building of the belfry, well underway, here (...); then back to the Mission of Santa Felicidade for a High Mass in thanksgiving for our arrival; next Sunday, the same at Agua Verde, and then at Colombo, etc."*⁵²

On November 1, 1895, the Bishop of Curitiba enacted another decree which confirmed the essential points of the decree of February 14, 1888:

"The existence is hereby confirmed of a certain form of chaplaincies provisionally established, for Italian Catholics and their children living in the ex-colonial settlements, and now incorporated, which are the following: Santa Felicidade, Campo Comprido, Gabriella, Pilarzinho, Timbotuva, Ferrara, Rondinha, Campina, Rio Verde, Agua Verde, Umbará, Santa Maria, Novo Tyrol, Zacaria, Muricy."⁵³

Thus, the chaplaincy of Colombo, together with the communities of Capivari, Canqueri, and President Faria, were separated and entrusted to the care of Father Francis Bonato. Another innovation was the explicit provision that the Superior of the chaplaincy was given a free hand to assign missionaries to centers other than the central residence.

Father Brescianini complied with the wish of the Bishop by establishing two residences, one at Santa Felicidade, and the other at Agua Verde, where Italians used to go from the city for the reception of the Sacraments; but the two missionaries were practically the life of the community.⁵⁴ The Bishop urged him also to ask Bishop Scalabrini to send three nuns for the instruction of young girls. Father Brescianini soon decided to open a convent and a school by the Church of Santa Felicidade,⁵⁵ but construction could begin only in 1899, and was completed in 1900, with the usual generous cooperation of the people. In November of the same year, the first four Sisters Apostles of the Sacred Heart arrived to open their first house in Brazil.

Another project immediately undertaken by Fathers Brescianini and Consoni was the construction of the churches of Campo Comprido, Umbará, Zacaria, and Santa Maria Novo Tyrol.⁵⁶

On February 24, 1897, Father Faustino Consoni left, assigned by Bishop Scalabrini to succeed the late Father Joseph Marchetti in administering the "Cristoforo Colombo" orphanage in São Paulo. He was replaced by Father Natale Pigato on March 12. Besides the school for girls, to Father Pigato and Father Brescianini are also to be credited for the enlargement of the cemetery, the Italian-style bell tower (the first in those regions), and a tract of the road that links the town to the city of Curitiba. The first laying out of this road had

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Decree, November 1, 1895, signed by D. José de Camargo Barros (Arch. G.S., 390/4).

⁵⁴ Brescianini-Scalabrini, Santa Felicidade, October 23, 1895 (Arch. G.S., 390/14).

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Brescianini-Rolleri, Santa Felicidade, January 10, 1896 (Arch. G.S., 390/4).

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III CHAPTER III

been arranged in 1891 when Father Colbacchini secured from the Provincial government a substantial allocation for the construction of the Church in exchange for his building of the road done free of charge by the colonists under the supervision of the Missionary.⁵⁷ Later on, they opened a Sunday recreation center for girls, and then, another one for boys, where classes were held twice a week, and a kindergarten.

They promoted vocations. Father Brescianini taught the basic elements of Italian and Latin to young boys who wished to become missionaries for emigrants, and he sent them to Piacenza to continue their studies.⁵⁸ In the years between 1891 and 1897 they sent no less than six of them. We know for sure that Father James Garzaro reached the goal. Numerous girls were also directed to the religious life. At first, most of them entered the Congregation of St. Joseph of Chambery at Curitiba (about 18 of them, it seems); then, others joined the Apostles of the Sacred Heart, who had opened their novitiate at Santa Felicidade, and still others, the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles at São Paulo.

Their activity was always very intense throughout the colonies that depended on the chaplaincy of Santa Felicidade, and in others as well that were under the jurisdiction of Brazilian parishes.

In 1897, following the departure of Father Consoni, the community of Agua Verde was somewhat neglected mostly because the diocesan seminary was built in the vicinity, and on days of obligation a Mass was said there for the people of the countryside who were thus able to avail themselves of the members of the faculty that knew Italian for their confessions.⁵⁹

In 1904 the colony passed definitely under the care of the Franciscans.⁶⁰ With the consent of Bishop Scalabrini, the colony of Umbará was that same year entrusted to the diocesan priest Matthew Bonato with the understanding that with the arrival of new missionaries it would be returned to the Scalabrinians.⁶¹ Shortly afterwards, a stone church, dedicated to St. Peter, was completed in place of the wooden chapel built by Father Colbacchini.⁶²

In 1894 a church made of bricks, dedicated to Our Lady of Lourdes, was built at Campo Comprido, and blessed on December 8.⁶³ The community of Zacaria, where a stone church dedicated to Saint Ann had been started by Father Brescianini in 1898⁶⁴ remained under the jurisdiction of Santa Felicidade until 1900.

On May 1, 1901, the foundations were blessed to replace the chapel built by Father Colbacchini.⁶⁵ At that time, Rondinha was under the jurisdiction of

⁵⁷ Colbacchini-Spolverini, Santa Felicidade, May 17, 1891 (Arch. G.S., 356/17).

⁵⁸ Pigato, Santa Felicidade, September 10, 1897; Brescianini, Santa Felicidade, September 10, 1899, Brescianini, São Paulo, April 1901 (Arch. G.S., 390/5).

⁵⁹ Brescianini-Molinari, Santa Felicidade, April 20, 1897 (Arch. G.S., 390/4).

⁶⁰ Brescianini-Consoni, Santa Felicidade, March 30, 1904, (Arch. G.S., 390/5).

⁶¹ Brescianini-Consoni, Santa Felicidade, October 13, 1904, (Arch. G.S., 390/5).

⁶² Brescianini-Consoni, Santa Felicidade, April 18, 1904, (Arch. G.S., 390/5).

⁶³ Brescianini-Consoni, Santa Felicidade, April 18, 1904; December 6, 1904 (Arch. G.S., 390/5).

⁶⁴ Brescianini-Molinari, Santa Felicidade, January 15, 1898, (Arch. G.S., 390/5).

⁶⁵ Brescianini-Roller, May 14, 1901, Santa Felicidade (Arch. G.S., 390/5).

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III CHAPTER III

Timbotuva which was in the care of the Scalabrinians together with the communities of Rio Verde and Campina, where Father Colbacchini had built wooden chapels respectively dedicated to the Annunciation and to St. John the Baptist.

Already in 1895, the parish of Vila Colombo (once Alfredo Chaves), where Father Colbacchini had erected the first wooden chapel in honor of Our Lady of the Rosary, had been assigned to the care of Father Francis Bonato.

As already pointed out, also, the communities of Capivari, Canqueri and Presidente Faria passed to the jurisdiction of Vila Colombo, together with the colony of Antonio Prado that had been in the hands of the Scalabrinians until 1895. By initiative of Father Colbacchini, wooden chapels had been constructed in all four colonies.

Father Francis Bonato remained pastor of Vila Colombo till his death in 1913. Also the distant colony of Santa Maria de Novo Tyrol, dedicated to the Assumption belonged to Santa Felicidade until 1900; Father Colbacchini had a wooden chapel built there, later enlarged by Father Brescianini with a stone sanctuary.⁶⁶ When it was made a parish, the Scalabrinians continued to visit it from time to time to minister to Italians in that region. In 1898, the new church of Pilarzinho, dedicated to Saint Mark, was blessed by Father Brescianini, who must also be credited with the chapel of Saint Francis Xavier at Gabriela or Colonia Nova, and the Church of the "Buon Gesù" at Ferraria. Until 1900, the colony of Daldin was a chapel built by one of the settlers, and until 1908, the chapel of Angelina, closed down later and attached to the parish of Curitiba, were dependent on Santa Felicidade. The missionaries of this mission periodically visited the Italians of Bela Vista, dependent on the parish of Cupim, where they had a church built in honor of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, and those of São Carlos, in the parish of Lapa: here, too, they succeeded in having the colonists construct a church in honor of St. Charles Borromeo.⁶⁷

Father Brescianini left in July 1900 for a period of rest and recuperation in Italy, and was back in November with Father Massimo Rinaldi and the first Apostles of the Sacred Heart. In 1903, Father John Baptist Bergia came to help him and besides acting as assistant to Fr. Brescianini, by order of the Bishop had also the care of the Brazilian parish of Campo Largo. This parish, where only ten Communion a year were at first ministered⁶⁸ was accepted by the Scalabrinians on condition that they be allowed to take care of the Italian communities of Timbotuva, Rio Verde and Rondinha.⁶⁹

In 1905 also Father Alfred Buonaiuti, brother of the notorious modernist Ernest, arrived and was appointed by the Bishop to assist Father Bergia at Campo Largo.⁷⁰ He was then moved to the Tibagi region, and was replaced by

⁶⁶ Brescianini-Scalabrini, Santa Felicidade, July 12, 1897, (Arch. G.S., 390/5).

⁶⁷ G. Martini, "Relazione sulle Colonie Italiane che furono e sono alla cura dei Missionari di S. Carlo ("Report on the Italian Colonies that were and are in the care of the Missionaries of St. Charles"). September 15, 1908 (Arch. G.S., 390/6).

⁶⁸ Brescianini-Consoni, Santa Felicidade, July 27, 1905 (Arch. G.S., 390/5).

⁶⁹ F. Dolci-Vicentini, Santa Felicidade, May 2, 1906 (Arch. G.S., 390/6).

⁷⁰ A. Buonaiuti-Consoni, Santa Felicidade, March 17, 1905 (Arch. G.S., 390/5).

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER III

Father Andrew Garau. With patience and constancy the missionaries improved the religious conditions of Campo Largo so much that on the occasion of the pastoral visitation in March 1905 some five hundred confessions were heard and four hundred Communion received.⁷¹ On April 23, 1906, Father Claudio Morelli was put in charge of the parish, while Father Bergia returned to Italy for reasons of health, and Father Garau devoted himself to the Italian colonies, especially to the community of Timbotuva.⁷² This parish remained in the care of the Scalabrinians until April 1907.⁷³

On April 27, 1906, Fathers Brescianini and Pigato left Santa Felicidade to return to Italy; provisionally Father Francis Dolci replaced them, helped by Father Faustino Consoni,⁷⁴ while waiting for the arrival of the new superior of the mission, Father Joseph Martini.

When he arrived at São Paulo, he met Father Pigato, who had already changed his mind; the short sea voyage from Paranaguá to the Capital of São Paulo had somewhat improved his health, and he decided to call off his return to Italy. Together with Father Martini, he arrived at Santa Felicidade on May 6, 1906.⁷⁵ With the arrival of Father Martini, assignments for the missions in Paraná were for some time arranged this way: Fathers Martini and Pigato at Santa Felicidade with jurisdiction over Italians in Campo Comprido, Ferrara, Pilarzinho, and Gabriela; Fathers Garau and C. Morelli were appointed to the parish of Campo Largo with care of the communities around it; Fathers Mark Simoni and A. Buonaiuti were sent to the Tibagi mission.

Before writing about this last mission, I wish to report a typical example of the visitations the missionaries of Santa Felicidade were, from time to time, conducting through the Italian colonies, even those very far from Curitiba. We have here an account of a visitation made in the form of a Mission to the two parishes of Cupim and Prudentópolis:

"More than once Father Natale Pigato, of the Congregation of the Missionaries of St. Charles was invited by the pastors of the diocese of Curitiba to preach missions in their respective parishes: in fact, one always finds here and there some groups, some families, of Italians.

However, this time we can truly say that there was something special, something extraordinary, to his mission, and this was so in many respects when compared with other missions he preached. Actually, it was not restricted only to Italians, as had happened before; it included also Brazilians, Polish, and Germans residing in those parishes, that as to extension may well equal our Diocese of Piacenza. This is all proven by the fact that it took the missionary almost two months to cover the territory from one end to the other, without being able to complete the visitation. Father Pigato was given by the Bishop of Curitiba the special faculties needed for the various cases one may come across in a mission. And so, happy and contented, he left his residence

⁷¹ G. Bergia-Consoni, Campo Largo, March 16, 1905 (Arch. G.S., 390/5).

⁷² C. Morelli-Consoni, Campo Largo, August 19, 1906 (Arch. G.S., 390/6).

⁷³ G. Martini-Morelli, Santa Felicidade, April 16, 1907 (Arch. G.S., 390/6).

⁷⁴ Dolci-Vicentini, Santa Felicidade, May 2, 1906 (Arch. G.S., 390/6).

⁷⁵ Martini-Novati, Santa Felicidade, May 7, 1906 (Arch. G.S., 390/6).

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III CHAPTER III

in Santa Felicidade in the beginning of last December. He was not all alone, however; as always on other missions, he took along his sacristan, Angelino Slompo, an excellent young man, about 22 years old, of an Italian family from Tyrol. This youth was quite seriously aware of the importance of this holy venture. At the end of a four day journey by rail and on horseback they arrived at the vast field of the mission. But how hard and difficult is a mission in those places! So many and such are the difficulties that come up on all sides at any moment, both spiritual and material, that goodwill alone is not enough. Great courage and excellent health are also needed. Only one who experienced them is in a position to know how hard it is, and what a life of sacrifice one must go through to succeed even just in part. But the two companions did not hesitate in the face of all these serious difficulties; rather, they were, more determined than ever. They got hold of an experienced guide, familiar with those regions, and with trust in God's help and in the protection of St. Charles, they ventured into woods and forests, thus reaching places where none of our missionaries, apart from the well deserving Jesuits, had ever set foot! But what an experience for one living in our Italian colonies to pass through those remote and, I would say, almost forgotten and uninhabited regions. In the deep forests conditions and customs are quite different. What a misery! No road but only narrow and dark trails, often blocked by branches and trees knocked down by the wind, which the traveler has to cut them to pieces if he wished to pass through and go ahead over distances of up to fifty or more kilometers from one settlement to the next, without seeing a house or meeting anyone on the way.

One must go up and down those steep and rugged mountain ranges that do not often allow riding on horseback and force the traveler to climb from hill to hill on foot, and then suddenly find himself climbing down into the bottom of valleys flowing with swift and deep rivers, such as the Rio dos Patos, the Agua Quente, the Rio Preto, and others, which he has to cross aboard a hollow piece of wood. But there is more to it! At the end of a day-long march, maybe without food, and without finding any good water to drink, the poor missionary, tired and exhausted reaches, almost in the dead of night, some house of Polish or Brazilian peasants who will be able to offer the exhausted guest a few black beans to eat, and an ox skin on which to spend the rest of the night. What destitution! Poor people, in what privations they live! Except for a few cases, there in the midst of the woods, life is quite miserable! Too often their children, up to eight or ten years old, are seen roaming around like animals naked, weak and emaciated, uneducated, with no respect for anyone. Together with his sacristan Father Natale became an eye witness to all these things so much so that writing one day to his superior Father Francis Brescianini he had this to say:

'We are here in the midst of these woods, or I should rather say, wild jungle, where in my opinion, it seems that neither civilization nor morals have yet to enter. Here people live like animals, in all respects. We are here four days, now guests of a Polish family, and sickly because of the steady rain we travelled under without even drying our clothes, and without food. We are in great difficulty and we do not know what to do. We are in such straits this time, like dogs caught between doors, one would say, and we do not see a way out. To go back does not seem possible, because the trodden trail is long and difficult;

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III

CHAPTER III

to go ahead scares us because our strength does not yet allow it; in the meantime, there is nothing else we can do but pray and cry! Indeed, we have never suffered so much in our lives, neither did we have a more trying and sad experience. Father Superior, pray for us, and have others do the same, that we may soon take to the road again. Let us hope to see each other again. In the meantime, so-long and greetings to the family of Angelino.'

Anyway, on the following day they start out, and for three more days they suffer the same privations! At last, they arrive at more densely populated settlements, and there they regain strength by eating good food; but as to faith, religion, and morals, they find those people in the most miserable conditions.

Here the missionary pitches camp, as it were, making use of some old and ruined chapel, relics still standing left by the Jesuits, or of a room in the house of a farm rancher; there he stays one or more days in accord with the people's attendance. I do not say in response to the need, because this is great; so great, in fact, that it would take the missionary more than one month in each community to raise those people up from the moral misery they have fallen in.

Suddenly the news of the missionary's arrival quickly spreads all around the community. But how many of them will come, how many will take the opportunity to fulfill their Christian duties? Except for a few Catholic families still able to be faithful to the best of their ability to their ancient traditions, the rest, the greater part, couldn't care less, and any excuse is good for them to remain at home. As they claim, their excuses are the long distances, the rain, the rough trails in disrepair; anything, everything prevents them from taking part in the sacred rites. But, these are the pretexts only for the many, while others come and quite willingly attend the rites from morning till night.

The most zealous, however, are always the Polish and Germans, while the Italians are the most negligent, whenever they happen to live in the midst of other nationalities apart from the Italian communities. Oh! Far from the Church and deprived of the assistance of the Catholic priest, the Italians soon get lost; in a few years they cease showing the contented face of happy fellows at peace with others and they look like people, who have committed a serious crime, and they shun away even from their own countrymen.

Now some of them are Protestant, others Masons, still others believe in spiritism and all have their minds imbued with the most incredible superstitions. It is enough to say that many live in a state of illicit unions; neither do they care for the Sacrament of Matrimony. Others do not baptize their children, or give them an education in moral and social living; they let them grow like animals. There is no lack of those who have no use for Confession and Communion; and so, very few take advantage of the mission to fulfill their duties as good Christians. To prove it, we have here the statistics of what Father Natale was able to accomplish in the two months of his mission.

Travelling back and forth together with his sacristan through those parishes, and suffering day and night all kinds of discomfort with serious risks for their own health, he could bless only ten weddings, baptize 92 babies, and administer confession and Communion to only 335 people.

Besides, he made plans to have four chapels built, set aside pieces of land for

three new cemeteries, and blessed their crosses.

Santa Felicidade, March 1904."⁷⁶

3. Rondinha and Campo Comprido

We round up the history of Santa Felicidade with a brief report on the beginnings of the other two Scalabrinian parishes born of the initial chaplaincy for Italians. We have spoken already of the parish of Umbará.

The parish of St. Sebastian in Rondinha was canonically erected only on April 2, 1937. Before then, it used to be a mission with a resident priest, dependent on Agua Verde at first, and on Santa Felicidade since 1895. It was known as Mendes de Sé, after the family that had donated the land for the Church. In 1888, Father Colbacchini had a wooden church built there, and entrusted it to the care of Father Francis Bonato who had his usual residence at Timbotuva. For many years, in fact, Timbotuva and Antonio Roboucas were the main centers in the religious life of that region. Antonio Roboucas, founded in 1876 with the arrival of 36 Venetian families, was the first among all the Italian colonies in Paraná to build a church in 1878. It was visited several times by Father Cibeo, then with greater regularity from 1886 by Father Colbacchini. Upon the arrival of Father Francis Bonato, who was to be its resident priest from 1888 to 1895, Father Colbacchini blessed a statue of Our Lady of Mount Carmel donated by the state government of Paraná (July 16, 1888). Antonio Roboucas began to decline in 1895 when Father Bonato, "who had met with little success in spiritual as well as temporal matters"⁷⁷ moved to Colombo. The priests of Santa Felicidade who succeeded him paid greater attention to Rondinha which had a larger population and was more centrally located.

In 1898 Father Brescianini launched an appeal for the construction of a new Church in Rondinha; work, however, began only in 1903 by the initiative of Father John Baptist Bergia, resident priest from 1903 to 1905; while its actual spiritual organization was due to Father Andrew Garau, resident priest from 1906 to 1910. As we gather from a report of Father Joseph Martini, the church was completed in 1906, and solemnly blessed in October.

"Rondinha is an Italian colony with some hundred Venetian families that began to settle in that region of Paraná about 25 years ago.

Exiles because of need, and lost in the midst of those forests, the only effective comfort in their misery was the strong faith brought along from their country. They sought to keep it alive as their precious treasure by building a modest chapel made of wood, where they used to gather together to pray. There they flocked in haste when Father Colbacchini, first, and then the other missionaries, went from time to time to administer the sacraments and preach the Word of God.

When the community grew larger, it felt the need for a larger church, and a more

⁷⁶ "Relazione. Una visita in forma di Missione nelle due parrocchie di Cupim e Prudentópolis" ("Report. A Visitation in the form of a Mission to the two parishes of Cupim and Prudentópolis"), Periodico della Congregazione dei Missionari di San Carlo, Second year, No. 5, May 1904, pp. 36-38.

⁷⁷ Bonato-Molinari, Timbotuva, November 5, 1894 (Arch. G.S., 356 24).

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III CHAPTER III

frequent presence of a priest among them. And the Lord provided that a missionary should devote himself completely to the care of that colony and of the smaller communities around it. Their goodwill had a new church built there of stone and brick which stands as a witness and a monument to their faith. But their goodwill would not have been enough without the effective and enlightened guidance of the missionary, who, leaving family and country, devoted himself to the religious assistance of his fellow countrymen. Father Brescianini, though responsible for the care of ten other colonies, did not neglect Rondinha, where he began work on the new Church and also on a residence for the missionary. Afterwards, Father Bergia fixed his residence there, and during his short stay continued the work. When he was transferred to Campo Comprido, Father Garau replaced him.

This missionary gave himself body and soul to have the undertaking completed; within seven months of tireless work, he saw it reach the point when he could open it for public worship. On Sunday night, October 7, Solemnity of the Holy Rosary, Rondinha was proud and jubilant for the solemn blessing of the church, dedicated to St. Sebastian. Canon Celso Itiberé da Cunha, Pastor of the Cathedral of Curitiba, and Vicar General of the Diocese performed the rite and sang the Solemn Mass, the undersigned assisted as deacon and preached the sermon, while Father Garau served as subdeacon. Beginning with the preceding night, there were fireworks and campfires at different hours during the day, while the music band of Campo Largo made its harmonious notes echo over the hills, and announced far and wide the joy of Rondinhians in the midst of their auction sale (what beautiful items!), the raffle, and bingo games. And so they saw their efforts and sacrifices reach the goal and crowned with joyful success. In all truth, one can say that this community, though so poor, has outdone itself. In fact, in the short span of five years it built a church which inspires the admiration of all those who see it. The building is valued at sixty contos (one hundred thousand liras = today's 62 million liras), with only five still to be paid."⁷⁸

At that time the communities of A. Reboucas, Mariana, Ferrara, Timbotuva, Rio Verde, Acima, Rodeio, Campina, San João do Capão (Miqueletes), Figueiredo, São Benedito do Salgadinho, São Antonio, Butiatuva depended on the mission of Rondinha.⁷⁹

The founding of the parish of Campo Comprido shows a recent date: April 1962. Its origin, however, goes back to one of those groups of Italian families that had moved from Morretes to the highlands of Curitiba shortly before 1880. In 1887, through Father Colbacchini's initiative, the Oliveto family donated the land for the construction of the church, and two years later a wooden chapel was built in honor of the Purification of the Blessed Mother. The colony counted then about thirty families. In 1896, Fathers Brescianini and Consoni obtained permission from the Bishop to build a stone church dedicated to Our Lady of Lourdes, which was completed only in 1914, when on December 3rd it was solemnly blessed by Father Brescianini himself.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Martini-Vicentini, Santa Felicidade, October 10, 1906 (ArcF. G.S., 387/1).

⁷⁹ A Arquidocese de Curitiba na sua historia ("History of the Archdiocese of Curitiba"). (Curitiba 1956) pp. 137-142.

⁸⁰ Brescianini-Scalabrini, Santa Felicidade, December 10, 1904 (Arch. G.S., 374/1).

4. The Mission of the Tibagi

When Bishop Scalabrini visited Santa Felicidade in August of 1904, Father Marco Simoni, Vice Rector of the Orphanage "Christoforo Colombo" in São Paulo, who was accompanying him, wrote to Father Faustino Consoni:

"His Excellency found out here that many Indians living in the region between Curitiba and Santa Catarina are not instructed in the faith. Moved to compassion for these unfortunate people lying in darkness and death, he thought of opening there a mission, gathered detailed information, and then wrote to the Holy Father on the matter. And so, if all goes according to plans, within two months the Mission will be opened. I was chosen to be the first to go there amongst those "Indios".⁸¹

In Father Simoni's words, we know that the well-known writer, Anthony Fogazzaro gave an idealized account of an interview he had with Bishop Scalabrini. It is worthwhile reading:

"Once, while preaching in the church of one of those parishes, sixty thousand square kilometers in size, he saw emerging from amongst the heads of his listeners the feathery headpiece of an Indian. The rite over, he had him called in, and there followed a short dialogue:

The Bishop: *Is your tribe close by, or far from here?*

The Indian: *Close by.*

The Bishop: *How close?*

The Indian: *Only twenty hours on horseback.*

The Bishop: *Go back to your chief, and tell him that the Italian Bishop would be glad to see him, and is waiting for him.*

The "Indio" hops up on his horse and leaves. Two days later he is back out of the woods.

The Bishop: *What? Isn't your chief coming?*

The Indian: *The chief says he would gladly see the Italian Bishop, and is waiting for him in the forest.*

The Bishop: *All right then, we shall go into the woods.*

All drew near, beseeching him not to trust the invitation, not to go. The Bishop, disregarding those who tried to scare him out of it, trustingly mounted his horse together with a small retinue, of which a Venetian missionary was a member. At the end of a twenty hour ride, they arrived at the forest; at that point they are quickly greeted by herds of monkeys with a barrage of rocks. *'This must be the place'* - the travelers think to themselves - and Bishop Scalabrini puts on his pontifical vestments. *"I was all red"* - he said. They began to move ahead, and lo, from the thick of the forest, a beautiful sight! Preceded by their chief, stately attired, an array of three or four hundred Indian horsemen were coming forward. Feathers, necklaces, skins of wild animals; nothing was missing. All get off their horses, the Chief presents himself respectfully and with dignity, and utters a short welcome address in Guarani. He recalls the missions of two hundred years before, rebukes the Church for having forgotten them, and gives thanks to the visitors. To the

⁸¹ Simoni-Consoni, Santa Felicidade, August 26, 1904 (Arch. G.S., 390/4).

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III CHAPTER III

great astonishment of Chief and Indians, their guest responds in Guarani. He brings greetings from the Great Priest of Rome, apologizes (*as well as I could - he says - because those poor people were right*) for the involuntary neglect on the part of the Church, promises to make their plight known in Italy, he will tell about them to the Great Priest. Following the speeches, they all fraternized, people with beards and people with feathers. The Indians take a great liking to the Venetian Missionary, they crowd around him, they wish he could remain with them. The Missionary is moved to compassion and is on the point to say yes.

But the Bishop cuts in: "*What can you do here, my dear son? You do not know a word of Guarani! I will have him study Guarani - he tells the Indians - "Watch out, however, that you do not eat this priest of mine."* And, the Chief began to laugh.

"*Oh, I told all this to the Holy Father!*" exclaimed the generous Bishop interrupting his narrative. "*What are so many thousand monks doing in Italy? Reciting rosaries all day long? Why are not some of them sent to evangelize those poor Indians who are crying out for nothing else? Pius IX and Leo XII have insisted that something be done about it, but not one responded.*"⁸²

When this article of the novelist from Vicenza was reprinted in the biography of Bishop Scalabrini written by Mons. Francesco Gregori, Father Simoni, then in his seventies, wanted to revise the episode within its proper context:

"Following a triumphal welcome into Curitiba we were honored guests at a banquet. We were seated at table with President Machado⁸³, with the highest civil and military authorities, and with the clergy of the state. When the conversation fell on the miserable conditions of the Indians, President Machado was lamenting that none of the clergy was taking care of these poor savages. Our beloved and holy Founder, Bishop Scalabrini, always generous in his holy and enlightened charity, said: "*If I had a missionary willing to go, I would send him right away.*" Sitting next to him, I turned and he quickly said: "*Do you feel like going?*" "Yes!" - I said. Then, right then and there, he exclaimed: "*Mr. President, it is done. I shall give instructions, and send a missionary right away.*" All during our stay at Santa Felicidade, Bishop Scalabrini and I kept speaking about this mission. When the visitation to this colony was over, we bought our tickets for Rio de Janeiro. Then, at the insistence of Father Top, on our way from Paranaguá, we landed at Florianopolis. This Father Top had a Botocudo Indian (ugly as a storm) living with him in the house who was fifteen years of age, whom he had raised since childhood. Bishop Scalabrini spoke for a long time with this Indian (in Portuguese, of course), and their conversation responds more or less to the one reported in his biography, that was the only Indian he talked to.

Bishop Scalabrini preached in Portuguese and Latin in seminaries and elsewhere at São Paulo and Curitiba to the amazement of all; but in Guarani, never. When he returned to Italy he granted an interview to Fogazzaro, the representative of my constituency of Vicenza, who reported it thus

⁸² Fogazzaro, "Una Visita a Mons. Scalabrini" ("An Visit to Bishop Scalabrini"), La Rassegna Nazionale, July 1, 1905, pp. 7-8.

⁸³ Dr. Vicente Machado da Silva Lima, President of Paraná.

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER III**

embellished."⁸⁴

Bishop Scalabrini's personal butler, who had also accompanied him on the journey to Brazil, was recalling it this way at the process of beatification:

"I can mention the visit the Servant of God paid a tribe of half civilized Indians. He limited himself to the first villages even though his wish was to venture deeper: a desire he could not see come true because he was advised against it, due to dangers for his life. This explains why the Servant of God recommended these savages not to eat his missionary.

I remember that on this occasion he was given by the Chief of the tribe two metal cruets for the mass, which had belonged to the Jesuit missionary expelled from those regions by the Portuguese government; the Servant of God presented them to the Holy Father, Pius X. The visit of Bishop Scalabrini was much appreciated by the tribe, and the Chief begged him to ask the Great Priest to send a missionary."⁸⁵

As reported by an article in the "Caffaro" of Genoa, upon his return from Brazil, Bishop Scalabrini himself spoke about several incidents at the testimonial dinner in his honor offered by the "Cristoforo Colombo" Association:

"Interesting the incident of the visit in neutral territory to an Indian Chief, who presented him two very ancient cruets that had once belonged to the first Catholic Missionaries ever to visit those places."⁸⁶

The fact is that on September 2, 1904, the day he left Curitiba, Bishop Scalabrini thus wrote to Bishop Duarte Leopoldo e Silva:

"I would willingly undertake the evangelization of Indians in this state, thus carrying out the desire expressed to me by the Holy See, should Your Excellency be pleased to allow our missionaries to the Tibagi, a region for quite some time without a resident priest. They would have the care of the parish and of the Italian communities in those remote regions, while trying to find ways to contact the Indians themselves. Then, at a later date, Missionaries could be sent there as needed."⁸⁷

When Father Marco Simoni returned from Rio Grande do Sul where he had been to accompany Bishop Scalabrini, he immediately called on the Bishop of Curitiba to discuss the matter as previously agreed. Bishop Duarte readily put him in charge of the parish of Tibagi, and the missionary departed alone on the October 24, 1904⁸⁸; Father Alfred Bonaiuti arrived to help him on June 27, 1905.⁸⁹

To have an idea of the size of the parish of Tibagi, we must keep in mind an area of 28,776 square kilometers, considerably larger than Sicily, without

⁸⁴ Simoni-Pedrazzani, March 5, 1938 (Arch. G.S., 408).

⁸⁵ Sommario del Processo di Beatificazione del Servo di Dio G.B. Scalabrini ("Summary of the Beatification Process of the Servant of God John Baptist Scalabrini") (Rome 1943) pp. 27-28.

⁸⁶ "L'arrivo ("Return of") di Mons. Scalabrini. Il ricevimento all'Associazione C. Colombo"("Reception at"). Il Caffaro (Genoa), December 6-7, 1904.

⁸⁷ Scalabrini-Duarte, Curitiba, September 2, 1904 (Arch. G.S., 408).

⁸⁸ Simoni-Consoni, Santa Felicidade, October 21, 1904 (Arch. G.S., 390/5).

⁸⁹ Brescianini-Consoni, Santa Felicidade, June 20, 1905 (Arch. G.S., 390/5). Buonaiuti-Consoni, Tibagi, June 28, 1905 (Arch. G.S., 408).

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER III

means of communication, rich with virgin forests and waterways, of which only one tenth inhabited. It made up a great portion of Northern Paraná, and precisely, all the region delimited at the North by the river Paranapanema; on the West by the rivers Paraná and Ivai as far as Teresa Cristina; to the South by a line from Teresa Cristina to Castro; to the East by the Rio do Peixe and Rio das Cinzas. It had been made a parish in 1847, having common boundaries with the parishes of Facarezinho, Guarapuava, Castro, and Ponta Grossa. This territory is now inhabited by some four or five million people who settled there mostly only after World War II. In 1905 people lived only in its southern lands, with their main center Tibagi, 150 kilometers on a straight line from Curitiba, and sparsely along the river Tibagi. There were thought to be twenty thousand whites, and three thousand Indians, belonging to the Guaraní, Caina, Botocudo, and Coroado tribes.

But now we listen to the first report sent in by Father Marco Simoni:

"Tibagi is a very small town, about the size of Villa Prudente, very old, but beautifully located on the left bank of the river of the same name; the river flows rapidly, there is no bridge to cross it; only an old raft with which we drifted swiftly and almost aimlessly downstream. The air is healthy, the water is pure, and the people spread all over the parish territory, are good, as well. It is given as a sure fact that twenty thousand people live here, not counting innumerable Indians, some still savages, and some others civilized. The area of the parish is larger than the whole Veneto. From Paranaguá it takes six or seven days to cross it, that is, three by rail to Castro, and the rest on horseback!"⁹⁰

On November 8, he started out on his visit to the Indians, as he himself wrote, "with no money, no travelling bag, no change of shirt," (Matthew 10, 10) and at the end with neither sandals left. He pushed on forward as far as Jatahy, today's Jataizinho, in the vicinity of São Paulo, about twenty kilometers from Londrina and thirty from São Paulo's State boundaries; all together, a good two hundred and thirty kilometers from Tibagi. It took him a six day ride on a good horse.

"From November 8th to September 17, I took a trip in search of them in the forest and I came back home looking like a beggar! Was I glad to see my trunks! In these places one does not find tailors or anybody selling ready-made clothes; that's how much trade there is here!

In regard to religion, I have found an unbelievable misery in all aspects! Eighteen years old to be baptized. Marriages...! Let anyone figure it out for himself! I blessed marriages of grandparents! Confession and Communion sound like novelty to some people of this parish. Twenty or more thousand souls live in its territory: there are eleven chapels, and I preached the Holy Missions at all of them in Portuguese. When I concluded the Mission journey at Jatahy, on December 8, I drew up the statistics: 328 Communions, some 500 Confessions, 332 Baptisms, and 30 Marriages. I entered the forest to find out where and how the Indians were living. To my estimation, I found about two thousands of them, scattered all over in small communities, but all peace loving, decently dressed, and some of them speaking a little Portuguese. I spoke to six tribal chiefs. All

⁹⁰ Simoni-Consoni, Tibagi, October 30, 1904 (Arch. G.S., 408).

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER III

welcomed me graciously and showed sure determination to better their miserable conditions. I invited those close by to assist at a field Mass, and then I distributed cake and a little brandy. They were all happy and contented. These Indians live in a territory closed in by the rivers Ivahy, Paraná, Paranapanema, and the Tibagi region has common boundaries with the states of Mato Grosso and São Paulo. There are many Indian villages, some of them not so far; I wanted to visit at least one, but there was no Indian willing to go with me.

Now I am trying to build a house, hoping to receive some help from Your Excellency, our beloved Superior. Please, send some help!

To start catechism classes, I intend, if possible, to build a house in their midst; to give way to a large plantation and so have them busy in a steady occupation without depriving them, of course, from their occasional amusements; to call in nuns to teach their children. As to adults, one has better to be tolerant of their habits and their customs. To me, it would be a waste of time to try to have them changed. Is this project of mine worthwhile?

Years ago, there lived in Jatahy, by São Paulo, a Capuchin monk who had done all possible for these Indians, but when he was about to gather some results he died, and was not replaced. Any well begun undertaking should be continued if its fruits are to be gathered in the children of this old generation."⁹¹

By January 1905, Father Simoni made a second visitation to the Indians which lasted twenty eight days:

"I have been three days with a community of a hundred Indians, all peaceful and docile, saying Mass every day with all of them present.

In all that time, I spoke to them of God (TOPE), of the future life, and of the sacrament of Baptism, absolutely necessary for salvation.

I could speak also a few words in their language. It seems as though they understood, because after the Mass on the second day all wanted to be baptized. I took advantage of their good disposition and of the grace of God and baptized fifty one of them; I heard confessions, and performed three weddings of the best prepared. This time I slept inside their houses; as a sign of distinction, in one corner of the house open to the four winds, they had a bed ready for me on the ground, made of pieces of wood tied to each other. On it I lay all night without closing my eyes for one moment, without blankets, only my coat! For three days I ate their food, took part in their amusements, such as singing and dancing, and because I was enjoying being with them, they did not know what to do for me. So happy were they! When I was about to leave, they did not want to let me go away crying out to me: "Fique, Pandero, fique". (Stay with us, Father, stay).

They continuously complain about the Brazilians, whom they call 'Portuguese', for occupying their land, mistreating and killing them, for taking away their children without ever giving them back. Unfortunately true, these things are very sad, Your Excellency; Brazilians would rather see them all dead and it is likely to hear someone even among the clergy say that those people must be evangelized at the sound of rifles.

⁹¹ Simoni-Consoni, Tibagi, December 11, 1904 (Arch. G.S., 408).

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER III

I have here ready a petition to the government for six million milreis, that is six "contos" (six thousand liras of the time) each year to meet expenses. I asked also for a large piece of land on which to teach Indians how to till the fields. I intended to have the Bishop of this diocese present it, but I could not get hold of him because he was making the pastoral visitation. So, I sent for him by mail, and now I shall write to him explaining everything. According to Father Francis, it seems as though feelings here are not favorable to any foreign priests, and His Excellency wants all of them to speak Portuguese.⁹² As to the mission for the Indians, His Excellency is well disposed, but many in Curitiba told me that the Bishop wants to give a character and a line all his own. So far, I did not move a finger without consulting him in writing, but he never said a word about his intentions. Should this be true, and the Bishop let me know something about it, I shall immediately inform Your Excellency. For as long as the Bishop does not make his plans known, I will not buy, nor build a house. My impression is that there is little interest, and also little seriousness. However, he has treated me very well, so far, always writing letters of encouragement in this undertaking. I am sending you a copy of the petition presented to the Honorable Congress of this State.⁹³

I have extreme need of a priest to be my cooperater. I am so far from anywhere that it takes me four days on horseback to go to confession. It is now four months since I went last. I have written to Father, but I haven't heard from him. On my visit to the Indians, I stopped also at several Brazilian communities, heard 240 confessions, gave more than a hundred First Communions, performed 40 weddings and 279 Baptisms. Once I said Mass at the house of a certain Cirino Mendes; when his children heard us speaking about the Mass, they asked whether it were something good to eat."⁹⁴

This is how Bishop Scalabrini answered his letter:

"I have spoken on their behalf to the Holy Father. Moved to compassion, he immediately ordered the Cardinal Secretary of State to express to the Capuchins of Rio Grande and to the Minors of Santa Catarina his desire, indeed his will, that they undertake the conversion of the Indians. It was so decided: Rio Grande to the Capuchins, Santa Catarina to the Minors, Paraná to the Missionaries of St. Charles, São Paulo to the Capuchins. The Augustinians also will be invited; rather, they have been invited already, to open a mission; and so a true crusade shall be undertaken to lead to Christ many souls too long neglected. Father Bruno of Gillonay⁹⁵ wrote me saying that the most rewarding fruit of my peregrinations will be the conversion of the Indians. May the Lord

⁹² Bishop Duarte Leopoldo y Silva had already objected to the nuns of Santa Felicidade teaching Italian, thus provoking the complaints of the missionaries, and also of the Italian Consul of Curitiba. They appealed to the provisions of the Government that did not intend to impose the Portuguese language on immigrants. The missionaries also had recourse to Bishop Scalabrini. He answered them that the "Holy See would not allow Italians to be taught in Portuguese." (Cfr. Brescianini, Santa Felicidade, April 27, 1905. (Arch. G.S, 390/5).

⁹³ In this petition to the Congress of the State of Paraná, we read, among other things, the following: "Except for a few better educated, they do not till the land; rather, they live hunting, fishing, gathering fruits and tree roots, so abundant in those fertile lands. Often they steal from the neighboring communities with the excuse that they hold their lands and treat them always unjustly, cast them away, and occasionally even till them. This way, save few exceptions, there continues to be a strong hostility between Brazilians and Indios. The scope of this mission would be: 1st, to open an agricultural school exclusively for "Indios" with the aim of setting them on the pursuit of all kinds of farm works and trades; 2nd, to open another school for boys and girls where to teach them reading and writing, and to instill in them love for this land, their native country. (Arch. G.S., 408).

⁹⁴ Simoni-Scalabrini, Santa Felicidade, February 26, 1905 (Ar6h. G.S., 408).

⁹⁵ Bruno da Gillonay, Provincial Superior of the Capuchins of Rio Grande do Sul.

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER III

make my dream come true! To Him all honor and glory.

I would like you to tell the Bishop, to whom you shall present my respects, that in case the Holy See should entrust our Congregation with the evangelization of Indians in Paraná, it will be necessary to direct our attention also to the region of Guarapuava. Besides, let him know that as soon as he will see it fit to provide a residence for our missionaries in that region, I shall send good missionaries for this scope."⁹⁶

The government of Paraná gave a favorable response to Fr. Simoni, promising to allocate in 1906 a fund for the missions amongst Indians. On his part, the missionary took care to buy ten hectares (25 acres) of wooded land to plant with grains and fruit trees, and signed a contract with a water sawmill to have boards for the construction of houses for the Indians, the missionaries, and the sisters he intended to have for the schools.⁹⁷

In the last months of 1905, weakened by the excessive work and tormented by herpes, Father Simoni had to undergo treatment at Pocas de Caldas (Minas Gerais), and took the opportunity for a missionary journey through the state of São Paulo, which brought in one "conto" for the Indians.⁹⁸ In the meantime, Father Buonaiuti took care of the mission all alone. He restored and beautified the church of Tibagi, began building a chapel at Bairro do Felisberto, and founded the confraternity of the Sacred Heart at Caité (today's Curiuva, we believe), Lageado Lino, and Filisberto.⁹⁹

In the midst of difficulties of all kinds, especially the lack of personnel and funds, the two missionaries carried on their mission, dividing their time between the more civilized ("cablocas"), such as, for example, those living at Imbaú, Campina dos Pupos, Reserva, São Jerônimo da Serra, and the less civilized population.

"In the month of June also I visited a large settlement of Indians, 25 miles from our residence (about 40 kilometers). Except for a rainy day, the trip was excellent. On our way out, at about six kilometers before reaching the village, while travelling along and talking with my guide, suddenly there was a little dog, all happy, running three meters ahead of us. Close by a brook we noticed that he had spotted a prey, and urging him on we went quickly over to watch the catch. With all his might he dragged almost to our feet an enormous "urutu", one of the most poisonous snakes of Brazil, causing almost instantaneous death with its bite. At such present, we jumped back to safety like lightening. In the twinkling of an eye it was stoned to death; it was two meters long; we were scared for the rest of the day. At the end of a six hour ride, two on horseback

⁹⁶ Scalabrini-Simoni, Piacenza, March 31, 1901 (Arch. G.S., 408).

⁹⁷ Simoni-Consoni, Tibagi, July 4, 1905 (Arch. G.S., 408). The Bishop of Curitiba had some reservations: "His Excellency wrote to me saying he cannot forward my petition because he has another one of his own pending with the same government, and advises me - rather, he tells me -, to wait another year, as he intends to do it all on his own. Besides, he reprimands me quite harshly because in explaining to the government the reasons for my petition I wrote that the report on the miserable conditions of these unfortunate Indians had moved the heart of an Italian prelate, Bishop John Baptist Scalabrini, who had thus decided to open a mission on their behalf to evangelize them and teach them farming. This statement displeased the Bishop very much. I do not know why or how things can be interpreted. Oh, well, the Good Lord will provide!" (Simoni to Consoni, São Jerônimo de Tibagi, April 1, 1905). (Arch. G.S., 408).

⁹⁸ Simoni-Consoni, Pocos de Caldas, October 8, 1905: - to Vicentini, Sao Paulo, December 13, 1905 (Arch. G.S., 408).

⁹⁹ Buonaiuti-Simoni, Curitiba, January 11, 1906 (Arch. G.S., 408).

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III

CHAPTER III

and four on foot, we arrived at the settlement. On a beautiful plateau, high on the mountains, by a stream, there live some 300 "Indios", with their huts well lined along the banks of the river, fashioned into various shapes according to the tastes of the builders, with roofs made of straw or of palm branches, some with walls of logs standing next to each other, and others without. I was a guest in a hut with walls. As soon as I arrived, all came to see the "Pandero" (Father) asking for things and clothing. I tried to satisfy all, some with toys, and others with kind words. I remained with them two days, and said Mass, to their sincere appreciation. I spoke of God, redemption, and baptism: at the end of the Mass 34 wanted to be baptized. I also baptized an old woman, whose age nobody seems to know; maybe over one hundred! She lived to see the sixth generation! When it was time for me to leave, they took my luggage upon their shoulders and accompanied me for almost four hours, placing with me orders, some for shoes or boots, and others for umbrellas, knives, etc. Women were asking for earrings, brooms, needles, thread and sewing material."¹⁰⁰

Father Simoni took another missionary excursion up the Ivai River in August 1906, covering 700 kilometers in 23 days, visiting more than 300 "Indios", and baptizing quite a few of them:

"The 'Indios' I visited are all peace-loving and well disposed; however, they have very little desire for work, the poor fellows, and they are in need of everything. They want me to bring them whatever they see, but if I cannot do so, and I give them something else, instead, they remain satisfied just the same. They have no ambition and no plan for the future. When in need they are contented with anything; when not in need, they do not work; they do not know how to appreciate what is good for them; at their great sacrifice they may buy a needed utensil today, to give it up tomorrow for very little."¹⁰¹

In October the Bishop conducted the pastoral visitation of the Tibagi:

"His arrival was greeted with a beautiful welcome; the music band, civil authorities, members of the Apostleship of Prayer, pupils of the parochial school, all the boys and girls of Christian Doctrine, together with all the people that had gathered here for the occasion. It seems as though he was satisfied with our work, and he treated us kindly. He remained with us four whole days, administering 449 Confirmations. We heard more than 400 confessions and gave as many Communions. He found all things in good order and left satisfied. I would like to hope that certain hostilities may have ended and so be able to work with courage in the vineyard of the Lord. His Excellency is doing work, such as no missionary could."¹⁰²

By the end of 1905 Fr. Simoni informed the Provincial Superior that he was building a house, 5 by 10 m., for the missionaries, and asked information about the "Indios" he had sent to the orphanage "Cristoforo Colombo" of São Paulo for an education. He had baptized them giving to one the name of John Scalabrini, and Dominic Vicentini, to the other.¹⁰³

When Fr. Simoni, who by now was urgently in need of rest and treatment to

¹⁰⁰ Simoni-Vicentini, Santa Felicidade, July 1, 1906 (Arch. G.S., 408).

¹⁰¹ Simoni-Vicentini, Tibagi, September 30, 1906 (Arch. G.S., 408). In his answer, Father Vicentini advised the Missionary not to be too hasty in administering Baptism.

¹⁰² Simoni-Consoni, Tibagi, October 27, 1906 (Arch. G.S., 408).

¹⁰³ Simoni, Tibagi, November 25, 1906 (Arch. G.S., 408).

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER III

regain his health, asked for a missionary to replace him, Fr. Vicentini, the Superior General, answered:

"It is not possible, for the time being, to replace you in the care of the "Indios"; that is a fire which will be hardly possible to keep burning. We need means and personnel we do not have. We have great difficulties to hold on to the missions for Italian migrants, the first and essential scope of our Institute."¹⁰⁴

Moved, however, by the repeated requests of Fr. Simoni, Father Vicentini sent Father Carlo Pedrazzani to his help.¹⁰⁵ In the meantime, from April to June, two missionaries of Saint Vincent de Paul, Fathers Anthony Falci and Manuel Gonçalves, preached several missions. Statistics show 1,358 Confirmations, 43 Marriages, 120 Baptisms, 1,200 Confessions, and 1,160 Communions.¹⁰⁶ On June 13, 1907, Father Marco was able, at last, to leave for Italy, and was replaced by Father Claudio Morelli. But, a short while afterwards, Fr. Buonaiuti had to flee from Tibagi because a friend of his had been murdered, and he was afraid he might be next.¹⁰⁷ On September 3, Fr. Carlo Pedrazzani arrived to take his place.¹⁰⁸ He cared little for the Indians, and had little use for the rest; he complained that only three percent of the people received the sacraments while they did not attend religious instructions and with the greatest indifference they married only in court.¹⁰⁹

Father Martini himself thus reported to the Superior General:

"From what I gather from the missionaries, that parish can be said to be good only for those four or five contos it can yield with hard work. I do not wish to deny that some good for souls is being accomplished by our missionaries, but those Brazilians are negative to the substance of religion while they content themselves with its appearances; besides, they do not favorably view the presence of foreign priests. Furthermore, a missionary needs to know their language and should be endowed with stronger stamina to endure life in their midst. And, it seems to me that we do not have either the personnel with this vocation, or the means to run that mission.

In my opinion, it would be better if we left both the mission among the Indians and the 'good' parish of Tibagi, to devote ourselves to the care of so many Italians who yearn for priests who speak their language. As I have already pointed out to you, we may be called to this or that place, but we cannot satisfy everyone.

I am of the opinion that only the Bishop, who sees things differently than Dom Duarte (who wanted to integrate all foreigners overnight), could arrange things to the satisfaction of all the greater good of souls."¹¹⁰

Right then the Bishop Dom F. Braga seemed willing to give the colonies of Agua Verde and Umbará back to the Scalabrinians.¹¹¹ Father Vicentini wrote saying

¹⁰⁴ Simoni-Consoni, Tibagi, October 12, 1906 (Arch. G.S., 408).

¹⁰⁵ Simoni-Consoni, Tibagi, February 15, 1907.

¹⁰⁶ Buonaiuti-Consoni, June 8, 1907.

¹⁰⁷ Martini-Vicentini, Santa Felicidade, August 22, 1907 (Arch. G.S., 390/6).

¹⁰⁸ Martini-Consoni, Santa Felicidade, September 23, 1907 (Arch. G.S., 390/6).

¹⁰⁹ Pedrazzani-Vicentini, Tibagi, April 20, 1908 (Arch. G.S., 408).

¹¹⁰ Martini-Vicentini, Santa Felicidade, June 1, 1908 (Arch. G.S., 408).

¹¹¹ Martini-Vicentini, Santa Felicidade, May 18, 1908 (Arch. G.S., 390/6).

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER III

he intended to take the missionary out of Tibagi.¹¹² At the same time he got in touch with the Superior General of the Comboni Fathers, Rev. Frederic Vianello, inquiring whether they could take upon themselves the care of that mission. Father Vianello and his Council declared themselves willing to accept the proposal¹¹³, but it seems that the negotiations fell through for lack of qualified personnel.¹¹⁴ The Scalabrini Fathers left the parish of Tibagi in July 1911, and went to the assistance of the Italian communities around Curitiba, as we gather from a letter of Fr. Carlo Pedrazzani to Bishop Geremia Bonomelli:

"By order of my superiors I left the vast parish of the Tibagi valley. It has been entrusted to two Stigmatine priests, who are to take care also of the evangelization of the Indians. As I had pointed out to Your Excellency, that parish is totally made up of Brazilians, and due to the scope of the Congregation of St. Charles, it could not be directed by me. However, my heart had some attachment to it, and it was therefore quite a moving experience for me to leave. I have now been assigned to several Italian settlements in the vicinity of Curitiba, the capital of Paraná. They are Umbará, Portão, Chui, and Agua Verde where I have my residence."¹¹⁵

¹¹² Braga-Consoni, Curitiba, November 25, 1908 (Arch. G.S., 390/6).

¹¹³ Vianello-Vicentini, Verona, December 15, 1909, and December 22, 1909 (Arch. G.S., 408).

¹¹⁴ Vianello-Vicentini, April 9, 1910; May 3, 1910; May 13, 1910; June 16, 1910 (Arch. G.S., 408).

¹¹⁵ Pedrazzani-Bonomelli, Umbará, July 30, 1911 (Arch. G.S., 15999/2).

CHAPTER IV

ITALIAN MIGRATION IN THE STATE OF SÃO PAULO

1. The Flow of Italian Migration in 1906

The colonization of the State of São Paulo with an area of 250,000 km² had been the concern of statesmen from the beginning of the Empire when large estates were still cared for by slaves. The first official Colonization Acts trace back to 1827. The colonial center of Santo Amaro was founded in 1829; apart from two or three unsuccessful attempts, from 1830 to 1876 the state-sponsored colonization remained suspended, while private enterprises created about a hundred colonies with six thousand immigrants, mostly Portuguese.

In 1874 the sailboat "Anna Pizzorno" arrived at Paranaguá (Paraná) with a hundred Italian families abroad. They were invited to Brazil by Emperor Dom Pedro II, who refunded their ticket. In the same year, a group of five Italian immigrants for the first time reached the "sertão" (the wild and uninhabited territory) of São Paulo. This was the first nucleus of the many that would give a start to the impressive work of colonization of the State by Italians. In 1875 Italian immigrants to São Paulo were 126, and in 1877 they rose to 2,006. In this same year also, the State resumed its colonization policy and founded the centers of Santana, Gloria, São Caetano, and São Bernardo; together with Santo Amaro, all these communities are now parts of the "greater" São Paulo. In 1885 settlements were established at Canas and Cascalho; in 1887 in Riberão Pires, Antonio Prado, Rodrigo Silva and Barão de Jundiá; in 1889 the community of Sabauna; Quiririm in 1890; in 1897 Piaguí and Campos Sales at the "fazenda" (ranch) of Funil.

In 1870 the "Association for the promotion the immigration to, and the Colonization, of the State of São Paulo" came was organized to bring in 15,000 Italians within three years by means of regular contracts. In the following years the State Administration allocated rather large credit funds to encourage the importing of able bodies, and cooperated in founding the "Sociedade Promodora de Imigração de São Paulo" (Society for Promotion of Immigration to São Paulo), which succeeded in bringing in over 120,000 immigrants over ten years. In 1894, immigration services passed from the Federal to the State governments; in 1899 a law provided that the bringing in of immigrants be carried out with funds allocated by the State to ship-owners and shipping companies. Each immigrant was thus entitled to a free trip, free lodging at the hostels for a week, and a paid ticket to the farm of his destination.¹

Here we present the official statistics of Italian migrants entering the State of São Paulo from 1890 to 1905 with trip from Genoa paid for by the Government of the State of São Paulo:

¹ Cfr. A.A. VV., Il Brasile e gli Italiani ("Italians in Brazil"). A publication of the "Fanfulla" (Italian newspaper of Sao Paulo) (Florence, 1906), pp. 561-562.

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER IV**

Year	Immigrants	Year	Immigrants
1890	20,991	1898	20,389
1891	84,486	1899	11,141
1892	34,274	1900	10,978
1893	48,739	1901	33,717
1894	22,420	1902	2,324
1895	84,722	1903	2,817
1896	49,846	1904	3,757
1897	52,880	1905	9,585

Total: 493,066

To these must be added the migrants brought in by the Federal Government, or who entered at their own expense. The latter, especially, were a large number. Some think that they were almost as many as those who were officially admitted. Consequently, in that same period, Italian immigrants into the State of São Paulo may well have been a million or so.² Others, however, are of the opinion that in 1905 they amounted to 700,000.³ From these statistics are excluded children of immigrants born in Brazil. For an accurate evaluation of this data it is wise to remember that the city of São Paulo had 200,000 inhabitants in 1895, and 300,000 in 1904; the whole state had 2,570,000 people. In 1905 about half of the 300,000 inhabitants of the capital were thought to be Italians. We have here a graphic of the presence of Italians in the other townships of the State reported in accord with the toponymy of the time. These statistics are surprising and speak for themselves

Township	Italians	Total Population
Amparo	15,000	50,000
Anapolis	2,000	
Apiai	3,000	
Araraguara	15,000	34,000
Araras	5,000	20,000
Areias	2,000	
Atibaia	3,000	
Avare'	5,000	
Bananal	1,000	
Bariri	4,000	11,000
Barretos	2,000	
Batatais	13,000	26,000
Bauru	1,500	
Bebedauro	3,000	

² *Ibid.*, p. 563.

³ Cfr. V. Grassi, *Storia della Colonizzazione Europea al Brasile e della emigrazione italiana nello Stato di San Paulo* ("History of European Colonization of Brazil, and of Italian Emigration to the State of São Paulo"), (Milan, 1914), p. 319; G. Mortara, *A imigração Italiana no Brasil e algumas características demograficas do grupo italiano* ("Italian Immigration to Brazil and some Demographic Traits of the Italian Group"). (Rio de Janeiro, 1950), pp. 324-326.

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER IV**

Belem do Descalvado	14,000	
Boa Esperanca	2,500	18,000
Boa Vista das Pedras	1,000	
Bocaina	1,000	
Bom Sucesso	1,000	
Botucatu	10,000	
Braganca	5,000	40,000
Brotas	7,000	
Buguirá	1,000	
Caieuva	2,000	7,000
Cacapava	7,000	
Caconde	14,000	
Cajuru	6,000	15,000
Campinas	25,000	
Campolargo de Sorocaba	12,000	
Campos Novas de Paranapanema	2,000	6,000
Campao Bonito de Paranapanema	1,200	
Capivari	7,000	
Casa Branca	6,000	
Conceicao dos Guarulhos	600	
Cotia	3,000	
Cravinhos	12,000	30,000
Cruzeiro	4,000	
Cunha	2,000	
Dourado	4,000	
Dois Corregos	8,000	14,000
Espirito Santo da Boa Vista	1,300	
Espirito Santo do Pinhal	8,000	
Espirito Santo do Turvo	600	
Fartura	1,000	
Franca	5,000	
Faxina	200	1,560
Guarazenia	1,000	
Guarantiguetá	12,000	
Guarei	1,000	
Ibitinga	2,000	
Ignape	4,000	
Indaiatuba	3,000	
Iparanga	2,000	
Itapetininga	8,000	14,000
Itapira	12,000	
Itaparanga	1,000	
Itarare'	2,000	
Itatiba	14,000	25,000
Itatinga	2,000	
Itu'	10,000	
Ituverava	2,000	
Jaboticabal	13,000	
Jacarei	6,000	
Jamberei	5,000	
Jardinopolis	12,000	
Jatai	700	
Jau'	25,000	
Jundiai	16,000	
Jugueri	1,000	

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER IV**

Lagoinha	2,500	
Lavrinhas	500	
Leme	7,000	12,000
Lencois	5,000	
Limeira	8,000	
Lorena	6,500	
Matao	8,000	
Mineiros	5,000	
Mogis das Cruzes	8,000	
Mogi-Guacu	2,500	7,000
Mogi-Mirim	10,000	
Monte Alto	15,000	
Monte Mar	3,000	7,000
Nazaré	3,000	6,000
Nuporanga	6,000	
Paraibuna	5,000	
Parnaíba	3,500	8,000
Patrocínio de Santa Isabel	1,000	
Patrocínio de Sapucaí	1,000	
Pedreira	8,000	
Pereiras	3,000	8,000
Piedade	1,000	
Pilar	3,000	
Pindamonhangaba	12,000	
Piracicaba	7,600	25,00
Piraju	3,500	
Pirassununga	8,000	14,00
Pitangueiras	2,000	5,500
Porto Feliz	5,000	12,00
Porto Ferreira	3,500	
Queluz	3,000	
Redenção	3,000	
Remédios da Ponte do Tietê	1,000	
Ribeirão Bonito	4,000	7,000
Ribeirão Branco	700	
Ribeirão Preto	25,000	53,000
Ribeirãozinho	8,000	16,000
Rio Bonito	2,500	
Rio Claro	10,000	
Salesópolis	3,000	
Salto de Itú	3,000	
Santa Bárbara	3,000	
Santa Bárbara do Rio Pardo	1,000	
Santa Branca	3,000	
Santa Cruz de Conceição	3,500	
Santa Cruz das Palmeiras	15,000	
Santa Cruz do Rio Pardo	4,000	
Santa Isabel	3,000	
Santa Rita do Paraíso	5,000	
Santa Rita do Passo Quatro	12,000	22,000
Santo Amaro	2,000	
Santo Antônio da Alegria	1,000	
Santo Antônio da Boa Vista	1,000	
Santo Antônio da Cachoeira	4,000	
São Bento do Sapucaí	4,000	
São Bernardo	5,000	
S. Francisco de Paula das	1,000	
São João de Boa Vista	18,000	35,000
São José' do Barreiro	1,000	

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER IV**

São Jose' dos Campos	5,000	
São Jose' do Rio Pardo	20,000	35,000
São Jose' do Rio Preto	3,000	5,000
São Luiz do Paraitinga	8,000	
São Manoel do Paraiso	15,000	
São Miguel Archanjo	500	
São Paulo dos Agudos	4,500	
São Pedro	6,000	16,000
São Pedro do Turvo	4,000	
São Sebastiao	2,000	
São Simao	14,000	
São Vicente	800	
Sarapui	2,000	
Serra Negra	14,000	22,000
Sertaozinho	12,000	
Silveiras	1,000	
Socorro	7,000	
Sorocaba	12,000	
Tambau	4,000	6,000
Tatui	12,000	
Taubate	15,000	31,000
Tieté	8,000	
Tremembe'	1,000	
Ubatuba	2,000	
Una	2,500	
Veila Bela	2,500	
Vila Vicira de Piquete	800	

These tables, which date back to the years 1905-1906, are incomplete; for instance, data, even approximate, are missing from the townships of Mococa, Paderneiras, Santos, São Carlos do Pinhal, São João da Bocaina, and São Roque, where Italians lived by the thousands.

As to the regions of origin of Italian immigrants in São Paulo one can easily notice that from 1876 to 1886 the Veneto, Lombardy, and Piedmont Regions take first place with 64% of the total. From 1887 to 1890 the Veneto Region continues to hold first place, while the Campania Region comes in second, followed by the Piedmont and Lombardy Regions. From 1901 to 1914 the Veneto Region still holds first place, but its percentage of 36% decreases to 17%; Sicily comes second with 12.6%; then Campania (11%), followed by Piedmont, Lombardy, the Abruzzo-Molise, Calabria, Emilia, Tuscany, Puglia, Marche, Basilicata, and Latium, in that order.

Venetians took mostly to farming, the Piedmontese to railroading, Tuscans to small trades, especially oils; immigrants from the south to vegetable businesses in the city, but especially to jobs as peddlers. Thus, to a certain measure at least, Italian immigration to Brazil was marked by characteristics opposite to those of Italian emigration to North America, made up mostly of people from the South. The essential difference between Italian emigration to Brazil and to the United States in the years of the great expansion of the phenomenon is the fact that the great majority of migrants to the United States were "migrating birds", that is, mostly single people, who tried - intentionally at least - to put together a good capital in the shortest time possible to invest upon returning

home, while the colonist in Brazil tended to settle there for good. Besides, Italians migrating to the United States preferred to settle in the industrial centers. In 1900, 74% of them were employed in industry and commerce, and only a very small majority in farming. In Brazil, instead, and particularly in the State of São Paulo, the majority of Italians were arriving with their families and a contract in their hands, and that, like it or not, tied them down to the land. Extreme need for able bodies, especially for the increasing coffee plantations, led the government to entrust the recruiting of immigrants to a society for colonization and to contractors who in turn relinquished the recruitment itself in the hands of the shipping companies. Sure to collect on the spot the money for their expenses, both were in a position to bring in crowds of immigrants. As a consequence, the companies unleashed their ill-famed emigration agents to all corners of Italy to gather the manpower while promising the moon. There was not the slightest concern over selection; what counted most was to muster enough people to fill their ships to the limit. All, even barbers, were given contracts as farmers by the State Government of São Paulo. It was strictly a regular importation of laborers for the vast "fazendas" of the government and of rich land holders, strictly in line with the capitalistic mentality expressed by Ernest de Faville: "*Each immigrant represents an average profit of 20,000 francs for the country that takes him in.*"⁴

2. Conditions of Immigrants in the "Fazendas"

The contract between "fazendeiros" (landowners) and colonists was ordinarily drawn up at the immigration hostels where families were lodged when reaching Brazil. Once at the ranch, they were given a house, utensils, furniture of first necessity, and the tools for work. When a family lacked the means for self-support, - as was ordinarily the case, - the landowner provided in advance to its needs by supplying groceries either directly or through a credit account with the local stores.

Each family was assigned the care of a well-defined number of coffee plants; 2,500 each male adult, 1,000 each woman and boy. Families were grouped in colonies directed by supervisors who used to wake up the colonists in the morning at the sound of a bell, and took care that the work was properly carried out.

Balancing wages for its quota of plants, its share in the harvest of coffee and other crops (wheat, corn, beans) its profit in raising the domestic animals it was allowed to have, with expenses for food and clothing, a family of two members at work and a woman busy with housekeeping could end up the year with a clear gain of 483 contos, equal to 800 (1905 value), approximately responding to today's half a million liras. This saving, quite modest if one considers the work, could be obtained only in the best of conditions: good land, an honest landowner, no unjust fines, and above all, no sickness. Due to an

⁴ Cfr. F. Cenni, Italianos no Brasil, (Sao Paulo, 1959), pp. 169-176.

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III CHAPTER IV

absolute lack of social welfare, and to exorbitant prices of medicines and medical services, sickness meant ruin for the families of colonists.

Following the first years, the share-cropping system came into being which was benefitting both landowner and farmer. Under ideal conditions such as above described, a family could clear a net profit of 3,500 contos. It was able, therefore, to put together a small fortune in a short while, which allowed it to become a small land owner, or to devote itself to commerce or to a small commercial enterprise in the city.

The large farming ranches (fazendas) were like islands separated from the rest of the world. There were the shopping center where the farmer was able to buy whatever he needed, the church, the school, the post office, and some amusements. In the small ranches something like a general exodus took place on Sunday; only a woman remained at home to prepare dinner, while all others, men on horseback, women almost always on foot, went to the closest town for Mass and their weekly shopping.⁵

Many of the thousand ranches spread all over the State of São Paulo (in 1900-1901 there were 15,828) became flourishing cities or towns in a few decades, thus assuring the development of the whole interior of the richest state of Brazil. This is due in great part to the Italians who made up eighty per cent of the coffee growers, the most important source of the State's revenue, which supplied two-thirds of the world's consumption.

"And, there, in the midst of green forests and lands brown with the coffee plantations, the smallest inhabited settlement known as Vila came into being. A town is born as if by magic. First, a rough cross made of wood is raised on the spot that will mark the central square of the future town; then a humble abode, and then another one, later on a small group of houses that will become, little by little, more conspicuous. A village is born; life begins its normal throbbing. A small crowd of customers streams into town, rumor starts spreading all around about the vitality of the new Vila, and from the big cities traders, professionals, and merchants, especially "Syrians", begin to come in. Within a very short time the Vila becomes a town; in a few years, a full grown city."⁶

The economic progress stimulated by the inflow of immigrants to São Paulo can be measured by the fact that until the end of 1901 the State Treasury had spent on free or subsidized immigration about 38,500 contos, while at the same time taking in three hundred thousand in tax revenues on exportation of coffee. It passed from 3,000 contos in 1888, to an annual average of more than 28,000 in the years following 1892.⁷

For this reason, eminent Brazilian personalities did not hesitate to offer the most generous praises to the Italian contribution toward the progress and well-being of São Paulo. Dr. Dino Bueno, majority leader in Congress, had this to say one day to the Federal Chamber of Deputies:

⁵ Cfr. AA. VV., *Il Brasile e gli Italiani*, cit. pp. 415-430.

⁶ G.A. Musso, *Gli Italiani del Sertão* (Rome, 1941). (An excerpt from the *Bollettino della Società Geografica Italiana*, Rome, October-November 1941), p. 523.

⁷ V. Grossi, *op. cit.*, pp. 181-183.

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III CHAPTER IV

"If the State of São Paulo is today the star that so brilliantly shines in the constellation of our Brazilian fatherland, this is certainly due in great part to Italian immigrants who adapted themselves admirably to the climate, integrating with the local people and our national life, improving, perfecting, and making good of the well-known spirit of initiative that for many years has been a tradition of that segment of the Brazilian people.

It was the Italian element that brought us the art and style we see in the buildings of São Paulo, transforming our old capital into the beautiful, elegant, and modern city, which is today the pride of Brazil, and the envy of foreign visitors.

But this is not enough: It was they, the Italians, especially, that by their work produced the riches São Paulo enjoys, and the vast coffee plantations it possesses which helps Brazil to hold first place for the market of this product in the world. Well-known is the great concern of the agricultural world over the profound social transformation brought about by the golden law of the May 13, 1888,⁸ which merited us so much esteem in the eyes of civilized nations! Instead of the dreaded agitations one might have expected over the sudden change in the organization of the labor system, we ourselves, the people of São Paulo, we, the people of Brazil, saw a new source of prosperity come into being as by magic through the large influx of Italian immigration that working in perfect harmony with the native element was able to put to good use the capital provided by the State of São Paulo."⁹

Dr. Moraes Barros thus remarked to the Federal Senate:

"If São Paulo has achieved prosperity, if São Paulo walks now on the path of progress and future greatness, this is due especially to foreign workers, among whom Italians hold a prominent place.

*It was the Italian colony that helped São Paulo pull through the crisis caused by the slave emancipation act without jolts or trouble! The state got through this period on ever increasing progress and at a much more rapid pace than the others. All this is above all due to the Italian community."*¹⁰

Actually, the slave emancipation act had not marked the end of the large land properties, as some had hoped, or the end of the old social system that had employed slave labor before, and was now exploiting the work of farmhands. The introduction of the cultivation of coffee, rather, was the decisive factor in bringing about a change; some kind of social and economic revolution that would eventually lay the foundation for the industrialization of São Paulo. In this evolution, Italian work has a determinant part.

Not only did Italians save the plantations abandoned by the slaves, but they also put progressively to good use new lands by transforming vast wasted and wooded territories into fertile farms. Immigrants must be credited for succeeding in tearing down the barriers that obstructed the reform of a society fixed in unchangeable castes (categories): aristocracy, populace, and slaves.

Far from forming a demographic island, Italians knew how to join their tricolor

⁸ Allusion to the "golden law" of total emancipation of slaves.

⁹ AA. VV., *Il Brasile e gli Italiani*, cit., pp. 746-747.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 747.

with the green and gold of the flag of the new Republic paving the way for a gradual and smooth process of integration. In all cities, big and small, they gave life to associations and social welfare institutions which were transformed almost imperceptibly into typical local institutions by the new Italo-Brazilian generations. Another fact strikes us when examining this smooth and steady integration of Italians into the texture of the State of São Paulo. Through their common sense and those qualities that J.F. de Almeida Prado defined "*a remarkable harmonious whole of talents most needed for such circumstances and expressed through their rural traditions, practical wisdom, will for work, coupled with having the same religion and with their ties to the traditions and ways of their ancestors*", Italians vanquished through a peaceful revolution the two most serious drawbacks of the Brazilian immigration policy: large land holdings and monoculture.

In fact, in 1901 there were in the State of São Paulo 1,057 Italian landowners; the number increased to 5,000 in 1906, and to 15,000 in 1920. Once a landowner, the Italian farmer, following the millennial traditions of his homeland, did not limit himself to the production of coffee, but he devoted himself also to other products and to cattle breeding, thus obviating the disastrous periodical coffee crises. Agriculture attracted eventually credit banks, churches, market places, schools, welfare and recreational institutions, and a large number of veritable cities that through reliable infrastructures and a diversified agriculture could stand up to the serious crisis of the decisive decline of the coffee markets in the years 1920-1930.¹¹

3. Italian industrial workers in the State of São Paulo

Moving on from agriculture, we present a brief account of the contribution given by Italians to the industrial development that made São Paulo the financial capital of Brazil. We are not going to write here about the major representatives of industry such as Materazzo, etc. Rather, we shall speak about those humble immigrants who at the height of their arrival were mostly engaged in farming as farm hands. These formed the nucleus of the future middle class that would make up the essential element of any industrialization; more so since many of them became farmers not by choice, because in Italy they were employed in industry, and in handicrafts, or had a strong inclination to industrial works and the trades.

We must keep in mind that great majority of Italian immigrants were originating from the Veneto, Lombardy, and Piedmont Regions, where: industry, especially textile, had already achieved a high degree of development. At the dawn of São Paulo's manufacturing industry, Antonio Francisco Bandeira, Jr., thus wrote in his book: "*Industry in the State of São Paulo in 1901*":

"Two factors seem to concur in this rapid progress of the industrial development: the spirit of initiative of the citizens of São Paulo and Italian

¹¹ Cfr. F. Cenni, *op. cit.*, pp. 181-183.

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER IV**

immigration. Under any living conditions or in any struggle for survival, Italians are essentially craftsmen and we saw evidence of it in our tours through the interior of the State. Among farmers and merchants we have found also those who were able craftsmen, mechanics, painters, and musicians. As to the professions, hardly any Italian can be found who does not benefit from them. This is the reason why the Municipal Chambers of Commerce will not be able to supply accurate statistics for a normal collecting of revenues. This defect, however, has also many positive aspects, because, should we levy taxes on them, these small industries would cease to the great detriment to townships of the interior.

Incalculable is the number of shoemakers, carpenters; oil and lubricant shops; pasta, ink, clothing, and hat factories; and of foundries, conducted in hotels, storage rooms, all in places removed from public view. Incalculable is also the number of carpenters who work on their own. As to beverage and pasta factories, the truth is that while they represent a gain for the poor classes now with the cost of living so high, they cause also a sizeable loss for large factories. However, this is not the case for the Federal Capital, which, second only to São Paulo, is the most industrialized city of the Republic; and it is so because the great majority of immigrants who entered those regions is altogether other than Italian: reason why the industrial development there lags far behind as compared with conditions here."¹²

Speaking of the Italian element in the working classes in the factories of São Paulo he adds:

"Thousands of workers, men and women, are employed to attend the the smallest machines and the largest ones, as well, that set in motion hundreds of others, but, sad to say, only 10% of them are Brazilians. In the state of São Paulo, the workers, men, women and young men, exceed 50,000, and almost all of them Italian, because, as we have pointed out, all Italians are able craftsmen. Remarkable is the number of minors, age five and up, who busy themselves in mechanical jobs, getting salaries that begin at 200 reis a day; but what counts most is that these youngsters enjoy the advantage of acquiring good working skills. In this way they insure for themselves a job that will provide for their future rather than risk increasing the mass of unemployed minors that crowd this city."¹³

These last remarks, disgusting and cynical as they may be, show us once more the sad reality of the other face of the problem to which we must turn our attention for a while with the help of a keen and dispassionate student of Brazil's migratory problems, Prof. Vincent Grossi, Professor of commerce, statistics, and colonization at Rome's "Institute of Higher Studies", who was an Italian General Consul in Brazil during the period under study:

"I shall always remember a friendly, though animated discussion, I had one night with Dr. Marinico on a balcony looking down the hilly and vast countryside. It was the occasion of an unforgettable excursion I took in January 1892 through the magnificent ranch of Guatabara, Riberão Preto county, with the late Dr. Martinho Prado Jr. and his famous brother, the State

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 203-204.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 205.

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER IV**

Councillor Antonio Prado, the present worthy Governor of the Capital.

While showing me the returns of his farmers, the Hon. Martinho Prado, Jr. assured me that none of those families would have netted less than 500 milreis (about 650 liras of the time) by the end of the year; some would even net a profit of two or three "contos", and then added: *'Many of these settlers have materialized such savings as to bring in good profits, while almost all of them own horses, pigs, chickens, etc. besides an abundant provision of groceries.'* Then turning to me, as though with an air of victory, he exclaimed: *'This should be proof enough that an honest colonist who wants to work can find in our midst an enviable position!'*

This was my answer:

'Yes, dear Mr. Prado, much of what you said is true, quite so; you could also have added that in general the colonists eat well, work less, and are better off here perhaps than in Italy.

On a purely biological, and partly, also economical aspect, the improvement of their conditions is an evident fact; and on this point I am in perfect agreement. But, you have forgotten a very important aspect of the problem: the moral and social aspect. *"Man does not live on bread alone!"* (Matthew 4, 4).

Now, it is a proven fact that in regard to morals, instruction, and education, the life of the poor farm laborers, especially when far away from the inhabited centers, leaves much to be desired and presents many points of similarity with the life of primitives, whether of old or modern times. Max Nardau tells us that the need for an "ideal" has its roots in every man's mind, even of the most primitive one; and in Old Europe even ignorant and working people are sure to have the opportunity to effectively pursue this need for a higher order, no less real or strong than purely biological needs.

They have there religious festivities, schools, theaters, concerts, lectures, gatherings, clubs, workers' mutual societies, cooperatives, associations, political assemblies, charitable functions, square dances, Sunday entertainments, excursions, public parks, and more; all things that take and keep man away from isolation, leading him to enjoy all moral satisfaction and emotions that derive from knowing himself as an integral part of a great community; in other words from a feeling of solidarity. Well, little or nothing of all this is to be found in the monotonous life of these plantations, especially, I repeat, of those that are far away from large centers; this is surely a very serious disadvantage that contributes in increasing the nostalgia for their homeland of these poor settlers, especially of the new arrivals.

Now tell me, Hon. Mr. Prado, why this "moral human privation" should not represent any serious drawback for the profits the landowner may draw from his leasing of land the colonist makes so productive by the sweat of his brow. Besides, should not one pay heed to the hard struggle the emigrant has to go through in his heart before leaving the good land of his toil; as well as to the vicissitudes, risks, and dangers of a long, boring, and tiring journey over land and sea packed aboard ship or train like sardines? Then, keep in mind the wealth of mental and physical energies each emigrant subtracts from his homeland bringing them into his new country! Let us consider also the value he confers as farmer and potential owner on lands that would otherwise remain almost unproductive. All these facts, and many more I could mention,

should then be counted as nothing in the financial budget of your country in general, and of landowners in particular?

Is such capitalistic exploitation that sees in the farmhand only an instrument of production and in man only a beast of burden, logical, just, or humble?"¹⁴

4. Religious Conditions of Emigrants

The most accurate information on the religious conditions of Italian migrants in the State of São Paulo - though savoring of pessimism - is from Father Colbacchini, the first Italian missionary to go there with the intent to devote himself to the care of Italian immigrants. He carried out his ministry from March 1885 to May 1886 at the Italian community of Monte Serrat, half way between Jundiá and Indaiatuba. Later on, he went back there twice, the second time in 1889 by order of Bishop Scalabrini, who had sent him to study the situation in view of a mission for migrants.

In his report on the visit, Father Colbacchini sums up his impressions this way:

"My last visitation to the colonies of this province has rent my heart, as it made me realize the absolute need to provide, with all means and as soon as possible, religious assistance for these poor Italians of ours who would otherwise be surely lost.

I found much apathy for religion, very serious deviations from right morals, and a disorderly lust for gain. If not soon provided, they would be impossible perhaps to correct later.

This is the most difficult mission one could devote himself to on account of the difficulties it presents. Consequently, priests assigned here must be quite virtuous; besides, to increase difficulties, one has also to contend with church authorities, who allow themselves to be deceived by shrewd pastors, who look upon missionaries as usurpers of their rights."¹⁵

There was already a certain number of priests in Brazil, but, except for a few cases, they were not engaged in the care of Italian immigrants. They had immediately entered the system by incardination in the diocese, thus placing themselves on a plan of action as Brazilian priests in care of souls in parishes or other ministries.

The few Italian Jesuits were not doing much for immigrants, neither were the Salesians, also Italian, who were called in by the Bishop of São Paulo to direct a "Liceu de Artes, Ofícios, e Comércio" ("A School of Crafts and Trades") founded by Rev. Lasagna as an institution dependent on the Sacred Heart College, that marked the beginning of the great Salesian expansion in the field of education, and later on in the missions of the "Mato Grosso". Father Colbacchini had these remarks:

"The Salesians of Rio, São Paulo, Montevideo, Buenos Aires, as all Salesians all over the world, are not engaged in mission work, except those in Patagonia. They come here to be teachers and directors of the "Trade Schools" they run in

¹⁴ V. Grossi, *op. cit.*, pp. 543-547.

¹⁵ Colbacchini-Rolleri, Sao Paulo, July 15, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 356/21).

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER IV

*these regions; theirs is a great mission, but their work is altogether different from what most people expect here. They live in the cities confined within their walls, no less than if they were living in Italy and France. Missionary life is an altogether different calling."*¹⁶

But, let us trace our steps back to the direct experience of Father Colbacchini himself:

"On March 14, 188, I left for São Paulo, the place of my destination. I called right away (it was four in the afternoon) on the Bishop. He was not in. Though tired following 14 long hours on the train, I waited for him until he arrived at 9:00 in the evening. He acknowledged my presence, and calling my attention to the late hour he excused himself for not granting me an audience; instead, without delay he sent for a servant to accompany me to a hotel where to spend the night. I expressed the desire to be a guest of the seminary. He remarked that the seminary was not a hostel for priests. Then he gave me an appointment for eleven the following morning. The Bishop had been informed of my arrival not only by me, but by the Superior of the Salesians, and by the Internuncio himself. The Brazilian etiquette is not quite like ours! We need patience.

In the morning, after spending a bad night at a tavern, the only accommodation I was able to find at that late hour, I went over to the Seminary where I was welcomed by the Superior. After Mass, I went looking for an Italian priest who was said to be a pastor in the city. I called on him; unfortunately he was a Neapolitan!

However, in his roughness he was polite, and, together with him, I called on the Bishop. He took my letters of recommendation without giving them any consideration. I was carrying them along with me from high church officials such as the Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda, the good Cardinal Patriarch of Venice, my own Bishop, Don Bosco, etc. I would have had a better reception had I not been so much recommended. Had I presented only, as the Neapolitan priests do, a letter of leave from my Ordinary, I would have been welcomed into this diocese. But those letters did not bring any results there, or help the cause of this mission in Paraná. The Bishop offered me a chaplaincy in a community of Mantuans at Montserrate. I had no choice but to accept it with the intention of learning, in the meantime, the language and way of life of these people. Then the Bishop mentioned also other Italian communities in that vicinity to whom I was to give assistance.

In five hours I arrived by train at the city of Jundiá to whose pastor's jurisdiction the colony belonged. He acted suspicious, but he finally accepted the decisions of the Bishop. From there I reached Montserrate in an hour's train ride. It was three o'clock on a Sunday afternoon. Many people were milling around a large building that belonged to the landowner, a tavern, we would call it, to which a general store was also attached. They had gathered together to say the Rosary in a hall of that large house adapted to serve as place of worship. Upon seeing me they were surprised, but did not give any sign of rejoicing. This did not seem to respond to what the Bishop had told me as to their anxious desire to have a priest. Two or three of them moved forward to meet me. I presented to the administrator of the colony, a Brazilian, a letter that the landowner in agreement with the Pastor of Jundiá had me read before; with cold indifference

¹⁶ Colbacchini-Mantese, Curitiba, February 28, 1887 (Arch. G.S., 356/19).

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER IV**

he gave me his welcome, without even offering me a cup of coffee.

In the meantime, upon hearing that I had come to the colony to stay for some time, a man that was acting as sexton began to take care of me. He had the administrator order the teacher to turn over to me the room he was in, and a bed in the Brazilian fashion was made ready for me. Sometime later, many came to talk to me, and when they began to realize what it all meant, they came to life. Three hours after my arrival I needed to ask someone to carry into my room the three trunks that had been unloaded on the street at the station two hundred meters from the house.

This marked the beginning of my mission among these unfortunate Italians in Brazil for whom I had given up my beloved missions of Italy, all family ties, and everything else I could have enjoyed in my homeland! By God's Grace, I did not get discouraged; rather, I was strengthened by these principles, rightly stated by the Ven. Cottolengo: 'The works of God's glory are like upside-down pyramids which rise from a small point, but then always keep growing up in width. The cornerstone is Christ.'

My mission in that community and in ten others of the surrounding district, was much blessed by the Lord. Except for a very few, the dormant faith was revived in the hearts of all, and charity regained strength in many. Hardly a day passed by without preaching a sermon or giving Holy Communion. I spent a year and a half there in much suffering because I hardly had what was needed for my support and living quarters. Besides, I had to deal with rough and hardheaded people, such as the Mantuans. Except for two, where the landowners were happy with my ministrations, in the neighboring colonies I had to force my apostolate on them.

I was in a precarious position that could not go on any longer. I could not form the basis for an effective mission responding to the needs of so many people because it depended on the whims of the landowners whose great majority had no other religion than money. They were happy to know that their farmhands were religious, so they would not steal; for the rest, they could hardly tolerate to see them take a little time out of work to go to church. In the meanwhile, the Bishop offered me a number of parishes, but I told him very clearly it did not pay the trouble to cross the sea to be a pastor, since I had been sent to care for the souls of my fellow countrymen totally deprived of religious assistance. Baptisms and Weddings, that is all the ministry of pastors! Fees are five francs for baptisms, and seventeen and a half for weddings.

But, how could I ever leave the colonies of São Paulo that had so well taken to me already! I promised I would return to visit them now and then, and left for Paraná! Once again, I was on my way by sea and went back to my first colonists. In the meantime the enemy had sown here and there his darnel; not to such an extent, however, that the good grain could not be gathered into the barn in due time."¹⁷

In 1888, Father Colbacchini pointed out to Bishop Scalabrini that his description of the conditions of Italian migrants in Brazil in his publications was too pessimistic. In the opinion of the missionary, the Bishop had given too much attention to catastrophic reports of organizations and people influenced,

¹⁷ Colbacchini-Scalabrini, Santa Felicidade, December 25, 1888 (Arch. G.S., 356/6).

or even hired, by the government of Argentina to turn Italian migration away from Brazil and channel it to that Republic.

Then he offers one of his rosy descriptions of immigrants' conditions in Paraná, already known to us; but he would have to recant them in part, while he had this to say in regard to the immigrants in São Paulo:

As to the state of São Paulo, circumstances are different. They are not like slaves there, because they are hired with regular contracts by individual landowners. They are free to change their location, to have recourse to the courts if exploited, to buy land, etc. Many are well off; here they do not live in the throes of starvation as they used to in their home towns. They enjoy here the comforts of the abundances of all things needed. Besides, there are many in São Paulo who would never go back to their native land even if they had the means to do so. Some are unhappy, but that is due to the treachery of landowners who do not live up to their contracts. In any case, no one dies of hunger, or even suffers from it. The climate is not too good because of the heat at times; still, they enjoy good health no less than they did in Italy. I have toured almost all that state and I can testify to that out of my own experience. Were our government to officially take stock of all this and make use of capable and honest people to working out a plan in this country on behalf of our immigrants, these would be the luckiest Italians of all."¹⁸

This time it was Father Colbacchini who exceeded in optimism; but in regard to religious assistance he was even more pessimistic than Bishop Scalabrini. As pointed out before, Bishop Scalabrini had charged him in 1889 with making first contacts to the end of opening some missions for emigrants also in the State of São Paulo. Father Colbacchini took himself to the metropolis of São Paulo, but Mons. P.J.E. Braga, chancellor and secretary to the Bishop, greeted him with the news that his faculties for Paraná would be revoked. In spite of malaria contracted a few days before in Rio de Janeiro, the missionary ventured on a very hazardous journey to reach the Bishop who was staying at São Bento, close to Sapucaí, along the boundary with Minas Gerais.

"As I have already reported to you before, the result of this audience with the Bishop was a very explicit declaration that he did not intend to discuss, at least for the time being, the Italian mission, that he did not consider it necessary; Italians had to accept conditions as Brazilian nationals did; he did not want to give cause for conflict with the pastors; he would take the matter to the Holy See. In the meantime, he revoked all my faculties for the province of São Paulo urging me to return as soon as possible to Paraná, after a stay in Itú, without visiting the colonies of this province of São Paulo.

I sent him in the parishes he was visiting a certain quantity of medals, rosaries, and holy pictures, together with a letter telling him that I would not disobey his orders, though, at the same time, I would be waiting for instructions from my superiors so to pave the way for an honorable departure together with my confreres towards regions where bishops would encourage our ministry rather than hinder it.

Was it this letter or something else? The fact is that the day before yesterday a

¹⁸ Colbacchini-Scalabrini, Itú, June 20, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 356/7).

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER IV

sealed official envelope came in to me. It contained a petition written in my name, but not upon my solicitation, by Mons. P. Braga, for the faculties to exercise the ministry in this province, with the approval of the Vicar General and under instructions of His Excellency, the Bishop."

Having been granted the faculties, Father Colbacchini called on Hon. Marinico Prado (Martinho Prado, Jr.), President of the "Society for the Promotion of Immigration" to discuss a plan of action:

"The mission for the Italian colonies is well known and accepted by all 'fazendeiros' (landowners) even by those who do not practice their religion. They are quite aware of how much their farmhands' honesty and trustworthiness, and hence their own interest, depend on it.

There are communities with over one thousand people. Within the range of one hour horse-ride there may be formed communities of six or ten thousand Italian residents. The need is urgent; the earlier we provide for it, the better it will be, so that these unfortunate people may not get accustomed to living without religion, and cease feeling the need for it, as has happened in many places. In the very colonies under my care, I have found for some time more causes for sorrow than for comfort."¹⁹

He made an agreement also with the government of the Province of São Paulo:

"Besides, knowing how things stand and how civil authorities direct everything, even church matters, I put to good use my acquaintance with very influential people in the Provincial Government. By means of a letter of recommendation from the President of Paraná, I succeeded in presenting a plan of mine to the government, and I was given assurance of its full support. As proof of this, today I will be granted a certificate for free transportation on all railroads of the State to enable me to visit the most important colonial settlements and study ways, and means for opening missions amongst Italians.

It seems as though the dawn is now rising of the day so much hoped for, so that we may finally be given to carry out the work of redemption of these unfortunate countrymen of ours.

Very serious difficulties will arise, European and Brazilian sects have succeeded in appointing to head almost all these colonies of Italians, some of them architects, who have been educated in the modern schools. They will certainly oppose difficulties to our ministry. Be it enough to say that, by initiative of these ultra-patriot Italians, the revolutionary dates of our fatherland are celebrated with the greatest solemnity, not without the most clear allusions to hatred for Pope, Church and Priests. I have sent to the Internuncio my notes on the history of my five year mission in Brazil (22 pages) and my answers to twenty two questions he had deigned to present to me on this mission by orders from the Holy See."²⁰

From these "Responses to Certain Questions submitted by His Excellency the Most Rev. Francis Spolverini, Papal Internuncio to Brazil, "On the Present and Future State of the Italian Colonies" we present the passages concerning the State of São Paulo:

¹⁹ Colbacchini-Scalabrini, Sao Paulo, July 5, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 356/7).

²⁰ Report by Colbacchini sent with letter to Internuncio F. Spolverini on June 19, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 356/14).

"Chapter I

1. Origin and Growth of the Colonies.

In the Province of São Paulo, where it was to expand the most, Italian immigration began later and in another form.

The first colony of sixty Italian families settled there in 1879. They were brought in by a certain Antonio Leme de Fanseca, and engaged to take the place of the slaves in his coffee plantations at Montserrate, on the road to Ituana.

His example was immediately followed by a few others, and the Provincial Government itself founded the colonies of Santa Ana, São Gaetan, São Bernardo, in the vicinity of São Paulo. There may have had as many as 160 families. Only five or six years later, that is, when fearing a law of emancipation of the slaves, the landlords realize the need to fill in with Italian settlers the posts left vacant by the slaves in their coffee plantations. From 1884 to 1889 no less than 200,000 Italians entered the Province, brought in with trips paid mostly by an "Immigration Society" with headquarters at São Paulo under the sponsorship and financial help of the State.

2. Distinctions between landowners, colonists and merchants.

For these reasons a distinction must be made between the colonies of the Province of São Paulo and those of other provinces. These last ones, except for a few administered by the government, belong or are managed by large landowners (fazendeiros). The other settlements instead were set up by the government and some (like those in Paraná) came spontaneously into being by the purchase of pieces of land by the colonists with money earned with the work of their hands, especially in railroads. As a consequence, the Italians in the province of São Paulo and, in part in the province of the Espiritu Santo, can be rightly called farmhands, since they cultivate somebody else's land, while those of other provinces should be called landowners, either because they bought the land from the beginning, or they obtained it through installments by the government. Italians engaged in trades must be classified in a group by themselves. They may be divided into two classes: 1) those that came over from Italy with the specific intention of pursuing a trade with a capital of their own; 2) those who abandoned farming to devote themselves to this or that kind of small business, especially by opening stores where a little of everything is sold.

The first group settled in small and large cities, the latter one in the midst of small communities and along transportation routes.

3. Attitudes of Landowners as to moral and material welfare.

Much could be said about the landowners, but much could be said in a few words. Since the colony is for them and object of speculation, they try to get the most out of it by paying little and demanding much. There are landowners who treat Italians the same way they did the slaves, with only a few changes in conditions. In their lands they conduct themselves like great Sultans, often neglecting to pay wages, always arrogant and pretentious. Many colonists find themselves under an iron rule; if they do not break loose it is just because they do not stand a chance. To survive many of them are forced to work for their master by day, and for themselves at night.

As to morals, the greatest majority of the landowners do not care, and not a few of them lead the poor colonists to abandon the practices of religion and fall into a life of sin by their bad examples and loose language.

How many unfortunate young ladies have fallen victims to the seduction of the landowners! If they build chapels, and let the priest come to the colonies sometimes, most of the times they do it only so that the colonists be reminded to be obedient to the owners and not steal from them. There are even those that do not allow the priest to care for the spiritual welfare of the colonists because, they say, farmers are in the land to work not to be monks. Few ranchers have had a church built.

4. What does the future hold in store?

It's easy to guess the future of the large land estates! Within six or ten years they will all cease to exist. As soon as farmers will have saved some five or six thousand liras, either they will return to Italy (the dream of many of them), or they will buy a piece of land to farm as owners. Agriculture, now in the hands of farmers, is doomed to end very soon in the states of São Paulo and Espírito Santo, while the landowners will have to sell their lands by lots if they do not wish to see them left unproductive and abandoned. Italians did not come here to remain the slaves of foreigners forever; they aspire to become proprietors in their own right. Ordinarily, those that quit the landowners unite in groups of three or more families, they buy two or three hundred hectares of land, and end up by farming a small nucleus that will eventually keep growing larger. (...).

Chapter II - Religion and Schools.

1. On the initial religious assistance given to the colonists and the Bishops' action.

It is understood that the religion of Italians living here is Catholic. Generally, on their arrival and for a few years afterwards, immigrants feel a very strong desire for religion, and greatly lament the lack of churches, priests, and means for salvation. But, then they begin to get accustomed to the circumstances, cease experiencing this need, and let themselves down the road of a materialistic way of life, limiting their religion, at the most, to teaching children their prayers. Only in a few places were chapels built where on feast days people may gather to pray; however, this is true only in free or government-run colonies, but almost never in the "fazendas".

One must also say that the ecclesiastical authorities of this diocese to which Italian immigrants have come, are not concerned to provide for the spiritual needs of the souls of so many new arrivals. It was believed that the ministry (of collecting the stole fees) by either Brazilian or Neapolitan pastors appointed to head the parishes should be sufficient also for them.

In spite of earnest petitions sent from time to time by some colonies to the Bishop for the much needed help of priests, either because in no way was it possible to find one, or sufficient importance was not given their requests, nothing has been done. On the contrary, should any priest spend some time in the colonies, he could not obtain the faculties needed to minister to them and would not be supplied with the means for his sustenance; he was made,

rather, to depend on the jurisdiction of the local pastor, to whom he had to hand over all stole fees.

The undersigned resided a year and a half at the colony of Montserrate, in the diocese of São Paulo, always dependent on the local pastor, without compensation of any sort (...)!

And, I cannot omit mentioning here the open opposition to Italian immigration of the Bishop of Rio de Janeiro, on whose jurisdiction the Provinces of Santa Catarina and Espirito Santo depend: he considers it the greatest calamity of Brazil; hence, his lack of concern in providing Italians with religious assistance because, in his often repeated statement, he did not want to give the pastors of the diocese cause for complaints with provisions that would detract from their jurisdiction and rights.

For these reasons, the Missionary priests of the Institute "Cristoforo Colombo" find greater difficulties than those who exercise their ministry in the Province of Paraná, where they were able to obtain at least some freedom of action from their Bishop.

As a whole, the bishops do not realize the need and the importance of providing Italians with appropriate opportunity for the practice of their religion. They contend that what they believe is enough for their Brazilian nationals should also be sufficient enough for Italians. What this means is a mostly distant Pastor who baptizes babies, performs weddings and collects fees, very often with excessive greed and injustices. It will be hard to get into their heads the awareness of the absolute need Italians have to be religiously well cared for. Perhaps, they will realize it when, after losing the restraint only religion can provide, Italians will ignite the fuse of anarchy and revolution in this country.

2. Attitudes of Pastors in regard the Missionaries.

The answer to this question is easy and brief. For the greatest majority, and I do not know of any exception, pastors consider our missionaries as intruders who came here for the same purpose of the Neapolitan priests, whom they identify as Italian, that is, to make a living. I cannot help doubting whether they are motivated by a supernatural motivation in their ministry. In fact, they behave like cats and dogs, displaying jealousy, envy, suspicions, recriminations, slander and other wicked behavior.

In any case, if only for the Mass offerings that more readily are given to the missionaries, these priests suffer some loss of income and this is an affront to their rights, since most of them do not know or exercise any other ministry than collecting their fees.

Besides, I must point out that the Brazilian nationals themselves and not just the Italians, prefer the ministry of the missionaries to the ministry of other local priests or pastors. They make hateful comparisons to bring discredit upon them among the people and underestimate the favor the missionaries enjoy.

3. Moral and religious response of immigrants to the pastoral care of the Missionaries.

In colonies of recent foundation the missionary does not find the difficulties he encountered in others who've been too long without priests. Two horrible

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER IV

vices, cursing and drinking, cause so much corruption in the moral behavior of Italians in Brazil that the missionaries must struggle hard to eradicate them. In every colony there are people who immediately respond to the care of the missionary, but there are also those who seem to be sent by the devil to oppose the good and render void the work of priests.

As to Italians living in the city, such as merchants, artists, day laborers, except for a few cases, they are all lost to religion, and there does not seem to be any means for their return. In the city of São Paulo there are in excess of 10,000 Italians, but very few of them practice their religion, even with the Salesians stationed there who could provide them with a ready opportunity. So also at Campinas, hardly anyone of the almost 8000 Italians is found to fulfill his religious duties. The same is true for Pelotas, Porto Alegre, Santa Catarina, and other cities. The lack of religious assistance, the indifference, and the corruption of the people in whose midst they live, lead them to forget and lose quite soon all sense of religion. In this respect the evil seems beyond redemption.

There is great need of prudence and kindness if one is to win over the most hardened hearts, and he must behave in such a way as not to present the least pretext for false interpretations and slander. At first the missionary has to be careful not to show the need he has of the material support from the colonists. Only the suspicion of it would greatly hinder his mission. On the other hand, he must generously give out booklets and religious articles of all kinds, free of charge, that he may clearly prove that only his desire for the welfare of their souls prompts him to take care of them. I have always made use of this practice, by all means a costly one, and I have always found it appropriate and very effective.

In fact, once they have been won over by the charity and zeal of the missionary, not only will it be easy for him to lead the colonists back to the practices of their religion, but he will also very soon enjoy the satisfaction of inspiring such fervor in them as one would not find, perhaps, even in our best parishes of Italy."²¹

As he had promised, Father Colbacchini made a quick tour of the State of São Paulo to find out which one would be the best location where to open the first center of the Scalabrinian missions.

"In the region between the two parishes of Riberão Preto and São Simão, 300 km. from São Paulo, I have found a colonial settlement that may well count no less than 20,000 Italians within a radius of 10 km.

On that spot I seem to have set my eye for finding the means where to place a residence for three missionaries, at least. I have established already the first contacts with interested ranchers and with the government to secure a certain piece of land, a church, and a house, totally free and unattached.

The government was pleased with my proposal, and is carrying it out in agreement with the Ecclesiastical authority, with whom I deemed it better

²¹ Report by Colbacchini sent with letter to Internuncio F. Spolverini on June 19, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 356/14).

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER IV

not to deal directly."²²

However, as Father Colbacchini gives us to understand, it seems as though the ecclesiastical authorities themselves were the ones that opposed the project:

*"Opposition to my efforts in São Paulo came this time from the Bishop, and from him alone, or from someone for him. I placed the whole matter into the hands of the Internuncio."*²³

In the meantime, the republican revolution, which happened soon after, caused the whole plan to come up for discussion all over again. Finally, due to the departure of Fathers Mantese and Molinari, Father Colbacchini could not devote any more time to paving the way for missions in São Paulo. New missionaries were sent to Brazil only in 1896, precisely immediately after Father Joseph Marchetti opened the mission of São Paulo.

²² Colbacchini-Scalabrini, Curitiba, July 23, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 356/7).

²³ Colbacchini-Scalabrini, Santa Felicidade, September 28, 1889 (Arch. G.S., 356/7).

CHAPTER V

**SÃO PAULO, THE CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS ORPHANAGE
1895 - 1905**

1. Father Giuseppe Marchetti, the Founder

Apart from the preparation work of Father Colbacchini, the pioneer of the Scalabrini missions in the State of São Paulo is Fr. Giuseppe Marchetti.

Born at Camaiore (Lucca) on October 3, 1869, ordained a priest in 1892 shortly before listening to a lecture on emigration given by Bishop Scalabrini at Lucca, he was appointed to teach at the seminary, and sometime later assigned in care of souls to the little town of Compignano. In 1894, he accompanied half the people of his small mountain parish to Genoa on their way to Brazil. At the port he got acquainted with Father Maldotti, and decided to join the Congregation of Bishop Scalabrini who admitted him as a "missionary helper", that is, as one engaged to accompany emigrants on their crossing as chaplain on board ship, when free to do so. He took his first voyage on the ship "Maranhão" in October and November 1894.

On his crossing, he generously devoted himself to assisting the emigrants preparing fifty of them for First Communion, preaching, hearing confessions, blessing marriages, acting as peacemaker in their disputes bound to happen frequently in the midst of that inhuman heap of people. At the Ilha das Flores, or Ilha Grande, where he remained for two days, he saw for himself the sad welcome accorded the immigrants at the "Immigration Hostels". He had immediate recourse to the Italian Consul in Rio de Janeiro, Count Gherardo Pio of Savoy, presenting a plan of "Immigration Centers" at Ilha das Flores, Santos, and São Paulo, where to welcome, protect, and counsel immigrants. The Consul wrote to Bishop Scalabrini.

"Good Father Giuseppe Marchetti, the carrier of this letter to you, will explain things better by word of mouth. Emigration cannot be stopped, and it may just be something good, not in itself, but as a remedy against worse evils.

Conditions of Italian immigrants are not as bad as some are describing them, though bad enough, to be sure.

There is much to be done. It is an exaggeration when they speak of speculation on human flesh, on white slavery, etc., but there is some truth to it.

Nothing is there more humiliating for us Italians than these throngs of people in rags arriving here by the thousands. Urged on by hunger, they travel in misery directed into the unknown.

What could be done on their behalf?

Beginning with the time when the emigrant starts getting ready to leave until the day he can be considered on his own and ceases to be a ward of the State, emigration calls for a whole body of legislation - (I could not think of a better term) - which is still to be enacted. And this work should be the ambition of the Italian government. Moreover, agreements should be made with the Brazilian

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER V**

government to induce it to do or allow certain things; and this should be the task of diplomacy.

All things considered, emigration in itself is indeed a cruel phenomenon; as a product of poverty it carries within itself the seed of so many evils as to give room for everyone, especially the Church, to remedy them.

I have said and repeated this any time I had the chance without waiting for the favorable reaction. It seems at last to be attract attention so as to make it permissible also for a public official to mention God when discussing the great needs of souls without being accused of bigotry.

Now if to obviate the evils of emigration there is room for the Cross, here, in Rio de Janeiro, it is entitled to a prominent place both regarding the particular sanitary conditions and many other aspects of a social and political nature.

Our immigrants arrive at the end of a long journey, overcrowded on ships more like merchandise than human beings; in the course of the trip someone is born, and some other dies without a word of comfort.

No sooner do they arrive than they are loaded like inferior merchandise aboard shabby large barges of "the Land and Colonization Supervisory Office", and led to the miserable barracks of the Ilha das Flores. There, in those barracks, they spend the nights on bunks, on wooden planks rather, just a few inches from each other, men, women, children, elderly persons, and adults without partitions.

Apart from the seduction attempts on women by officials of immigration centers, apart from love affairs born during the crossing and carried on in these places, Your Excellency can figure out what may happen in such hostels in regard to intimacies between man and wife following a separation of twenty or thirty days, with children, sisters, old parents around as witnesses.

Poor, dejected by the misery around them, by uncertainty for the future, and unprotected, immigrants become prey to a thousand bullies, especially in the first few days of their arrival, and when there is no one to welcome them, they are totally left to themselves in this vast country.

Their complaints do not reach the Office of the Royal Consulate; and should they, what could the Consul do? Brazilian authority would never allow our Consuls to conduct an appropriate and effective supervision which they call a "fiscalização" (control).

On the other hand, swept away by the current, immigrants have no time to complain; busy and worried about the future, they have no time to remember, and readily forget. And so, abuses big and small, humiliations, dejection, ill-treatment, offenses against morals, property and persons, all go unnoticed like water flowing down to the river's mouth.

There is more to it. On his trip over, a certain man has lost his wife who left him with a three month old baby to care for (this case has actually happened) and he has no right to repatriation; what is he going to do? Shall he, perhaps, abandon his child in the street so that he may be free to take up the shovel and go to work?

On her journey to Brazil, a certain lady (and this also happened) became insane. What will the husband do with her? When it will be time for them to leave the "Ilha das Flores" shall he remain or return? What will be of his wife if

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER V**

he should leave? What will he do if he is to stay?

A whole family breaks out with a severe eye infection, curable, to be sure (this is also a well-documented case) but it is thus made unable, for the time being, to continue on to their destination. What will happen to this family with impaired sight abandoned by all in the hands of irresponsible and merciless authorities?

Cases of this kind are many as is easy to guess when one considers that for the last ten years Italians arrived in Brazil close to 50,000 a year; all people that have experienced hunger, who, sometimes, carry in their blood the germs of serious sicknesses.

As Your Excellency well knows, there were years when Italian immigrants to Brazil have reached or exceeded the quota of 100,000.

There is still more! We have the yellow fever and the landowners, two calamities that count for four: the yellow fever kills and is frightening, the rancher is all too often deprived of any Christian principle and still accustomed, until recently, to hitting slaves. While the yellow fever, as has happened many times, hits the immigration centers on one end, the landowner, mostly merciless and inhuman hits on the other, depending on the support he count on. Neither the yellow fever nor the landowner have any consideration for family ties; the latter, concerned only with his own interests, separates what should be united and joins what should stay separate.

Now, having said this, who is there that, having a heart, would dare say that in the midst of such misery there is no room for the Cross, no need for someone that without arousing suspicion and prejudice would work in preventing so much evil and protecting against it?

This someone cannot be a Consul; it cannot be any Italian patronage society, the local red or blue cross, or the local welfare society for emigrants! I have ruled out the Consul, already! But, what about the welfare societies? What a pity! It is one thing to preside over such societies, sitting on a comfortable easy-chair with a ribbon on the lapel and a cigar in the mouth, but quite another to venture into those infernal dens, the immigration centers and hostels! I do not believe in either red or blue crosses!

As to the emigration patronage society, it does not exist here, and it will hardly be possible to establish it; in fact, believe me, it will never be! We know well that perfection is the enemy of good!

Could not something be started in the meanwhile, like sending here three or four priests (even two would do) of Father Giuseppe Marchetti's caliber?

Having provided an answer to this problem, there is still the rest: initiatives to be taken in agreement with religious and civil authorities, resources, etc. Prudence will never be enough! I am firmly convinced, though, that in this respect something can be accomplished.

I have to conclude now. The captain of the "Maranhão" with the excellent Fr. Marchetti on board, is already waiting for half an hour to sail; and I must close right when I have come to the best part! Pardon and excuse me. I should conclude, but I have no words offhand to justify my presumption! Father Marchetti will tell you the rest."¹

¹ G.P. de Savoia to Scalabrini, Rio de Janeiro, November 11, 1894 (Arch. G.S., 356/2).

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER V**

On his arrival in Italy, Father Marchetti immediately reported his impressions and proposals to Bishop Scalabrini who charged him with conveying to the Italian Consul of Rio de Janeiro the following answer:

"Father Marchetti presented to me your most worthy message of the eleventh of November and I cannot express in words how much I appreciated it!

It is indeed a source of comfort for me whenever I am given the opportunity to get acquainted with men of heart and talent who devote themselves, body and soul, to relieve their neighbor's miseries. My sincere thanks, Illustrious Consul, for your excellent concern on behalf of our unfortunate emigrants. On my part, I would consider myself quite honored, were I to succeed in carrying through your proposals.

To me the greatest difficulty would be to let the missionaries live alone apart from each other. You are a man of experience and you know very well how hard it is to preserve for long the good spirit of one's calling when living isolated in the midst of strange elements which he always has to hold at bay. The soul may relent, at long last, and it is in need from time to time for strength and renewal in the spirit of the rules through the words and examples of confreres.

It would be necessary, therefore, that there be at least two missionaries who should also live community life. To this end, it would be sufficient if they had a small chapel or oratory with a house attached to it. One of them could minister to immigration barracks, going back home ordinarily at the end of the day. But, about this, Father Marchetti himself, charged to deal with you, will talk to you in greater detail."²

At the same time Scalabrini also handed a few instructions to Father Marchetti:

"I accompany you with my blessings and heartfelt good wishes for the voyage you are once again about to undertake. May God assist you and make you his instrument in performing all the good possible for His greater glory and for the salvation of souls.

You have here some directives for your norms of action:

First of all, you shall give the enclosed letter and the attached booklets to the competent Consul and you shall discuss with him the question at hand, without forgetting, however, that our rules do not allow ordinarily a missionary to live alone; he must always be in the company of another. In case it were possible to have a church or a chapel with some rooms for the residence of two or three priests, one of them could devote himself to the immigration centers, returning home when the need should cease to exist.

You will ask the same Consul to try to secure from the government free passes for the missionaries who will be sent there.

You shall humbly petition the Archbishop whether he would allow our Missionaries to have the mission of Nova Mantua back, together with the neighboring Italian colonies. Besides, you shall let him know what the Holy Father desires in the matter. To this effect I quote for you the following deliberation as read in directive # 2978 of Propaganda Fide: "As to the Bishops of Brazil, the Holy Father desires that they grant directly to the missionaries the

² Scalabrini to G.P. di Savoia, Piacenza, December 26, 1894 (Arch. G.S., 356/1).

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER V**

necessary faculties independently of the local pastors and vicars, empowering them, when needed, to separate the territories inhabited by Italians from the parishes' jurisdiction, and to form new parishes thereof to be entrusted to the care of the same missionaries." The experience of these years has proven that without freedom of ministry, even if with only a limited degree of dependence on the native pastors, nothing or very little can be accomplished.

The same you shall do with the Bishop of São Paulo, assuring him, besides, that in case he were to accept our proposal, truly pious and zealous priests will be sent to him. You shall also point out to him that if any of them did not succeed as well as expected, an extenuating factor is to be found in the lack of support on the part of those who should give it. Should it be possible for you to push forward to Curitiba, you shall ask that Bishop also whether he would allow us to have the mission back which was once directed by Father Colbacchini, a mission with church, house, and several chapels. Him, too, you shall inform of the desire of the Holy Father. Lastly, you shall find out under what Bishop's jurisdiction Nova Venezia is, and on that score you shall negotiate with him the assistance to that colony. In any event, it will be good to have these bishops set down in writing the conditions for admitting our missionaries and the directives they should intend to give on the matter.

I am well aware, dear Father Giuseppe, of the serious difficulties connected with these negotiations, but, should you succeed in settling all matters, they will turn to your greater merit."³

By the end of 1894, Father Marchetti was on his second voyage, again as chaplain of the ship, this time, the '*Giulio Cesare*'. On his trip, however, an incident happened that would definitively change the course of his vocation. Let us listen to the report of it in Bishop Scalabrini's own words:

"Aboard the ship on which a missionary of mine, Father Giuseppe Marchetti, at one time a teacher at the seminary of Lucca, was sailing, a young married woman who died, leaving behind a suckling orphan and her husband, all alone in despair.

The Missionary, to calm down the desperate man threatening to jump overboard into the sea, promised him that he would take care of the baby! As he promised, so he did! He landed at Rio de Janeiro carrying that innocent little bundle in his arms, and presented himself with it to the noble Count Pio of Savoy, then the (Italian) General Consul in that city, who could not offer him but words of support. These were enough to bring him knocking from door to door until he succeeded in placing the poor little orphan with the janitor of a religious house. On that occasion the idea flashed through his mind of founding an orphanage for children of Italians at São Paulo, the city of his destination."⁴

In fact, as soon as he landed he made his project and difficulties known to Father Andrea Bigioni, a Jesuit, who brought them to the attention of Count Jose' Vicente de Azevedo. The Count had happened to be, at that time, by the entrance of the church where Father Marchetti had been saying Mass. The

³ Scalabrini to Marchetti, Piacenza, December 26, 1894 (Arch. G.S., 396/1). The colony of Nova Venezia mentioned by Scalabrini was in the state of Santa Catarina; it had been founded in 1891; in 1895, of its 2,924 colonists, 2,885 were Italian. It was later incorporated into the township of Urussanga. There was another hamlet Nova Venezia in the state of Espirito Santo.

⁴ Scalabrini, *L'Italia all'Estero*, (Turin, 1899), p. 22.

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER V**

benefactor promised he would look around for a piece of land immediately; actually, on the following day he took the Missionary to "Alto do Ipiranga", the hill on which stands the Independence Memorial, and presented him with a piece of land measuring 1.408 square meter and a small chapel entitled to St. Giuseppe, and more than 50 thousand bricks he had prepared for the building of a new school.⁵ (5) They sought permission from Dom Joaquim Arcoverde de Albuquerque Cavalcanti, Bishop of São Paulo, later Archbishop of Rio de Janeiro, and first Cardinal of Brazil. But, let us hear how Father Marchetti himself reported the first news of his grandiose plans to Bishop Scalabrini:

"The environment where I have to carry on my ministry is very difficult, and I owe it to Divine Providence if I succeed in gaining favor with the Bishop of São Paulo. I spoke to him about my plans; he listened to me and took a real interest; and now twenty missionaries would hardly be enough for the most urgent needs. The idea of an orphanage met the favor of all, the Bishop, the Consul, etc. The Bishop offered a very valuable and suitable site for its construction. It is on a hill on the outskirts of the city of São Paulo. It is the right place for a building, a beautiful garden, and all. Thanks be to God! Right what I had hoped for!

Furthermore, he handed over to me a chapel with all its furnishings, and a house, right there on the property, as a residence for the priest appointed to direct the whole institution which could very well serve also as living quarters for the missionaries. It is a delight....God wanted the orphanage. I see it, I feel it, I know it! Praise to God!

I organized a committee of ladies with Countess Briscianteau, wife of the Consul, as chairlady. I give lectures to the committee, and they shed tears when I describe certain situations! And the money is not lacking! I knock at doors, go begging, work hard, preach, hear confessions, urge on everybody; but I am all alone! The harvest is great! If you could only see it! The walls are rising; in two months the framework will be completed.

Providence has indeed willed to crown my hopes, my dreams, and, maybe, even yours! Emigrants, orphans, all provided for!

However, what about the poor suffering and unfortunate sick Italians, abandoned in the "fazendas"! Let us thank the Lord! They, too, have been provided for! A hospital for Italians had been built here in São Paulo, or was actually almost completed. It was all the work of Committees, Demagoguery, and Masonry, and, therefore, it could never be finished!!

There was need of the Cross! And, I was the one to bring it there! The Italian Consul asked me to take over its direction, supervision, and accepted my suggestion to place sisters in charge of it And, lo and behold, a new nest here for my little "doves" (colombine) of Jesus. God be praised! I have here some ready for the novitiate; many of the orphan girls will become nuns, and Jesus will be glorified!

We shall expand to Minas, we shall go forth to Rio de Janeiro, to Santa Catarina, the interior of Brazil, Argentina, everywhere! Thanks be to God! The harvest is great...! Send us missionaries.

⁵ Cfr. Homenagem do Orphanato Christovam Colombo ao Fundador Padre Jose Marchetti (Homage of the Christopher Columbus Orphanage to its Founder, Father Joseph Marchetti"), (São Paulo, 1946), pp. 7-8.

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER V**

At Santos everything is now ready for a missionary to assist the immigrants! If a missionary is ready, wonderful! If not, send anybody! Two or three thousand immigrants suffer in those barracks! There are 30,000 people in Santos with only one priest who wastes his time smoking!

Now I hurry to Rio, and I shall get things ready at the Ilha das Flores and Pinciros. Means for our support are not lacking; in case, we shall suffer. (...)

I make my vows, accept them! In two or three months I shall come to place them in your hands; then I will take back with me my "Colombinas" and the missionaries, if you have them ready."⁶

It should be pointed out that this letter was written on January 31, 1895, that is, only two weeks following his arrival at São Paulo. On February 15, with construction already underway, the foundation stone of the "Christopher Columbus Orphanage" was blessed; at the same time construction of a second building was begun at Villa Prudente on a piece of land donated in part by Lady Maria do Carmo Cipariza Rodriguez.⁷ A month later Father Marchetti explained how he intended to set up his educational program:

"The Congregation intends to promote the faith, good morals, and education all the orphans, the abandoned, and the neglected, which are now in danger everywhere in the cities, especially in São Paulo. Out of these social classes girls are taken to serve in coffee shops, restaurants, etc. Out of these social classes come the vagrants, members of Masonry, criminals, etc.; in a word, all those that will spread impiety also in the countryside as missionaries of the ungodly, the lodges, etc. These classes of people must be taken care of so that of them the contrary may become true. It seems to me that it may be accomplished by the Institute I have just founded. Among the girls there will come seamstresses and teachers, that will afterwards educate children in the colonies; nuns who will assist our sick people, etc. From the boys there will come artists, school teachers, missionaries, good Catholic laymen who will assist the colonists, teach them, etc.

Now you may want to know how things stand with the orphanages, right? Both are under construction. The building for girls, one section, will cost sixty contos (150.000 liras of the time); the boys, three hundred contos (more or less 750.000 liras of the time). Well, what is this in God's Providence? I am not disheartened. After all, the builders carry on their work, and there does not remain anything else for me to do but pray, hear confessions, preach, and walk from door to door begging. From him who gives money I accept money; and from him who offers abuses I take abuses, these too are welcome. But, the money keeps coming in and the walls are rising! I foresee that within five or six months it will be possible to admit both boys and girls. Let us give thanks to the Lord!

Thus all difficulties of finding an immigration center for the priests are resolved! They shall stay here, be well accepted, gain the confidence of all, and assist the orphans. They will go preaching missions in the colonies, taking along with them the orphans; they will win the hearts and the support of the colonists, gather the vagrants of the cities, and gain the protection of the State.

And please, Rev. Bishop, do not tell me that I put too much meat on grill,

⁶ Marchetti to Scalabrini, São Paulo, January 31, 1895 (Arch. G.S., 396/1).

⁷ Cfr. *Homenagem, etc., op. cit.*, pp. 8-9.

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER V**

because the Lord who made me put it but know how to cook it. In fact, to support the orphans I am soliciting funds from the governments of Brazil, Italy, Germany, Spain, and Portugal. In order to avoid preferences, I have acted for orphans of immigrants in general.

Besides, both boys and girls will work, make clothes, shoes, furniture, all products of their crafts, that will be a source of income. Work will not be lacking because I will appoint a representative of orphanage in each colony to act as shipper of colonists' products, who will not refuse to provide a piece of bread and offer support for their little orphans. This way, relations between colonists and missionaries will be kept more lively and strong. Thanks be to God!

Moreover, I shall ask each merchant to pledge monthly for the orphans either bread, or a couple of pounds of meat or coffee. And this is another way to keep merchants and people in touch with the missionaries.

And then Divine Providence...

But the personnel? This also will come, and your Excellency shall be the one to send it. As a matter of fact, I have here three young men who are already preparing themselves in the practice of virtue, spirit of sacrifice and studies. I have also two young ladies of mature virtue who seem to be the type of those sent by God to the Venerable (Saint in 1934) Giuseppe Cottolengo; a pious lady has donated a mansion where they are every day more deeply formed in the practice of virtue under the direction of the Salesian nuns. And may the Lord be thanked! Besides, don't I have my "Colombinas" there?⁸

This letter was written on the back of a propaganda leaflet dated March 10, 1895. In it, qualifying himself as a Missionary of the "Christopher Columbus Congregation", Father Marchetti announces the founding of an orphanage where "to turn into honest workers and citizens the orphans of unfortunate immigrants who have died at sea or in the colonies leaving behind their young children" and points out that the girls section "is to be entrusted into the hands of Nuns or of Ladies of Charity of the same Congregation".

In a letter of March 29, the enterprising (and somewhat naive) Missionary reports to Bishop Scalabrini the steps taken to organize the assistance at the immigration stations, and the exercise of the priestly ministry in the colonies. Then he adds other information on the construction of the two orphanages. We point out that it was his intention to have the girls at Ipiranga, and the boys at the other building of Villa Prudente.

- I. The known plan of Consul Pio of Savoy, that is, the assignment of a priest to the immigration stations, has been done in a very satisfactory manner; we no longer need the help (handy but superfluous) of the Italian government because the support of the Brazilian government is sufficient for our purpose. So also in all other enterprises the government will favor our Congregation, whose members are no longer considered as spies, but rather as wise men to whom the Brazilian government may as well entrust the care of orphans of the immigrants it asks us to bring in. Its protection and benevolence is overwhelming. It sang my praises, and when Congress will reconvene, it will fill my pockets, because I have formed a committee all composed of Senators

⁸ Marchetti to Scalabrini, São Paulo, March 10, 1895 (Arch. G.S.,396/1).

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER V**

and Representatives. I can assure you that the difficulties our missionary would have had from the government and from the opposition of the "fazendeiros" (who are said to have objected to the presence of priests at the immigration centers for fear they may deprive them of their prey), have all been eliminated because of the orphanage.

- II. As to our residence here, the Lord has provided generously, because we do not have here just a small chapel with two rooms, but two large orphanages with two beautiful autonomous little churches where we will be able to strengthen our spirit, to train for the missions the young orphans whom God will call to the priesthood, and those children of emigrants, who though not orphans, yet feel themselves called. How happy will Your Excellency be when in a year you will see our young clerics arrive at Piacenza to prepare themselves at your side for the Priesthood and perpetual vows.

As I told you, I have opened a novitiate already, with two young men, a roman and one from La Spezia. I met the first one in Rome, he gave me a good impression, and I had him come here. So far, I have not been disappointed. The other is the son of my master builder. Following a boyhood with street urchins he found God who touched his heart at sea on his way here. Of the seventy young boys I gave first Communion to crossing the equator, my young Charles was the most moved and the most moving! God called him, he responded, and now he is fervent! O blessed that mission over the Ocean!

- III. In regard to the other question, a most delicate one, that is, autonomy from the local pastors, in some places it will be possible to obtain, but not in others where there exists a hierarchy that could not be upset without endangering the effectiveness of our mission. In any case, there will be room here also for our missionaries right because there are vast parishes, where they can be parochial vicars with no need for separations. If we had missionaries to spare then we could also open new parishes. After all, it seems to me, the work that is most demanded here for a priest is true mission work!

From the orphanage, two or three priests will go out to some parish, will gather all the people around in church, and may even succeed at times in changing the attitude of the pastors; they will bless marriages, perform baptisms, take care of their material needs, take back with them any orphan they may find, and shall finally return rich with spiritual fruits to the noise of the workshops in the midst of my earnest little rascal. Together with the young orphan they will take back with themselves the heart of that parish, and the mission shall flourish and be blessed. This is the field the Lord is preparing for our missionaries in the regions around the cities.

In the most remote places, at the immigration stations, and at sea, the field is wider, but not more fruitful. When I will have somehow rested my brains, I shall return on the subject in greater detail. As of now, I only tell you that I have done this work myself on a number of occasions, and I have gathered fruits pleasing to the Sacred Heart in abundance.

Nova Mantua, Curitiba, Nova Venezia, are waiting for a priest to sanctify them. The news of the orphanage and of the perpetual vows has made a favorable impact!

- IV. The orphanage for girls is 28 m long , 18 m wide, and 11 m high. The section now under construction is only half of the project. When completed

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER V**

later on, it will be a four sided building 28 x 36 m, with a beautiful cloister all around inside, and a chapel to St. Giuseppe in the middle.

This building rises in the middle of a piece of land, the size of almost 10,000 m², landscaped into a garden. Its position is enchanting and well suited for the scope! The government will bring the streetcar line close to the entrance, it will purposely lengthen the tracks by 400 m.

- V. The orphanage for boys will rise on the opposite hill, about one, or one and half kilometers away, in an area of 15,000 m² of land. Only the inner section is now under construction, that is, the chapel (for which we are now using a regular room) and a large refectory that will serve many purposes for the time being. Then, right afterwards, three imposing floors shall be raised. It will be a square building sixty meters on each side. However, the wings shall not be full length right away. In the cloister there will be the chapel, the refectory, etc."⁹

Sometime later, he informed Bishop Scalabrini of the arrival of Father Glesaz, and then added:

"I shall depart on the fifth or the tenth of May (...). The construction of a house for the future "Colombinas" of Jesus is well underway.

As of now, eighty girls can be admitted, lost souls, who under the wings of these "Colombinas" shall be like eighty angels. Thanks be to God!

I am engaged in negotiations to have our "Colombinas" also at the direction of Umberto I Hospital that will soon be opened. Sick immigrants will be admitted to it; why should not our "Colombinas" take charge of it? Our mission will thus be complete. It takes the emigrants, helps them along to ports of embarkation, assists them on their voyage, takes care of their orphans, provides kind attention and comfort to the sick, finds them work, keeps visiting them, dries their tears, and follows them back to their native land (...).

As to the "Colombinas", for the time being they shall be known as "Ladies of Charity"; when proven ready, they will form a true congregation. They are much needed, and I feel that Jesus wants them to provide for the needs of emigration to which the priests could not otherwise attend.

In July, my mother will sail together with my sister and two novices, now in Florence to train their souls in the love of God and in the spirit of sacrifice; two are here; and so, we shall have seven or eight of them." ¹⁰

As we see, Father Marchetti had convinced his mother and his sister, Assunta, to follow him into the mission field and devote themselves totally to the service of emigrants, especially, orphans, the abandoned and the sick.

Father Glesaz remained only a few days in São Paulo, but preferred to go back to Genoa. Father Marchetti was informed by him that Bishop Scalabrini was to soon send eight missionaries to Brazil, and he reported the news to the Bishop of São Paulo, who solicited their departure. Fr. Marchetti had in mind to assign them as follows: one to Perdizes, another to São Bernardo, ("a large community extending from the city almost to Santos"), two with himself at the orphanage to take care of Italians in the city, ("who are very many and most in need"), one or two at the mission of Curitiba, if only to prevent Fr. Colbacchini from going

⁹ Marchetti to Scalabrini, São Paulo, January 31, 1895 (Arch. G.S., 396/1).

¹⁰ Marchetti to Scalabrini, São Paulo, April 4, 1895 (Arch. G.S.,396/1).

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER V**

back there (*"he has left a sad impression here, and I do not know exactly why; perhaps because he was unable to find more conciliating ways for his zeal"*); one or two to Rio de Janeiro for Ilha das Flores and Nova Mantua.¹¹ But, then he was later informed by Fr. Glesaz that Bishop Scalabrini intended for the time being to send some missionaries only to Paran , and he complained presenting to him a different view than Fr. Colbacchini's:

"My mission is about complete, but I have to point out what will come of it should two of our priests be assigned to Paran , four to Rio de Janeiro, four to S o Paulo, and two to Santa Catarina, etc. If one is to be pastor here, and another there, as I said, nothing will be accomplished. This or that colony only will benefit, they will enjoy the good luck of having a missionary, but what about the others? They will still languish as before!

Instead, if each province had a mother house where ten or twelve priests could live together, they would be sufficient to attend to the temporal and the spiritual interests of Italian immigrants. They could go forth two by two into all communities and ranches, remain with them ten to fifteen days, strengthen their faith, purify their consciences, raise crosses; in short, they could preach missions as the zealous Missionaries of Saint Paul of the Cross are doing in our countryside in Italy.

This does not exclude, however, that some be assigned to be pastors in larger colonies, especially those close to the cities where masonry is causing immense ruin."¹²

In the same letter he was informing that his departure for Italy would be on August 15, but he arrived in October. He took along his mother, Caroline Marchetti nee Ghilardetti, his sister Assunta, and two young ladies from Compignano, Mary Franceschini and Angela Larini. On October 24 he presented them to Bishop Scalabrini. We quote here the story of the event written immediately afterwards by an eye witness, Father Giuseppe Benedetti, pastor of Capezzano, and published in the L'Esare of Lucca:

"I boarded the coach also, and went with them as far as Piacenza. I witnessed Bishop Scalabrini embracing Father Marchetti. He gave me the impression of Saint Francis de Sales welcoming one of his beloved disciples. Those two fervent hearts understood each other when speaking words of apostles. The meaning of their conversation could be drawn from the tears shining in their eyes...

In the meantime, from the hospice for deaf and dumb girls, where they were hosted, the new servants of orphans and derelicts walked over to the Bishop's residence. The welcome was worthy of a saint, zealous for the glory of God. He spoke at length with the Superior assuring her that son's Institution with their own cooperation would be providential for the salvation of those people in distant lands. At the conclusion of the meeting, he confirmed and extended the faculties of Fr. Marchetti, and invited all to his private chapel for a Mass at seven the following morning, when they would take their vows! At seven o'clock they were all in chapel. The Bishop gets ready for the Holy Sacrifice. The missionaries, priest and sisters, are recollected in profound contemplation until

¹¹ Marchetti to Scalabrini, S o Paulo, April 12, 1895 (Arch. G.S.,396/1).

¹² Marchetti to Scalabrini, S o Paulo, June 14, 1895 (Arch. G.S., 396/1).

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER V**

the master of ceremonies intones the Confiteor. At that moment, the fervent Bishop turns with the host in his hands and proclaims the words, Behold the Lamb of God. He then stands there waiting in silence. Fr. Giuseppe prostrates himself before the Blessed Sacrament, and visibly moved pronounces with a clear voice these approximate words: I, Giuseppe Marchetti, called to the honor of the Catholic apostolate, before Almighty God here present under the Eucharistic species, make Perpetual vows of chastity, obedience, and poverty. O Jesus, bless me and grant that these vows, you have inspired in me, be my strength in life, my comfort in death, and my crown in eternity. The Bishop gives Holy Communion to the Sisters, and concludes the Mass. Then he puts on the miter, blesses the crucifixes, and pronounces a brief exhortation to the missionary Sisters. Immediately afterwards, one of them, also with moving words, speaks the following in the name of all:

'Though unworthy, we, Carola Marchetti, Assunta Marchetti, Maria Franceschini, and Angela Larini, called by Divine Providence to the honor of the Catholic apostolate, take an oath of fidelity to our Heavenly Spouse, and make temporary vows of chastity, obedience, and poverty...' The Bishop, almost in tears, turned to the new apostles, and in presenting each a crucifix says: 'Behold the indivisible companion of your apostolic peregrinations, your comfort, your strength, your salvation,' and he places it around the neck of the new brides of Christ.

Then, he accepts their pledge of obedience, blesses them in tears, presents them with a book on the life of Father Perboyre as a source of inspiration, embraces them, a kiss to Fr. Marchetti, and the rite is over. We all have breakfast at the Bishop's residence, climb back into the coach, and off again to the train.

The joy bursting out of their hearts brings a heavenly smile to their lips; all difficulties fade away; the passengers are all caught up with their enthusiasm. A young lady asks to join the Servants of orphans and derelicts, a pastor burns with the desire to spend the rest of his life in the new apostolate, the Star of the Sea guides them, above the noise of the locomotive a cry rings out: "Long live Mary!" With this hurray of joy we arrive at Genoa. A crowd of emigrants rejoice to have them along as wonderful companions of their trip. Soon enough in the vast expanses of Brazil, the orphans too will rejoice, and derelicts will exalt."¹³

Bishop Scalabrini delegated Father Marchetti to receive the Sisters' renewal of their vows for another six months, and then for a year, and entrusted him with the task of writing a rule after the pattern of the Rule of Saint Francis de Sales for the Visitation's nuns.¹⁴

Father Marchetti and the "Servants of Charity" embarked on the ship "*Fortunata Raggio*", and sailed on October 27, 1895. On their voyage across the sea they taught catechism to many children of the emigrants and eighty three of them were admitted to First Communion. They landed at Santos on November 20 and arrived at São Paulo in the afternoon of the same day. At first, the "Servants" were guests of the House of Mercy directed by the Sisters of St. Giuseppe, and then of Jose' Vicente de Azevedo. In the meanwhile they were

¹³ E. Benedetti, "La Partenza di P. Marchetti" ("Departure of Father Marchetti"), *L'Esare* (Lucca), anno XI, No. 249, October 30, 1891, p. 1.

¹⁴ Sister Assunta Marchetti and her companions to Scalabrini, São Paulo, December 28, 1900 (Arch. G.S., 103/4).

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER V**

summoned to an audience with the Bishop of São Paulo. The Christopher Columbus Orphanage in Ipiranga was dedicated on December 8, 1895, feast of the Immaculate Conception. Fr. Marchetti reported the event to Bishop Scalabrini on December 12, asking for the necessary faculties, in writing, both in regard to the "Servants" and the mission. He called also for the help of other missionaries because he had to make the rounds of the colonies to support the orphans, while providing a precious apostolate for Italians; but, in the meantime, the orphanage remained without a priest to supervise it for varied periods of time. The priest had to walk all night sometimes in order to be back in the morning on time to say Mass.¹⁵

A month later he informed Bishop Scalabrini that the government had provided him with water free of charge through a long pipe purposely constructed, a teacher of Portuguese, medicines, and exemption from taxes, and again, he reminded him of the need for help:

"I had to buy a horse because my legs do not want to respond to my mind and heart! How sad it is to be all alone! Are you still to tarry any longer perhaps, Rev. Bishop, my most loving father, before showing compassion to this poor priest?! The need of this mission here in São Paulo is overwhelming! One priest here, and another there, do not accomplish anything, so as also the Jesuits, the Salesians, and the Capuchins, etc., would not have accomplished anything. Parishes are the tomb of the spirit of our Congregation.

On my part, I cannot continue this way, and you know it, not because there may be any lack of spirit or determination, but because my legs, stomach and head cannot hold out."¹⁶

At last, in March 1896 he received a letter from Bishop Scalabrini. This was his answer:

"Thanks be to God! How wrong of me to complain! It was all due to postal mishaps, and what mishaps! Anyway, I have your letter now, and I am happy and, the Bishop as well."¹⁷

With the answer, he also informed to Scalabrini that he "*had laid the foundation of another building for the most derelicts, close to the orphanage of Ipiranga*", that is, as he was explaining a little further, for the retarded and the deaf and mute. Then, follows the description of the type of missions he was conducting, at the same time, on behalf of Italian farmers in the interior of the state.

"In the thirty days I spent visiting the interior, the Lord gave me the opportunity to preach 72 sermons, to hear the confessions of and give communion to 2600 people, to bless countless marriages, and what counts the most to admit 720 adults to First Communion, some of them married, newly wed, and almost all over 16 years old: all of them Italian. I was expected to die; Jesus, instead, made me gain weight to show more openly that the work is His."¹⁸

At last the Bishop of São Paulo had also received a letter from by Bishop

¹⁵ Marchetti to Scalabrini, São Paulo, December 12, 1895 (Arch. G.S., 396/1).

¹⁶ Marchetti to Scalabrini, São Paulo, January 12, 1896 (Arch. G.S., 396/1).

¹⁷ Marchetti to Scalabrini, São Paulo, March 17, 1896 (Arch. G.S., 396/1)

¹⁸ Ibid.

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER V**

Scalabrini four months before. Here is his answer:

"I am very pleased with the work of your Father Marchetti. In the beginning, due to inexperience and young age (too young in fact), he has made some mistakes and practical blunders, but now that he has learned to know men and difficulties, he is doing very well and works as a true apostle. God keep him always in the same spirit! On my part, I shall do all I can for the Congregation of St. Charles and for the "Servants of the Derelicts."¹⁹

On March 19, Fr. Marchetti saw at last the arrival of a missionary, Father Dominic Vicentini; he, however, was only passing through on his way to Rio Grande do Sul. In expressing to Bishop Scalabrini his disappointment in still being left without help, he informed him that he had opened the workshops, was expecting from Italy the musical instruments for the band, and had plans for a permanent "Retreat House" and for the Novitiate of the Sisters.²⁰

On the same date, Fr. Vicentini reported to Bishop Scalabrini on the progress of the works at Ipiranga and Villa Prudente:

"The building has not been completed, but work is proceeding fast. It is sufficient for the need. While this house is being completed, work has begun on another grandiose project at Villa Prudente, for boys only; the building of Ipiranga is reserved for girls and infants. A bakery is functioning already. Besides making bread for the house, it serves also the people in the city with some profit for the orphanage. There is also a shoemaker shop. These crafts, and others planned, shall be relocated in due time at Villa Prudente, about six kilometers away. The sisters lead a life of sacrifice, which is of great service to the orphanage; for sure, nothing could be done for these little ones without them.

Of course, the organization is quite far from being perfect and orderly, but what was accomplished in such a short time is certainly miraculous.

He (Father Marchetti) assures me he has no debts; rather, he actually has a substantial fund set aside to carry on his works. He is all zeal and faith in Divine Providence, ever hoping for new donations. No doubt, he has great need of them if he is to carry his projects through.

To be sure, I am not in a position to make a judgement on the good success of his plans, but he is certainly in absolute need of personnel. He must frequently move around the vast Province of São Paulo for priestly ministry and to collect donations, while the orphanage remains without a priest for weeks on end."²¹

In a successive letter to Father Molinari, Fr. Vicentini expressed some criticism in regard to F. Marchetti:

"Up to this point he has done much, and people seem to appreciate his work, at least from what he says, with many words and some bosting. He cares for forty orphans already and has under construction another orphanage for boys as the one he directs now shall be set aside for girls only.

As of now, I do not know what to make of it, but the strange set-up of the new kind of convent of the sisters founded by Fr. Marchetti is worth some criticism. In it live his mother, one sister who is a nun and another who is a widow of two

¹⁹ Dom J. Arcoverde to Scalabrini, São Paulo, February 19, 1896 (Arch. G.S., 396/1).

²⁰ Marchetti to Scalabrini, São Paulo, March 25, 1896 (Arch. G.S., 396/1).

²¹ Vicentini to Scalabrini, São Paulo, March 3, 1896 (Arch. G.S., 396/1).

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER V**

*months and is in an advanced state of pregnancy (!!). There are also two small sisters, 9 and 3 years old; he has placed another one, who is 15, in a boarding school of São Paulo. Living with him to his also one of his brothers who works in the bakery for a salary. In addition to all these relatives, there are also two postulants. I am not pleased with all these relatives around him. No doubt, they may be a big help to Fr. Marchetti and his work, but certainly I would not have it function under the sponsorship of any congregation, be it even the Congregation of the Missionaries of St. Charles."*²²

Bishop Scalabrini also complained that Fr. Marchetti had surrounded himself with too many relatives, but he was saying at the same time that this was the only trouble borne on him by that "holy missionary"²³. The "nuns" were four: Caroline Marchetti (who was never to make a true religious profession), administrator of the orphanage; Assunta Marchetti, procurator; Angela Larini, the nurse; Mary Franceschini, in charge of postulants. His two sisters, Angela and Elvira were serving respectively as a cook and as a teacher of the girls. Angelo Priulo, a seminarian, was teaching the boys. Mr. Oswald Dinucci was the secretary of the Institution.²⁴

In June 1896, unable to remain any longer without help. Fr. Marchetti had decided to return to Piacenza "to renew his vows, for advice, and other things,"²⁵ but in the meantime, he had to undertake a long tour of the colonies:

*"I have been travelling sixty five days" - he writes - "through forests infested with yellow fever."*²⁶

Father Mark Simoni, with whom he intended to preach a "great mission" beginning in October was about to arrive.²⁷ But, the priest did not show up. Fr. Marchetti wanted to have him also because he had in mind to begin publishing the "Bollettino Colombiano" to be printed by the presses installed at the orphanage.²⁸

The 27 year old priest, however was already reaching at the end of his incredible mission, whose explanation is found in the two vows he took in October 3, 1896:

- I. To be always a victim of his neighbor for the love of God.
- II. Not to waste so much as a quarter of an hour doing nothing!"²⁹

Immediately afterwards, he was off on a mission at Jahú that would burn out his remaining energies. Fr. Faustino Consoni recalls:

"We saw him return from the last mission of Jahú in early November 1896 suffering from rheumatic pains and an insidious slight fever that was to carry him to his grave; the spirit was willing, but the flesh was by now weak. Up to the very last moment he gave his attention to the good management of the institution; though weighed down with the symptoms of death in his body, he

²² Vicentini to Molinari, Santos, March 30, 1896 (Arch. G.S., 396/1).

²³ Scalabrini to Consoni, Piacenza, April 12, 1897 (Arch. G.S., 3023/2).

²⁴ Cfr. *L'Italia* (São Paulo), October 23, 1896 (Arch. G.S., 1572/1).

²⁵ Marchetti to Scalabrini, São Paulo, June 14, 1896 (Arch. G.S., 396/1).

²⁶ Marchetti to Molinari, Campinas, August 18, 1896 (Arch. G.S., 396/1).

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Marchetti to Scalabrini, Riberão Preto, October 12, 1896 (Arch. G.S., 396/1).

²⁹ Form of vows of Marchetti, October 3, 1896 (Arch. G.S., 1572/1).

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER V**

promptly responded to the call of his ministry, ready to go wherever he was requested to assist the sick, so much so that he went one day to hear the confession of a sick lady at Villa Marianna who was to die on the same day as he."³⁰

On November 28, had to give in! He was sick with typhus. Health authorities isolated the sick man in a little house close to the orphanage on December 6. At last, on December 14 a missionary arrived to help him. Father Natale Pigato, wondering why no one was there to meet him, and more so, why the orphanage was so silent, entered to find the "poor orphans and sisters all gathered around the altar of Our Lady of Pompeii praying with tears for the health, for the life of their Superior and Father, the Rev. Giuseppe Marchetti."³¹

That same evening Father Natale had written Father Molinari a long report on his trip, but he had to open again the letter to add another sad note:

"I open this letter to give you the sad and sorrowful news of the loss of our beloved confrere Father Giuseppe Marchetti. I had not finished sealing the envelope when someone called me to assist him in his last agony. But, I was unable to get near him in the last moments because everyone was forbidden to enter. However, a priest, a close friend of his, had been here to assist him a few days ago; he had gone straight to the house where the sick man was lying, and administered him the last comforts of our Holy Religion (...). Father Giuseppe was granted sufficient time to dispose of all his things, he receive absolution, and then as peaceful as a turtle dove, he departed for heaven tonight at about six o'clock. A saint has died. He was ready for heaven; God wanted him in his eternal rest.

So exhausted, worn out with fatigue, consumed by the continual sacrifices for his orphans, never resting day or night in order to provide for their needs, he ended his life entrusting them into the hands of Divine Providence.

And now, who will take care of them? Who will assist them, and provide for them? One hundred and eighty orphans are going to be a great responsibility for anyone that will have charge of them! The situation of this institution is, at present, such a vast and involved mystery as I would never be able to fathom."³²

Father Pigato sent a telegram to Bishop Scalabrini who promised him to send another missionary immediately. In the meantime, he made all efforts to overcome his first moments of disorientation:

"It is a fact that Father Marchetti was a prodigious man and has truly performed miraculous deeds in every respect. All alone as he was, with no financial means, and often met with opposition from within, so that the saying 'a man's enemies are those of his household' (Mi. 7, 6) had in him its fulfillment, he succeeded, nonetheless, in accomplishing so much as to make it hard for anyone ever to believe it unless he should come here to see and find out for himself.

This institution shall remain as a perennial testimonial for posterity, to the glory

³⁰ Consoni, "Il Missionario e l'Orfano", in Special Issue: Orphanato Christovam Colombo, Commemorazione della Morte di P. Giuseppe Marchetti ("On Marchetti's Anniversary", São Paulo, December 14, 1902), p. 2.

³¹ Pigato to Molinari, São Paulo, December 14, 1896 (Arch. G.S., 396/2).

³² Ibid.

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER V**

of God, the honor of the Catholic religion, and the credit of the departed missionary Father Marchetti, how great was his faith, charity, and spirit of sacrifice on behalf of orphans, poor widows, and anyone in need, who had recourse to him. We must admit that he was guided by a supernatural light and was helped from above in a totally extraordinary manner. Indeed, we must admit with the universal consent of the citizens of the State of São Paulo, from the highest ecclesiastical and civil authorities to the most humble of the people that Father Marchetti is truly a saint: he now rests in heaven.

These words are not mine, they are the words of the Bishop of São Paulo himself! On my part, I invoke him to insure his protection on our behalf!

But, considering the magnitude of the work initiated by Fr. Marchetti less than two years ago and brought by him to a good point, but not completed because of his premature death that overtook him at the time when he could reap abundant fruits, you can very well imagine in what predicaments he has left us and how I feel in these first moments of my arrival to this land altogether new to me. Far from me to accuse him of any wrong doing, ever! He deserves, rather, all credit before God and man. Had he lived a few years longer, with his remarkable talents and driving zeal, he would have taken care of everything without difficulty or trouble! He felt sure of himself because he could frankly claim having the whole State of São Paulo in the palm of his hand (...).

Faced, however, with such a confused state of affairs and unfinished business at home and abroad, I could not bear upon myself to remain in this house any longer. I called three times on the Bishop of this region to tender my resignation with the intention to pack and go. I had no luck; on the contrary, by common approval of both church and state authorities, much against my will, I was charged with the spiritual and temporal administration, both at home and outside of the whole institution of the Christopher Columbus orphanage. But only for a time! That is, until His Excellency, the Bishop of Piacenza, will decide and provide on the matter. Now, on hearing that a new director is on his way over, I thank the Lord (...).

I had a long talk with His Excellency Guidi, the Apostolic Internuncio, who was returning from a visit to the parishes of Fr. Faustino and Francis. He spoke highly edified by what they are doing, and told me the sad story of Father Colbacchini.

I paid a visit to the Minister of the Interior, the President of the State and the Secretary of Agriculture. Then I went to see the Italian Consul, and many other influential and important people. They all had for me words of comfort, encouragement, and support to continue the work of Father Marchetti. Besides, I collected five "contos", with promise of another eight to be received later, for our daily needs.

While visiting great and rich people, I was able to find out many subscriptions by which they pledge themselves to contribute monthly a certain amount of "contos" for a number of months."³³

One month later, the new secretary of the Orphanage, Giuseppe Santanello, gave a more detailed report "on the state of affairs which everyone thought to be good at first. But then, upon careful examination they showed instead to be

³³ Pigato to Molinari, São Paulo, December 25, 1896 (Arch. G.S., 396/2).

disastrous and thorny". From the inventory it was found that the real estate and personal property could be valued at 260 "contos", while the debt amounted to 80 "contos".

*"Debts were pressing, and one had to get busy and pay them, also in view of a certain scary mood that had overtaken many demanding creditors. There was no money left; moreover, Father Pigato began his administration borrowing 86 liras from a priest friend of his who happened to be there (...). Within a month of steady, unrelentless, risky and hard work, Fr. Natale was able to pay off eight thousand liras on the most urgent and worrying debts and provide for the support of the community requiring between three to four thousand liras a month. Besides, with heaven's favor, ten more orphans were added from the colonies to our large family."*³⁴

2. Father Faustino Consoni

On January 15, 1897, Bishop Scalabrini wrote to Fr. Faustino Consoni who had been a few months at Santa Felicidade, Paraná:

"Dear Faustino,

I have appointed you to take the place of Fr. Giuseppe Marchetti. He was a saint, and will certainly help you from above in carrying on the work which he began. Fr. Natale Pigato will replace you, and the excellent Father Simoni will remain with you in São Paulo. I am sure that keeping in absolute dependence from the local venerable and able Bishop you will succeed (...).

Depart immediately with Fr. Mark for São Paulo, and if, as is quite possible, you should need another missionary, we shall see to it that one is sent as soon as possible. It is the most important mission of our Congregation, and we must do all we can to keep it.

*Dear son, the Lord inspires me with great trust in your work, and you, I am sure, shall obey with joy, and God will give you the strength to overcome all obstacles."*³⁵

Father Simoni, the bearer of this letter, left for Brazil the following day, January 16, and after a brief stay in Paraná, he reached, together with Father Consoni, São Paulo, to serve as Vice Rector of the Orphanage. The two missionaries arrived at Ipiranga on March 4, 1897. The following day, Father Consoni called on Bishop Dom Joaquim Arcoverde de Albuquerque Cavalcanti who made some remarks on the administration of Father Marchetti. He ordered him not to leave the community at least for a month in order to establish an accurate control over the situation, and promised he would write a circular letter of support to pastors and "fazendeiros", as he actually did on March 12. Father Consoni called also on the President of the State, who kindly welcomed him promising his support, though not immediately because it was a time of turmoil brought about by unrest in Bahia and a revolt in São Paulo.³⁶

Both Fathers Consoni and Simoni patterned their administration after Father

³⁴ Santanello to Molinari, São Paulo, January 31, 1897 (Arch. G.S. • 396/2).

³⁵ Scalabrini to Consoni, Piacenza, January 15, 1897 (Arch. G.S. , 3023/2).

³⁶Consoni to Scalabrini, São Paulo, March 9, 1897 (Arch. G.S. , 396/3).

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER V**

Marchetti's, taking turns in long tours through the "fazendas" even when their legs were covered with sores. Here we have the report of the first missionary tour of Father Simoni:

"I arrived at Riberão Preto on the evening of the 5th of this month. The Rev. Pastor welcomed me kindly and put me up for the night. Early, the following morning I left for Cravinhos; there I called on the foreman of the agricultural company. Can you recall the scene of Father Cristoforo and Don Rodrigo? I do not need to tell you more! I acted with all kindness; I showed him his pledge paper, but his answer was that the farmers had not responded well in their obligations, this was hardly the time for my visit, and the farmers were too busy in other concerns. Then, with a Don Rodrigo's attitude, he served me notice that the missionary was not to go there before a three month period. As to his pledge, he said he would not give all of it, as he would work out, rather, an average between the profit realized by workers that carried out their job well and those who did not. With that he gave me five hundred milreis, and remained obstinate in his decision. I thought it better to accept the money and I gave him the receipt. I entreated him kindly to give me a man along with a horse to carry my luggage, but he was almost about to refuse saying that his men had to be busy with the coffee. However, he let me have him finally! And I was grateful to the Lord for it as I would not have known at all how to get out of that God-forsaken place. When they saw me coming, the colonists rejoiced, and I was hoping to find much goodwill, but when they found out I was leaving, some of them cried. But what could I do! We need patience. I returned to Cravinhos on foot with my unhappy janitor who was complaining all the time.

When I arrived at Cravinhos I left my luggage at the hotel of an Italian who gave me a hearty welcome, and I was off on foot through the neighboring colonies to find out whether the "fazendeiros" would allow me to say Mass and make a collection. I walked for about eight hours under the sun, and made it through four "fazendas". I found all the landowners well disposed, and all of them treated me to a drink. I went back to Cravinhos, and early on the sixth, at two past midnight I left on foot with luggage on my back directed to the "fazenda" of Antonio Azevedo e Souza at Paude Alho.

To the great edification of the people, I said Mass, I heard the confession of almost all of them, gave more than fifty Communions, and collected 92,400 milreis.

Today, Sunday, I am at the "fazenda" of Emiliano Alves de Cunha in Agua Branca. After Mass I heard many confessions and collected 51.920 milreis from the colonists. Not much; I was disappointed. The "fazendeiro" is a very good man, but so far....nothing. I hope by tomorrow morning! He asked me to bless his house and machinery.

Up to now I was unable to send you anything because I had no way to do it. At the first opportunity, I shall send in all I have. The total is 902 liras. What hardships and humiliation and patience!

So far, I have met with only two bad "fazendeiros"; all others I found kind and generous. No one of them gave less than fifty liras, and one contributed one hundred."³⁷

³⁷ Simoni to Consoni, Plantation Agua Branca, May 9, 1897 (Arch. G.S., 396/3).

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III CHAPTER V

In the two months of June and July he made a tour of the colonies between São Paulo and Santos; when Fr. Marco returned home, Father Faustino spent a month at the communities of Jaú, several hundred kilometers from São Paulo; Father Marco conducted a mission of 45 days in the months of September and October.³⁸ From the middle of October to the middle of November Father Consoni went begging through the city, in spite of a rather serious heart attack he suffered on the feast of St. Charles. He held out up to the night of November 14. After the commemoration of the first anniversary of Father Marchetti's death, he had to go to bed with a high fever and a dreadful headache³⁹; he was sick with typhus, and was forcibly brought to the hospital. Discharged too soon, perhaps, in January 1898 he suffered a relapse which he considered providential; in fact, in the course of his sickness, a former seminarian applied for admission to the Orphanage. He had asked to join the Congregation and was about to leave for Italy, but Father Consoni stopped him on time after receiving information from the Archbishop that the youth had on one occasion attempted at the life of the rector of the seminary. Father Peter Dotto, who had just arrived from Italy with Brother G.B. Guerra, told him in the lobby of the Orphanage that Father Faustino was sick and could not see him. The young madman pushed his way through waving a razor and threatening revenge.

*"I informed the Police" - wrote Fr. Consoni - "and they are willing to provide any assistance needed to save my life. My present conditions do not allow me to go back to São Paulo but when I will feel up to it I shall not refrain from going there because of this madman. Should I fall a victim to his dagger, I shall willingly die, happy to know, at least, that a ravenous wolf will not have entered the sheep's fold."*⁴⁰

Once back on his feet he continued his tours through the "fazendas"; he even went on a seven day tour of the State of Espirito Santo with the Bishop of Victoria. In his report sent to Bishop Scalabrini we read the following interesting passage:

"I was told that Fr. Peter Maldotti has published a book on emigration. I dare ask Your Excellency to, please, send me some copies, if you have them available, as I greatly wish to read it, also to find out whether he might have incurred any mistake that may cause difficulties for our missions here about which he does not have much information. I wanted to tell this to Your Excellency because of inaccuracies I found in a biography of Fr. Marchetti written by a Priest of Lucca."⁴¹ I did not neglect pointing them out to him. Fr. Maldotti concluded a letter to Consul Gioja with a statement that savored too much of socialism. The Consul himself made some comments about it. Let the good Lord take care of things; let us defend the rights of emigrants but without arousing the natives to anger; it does not belong to us, who must teach love and

³⁸ Consoni to Molinari, Jaú, July 22, 1897 (Arch. G.S., 3 6/3).

³⁹ Santanello to Scalabrini, São Paulo, December 12, 1897 (Arch. G.S., 396/3).

⁴⁰ Consoni to Molinari, São Paulo, February 16, 1898 (Arch. G. .S, 396/3). Cfr. Dotto to Molinari, São Paulo, February 14, 1898. (Arch. G.S396/4).

⁴¹ Reference to pamphlet: Nell'Esequie Solenni del Missionario Giuseppe Marchetti celebrate nella Chiesa del Suffragio di Lucca il 3 aprile 1897. Elogio detto dal Prof. Giuliano Pisani. (Lucca 1897) - (Funeral Rites for Father Joseph Marchetti. Eulogy by Giuliano Pisani").

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III CHAPTER V

*charity, to cause divisions in the Brazilian forces, because hatred and bad reputation would then fall on our Congregation. I do not compromise either, and when preaching my poor and plain missions, I point out to the "fazendeiros" the serious obligation they have to treat justly our Italians, the only ones that indeed make Brazil rich; but, I would never allow myself to put down in writing what takes place in the "fazendas". Anytime I discover some difficulty amongst the farmers, abuses or anything, I call on the Consul to inform him secretly about it. This way I succeed in taking care of many abuses."*⁴²

We have two reports on conditions at the Orphanage in 1899: the first belongs to Mr. Gioja, the Italian Consul of São Paulo, the other belongs to Clementino de Souza e Castro, "the judge of orphans" at the court of São Paulo. The Consul wrote thus to Bishop Scalabrini:

"In the two years of my residence here I was able to witness for myself the remarkable and charitable work of the Christopher Columbus Orphanage administered by the Fathers of St. Charles of Piacenza. In it more than 160 little orphans, in greater part Italians, are freely housed, fed, and educated who would otherwise remain abandoned and lost.

*Such important and beneficial results are due to the genuinely Christian, loving, and fatherly care of Father Consoni and his staff. Travelling in adverse hardships and enduring privations of all kinds, they take turns in visiting the colonies scattered all over this immense State where so many Italian families live, bringing everywhere a word of comfort and counsel while collecting the spontaneous donations for the orphanage. This way, and with the contributions they may secure from the Government of this State and from the generosity of benefactors, they are able to meet the high costs they have to contend with while confidently continuing to direct, improve, and expand that charitable institution, the precious heritage of the late beloved Father Marchetti."*⁴³

In September 1899 the "Judge of Orphans" made public this statement:

⁴² Consoni to Scalabrini, São Paulo, October 22, 1898, (Arch. G.S., 396/3).

We must point out another incident that took place in 1902. It concerns Cav. Adolph Rossi, extraordinary Commissioner for Italian emigration in Brazil. He called on Father Consoni with a letter of recommendation by Father Maldotti desiring to visit "incognito" the colonies disguised as sexton of the Scalabrinian Missionaries:

"He expressed the desire to visit the plantations of the State's interior to study and find out at close range the needs of our colonists while accompanying our missionaries disguised as sexton. This desire, on the surface neither too demanding nor risky did not, as in fact it could not, obtain approval. After all, this orphanage was founded with and continues to exist by the support of the public, and for the greater part it is the Italian colonists and the plantation owners that contribute to it. Now, in case I had gone along with the scheme devised by Mr. Rossi, and should it sooner or later be discovered because of reports the Commissioner would send to the government, what would be the consequences for the poor Orphanage!? One way or other, my part in it would appear blameworthy, and I would have doors shut in my face that are now wide open!

I gave all these reasons to both Mr. Rossi and Consul Monaco; they were convinced and understood my position. Besides, I told those gentlemen that we, the missionaries, are welcomed and helped by those good and charitable landowners and that they treat their farmhands justly. The fazendeiros who leave much to be desired stay behind locked doors and do not allow the poor missionaries even so much as to lift the morale of their unfortunate and abused laborers. In such circumstances, why should I allow the comedy of impersonating a sexton devised by Mr. Rossi? (...).

Now Mr. Rossi has left for a tour of only a few plantations, visiting, inquiring, and gathering useful data needed later on to bring about those fitting and practical remedies that may safeguard the dignity and the interests of the laborers and their families." (Consoni to Scalabrini, Sao Paulo, February 10, 1902, Arch. G.S., 396/3).

We know that consequent to Rossi's report, a decree, the so-called "Prinetti Decree", was enacted by the Italian government, forbidding free emigration to Brazil. The decree received varied interpretations; in any case it marked the sudden decline of Italian emigration to Brazil. In 1901, there were 82,159 emigrants; in 1902, 11,728 entered Brazil on their own, and 17,167 with a paid ticket; in 1903, only 9,444 entered and at their own expense.

⁴³ Gioja to Scalabrini, São Paulo, February 5, 1899 (Arch. G.S., 396/4).

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER V

"A few months ago, I spontaneously decided to pay a visit to the Orphanage. My first impression was one of poverty. When he arrived in this capital to found this Institution, Fr. Marchetti had no funds. He sought out public and private support, and with the few donations he was collecting little by little, built the present building where he began to take care of the poor children he was admitting.

Father Marchetti's intention, well I know, was to found a great institution at Villa Prudente, with sections for boys and girls, and by the time death overtook him, he had indeed succeeded in laying the foundation of a great enterprise.

The present building was built on a temporary basis as provisional living quarters until another one would be made ready.

Knowing well its origin and purpose, the impression I received of the building could not be the impression of any stranger visiting it for the first time.

As to its internal life, here is what I have to say. I saw a hall where several children are sheltered, one year old and older, all afflicted by congenital ailments, some born blind, others extremely frail, and still others crippled, etc. This vision, which would give an impression of disgust to people unused to seeing misery and misfortune, was for me the one that above all others impressed my spirit with the greatness of Fr. Marchetti's work.

It is sheltered did not exist, where would these children be? What other institution in this State or in this Capital take in poor children, and especially such as these?!

Besides these, I was able to visit all the other guests, all glad and happy; I sat down at their classes and meals; I visited also the dormitories, noticing however that the walls had not yet been plastered. The director assured me that plans are underway already to take care of it. As a whole, I did not see anything that could give me any bad impression.

At the time of my visit, there were about 170 guests, boys and girls, 12 years old and younger; the girls, a smaller group, in a separate section; but all busy in different crafts and arts, music included, all healthy and able to read and write.

I was told that the institution does not receive any monthly or annual subsidy, does not request any compensation for boarding or clothing, and only accepts the charitable donations people are willing to give, including used clothes.

The institution was then receiving a grant of six thousand milreis from the Public Treasury which was increased to 12 contos last year. I am informed that it has been further raised to 18 contos for the next year; it is still way below the needs, however.

In concluding I will say that one cannot wish for more than what its directors are doing in an institution which cares for so many people with resources dependent on public charity, which is so much in need of organization in our country.

I experienced, besides, an impression of both sadness and satisfaction: sadness in witnessing the poverty existing there; satisfaction at seeing these unfortunate children, so much neglected by us, sheltered in an Institution respondent to their lot.

Such were my impressions! But, as a judge of the juvenile court, I have also to bear witness to the fact, and I do so also on the authority of my colleague Doctor

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER V**

*Jose Maria Bourroul, that the Christopher Columbus Orphanage is absolutely the only institution in this Capital city that accepts minor delinquents sent to them by the judge: I repeat, the only one."*⁴⁴

On May 30, 1899 Father Louis Zanchi and Brothers Leonard Del Bianco and Bartholomew Celoria came to their help. The first (who devoted himself especially to the spiritual direction of the institution) remained until November 1906. The latter was to devote 61 years of his life to the Orphanage where he died on October 19, 1960. Fr. Simoni, however, was recalled to Italy to help Fr. Giuseppe Molinari who was in very poor health; in fact, he was to succeed him temporarily until Father Bartholomew Rolleri's return in August 1900.

At São Paulo, consequently, toil and struggle were beginning to be unbearable.

*"The poor Sisters are making incredible sacrifices, and the string is bound to snap when it is too tight! So, I have three of them sick, already. My confreres also are working as true apostles, and reap a rich harvest of souls. Only this month, Father Louis gave Communion to over four thousand people in the municipality of Jahú, ministered three thousand Confirmations, blessed common-law and civil marriages by the hundreds, and sent twelve thousand liras to the Orphanage. Father Peter Dotto, also on a mission through the plantations of Jaboticabal with Brother Bartholomew Celoria, writes that this is the first time in twelve years a priest has set foot there. On the 25th of this month I will leave on a mission in Portuguese at the city of Jahú by invitation of the pastor. He gives me complete freedom in regard to preaching and ministering Confirmation to Italians, because Father Luigi has already visited more than one hundred plantations in that parish. The harvest is not lacking; only the workers are missing "*⁴⁵

Father Simoni returned on September 17, 1900 with Father Modesto Gembini, Brother Giuseppe Tomasi, and six Nuns, to relieve some of the pressure. Father Marco immediately resumed his missionary peregrinations through the coffee plantations:

"I am out since October 9 preaching missions six hundred kilometers from São Paulo, and if the good Lord gives me health and my superior allows it, I shall remain till early in January. By the grace of God and the help of the Blessed Virgin, the mission is a success; confessions in great numbers, and an average of hundred Communion every day. I have also the faculty to administer the sacrament of Confirmation, and so, depending on the size of the plantation, I confirm some one hundred and fifty, or even two hundred people each day, and not all of them exactly children; one was 94 years old!. Besides, all those who are seven and older go also to confession! Baptisms are regularly four or five a day; but there were days when I administered fifteen, twenty, and on one occasion even thirty of them. In the two months I am around, by God's grace, I found few irregular marriages; only eighteen of them, at times even with children who are thirty years old. Some were married only in court, while the others were just living together in a common-law union. As to First Communion, you may find children of our unfortunate Italians, 20 years old, who have never been to confession, and at times even some who unfortunately do not know how

⁴⁴ de Souza e Castro to Dotto, São Paulo, September 23, 1899 (Arch. G.S., 396/4).

⁴⁵ Consoni to Scalabrini, São Paulo, May 14, 1900 (Arch. G.S., 396/3).

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER V**

to make the sign of the cross. Among Brazilians there may be found people of any age who have never been to confession.

Wherever I went these two months, all have welcomed me with great love, and, as though competing with each other, many fazendeiros have invited me to their homes. Each wanted me to visit his plantation first before any other. In these regions fazendeiros are better and more humane than elsewhere.

Any place I go, I recite the Rosary every night and sing the Litany of the Blessed Mother with the participation of all colonists. They close the house doors behind them and carry also their smallest children along; after the Litany, I preach a short sermon reminding them always of the brevity of time, the uncertainties of life, the need to be prepared, God's goodness and justice as well. And it is for me a great source of consolation to see them wait for confession after the sermon. The following morning, at the Mass I speak to them always about prayer because almost all our unfortunate Italians have left it out of their lives altogether. I insist on the truth that he who prays is saved and he who does not pray is condemned. When I find them tried by misfortune I exhort them to carry their cross reminding them how Jesus carried his for us!"⁴⁶

In 1902 Father Consoni proposed the idea of an Italian weekly:

"There does not exist in this city, or in the State, an Italian Catholic publication that may serve as a guide and companion of most of the more than a million Italians inhabiting this land! The Italian press here is representative all a small percentage of atheists and sinners who pretend to force themselves by all means on the consciences of people (...).

In touch with immigrants and their grievances, we know, in fact, how ardently Italians desire above all a priest's word of comfort, or someone who may speak to them in the name of Holy Church. We used to publish the "Cristoforo Colombo" edited by a Father Paolini, but it has gone out of circulation; and that priest is now going around collecting on his own among our very benefactors.

We have a printing shop in the house with a certain number of well-trained orphans, and our secretary is a journalist of long experience. In addition to an unshaken practice of our holy faith, he possesses also a special competence as a Catholic publicist. Therefore, with permission and blessing from Your Excellency, we would like to publish a weekly newspaper by the title: "Il Colono Italiano in Brasile" ("The Italian Colonist in Brazil").

In it we will also provide public reports on our missions which, though very consoling, are still falling short of the indispensable spiritual needs and strength of believers.

Our Institution will thus have its own spokesman for the great good it is bound to do every day among the needy; our farmers will have their guide, their counsellor, their defender; this newspaper shall be the companion of their Sunday rest. Official Italy shall have in it a faithful interpreter of Italian life in this land, all reported without prejudice, hatred or deceit."⁴⁷

The "Il Colono Italiano" began publication that same year; Giuseppe Santanello was the editor, and Giuseppe Zioni was the managing director. We do not know how long it lasted! We only know that in 1906 the Capuchins of São Paulo

⁴⁶ Simoni to Rolleri, Botucatu, December 7, 1900 (Arch. G.S., 396/5).

⁴⁷ Consoni to Scalabrini, São Paulo, February 10, 1902 (Arch. G.S., 396/3).

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER V**

began publishing "La Squilla", a weekly edited by Father Siberio of Trent; in 1922 the Scalabrinian Father Charles Porrini began contributing his articles under the pseudonym of "*Masticapolenta*" ("Cornmeal Eater"), and became its director in 1925. It was printed by the press of the Orphanage placed at its disposal by Father Consoni. In 1938 "La Squilla" ("The Bell") was sold to the Paulist Fathers, while the Scalabrinians decided to go ahead with the publication of the weekly, "La Fiamma" ("The Flame"), which lasted from 1932 to 1939, when the laws prohibiting the use of foreign languages enacted by the Brazilian government caused it to discontinue.

As can be seen throughout the history of the Congregation, the initiatives of the Scalabrinians were many, grandiose, and, above all, responding to the true needs of the Italian emigration, which was made up of the mass of farmhands and laborers. Instead the multitude, or rather, the boom of all other initiatives, directed almost exclusively to small groups of various political and ideological tendencies, and fractioned into a myriad of divisions, were blown off by the first wind.

But, the Scalabrinians lacked funds and coordination: it must be said that many of their initiatives had a short life for lack of coordination, and, especially for lack of unity! In all cases, however, their main handicap was always the shortage of men: proof of this is the enormous work laid on the shoulders of Fathers Faustino Consoni and Marco Simoni in the State of São Paulo, albeit both in very poor health!

In March 1903, Father Consoni sent to Bishop Scalabrini one last petition for help: Father Simoni was in the hospital ill with a sickness that had been tormenting him for the past three years, and Father Faustino could hardly keep going; the new coffee crisis was affecting heavily the life of the orphanage:

"I understand, and everyone says so, this is a difficult mission, due especially to the need of asking for donations and working in the midst of poor and uneducated people for the support of these two hundred orphans; on the other hand this is also the most praiseworthy and meritorious mission, though not quite well-known by Your Excellency. I am carrying on in poor health for more than two years, and, had not my duties in this house prevented me, I would have willingly come there to see Your Excellency again and talk to you personally, but even now I am not in a position to do so. Count Pio of Savoy was here the other day and he was amazed on how I could possibly support so many orphans besides teaching and making them skilled craftsmen, all only with the help of free donations. He observed also that there should be more personnel to staff it."⁴⁸

Help came when Bishop Scalabrini arrived in Brazil for a visitation to the immigrants and their missionaries bringing along Fathers John Capello, Charles Pedrazzani, Alfred Buonaiuti, John Rabaioli, and a few sisters. The Founder had been expected for many years, and the welcome was proportionate to the expectation. Father Marco Simoni went to meet him in Rio

⁴⁸ Consoni to Scalabrini, São Paulo, March 3, 1903 (Arch. G.S., 396/3).

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER V**

de Janeiro:

"The steamship "Città di Genova" of the "Veloce" company arrived at the port of Rio de Janeiro on the morning of July 7th. It remained there only a few hours, and then it sailed off for Santos. Our Bishop took advantage of the brief stopover for a visit to the city and to call on Dom Joaquim Arcoverde Cavalcanti, Archbishop of the Capital of Brazil. I could not possibly describe the great joy of the two eminent prelates upon embracing each other: They were together until late, and then the Archbishop accompanied our Bishop back to the port with his own carriage. There a motorboat was waiting to take them aboard the ship; here the two prelates parted after repeatedly embracing of each other.

On her way to Santos the "Città di Genova" slowed down so much that when she reached port it was not possible for Bishop Scalabrini and his missionaries to disembark on the night of their arrival; so, they had no choice but to remain on board to the disappointment of the people at São Paulo who had gathered at the station to greet our Bishop, as there was no way we could possibly inform them of the delay.

I nearly forgot to tell you that I went to Rio de Janeiro to welcome His Excellency, and then I continued from there (with him) on the way to Santos and São Paulo.

On July 9, 1904, at 8:00 o'clock in the morning, we took our first class seats in a beautiful special train car reserved free of charge for Bishop Scalabrini by the São Paulo Railways Company.

The three hour train ride went like lightening because at almost all the stations along the way people had come to welcome the Bishop. At the station of San Bernardo there was even the band of the local Salesian School whose superiors had offered to organize the celebrations in honor of the arriving prelate.

At the station of Ipiranga, all the orphans, boys and girls, of our institution were lined up on a platform, applauding and welcoming their protector. I cannot describe the scenes of commotion, jubilation, and affection that followed. You can figure them out for yourself. Then the train resumed its wild race, and in a few minutes we reached the central station of the city where a pressing crowd of people from all walks of life joined their cheers with the musical sound of two bands, one from the orphanage conducted by the able Maestro Capocchi and waiting there since early morning, and the other from the Salesian School that had gotten off the train with us.

The first prominent personalities to welcome His Excellency were the Most Rev. Dom Jose de Camargo Barros, Bishop of São Paulo, Count Gerard Pio of Savoy, Consul General of Italy, and Father Faustino. Then, right afterwards, a long line of Canons, Monsignors, Priests, lawyers, doctors, architects, merchants came up to kiss the sacred ring of the long expected and venerated guest. The Bishop introduced to Father Michael Kruze, the illustrious and learned young Abbot of São Paulo who invited him to be his guest at the Abbey.

A procession of coaches was formed and we all went to São Bento's Abbey. There, all the usual formal welcome procedures were concluded and the crowd gradually began to disperse. The Bishop remained at the Abbey until 3 PM. Then he decided to come to this 'his' house. I leave it to your imagination to figure out how expected, desired, and longed for, he was here!

He was with us until the 22nd of that month studying, observing, examining the

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER V**

general state of our administration, and suggesting provisions for the future. We also made a three day retreat with great benefit for our souls and our future apostolate. It would be impossible to draw an exact list of visitors received by His Excellency. He had to go back to the city and fix his residence at São Bento in order to make himself accessible to so many signs of respect and affection. The President of this state enjoyed, and reciprocated, a visit from the Bishop and many other authorities did likewise.

His Excellency also visited almost all the religious communities and was everywhere welcomed and greeted with enthusiasm and respect. But, the welcome and joy accorded him at the Sacred Heart School directed by the sons of Don Bosco were beyond all expectations, and are difficult to describe. Yesterday marked a day of great solemnity for the great institution of the Salesians where six hundred students acclaimed Bishop Scalabrini while the upper echelon of the state were present to pay him homage.⁴⁹

The report of Fr. Simoni concludes saying:

"Bishop Scalabrini had here the honors due to him even from somewhat skeptical people and at a moment when nationalism is beginning to show in regard to foreigners."

The most important weekly of São Paulo, "O Estado de São Paulo" made itself the spokesman of this distrustful nationalism. It pretended to read between the lines of an interview granted by Bishop Scalabrini to the Italian newspaper, "Il Fanfulla" the subterfuges of "a plan for a struggle against the language and nationality of its Brazilian coreligionists". And it remarked: "At times the respectable priestly attire carries a resemblance to the historic (? sic) and fatal Trojan horse." It was inviting the Brazilian government to actually break diplomatic relations with the Vatican, treacherously allied with the Quirinal Palace against Brazil's interests, in spite of all excommunications inflicted on it for taking Rome:

"The scheme is well laid out. The Congregation of St. Charles and the Salesians have established in our land several institutions, such as the Christopher Columbus orphanage, which are subsidized by the Italian government. In the name of religion and charity they will wage war on us without arousing suspicion or opposition."⁵⁰

It was easy for Giuseppe Santanello, secretary of the Orphanage, to deny such accusations. Through the columns of the "Fanfulla" he was inviting the radical journalist to visit the orphanage where he could see for himself that the orphans were learning Italian and Portuguese as well, an opportunity they would never have, otherwise.

"Be it enough to state that in setting foot inside the Christopher Columbus Orphanage in Ipiranga, Bishop Scalabrini found himself immediately among 212 orphans, boys and girls, waiting to welcome him. Well, what was his greatest satisfaction? Being informed, upon his request, that out of 212 young residents, 55 were Italian born, 25 Brazilian born of Italian parents, 76 full blooded Brazilians, and a small group of other extractions. "There is, then, an international

⁴⁹ Simoni to Mangot, São Paulo, July 26, 1904 (Arch. G.S., 396/7).

⁵⁰ P.P. "A Vida Nacional", O Estado de São Paulo, July 16, 1904.

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER V**

character to this institution" - he said - "and so be it! In a foreign land it could not be otherwise!"

With this we do not mean to say that Italian is not taught at the orphanage, not at all! Both Italian and Portuguese are studied on equal terms."⁵¹

This is actually what Bishop Scalabrini stated in his interview to "Il Fanfulla":

"I had no meeting with Giolitti (...). Neither did I seek out any minister in Rome, nor did they do so with me. They are people of talent and well know that I was to come to a country that, though certainly friendly, is nonetheless jealous of its own independence. I beg you to state clearly in the newspaper that I have no political intentions. My program is contained in these precise words: "To do all good possible without causing trouble for anyone while seeking to keep Italian language and traditions alive in our people." And, all this carefully respecting the sovereignty of the countries where our immigrants go to live (...). I insist very much on education.

In my long journey through North America, I insistently repeated the following words: "The Italian language! This is the secret by which you will keep strong and united." The English language is needed for the trades and for the day-to-day life; however, the preservation of the Italian language is a primary factor for the intimate and moral life of the family. Besides, as long as a man speaks his language, he will keep his faith, as well. This, also, I will keep repeating on this journey."⁵²

In any case, Bishop Scalabrini was not the man to be easily affected by criticism of journalists, especially anti-clerical ones! In Italy he was subjected to even more subtle and perfidious attacks on the part of the press, even some Catholic press. Instead, he devoted himself to studying the situation and preparing plans for the growth of his missions. He had been particularly impressed by the accomplishment achieved by his missionaries in their first nine years:

"These two Institutions have already prepared 810 young boys and girls, all well trained and employed. Many of them have gathered here yesterday, grateful to the "Holy House", as they call it, that saved them from spiritual, moral, and religious ruin. And, it deserves this title, indeed.

The missionaries follow the rule of the Mother House, and everything proceeds with genuine example and great edification.

Today, I received the financial report: 980 thousand liras were spent on the two grandiose buildings, and there are no debts. It is a miracle of the loving Providence of God. And besides, to provide for 300 people, including priests, nuns, craft and art masters, without incurring any debt! Isn't it marvelous?"⁵³

He immediately got together with Dom Jose Camargo Barros, the new Bishop of São Paulo to discuss plans on three points:

1) To begin a section for the deaf and dumb at Vila Prudente;

⁵¹ Santanello: "Mons. Scalabrini in Brasile. Le cose a posto", ("...Corrections (of an article)", Il Fanfulla, (São Paulo), July 18, 1904.

⁵² Interview granted by Bishop Scalabrini to "Il Fanfulla" published on July 10, 1904. Cfr. complete documentation in Appendix No. 1.

⁵³ Scalabrini to Mangot, São Paulo, July 11, 1904 (Arch. G.S., 3022/22).

- 2) To entrust to the Scalabrinians the parish of São Bernardo;
- 3) To establish, as soon as possible, in the interior of the State two fixed residences for the assistance of Italians employed on the coffee plantations; two priests, who would otherwise have to remain at the Orphanage in São Paulo, would be assigned to them and appointed to this mission.⁵⁴

The Bishop was enthusiastic about the first proposal. Bishop Scalabrini spoke about it to the President of the State of São Paulo, and gave immediate orders to his secretary, Mons. C. Mangot to tell the Superior General of the Apostles of the Sacred Heart (forming at that time one Congregation with the Scalabrinian Sisters) to have ready the two sisters that had been trained at the Institute for deaf and dumb girls in Piacenza.⁵⁵ The Apostolic Nuncio also approved warmly this project,⁵⁶ while, the Brazilian pastors remained cool to the idea.⁵⁷ They had been informed by means of a circular letter. Among other things we find in it what follows:

"We have here in our Christopher Columbus Orphanage a deaf and mute boy. His presence deeply moved our Superior General, his Excellency the Most Reverend Bishop Scalabrini. While discussing the miserable lot of unfortunate individuals such as this one with our esteemed and zealous Bishop, Don Jose de Camargo Barros, our Superior was urged by him to take the steps necessary to open with urgency this beneficial institution (...). And since, by a providential coincidence, we have among our missionaries and nuns several who are already well trained for this difficult task, it was decided to keep them ready for when it will be possible to carry out this great work of Charity.

We kindly ask Your Most Illustrious Lordship to seek information about the possible existence in your midst of any deaf and dumb boy or girl, and to be pleased to send the information thus obtained to us."⁵⁸

On his return to Italy, Bishop Scalabrini continued to take an interest in this institution. He sent two nuns who arrived at the end of March 1905 together with Fr. Claudio Morelli and Giuseppe Zioni on a ship whose captain had known Father Marchetti on his first trip⁵⁹, and had Father Nicholas Carusone trained at the Institute for the deaf and mute in Milan.⁶⁰

In his last letter to Father Consoni, fifteen days before his death, he wrote:

"Have the schools for the deaf and mute been opened yet? I will send you a very able priest who is now in Milan studying for the appropriate diploma. Time and again I highly recommend to you this institution which is of immense importance, both moral and religious!"⁶¹

Father Carusone arrived at São Paulo towards the end of 1905. In the beginning of 1906, the little building close by the section of Vila Prudente rented from Mr. Joaquim Teixeira de Freitas as living quarters for the

⁵⁴ Scalabrini to Mangot, São Paulo, July 14, 1904 (Arch. G.S., 3022/22).

⁵⁵ Cfr. *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ Tonti to Consoni, Petropolis, September 15, 1904 (Arch. G.S., 396/7).

⁵⁷ Consoni to Scalabrini, São Paulo, September 10, 1904 (Arch. G.S., 396/3).

⁵⁸ Circular Letter Consoni, São Paulo, August 7, 1904 (Arch. G.S., 396/7).

⁵⁹ Morelli to Scalabrini, São Paulo, March 31, 1905 (Arch. G.S., 1585).

⁶⁰ Scalabrini to Consoni, Piacenza, March 10, 1905 (Arch. G.S., 3023/2).

⁶¹ Scalabrini to Consoni, Piacenza, May 16, 1905 (Arch. G.S., 3023/2).

missionary was chosen as the provisional site. The priest was to reside at the girls orphanage.⁶² The first two deaf and mute were admitted in April, while others were expected.⁶³

The Founder wanted to see for himself also the field of action of his missionaries through the plantations. So, he visited some of them either by train or on horseback.

From St. Gertrude's plantation, close to Rio Claro, the property of Count Edward Prates, one of the most prominent benefactors of the Orphanage, Bishop Scalabrini wrote:

*"This one where I am now, is one of the best. The landowner, Count de Prates is a good Catholic and had a church built in the middle of the plantation where colonists may gather at least for their devotions, and receive the Sacraments once every two years when our missionaries arrive. Now, upon realizing conditions as they really are, I must admit that our missionaries are real heroes. Almost all of them are now out preaching and hearing confessions. They keep doing this for months on end, going from plantation to plantation in the midst of great difficulties. Had I on hand a hundred truly zealous priests, how greatly the glory of God and the good of these poor abandoned souls, almost a million of them, would be increased."*⁶⁴

Among his missionaries he saw "much good" to be "kept" and faults "to remove with prudent charity, putting quickly into action the reforms and the new projects to be undertaken."⁶⁵

Bishop Scalabrini decided to take back with himself to Italy Father Dominic Vicentini, who had served as first Provincial of Brazil since 1898, to make him rector of the Mother House, and proceeded to appoint Father Consoni as the new Provincial Superior to be assisted by a council whose members were Fathers Francis Dolci, as provincial Vicar, Peter Dotto, Louis Franchi, and Marco Simoni, as Provincial Treasurer. We should point out, however, that Father Simoni never actually carried out his task because he accompanied Bishop Scalabrini on his visitation through the missions of Brazil, and when they reached Paraná he volunteered to open a mission in the Tibagi.

The Superior Provincial was granted faculty to invite also the superiors of the houses who might happen to be at São Paulo at the time, to take part in the Council meetings. He was to visit either personally or by delegation the missions every year, to take diligent care that the rules were observed, and the practice of the annual retreat and of the monthly recollection day kept without exceptions.⁶⁶

The decree is dated August 4. On that occasion the first meeting of the Provincial Council was held. We have here the minutes of the meeting:

"Having implored the assistance of the Holy Spirit with the recitation of the "Actiones nostras, versus et oratio propria", being present:

⁶² Martini to Novati, São Paulo, January 1, 1906 (Arch. G.S., 396/8).

⁶³ Martini to Novati, São Paulo, April 19, 1906 (Arch. G.S., 396/8).

⁶⁴ Scalabrini to Sidoli, Santa Gertrudes, July 30, 1904 (Arch. G.S., 3022/22).

⁶⁵ Scalabrini to Consoni, Niteroi, August 10, 1904 (Arch. G.S., 3023/2).

⁶⁶ Decree of Scalabrini, São Paulo, August 4, 1904 (Arch. G.S., 396/7).

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER V**

1. His Excellency John Baptist Scalabrini, Bishop of Piacenza, Superior General

2. Rev. Father Faustino Consoni, Superior Provincial

3. Rev. Father Francis Dolci, Vicar Provincial

4. Rev. Father Marco Simoni, Provincial Treasurer

5. Rev. Father Louis Zanchi, Councilor

The following decisions have been taken:

1. The schedule:

10:30 A.M.: breakfast;

11:00 - 12:00 P.M.: free time;

12:00 - 1:00 P.M.: siesta;

1:00 P.M.: Visit to the Blessed Sacrament, spiritual reading, Vespers and Compline;

4:30 P.M.: Matins and Lauds in common in chapel, dinner;

7:30 P.M.: Benediction, Night Prayers

9:00 P.M.: Retire

2. Diligent watch over the conduct of the clerics.

3. To adopt the State programs for our schools with the addition of the study of the Italian language.

4. Separation of small children from older ones.

5. Appointment of Father Massimo Rinaldi as Superior of the House of Ipiranga, São Paulo.

6. When visiting the plantations there shall be two missionaries, the senior one acting as superior. On their return, they shall give a detailed report of their mission. The Reverend Provincial shall record the spiritual activities, and the treasurer the economical income of the mission.

7. A date was fixed for the monthly recollection day. All priests in town, and possibly of neighboring mission, must attend it.

8. The day after their recollection day, the Rev. Fathers shall get together for the solution of "moral cases" based on a treatise of moral law or liturgy.

The meeting is adjourned with the "Agimus" (Then the signatures follow).⁶⁷

On the following day, August 5, Bishop Scalabrini blessed the chapel and the girls' section of the Orphanage at Vila Prudente. For the solemn dedication, tentatively fixed for December 8, Father Consoni sent a petition to Pius X signed by the twelve missionaries who formed the community of São Paulo at the time: Consoni, Simoni, Dotto, Dell'Uomo, Preti, Rabaioli, C. Pedrazzani, Capello, Viola, Dolci, Baonaiuti, Zanchi.

Bishop Scalabrini added the following:

*"Your Apostolic Blessing together with your word of comfort will be the most treasured gift and a source of much good for these 12 priests, indeed true apostles of Jesus Christ."*⁶⁸

Pius X responded immediately with an autograph:

"On our beloved sons, the Missionaries of the Congregation of St. Charles of Piacenza, and on their equally beloved benefactors who cooperate in the

⁶⁷ Book of the Acts of the Cristoforo Colombo Orphanage. Original in the Archives of Province of São Paulo (Scalabrinians). Photocopy in Arch. G.S., 357/2 bis.

⁶⁸ Consoni to Pius X, São Paulo, August 3, 1904 (Arch. G.S., 396/3).

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER V**

construction of the Orphanage at Villa Prudente de Moraes, invoking from Heaven the choicest graces as their reward, we wholeheartedly impart our Apostolic blessing together with our modest donation as a pledge of our gratitude and particular benevolence.

From the Vatican, September 1, 1904

Pius PP. X⁶⁹

The "humble contribution" of the Holy Father amounted to 1000 liras. (The value of it at the time made the donation rather valuable for the missionaries).

Though still incomplete, the building at Vila Prudente began to operate on the August 7. On the following day, Bishop Scalabrini left São Paulo after spending 30 days there, days that left in him and in the whole Orphanage community a strong sense of nostalgia.⁷⁰

"Today, I have dedicated the Villa Prudente Institute, a beautiful building that will be an orphanage for girls; I have appointed the Superiors for the Missionaries and for the Nuns. With this I can say that I have completed my mission here."⁷¹

In 1905 we do not find any other important news worth reporting. From a report sent on the March 31, 1905 by Father Consoni to the Italian Foreign Ministry, the statistics of the Christopher Columbus Orphanage at the end of 1904 stood as follows:

On December 31, 1904, there were 232 resident orphans thus distributed:

<u>Nationalities</u>	<u>Boys</u>	<u>Girls</u>
Italians	81	51
Brazilians	40	31
Portuguese	12	3
Others	8	6
<u>Totals</u>	<u>141</u>	<u>91</u>

<u>Age</u>	<u>Boys</u>	<u>Girls</u>
1 to 5	28	16
6 to 10	36	29
11 to 15	38	32
16 up	39	14
<u>Totals</u>	<u>141</u>	<u>91</u>

⁶⁹ Autograph of Pius X, September 1, 1904 (Arch. G.S., 396/7).

⁷⁰ Scalabrini to Mangot, Niteroi, August 9, 1904 (Arch. G.S., 3022/22). Scalabrini to Consoni, Niteroi, August 9, 1904 (Arch. G.S., 3023/2).

⁷¹ Scalabrini to Mangot, São Paulo, August 5, 1904 (Arch. G.S., 3022/22).

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER V**

Following is also a budget report for 1905, in Italian liras of the time:

Ordinary Income

Subsidy from State of São Paulo	20.000
Subsidy from City of São Paulo	5.700
Subsidy from Italian Foreign Ministry	2.000
Subsidy from of Migration Committee	2.000
Various Sources	4.500
<u>Total</u>	<u>34,200</u>

Expenditures

Ordinary Expenditures	72.000
Maintenance and Improvements	12.000
Increases due to number of orphans	6.000
<u>Total</u>	<u>90.000</u>

The deficit of 55,000 liras was covered by the donations of benefactors, for the most part offerings from migrants collected by the Missionaries on their visitations to the plantations.⁷²

⁷² Consoni, Report to the (Italian) Foreign Minister, São Paulo, March 31, 1905 (Arch. G.S., 396/3).

CHAPTER VI

BEGINNINGS AT THE PARISHES OF SÃO BERNARDO AND CASCALHO

Other Activities of the Missionaries of São Paulo

1. The Parish of São Bernardo

As we have seen before, among the plans agreed upon by Bishop Scalabrini with the Bishop of São Paulo in 1904, there was also the take-over of the Parish of São Bernardo do Campo in whose territory the two orphanages were then located:

*"To entrust the parish of São Bernardo, where our institutions now stand, to the care of the missionaries. It has almost 40 thousand parishioners, and it extends from São Paulo almost to Santos, that is to the sea; 80 km². This was the kind idea of the Bishop aimed at providing the Missionaries, for whom he has a great respect and consideration, with an income of five or six thousand liras, thus making their very heavy task easier. The Parish is made up of almost all Italians."*¹

In fact, it looks as though the factor determining Scalabrinians to begin parish activities in the State of São Paulo has been an economic one, for the reason that all their action of the first years was geared toward the Christopher Columbus orphanage.

In the report presented at the close of the preceding chapter to the Italian Foreign Ministry, Father Faustino Consoni pointed out that the donations collected by the Missionaries through the colonies were progressively decreasing due to the coffee crisis in progress since 1902-1903.²

Exactly in 1903 the same missionary wrote to Bishop Scalabrini:

"Conditions being what they are, I allow myself to ask of Your Excellency a permission in case I should need it. It may very well happen that the present Bishop Dom Antonio Alvarenga and his worthy Vicar General Mons. Manoel Vicente da Silva decide to entrust one or two important parishes of this State to the care of our Missionaries; the curia shows much respect and confidence in Religious priests. Should this be the case, as I was saying, would Your Most Reverend Excellency empower me to accept them? Income from parishes is not small in these lands, and with it we could provide in part for the increasing needs of our Institutes, while we could supply the rest with donations collected preaching missions. But, even in this there is much suffering, Your Excellency, because neither I nor Father Mark, nor the other priests here feel as strong as before for such hard tasks. We shall continue to do whatever our duties will demand of us for the salvation of souls and on behalf of our unfortunate Italian emigrants, but as to collecting donations, we shall not give so much of ourselves as we did until now, sure as we are that we would

¹ Scalabrini to Mangot, São Paulo, July 14, 1904 (Arch. G.S., 3022/22).

² Consoni, Report to Italian Foreign Ministry, São Paulo, March 3, 1905 (Arch. G.S., 396 /3)

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER VI**

uselessly waste our energies."³

However, Bishop Alvarenga died two days before Fr. Faustino had written this letter; naturally, he continued negotiations with the Successor Dom Jose de Camargo Barros who made his entry into São Paulo on April 24, 1904.

Two colonial settlements, mostly of Italians, had been founded in the municipality of São Bernardo in 1877. The first began on January 28, 1877, at São Caetano; the second, dating from July 2 was called São Bernardo after the old plantation of São Bernardo, where it was located. In addition to this property it included also the territory of the Jurutubaba plantation. By an act of expropriation, the government had acquired them from the Benedictines in 1876.

On June 29, 1877, twenty six families, mostly from the province of Treviso left Italy on the steamship "*Europa*" directed to Santos where they arrived on the July 22. They remained a few days at the immigration center of Rua do Gazometro in São Paulo, and on July 28 they arrived by train at the station of São Caetano. From there they continued on foot to the old plantation of São Bernardo. There was, at the time, a little chapel surrounded by some huts. Only three or four families lived in the neighborhood. The plantation was divided up into lots and one of the new arrivals, a certain Emilio Rossi, was appointed administrator and interpreter. Another 13 families arrived six months later. In 1883, two elementary schools were built in the township of São Caetano, then inhabited by 251 colonists. The same year the chapel was restored and its restoration was marked by celebrations presided over by Father Jose Marcondes Homem de Mello, then pastor of Braz, and, later, Archbishop of São Carlos.

The community of São Bernardo had its actual beginnings on September 3, 1887, with 52 immigrant families. The municipality of São Bernardo was incorporated in 1887. The police department was opened in 1890, while in 1896 the court of Justice was erected at Riberão Pires. The friendly mutual society "*Principe di Napoli*" was founded in 1891 at the Church of São Caetano on the occasion of a large rally of Italians. The police district station of Alto da Serra (presently Paranapiacaba) was set up. Father Bove (Bovi?) fixed his residence at São Caetano to be succeeded later on by the Scalabrinian Father Remigio Pezzotti.

In 1905, the municipality of São Bernardo was divided into five districts: São Bernardo (Vila), Santo Andre', Riberão Pires, Alto da Serra, São Caetano.⁴ All these communities had the religious assistance of the periodic visitations of the Scalabrinian Missionaries of São Paulo since 1898. The parish of São Bernardo was erected on October 21, 1812 by decree of Dom João, the Prince Regent, that detached it from the Cathedral of São Paulo on behalf of the fourteen hundred people living in the district crossed by the famous "*Caminho do Mar*", the old road São Paulo-Santos. At the plantation of São Bernardo, donated to

³ Consoni to Scalabrini, São Paulo, March 31, 1903 (Arch. G.S., 396/3).

⁴ Netto Caldeira, *Album de São Bernardo* 1937,(São Paulo, 1937, pages not numbered)

the Benedictines in 1651 by Miguel Aires Maldonado, a small chapel was built in 1735 by Antonio Fires Santiago that travelers from São Paulo to Santos used to visit.

In time it had become the traditional spot where to spend the night. The rough stone image of the Madonna, invoked by travelers, is now kept in the mother church of São Bernardo; this is the reason why the parish carries the title "Nossa Senhora da Boa Viagem e São Bernardo."

Work on the mother church began under the administration of the first pastor, Father Carmim Rodrigues, but was still unfinished in 1847. Father Francis Dolci was its first Scalabrinian pastor; he took possession of it on November 17, 1904, the first residence with parochial jurisdiction given the Scalabrinians in the State of São Paulo. At that time the parish extended from the city limit of the capital to the edge of the mountain range overlooking Santos, and across, from the boundaries with the parishes of Mogi das Cruzes to those with Santo Amaro. As we will see, it will be later on divided into four parishes: São Bernardo (Vila), Santo Andre' (São Bernardo Estacão), São Caetano, and Riberão Pires, and then, on various dates, into many other parishes. It is interesting to point out that the old parish of São Bernardo do Campo included approximately the territory of the present diocese of Santo Andre' created in 1954.

From the end of 1905 or the beginning of 1906 to the middle of 1907, Fr. Francis Dolci was replaced by Fr. Louis Zanchi who remained alone but with the help given him by the priests of the Orphanage, especially for the distant communities of Riberão Pires, Pilar (now Maua'), Estacão do São Bernardo, (today Santo Andre'), Rio Grande, Campo Grande, Alto da Serra (presently Paranapiacaba). The care of São Caetano was entrusted to Father Victor Viola, chaplain of the girls' section of the Orphanage.⁵

2. Cascalho (Parish of the Assumption)

Father Victor Viola, we just mentioned, was also to act as assistant to Father Peter Dotto, curate of Carvalho, a suburb of Cordeiro. The parish of Carvalho, that belonged to the diocese of São Paulo, and to the new diocese of Campinas since 1908, was accepted with the intention to begin carrying out a plan that called for establishing some fixed residences in the interior of the state so as to avoid for the missionaries the inconvenience of retracing their way back to São Paulo whenever they visited colonies. In 1904, Fr. Consoni thus wrote to Bishop Scalabrini:

"I know that Father Peter Dotto has asked Your Excellency to be assigned to a parish. Upon consultation with older priests and in line with the desires of the Capitular Vicar, I deemed it better to appoint him to a community of Italians in a locality called Cascalho, also in view of providing a resting place in our long journeys back and forth. Whatever is to be the balance of the expenses allowed

⁵ Libro degli Atti (Book of Records) - Session of December 11, 1905. Origin in Archives of São Paulo Province (Scalabrinians) -Photocopy in Arch. G.S., 353/2 bis.

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER VI

*by the rule for the support of the missionary shall be scrupulously sent to the Mother House. For the tranquility of my conscience, however, I wait for approval from Your Excellency."*⁶

Bishop Scalabrini answered on March 21, 1904, giving his permission.⁷ Father Peter Dotto had been installed on February 20, the same day of his arrival at Cascalho. We know it from a letter written by him to Bishop Scalabrini on March 1, 1904:

"I do not know whether Father Faustino has informed Your Excellency about me. In agreement with the Capitular Vicar, it was decided to appoint me to a quasi-parish called Cascalho. I have been residing here ten days already with proper investiture decree of the Bishop, dependent, however, on approval from our Congregation of St. Charles and from our Superiors. If Your Excellency has no objection, I do not wish for anything else more than this.

This community is not a large one, or rich, but very generous; the great majority is from the Veneto Region. Besides a few native Brazilians, there is also a colony of Portuguese.

*I know this place for about four years, and I have been here provisionally three months last year for reason of ministry. As it became necessary to remove the pastor, the people did all in their power with Father Faustino to have me back, and so it happened. He told me he came to this decision in order to provide means for the support of our Mother House in Piacenza."*⁸

We gather other information on that parish, then numbering a little over two thousand people, from a letter written by Father Dotto to Father Anthony Demo on November 14, 1904, telling his first experiences:

"I have been now in the care of souls for about seven months in a suburb of Cordeiro, called Cascalho, a community made up for the greater part of Italians, Venetians from the province of Treviso, some Portuguese and native Brazilians. The population is generally good, free of certain vices, all of them laborers, with no political allegiance; however, they are somewhat lax as to their religion and hard to convince.

Last month I had the precious visit of Bishop Scalabrini, our Founder and Superior General who was much edified by the welcome of the crowds. His presence here aroused great enthusiasm because of his kindness and approachability. We can say in truth that he was impressed more here than anywhere else in the State of São Paulo because you must know that anti-clericalism is very strong in Brazil, and it has little use for foreigners.

Both in public and in private Bishop Scalabrini also said that he had the impression of being in a parish in Italy.

As to my being here, I am happy with it, but I do not know whether it will last because Father Faustino has now been appointed Provincial Superior; there is, therefore the chance of a few changes.

The Superior General seems of the opinion to create here a branch of the house of São Paulo, and place in it two or more missionaries! This arrangement would be much more convenient for the visitations of the colonies; but, I doubt whether

⁶ Consoni to Scalabrini, São Paulo, February 18, 1904 (Arch. G.S., 396/3).

⁷ Summary of letters Scalabrini to Consoni (Arch. G.S., 396/3).

⁸ Dotto to Scalabrini, Cascalho, March 1, 1904 (Arch. G.S., 403).

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER VI**

*it will be carried out."*⁹

As far as we know, Father Victor Viola took temporary charge of the parish of Cordeiro from the month of February to the end of 1905. In his first letter written to the Superior Provincial from Cordeiro he informs, among other things, that the people showed satisfaction with a daily lenten program of catechism for 70 children. Besides, he was now and then saying mass at the plantation of Santa Gertrudes.¹⁰

In a successive letter he points out that the moral and religious conditions of the parish were satisfactory; on feast days the chapel was crowded with people; he had decided to organize the confraternity of Saint Anthony; revenues are good. And then, he continues:

*"Such is the state of the parish! But, I do not intend to assure you whether this rosy situation will continue for all the months ahead; this is true, however, that we notice a marked financial improvement responding to the spiritual progress of the people. Whether it will be opportune to keep it (the parish) or not, the decision is all yours (...). I allow myself an observation. To me, keeping it would represent a great advantage for two reasons: 1) its location, a truly enchanting one, that would afford a great convenience for our missionaries who could find here a resting place in their journeys back and forth through the missions; 2) Cordeiro has a future. Besides, didn't you say yourself that the Bishop will not leave the parish divided like this? And this might very well happen shortly should a diocesan priest come here and send a report in to the Chancery office! Then we would lose both! Moreover, in case you would or could, not open a house at Rio Claro, why don't you as of now obtain for me the faculty to binate telling the Count that even without sending two missionaries to Rio Claro he could still have the Mass all the same? I am of the opinion that we would highly benefit by such way of action!"*¹¹

In the last lines, Father Viola mentioned a certain small orphanage of St. Anthony at Rio Claro for which negotiations were begun in 1905; it started functioning, it seems, in 1907, by the generosity of Count Prates as a branch of the one at São Paulo.

Based on the rule by which a missionary was not to live isolated from the others, the question of Cordeiro was resolved differently at the Provincial Council Meeting of December 14, 1905, with the removal of Father Viola. Concerning the assistance to the colony of Santa Gertrudes the following decision was taken:

*"Having assigned a priest to assist Santa Gertrudes, a plantation owned by the Most Excellent Count de Prates, a distinguished benefactor of the orphanage, we have hereby decided by a majority of votes to appoint the Rev. Louis Capra to help Fr. Pietro Dotto, the curate of Cascvalho. He shall go to the said plantation in a coach provided by Count de Prates every Saturday to perform the religious services there, as agreed upon."*¹²

⁹ Dotto to Demo, Cascvalho, September 14, 1904 (Arch. G.S., 403).

¹⁰ Viola to Consoni, Cordeiro, March 29, 1905 (Arch. G.S., 410/2).

¹¹ Viola to Consoni, Cordeiro, August 1, 1905 (Arch. G.S., 410/2).

¹² Libro degli Atti (Book of Meetings), cit. Session December 11, 1905.

Father Capra remained there only a few days because he was recalled to São Paulo to teach at the Orphanage, and was replaced by Fr. John Capello. However, a little later we find the Scalabrinians back in Cordeiro, certainly by decision of the Bishop, who did not consent that the parish be abandoned.¹³

3. Riberão Pires (Parish of St. Joseph)

Two of the communities along the São Paulo-Santos railway visited with greater frequency, and from 1898 with regularity on all feast days, by the Scalabrinians from the Orphanage of São Paulo, were Riberão Pires and Alto da Serra (Paranapiacaba). For their spiritual needs they were dependent at first on the Shrine of Our Lady del Pilar, three miles away. In 1887, several Italian families began to move in the area, where they found work with the most important industries of the region: dairy products, brick factories, and construction quarries. In 1893, Italian and Brazilian families, together, (Catta, Preda, Pinto, Rossi, Pereira, Figueredo, Gala, Zampol, Botacin) began construction on a chapel dedicated to Saint Joseph. The first priest to take care of them was a Jesuit from São Paulo, but when people began insisting on a more regular assistance, they were entrusted to the care of the Scalabrinians. Besides Fathers Faustino Consoni and Mark Simoni, we must mention also Father Carlo Pedrazzani, and especially Father Giovanni Rabaioli, who took frequent weekly tours amongst the colonists collecting the funds needed to build a new church. He even succeeded in securing two hundred liras from Pius X. This way he brought the construction to the roof by 1905.¹⁴

But, the parish of Riberão Pires was canonically erected only in 1911, thanks especially to Father Louis Capra, who had worked tirelessly along the region crossed by the São Paulo Railway, thus laying the foundation for the creation of the new parish.

4. The "Umberto I Hospital (Matarazzo Hospital)

When speaking of Father Marchetti we pointed out that one of his plans was to provide spiritual assistance and nurses for the incipient "Umberto I Hospital" to which the Scalabrinian nuns¹⁵ were to devote their services.

Father Marchetti had remarked that the hospital had been built by initiative of a masonic society, and was unable to administer it properly. For this reason, it had recourse to him, etc. Things, however, were somewhat different. Probably, it was not a question of a masonic society, as rather, of a liberal minded association like all, or most, Italian associations founded in São Paulo and elsewhere at the time. We cannot, however, exclude that some members, followers of Mazzini and Garibaldi, were also masons as was the fashion with anticlerical Italians of that time.

The "Umberto I Hospital" was built by initiative of the "Italian Beneficent

¹³ Capra "Diario", 1905-1906 (Arch. G.S., 1520)

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ See above

Society of São Paulo" as a project to honor king Victor Emanuel II, who had died on January 9, 1878, and was started the following January 20. Its main objective was the founding of a hospital for Italians named after Umberto I King of Italy. Thus a piece of land was purchased in the suburb of Bexiga in 1881 and construction was completed in 1892. But, the number of Italians in São Paulo had in the meantime multiplied and the small hospital of Bexiga was found to be totally inadequate! In 1899 the building was sold to the State of São Paulo, and a larger property was bought at Morro Vermelho. The foundation stone of the new hospital was laid in 1901. But, this piece of land and the hospital built on it were also found to be unsuitable and so they were sold to Dr. Pignatari and Father Angelo Bartolomasi who turned it into a hospital for eye patients.

At long last, on August 14, 1904, two wings of a new hospital were opened on its final location in the vicinity of the "Avenida Paulista", with one hundred beds; and on the first of January 1905 it began to admit all patients regardless of nationality.

The Scalabrinian Missionaries began providing the spiritual care of patients in 1896, and for long periods they were the chaplains of the hospital! The Scalabrinian Sisters began their activity in 1900 continuing until 1907 when because of their division into the two branches of the Apostles of the Sacred Heart and Missionary Sisters of St. Charles (Scalabrinians) their field of work was also separated. The first group remained with the Hospital Umberto I, which was later renamed "Materazzo Hospital", where they still serve; the second group kept charge of the Christopher Columbus Orphanage.¹⁶

5. Their Most Important Work

We have often mentioned the work of the Scalabrinian Missionaries through the plantations and other colonial settlements in the State of São Paulo. As the humble and poor Italian immigrants of the colonies were in truth mainly responsible for the wealth of that *paulista* State, so we believe also that the greatest merit of the few Scalabrinians of the community of São Paulo in the first twenty years has been conducting a vast mission work of evangelization in the various Italian settlements along the "Inglesa" railroad from Santos to Jundiaí, and of Sorocabana, Mojana and Paulista railroads. Unfortunately, especially for scarcity of documents, we are not in a position to reconstruct with precision this work that extended to communities even five to six hundred kilometers from the capital. It is thought that about 150 of those centers of Scalabrinian activity became parishes later on, and some also dioceses.

Besides São Bernardo, Santo Andre', São Caetano, Riberão Pires, Mauá, Paranapiacaba, Rio Grande da Serra, Campo Grande, the larger localities periodically visited by our missionaries were those scattered in the municipalities of Jundiaí, Capivari, Monte Mor, Piracicaba, Rio Claro, Cordeiro,

¹⁶ Cfr. AA. VV., *Il Brasile e gli Italiani* (Florence, 1906), pp. 951-956; Cenni, *Italianos no Brasil* (São Paulo, 1958) pp. 244-247, see below.

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER VI**

Botucatu, Jaú, Matão, Sertãozinhos, Mococa, Descalvado, Pirassununga, Araras, Campinas, Bica de Pedra, Guaíba, etc.

Then this typically Scalabrinian approach, we quote an independent testimonial of sort contained in a report by Architect Silvio Coletti, Royal Inspector at-large of Italian emigration to Brazil:

"The instructions directing my activity include the task of studying 'the mission of the Missionaries for the assistance of Italian emigrants to Brazil'.

These words clearly limit my study to the Missionaries of St. Charles. In fact, among all other religious corporations they are the only ones who devote their mission primarily to emigrants, in particular to the Italian colonists of the plantations in the State of São Paulo, of whom they take direct care.

All other religious orders do not respond to the above description either because they are consecrated to a purely contemplative life, or because, like the Salesians, they exercise their work of charity on a more general plan, or because they prefer to wait for people to come to them rather than going to seek out and visit those who need help, as often as needed, to offer an effective and timely assistance to our emigrants.

My study was conducted on a more limited scale for the reason that the distinction mentioned above was brought to my attention by one in authority and competent in the matter, the apostolic nuncio, Archbishop Tonti himself, to whom I had recourse privately in order to avoid errors of omission.

Having thus defined the field of my inquiry and taking São Paulo as the center of my activity, together with the Royal General Consul I paid a visit to the mission of St. Charles, that is, the Christopher Columbus Orphanage in the days between last February 22nd and March 31st.

During the session of June 21, 1905, over the Emigration budget, after stating that religious institutions for emigrants are not unlike any other republican, or socialist, organization with the same scope, equally tending to sectarian propaganda of intents, an Honorable member of our Parliament (Cabrini) concluded his intervention on the subsidies to be granted such institutions with the following principle of general interest: "Emigration grants should be used for an assistance neither socialist, nor republican, neither Catholic nor anti-Catholic; it must be viewed only in function of offering protection from greedy speculators to our emigrating Italian citizens."

As to the conclusion in regard to principles of propaganda obvious to the intrinsic nature of confessional institutions, allow me to take exception for conditions concerning Brazil. Conditions of our emigrants in this country are very different from those found in central Europe!

It is enough to reflect on the nature of these regions and their enormous distances for us to realize the difficulties the colonists find in seeking assistance, and Italian functionaries to provide it.

If we are not to lose sight of the scope we are aiming at, the protection of emigrants in Brazil, my opinion is that it will be necessary to make good use of all forces - albeit still very limited - we can dispose of, including confessional ones (...).

The city of São Paulo boasts larger and more richly endowed orphanages than the one conducted by the Fathers of St. Charles: as their names testify, both

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III

CHAPTER VI

orphanages "Santa Maria" and "Divina Provvidenza" are religious institutions. The modern nonsectarian spirit of this nation that chose separation of Church and State in its Constitution for historical and other reasons, which I consider irrelevant to discuss, has to take a second place to the religious spirit that provides shelter for abandoned orphans. The lay state has limited itself to granting some financial assistance for the support of religious institutions. Why could not the Italian State also make use of the same means? In providing assistance to orphans of our poor colonists, we have no other recourse except repatriation to place them in the care of some relatives, or of our country's institutions. Both these means, however, are inadequate to the sad needs found amongst the 800,000 Italians of São Paulo and I do not see how we could give up either of them.

The Christopher Columbus Orphanage has purely Italian origins; Bishop Scalabrini of Piacenza, and Father Marchetti were respectively its inspirator and founder; the religious men and women who helped them and are now carrying on the work of the two now deceased, were and are all Italian. This fact is worthy of consideration because, while in Italy the different opinions on the work of the government divide men into political parties, in foreign lands these divisions are less marked and the pride of being Italian forms still the greater force of unity in our colonies otherwise divided in almost any other initiative that does not reflect an expression of love for their fatherland. The earthquake of Calabria, the eruption of the Vesuvius, the exposition of Milan, are all generous examples of patriotic unity.

This orphanage, opened in 1895 by means of public charity, came soon afterwards within the area of action of the Italian government. By a signed agreement of November 1896, Brazil paid four thousand "contos" as indemnity for losses suffered by Italian citizens in the last revolution. Many of the damaged had vanished with no possibility of finding their heirs so that when all accounts were taken care of, one hundred contos of the remaining balance were allotted to this pious Institute. In January 1902, fifty contos of this sum were placed at the disposal of the orphanage that used them to complete the section at Vila Prudente (...).

The Institute continued to grow also when donations began to dwindle because of the increasing coffee crisis; in March 1904 the Ministry ordered that 25 contos be given to the administration of the orphanage; there still remain 25 contos on hand (...).

In February 1903, the Ministry allotted the Institute a grant of two thousand liras for its financial budget 1901-1902; then in April 1904, it decided an equal subsidy for 1902-1903; finally, it granted the orphanage two thousand liras from the Emigration budget for 1903-1904 and following years.

Should the government's action carried on until now be discontinued? If not, on what conditions should it be continued? Certainly, it should not be stopped because an orphanage for the children of our emigrants responds to a social policy of protection for Italians in foreign lands, and of support for their needs. If such an institution did not exist, one would have had to be created.

(...) It so happens in this young country that programs for the protection of the less fortunate classes are by a sad condition of circumstances inversely proportionate to their needs. On one side you have the cities where workers

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER VI**

are generally paid with just and sure wages; on the other, the colonists, scarcely compensated, often left to the arbitrary action of the more powerful, and who, more than anyone else, are burdened with hardships and are exposed to danger. The poor Missionary of St. Charles serves at times as the only humanitarian link that unites them to their more fortunate fellow emigrants!

I did not use the qualification "poor" in order to arouse a special feeling of pity; the word applies in all its meaning. These missionaries are eight. I have watched them closely, and I know all of them personally, except for their superior, Father Consoni, who was touring Paraná at the time of my visits. There was no need of special observation to find out that they do not enjoy even the most modest comfort, and they have never, perhaps, wished for it. With a phrase understood in its evangelic connotations, I would like to qualify them as "poor in spirit", so uncomplicated have I found them in their ideas; being the last arrival among them from Italy, I was asked information about the Sempione tunnel, the beatification of Joan of Arc, His Highness the Prince of Piedmont, and His Holiness Pius X. The quality of their questions was characteristic of the simplicity distinguishing people that live isolated from the busy centers of human social interaction. Speaking of the Missionaries of St. Charles, a certain personality deplored that they were not more learned. Allow me to point out, however, that a greater learning would be a useless luxury for the need they would have of it with people in great part illiterate and made even more awkward by the wilds of these regions, than when they left their place of origin in Italy. Neither do I believe, besides, that a greater ecclesiastical learning in philosophy and theology would benefit the work of charity they are engaged in or the manner in which they exercise it, that is, their Christian humility, always appreciated by all independently of any religious belief, when it is so sincere and proven by a life of self-sacrifice.

These priests leave Ipiranga where they share quarters with the orphans, and travel to the interior to say Mass, baptize, hear confessions, give Holy Communion, and perform weddings, in places where state authorities will arrive, who knows how many years from now!

The total dedication of the missionaries is manifested by the comfort they bring through the exercise and spirit of their ministry such as no one else could ever supply either by this or any other means. While visiting the plantations, the missionary carries out his apostolate, collects donations, and seeks orphans or he spends five or six months in the interior going from colony to colony, journeying on whole days on foot, sleeping wherever possible, eating what charity provides; then he returns home to Ipiranga.

"There was a time" - one of the priests was telling me - "when donations we were able to bring back home were considerable. The orphanage of the boys was built with money collected this way. With the fall of the coffee market, times have changed; now we can hardly get in three or four months what years ago we used to collect in one. There was no colonist, then, who could not give his milreis, but conditions are so bad now that the penny we receive deserves greater merit before God than the milreis of yesterday."

Currently, there are 175 boys at the orphanage of Ipiranga, and 86 girls at Villa Prudente, from toddlers taking their first steps to 15 or 16 year old boys and girls completing their apprenticeships in the trades they were taught at

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III CHAPTER VI

the orphanage in the city's shops and factories. Once able to fence for themselves, they learn right from the beginning how to save on their very first modest wages.

Though simple, the stories I wanted to know about several of those children of charity were all so pitiful and I will not repeat them. Each one is a living witness to the sorrows of the colonists' life, to the way they are born and die here beyond the reach of any help from the rest of the human family. Some of these youngster don't even have a story! They simply were found, one in a stable, the other on the street, and in the ruins of an old hut, the others! A little Indian was picked up at the edge of the forest after waiting in vain for his parents to take him home.

The orphanage is hardly endowed with the bare necessities and I have to admit that I could not find anything superfluous. Even what they have does not cease testifying to their scarcity of means and to the scope of the institutions such poverty honors! Dormitories have tile roofing but no ceilings; the bedsheets show a complicate lay-out of geometric figures drawn by the needle work of Vila Prudente; with its pretense at polychromatic plaster decorations, wooden images of saints, cheap paintings, and the usual paper flowers, the chapel itself gives proof that even here, though looking for improvement in other things, the intrinsic scope of the Institution for abandoned children has not been set aside."¹⁷

¹⁷ Coletti, "Lo Stato di San Paolo e l'Emigrazione Italiana", Bollettino dell'Emigrazione, 1908, No. 15, pp. 40-45.

CHAPTER VII

**ITALIAN EMIGRATION IN RIO GRANDE DO SUL
1875 - 1905**

1. **A Glance at the Epic of Italian Emigration.**

The State of Rio Grande do Sul, whose area (282,184 km²) is just a little smaller than Italy, had 59,142 inhabitants in 1803, and 106,000 in 1822. The Germans began immigrating in 1824 and founded the colony of São Leopoldo.

Following the interruption due to the Farroupilha revolution, Germans resumed flowing in and settled over the great area of the "Serra da Itacolomi" in the outer regions of Alto Jacuí, inhabited the river valleys of Cadeia, Caí, Taquari, Rio Pardo, Pardinho and its tributaries, coming to a halt at the springs of the Caí-Santa Cruz and its tributaries, Pinhal, Forromeco, and Maratá; they hardly got to the foothills of the Sierra, as far as Nova Petropolis, Feliz, Santa Maria da Soledade, and Maratã, but did not go over the mountain range into the rough and inaccessible territory still ruled by Indians and wild animals that would be settled by Italians later on.

With the intent to promote its colonization, the Provincial Government founded the colonies of Conde de Eu (Garibaldi) and Dona Isabel (Bento Gonçalves) on May 24, 1870. A contract was signed on January 31, 1872, with two private companies, Caetano Pinto and Brothers, and Holtzweissig and Co., aiming at bringing in forty thousand colonists, preferably farmers, within ten years. Immigrants were to pay their own pass to the ports of Rio Grande, but would be refunded the difference exceeding the price of a trip to the United States.

The free distribution of land had already ceased since 1854; now immigrants had to pay for it within five years, earning the money for their first expenditures working on road construction. It was by reason of this contract that Italians first entered the state of Rio Grande do Sul. In 1875, President De Azevedo Castro presented to the Provincial Assembly a report on immigration from 1859 to 1875. In his summary of statistics, out of a total of 12,563, the Italians numbered 729. However, the official date of the beginning of Italian immigration to Brazil is conventionally fixed for 1875. But, in the report prepared in 1871 for the Provincial Assembly by the Councilor Pinto Lima, it is said that there were already 27 immigrants of Italian and Austrian extraction at Conde d'Eu. The first one was probably a certain Cirillo Zanoni. In 1874 Italian settlers were also listed at São Feliciano. In 1875, in the colonial region of Nova Palmira, a territory now belonging to Farroupilha, there lived 49 Italians.

After a trip of three months and three weeks, on May 10, 1875, the Crippa, Spreafico and Radaelli families arrived from Olmate (Monza), in Lombardy.

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III CHAPTER VII

They settled in a locality which they named "Nova Milano", which was inhabited mostly by Indios. In the following year, the government had a hovel built there to serve as a shelter for emigrants on their way to the plantations of Caxias do Sul (Barracão).

On September 30, 1875, another fifteen families arrived, joined soon after by others, mostly from the Veneto and the Tridentine Regions. We should point out here that we identify as Tridentine all those whom the Brazilian documents ordinarily indicated as Tyroleans, because they belonged actually to an Italian ethnic group, though politically under Austrian domination. In 1876, many of them settled in a place called Campos dos Bruges because inhabited before by the Coaguas Indios. This is how Caxias do Sul, "the Pearl of the Italian colonies", had its origin: "in just ten years it reached upward of 13,000 people!

In December 1875 the first Italian immigrants arrived at Dona Isabel (now Bento Gonçalves). Italian colonization in the municipalities of Santa Maria, Julio de Castilhos, Cachoeira, and Arroio Grande began in 1877.

The government's colonial settlements of Alfredo Chaves, and São Marco were founded in 1884; Barão do Trinfo and Vila Nova in 1888; Antonio Prado in 1889; Ernesto Alves, 1890; Marques do Herval, 1891; Guaporé, 1892; Chimarrão, Anta Gorda, and Itapuca, 1897; Maciel, near Canguçu, 1902.

Vila Nova was the oldest of the colonies founded through private initiative; the others were Visconde de Rio Branco in Cruz Alta, and São Paulo in Soledade, 1898; São Miguel in Cachoeira, and Doerken in Guaporé, 1899; Araca, and Cacique Doble, 1901; Sananduva, 1902; Rio Ricardo, 1904; Bastian, 1906; Deodoropolis, 1908; and Palassin in Guaporé, 1911.

There was something peculiar about the Italian colonies of Rio Grande; they were arranged in lands abutting a river or a brook. Some lands were set aside as seats for municipalities, and others for agriculture. The latter ones were of different sizes, according to the various zones of colonization; they measured on average 2000 m along the river line and 1000 m in depth. The house was built on piles or on stone foundations in the center; the rest, especially in the first years, was ordinarily constructed with wooden boards or logs, sealed up with mud. The lots belonging to Italians in 1898 were about 20,000.

According to the January 1, 1881 law, immigrants with family were enjoying the following rights:

- a) Support, shelter, and free transportation from arrival at Porto Alegre to entering their colonial piece of land.
- b) A subsidy of one hundred liras for construction and maintenance of roads.
- c) 25 liras worth of working tools.
- d) Sure employment in public works fifteen days each month until the first harvest.
- e) Allotment of 25 or 30 hectares (61.7 or 74.1 acres) of land at

the price of one to five refs by the square meter - (the average cost of a lot amounted, therefore, to over six hundred liras.

- f) Term of five years to pay for the lot, with right to do so on yearly installments.

If, besides the purchase of the land one considers the expenditures for building the house, on working tools, and on domestic animals, the funds needed for a family to settle in "the colony" were valued on an average of over one thousand liras of the time. By a legislation of July 4, 1900, reductions of 12% were granted on payments made within two years, and 6% within three, while penalties of 20% or 30% percent, respectively, were imposed for delays of one or two years. Italians often found it difficult to pay their debts to the government, because there was little money circulating due to poor trade opportunities and lack of roads and means of transportation. It often happened in early times that, in spite of the abundance of food, immigrants had no money to buy their clothes because their products were left to rot in the fields. Other negative factors also must be considered, such as the 1893-1894 revolution, that drove a great part of immigrants to take refuge in the forests, and the recurrent epidemics due to an almost total lack of medical assistance.

Italian families were generally very prolific. The family of Joseph Basso that had arrived at Bento Gonçalves in 1879 with seven children, had grown into a clan of 177 members by 1925; the family of Joseph Mariani who had settled as a newly-wed young man at Nova Milano in 1876, could boast eighty one descendants; and the family of John Barea reached 102. This is one of the factors explaining the very rapid growth of the colonial centers. It is enough to point out among the mixed colonies of the world wide Valley, the Italian contribution to the population increase of Erechim. It had been founded in 1908 and given its actual start with 36 immigrants in 1910; by 1918 it had 32,000 inhabitants.

Naturally, in this case, the phenomenon of the internal immigration of other ethnic groups also substantially contributed to its growth.

Unfortunately, we do not have on hand any statistics on the number of Italians migrating into Rio Grande do Sul from 1875 to 1881; someone guessed about 14,000. In 1877, only in the colonial region of Caxias, there were already 3000 Italians. By 1924 about 340,000 inhabitants of Italian extraction, parents and descendants, were thought to be living in the state. In 1901, the Italian consul of Porto Alegre, E. Ciapelli, estimated them to be from a minimum of 150,000 to a maximum of 200,000 in a total population of about 1 million people.

According to the Annual Statistics of Rio Grande do Sul, published for the years 1911-1912, the number of immigrants into the State, between 1882 and 1914 were as follows:

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER VII**

Year	Total	Italians	%
1882	3,549	3,205	90.30
1883	4,402	3,735	84.89
1884	1,895	1,345	67.75
1885	8,286	7,600	91.72
1886	3,354	2,352	70.12
1887	5,326	4,362	81.90
1888	4,927	4,241	86.07
1889	9,787	7,578	77.42
1890	19,485	2,701	13.86
1891	20,739	9,440	45.51
1892	8,526	7,523	88.23
1893	2,795	1,503	53.77
1894	855	424	49.59
1895	2,329	947	40.66
1896	3,095	917	29.62
1897	1,431	690	48.21
1898	1,613	989	61.31
1899	2,556	1,070	41.86
1900	1,503	745	49.56
1901	1,315	631	47.98
1902	847	359	42.38
1903	743	305	41.04
1904	837	296	35.36
1905	963	247	25.64
1906	1,013	449	44.32
1907	754	239	31.69
1908	4,117	355	8.62
1909	5,955	397	6.66
1910	3,583	425	11.86
1911	7,790	657	8.43
1912	7,700	467	6.06
1913	9,890	477	4.82
1914	2,632	230	8.73
	154,682	66,901	43, 25%

In 1975, a hundred years from the beginning of Italian emigration, it was worthwhile to recall the hard conditions the pioneers had to face! The Italians arrived fifty years after the Germans who had already taken possession of the most accessible, fertile, and productive lands closer to the capital and the ports, all provided with good roads and waterways. The Italians were practically thrown into the forest ("jogados no mato") with no roads or infra-structures, with mule trails if there were lucky! It took them two days to take their products on the back of animals from their colonies to the Rio Cai, the closest

waterway.

Borges de Madeiros, President of the State of Rio Grande for a quarter of a century, had this to say in a speech given at the inauguration of the Porto Alegre Italian Colonial Exposition in 1925:

"In the apportionment of the territory of Rio Grande, Italian colonization was the least favored! Italians found the most productive lands already taken by others! Destiny has reserved for them the roughest mountain region to the north of the State and of the German communities, where the mountainous wild, and rocky countryside, crossed by narrow valleys and swift streams, and inhabited by savage nomads, was to become the grandiose stage for the strong race of the new settlers.

Distant from urban centers, lacking easy and direct means of communication, and nearly isolated in these rough regions, they spent their early years in an unyielding struggle against the "wild forest", knocking down trees by fire and pickax, opening trails, shoving off the savages, and hunting down wild animals. During this hard period, production was limited to almost the bare necessities for survival, trade was rudimental, transportation precarious and very slow.

These communities lay abandoned and forgotten by the governments of that time!"¹ (1)

A certain Peter Tomasi, an elderly Italian settler, described this way to a priest the hardships of those first years:

"In great fear of attacks from Indians, we worked by day cutting down trees to clear a piece of land, or to make wood for our use, for the construction of a barn, or a fence. By night the colonist took turns in guarding our properties, ready to sound off a warning in case of aggression. But, to be honest, the "Indios" never bothered us and we never saw them.

However, were it not for our courageous persistence, I wonder whether we would have survived! In fact only in early 1877 we began harvesting the products to discovered that we had to contend with competitors, such as monkeys, parrots, and other animals and birds that were storming through our plantations. However, if on one hand they caused us some losses, in truth we have to admit, that many of them, caught and killed, often filled our pots, providing us with very tasty soups and meats. As to wild pigs, we were not contented with casting them off our fields with gunshots at night; we wanted to capture them. The trick consisted in digging holes which we covered with branches. Passing over them the pigs would fall in, giving us an opportunity to capture them with ease, slaughter, and then, carry them home. Another scourge was represented by the rats. Incredible hordes of them came to nibble at furniture and shoes; and at night they organized veritable attacks on people in their sleep. In Campos dos Bugres, colonization authorities helped us to exterminate them, paying them 500 reis a quarter measure (eight kilos).

But after a two month search we discovered their nests and burrows in the midst of bamboo patches, and with the use of poisons we succeeded in wiping out that horrible scourge.

¹ Cfr. F. Cenni, Italianos no Brasil. (Sao Paulo, 1958) pp. 109-110.

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III CHAPTER VII

*Try to figure out for yourself, Rev. Father, the hardships we had to undergo to secure some items of prime necessity! We had to walk a whole day splashing ourselves with mud up to our eyes to cover a distance which is now easily run in a short while. More than one poor settler had to walk half a day with a sack of mais on his shoulders to take it to a place where some kind of mule could be found."*²

Italians were not only farmers. The law 749 of 1871 that brought into being the Caetano Pinto contract, allowed for ten percent of immigrants not to belong to the farming class, and for every family one unmarried man could qualify without, however, the right to the apportionment of the rural lots. It is out of these groups that the classes of merchants and manufacturers were born. There were also some heads of families that after saving a certain sum of money preferred to leave the fields and settle in the cities in search of a more secure and rewarding job. The most significant instance of this qualitative change is to be seen in Caxias do Sul, one of the most industrial cities of Brazil. Already in 1892 it boasted ten hydraulic and three steam sawmills, two steam and fifty water flour mills, seven tanneries, seven breweries, three distilleries, one soft drinks factory, three hat factories, two of wicker furniture, one of insecticides, two of soap, fourteen iron foundries, five factories for wine making tools, five shops for furniture, twenty-five for shoes, twelve for tailoring, ...and many other kinds of shops. Their owners were almost all Italian.

A large portion of the industry of Rio Grande do Sul had its start with the rural craftsmanship borne of immigration. This explains why the great majority of names recurring in all large industries and firms of the State are either German or Italian. We shouldn't forget, however, that unlike German and other immigrants, Italians could not count on any financing from their mother country. As regards Italians and Germans, the history of Rio Grande do Sul could supply us with an easy disavowal of some prejudices concerning Latinos and the supposed economic pre-eminence of Protestants as compared with Catholics. Germans, due more to traits of their own than to environmental conditions, and Italians, by force of events, lived for a long time in cultural isolation, the main cause of the slow progress of agriculture that beyond the regions closest to the cities and the coast continued to employ backward farming systems for decades. When the natural yield of the land ceased, many farmers had to move to other regions either in Rio Grande do Sul, or in the states of Santa Catarina and Paraná. Cultural mediators and immigration inspectors repeatedly, but in vain, raised their voices against this cultural isolation; they demanded from the authorities roads and schools, but their requests were ignored.

In 1890 the Director of Lands and Colonization had this to lament in regard to the Italian settlements:

"There is a great need of schools where children of Italians may learn our

² A. Fortini, "0 75 Aniversario da Colonizacao Italiana no Rio Grande do Sul." (Porto Alegre 1950), pp. 21-22.

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER VII

language, that should also be their language, thus to avoid the recurrence of what happened to the old German colonies."

In 1902 he remarked that the 20,000 Italians of the township of Guaporé had only two schools at their disposal. Regarding to the Anta Gorda and Itapuca communities, he pointed out:

"The only existing school is the one located at the site "Carlos Barbosa" in Anta Gorda, and, to boot, is run by an unqualified teacher...."

More frequent still were their demands for roads to allow them exportation of products, and farming expansion through better techniques of cultivation. The low degree of education or outright illiteracy, brought over from Italy, presented a heavy drawback for many of them! For a long time it slowed down the immigrants' social status as did the lack of migration policy on the part of the Italian government! As Brazilian governments were insensible to the complaints of their functionaries in charge of immigration, so were also Italian governments deaf to the appeals of Consular agents and emigration inspectors who called above all for some financing and trading. Consequently, so much more praiseworthy was the slow, hard-gotten, but sure, success our unfortunate emigrants were able to achieve against unbelievable odds such as had discouraged both the Germans and the French! In 1925, B. Crocetta made the following observations:

"The truth is that Italy has sent to Brazil only able bodies, a crowd of workers and farmers; while England, France and even little Belgium, were pouring in millions of pounds and francs! Rightly therefore, Italian emigrants heard themselves often described as servile, pliant to the most humble jobs, submissive, patient, and tolerant of any humiliation (...). The psychological trait of Italians, that many of our defamers mistook for servility, is one of great adaptability. This is a virtue that renders them extremely practical, whether you meet them at their arrival in a new land, or walking down city streets with two baskets of fruits or vegetables, while attempting to bend their dialect to fit the local language; or whether you come to find them isolated in the virgin forest cutting their way through it (...).

To this trait is due the strong spirit of initiative and endurance of which our colonists gave, and still continue to give, evidence!

Indiscriminately cast around and often abandoned, in the boundless and dreadful solitude of the "Serra Geral" in the midst of mountains and valleys, until then inhabited by savages and wild beasts, they built new trails to evermore distant communications, leaving shreds of their flesh and dreams behind in the underbrush and on stumps of the gigantic trees they were cutting down in the forest; but they were thus establishing there the first centers that were to become later on the rural communities, and eventually the towns or the cities of today!

Had they not been individualistic, our colonists would have hardly been able to withstand the solitude and hardships to which they were confined in the beginnings of the colonization of Rio Grande do Sul; a colonization,

unplanned, irrational and cruel!"³

Italian immigration into Rio Grande do Sul as well as into Paraná and Santa Catarina, was characterized by the presence of an environment which responded to the particular traits of Italian farmers! Italians, farmers especially, cherish a dream: that is, being the owners of a piece of land and of their own home, producing their own harvest, and being able to save enough money to warrant a better future for their children. In this respect the type of colonization employed in Rio Grande do Sul could be considered ideal not only for farmers but also for the advancement of agriculture itself; the evil of tenant farming, which had embittered their lives in Italy and the lives of many immigrants in the state São Paulo was practically nonexistent. There were instead many small landowners, quiet and laborious, in a position to realize a modest dream of self-sufficiency that would lead not a few of them to wealth. Moreover, almost all the major exponents of commerce and industry of the Italian colonial region were men of their own making, who had worked and saved their way through from owning a small land property!

Wineries derived from their home wine-making; mechanical saw mills sprang up from their primitive water machinery; great metallurgic firms had their origin from their small workshops improvised to make or repair agricultural tools; tanneries and sausage factories traced their source to the raising of animals. On their part, farmers contributed to the general affluence of the state by virtue of their distinguishing trait of extracting from the land what was necessary for the support of the whole family expressed in the biblical saying: "bread and wine". Wherever Italians arrived wheat and vines grew, the typical mediterranean cultivations. Portuguese immigrants had left them behind because they had come in search of gold, not to work the land, and intermarrying with the natives they ended up with adopting their eating habits; and so, especially because of laziness and indolence, the former consumers of wheat had become eaters of manioc (= tuberous root used also to make tapioca), beans, and corn, at the most. As was the case in the state of São Paulo, so also here in Rio Grande do Sul it was mostly the Italians who developed the farming of poultry. Along with wheat and vines naturally corn was always present, and being easier to cultivate. It was used by Lombards and Venetians not only for their traditional "polenta" (= corn meal) but also for feeding domestic animals. Corn meant poultry and pigs; hence fats, eggs, and vegetable oils, processed in food industries. Of the corn the mills were born; of the wine the glass factories, and so on. However, true as it may be that this kind of farming by Italians with no rational planning and in response to immediate need for supplies, might have caused an ecological imbalance by impoverishing the soil and giving rise to land erosion through an indiscriminate deforestation; still it is also equally true that Italian farmers did not receive any moral support or technical assistance. Such

³ B. Crocetta, "Un Cinquantésimo di Vita Coloniale" in the book: Album Comemorativo do 75 Aniversario da Colonização Italiana no Rio Grande do Sul. (Porto Alegre, 1950), pp. 360-361.

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER VII**

errors were acknowledged by the Brazilians themselves. In a 1904 lecture, Mr. Assis Brasil admitted:

"Since we are not well educated and we don't really know what line of action to choose even for ourselves, even less, then, are we in a position to do so in settling our colonists. We isolate immigrants, we allure them into the wild extensions of our few and precious woods offering them as models the semi-barbarous "caboclo" (= mestizo), who use their iconoclastic axes to destroy the forest, which someone has defined as *'the gift from heaven'* (...). We thus gave them reasons to become aliens to us and we let them turn into savages; no wonder then, if, after some years, we should need the noose to catch them..."

As we have mentioned already, Italians themselves had to bear the consequences of the fast exploitation of the soil. Together with other causes, such as the rapid population growth and distance from means of communications, it provoked a continual internal migration with consequent geographical dispersion, much wider than the dispersion of German immigrants who had settled in their fertile and easier colonies with much stronger stability. Even in this instance, however, Brazilians had to admit that "as from the evil of some derives the good of others so also we can be thankful for the conditions that brought about this phenomenon which caused those able farmers to spread around in all directions over the state."⁴

The same author, Mem de Sá, felt bound in conscience to sound a hymn of praise for the "wonderful and prodigious talents of the peninsular immigrants":

"They cleared mountains, conquered forests, overcame all difficulties, and all hardships of the lands they were allotted and of the poor yield of the soil they had been given! They peopled one region, then penetrated all others in the state, formed communities, subdivided the old counties, thus forging new administration centers! They cut down the woods, irrigated the land with the sweat of their brow and the blood of their hands, planted it with abundant and fertile seeds, restored the farming of wheat of which they are still the major producers. They covered the hills with vineyards of which they draw the nectar that on the altar stands to represent the blood of Christ. They expanded the cultivation of corn and the raising of pigs. They doubled the yield, and brightened the green landscape with the golden spikes of wheat. First they opened their workshops, then the factories, thus multiplying riches by the tenfold! They taught us and practiced the most effective form of cooperation. Orderly, peaceful, lovers of life and nature, of laughter and joy, jovial and strong, they are also a living example of laboriousness and frugality, of initiative and creativity.

They repaid us a threefold of what Brazil had offered them; they have responded to sympathetic welcome of those who accepted them with their love for children and country. Always sincere in heart and behavior, they did not allow themselves any prejudice as to race or origin.

Be they blessed!"⁵

⁴ Mem de Sa: "Aspectos Economicos da Colonização Italiana no Rio Grande do Sul", *Ibid.*, p. 83.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 103-104. Besides the document quoted in the preceding note, the study of E. Pellanda, "Aspectos Gerais da

2. Religious Conditions

The State of Rio Grande do Sul was first evangelized by Jesuits entering from Paraguay to which it belonged in the seventeenth century. In its northwestern region along the Uruguay river, they founded a number of missions, the so-called "reductions" (= communities of Indios for civilization and evangelization purposes), afterwards destroyed by the "bandeirantes" (= revolutionaries) of São Paulo. In order not to be taken slaves the natives fled before their arrival. Many of those Jesuits were Italian.

In 1860, Dom Sebastiano Dias de Laranjeira, the second bishop of Rio Grande, succeeded in securing a number of Italian Jesuits to replace the Spanish ones who had to leave. Some of them were entrusted with the direction of the diocesan seminary. In 1869 they were succeeded in turn by German Jesuits. Many children of Italians were trained and prepared for the Priesthood by the Jesuits in the diocesan seminary and in other ecclesiastical institutions.

Accepting a petition of Italians in Vale Veneto, and Silveira Martins in the neighboring region of Val de Serra, two Italian priests reached them in 1880 from Italy. The priest that took up residence at Vale Veneto died three years later; immigrants turned to the Salesians, but Don Rua directed them to the Pallottines. Thus, this congregation entered Brazil in 1886. Besides the above-mentioned places, it opened parishes and religious houses at Caxias, Flores da Cunha, Cruz Alta, Passo Fundo, Ijuí, Serro Azul, Palmeira, Nanoai, Belem Novo, and Porto Alegre.

The Capuchin Fathers Bruno of Gillonay and Leo of Chambery, of the Province of Savoy, arrived on January 18, 1886. They fixed their residence at Garibaldi where they opened a seminary in 1898. They established a novitiate at Flores da Cunha in 1889, and the seminary of Veranapolis in 1902.

Either continuously or intermittently, the Capuchins directed the parishes of Garibaldi, Flores da Cunha, Veranapolis, Vacaria, Sananduva, São Antonio at Porto Alegre, Lagoa Vermelha, Erechim, Bom Jesus, Jaguari, Vespasiano Correa, and Capoeiros (= Nova Prata). The two last ones were later taken over by the Scalabrinians.

The Salesians began their activity in the first years of this century with the colleges of Sagé and Rio Grande. In 1889, Dom Goncalves Ponce de Leão, the third bishop of Porto Alegre, brought along from Italy several Camaldolese monks. They fixed their residence in the vicinity of Caxias, and founded a new "Camaldoli", staffing also the parishes of Caravaggio,

Colonização Italiana no Rio Grande do Sul" (= General Aspects of Italian Colonization in Rio Grande do Sul), *ibid.*, pp. 34-64, we availed ourselves of the various articles contained in the book: Ciriquantenario della Colonizzazione Italiana nel Rio Grande do Sul (= Fiftieth Anniversary of Italian Colonization in Rio Grande do Sul) (Porto Alegre, 1925); of the basic work of A. Franceschini: l'emigrazione Italiana nell'America del Sud (= Italian Emigration in South America), (Rome, 1908) pp. 609-946; and of the above quoted work of F. Cenni: Italianos no Brasil (= Italians in Brazil), (São Paulo, 1958), pp. 101-131.

first, and of Ana Rech, later. The Marists arrived in 1901. They limited themselves to the German colonies at first, but then, in 1904 they began working with Italians, beginning at Garibaldi. The Christian Brothers made their appearance in 1906.

Among the orders of nuns that took care of Italians, especially in the field of education, we have to mention the Congregation of the Most Pure Heart of Mary, approved in 1906, and supported by the Scalabrinian Father Vicentini. In 1898 the Capuchins invited the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Chambery to Rio Grande do Sul. The Scalabrinian Sisters arrived only 1915.

Already prior to Italian immigration there were several Italian priests in Rio Grande do Sul. The first one, perhaps, was a certain Father Prospero of Santa Teresa, a Carmelite, appointed pastor of Conceição do Arroio in 1825. From 1844 to 1875 we know the names of about sixty Italian priests, almost all diocesan, who were pastors, curates, and assistants in communities scattered all over the State.

The first priest to accompany Italian immigrants was Fr. Bartholomew Tiecher, of the Tridentine Region: he arrived on October 24, 1875 with seven hundred "Trentinos", among whom his parents and brothers. He was slated to be the curate of the colony of Santa Maria da Soledade (=Forromeco) by the Federal Government; on March the 21, 1876, at the colony of Conde d'Eu (=Garibaldi), he said the first Mass for a totally Italian community on an altar improvised in the middle of the road with the trunks of the colonists. He had also the care of Italians at Dona Isabel (= Bento Gonçalves).

The first curate of Caxias do Sul was Father Anthony Passaggi who began to minister in a bamboo chapel by the old cemetery; an old pendulum-clock cabinet was used as tabernacle. Soon afterwards he moved into a modest house on Julio de Castilhos Street, and later still, to another home in Dante's Square, at the corner with Sinumbu Street. Later on, a large wooden building was put up, and on land next to it the foundation stone of the Church of "Santa Teresa", the present cathedral, was laid in 1895. Amongst the Italian colonies, the parish of Caxias was the first to be canonically erected, on May 20, 1884. We do not need to enumerate all the priests who took care of Italians; we shall say that from 1875 to 1896, the year when Scalabrinians began their apostolate, about seventy Italian diocesan priests exercised their priestly ministry in Rio Grande do Sul mostly in regions of Italian colonization. Some had come from Italy and others had studied in local seminaries. The first of a long list of priests, children of Italians, was Mons. Giosué Bardin, who completed in the seminary of Porto Alegre the studies he had begun in Feltre (Italy) and was ordained on November 29, 1885.

We should point out that the study of Italian was mandatory for children of Italians at the seminary of Porto Alegre; in Theology they were given courses of sacred eloquence in Italian.

Unfortunately, we do not possess statistics on clergy of Italian extraction in the early years, but we may get an idea of it by observing the statistics of

the seminary of Porto Alegre in 1925:

Minor Seminary

Seminarians:		
Italian Born	2	
German Born	2	
Brazilian Born	272 of whom	72 (Italians)
"		157 (Germans)
"		6 (Polish)
"		33 (Portuguese)
"		3 (Ruthenian)
"		1 (Assyrian)
Total	272	272

Major Seminary

Seminarians:		
Italian Born	2	
German Born	4	
Uruguayan	1	
Brazilian Born	81 of whom	27 (Italians)
"		43 (Germans)
"		6 (Portuguese)
"		4 (Polish)
"		1 (English)
Total	88	81⁶

3. A Report to Bishop Scalabrini

In 1904, when visiting his missionaries in Rio Grande do Sul, Bishop Scalabrini asked Father Bruno da Gillonay, a pioneering Capuchin in that State, to prepare a report on conditions of Italians.

It affords us a general view of the situation before we study the activities of the Scalabrinians, and it presents, at the same time, some points of reflection on the difference of systems.

We limit ourselves to examining only one aspect. In the first years, Capuchins directed all their efforts and personnel toward building their

⁶ Cfr. G. Barea, "La Vita Spirituale nelle Colonie Italiane dello Stato" (= Spiritual Life of the Italian Colonies in the State); G.M. Balen, "Opera di Sacerdoti e di Congregazioni Italiane nel Progresso Religioso, nello sviluppo dell'Arte, dell'Istruzione e dell'Assistenza nello Stato" (= The Action of Italian Priests and Congregations towards the Religious Progress, the Development of the Arts, Instruction, and Assistance in the State), in the book: Cinquantenario della Colonizzazione Italiana del Rio Grande del Sud (Porto Alegre, 1925, pp. 55-192.

seminaries and novitiate, thus securing from the very beginning a sure future and a great expansion. As we shall see, the same idea was also in the minds of the most active pioneers of the Scalabrinian missions; unfortunately, however, all pleadings of Fathers Marchetti, Consoni, and Colbacchini went unheeded. This is one case when we may apply the Brazilian saying that: "*in caring for the most urgent, we neglect, at times, what is most important.*"⁷

Report of Father Bruno of Gillonay
On Italians in Rio Grande do Sul

"To His Excellency John Baptist Scalabrini
Bishop of Piacenza

Excellency,

A few days ago you were pleased to ask me for a written report that would help you to better remember what you have seen and understood in regard to our beloved Italians of Rio Grande do Sul, and thus to inform of it our Sovereign Shepherd and Pontiff, Pope Pius X.

I hasten, Your Excellency, to comply with your request to the best of my ability. I pray you, however, to bear with me for the deficiencies of this report of mine as it carries only the notes of a poor missionary writing in a hurry because he has no time to check them over for the logical order the Bishop to whom they are addressed is entitled to. I beg you also to forgive me for writing in French, my native language, and better known to me, as it insures a clearer rendering of my thoughts.

I. Material Conditions of Italians in Rio Grande do Sul

The program adopted by the Government in the colonization of Rio Grande, admirably favors the material well-being of new immigrants and of all colonists in general. It consists in granting anyone who requests it a sufficient piece of land through a modest compensation payable to the government within a certain number of years. Besides, the colonist is given the chance to pay off his debt with the government in a short while by doing work on roads built by the State. He enjoys the full benefits of the land until he pays his debt, becoming its undisputed and independent owner when this is done.

This system spurs him to work, and almost without his noticing it, he finds himself a proprietor. The land is productive; consequently, through work and

⁷ Already in 1888 Father Colbacchini, thought that the house he was building at Aqua Verde (Paraná) should have been "used later on as a Seminary" (Letter to Father B. Roller, Curitiba, Sept. 19, 1888. Arch. G.S., 356/20). In his farewell address to the faithful of Santa Felicidade in 1894 he pleaded with them to set aside ten per cent of their products for the support of the missionaries and "towards giving life to a small seminary for young Italians aspiring to the Priesthood." (Discurso letto, ai Coloni Italiani nel Paraná, ecc.). (Speech read to Italian Colonists in Paraná). Bassano del Grappa, 1894, p. 26. Arch. G.S., 356/23). In 1896, before returning to Brazil, Father Colbacchini personally made a proposal to Bishop Scalabrini for publishing a periodical on the missions, in order to make them known and to stimulate vocations, and for opening a minor seminary in Brazil, with the intent, later on, to send the seminarians to finish their studies in Italy after completing their high school courses. (Cfr. Letter Colbacchini to Scalabrini, Bassano del Grappa, July 4, 1896. Arch. G.S., 1533/2).

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III CHAPTER VII

thrift, he easily arrives at a relatively comfortable standard of living. In a quarter of a century the most wise and laborious ones have reached those economic conditions for which King Solomon was praying as standing between riches that bring luxury, and poverty that represents at all times a bad training ground for vice.

II. Moral Conditions of Italians in Rio Grande do Sul

This colonization plan admirably promotes also: 1) their independence and nobility of character; 2) their honesty of life; 3) the preservation and development of their Christian families.

a) Independence and nobility of character. The poor are always afraid of their masters and to please them they often abdicate their principles and conscience through gross concessions. Italians of Rio Grande are not exposed to dangers of this kind. They feel free in their small properties, and expecting nothing except by the strength of their arms and the protection of God, they preserve a certain independence of ideas and nobility of character that make of them real human beings and true citizens. Let the rich and learned say what they want; they, the humble colonists think as and believe what their fathers did. This noble pride is one of the characteristic traits of our Italians of Rio Grande.

b) Honesty of life. Living apart in their properties and busy with their hard rural work, Italian colonists are beyond the reach of the cities' dangers, and of the temptations stemming from idleness. Thus, a great purity of life rules over their families. Children, watched over day and night by their parents and kept away from evil companions, easily preserve their innocence. Parents, also busy and secluded, love each other and are faithful to their duties. Every family can well provide for all its needs by their work. Stealing is practically unknown.

c) Preservation and growth of the family. Since the law of military service does not affect children of Italians, these young men soon form their own families. When the family property is no longer sufficient for all, the new couples turn to the government, they are given a new piece of land, and with all the energy of their young arms they build a nest where very soon a numerous family will live. And so, without fear of hunger and misery, numerous and laborious families multiply. One is amazed at the rapid growth of Italian population in the state of Rio Grande. It is difficult to draw exact statistics because of the steady moving out of new families, but we can say there is a ratio of up to eighty births to twenty deaths.

III. Religious Conditions of Italians in Rio Grande do Sul

Except for a few immigrants who settled in the cities, one must acknowledge that the 300,000 Italians of Rio Grande have so far remained very faithful to their religion and to its practice whenever they are offered the opportunity. They are indeed craving for religious celebrations, instruction, and the sacraments.

As soon as they arrived to find shelter for their families and settle down in a wild region where there was nothing but virgin forest, they did not forget the

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER VII

House of God. In the midst of all their communities there stands already the church, ordinarily in good taste, and on occasion very beautiful. Besides, due to the great distance that often prevents them from frequenting regularly the parish church, they built a number of small but charming chapels where they gather on Sunday for their community devotions. Now, churches and chapels are the products of the sweat of these good colonists! In fact, the government here is not doing a thing for the Church, and there is an absolute absence of rich families, as all of them have arrived here within the past twenty-five years in conditions of total poverty. The faith of these colonists has not lost ground to the hardships of the first years, and they continue to build their churches to God and His Mother, or to embellish those extant already.

Though so sincere, this faith, however, is exposed to very serious dangers.

First, distances and wide extensions of the parishes. They do not allow priests to preach often the Word of God to the people, and the faithful to normally frequent the parish church.

Second danger, the lack of priests. True, Your Excellency, your missionaries devote themselves with admirable dedication to the care of these good Italians. I have been for many years an edified witness to their ardent zeal, and I have blessed a hundred times Divine Providence for sending such missionaries to these poor immigrants; the Capuchins also lend their hand to the diocesan clergy, but all this is not enough! Here in Rio Grande the words of the Scriptures become terribly true: "The little ones have asked for bread, and there was no one to give it to them!"

The third danger stems from the preceding ones: Religious ignorance. It would threaten to destroy everything should not effective remedies be applied on time. All poor, and children of the poor, Italian colonists arrived here with a very limited knowledge of their religion. Caught up with their work and hardships encountered in settling in the midst of these virgin forests, they could not impart their children but a very rudimentary religious education. Besides, since on account of distances, a large proportion of these colonists cannot attend regularly the parish church, we witness with concern an alarming increase of religious ignorance!

However, we actively work to ward off these three dangers threatening the faith of Italians in Rio Grande. We are busy organizing: 1) Catholic Schools; 2) the Press; 3) the Preaching of Missions.

1) Catholic Schools. They will compensate to a certain extent for the lack of priests. True enough, the institution of these houses of education meets with great difficulties. On one side, the lay and free public schools, here as in a great number of other nations, draw a large number of students especially because they are free; on the other, the colonists, not so rich and burdened with the support of their priests and the construction of their churches, cannot undertake the economic sacrifices, though so modest, for building and running schools. Yet, Catholic schools begin to rise. We point out especially the work of the Sisters of St. Joseph. These Religious, who arrived here six years ago to serve the Italian colonies, have opened schools that are now well attended in various locations. In order to provide for the future of these schools and increase their number, they have opened a flourishing novitiate where about sixty novices, all Italian, are preparing for the religious life and

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER VII**

teaching. This work provides good reasons for the most promising hopes for the religious instruction of Italians in Rio Grande do Sul. We call your attention also to the Marists. They have opened a school this year practically exclusively for Italians, to which they began to flock from all colonies. Their institution shall serve also as a center of religious education.

2) The Press. Not a press as understood in Europe: the political press, propaganda press, factional party press! This is not the press we want here. We are now busy with setting up here, right in the center of the Italian colonies, a small printing shop that shall regularly bring into every family, all in their own language, a page of the Gospel, explained and commented, an inspirational story, various agricultural information, articles responding to the needs of our colonists. Deprived of all information in the solitude of their fields, they are waiting for this with holy impatience.

3) Preaching Missions. The Spiritual Exercises form a great means for preserving or reviving the practice and knowledge of the faith in the Christian people. Capuchins have been pursuing this sacred ministry, already; but, busy as they are with founding and organizing their institutions, they could do it so far only on a part time basis. In fact, they have opened a novitiate and houses of studies where they train for the religious life and educate in church doctrine young Capuchin missionaries recruited amongst Italian families of Rio Grande. With the help of these new recruits, they hope to prepare a group of missionaries who shall go to the help of all priests who will invite them to cooperate in the exercise of the ministry especially in the chapels and in the most neglected places.

This way, by giving help to the clergy with the schools, the press, and the missions, we hope to preserve the faith of our beloved Italians of Rio Grande, and make them a people truly Catholic and pleasing to God.

And now, Excellency, there does not remain for me but to kneel at your feet, to kiss your hands and ask your fatherly blessing on all Italians you and I love so much, while pleading at the same time with you to implore the Vicar of Christ for a special benediction on all of us doing apostolate in Rio Grande that we may "*instaurare omnia in Christo*" (= "to restore all things in Christ) in this remote corner of the Church of God.

Your Most Humble and Obligated
Fr. Bruno, O.F.M. Cap. Vicar Provincial
Conde d'Eu, October 12, 1904"⁸

Lastly we quote the impressions of the Italian Consul of Porto Alegre from a report sent to the "Italian Foreign Ministry" in 1903:

"Temporary immigration does not exist here. All immigrants come to this state with the intention to stay. In fact, it seldom happens that anyone may return to his fatherland except for a short period of time, mostly to take care of his private affairs, or to get his family.

Immigration may be divided into two classes: one of farmers, the other of laborers and farmhands. I shall speak later of the first, which is doubtlessly the more important of the two, and is made up almost exclusively of venetians.

⁸ Report of Fr. Bruno of Gillonay on Italians in Rio Grande do Sul to His Excellency John Baptist Scalabrini, Bishop of Piacenza", Garibaldi, October 12, 1904. (Arch. G.S., 10/5).

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III

CHAPTER VII

The latter one is composed of a small number of laborers. They should not be encouraged to come as, on account of the economic crisis this country is undergoing, work is lagging. To this group belong also a few farmhands from the provinces of Salerno and Cosenza who always know how to find ways to live and save devoting themselves to street vending or to the sale of food products, and above all, of lottery tickets. Because of the trades and occupations they are engaged in, this class of immigrants is not the kind that helps enhance the prestige of the Italian community; it is made up, however, of active frugal; and well behaved people. This is so true, that seldom a southerner is found who has any trouble with police, except perhaps, for the sale of tickets of certain clandestine lottery, which is, after all, quite acceptable to the public in general.

Beginning in 1872, farmers immigrated in great numbers during the time of the Empire, and continued considerably also in the early years of the republic; then, due to the civil war and, later on, to the abolition of free passages, their flow began to dwindle. In the last five years an average of 825 immigrants a year entered.

The colonization system adopted by this state is good both for the immigrants and for the country that takes them in. In fact, once the immigrant farmer becomes the owner of the land he cultivates, which is his most cherished dream, he gets attached to Rio Grande which he accepts as his second country. Far from considering returning, he tries, rather, to increase his property, investing his savings in the acquisition of more land, so that many families now own two or three allotments. Such a rational system of colonization cannot help but yield satisfactory results, when one looks at it from a general point of view, not considering certain drawbacks of a passing nature.

To make sure, conditions are very hard in the beginning, but whenever he can count on the help of one, or better yet, more adults in the family, the colonist is able to pull himself out of them, and things start to improve by the end of the first year. His greater or lesser affluence depends on several factors; particularly, his ability to keep going, the fertility of the land, and the availability of markets for his products. In any case, even as soon as they settle here, no family ever lacks an abundance of food. Except for some rare cases, all have a certain amount of products left over to sell for or to exchange with others of which they need, because not grown locally. No doubt, conditions of farmers, in general, and of the Italians, especially of those who live mostly in centers located on the high plateau, which are harder to reach, would be better if this country had a sufficient network of roads! The government is well aware of this need, and as I already pointed out elsewhere, it has decreed a loan of a million pounds to meet the cost of extraordinary works that include also a railroad from Porto Alegre to the projected Porto das Torres on the Ocean, whose construction depends on the Federal Government. Hence, the main task of the state's government will have to be directed towards resuming a strong immigration policy, and insuring a rapid and economical transportation of products to the sea by means of good roads. They are indispensable if Rio Grande is to draw from the new port benefits respondent to the grandiosity of this project. Without them, it would be scarcely warranted, as it could hardly increase its present commercial activity

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III CHAPTER VII

if it were not given the opportunity to increase considerably the means of production: manpower and capital. In addition to farmers, attention must also be paid to that part of the people who are given to trading. These are many, and they are not found only in the main centers of the municipalities, but also in small communities, and even in the various sections the colonies are divided in. Generally, they are immigrants who after setting aside a certain amount of money, left farming to devote themselves to more rewarding pursuits. One may find quite a few of them today who have saving accounts of ten to thirty "contos" of reis to their credit.

In some places I have met people who could recall walking on foot all the way from Treviso, Padua, or Vicenza, to Genoa because they could not afford to buy the train ticket! Italian colonists are now rightly proud of their achievements and take pleasure in comparing present conditions with those in their towns of origin. Now, they feel at home here, and it does not even seem true to them to be under laws and customs other than those of their home country in whose honor they named the numerous communities they have founded: Nova Padova, Nova Vicenza, Nova Treviso, Nova Bassano, Nova Venezia, Nova Pompei, Nova Roma. In a word, it is a new Italy in miniature, born in places where only thirty years ago there were a few "indios" and a large fauna of jaguars, panthers, and pumas.

Lately, the driving energy of our fellow countrymen has decreased, and keeps waning away, while vices are spreading far and wide, especially drunkenness. However, they should not entirely be blamed for it, after all, since leaving Italy hardly anyone has ever reminded them of the duties of a moral and civil life, except perhaps, some good priests. There are communities, isolated from the main administration centers, with no trace of authority over them, so that people there have always lived, and still do, in a semi savage state, without any kind of control or guide of sort.

The government is increasing the number of schools, but it cannot provide for the needs of all communities. Besides, on account of language barriers and temperament, teachers are not in a position to improve the intellectual and moral conditions of the environment. For these reasons it would be necessary to open some Italian schools and send here good and able teachers from Italy. Entrusted, at the same time, with the task of consular agents besides giving the instruction needed, they could also provide a certain degree of protection for our fellow countrymen. An attempt has been made in this respect with good results, and it seems as though they decided to extend it to other communities. The opening of kindergartens would also help very much."⁹

⁹ E. Ciapelli, "Lo Stato di Rio Grande del Sud", in Bollettino dell'Emigrazione, 1905, No. 12, pp. 80-82.

CHAPTER VIII

THE EARLY TEN YEARS OF THE SCALABRINIAN MISSIONS
IN RIO GRANDE DO SUL
(1896 - 1905)

1. Encantado

On November 1, 1894, the Italian colonists of "linhas" (= tracts of land apportioned for colonization) VIII, IX, X, XI, and XII, of section II to the west of Alfredo Chaves (= Veranópolis), that is, of the colonies of Silva, Jardim, Senador Ramiro (= Nova Bassano), Benjamin Constant, Anita Garibaldi, and Luiz de França, wrote the following letter to the Bishop of Porto Alegre:

"We, the undersigned settlers of the territory of Alfredo Chaves, "Linhas" VIII, IX, X, XI, and XII, have sent a petition to His Excellency John Baptist Scalabrini, Bishop of Piacenza, asking him to send us one of his missionaries. He informed us he would not send one without the consent and approval of Your Lordship. For this reason, we respectfully ask that you be pleased to grant your approval in writing without which we could not attain our goal. Do send it, we beg you, to us here in this colony, and we will immediately forward it to His Excellency the Bishop of Piacenza."

Father Giosué Bardin, who was then the curate of São João B. do Herval (= later, Capoeiras; and now, Nova Prata) had this to add:

"I consider reasonable the request for a priest at the above-mentioned "linhas" that include some three or four hundred and fifty Brazilian and Italian families. A center and a residence could be chosen there in a locality convenient for the colonists, as Your Excellency can see for yourself on the map of the territory of Alfredo Chaves.

This does not prevent that another priest may be stationed at São João B. do Herval, on whose curate's care all those colonists now depend. Enclosed you will find a letter from the new priest."

Dom Claudio José Gonçalves Ponce de Leão, Bishop of Porto Alegre annotated with his observations the letter, which was sent afterwards to Bishop Scalabrini with this handwritten addition of his own in Italian:

"I shall welcome the priest sent by Your Excellency, and I grant my approval for this new center. There are still other communities in the midst of the Italian colonies in great need of good priests. There are more than one hundred and fifty thousand Italians in this diocese."¹

On August 28, 1895, nine other Italians of Alfredo Chaves wrote to Bishop Scalabrini:

"We, the undersigned trustees, representing a community of more than four hundred families, all Italian fellow countrymen, fully realizing the great need of a priest for the spiritual care and guidance of our souls, three years ago presented a collective petition to His Excellency the diocesan Bishop of Rio Grande in Porto Alegre to obtain the favor we are so much in need of assuring him that we would supply the salary he should decide upon.

We were granted full satisfaction. He gave us permission to build a new church naming it as a new seat for the care of souls, while promising, at the same time, to send a priest to officiate it.

A church was built at the cost of immense sacrifices, but due to a great shortage of priests we remain so far still without one. However, it seems as though the Good Lord is now showing His mercy on us from up high above by making our urgent need known overseas in our beloved native country. We say so confiding in a letter from Father Antônio Seganfreddo of Mason Vicentino, now residing at the Seminary in Piacenza. In it he says that, if we supply the money necessary for the trip, the Bishop would fulfill our long lasting hope by sending us one of his priests, a certain Father Natale Pigato, also of Mason Vicentino.

¹ Letter of Joseph Dal Pra', Joseph da Re, Nicholas Balzan, and Francis Maroso to Dom C.J. Gonçalves Ponce de Leão, Alfredo Chaves, November 1, 1894. Marginal note of Dom C.J. Gonçalves Ponce de Leão, Porto Alegre, November 16, 1894. (Arch. G.S., 410/1).

Filled with joy at this news, we turned to our director for advice on how we should go about it, and we came to this decision.

Since trips from Europe are so expensive, he offered to help us by including Father Natale Pigato in the request for a free ticket already presented on behalf of Father Antônio Seganfredo and his family.

We, the undersigned, declare ourselves responsible for the support of the Priest and for all other expenses thereof."²

We must point out that Father Seganfredo - (perhaps Father Giosué Bardin's allusion to the "new priest" in the letter quoted above was in reference to him) - had migrated as a young man to Alfredo Chaves where he was employed in the construction of the road leading to Bento Gonçalves; and since he was conducting the common prayers of his fellow laborers, they were already used to calling him "the chaplain".

Having set aside a sufficient sum of money, he returned to Italy to begin studies with Fathers F. Consoni, N. Pigato, P. Dotto, M. Simoni, at the Mander Institute at One' di Fonte first, and to continue them with his four companions afterwards when this was closed, at the Mother House of the Scalabrinians at Piacenza, where, at age 44, he was ordained a priest by Bishop Scalabrini on March 31, 1893.

As we have seen already, Father Natale Pigato was assigned, instead, to São Paulo, and then, soon after, to Paraná, while the departure of Father Seganfredo was somewhat delayed. The pioneer missionary in Rio Grande do Sul was Fr. Domenico Vicentini, whose arrival was notified by Bishop Scalabrini to the Bishop of Porto Alegre. The latter answered as follows:

With the most sincere satisfaction I received the letter the Superior of the Institute "Cristoforo Colombo" wrote to me in the name of Your Excellency on January 2. Thanks, thanks a million, for this first help Your Excellency is pleased to send me, and for your promise for more, shortly. One must be here and know the needs of so many unfortunate people to appreciate the value of the favor you are doing for me on whom rests the responsibility to provide the flock with vigilant and zealous custodians, and the good you bestow on so many of your countrymen, many of whom, while abounding in temporal bread, go hungry for the bread of the soul for the lack of priests.

Oh! If you only could send us twenty, or so, zealous missionaries! What a vast vineyard they would find here to take care of! A field well disposed, a copious harvest to reap! In any case, though only one for now, Father Domenico shall always be welcome among us, where he will arrive long expected and warmly accepted! He shall take charge of a vast and well inhabited territory. Though not enjoying the title of a pastor, (the place has not been made a parish, yet), still he will not lack any of the faculties a pastor is entitled to for a good administration. Besides, it is my intention to establish in the territory three or four centers for the care of souls, and then see to it that they are directed by your priests. As in a bond of unity, these could be helped along and guided by their senior and more experienced missionary, whom they would obey as their Superior. The forming of these centers at various places is demanded by the number of people in the area and by the hard to cross rivers that separate them.

It is my hope that Father Domenico will have a lot of good news to write to Your Excellency when he arrives: about our beautiful sky, healthy climate, fertile lands, and the good religious dispositions of these colonists, so prepare the ground for the arrival of the second expedition of other long desired priests."³

Father Vicentini arrived and was welcomed at Porto Alegre by the Bishop with much cordiality:

"But, and here begins the trouble! The Bishop started to sing the praises of the colony where I and my future companions are to be sent. The place is in a magnificent position, along the river; one reaches it by steamboat to Estrêla, (some seven or eight hours), and five more on horseback, etc. I remained there with eyes wide open! I was listening to a description quite other than the colony of Alfredo Chaves, about a four day trip away on the mountains, that is, on the high plateau. The Bishop told me he had already informed the settlers of my

² Letter of Christian Simonata, John Conte, Valentine Presotti, Henry Difant, Joachim Fiore, Augustine Miglia, Anthony Rigo, Philip Giuriati, Peter Sottili, to Bishop Scalabrini, Alfredo Chaves, August 28, 1895. (Arch. G.S., 410/1).

³ C.J. Gonçalves to Scalabrini, Porto Alegre, February 28, 1896 (Arch. G.S., 410/1).

arrival, and then showed me a letter from one of the colony's exponents expressing himself in a thousand thanks for heaven had answered at last the prayers of many; etc. This is not the colony of Alfredo Chaves; it is Encantado! And truly Encantado, I say, on account of the charm of its position and fertility. But, your Excellency, I said, there must have been mistake! You should know that the colonists of Alfredo Chaves, "linhas IX etc..." have asked Bishop Scalabrini for a priest, for three priests actually, and they have disbursed a sum of money for this purpose. All this was done with your approval.

I am not aware of it, he replied; on the other hand, Bishop Scalabrini was not speaking of Alfredo Chaves when he wrote he was sending a missionary. In any case, I will take care of the whole matter myself with the people of Alfredo Chaves, also as to the money they spent. Actually, he was quite aware of the fact that the colonists of Alfredo Chaves had asked and were waiting for me. Evidently, he was anxious to accommodate first an older colony that had been clamoring for a priest for a long time. Certainly he knew about it! In fact, to a young priest he was sending to the region of Alfredo Chaves he had said a few days before that he would assign the missionaries of Piacenza to Encantado. The priest answered: "Good heavens, Your Excellency, do not do this; those settlers will make a revolution!" The Bishop replied: "You keep quiet; should you meet anyone from that colony, do not say anything. I will take care of things!" Tonight I brought up the matter again, but he is determined that I go to the colony of Encantado. And so be it! There is no other way; one must tie the donkey where his master decides. Orders are orders, and we have no choice but to obey. He must know what he is doing; we did whatever was in our power to satisfy the colonists of Alfredo Chaves; the Bishop will see to it himself!

While talking with him I was made to understand that he does not like to be dictated to by the colonists. He also told me to write to Bishop Scalabrini inviting him to refrain from indicating any particular way of action. Besides, he let me know not to ask or pretend a fixed salary, so as to be always free and independent, because taxing the families every year for a percentage is a source of many disturbances. And mind you, I had never mentioned the fact that the colony of Alfredo Chaves had pledged itself to the payment of five milreis per family a year! We shall see what will come of it!"⁴

The following day the Bishop signed the decree appointing Fr. Vicentini as curate of the chapel of São Pedro in Encantado for one year.⁵ He arrived at Encantado on April 20, 1896. Let us hear his first impressions:

"It's about time I got down to writing, but I am doing so with a heavy heart because things did not turn out the way they should! I shall tell the whole story! As I have already written to you rather than to Alfredo Chaves, I was made to go to Encantado! Neither did my objections to the Bishop, nor the commitments taken with the colonists of Alfredo Chaves help any. To make it short, on April 20, I arrived at Encantado, solemnly welcomed there by a grand procession of men on horseback, as is the custom here, and with all kinds of fireworks. To tell the truth, I did not enjoy it very much; first, I was thinking about the not too pleasant changes made by the Bishop, and second, I was quite worn out following an eight hour ride on horseback!

Now let us get to the point!

The territory assigned to me extends to an area of some fifty square miles, partly still uninhabited! As of now, it has a population of approximately three thousand people, but it is increasing fast because the land here is one of the most productive. It is not government's property; it belongs to landowners who sell it to the colonists, and its value keeps going up. An allotment of this land could be purchased for one or one and a half "conto", ten years ago; now it sells for eight, ten or more "contos". One "conto" is the equivalent of one thousand milreis.

Except for a very few Brazilian, French, and German families, the population is entirely Italian, all hailing from northern Italy, including some from the Tyrol. They are quite good and religious people, all very happy to have a priest. Generally, they avail themselves of his ministry! But, here is the trouble! There is no unity among the different groups; each has its own chapel, and each

⁴ Vicentini to Molinari, Porto Alegre, April 13, 1896 (Arch. G.S., 442/1).

⁵ "Provisão nomeando o Rev. Domingos Vicentini Capelão Cura da Capela de São Pedro de Encantado," (Decree naming Rev. Dominic Vicentini, Chaplain of the chapel of St. Peter in Encantado), Porto Alegre, April 14, 1896 (Arch. G.S., 442/1).

would like to have the priest exclusively for itself. Otherwise, little or nothing would they contribute to the support of the priest and much less to the construction of the parish church.

The main difficulty with our colonies is choosing a suitable location where to build the parish church. Where this is built, there rises the village, the town, the city; consequently, the closest ones to it benefit the most economically. Hence, intense disputes arise among the Italians over choosing or accepting the choice of a location! And now I find myself deep in these difficulties even after the Jesuits, who visit these communities, have chosen the chapel of San Pedro at Encantado already, in agreement with the Bishop.

I wonder whether, and when, if ever, I will be able to succeed! In the meantime, my cathedral remains a wooden and poorly protected hut, and on Sundays the great majority has to stand outside as it can hold hardly a hundred people, standing and crowded in, like sardines.

There is no rectory, as yet, but it is being planned, and on my return I hope to find two convenient rooms well sheltered from the cold.

So far, I have been living in a wooden house without glass windows, so that when it rains or the wind blows, one must close the shutters and remain in total darkness! But, even when these are closed the wind blows in from all sides!

With all this, through thick and thin, this year they are undergoing a very dry spell; during my stay there it rained only twice. Though it be summer-like warm during the day (as high as 25°), it is rather cold at times at nightfall, in the night and morning! In my room the thermometer hit six degrees above zero for two nights in a row. With no winter clothes along and only one summer suit on, I felt cold, and I had to go to bed early to warm myself up a little, thus making it up for the morning after when I had to rise early!

But, where were my clothes? They were in my trunk at the customs' offices in Santos! For this reason I returned to Porto Alegre to solicit their release. Finally, by God's help, they arrived here in the beginning of this week. Now the problem was to have them brought to Encantado!

In fact, you had better know that the river Taquari on banks of which Encantado was built, is strewn with rapids (I have returned to the Nile) and when there is scarcity of water the steamboats do not sail further than 50 miles, while Encantado is located one hundred miles upstream.

And so I had to go through the trouble, this week, of setting the content of my trunk in as many boxes to be carried on the backs of mules, leaving one filled with books behind at the Bishop's house. When the waters of the Taquari will flow high again, they will be forwarded to me.

You see, there are no carriage roads reaching Encantado, but only trails for horses. To reach here I had to ride seven hours on horseback, four hours by canoe down the river, three hours on a small steamboat, and finally eight more hours on a larger steamboat. A far cry from the transportation system in the United States!

I could never imagine they would be so backward here! And to think that there is no telegraph in this "linha" while the closest post office is some six hours on horseback away from Encantado.

And now, what about the colonists of Alfredo Chaves? As soon as my letter reached them from Santos, they came to Porto Alegre to take me in, discovering on arrival that I had gone already. They had already erected arches and made other preparations to welcome me! The Bishop had a hard time trying to calm them down with the promise he would, no doubt, send them one of the missionaries that were to follow later, etc. Besides, he granted me permission to visit their colonies, to perform baptisms and bless Marriages!

From Porto Alegre, two men, the brother of Father Antônio Seganfreddo and Joséph Faedo who had offered the money at Piacenza, come up to Encantado!

The poor fellows, they had been on their way two weeks by then. I gave them word that as soon as my trunks were in, I would go to them also with the intent to arrange where to fix the residence for the missionaries! It looks as though there is going to be trouble there too on the matter!

The other day, I sent a telegram to Alfred Chaves informing them that next Monday I would be at São João Montenegro, located on a bank overlooking a river; they were, therefore, to pick me up with a horse! It takes a three day horse-ride to reach there. Today I received news from Alfredo Chaves that as

soon as they received a telegram from the Bishop informing of the arrival of my luggage some men had left already for Encantado to pick me up. And now, what are they to do? How many hardships, how much trouble, what expenses! If only there were the telegraph at Encantado or close by, it would be possible to correct the situation; but conditions being what they are, it is impossible.

Anyway, I shall go to bring them the sacred vestments. But then, what are we going to do about priests? This is the problem that kept, and still keeps me, worrying very much, because I feel that our plans, our religious discipline, and our rule, are this way falling apart! Yet, the Bishop is all set on it!

From the very first moment he informed me of the change I tried to oppose it with all means, but to no avail! Even before leaving Estrêla, where the Jesuits are, to reach Encantado I wrote to the Bishop that as an individual I would have no objection to the change of destination but as a member of a Congregation I could not consent to it; that, also in view of the pledge taken with the colonists of Alfredo Chaves, the change would displease Bishop Scalabrini very much. He turned a deaf ear to it!

He says he will straighten all things out with the Bishop and the colonists. On my return here I brought the problem up with him again remarking that I do not know whether Bishop Scalabrini will send any more missionaries since things turned out this way. Do you want to know what his answer was? That Bishop Scalabrini, or you, wrote him the missionaries were to remain fully under his jurisdiction when they arrive here; consequently, he could dispose of them as he thought best responding to the needs! True, I said, but without prejudice to the internal discipline of our rule. He does not seem to understand much of this; rather, he understands all right, but he has the needs of his immense diocese at heart! Anyway, he is a good Bishop, a holy man, humble and affable. He is a Vincentian, and he is well aware of the need of missionaries to stay together.

The other day, in the presence of a Jesuit priest, he told me that I should not create difficulties in Piacenza because much good would remain undone if no other missionaries were sent. Besides, the Bishop himself feels that even diocesan priests should be at least two together in a parish; and given time, he will provide so. More than once today His Excellency pleaded with me not to stir up any trouble when I write to Bishop Scalabrini, because all things will be straightened out in due time. Anyway, I do my duty. I only ask you that when writing to the Head of this diocese, Bishop Scalabrini or you abide by the principle involved and not on an objection or opinion of mine, so that I cannot be blamed for it. I understand the great need for priests here in the vast extension of this territory with so many and widely extended colonies. But, all this is well known to you!

It takes some two days back and forth on horseback to reach a priest. True, from time to time, a Jesuit comes to visit the German communities an hour and a half away; but one must know when he does and have the time for it. However, I think that a priest will be stationed shortly a four hour distance from here."⁶

Returning to Porto Alegre, Father Vicentini added that the Bishop had already decided the destination of the other two missionaries that were to arrive; one for "linhas" VIII, IX, X, XI, XII of the second division west of Alfredo Chaves; the other for a locality Father Vicentini says to be a two hour horse ride from Encantado. He was also pleading that three missionaries, instead of two, were sent so as to have two priests together at Encantado, and two more for the other colonies, "because" - he said, - "one alone gets used little by little to do things all by himself and will end up with considering himself no more and no less than any other diocesan priest."⁷

Following information received from Giuseppe Faedo, one of the three pioneer colonists of Nova Bassano, the Bishop of Porto Alegre wrote rejoicing over the news of the imminent arrival of three priests, instead of two; he declared himself willing to finance the trip as long as he could provide zealous priests for "his good colonists", and he continued:

"Like the others, the fourth missionary shall have his residence a few hours short distance from them (...). If we should succeed, however, in obtaining more priests, we might start considering a day school, or even a small seminary! There are many priestly vocations among Italians, and with diligent care we

⁶ Vicentini to Molinari, Porto Alegre, May 23, 1896 (Arch. G.S., 442/1).

⁷ Vicentini to Molinari, Estrêla, May 27, 1896 (Arch. G.S., 442/1)

could form many good priests. Kindly speak to Bishop Scalabrini about this project!

There are three seminaries already in this diocese, under the direction of German Jesuits, where young men of all nationalities are trained; but another one directed by our good missionaries would be of great benefit.

In the country expenses are less demanding on parents, who, feeling more deeply the separation from their children would, in turn, more easily allow their sons to enter the seminary! The colonists of that zone themselves could help with the abundance of their products. This way the students would be treated to the same cooking they are used to in their colonies at home, etc."⁸

In a succeeding letter he specified that he intended it to be a minor seminary from where the students would pass to the diocesan seminary of Porto Alegre to complete their studies:

"Through this means we could also more easily make sure that no one of our Missionaries would remain alone which is the source of very serious troubles."⁹

On his part, Father Vicentini was still waiting for orders from Bishop Scalabrini. He felt he could not last much longer at Encantado so isolated as he was, even with the construction of a stone rectory underway.¹⁰

While the departure of Fathers Colbacchini and Serraglia was delayed, Father Antônio Seganfredo arrived in Paraná in August, with orders to continue on to Rio Grande do Sul, only if assured with telegram from the Bishop of Porto Alegre that the missionaries were assigned together to the colonies of Alfredo Chaves. Otherwise, even Father Vicentini would have had to leave for Paraná. As he could not easily send telegrams, he himself had written to the Bishop in this sense.

"At the same time, in explaining the reasons I made it clear to him that they would be sent only if he intended to provide a residence for them where to live the community life; otherwise they were to have another destination. The Bishop, then, expressed the idea that I could open a small seminary here. I answered him it would be a splendid idea but hardly a possible enterprise. With so few members, our Congregation does not have either the means or the personnel for it, which is now all engaged in other missions.

In his reply the Bishop expressed himself in strong terms especially for withholding the missionaries in Paraná, when for some time now the colonists of Alfredo Chaves were at Porto Alegre to welcome them at their own great inconvenience as they had to lodge at the hotel and take care of the six horses they had brought along for themselves and the Missionaries.

He blames me for the whole mess remarking how after treating me like a son I had caused him so much sorrow! And when I reminded him that it was my Superior's desire that I should possibly try to join the other missionaries, he almost ironically answered that two diocesan priests he is expecting will arrive. (He is always expecting new priests, but they never seem to arrive.) He will assign one of them to Encantado. Then, I would be free to join the community.

Then, he added I had better forget about the little seminary, or anything else! I replied that I was quite sorry if my letter had caused His Excellency so much suffering, but I invited him to consider my position and how I had come here to start the work of our institution in his diocese; that our Congregation has its rules the missionaries must observe faithfully in order to preserve their good spirit, one of them being the injunction not to live in isolation; that such was the charge given to me; I acknowledged the wonderful welcome he had accorded me for which I will be ever so grateful, but I could not see how I could possibly have shown myself ungrateful to His Excellency for nothing else except trying to carry out my superiors' orders with the same scrupulosity with which I am obeying the instructions of His Excellency in the mission assigned to me; I was sorry for the colonists of Alfredo Chaves who had to undergo such expenses for the missionaries (so he says); however, I hoped he would not blame me also for the expenses incurred by the colonists in their trips back and forth to welcome me! Alfredo Chaves has the telegraphic services, and they could have been spared the trips, had they only waited for the call. In case, they could have been at Porto Alegre in a few days, anyway.

⁸ C.J. Gonçalves Ponce de Leão to Molinari, Porto Alegre, June 20, 1896 (Arch.G.S., 442/1)

⁹ C.J. Gonçalves Ponce de Leão to Molinari, Porto Alegre, June 14, 1896 (Arch. G.S., 442/1).

¹⁰ Vicentini to Molinari, Encantado, June 22, 1896 (Arch. G.S., 442/1)

Actually, I could not help it if he was so upset, as he is all to be blamed for it. Had he kept faith right from the beginning to what had been agreed upon with Bishop Scalabrini, he could have been spared all this trouble! Besides, if the colonists of Alfredo Chaves did not suspect that the Bishop might act with the new missionaries the way he had done with me, they would not have been in such a hurry to go to Porto Alegre.

In any case, one can see for himself with what kind of bishops I have to deal with. What is he going to say now that not two, but only one missionary is to arrive. I do not know whether the other two that are to follow will help to reassure him!"¹¹

Actually, the Bishop gave a warm welcome to Father Antônio Seganfredo, who arrived at Porto Alegre in September 1896 to be assigned immediately to the colonies of Alfredo Chaves, and to Fathers Antônio Serraglia and Pietro Colbacchini, who arrived on October 17. Informing Father Vicentini about the arrival of the first missionary he was assuring him that he found life in community just and necessary, and solicited his opinion on the assignment of the next two missionaries!¹²

Following the advice of Father Vicentini, he assigned Fr. Colbacchini to the colonies where Fr. Seganfredo was working already, while Fr. Serraglia was sent to Encantado, where he arrived on the October 22.¹³

Thus, the Scalabrinian missions in Rio Grande do Sul had their beginning. The initial difficulties with the Bishop were soon ironed out, so much so as to declare to Fr. Colbacchini that he intended to respect the rules of the Congregation, he still was considering a minor seminary, he was willing to entrust the whole territory of Veranópolis where Fr. Matteo Pasquali was in charge were another missionary sent to him!¹⁴

For all practical purposes, the history of Encantado begins with the arrival of the Italian colonists Giovanni B. Lucca, and the two brothers, Antônio and Giovanni Bratti in 1882: they were soon joined by other Italians, hailing in greater part from the colonies of Garibaldi, Bento Gonçalves and Caxias, and by several French and Brazilian families. The mestizos were extremely few and were spread here and there in that vast territory.

The first to take spiritual care of them in those years were the Jesuits of Estrêla who used to visit the colony from time to time. By initiative of Fr. Eugene Steinert, the colonists built the first wooden small church, dedicated to St. Peter, on a piece of land donated by Giovanni B. Lucca and Francesco Bigliardi, half way between the colonies of "linhas" 16 and 17. Its site corresponds to the place where now the parish hall stands. One mile further other families erected the small chapel of St. Anthony the Abbot.

Encantado belonged, then, to the municipality of Estrêla; in 1891 it was incorporated with Lajeado, and in 1892 it was declared a "distreto". As we have seen, in 1896 it was made a quasi-parish. In 1899 it had its first state school, in 1900 its first Post Office and the telephone in 1904. It was "emancipated" in 1915, that is, it became a municipality on its own right.

As already noticed, Father Vicentini's greatest difficulty had been deciding on a location for the central residence. Already in 1889 the Capitular Vicar of Porto Alegre had felt it his duty to urge the founders of the chapel of St. Anthony to join forces with those of St. Peter's and get along together.¹⁵ Later on, greater difficulties came from the colonists that had founded the chapel of St. Joséph in 1889. Father Vicentini had requested the company of Fr. Serraglia also in view of "uniting here certain groups who were unwilling to contribute to the parish church unless they had a priest a certain number of times each year on feast days to perform the liturgy in their chapels:

"Father Serraglia arrived here and I gave them even greater satisfaction than

¹¹ Vicentini to Molinari, Encantado, September 29, 1896 (Arch. G.S., 442/1)

¹² Vicentini to Molinari, Encantado, October 16, 1896 (Arch. G.S., 442/1)

¹³ Colbacchini to Scalabrini, Porto Alegre, October 18, 1896 (Arch. G.S., 448/1); Serraglia to Molinari, Encantado, October 23, 1896 (Arch. G.S., 442/1).

¹⁴ Colbacchini to Scalabrini, Porto Alegre, October 18, 1896, and November 1, 1896 (Arch. G.S., 448/1).

¹⁵ Decree of Mons. Vicente Ferreira da Costa Pinheiro, Porto Alegre, November 19, 1889, quoted in the book, Município de Encantado através do tempo (= The municipality of Encantado down through the years) by Lauro Nelson Fornari Thomé. (1964), pp to 228 – 230.

they had hoped for. But they did not give in, and remained obstinate in their idea to build the priests' residence by their chapel, against the precise instructions of the Bishops. One of these groups, only half-an-hour from here, refuses to contribute to the Parish Church, to send their children to catechism, while people farther off do so. In their ignorance, they were instigating Fr. Serraglia to take up his residence with them promising him the moon, as long as they could have their way. Yet, it is a well-known fact that they would not be able to do anything on their own. Fr. Antônio was indignant at such stubbornness.

On the other hand, there are not enough people here now for two priests, and during the week there is nothing to do. It does not pay the trouble to tour the outlying homes, because they cannot be called together.

Fr. Colbacchini wrote twice telling me he would need Fr. Serraglia because he has too much to do and is unable to attend to all things especially now when he has also to supervise the building program underway! Besides, something else happened: That is, he was kicked on one knee by his horse, and cannot move around! In short, he sent a certain Mr. Faedo here to pick him up!

I spoke to Fr. Anthony. He would be glad to go if I sent him, if only to teach a lesson to the people of Encantado. Who knows, may be they will learn! And so Fr. Antônio left yesterday! It grieves me to be alone, but as of now, it is not right to leave these people all to themselves; after all, they are deeply religious. The cause of this disunity is found in long-standing frictions between the different communities, always over the parish church!

Let's see whether I will succeed now. I have already begun soliciting subscriptions for the new Church, and have collected seven "contos", so far; should I reach ten, then I will give it a start; otherwise, I shall forget it."¹⁶

The people of St. Joséph remained unmoved for several months. When they sent a delegation with a list of subscribers to the Bishop they were told that there were no priests available, and even in case there were any, they would not be sent to that colony.¹⁷ The agitation continued until May 1898 when the Bishop imposed the interdict on the chapel. The people began to have second thoughts, and asked Father Vicentini himself to interpose his services with the Bishop to have the decree revoked. In October the Bishop left the solution of the controversy in the hands of the missionary.¹⁸

In spite of these difficulties, the religious life of the colonies was prospering to a comforting degree.

"In this Easter season I had a genuine consolation with confessions and communions. As far as I know, I would dare say that no other parish in these regions could proportionally claim as many Easter communions as I had here. Besides, following the proper instructions, I gave this year First Communion two Sundays ago to 58 children, altogether. It seems my presence here is not useless!"¹⁹

Construction on a stone church was begun on April 15, 1898.

It was 38 m long and 18 m wide, on land donated by G. Ferri and B. Lucca. By the end of the same year, negotiations were underway to have the Sisters of the Most Pure Heart of Mary, who were to open the College of St. Anthony in early January 1900.

Father Vicentini was named Provincial Superior of the Scalabrinians in Brazil on November 19, 1898. He was given the help of Fr Giuseppe Pandolfi, who arrived at Encantado only on November 4, 1899: but he could not have him for long! On April 7, 1900, Fr. Pandolfi was appointed Vicar of Alfredo Chaves (Veranópolis) by the Bishop. A month later he was thus writing to Bishop Scalabrini:

"I am writing from Alfredo Chaves where I have been for the past two weeks by assignment of the Bishop of Porto Alegre who had relieved a certain Father Matteo Pasquali of his pastoral duties; he is 75 years old now, though still strong. He is a very stern man and very rude with the people, but his undoing came about when he began take it up against civil authorities too strongly! He

¹⁶ Vicentini to Molinari, Encantado, January 18, 1897 (Arch. G.S., 442/1)

¹⁷ Vicentini to Molinari, Encantado, January 30, 1897 (Arch. G.S., 442/1)

¹⁸ "Diario" (diary) Vicentini, Vol. IV, 1893 – 1907, pp. 63 – 64, and 67 – 68 (Arch. G.S., 1642)

¹⁹ Vicentini to Molinari, Encantado, January 30, 1897 (Arch. G.S., 442/1)

kept mercilessly whipping them from the pulpit as thieves, etc.

The bishop chose Father Colbacchini to take immediate charge of the parish until I would arrive. He took over on Holy Thursday! He should have never done it! He had enemies in town, but more so in the colonies! On Easter Sunday a brawl ensued in church! Had he not succeeded in slipping away from it, he might have been in for a lot of trouble!

I came here without any opposition, and it seems as though people are satisfied. Still, my position is difficult! There is no rectory, because the old pastor did not think of it! He had provided only for himself with a house of his own. The church also is in disarray; it needs a new roof badly; and the vestry has no funds! The church was built by the government way back at the time of the monarchy; now everything must be done by the colonists who are not accustomed to contribute much for the church. Besides, they are going through hard times, and though not going hungry, still they have no money!

However, many as they are, if they put their mind to it, they will succeed in doing something!

The Bishop of Porto Alegre wrote me that for a long time now he had in mind to entrust the care of this vast parish to our Congregation also with the intention that from the stole fees we could derive some source of income for it!

These are hard years, still some profit will materialize, and I shall send it in as I always did. It is not possible, however, that I may withstand the hardships of this vast parish! There are more than forty chapels to visit from time to time, and each takes at least a two day absence from the central residence located in a somewhat important town; there is need of at least one more priest! In case this should be impossible, I would be forced to leave the parish! Father Colbacchini has done much so that the Bishop would entrust this parish to us with hope to have two or three priests stationed here; but he managed also to have an enemy, the old Pastor, who was removed, and with whom he had some quarrels, especially on questions of territorial jurisdiction. As though always afraid not to have enough of it, the same Father Colbacchini had the Bishop define a division of territory which resulted in an arbitrary one in many places! For instance, he had some chapels about 40 km from Nova Bassano included in his parish which were only eight or ten km from Alfredo Chaves! This way he caused much discontent in many colonies that brought to the brawl in church on Easter Sunday; a scandal never heard of before in these communities. (...)

Another unpleasant result of this new assignment is that I cannot take care of the distant missions of São Paulo and Paraná. I had already decided to pay them a visit from Encantado, but with this new chain of chapels I have enough with taking care of the missions of Rio Grande do Sul.

(...) Father Pandolfi remained at Encantado, and I hope he will do alright! By God's grace, that parish is well organized. Father Colbacchini would have liked me to bring along with me Fr. Pandolfi, but this is impossible; I would let Alfredo Chaves and any other mission go, rather than abandon Encantado. They loved me there, but I did not expect that much! When they heard I was to leave them, they thought of it as of a nightmare; they could hardly believe it! Moving scenes took place; all were crying! "Such things can only be experienced; there are no words to describe them", said Fr. Pandolfi. I had a hard time in quieting them down! I promised them that as far as it depended on me, I would visit them myself on occasion! A multitude accompanied me for quite a while down the road; about fifty people came along for a four hour ride on horseback, and four of them travelled with me the whole two day trip.

I tell you all this to show you how attached those people get to their priests. They deserve all our attention, and much more so because they keep growing in number."²⁰

Father Vicentini had Father Pasquali reinstated by the Bishop but insisted on being relieved of the care of Alfredo Chaves, above all because it forced him to have a fixed residence which did not allow him to carry out his duties as Superior Provincial!²¹

The Bishop answered asking him to be patient for a few months. By the end of the year Father Pasquali resumed the direction of the quasi-parish, assisted by

²⁰ Vicentini to Scalabrini, Alfredo Chaves, May 7, 1900 (Arch G.S., 412/2).

²¹ "Diario" Vicentini, pp. 82-87.

a Priest from Calabria. Later on, it was taken over by the Capuchins.²² Fr. Vicentini was thus able to leave Alfredo Chaves by the end of October, and reached São Paulo in early December! The day before his arrival, Fr. Massimo Rinaldi had left the capital of São Paulo; he had received orders from Piacenza to reach Alfredo Chaves, but he was rerouted to Encantado by the Bishop of Porto Alegre.²³ He remained there, however, only from January to April 1901, that is, until Fr. Vicentini's return, who assigned him to Nova Bassano as assistant of Father Serraglia, who was alone following the passing of Fr. Colbacchini on January 30, 1904. Fr. Vicentini fixed his residence at Encantado²⁴ where he remained until the end of his term as Provincial, in 1904.

In 1901, the rivalries between the communities of St. Peter and St. Antony, "like Jews and Samaritans", were still raging over the question of the cemetery! The people of São Pedro had been making use of a cemetery of their own for four years already! It had not been blessed. The community of São Antonio on the other hand had one, approved and blessed, at equal distance from the church of São Pedro. In the hope that the people would decide to offer a more substantial contribution for this purpose, Fr. Vicentini advised the Bishop to delay approval for the cemetery of São Pedro until after the construction of the new church was completed. But, the letter of the missionary did not reach the Bishop on time and he consented to the petition of the colonists of São Pedro.²⁵ In the beginning of 1902, Fr. Pandolfi requested to be transferred to Turvo, today's Protasio Alves. Fr. Vicentini remained alone, and courageously resumed work on the construction of the Church in spite of the revolution of the so-called "Monges do Pinheirinho":

"Now I cannot move away from here because I have resumed work on the new Church, and if I am not around, nothing gets done! Besides I am alone, and now another trouble came up, about which you may have read in the press! A certain one who calls himself P. Monge (a new edition of the notorious Antônio Conselheiro) after roaming back and forth through the woods of this parish to gain supporters amongst the Brazilians, on the third of this month, came to pitch camp together with a group of them closer to our residence, about three quarters of an hour horse ride away.

Sometime back, local authorities had already sent information to the government which did not care to send soldiers! People were living in fear of some surprise attack and pillaging, etc. On May 4, in the morning, delegates of this and neighboring municipalities called on the camp of the "Mongistos", accompanied by a group of armed young men. They tried to convince them to surrender; but they were attacked instead with shots and daggers! Two of ours were mercilessly slaughtered and three others wounded, while the rest of the young men took to flight after firing several gunshots!

Now there is here a detachment of the armed forces, and the bandits withdrew to the "Mato" (woods).²⁶

Short of plastering, the church's construction was completed soon enough, but its inauguration was reserved for Bishop Scalabrini on the occasion of his visitation to the missions of Brazil. About his visit to Encantado we have a report written by Fr. Vicentini himself:

"On his arrival in Rio Grande he had a very warm welcome by the illustrious Colonel João Viana who deemed it a great honor to have such a famous Bishop as his guest, and to comply, at the same time, with the desires of the Venerable Bishop of Porto Alegre who had pressingly recommended Bishop Scalabrini to him for hospitality. The following day, he continued his trip on another steamer for romantic Lagoa dos Patos, arriving at Porto Alegre the next day, the tenth of September! Its most Excellent Bishop was absent on account of the above-mentioned Bishops' Conference; but as the good friend of Bishop Scalabrini that he was, whom he had visited and known in Piacenza, he had left clear orders not to neglect anything that might help in giving him proper welcome: "Bishop

²² Vicentini to Rolleri, Sao Paulo, December 6, 1900(Arch. G.S., 4125/2)

²³ Vicentini to Rolleri, Sao Paulo, January 18, 1901 (Arch. G.S., 412/3).

²⁴ Vicentini to Rolleri, Sao Paulo, February 15, 1901(?) (Arch. G.S., 412/3)

²⁵ Vicentini to Gonçalves Ponce de Leão, Encantado, November 16, 1901, summarized in cit. "Diario", pp. 93-94.

²⁶ Vicentini to Consoni, Encantado, May 12, 1902 (Arch. G.S., 412/4)

Scalabrini" - he said - "has been so very kind to us at Piacenza, and we want to do likewise for him." Mons. Otaviano Pereira de Albuquerque, Vicar General or Governador do Bispado, a priest gifted with a keen mind and a generous heart, did a superb job in taking the Bishop's place. There were the usual welcome receptions with the participation of Government authorities, military bands, and then dinner at the Bishop's residence, speeches, toasts, and visitation to the most important institutions of the city. There remained now the most difficult part of the program scheduled for the visit of Bishop Scalabrini.

At six in the morning of September 12, he departed from Porto Alegre on a steamboat of the river fleet, accompanied by his butler and by one of the missionaries who had come to welcome him from the colonies of the hinterland.

This city stands astride a beautiful hill; together with its environment it offers from the lagoon an enchanting sight truly worthy of its name to the viewer. His Excellency sailed all day long on the river Taquari which runs wide at first within its low banks, mostly wild and marshy filled with free herds of grazing cattle. About six hours upstream on steamboat, the river widens majestically at the confluence with the river Jaci, and turning north it enters the high Taquari, becoming gradually narrower and rocky, jagged by rapids, or as they call them here "cachoeiras", with very high banks. The wide and fertile lands along it are farmed by the early German immigrants. By nightfall they arrived at Lageado, the head town and county seat. There the illustrious pilgrim was warmly welcomed by the Rev. Jesuit Priests who hosted him for the night with every solicitous attention. Early in the morning a good number of colonists sent with horses from Encantado to accompany him were all ready and waiting. Right there and then, Bishop Scalabrini was made to understand on what a rough trail he had to ride, or I should better say, what torments he was to undergo on account of the means of transportation he would have to travel. Already suffering from the illness that afflicted him, he asked on several occasions whether there were any other means, even a small carriage. At a negative answer, he exclaimed: "In nomine Domini, andiamo!" ("Let us go forth in the name of the Lord") and he started on his trip! For him it meant about a seven hour horse ride, interrupted only by a short stop for a snack and a little rest. At this point, he entered the region of the Italian colonies, and was met from time to time by groups of colonists who were coming out on horse to greet him; they kept increasing from place to place through those mountains. What a wonderful sight, those men getting off their horses, do profound homage to the Bishop, receive his blessing, then remount and join the cortege. Already the shooting of a rudimental cannon, handmade by the colonists themselves, could be heard; and then the bursting of rockets hurled into the sky in full daylight as is the practice in Brazil. From a hill a quarter of an hour away, one could see the little town of Encantado with its church towering over it, with its streets all decorated by arches, festoons, flowers, flags, and busily astir with milling crowds! To us, emerging from the forests through which we had been traveling for several hours, this sight brought the wonder of a fantastic spectacle, and a feeling of an indescribable joy, as well!

The Bishop seemed enthralled; he found himself in Italy! All those people, whom nobody knew where they had come out of, were all Italians with their own Italian ways; they did not speak anything else but the Venetian dialect, mingled with Mantuan and Tyrolean expressions. By the time of our arrival the people had already lined up in good order, in perfect silence, and the Bishop walked slowly down the middle of those two lines of people standing on either side, preceded by a procession of girls in white spreading flower petals before him in profusion. At his passing, those good colonists looked at him in wonder as at an angel from heaven, and on their knees they received his blessings! Upon entering the church, he knelt for a brief pause in adoration; then, though so extremely fatigued, he wanted to address the people!

He was deeply moved, as moved was also the multitude crying for joy! It was the fourteenth of September!

He stayed at Encantado about ten days, always busy with the exercise of the holy ministry. Every day crowds of colonists flocked to him from the most remote regions of the parish, travelling four, six, eight, ten, or more hours on horseback to see the Bishop, assist at his Mass, listen to his words, and above all, to have their children confirmed, because the Bishop of this diocese, only a little smaller than Italy, had not been able to visit that region for quite a few years. In these short days he administered the sacrament of Confirmation to some two

*thousand people; a few of them, Brazilians especially, were adults, settlers of the woods who seldom venture out of their homes! On the 20th he solemnly blessed the church of Encantado, dedicated to St. Peter the Apostle."*²⁷

In memory of the visit of Bishop Scalabrini, Mayor José Benevolo de Souza named a street of the town, after him in 1915 when Encantado was made a municipality. A bronze plaque with the portrait of the Bishop was placed, in church with the following inscription:

**Jo. Bapt. Scalabrini Ep.us Placentinus
ex Italia huc adventans
Suos missionarios et italos
Visitaturus
Rite hanc Ecclesiam
solemniter benedixit
Die XX Sept. MCMIV***

**Al loro Padre e Pastore
Gio. Batt. Scalabrini
I suoi Missionari
E le colonie italiane
Da lui beneficate****

** On the occasion of his visit here from Italy to his Missionaries and Italians, Bishop Scalabrini solemnly blessed this church on September 20, 1904.)*

*** To their Father and Shepherd, John Baptist Scalabrini, his Missionaries and the Italian colonies which benefited.*

Bishop Scalabrini would have wished to visit also some other colonies, but was advised against it on account of persisting bad weather that had made the roads impassable.

He decided, therefore, to call together all the other missionaries of the region for a meeting. The weather, however, got better, and on September 22 he left for a visit to São Laurenço de Vilas Boas (today's Coronel Pilar), Garibaldi, Bento Gonçalves, Veranópolis, Nova Prata, Nova Bassano, etc.

We know already that on his return to Italy he brought along Father Vicentini who was to be the rector of the Mother House! Father Massimo Rinaldi, who was there already when Bishop Scalabrini arrived, succeeded Father Vicentini at Encantado. He was helped for a while by Father Enrico Preti, who had to move to Monte Belo (then known as Zamith) by the end of 1904.

"With the departure, first of our beloved Fr Domenico, and then, of our dear Fr. Enrico, assigned by the Superiors to Zamith, a healthier locality than this, eight hours on horseback from here, I have been left all alone here with a territory more than double the size Fr. Vicentini was ministering to, on account of the vacancy of the neighboring parish of Esperança. You surely must have read in the newspaper "Estandarte" of São Paulo, No. 18 c.m., about the disgraceful events that took place there!

*I find it impossible to take some rest at least for a few hours at night. I have to be constantly on the go in the field entrusted to me by the Lord with the firm hope that some day soon I will be given help."*²⁸

Thus wrote Father Rinaldi in March 1905. Two months later he remarked:

"By God's grace it is my pleasure to assure you that His mercy is generously supplying for lack of needed help, because in spite of my constant activity I enjoy fairly good health!

The vast extension of the territory, the multitude of Christian souls entrusted to my care, did not prevent me from attending to the plastering work of the Mother Church here at the central seat; neither did the lack of funds stop me from doing works, worth about four contos, two and half of which paid already; by the end of the year I hope to pay back also the rest to all those that generously lent it to

²⁷ D. Vicentini, *L'Apostolo degli Italiani Emigrati nelle Americhe* – (Apostle of Italian Migrants in the Americas, Piacenza, 1909), pp. 54-56

²⁸ Rinaldi to Consoni, Encantado, March 23, 1905 (Arch. G.S., 442/2).

me at no interest."²⁹

By the end of September help arrived at last: Father Giovanni Costanzo.³⁰ The joy over his arrival and the completion of works on the church was immediately shattered by an invasion of locusts which lingered on till February 1906 destroying all harvest.³¹

At the beginning of November, Fr. Enrico Preti still dependent on Father Rinaldi, was sent for a month to help Fr. Serraglia at Nova Bassano, while Father Costanzo was held inactive by the disastrous consequences of his first horse rides! For these reasons, Fr. Rinaldi was forced "to travel over a region, five hundred square km in size, which included the territories of the parishes of Encantado, Esperança, and Montebelo, with some twenty thousand people. Thanks be to God, who is thus offering me an opportunity to do penance for my sins"³²

According to statistics by Father Vicentini, together with the colonies dependent on the mother church of São Pedro, Encantado had then a population of eight thousand people, with an annual average of 450 Baptisms, 80 Weddings, 150 First Communions. There were three confraternities and 19 chapels.

2. Capoeiras

In order of time, the second Scalabrinian mission of Rio Grande do Sul seems to have been Capoeiras (today's Nova Prata), which was the "Linha I" of the Second Section west to the Municipality of Alfredo Chaves (today's Veranópolis).

The colony of Alfredo Chaves had been founded by Architect Julius da Silva Oliveira, in a territory that belonged to the municipality of Lagoa Vermelha. It was made an independent township on January 15, 1898. In 1887, a new stone church was built at Alfredo Chaves; already the previous year Father Matthew Pasquali, a priest from Vicenza, had been named quasi-pastor. He celebrated the first Mass there on March 16, 1886. In the years 1891-1892 he had Father Giosué Bardin as his assistant, who later moved on to Capoeiras from 1893 to 1895. We have already seen the Scalabrinian Fathers Colbacchini and Vicentini provisionally directing the quasi-parish of Alfredo Chaves from April to October 1900. Bishop Scalabrini visited it for five days on October 5 – 10, 1904, confirmed 4,951 people, and received into the Church fourteen members of the Ausnelli family from Treviso, converts from Protestantism, who had been touched by the brief greeting sermon the Bishop had addressed to the people on his arrival.³³

Capoeiras was declared the second "distrito" (=dependent village), of Alfredo Chaves on August 17, 1898; Monte Veneto, the third on October 18, 1899; Bela Vista, the fourth, and Nova Bassano, the fifth, on June 12, 1905; Vista Alegre, the sixth, on June 1, 1915. Capoeiras was periodically visited by Father Pasquali at first, and then, from 1891, by Fr. Bardin, who became its curate when it was made a quasi-parish on May 25 1893.

Italians began to settle there in 1898 as soon as the road from Capoeiras to Monte Negro was completed. Sometime in 1889, a certain Antônio Silveri of Araújo offered a plantation in honor of St. John which was divided into lots for the creation of the town. Immediately a first wooden church was built; dedicated to St. John, so that Capoeiras was then called also São João do Herval.³⁴

As mentioned already, when Fr. Antônio Seganfredo arrived in Rio Grande do Sul in September 1896, he was sent by the Bishop to assist the Italians of

²⁹ Rinaldi to Consoni, Encantado, March 25, 1905 (Arch. G.S., 442/2).

³⁰ Costanzo to Consoni, Encantado, March 30, 1905 (Arch. G.S., 442/2).

³¹ Rinaldi to Consoni, Encantado, October 28, 1905 -June 2, 1906. (Arch. G.S., 442/2)

³² Rinaldi to Consoni, Monte Belo, November 18, 1905, (Arch. G.S., 442/2).

³³ Scalabrini to Mangot, Alfredo Chaves, October 9, 1904; Bento Goncalves, October 12, 1904 (Arch. G.S., 3022/22).

³⁴ Dicionario Historico, Geografico e Estatistico do Município de Alfredo Chaves (Porto Alegre, 1923), pp. 7-19; G.

Barea, "La vita Spirituale nelle Colonie Italiane dello Stato", (Spiritual life of Italian Colonies in the State), in the Vol: Cinquantenario della Colonizzazione Italiana nel Rio Grande del Sud (Fiftieth Anniversary of Italian Colonization in Rio Grande do Sul). Porto Alegre, 1925, pp. 94-95.

"linhas" VIII, IX, X, XI, and XII, second section west of Alfredo Chaves. Upon his arrival, a month later, Father Colbacchini was also assigned by the Bishop to those communities to act as superior. However, the incompatibility of the two missionaries having soon been discovered, it was decided that Fr. Seganfredo should reside as assistant at Capoeiras, "a small community of 500 families."³⁵ Father Seganfredo devoted himself to an intense work, helped in his first years by an enviably strong health, though not a very young man. Every day he toured the "linhas", on horseback and on foot, spending days hearing confessions, always cheerful and friendly with everyone. Yet, he had to carry on his work almost always by himself, unappreciated by his superiors, in the totally primitive social conditions and in an environment of very poor communities. In 1898 he began construction on a stone church.

"I have made preparations for the construction of a new church, and in order to stimulate the people I had ten thousand bricks made at my expense; but I have not finished paying for them. I point out, though, that to accomplish all this I had recourse to the colonists. All responded and came to my help, first of all by bringing me fifty sacks of wheat. I sold part of it for fourteen "milreis" a sack, and for twelve the rest. By no merit of mine, the colonists are fond of me. This is why they did not allow that I be left without anything, and so they brought over to the rectory all kinds of goods. As it were, thus far, I have spent nothing for my support. This is what enabled me to pay off all my debts and obligations. On my part also I saved much in everything, eating "polenta" (=cornmeal) and drinking the apostles' wine, that is water!

Now, however, I am without clothing and in need of the necessities of life! But, if in a little more than a year I could accomplish this much, I trust that, if God grants me good health, I will take care also of the rest in the future; of course, at a slower pace, because 300 families have now been taken away from me."³⁶

In fact, Father Colbacchini had succeeded in convincing the Bishop to place another four colonies, the best, probably "linhas" IV, V, VI, and VII, under the direct jurisdiction of Nova Bassano. Fr. Seganfredo was left with 350 Italian families and a few others of Brazilian, German, Polish, and Russian extraction.³⁷ For this reason, work on the church slowed down, and in June 1900 it was still half way.

"The new church is already half way, that is, the walls have grown four meters over the foundations. It is 24 meters long, and 15 meters wide; it has a sanctuary 8 meters deep, a nave and two aisles, two sacristies, etc.

Its location, on a hilltop, is beautiful! It is about 200 meters from the main road where the houses are. I have no debts; whatever has been done is all paid for. But I also had to contribute something of my own."³⁸

The personal contribution mentioned by the missionary consisted in visiting for a week, once every two months, the Brazilians of the plantations in the direction of Lagoa Vermelha. It took him eleven or twelve hours on horseback to reach them.

Upon agreement with the Bishop, part of the offerings he collected was set aside for the construction of the church of Capoeiras, the rest for the Mother House.

"I do it willingly, first to do some good for these unfortunate people, and then to help my Congregation."³⁹

In 1901, Father Seganfredo was also given charge of the colony of Turvo (today's Protasio Alves),

"distant a five-hour horse ride from here, and what is worse, I have to cross a river by canoe (...). In that colony, closed in by two rivers, the Prata and the Turvo, there live more than 250 families, poor or destitute. They are confined on that island, with no bridges and no roads, in the midst of deep ravines and gorges. It is 24 kilometers long, divided into eight "linhas", with six chapels. The colonists hail mostly from the Veneto, the greater number from the towns of Fr.

³⁵ Colbacchini to Scalabrini, Nova Bassano, May 28, 1898 (Arch. G.S., 448/1). Vicentini to Molinari, Encantado, January 18, 1897 (Arch. G.S., 442/1); Colbacchini to Scalabrini, Alfredo Chaves, January 5, 1897 (Arch. G.S., 448/1)

³⁶ Seganfredo to Molinari, Capoeiras, November 21, 1898 (Arch. G.S., 468).

³⁷ *Ibid.* Seganfredo to Simoni, Capoeiras, August 3, 1900 (Arch. G.S., 468).

³⁸ Seganfredo to Molinari, Capoeira June 5, 1900 (Arch. G.S., 468).

³⁹ *Ibid.* Seganfredo to Poggi, Capoeiras, August 29, 1900 (Arch. G.S., 468).

*Serraglia.*⁴⁰

Even following improvement of general conditions, in particular of the means of transportation, the majority of those colonists continued to live in poverty.

"There is much poverty here! The colonists have all they need and they, actually, live well; but there is no commerce! Their products do not sell for much, but what they need to buy is expensive. Items of prime and second necessity must be carried on the back of mules, and it takes ten or twelve days to go back and forth from Porto São João de Monte Negro. The missionary has thus to exercise much of his ministry without accepting offerings, and live by exchange of agricultural products, such as milho, beans, poultry, pork, and the like. When doing mission work anything can happen! The missionary may even find himself covered with countless nasty and revolting insects and be forced to get off his bed in the middle of the night to avoid being devoured alive. Still, I do not mind it, and it does not always happen; in many places one feels very much at ease! Besides, not all colonists are poor; the industrious ones are well off and enjoy a certain degree of affluence.

And, now let me tell you about the new church. It has a stone foundation, the walls are made of bricks and the roof is covered with tiles.⁴¹ It is 35 meters long, 15 wide, and 15 high, with a nave and two aisles separated from each other by ten round columns joined by brick arches. The sanctuary is 8 meters wide and 12 long; it has two sacristies by the choir side, etc. Only the sanctuary has been completed thus far, where I have been saying Mass since the feast of São João Batista of this year. He is the Patron Saint of this gentle Capoeiras.

Construction on the bell tower has started; it is to be 13 meters to the bells; of course, all made of wood, but the kind these forests of ours can produce. We have here post office, telephone, a brass band, and a highway passes through to Alfredo Chaves. Before then, one had to walk a day to get to the post office."⁴²

The church not quite completed, was solemnly blessed by Bishop Scalabrini either September 29 or 30, 1904.

For a more accurate idea of the Fr. Seganfredo's work, though with some repetition, we quote here a report he sent to Father Faustino Consoni on September 17, 1903, when he was about to open his unfinished church for public worship:

"Here, too, one is kept very busy, in toils and sacrifices of all kinds, without letup or limitations. Imagine a territory with six hundred families. I need a whole day on horseback to reach the most distant from my residence, through difficult roads, or trails rather, winding in the virgin forests of the hinterland where deep valleys, ravines, marshes, rivers, and no bridges, etc., are found. Now, however, the roads have improved; some improvements were made, but some of them are still in a terrible state of disrepair!

I hardly dare remain on the saddle, and so I walk on foot even for three or four hours on end. I have a community, Turvo, with 230 Italian families, closed in on all sides by two rivers, the Turvo and the Prata; to reach them I have to cross the river Prata by canoe, and when I do not find one, I have to wade it. The roads, besides, are rough, and no one takes care of them. Colonists expect help from the government, which never comes. In the meanwhile, the worst befalls on the poor missionary! Father Pandolfi used to say he has been a year with that community to do penance for his sins. Father Serraglia was there once, but he did not want to go back anymore! And so it is left up to poor uncle Tony! Out of six hundred or more families, some two hundred are of Polish, German, and Brazilian extraction. The last ones live as shepherds in the prairies, far away from the rectory, that is, distant fourteen kilometers where the forests cease. The people in the plantations are of mixed nationalities. The Italians are many, and I visit them every two or three months. As for sick calls, I am ready anytime when needed. The hardest difficulty one encounters here is crossing the river Prata. I have to cross it at five points on horseback, and when swollen, the water reaches up to the saddle filling the pockets of the rider with the danger to be swept away by a very swift current.

This territory is a high plateau, 860 meters above sea level; due to its altitude, in places the rivers may flow over falls even twenty meters high, resulting from

⁴⁰ Seganfredo to Rolleri, Capoeiras, November 13, 1901 8). Arch. G.S., 468) Serraglia was hailing from Mason Vicentino)

⁴¹ It is believed that the church of Capoeiras was the first in the region to have a tile roof.

⁴² Seganfredo, letter with no date. (Arch. G.S., 468).

the precipitous course of the currents. Their crossing is dangerous. During his stay at Alfredo Chaves, Father Provincial gave me a good scolding because he had gotten wind that I was wading across the river Prata with cassock and vestments on my shoulders, and sternly forbade me!

But, how can I obey him? The river is some 25 to 30 meters wide; if I try to reach the bridge it would be four-hour trip often on foot. Besides, it would be risky to ride on horseback through trails one foot wide, running along ravines and gorges that drop to a depth of some hundred or more meters below. It's easy for the superior to give orders, but many a time one simply cannot obey. This is what he told me: "Do not go, or go once a year!" And those poor abandoned ones, and the sick?

Do they have to go deprived of the comfort of their religion? The good Lord has always helped me and nothing bad has ever happened to me except for an occasional scare.

A month ago I was called to a poor sick young man dying of tetanus. I reached the swollen river at 1 AM, or a little after midnight. I crossed it in a canoe by the light of a lantern, commending my soul, and shuddering with fear that the current might not carry a tree to sweep it away. I was saying to myself: "Poor uncle Tony, this is the one time you will reach Porto Alegre without a boat!" But, then I was happy because I had brought great comfort to the sick man, an only son of old parents and their only support."⁴³

Besides his ordinary ministry in conditions as above described, by 1905 Father Seganfredo could count to his credit the construction of church and rectory, the founding of several confraternities, of which those of the Blessed Sacrament and of Our Lady of Caravagio especially distinguished themselves, and the dedication of eight new chapels around the territory of his quasi-parish.

3. Nova Bassano

Father Carlo Porrini, who had been assigned to Nova Bassano in 1907, that is, only eleven years after the arrival of Father Colbacchini, reports hearing the early colonists Checco Gaiola, Basso, Feron, Leopold Gorlin, and Roman Girardi tell the story of the beginnings of the parish. They often recalled the years of the "great struggle" when trees were their only shelter, and tigers, pumas, monkeys, and snakes their only companions! There was no church, bell-tower, cemetery, school or pharmacy.

Checco Gaiola recalls:

"Things started to get better when Father Colbacchini arrived. We were then dependent on the "New Town", as the colonists called the old settlement of Alfredo Chaves.

There was a pastor, Father Matthew Pasquali, who never came to visit us. However, it was not his fault! He lived 50 kilometers away, and there were no roads or bridges! One happy day we heard that a priest was on his way assigned to us. We were beside ourselves with joy. And, indeed, he came! He was Father Antônio Seganfredo, who had his relatives at "linha" IX. When it was a question of choosing the site for the new church, the Seganfredo clan were all set that at all cost it be built close to their home, at No. 40 of "linha" IX. But, we opposed them! When he realized we could not come to an agreement on the location of the church, Father Seganfredo moved to Capoeiras to prevent worsening the discord! And so, in the squabble we all became losers, as we remained without a priest. The departure of Fr. Seganfredo was a setback for us (...), when a telegram to Poldo Gorlin announced:

"In three days I shall be at Alfredo Chaves. Come to pick me up. (signed) Pietro Colbacchini,"

(...) Father Pietro fixed his residence at "linha" X, by the house of Joséph Faedo from Crespano. A chapel in honor of St. Peter stood at a location called Barracão, by the watermill of Mr. Vacca (...). Father Colbacchini got down working right away on the construction of church and rectory (...). On a visit to the chapels of "Linhas" VIII, IX, X, XI, XII, he became well aware of the discord existing between colonists over the location (...). One Sunday he summoned all

⁴³ Seganfredo to Consoni, Capoeiras, September 17, 1903 (Arch. G.S., 468).

the trustees of the "linhas" at Faedo's house (...). With them he went around looking for a piece of land on which to build the Church. By the river he asked whether the Massignan, Bianchin, Feron, and Vanzo families were willing to donate one fourth of a plantation. Those good colonists gladly consented. It came out that the land donated was actually a whole plantation and a half."⁴⁴

We have reason to believe the "memoirs" of Father Porrini to be substantially correct; however, we shall now continue on the evidence of the documents. When he arrived in Paraná on September 28, 1896, after a two year stay in Italy, Father Colbacchini was warmly welcomed by the people of his old parish of Santa Felicidade, but coldly by the Bishop, Dom José de Camargo Barros, who was accusing him, not without cause, of undue interference in the affairs of the diocese! He decided, therefore, to leave immediately for Porto Alegre with Father Serraglia, whom he had requested as his assistant from Bishop Scalabrini, without presenting his plan for the colonization of Paraná.⁴⁵

On October 17, he arrived in Porto Alegre, and in agreement with Father Vicentini, was assigned to the communities of Alfredo Chaves, where Father Seganfredo was residing already.⁴⁶ On November 24, he was informing Bishop Scalabrini about the situation and his plans, as grandiose as ever.

"Now I am in a position to write to you about things here with sufficient knowledge of the facts! The Bishop has sent us (Seganfredo and me) to take care of about four hundred Italian families living in the farthest "linhas", VIII to XII, of Alfredo Chaves. They are still at their beginnings, almost totally deprived of roads, and very poor. It's enough to tell you that we had to pay of our own pocket for the trip from Porto Alegre to here (about 260 kilometers). In spite of their goodwill, the colonists could not afford it.

True enough, at every "linha" they have built certain chapels, hardly large enough to hold 200 people each, but completely deprived of all things necessary for the services, with no altar, and with ceilings so low that one feels like being locked up in an oven when officiating there.

The Bishop had been told that a church and a house for the priests were built there, or were about to be built, as the seat of the new parish; and so, for being so credulous to this false information, he limited our jurisdiction to only those five "linhas", with orders to construct church and rectory, and no means to do so.

Just the same, I made a missionary visitation of the five "linhas" staying three or four days at each preaching the word of God with great profusion, ministering the Sacraments to all of them; this way I could give 1,300 Communions. At the same time, I busied myself with uniting their hearts and in eliminating dissensions to the end of joining all forces together for the construction of Church and Rectory.

Each "linha" (some three kilometers distant from each other) wanted the central church in its own territory; actually, each clan wanted it in the shade of their houses! In line with orders from the Bishop, disregarding anybody's opinion, I have chosen a location central to all five "linhas", in the midst of a virgin forest, in a beautiful valley with pure waters and air! A site most appropriate for a future community! Ready to pay, should not the government grant my request, I applied for, and obtained a quarter of a lot of land from each of the colonists that owned it; this way I succeeded in securing an area of some seventy hectares, that can turn out to be a convenient place for all our needs.

In four days, the colonists from the five "linhas" cut down the forest, and now the wood is drying in the sun to be burnt at the earliest, so as to make room for the buildings!

As you see, my plan is a daring one, but I shall do my best to carry it through. I hope to move there to officiate in a small temporary chapel by Christmas, and

⁴⁴ C. Porrini: "Memorie del P. Pietro Colbacchini desunte dalle notizie date dalla Rev.ma Madre Lucia Gorlin". (Recollections on Fr. Peter Colbacchini gathered from information supplied by Sister Lucy Gorlin) (Manuscript). (Arch. G.S., 1533/7). Sister Lucy Gorlin, housekeeper to Fr. Colbacchini at Nova Bassano, was the only witness to the passing of the missionary, which took place a few days before she was to leave for Sao Paulo to join the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles (Scalabrinians). She served later as Vicar General.

⁴⁵ Colbacchini to Scalabrini, Colombo, October 2, 1896 (Arch. G.S., 448/1). As to the projects of colonization by Fr. Colbacchini cfr. Perotti: "La Società Italiana di fronte alle Prime Migrazioni di Massa", (Italian Society and early Mass Migrations), *Studi Emigrazione*, V, 11-12 (1968) pp. 12-144; - 325-394; and G.F. Rosoli, "La colonizzazione italiana delle Americhe tra mito e realtà", (1880-1914) (Italian Colonization in the Americas. Myths and Facts), *Studi Emigrazione*, IX, 27 (1972), pp. 3 -374.

⁴⁶ Colbacchini to Scalabrini Porto Alegre, October 18, 1896 (Arch. G.S., 448/1)

right afterwards to begin construction of a church with sitting capacity for fifteen hundred people. Since there is great abundance of wood, it will not be difficult to get the material for building, but I will find it hard to secure free labor from these people who have just now awakened from the slumber of the past five years. Besides, what I shall not hope for is to obtain from people this poor the money we will need for expenses. I shall go on until I can with the money I brought along with me. Your Excellency knows my forceful temperament that does not shrink from any difficulty which may present a possible solution! In any case, it will be convenient and necessary that the Bishop extend our parochial territory. This way our ministry will reach a larger population that will help in securing some other more substantial supply of money for our needs. The Bishop was so ill informed about things here that he gave me instructions to open a seminary boarding school at "linha" X, where he was assured by Mr. Faedo of available means! Instead, I paid a visit to Alfredo Chaves to discuss this project and the plans for a boarding school for girls to be run by Sisters. I hope this first seed sown there will bring forth abundant fruit! In that central town our project has a good chance for success, as much as it would be utopic for it to succeed in the midst of these forests still roaming with wild animals and inhabited by still very few people with no opportunities and so uneducated! I have also already written to the Bishop on this point to enlighten him of the situation.

Work on the parochial center and on the new town the Bishop has charged me with is progressing, and by Christmas I will be able to say Mass in the midst of those woods. Those people are so taken up as to neglect their own interests in order to attend to this project. The wooden chapel they built at the "linhas" will supply the boards needed to construct the first parochial house which will be completed within three or four days. I am writing also to Marquis Volpe-Landi so that he may urge Mr. Gavotti to promote the carrying out of my colonization's project. This government would willingly grant vast territories, the most fertile ones, to a well organized group. These territories would be in northern Uruguay, along boundaries with Paraguay and Paraná. Should the colony I proposed to Mr. Gavotti be successful, we will open for ourselves the doors to that great colonization."⁴⁷

Because of the daily rains that prevented the burning of wood, work to clear the land of trees and prepare it for construction lasted longer than expected. Mass was said on Christmas, but under a huge tent.⁴⁸ In the middle of February 1897, Father Colbacchini complained of not having received any answer from Bishop Scalabrini, from whom he was expecting some help to open a small seminary, nor from Mr. Gavotti concerning the colonization plan, and added:

"Things are progressing here. Since February 15, we already live in the new house, and in the presence of government authorities, we dedicated yesterday this new church that will be the center of a town already named Nova Bassano. Its location is the most beautiful anyone could find, on a gentle slope on high ground, flanked by two small rivers that supply good water.

At the moment, many people are asking me for lots in town where to move and settle their shops and trades. Though their price is high, some 150 liras each, only 14 meters wide and 20 deep, still I hope to accommodate all of them. As of now I have 63 petitions, but there is still enough land for as many more. The money I get shall be used to defray the expenses I incurred until now (some three thousand liras); whatever is left will be set aside to start a fund for the construction of a new brick church next year. The house offers many comforts, and it will host a group of boys as a first nucleus towards opening a boarding school. The mission is endowed with abundant and fertile land (some 30 hectares) that shall be partly farmed for its support. Thus far, the colonists have contributed 2,500 days of free work. All the wood was locally harvested, but there were difficulties with scarcity of qualified carpenters. Besides, in clearing the surrounding area so much wood was cut to supply all Piacenza for three whole years!

Incredible was the saw and hatchet work in piling up so much wood to get ready for burning! To add to the difficulties, for almost two months it rained buckets every day, making it hard to start the fire! There is still a lot of wood to be burned, but I hope to have it all done away with within eight to ten days.

⁴⁷ Colbacchini to Scalabrini, Alfredo Chaves, November 24, 1896 (Arch. G.S., 448/1).

⁴⁸ Colbacchini to Scalabrini, Alfredo Chaves, January 3, 1897 (Arch. G.S., 448/1).

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER VIII**

Last Sunday (the day before yesterday) we had a very moving celebration! About fifteen hundred people gathered in the new church and around it to assist at its blessing. Their joy was visible in all of them had seen the fruit of their satisfaction in having a church where to sing together the praises of the Lord after so many hardships, discussions and dissensions! The director of the colonies remained deeply moved and promised me the undivided support of the government"⁴⁹

Apparently, then, the provisional wooden church was blessed on February 14, 1897, and solemnly officiated on the 15th. Father Serraglia had arrived only 20 days earlier as assistant to Fr. Vicentini. He admiringly wrote:

"In a short while Father Pietro has straightened out many intricate problems here. He settled very strong divisions and dissensions; at the same time he directed the people to a common decision, and built church, rectory, kitchen, wine cellar, stable, etc. In a few days all will be completed."⁵⁰

Expectations for the development of the community of Nova Bassano were too optimistic. Always precise in furnishing data, Father Serraglia will report in 1902:

"The new community of Nova Bassano is stationary; it progresses very little indeed; there are only seven houses in all, and six families."⁵¹

In 1906, ten years after its founding, it was still a colony of diminutive proportions:

"This little town now hardly counts thirteen families, due to total lack of roads and trade, and to its distance from large centers."⁵²

Following completion of the most needed works, in 1897 Fr. Colbacchini began busying himself about the projected small seminary.

"A few days ago, while I was out preaching missions, the Superior gathered together several boys from the "linhas" to have them study here. He intends to open a small boarding school! But where do we find the teachers? He expects them from Piacenza."⁵³

Instead, from Piacenza no help could come! And so Father Serraglia had to be the teacher at first, then one came in from Bassano del Grappa.⁵⁴ We know for certain only one name of those students, that is, Cirillo Seganfredo, a nephew of Father Antônio Seganfredo. He continued his studies at the diocesan seminary of Porto Alegre, but was dismissed in college years. We are in possession of a letter of his, written on the occasion of the passing of his uncle who died on December 23, 1912. Sent from Rio Claro, it carries the date of the February 5, 1913, and it indicates that the young man was living, perhaps as a teacher or an assistant, at the orphanage "São Antônio" of Rio Claro, a branch of the orphanage of São Paulo.⁵⁵ Besides all this, Father Colbacchini was relentlessly devoting himself to the visitation of the colonies preaching, teaching catechism to the children, and administering the Sacraments. In the midst of all his concerns, he waged campaigns against blasphemous talk and alcoholism, had to struggle with authorities and settlers that were not willing to go along with him. Furthermore, long horseback rides, inclement weather, hardships of all kinds, all began to claim their toll, and he realized he could not carry on any more like this! In March 1898 he received a letter from Bishop Scalabrini recommending him moderation and better care for his health:

"I am sorry to hear that your health is not what it used to be; I prayed, and I had these holy communities of mine pray for you; I hope their prayers have been heard and that you may be in sufficient good health. Be stouthearted and place your trust in God! Should you have no choice but to leave your post, we shall welcome you with open arms, and you will be of great service also here with your counsel, your pen, and your apostolate.

On the spiritual level, things here have improved quite a bit! The Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith is taking a great interest in our

⁴⁹ Colbacchini to Scalabrini, Nova Bassano, February 19, 1897 (Arch. G.S., 448/1).

⁵⁰ Serraglia to Molinari, Nova Bassano, January 25, 1897 (Arch. G.S., 448/3).

⁵¹ Serraglia to Bonato, Nova Bassano, January 31, 1902 (Arch. G.S., 448/3).

⁵² Serraglia to Vicentini, Nova Bassano, January 30, 1906 (Arch. G.S., 448/3).

⁵³ Serraglia to Molinari, Nova Bassano, June 2, 1897 (Arch. G.S., 448/3).

⁵⁴ Serraglia to Molinari, Nova Bassano, November 4, 1897, (Arch. G.S., 448/3).

⁵⁵ Seganfredo to Consoni, Rio Claro, February 5, 1913, (Arch. G.S., 468).

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER VIII**

work and not in words only. In North America, the new Provincial, Father James Gambera, brings new vigor into the Congregation, urging the observance of the rules and governing with strength and prudence. He meets with the approval of the Bishops, and Rome writes with sincere praise about him.

But, together with the joys there come also the sorrows! Fr. Molinari is quite run down, so much so that we feared for his life! Now he is somewhat improved, but if he does not slow down we will not have him for much longer. For the time being I forbade him to hear confessions.

And, Faustino! He, too, fell gravely ill; the last news, however, is better. And now, you too are in danger! 'O Lord, keep the best of mine', is the cry of my heart, often wounded and replenished of anxious concern for all. But let us not lose heart; God sees and provides!

I recommend that you use moderation in your work; do what you can, and let the Lord take care of the rest; 'caro mea aenea non est' (my flesh is not made of bronze) Job used to say, and so neither is ours! Anyway, 'liberabit te Dominus ab omni malo et salvum te faciet.' (the Lord will free you from all evil and will save you)."⁵⁶

In his answer, Father Colbacchini informed him that he was already getting better, and considering building a church made of stone, for which he estimated an expense of 30 contos. But he does not have even one of them!⁵⁷ In a succeeding letter, he reported that he had to call in an Italian doctor to perform a minor operation on his knee to whom he presented his fee in an envelope. In starting back to Alfredo Chaves the doctor happily told his friends, he had received one "conto" for the minor operation which Father Colbacchini defined "barbarous". But half-way on his return trip he opened the envelope finding only 150 milreis in it. Highly offended, he sent it back to the missionary protesting that for the dignity of his profession he could not accept less than 500 milreis.⁵⁸

Father Serraglia as well had to go through hardships in such dire lack of medical assistance.

"In less than ten days, typhoid fevers brought ten young ladies to their death. Sick myself with the same ailment, I had to assist them at their bedside. The superior was then touring through the "linhas" preaching missions. Imagine my predicament! Yet, the Good Lord was giving me strength to carry on as best as possible. For the first fifteen days I was in a state of delirium totally unaware of myself."⁵⁹

Work was indeed overbearing, if one considers the distances over mountain regions and through forests where, at times, there were only a few trails.

"Here things are good and bad, as everywhere in the world. Much work, but the harvest yields wheat and darnel. The Good Lord helps me and I carry on. We are two priests here with a residence by the parish church and with thirty other chapels to visit every two months. The colonies are divided into "linhas", one to two hundred lots each, with two, three, or more chapels each, responding to the number of confraternities organized by the colonists. The farthest ones are located at 45 kilometers from the central residence, a whole day horse ride."⁶⁰

We already mentioned Fr. Colbacchini's brief stay at Veranapolis, when the Bishop had temporarily entrusted the quasi-parish to the Scalabrinians⁶¹ after suspending Fr. Matteo Pasquali for having too strongly opposed the supporters of the monarchy, taking part personally in the demonstrations with rifle in hand. Father Colbacchini himself was given the task of reporting the decision of the Bishop to Father Pasquali, thus taking his place until the arrival of Father Vicentini. However, when on Easter Sunday he read the decree of the Bishop from the pulpit, the most ardent republicans staged a demonstration in church that forced Father Colbacchini to run for his life into the woods.⁶² On August 4, 1900, Father Colbacchini informed Bishop Scalabrini that he was all busy with the construction of the new Church for which he was the architect

⁵⁶ Scalabrini – Colbacchini, Piacenza, February 9, 1898 (Arch. G.S., 3023/2)

⁵⁷ Colbacchini-Scalabrini, Nova Bassano, March 20, 1898 (Arch. G.S., 448/1)

⁵⁸ Colbacchini-Scalabrini, Nova Bassano, April 11, 1898 (Arch. G.S., 448/1)

⁵⁹ Serraglia-Molinari, Nova Bassano, December 4, 1898 (Arch. G.S., 448/3).

⁶⁰ Colbacchini-Bonato, Nova Bassano, December 24, 1898 (Arch. G.S., 448/2).

⁶¹ "Portarias" (Decrees) of Dom C.J. Goncalves Ponce de Leão, Porto Alegre. March 28, 1900 (Arch G.S., 448/2)

⁶² Colbacchini-Consoni, Nova Bassano, May 5, 1900 (Arch. .S., 448/2).

and master builder.⁶³ But, he could not see it completed. Embittered by the fact that Father Vicentini had given up the quasi-parish of Alfredo Chaves, for which he unjustly accused him of timidity, indolence, and lack of sufficient love for the Congregation, discouraged by the increasing number of enemies his often imprudent and ambitious zeal was gathering against him, and physically run down, by the end of 1900 Father Colbacchini decided to return to Italy.⁶⁴ On January 26, 1901, he wrote to Bishop Scalabrini that he intended to depart for Italy within February.⁶⁵ Four days later, on January 30, he died suddenly. He was fifty five. The young Lucy Gorlin, the housekeeper, was the only witness to his passing. From her we gather the de tails:

"My leaving for São Paulo to become a missionary sister of St. Charles had been set 10 days earlier than Fr. Colbacchini's departure on January 18, invited by Father Faustino Consoni, director of the Christopher Columbus Orphanage, to give a retreat to the same Missionary Sisters of St. Charles. I remember him telling me these precise words: 'Now your "dad" is sending you to São Paulo. If on my arrival I find things all right, and that you have been admitted, I shall leave you there, otherwise your "dad" will take you along to Italy where he will place you where he thinks best. In the meantime pray.'

These decisions were taken in the beginning of January. I felt sure his leaving for Italy would soothe the sorrows of his heart! But Divine Providence had provided otherwise. He said Mass on Sunday, January 27. His sermon impressed me for his insistence and firmness toward those who had opposed his plan for the new church. With his usual fire, he told them he was losing heart over their opposition. But he added:

'Do you wish to know what St. Francis used to say? - So great is the reward awaiting me that any sorrow is a delight to me! - That was the last sermon I had the comfort to hear from his lips. Before saying Mass he had given strict orders to have his horse saddled and ready. After Mass, he took some milk, and immediately started out with his faithful travelling companion for "linha" VIII.

Worried over one thing or another, and afraid that something might happen, I told him: 'Father, do not leave like this!' But, turning to me he said: 'Martha, Martha, you are anxious and upset' and spurred his horse on. He was anxious to settle a certain quarrel born among the colonists over the chapel of the "linha", and to restore peace and harmony between them.

He remained there also the following Monday for Holy Mass, catechism, and instructions, and spent Tuesday at another chapel of the same "linha". By nightfall of the same day he returned quite happy, so happy, in fact, as to say with a smile: 'You see? Here I am! I have come back happy, safe and sound.' On Wednesday morning (January 30), he rang the bell at the usual hour and said Mass; I assisted also. When it was time for Communion turning to the people with the Holy Host, before giving it to them, he recited the 'Behold the Lamb of God' with such an unusual and meaningful feeling as to give the impression he wanted to engrave every word in his heart and ours. Somewhat apprehensive, I thought to myself: 'Will this be, perhaps, the last time he gives Holy Communion? Would it?' My sad foreboding was not without cause. It was indeed the last time we received Holy Communion at his hand.

After Mass he remained in church for his usual thanksgiving; then he walked over to the vine to pick some grapes, but could not enjoy the taste; bringing them to the rectory he said: 'Do you know what? I feel sick! I went to pick some grapes and I felt like collapsing. Make some coffee.'

I should point out that he never drank coffee! In fact, he took only one sip of it, telling me to drink the rest. That morning my sister also had stopped over at the rectory for a moment, leaving almost right afterwards. Observing the priest with attention, she too said: 'It seems to me he feels really sick!' But, she did not expect the end to be so close at hand. In the meanwhile, he called to tell me he was going to bed. I asked him: 'Wait a minute, it is not made yet.' 'It doesn't matter' he replied 'I cannot wait any longer; close the windows' and he let himself fall into bed entreating me: 'Go before the Blessed Sacrament and pray for me because I am dying.' Moved by his statement uttered with much conviction and tranquility, I replied: 'Rev. Father, don't say that!' Without wasting any more time, I hurried to the Church to pray with all fervor and a ray

⁶³ Colbacchini-Scalabrini, Nova Bassano, July 4, 1900 (Arch. G.S., 448/1).

⁶⁴ Colbacchini-Scalabrini, Nova Bassano, October 23, 1900 (Arch. G.S., 448/1).

⁶⁵ Colbacchini-Scalabrini, Nova Bassano, January 26, 1901 (Arch. G.S., 448/1).

of hope in my heart, beseeching the Good Lord for help in such pressing anxiety. His bedroom was close to the church, separated only by a wooden wall. Reason why the complete silence on the other side of that wall got me worried while I was praying! I soon walked out of the church and knocked at his door, but he did not answer.

I slowly opened it, and I saw him pale in the face holding fast the crucifix in his hands, praying with fervor. Aware of my presence he motioned me to his bedside and said: 'Bring me a glass of cool water and a lime orange' directing me to pick it from the tree by the window he had planted himself.

In all solicitude I complied with his desire, his last one, but after hardly tasting them he left them alone. In all truth, I must confess that at the sight of this unexpected scene taking place in such a brief time, no matter how hard I tried, I could not help being overwhelmed by my strong emotions. Unable to stand on my feet any longer I answered the Litany sitting at his bedside.

When it was finished, he continued to pray in Latin; I could not understand, but I presume he was reciting the prayers for the dying. At the same time he more strongly clasped the crucifix to his heart, and then said: 'Give my sincere farewell to Father Serraglia, and tell him not to lose heart.'

He was sinking fast, and noticing that I was trying to find a way to summon somebody, he was quick in saying: 'Do not call anyone that he may not give me cause to die an uneasy death; in any case, I am fully aware that death is close at hand!'

And then, turning to me, as though in meditation, he continued: 'See, how short life is? It seems as though I were born yesterday! And here I am, dying already! How fortunate you are to be still so young! You still have plenty of time ahead to do much good.' Then, placing his hand on my head he said: 'God bless you as I bless you. Farewell, I will be seeing you in heaven.'

I heard him still muttering some prayer with a smiling countenance; he pressed hard the crucifix to his side and stretched out on the bed. It seemed as though something broke loose within his poor ailing body with a strange shrieking sound. Suddenly he turned all blue. I remembered then that he used to tell me how salutary it is to recite the 'De profundis' (Psalm 130) when one is dying, and I said it for him on my knees while he was breathing his last. In half an hour his face brightened up again, resuming its usual peaceful countenance, a reflection of his beautiful soul and good heart. I immediately called a group of laborers volunteering their work on the new church. They ran over terrified and resentful because I had not called them in on time. The most upset of them all, I remember, was a certain Francesco Basso. It was indeed my intention to summon somebody in those sad moments of sorrow and anxiety, but by so doing I would have disobeyed and acted contrary to the desire of the dying missionary who had entreated me not to call anyone that he might not die disturbed."⁶⁶

Father Serraglia was staying at a colony 40 kilometers away. Several colonists started down the road to inform him, while two more ran to tell Fr. Seganfredo who had his residence at a distance of twelve kilometers. Father Seganfredo departed in haste on his riding horse, but he arrived at Nova Bassano only in the afternoon. He sent someone to inform the authorities and the colonies. In a few hours, church and square were crowded. The following morning he waited till 9:00 o'clock for the arrival of Fr. Serraglia, then he began with the office of the dead, trying to say it as slowly as possible; he sang a high mass, gave the eulogy and accompanied the casket to the cemetery followed by a vast crowd of people.

"It was noon already, and the authorities had ordered to lower the body into the grave, but no news of Fr. Serraglia. All hope was gone, we had to bury the casket. I did not know what to say or do! When, suddenly, as a whisper at first, and then as repeated cries: - 'Father Antonio, Father Antonio' began to be heard amongst the crowd. It was indeed Father Antonio. He was coming at full speed as though the horse had wings. Within minutes he was with us! When we came face to face together it was one of those instances even the enemies of Father Pietro Colbacchini could not witness without shedding tears. Rev. Father Rolleri, such moving scenes can hardly be expressed in words! Father Antonio wanted to gaze one last time at Father Pietro's countenance, but he had to step down

⁶⁶ Manuscript of Mother Lucy Gorlin (Arch. G.S., 1533/5).

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION - VOL. III
CHAPTER VIII**

*into the grave. The casket was opened for him, and he stamped a kiss on his forehead! Immediately following the seven hour ride under the hot sun of the day in such circumstances Father Antonio fell sick and was quickly struck with a high fever. For a moment I feared for his life! I left him in sufficiently good health this afternoon. He had gotten up and the fever had gone entirely."*⁶⁷ (67)

Father Serraglia remained alone four months until he was joined at last by Father Massimo Rinaldi from Encantado. He stayed at Nova Bassano three years, from May 1901 to May 1904. The diminutive and timid Father Serraglia could not hope for better help:

*"Father Massimo is here with me; I am amazed at the immense good he is doing! The Lord sent me a companion of whom I could not desire the better."*⁶⁸

With this valid help at his side he took heart and resumed work on the new Church in January 1902:

*"Fifteen days ago I resumed the work on the new church initiated by our well beloved Father Pietro Colbacchini. God willing, I hope to see it covered within three months. I gave it a start myself with only 87 milreis on hand. I will surely incur a debt of one conto, at least. But, the good colonists are all willing, and they will not go back on their word, I am sure. My most dear confrere and I went from door to door to bless homes. We could collect a good quantity of grain which filled 237 sacks. As you can see, the rather high debt we are going to incur shall be paid off by the sale of all this God-given abundance!"*⁶⁹

The blessing of the new brick church and the celebration of the first Mass took place on the feast of St. Peter, June 29, 1902.⁷⁰ The year 1904 was rather difficult for Fr. Serraglia. Left alone when Fr. Rinaldi was appointed to Encantado to replace Father Vicentini, who had been called to be Rector of the Mother House, he was given an assistant only on August 14, with the arrival of Father Eugenio Medicheschi! Only for a few weeks, however, because when Bishop Scalabrini arrived for his visitation of Nova Bassano on October 1, he sent Father Medicheschi to take charge of another mission.⁷¹

On August 17, he lost almost all his possessions in a fire.

*"At four in the morning I suddenly woke up and saw the house overrun by slow burning flames. Imagine my shocking fright! I immediately ran for the bell and began ring it loudly. People started to gather immediately, but nothing could be saved of the little I possessed! The fire did a thorough job! It was discreet enough, however, to let me keep the house nearby where I have my bedroom, and spare the church not far away that the flames could have destroyed in no time! I could save only my linen. But, one must be patient, as it could have been much worse!"*⁷²

A few days later he risked drowning while crossing a river.⁷³ The year 1905 began under better omens with the first pastoral visitation of the Bishop of Porto Alegre who was pleased with the quasi-parish.⁷⁴ In November of the same year he was able at last to obtain the assistance of Father Giovanni Costanzo.⁷⁵ In the meantime the small town was made a "distrito" dependent on the municipality of Veranopolis, and it seemed to be on its way to a better promising future.⁷⁶

At the close of 1906, Father Serraglia was ordered back to Italy to be the Rector of the Mother House. His place was taken by Father Giovanni Costanzo, named curate on February 11, 1907.

We are pleased to quote here in its simplicity a special report prepared by Father Serraglia at the end of 1903 on the mission of Nova Bassano because we consider it a proof of the historic importance of the presence of the missionaries for migrants in Brazil. The whole structure, religious, civic, and

⁶⁷ Seganfredo-Rolleri, Capoeiras, February 1, 1901 (Arch. G.S., 1533/5).

⁶⁸ Serraglia-Rolleri, Nova Bassano, July 8, 1901 (Arch. G.S., 448/3).

⁶⁹ Serraglia-Bonato, Nova Bassano, January 31, 1902 (Arch. G.S., 448/3).

⁷⁰ Serraglia-Consoni, Nova Bassano, July 15, 1902 (Arch. G.S., 448/3).

⁷¹ Serraglia-Simoni, Nova Bassano, May 5, 1904 and August 23, 1904; to Consoni, November 21, 1904, (Arch. G.S., 448/3).

⁷² Serraglia-Consoni, Nova Bassano, June 23, 1904 (Arch. G.S., 448/3)

⁷³ Serraglia-Poggi, no date (July 1904)(?) (Arch. G.S., 448/3)

⁷⁴ Serraglia-Consoni, Nova Bassano, January 27, 1905 (Arch. G.S., 448/3)

⁷⁵ Serraglia-Vicentini, Nova Bassano, June 30, 1906 (Arch. G.S., 448/3).

⁷⁶ Serraglia-Vicentini, Nova Bassano, January 30, 1906 (Arch. G.S., 448/3)

social, as well, of quite a few modern centers is deeply rooted in the determinant work of priests who made themselves migrants among migrants with the scope of the Scalabrinian Congregation of "keeping alive the Catholic Faith in the hearts of our fellow countrymen in foreign land, and of promoting as best as possible also their moral, civic and economic welfare."⁷⁷

"My most dear confrere Father Massimo and I are working in the Lord doing whatever we can for the good of others and ours. He is absent from the residence four months already, doing missionary work from one community to another with alacrity and zeal. On the sad occasion of the death of the great Leo XIII he wrote a short biography to raise funds for our humble church.

Imagine an immense parish covering a territory of 40 or more square kilometers and then, as is our practice, having to visit all of it every two months, staying two or more days at each of the 27 chapel/stations that make up the parish, administering the sacraments, (an average of 1,000 communions every two months), preaching, teaching catechism, visiting the sick, counselling, etc. Here one must be on the trail for half or for whole days, riding through narrow and dangerous trails in the midst of thick forests always facing risks of all kinds. And all this even with the steady effort of our colonists to successfully clear the virgin forests and to open as best as they can some ways of communication from one community to the other, from place to place, from one center to another, from a small town to a hamlet with few huts. And mind you, the founder of these small communities, interspersed 30, 40, or more kilometers from each other, is almost always a priest or a Catholic missionary who upon overcoming the initial hardest difficulties is afterwards supported by the local authorities.

Here at Nova Bassano, for instance, there was nothing but virgin forests! Nobody had ever thought or dreamt even, of the creation of a small town seven years ago! When a missionary, Father Pietro Colbacchini, arrived, he bought a piece of land from the owners, had the trees cut down, and built a wooden church and rectory. He paid all this out of his own pocket, except for the free contribution of the colonists in less expensive works.

On feast days a multitude of people used to come (as they still do) to assist at Holy Mass, and to hear the word of God. This zealous and tireless missionary had a quarter of the land divided into lots. First came a merchant who stocked his store with all kinds of merchandise that could be sold in these locations! Later, when the news spread around about the new town, a blacksmith opened his shop, then a shoemaker, and still a brewer, a tanner, etc.

The government also took an interest in the little new community and sent a public teacher over to teach the language of this country to our numerous young people.

With the annual collections and products, the little town of Nova Bassano has the merit of building for itself in a few years (through the services of the missionary and by the generous will of Italian colonists) a most beautiful and elegant church made of stone and bricks, with a nave and two aisles, 30 meters long, 14 wide, and 16 high. It is dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, to the Sacred Heart of Mary, St. Anthony and St. Bassano. And, all accomplished through the encouragement and leadership of the priest (...). Should there be no priests or missionaries here, within a quarter of a century, I dare say even in less time, our Italian emigrants would turn to the savage state, or just about, with no religion, no laws, or civilization, in the same condition as the native Brazilian are actually in, who inhabit these immense and unexplored forests, the so-called "mato perso" (=forgotten forest), where they live like animals, beget children, grow, live, and die without any notion of the civilized world. They baptize their own children, perform weddings by themselves, but do not know anything besides."⁷⁸

4. Protasio Alves

From February 1902 to within the first months of 1903, a Scalabrinian missionary resided at Protasio Alves, even though not an independent quasi-parish, as it was still a dependency of Capoeiras (Nova Prata). In the previous years, from 1886 to 1893, and then afterwards from 1905, when it was made a

⁷⁷ "Regolamento della Congregazione dei Missionari per gli Emigrati" (Rules of the Congregation), 1888, Chapter I, no. 2 (Arch. G.S., 127/2).

⁷⁸ Serraglia-Poggi, Nova Bassano, November 13, 1903 (Arch. G.S., 448/3).

quasi-parish, to 1909, the Scalabrinians took care of it, especially Father Antônio Seganfredo. Before the Italians arrived there, the few "caboclos" (= mestizos) who lived around that region had named that locality "Chimarrão" after a small stream, an affluent of the river Turvo. Arriving in 1892, Italians renamed it after the latter, and called it Turvo. Later on, from 1904 to 1917 it was known as Independencia. Made a "distrito" of the municipality of Lagoa Vermelha, in 1917, it was called Protasio Alves, in recognition for the favors received from the Secretary of State of the same name.

The story of the first Italian immigrants of Protasio Alves is similar to the one just reported for Nova Bassano: the hard work of the first settlement in clearing the woods and in forming the plantations, with all the sacrifices that a pioneer's life demanded, left to themselves with no money, no means of communication, and no social or economic infrastructure! Here, too, social life began and developed around the chapels built at each of the eight "linhas". Every Sunday the trustee, or "chaplain", that is, the best learned and most willing colonist, used to gather the families for Rosary and for the teaching of catechism to the children. Though so much requested, they did not enjoy the comfort of any priest's visit from 1892 to 1896. Invited by the trustees Antônio and Pietro Bortolon, Father Colbacchini visited Turvo remaining there for three days! He said Mass at the cemetery, baptized, blessed marriages, and urged the colonists to build a central church. The following year Father Serraglia went there and chose the site for the construction of a wooden church that was built on ground donated by the government, blessed on December 21, 1897, and dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary. As was mentioned before, the colony was regularly visited from 1897 to 1902 by Father Seganfredo, curate of Capoeiras. In the jubilee year 1901, Father Serraglia was there for some three weeks preaching missions at several chapels. Upon insistence from the colonists he had a petition sent to the Bishop, and to Father Vicentini, the Provincial Superior of the Scalabrinians, asking for a resident priest because the number of families was exceeding the two hundred mark while contacts with Capoeiras were extremely difficult on account of the rushing river Prata. With the consent of the Bishop, Father Vicentini sent Father Giuseppe Pandolfi⁷⁹ who took charge at the end of February 1902.⁸⁰ He remained only a year; yet, in spite of great poverty he succeeded in building the rectory and the sacristy. In October 1902 he wrote:

"This year I will have here the Bishop of Porto Alegre for the pastoral visitation. Probably he will assign me to another place because people here are too few, while others with more have no priest!"⁸¹

Actually, Father Pandolfi left in February 1903, and the periodical visitations were resumed by Father Seganfredo. The pastoral visitation could be held only in January 1905: The Bishop promised not to abandon those colonists who kept insisting to have a resident priest, although they lacked the means necessary to support him.⁸²

Also to Bishop Scalabrini, when he visited Capoeiras from September 28 to October 1, 1904, they had presented the following petition:

"The present committee respectfully turns to your Lordship that you may lend your support to our request presented to His Excellency Dom Claudio, Bishop of Porto Alegre, which until now went unheeded: is it negligence? It could not be possible, we refuse to believe so! But in the meantime this community of pious and religiously educated people has been left without a priest for some two years. What could the reason be? Will it ever be possible that he could not find a priest so much needed by people who want and love him? Interpreting the unanimous desire of the area of Turvo and Prata, in the municipality of Independencia, we have recourse to Your Lordship that you may kindly give us assurance of your support for this needed petition."⁸³

⁷⁹ "Diario" Vicentini, Vol. IV, 1893-1907, p. 97 (Arch. G.S., 1642).

⁸⁰ "Cenni storici sulla parrocchia di Alfredo Chaves" (Historical Notes on the parish of Alfredo Chaves) (typewritten manuscript). (Arch. G.S., 455): G. Barea, "La vita spirituale nelle Colonie Italiane dello Stato", in the book: Cinquantenario della Colonizzazione italiana nel Rio Grande del Sud. (Porto Alegre, 1925), p. 102 (see note 34)

⁸¹ Pandolfi, Turvo, October 13, 1902 (Arch. G.S., 455).

⁸² "Diario" Vicentini, p. 137 (Arch. G.S., 1642)

⁸³ Peluso, Zanella, Bortolon, Silveira, Porta, Massignan, Zigliotto, to Scalabrini. No date. (Arch. G.S., 455).

However, nothing could be done until 1909 except to continue with the visitations by Fathers Seganfredo, Rinaldi, Medicheschi, and Porrini.

5. São Lourenço de Vilas Boas (Coronel Pilar)

Father Pandolfi moved from Protasio Alves to São Lourenço de Vilas Boas, in the municipality of Garibaldi. The name of the place was changed a number of times: São José do Figueira de Melo, Sessenta, Floriano Peixoto. At present it is known as Coronel Pilar.

This is one of the earliest regions of Italian colonization. In fact, already in October 1877, some families of the provinces of Cremona, Bergamo, Milan, Vicenza, and Trent arrived from Garibaldi. They soon built a wooden chapel. In 1925, the carpenter who had made the altar, the pavement, and the windows of the chapel, was still living at the age of 86: Francesco Baruffi, father of 17 children, holder of several military decorations for participating in the Italian independence wars.⁸⁴

A church with stone walls was built in 1888 at the cost of only four "contos" because the colonists had volunteered their labor. It must not have been anything too much if in 1908 Father Pandolfi did not consider it worth restoring. The quasi-parish was erected on December 31, 1889, but already since 1886 it was cared for by Father Augusto Finotti, who was succeeded by Fathers Giovanni Fronchetti (1889), Giovanni Rampini (1897), Giovanni Carassai (1898), Giovanni Riolo (1900), and Mariano Rossi (1902), all diocesan priests. The Scalabrinian Father Giuseppe Pandolfi was named its curate on February 20, 1903, and remained until the end of 1908, when the quasi-parish was returned to the diocesan clergy. That year it had 3,500 people and an annual average of 245 baptisms, 30 marriages, and 115 first Communions, and had 21 chapels.

The information on the brief Scalabrinian tenure of this quasi-parish is very scanty. Half a year after his arrival, Fr. Pandolfi was thus writing, in his telegraphic style:

*"Vast parish; work for two, support resources for one. Good climate, excellent water, and good wine, too. Good health."*⁸⁵

From September 22 to 26, 1904, the parish was visited by Bishop Scalabrini, arriving from Encantado:

"This mission of São Lourenço, where good Fr. Pandolfi resides, covers a territory of 30 km², with 20 settlements of colonists, each with its own chapel: Holy Family, Immaculate Conception, St. José, etc. This last one, made up entirely of people from Cremona, held a simple but very moving reception for me, asking with filial concern and tears in their eyes news about their Bishop, and their priests, most of them unknown to me. Upon hearing of his death, two families hailing from the late don Angelo Martinoli's first parish, of which I cannot recall the name, burst into bitter tears that moved everyone, myself included (...).

*Of course, I administer Confirmation wherever I go. Here I confirmed 1,500 people of all ages."*⁸⁶

By the end of 1906 Father Pandolfi supplied an idea of the situation as follows:

*"I do not deem it opportune for the time being that another priest should come here. If all paid the Mass stipends two priests could live here, and still be able to send two "contos" a year to Piacenza. But they don't; so in almost four years all I could put together was only half a "conto". Out of ten families only one pays the stipend. Besides, Mass intentions are seldom ever requested at the chapels, and the fee for baptisms is too low."*⁸⁷

In a letter to the Superior General on December 29, 1908, he expressed the opinion of abandoning that quasi-parish.⁸⁸ In fact, already by January 4, 1909, Father Nicola Muotri was assigned to succeed him.

⁸⁴ Cfr. Barea, op. cit., p. 84.

⁸⁵ Pandolfi, Poggi, São Lourenço de Vilas Boas, July 14, 1903 (Arch. G.S., 474).

⁸⁶ Scalabrini-Mangot, São Lourenço d.V.B., September 25, 1904 (Arch. G.S., 3022/22).

⁸⁷ Pandolfi-Vicentini, São Lourenço d.V.B., December 24, 1906 (Arch. G.S., 474).

⁸⁸ Pandolfi-Vicentini, Encantado, December 29, 1908 (Arch. G.S., 474).

6. Monte Belo

The colony of Monte Belo belonged to the municipality and parish of Bento Gonçalves. In 1882, when known as Zamith, together with the "linhas Leopoldina, Faria Lemos, Fernando Lima, Alcantara, Armênio, Argemiro, and Palmeiro, it was given a Franciscan priest as a chaplain, the Father Davide Faustini. On February 11, 1889, it was made a parish. Its pastors were Father Augusto Finotti (1889), a diocesan priest, Father Francis Schuster, a Pallottine, and Fathers Bartolomeo Tiecher (1891), Francesco Piccoli (1892), Giuseppe Dalmassi (1894), again Francesco Piccoli (1895), and Enrico De Biasi (1903), all of them diocesan clergy. On July 21, 1904, Fr. Enrico Preti took charge of the parish, which remained in Scalabrinian hands until 1928. The Church, constructed under the pastorate of Fathers Faustini and Piccoli, was dedicated to St. Francis.⁸⁹ Father Preti had the pavement, the two, lateral altars, and the pulpit made, and the ceiling coated.⁹⁰

According to statistics supplied by Father Vicentini in 1909, the parish had 3,000 people distributed between the center and the 18 chapels around, with an annual average of 140 baptisms 20 marriages, and 90 first Communions.

7. Monte Vêneto (Cotipora).

Located at the second section, series 3, of the municipality of Alfredo Chaves (Veranópolis), Monte Vêneto, now Cotipora, had been known as Nova Bassano. Already in 1889 there were colonists from the provinces of Treviso, Vicenza, and Bergamo, and it included also the Polish settlers of the eighth section. Of the several chapels around the "linhas", the chapel of Our Lady of Good Health was chosen as central residence; and the first priest to take charge in 1893 was Father Fortunato Adorizzi from Trent. He gave start to the works on the new church in 1898, but died in 1899, and was succeeded by Father Georgio Rivola, who retired in February 1904. For over a year, then, the quasi-parish was demoted to a chapel served by Father Edmund de Naves, a Capuchin.⁹¹ At the close of 1905, it was entrusted to the Scalabrinians who held it for about forty years.

On September 26, 1904, the colonists of Monte Veneto presented a petition to Bishop Scalabrini saying that, following the departure of Father Rivola, they had asked Fathers Rinaldi and Serraglia for a Scalabrinian missionary on account of their closeness to Nova Bassano. In turn, these forwarded the petition to Father Vicentini who provisionally appointed Father Seganfredo until the arrival of Father Medicheschi. Since the latter had not arrived as yet, the colonists entreated Bishop Scalabrini to grant them a missionary even if it meant incorporating Monte Veneto with Nova Bassano.⁹²

Father Medicheschi took his permanent residence there only at the end of 1905, and immediately devoted himself to the building of a church for which only the foundations had been made ready.

According to statistics of 1909 by Fr. Vicentini, the quasi-parish had three thousand people, with an annual average of 250 baptisms, 25 marriages, 60 first Communions and it had 16 chapels.

As our conclusion to the history of the first ten years of the Scalabrinian Missions in Rio Grande do Sul we quote a report written by Bishop Massimo Rinaldi for the magazine "Congregazione dei Missionari di San Carlo" (= Congregation of the Missionaries of St. Charles), later "L'Emigrato Italiano", in 1904:

"Like other missions of ours such as Encantado, Capoeiras, and São Lourenço, so also the territory of Nova Bassano is more or less on hills, rich with virgin forests, cut down here and there, opened, and burned by the different people who settled there, to turn them into fertile lands for all kinds

⁸⁹ Cfr. Barea, op. cit., p. 87.

⁹⁰ "Atti della Visita Canonica" (Acts of Canonical Visitation), April 15, 1910 (Arch. G.S., 470).

⁹¹ Cfr. Barea, op. cit., p. 99.

⁹² Pedott-Scalabrini, Monte Veneto, September 26, 1904 (Arch. G.S., 469).

of cultivations. This land, in fact, is also suitable for certain European products. (...). As of now, riches did not find their home here, yet; but in most families, Italian especially, there exists a certain affluence. The lack of roads and bridges, of inhabited centers and trade, forms the main cause of the limited prosperity of these communities.

To provide for their most basic needs, these people join together in societies, and through contributions of alimentary products they succeed in putting aside enough to help the poorest families struck by bad luck, and to pay a teacher for the instruction of their children. To him, mostly, they entrust also the task of leading the prayers in chapel, and teaching catechism to boys and girls.

The seat of their society is generally the chapel, made either of wood or of clay bricks. The society supplies some sacred furnishings for the chapel, the living quarters and the food for the missionary who ordinarily visits them every two months for two or three days, according to circumstances and number of families pertaining to that colony, administering the divine mysteries. When the missionary arrives, the colonists suspend their work and spend a good deal of the day assisting at the religious services, at Holy Mass, at the religious instruction, and receiving the sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist (...).

When in residence, on certain solemn feast days of the Church and of devotion for the people, it is quite rare that the missionary, after hearing confessions for a few hours at night, may be able to finish them before ten in the morning, or even before noon.

To give people coming in from afar the opportunity to assist at it, the missionary says Mass at about noon, preaches a brief sermon, and has them sing the praises of the Lord. After Mass, when through hearing confessions, he prepares the banns for impending marriages; he baptizes even 12 babies at one time; he blesses the healthy and the sick, the fields and the animals; and lastly, after taking care of the spiritual and temporal needs of the colonists, he goes to dinner.

After dinner he returns to the chapel, teaches catechism to young and adults, recites the Rosary, and again hears confessions should anyone be waiting. At night he goes back to the colonist's house that hosts him, where he has supper, mostly in the presence of a dozen or more people who gather around him to spend an hour chatting about happenings of the old and new world. At the end of these conversations, he recites the Rosary with them, and then retires. But he will be lucky if during the night he will not hear either some baby cry, or dogs barking while charging wild animals in the woods, or the thumping and bighting of certain black beasts kept under the pavement of houses as is much the custom here for an easy gain. When he is finished with the visitation of a chapel, the missionary gathers the necessary provisions for his horse, and after a ride of a few hours, he reaches the next chapel to resume there the same sacred activities.

The chapels of the territory of Bassano are 28, 5 made of bricks, and the rest of wood. These keep the two priests assigned to this mission most of the year away from their residence. However, in spite of this nomadic life their health is satisfactory such as is also the health of the colonists. It surely is a blessing because, should they get sick, deprived as they are of medicines and doctors, there would not remain anything else for them to do but turn their eyes and hearts to God and say: "*Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my body and my spirit.*"

The trails add much to the missionary's hardships: some are hardly traced, others are in bad shape; the long and frequent rides on horseback, the heat, the rains, the distant sick calls, often a whole day from each other. But,

*the God who humbles and raises up,
who causes hunger and brings comfort*

is at his side, watches over and blesses his toil, sustains his strength, and fills him with the most soothing consolations as a pledge of the joys far sweeter and more comforting, he is preparing for him in heaven!"⁹³

⁹³ Sabinus, "La colonia italiana a Nova Bassano", Congregazione dei Missionari di San Carlo per gli italiani emigrati nelle Americhe, (The Italian Colony of Nova Bassano - Congregation of the Missionaries of St. Charles for the Italian Emigrants in the Americas), Anno (Year) II, no. 8 (August 1904), pp. 62-64.

APPENDIX I

BISHOP SCALABRINI'S VISIT TO BRAZIL

FROM HIS LETTERS

AND THE PRESS

(JUNE - DECEMBER 1904)

1. AUTOGRAPH OF PIUS X TO BISHOP SCALABRINI

Rome, June 5, 1904

Pleased with the news you kindly sent me, I will be glad to see you once again on the 14th of this month together with your beloved missionaries, and to bestow on them a blessing that may go along and remain with them in the missions as a pledge of copious fruits and consolations in their apostolic work.

From the Vatican, June 5, 1904

(Signed) Pius PP. X.

2. LETTER OF BISHOP SCALABRINI TO BISHOP BONOMELLI

My Venerable Friend,

The two young priests you sent shall leave with me. I succeeded in having their time spent at the Seminary of Cremona accepted as valid for their year of preparation. It gives evidence of high regard for you and your seminary! Thanks be to God.

The third young man did not show up. From what I hear, I cannot count much on him! ... Indecisive young men never amount to anything.

I shall leave on Monday, the 13th of this month, stay two days in Rome, and sail from Naples on the 17th. Upon arrival in Brazil I will give a retreat to the missionaries and the sisters. I shall visit as many of our missions as possible, and on the feast of the Immaculate Conception, I will also preach the homily in Portuguese! Yes, it's true! This is a language I learned without serious difficulties! Well, we will see how things will turn out!

Should I be privileged to see you before I leave, we will have the opportunity to discuss together the ugly scheme being planned against your institution! If what is being rumored is true, it surely would be a terrible thing. No doubt, I shall speak up loud and strong. Let's hope for the best!

In earnest hurry, but with all my heart

I confirm myself yours truly,

+John Baptist Scalabrini

3. BISHOP SCALABRINI'S JOURNAL OF HIS VOYAGE

On board ship, June 17, 1904

June 17: United in spirit with all my sons who are celebrating his feast in

heaven, I say Mass this morning, at the tomb of Blessed Paul Burali, my glorious predecessor on the chair of Piacenza! I am experiencing feelings of the most vivid and happy confidence! I had the impression hearing his voice say: 'Go forth wherever God is calling you; in the meanwhile, I shall take your place in the care of your flock that once was mine!'

At four in the afternoon I am on board, at five I bid goodbye to my brother Angelo and my secretary urging each other to hide the emotions of our farewell, and parted as men of strength.

I enter my cabin, the best, to take care of my things, and more so, to put order in my thoughts. At six, dinner is served. It's Friday, and most everybody abstains from meat! This is a multi-national community but it shows great respect and courtesy. Staying next to me is a Brazilian colonel, a certain Alberto Gracia, who lights up when I invite him to speak Portuguese. This way I begin to practice my modest linguistic repertoire.

June 18: An extremely warm night has passed! I say Mass and give Communion to several people. I follow my home routine. At ten in the morning, breakfast, and one hour of conversation in Portuguese with Mr. Gracia, who, more so each day, appears to be a man of learning. At five in the afternoon, dinner, etc. As to health, very good: The blessing of our beloved Holy Father, and the memory of that exalted simplicity and sovereign condescension kindly move and sustain me. God keep him for many years to come that he may be given to carry out the "restoration of all things in Christ", a much needed program. Our august Shepherd, Pius X, promised me to send his blessing along every day, and a special remembrance for me at Mass.

Following his example, I bless, in turn, with all my heart, you, Father Francesco, the Seminary, the Chapter, the Pastors, their Assistants, the Religious Communities, all my people!

I have under my eyes the cordial telegrams sent to me by the Rector, Father Cardinali, and by the most able Archpriest of Rivergaro. The latter informs of a triduum to Our Lady of Grace for me in that beloved Shrine of hers! To them and to all who pray for me: 'The Lord reward you and fill you with all graces!' Farewell; let us pray for each other!

June 19 - Sunday: Today I can truly say I began my mission. The ship looks like a monastery! I am moved, and so are also the 500 passengers when I preach the sermon: The gospel lent itself so well to it The Divine Master instructing the crowds from the boat, and I on deck in the middle of the ocean! The words of Jesus, "*Put out into deep water*" (Lk 5, 4) inspire me with noble thoughts! Even without being one, anybody can be an orator! It is a heavenly experience!

At three in the afternoon, catechism to adults and children; we draw the list of those that will make their first Communion and receive Confirmation two weeks from today. Every day both groups shall have religious instruction for a proper preparation; otherwise, who knows when they would have this opportunity! I am doing all this availing myself of the most extensive faculties

granted me by our glorious Holy Father!

All of us are in excellent health, except for Fr. Carlo Pedrazzani, the only one to pay his tribute to the sea! We are crossing the gulf of Lyons, and we have to expect some motion! Trust me. You can see I am writing you in all sincerity. Good-bye! I will be seeing you.

Monday, June 20, aboard ship. The sea continues rough all night, and still rolls on! Many passengers are in some way afflicted by the usual sickness! But, Carlo, the missionaries, and I go free! I say Mass with no particularly strong wave motion, surrounded by a large number of people. At all Masses people receive Holy Communion! All this is beautiful, heavenly! Thanks be to God!

I really do experience the fruits of the blessing of the Holy Father and of the prayers of my beloved faithful of Piacenza and friends, among whom I mention His Eminence Card. Antonio Agliardi, who, while embracing me, said such words as I shall never forget.

We are coasting the Balearic Islands without stopping!

June 21, St. Aloysius: We all say Mass and many people receive Holy Communion. My thoughts go back to my beloved Seminarians, and I strongly feel the sadness of not being among them! I join them in spirit imploring on all and each of them the abundance of heavenly graces!

Instruction continues to be imparted to the girls and their mothers by the Sisters who edify all with their pious and reserved behavior; boys and men are instructed by the missionaries! These young men left their homes in top moral dispositions! May God keep them always such!

Today an annoying ugly fog is all around us. We are about to enter the famed Strait of Gibraltar. The ship slows down almost to a stop and sounds off the alarm to avoid possible and dreadful collisions! We shall see what happens! We are in the hands of God.

Several hours later the fog lifts, but a cold wind is blowing and the sea starts squirming! The coast of Spain stands now clear before our eyes; we sail past the strait, and find ourselves moving on along the coast of mysterious Africa! I keep looking for hours on end, as though with eyes nailed down by a Superior Force, under the spell of a mysterious sadness over those lands once so flourishing. I meditate on the vitality of Catholic life in early centuries Christianity; on the renowned churches of the Provinces of Carthage, Numidia, and Byzacena; on the great men that honored them with the splendor of their apostolic virtues and learning, such as Cyprian, Augustine, Fulgentius, etc.; on their Councils in which as many as 270 bishops took part. I am thinking about what they were, and comparing conditions now! Spontaneous come to my lips the words, "*enlightening to those that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death*" and, moved to tears I say to myself: "Oh! Why don't we priests go to evangelize those people and sow with our blood the fertile seed of Christians?"

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION – VOLUME 3
APPENDIX I**

Our health holds out beautifully. That's enough. Farewell. I embrace and bless you all!

June 22: The wind that began blowing yesterday is growing stronger and colder! I say Mass this morning, but with difficulty, imploring our ten holy martyrs. The ship is tossed about by heavy seas, and almost all passengers are sick! Four of our missionaries are ill, and Carlo is also suffering from the same sickness. By God's help, I am feeling fine. I owe it all to the blessing of the Holy Father and to the prayers of my good people of Piacenza! May the Good Lord exalt our august Pontiff and bestow the abundance of his graces on those who pray for their Bishop far away that never forgets them!

June 23: Like yesterday, today also the cold wind is still blowing, though not as strong! I say Mass in spite of the annoying motion, and give Communion to a number of people! Today, like yesterday, I will have to resign myself to remain in my cabin, except for breakfast and dinner, when I will meet the able Commander Magnano, a true sea-dog from Genoa; the two good doctors, one the ship doctor, and the other the Royal Commissar; and the other occasional friends such as Mr. Gracia, a well-balanced man in mind, heart, and word. My health ever so good! Thanks be to God. Tomorrow we will reach Tenerife where we will stay three or four days! The sick of yesterday are up on their feet today. After Tenerife, so we are told, we will enjoy an ever calm sea! May God grant it so!

Good health and blessings to you, Father Francesco, and to all.

Very Yours,
+ John Baptist, Bishop

June 24: We land at Tenerife at about 4 in the morning. At five I say Mass on deck. We are facing the little city of 20 thousand people on the foothills of the mountains. It is the capital of the Island of Santa Cruz, one of the Canary Islands, 32 miles long and 20 wide. It is a very beautiful volcanic island; its climate is pretty even through the seasons; it produces all kinds of fruits and vegetables that form the main source of its wealth. The famous theologian Melchior Cano was bishop of this group of islands. As to art, none whatsoever! We leave at 2 in the afternoon under clear skies and with a cool wind, but the sea is always rough! I received well wishes of all kinds! Many persons wanted to receive Communion from me! Blessed be God!

June 25: The sea keeps moving! However, I say Mass without much difficulty. The two young missionaries who were sick yesterday are well today and say Mass. I pray, study, and keep well. Carlo thrives in this tranquility and ease! With a holy kiss!

June 26: I say Mass on deck surrounded by all passengers, and give Communion to a good number of them. I observe some moved to tears! With my deep consolation I give the sermon right after Mass! Perhaps they have

never seen a Bishop speak to them at such close range! We continue to teach catechism! A week from today we will celebrate First Communion for about 20 young people, some of them 18 years old. As many will receive the Sacrament of Confirmation! Who knows whether they would otherwise ever have the chance to receive it! Most of them will end up in the seclusion and isolation of Brazil's hinterland! Heaven knows, would they ever be given the opportunity to have a bishop? Health ever good! Farewell! Most affectionate greetings!

June 27: The sea is calm and everyone is well and moving about! The air, which was cool so far, is progressively warming up as we approach the Equator. On deck one feels comfortable, but inside the cabin it is boiling hot. As to myself, all things are going perfect.

With a holy kiss, I send my blessings and greetings to all, with what effusion of heart you can very well figure out for yourselves! Farewell!

June 28: We are close to the Equator, and the heat is building up! The sea is gray and rough, and a good number of passengers are struck down with the usual sickness!

I say Mass, and keep going in tranquility and good health! Today, vigil, we priests, nuns, several good Christians, and the Bishop, have dinner at noon, and fast abstaining from meat, of course! Tomorrow we shall celebrate the feast of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul in the best way possible, and I will give Holy Communion. We all hear confessions!

I embrace and bless you and our dear Father Francesco!

June 29: I say Mass on deck very well and pleasantly prepared for the occasion. Flags representing all nations stand all around us! One is yellow in the place of honor! Could it be the flag of the Church? I love to think so. This fact fills me with joy! The nations are paying homage to Jesus Christ their Lord and Sovereign! Deeply moved, I say Mass, give Holy Communion, and preach the sermon on the solemnity of the day! When I point out that Peter is living in his worthy successor Pius X, who is sending everyday his special blessing on them and me, it gives way to an indescribable scene! As for me in particular, this blessing which I receive daily on my knees in the cabin meditating over the unforgettable words of the Holy Father, is the source of my complete and perfect security! Something I did not experience on my previous voyage!

The heat is extremely annoying, and one perspires by day, and more so by night! It feels like being in an oven! We stand at the so-called equatorial doldrums; this region used to be known once as the stormy sea. This gives you an idea of how things are! But as for myself, perfect health! The day after tomorrow we shall cross over the Equator towards winter and the heat will simmer down! However, whatever God wants.

June 30: Yesterday and today, as well, horrible weather! The doldrums and the unbelievably heavy downpours combine together! Almost all passengers are sick, but I am obstinately holding out! The good Lord, in spite of my failings, has a specially loving care for me! I am here for Him, and for His sake I shall carry out the mission He entrusted to me. If it pleases Him, I shall be back in

the midst of my beloved children by All Saints Day! Farewell! Let us pray that our God and Lord may grant a safe return to seafarers!

July 1: Twelve, noon! We are leaving right at this very hour the region of equatorial storms and doldrums, and welcome a cooler wind which clears the sky and gladdens all of us with a friendly ray of sunshine! The sea, however, grows more gray and rough, and we have to resign ourselves to remain seated in our chairs! As to the rest, all is well.

The wind keeps blowing. I say Mass in the midst of rather strong jolts, but I am assisted as always by two of our missionaries.

At ten in the morning, an unfortunate member of the crew had the sad experience of being hit over the head by an iron container! He was taken to the hospital with his head all broken up! I went to see him; he made his confession as well as he was able since he had difficulty in talking! He stands a good chance for recovery!

At three in the afternoon, a furious fight breaks out between an Italian and some Arabs that casts the whole ship into utter confusion! Some shout, others take to flight, and still others cry! A veritable pandemonium, which by God's help, did not have serious consequences. The two responsible are locked up, and once again there is peace.

July 2: Bad weather! Very rough jolts also during Mass. One missionary holds the chalice steady, another the Missal, and two others the altar! I keep my balance as best I can! It is the feast of the Visitation, so mysteriously related to my patron St. John Baptist, and I decide to say Mass for my beloved "Piacentini" and myself. Though far in body, I ever feel the need to remain united with them in spirit! Hence, the deep emotions stirring up in me whenever I apply the Mass for my beloved people! We are all in good health! Farewell!

July 3: Horrible night! The sea is roaring, the winds double their force; everything is in motion: The great majority of passengers is up! I retire to my cabin at half past nine at night, and, somehow, at about ten I fall asleep. This is indeed the occasion to repeat time and again: "Into your hands, Lord!" From time to time I suddenly wake up, but in spite of it all, I manage to rest until five in the morning.

With great difficulty I say Mass and administer First Holy Communion to about fifteen children and adults. During the sermon I hold on to the altar with one hand, and to the iron railing with the other; this way I can stand quite well.

The wind keeps blowing; many fall sick; only two missionaries are able to say Mass! In spite of these discomforts I persist in being well! You, Fr. Francesco, and all, pray for me to the glorious Saint Antoninus. Farewell!

July 4: Saint Antoninus! What a day! Such as it ought to be, and so it is! How sad not to be with my children! One needs patience! Here I am, far away from my saints, my most beloved saints, for the sake of the Lord! I say Mass with great difficulty, but with much consolation!

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION – VOLUME 3
APPENDIX I**

The weather is still bad, the wind still blows hard, the sea is still gray, gray; it churns angrily, and the poor ship courageously plows through the waves! But there is no danger! We remain seated tossed about as on a swing! Still, by God's help, my health is ever perfect! Greetings and blessings to all!

July 5: Weather conditions have improved, but they are not yet good! Already we are two days in the dead of winter! At 5:30 in the afternoon, it is dark, and when it does, the sun rises at about 7:00 in the morning. With great difficulty I say Mass and administer Confirmation to some twenty young people. Health, very good! Thanks and praises to the Lord.

July 6: Our friend the wind indeed wants to accompany us to Rio, where we are to disembark tomorrow morning at nine! We will enter port in the night! The first part of my program has happily drawn to a close. Let us give thanks together to Our Lord and to the Immaculate Conception both for the good done and for the protection they granted me! Deeply moved, I raise my heart to them expressing my heartfelt thanks and praises to no end! Only reluctantly I quit writing these notes; they were affording me a fleeting illusion of being at Piacenza, in my study, or in the garden, colloquially chatting with you, with Fr. Francesco, sitting on the ground and throwing rocks, just like little children! But everything comes to an end here on earth, even the innocent illusion of being at home while twelve thousand kilometers away from it! I anticipate my return with the most earnest desire! In all things and always, however, God's Will be done! Amen, or "assim seja", as the Brazilians say!

I embrace you with all the affection you well know; my embrace also to Fr. Francesco. My most cordial greetings to Monsignors Vinati, Rossignoli, Dallepiane, Scrivani, Rossi, and to all canons by name. Do not forget my Agareni. To the good pastors Corvi, Busi, and all others, my heartfelt greetings. To the rector of the seminary, professors, and seminarians, blessings and all my best! Greetings to Guerra, Volpelandi, Tedeschi, Marchesi, and all those who will ask for my news!

Remind Msgr. Roncovieri to remember me when he says Mass at the altar of St. Antoninus! I would have more to say, but the wind is growing stronger than I! Therefore, farewell! Sincere greetings.

Let us pray for each other!

All yours in Christ Jesus,
+ John Baptist, Bishop of Piacenza

4. BISHOP SCALABRINI TO CANON CAMILLO MANGOT

June 23, 1904

My most dear Father Camillo,

You can hardly imagine my joy in writing you this letter! The ship is tossed here and there, and the sea churns around her; yet, besides this faulty diary

you will have to edit because jotted down in a hurry without taking time to read it over, I need to add another word to you. I assure you that I am enjoying perfect good health! I eat well and sleep tight! I do not suffer the slightest discomfort! Everyone is showing me the deepest and warmest respect, and days go by very fast, almost without my noticing it! If I were not aware being so far away from you, who, I know to be worrying about my departure, from Father Francesco and from so many dear souls of clergy and laity, I could say in Brazilian: "*Eu sou muito contente que Deus doe-me dias semelhantes a estas!*" You had told as much when you bade me farewell without shedding a tear! The rest is found in the diary!

Greetings to Monsignors Vinati, Rossignoli, Dallepiane, and the whole chapter; to Father Lodovico and all his colleagues; to the Seminary and all its members; and to all my able pastors who should ask for my news!

Tomorrow we shall celebrate on deck my feast day, Saint John the Baptist, and it will be a day of spiritual rejoicing! The wind does not allow me to write what I would like! Learn to discern a volume of good things in each word!

Farewell! I bless you, and Fr. Francesco and all with you! I greet you all with a holy kiss.

From aboard of the "Città di Genova"

June 23, 1904

All yours in Christ Jesus,

+ John Baptist, Bishop

5. BISHOP SCALABRINI TO CANON CAMILLO MANGOT

Rio de Janeiro, July 7, 1904 - 6 PM

Aboard the "Città di Genova"

My Father Camillo,

I went ashore sightseeing the most beautiful city of Rio de Janeiro with its magnificent harbor, unique in the world! Imagine an arm of the sea dotted with small islands and surrounded on three sides by mountains of different heights, all green in the dead of winter, all built with houses and palaces, and you will get a faint idea of the real thing!

The Archbishop of Rio welcomed me with the warmth of an old friend, and was pleased to accompany me back to the ship. He gave me the impression of a man of talent and sound ideas. He is highly esteemed here, and much loved! However, he still misses São Paulo very much where he was the Bishop for many years doing a lot of good.

We had planned to take the train from here to São Paulo but it would have meant an uncomfortable trip of sixteen hours; so, we were advised to continue on to Santos aboard ship, and reach São Paulo in three hours by train from

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION – VOLUME 3
APPENDIX I

there. I accepted the friendly advice, and this is why I am still here. We shall sail from Rio at seven tomorrow morning, reaching Santos at six in the evening. At eleven the following morning, I will board the train arriving at São Paulo by two in the afternoon. I will write to you from there!

Rio's newspapers, the same as anywhere, were informing two days ago that the "Città di Genova" would reach port on the twelfth, and here we are early this morning! This fact shatters everybody's plans. No damage done! What counts is that all of us be happy and in good health, and by God's help, be able to do some good.

I discussed with this Archbishop the need for assistance at the port and for an Italian church in the city! He showed himself very much in favor. I shall write to him from São Paulo, and God willing, we will succeed in accomplishing something. A good beginning is half the work!

Greetings to all! A million things from the heart to Fr. Francesco! Affectionate greetings to Father Faustino with a special urging finish putting the archives in order by the time of my return! All blessings to M. Pinazzi!

Farewell! I embrace all with deepest affection. Pray for me!

All yours,

+ John Baptist, Bishop of Piacenza

6. BISHOP SCALABRINI TO CANON CAMILLO MANGOT

São Paulo, July 11, 1904

My dear Msgr. Camillo, best of all things to you.

You can tell from the two overlapping tableaux where I'm writing you from. I arrived at São Paulo last Saturday, the 9th, at 11:30 in the morning! The music band of our orphans came five miles out to welcome me, and then climbed up into the train that had been freely placed at my disposal in Santos! In attendance at the station, the band of the Salesian school, the Bishop, the Chapter, the parish priests, Salesians, Capuchins, Benedictines, Augustinians, civil authorities, and a great crowd of people; a solemn welcome.

The meeting with the Bishop, a worthy prelate, here only two months, was cordial beyond all expectation! He was all dressed up as though he were to welcome the Pope.

Since the residence of our missionaries is located outside of the city, we got off the train at São Benito where we had dinner, that is, the Bishop, the Consul General, the other authorities, and myself.

At 4:00 in the afternoon, I was brought here by coach, where again I was welcomed with music, songs, fireworks, while walking under lighted green arches. Everything to perfection!

Yesterday, July 10, I went to the city to return the visit of the Bishop. Together

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION – VOLUME 3
APPENDIX I**

we planned many beautiful initiatives on behalf of emigrants. In the city of more than 2 million people, more than half are Italian! The diocese includes the whole state of São Paulo, two and a half the size of Italy, with enough room for 100 million people. This is wonderful country even now in the dead of winter, all green and in bloom; magnificence of trees, and splendor of flowers of all kinds and colors! In one word, one could say that the Garden of Eden was, or could have been here!

Our excellent missionaries enjoy here much esteem and respect from all social classes, from both clergy and laity. The two orphanages are indeed worthy of our admiration. These 200 orphans edify us with their behavior, piety, and good manners! There was a little reception party, yesterday. A twelve year old girl gave a moving report of herself! First, she had witnessed the death of her mother, and later that of her father. With emotion she recalled the tears of those occasions, the misery she, a girl, only nine, had to live in afterwards with her little brother! The spoke of hunger and sad rejection by all until her meeting on the road with Father Marco who took her by the hand and carried the little boy in his arms bringing them to the orphanage; of her gratitude, etc! But, she could not finish! She broke down and had all of us in tears, as well! Already 810 youths went out of these two orphanages, all well trained and ready for good employment. Yesterday, many of them gathered here with a blessing in their heart for this "holy place" as they call it, that saved them from spiritual, religious, and moral ruin! And, indeed, it deserves this title! The missionaries follow the rules of the Mother House, and to my great edification and consolation, everything is found to run well.

Today I was shown the financial report. Nine hundred and eighty thousand liras were spent on the two grandiose orphanages, and there are no debts! It is a miracle of the loving care of God's Providence! Besides all this, they manage to provide for a whole community of three hundred people, missionaries, sisters, teachers of arts and crafts without getting into the red! Isn't this something extraordinary? May the Lord be praised forever!

My health is every splendid; I feel so good here as I never felt in a long time, or, as I have never realized it before, at least! Carlo also is very well, and cannot stop praising whatever he is given to experience in this house of the Lord!

But, I had better get to the greetings, because this long letter has come to an end. Remember me to all, to the chapter, to the professors, especially to Fathers Francesco and Domenico!

Pray, and have others pray that we may return to our own in peace, good health, and joy. Farewell! Let us pray for one another every day.

Carlo sends his cordial greetings to all.

Very yours,

+ John Baptist, Bishop of Piacenza

7. BISHOP SCALABRINI TO CANON CAMILLO MANGOT

July 14, 1904

Dearest Msgr. Camillo,

Two more words to explain in greater detail the news already given you! Here we are in mid-winter, but I do not feel the need or the desire for heating. In the morning before sunrise, and at night after sunset, we enjoy the May temperatures of our countryside; in the day those of our July and August. I experienced this hot sun yesterday while walking up the hill of Vila Prudente where the new orphanage stands. It will be dedicated next month; a real wonder that gives credit to our Congregation.

In another letter of mine I mentioned I was planning very useful programs with this able and pious Bishop. Now here is what we agreed upon:

- a) Start gathering the deaf-mute boys and girls, and give immediate beginning to this work. Upon reading this letter of mine you shall call on Sister Marcellina, the Superior General of the Sisters Apostles of the Sacred Heart, and tell her in my name to have two sisters ready of those trained by Sister Candida, and to send them here, when I will notify her. This institution, totally new in these vast states, is of the greatest importance! It will bring honor on our missionaries, and be a lasting memory of my visit here. Take care of this matter and report right away to the Superior. The Bishop accepted the proposal with genuine enthusiasm immediately grasping its moral value. In hope for some help, I shall speak about it tomorrow with the President of this State. As of now, the program shall have its beginning in the section left free by the girls and sisters who will move to Vila Prudente. The Bishop promised me his moral and financial support as much as he can. Should this work of rehabilitation be the only accomplishment of my visit here, then I would be satisfied with my long journey!
- b) To grant our missionaries the parish of São Bernardo within whose territory our institutions are located. It has forty thousand people, extending almost to São Paulo and to Santos by the sea, a distance of eighty miles. This was a kind thought of the Bishop, with the scope of providing our missionaries, for whom he has great regard and respect, with an annual income of five or six thousand liras to help them in these important institutions. The parish is almost entirely Italian.
- c) To open, as soon as possible, two missions in the hinterland of this State for the assistance of Italians working in the plantations. There are more than two thousands of them, and to this day they are cared for at their greatest sacrifice by our missionaries at the orphanage.

One million and two hundred thousand Italians live in this State and diocese. It is of great importance that we well establish our mission here, because this would properly provide for the largest community in South America. Should there be by chance at the motherhouse some priests, good and ready, they could leave with the sisters.

Tell young Father Morelli that this environment is suited for him! Here he would be perfectly cured of his ailment as also Father Faustino was.

I am always in good health, and from the day of my departure till today I did not suffer any slightest discomfort common and frequent to all.

I live in the midst of honors! These Brazilians are peaceful, kind, grateful, charitable, and support with loving care our institutions!

There are 300 people here to care for, and their charity supports them!

God bless and prosper them!

I was hoping to find here a letter from you! I was glad to be and show myself more solicitous than you or Father Francesco, however!

I embrace you both. Let us pray for one another.

Brazil, São Paulo-Ypiranga
July 14, 1904

All very yours in Christ Jesus,
+ John Baptist, Bishop of Piacenza

8. INTERVIEW GRANTED BY BISHOP SCALABRINI TO THE "FANFULLA" OF SÃO PAULO - JULY 10, 1904

- Well then, Excellency, in addition to Apostolic Delegate you arrive here also on an official mission.
- Please, explain!
- On an official visit from the Italian Government.
- Not at all. Please, deny it absolutely. I have no mission from any government. My mission is essentially a religious one. I come to visit the institutions and the schools of the Congregation of St. Carlo. Our missionaries zealously devote themselves to the moral and religious assistance of emigrants.
- But the newspapers have reported that you had a conference with the Minister Giolitti.
- I had no meeting with Giolitti. In any case, I should have talked, rather, with the Hon. Titoni, or with the Hon. Guido Fusinato, the Undersecretary at the Foreign Ministry, at least, a man of rare qualities, whom I know very well.

But the truth is this: In Rome, neither did I seek out the ministers, nor did they seek me! They are people of talent and discretion, and well they know that I was coming to a friendly country, yet jealous of its own independence. Besides, any political mission would jeopardize my work and arouse suspicions. Should they have suggested it to me, I would have refused.

Besides, I deeply detest politics! I have too many things to be busy about! My diocese, with its 400 parishes takes up all my time, and what is left of it I employ in the direction of the Congregation of St. Carlo. State clearly in your paper that I am not here with any political mission. My program can be summed up in these precise words:

"To do all the good I can without causing trouble for anyone, trying to keep language and traditions alive, in our people, always with due respect for the rights of the nations where our fellow countrymen go to live!" "*O paiz que nos hospeda*" (the country that hosts us) he added with a smile.

- What are your plans?
- As to the carrying out of my program it goes like this: the strengthening of the faith, and the increase of schools.
- Including cooperation with us in the work of the "Dante Alighieri" as second part of your plan?
- No. We open schools directed by our missionaries and sisters totally independent of that national Society. Naturally, both the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the "Dante Alighieri" approve of them, why should it be otherwise, and of the work of the Missionaries of St. Carlo. Some time back, in answer to a complaint of mine, the Foreign Minister said: "But why don't you solicit any help from us for your schools?" We are receiving some help now, with books, especially. I insist very much on instruction. In my long journey through North America I kept repeating these words to our migrant countrymen: "The Italian language, this is the secret for keeping strong and united! English is necessary for the trades and everyday life, but conversing in Italian is one of the main factors for a good moral life in the inner circle of the family! Besides, as long as a person speaks his or her own language he or she will not lose his or her faith!" This much I shall say also on this journey!"

And noticing me smile he added:

- Of course, you journalists are in greater majority 'free thinkers'; yet, a 'free thinker', President Theodore Roosevelt, told me that Italians there, whom he holds in high regard, could exercise much greater influence if they were faithful to their religion!
- Oh, by the way, before your departure you had a meeting with Bishop Bonomelli. Naturally, your discussion was on the migration program.
- Simple! Bonomelli is an old friend of mine, and he came to Piacenza expressly to bid me his farewell.
- And in Rome, did you have an audience with the Holy Father?
- Yes, I had a half-hour audience with the Holy Father! The Pope has a deep pastoral interest in, and concern for, the question of Italian emigration! Actually, it was he who, for several months before my departure, was kindly urging me to do so. In parting we embraced. The Holy Father was moved, and charged me with bringing his blessing to our fellow countrymen

scattered on the other side of the Ocean.

- You say that the Pope takes an interest in the emigration problem! But, what are his ideas on the matter?
- Here they are: All efforts be made to provide religious assistance. With all possible means, besides the good of souls, also the temporal welfare of emigrants be promoted!

At this point, Bishop Scalabrini profusely elaborated on the moral and intellectual qualities of the Pope, to whom a long standing friendship binds him. Then added:

- In his good humor and simplicity he has deep, precise, and modern ideas!

And, my famed interview continued:

- To me, faith must provide the means of unity for Italians in foreign lands. If you only knew of what miracles the propagation of the faith is the source in the midst of our colonies of North America! Larger colonies have built church and school; requests for missionaries pour in every day from many other places, from our women migrants in need to soothe and strengthen their spirit in the turmoil of their work! In New York (and here he spoke with interest about the colony, newspapers, and journalists there) we have founded the Society of St. Raphael for the protection of emigrants at landing ports. Its scope is to direct them on the road of the new life they are about to enter in the new country. Its accomplishments are highly appreciated by Americans! In Boston, St. Louis, etc., our work is progressing well. Here I shall try to carry out many of those ideas that have brought forth so much good in the United States.
- Also a Society of St. Raphael?
- And why not? At Rio I spoke of it to the Archbishop. He is the only person of rank I visited so far. To avoid speculation on the scope of my journey, I deprived myself also of the pleasure of a visit with the Minister of Italy, Prince Cariati. Only a mention of it, but I shall resume the discussion on my return to the Federal Capital.
- Naturally, you will call on the President of the Republic!
- Yes, I will be introduced to him by the Archbishop.
- And, here?
- Before beginning my rounds, I shall pay a visit to the President of the State.
- ... Through the plantations?
- Yes, I shall spend my time with the colonists accompanied by some missionaries!
- Missionaries like yourself....
- Precisely!
- Will you remain long with us?
- This whole month in São Paulo; then following a tour of this state, I shall visit the states of Santa Catarina and Paraná, and return to Rio de Janeiro,

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION – VOLUME 3
APPENDIX I**

from where I will sail for Argentina. By October, I hope to be going back to Italy!

- Has Your Excellency ever devoted himself to problems of emigration?
- Anything that can be perceived as propaganda for promoting and directing emigration towards this or that country has found me disinterested! On this point, I had better call your attention to this fact. There is now in Italy a certain Mr. Amaza Thortal, an agent for a North American emigration agency interested in establishing a number of Italian colonies in Cuba. Mr. Thortal came to me. I pledged myself to send priests and sisters on condition they build churches and schools on healthy locations, but as to propaganda for attracting the families of emigrants to Cuba, I absolutely refused. Furthermore, to the General Emigration Commissioner that asked my opinion on the matter, I recommended great caution. I am convinced that emigration must be left free and directed to those countries that offer assurance of lasting stability, and not a temporary and fleeting future. In this respect, these countries of South America offer greater advantages perhaps than North America, where, if our worker fares well, he could also suffer great loss in case an industrial crisis should shatter both large and small fortunes.
- Do you expert, Bishop, the Commission's prohibition of emigration to Brazil to be lifted?
- I think so! The need for expansion is pressing Italy as an immediate demand. It is necessary we all be deeply involved in the problem! However, while up to now only a few among us were devoting themselves to this serious problem, also personalities of great talent are giving their attention to it, at the present. As to myself and my missionaries, we do not pretend to be profound scholars, or to have all the answers. It is our desire that in all Italians emigrating to foreign lands their religion may not be disjointed from love for their country. It is faith, be it in God or in ourselves, which sustains us in our endeavors! Preserving and speaking a common language is the same as having a community of thoughts and hearts. Faith cannot, nor should it, exclude Italian culture. While preaching the Word of Jesus, Missionaries do not forget their own country; rather, they love to keep its memory and customs alive by speaking and teaching in their own idiom,
"that crowned harmony
which with rising Italy
from Dante's heart did flow!"

9. AN ARTICLE FROM THE DAILY "O ESTADO DE SÃO PAULO"

July 16, 1904

"National Life"

The Mission of Bishop Scalabrini. - The Quirinal allied with the Vatican? - Italian Schools in Brazil, Ridiculous pretenses.

The Bishop of Piacenza, Italy, has arrived here a few days ago. Is he a Bishop just like any other to whom we generally direct the disgruntled to do their complaining? No, this one is quite different! It is known that, besides being a good friend of Pope Pius X and Founder of the Congregation of St. Carlo, he also has an important mission from the Italian government, the same government, which has been excommunicated by one of the successors of St. Peter for entering Rome by force of cannons and bayonets!

For what purpose did this foreign prelate come? To convert the infidels to the faith, as he keeps saying all the time? To collect offerings for pious institutions devoted to the salvation of the heathens? Not at all! These things are old junk, good only for the century of the simple and dedicated Anchietas! (Anchietas, an early Jesuit missionary). Modern missionaries are interested in more practical questions; they concern themselves, with political and commercial problems! They still go to Asia, Africa, and America, but with guns and trade briefcases under their arms dividing zones of influence amongst the colonizing nations at whose service they commit themselves.

However, let us not waste our time in mere conjectures!

Bishop John Baptist Scalabrini himself has kindly stated his intentions in an unusual interview with a reporter of the Italian newspaper of this city, the "Fanfulla". Evidently, he has denied having received any official mission of this kind attributed to him by the reporter while alluding to the meaningful presence of all Italian consular authorities at the reception party in honor of the Church visitor. He did not hide, however, being unofficially charged with increasing the number of Italian schools in Brazil to keep the Italian language and traditions alive in our people - "their people" that is - and in elaborating on his political and religious program he revealed plans of opposition to the language and nationality of his Brazilian fellow believers.

"We open our schools under the direction of our missionaries and sisters, independently of our National Society. Of course, both the Foreign Ministry and the 'Dante Alighieri' view with all favor - why otherwise - the action of the Missionaries of St. Carlo. Furthermore, in answer to a complaint of mine, the Minister of Foreign Affairs said to me some time ago: "But why don't you ask us for some help to your schools?" Now the government provides us with some help, with books, especially."

A little further, the Bishop, for whose ardor in the propagation of the faith the shrewd reporter had a meaningful smile, anxiously volunteered some more supplementary information!

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION – VOLUME 3
APPENDIX I**

We still quote his words in the original language that no one may attribute allusive phrases even in the well-known idiom of Dante to the translators:

- One more question Bishop. Would you tell us a word on the project of Comm. Angelo Scalabrini, your brother?
- What can I say? All newspapers carried reports on it. My brother told me little about it; as to his position in the ministry and to his project, he is very reserved with me, and rightly so.
- We have publicized the 'general outlines' of the project in the "Fanfulla". The ten millions...
- He has secured the ten million liras already by forming a committee of capitalists from Milan and Como. However, the project has been opposed. They labeled it "clerical".

I am in a position to tell you, however, that Prince Odescalchi, who spoke to me about it in Rome, assures him that the project will be accepted in the long run by the General Commission.

- A newspaper went so far as to say that you generously contributed in helping Comm. Angelo towards the organization of the project.
- This is not true! Whatever may be singled out as propaganda for promoting and organizing emigration has always found me disinterested!"

With these words this eminent priest whom the Pope recently considered naming Archbishop of Genoa, admits his ties with the Italian government. The latter helps him, it lends him some support, especially with textbooks, when it does not do so by donating to the institutions of the Congregation of St. Carlo some machinery worth a hundred contos extorted from Brazil through scandalous dealings. Besides, the Bishop has a providential brother who presents projects of colonization, qualified as "clerical" by gossipers, to the Emigration Commission in Rome...

One could not be more explicit in a country hosting him (*no paiz que nos hospeda*) without committing a discourteous offense. Neither could we hope for anything more explicit from one who finds it proper that a brother, not in the faith, but in the blood, be very reserved with him. What is the obvious conclusion we ought to draw from these meaningful disclosures? Though it may appear absurd, we believe it to be this: "At times even the respected cloth of a priest takes a resemblance to the historic and fatal horse of Troy!"

As is rumored, for some time now, it is no news that the Italian government is seeking an agreement with the Holy See to carry out a combined action in Brazil! Already in 1901, a Mr. A. Grandis, a trustworthy Italian, then a correspondent for this newspaper in Rome, had said in one of his reports:

"At the Ministry of Foreign Affairs negotiations were underway for the creation of Italian schools in Jaffa and Jerusalem, and for the teaching of Italian in schools directed by Italian priests in South America.

Minister Prinetti is convinced that the best way to preserve the Italian language in the colonies of South America will be to entrust the teaching of it

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION – VOLUME 3
APPENDIX I

into the hands of the Salesians, whose institutions are scattered all over South America!"

Considering the friendly relations between the Brazilian Republic and the Vatican, all refused to believe the truth of this news. The words of the Bishop of Piacenza, however, are beginning to shake up the spirit of the most incredulous ones who allow themselves some doubt.

Is it actually a question of an alliance between Quirinal and Vatican against the Brazilian nation? This would be one more shocking piece of news in this utilitarian era of ours when heads of state get along urging each other on through their chiefs of staff. The so-called King of Rome shaking hands with the King of United Italy! The House of Savoy in full agreement with the Supreme Pontiff, a prisoner in his own palace! Indeed, as it is possible to come to terms with the gods, so also with governments...

We do not wonder that ministers of King Victor Emmanuel II take advantage of this effective means to protect their natural interests since we neglect ours! What strikes us is that the Papacy should repay us with such ingratitude the innumerable marks of respect we showed him granting him all kinds of privileges, allowing him the widest freedom of action, and above all, welcoming with extraordinary generosity the Religious expelled from France, Portugal, the Philippines, Ecuador, and rejected by Argentina, Uruguay, Bolivia, and Paraguay. On the occasion of the popular revolt in Rio de Janeiro against granting our convents to foreign religious, it was declared that the Church does not make distinctions between nationalities because all faithful are considered equal; that the doctrine of Christ is one and universal; that under the habit of a religious there is only the servant of God, not a subject of any sovereign! Yet, we witness eminent personalities of this Church inciting a Catholic nation against another.

The trumped-up brotherhood of Christians holds good only when it is a question of exploiting the faithful and the monasteries of Brazil! Finally, many priests, with the pretext to serve the spiritual power, are actually at the service of temporal powers! Now then, if such be the case, we must defend our national unity so treacherously attacked! Our Chancellery has the power to negotiate on this point with the Holy See. With a minimum of political acumen it will not be difficult to score success. In case we should not be given consideration we would have to recall our representative at the Vatican, and accept the challenge of a fair, loyal, and open fight; we would not be the losers!

No one ignores that the Italian and German governments run numerous schools in our country with the intent to prevent assimilation of immigrants! After reporting the reopening of fourteen Italian schools in the municipality of Usuranga, and the appointment on the part of the Rome government of Dr. McDonald Caruso as inspector of the subsidized schools opened in the State, the "Correjo do Povo" of Santa Catarina published an article a few days ago upraising the issue in harsh terms:

"Such news lead us to quite sad comments! Now is the case to question

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION – VOLUME 3
APPENDIX I

competent public authorities in government, both in the legislation and in the executive, whether this is Brazil or the black continent.

No one ignores that in all colonial centers of this state, in this capital city itself, there exist schools for the exclusive teaching of Italian and German, in some of them even with prohibition for students to speak Portuguese among themselves."

Condemning the practice of foreign elements as producing "Brazilian enemies of Brazil", such as we are actually witnessing in certain German Brazilians, the writer concludes with this warning:

"It is time we put a stop once and for all to these trends! Let us prevail upon the Governor of this state in seeing to it that, should not there be one already, an adequate law be enacted at the next session of Congress to be applied in the sense we indicated."

Though controlled by special inspectors, schools of this type do not satisfactorily respond to hopes placed in them! Founded by private groups, they suffer from the anarchy one often notices in their midst! Besides this drawback, one discovers a lack of trained teachers and of comfortable buildings. Hence, the preference colonists, especially in São Paulo, show for the national schools that offer better advantages for the students! This is why the Italian government is turning the schools over to the religious. Beyond all doubt, these enjoy greater stability and teaching efficiency! They have numerous personnel, a genuine spirit of dedication, and enjoy financial security through the support of Brazilian Catholics. Besides, their influence extends to all children of Brazil, who will be taught Italian language and attitudes!

The plan is well thought out! The Congregation of St. Carlo and the Salesians have established various institutions in our territory like the "Cristoforo Colombo" orphanage at Ipiranga, subsidized by the Italian government! This way, in the name of religion and charity they will move on us at our own expense without arousing suspicion or opposition!

If we employ the necessary measures against any deceitful attacks on our future and national sovereignty, we shall have nothing to fear from the Italian community that is helping us in our struggle for the greatness of this most rich region of South America! Related to us by race, Italians present hardly any difficulty in assimilating with our nationality that will have only to gain by mixing bloods with them! Attracted by our peaceful and tolerant temperament, Italians willingly let themselves be integrated in our society where they find friends, respect, and wellbeing. They learn with ease our language, get used to the environment that accepts them, obey the laws we enact, and make their own the ideas inspiring us! In a short while they will be fully integrated provided they have good plans in carrying out their colonization and immigration program! Only ten years ago, it was impossible to meet on the streets of this city Italians who were not speaking but their language! Not today! Now one may notice groups speaking Portuguese and employing our popular idiomatic expressions. Spoken by the children especially, the

Portuguese language prevails also within the family circle. The surest key to this easy integration is a progressive and good school system! As long as we will provide to have it, we can well be sure that the integrity of our great country will not suffer loss.

We are perfectly aware of disturbing pretenses here and in Italy. But they do not go beyond the realm of daydreams! Even the people that spread them around are down deep convinced they are wasting their time in just platonic and ridiculous claims!

Italy is militarily unable to dominate us! With its economy in ruins, hindered by socialists, striving to keep pace with militaristic Europe, Italy is quite far from being in a position to depend on its own resources for war games across the Ocean. In fact, its dreadful experience in Abyssinia has proven how costly it would be to attack a nation that as to civilization, intelligence, courage, and military potential is far superior to Menelik's barbarians!

The glorious homeland of Garibaldi must be contented in America with the honorable historic mission of contributing to the formation of the latin nations in their process of development.

At the most, it must content itself with the hope for the strong moral and commercial gains this position is affording it.

This is why we consider useless any measure that, inspired to a narrow-minded and prejudicial nationalism, tends to establish antagonistic distinctions between born and naturalized citizens! We do not find valid, for instance, the reasons of those who want to deny naturalized citizens the right to aspire to the responsibility of President! In fact, either born Brazilians make up the majority, and will carefully, choose candidates of their trust, or they form a minority, improbable to be sure, then brute force and violence will do away with all defenses set on paper.

Let us promote patriotism, never nationalism! The first is love, the latter hatred. The first, productive, creates the Japanese, strong and progressive; the latter, sterile, produces a China, awkward and in decline!

P.P.

Paulo Rangel Pestana

10. AN ARTICLE OF THE DAILY "IL FANFULLA" - JULY 18, 1904

BISHOP SCALABRINI IN BRAZIL

All Things in Order

(With regard to an article)

Our friend and old colleague in journalism, Joseph Santanello, secretary of the "Cristoforo Colombo" Orphanage, sends us the following letter in answer to the

known article of P.P., which has already been the subject of one of our editorials. We make public this letter because, through factual documentation, it cuts short the wild reveries of P.P., which we do not know whether to consider eccentric or insinuating.

"Most Illustrious Director of the 'FANFULLA',

Unheralded by any noisy publicity or by the usual magic expectation of things to come, the visit of Bishop Scalabrini of Piacenza to Brazil has provided the press of all parties the occasion for different interpretations. Should they have been limited to the level of slander or partisan insults, they would not be worth considering! But things seem now to have gone too far! It's regrettable that "O Estado do São Paulo" should be the one to give the bad example, the very same newspaper that had shown in its articles a constant concern for the defense of truth of a moderate style and a well-balanced appreciation of the facts!

On July 16, issue 9358, a certain P.P. whom we have reason to believe a fanatic of doubtful good faith, and even less, of fair judgment, writes a three column article in the "Estado" which can be summed up as follows:

*'The Mission of Bishop Scalabrini,
The Quirinal allied with the Vatican
Italian Schools in Brazil
Ridiculous Schemes!'*

It would be madness as much as are his strange and unreasonable deductions to carefully read the lengthy prose of the writer in order to discredit one by one his words put together with the scope of arriving at the desired conclusions! Instead, we shall limit ourselves to answering the main points with words of truth in the hope there be a stop once and for all to seeing enemies, cannons, ships, and warring armies in anything entering Brazil from overseas, from Italy especially, with the best intentions in the world!

Does he really want to know what the Mission of Bishop Scalabrini is? We will tell you what his mission is, and right away! He comes on his visit here of his own free choice as a special missionary, a title properly his, Founder of the Congregation of St. Carlo. He travels at his own expense, does not solicit donations from anyone, and will visit one by one only the houses founded in the various states of Brazil by his missionaries, appreciated and loved anywhere they exercise their action of mercy.

Obviously, in the course of his visit he will encourage the opening of schools where Italian will be taught. Such action that would be banned by anyone who sees in it a national menace, certainly cannot be viewed as such by one who still feels himself a son of the beautiful peninsula so ill repaid for the good it is doing for others through the work of its emigrants!

The Quirinal allied with the Vatican

Much could be said on this point, but we prefer to dismiss it in a few words, so tall is the story, and so gross the blunder of P.P. I will only say: "Neither I nor you will ever see the day when such peace shall be achieved!"

Such and so many are the blunders, insinuations, historical and logical errors

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION – VOLUME 3
APPENDIX I

of P.P. in describing the alliance of the Quirinal with the Vatican worked out by Bishop Scalabrini that we must assure the Brazilian diplomats accredited to the Holy See that they may well sleep peaceful nights, and pay no attention to the warnings of worried P.P. of the "Estado".

Italian Schools in Brazil

Should we repeat here what has been so well said by the "Fanfulla" on the 17th of his month? P.P. does not seem to realize that citizens of various nationalities residing here have opened their own schools where they are taught the language of their home countries, German, French, Spanish; even Arabs have their public and private schools here, besides colleges and institutions of higher learning! But, P.P. does not have eyes for them! He worries and is troubled at seeing and knowing that in Brazil, Italian schools exist and are opened where (lo! the temerity!) they dare encourage children to learn the idiom of the "bel sì".

What a pity for P.P.! Why did, or does he not poke his head through the doors of one of these dreaded schools? He would realize that these children who are learning the poetry of Dante already know the language of Camoes, and that as to logic they are further ahead than P.P. himself and his fellow Jacobins. Oh! come now, Mr. P.P., let's be fair! Should you wish to deprive also of his language, for fear of subversion, the Italian immigrant who comes here to work hard, suffer, and make a more or less difficult living, be pleased to warn us on time before you ever enact a law forbidding it, that we may keep ourselves at a far range from this appalling calamity!

And what are we to say about the concluding lines of the infamous article of P.P., and exactly about the so-called "ridiculous schemes"?

Who is to be blamed for these "schemes", and who makes them "ridiculous"?

Italians? Certainly not, and much less so the good Bishop of Piacenza and his missionaries! To prove the truth of this statement be it enough to point out that in setting foot at the threshold of the "Cristoforo Colombo" Orphanage of Ipiranga he found himself face to face immediately with 212 orphans of both sexes waiting to welcome him! Well, what was his greatest satisfaction?

Informed that 55 of them were Italian born, 25 Brazilian of Italian parents, and 76 pure Brazilian, with a lesser number of other nationalities, he said: "Well, then, this institution has an international character to it! Very well, in a foreign land things cannot be otherwise."

With this we do not mean to say that Italian is not taught at the orphanage, not at all. Italian is taught on equal terms with Portuguese (...).

G. N. Santanello

11. AN ARTICLE FROM THE PERIODICAL "ESTANDARTE CATOLICO"

São Paulo, July 30, 1904

All those who had the good opportunity to know at close range this Prince of

the Church during the few days of his stay at São Paulo agree having met an apostle whose memory shall indelibly remain in their heart!

This prelate is a true minister of Jesus Christ, grown gray in the service of the Church by his long 28 years as a Bishop. His Episcopate, rich with excellent fruits in many fields of the ministry, can credit flourishing seminaries, numerous and virtuous clergy, a cathedral beautifully restored at the cost of a million liras, parishes all well organized, strong practice of Catholic life by most of the faithful, proven by the fact that during his years in Piacenza only two funerals were celebrated outside the Church. Love for his diocese prevented him from accepting promotions and responsibilities of greater honor, such as the Patriarchate of Venice only recently offered him by Pius X; and this love of his for the mystical bride is reciprocal; indeed, the people of his diocese hold him a saint.

But, Bishop Scalabrini is more than this! He is the apostle to thousands of emigrants who annually leave their beautiful country of Italy in search of better living conditions in distant lands! To protect these unfortunate countrymen of his from spiritual ruin the most zealous Bishop of Piacenza has founded a Congregation of missionaries for the purpose of assisting emigrants in nations where Italian is not spoken: Switzerland, Germany, France, and the Americas! Only God knows the material and spiritual good wrought by these missionaries in the midst of colonists and other Italian emigrants! Only God will know how to reward them and their Founder!

The world never appreciates true values, and the fact that this apostolic prelate has adversaries can be explained only from a supernatural point of view! "All those who wish to live uprightly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution!" - he was saying on a certain occasion a short while ago. These words may indeed be said of him! He sacrifices everything, his comforts, his goods, - he is as poor as a Franciscan, - his very health, to do good to the poor and the unfortunate in and out of his diocese! With all this, there do not lack right here in São Paulo those who accuse him of political aims in his institutions! The Bishop would have come here to pave the way for the conquest of Brazil, United States, Germany, Argentina on the part of Italy!

The writer of these lines is grateful to God for granting him the grace to live a few days with a holy Bishop, a true emulator of the great Carlo Borromeo. While kissing his ring once again we ask for his prayers and blessings!

12. A LETTER OF BISHOP SCALABRINI TO POPE PIUS X

São Paulo (Brazil) July 22, 1904

Most Holy Father, In Your good heart, I beg you, be pleased to forgive me if I dare to address this letter of mine to You making use of this paper, the best I could find in this house of the Congregation of my missionaries which places

before your eyes the institution of great charity they have founded!

Prostrate on my knees before Your August Person, I feel strong in me the need to thank you for the blessing with which you deign to accompany me on my long journey, and whose salutary effects I had occasion to experience.

In my 27 days aboard, by God's Grace, I did not suffer the least discomfort though the sea had not always been in a friendly mood!

I could say Mass every day, we heard confessions, gave Holy Communion, preached, and taught catechism. On landing a certain Brazilian passenger had this to say: "We have spent three weeks in a monastery!"

Here I was warmly welcomed by the Bishop, a man equal to his high responsibility, by the clergy, and by an immense crowd of Italians; something that disturbed, quite a bit, the cosmopolitan socialist party here, so strong and numerous!

After preaching a retreat to our Missionaries and Sisters, I began visiting the Italian communities of the so-called "fazendas" (plantations). My meetings with them cannot be described with words! When they see me coming in from afar they shout their "long live", but, by the time I reach among them, they are all in tears! The most solemn and moving moment, however, comes when I speak of Your Holiness and impart Your apostolic blessing; sweet tears of an intense and lively joy!

Yesterday I visited a colony almost entirely of immigrants from Treviso. What a moving experience to hear them talk about their Holy Father, their spontaneous boasting of having seen you, talked to you, gone to confession to you, when a pastor, a canon, a Vicar, etc. The landlord of this plantation, also present at the reception, was in tears just like the rest, and he told me that this was one of the happiest days of his life!

I shall continue like this here for another week, then I will move on to the states of Espirito Santo, Paraná, Santa Catarina, and Rio Grande do Sul, visiting the missions of our Congregation, and as many communities of our emigrants I can!

I am leaving São Paulo greatly satisfied for successfully planning various initiatives with this able prelate, which will be of much good for the souls of our emigrants here more than in Italy, thirsty for the Word of God and the Sacraments!

There are more than two thousand plantations in this diocese. As true apostles, the Missionaries of St. Carlo tirelessly visit them as often as possible, though not more than once a year, due to their small number of only twelve! I will have to increase it, if only to provide better assistance for these important institutions of charity created by them in the past ten years.

Italian orphans were generally ending up in humiliating conditions. Our first missionaries understood immediately the need for an Italian orphanage, and courageously set down to work, and God came to their aid! Already eight hundred orphans have been here sheltered, trained, and assured a good job. At

present, there are 242 orphans, in two separate institutions conveniently located at the outskirts of the city. They pray, study, and learn a trade, preparing to be good Christians! They live on donations the missionaries collect in their steady apostolic peregrinations! What amazed me most is that they have no debts whatsoever! God sees and provides.

And now, Most Holy Father, I take the liberty to express to you an idea of mine. Would not the Church, that through the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith employ so much money and personnel to spread it amongst the infidels, do something similar to preserve it amongst the emigrants? And I mean emigrants of all Catholic regions and nations; Italians, Polish, Spanish, Portuguese, Canadians, etc. A Congregation especially devoted to this problem, the most urgent in our century, would bring honor to the Apostolic See, help draw nations closer to it as to their tender Mother, and effect much good. In the United States losses to Protestantism are counted in the millions, certainly more numerous than the conversions reported by the missions amongst the infidels in the past three centuries; and in spite of appearances, they still continue! Protestantism is hard at work, as well as here, in perverting souls! A Congregation that keeps in touch with the Bishops of departure and arrival of Catholic emigrants, and in case, also with the government, would study in all its aspects the hard and complex problem of emigration making use for this purpose of modern and old research studies; and on Authority of the Holy Father, it would give directives demanded by circumstances. Such Congregation would be a blessing for the world, alone sufficient to make glorious Your Pontificate!

Forgive my daring, Most Holy Father; it reflects the trust of a devout and grateful son who would be ready to give his life for You and Your cause!

Be pleased to continue your daily blessing on me which I receive with deep emotion on my knees, so that I may accomplish with the divine help the work for which I have come here, and then be back in the midst of my beloved people by All Saints Day!

Most Holy Father, prostrate at your feet, with sentiments of a most vivid, long-standing, and heartfelt veneration, I glory in declaring myself of Your Holiness a most humble, devoted, grateful, and affectionate son,

+ John Baptist, Bishop

**13. A LETTER OF BISHOP SCALABRINI TO CANON CAMILLO MANGOT
AND FATHER FRANCESCO SIDOLI**

Monastery of St. Benedict, São Paulo
July 25, 1904

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION – VOLUME 3
APPENDIX I

I am here a guest of the Benedictines three days for the Feast of St. Gregory the Great, concluded by me with Pontifical vespers, and here I received your most welcome letters of June 30; I read them with deep emotion, and I give you my answer immediately.

I confirm news of my good health, and I am indeed experiencing the daily blessing of our most beloved and venerated Pope Pius X, and of the prayers of my people of Piacenza, whom I love so well, in an indescribable degree, though so far away!

To all I send my thanks and greetings and implore the abundance of heavenly graces on all those who are praying for me.

Today I will give a talk, in Portuguese of course, to these 420 young men trained under the direction of the Benedictines, and another tomorrow at the Salesian school. The harmony existing here amongst all religious is something admirable. Yesterday they were all here at St. Benedict's, European, German Benedictines in perfect accord with Italian religious!

I would be so much in favor of an assignment of Sidoli as coadjutor to Piacenza and as I could not express in words. Both of us could not part with Father Francesco without much sorrow, and I would not have resolved to let him go were it not in view of his greater good! Certainly, should the plan be worked out, it will be all for the better, and Father Francesco will be in a position to render great services to the diocese, me, and my successors.

I must stop at this point because the good Salesians have come to pick me up!

July 26

Their reception could not be more solemn or cordial. I spoke to the young students in Portuguese answering their many addresses in the presence of the State General Director of Schools and of the Senate's Vice-President, amazed and surprised at the ease in which I spoke their language.

We dined all together exchanging the ritual toasts in honor of Brazil and to the welfare of the State of São Paulo, on my part, and of Italy, mine, and to the success of our emigration, on theirs.

All went perfectly: Thanks to God!

In a few minutes I am to leave for other visits, and before nightfall, I shall be at Ipiranga, as I desire it with all my soul!

Farewell Father Camillo; Farewell, Father Francesco.

On August 2, I shall leave for the State of Espirito Santo, and then on to Paraná, Santa Catarina, Rio Grande do Sul, etc., to be in Piacenza by All Saints' Day.

Greetings! Carlo is in perfect health, and says hello. I bless all with a big heart!

São Paulo, July 26, 1904

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION – VOLUME 3
APPENDIX I**

All yours in Christ Jesus,
+ John Baptist, Bishop of Piacenza

P.S. Should you write, please send your letters to São Paulo, Ipiranga. You do not need stamps or to have them registered. My Missionaries will see to it that they are in my hands at the place where I am staying!

14. LETTER OF BISHOP SCALABRINI TO FATHER FRANCESCO SIDOLI

Fazenda de Santa Gertrudes
July 30, 1904

My Most Dear Father Francesco,

As you can see, I am staying here 250 miles north of São Paulo visiting our young Italians in the "fazendas". This one where I am now, is one of the best! The owner, a good Catholic, had a church built in the midst of the colony where they can gather to say their prayers, and receive the Sacraments once every two years when the missionaries come to visit them!

Now that I realize how things are, I have to admit that they are heroic indeed! As of this moment, almost all of them are out preaching, hearing confessions, and they continue so for months on end, going from one plantation to another in the midst of great difficulties! If I had a hundred priests at my disposal, how greatly would the Lord be glorified, how much good could be done for these unfortunate abandoned souls, about one million of them!

I would be very happy to see you as coadjutor to Mons. Piacenza! Write, and expedite things so that they may be settled by the time of my return to Italy. It's true, you are still too young, but this drawback can very well be corrected each passing day!

You know my news already, and there is no need for me to repeat them here. I only tell you that I keep feeling in good health; God watches over me with his loving fatherly care. Oh, the efficacy of prayer! How well do I experience it here in the circumstances I am in.

Greetings to Mons. Rossignoli, all your colleagues by name, above all to Father.... whom God has gifted with a big heart, to the Superiors of the Seminaries and the (Alberoni) College, and all who will ask for my news. With much love and heartfelt friendship I bless them all!

This letter is meant both for you and Father Camillo. I embrace you both together warmly!

I confirm myself
most affectionately yours,

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION – VOLUME 3
APPENDIX I**

+ John Baptist, Bishop of Piacenza

P.S. Carlo is feeling fine, and asks you to convey his news and greetings to his mother! Good-bye! I bless all our household, Andrea, Caterina, etc.

**15. DECREE OF BISHOP SCALABRINI, BISHOP OF PIACENZA
SUPERIOR GENERAL OF THE CONGREGATION OF ST. CHARLES**

August 4, 1904

Being vacant the Office of the Provincial Superior of our missions in Brazil due to the transfer of Father Domenico Vicentini, assigned as Rector of the Mother House of the same Congregation:

1. Desiring, as is our duty, to provide on the matter, after humbly imploring God's help and light from the Holy Spirit, we came to the decision of appointing, as we do in fact, with this present decree, as Superior Provincial of the missions of St. Charles in Brazil

**The Rev. Fr. Faustino Consoni
whom all priests of the Congregation should obey
as their lawful and immediate Superior.**

2. In carrying out his office, the Superior Provincial shall be helped by his Council, a Secretary, and a Provincial Administrator.
The Council shall be called together by the Provincial at least once a month, and whenever he deems it opportune or necessary. At the meeting they shall discuss all moral, religious, and economic matters of the Congregation. Each member shall diligently attend to his duty without either exceeding or falling short of whatever has been decided by the Council itself.
3. The Council is composed of the following:
 - a) Father Francesco Dolci, who shall be the Vice-Superior Provincial, and the Secretary.
 - b) The Superior "pro tempore" of the House of São Paulo.
 - c) Father Marco Simoni, Provincial Bursar.
 - d) Father Peter Dotto
 - e) Father Luigi FranchiThe Council shall be presided over by the Provincial or his delegate. He is allowed to invite the Superiors of missions that should happen to be present.
4. It belongs to the Provincial to supervise the sisters' house, to provide ordinary and extraordinary confessors, annual and monthly retreat masters, to care for the external discipline and to see to it that all things may run in good order and charity.

5. The Provincial shall conduct the visitation of the missions every year; in case he should be detained, he will be allowed to delegate the Vice-Provincial or a missionary he deems best qualified for the important responsibility. He shall contact the Bishops concerning the founding of new missions for the assistance of our fellow countrymen. He shall take diligent care that the rules be observed as well as possible in all houses, and all, also the priests in the mission houses, without exception attend to the sacred duty of the annual and monthly retreat.

We implore with all our heart the Divine Blessing on all.

Given at São Paulo (Brazil) from our House of Ipiranga August 4, 1904.

+ John Baptist Scalabrini, Bishop of Piacenza
Superior General of the Missionaries of St. Charles

16. LETTER OF BISHOP SCALABRINI TO CANON CAMILLO MANGOT

August 5, 1904

My most dear Father Camillo,

Today I have dedicated our institution of Villa Prudente, a magnificent building that will be the orphanage for girls. I have appointed the Superiors of both Missionaries and Sisters, and with this I can say I have carried out my mission here!

On Monday morning at 5:30 I will definitely leave São Paulo for the State of Espirito Santo, etc. My visits there will be shorter, so that my return still holds for All Saints Day. With great desire I anticipate embracing my beloved diocese and you once again!

In case he did not do it yet, tell Mons. Vicar General to send the authentic copy of the statement of our ex-monk to the Holy Father, asking him at the same time, whether we should allow him to say Mass again, not in his pretended oratory, of course, and what canonical penalties to impose on him first! Let the Vicar General go cautiously with that shady character! The Holy Father spoke the greatest disapproval of him to me.

The old procedure still holds; the prescription of the well-known document, which you will have no doubt passed on to Mons. Vinati, must be strictly followed.

You may very well tell the Vicar General that the solemn jubilee celebrations in honor of the Immaculate Conception in December, must be exclusively conducted in the Cathedral. The other churches throughout the city will limit themselves to the octave in preparation for them and more so, since the missions will be held at the Cathedral also.

As I have written, so I tell you again, I am more than happy that our dear and good Father Francesco be appointed coadjutor to Mons. Piacenza. I have immediately written to Father Pietro expressing to him my complete and

unconditional approval for the appointment. I only wish the whole matter be settled by the time of my return.

If you did not mail it as yet, keep the box of medicines there. We shall send it at the first chance. Mr. Becherini has momentarily, I think, given way to a fit of homesickness, unless it be because he got really sick! Should you happen to remember the address of Annovazzi, write to let him know that, by the end of September, I will be in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Anyway, it would be too late, already! The journey is long and letters would not arrive on time.

My health is perfect. So is Carlo's. We certainly need it; there still remains a long way to go!

My cordial greetings to Vinati, Rossignoli, Pinazzi, Mondini, etc., and above all to Father Francesco, whom I like to imagine sitting on the lawn after dinner, and throwing rocks! A warm farewell! Let us pray for each other. Remember me with great affection to all my dear ones!

Good-bye. Carlo sends his greeting to you and Father Francesco, and, once again, to his mother!

All yours in Christ Jesus,
+ John Baptist, Bishop of Piacenza

17. LETTER OF BISHOP SCALABRINI TO CANON CAMILLO MANGOT

Nicteroy, August 9, 1904

Most dear Provost,

With deep regret I left São Paulo yesterday for good. I was so happy there! I am now a guest of this Salesian Institute. These good and zealous religious have welcomed me everywhere with all demonstrations of respect. At stations where they have their schools I have always been greeted by their young students and music bands! So also there is no telling about the place I am a guest of now! Indeed, I am very grateful to their Superior General Don Rua, and truly edified by the zeal and piety of these sons of his! From here, through their grandiose school with its magnificent monument to the Immaculate Conception, they irradiate their benefic influence as far as Rio and beyond! God help them, bless them, and protect them always!

Tomorrow I depart for the State of Espirito Santo. On the 21st, I will be in Paraná, and on the 28th in Urussanga. As I promised you, I shall write to you from any new location! In São Paulo, I concluded the various projects I spoke to you about, in agreement with that able Bishop whom I met yesterday at 5:30 in the morning upon my departure from the station.

These plans concern the parish of São Bernardo, Italian churches in São Paulo, the deaf-mute, our houses in the diocese. May God send us good priests. The

harvest...

God continues to watch over me. My health is excellent, and on my part I contribute to it also by taking all possible care!

I hope the appointment of Father Francesco as coadjutor is being carried out. It is my wish, I repeat, that it be settled before my return to Piacenza. Talk things over with Mons. Vinati; however, not without consulting Father Pietro, first.

I have written to the Holy Father; it was better, perhaps, if I held my peace! I dared too much, perhaps. But all considered, it's better this way!

Many affectionate greetings to Mons. Vinati, to the elected Archpriest of the Cathedral who should seriously attend to the liturgical singing, and to all!

My most cordial blessing on clergy and people. Farewell! Good-bye! I will be seeing you. Pray and have others do so for me.

All yours in Christ Jesus,
+ John Baptist, Bishop of Piacenza

18. LETTER OF BISHOP SCALABRINI TO FATHER FAUSTINO CONSONI

August 10, 1904

Most dear Father Faustino,

I have safely arrived here, received with great joy by these good Salesians who treated me with exquisite kindness! But, I did not quite get over the sadness for having to leave our house of Ipiranga where I happily spent one month surrounded by the reverent affection of all! I always have you and each of the priests on my mind. As good sons with their father, you showed me so much affection. I can hardly resign myself not to have you around! May God always keep you, and bestow on you all his choicest blessings!

I recommend you to preserve the much good there is, and correct with prudent charity the defects of which we spoke, giving way as soon as possible to reforms and new initiatives. The Lord will certainly help you!

When you have the occasion present my deep respects to the worthy Bishop, and give him my renewed thanks for his fraternal kindness accorded me, which I shall never forget! My regards also to the Vicar General, his secretary, the Salesians, the Jesuits, the Capuchins, etc.

My greetings to our missionaries by name. On you and on all of them my special and very cordial blessing! Wholeheartedly I bless the sisters, the teachers, and boys and girls of Vila Prudente, everyone. Farewell!

Tomorrow I shall leave for the state of Espirito Santo. Pray, and have others pray for me.

Yours most affectionately in Christ Jesus,
+ John Baptist, Superior General

19. LETTER OF BISHOP SCALABRINI TO CANON CAMILLO MANGOT

Curitiba,
August 19, 1904

My most dear Provost,

I am writing from the Bishop's house. I arrived here yesterday at 6:30 in the morning. We stand one thousand meters above sea level.

I was given a veritable triumphant welcome. The President of the State of Paraná placed the presidential coach at my disposal. Civil, military, and Church authorities were all there together with the music band to welcome me. I had in mind to proceed on to Santa Felicidade because our emigrants had come to the city (a half hour horse ride away) to take me there in triumph, but I had to yield to the insistence of the authorities, and stay at the Bishop's residence where dinner was served to which they had been invited together with the Italian Consul. Today, I shall return the visit to the President of the State, to the General of the Army, to the Consul, and then off to our colonies.

It took six days, five by sea, from Rio to here! The first day was terrible! All were sick. I had to pay my little tribute to the rage of the waves, also. Carlo thought he would die. Exactly twenty four hours of sufferings. But, with the subsiding motion of the water, all got well, and soon forgot everything!

The rest of the journey was beautiful!

From Paranaguá, the seaport of this state, we reached here by railroad which on places runs along ravines that filled us with fear. But, all in all, it was excellent travelling.

I will stay here eight days at least, and then I shall move on to for Rio Grande do Sul, where a stay of ten days has been scheduled! I will write from there.

Here, winter is gone by now, and spring is around the corner; the trees are in bloom, and it is a marvelous sight! The state of Paraná, about the size of Italy, is a beautiful country.

It could support thirty million people while it does not have actually more than four hundred thousand. It is one of God's reserves! An immense high plateau! These "araucaria" (Brazilian pine tree) forests are a delight, and I often say to Carlo: "Oh! If Don Camillo were here!"

My health is ever perfect; and so is Carlo's! I intend to leave by the beginning of October. If Father Maldotti would speak to the directors of the "Generale"! In any case, within the first half of October I leave!

On October 9 I should preach in Portuguese the homily of the Immaculate Conception at Rio Nicteroy, but I did not tell them for certain! It would be wonderful to conclude my peregrinations with a special tribute to our dear "Madonna", the Immaculate One, and then leave!

Well, I shall see! Not everything that is beautiful is possible to do. But, the

thought of it is appealing to me, and it would be quite an event!

The question of Sidoli's assignment as a coadjutor will be settled, I hope! How happy I would be to see him in a flaming new monsignor garb!

Farewell! Most affectionate greetings to the new Archpriest, to Pinazzi, Vinati, Don Faustino (are the archives all in order?), and all others.

With all my heart I bless the whole diocese! Pray, and have others pray for me!

Very truly yours,

+ John Baptist Bishop of Piacenza

20. LETTER OF BISHOP SCALABRINI TO POPE PIUS X

End of August 1904 (Minute)

Most Holy Father,

May it not be displeasing You in the midst of the sufferings and anxieties of Your Supreme Ministry that one of your sons comes to you from afar to place at your feet his homage and well wishes that God may grant you light and strength equal to the needs of our time! And since Your Holiness honors me with his fatherly benevolence, allow me to express to You something which concerns me.

I am staying here in the State of Paraná. The state President, all civil, military and Church authorities were waiting in a body to welcome me on my arrival at the station. It was quite a comforting consolation after the discomforts of six days at sea, and of a six hour train ride along horrid ravines up here 980 meters above sea level.

I am a guest of my missionaries at Santa Felicidade. This is a model colony, the best organized of all in Brazil. Our missionaries have charge of it from its very beginning and have been directing it since.

It remained Christian, Catholic, fervent! Yesterday I gave Holy Communion to an extraordinary number of people. The parish extends some twenty miles into the hinterland, and these good priests are always on the go not only through these colonies, but through the missions all over the state as well! I have reached P., the last civilized hamlet! Beyond that, it is all forest inhabited by savage Indios!

Cardinal Simeoni often said to me: "When they reach the Indios, the missionaries should think also about doing something for them!" And now here is the opportunity! Even the President of the State spoke to me about it assuring me of his support. For the time being three or four priests would be enough. While taking care primarily of the Italian colonies, they shall find ways and means to contact those savages! God willing and with his help, I would be ready to send the missionaries ready to make the sacrifice; otherwise, let us

give them credit at least for their availability! These savages are the descendants of those converted by the Jesuits in the "reductions"; but then afterwards, abandoned and attacked with fire arms, fled into the forests! In their religious practice they will hold on, so I am told, to some traces of Christianity. Most Holy Father, I ask you for a prayer and a special blessing on this new work of charity.

In spite of the hardships of my long journeys, my health is ever perfect! It is all due to Your Blessing! Only one day did I suffer some discomfort at sea in a raging storm! I said to myself: "Perhaps, the Holy Father did not remember to bless me!"

We begin to experience the warmth of spring with its usual ills, that is smallpox, killing its victims by the hundreds, and here and there a few cases of the plague! I have already visited the infected regions. Now, I shall continue on to Rio Grande do Sul. God willing, I intend to depart by the beginning of October.

Prostrate at your feet, etc.

21. LETTER OF BISHOP SCALABRINI TO CANON CAMILLO MANGOT

Santa Felicidade de Curitiba
August 31, 1904

My dear Don Camillo,

I wrote to you about my arrival at Curitiba, and I do so now that I am to leave. I take the train tomorrow morning at 6:30 for Paranaguá from where I will reach Porto Alegre by sea in five days.

From the Bishop's residence in Curitiba where I spent the night on my arrival, I moved on to Santa Felicidade, a distance of seven kilometers, and took residence with our missionaries in their humble wooden home! I am told that this is Brazil's best colony. A beautiful church, holding several thousand people! Here, sisters, schools, frequent reception of the sacraments and attendance to the Word of God, as in the most flourishing parishes of Italy.

Forty miles around many Italian communities branch out: Agua Verde, Campo Comprido, Timbituva, Caratuba, Ferraria, Rondina, Campinas, Umbará, Santa Maria, Novo Tirolo, etc. I visited them all in the midst of indescribable demonstrations. Each colony has its own church periodically visited by the missionaries. These colonies were founded by our first missionaries Colbacchini, Molinari, Mantese and been enlarged and kept fervent Catholic by their successors! This territory, once a forest and a hiding place for thieves and murderers, is now a garden in all respects! It is a magnificent enterprise, but to keep it going there is an immediate need, now at least, of three or four missionaries! This countryside of Paraná is beautiful, very healthy, balsamic air, one thousand meters above sea level, magnificent vegetation of pines and

araucarias! Even our good Morelli could be very much at home here!

My visit here was blessed by God! If what has been agreed upon with the Vicar General is carried out, then the Glory of God shall be manifested and the good of souls insured! So be it! So be it!

At this height we have experienced the winter a little! From the 19th to the 25th it was in the high twenties, but on the following day the temperature plunged to 8 centigrade; a difference of twenty degrees! I felt it, too, though so lightly! It is 18 now and raining torrentially! On the 28th, I was in Curitiba to preach a sermon to Italians in the city. It was a very moving meeting, which made it hard not to burst into tears! Many were crying, men and women, but I remained strong. Only to God all honor and glory!

I feel very well, and so does Carlo! Farewell! Cordial greetings to Mons. Vinati; to Father Francesco, whose appointment I hope accomplished, so as to see him in flaming red by All Saints Day; to Father Faustino, to whom I much recommend the archives, I would appreciate finding them in order by my return; to the Canons, the beneficiaries, the clergy, Dr. Marchesi, C. Tedeschi, M. Volpe-Landi, Guerra, Calda; to all those who pray for me or ask for my news!

Warm regards! Pray and have others pray for me.

All yours in Christ Jesus, Our Lord,
+ John Baptist, Bishop of Piacenza

22. LETTER OF BISHOP SCALABRINI TO BISHOP DUARTE LEOPOLDO E SILVA OF CURITIBA

Curitiba,
September 2, 1904

Most Rev. Excellency,

Before leaving your episcopal residence, where I spent the first night on my arrival, and the last one of my stay in Curitiba, I deem it my duty to present to you my felicitations for your appointment to this see to which you were most deservingly elevated, and to wish you all success in your lofty episcopal ministry.

I warmly congratulate you also for your most beautiful book "Concordancias dos Santos Evangelhos" which I read with great interest, and I pray that you may contribute other such jewels to church writings!

A Bishop such as Your Excellency who can write: "In Brazil, where workers in the vineyard of the Lord are so few..." (p. 78)"... a true shepherd dies, if necessary, so that his sheep may have life, the life of grace." (p. 192), cannot help but appreciate what I am about to propose to you for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION – VOLUME 3
APPENDIX I

1. I would be willing to have a program of religious instruction started for the Indios of this State, and thus carry out a desire expressed by the Holy See, if Your Excellency would assign Tibagi, long without a resident priest, as the residence of our missionaries! They would serve the parish and the Italian colonies of those remote places, while trying to find ways and means to get in touch with the Indios themselves. Then afterwards priests would be sent as needed.
2. Your Vicar General was talking to me about moving the missionaries of Rondinha to the parish of Campo Largo, because, besides taking care of it they could serve from there also the Italian colonies of that region. Should Your Excellency approve of the project, be pleased to let me know that I may act accordingly.
3. It would be necessary for the missionaries to have from Your Excellency all freedom to visit all Italian colonies, where many are unable to make their Easter Duty, and, all rights respected, to administer the Sacraments, as Bishop Arcoverde, Alvarenza, and, I believe, also their present worthy successor, have done for the "fazendas" of São Paulo.
4. An Italian church in the city would turn highly beneficial, and we would still be on time to save many souls fallen away from God!
5. The Italian colonies of Agua Verde, Santa Maria, Novo Tirolo, Zaccaria, and Moracy, subtracted from the missionaries of St. Charles for lack of personnel, and placed under the care of German and French priests, are fervently asking to be returned to Italian missionaries. It is my opinion that Your Excellency grant their request to avoid displeasing impressions in Rome! I convinced them to be patient with the assurance that Your Excellency would take care of things for the good of their souls! It is all up to You, Bishop!

I am willing to send other missionaries within the current year, placing two at Santa Felicidade, two at Agua Verde, two at Rondinha, and Campo Largo and two at Tibagy. Your Excellency would, thus, give your Episcopate a magnificent beginning, showing that you do not play favorites with anyone, and take care of all, savages not excluded!

Father Marco, or other, shall call on you to know what Your Excellency's intentions are, and then inform me about them that I may send the missionaries as soon as needed!

My venerable Confrere, with feeling of high esteem, I kiss your hands, and with deep veneration, I profess myself of Your Most Reverend Excellency,

Most humble and affectionate servant,
+ John Baptist, Bishop of Piacenza
Sup. Gen. of the Missionaries of St. Charles

23. LETTER OF BISHOP SCALABRINI TO CANON CAMILLO MANGOT

Aboard Ship "Prudence de Moraes"
September 9, 1904

My dear Don Camillo,

Some information on my itinerary! I left Curitiba at 6:30 Saturday morning, the 3rd of this month. I was driven to, and sent off at, the Station by the Vicar General, the Consul, and many priests, etc. I made the descent along those ravines with less anxiety than I had anticipated. The State President had placed his special car at my disposal! At noon I reached the port of Paranaguá, and at 3 in the afternoon, I boarded the steamer "Santos", the most beautiful of the "costeiros" so rightly named because they steam along the coasts of Brazil! The voyage was good enough, except on the 7th, when a storm had us all sick with the usual sickness, including me, though the least of them all. We arrived at the port of Rio Grande do Sul at 7 the evening, and when the steamer docked we were instantly well! However, an unexpected accident happened to us there. The storm had driven such a quantity of sand to that spot that the steamer ran aground, and we remained caught there, waiting for the high tide, till 7 in the evening of the following day, the Nativity of the Blessed Mother. When the tide rolled in at that very hour, in a few minutes we were at Rio Grande, a beautiful little city, which takes its name from the navigable river. Tomorrow morning we will be in Porto Alegre. From there, a one day journey to Encantado, where I will stay ten days. From that remote American corner I will send you my news.

I forgot to tell you that on the 5th I had set foot for a few hours at Florianopolis, capital of the State of Santa Catarina. The clergy, a representative of the government, and a guard of honor, came to take me in on a boat. The President, a worthy man and a fervent Catholic, made a wonderful impression on me. Blessed the nations worthy to have such leaders!

This trip is beautiful. The river is wide, and we can enjoy the sight of the ever green banks. The climate is much like Italy's. It's the beginning of spring, and we experience some cold weather. Buenos Aires is two days away! We have come south quite a bit!

Perfect health! Farewell! Affectionate greetings to Mons. Vinati, Dallepiane, Rossi, Pinazzi, etc. A thousand cordial things to Father Francesco! Let us pray for one another. Farewell! Good-bye! I will be seeing you by All Saints Day.

Very truly yours,
+ John Baptist, Bishop of Piacenza

Porto Alegre,
September 10

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION – VOLUME 3
APPENDIX I**

I re-open this letter to let you know that at 10 this morning, I finally arrived at this city, among the beautiful cities, the fairest of all! On behalf of the Bishop, absent for the triennial Bishops' Conference, I was received with much cordiality by the Vicar General, and by many Catholics. I will stay till Monday. A representation from the government with a band was scheduled to be present at the landing, but the weather was bad! Rain by the buckets that kept everyone at home. From here I shall leave for Encantado at 6 Monday morning. They worried about me here because a real storm had broken out, that uprooted trees, uplifted roofs, etc., and were afraid of a wild tempest in the "Lagoa dos Patos" (the Ducks' Lagoon), not far from the city. Instead, we did not experience any disturbance! The terrible lagoon was like a sheet of glass. The same thing had happened at Paranaguá! Oh! The prayers of our good people of Piacenza and the blessing of the Holy Father!
My blessing and embrace.

All yours in Christ Jesus,
John Baptist, Bishop

24. A LETTER OF BISHOP SCALABRINI TO CANON CAMILLO MANGOT

Encantado,
September 15, 1904

My most dear Don Camillo,

I have written you on my arrival at Porto Alegre on the 10th of this month, and I continue to give you my itinerary with this letter. The 11th marked a grandiose celebration for me. The government sent a music band to the Bishop's house; at dinner the President of the cabinet and the top echelon of clergy and laity were present; there were speeches, warm and cordial toasts! To their great surprise and pleasure I answered in Portuguese. I had spoken also to the seminarians, about forty in all!

On Monday I visited the hospital and several other institutions, and on Tuesday morning at 6, I sailed up the river Taquary arriving at 8 in the evening at Estrella where I lodged at the Pastor's house, a Jesuit. I left on horseback the following morning (Wednesday 14th) arriving here at five in the afternoon, welcomed by this colony in a triumphant, enthusiastic, and moving manner! For several miles I was accompanied perhaps by some three hundred men on horseback! The town, a real beauty, was in an uproar with the gun salutes! Encantado, about three hundred and fifty miles north of Port Alegre, is a beautiful, healthy, and fertile territory! Our missionaries are respected and do a lot of good. But they are few, scattered around a region over 130 square miles in area. I had in mind to visit all the colonies, but this is impossible. Be it enough to tell you that it takes four days on horseback from here to Nova

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION – VOLUME 3
APPENDIX I**

Bassano through roads often impassable! I shall make the sacrifice and remain here where I will receive the missionaries, and be contented with visiting the colonies closer at hand.

In the beginning of October I will go from here to Argentina to embark on my return to Italy, where I hope to be by All Saints! By the time you will receive this letter of mine, I shall be on the high seas. I have decided against returning to Rio for the Homily on the Immaculate Conception! An epidemic of smallpox, with some cases of bubonic plague, is raging there! Prudence suggest one stay away from danger when there is no need to expose oneself to it!

I have always received your letters and newspapers. Here I received the two letters of the 2nd and the 6th of August, forwarded to me from São Paulo.

The project on behalf of the deaf-mute I wrote you about is being organized with the general support of clergy and civil authorities of São Paulo. It will be the noblest memorial of my visit to that State. To God only all honor and glory!

The other plans also are in the process of organization. In one word; I am very happy for having come here!

Farewell! Cordial greetings to Fr. Francesco and to all! Let us pray for one another!

Your most affectionate,
+ John Baptist, Bishop of Piacenza

P.S. In spite of hardships and discomforts of endless journeys, Carlo and I enjoy perfect health! The state of Rio Grande borders with Argentina. It takes four days to reach Argentina from here.

25. LETTER OF BISHOP SCALABRINI TO CANON CAMILLO MANGOT

São Laurenço de Rio Grande do Sul,
September 25, 1904

My most dear Don Camillo,

A letter from each station; well, doesn't this sound prodigious?

On the 22nd, Thursday, I left Encantado arriving here unexpected after a five hour horse ride. Actually, I was expected the day before, but the rain had ruined these miserable roads. Upon seeing me coming, the various communities gave way to fireworks, amazed as they were, and moved, by my courage!

As I wrote you, I had indeed intention to go back to Porto Alegre, and proceed from there to Argentina for my return, but these remote colonies entreated me so much and so persistently that I could not resist! Therefore, I will push

forward to Nova Bassano, 200 miles inland from Encantado.

This mission of São Laurenço, where good Father Pandolfi resides, extends some thirty miles around, with twenty communities of colonists, each having its own chapel, Holy Family, Immaculate Conception, St. Joseph, etc. The last one is a community of people from Cremona. They gave me a humble but very moving welcome!

With filial concern and tears in their eyes, they asked information about their Bishop and pastors, most of whom were unknown to me. Two families of the parish first, whose name I now don't recall, asked me about Don Angelo Martinoli, and upon hearing that he had died, they broke down so profusely in tears as to move everyone, me included. The memory of the just man shall live forever! It is indeed important to restate it! Poor Father Angelo, so good, so zealous, and so tried by suffering.

Monday morning I shall leave for Comde d'Eu, Tuesday for Alfredo Chaves, and Wednesday for Capoeiras, the residence of Father Seganfredo.

Naturally, I administer Confirmation wherever I go. Here I confirmed fifteen hundred people of all ages. The Bishop travels and works, but he has a diocese as large as all of Italy, with no roads, so that it becomes difficult for him to take care of all!

My health is very good, and so is Carlo's! Awareness that God keeps it so that I may do good to souls made me delay my return a few more weeks.

I am sorry I cannot be at home by All Saints Day; one must be patient! It is all for God's sake! If I am lucky enough to find connections from Porto Alegre to Buenos Aires, I will not be able to embark before October 20! In this state also our missionaries are highly respected and work as true apostles! Each mission extends to 20 or 40 communities as large as our mountain parishes, some a six hour horse ride away. They visit one every week, preaching, hearing confessions, baptizing, and teaching catechism. They always return to the central residence on Sunday. It is a debilitating work! As anywhere else, other missionaries are needed here. May the Lord send workers to his vineyard.

You will have to take care of the mission at the Cathedral. But, you did so already in regard to the preachers, I suppose. Consult on the matter also the Chapter, or Mons. Vinati, at least, to whom you shall present my regards.

Has Father Francesco been appointed coadjutor yet? To him, as well as to the Canons, the chancery officials, the pastors, and all who have at heart their Bishop far away, greetings to no end.

I embrace you all! Keep praying and have others pray for me. Farewell and Good-bye!

Yours in Christ Jesus,
+ John Baptist, Bishop of Piacenza

26. LETTER OF BISHOP SCALABRINI TO CANON CAMILLO MANGOT

Conde d'Eu,
Sept. 26, 1904

My beloved Mons. Secretary,

I cannot help writing you a few words from this excellent colony. I left São Laurenço, accompanied by a multitude of men, all on horseback, and arrived here at 12 noon. All along the route there was a steady roaring of guns and fireworks, a ringing of bells at each community, arches and all; a thing beautiful to behold. Two hours before reaching this town I was met by the Mayor (called Superintendent here), and by a group of men on horseback! Here with a sad heart I took my leave from the group that had accompanied me. Then, we had our magnificent entry into town!

The students of the Marist Fathers, the girls of the Sisters of St. Joseph, an immense crowd, the band, the ringing of bells, the roaring of guns and fireworks, made our entry procession so fantastically beautiful as to move everyone deeply. I was led to the parochial church, large, but not beautiful, where I addressed the people and thanked them wholeheartedly! One thing in particular: the picture of our beloved Holy Father Pius X was on display on all arches. This gave me a most vivid satisfaction! Nobody can tell what a special significance those good colonists intended to give this manifestation! People of these colonies love Pius X with an intense and filial love, such as to cause them to shed tears when I speak to them and bless them in his name! The same thing here. The consular agent, a certain Luigi Petrocchi, who resides at Bento Gonçalves, told me that he owes it all to that "Angel", entreating me to convey to Him his homage and the sentiments of his everlasting gratitude, as he does not dare write! Let him know about this. Grateful men are so few!

Tomorrow morning I leave for Alfredo Chaves, and I shall spend the night there at the monastery of the Capuchins from Savoy; good and holy people. Fifty-four kilometers, but I will travel by coach.

At noon on Wednesday I shall be at Capoeiras. I will write you from there.

I do not add anything else because you will receive this scribble together with the letter written from São Laurenço.

I embrace you and Father Francesco. Let us pray for each other!

Yours in Christ Jesus,
+ John Baptist, Bishop

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION – VOLUME 3
APPENDIX I**

27. LETTER OF BISHOP SCALABRINI TO CANON CAMILLO MANGOT

Capoeiras,
Sept. 28, 1904

My dear Don Camillo,

A short note also from here. I left Conde d'Eu on Tuesday morning at 7, arriving at Bento Gonçalves at 10. I was led to the Church in triumph where I preached to the people. Then, I continued on to Alfredo Chaves, 54 kilometers away! I travelled on a primitive carriage with Carlo and Father Marco, and, as I told you already, I spent the night at the Capuchins! I arrived here this morning at 10 in the midst of the usual demonstrations of festive joy! This mission is as large as one of our dioceses with some twenty chapels; it will have a large population in a short while. It has now ten thousand people. Father Seganfredo is in extreme need of an assistant. Imagine, it takes four days on horseback to go from one end to the other of the mission; and oftentimes, when back from one corner he is summoned to another, always more or less distant!

I will stay here until Saturday for Confirmation and the rest, and at noon I shall be on my way to Nova Bassano, only four hours away. I am staying at a new wooden house where living quarters were put up for Carlo and me. They have a beautiful church, almost finished, dedicated to St. John the Baptist! I will solemnly bless it either tomorrow or the day after. It is the work of good Father Seganfredo, who has gained the respect of all by his zeal and piety! Excellent health in spite of the long trip and a pouring rain that kept falling on us all along the journey of 54 kilometers! Today the weather has improved! No need to tell you that besides Father Francesco and you, my most cordial greetings are always meant also for Angelo, Sofia, Camilla, Luisa, Alessandro, Peppino, Pietro, Paolina, Don Attilio, his mother and family.

Farewell! I embrace and bless you. Let us pray, brethren!

All yours,

+ John Baptist, Bishop

28. LETTER OF BISHOP SCALABRINI TO CANON CAMILLO MANGOT

Nova Bassano,
October 2, 1904

My dear Don Camillo,

I left Capoeiras yesterday, arriving here after a four hour horse ride. A delightful journey almost to the end! Beautiful weather, a trail in the midst of

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION – VOLUME 3
APPENDIX I**

virgin forests, a series of triumphal arches, people gathering from the colonies around deeply moved on receiving the blessing; everything was welcoming us. But, half an hour before entering Bassano, a sudden downpour disarrayed the triumphant march, and we reached here all wet and muddy. I did not suffer anything at all! Today at noon the weather is better, and it will remain that way, I believe.

This colony was founded by the late Father Peter Colbacchini who is buried in this church. It is a beautiful gothic building with a nave and two aisles. I will solemnly bless it. This mission too is extremely vast, with thirty communities, each having its own chapel, visited from time to time by the central residence. Some are a whole day ride away. One of them, the colony of St. George, is entirely made up of Father Camillo Chiapperini's parishioners. Please, give him my greetings! These people are faithful to their traditions, and they've built their own church dedicated to their patron saint and a house for the missionary! Father Eugenio was here a few days ago, and reported hearing all their confessions and giving them Holy Communion! About thirty families in all, if not all from St. George, certainly of the surrounding area. Our Italians here remain generally good, and their praises are heard everywhere.

I shall leave Bassano on the 15th of this month, and so I would have by then completed my program. But, as I wrote you, the entreaties of the other colonies were so strong and insistent that I will have to prolong my stay here till the 20th. From this date I will be on my return journey to Porto Alegre, Buenos Aires, Piacenza!

May God keep watching over me. Farewell! Greetings to our Father Francesco, to Vinati, Rossignoli, Rossi, etc.. Let us pray without letup.

Yours in Christ Jesus,
+ John Baptist, Bishop

29. LETTER OF BISHOP SCALABRINI TO CANON CAMILLO MANGOT

Alfredo Chaves,
October 9, 1904

My dear Don Camillo,

I arrived here from Bassano on Wednesday the 5th of this month, triumphantly welcomed by this Italian colony. Four hundred men on horseback came out to meet me some four or five kilometers before entering the town. Civil authorities, the clergy, and the people, in procession, music band, arches in great number, decorations, speeches, etc. They led me to the church where deeply moved, I addressed the people from the altar! In these five days I confirmed five thousand people! Today, at 10 in the morning, solemn High

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION – VOLUME 3
APPENDIX I**

Mass and sermon for the occasion. If emotions and tears of listeners were evidence of eloquence, then I would almost dare say that I am most eloquent! But, how well do I know that they proceed from other sources. The blessing of the Holy Father, Pius X, always brings forth its wonderful fruits!

Tomorrow I will leave for Benito Gonçalves, 42 kilometers away, on a quite primitive coach; but it does not matter! It certainly is better than on horseback. I shall stop an hour at the colony of St. John the Baptist, for the blessing of the cemetery. Poor people, with tears in their eyes they asked me to do so. It is along the way, and it will afford me a little rest. This mission of Alfredo Chaves used to belong to us, but due to the scarce number of Missionaries we gave it up to the Capuchins of Savoy, with whom I spent several happy days.

As to health, I am amazed myself at my feeling so well. It is God who sees and provides! Imagine, Saturday I confirmed 2,153 people without experiencing the slightest discomfort! The Baron, too, feels very well!

As of now, my itinerary has been definitely determined: From Alfredo Chaves to Bento Gonçalves, Conde d'Eu, Caxias, Porto Alegre, Argentina, from where I will sail by the beginning of November.

Farewell! By the time you and Don Cecchino will read this scribble, I shall be on the high seas.

I embrace and bless you all! Greetings by name to the Canons, beneficiaries, pastors, officials of the curia, and all those that have their Bishop at heart.

Farewell! Good-bye!

Yours in Christ Jesus,
+ John Baptist, Bishop of Piacenza

30. LETTER OF BISHOP SCALABRINI TO CANON CAMILLO MANGOT

Bento Gonçalves,
October 12, 1904

My dear Provost,

I realize it was a true inspiration to stay longer and visit the Italian colonies of Rio Grande do Sul! Much good has been accomplished. At Alfredo Chaves I had the consolation to receive from Protestantism into the Church the Busnelli family who had fallen into heresy when still living in the province of Treviso. They were present at my arrival and touched by the grace of God upon hearing my words of greeting, all 14 persons returned to the Church with the exception of the old father who, on the last day, did show great respect toward me. May the grace of God be generous on him!

I arrived here on Monday, the 10th of this month. It is impossible to describe the enthusiasm of this colony. The crowd of men on horseback, the

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION – VOLUME 3
APPENDIX I

decorations, the acclamations, even in Church; a real triumph! And, remember, these communities are infested by Protestantism with its church and by Masonry with its temple. But, as a whole, the people remain Catholic, fervent Catholics in the colonies.

This territory, two hundred kilometers long, and one hundred and fifty wide, includes three valleys formed by the rivers Carrero, Das Antas, Da Prata. Along the Carrero valley are found the missions of Encantado, São Laurenço, Figuera do Mello, Santa Teresa, Monte Bello, Monte Veneto, Nova Bassano, São João Batista do Harval, with more than a hundred chapels scattered throughout the colonial settlements. This valley is in the care of our missionaries.

So also the Prata valley is ours; an immense region that is just now beginning to be populated; about four or five thousand people.

The Das Antas valley with the missions of Conde d'Eu, Bento Goncalves, Alfredo Chaves, Antonio Prado, and Caxias, is the charge of Capuchins and Diocesan clergy.

It's amazing! A territory inhabited until 1876 by Indios is now home to more than one hundred thousand Italians, several thousand Poles, and hardly some Brazilian families, government officials, that had to learn the Italian language, the actual language of this region. If only our government sent some teachers, the interests of our country would be secured in the midst of these colonies.

I have received, and keep receiving requests from numerous colonies for Missionaries of St. Charles! But what can I do? To hold on only to what we already have, no less than half a dozen priests are needed as soon as possible. Consequently, I cannot help them now. But, it gives me great comfort to see and hear how much our missionaries are loved and respected here also. This is, however, a source of sorrow as well, knowing that we do not have enough of them for such serious and urgent needs.

Tomorrow I leave for Conde d'Eu where I will administer Confirmation, and on Sunday I will hold the ordinations for the Capuchins who have a novitiate there.

On the Monday, the 17th, I shall go to Caxias, the last colony; from there to Porto Alegre where I will arrive on the 2nd. I will write from both places. We are practically cut off from the rest of the world here; news reaches us, but with long delay; I do not read any newspaper; I do not hear any news whatsoever; yet, it feels wonderful to work for God and souls! Perhaps, you will receive several letters of mine all at once. They will, however, help in proving my steady good health and God's goodness to me in spite of the unending activities and considerable hardships.

Farewell, Don Camillo! Farewell, Don Francesco! Greetings by name on my behalf to the canons, beneficiaries and all others. Pray for me. I bless you with all my heart and benevolent affection.

Yours in Christ Jesus,
+ John Baptist, Bishop

31. LETTER OF BISHOP SCALABRINI TO FATHER FAUSTINO CONSONI

Caxias do Sul,
October 19, 1904

Dear Father Faustino,

I have already given you an answer in regard to the case of the Canon you wrote about, and nothing is possible without the testimonial letters of the Bishop of São Paulo.

Father Massimo shall remain as Superior of our missions here, so very important! As to the Superior of the orphanage, either continue yourself, or entrust the charge to others, to good Father Luigi, for instance.

As to the Sisters, there is great need of patience, and you have so little of it, it seems to me. We have to guard ourselves from sudden fits of nerves, from offensive words, from correcting in public what has to be spoken in private, etc. Otherwise, without knowing it, you render life miserable for you and others. All respect and love you, but all deplore some traits of your temperament that are a counter witness to your piety and generosity of heart! Meditate on these words before the Blessed Sacrament, and it will do you a lot of good! Upon my return to Piacenza, we will do what we possibly can for the novitiate. Should not the present Superior be fit for the job, she shall be given another assignment.

As to the rest, I have to inform you that these sisters are doing well everywhere. I have eloquent reports on their good spirit from the Bishops, while it would seem otherwise in São Paulo. How is that? Do not interfere with their internal discipline: to you the externals - matters of conscience to the confessors! Then you will enjoy greater peace and be happier. Should there be someone that does not fit in, you could consider sending her in this place. But, we shall treat the matter again in Santos.

The day after tomorrow I shall leave for Porto Alegre, from there to Buenos Aires, with immediate sailing, if possible!

My greetings and blessings to you, Fathers, Sisters, the children of both orphanages. Pray and have others pray for me.

Yours in Christ Jesus,
+ John Baptist, Bishop & Superior General

32. LETTER OF BISHOP SCALABRINI TO CANON CAMILLO MANGOT

Caxias, October 18, 1904

Most dear Don Camillo,

A word also from here, the pearl of Italian colonies. As the story goes, this large colony is called "Campo dos Indios" by the people. The reason is that until 1876 they used to have their most important camp right here where now stands this flourishing colony! This whole region was one big virgin forest, and they had cut down a small section of it to pitch their tents here.

It truly is a marvelous thing, I repeat, that a territory, as I mentioned already, only thirty years ago a forest, should be transformed into a countryside of plantations, with schools, churches, monks, nuns, so as to make one think it had been civilized for a century, at least! One here justly admires Italian ingenuity, which knows how to transform a forest, secure habitat for lions and tigers, into a place of beauty with all kinds of cultures.

I arrived here this morning after a journey of two days. I spent the night at the pastor's house in the parish of Madonna di Caravaggio. He is an excellent priest of the Brignole-Sale Institute of Genoa! I said Mass for the people. Many had waited in the churchyard all night. Due to distances they would not have been able to make it on time for the Mass the following day had they gone back home after my arrival at five in the afternoon. What a faith! What a shame for many of our faithful!

My entry here was spectacular! They wanted to outdo all others, proud to be considered the first and the most advanced of Italian colonies!

Deeply moved I preached a sermon in the large and beautiful church, and I am just now through administering Confirmation to some hundred boys!

I shall continue so tomorrow and the day after. Then, on Friday the 21st, I will leave for Porto Alegre, one whole day on a primitive coach, very primitive indeed, and the following day a ten hour navigation downstream the river Cahy.

My health, by God's help, ever so excellent.

Carlo also feels very well! Have matters been settled with Father Francesco?

I have received your letter dated August 16 on October 16. Two full months!

Farewell! Cordial greetings to Don Cecchino and to all. Pray for me.

Yours in Christ Jesus,

+ John Baptist, Bishop of Piacenza

33. LETTER OF BISHOP SCALABRINI TO CANON CAMILLO MANGOT

Porto Alegre,
Oct. 23, 1904

My dear Provost,

After forty days of unceasing work in the Italian colonies, I arrived here traveling two whole days, one over land, the other, downstream the river Cahy. There waiting for me at the Bishop's residence I found your letters of August 12 and 13, of September 2 and 5, and the newspapers; a letter of Mons. Vinati, one of Father Ludovico, another of the excellent lawyer Calda, and one of our dear Father Francesco. To all my cordial thanks and choicest blessings! At this very moment, on October 23, I receive a letter from Mons. Dallepiane, dated August 22! To him also many happy things! But, I know he is glad already over the six thousand liras!

Before leaving Caxias there were very impressive testimonials. I had to address the people in the public square in answer to their farewell speeches. Gaudy illumination, music, indescribable shouts of joy! I trust I did some good, leaving a salutary impression with them. May the good Lord give abundance of fruits to the seed sown in the midst of unceasing sacrifices!

Tomorrow I shall address the Italians of this city, and then I will leave for Buenos Aires.

From all this you can understand the reasons why I cannot answer to all personally as I would like to. You do my part and offer my apology to all.

Before receiving this letter of mine, a telegram will reach you from Buenos Aires informing you of my departure. As to the rest, let us not fool ourselves. Let us work for God, with God, and in God, and all things will be crowned with success!

My and Carlo's health, by God's help, always good! Farewell! This is perhaps my last letter from here. Good-bye! Regards and my sympathy to Father Francesco. Tomorrow I will offer the Mass for his late aunt. Let us pray.

Yours,

+ John Baptist, Bishop

P.S. I have received the messages of my beloved priests gathered at San Lazzaro and Bedonia for their retreat, and of those assembled at Salsomaggiore for the annual memorial of Cardinal Alberoni.

Deeply grateful I thank them, and I bless them all from the bottom of my heart! It will be opportune to send them sincere thanks for a job well done!

**34. AN ARTICLE FROM "O COSMOPOLITA",
A NEWSPAPER OF CAXIAS DO SUL.
October 24, 1904**

On Tuesday of this week, more than five hundred people on horseback, on coaches, and carriages have gathered to welcome Bishop Scalabrini at the beach facilities of our friend Aristide Germani, a three quarter of an hour ride from the city.

Riding at the head of this procession was Father Carmine Fasulo, followed by Fathers Theodore Anstad, Joshua Bardin, Giulio Scardovelli, Giacomo Brutomesso, Francesco Cappuccino, Giuseppe Zamboni, and by the Camaldolese monks, Fathers Ambrogio, Mauro, and Michele, who preceded the coach that was carrying the illustrious prelate! The rear guard was made up of five elegant coaches carrying young and old ladies, while many women and a long cortege of people rode fiery steeds.

When we arrived at the plateau of Panegaz, from where one can see the hill on which proudly stands the "pearl of the colonies", His Excellency climbed up on the coach of Ugo Ronca, making his entry to this city at 11 in the morning.

On entering Pinheiro Machado Street, the students of the schools of the Sisters, of professors Alice Neves and Ancaroni, saluted the illustrious guest with a shower of rose petals! From here to the church on Dante Square, the streets were richly decorated with arches, branches, and flags! White draperies spread over carpets of different colors were hanging at the windows of buildings along the long route, while members of the "fair sex" saluted waving white handkerchiefs!

When he entered the threshold of the majestic temple, the choir burst out in a melodious hymn. At the conclusion of the ritual demanded by the occasion, Fr. Carmine gave an excellent speech. Following this address, His Excellency climbed the pulpit, and with a robust and vigorous voice he spoke at length expressing his satisfaction in learning that his fellow countrymen had found in these distant lands the two elements necessary in life: bread and freedom!

From the brilliant speech of His Excellency, a distinguished orator, we quote the following:

"While in Asia, Africa, and Europe itself, struggles for achievements and life reach the climax in shedding the blood of brothers; here in America, its vast fields, green woods and forests, its perennial streams of clear water, form a vision of peace, order and progress, the motto of the flag of this Republic by which its subjects live so happily. In whatever I have seen and observed in America, I discern the hand of God assisting the Italian people that was given the honor to supply the discoverer of these regions of the world for the benefit of his fellowman."

In closing His Excellency warmly exhorted his countrymen to love their adopted country, to respect its laws, and to cooperate toward its progress and peace in this life while loving and serving God as good Christians for the happiness of

the life to come!

On Wednesday at five in the afternoon, Father Carmine, the pastor, served a banquet in honor of His Excellency at the rectory. To it were invited civil authorities, Mr. Panegas, and other exponents of the city of Caxias.

At eight in the evening an immense crowd of people, led by a music band, at the light of innumerable fireworks, prompted a noisy demonstration in honor of His Excellency. Professor Ancarani gave the address, and then Bishop Scalabrini took the stand, and once again he had his clear and convincing voice heard in the beautiful language of Dante!

Yesterday morning at six, His Excellency resumed his journey on a coach toward Cai. Bishop Scalabrini stated he was leaving Caxias with the most cherished memories, and that Caxias, already defined "the pearl" was, indeed, no doubt the capital of Italian Colonies!

35. LETTER OF BISHOP SCALABRINI TO FATHER FAUSTINO CONSONI

Porto Alegre,
Oct. 26, 1904

Most dear Father Faustino,

I rejoice at the good news that the Holy Father, Pius X, has deigned to answer your letter immediately with such eloquent proof of his fatherly love. Thanks be to God! I am very happy with the Italian colonies here, and with the work of our missionaries! The Bishop loves and respects them very much. But, they are few. May the Lord send workers into his vineyard.

Father Marco is at Curitiba two weeks already.

You will decide yourself, however, the question of Santa Cruz das Palmeiras, together with your councilors. Certainly, one must decide what on what is possible to do, or whether one feels like accepting the assignment; but a little prudence, daring, and spirit of initiative is good. Our excellent Father Vicentini will help you with his advice, always tranquil and well balanced.

I shall write the Bishop of Pescia whatever you suggest about the person he recommended. He will be happy about it!

The self-styled professor Parmiggiani may very well take advantage of the gullibility of unsuspecting people, but not of my two notes. They do not say a thing, neither is there any need or reason for an apology or explanation to anyone!

How I would like to be there for St. Charles; to see you and everyone again; to pay my respects once more to that new venerable Bishop, to whom you shall present my most cordial homage, when you have the opportunity; to revisit so many good people! It would be a most pleasing experience for me. Still, I am

not in a position to promise you anything.

Tomorrow I will leave for Rio Grande; but when will I be able to set out for Argentina, and to your place and then to Italy from there? All things are still uncertain. But, I will inform you by telegram from Buenos Aires, as I told you already!

Farewell! Regards and blessings to all by name!

Let us pray for one another:

Yours in Christ Jesus,
+ John Baptist, Bishop & Superior General

36. LETTER OF BISHOP SCALABRINI TO FATHER MASSIMO RINALDI

Porto Alegre,
Oct. 27, 1904

My dear Father Massimo,

A thousand thanks for your most cordial letter brought to me by Father Domenico. Though pressed for time because of my departure today at 1 o'clock in the afternoon, still I cannot neglect writing you an affectionate word of farewell, filled with hope for the future to the glory of God and good of souls!

I was very pleased with our missionaries, as is also the Bishop, who is offering us the territory of Esperança and a church in the city. If God will send us good workers, we shall take care of it. In the meantime, he places Monte Bello and Monte Veneto in our hands with permission for Father Eugenio to reside alternately a week at each parish till we will be able to provide for both. I have already come to an understanding with Fr. Antonio on the matter. Send out orders, therefore, in the name of that venerable Bishop, who is granting all faculties needed for this purpose.

Farewell! Remember me at all times to the Lord, especially at Mass. I bless you, and besides you, my blessing goes also to Father Enrico and all others.

I embrace you.

Yours in Christ Jesus,
+ John Baptist, Bishop & Superior General

37. LETTER OF BISHOP SCALABRINI TO CANON CAMILLO MANGOT

Rio Grande, Oct. 29, 1904

My dearest Don Camillo,

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION – VOLUME 3
APPENDIX I**

I left Porto Alegre on the 27th in the morning accompanied with solemnity to the ship, which, in two days, brought me here to Rio Grande, a beautiful city of thirty-five thousand people. Here also I was splendidly welcomed, and taken to the church where I addressed the people in Brazilian since the great majority of the population is native to the place. I shall give a separate sermon to the Italians. So while here these days I administer Confirmation also. I said these days, because I do not know when it will be possible to leave for Buenos Aires. It all depends on arrivals here of ships on their way to that port. I had to wait eight days at Porto Alegre, 300 miles from here; and how long will I have to wait now? It is a great suffering to be on your way back, and find yourself blocked, almost a prisoner, and nobody knows for how long! This delays the day of my arrival in Italy, while I begin to feel a little homesick! Oh, well, one needs to be patient! I have come for the Lord and for His sake one must patiently endure all things.

Mine and Carlo' health is excellent, by God's help, and I do not cease thanking him wholeheartedly for the protection he accords me. Farewell! Most cordial and endless salutations to all, to Father Francesco, Mons. Vinati, Pinazzi, Rossi, Scrivani, Dallepiane, etc. I embrace you all. Pray for me.

Yours,

+ John Baptist, Bishop

38. LETTER OF BISHOP SCALABRINI TO FATHER CARMINE FASULO

Rio Grande,
Oct. 29, 1904

My dear Pastor,

On my arrival here I received your most welcome telegram. My most cordial thanks to no end! Caxias, its worthy pastor, its civil authorities, have crowned with this last one the exquisite courtesies shown me! All this shall form one of the sweetest memories of my long journey.

I shall not cease turning my most ardent entreaties to Heaven that the pearl, the capital of Italian colonies may be a model of activity, unity, peace, and above all, of a deep and sincere attachment to our most holy religion, root and foundation of true greatness.

To you, most worthy Vicar, my most heartfelt thanks, and my wish for all good things from the Lord.

Remember me to the excellent priests I met there, to the superintendent, the trustees, and all, with affection and everlasting gratitude. Let us pray for each other! I embrace you all.

Yours most affectionately in Christ Jesus,

+ John Baptist, Bishop of Piacenza

**39. LETTER OF BISHOP SCALABRINI TO BISHOP C.J. PONCE DE LEÃO
(MINUTE)**

Most Reverend Excellency,

I am waiting here for a ship to take me to Argentina, but before leaving your Diocese I deem it my duty, a duty of my heart rather, to warmly thank you for the kindness and courtesy shown me, and to assure you that my stay with you shall be cherished as one of the sweetest memories of my long and strenuous journey.

May God grant you, Bishop, to see all holy desires of your episcopal ministry come true, and preserve you long years for the good of this diocese, preparing you for a rich crown of glory in Heaven.

My respects with sincere affection and lasting gratitude to your most worthy Vicar General, so highly esteemed for his piety and ardent desire to serve God in the faithful service of his beloved and venerable Bishop.

Be pleased, Bishop, to commend me to the Lord in your fervent prayers, and

**40. AN ARTICLE FROM "EL MENSAJERO" OF BUENOS AIRES
November 18, 1904**

"Bishop Scalabrini and Italian Immigrants"

In the preceding issue we have been able to give only a few words of this distinct prelate, a guest of this capital city only two days and a half. He arrived here from Brazil on Wednesday of the past week, and left on Friday aboard the ship "Sardegna", directed to the See of his Diocese, Piacenza, Italy. Welcomed by the chapter on Saint Martin's day, he said Mass at the Cathedral.

Bishop Scalabrini had this to say to our metropolitan Archbishop Espinosa who was helping with the ablution of his hands: "Does Your Excellency intend by this act of humility to prepare for the Pontifical Mass you are about to celebrate in honor of your patron Saint Martin?"

His Excellency Archbishop Sabatucci, the Apostolic Internuncio, offered a banquet in honor of Bishop Scalabrini with the participation of Archbishop Espinosa, the Auxiliary Bishop Romero, Monsignor Echague, and other eminent ecclesiastics. The music band of the Salesian college of Almagro gladdened the gathering with choice pieces. The young musicians were rewarded afterwards by the Internuncio with a generous distribution of "masitas" (pastry), food much liked by children, especially! The Salesians, who had orders from Turin to accord Bishop Scalabrini the same honors as to their Superior General, could not carry out any part of their program of celebrations due to the brevity of his stay in this city as he intended to spend it with his brother Dr. (Pietro) Scalabrini, the main reason for his visit here. He stopped for a few minutes, however, at the Almagro School, highly praising their school

and workshops.

Then, together with Auxiliary Bishop Romero he took a fast tour of the city by car, and was amazed at the modernity of its buildings; he considered it the most beautiful capital city of South America.

(...) In Brazil, where he remained five months, ever journeying, he confirmed fifty thousand people! On discovering that a community of colonists from his diocese desired to have him visit, he reached them after a ride of long hours on horseback, welcomed with triumphal arches, music, acclamations, and all kinds of honors. Those enthusiastic colonists went to confession and communion upon invitation of their Bishop, who willingly remained in the confessional till three in the morning!

Related to the successes obtained by Bishop Scalabrini in the United States and Brazil, we deem it opportune to report a gentle and beautiful episode as we gathered it from the lips of the Prelate himself when departing on the "Sardegna". Bishop Scalabrini had an audience with His Holiness Pope Pius X who promised him a blessing every day at seven in the morning. At the very hour calculated as responding to that of Rome the Prelate recollected himself in prayer in union of spirit with the prayers of the Holy Father. Regarding his health and plans Bishop Scalabrini was very blessed. Only one day was he affected by a headache, which he attributed to not having received the usual blessing of the Holy Father. In fact, with the trust of his long friendship that binds him to Pius X, he wrote him asking whether he had forgotten to send his blessing on that particular day of discomfort....

41. LETTER OF BISHOP SCALABRINI TO FATHER MARCO SIMONI

Aboard ship "Sardegna"
December 17, 1904

My most dear Father Marco,

Your letter was for me a source of vivid consolation! Our dreams have come true, and you are at Tibagy, as you so much desired! May God be generous to you with his choicest blessings, and make you a generous missionary in spreading the mystery of Faith with a pure heart.

I shall always stand by you in spirit and with my prayers! Write soon and plainly. Do not worry about the form; in case I will do the editing and your news will help the publication of our humble periodical. It shall be its most interesting and edifying section. Your mission, and the institution for the deaf mutes in process of realization, shall form two of the sweetest memories of my journey.

My and Carlo's health is very good! He sends regards. God, in His mercy, has taken a fatherly care of me! Help me to give Him thanks.

Farewell, my good Marco! The field entrusted to you is great and beautiful; take

heart and have faith in the Lord and the Immaculate Conception, His and our Mother! I embrace you and I commend myself to your prayers, and I bless wholeheartedly, and with a benevolent spirit, you, your parishioners, and your dear Indios whom God may soon call to the Faith through your ministry!

Most affectionately yours in Christ Jesus,
+ John Baptist, Bishop of Piacenza & Superior
General

**42. AN ARTICLE FROM "LA LIBERTÀ" OF PIACENZA
December 8, 1904**

FROM ITALY TO BRAZIL AND BACK

(Impressions and anecdotes on Bishop Scalabrini's journey)

Yesterday afternoon, when I entered the waiting room, Carlo Spallazzi was holding an interview.

Comm. Guerra asked whether he had brought along any flower seeds to plant in his garden in competition with his incomparable "cameros". A young man inquired whether he had witnessed any case of yellow fever; another one questioned him about the disastrous hurricane of Buenos Aires! When he noticed me, the newest arrival, he became cautious; from the spots he recognized, or remembered, the leopard!

– I am very sorry, but I cannot introduce you to him. His Excellency is in his room resting.

– Much the better!

He remained with eyes wide open at such docility on the part of a journalist; and so I continued:

– It's better, because I was not really looking for anything else but for a chat with you!

The travelling companion

Carlo Spallazzi is a very intelligent young man, and has travelled with his Master half around the world! In his travels he has acquired exquisite easy manners and "savoir faire". All good reasons why my frontal attack did not affect his composure!

He took a few moments to reflect, then answered:

– Willingly, if I can be of any help! However, if we could only put it off for some time, ... I have a journal of our journey in my trunk, and

I will not be able to take all my things out until tomorrow. As you see, if you could only wait a few more days I could supply you with more accurate information.

Our good Spallazzi has kept a journal like an English tourist, although he hails from Rivergaro: rough shoes but sharp brains! In his eight years at the service of Bishop Scalabrini he has learned how to wear thin shoes, and put his brains to good use. For this reason, the Bishop holds him dear, and Carlo responds in turn serving him with great admiration and concerned care. He is thirty-three years old; an open and friendly face, impeccable demeanor without rigidity, respectful and kindly mannered. He is the butler, the faithful steward of good old times! He is neither a servant nor a waiter; he is something more and better!

The Bishop had him along on his first voyage to North America a few years ago, and took him again on his second crossing of the Ocean as his general secretary and travelling companion. Whom else could I better seek out for questioning to get an impressive idea of Bishop Scalabrini's voyage! Well, then, as he had a few minutes to spare, I did not wish to let the opportunity slip through my fingers!

– Listen, let's forget about the journal! You must remember something! Don't you?

– Oh, well, while waiting for the Bishop's call, I am at your service!

He ushered me into a quiet waiting room, and we sat at a table facing each other. I kept a pocket-size atlas open at the maps of the Americas.

An Incident Aboard

– And, so, they sailed....

On June 17th at Naples, aboard the "Città di Genova". A ship filled with people, loaded with emigrants: six hundred of them. Three hundred Italians and three hundred Turks. They began to scowl at each other immediately.

– Lucky for you there were six missionaries on board.

– Yes, six with the Bishop! But there was not much we could do with those Turks. As we sailed along over the Ocean, every day more and more I felt that something tragic was brewing between Christians and infidels down in third class. It was a wild hatred maturing into some serious clash! And it did flare up one afternoon while all migrants were on deck. An Italian and a Turk got into an argument and quickly turned on each other with knife and dagger. There was a general retreating to the cabins, which were soon filled with people in panic. I was dozing off when I was suddenly awakened! Not knowing what was going on, I went looking for the Bishop! I found him in his room well guarded by a crowd of Italian emigrants ready to defend him from the rebellious Turks.

– And, what happened?

– The sailors rushed over casting whatever they could put their hands on

against the two fighting men! The two wild beasts let go of each other, bloody, but free of serious wounds! Following medical treatment, both were locked up by order of the captain, and only by the Bishop's mediation were they let free later on.

- Did the Bishop suffer any discomfort on his voyage?
- A little! Crossing the Equator we found ourselves in a region of extreme heat and humidity. It was sultry, debilitating heat! The Bishop, however, said Mass on deck every day, and often climbed downstairs amongst the emigrants, giving help to many! In fact, besides the emigrants no other was there aboard the "Città di Genova" but a Brazilian colonel, who became a good friend with the Bishop and a few others!

Arrival at Rio de Janeiro

- We touched shore at Rio de Janeiro, a large and beautiful city, with an immense port! - continued my interviewee.
- But, since we arrived one day earlier than expected, nobody was there to welcome us. The Bishop, however, was warmly received by the Archbishop who placed his small yacht at our disposal to take us back to the ship later, when we were to proceed on to Santos! Here we were welcomed by the Italian Consul, the city's societies, all Italians, with rejoicing! But the Bishop decided to leave immediately for São Paulo, and the English railroad company set up a special train for him.
- Naturally his arrival had been announced in advance.
- The whole countryside was astir! The train was passing under triumphal arches, made of large palms. All stations of call were crowded with cheering Italian peasants. The two music bands of the orphanages founded by the Bishop climbed up onto our train together with many exponents of those communities! I shall never forget our arrival at São Paulo! All authorities of the State, the Bishop, the Consul; all had gathered at the station. Here, too, his stop was short. The Bishop left by coach for Ipiranga where the "Cristoforo Colombo" orphanage is located; along the road other arches, other flowers, all through the immense open plain, almost barren, and so much like the roman countryside!

Touring the "Fazendas"

- But, tell me, is the state of São Paulo all like that?
- No. There are larger extensions planted with coffee trees and corn. These plantations are called "Fazendas". We visited many of them, from community to community, along the comfortable railroad. It took us a month! Most of the farmhands there are Italian, well or badly treated, depending on the Brazilian landowners. Following the visitation of the "fazendas" we returned to Santos to set sail for the South!

- Did you call on many ports?
- At almost all of them down the coast. The Bishop got off the boat to visit the Italian communities, and preach to them. At Paranaguá he spoke also to the Portuguese in their language! But we landed at Paran (sic), from where the Bishop visited the Italian colonies of the states of Paraná and Santa Catarina. The colonists there are mostly Venetian. Their welcome was unforgettable! All through those colonies the high ranking citizens came out to meet him, while State Presidents and Consuls welcomed him in the Capital cities. However, travelling began to be difficult! The Bishop had to take long trips from place to place driven on an open two-wheel primitive cart.

Rio Grande do Sul

- Was this, by chance, the most difficult part of his journey?
- Oh, not yet! The most demanding hardships were awaiting the Bishop in the state of Rio Grande do Sul.

At Santa Catarina we set sail for Porto Alegre. At sea we were caught in the middle of a terrible storm. The Bishop suffered much because of it, and I was between life and death for two days! After being grounded for a day at the entrance to the bay, we at last landed at Porto Alegre. From there we set out on our way to the hinterland through the Italian colonies! A rough countryside, all forest, 150 kilometers wide by 250 long, and no roads. Only thirty years ago Indians were still living there. Only means of transportation is the horse! We were given two horses for the Bishop and me, and two mules for the luggage!

Through forests and mountains

- It must have been quite an experience!
- We stopped at each town. The colonists used to meet us on horseback, with cheers and rejoicing. The Bishop would get off, tarry a few hours, administer confirmation, and then we would continue our journey on our horses. At times, we rode through immense thick virgin forests along trails cut open by the colonists! We had to hold on tight to the saddle not to be thrown off our mount due the uneven conditions of the terrain.
- Were the laps very long?
- Some eight, and others twelve hours. They were terrible hours on hilly ground such as we encountered beyond Decantado (sic), towards Donna Isabella and Contedeo (sic). We carried along just plain food - some bottles of milk, bread, and cheese; that was all our provisions. Then the rains set in and where roads were available (what roads?) the Bishop was driven on certain low and heavy carts covered with a mat and pulled by six mules. The colonists themselves guided this odd caravan. It seemed as though the Bishop's cart, shaking and squeaking, was about to turn over any moment. Water, driven in by the wind, dripped through the mat, and so, in spite of any raincoat we

arrived after long Odyssey always all soaked to the bones! One evening we arrived at a colony almost starved, and there could not be found at the tavern but bread and cheese. There we spent also the night. Oh, how many times the Bishop sat at the tables of rustic kitchens of farmers with no cloth or napkin!

Enthusiasm of the Colonists

- Their welcome, however, was always enthusiastic!
- All the time! And, it comforted the Bishop in his toiling hardships! I remember the celebrations held at Cassia (sic) and Bento Consalvo (sic), two colonial municipalities. The colonists came out to meet us by the hundreds, speaking all dialects of Italy, all on horseback, waving hats and handkerchiefs, cheering! Then, when the Bishop spoke to them in the square, all listened to him with religious respect. They were everywhere, even hanging from roofs and trees like bunches of grapes.
- Did the Bishop suffer much during these weeks? His strong constitution served him admirably! He lost much weight, but suffered only some slight indisposition! And mind you, all this for the span of some two months. The last trip was also quite hard. We made the descent down the river Taquari on a sloop for boatmen; the wind blowing down the river was hissing through a screen wall of branches we had made to protect the Bishop. At last we reached Porto Alegre, from where a coast steamer brought us to Buenos Aires.

Return Trip

- And the way back...!
 - Oh, yes! And providential, for me, at least.... I was exhausted! The Bishop, instead, did not give much evidence of great fatigue! He was honored with great celebrations also in the Argentine capital. Happy and contented he climbed aboard the "Sardegna" on November 11. Blessed this ship that was bringing us toward our home country!
- Was it a rough crossing?
- Not really. Our arrival was delayed by a change of course to avoid a storm, but the sea was generally calm!
- I stood up! We had been talking one hour. The December dusk had caught up with us, darkening the room, and using together on the Atlas the boundaries of America and Europe, of Oceans and Continents in one confusion of lines and shades.
- Distances disappear - I observed.
 - Even the two inches of water marked on the map between the Old and the New World are disappearing, look! They tell me, it's only a little span.... Would you do it again?
- Carlo Spallazzi remained hesitant for a while, then with deliberation said:

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION – VOLUME 3
APPENDIX I**

- Should the Bishop so decide, perhaps.... But, as for myself, never again!
Stl.

43. A TELEGRAM OF POPE PIUS X TO BISHOP SCALABRINI

December 5, 1904
(Autographic Minute)

Bishop Scalabrini Piacenza

The Holy Father, acknowledging one further sign of your devotion, expresses his vivid congratulations for the abundant fruits of your apostolate and for your happy return. He cordially imparts his Apostolic Blessing!

Bressan

44. AUTOGRAPHED LETTER OF POPE PIUS X TO BISHOP SCALABRINI

December 22, 1904

Most Illustrious and Reverend Bishop,

Together with my first affectionate greetings immediately upon your setting foot on the continent, I would have desired to present to you my most vivid congratulations for the great good you did, especially on behalf of our unfortunate Italians, in your journey through Latin America. But, my communication did not come because of my many duties of the past days.

While I thank you with all my heart for the fruitful mission carried out only for the glory of God, I implore on you the most abundant reward from Heaven!

I shall be glad to see you when, without too much inconvenience for yourself, you will be free to come to Rome, that I may treasure your counsel and holy plans for bettering the moral conditions of those twice beloved sons of ours.

I thank you for your Peter's Pence donation while I express in return my wishes for the upcoming Christmas festivities, imploring on you and your diocese the sweetest comforts with the Apostolic Blessing which I bestow from the abundance of my heart!

From the Vatican, December 22, 1904
Pius P.P. X

APPENDIX II

**FOUNDING OF THE MISSIONARY SISTERS
OF ST. CHARLES BORROMEO –
SCALABRINIANS**

1. A COMPLICATED STORY

The Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo (Scalabrinians) was granted a "Decree of Recognition" by the Holy See, issued on May 19, 1934, by Archbishop Benedict Aloisi-Masella, Apostolic Nuncio in Brazil, in his capacity as Apostolic Visitor of the Congregation, and in virtue of the faculties received from the Sacred Consistorial Congregation.¹

We report here the decree we translated from Latin:



Benedict Aloisi-Masella, by the grace of God and of the Apostolic See, Archbishop of Cesarea, Apostolic Nuncio to the Republic of United States of Brazil.

**Decree of Recognition
Of the Religious Congregation
Of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles.**

About forty years ago, at the urging of Fr. Giuseppe Marchetti, a Missionary of St. Charles, the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles was founded by the Most Reverend John Baptist Scalabrini, Bishop of Piacenza.

The Sisters of this Congregation, besides attending to their own sanctification, devote themselves to the Christian and civil education of girls, serve the sick in hospitals, work with all means to preserve and promote the faith and good morals of Italian migrants in Brazil.

They take simple vows, temporary for two years to be renewed four times, at first; then, for five years, and finally perpetual.

By decision of the Bishop Founder himself, the Sisters moved to the Archdiocese of São Paulo, Brazil, in 1895, where they established the General Motherhouse with the consent of the Ordinary. With God's help, little by little they opened new houses, not only in the Archdiocese of São Paulo, but in other dioceses of Brazil as well, devoting themselves either to the care of the sick and old people, or to the education of the young in schools, orphanages, and boarding institutions.

Since the original decree of their founding could not be found, all things thoroughly considered, in virtue of the special faculties given me by the Sacred Consistorial Congregation:

BY THIS DECREE WE HEREBY DECLARE CANONICALLY ERECTED, and as such, we order that it be recognized as the "***Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo***", whose Constitutions were approved by the Holy See in conformity with the new Code of Canon Law for Religious, thus validating where applicable any previous omissions of Canonical erection.

We are confident that, grateful for this new sign of God's favor, the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles will pledge themselves with greater zeal to the practice of

¹ Cfr. Letter Card. R.C. Rossi to B. Aloisi Masella, Rome, January 19, 1934 (Arch. G.S., 103/7).

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION – VOLUME 3
APPENDIX II

all virtues, sincerely seeking only God in their works of charity, totally renouncing the world, and perfectly fulfilling the Will of God to His greater glory and for the salvation of souls.

Given at Rio de Janeiro, on May 19,
Eve of Pentecost in the year of our Lord 1934.

+ Benedict, Archbishop of Cesarea,
Apostolic Nuncio.

Federico Lunardi
Auditor of the Apostolic Nunciature²



The content of this decree already bespeaks the difficulty of determining with absolute certainty the beginning of the Congregation of the Scalabrinian Sisters. Its first thirty years represent an actually complicated and intricate history. Within the limitations consented by this volume, we make public the findings of our research, especially concerning the first ten years connected with the history of the "Cristoforo Colombo" orphanage singled out as the "prominent Institution" of the Congregation by the same decree! Of course, in reference to the time it was issued.

First of all, we point out Bishop Scalabrini's ideas concerning a Congregation of women to assist the Missionaries of St. Charles, and conditions in 1900 when the Founder sent in a "Report on the Work of the Missionaries of St. Charles for Italian Emigrants" to the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith:

"The work of missionaries would remain incomplete, especially in Latin America, without the help of Sisters. I asked several Congregations for help, but I did not succeed in obtaining any.

True, the good Sisters of Codogno offered their services, and I opened the field for them in America where they do much good, but their work does not correspond to the scope of our Congregation. We would need Sisters like those doing pastoral work in France who are willing to live in small communities of four, are satisfied with little, run elementary schools, teach catechism, and when possible, assist the sick with all the care, prudence and experience called for.

No matter how much the Missionaries insisted and urged me to have such sisters I always resisted, as I was strongly reluctant to engage in this new undertaking. But, some years back a combination of many providential circumstances made me understand such to be the Will of God, and now we have the Sisters Apostles of the Sacred Heart, also devoted to the assistance of emigrants, especially in America.

² Decree Aloisi Masella, Rio de Janeiro, May 19, 1934 (Photocopy Arch. G.S., 103/7).

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION – VOLUME 3
APPENDIX II

*In a short while, after a novitiate of two years, twelve of them will leave: six for São Paulo by the middle of this month, the others to Curitiba by the end of September. Others will leave later on, because in a short while we have received more than a hundred requests. This initiative is being undertaken on an experimental base. I hope that God will favor also this enterprise, and in due time we shall send the rules to this Sacred Congregation."*³

Before supplying the documentation, we call attention to the fact that the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles and the Apostles of the Sacred Heart formed for some years only one Congregation called Missionary Sisters of St. Charles, first, and then later, the Missionary Apostles of the Sacred Heart. This is one of the reasons contributing to the difficulty of a clear vision of the development of events in the early years. The most serious difficulties, however, rise from the scarcity of documents, and from the way Bishop Scalabrini himself went about this project. Only with reluctance, did he decide to work in founding a Congregation of women adopting a series of different experiments at different times! The first workable and effective experiment, representing the most genuine root of the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles, dates back to 1895 at the request of Father Giuseppe Marchetti. A second step was taken with a group of novices gathered in Piacenza by Bishop Scalabrini. The third took place in 1899 with a group of Sisters Apostles of the Sacred Heart received by the Bishop of Piacenza to become members of the Congregation of women he intended to found for assisting emigrants. From these three roots has its origin the Congregation of women that justly add the current qualification "Scalabrinians" to their official title!

Bishop Scalabrini tells us that his first attempt was trying to direct to the assistance of emigrants the missionary Sisters of Codogno, the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart founded by Mother Frances Xavier Cabrini.

Though acknowledging the immense good done by the "Mother of Emigrants" and her Sisters in the field of migration, especially in the early years, still one must realize that what Bishop Scalabrini intended and wanted as the specific scope of Cabrini's Congregation, little by little, according to the initial aim of the foundation of Codogno, it adopted an educational and assistential mission, not limited to Italians.

Bishop Scalabrini instead, wished to have Sisters with the same scope as the Missionaries, as he had expressed it to Mother Cabrini herself and her first companions when he gave them the Crucifix on March 19, 1889:

"Priests' work would not be complete without yours, Venerable Sisters. There are activities in which only you can succeed: God has endowed the heart of women with an particular touch by which they can exert a winning influence on minds and spirits. I am confident that you will respond to the grace of God calling you to a mission of religion and civilization in a distant land.

³ Scalabrini, "Relazione dell'Opera dei Missionari di San Carlo per gli Emigrati Italiani" (=Report on the Congregation of the Missionaries of St. Charles for Italian Emigrants), August 10, 1900 (Arch. G.S., 7/5).

I cannot recall without feeling deeply disturbed at heart what I read with tears in my eyes a few days ago in a letter of one of my missionaries: "If only you could witness the moral abjection, the delusions of so many Italian orphan girls, if you only knew their inner sufferings! Oh, Dear Lord, what sad tears you would shed! We beg you, send us some Sisters, send them right away, send us holy Sisters! God will provide."

It was then that the Sacred Heart of Jesus, to whom I have entrusted this problem, inspired me to invite these daughters of His to this mission, and these generous souls responded to the summons willing to sanctify themselves for the salvation of souls."⁴

A second attempt concerns the daughters of St. Ann, founded by the Servant of God Rose Gattorno, from whom he obtained some Sisters for the Italian Hospital "Cristoforo Colombo" founded in New York by Fr. Morelli. A few months later, however, the Foundress called them back because the rule did not allow begging for donations, then the ordinary means of support for institutions of charity.⁵

2. THE INITIATIVE OF FATHER GIUSEPPE MARCHETTI

Father Giuseppe Marchetti's initiative was certainly the most decisive of all the "providential circumstances" mentioned by Bishop Scalabrini in his quoted report of 1900, in which he had pointed out they had occurred "some years before", which, combined with strong pressures from his missionaries, induced him at last to found a Congregation of women.

In order to provide for the needs of the Cristoforo Colombo orphanage just founded in São Paulo, Fr. Marchetti deemed it indispensable to have the cooperation of Sisters especially when the Italian Consul Gerard Pio of Savoy suggested to him the likelihood of assigning Sisters also to the Humberto I Hospital (later renamed Materazzo).

We already know what Father Marchetti wrote in his first letter to the Founder from Brazil:

"Lo and behold! A new nest for my Colombinas (named after the Mother House Cristoforo Colombo of Piacenza). Thanks be to God! I have here several girls ready for the novitiate! As soon as I shall open the orphanage, the stronger ones will serve Jesus suffering. In the same house there will be the Novitiate; many of the orphan girls will become nuns! Jesus will be glorified! We shall open houses in Minas, Rio, Santa Catarina, in the hinterland of Brazil, everywhere!"⁶

Apart from the haste of the very young ardent missionaries, which Bishop Scalabrini certainly could not approve of, in his qualifying the Sisters as "Colombinas", one may already discern that the initial plan, as we shall see, of both Fr. Marchetti

⁴ Scalabrini, "Address to the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart" (= Discorso alle Missionarie del Sacro Cuore), March 19, 1889 (Notes in Arch. G.S., 3018).

⁵ Cfr. Francesconi, "History of the Scalabrinian Congregation", Vol. II (Rome, 1973)

⁶ Marchetti-Scalabrini, São Paulo, January 31, 1895. (Arch. G.S., 396/1).

and Bishop Scalabrini was to consider the future Congregation of women, a branch of the Congregation of men, with the same major superiors and rules. We know, in fact, that the missionaries of St. Charles were popularly known - and were called for long while in Piacenza - as "Colombini", from the name of "Cristoforo Colombo" given to the Mother House. Early on, even the Scalabrinian Congregation itself was often referred to as "Cristoforo Colombo Congregation." Thus did Fr. Marchetti call it, for instance, in his circular letter of March 19, 1895, announcing the opening of the orphanage. In it, he qualifies himself as "An apostolic missionary sent by the "Cristoforo Colombo Congregation." Speaking of the orphan girls, he pointed out:

*"The girls' section shall be entrusted to Sisters and ladies of the same Congregation."*⁷

Obviously, the Congregation of the Missionaries of St. Charles.

On the same occasion he informed Bishop Scalabrini that he already had three young men (one of them the future Father Alfred Buonaiuti), and two girls (who would become Sisters Mary Bassi and Camilla Dal Ri), all destined to become members of the "Cristoforo Colombo Congregation."⁸

Furthermore, as he never considered himself the founder of a new Congregation just because he had started recruiting vocations for the "Cristoforo Colombo Congregation", so also never did he do so concerning the Congregation of women for having personally gathered its first members.

In addition to the two girls just mentioned, he had convinced his sister, Assunta Marchetti, who was already contemplating for some time the religious life, two young women of Compignano (Lucca), of whom he had been the spiritual director, and even his mother, Carolina Marchetti, nee Ghilardi, to devote themselves to the assistance of orphans and sick immigrants.⁹

In order to arrange things with Bishop Scalabrini, and get the four "novices", Father Marchetti sailed for Italy, and on October 23, 1895, left Capezzano (Lucca) for Piacenza. The following day, Bishop Scalabrini received Fr. Marchetti and the four women. We have already read a report of the events of those days written by an eyewitness, Fr. Eugenio Benedetti, pastor of Capezzano.¹⁰ We believe, however, that due importance should also be given to the "*Brevi cenni sulla fondazione e sviluppo della Congregazione delle Suore Missionarie di San Carlo, anteriormente denominate Ancelle degli Orfani e dei Derelitti all'estero*" (= Brief Notes on the Founding and Growth of the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles, formerly known as Servants of Orphans and Derelicts abroad). It was written under dictation, or on authority, at least, of the memoirs of Mother Assunta Marchetti, one of the chief agents in the process of events. It was sent to the Sacred Consistorial

⁷ Marchetti, "Orphelinato de Artes e Officios Christovam Colombo" (=Crafts and Trades at the Orphanage Christopher Columbus), a printed "circular letter, São Paulo, March 10, 1895 (Arch. G.S., 396/1).

⁸ Marchetti-Scalabrini, São Paulo, March 10, 1895 (Arch. G.S., 396/1).

⁹ Marchetti-Scalabrini, São Paulo, April 4, 1895 (Arch. G.S., 396/1).

¹⁰ Benedetti, "La Partenza di Don Marchetti" (The Departure of Father Marchetti), *L'Esare* (Lucca), year IX, no. 249, October 30, 1895, p. 1 (Arch. G.S., 103/2). See above Chapter V.

Congregation in August 1931 to receive of the Pontifical approval of the new rules.

Here is what the report says:

"That small group of fervent religious, which included the mother and an older sister of Fr. Marchetti, left for Piacenza, the seat of the Congregation of the Missionaries of St. Charles, freely choosing to devote themselves to serve the Lord; they were admitted into the presence of His Excellency John Baptist Scalabrini, Bishop of that Diocese and Founder of the Congregation, with the specific scope of placing their vows and aspirations into his hands, as to the founder and protector of their new Congregation, and draw from his wisdom clear teachings for a successful perseverance in their vocation, and for achieving the precise aims intended for the high mission of assisting the derelict and providing a Christian education for poor orphan children.

On our arrival in Piacenza on the evening of that same day, October 23, 1895, they were given shelter at the Convent of the Sisters of St. Ann, who have charge of assisting the deaf-mute sisters of the Perpetual Adoration monastery!

The following day, accompanied by Mons. Domenico Costa, Pastor of St. Antoninus in that city, by Rev. Eugenio Benedetti, Pastor of Capezzano, a small community near Camaiore, and by Father Marchetti himself, founder of the "Cristoforo Colombo" orphanage in São Paulo, Brazil, then back in Italy for the sole scope of organizing the Congregation of the Sisters, whom he would entrust with the direction of the girls' section of the orphanage, they were introduced to the presence of Bishop Scalabrini who, after encouraging them to persevere in their holy and praiseworthy resolution, imparted on them his blessing.

On the 25th of the same month of October, after assisting the Mass celebrated by Bishop Scalabrini in the chapel of his residence, Father Marchetti pronounced his perpetual vows and the sisters temporal vows for six months, each receiving from the holy Prelate the Crucifix that was to accompany them on their long peregrination as a symbol of faith and spirit of sacrifice, deeply present in their hearts!

Father Marchetti was given by Bishop Scalabrini the faculty to accept the renewal of their vows for another six months, and then for a whole year when they would expire. He was also to draft the Constitutions and Rules of the new Congregation after the pattern of the rule of the Order of the Visitation founded by St. Francis de Sales.

Taking leave of Bishop Scalabrini, they reached the port of Genoa, and on the evening of October 25, 1895, they sailed aboard the ship "Fortunata Raggio" of the "La Ligure Brasiliana" company, scheduled to leave for Santos on that date."¹¹

In the "Memoirs on the Founding of the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo" written by Architect Hector Martini on information

¹¹"Brief Notes on the Founding and Development of the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of Saint Charles, formerly known as Servants of Orphans and Derelicts abroad." (Brevi Cenni sulla fondazione e sviluppo della Congregazione delle Suore Missionarie di San Carlo anteriormente denominate Ancelle degli Orfani e dei Derelitti all'Estero). Cardinal Rossi penned August 21, 1931, as the date of the document's arrival at the Vatican. (Arch. G.S., 103/7).

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION – VOLUME 3
APPENDIX II

gathered through direct testimony of some of the early sisters, especially of Sister Carmela Tomedi we read the following:

"Our Venerated Founder told them in his unforgettable fatherly farewell: Go forth with confidence, daughters! Later on I will send other Sisters, and you shall return for a period of intense and solid formation to the religious spirit!"¹²

From an over-all view of the testimony, we cannot say that what took place on October 25, 1895, was a true and proper founding, as rather the beginning of an experiment. Their "profession" was only a private one for the duration of six months. There had not been either a period of postulancy or a canonical novitiate, no religious habit was given them, the Constitutions had not been written as yet, and above all, there was no formal decree of foundation or approbation!

Should those early "Sisters" prove themselves worthy, then they would go back to Italy for their formation, that is for the canonical novitiate. In the meanwhile, Bishop Scalabrini himself would take care to gather and form several other sisters, so to give the first ones the opportunity to get together for the time needed for their religious formation. He thus reserved to himself the right to proceed to a formal founding in the future with the decree of June 10, 1900, as we shall see. Important is also the fact that the rules, should one consider them as such, were written by Bishop Scalabrini himself. Actually, it was more a directory, than of a set of rules. According to the "Brief Notes" quoted above, Bishop Scalabrini had charged Father Marchetti with compiling them after the Rule of the Order of the Visitation. Mother Johanna de Camargo, Superior General 1950-1960, affirmed hearing from Mother Assunta Marchetti that Bishop Scalabrini had given Father Marchetti a handwritten copy of the Rule of the Visitation Sisters, from which the chapters concerning enclosure and cloistered life were left out, charging him with adapting them to the needs of the mission.¹³ Quite likely, because this is what Bishop Scalabrini wrote to Fr. Consoni in 1897:

"As to the Sisters, there was a book of rules approved temporarily. If you do not find them, write immediately. We have wanted to begin with temporary vows; we shall see what God wants!"¹⁴

Still, the most authoritative testimony is what Mother Assunta wrote to Bishop Scalabrini in 1900:

"Their rules were dictated after the pattern of the Rule of St. Francis de Sales, by order and decision of Your Excellency."¹⁵

The most important sections of these rules, whose original copy we have, were written in Fr. Marchetti's own handwriting, and they prove that the Institute for women was considered only a branch of the Congregation of men:

"The Institute is ruled by a Superior, called Mother Superior, who, under

¹² Martini, "Memorie sulla Fondazione della Congregazione delle Suore Missionarie di San Carlo Borromeo-Scalabriniane" (Memoirs on the Founding of the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo - Scalabrinians) (Arch. G.S., 103/8).

¹³ Mother Joanna de Camargo-Paolucci, São Paulo, April 29, 1953 (Arch. G.S., 103/1).

¹⁴ Scalabrini-Consoni, Piacenza, April 12, 1897 (Arch. G.S., 3023/2).

¹⁵ Mother Assunta Marchetti-Scalabrini, São Paulo, December 28, 1900 (Arch. G.S., 103/4).

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION – VOLUME 3 APPENDIX II

obedience of the lawful Superiors, directs the Congregation in the spirit of the Constitutions approved by the Superior General."¹⁶

"As to the administration of temporal goods, the Congregation of the Sisters shall depend in everything and for all things upon the Provincial, who, in line with the program of the orphanages, shall take care of its external and temporal interests so as to leave the sisters free for their spiritual life, so that there may exist a close bond of unity between the houses of Priests and Sisters, and the spirit of the Common Constitutions be more securely preserved."¹⁷

Consequently, the Superior General was the Superior of both Priests and Sisters; even the Constitutions were common to both. So also in this strict sense, we believe, should be understood the formula of the first perpetual vows received by Father Faustino Consoni on October 24, 1897, upon delegation from Bishop Scalabrini. Mother Assunta Marchetti, Sisters Maria Franceschini, Maria Bassi, Angela Larini, Camilla dal Ri used, on that occasion, the following formula:

"I make the perpetual vows of chastity, obedience, and poverty, according to the rules of St. Charles."

That Father Consoni meant the Rules of the Missionaries, is proven not only by the fact that he does not adopt the formula of the "First Rules", "in accordance with the Rules of the Servants of Orphans and Derelicts abroad", never approved as such, but also by the way he expressed himself when marking the event in the "Diary" of the Orphanage:

"I, Father Faustino Consoni, received their vows by delegation from Bishop John Baptist Scalabrini, Superior General and Founder of our Congregation in Piacenza, Italy, with faculty also to admit other novices provided they have the qualities required by our Rules and Constitutions."¹⁸ (18)

Obviously, in Father Faustino's mind, "our Constitutions" could not mean, anything else but the "Constitutions of the Missionary men". It certainly is a strange thing, but we have to keep in mind that it was not a question of a religious Congregation of women in the proper sense, as rather of an institution in the process of formation on the experimentation stage; therefore, the profession of October 24, 1897, must also be regarded as private! In other words, things were still conducted family style, so to speak, for the simple reason that Bishop Scalabrini intended to see first how the experiment would turn out.

Following the death of Father Marchetti on December 14, 1896, Father Natale Pigato, his successor "pro tempore", asked instruction from Piacenza especially because the "Sisters" had not renewed their vows.¹⁹

¹⁶ "Prime Regole" (First Rules) of the "Servants of Orphans and Derelicts abroad, Chapter I. Government of the Institute, p. 45 (Original handwritten manuscript in the Archives of the Scalabrinian Sisters of the Province of São Paulo. Photocopy in the Arch. G.S., 103/9).

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, Ch. III, Administration of Goods, p. 48.

¹⁸ Cfr. "Brief Notes, etc." *cit.*, note 11. The Mother of Father Marchetti did not take part in that profession. She had temporarily retired to Italy for family reasons and by decision of the Bishop of São Paulo and Bishop Scalabrini.

¹⁹ Santanello-Molinari, São Paulo, January 31, 1897 (Arch. G.S., 396/2).

The same problem was brought up by Father Faustino Consoni, when he took charge of the direction of the "Cristoforo Colombo" orphanage on March 5, 1897. Besides, the Bishop of São Paulo himself spoke to him about it right afterwards:

"What struck me most was his remark in regard to the sisters at the orphanage. It went like this: "What are those women doing at the orphanage?" Quite humiliating for me! I answered that I would immediately write to Your Excellency asking you to approve the rules Father Giuseppe had given them after the pattern of those written by St. Francis de Sales for the Nuns of the Visitation; then I would set all things in good order, and he was satisfied (...). Another important matter is that you settle the juridical status of the Sisters by approving their rules, which I would afterwards print by chapters and paragraphs in our printing shop. I ask the faculty to accept the vows of the novices and the renewal of those whose vows expired. Five young ladies from Paran ; three of whom are known to Father Giuseppe Molinari, that is, Giacomina Stoffella, Louise Cappon, and Diomira Tosin, together with Mary Zonato, and a certain Miss Meneguzzo from Santa Felicidade, would be willing to enter the novitiate but what am I to do? (...). What is most necessary now is to admit them soon, because the need is urgent! In fact, I spoke to the Bishop today and he assured me that when you should grant the faculty to admit them and accept their profession, he would delegate either me, or a priest of his trust, in case he were not able to do it himself!

So write to me, Your Excellency, and I will report everything to the Bishop. I also found the enclosed note of the late Father Marchetti's mother. The Bishop wishes to know the title the Sisters are to be known by, and whether the following would be satisfactory.

I would wish, though, that your name be included in it. Something like this: "... for Italian orphans and derelicts abroad, founded by His Excellency J.B. Scalabrini, Bishop of Piacenza."²⁰

As reported, Bishop Scalabrini responded very briefly that there was a rule approved on trial, and young ladies could be admitted for the time being!²¹ By this answer he gave them to understand it was not the time yet to go ahead with a formal and final founding.

3. THE GROUP OF PIACENZA AND THE SISTER APOSTLES OF THE SACRED HEART

As he had promised, Bishop Scalabrini himself began to accept several young women at Piacenza, with the help of Father Giuseppe Molinari:

"And, indeed, while the first sisters who had left were eagerly devoting themselves to their work at the orphanage in S o Paulo, Bishop J. B. Scalabrini opened a novitiate at Piacenza in a building located at Via Nicoli, no. 45, across the street from the Cristoforo Colombo Institute, admitting to it

²⁰ Consoni-Scalabrini, S o Paulo, March 9, 1897 (Arch. G.S., 396/3).

²¹ Scalabrini-Consoni, Piacenza, April 12, 1897 (Arch. G.S., 3023/2).

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION – VOLUME 3
APPENDIX II

six other girls who made their regular novitiate. They were Sisters Candida Miriaca, Edwige, Agnese Rizzieri, Carolina, Carmela Tomedi, and Antonietta Fontana.

They testified to us that, following a postulancy of six months from June to December, they were admitted to the investiture by the Founder himself, Bishop J.B. Scalabrini, in the church of St. Charles in the presence of several priests and clerics of the Cristoforo Colombo Institute. In 1899 they made their year of novitiate. In agreement with Mother Carmela they confirmed:

"Before our investiture, Bishop Scalabrini had already given us the Holy Rule written in his own hand. As our Spiritual Director and Confessor, he appointed the Rev. Father Carlo Molinari, Provost of Saint Euphemia, who used to come in twice a week to give us religious instruction, explain the holy vows and rule, and hear our confession. During the year of our novitiate our Founder also used to visit us frequently to instruct us, and give us his exhortations, counsels, admonitions, etc., encouraging us to embrace with generosity the life as missionary sisters of St. Charles."

And then they so continued:

"We still see him enter the novitiate house kindly repeating: "Behold here the six Colombinas. Take care that you become good missionaries!" We remember with how much respect we used to take care of his clothing; what a contest amongst ourselves in carrying out a task so dear to us. At the close of the novitiate, he preached our retreat, thoroughly instructing us on many things, especially on the holy vows and the mission we were about to embrace. He encouraged and comforted us inviting us to trust in God and in the protection of Mary Immaculate!

He also gave us the canonical examination, and, on June 12, 1900, Feast of the Sacred Heart, he admitted us to simple and perpetual vows. He had us pronounce the formula before the Sacred Host, which he afterwards administered us in Holy Communion. This rite and the Holy Retreat took place at the Chapel of St. Francis in Castelnuovo Fogliani."²²

This is the second group, the second root we were speaking about in the beginning. Its history, however, is closely interwoven with the vicissitudes of the third group, with whom they made their first public profession of the vows in accord with all the canonical requirements on June 10, 1900 (this seems to us the exact date, not June 12) at Castelnuovo Fogliani, Piacenza.

The third group was formed of several sisters of the Congregation of the Sister Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus founded at Viareggio in 1894 by Mother Clelia Merloni, but still lacking a diocesan approval. By the end of 1898, either by incompetence or by dishonesty of the administrator, they were destined to fail. To provide in some way for their own support, they had to sell several houses and go begging. And it so happened that Sisters Nazarena Viganò and Caterina Heim came to knock at the door of Bishop Scalabrini, either by the end of January or, at most, at the beginning of February 1899. In fact, the first

²² E. Martini, "Memoirs, etc. cit. (Arch. G.S., 103/8). These "Memoirs" contain several inaccuracies; e.g. the three nuns Tomedi, Fontana and Rizzieri were ex-Apostles of the Sacred Heart, therefore, they could have been in Piacenza only from February 1899 when Bishop Scalabrini requested that several Apostles should immediately go to Piacenza to serve at the Mother House of the Missionary priests.

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION – VOLUME 3
APPENDIX II**

letter of Mother Merloni to Bishop Scalabrini is dated on February 16, 1899, while the Bishop's answer, presupposing a first meeting and verbal negotiations with Mother Merloni, had already taken place, carries the day of February 22.

The two sisters told the Bishop of Piacenza the vicissitudes of their Institute. He sent for the Foundress, who arrived immediately with Sister Nazarena Viganò from Montebello della Battaglia (Pavia) where she had taken refuge.

"Bishop Scalabrini informed the Foundress about his intention of joining together the Institute of the Sister Apostles and the Pious Society of his missionaries for the assistance of Italian emigrants, declaring himself willing to support in all ways the revival of her discredited and humiliated institution."²³

We point out that these expressions do not respond to the truth. Bishop Scalabrini did not intend to aggregate the Institute of the Sister Apostles, but only some of its members. From Viareggio Mother Merloni wrote to him:

*"With a comforted spirit filled with the most vivid gratitude, allow me, Most Rev. Bishop, to turn to you expressing my sentiments. Mine is the cry of joy of a navigator who, upon seeing his ship submerge and many poor creatures at the mercy of the waves, himself lost and defeated, suddenly discovers to be safe and sound by a powerful supernatural force. I express to you my sincere thanks in the name of the entire community, which now finds itself relieved of a nightmare. Our Institute is now in your hands, all of us entrusted ourselves to you, subjecting to your will. With the most ardent prayers and lively desire of our hearts, we hasten the moment when Your Excellency will summon us, and make us true Apostles of the Sacred Heart, true victims of charity, true daughters of Yours."*²⁴

Bishop Scalabrini answered making clear his intentions of the founding a new Institute, not rescuing of an existing one with its own scope.

"Little can I add now to what I told you by word of mouth. From the truly providential circumstances, it seems to me, and to the Fathers residing here, that God wills it. It will certainly succeed if by fervent prayer and sincere desire to consecrate wholly ourselves to the glory of God, we shall render ourselves worthy and meritorious of it.

I have written to the Superiors of our 'houses in America on the matter and I am waiting for an answer. I hope it will be in conformity with our desires.

Now I am busying myself with finding a house and with the rules, because, as I told you, we have to start from the beginning and open a regular Novitiate which all, without exception must make, thus to be conformed to the true spirit of Jesus Christ.

In expectation of the hour of God, live together with your fellow sisters, all in Him, with Him, and for Him, and by His mercy, He will assist us in the great

²³ "Vita di Madre Clelia Merloni" (Life of Mother Clelia Merloni) (Rome, 1954), p. 81. This biography is very laconic and inaccurate with regard to relations between Bishop Scalabrini and Mother Clelia Merloni and the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles. The nun writer, due to the scarcity of documents and of an understandable sense of respect for the Mother Foundress, offers us a presentation of facts which, in our estimation, does not respond to the historic truth.

²⁴ Merloni-Scalabrini, Viareggio, February 16, 1899. (Arch. G.S., 104/1).

work we want to undertake."²⁵

Of the letter sent by Bishop Scalabrini to the Superiors of the houses in America, we have only the copy sent to Fr. Pietro Colbacchini.

"Now I submit to your judgment a very important matter, and I ask you to give it all your attention! The need to have our own sisters, dependent on the Fathers, has often been brought up for discussion. A number of these wrote to me about it, showing themselves convinced that the Sisters would do much good! It is not a question of founding convents; rather, as it is done with much fruit in France, of having Sisters who would live three or four together in a little house by themselves, and do some teaching, take care of our churches, keep in good order the Fathers' belongings, teach catechism to the girls, assist the sick also at home, whenever feasible without any danger, etc....A certain number of good souls have offered themselves to this scope, and they can hardly wait to enter the Novitiate, which must be a regular one in all respects.

However, I am very hesitant, even though from certain signs, I would call providential, it seems that God wills to place on me this cross also, a heavier one than many others.

*Pray, think, reflect on it, and then express to me your opinion on the matter. I have written about it also to Father Vicentini and others, the most serious and prudent."*²⁶

The essential point "to have Sisters of ours dependent on the Fathers", was never interiorly accepted, or, at least, it was never well understood by Mother Clelia Merloni. This fact was the root of all complications and disputes in the following years. On March 19, the Mother asked Bishop Scalabrini whom she calls "Superior and Founder", whether she were allowed to continue to send the Sisters out begging for the support of the orphans of Broni.²⁷

The Bishop answered by word of mouth as the Mother herself testifies:

*"Through the Sisters, who called on Your Excellency, I received one hundred liras, and your instructions as well. Thank you, Your Excellency, for your donation and for your explicit prohibition to beg."*²⁸

In the same letter, she informed him of having rented a house in Alexandria (Piedmont), thanked him for promising to pay her debts in Milan and Monza, and then added:

*"I hear that Your Excellency desires that I should join the Institute not as Mother, but as a simple nun. Very well, Bishop, here I am, ready also for this, as long as I may be able to sanctify my soul."*²⁹

These words also clearly prove that Bishop Scalabrini intended to found a new Institute, not to rescue the Institute of Mother Merloni. Even the title was to be "Missionary Sisters of St. Charles"; something she could never accept. This is so true that she will prevail on Bishop Scalabrini in resuming later the title,

²⁵ Scalabrini-Merloni, Piacenza, February 22, 1899. (Original in General Archives of the Sister Apostles of the Sacred Heart, Rome; photocopy Arch. G.S., 104/1).

²⁶ Scalabrini-Colbacchini, Piacenza, February 15, 1899 (Arch. G.S., 104/1).

²⁷ Merloni-Scalabrini, Montebello, March 9, 1899 (Arch. G.S., 104/1).

²⁸ Merloni-Scalabrini, Alexandria; no date, but to be placed between the two letters of the March 9 and May 10, 1899 (Arch. G.S., 104/1).

²⁹ Ibidem

"Apostles of the Sacred Heart".

"The last time I came to Piacenza, I called on the director chosen by Your Excellency as our guide to make his acquaintance. But what a sad experience it was for me when upon my request, I came to know that Your Excellency has in mind to change the title of the Institute. Forgive me, Bishop, if I dare offer my objections, as my heart so wounded cannot bear it. Letting the title "Apostles of the Sacred Heart" go to choose another one is not carrying on the work for which I sacrificed my health, reputation, and my whole patrimony; it would mean to do away with one and found another (....)

I suspect Your Excellency wants to change the title of our Institute because of malicious gossip and persecutions to which I have been, and still am, subjected. Well then, Bishop, should this be the reason, I am ready, as of today, to renounce forever my belonging to the Institute of the Sister Apostles of the Sacred Heart rather than to see it destroyed!"³⁰

On May 23, she informed Bishop Scalabrini:

'I hasten to report to Your Excellency the results of the selection which respond to the desire of our hearts, as the chosen ones are all good sisters, fifteen in number, as you had instructed me."³¹

The Sisters arrived at Piacenza on June 2, 1899. Bishop Scalabrini informed Mother Clelia Merloni of their arrival. Mother Merloni had to remain, not without reason, and to her great disappointment, at Broni, and then at Alexandria!

The Sisters have arrived at their humble provisional quarters. But Jesus Christ and the Image of His most Sacred Heart has entered them before they did."³²

The Sisters who arrived on June 2 were twelve. In fact, three of the fifteen chosen had changed their mind and gone their way "because it was feared that under the new direction of a Superior of another Congregation they would not be able to take it."³³

This detail not only confirms the intentions of Bishop Scalabrini, but proves also that there already was a little group of Sisters, or novices, gathered by him at Piacenza whose Superior must have been the "Superior of the Other Congregation."³⁴

³⁰ Merloni-Scalabrini, San Remo, May 10, 1899 (Arch. G.S., 104/1).

³¹ Merloni-Scalabrini, Broni, May 23, 1899 (Arch. G.S., 104/1).

³² Scalabrini-Merloni, Piacenza, June 2, 1899 (Original in General Archives of the Sister Apostles of the Sacred Heart, Rome; photocopy in Arch. G.S., 104/1).

³³ Sister Gioachina Heim-Scalabrini; no date (Arch. G.S., 104/1).

³⁴It appears as though this Superior was Sister Candida Quadrani, of the Daughters of St. Ann. She was the Superior of the Institute for deaf-mute girls in Piacenza. In fact, right at that time, she wrote to Bishop Scalabrini: "It would be an excellent idea if you wrote to my Foundress (Gattorno) yourself about the plan you have regarding me and your Missionary Sisters. Your Excellency would wish to appoint me Superior of the said Institute; I deem it more appropriate that you should name me Sister Visitor, instead, because it would create a better impression on my Mother Foundress (...). I assure Your Excellency that I shall do on my part whatever possible to my humble ability in assisting those young angels, but I would not wish to displease thereof my direct Superiors. Write to my Mother Superior that I am willing to do whatever Your Excellency shall order me; for my own tranquility, I need also the consent of my Superior. If I were to write, it would look as though I were aspiring to be the head of the Congregation founded by you, while by you making the move and doing the asking, I would remain on the safe side." (Sister Candida Quadrani to Scalabrini, Piacenza, June 14, 1899. Arch. G.S., 103/8).

Bishop Scalabrini wrote to the Superior General of the Daughters of St. Ann: "Good Sister Candida informed me about the conversation she had with you, and my answer to her was: Your Mother General is right! - Were you at Piacenza I

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION – VOLUME 3
APPENDIX II

From time to time, Mother Merloni went to Piacenza, and began to understand that things were not proceeding in line with her ideas. She thus wrote to Bishop Scalabrini:

"I have an urgent need to know clearly your provisions concerning the course to be given our Institute.

When visiting Piacenza from time to time, I seemed to sense something obscure and mysterious about this house, and now my suspicions and foreboding are not such any longer, since they became reality through a conversation I had with the director of this house. He openly told me that Your Excellency seems to be set on founding it as a house completely independent of the others, detaching, as it were, the branch from the tree.

Please, listen, Your Excellency, why did you not explain more clearly your intentions right from the beginning? Forgive me, but under such conditions, I would not have sent you my daughters, for certain. Yes, I was happy; I wiped my tears away when the Lord made a ray of light shine in the darkness of my path; yes, I blessed that loving Heart, and gratefully kissed the hand of the angel He had sent to enlighten the dark road! All on one condition, however, Your Excellency, and always with the certainty that you would have supplied your help and worked towards giving a strong manly support to an apostolate, which I had begun with the inexperienced hand of a woman. Only to this end, only with this hope, I consented, and not on condition that you would destroy my foundation to start another one. Your Excellency, I have need to know the truth on this matter from you, clear and genuine, because as Mother I have the duty to inform my daughters, who live and work only with this hope, that is, of soon finding ourselves all indistinctly under the same roof, all united by the same ideal, all moved by the same spirit.

Instead, Your Excellency, would I have perhaps trusted and hoped in vain? I do not know, but I am afraid so! I am still of the same mind, that is, either all of them enter or none at all! I, as Mother, shall not set foot in this house, if, together with me all the others will not be admitted like the first ones!

I await your answer with a sad spirit, though calm and determined on the decision to take in case you should deem it opportune to oppose my just objections here expressed.

Should this be the case, with a broken heart, wounded in its most sensitive and delicate part, I withdraw taking along those grateful and faithful daughters of mine who, poor souls, were like their Mother the victims of an illusion. I may be mistaken, but you can be sure of this, Bishop, that not all of the twelve daughters who reside here also will be indifferent to my resolution, and remain at the house of Piacenza. The most serious and prudent ones, those with a submissive and virtuous spirit, yet frank and loyal, who would have otherwise

would have sought your advice; but it is too late now! There remains anything else now for me to do but to thank you for granting the permission. Sincere thanks for consenting that Sister Candida may devote a little of her time to the future Missionary Sisters, and I beg you to bear with me if trusting in your good heart I dare ask you still for another favor. It is my intention that your Sisters direct these young women, at least for a year. Two of your daughters, a Superior and a Vice-Mistress of Novices, perhaps, would do. This way, should these Missionary Sisters succeed, they would be informed to the modern and open spirit of your Congregation, and you would cooperate in giving life to a small and humble family to send to the help of our poor emigrants. Consult with the Lord as I did, and you will discover the answer to be affirmative." (Bishop Scalabrini to Mother Rose Gattorno, Minute with no date; Arch. G.S., 103/8).

*accepted any sacrifice, will never give in to this provision (...). They will be ready to sanctify themselves, to consume themselves in carrying out their duties, for a noble and holy scope, but they will clearly know where they stand, and be able to say "this has gone far enough" when confronted with a cowardly and disloyal act."*³⁵

As though this were not enough, she sent two Sisters to express her mind to him and present him another letter in which she says:

"As agreed with Your Excellency from the beginning, at the close of the school year we are to close down the house at Viareggio.

Several of my daughters, giving ear to certain unfavorable rumors going around at Viareggio in regard to the intentions of Your Excellency concerning them, have left the Institute (...).

*They say that Bishop Scalabrini has expressed himself as having no intention of receiving, like the others, the Mother, the Sisters of Viareggio and the remaining ones of the houses of Montebello and Versa. They tell us not to trust you, to be on our guard, because Bishop Scalabrini has indeed these intentions, and if you wish me to tell you straight, the Bishop of Pisa spoke in such terms to two of our Sisters (...). You may very well tell me clearly your intentions, your opinion, because as things stand now neither my daughters nor I myself, can go on living like this. Besides, in the people's eyes, Your Excellency, this manner of procedure looks bad. They cannot understand why Bishop Scalabrini, always so precise and just in his dealings, should leave this initiative of his so incomplete, and allow the Foundress of this Institute, with the rest of her daughters, to go around the world without bread, without a house, exposed to any danger for their souls, to any material privation, while warmly taking some of these Sisters under his protection."*³⁶

Bishop Scalabrini answered straight from the shoulder:

"Your letters fully prove what people write to me from all over about your personality. You interpret things your way, letting your fantasy get the best of you. I do not find in you either that loyalty or that humility which are, and must be, the principal virtues of all Christians, but especially of anyone wishing to consecrate herself to God. Now I understand why all those that had to deal with you have given information not at all favorable in your regard. A proud poverty is unsightly not only before the eyes of God, but of man, as well.

The first time you came to me, I told you in clear terms that I did not intend at all to assume any responsibility for the Congregation's past, that it was necessary to start all over again with a regular novitiate, that I would receive those young girls who should wish to become Religious provided proven worthy, and that their number could not exceed fifteen, for the time being, etc'

You closed down the house of Viareggio under pressure from your creditors and not because of any others! I do not intend in any way, big or small, to take upon myself the responsibility for girls, whom I do not know and who cannot be called Religious, besides, because not approved by any legitimate authority. If it cannot be arranged otherwise, let them join the others.

Anyway, as I have written you a number of times, I repeat that, provided we

³⁵ Merloni-Scalabrini, Piacenza, July 3, 1899 (Arch. G.S., 104/1).

³⁶ Merloni-Scalabrini, Alexandria, August 9, 1899 (Arch. G.S., 104/1).

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION – VOLUME 3
APPENDIX II

have room, I shall willingly accept here the Sisters of Viareggio and of the other two small communities, who will feel called to the missions and present their application. Should any of them find out that she can settle somewhere else, let her leave in the Lord!

As to yourself, though well aware of the sad afflictions with which the good Lord was pleased to try you, still I must frankly say that you have need of greater humility, simplicity, and prudence. Placing yourself on this road without any pretense to superiority, you, too, will be accepted.

You call yourself Foundress, but one cannot be qualified as such who has not been so acknowledged by the competent authority. Profoundly humble yourself before God; avoid all gossip, of which I am a fierce enemy; never act except upon advice of enlightened and pious persons, and God will then come to your aid.

I confirm what I told the two Sisters who were here the day before yesterday."³⁷

The tone of Mother Merloni's letters from August 20 to 25, immediately following, is quite different from the preceding one. She profusely expresses gratitude for the savior and benefactor who had sent through her Sisters one hundred liras for the most immediate needs, and the sum of three thousand for payment of some debts, a few days later.³⁸ But, soon afterwards the ups and downs of thanks and complaints began once more. On October 10, she laments that her best Sisters were being dismissed, while those she qualifies as "lightheaded fairies" except Sister Marcellina Viganò, remained on, insinuating: "*Should there still be anyone faithful to the Institute and her Mother, they seek to eliminate her.*"³⁹

Bishop Scalabrini had to brace himself up with an incredible degree of patience. Immediately afterwards he granted the Mother an audience allowing her to join the Sisters at Piacenza. He gave in also concerning the title of the Congregation. Until the end of 1899 novices undersigned themselves as "Missionary Sisters of St. Charles." thereafter, they will resume the title of "Missionary Apostles of the Sacred Heart."⁴⁰ Apostle and missionary are synonymous, but Bishop Scalabrini was concerned with giving prominence to the fact that they were to be missionary Sisters who had to leave their home country to place themselves at the service of emigrants.

There follow other letters soliciting the Bishop for ever more generous contributions because at Alexandria the Sisters had rented a larger building. One finds in them interminable complaints that the lingerie of the Sisters dismissed from Piacenza had not been all sent to Alexandria. But, Mother Merloni's strongest effort is constantly directed at obtaining her scope of being close to the Novices:

"Being so far from you disturbs and upsets me, also. How many times I would need your holy advice, a word from you. Often a certain degree of jealousy

³⁷ Scalabrini-Merloni, August 11, 1899 (Minute in Arch. G.S., 104/1).

³⁸ Merloni-Scalabrini, Alexandria, August 20, 1899, and August 25, 1899 (Arch. G.S., 104/1).

³⁹ Merloni-Scalabrini, Alexandria, October 10, 1899 (Arch. G.S., 104/1).

⁴⁰ To those days belongs a note from the Rector of the Istituto Cristoforo Colombo to Mons. Secretary of Bishop Scalabrini: "Sister Merloni is in town. I strongly entreat His Excellency not to allow her to set foot at the Sisters' Convent. There would result serious trouble. As far as it depends on me, if His Excellency does not tell you otherwise, do not allow her to go there and disturb the peace which now reigns amongst the Sisters that are left." (Molinari-Mangot, October 18, 1899. Arch. G.S., 104/1).

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION – VOLUME 3
APPENDIX II

torments me. And why are we so far away, while others have the grace to be so close to you? Could it not happen, perhaps, that Your Excellency may give better attention to the daughters close by than to those far away?"⁴¹

Concerning the lingerie, the Sisters who had remained in Piacenza could not help writing her what follows:

"Through the Reverend Rector an envelope was forwarded to us last week containing several lists on which some of the Sisters of our old Mother ask for objects and things.

We can hardly believe it! After receiving so much, how can they ever dare not only ask but also deceive the good heart of His Excellency our Bishop! Perhaps, you may understand why we call this request a deception. You must know that part of the items requested has been mailed already; as for the rest, however, there is someone amongst us who can testify that the items claimed in the name of Sisters, who have never set foot here belong actually to this house, or that these things and lingerie were not owned by said Sisters, when they entered the Institute.

Why then feign that the Sisters owned these goods, while it is not so? Is this not a deception? Believe us, dear Mother, we are grieving at the sight of such black ingratitude! After all the expenses paid, and all the money sent you by our beloved and good Father you still pretend to take away from us what has been so hard to come by?"⁴²

It was a question of things of little importance certainly, but these small incidents cast much light on the cause of the dissension that stood at the root of the future separation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles, from the Sister Apostles of the Sacred Heart.

We may not allow ourselves to pass judgment on intentions. As shown in the documents on hand, the fact is that Bishop Scalabrini always intended to found a new Institute of Missionary Sisters for Emigrants apart from the title, and he never kept his intentions hidden, and that Mother Merloni continued in her idea and determination to preserve her Institution.

The clarification came only a few years later at the price of sufferings and sacrifices. We can say, however, that the tenacity shown by both Mother Merloni and Mother Assunta Marchetti in keeping faithful to the original spirit of their respective institutions showed to be providential, after all. Actually, the Congregation of the Sister Apostles of the Sacred Heart was saved by the intervention of Bishop Scalabrini; and the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles knew how to weather away all storms. Now they are two flourishing Congregations well deserving of Church and society.

As to the personal responsibility of Mother Merloni, one must take into consideration also her psychosomatic conditions, which consequently to so many sufferings grew ever worse.

In the beginning of 1900, she wrote the following letter of apology to Bishop Scalabrini:

⁴¹ Merloni-Scalabrini, Alexandria, November 23, 1899 (Arch. G.S., 104/1).

⁴² Missionary Sisters of St. Charles to Merloni, Piacenza, December 10, 1899 (Arch. G.S., 104/1).

"Behold, Your Excellency, what I am capable of! I remember the letter I sent you; well do I know to have been somewhat impertinent. I cannot help being ashamed of myself while repeating: - Yes, Your Excellency, unfortunately I have failed, I confess it! For charity's sake, bear with me, forgive me, forget. And, now what else is there for me to do but to acknowledge my fault and humbly ask your forgiveness. Will the exquisite goodness of your heart, the deep charity I discern so splendid and genuine in you, allow you to deny me a word of forbearance? Oh, Your Excellency, I entreat you, do not let me believe so! It would be too much for me to take! Besides, if the Mother has erred, what fault could there be on the part of her poor daughters? Would you, then, abandon your protégées whom by divine approval you rescued from sure ruin with an act of generosity?"

When that certain letter reached Your Excellency, I was unfortunately sick in bed with a sickness that had directly affected my head, so much so that there was fear I would never regain my mental faculties. Imagine my condition then. With a head so perturbed and troubled, I expressed in a confused and intermittent manner my ideas to one of the Sisters. Without paying much attention to the moment of physical strain I was acting under, the poor dear faithfully wrote down word by word my feelings with no dutiful and kind thought for checking out whether the contents were more or less pertinent."⁴³

A few days later, the Mother expressed to Bishop Scalabrini her difficulty in staying at Alexandria. The house they had rented had to be evacuated by March 1; would it not be better to move to Piacenza rather than rent another more costly place?⁴⁴

Bishop Scalabrini, always accessible to the demands of charity, consented to admit the Sisters of Alexandria, Mother Clelia Merloni included, to Villa San Francesco at Castelnuovo Fogliani, which Duchess Clelia Pallavicino Fogliani had placed at the disposal of the Bishop, for the summer vacations of his deaf-mute girls.

On February 7, the Mother wrote Bishop Scalabrini that the Sisters would leave in a few days.⁴⁵ In fact, they arrived at Castelnuovo Fogliani on February 15.

The six Sisters of Piacenza remained there and continued their novitiate separately, joining the others only in May for their immediate preparation to the religious profession.

Charged with presenting the final draft of the new rules, as soon as she arrived at Castelnuovo Fogliani, Mother Merloni inquired of Bishop Scalabrini:

"I kindly ask Your Excellency to do me the charity of sending me the rules of the Canossian Sisters and the Constitutions of our Institute; this way we shall try to put something in good order together."⁴⁶

When speaking of the "Constitutions of our Institute" the Mother meant those of the Sister Apostles of the Sacred Heart, while Bishop Scalabrini had the

⁴³ Merloni-Scalabrini, Alexandria, February 1, 1900 (Arch. G.S., 104/2).

⁴⁴ Sister Ida Puppo-Scalabrini, Alexandria, February 1, 1900 (Arch. G.S., 104/2).

⁴⁵ Merloni-Scalabrini, Alexandria, February 7, 1900 (Arch. G.S., 104/2).

⁴⁶ Merloni-Scalabrini, Castelnuovo, February 18, 1900 (Arch. G.S., 104/2).

Missionary Sisters of St. Charles in mind. In fact, Mother Merloni answered as follows:

"I have received the Rules of the Canossians and of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles, but I was saddened beyond measure to hear that my Constitutions could not be found anymore."⁴⁷

This is one more of many proofs of the will of Bishop Scalabrini to found the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of Saint Charles, not just to rescue the Institute of the Sister Apostles of the Sacred Heart, even after consenting, for peace sake, to the use of the latter title.

4. CANONICAL APPROBATION AND DIFFICULT BEGINNINGS

June 10, 1900, marks the day when in the process of the same rite there took place at Castelnuovo Fogliani the canonical investiture with a new habit, the religious profession of the first twelve Sisters, the approval of the Rules, and the Decree of Approval of the New Congregation :

- "Upon mature study and examination of the Rules of this newly born Congregation titled 'Missionary Sisters Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus';
- having received the most assuring testimony as to the good spirit, piety, and zeal of each Sister, here present, from our Venerable Brother, the Bishop of Alexandria, and from other men of wisdom,
- having sought out the advice of enlightened and pious persons, having implored the light of the Holy Spirit and the special assistance of Mary Most Holy, with the desire to render an acceptable tribute of honor to our Divine Redeemer on the dawn of the new century;

We order and decree the following:

1. The Congregation of the 'Missionary Sisters, Apostles of the Sacred Heart' is hereby instituted in Piacenza.
2. The said Rules are by us approved 'on trial' for ten years.

Piacenza, June 10, 1900

+ John Baptist, Bishop"⁴⁸

The Constitutions were printed only in 1902 with some modifications suggested especially by Father Dominic Vicentini, as we shall point out. The first Article of the first Chapter:

⁴⁷ Merloni-Scalabrini, Villa di Castelnuovo, April 1, 1900 (Arch. G.S., 104/2). Father Marco Simoni cooperated also in writing out these "Rules of St. Charles". Cfr. letter Simoni to Consoni, Piacenza, October 16, 1899: "We are working at the compilation of the Rules for the Sisters and at the Prayer Book of the Congregation. The nuns here wear a habit slightly different. They have a white collar but without any wimple falling down over their breast. Their habit is black, with sash and a cape, like ours. They wear a veil with a white fringe over their forehead like our Sisters, there." (Arch. G.S., 103/1). It should be noted that the habit of the Sister Apostles of the Sacred Heart was not their original one. It was the habit given them by Bishop Scalabrini, with the Crucifix at the side: something halfway between the original habit of the Sister Apostles of the Sacred Heart and the one chosen by Father Marchetti for the Sisters of São Paulo.

⁴⁸ "Regola della Congregazione delle Suore Apostole del Sacro Cuore di Gesù" (Rule of the Congregation of the Sister Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus), Piacenza, 1902.

"Scope of the Institution" says:

"This Institution is placed under the protection of the Heart of Jesus to spread its devotion. It is to devote itself with zeal to the great work of the Missions, both foreign and Italian; to offer the merits of the various activities of charity demanded by obedience and all the sacrifices of religious life for the salvation of poor sinners, in particular of those affiliated with the masonic sects (through which especially, the devil works so much evil), and of unfortunate apostate priests."⁴⁹

The first Article of the Third Chapter, "External Direction" states:

"The Institute of the Sister Apostles of the Sacred Heart shall depend on their beneficent Founder Bishop John Baptist Scalabrini and his successors, or on the Ordinary of the Diocese in which the Mother house has its seat. He shall also be its Superior General."⁵⁰

There existed, therefore, a "Mother General" for the internal government, and a "Superior General" for the external direction. In other words, missionary activities and "eventual serious cases" were the competence of the Superior General, while the whole range of the ordinary internal government belonged to the Mother General. Fathers Marchetti, Simoni, and Consoni, would have liked something more, but in a letter of October 1900, Bishop Scalabrini pointed out:

*"Concerning the Sisters, they are of our founding, they depend on Mother Superior General as to destination, visitations she may undertake in the future, etc., but they absolutely depend on the Superior (a Priest) of the house for all the rest! They cannot and must not do anything without his permission. The Sister Superior takes orders and has them carried out. I have also sought out the advice of competent Religious on the matter, and all were of one mind in regard to keeping the two Congregations separate (= men and women Religious)."*⁵¹

Father Vicentini had been the principal supporter of a certain degree of autonomy. Writing from São Paulo on January 4, 1901, he made some observations to Bishop Scalabrini on the "summary" of the new rules that had been presented to the Sisters:

"As to the Sisters dependence on the Missionaries, I deem it my duty to repeat what I have written you two years ago already, when Your Excellency sought my opinion on the Congregation of Sisters to help our Institute. I feel the Sisters should have their independence not only for their internal discipline in conformity with their rules, but also a certain degree of autonomy for their external activities; otherwise there is bound to be much trouble (...).

The principal and primary scope of this Congregation (meant as a help to the Missionaries of St. Charles) is the propagation of devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Splendid, but I do not see in it any reason or connection with the scope of the Missionary Fathers of St. Charles.

The Institute shall be subject to Bishop Scalabrini, who is its Founder and Superior General; but after you are gone (forgive me, Bishop, I wish you could

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ Scalabrini-Consoni, Piacenza, October 25, 1900 (Arch. G.S., 3023/2).

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION – VOLUME 3
APPENDIX II

live a hundred years), on whom will it depend?"⁵²

As anyone can see, the Rules represented a compromise between Bishop Scalabrini and Mother Merloni, and, certainly, they did not help in making things clear. In September 1899, Father Marco Simoni, Vice-Director of the Cristoforo Colombo orphanage in São Paulo, had returned to Italy. He took the occasion for insisting personally and strongly with Bishop Scalabrini to send him "four Sisters thoroughly well trained."⁵³

Father Faustino Consoni, the director, repeated several times the same request for help, and in May 1900, he wrote they could not carry on like that any longer.

"The poor Sisters make unbelievable sacrifices; when the strain is too much one's strength may give; and now I have here three of them sick."⁵⁴

Naturally, the request increased to six Sisters.

"The venerable Founder decided to send four of them and retain in Piacenza Mother Superior and the Mistress of Novices (Sisters Candida and Edwig). Thus two Sisters should return from Brazil and a complete community be created in Piacenza to achieve uniformity in the religious and missionary spirit and form the new vocations in the best way possible.

Father Simoni, however, knowing the great need to the mission, wanted six of them. Bishop Scalabrini and Father Giuseppe Molinari, Superior of the Missionaries, in charge of the administration of the Novitiate, aware as they were that such decision would have paralyzed the life of the newly born Institute, persisted in a denial.

On the occasion we are speaking of Mother Clelia Merloni, Foundress of the Zelatrix of the Sacred Heart, having come to know about the matter, she herself, in difficulties endangering the very life of her Institution, offered the help of her Congregation to Bishop Scalabrini and Father Marco Simoni. The venerable Founder was not at all inclined to accept this proposal. However, Mother Merloni, supported also by other people, insisted so much and knew how to plead so well on behalf of it, that she succeeded in convincing Bishop Scalabrini, who ended up with consenting to accept her help. Not all the six missionary Sisters of St. Charles accepted the union proposed; Sisters Candida and Ed-wig withdrew."⁵⁵

In the passage just quoted, there is a serious inaccuracy because, as we have shown, the fusion of the two groups had already been decided several months before. What is certain is that the first group of departing Sisters was composed of three who had made their Novitiate at Piacenza (Antoinette Fontana, Carmela Tomedi, Agnes Rizzieri), and three who had theirs at Castelnuovo Fogliani (Elisa Pederzini, Assunta Bellini, Magdalena Pampana). They sailed from Genoa on August 10 and arrived at São Paulo on September 18, 1900.

This was the moment when Bishop Scalabrini intended to put into effect his

⁵² Vicentini-Scalabrini, São Paulo, May 14, 1901 (Arch. G.S., 104/11).

⁵³ Consoni-Scalabrini, São Paulo, November 8, 1899 (Arch. G.S., 396/3).

⁵⁴ Consoni Scalabrini, São Paulo, May 14, 1900 (Arch. G.S., 396/3).

⁵⁵ E. Martini, "Memoirs, etc." *cit.* (Arch. G.S., 103/8).

decision of providing a definite set-up for the seven Sisters living in São Paulo, who had been carrying on their shoulders, since 1895, the burden of assisting the orphans in the first most difficult years. He could not call them back to Italy because the need of their presence there was too great. However, he directed they were to be relieved of all responsibilities of direction in order to be free to make their canonical Novitiate, be invested with the religious habit, and carry the title of the Congregation canonically founded on June 10, 1900. Sister Elisa Pederzini and Assunta Bellini were respectively appointed Superior and Vice Superior.

Here (in São Paulo) the equivocation was revived in even more dramatic proportions than at Piacenza. Sister Elisa Pederzini, very authoritarian, kept ignoring the true identity of the new Congregation. On her part, Mother Assunta Marchetti immediately sensed the danger and as a true "lady of strength" resisted any attempt at changing the specific scope of the Congregation.

Significant is the fact that the three Sisters who had made the Novitiate at Piacenza under the direct influence of Bishop Scalabrini remained "Scalabrinians" while the three who made it with Mother Clelia Merloni remained "Merlonians".

A month after his return to São Paulo, Father Simoni wrote:

"We have here the old Sisters who do not get along at all with the new ones, nor do they want to accept the fusion into one Order."⁵⁶

Father Dominic Vicentini, Provincial Superior in Brazil, described to Bishop Scalabrini how the situation developed in São Paulo:

"It is three weeks that I am here. I found the greatest confusion among the Sisters! Both Father Faustino and I made all efforts to convince the old Sisters to accept the direction of the new ones and obey them; but it was no use; we were wasting our time. I told them that the change of title did not affect the identity of the Congregation, and that, as to its scope, it always remains the same, as one and the same is the Founder, etc. Just a waste of time! They took their vows as Missionary Sisters of St. Charles (...). One of the reasons brought forth by the old Sisters is the bad opinion they have of the new ones. In truth, several of these concurred in this opinion by defaming their Mother General and other companions in telling the vicissitudes of their Institute and their personal shortcomings, thus showing to have little religious spirit themselves. You can imagine how things are in a house where one does not, or does not want, to know who the Superior is. In order to calm feelings down, Father Faustino told them, for the time being, to carry out the activities of the house as best as they can. The old Sisters say, however, that twelve Sisters are doing less now than the six of them before. A Jesuit priest was here last month to preach the retreat to the Sisters, but when he realized the situation he stated it to be a veritable mess too difficult to put in order, and he cut the retreat short as a waste of time."⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Simoni-Rolleri, São Paulo, October 16, 1900 (Arch. G.S., 396/5).

⁵⁷ Vicentini-Rolleri, São Paulo, December 29, 1900 (Arch. G.S., 393/5).

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION – VOLUME 3
APPENDIX II

And now, we hear the reasons of Mother Assunta Marchetti. The day before Father Vicentini's letter, she had written a long letter undersigned also by the other "old Sisters", that is by those who had always been at São Paulo: Maria Franceschini, Maria Bassi, Camilla Dal Ri, Maria Das Dores, Angela Meneguzzo, Clarice Baraldini, and Luisa Micheletto, a postulant:

"It is six years now since the Cristoforo Colombo orphanage was founded by the late missionary Father Giuseppe Marchetti in the city of São Paulo (...).

The humble undersigned, called to support with their work this charitable and important institution, have responded to the appeal; with the consent and approval of Your Most Illustrious Excellency have received the religious habit, and accepted the rules, first dictated by the late Father Marchetti, and then revised by his successor the worthy Father Faustino Consoni; and have been given at the same time the title "Sisters of Charity of the Congregation of St. Charles, Piacenza."

Their rules were written after the Rule of St. Francis de Sales by order and will of Your Excellency, and as such accepted and scrupulously obeyed by the most humble sisters subsigning this letter.

In about six years of life, all devoted to the good of these unfortunate orphans, to prayer for the generous souls of our benefactors and for our own salvation, there was never an sole instance when any of us has lost the esteem of our superiors, or neglected, for one moment, her field of duty ever so dear to us because so needed. One dear Sister of ours sacrificed her life in her hard task while another indeed lost her health. Yet, there was no complaint, no recrimination; no desire was ever uttered from the lips of any of us to obtain a change, an improvement of living conditions. Everything was always done and faced for the sake of God's Will. When the lamented Father Marchetti died and was succeeded by Father Consoni, we were asked to renew our vows and make them perpetual. On that occasion, three newly professed Sisters joined us after a long period of training. Then things seemed to be going in the right direction; the most humble of the undersigned was appointed Superior (...).

By the middle of this year, which is now about to end, we began to hear of the arrival of other Sisters from Italy! We took that piece of news with satisfaction, even with enthusiasm, both because needed help was coming at the right time, and because by this event we were given to foresee a furthering of our Orphanage's progress (...). The new Sisters arrived only a month ago, and it was a pleasure for us to welcome and embrace them with that sisterly love which is the mark of harmony and affection sealed in the spirit of sacrifice.

Unfortunately, our joy was short-lived. We discovered that the orders of Your Most Reverend Excellency had inflicted a sorrowful blow on the most cherished memories of the humble undersigned; they were immediately given another superior from amongst the new arrivals, thus removing one who had never aspired to, nor desired, the honor shown her. But things did not end here! We were told we must change the old vows with the new, make a new novitiate, and adopt new habit and rules!

Excellency, with broken hearts we turn to your Most Reverend Excellency, prostrate at your feet, and implore all your protection. After spending six years of our lives keeping our rules under the title that distinguished and made us proud, that is, "Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo", with what heart could or should

we leave and forget our sacrifices and the rules that made us members of the Congregation?

How could anyone with a spirit informed to justice pretend that we who have entered, and until now supported, our Congregation, should renounce a whole past of love for orphans and of glory for it? By what human law can anyone demand a sacrifice by which we should renounce a past, hard for certain, but blessed by God and man, and face the future in a new unknown community by us neither sought nor chosen?

Excellency, by persisting in your orders, and by continuing to demand what we were told by the local Superiors, that is the disavowal on our part of the Congregation of St. Charles, we would be forced to respond by abandoning this institution in search of other works of charity to which we would devote the rest of our lives. But, would this be the right decision for us? And would our future leave at peace the conscience of those that decided to abandon us at the mercy of chance? No, your sense of justice, Most Reverend Excellency, will urge your heart to protect us, help us, and allow us to continue to spend our lives for little orphans so that we may gain for ourselves the glory and peace of the future life through the hardest toil, the bloodiest sacrifices, and the most piercing thorns!

In this hope we shall trustingly wait for directives from Your Most Reverend Excellency, who as our Father and Superior General will also grant us your blessing."⁵⁸

We have only a short mention of Bishop Scalabrini's answer in a letter of his to Father Consoni:

"I have written to the Provincial Superior about what is to be done concerning the Sisters. It grieves me to hear that those good daughters of mine, who served the house from its beginning, did not understand that what I have decided is all for their greater good, and that it was not possible to have a house by itself with separated and isolated religious in constant danger of extinction."⁵⁹

Consequent to the directives of Bishop Scalabrini and the action of Fathers Vicentini and Consoni, things seemed to have been soon settled peacefully. In fact, Father Consoni had this to write:

"Scope of this letter of mine is to comfort Your Excellency on the happy results achieved with the fusion of the two groups of Sisters. By the help of the Child Jesus, they are now getting along fine, and we hope things may continue to get better and better."⁶⁰

5. CONTRASTS WITH MOTHER MERLONI

The Founder was much pleased with this piece of news, and he expressed hope that the fusion too would last. In Italy he had sixty-two Sisters ready for the missions.⁶¹

The clearing, instead, was only momentary! This explains why, upon request of

⁵⁸ Mother Assunta Marchetti and Fellow-Sisters to Scalabrini, São Paulo, December 28, 1900 (Arch. G.S., 103/4).

⁵⁹ Scalabrini-Consoni, Piacenza, February 4, 1901 (Arch. G.S., 3023/2).

⁶⁰ Consoni-Scalabrini, Araras, March 30, 1901 (Arch. G.S., 396/3).

⁶¹ Simoni-Consoni, São Paulo, May 17, 1901 (Arch. G.S., 396/3).

HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION – VOLUME 3
APPENDIX II

Fr. Brescianini, four Sisters were sent to Curitiba in November 1900, while in May 1902, six were sent to Boston, requested by Father Biasotti. Thus began the spreading of the Institute throughout the Americas.

On the other hand, very few were sent to the São Paulo Orphanage because the storm had not died down yet. On June. 27, 1901, Father Consoni wrote to the Founder:

"As to the modifications of the Rules, I just finished reading concerning the admission of novices here, in all firmness I must express my humble opinion, and here it is. Those admitted here could teach the Sisters of that house (Piacenza) in many things. The Superior there (Mother Merloni) seems to me too hasty in doing and undoing things. I deem it proper, for the good of the activities undertaken, to advise Your Excellency not to give all the importance she attributes to certain things. While they all right for Italy, perhaps, they are not so here, where we are surrounded by holy Religious, well trained, orderly, with rules approved by the Holy See, doing much good with less pretenses than ourselves.

I must, therefore, inform you that our novices admitted here by the Superior, three in number, one of whom (Lucy Gorlin), previously recommended by Fr. Colbacchini, of holy memory, are excellent young ladies well deserving of the Sister Apostles of the Sacred Heart. The nerve of them! To say that these are not canonically in good standing is all wrong, because the law is not retroactive. The Superior there may well be sure that I shall never bother with Sisters of the Novices from now on. I have suffered enough as it is, even more than with our exhausting missions.

What those new Sisters are most in need of is sound judgment, not pretending to know it all. The Superior here is a holy young woman, but she wants to do everything by herself; she may do so out of zeal, still we were not born yesterday!

Besides, it is not right that they should bother the Fathers for every little thing! As to charity towards orphan girls and boys, and the sick, she seems to be born for it, and I have but praise for her, but she is too meticulous, so much so that none of her fellow Sisters follows her system.

Concerning the Rules, they observe them to perfection and it seems also that the old ones are getting used to them."⁶²

Mother Merloni, who was giving directives contrary to the will of Bishop Scalabrini, placed the whole blame for the trouble on the three Sisters who had made the Novitiate in Piacenza.

"Excellency, you will realize the need for releasing of their vows the three Sisters that were in Piacenza, source of all arguments and of all our worries.

You will see the necessity to let those unfortunate small and unhappy heads go free, since they will always be our cross and a disgrace to our Institute.

The other three, instead, and the four Sisters of Santa Felicidade were deserving of "at least a few lines of support" from the Bishop."⁶³

⁶² Consoni-Scalabrini, Piacenza, March 3, 1901 (Arch. G. S., 104/3).

⁶³ Merloni-Scalabrini, Piacenza, March 3, 1901 (Arch. G.S., 104/3).

Bishop Scalabrini answered:

"I read with deep emotion the long letter from Santa Felicidade. Let us accept with willing resignation the adverse conditions of São Paulo, and let us thank the Lord for the rest.

*As I have already written you, I gave strict and stern orders about the Sisters to Father Provincial. Before taking any decision, we must wait for his report. As soon as it will come, we shall do what is necessary for the glory of God and the good of the Congregation. In the meantime, peace, prayers, and complete trust in the help of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ."*⁶⁴

"Because of the spirit of division that has been showing until now" Mother Merloni did not want novitiates in America, "where the religious would not be formed in accordance with her desires".

*"However if His Excellency were of a different mind, at least the norms determining the dowry, which was to be surrendered to the Mother House, had to be strictly observed."*⁶⁵

We have listened already to the complaints of Fr. Consoni in this regard; but though insisting in declaring herself disposed to obey her "Superior and Founder," Mother Merloni had this to write to Father Consoni who had accepted the novices and the profession of perpetual vows of the others according to precise instructions from Bishop Scalabrini:

*"I have written a long letter already to the Sisters exhorting them to a life of perfection; I have clearly explained to them that all of them (except Sister Magdalene) have invalid vows because they made their profession before completing a whole year of Novitiate. Furthermore, having noticed the rather poor performance of some, in agreement with the Bishop, it was decided that in the Congregation the vows be renewed annually for five years."*⁶⁶

Father Consoni wrote to Bishop Scalabrini on the matter:

"Another thorny question is that of the Sisters. The Mother General wrote us that their vows are invalid! Imagine the complaints and the discussions! Here, too, there is need of the authority of Your Excellency. Upon consultation with Mother Superior, write to me directing that they make a retreat, renew their vows, and so join forever the Congregation after renewing them annually for five years; otherwise, it is going to be a real mess.

Together, the Superior and I have acted according to the advice of Your Excellency; but, lo and behold, the Mother came up with the canons of the Council of Trent to prove the nullity of the vows. Is it possible you should allow this to happen?

We also have the two novices. I had already written to you that they take their vows here. On this point, the Mother writes they cannot be allowed to do so. Besides, who can put together the required trousseau and the ten thousand liras for the dowry! These two good young women have toiled much already here for these poor orphans, while Sister Elisa has admitted them upon precise instructions from the Superior. I entreat Your Excellency to take immediate steps

⁶⁴ Scalabrini-Merloni, Piacenza, March 6, 1901 (Original in Arch. Gen. of Sister Apostles of the Sacred Heart; Photocopy in Arch. G.S., 105/3).

⁶⁵ Merloni-Scalabrini, Piacenza, May 30, 1901 (Arch. G.S., 104/3).

⁶⁶ Merloni-Consoni, February 7, 1902.

towards reestablishing the peace, since I bear the full responsibility for it."⁶⁷

Bishop Scalabrini clearly stated:

"The vows taken by the Sisters there are most certainly valid, neither is it necessary to repeat them.

Those good daughters had been duly prepared, they were religious already and in order to join the Sister Apostles of the Sacred Heart it was enough for them to repeat their vows. I grant permission also for the novices to be admitted to simple perpetual vows.

(...) Perhaps, it will be necessary to open a Novitiate there."⁶⁸

Sisters Lucy Carlin and Teresa Montagnoli were admitted on February 3, 1903. At the same time, Mother Merloni called Sister Elisa Pederzini back to Italy to take charge of the house in Piacenza, assigned to them in 1900 by Bishop Scalabrini in Via Borghetto. With her, also Sister Assunta Bellini returned. Sister Camilla Dal Ri remained as provisional Superior of the Orphanage.

In Piacenza, Mother Merloni considered Sister Elisa Pederzini a "revolutionary", and she did everything to have her removed at the earliest. She returned to Brazil in November 1904 with four other Sister Apostles to the new community formed through the services of Father Consoni at the Italian Hospital Humbert I ("Matarazzo"), which they still serve.

In the meantime, the situation in Piacenza was getting ever more confused. Bishop Scalabrini charged a priest, probably a Jesuit, with conducting an accurate visitation, whose principle result was the following:

*"In order to achieve all this, Sisters Clelia Merloni, Ignazia, and Elena must be removed, otherwise things will remain as before."*⁶⁹

It is clear that the Mother, by this time, was considering her own position untenable. In fact, she repeatedly asked Bishop Scalabrini to be relieved of her burden proposing Sister Marcellina Viganò to succeed her.

On February 28, 1904, the Bishop issued the following decree:

"Having considered and reflected before God upon the repeated petitions presented us by the Rev. Mother Clelia Merloni, Superior General of the Sister Apostles of the Sacred Heart that we are pleased to relieve her of the heavy burden of her office;

- considering her poor health conditions, which do not allow her to attend as she would want to the development and progress of the pious Institute, and to the visitation of the houses as the rules prescribe;
- considering that in her status as Foundress, she will attend in meditation to the compilation of the Constitutions of the Institute and of the book of common prayer;
- considering that her three year term of office must be considered practically completed in keeping with the rules;
- considering all other aspects of the matter;

⁶⁷ Consoni-Scalabrini, São Paulo, July 2, 1902 (Arch. G.S., 396/3).

⁶⁸ Scalabrini-Consoni, Piacenza, September 10, 1902 (Arch. G.S., 3023/2).

⁶⁹ N. Nola-Scalabrini, no date (Arch. G.S., 104/6).

We accept the resignation from the Office of Superior General presented to us by the said Mother Clelia Merloni, who, therefore, shall retire to one of the Institute's houses of her choosing.

Given the impossibility to call together the religious for the election of the new Mother General, we provisionally entrust the direction of the same Institute to the Sister Vicar with the title of Superior General, whom all Sisters shall obey as their legitimate Superior.

In the meantime, preparations are to be made for the election of the Mother General in accordance with the norms of the rules.

May God protect the Institute of the Sister Apostles of the Sacred Heart on which we bestow our Episcopal blessing from the bottom of our heart."⁷⁰

Mother Clelia retired to Alexandria (Piedmont), from where she wrote on March 14:

"Keep your peace, do not worry because in spite of the bitter drink Jesus is offering me, He gives me strength and courage to sooth it!

Awareness of being a spouse of Jesus Christ, not a spouse of delights, but of blood and sufferings, urges me not to back out of the promises and vows taken at the foot of the Altar; by His Divine help, it compels me, rather, to keep myself ever more faithful to my God. The more terrifying my sorrows, the more cruel my disillusionings, the more I experience Jesus at my side to help me! (...)

Should you have the chance to see the Bishop, try to comfort and hearten him; tell him not to worry about me because I am at peace; the Sacred Heart sustains me in carrying the cross so as to render it very light on my shoulders."⁷¹ (71)

We are not in possession of any document that may clearly indicate the precise attitude assumed by Mother Merloni in the following months except for two drafts of letters of Bishop Scalabrini and an answer of hers. In a memo, probably of January 1905, Bishop Scalabrini marks down:

"Write to Alexandria that we cannot go on like this. Take provisions, otherwise I will relieve them and send them to you; and so be it done over with!

Things cannot go on this way! I go to Rome and bring the case to the Congregation of Bishops and Religious proposing the suppression of the Institute."⁷²

The draft of one of the two letters the Bishop wrote to the Mother dates back to April 1905:

"I am deeply grieved in realizing that, after so many sacrifices made by me for it, your Institute is running down to its ruin because of you.

I recently received a very serious letter from Rome. In it I am warned that, in case the Institute should not be put in order, it will be suppressed. It contains accusations of all sorts; quite a few may be exaggerations, but many may be true! The danger, however, is real! It is about time we have a good talk!

It looks as though some creditors... and several dismissed nuns have written to the Holy Father complaining about you and the Institute. Unfortunate sick

⁷⁰ Decree Scalabrini, Piacenza, February 28, 1904 (Minute Arch. G.S., 104/6).

⁷¹ Merloni to Father X, Milan, March 14, 1904 (Arch. G.S., 104/6).

⁷² Note of Scalabrini (Arch. G.S., 104/7).

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION – VOLUME 3
APPENDIX II**

woman, you pay heed to those Sisters who are least qualified to give you advice.

You have asked to be relieved of the office of Superior General and I decreed to appoint one indicated by you. What regard did you show for that decree? Instead, you kept torturing that poor thing, and still do every day! This way of doing things is sad indeed, because it is causing the ruin of the whole Institute. Do you wish to remain at Alexandria? Very well, but then leave all the other houses alone!

Several novices have now completed the year required for their novitiate, and beyond; why do you not allow them to take their vows? The Foundress has no other right than being the most humble, and the most observant of the rules, no other!

The house of Bardi is about to be closed deprived of Sisters; why? ... because those also are Novices?

The letter from Rome states that secular women are admitted to the Mother House; they must be dismissed. What is the maid in charge of the guest quarters doing there? Why has a secular woman been sent here from Alexandria? Why....

The poor Sisters lack what they need! Let the number of postulants and novices be fixed, and never exceed it!

Two houses.... closed down....and in only one house; only the Mother House.

Let there be set-up a regular administration with a priest of trust and proven honesty at the head of it responsible for all economic matters.

Instead, you take to hatred those who do you good, and hold dear those who, in good faith certainly, were the cause of your financial ruin and have discredited you. Well, then, what do you intend to do? Prostrate yourself at the feet of the Crucifix, and answer me because I am really weary of it all! I repeat, if you wish to remain at Alexandria, do so by all means, and fix there the Mother House! I inform you, though, that I will cease to assist you and am advising the public I have nothing to do with you any longer! The worthy Bishop of that diocese, a much more able man than I, will be of greater help to you. You printed in the rules that I am the Founder, you printed it a thousand times! What regard did you have for it? Tell to God to Whom you shall give an account."⁷³

Mother Merloni's response is dated from Alexandria on April 14, 1905, and it is the last we have of the correspondence Scalabrini-Merloni; the Bishop died on June 1!

Unfortunately, many letters of Bishop Scalabrini were lost; there remain only the less important ones and some drafts. However, the knotty aspects of the history of the initial years of the two Congregations of women sufficiently explain why many documents were destroyed.

Here is Mother Clelia's answer:

"I hasten to give an answer to your appreciated letter of yesterday.

1) I am quite willing to send the Sisters, the Novices, and the Postulants back to the house of Piacenza as requested by the Holy See.

⁷³ Scalabrini-Merloni, Draft with no date; very probably of April 13, 1905 (Arch. G.S., 104/7)

**HISTORY OF THE SCALABRINIAN CONGREGATION – VOLUME 3
APPENDIX II**

- 2) *As to the money of the Postulants I am in perfect order.*
- 3) *About dismissing the secular women from the Mother House, it can be done by the Superior of the house.*
- 4) *Regarding the number of Postulants to be admitted, let Your Excellency do as the Holy See demands.*
- 5) *For the Congregation's regular administration, do what you think best.*
- 6) *As to myself, it is only right that, having given my resignation, I should be a simple Sister.*
- 7) *It is my desire to remain at Alexandria until the time the Holy See will have appointed visitators to thoroughly study the state of mind of the poor Sisters both at the Mother House and at all the filial houses of the Congregation. Should you deem it fit to have investitures and profession, go ahead and do so as long as they be not on my conscience.*

Creditors did not write to Rome; rather, they were the same people who had already sought before to destroy the good reputation of both the Mother and the Congregation in Alexandria and elsewhere.

God is just and the results will soon be seen. If it is true that without a Sister well trained in music they are forced to close the house of Bardi, why not send Sister Borsini there?

Even though the letter was written in your hand, still I understand too well that the expressions used in it do not come from your generous and noble heart, but suggested by someone who will not be contented until he will see, as he hopes, the dissolution of the Institute. He shall never succeed in his scope.

Asking you to accept my humble regards together with those of these poor daughters, respectfully kissing your Sacred ring, I am honored to confirm myself for all my life your most grateful, obliged and sincere daughter,

Sister M. Clelia Merloni

P.S. April 14, 1905. I am waiting for the money of the train fare for 22 tickets, 13 with the reduction and 9 full fares."⁷⁴

In spite of this letter in which, though protesting to consider herself a simple nun, Mother Merloni was still expressing herself in tones of a Superior General, Bishop Scalabrini still showed a last gesture on behalf of the Foundress of the Sister Apostles of the Sacred Heart.

Suddenly, in May 1905, Mother Clelia Merloni expressed to the Sisters her strong concern over the health of Bishop Scalabrini.

"The Bishop is leaving us; the Bishop is leaving us!" she exclaimed with great surprise of all, as the Bishop, in spite of the innumerable discomforts of his trip to Brazil, was known to enjoy good health.

In her concern over this conviction, the Foundress decided to go to Piacenza. Upon hearing the reason of her trip, Mother Marcellina had a smile. *"Mother, believe me, the Bishop has never been better!"*

"Let us go, let us go to His Excellency!" was her answer. During the audience, the Mother kindly expressed to Bishop Scalabrini her desire for a settlement in

⁷⁴ Merloni-Scalabrini, Alexandria, April 14, 1905 (Arch. G.S., 104/7).

the juridical status of the house on "Via Borghetto" placing its title under the name of one of the Sisters. The Bishop also was surprised. "*But, I kept telling you for a long time that I wanted to do it! It was always you that answered me: There is time; we have time!*"

"*It's true, Your Excellency*" replied the Mother, "*but this time it is I to tell you. One must make hay while the sun shines!*"

And noticing the Bishop's wonderment at this expression she tactfully hastened to add:

"*I am in poor health, Excellency, we never know, I would like to see things settled.*"

"*Very well, let's go through with it.*"

The house was titled to Mother Marcellina; the necessary procedures took some fifteen days. Right at that time, Bishop Scalabrini was struck with a sudden illness."⁷⁵

Following the death of Bishop Scalabrini, the Mother House of the Sister Apostles was moved to Alexandria, and they began to depend on the Bishop of that city as provided by the rules.

The apostolic visitation requested by Mother Merloni took place in the year 1911.

In the meanwhile, and precisely in 1907, the separation between the Sister Apostles of the Sacred Heart and the Scalabrinian Sisters became an accomplished fact.

During the month spent at São Paulo in 1904, Bishop Scalabrini had realized that the fusion of the two groups of Sisters had to be considered a failure because each group was holding on to its own mentality and spirit.

"The good sisters of that time, eyewitnesses to the facts, remembered, and still do, what Bishop Scalabrini said at the orphanage of Ipiranga on the occasion of his trip to Brazil in 1904.

When in all confidence they opened their hearts telling him, as to a Father, their worries, their troubles, and their uncertainties for the future, he assured them:

"Do not be afraid, daughters, you shall be Missionary Sisters of St. Charles."

To this sad period belongs the small but significant incident that took place at the orphanage of Ipiranga, which we wish to report here:

It was a winter day, about lunch hour. The venerable Founder had just stepped out of the administration office and was walking down the hall when he met Mother Assunta. All recollected and with a fast step she was carrying a soup tureen. Bishop Scalabrini, who with his searching eyes could read deep into their hearts the anxieties of his daughters, addressed her in a moved fatherly voice with these memorable words of encouragement:

"Oh, poor Assunta, cheer up, cheer up, you shall die a Missionary Sister of St.

⁷⁵ "Vita di Madre Clelia Merloni" (Life of Mother Clelia Merloni) (Rome 1954), pp. 123-124.

Charles!"

Prophetic words! Years later, sick in bed and a month before her passing, with immense emotion she will still remind Mother Lucy of those memorable words of the Founder, that had infused in her so much courage and strength in the years of trial."⁷⁶

With the transfer of the Mother House to Alexandria after the passing of Bishop Scalabrini, the Sister Apostles felt free to go their way, which did not coincide with the road laid out for them by Bishop Scalabrini.

The Sisters of the "Scalabrinian" group could not accept this change of direction. They had accepted, or had sought to accept, the merging of the two groups because they were assured that the scope was the same, as the same was the Founder; and such was indeed the will of Bishop Scalabrini. Instead, they were now realizing that the group of Mother Merloni, much larger, as it counted two hundred members already, was decidedly turning away from the Founder and from the scope for which he had canonically founded the Congregation. The separation could not be delayed any longer! The new Superior General of the Scalabrinians, Father Dominic Vicentini, took it upon himself to settle the matter.

He gave orders to Father Consoni, the greatest benefactor, except for Bishop Scalabrini, of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles, to discuss the question with the Bishop of São Paulo. With his approval, all the Sisters of Mother Merloni were sent to the hospital Umberto I, while the nine Missionary Sisters of St. Charles remained at the orphanage and readopted the old rules.

Especially by merit of humble and strong Mother Assunta Marchetti, from this small group there grew the Congregation known by the official title "Missionary Sisters of St. Charles (Scalabrinians)".

⁷⁶ E. Martini, "Memoirs, etc." cit. (Arch. G.S., 103/8).

Scalabrini to Ledochowski ¹

Report to the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith on the Institute of the Missionaries of St. Charles for Italian Emigrants

August 12, 1900

Most Reverend Eminence

I am finally keeping my promise to send you a report on the St. Charles Institute for our Italian emigrants. I would have liked to prepare a complete and documented report, given, however, the little time at my disposal, I will limit myself to what is most important.

1. The origins of the Institute

One of the scourges I lamented, while visiting for the first time the 386 parishes of my diocese, was that of emigration. I took notice that at that time as many as 28,000 members of my diocese were living abroad. Not infrequently, some of them were sending me very moving letters, where, in giving me notice of their sad state, especially from the religious point of view, they were begging me insistently to come to their help. More than once at the Piacenza railroad station, I myself witnessed the departure of emigrants and I admit that, in seeing their pain and sadness, thinking of the very numerous and serious evils they would encounter, imagining the lack of any spiritual help they would face, I felt the pain in my heart, and, saddened about their lot, I resolved within myself to do something.

It was then I felt I had to turn, as I did, to the Most Em. Cardinal Simeoni, then Prefect of “*Propaganda*”, to learn how I could meet this serious need, in a sure and efficient manner. He answered with letter dated February 9, 1887. In it, while lamenting that the efforts of this S. Congregation to set up aid committees for Italian emigrants, had not produced satisfactory results, he invited me, on behalf of the Holy Father (who had been pleased with my initiative), to prepare and present a project for the purpose of providing at least for the most urgent spiritual needs of Italians across the ocean.

I immediately carried out the mandate as best as possible. This S. Congregation took up this very important issue, and the Holy Father, during the audience of June 26, 1887, approved its decisions. One of these, the fourth one, said the following: “*To establish in Italy one or more institutes of priests, who would go to America, to do mission work among emigrants, so as to confirm their faith, in proper agreement with the local bishops. This Institute will be placed under the supervision of the Ordinary, but its rules would have to be approved by the S. Congregation of Propaganda*”. After said arrangement, I was called to Rome, and I was then authorized to open in Piacenza the Institute of Missionaries and to provide as far as possible to all other needs of the emigrants.

I will not take more time to address the needs of our emigration. Our compatriots in America amount to more than 3 million and this S. Congregation knows full well their condition. Having done so much for the

¹ Ledochowski M., Cardinal Prefect of the S. Congregation of Propaganda Fide from 1892 to 1902.

spreading of the faith among those who never had the benefit of having it, this S. Congregation has not neglected to extend its attention to keep that same faith alive in those who already have it.

2. Growth of the Institute

Upon my return to Piacenza, trusting in the help of God and in the promise of a substantial annual contribution by this S. Congregation, and after having made known the project to the press, I opened an Institute for Italian Missions especially in America. Immediately I received requests from priests who were asking to be admitted to the new congregation. The first to be accepted were: Fr. Giuseppe Molinari, from Piacenza, and Fr. Domenico Mantese from Vicenza. Both have died in odor of sanctity following their hard labor: the first as superior of the House of Piacenza, the second in New York. In keeping with the Rules approved by this S. Congregation, the priests were expected to undergo one year of novitiate, take the three usual religious vows, but only for 5 years, and place themselves fully at my disposal. No need to enumerate here the many missionary expeditions; this S. Congregation has surely recorded them, having sent each time to the departing individuals its endorsement as apostolic missionaries.

3. The St. Raphael Association

To better respond to the intentions of this S. Congregation, in addition to the Institute of Missionaries, I also established a lay society, entitled to St. Raphael. To make it better known, I travelled to hold conferences in the main cities of Italy, where I also sought to establish committees of said society. In a short while 19 of them were organized and right where the migrants' exodus is more conspicuous. Although this institution, the Bylaws of which I am attaching, has yet to be as successful as expected, it has, nonetheless, kept the idea alive and it has been of great help. From now onward, it is my hope that the St. Raphael will be of greater help thanks to the backing of the Catholic Congresses. During the Congress held last year in Ferrara, I spoke about it and soon, with unanimous applause, it was decided to set up a group especially dedicated to emigration. I have been invited again to speak about it in the next Congress in Rome and I would like to believe that it will not be in vain.

4. The Mother House

It was first necessary to have a fixed residence, that is: the Mother House of the Congregation of the Missionaries, which I placed under the protection of St. Charles. This was done by purchasing from the diocesan seminary, with due licenses from the Holy See and from the government, an old convent, with an attached garden of 14 perches of land and the church which had been long closed to public worship. After purchasing it, some renovations were done to both the house and the church; and now we have a place, not grandiose, but quite suitable to keep the candidates separated from the novices and these from the professed religious. The church, which is attended by the people with particular predilection, is modest but it is kept up with great propriety and is served by the missionaries themselves, in preparing for their apostolic ministry, to which they are called.

I am attaching to the present report a drawing of both the house and the church with the note that, for the government, both appear as the property of the Seminary. To avoid expenses (awaiting the drafting of a regular contract whenever it may be proper), all that could be sufficient for now is a decree from the S. Congregation of Propaganda Fide, stating that said house and church belong to the S. Congregation of Propaganda Fide, to be used as Mother House of the Congregation of St. Charles. With the government we are safe: the Seminary appears as the owner and no sale taxes or other fees are to be paid. One of my successors could raise an issue; but to avoid this inconvenience, I believe that the above-mentioned decree could be more than sufficient.

In this residence there are classes of theology and philosophy. The courses of theology are attended also by the priests who have already completed their studies, while they stay at the Mother House. The young missionary candidates, who have yet to complete their high school, are attending the diocesan seminary. The Mother House's annual expenses, including the expeditions of the missionaries, are ordinarily between 45,000 to 50,000 liras.

5. The House in Genoa

One of our migrants' great needs is that they be assisted in the port of embarkation of Genoa. Those poor people are treated there as cheap merchandise, if not worse. There too I spoke publicly about the St. Raphael Society - I think it was in 1888 -, and the then Venerable Archbishop Magnasco and the port inspector, the Cav. Malnate, begged me with tears in their eyes to send a missionary to Genoa to attend to those unfortunate people, viciously betrayed and exploited in all possible ways. As soon as I could, I met their holy desire, which was also mine, and I opened a house there. The good the Missionaries are doing is incredible. It is true that, in trying to counteract so many abuses and deceptions, the missionaries had to face the anger of private interests and of the Masonic newspapers; but, by the grace of God, they overcame everything. Now their work is universally appreciated and Fr. Maldotti's name, the first missionary sent to Genoa, is blessed by all.

6. Religious Assistance from Genoa to the American Ports

As soon as the institution of the Missionaries of St. Charles and the St. Raphael Society came to be known by our emigrant compatriots, I received letters from various parts of Italy, pointing to the grave need of assisting emigrants during the ocean crossing. I appealed right away to the various shipping companies requesting free round-trip for those priests willing to do this work of charity; only one, "*La Veloce*" replied positively to my appeal. No less than 10 or 12 priests were departing every year from the port of Genoa along with the unfortunate expatriates. On ship they celebrated mass, preached, heard confessions, assisted the sick, who were never lacking. In just one ocean crossing 18 people died. Fortunately the priest was on board: he was able to assist the dying and give comfort with his word and with his example to the survivors. This went on for 4 years, but then "*La Veloce*"

suffered a setback and, unfortunately, it too restricted his policy extending it only to the Missionaries of Genoa. Oh, if we only had the means, how much more good could be done!

I must point out that the Most Em. Cardinal Simeoni had granted me, as apostolic delegate, on behalf of the Holy Father, all the necessary faculties to be conferred to the priests who were following the emigrants overseas: such faculties ceased for the priests once the ship reached the territory subject to someone else's jurisdiction.

7. North America

What the conditions of the Italians in North America were 12 years ago or so, could be gathered from the above-mentioned letter of the Most Em. Simeoni, dated February 9, 1887. *"I too - that the holy man wrote me - am deeply distraught by the sad conditions (of the Italian emigrants in America). The reports sent to this S. Congregation by the archbishops of New York, New Orleans, and by the Fathers of the 3rd Plenary Council of Baltimore, offer a very disheartening idea of their spiritual and religious condition."*

Be it enough to say that in New York the Italians were only allowed to use the basement, or the lower Church, of the Ascension. For truth's sake, however, I must point out that, as soon as Archbishop Corrigan of New York came to know our institution, he wrote me very warm letters asking for Missionaries and offering to protect them the best way possible. Our Missionaries went there; they opened, so to say, the doors of the missions to the Italian expatriates, and now, if they wish, most of these can satisfy their spiritual needs. Other Congregations joined the Missionaries of St. Charles, and in the hearts of the Shepherds a providential concern arose for the poor emigrants; and thus, even if unable to do all that should have been done for them, still we accomplished much. On the occasion of the canonization of John Baptist LaSalle and Rita of Cascia, I had the opportunity to meet many North American Bishops: all showed themselves happy, very appreciative for the good the Missionaries of St. Charles are doing there. I have in this regard, a very flattering letter from the Most Em. Cardinal Satolli, former Apostolic Delegate in America, and a close witness to the zeal of the Missionaries. In addition, the Archbishop of New York, who came here, in response to the salutations of the clergy of the city, who had come to offer their respects, offered for the occasion words so highly laudatory of our work, that I, albeit deeply and gratefully moved, thought it better, for the sake of truth, to soften them. I pointed out that it is a new Institute, still a baby, which can hardly be totally exempt from defects and lack of experience; I added that there had been faults and that many failures had also taken place among us; but I hoped that, with divine help, our Institute would always continue to be perfected.

I have a number of requests from those Most Rev. Bishops and, as soon as I will be able to, I will grant them quite gladly. I always have in my mind (even though expressed in faulty Italian) the words of Bishop Spalding of Peoria: *"The problem of Italian emigration to the United States and of the condition of emigrants in America is of great importance, and more so because the head of the Church is in Italy; this leads those ill-disposed to believe that the dejected condition of this part of our people is due to the influence of their own Church."*

It seems, therefore, that this issue should be brought to the attention of the Holy Father and of the Italian Bishops.

8. Houses in North America

The houses open so far in North America are:

1. New York: Church of St. Joachim. Superior Fr. Oreste Alussi.
2. New York: Church of the Blessed Virgin of the Rosary of Pompeii. Superior Fr. Antonio Demo.
The Port Mission deserves special mention. The Missionaries assigned are recognized as legal representatives of the Italian emigration with the "Labor Bureau" or Minister of Public Works. In this way they, while residing in the "*Barge Office*" or the Immigration Office at the port, they offer ready assistance to all Italian emigrants who disembark, especially to those who are recommended to them and arrive holding special tags given them by the committees of the Patronage Association established in Italy.
3. Boston: Church of the Sacred Heart. Superior Fr. Giacomo Gambera, Provincial.
4. Outside Boston: Church of St. Lazarus.
5. Providence: Church of the Holy Spirit. Superior Fr. Paolo Novati.
6. Outside the city: Church of St. Anne. Superior Fr. Giulio Priolo.
7. New Haven, Conn.: Church of St. Michael. Superior Fr. Luigi Lango.
8. Cincinnati: Church of St. Peter. Superior Fr. Giuseppe Quadranti.
9. Cincinnati: Oratory in the Sicilian section.
10. Buffalo: Church of St. Anthony. Superior Fr. Lodovico Martinelli.
11. Syracuse: Church of St. Peter. Superior Fr. Vittorio Sciolla.
12. Cleveland, Ohio: Church of O.L. of the Rosary. Superior Fr. Antonio Gibelli.
13. Kansas City, Mo.: Church of the Rosary. Superior Fr. Pietro Lotti.
14. New Orleans: Italian Chapel. Fr. Luigi Paroli.
15. Detroit, Mich.: Church of St. Francis. Fr. Francesco Beccherini.
16. Newark: Church of St. Joseph. Fr. Felice Morelli.
17. Marquette: Fr. Beniamino Bertò.
18. Boston: Polish Church. Fr. Giovanni Chmielinski. This young Polish priest, who studied here at the Mother House (showing me regular papers from his Bishop) asked me earnestly to devote himself to his countrymen. After having consulted that worthy Archbishop, I consented. He, however, is under the superiors of the Congregation of St. Charles.
19. Pittsburgh: The Church of St. Peter, which is being used by the Italians, was ceded to the Franciscans, because the pastor had to return to Italy and had no one to take his place.

9. Brazil

As is well known by all, our emigration is mainly headed towards South America: there too, therefore, and especially in Brazil I sent some of my Missionaries. Initially I had favored the North: both because it was a Protestant region and also because it seemed to me that there the need was greater. Nonetheless I have always divided my expeditions evenly between the North and the South.

As soon as the Missionary set foot on Brazilian soil, rather than finding help they encountered obstacles, and numerous oppositions; however in the last several years, thanks to the zeal of those holy bishops, things appear to have changed.

I believe it useful to report a letter sent on May 14, 1900 from Petropolis, to

the Superior of our Missionaries of São Paulo by his Excellency the Internuncio: *“I have learned – he says – of the great growth of the Institute of the Missionaries of St. Charles in those regions; and of the immense good they are doing among so many abandoned colonists in places totally segregated and deprived of religious assistance. I am truly edified and I profusely thank God and the good religious, especially Your Reverence, who is their head and encourages them with words and example. This makes it even harder for me to have to tell you that “rem difficilem postulasti”.* Thus far the Internuncio; and since from a letter Fr. Consoni sent me with that of the Internuncio I was able to understand what the matter was, I too repeat what the Monsignor wrote: *“rem difficilem postulasti”*, grateful for what this S. Congregation is already doing for us.

While in the North the emigrants are gathered in large masses in the cities, in the South, especially in Brazil, they are scattered in small groups over very large territories. Our Missionaries, thus, have taken care to build among those groups small churches, oratories, chapels where they go periodically to exercise the sacred ministry.

10. Residences in Brazil

1. In S. Felicidade in the diocese of Curitiba, and from there they travel throughout the entire territory of Paraná. There, through their initiative, as I see from a report I just received, the following has been accomplished:
 - a. a beautiful and large church dedicated to S. Felicidade;
 - b. a bell tower in masonry which will be 40 m high;
 - c. a cemetery with a chapel for the celebration of Mass;
 - d. the confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, of the 40 Hour Devotion and the St. Anthony Association with 400 members;
 - e. a cemetery and the church dedicated to the Transfiguration in the colony of Ferrara;
 - f. a church which, once completed, will be dedicated to O.L. of Lourdes in Campo Comprido;
 - g. a church to St. Francis Xavier in the colony of Gabriela;
 - h. a very beautiful church dedicated to St. Mark the Evangelist in the colony of Pilarsinho.
2. In the colony of Umbará, a wooden church dedicated to St. Peter the Apostle, with its bell tower, a cemetery with a chapel, where Holy Mass can be celebrated.
The number of baptisms in the Italian colonies from July 1893 to April 1900 reaches the goodly number of 1229, the number of marriages is 229. This year in S. Felicidade a school has been opened for girls assisted by the Sisters, about which the Italian Consul residing in Curitiba has written a highly laudatory report to the ministry.
3. In Encantado in the diocese of Porto Alegre.
4. In Nova Bassano, a small city which rose and prospers, it could be said, through the efforts of our missionaries and especially of Fr. Pietro Colbacchini, an early and very zealous apostle of Brazil: a soul totally on fire for the good of the brothers and capable of great things. His health, however, is poor and I do not know whether he can withstand much longer in leading that important mission, which covers a very huge territory.
5. In Alfredo Chaves, a large mission entrusted lately to our Fathers by the

bishop of Porto Alegre.

6. In Santa Teresa, but I know little about this mission. The one in charge of it is a pious man, a hermit, I should say, and writes little.

7. In São Paulo, where Brazil's most important mission is found. Presently there are 4 priests with some brother catechists. On the 12th of this month 2 more priests with catechists and with 6 sisters for the orphanage will depart. Since the Bishop of São Paulo is now present in Rome, the S. Congregation will be able to receive direct news from him, who is very deserving of our missionaries and of our emigrants. I just mentioned in passing the orphanage; but it deserves a special mention. Aboard the ship, where a missionary, Fr. Giuseppe Marchetti (a professor in the seminary of Lucca) was traveling, a young bride died leaving behind an orphaned infant and the husband in a state of despair. The missionary, trying to console the poor man, who was threatening to jump overboard, promised him that he would care for the baby and he kept his promise. He arrived at Rio de Janeiro carrying in his arms that innocent little creature and with it in his arms he presented himself to the noble Count Pio di Savoia, who was then the Consul General in that city. All he could offer to the young missionary were words of encouragement; but this was enough for him to go knocking from door to door until he finally entrusted the little orphan to the porter of a religious house.

From that moment on the idea came to him to found in São Paulo (where he had arrived) an orphanage for the children of Italians and through many great sacrifices he succeeded in establishing it. It is now 6 years old with 200 orphans and a martyr who prays for them from Heaven, because the demanding work undertaken cost the pious and zealous missionary his life. May his soul, which had ripen for heaven at 30 years of age, be at peace!

11. The Sisters

The work of the Missionaries would be incomplete, especially in South America, without the help of the Sisters. I asked for them from various existing congregations but with no success. True, the good Sisters from Codogno offered themselves and I opened to them the doors of America, where they are doing much good, but not the good which is intended by our Congregation. We need Sisters like those found in the dioceses of France, who readily accept to live in a community of only four and unpretentiously offer preliminary schooling, teach catechism and, where possible, assist the sick, with all the safeguards prudence and experience would suggest. Even if the Missionaries insisted and pressured me to have such Sisters, I have always resisted it, feeling a strong reluctance to take on such task.

A few years ago, however, a number of providential circumstances made me understand that this was the Will of God, and now we have "The Apostles of the Sacred Heart", who are also assigned to assisting emigrants, especially in America. In a short while, following two years of preparation, 12 of them will leave: 6 in the first half of this month for São Paulo; the other 6, by the end of September, for Curitiba. Others will leave later, since in a short time we have received more than 100 requests. As of now all this is done on an experimental basis. Should God bless, as I hope, this initiative, in due time the Rules will be sent to this S. Congregation.

12. Conclusion and Documentation

To complete this report in the short time at my disposal, I am listing the documentations I am sending concerning this matter:

- a) I sponsored a competition for a "*Handbook or Spiritual Guide for the Italian Emigrant in America*" posting a reward of 1500 lira. 25 deserving ecclesiastics from various regions of Italy responded. A commission, chaired by the late Cardinal Alimonda of Turin, awarded the prize to the Reverend Pietro Colbacchini a missionary of ours. Thus Divine Providence, who knows our poverty, did not allow the awarded some to leave our small coffers. Copy of this "*Guide*", which was printed in great quantities, is being sent to this S. Congregation.
- b) Of my own initiative, I published a booklet entitled "*The Italian Emigration in America, Observations*" etc.
- c) At the time of the new emigration law (1888), I also published another booklet entitled: "*The Proposed Legislation on Italian Emigration. Observations and Proposals*". Those proposals were then applauded, but not adopted. It is known that the progress of ideas is exasperatingly slow, especially when they antagonize interests and passions, but it is continuous when the proposed ideas are right and truly useful. And, in fact, those same proposals now form the basis of the law on emigration, which will soon be debated in the Chamber of Parliament.
- d) I am also attaching a copy of the report I sent to the Foreign Minister, which had been put together by me, by the president of the St. Raphael, the Marquis Volpe Landi and by Fr. Maldotti, after having studied together the outline of the law on emigration sent to me by the Minister himself.
- e) Finally I am attaching a copy of a *Conference I gave at the Sacred Exposition in Turin*, with the ever clear intention of calling the attention of the elite on the grave problem of emigration and of inciting good people to come to the help of their expatriate brothers.

I conclude with the Apostle (St. Paul): "*Ego plantavi, Apollo rigavit, Deus autem incrementum dedit*" (I planted it, Apollo watered it, but God gave it growth"²

John B. Scalabrini

² AGS / BA 03, 04, 02a