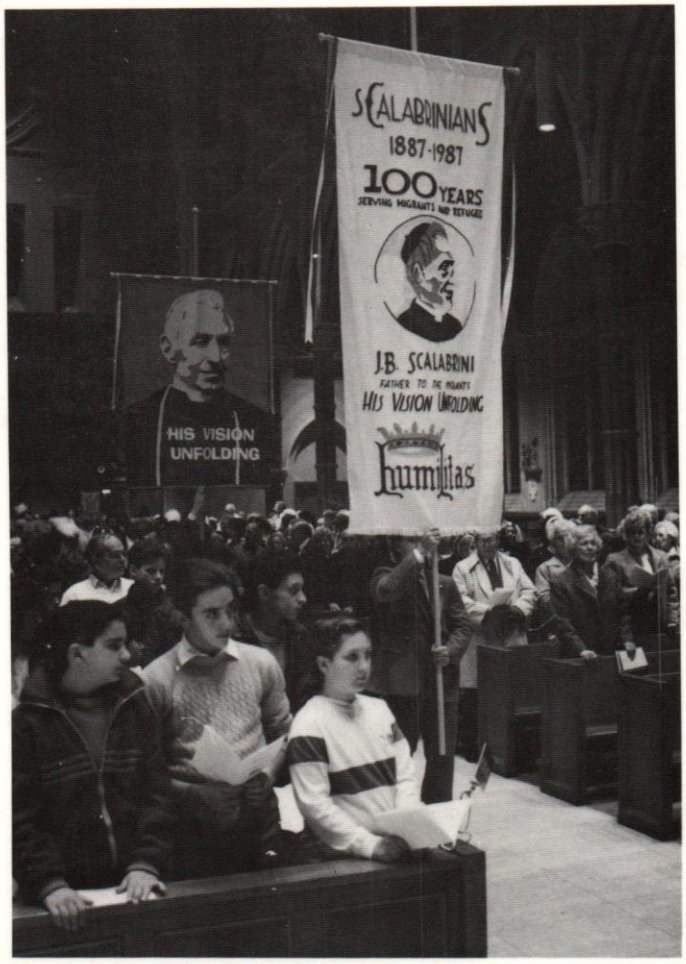
THE SCALABRINIANS IN NORTH AMERICA 1888 - 1988

A VISION UNFOLDING



Alba Zizzamia

Center for Migration Studies

A VISION UNFOLDING

THE SCALABRINIANS IN NORTH AMERICA

(1888 – 1988)

by

Alba Zizzamia

Canter for Migration Studies

1989

Content

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Father Andrew Brizzolara, who first approached me to undertake this brief history in the context of the centenaries of the Scalabrinian Order and the first mission in North America. It has been a pleasant and rewarding experience thanks to the Scalabrinians I encountered along the way, who were unfailingly helpful, hospitable, patient and generous with interviews and documentation, whether in the Generalate in Rome, the Motherhouse in Piacenza, the Centers for Migration Studies in Rome and Staten Island, the homes for the elderly and cultural centers, and the parishes I was privileged to visit. Without them this work could not have been written and I am deeply grateful to all of them.

I wish especially to express my appreciation to Father Joseph Invernizzi, who was Superior of the New York Province under whom the work got started, for his invaluable insights, understanding and suggestions; to Father Vincent Monaco, Provincial Treasurer, for his ever-ready and varied assistance; Julio Rosario for the graphic composition of the text, and to Father Silvano Tomasi, the present Provincial Superior, for his expert guidance through the history and background materials.

New York, June 1, 1988. Alba Zizzamia

Foreword*

Immigration has marked American life from the start. In fact, the growth and development of all the countries in the Americas are linked to the arrival since 1492 of colonial conquerors, slaves, indentured servants, immigrants and refugees.

While American history cannot be understood without reference to the immigrants who settled the Western Hemisphere, the immigrants' experience can hardly be understood without reference to their religion and the role it played in their process of adaptation.

The immigrants from Italy coming to North and South America at the close of the nineteenth century had mostly economic survival and the desire to make it in the new country as a priority. Their traditional Catholic faith, however, was the natural context within which family life, personal dignity and group solidarity were expressed and celebrated, occasional outbursts of anticlericalism notwithstanding.

This book, *A Vision Unfolding: The Scalabrinians in North America (1888-1988)* looks into the interaction of immigrants and religion from the perspective of a case history, that of the Missionaries of St. Charles-Scalabrinians, a group of religious men active among immigrant communities since they first arrived in New York in July 1888. In a popular reflective and fast-moving narrative, Alba Zizzamia catches the inspiration and the evolution of pastoral strategies, the social assistance projects, the personalities involved in a century of ministry to newcomers. It was not intended to treat the themes discussed and pastoral agents mentioned with extensive analysis and documentation. The purpose of the book is simply a panoramic presentation of the contribution and work of the Missionaries of St. Charles in the context of the Church's pastoral action among immigrants in North America. The insights that emerge from the history of this small missionary community still point out the direction of the journey as the Scalabrinians move forward into their second century.

The importance of religious assistance to the Italian ethnic group shows the lesson that the very experience of uprooting and immigration into unfamiliar cultural surroundings calls for a specialized pastoral ministry beyond any particular nationality and culture.

Immigrant groups are dynamic and pastoral strategies need to adopt a creative flexibility that reflects their mobility and pace of integration while taking

advantage of the structural stability of their parishes where ethnic identity and a sense of community were nurtured.

The vision and practical courage of the charismatic founder and saintly bishop John Baptist Scalabrini remain a model for his missionaries on how compassion and social justice can find in faith a most effective way to reach out and walk with the migrants.

Shortly after they settled in the United States, the first Scalabrinian missionaries added this comment in a report "from the day of their departure from Piacenza on July 12, 1888" sent to Bishop Scalabrini: "So far the project moves along very well. Such is the state of our mission in New York. Many are the struggles endured and many will be those that we will have to endure because the difficulties are many. Our success, however, will not fail." From the tenements of New York, they reached to the migrant farm workers of California, to Canada, Mexico, Venezuela, Colombia and to Australia. With moments of crisis and the ever-present tensions brought about by "the abundant harvest and the few workers" (Lk, 10:2) as today's masses of immigrants and refugees increase on the crossroads of the world, the dream of the early Missionaries of St. Charles is still pursued and their Founder's vision is still unfolding.

**Silvano M. Tomasi, c.s.

*Please note: not all the pictures in the printed book are inserted in this electronic format.

**Silvano M. Tomasi, c.s., is Provincial Superior of the St. Charles Borromeo Province (New York) of the Missionaries of St. Charles-Scalabrinians and former director of the Office of Pastoral Care of Migrants and Refugees of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Chapter 1

The Setting

"...thousands upon thousands
of our brothers live defenseless
in a distant country, objects of
exploitation that is often unpunished,
without the comfort of a friendly word...
What can be done to help them?"

Bishop John Baptist Scalabrini

Much is made of the United States as a unique beacon of freedom and opportunity. But its most remarkable attribute perhaps is the toil-and-trouble ridden way it has absorbed into a variegated unity the diverse races, nationalities and cultures that have entered its borders throughout its history. And it continues to do so as the changing tides of immigration still press in.

Some one hundred years ago a far-sighted Italian bishop saw this phenomenon as America's special and divinely ordained vocation. He was John Baptist Scalabrini, Bishop of Piacenza in Northern Italy. And if the process of assimilation into American life is today a little less painful and in some ways more enlightened, this may be credited in good measure to the concepts, initiatives and institutions he developed and fostered in his concern for the plight of his countrymen struggling in the mass movements to the Americas.

In 1887 he founded a society of priests to serve the Italian migrants, the Missionaries of St. Charles, popularly known as the Scalabrinian Fathers, who have brought his spirit and ideas, his philosophy of service and practical action to their work on behalf of the neglected and disadvantaged in the ever-widening field of migration.

The nineteenth century in the United States was one of heady economic growth and expansion, propelled by successive waves of immigrant groups from Europe which filled the needs of the changing economy for an abundance of low-cost labor. Not reflected in America's self-image as the open "golden door" to dreams and freedom are the prejudices and often cruel forms of discrimination

encountered by each nationality group, with which, once established, it proceeded in its turn to treat the next arrivals, whether from ignorance, forgetfulness or a sense of superiority for having "made it."

By the time the mass immigration from Italy began, after the Civil War, the early movements of Scandinavians, Germans and Irish had already started to move up the ladder of social acceptance and had gained a foothold in the occupations and to some degree in political life. The Italians then fell heir to their prejudices as well as to the lowest jobs on the ladder, and at the same time both early and new immigrants felt the shafts of the anti-foreign, or nativist, and anti-Catholic bigotries that kept resurfacing in American society as one or another "protective" association, know-nothingism or the Ku Klux Klan, whose special targets included Catholics and Jews.

Early settlers in New England had seen themselves as the new Chosen People, who under Divine Providence were to bring about a Christian society in the new world. This concept, which seeped into secular life, served at first to identify America as Protestant territory and eventually contributed to the view that the immigrants flooding into the country were diluting the "purity of the race" and undermining the moral fiber and culture of American society. The great influx of immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe in the latter half of the nineteenth century was viewed particularly as a foreign menace, and books, debates and treatises appeared setting forth the superiority of the Nordic peoples. Supposedly "scientific" facts and reasoning were adduced to prove the inequality of the races; the Mediterranean and Jewish people were considered definitely on the bottom of the racial scale. While there were many who thought them unassimilable, there were also others who felt that they held some promise and attempts should be made to "civilize" them, i.e. give them the Anglo-Saxon concept of righteousness, law and order and teach them to eat "nutritious foods."

Like the Germans and Irish before them, the Italians were not only foreign they were also Catholic and this was enough to raise the hackles of fear in the face of a presumed religious and political threat. The early colonies had had laws limiting the political liberty of Catholics or restricting the practice of their religion. Most of these laws disappeared or were modified after the American revolution, but the attitudes and discrimination in professional and social life they had embodied remained. The strain of anti-Catholicism that ran through American Society at times gave rise to an occasional riot, led to the burning of convents and churches, produced scurrilous literature describing the depravity of nuns and priests and raised horrific visions of a papal military invasion or a Vatican established in the heart of the Mississippi Valley (feared by Samuel Morse of

telegraph fame.) While these were extremes they nevertheless reflected and contributed to the various patterns of anti-Catholic discrimination that persisted through the first half of the twentieth century. Even the incredible extremes resurfaced in the campaign against the presidential candidacy of Al Smith, the speeches Senator Thomas Heflin of Alabama repeatedly delivered in the Senate in the 1920s, and the activity of organizations "for the protection of the separation of Church and State" in the 1950s.

Two aspects of this anti-Catholic mistrust and antagonism particularly influenced the Catholic Church the immigrants encountered in the latter half of the nineteenth century. One was the aggressive proselytizing of some Protestant denominations in a no doubt well-intentioned effort to redeem the Catholic immigrants from their benighted state and "Christianize" them. The other was the charge that the Catholic Church was a foreign entity, that its members were subservient to a foreign power (i.e., the Pope) and that to be a Catholic was somehow un-American.

One response of the Catholic Church to the dominant Protestant culture, which it viewed with its own brand of mistrust, was the creation of parochial schools (though a subject of debate within the Church for years), Catholic hospitals, orphanages and other institutions, thus providing a full range of services where the faith could be nourished and protected. Another was the eventual acceptance, again amid tension and debate, of the national parishes for different nationality groups of immigrants, some of whom, in fact, initiated the establishment of their own churches. These parishes were desired and sometimes insisted upon by practically all the Catholic immigrant groups because there they could worship, pray and hear the Word of God in their own language, continue the religious customs and traditions they had brought with them, and find a comfortably familiar community that offered relief and surcease from the trauma of adjusting to the strange new society they had entered. These parishes along with the parochial schools both cushioned and facilitated the immigrants' transition into mainstream America and provided a first bridge between them and their American-born children.

The charge of "foreignness" was a concern of the United States Church that lasted almost down to the present day. The desire to prove it untrue, to be recognized as fully American, fostered a general tendency to push for the rapid Americanization of the newcomers. This led on the part of bishops and clergy (with notable exceptions) to some insensitivity to the diverse customs and cultures entering their churches; they had little or no knowledge about them and found them hard to understand in any case.

The first Catholic diocese in the United States had been created in Baltimore in 1792 with John Carroll as its bishop. So it was a young Church the immigrants met in the 19th century, striving to establish itself, growing and expanding as the tides of newcomers rolled in. The Germans began coming early in the century and for them, as for later immigrant groups, their language was intimately interwoven with the practice of their faith. They insisted on the use of German in the liturgy and other services and so they started national parishes. The Irish had been coming to the United States in fairly large numbers since colonial times and had the advantage of speaking English. The Protestants among them fitted easily into the contemporary culture. The Catholic Irish, for whom their religion was a mark of individual and national identity, gathered in their own neighborhoods and parishes, and in a sense fixed the establishment of the Church in the United States, at the same time exerting a predominant influence on its character and development.

The bishops, involved in building churches, schools and other institutions and coping with internal tensions and controversies, had little time or enough priests to deal with each new wave of immigrants in a systematic way. The assistance these needed was somewhat sporadically provided by several religious orders and the occasional individual priest of a given nationality, while in a few dioceses priests were sent overseas for the required language training. But apparently there was need for some control over such a patchwork constituency, some uniformity in religious practices and the fulfillment of religious obligations. The simplest, most direct, though certainly not the easiest, approach was to have the Catholic immigrants conform to the "American" Church and the "American" way of doing things - again Americanization as quickly as possible. The resentment shared by Germans, Poles, Italians and French Canadians - to being "Irishized" as they saw it, their insistence on their own churches and adherence to their own traditional religious customs form a substantial and often troublesome part of American Catholic Church history of the nineteenth century.

By the 1880s, when Bishop Scalabrini turned his perceptive and compassionate attention to the Italian emigrants to the Americas, the Church in the United States and the Italian newcomers had become something of a mutual problem. Who were these Italians the local clergy viewed as irreligious and generally impossible? For one thing they were far from a homogeneous group, coming as they did from a variety of towns and villages, each with its age-old traditions, their language fragmented in numerous dialects. Unlike the Irish their loyalties were not political, that is, to the Italian State, which after all was only ten years old, but rather to Italy in terms of values and culture. They had a sentimental nostalgic attachment to the town from which they had come, and it was a practical

one too since it was in the neighborhood clusters of their fellow-townsmen or "paesani" that they found a taste of home, usually generous help on their first arrival and a haven from the unwelcoming society around them. They also brought with them their historical inter-town and inter-village rivalries ("campanilismo") that at times extended even to the festivals for their patron saints.

Before 1870 a scattering of immigrants from Genoa and other Northern Italian areas had become successful entrepreneurs in cities like San Francisco and Chicago and some had even established a successful trade between Genoa and New York. Other pre-1870 immigrants had included a trickle of musicians, artists, architects, writers and adventurers, among them political exiles tossed up by the revolutionary movement for the unification of Italy. Many of the exiles particularly were anti-clerical and anti-Church, a stance that in no way helped the later immigrants and in fact often created problems for them. There were Italian craftsmen among the stone cutters and carvers in the quarries of Vermont, among the silk workers in New Jersey, and doing the decorative work in government buildings in Washington or in New York's new and elegant apartment houses.

Around 1870, however, emigration from Italy became a mass movement to the United States and to South America, composed mainly of the poor seeking escape from a hopeless future and others hoping to earn the modest wherewithal to return home and buy the piece of land, the house, or the small business on which they had set their hearts. Factors contributing to the exodus were the depressed state of the economy in Italy due to severe reverses in agriculture, its chief sector, a falling off of trade, a series of natural disasters in Southern Italy, a declining textile industry in the North, widespread unemployment and a newly structured government busy trying to organize itself and largely unable to cope with the growing crises. Into this socioeconomic unrest came recruiters from transportation companies anxious to fill their ships and from other enterprises keen to import cheap labor for the hard and dangerous work no one else wanted to do. Such agents, who received so much per person they signed up - a practice as old as the American colonies - painted seductive pictures of the money to be earned in the great new world, sometimes sent their migrants to their "promising" future trapped in crippling labor contracts, or again gulled them unmercifully, taking all their hard-earned savings and sending them into the unknown where no employer or anyone else was waiting to receive them. There were also inviting letters from relatives and friends recounting new opportunities and the beguiling tales of returnees who had managed some success and were spending money the stay-at-homes could barely dream of.

By the end of the nineteenth century about two-thirds of those emigrating to the United States were from Southern Italy, mostly peasants and farm laborers from impoverished rural areas, illiterate, unskilled, with no experience beyond their own closed environment and doubly disadvantaged by their lack of English. The nationality groups that had preceded them added their prejudices and hostilities to those already prevalent in American society toward the foreigner and the Catholic. To survive, support their families and the poor relatives who kept arriving, to send money home to help families or elderly parents left behind, or to repay a loan for the voyage to this promised land, they accepted any job they could get at whatever wages. Earlier immigrants, both skilled and unskilled, viewed them as competitors and later as a threat to their efforts to move up the wage scale through unions, as employers in the burgeoning industries created by new inventions were glad to get hard workers at low cost who were difficult to organize because of the language barrier. Worst of all, they were poor and so suffered from the hoary (and convenient) view of the poor as responsible for their own misery, and this especially at a time when the national American hero was the "self-made man" and the concept of the survival of the fittest permeated social thinking. The poor, seen as shiftless, lazy, ignorant and intemperate, were definitely of inferior stock. The poor peddler with his cart was never seen as a man who had chosen that way to work because he wanted to be independent.

The press marketed familiar stereotypes, the organ-grinder with his monkey, the bootblack, the fruit peddler and the mustached character with the ever-ready knife, some of which it created and generally exaggerated. Cruel editorial cartoons and the tendency of the yellow press of the time to play up incidents of violence (in what was in any case a predominantly violent society) inflicted an unsavory image on the Italian immigrants, even though there were those who recognized their sturdy and willing industriousness, their quick adaptability to all kinds of work and endurance at long hard labor. Much as they disliked and disdained the foreigner some American-born, or natives, were particularly irritated when Italians took the savings painfully acquired through toil and thrift and, following a time-honored tradition of seasonal migration for work (formerly to European countries) left the dirty, crowded streets and dank tenements to return to their sunny villages and start a new and more comfortable life. Presumably, they were ungrateful.

With the continuing waves of immigration came tradesmen, masons, construction workers, carpenters, tailors, shoemakers (trained to make shoes from scratch) and others who made a decent and dignified life for themselves, however tarnished by the popular attachment to the prevailing stereotypes. Despite the difficulties they encountered, the Italian immigrants went steadily about the

business of improving their lot with the mixture of resignation and cheerfulness characteristic of them. They worked and died with other immigrants in the coal and iron mines, built railroads (especially the Santa Fe and Maine), subways, and any number of well-known structures such as New York's Grand Central Station and Philadelphia's City Hall. They developed businesses and services responsive to their needs and shrugged off intolerable conditions through their strong, devoted family life, their innate self-respect and their irrepressible humor, which turned employer and job discrimination into hilarious comedies in the dialects of Naples and Sicily. In their anonymous daily lives, they, with the other immigrant groups, made the phenomenal economic and industrial growth of the United States possible.

More difficult and more damaging were the frequent hostility and discriminatory treatment accorded Italian immigrants by those local clergy and lay persons who shared the current prejudices, the disdain for the illiterate as ignorant and the poor as filthy and tended to generalize on the basis of particular places and unhappy experiences. Isolated by the language barrier and at times by geography, left to themselves or actually rejected, the Italians at best felt unwelcome and outsiders in an unfamiliar and intimidating Church. They had come from a country where the local church was omnipresent in their daily lives, an integral part of the village or neighborhood community which they had come to take for granted. In it they found the familiar images of Christ, the Madonna and their patron saint. Around it were organized the festivals and processions, which were not only religious manifestations of a sort but also, with their exuberant bands, fireworks and pageantry, provided a splash of color and theater to brighten the monotony of village life, or the daily grind in the neighborhoods of the towns, but which produced scandalized reactions when transferred to American communities. The patron saint, whose miracles were the subject of oft-told legends, was their protector in evil times and their hope in troubled ones, whom they treated as a close friend or relative and beseeched in sometimes blunt and familiar terms. They did not have to support their local church because it was maintained by benefices and other resources built up over the centuries. The institutional Church, like the government, tended to view with an inborn skepticism as another bureaucracy. Their knowledge of religion might be rudimentary, with a sprinkling of folklore and superstition, but they had a personal relationship with God and the saints, and their faith was deep and ingrained; it permeated their lives and shaped their attitudes and outlook toward the world around them, buttressed by age-old customs and colored at times by the vagaries of personal piety.

With their legalistic approach to how Catholicism should be "practiced" and their need for money to build churches and schools, there was no way predominantly Irish and authoritarian pastors could possibly understand the Italians or be understood by them. The Italians, for example, unaccustomed to having to support the church, could not understand why the priest wanted "seat money" or "pew rent" to admit them to Mass as if it were a theatrical performance. Because of their failure to contribute they were scorned for wanting services they did not pay for, and on occasion were actually ousted from the church or found its doors closed against them as outlandish and troublesome people.

At the time of the growing influx of Italian immigrants, there were a number of "mixed" parishes, composed largely of Germans or Irish, now arrived in the middle class, into whose neighborhoods the Italians were moving. As they did so they, like newcomers of other nationalities, found themselves relegated to the church basement for services at specified times in their own language. Whatever the arrangements made, they proved to be unsatisfactory from both a religious and a practical point of view. While some of the others had their "national" churches, the Italians found it humiliating and demeaning to be consigned to basements that were often dark and humid, not very clean, a far cry from the bright and warmly decorated churches they had left behind, and they quite simply stopped going. The idea of setting up Italian parishes was not particularly welcome and was opposed by some pastors, protective of their turf, who viewed them as possible competitors in matters of jurisdiction and the collection plate. In addition, many of the Irish, both clergy and lay, considered the Italians enemies of the Catholic religion because in unifying Italy they had taken the Papal States away from the Pope and made him a "prisoner" in the Vatican (though staying within its confines was his own choice). Attacks from the pulpit on Italy and her citizens as anti-Pope and anti-religion, and dictatorial efforts on the part of certain pastors to force conformity to their ways further alienated numbers of other Italians as well. Given the cultural chasm and misconceptions between the local parish and the newcomers, the poor, grubby immigrants were easily dismissed as irreligious, stingy, the "worst" Catholics, addicted to scandalous processions, and Italian priests as ignorant interlopers or competitors to be controlled.

That the great majority of Italians shrugged off the humiliations and remained faithful at heart to the religion of their fathers is evidenced by their response to the priests who understood them and whom they came to trust. At various times throughout the century different religious orders had in separate and successful instances responded to the religious needs of the Italian immigrants, among them the Franciscans, Jesuits and Salesians. The Pallottine Fathers

pioneered in these efforts in New York and Brooklyn and Italian priests as well as diocesan priests who had studied in Italy were to be found serving in a number of parishes in various cities. The first "Italian" Church in the United States, St. Mary Magdalene, had in fact been established in Philadelphia in 1854 by the Bohemian-American Bishop of that diocese, St. John Nepomucene Neuman.

But there were many thousands still unreached among the fast growing numbers of migrants, and it was to the poorest and most neglected of them that Bishop Scalabrini sent his missionaries to care for their spiritual and material needs in the society and Church they encountered in a difficult new world.

Bishop John Baptist Scalabrini

1839 - 1905

Fr. Francesco Zaboglio, 1852-1911, first superior and organizer of the Scalabrinian Missions in North America.

Mother Frances X, Cabrini,
patron saint of migrants, 1850-1917.

Fr. Pietro Maldotti,
farewell to emigrants
at the Genoa port, 1890.

St. Joaquin's Church, Roosevelt St., New York.

Fr. Giacomo Gambera, 1856-1934.

Fr. Felix Morelli, 1891 ca.

Chapter 2

The Father to the Emigrants

"A good Pastor, a loving Father,
a splendid and most gentle
figure of a Man of God"

Cardinal Ferrari

By nature, and by experience Bishop Scalabrini was inevitably drawn to act on behalf of the emigrants who, in the most adverse circumstances, were leaving Italy in the thousands with high expectations of a better life in North or South America. Slight of build but possessed of tireless physical energy and intellectual vigor, he more than anyone else made the Italian Government and public and the Church compellingly aware of the purely human aspects of the emigration phenomenon. His views and proposals for the protection and treatment of migrants, like many of the views and initiatives that marked his episcopate, were a hundred years ahead of his time, though today they are considered a given, part and parcel of current attitudes toward migrant people. His kindly and endearing personality, his practical and compassionate activity earned him the title "Father to the Emigrants," a tribute to his outstanding influence on his own and subsequent times, carried forward by the Society of Missionaries he founded as an immediate response to the crying needs of the emigrants.

Scalabrini was born in a small town near Como in 1839 into a devout family of modest means. He pursued his studies for the priesthood with characteristic enthusiasm and was distinguished by his lively intelligence and the generosity with which he helped those less gifted than himself. After ordination he gave up a deep, long-cherished desire to become a missionary in obedience to his bishop, who insisted he needed him in the diocese and told him to find his "Indies" in Italy. But the missionary ideal remained dear to him. He went on to become professor of history and Greek at the diocesan seminary of St. Abbondio, later its rector, and then pastor of the church of San Bartolomeo on the outskirts of Como. From the very beginning his priesthood was one of intense, whole-souled activity on behalf of the poor, the sick, the neglected, the disadvantaged.

As a young priest, serving in various parishes when he was free from teaching, he had come to know intimately the conditions in which the poor farmers and laborers of the area lived. In his six years as pastor of San Bartolomeo he became familiar with the daily struggles of factory workers and craftsmen in the silk industry, seeing at firsthand what unemployment could do to families and individuals and the sheer misery caused by recurring crises in the industry, which led great numbers to emigrate. Anxious for their eventual well-being he sought to ensure some help for them in their new land by insisting that they take with them a letter of recommendation to the clergy where they were going to settle.

In 1876, Scalabrini was named bishop of the diocese of Piacenza, which covered an area bounded on the north by the Po River and extending gradually up the Apennines to a relatively narrow zone at about 6,000 feet above sea level. From south to north it is crossed by four valleys formed by rivers flowing into the Po. The city itself is the capital of the province and is situated on the Po at the northern tip of the diocese about 45 miles south of Milan. It was founded as a Roman fort - the *CoIonia Placentia* - at the hub of roads joining northern Italy to Gaul and Germany, and in later years it was a transit point for pilgrims journeying to Rome from the north. By Scalabrini's time it had developed into a thriving commercial center with a population of some 35,000 to 40,000 persons, who took the handsome, energetic young bishop to their hearts as he proceeded to stir up the spiritual/religious life of the diocese with his pastoral letters and visits, the diocesan synods and most of all with his example.

Whatever work the new bishop embarked upon he brought to it an intuitive spirit of innovation, whether in upgrading seminary curricula and training, creating new forms of pastoral ministry, or describing the role and participation of the laity in the social action and charitable works of parish and diocese. He wrote a special catechism for kindergartners (revolutionary at that time) and organized the first National Catechetical Congress ever held. He had a deep analytical interest in social problems, whose underlying causes he defined with clarity and with sympathy for those suffering their consequences. Characteristics of his pastoral approach are the many initiatives he undertook on their behalf. These were not only forms of assistance but remedial measures that went to the root of a problem, like his school for the deaf, for example, or his organization of an inter-diocesan association of the migrant workers in the rice fields of the Po Valley, which defended the right of collective bargaining and established a referral office for their protection. Its newsletter, which he supported, dealt with such issues as fair wages and child labor. He gave himself completely, with conviction and with consummate faith, to whatever work at hand and over the years his charity became

legendary. For him social action was the logical consequence of fidelity to the Gospel message.

The emigrant outflow could not fail to claim again his attention and concern during his pastoral visits to each of the 365 parishes in his diocese, a third of which were in rural areas and another third reachable only by mule or horseback over precipitous goat trails through the mountains. The conditions he found in the countryside, the damaging effect of emigration on the towns, the deserted villages and hamlets in the hills were distressing evidence of the circumstances surrounding the phenomenon; 28,000 persons had left the diocese in one year alone. Clearly foreseeing the difficulties, disappointments and humiliations the emigrants were likely to face, he encouraged his priests, as a first step, to dissuade them from leaving or, failing that, to provide them at least with a letter of recommendation, the practice he had already instituted at San Bartolomeo. He was well aware that this was but a band-aid of uncertain efficacy, and he proceeded to make a thorough study of the emigration phenomenon, its causes, characteristics and consequences, which he analyzed with deep-felt empathy.

Precious little constructive action on behalf of the emigrants had been taken by the Italian governmental authorities at any level. Private initiatives in the early 1880s had petered out. Committees set up in Italy's principal port cities by their respective bishops to assist the emigrants spiritually and materially as they departed were not entirely successful mainly because they lacked the necessary knowledge and financial means for effective action. Their efforts, however, pointed up the difficulties and what was needed to overcome them. Numerous studies were looking at the emigration movement from differing viewpoints and novelists and poets were recording the heartbreak of exodus. Interpretations and solutions of the problems appeared in articles and newspapers, politicians debated whether emigration was a "good" or a "bad" thing, and sporadic legislative proposals died aborning.

Into this unproductive eddy of concern for the emigrants Bishop Scalabrini stepped with his usual candor and gift for direct action. In intense correspondence with members of Parliament, in "open Letters" and other writings he brought them and the public a comprehensive view of the many problems involved. He critically analyzed the current legislative proposals, particularly those measures that permitted the licensing of recruiting agents, the "traffickers in human flesh", as he called them, whose greedy exploitation of the emigrants was the cause of so much woe that followed them even across the ocean. His own proposals and recommendations gradually influenced the lawmakers and some years later were incorporated in the legislation of 1901. In Piacenza he set up an aid society for

migrants under the name of St. Raphael and he promoted the establishment of similar societies in lectures tirelessly delivered in Rome, Milan, Florence, and other cities throughout Italy. His sincerity had an eloquence that captured the attention and the press even of the anti-clerical factions of the time. Noted particularly was his apolitical appeal in a period of sharp Church/State tensions following the 1870 unification of Italy. In short, Scalabrini was challenging both secularists and Catholics to climb over their "historical fence" and work together for the benefit of the migrants. And in a series of publications, he kept the subject before the public.

Notable among these was the pamphlet *Italian Emigration in America (L'Emigrazione Italiana in America)* published in June 1887. Written with moving simplicity, it went through several printings and was widely distributed. Bishop Scalabrini's deeply human understanding of the emigrants' situation is reflected in the opening paragraphs in which he describes his thoughts on seeing a large crowd of men, women and children of all ages waiting in worried but hopeful patience outside the Milan railroad station for the train that was to take them to the ship for America, a scene he never forgot and retold many times. The pamphlet is an overview of the emigration phenomenon, set in historical context. In it he presented a factual account of the situations in Italy at the root of the migrant movement and deplored the neglect of the Italian emigrants by their government and countrymen in comparison with those from other nations. He cited examples of the exploitation to which they were subject, of the miseries and difficulties they met in the host countries and concluded with recommendations for meeting their religious and material needs.

Bishop Scalabrini was particularly concerned, however, because of the deprivation of religious support and assistance suffered by the emigrants and he had early conclude that it was essential to have an association of priests dedicated entirely to their service before, during, after their voyage and in the places where they resettled. What he learned from the people of his own diocese told him this and so did the letters he received from former parishioners and others, filled with nostalgia for the church they had known and pleading for priests to be sent to them. Particularly compelling were the urgent communications he received from a former student of his at the Seminary of St. Abbondio, Francesco Zaboglio. Ordained in 1875, he had served as a parish priest in villages that were decimated by the exodus and he was familiar with its tragic aspects. His father, sister and brother had emigrated to Wisconsin and other relatives were settled in South Dakota. In his visits to them and to other emigrants in his travels in the United States in 1886 he had been appalled by their utter lack of religious services of any

kind. In person and in subsequent letters to Bishop Scalabrini he had expressed his anxieties for the spiritual welfare of the migrants, his conviction that a broad system of aid was necessary for them, and his urgent hope that the Bishop would take the lead in organizing it. In several articles written and published at Bishop Scalabrini's suggestion he further described the material and moral problems besetting the migrants, with affectionate understanding of their "Italian" character and their longing for the comfort of religion that was evident in the anxious welcome with which they greeted him wherever he went. His information and ideas buttressed Bishop Scalabrini's presentation in *Italian Emigration in America* and the memoranda and suggestions the bishop sent to the prefect of the Propagation of the Faith, which had jurisdiction over the church in the United States, still considered in the 1880's a "mission" country.

About that time the Holy See was disturbed by reports from the United States regarding the Italian migrant's lack of religion and as Archbishop John Ireland of St. Paul was in Rome, he was asked to comment on Scalabrini's first memorandum (January 1887). Ireland proposed to the Holy See that an aid organization like the German St. Raphael Society be established for the Italian emigrants and he called attention to the more or less isolated groups scattered through the United States who might benefit from temporary missions. These ideas coincided with Scalabrini's recommendation in his pamphlet for an aid society (*Società di Patronato*) and with Zaboglio's emphasis on the need to recruit and train Italian priests who understood the migrants. These, together with his own convictions, Bishop Scalabrini merged in a logical and practical project for a missionary society of priests that would indeed meet the needs of the emigrants, the emigrating and the emigrated. It was sent to the Holy See in February 1887 and was soon actualized in the Congregation of the Pious Society of the Missionaries of St. Charles, more familiarly known as the Scalabrinian Fathers. Their history was shaped and is best understood against the background of his far-sighted and global view of the migration phenomenon, cogently set forth in his writings and lectures.

Bishop Scalabrini saw migratory movements as providential occurrences, expressions of a law of nature, a mysterious force that governs both the physical and human world. He stressed that freedom to emigrate is an inalienable human right, a concept enshrined sixty years later and after much debate in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In his view emigration is almost always a human good, being one of the ways in which Divine Providence guides the economic and moral progress of humankind, even through catastrophes, "toward the final goal which is the perfecting of man on earth and the glory of God in the heavens." On

the earthly level it provides a safety valve for the social order, especially in cases of economic and population pressure; it opens new paths of trade, facilitates the spread of new scientific and technical knowledge, and is a source of hope and future well-being for the disinherited. In his broad and optimistic vision, the consequent mingling of peoples would eventually overcome racial and nationalistic barriers and stretch human horizons beyond geographical and political boundaries to a concept of the world as the fatherland of the human person. He unequivocally condemned, as evil and dangerous, forced emigration and the practice of recruiting emigrants, which only increased the number of the displaced and the disillusioned.

In his writings and his lectures during this period, Bishop Scalabrini challenged both the Government and the Church to respond to what was the most pressing social problem of the time. The Government had the duty to ensure the protection of emigrants at their departure and on their arrival in the country of resettlement, and he recommended appropriate measures it should take. These are still valid today, many of them are in effect in several countries and are echoed in international treaties dealing with migrants. For the Church - bishops, clergy and laity - the spiritual welfare of the emigrants was an urgent responsibility, namely, to keep alive and alert their religious faith, endangered by neglect, proselytizing, political and other vested interests, or assorted destructive influences. All emigrants needed priests who were of their own nationality or at the very least could speak their language. His interest in all emigrants is evidenced by his relationship with the German St. Raphael Society and his influence on the international meeting in Lucerne (1890) which aimed to set up an international league of emigrant aid societies.

Some years later his concern for effective action for the emigrants of all nations is persuasively set forth in the memorandum he wrote after his pastoral visits to the United States and Brazil and sent to the Holy See shortly before his unexpected death in 1905. In it he proposed a central commission or "congregation" of the Holy See that would have all Catholic migration under its purview and would ensure that the migrants' needs were provided for, especially their spiritual needs. It would be a kind of coordinating mechanism that would prevent duplication among church and lay agencies in the field, provide continuity and follow-up, and as an instrument of the Holy See could deter potential jealousies on the part of governments or national hierarchies. He presented in some detail its possible composition and functions, from continuing research and dissemination of information to the recruitment and screening of priests for migrant work, and he offered three of his missionaries to help set it up. He died three weeks later and the subject was not pursued until in 1912 Pope Pius X

established in the Consistorial Congregation a Special Office for the Spiritual Care of Migrants to supervise all matters pertaining to emigrating priests and the various aid associations for migrants. Scalabrini's ideas and recommendations find an echo in Pius XII's *Exsul Familia* (1952) which outlines the historic concern of the Church for migrants and the norms to be followed in providing for their religious needs. Through a succession of transformations, the Special Office finally became today's Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and People on the Move, established by Pope Paul VI in 1970. Since then, a Scalabrinian, Father Giulivo Tessarolo, a former pastor and Superior General of the Congregation, has served as its General Secretary.

Today the importance of respecting the cultural background of the migrant, of providing a familiar context in which the process of transition into the new society can take place in a positive way, is generally recognized at least in theory. In his day Bishop Scalabrini's concepts were new. For him the fact that for all peoples religious faith is intimately interwoven with their language and rooted in their cultural traditions made it all the more important to preserve the religious context of their place of origin. This was especially true in the case of the Italians, who were entering an utterly different society, unsympathetic when not actually hostile to their religion, and who had to cope with a thoroughly unfamiliar language. This is why he stressed the need for priests who could build on their ethnic identity. The ability to understand and speak the language of the people of a given nationality, he pointed out, does not necessarily carry with it a real understanding of or empathy with their mentality. He knew very well that many cultural traditions eventually disappear as integration into a new society takes place. But he also knew it was important to cushion the process for the benefit both of the newcomers and the society they were entering.

Chapter 3

The Early Beginnings

"To better serve the migrants...."

Rules of Life

In 1887 while writing and lecturing on what was happening to the Italian emigrants, Bishop Scalabrini was moving directly to action on the three approaches he had in mind to come to their aid - the establishment of a society of priests who would go to them in North and South America, the migrant flow to the latter being even greater than that to the United States and beset by the same difficulties, compounded by the plantation system; an aid society to be organized in Italy (*Società di Patronato*) to assist the emigrants at the ports of departure and arrival (later the St. Raphael Society); and a group of "flying" or itinerant missionaries who from an established center would move out to reach isolated groups of emigrants and spend from fifteen to twenty days among them, preaching, administering the sacraments, setting up a chapel if possible where the people could gather to pray together, and providing other needed services brought to their attention.

Early in 1887, as already noted, Bishop Scalabrini had begun to correspond with the Holy See regarding an association of priests for the emigrants and he had enlisted the interest and sympathy of Pope Leo XIII, who on November 25, 1887, issued his official approval of it. Two days later Scalabrini established the Christopher Columbus Institute (*Istituto Cristoforo Colombo*), where the priests were to spend six months in preparation for their work among the emigrants. It was named for Columbus because he was the discoverer and first evangelizer of America and also because it was believed that his family had originated in the diocese of Piacenza. The purpose of the new society, as defined in its first Rules, was "to preserve the Catholic faith in the hearts of our countrymen who have emigrated and to lead them as far as possible to achieve their moral, civic and economic wellbeing." Its primary aim, then, was to provide for the spiritual welfare of the emigrants and then to provide the other services and institutions necessary to assist their progress in the New World. Bishop Scalabrini did not see them as ignorant and unprepossessing poor, but as individual human persons, not groups, in

terrible situations and it was the whole person his missionaries were to be concerned about.

Despite his sense of urgency, Bishop Scalabrini felt the structure of the society would best be developed slowly on the basis of experience since this was a new field both for him and his missionaries, and so the first rules were quite simple. The missionaries promised to remain in the society for five years, when they would be free to renew the promise or not as they wished, and they were to turn over any monies or other things they received to their superior, whom they were to obey. Particular emphasis was placed on their obedience to the bishop of the diocese in which they went to work.

News of the formation of the Institute was greeted with enthusiasm and requests for priests came from a number of places, including East Africa, Jerusalem, Lebanon and Rumania. Among the enthusiastic responses was a letter from Archbishop Michael Corrigan of New York, who had long been worrying about the Italian migrants pouring into the city. He called Bishop Scalabrini's initiative the "guarantee of salvation" of the Italian immigrants and he asked that two missionaries be sent to him as soon as possible. There had already been some correspondence between these two bishops, and a close friendship later developed between them. In December 1888 Leo XIII officially announced his support of Scalabrini's missionary Institute in an Apostolic Letter addressed to the Roman Catholic hierarchy in the United States.

Humilitas, the motto of the Scalabrinian Congregation, was quite evident in its humble beginnings. Its first two members were housed in the modest rectory of the basilica of St. Antoninus, its hospitality offered by the Rector, Father Domenico Costa, whom Bishop Scalabrini had asked to be for a time the Superior of the tiny community. On November 28, 1887, the first two Scalabrinians, Domenico Mantese and Giuseppe Molinari, made their first promises at the tomb of St. Antoninus, the patron saint of Piacenza. There is perhaps a quiet symbol in the choice of his church, apart from its importance in the city. For Antoninus, a young soldier originally from a flourishing Christian community in Southern Egypt, had been in a sense a "migrant", having served in the Roman army in various eastern sectors of the Empire, and had come to Piacenza as a refugee from persecution. There he participated actively in its Christian community until, in 303 A.D., the persecution spread to that city too and he was beheaded for his faith.

It was also from the basilica of St. Antoninus, filled to overflowing with the enthusiastic great and not-so-great of Piacenza, that Bishop Scalabrini sent his first missionaries to the Americas in a solemn departure ceremony (July 12, 1888), the

significance of which was widely noted in the newspapers of the time. Five priests and a lay brother set out for Brazil; two priests and a lay brother departed for New York City, Fathers Felice Morelli and Vincenzo Astorri and Brother Angelo Armani.

In giving them the crucifix that was to be the "inseparable companion" of their journeys and their "unfailing comfort in life and death," Scalabrini told them the field open to their zeal was limitless. There would be sufferings to heal, churches to build, schools to open, hospitals and orphanages to establish, dangers and opposition to overcome, struggles and sacrifices to endure. This was, in fact, an apt description of the early history of his missionaries, who threw themselves with whole-hearted zeal into that "limitless" field. Wherever they went they scraped along on slim resources and were truly poor among the poor. They adapted to whatever lodgings that were available to them, however miserable and uncomfortable, ate when, where and what they could (one lived on bread and milk for several weeks) and devoted to the work in hand whatever meager salaries or stipends that came their way. Their first concern was to reach out to the Italian migrants with the Word of God and to provide the services they had come to give them. They, too, were migrants, who had left relatives, friends and familiar surroundings, and they were not strangers to the loneliness and nostalgia felt by their parishioners, who recognized in them immigrants like themselves.

Though hampered by a limited knowledge of English and of American customs, whether financial or ecclesial, they plunged ahead with enthusiasm, and despite recurring difficulties, an occasional disaster, threats and anti-clerical propaganda, they forged ahead with sacrifices, sweat and tears. They coped with opposition, coldness, rejection, sometimes on the part of the local clergy, sometimes on the part of their immigrant flock, whose members could be mistrustful, fractious, stubbornly attached to their own ways and divided by hometown rivalries or simply indifferent as a result of long neglect. The Scalabrinians were from Northern Italy but proved flexible enough to accept the unfamiliar saints and folkways of the Southerners, and eventually, through the faith that bound them all and through patient understanding of the diversity of traditions among the Italians, they achieved over the years a community between Northerners and Southerners and among the various regional and local chauvinists. On the positive side, of course, there was also help from other priests, from lay persons, and from the ebullient Italians themselves, who often actively pressed for their own churches and on occasion fell to and actually did the building.

Once over the first hurdles, the Scalabrinian congregations grew rapidly and were in constant need of larger quarters - for the church, for catechism classes, for

schools, a convent for the Sisters who came to help them - and their history at times seems a chronicle of building, paying off loans, restoring churches, and more building, but somehow or other they kept the bricks and mortar from entering their souls. By 1891, four years after their founding, the Scalabrinians had created eleven missions in North America and five in South America. In 1892 Bishop Scalabrini established their Motherhouse in Piacenza in an impressive 17th century monastery, brought up to date and enlarged. At this time, he placed his missionaries under the patronage of St. Charles Borromeo, the famous 16th century Archbishop of Milan, who was an exemplary pastor and whom Scalabrini himself took as his model. The charming little church next to the Motherhouse, which Scalabrini also restored, had already been dedicated to St. Charles, and the Congregation became known as the Pious Society of the Missionaries of St. Charles.

Bishop Scalabrini had sent Father Zaboglio ahead of the first missionaries to represent him in the establishment of the mission in the New York Archdiocese and to confirm the conditions under which they would work. They were to be subject to the bishop of the diocese and were not to undertake anything without his consent. But they were to be free to carry out their pastoral duties and to have a house of their own (i.e., they were not to be under the jurisdiction of a local pastor), and they were to be permitted to collect funds for building a church. This was the pattern maintained as they moved into other dioceses throughout the United States. Zaboglio was also to draw up the rules governing the members of the mission and submit them to Bishop Scalabrini.

In many ways, then, Zaboglio became the "co-founder" of the Scalabrinian missions in North America and he continued to play a leading role throughout their early history. Perceptive and practical, he was usually the advance man to look into new areas when there was a request for a Scalabrinian priest, and the trouble shooter when difficulties arose. At various times he served in different capacities - port missionary, pastor, provincial superior, rector of the Motherhouse, mission visitator, stepping in with humble flexibility wherever there was need and the required personnel could not be found. He became the first Vicar-General of the Congregation and later its Procurator General. A slender man of serious mien, he bore the brunt of many of the difficulties and humiliations that attended the first beginnings, and he did so with patience, perseverance, not a little diplomacy and a wry sense of humor that glances through his clear, detailed reports to Bishop Scalabrini. And he was generous in acknowledging the help and advice given him in the first difficult times by Father Edwards, the old German pastor of Immaculate Conception Church, and Father Michael Callaghan, director of the Irish Mission of

Our Lady of the Rosary (for immigrant girls), who had also begun to help the Italians and strongly felt their need for Italian priests. An energetic organizer and effective administrator, Father Zaboglio brought sensitive insight as well as intense dedication to his work for the missions and one senses the frustrations and anxieties he must have felt when there were not yet enough Scalabrinians available to fill all the requests that came to him.

Notwithstanding Archbishop Corrigan's warm welcome and support for the Scalabrinians, Zaboglio encountered unforeseen delays - there was no house or chapel as promised - and faced his first difficulties with local pastors, two of whom particularly seemed to consider the newcomers an intrusion and insisted they live in a subordinate position in the parish rectory, an arrangement that had limited previous Italian priests in the functions they could perform for the Italians.

Despite opposition, some of it quite subtle, Zaboglio and the first missionaries managed to get established. Their first "community house" was a rented flat of four narrow rooms in a tenement building on Grand Street, their first chapel a small, rented store on Center Street, which the Archbishop helped to furnish. It was named the Chapel of the Resurrection and was formally opened on August 5, 1988, welcomed in both American and Italian language newspapers. The immigrants came in unprecedented numbers and the Sunday collection amounted to a respectable sum. The immigrants, in other words, felt at home. The first baby to be baptized in the chapel was named John Baptist after Bishop Scalabrini. It soon became necessary to provide a second chapel and this was set up again in a rented store. It was dedicated to St. Joachim, in homage to Leo XIII whose first name was Joachim, and solemnly opened at Midnight Mass on Christmas 1888. Resurrection Chapel continued to function, however, in order to accommodate the increasing numbers responding to the Scalabrinian ministry.

The missionaries now had their first experience with the dissensions among Italians from different regions, which so often worked to the immigrants' disadvantage in their early years in the United States. This time it was the historic rift between Northern and Southern Italians. The latter, mainly from Naples, did not feel completely at ease in St. Joachim's among the Northerners and wanted their own church in their own neighborhood. Another chapel was opened at Christmas in 1889 in a house bought for the purpose on Mulberry Street and was called the church of the Precious Blood. Again, this proved too small for the thousands of Italians who frequented it and on borrowed money and a load of pledges a new one was started on Baxter Street.

The first pastor of St. Joachim's was Father Felice Morelli, an eloquent and persuasive preacher, tirelessly active and forgetful of self. He was also responsible for the development of the Church of the Precious Blood. Like other priests from Italy, however, he was quite unfamiliar with the financial and administrative complexities of building a parish in the American setting. The churches where they came from were all well and long established, administrative work was minimal and they could devote themselves entirely to pastoral work. Morelli's zeal for expanding religious services to as many immigrants as possible and his open-hearted trust in pledges created not a few financial difficulties for the New York Mission and eventually the Church of the Precious Blood had to be given up in unhappy circumstances. St. Joachim's, however, went on to become an Italian "national" parish.

Father Morelli early conceived the idea of a hospital for the Italians, whose inability to explain their ills in English only deepened their sense of isolation and suffering. With the blessing of Bishop Scalabrini and a proper board of trustees under the presidency of Archbishop Corrigan, it was opened on East 109th Street, with 60 beds. It was named for Columbus and Bishop Scalabrini secured sisters, the Daughters of St. Anne, to run it.

1889 saw the beginnings of two other initiatives of concern to Bishop Scalabrini. One was the practice of "flying" or itinerant missions. The first two were conducted in this year in Paterson, New Jersey, and in Pittsburgh by Father Astorri, who was particularly gifted as a preacher and had also given a number of popular missions in the Chapel of the Resurrection. These flying missions were originally conceived as precursors which would pave the way for the establishment of permanent missions. But the Italian migrants were already settled, so to speak, and already wanted a church, so parishes and missions more or less developed together. Scalabrini's early proposal for a center from which missionaries would radiate was never realized for lack of funds and personnel but from practically every parish they established the Scalabrinians went out to Italian communities scattered through the surrounding areas to preach, say Mass, administer the sacraments, in short, to conduct a mission though sometimes in abbreviated form. Eventually permanent parishes grew up where they thus planted these first seeds.

The other was Bishop Scalabrini's concern to have a school and especially catechism classes for the children of the immigrants in each parish, and this brought St. Frances Xavier Cabrini to New York in March 1889. The missionaries had from the beginning asked for Sisters to help with the children. The need for schools was keenly felt because of the lack of bilingual education in the public schools and the aggressive proselytizing conducted by some Protestant churches

with free classes and gifts for the children. Bishop Scalabrini, who had often visited the convent of Mother Cabrini's Missionaries of the Sacred Heart in Castel San Giovanni near Piacenza asked her for Sisters to direct the classes his priests wanted to start at St. Joachim's. At the same time, he pointed out, it would be possible for her to take over an orphanage for girls which Archbishop Corrigan then had under consideration. Scalabrini's practical persistence and the encouragement of Pope Leo XIII overcame Mother Cabrini's initial reluctance - she had her heart set on China - and thus began the history of the Cabrini Sisters in the Americas. They, too, at first found it difficult to obtain suitable housing and Archbishop Corrigan settled them with the Sisters of Charity who had charge of a children's home. He took a most kind interest in them and sometimes accompanied them on the visits to various schools and children's homes to which the Sisters of Charity took them.

The Cabrini Sisters took over the teaching at St. Joachim's and were able to open the orphanage thanks to Mother Cabrini's skill in overcoming initial misunderstandings. Meanwhile, because their Rule did not permit fund-raising the Daughters of St. Anne had been withdrawn by their Superior from the hospital founded by Father Morelli. Again, in response to Bishop Scalabrini, Mother Cabrini agreed to have her Sisters take their place. Some charitable tension developed between Father Morelli and Mother Cabrini, both strong personalities, and while Mother Cabrini professed to respect Father Morelli's holiness and zeal she was not entirely happy with his administration. She eventually took it over and then the hospital itself along with the debts clinging to it, moving it to East 19th Street where this first "Columbus Hospital" grew over the years into the present highly regarded Cabrini Medical Center. Father Morelli's creative energies later founded two orphanages in New Jersey and laid the foundation for several parishes.

Chapter 4

The St. Raphael Society

"Once in life - at some particular point –
one must believe in the impossible."

Bishop John Baptist Scalabrini

While the work for the emigrated was thus being started, Bishop Scalabrini was at the same time acting on behalf of the emigrating, whose needs he keenly felt and whose victimization he vividly defined and deplored in writings and lectures. In his 1887 pamphlet, *Italian Emigration in America*, he had called for a national charitable organization to assist the emigrants that would have the task of protecting them from exploitation in the port cities of departure and arrival, counseling them, helping them in case of disaster or sickness, and providing religious assistance during the journey and in the place of resettlement. Mainly through his efforts and with the cooperation of eminent Catholics active in the social field, the Aid Association for Italian Emigration (*Associazione di Patronato per L'Emigrazione Italiana*) came into being in 1889. Its president was the Marquis Giovanni Volpe-Landi, an eminent layman and close cooperator of the Bishop. As already noted, in his talks and various conferences in the major Italian cities, Scalabrini promoted the establishment of local committees for emigrant aid. By 1902 some nineteen had been formed and were associated with the central committee in Piacenza. In accordance with Scalabrini's early intentions the Association's functions and structure were patterned after the St. Raphael Society which had been founded by the wealthy merchant, Peter Paul Cahensly in 1871 for emigrant countrymen and had established branches in Austria, Belgium, Spain and New York. It was the first international voluntary social organization.

Bishop Scalabrini had met Cahensly on one of the latter's trips to Italy. There was an understandable meeting of minds between them and they became friends. Scalabrini had sent Father Zaboglio and Volpe-Landi as representatives of the Italian Association to the 1890 meeting in Lucerne that hoped to form an international league of such emigrant aid societies. This never materialized although international cooperation continued to be the aim of many of the people involved. In their final form the statutes of the Italian Association were approved

by the Holy See and its name was eventually changed to the St. Raphael Society in conformity with the similar societies in Europe but independent of them. Its basic purpose was to keep "alive in the hearts of the Italian emigrants, along with their faith, a sense of nationality and love for the mother country and to procure their moral, physical, intellectual, economic and civic well-being." The statutes spelled out Scalabrini's earlier recommendations and envisioned a wide range of services, from helping the new Congregation of missionaries with funds for chapels and churches, to providing the emigrants with medical help, advice, legal aid, schools, and information about conditions in receiving countries, including job opportunities.

Just as Bishop Scalabrini laid particular stress on the role of the laity in the social action field in his diocese, it was due to his wishes that the St. Raphael Society was essentially a lay organization (though priests were also among its members) and its Central Committee was composed entirely of lay persons. In his view the emigrant phenomenon posed not only a religious problem but a human one and the cooperation of the laity was both necessary and advantageous in addressing its socio-economic aspects. The laity, he felt, should have a certain autonomy in the social field but cooperate with the clergy as well as with other entities such as local authorities and trade unions. Neither the membership nor the aid of the St. Raphael Society was to be restricted to Catholics.

In fact, he encouraged a broad membership open to all persons of goodwill, whatever their political or other persuasion, provided they were respected citizens known for their love of country, their enlightened charity and their informed sensitivity to the social problems of the period. His approach was a totally new and original departure for his time, characterized as it was by acute Church/State tension following the takeover of the Papal States and the consequent tendency of Catholic lay organizations to become highly politicized. He had to overcome not a few nervous reservations on the part of the Holy See and controversial reactions from Catholic laity and clergy as well as from those unsympathetic or hostile to church initiatives. He wanted an apolitical movement, the cooperation of everyone apart from and above political considerations for the good of the emigrants and the honor of the country. And through the force of his personality, his clear integrity and undeniable sincerity, he succeeded in pushing forward, as it were, a work of "silent reconciliation." As his biographer, Father Mario Francesconi, points out, it is impossible for us today to appreciate the amount of courage and prudence it took for him to do so.

Genoa

The most active aid committee in Italy was that in Genoa, founded in 1889 by Bishop Scalabrini, which later became part of the St. Raphael Society. It was enlarged and expanded in 1891 after his other lectures there, which enlisted the interest and the valuable cooperation of the port inspector, Commander Nicola Malnate. In 1893, Father Zaboglio, in his usual role as pathfinder, was sent to prepare the way for the Scalabrinians in the Genoese port, where, as he wrote Scalabrini, he functioned "as a whole committee."

It is Pietro Maldotti however, whose name immediately conjures up the "port mission" in Genoa. A highly intelligent and dynamic priest from Parma, he had been a professor of literature in his diocesan seminary before joining the Scalabrinians in 1893.

In August of 1894 he arrived in Genoa with the blessing of Bishop Scalabrini, very little money and a general mandate, as he later wrote, to "do good for the poor emigrants." He had not been to Genoa before, he did not understand the local dialect, the members of the Aid Committee were all away on vacation, and he had trouble finding a place to stay. A man of exceptional courage and keen mind, he nevertheless set about to study the emigrants' situation and was horrified by what he found. Thievery and rape seem to have descended on migrants and refugees of every country from early history down to our own day, and the masses huddled in Genoa were no exception. They were often fleeced by the recruiting agents, who kept finding additional "expenses" for them to pay, speculators who brought them on "special trains" for which they charged triple the normal fare, smooth crooks posing as ship's agents or representatives of aid societies, money changers and other shifty entrepreneurs. They were commonly lodged in miserable hotels, from which agents and runners received a cut, were charged scalpers' prices for bad food, and if their limited funds - more often than not their life's savings - ran out, they were thrown out on the street where they fell prey to other scavengers and riff-raff. One of Maldotti's early encounters was with a young man wearing an identity card of the St. Raphael Society of his hometown, who, during a short absence, had had his wife, children and belongings snatched from him. Maldotti joined him in a chase through the piazza, crowded with "almost all the dialects of Italy," caught the thief who was about to drive off with the young man's family and baggage, and in the ensuing fisticuffs gave better than he got.

Maldotti met the trains to prevent the emigrants from being hustled off to cutthroat hotels; he finally succeeded in getting the hotel runners barred from the railroad station and got five inns closed for unsanitary conditions. Emigrants were

brought to Genoa four or five days before their ship sailed. Finding lodgings for them was a serious and difficult problem, he wrote, "and brought me one fight after another, hatred, insults, threats, which in any case never lost me any sleep or peace; in fact, I don't know why, they put me in a strange good humor." Among other services he made donated clothing, new and used, available to the neediest migrants. He worked entirely without salary, living on Mass stipends and the offerings of friends. He was joined in 1895 by another Scalabrinian, young Theophilus Glesaz, who actually was just passing through Genoa but to whom Maldotti promised "constant labor and sacrifices, and a little hunger now and then if he stayed....and he accepted with enthusiasm." Sometime throughout the long hectic hours of every day they were called to baptize, confirm, marry and occasionally bury one or another of their motley charges.

They reported the swindle artists to the port inspector Malnate who gave them every cooperation. As a result of Maldotti's protests and activities, subagents in the provinces lost their licenses to recruit; shippers and their agents were directed to bring the emigrants to the port only on the eve of their departure and to feed and lodge them gratis. The traffickers who saw their easy pickings dwindling away naturally reacted, wrote to the authorities denouncing Maldotti as a trouble-maker and sent him anonymous letters threatening him with death. He took his cause to the newspapers and with their cooperation made the port situation a national issue. In a twenty day campaign he saw many of the crooks and con men brought to trial.

Maldotti also made two trips to Brazil (1896 and 1897), traveling with the emigrants, and he later battled against the abuses they suffered on shipboard until a Commission of the Italian Royal Navy took up the matter. The situation of the emigrants in Brazil, he found, was also appalling, and not only in the ports. His lively "Report of the Operations in the Port of Genoa from 1894-1898 and on Two Voyages in Brazil" was published and circulated as a pamphlet. A further Maldotti report on the "Italians in Brazil" and other materials, e.g., articles and reports of other missionaries, notably two monographs on Brazil by the Scalabrinian Father Pietro Colbachini, were brought to the attention of government officials and members of Parliament. A special memorandum written by Bishop Scalabrini with the cooperation of Maldotti and Volpe-Landi, which dealt with measures to be taken to protect the emigrants before departure, during the journey and in the host country, was sent to the Italian Foreign Minister. With his contacts in the Italian government, Maldotti became Scalabrini's close collaborator and adviser in relation to effecting changes in the existing emigration legislation, and the new law finally adopted in 1901 incorporated most of their suggestions. Maldotti was twice

honored by the Italian government and received from Pius X the medal "Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice."

After Scalabrini's death, however, the St. Raphael Society gradually ceased to function, many of its concerns being covered by measures in the new law. Maldotti continued to work for the emigrants through a new organization, *Italica Gens*, a federation of religious orders, including the Scalabrinians, and other societies and individuals active with the Italian emigrants to the Americas. A first attempt at a kind of coordination, it was founded in 1908 by laymen, maintained an international secretariat in Turin and local secretariats in Canada, the United States and South America.

It had also been Bishop Scalabrini's desire to provide priests for the ocean journey, which often took as long as thirty days that could be spent responding to the religious and other needs of the emigrants, counseling or comforting them as the case might be. There were as many as fifteen sailings a week and to fill the need Bishop Scalabrini wrote a circular letter to "priests of good will" urging them to take round trips as "externs" of the Congregation. He also wrote to shipping companies asking for free passage for priests accompanying the emigrants. Several replied in the affirmative, giving priests he sent them free first class passage. Many priests traveling for other purposes were also enlisted to lend their services, sometimes through Maldotti's efforts in the port itself.

New York

In New York, the St. Raphael Society functioned under the direction of Father Pietro Banditti, sent by Bishop Scalabrini in 1891 to establish the "mission in the port." Bandini had begun his priesthood as a Jesuit, had taught in several Jesuit schools, served in the Jesuit Rocky Mountain Mission in Montana, and had opened the St. Francis Mission on the Crow Reservation in that state. At the age of 38 he left the Jesuit Order but was eager to return to the missions. He was especially interested in founding a colony or settlement of Italian emigrants, and hearing of the newly formed Congregation wrote of his interest to Bishop Scalabrini. The Bishop accepted him, but since he was fluent in English persuaded him to establish instead a branch of the St. Raphael Society in the port of New York.

At that time immigrants were ferried in small boats from the piers of the big steamers to Castle Garden, formerly a fort at the tip of Manhattan, which then functioned as the processing center. Two days after his arrival Bandini was busy at the Barge Office, originally a customs office for inspecting the baggage of cabin

passengers but used as the immigrant depot until the United States Government opened Ellis Island in 1892. He quickly became familiar with the cruelties and trickeries to which the immigrants fell victim, too trustful in their first confused moments of anyone who spoke to them in Italian. In New York, too, there was the usual complement of dishonest money-changers, food vendors, runners for disreputable hotels, con men claiming to represent aid societies or absent relatives. In addition, there were two other sources of grief. One was the frightening experience of being "detained." The newly arrived might be obliged to wait until the necessary papers or affidavits from relatives showed up or the relatives themselves appeared. They might be detained for further health checks or, if ill, separated from family or friends and sent in worried loneliness to the hospital. Sometimes their situation had to be untangled from wrong or unsatisfactory replies they had given the immigration officers in their lack of understanding either of English or the whole process, and a scary investigation resulted. Whatever the cause of detention, there was the dreadful fear of being sent back.

Once outside the immigration premises, the newcomers encountered the notorious "padrone" or "boss" system, a network of labor contractors and sub-contractors who negotiated the hiring, provided food, lodging and transportation to the employment site, and generally exploited both employers and employees. The latter, unfamiliar with the ways of the new country and anxious above all to work, accepted miserable wages, found themselves housed in squalid shelters, obliged to buy whatever they needed in something like a company store, and saw practically 90% of their income go into the boss system. However rebellious they might feel, they usually worked out the term of the contract, intimidated by threats of dismissals and then being blackballed from any other employment; in any case there was no guarantee another employer would be any better. The worst kind of exploitation was that of children, set to work in factories or to beg, or sent out to sell newspapers or shine shoes for ruthless masters reminiscent of the characters described by Dickens.

There had been several previous efforts to help the immigrants at landing but they had not been very successful or had been short-lived for lack of funds. Bandini, an astute man of quick decision, immediately got himself accredited to the "Labor Bureau" at the Barge Office as the representative of the St. Raphael Society which he then set about organizing. The "St. Raphael's Italian Benevolent Society" was incorporated in June 1891, under the presidency of Archbishop Corrigan. Its stated purpose was to protect the immigrants from the predators, help them get jobs, provide religious services and find shelter for the poor and for the unaccompanied children. Archbishop Corrigan sent a circular to the pastors and

Italian priests in his diocese announcing the formation of the Society and encouraging support for it. Dues for active membership was one dollar a year, supporting membership twenty-five cents.

Bandini and two lay assistants were kept busy helping the immigrants in every possible way, acting as interpreters, getting them to the right train or boat for the rest of their journey, telegraphing relatives of their arrival, visiting the sick in the hospital and helping the detained out of their difficulties. He managed to have unaccompanied youngsters released to his care while they waited for the parents or relatives and he housed them meanwhile with families well known to him or with the German or Irish missionaries. Father Callaghan of the Irish Holy Rosary Mission again figures as an invaluable guide and help. Bandini soon began to place reports in New York's Italian newspapers, giving information on the number of arrivals, the number aided by the Society, the names of those detained, sent back, in hospital or dead at sea. And he soon began receiving letters from various parts of the country asking for help in tracing lost relatives or baggage or finding a job. His "Labor Office", set up at first at 7 Broadway, offered free job placement and advice and monitored contracts brought to its attention. In 1892, through the good offices and financial help of Archbishop Corrigan, a shelter for the needy, particularly women and children, was opened at 113 Waverly Place. It also housed the offices of the Society and had a small chapel dedicated to Our Lady of Pompei, which later evolved into the parish of the same name.

It was also Bandini's duty to keep in touch with Volpe-Landi at the Central Committee of the St. Raphael Society and he soon began to send him information for those intending to emigrate, warning them of the difficulties and crooks they might encounter, explaining pertinent United States regulations, and outlining the services offered by the St. Raphael Society. This information was circulated by Volpe-Landi to local pastors, mayors, committees and others. Bandini's report of St. Raphael's first year of work (*Relazione della Società Italiana di San Raffaele in New York*), during which some 20,000 persons had been assisted, was also published and widely circulated.

Bandini became an active member of a United States Senate Commission of Inquiry on Italian immigration problems. In conversations with the Secretary of the Treasury, who had jurisdiction over immigration matters at that time, he took the occasion to give him Bishop Scalabrini's pamphlets on Italian Emigration in America and on Italian legislation, excerpts of which the Secretary included in his report to Congress along with Bandini's "notices" or information for emigrants. In 1893-94 Bandini traveled through the southwestern United States and parts of Mexico and gathered much practical information on agricultural settlements. In

1896, feeling the new United States laws governing the landing process and a new Italian Government office for the protection and care of the immigrants reduced the need for much of the work he was doing, he left the Society and went to work in Arkansas where he pursued his original dream of founding an Italian colony.

The St. Raphael Society was later reorganized by Father Zaboglio and then again by Father Giacomo Gambera, and its subsequent history is closely interwoven with the parish of Our Lady of Pompei. It continued to function through various changes and vicissitudes until 1923 when religious assistance to emigrants on board ship and in the ports came under the jurisdiction of the Vatican Prelate for Emigration and the Scalabrinians were requested to transfer their work in the port to the Italian Immigrant Auxiliary (the United States branch of *Italica Gens*) under the jurisdiction of the New York Archdiocese.

The story of Father Bandini's colony is worth telling though it was not, and probably could not be duplicated. Many at the time, including Bandini, thought the Italian immigrants would be better off in rural areas in agricultural colonies away from the hardships and dangers of the city. But once in the city where they first landed, the Italians lacked the money or the inclination to move into still further unknown areas to repeat what the young, particularly, could only envisage as the unrewarding farm work they had come to escape. In 1896 a millionaire New York philanthropist, Austin Corbin, together with Prince Ruspoli, the mayor of Rome, had established a model settlement, complete with church, school and Sisters' convent, at Sunny Side in Arkansas on the banks of the Mississippi. Ruspoli wrote to Bishop Scalabrini asking for a missionary, and especially Father Bandini, whom he had come to know through his work with the St. Raphael Society. When Corbin died, leaving no provision for the settlement, his heirs sold much of the land, malaria decimated the settlers, and a group of families gathered around Bandini urging him to come somehow to the rescue. He led them off to the Ozark mountains in northeast Arkansas, where they managed with the usual difficulties to buy 800 wooded acres on the installment plan, built log cabins, and settled down to farm.

Somehow in the next two or three years they survived the loss of their harvest through frost, further destruction from a hurricane, and the hostility of their neighbors, who harassed them in numerous ways because they were Italian and Catholic, and even set fire to their school, in which they kept their most precious belongings including the church vessels. The settlers then armed themselves to guard their homes and fields and at the same time appealed to the county authorities. Measures were taken to protect them, peace finally came to the area, and with hard and steady work they gradually built an entire town. In response to

Father Bandini's wish, it was named Tontitown after one Enrico Tonti who at the end of the 17th century had served as La Salle's lieutenant and discovered and explored some of the territory in the Mississippi basin. Bandini himself, plentifully endowed with talent and energy, served as pastor, notary public and district school inspector. He directed the agricultural work, gave Italian lessons to the youngsters, and trained the bandmaster. When Tontitown became officially incorporated, he was unanimously elected mayor, though he declined to accept that office. In the course of time, he and the governor of Arkansas became friends and he won the affection of the Bishop of Little Rock, who named him "vicar forane" (i.e., in the countryside).

Chapter 5

The Parishes

"There is no greater work
a charitable or religious society
can do than to extend friendly help
to the man and woman
who come among us
to become citizens
or the parents of citizens.
If we do not care for them,
if we neglect to improve their lot,
then our children without fail
will pay the price."

President Theodore Roosevelt to Bishop Scalabrini

A necessary response to the needs and wishes of the early Italian immigrants was a decent church of their own in which to worship. Despite divisions and difficulties, the efforts to finance and build it eventually created a community of purpose and work. Whether it was newly built or restored, the Italians were charmed to see how their money was spent and took great pride in their church. At the same time, it was an achievement that raised their status in the broader community. Once a church was established, or even just started, the congregation grew rapidly, sometimes evolving into a "national parish", sometimes into a "territorial" parish with recognized outreach to the Italians beyond its boundaries. Protestants tended to misunderstand national parishes, viewing them as a tactic on the part of domineering priests to keep their flocks isolated and loyal. And there were some bishops, intent on rapid Americanization, who regarded them with reservation if not actual disfavor. The various nationality groups had nevertheless succeeded in establishing them, and they were, in fact, recommended by the Holy See. For the Scalabrinians the parish was the natural setting for preserving the faith and for the necessarily gradual integration into the new society, which was the basic concept of their Founder. The parish - together with its associated "missions"

- has remained their basic pastoral strategy. But the early years were often very tough.

New York City

As mentioned earlier, St. Joachim's grew out of one of the first two chapels opened by the Scalabrinians on their arrival in New York. The burgeoning congregation soon required more space and the church was transferred to another rented building on Roosevelt Street. To help pay off the lingering debts, the first floor was leased to a kind of warehouse where rags brought in by individual ragpickers from all over the city were sorted, baled and sold for manufacturing purposes. On weekdays, the men and women busy sorting the rags could be heard joining in the hymns and responding to the prayers of the Mass being celebrated in the church proper on the floor above them. Day laborers, neighborhood vendors, bootblacks and others could be seen wandering in and out of the church each day, pausing to say a few prayers, and from five hundred to a thousand persons were at each of the five Sunday Masses. So much for the "irreligious" Italians. St. Joachim's survived a succession of vicissitudes, including a fire, and by the time of its 25th anniversary the parish could boast of a lovely church, the favorite saints of its members standing in dignity in the carved niches along its walls. It had a recreation center and a cluster of active religious and charitable organizations, developed under the leadership of Father Vincenzo Jannuzzi, a dynamic, self-confident personality, under whom an auxiliary chapel was dedicated to St. Joseph. This evolved into a full-fledged parish church, with the inauguration of a new church and school in 1925.

St. Joachim's was always dear to the Scalabrinians because it was their first parish church in the United States, their first stop when they arrived in New York headed for their various missions; Bishop Scalabrini visited it, said Mass there and ordained three of them at its altar; and Mother Cabrini began her work for Italian migrants there. The inevitable shifts in population and the inexorable inroads of urban renewal finally overtook it and despite the consternation of the parish and all attempts and campaigns to save it, St. Joachim's was demolished in 1958.

The chapel dedicated to Our Lady of Pompei in the migrant hostel established by Bandini, which had begun to function as a parish church, was soon outgrown and new quarters were rented in an abandoned Protestant church on Sullivan Street. Soon after this Bandini left for Arkansas and Father Zaboglio took his place in both the parish and the St. Raphael Society. The latter never could make income and expenses balance, given the needs of the migrants, and the members of the parish were among the poorest, their weekly wages barely

sufficient for survival. The church - and Father Zaboglio - were rescued from financial disaster by a Miss Anne Leary, who had inherited a respectable fortune from her brother and had opened a vocational school for women and girls in Greenwich Village. She paid off the remaining debts, provided a monthly allowance to cover expenses, restored the facade of the church, repaired its stairs and engaged in a number of fund-raising activities for its benefit. Disaster struck, however, in the form of a gas explosion in the church basement in which the sacristan and a St. Raphael Society agent were killed. Father Zaboglio, who was with them, almost died of his burns and his health was never quite the same again.

The next "home" of the parish was a church on Bleecker Street, formerly the church of St. Benedict the Moor, a parish church for black Catholics who had now moved out of the neighborhood. In 1900 when Father Antonio Demo took over as pastor, he inherited a well-organized and active parish, which continued to grow and was credited with exerting a welcome influence on the area. A very tall and imposing figure and an affable and kindly man, he continued as pastor for the next thirty-five years. He was a strict administrator and quite authoritarian, but with a captivating personality and great courage. He was the center of parish activities, many of which he initiated, and an enterprising fund-raiser. In 1925, when the church was threatened with certain demolition by the extension of Sixth Avenue, he mobilized an "Our Lady of Pompei Builders' Society" and through their joint efforts the present complex of church, rectory and school on Carmine and Bleecker Streets became an outstanding Scalabrinian presence in the city. He did not hesitate to enlist the support of New York's archbishop and the Apostolic Delegate in a funding campaign for a day care center, for which he instituted a two-week bazaar, a novelty at that time and the ancestor of today's festival of Our Lady of Pompei. He also served for a time as Provincial Superior, took part in community affairs and amid the formidable list of his activities he found time to respond to the many requests for help and advice that came to him from around the United States and from abroad. In the early years of the parish, Mother Cabrini herself had taught the catechism classes for the girls and directed the Sodality of the Children of Mary; Father Demo was her confessor at that time. Among the many honors he received was one from the Italian Government, and four years after his death Mayor Fiorello La Guardia, who had been his friend, dedicated to him the small square near the church, known today as Demo Square.

Far from being constrained by their first experiences in New York, the Scalabrinian missionaries immediately reached out to Italian immigrants scattered through the United States, usually in response to requests from bishops, or sometimes to initiatives of Italian Catholic laymen. In the first ten or fifteen years

following their arrival, they seemed to be preaching and building almost everywhere at once and parishes were being sown in New England, New York State and the Midwest. At times they were stretched very thin and moved too often from one place to another in their anxiety to fill the many urgent needs. These were so pressing that Father Zaboglio kept besieging Bishop Scalabrini for more priests, prompting the Bishop, who felt the need for careful training and screening, to answer, "You missionaries are a funny lot. You act as if the Institute were twenty years old instead of only a year."

New England

Diaries and other documents of the 17th and 18th centuries record a number of Italians who contributed significantly to New England's history. As elsewhere it was the mass emigration movement of the 1880s that brought Italians in large numbers to the area and Boston was the principal port of entry. Earlier immigrants had come in on merchant vessels; others, who had landed in New York, made their way north, lured by the promise Massachusetts seemed to hold out for them. A few went into farming and became quite prosperous, but most ended up in the inevitable urban "Little Italy." The majority of the early arrivals were from Genoa and by 1880 they had a monopoly on the fruit and vegetable stores and the shops where Italian products could be found. As the Southern Italians and Sicilians arrived, they threw themselves into whatever work was available, however humble or ill-paid. A new character appears among the street vendors in Boston, the traveling "figurinaio", whom the Scalabrinian Father Biasotti called the "lone representative of our national art." He was the maker of little plaster figurines of saints, dressed in vivid colors, or of ancient Greek or Roman masterpieces which he displayed on a chalk-covered tray with a whole plaster menagerie of domestic and ferocious animals. As the number of immigrants grew they spread through the factory towns of Massachusetts where work was available; by the beginning of the 1900s they were in practically every field of labor and commerce, and they were also to be found teaching music or art in Boston's public and private schools.

Boston's "Little Italy" was in the North End, practically in the shadow of the Christ Church bell tower associated with the famous ride of Paul Revere. The houses were run down by this time and the area was crowded, but while the immigrants were poor theirs was not the miserable poverty that assailed the early arrivals in New York. A first church for Italians was St. Leonard's, run by Franciscan Friars, which was fast becoming too small for the growing population. It was a "mixed" church, and, as in other cities where Italian priests did not address themselves so much to the specific needs of the immigrants but rather adapted

immediately to the "Irish customs," the immigrants encountered the usual humiliating difficulties and felt generally ill at ease. They wanted a church of their own and how they got it is worth repeating.

They formed an "Italian Catholic Society," later called the "Society of St. Mark," and approached Father Boniface, the Franciscan pastor, with their arguments for a separate church. He suggested they buy a Baptist church then up for sale in North Square, known as "Father Taylor's Seaman's Bethel", and that they run a campaign to pay for it. Once it was bought the Franciscans would service it. When, however, they said they wanted the administrative control of the church, he washed his hands of the whole affair. This impulse to own their church and hold on to its administration surfaced in a number of different nationality groups and was a recurrent headache for the bishops until the final control of the latter over all churches was fully established.

Nevertheless the St. Mark's Society went ahead enthusiastically with their campaign, bought the "Seaman's Bethel" and furnished it as a church. The Archbishop of Boston, John Williams, was a convinced believer that the immigrants should be rapidly assimilated into the American church and he seemed also to have a personal policy of neutrality, taking no public position on some of the larger issues with which the church was dealing. The present case and others like it elsewhere were a kind of "territorial imperative", with the bishop hesitant to do anything that would upset a local pastor. Here Archbishop Williams was caught between the Franciscans and the strong-willed St. Mark's Society, which was growing rapidly. Its members went to Mass in "American" churches, but they gathered every evening in "their" church to say the rosary and the litanies appropriate for the day. On Sunday evenings they gathered to hear the Gospel and say the Gloria and other prayers of the Mass in Italian and to sing Vespers - all conducted by lay persons. This prompted those opposed to a separate Italian church to label them schismatics and heretics, and a bitter slanderous campaign was launched against them.

All efforts of the Society failed to get the Archbishop to recognize them and duly open St. Mark's as a church. When they heard of the arrival of the Scalabrinians in New York they immediately got in touch with them, and Father Zaboglio entered the picture. Though he did not escape the smear campaign, with patience and tactful persistence and after some initial difficulties he finally succeeded in reaching the Archbishop. The latter, after further long and difficult negotiations, said St. Mark's was to be closed and deeded to the diocese, but the Italians could rent some other locality for a temporary chapel. They obeyed immediately, however reluctantly, and found a place on Beverly Street in a second

floor shop, badly ventilated, amid noisy surroundings and accessible only by a steep and narrow outside stairway. The chapel was dedicated to the Sacred Heart. Although only a twentieth of the Italians could fit into it at one time, they endured the dangerously over-crowded and unpleasant situation for a year and a half while discussions with the Archdiocese continued and the "mice danced as they pleased" in the empty St. Mark's, as Zaboglio dryly observed in one of his letters. The matter was finally settled after a visit from the Apostolic Delegate, whose report to Rome led to a directive from the Holy Father that the church of St. Mark was to be opened. Meanwhile, four more Scalabrinian missionaries had arrived, missions were being conducted for the fast increasing number of communicants, and at last St. Mark's was blessed as the parish church of the Sacred Heart on May 25, 1890. Some six or seven years later, Archbishop Williams met Bishop Scalabrini in Rome, praised his missionaries, and told him no other colony could compare with the Italians for a "true spirit of religion," uprightness and good behavior.

The Scalabrinians went out to the towns in the surrounding area to say Mass and administer the sacraments for the Italians, establishing "mission" chapels along the way in Milford, Springfield and North Adams. With the help of the Society of St. Mark a small wooden auxiliary chapel was built in Orient Heights (East Boston) and dedicated to St. Lazarus. It later became an independent parish with a new church, school and convent.

One of the spin-offs from the Sacred Heart parish in Boston was that of St. Tarcisius in Framingham. It was founded by Father Peter Maschi who, in 1906, went to Framingham to give the last sacraments to the victims trapped in a building that had collapsed and discovered his brother among them. He vowed to build a church on the spot and did so, drawing on the support of the Italian families in Natick, Marlboro and Wellesley. The church was rebuilt after a devastating fire in 1918, and Father Maschi remained its pastor until 1939. The Scalabrinians from Boston's Sacred Heart Church also regularly served the Italian community in Somerville, to whose tree-lined streets the immigrants had come to escape the stifling crowdedness of the big city settlements; it was not possible, however, to begin the modest church of St. Anthony of Padua until 1915. In Everett where other Italians had sought refuge from the North End settlement, they organized a "Society of St. Anthony" but went all the way back to Sacred Heart or St. Leonard's for church services. The Scalabrinians shuttled back and forth between Boston and Everett until in 1928, Father Lino Buggini rented an old movie theater, put an altar on the stage, said Mass there, and a new parish was born, which survived the 1929 depression through the enormous efforts of its constituents.

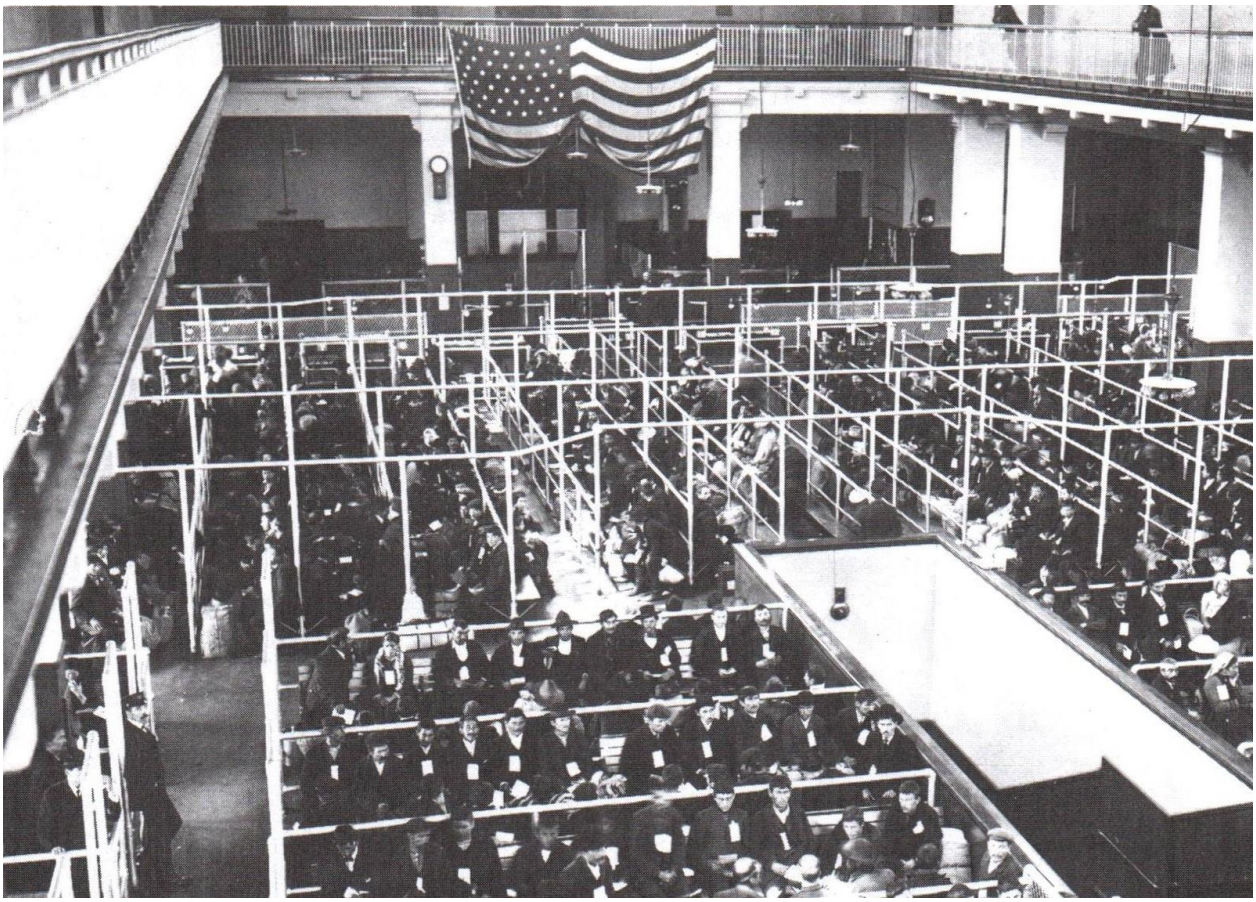
Among the Scalabrinians assigned to Sacred Heart Church was a strong-willed and energetic young Pole, John Chmielinski, who had joined the emigration movement from his native country. In Genoa he heard of the new society of priests formed to help Italian emigrants, decided that he too wanted to be a missionary and applied to Bishop Scalabrini, who accepted him. He was ordained in 1892 and his first assignment was the Sacred Heart parish. There he soon began to contact the Polish immigrant groups in various towns around Boston and to provide religious services for them, even going as far as Providence, Rhode Island. The Poles in those areas, who had been as neglected religiously as the Italians, greeted him enthusiastically and began to clamor for a church of their own. At his request, Bishop Scalabrini granted Chmielinski permission to devote himself entirely to his countrymen and confirmed this mandate when he accepted the renewal of his promise. He later sent him another Polish Scalabrinian, Father Stephen Duda, as his assistant. The first Polish church erected by Chmielinski was dedicated (November 1894) to Our Lady of Czestochowa. By the time of his Silver Jubilee (1916) Father Chmielinski had founded eleven parishes and schools, which were eventually incorporated in the Boston Archdiocese. Chmielinski himself did not renew his commitment to the Scalabrinian Congregation, becoming a diocesan priest instead, but he always remained close to it and contributed generously to the Motherhouse.

The Sacred Heart parish was also closely associated with the branches of the St. Raphael Society in both New York and Boston. It was while he was pastor here that Father Gambera shuttled between Boston and New York to keep the St. Raphael Society there in operation and began to reorganize it. He was succeeded as pastor at Sacred Heart by Father Robert Biasotti, under whom the Boston branch came into being in 1902. It was made necessary by the urgent needs of the greatly increased number of immigrants entering Boston as a result of the direct sailings between the Mediterranean ports and Boston inaugurated in 1901 by the Dominion Line (later White Star). Biasotti had to overcome the difficulties set in his way by customs inspectors, the Dominion Line and the Italian consul, who favored a society run by a Methodist minister, and also the initial mistrust of the migrants themselves who were unused to free services. The Italian Society of St. Raphael the Archangel for the Protection of talian Immigrants was incorporated in 1903 with Archbishop John Williams as its president. In Boston the unsuspecting immigrant met the same scenario as his countrymen did in New York. Here, too, there were the agents of unscrupulous "bosses," con artists, impostors claiming to be relatives of unaccompanied minors. "... here relatives are manufactured with alarming speed," Biasotti wrote in his monograph on the Society. In Boston, too,

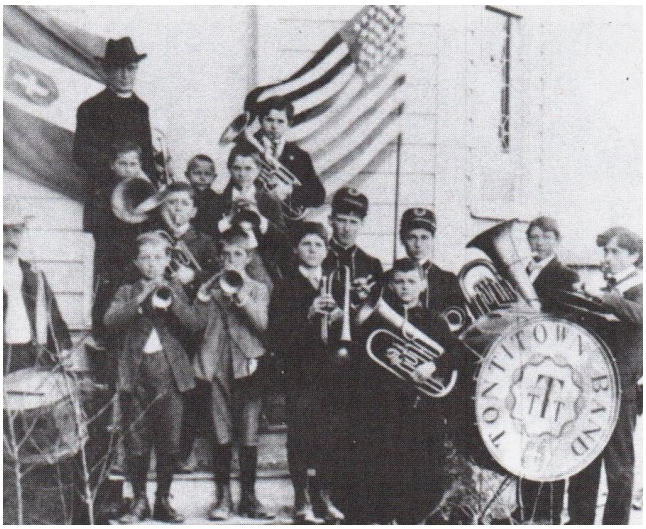
the St. Raphael Society soon won respect. Minors and detainees were often released to its guardianship. It provided legal aid for the detainees and financial help for the sick or those being repatriated; among other services it maintained a hostel and ran a modest employment office. The secretary of the Society was Eleanora Colleton, who headed a committee concerned for the welfare of foundlings and orphans. Thanks to her intense and effective efforts and the interest of the Archdiocese, legislation was passed to ensure their being placed in institutions or families of the same nationality or religion as their parents where this was known. In Boston, too, it was never possible, even with a government subsidy, to provide the many forms of assistance required without running a deficit, and the Sacred Heart parish usually picked up the slack. In 1907, Ms. Colleton became president and director of the Society, and its name was changed to the Boston Society for Italian Immigrants. Many, however, still turned to the Scalabrinians for help.

As their activities spread throughout New England, the Scalabrinian missionaries enjoyed friendly relations and cooperation with Jesuits and with French Canadian and German priests also concerned with nationality groups, and they found the Irish priests more open and cordial than those they had met in New York. Many of the New England priests had been sent by their bishops to study at the American College in Rome and were working effectively among the Italian immigrants.

While the protracted negotiations in Boston over St. Mark were still going on, requests for Scalabrinian missionaries came from the Bishops of Providence and of Hartford, Connecticut, and again it was Father Zaboglio who made the initial arrangements. Providence was one of the first cities to welcome Italian immigrants and its bishop, Matthew Harkins, concerned at the maltreatment some of them had received, was anxious to provide for them. With his interest and help a first church and parish were established and dedicated to the Holy Ghost in August 1890. Its members numbered about 6000 spread through an area within a fifty mile radius and, like Boston, it gave rise to a number of other parishes. Chief among the difficulties the missionaries encountered here was the strong spirit of factionalism among the Italians from different towns, intensified by the distances between their respective settlements. In 1894 Father Paolo Novati was made pastor of Holy Ghost Church. A highly cultivated and learned person of distinguished background and intellect, he had joined the Scalabrinians two years previously. He was a prudent administrator whose firmness was tempered by a kindly and winning personality and during his eleven year tenure the parish was a strong center from which missions were conducted throughout what was largely a farming area. A



Ellis Island at the beginning of the century.



Fr. Peter Bandini in Tontitown, 1905 ca.

Fr. Oreste Alussi, 1856-1928, Pastor of St. Michael's Church in New Haven.

A graduation class, Sacred Heart Church, Boston, Fr. Vittorio Gregori, 1920 ca.

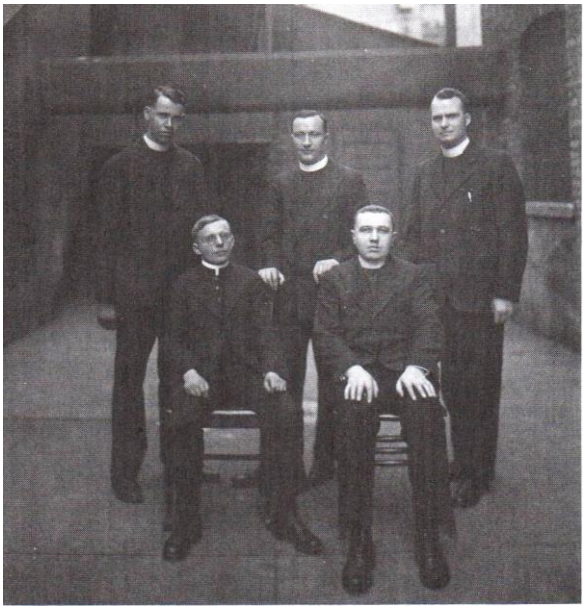
Societies often laid the foundation for early parishes.

Fr. Antonio Gibelli, 1859-1907
Pastor of St. Anthony's Church, Buffalo.

Msgr. Michael Lavelle blesses the cornerstone of Our Lady of Pompei Church, Greenwich, N.Y. October 3, 1925. Facing the group is Fr. Antonio Demo, Pastor for 35 years.

Fr. Benjamin Franch with
Fr. Ettore Ansaldi the first novice master
at Sacred Heart Seminary, Chicago, 1946.

(Left to right) Fr. Sante Bernardi
Fr. Giuseppe Lazzari, Fr. Ugo Cavicchi
Fr. Antonio Cogo, Fr. William Pizzoglio.



Fr. Luigi Riello
leading his parish
procession in
Milwaukee,
Wisconsin, 1937.

second church, dedicated to St. Rocco was built in Thornton and from there, in response to lay initiatives, a third parish, that of St. Bartholomew the Apostle was established in Silver Lake. Later Scalabrinian parishes included Our Lady of Mt. Carmel in Bristol (1916) and Our Lady of Loreto in East Providence (1920), for the building of which the parishioners contributed a day's labor or a day's pay.

In Connecticut the Italians found employment on the railroads or on public works, or they turned to farming. They also found a welcoming diocese very open to their requests. One of the first, spearheaded by Attorney Paolo Russo, was for an Italian church. Bishop Lawrence McMahon initially assigned to the immigrants priests who had studied in Rome. His appeal to Bishop Scalabrini brought two of the early missionaries to New Haven, Vincent Astorri and Oreste Alussi, who took over the church of St. Michael the Archangel, a small wooden Protestant church the Italians had managed to purchase two years before. The parish progressed to a brick church in 1897 and debts were paid off despite the meagerness of their resources. Then factionalism broke out among the more hot-headed Southern Italians when one of the priests (by then it was Father Beccherini) was transferred to Meriden. Father Zaboglio came to the rescue and remained until all was calm again. The parish survived afire, after which the church was immediately rebuilt, and then a further outburst of difficulties from malcontents. It went on, however, to a thriving and productive history, eventually establishing the auxiliary church of St. Anne in Hamden.

In 1903 the need for a second church became apparent and Father Bartolomeo Marenchino, then the pastor of St. Michael's, set out to collect the necessary funds. By this time the more affluent Italians were contributing generously and the church of St. Anthony was dedicated in 1905. It, too, had a prosperous history.

From 1894 to 1908, the Bishop of the Hartford diocese (which included all of Connecticut at that time) was Michael Tierney, himself an Irish immigrant, whose concern for the immigrants was completely pastoral and who addressed their problems more sympathetically and systematically than had been done before. He sent seminarians abroad to complete their studies and to learn different languages and national customs, and the students in the minor seminary, St. Thomas, were already being taught an appreciation of different cultures. During his episcopate seven national Italian parishes were established in the diocese. This pro-immigrant stance, accommodating to both old and new immigrants, was continued by his successor Bishop John J. Nilan. The editor of the diocesan newspaper, The Catholic Transcript, Monsignor Thomas S. Duggan, defended the immigrant minorities, was impressed by their affection for their customs and traditions and

praised their efforts to establish national parishes. What was important, he wrote (June 18, 1908), was not "whether we are Irish Catholics, or French Catholics, or Polish Catholics, or German Catholics, or Lithuanian Catholics, or Greek Catholics," but "whether we are Catholics worthy of our birthright both as members of the Church of Christ and as citizens of the American Republic." In this atmosphere it is not surprising that the Italians felt comfortable with the Church in

Connecticut and got along well with both Irish and Italian pastors. In Connecticut, one writer noted, "Italians were the only group to demonstrate that an ethnic minority could accommodate with grace and a spirit of accommodation to New World traditions if the right conditions for that spirit to develop also existed."

New Orleans and other Missions

A mission was started in New Orleans in 1889 in response to appeals to Bishop Scalabrini from both Archbishop Francis Janssens of New Orleans and Bishop Domenico Gaspare Lancia of Monreale (Palermo) in Sicily. Assigned to it were two of the most colorful early Scalabrinian missionaries, Giacomo Gambera and Angelo Chiariglione, both of whom left unforgettable memories in the history of the Congregation. Gambera, a rather husky man of forceful presence and lively nature with a no-nonsense look about him, had on his ordination been given a most difficult parish, which he cheerfully and successfully pacified and unified. Bishop Scalabrini's writings and lectures reawakened in him an attraction to the missions he had felt as a student, and a visit to the Bishop himself settled the matter. He entered the Christopher Columbus Institute in June 1889, overcoming the reluctance of his bishop to let him go. On Sundays Bishop Scalabrini sent him to help where needed in various rural parishes and this proved to be a significant preparation for his work with the migrants. He also served as secretary-general of the First National Catechetical Conference, another of Scalabrini's historic innovations.

Angelo Chiariglione, born near Turin in 1831, was in his youth of a romantic and patriotic turn of mind. Disillusioned by the reverses plaguing the movement for the unification of Italy and deeply saddened by the death of his mother, he left school and immersed himself in romantic literature and in travel, first with his father and then alone. When his father died he turned his share of the family patrimony over to his sisters and became a restless wanderer, traveling with only a knapsack and generally on foot. When he ran out of funds he became a day laborer in a construction industry, carrying bricks and mortar for the masons. He continued his voracious reading, however, spending any money he earned on books. His checkered career included an attempt to fight in the Crimean War (it ended before

he finished training), and construction work in Algiers, interrupted by an earthquake. Finally, influenced by two good friends he grew to esteem while living in Toulouse, he returned to his studies at the age of 29. He became a missionary priest, served ten years in Palestine, and then for a time as a pastor in the diocese of Turin. There he became distressed at the numbers of Italians emigrating and worried at their being thrust suddenly into an unknown world. He thought of his own self-imposed exile and considered it was time for him to travel again. He joined the Scalabrinians in 1889 at the age of 58.

The two arrived in New York in December 1889, and they immediately plunged in to help the missionaries at St. Joachim's, hearing confessions until past midnight and assisting at the succession of Masses the next day from five o'clock in the morning until noon, all of them crowded and overflowing into the street. This made a great impression on the two newcomers and in his Memoirs (Memorie) Gambera wrote: "I saw immediately that in our colonies the Church was the center of dearest memories, of deepest consolation and the strongest bond among our Exiles, and that the Missionary was the living - and best - representative of the most beautiful and sacred traditions of the Fatherland..."

Illustrative perhaps of the reactions of many of the immigrants on first arriving in New York are his impressions of constant, crowded and boisterous movement, accompanied by the unceasing, rackety clatter of the El trains and the mournful bellowing of ships' horns and ferry-boat sirens. "I who had come from the silent and solitary Alps," he wrote, "seemed to be submerged in a rushing torrent of unceasing noise." To him, New York's "one great marvel" was the Brooklyn Bridge. He responded to the thirty hour train ride to New Orleans with a sense of wonder. "It was a flying vision of the immeasurable riches of this land and the feverish activity of this eminently industrial People. I was really discovering America, skimming over its vast natural treasures."

The emigrant flow to New Orleans had begun in the 1860s, mostly from Sicily and generally for the same reasons that had impelled the emigration from other parts of Italy. By the time of the Scalabrinians' arrival a few of the immigrants had become quite prosperous as professionals, as owners of fishing boats or flourishing fruit and vegetable outlets. Some had farms outside the city, others worked as crewmen on the various commercial vessels plying the harbor, and there were the usual small shopkeepers, barbers, street vendors, etc. A direct steamship line from Palermo to New Orleans brought in thousands of Sicilians to work on the cotton and sugar plantations at harvest time. Many stayed, many returned to Sicily, while others kept going back and forth as the seasonal work or their own needs and wishes prompted them. There were also adventurers among

them, mostly riff-raff or "mafiosi," members of the "Black Hand," who eventually gave the whole Italian colony a bad name. In sum, Father Zaboglio, who had made the first arrangements for the mission with the Archbishop, described the colony as the roughest and most difficult, "the worst in the United States."

The difficulties new immigrants encountered on first landing - from scalpers to the omnipresent "bosses" - were much the same as in New York or Boston, and Gambera and Chiariglione did some work among them, although there is no record of the formation of a St. Raphael Society. There was an Italian church of sorts, St. Anthony of Padua, founded in 1875 and owned by a wealthy Sardinian priest, Joachim Manoritta, who also owned the rectory and quite a bit of the surrounding land. He catered mostly to the Creoles, however, whom he found to be more generous than the Italians. The latter did not frequent the church because they thought him too interested in making money and considered him both too demanding and too stingy. Although advanced in years and unable to exercise fully his parish duties, he refused to give up his church to the Scalabrinians, despite the intervention of the Archbishop. He viewed them as competitors, became actively hostile to them and sought to undermine their efforts. As if this were not trouble enough, there was more than the usual factionalism among the skittish Sicilians, who found a number of excuses for not attending or supporting the church - e.g. "their" saints were not there; the priests could not speak their dialect, etc. A general census of Italian families brought only a slim response and the more successful and respectable citizens among them - mostly northern Italians or "prominenti" - refused to have anything to do with the Southerners whom they lumped together and identified with the riff-raff and "mafiosi."

To make matters worse the popular chief of police, David Hennessey, was shot and killed, ironically enough on his way home from a banquet in his honor tendered him for admirable service by a group of distinguished Sicilians, a few of whom were actually accompanying him at the time. Some months earlier a group of Sicilian workers had been killed, it was thought by a rival gang, and the police had been successfully tracking down the killers. The city reacted in furious anger at the assassination of the police chief, several suspects were arrested and thirteen were indicted. There followed a long and stormy trial, which dragged on in a climate of blackmail, threats and bribery. It ended with the acquittal of the thirteen, who were to remain in the city jail overnight and released the next morning. But that night a mob invaded the jail and dragged eleven of them into the square where they beat them to death (two had hidden in the kennels). There were indignant protests and demands for reparation from the Italian government and finally compensations were granted the families of the victims. There was a feeling they

were among the innocent, that the truly guilty had escaped. The incident left a simmering hostility among the citizens of New Orleans and a sorry cloud of shame and disgrace over the Italian community.

Father Chiariglione meanwhile had asked to be transferred and had gone to Cincinnati. Gambera continued his uphill efforts with the help of two Scalabrinian Brothers. From pledges and the proceeds of a bazaar he had managed to put together $6,000, not enough to start a church, and there was little more to hope for from the adults. But there was probably enough to start a school for the youngsters, at least for religious instruction. Gambera had met Mother Cabrini in New York and knew the work of her Sisters at St. Joachim's. At this time she was in Nicaragua to open an orphanage and a school for girls. He wrote to her describing the mission's situation and appealing for her help, not failing to point out the strategic location of New Orleans for her expanding work in North and South America. She arrived in New Orleans a month later, the necessary arrangements were quickly made, and within three months three of her Sisters arrived. Gambera assumed some of the financial responsibility for them as they opened a youth center, taught catechism and began to set up an orphanage. An English/Italian school was opened in 1892, and soon others of her institutions were built and flourished.

Despite his many difficulties, Gambera did have help from several persons - notably the Provincial of the Redemptorists and the Superior of the Sisters of St. Joseph - to whom he paid tribute in his memoirs. First among his benefactors was the Archbishop who customarily took him on his visits to rural parishes so he could minister to their Italian families but also to give him some respite from the city. There were also benefactors among the more affluent Italians, and last but not least a little old Sicilian woman whose dialect he could not understand at all but who took pleasure in bringing the missionaries huge plates of pasta she had prepared herself. Gambera's successor was Luigi Paroli, whom he described as a dedicated and virtuous young man, "a bit of a poet and a fanatical vegetarian." Paroli gave up the idea of a separate church for the immigrants and decided to devote his time to flying missions in various parishes of the city and in the country-side.

Gambera then spent sixteen difficult months in Pittsburgh where there were numbers of Italians working in the mines and mills. As mentioned earlier the first missionaries to arrive in New York preached a highly successful mission there in 1889 and the Bishop offered them the basement of the cathedral for a temporary church. Meanwhile, some five hundred heads of families had set up a standing committee to raise funds for a church. In 1891 the cornerstone was laid by the

Bishop, who was escorted by a spectacular procession of marchers on foot, on horseback, and in carriages accompanied by enthusiastic bands and punctuated by a varied array of banners. The budding parish was served by the two first Scalabrinian Missionaries, Mantese and Molinari, who had come from effortful and productive missions in Brazil. In the building of the church, Molinari was by turns foreman, carpenter and painter, starting a long line of active Scalabrinian builders. The church was blessed in 1893 and dedicated to St. Peter.

Gambera's tenure as pastor was plagued by an aggressive committee of parishioners who insisted on owning and running the church and whose rival factions were a further source of discord. Gambera, with his usual steadfastness and blunt vigor, brought calm and order to the Italian community, paid off the mortgage and other obligations and generally strengthened the parish administration. He had served more than the five years of his promise and having advised his Superiors of his intention to return to Italy he left for New York. Later the Scalabrinians relinquished the parish and it was taken over by the Franciscans.

Asked to become pastor of the Sacred Heart parish in Boston, Gambera gave up his dream of Italy and bowed his head in obedience as he said he had done in his three previous assignments. The parish prospered in the seven years (18951902) of his vigorous leadership. Societies, Sunday school and other activities were strengthened, the mortgage paid off, and the church restored and refurbished. In 1897 he was also named Provincial Superior, a responsibility he fulfilled with characteristic energy and directness. He presided over or initiated several new missions and, in response to a request of the Servite Fathers, facilitated the coming of Mother Cabrini's Sisters to Chicago.

It was while he was already exercising a double function in Boston that he became involved in the St. Raphael Society. The departure of Father Bandini and the weakened health of Father Zaboglio (after the explosion at Our Lady of Pompei) had left only one agent active in the New York harbor. By 1900 the United States Government no longer permitted governmental representatives for different nationality groups in the Barge Office, where only charitable, non-profit organizations were now allowed. It became clear that the St. Raphael Society had to be revitalized and Gambera stepped into the breach, first with a circular letter to all the Scalabrinian missionaries in the United States and then with a direct appeal to the Italian Foreign Minister on the occasion of his visit to Rome in that year. As a result of subsequent negotiations, the Italian Government granted the Society a subsidy that included the salary of one or two agents. For Gambera the St. Raphael Society was an essential part of the Scalabrinian mission and he dedicated himself to preserving it. From March to December of 1901, no priest being available for

work at the port, he undertook it himself, leaving Boston on Sunday night, working at Ellis Island Monday through Friday, and returning to Sacred Heart in Boston on Friday night, all at his own expense. He devoted himself mainly to those who were detained, seeking them out where with hundreds of others of every nationality they huddled frightened and confused, and spending, as he said, seven or eight hours a day amid the scrambled bags and baggage and multiple miseries of the immigrants.

His first thought was to redo and expand the Bleecker Street shelter for the detained or stranded, especially women and children; the cost of this was borne by New York's Our Lady of Pompei and the Sacred Heart parish in Boston. The shelter was blessed by Bishop Scalabrini during his visit to the United States. Three meetings were held with Archbishop Corrigan while Scalabrini was in New York, a committee was put together for the St. Raphael Society and Gambera continued the task of reorganizing it. It was incorporated with a new constitution in 1902. In 1904, larger quarters for the hostel were purchased through the good offices of the Archdiocese, and the running of it was entrusted to the Pallottine Sisters, to whom it was eventually transferred. According to a report of the Society in the period from late 1900 to June 1902 more than 50,000 immigrants were helped in one way or another and 705 had been entrusted to its care and given shelter in the hostel.

At the end of 1901, Gambera had resigned as pastor of Sacred Heart in Boston and devoted himself full time to the Saint Raphael Society, serving as its director until 1905, entirely without salary; his only income came from Mass stipends. His work was highly praised by the United States authorities. The Commissioner of Immigration, William Williams (1902-1905), who instituted a number of reforms designed to control the corrupt practices rampant on Ellis Island, on one occasion singled out the St. Raphael Society as a model of disinterested assistance to the poor immigrants. On another, when President Theodore Roosevelt was visiting the Ellis Island processing center, Gambera was introduced to him. The President, to his pleasant surprise, congratulated him on the good work he was doing and then launched into high praise of Bishop Scalabrini. Gambera was later honored by both the Italian Government (he was made a Knight of the Crown) and by the Holy See (with the *Pro Ecclesia* medal). In 1905 he accepted the invitation to become pastor of the church of Santa Maria Addolorata, which the Archbishop of Chicago had assigned to the Scalabrinians, and we shall meet him still again.

Father Chiariglione meanwhile was pursuing his own unique and pioneering vocation as a flying missionary, with brief pauses here and there to sow the seeds of future parishes. He arrived in Cincinnati with $1.20 in his pocket and with his

spirit of dedication and sense of humor intact. He received a warm welcome from Archbishop Elder, who had earlier invited Zaboglio to come and explore the possibilities for a Scalabrinian mission, but he met with some coldness and skepticism among the Italians, many of whom had lost their savings in an ill-starred bank opened by the previous archbishop and his brother. Chiariglione lived on the daily Mass stipend of one dollar and was aided in his efforts to establish a church by the Jesuits and a generous Irish family. He was at this time sixty years of age and plagued with often crippling rheumatism, but his brief stay in Cincinnati is punctuated by unlikely excursions to meet some spiritual need brought to his attention. For example, a young woman's plea that he visit her ninety-year old grandfather who had not seen a priest in sixty years brought him on a journey of 80 miles by train and ninety more by stagecoach (*carrozza*) to give the old gentleman the last sacraments. He then spent the next four days traveling through the neighboring districts in search of those needing or desiring a priest.

From Cincinnati Chiariglione went to Hartford, Connecticut, where a small chapel was assigned to him which, he said, could take in only fifty people packed "like anchovies in a barrel." At first shocked and outraged by a committee of Italian "capitalists," as he called them, who proposed to buy a church and pay him a salary provided he turned over to them all the parish income, he gradually simmered down and proceeded to conduct his ministry in a succession of rented store fronts. A story frequently told of his stay in Hartford concerned his refusal to be intimidated by warnings about the eventual reaction of the redoubtable Father James Hughes, then traveling in Europe, in whose parish, contrary to diocesan protocol, he was operating without Hughes' permission. He had not been afraid when he heard a lion crying near his mission in the Holy Land, he answered, neither would he be afraid of Father "Hoogheez" when he returned. What transpired when they finally met, behind closed doors, is not known, but Chiariglione missionary endeavors were not interrupted. He subsequently moved to Meriden where he started a church later completed by Father Morelli, and for a while he commuted, saying one Mass on Sunday in Hartford and another in Meriden. From the latter city he could reach out to the surrounding towns (Windsor Locks, Middletown, Waterbury, New Britain, Danbury, West Norfolk) where there were small enclaves of Italian families, thus laying the groundwork for later parishes.

In 1896 at the age of 65, he took up his nomadic life again, travelling through Ohio and Illinois to Memphis, Tennessee, and stopping in small towns and villages in different dioceses where he found out there were Italian families. He made house-to-house visits, blessing marriages, baptizing, hearing confessions,

administering the sacraments to the sick, and where possible getting these long neglected souls to the nearest church. Sometimes he stayed a few days, sometimes a month or more depending on the need. In Memphis he stayed four and a half months, making his "flying" excursions into Georgia and South Carolina, and then decided to travel up to Washington, D.C., having the sum total of fifty cents to see him on his way.

In one town along his route the pastor of the Catholic church at first received him cordially and offered him hospitality; then when he learned he had come to serve Italian immigrants he threw him out and ordered him to leave the parish immediately. Along the way he met more cordial hospitality from a Black traveler he met on the road who took him home with him, and then by a Protestant minister. His lodgings on other nights were the floor of a telegraph office, the steps of a railroad station, or simply a sheltered spot under the open sky which he dubbed the "Hotel of the Beautiful Star." In Bristol, Virginia, he was directed to a Benedictine monastery, where he arrived late at night and knocked on the door of one of two buildings in the complex. It happened to be the convent of the Sisters, who were frightened by a supposed intruder at that hour and loosed their dog on him. Not knowing what to do he stood still and the dog, having conducted its own examination of the stranger, wagged its tale in hearty canine welcome and curled up companionably at his feet when, exhausted from the day's twenty-five mile hike, he sat down on the convent steps and went to sleep. The Benedictine monks, when he corrected his mistake, were friendly and hospitable and pressed him to stay with them, which he did for a short while. He was anxious, however, to reach his "children," and with the help of friends he made it to Washington and Baltimore.

At Father Zaboglio's request, he stayed for a while at Our Lady of Pompei in New York. A newspaper account of an outbreak of yellow fever in Alabama sent him on his way again. He wrote to the Bishop of Mobile to offer his services, which the bishop received gladly. When the epidemic was over he settled him in the farming community of Daphne, charging him to take care of the French, Italians and Germans throughout the diocese, which at that time comprised all of Alabama and part of Florida. His peregrinations took him into the latter state, where, in Pensacola, he hired a boat and went out to visit fishermen in the area. There were no Italians among them but a number of Montenegrins "more or less married" to local women. He returned the following year as he had promised and gave them a mission in "grand style," attended by people from several miles away in the surrounding area.

In Daphne some of his parishioners wanted to give him fifty cents a month each for his expenses, but he refused. He accepted instead the foodstuffs they brought him, which he cooked himself. At Christmas time a group of Italians and Americans took up a collection to buy him new clothing. From Daphne he went every Saturday evening to two hamlets, one twelve and the other sixteen miles distant, inhabited by Germans and Italians, and after his Masses there he returned to offer the Sunday Mass in Daphne. The last ten years of his life were spent in Daphne, where he was beloved by "Americans and Europeans, Blacks and Whites, Catholics and Methodists." In August of 1908, after a three-day search he was found dead in a forest he was traveling through at night, in all probability to bring help and comfort to some poor soul in distress. He was seventy-seven years old.

New York State

The Italian immigrants moved up through New York State working on the railroad, sometimes accompanied but in any case often visited by a Scalabrinian missionary, and again later parishes grew up where they had stopped. The first Italian in Buffalo, the Milanese Paul Busti, was actually one of the city's founders. The United States government had given him a vast tract of land west of the Genesee river to colonize, and it was he who had the first map of Buffalo drawn up in 1802. By 1890 the Italian community numbered about 6,500. It was something of a floating population since half went out in the summer to work on farms, roads and other construction and returned to the city when winter cold put a stop to this kind of employment; and some kept moving in and out in search of permanent jobs. In Buffalo there was not the brutalizing poverty that afflicted the immigrants in New York City. Many of the Italians were doing well; some owned their own homes or shops, and Italians were to be found in all the occupations from factory hands to bartenders, with a sprinkling of doctors, lawyers and university students among them. Only the Sicilians had a rough time getting jobs, for news of the New Orleans lynching was widespread and they were indiscriminately tarred by the "mafiosi" brush.

Shortly before 1888 an attempt was begun to organize an Italian parish with the help of a Hungarian priest who spoke Italian. In November of 1888, at a meeting held under the guidance of the rector of the cathedral, James Quigley, (later bishop of Buffalo, then of Chicago and a constant friend of the Scalabrinians), a committee was formed to raise funds to build a church and buy the land for it. The Scalabrinians were invited to take charge and arrived in 1890. The cornerstone of the church of St. Anthony of Padua was laid in 1891 and a school was begun the next year with 374 pupils. By 1901 the parish numbered

10,000 members and it continued to grow. Meanwhile the more prosperous Italians were buying land in the countryside and various agricultural centers were springing up, the largest of which was Fredonia. The Scalabrinians in Buffalo visited it periodically and eventually another church of St. Anthony was begun as a "mission" of the church in Buffalo. In 1906 a new church was dedicated, actually constructed by members of the Society of St. Anthony who devoted their free time and labor to it, and in time it became an independent parish.

The Scalabrinians went to Syracuse in 1895 at the request of the Bishop. The first to arrive was Francesco Beccherini. He overcame the hostilities of an Italian "boss" and some of the local clergy, and through his efforts and the cooperation of the people he raised enough money to buy a former Lutheran church, which was opened in 1896 as the church of St. Peter. Italians working on the railroad also settled in Utica, where in 1901 Bishop Scalabrini laid the cornerstone of the church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. It opened for worship in 1902 to a fast growing and increasingly generous congregation.

In upper New York State another well-known Scalabrinian worked both as a flying missionary and a parish builder. He was Father Pio Parolin, born into the poorest family in his poor village. He had known hunger as a child, and his train ride to Piacenza to enter the seminary was his first journey away from home. There, as he writes in his memoirs, he found the language and customs very different from those he had known in his village. He was one of the four deacons who came to New York at the behest of Bishop Scalabrini to be ordained by him at the church of Our Lady of Pompei (1901). The way he got through customs without the necessary papers is a story in itself. In later years he marveled at his temerity at giving a homily in the presence of Bishop Scalabrini. The latter smilingly told him it was a "so-so" sermon but tempered the faint praise with enough encouragement so that Parolin went on to become a persuasive preacher. He spent twelve years at Our Lady of Pompei, where he organized singing and amateur theatrical groups, first among the children and then the adults. He composed music for them and the plays he produced (in Italian) - including a Passion Play in Lent - were the principal entertainment accessible to the immigrants. From 1914, except for periods of illness and a stint in Boston, he served as pastor in Syracuse, Fredonia and Utica. A humble, affable and dedicated priest, he managed to control a tendency to hot temper with humor and a patience that bordered on the saintly given the problems he was sent to solve. In Syracuse he dissipated the bad feelings left by his predecessor, paid off the inevitable mortgage and established missions in Norwich (St. Bartholomew), Oswego (St. Joseph), and Cortland (St. Anthony), which later became large independent

parishes. In Fredonia where he served as pastor for nineteen years, he settled, among other things, a long factional dispute over a cemetery and was revered as the "father" of the community. During his tenure the expanding parish of St. Peter's was divided in two and he became the founder also of the second church, dedicated to Our Lady of Pompei.

The Midwest

In Ohio Father Giuseppe Strumia preached a number of missions in Youngstown, Cleveland and East Cleveland. In 1892, after a series of setbacks, a committee of Italians, assisted by a group of Irish Catholics, gathered all the carpenters they could enlist in Cleveland, and between the morning of Holy Thursday and Holy Saturday evening a small wooden chapel was built, complete with altar. Forty members of one of the Italian societies marched through the city in dress uniform to act as a guard of honor for the two Masses celebrated there on Easter Sunday. The following year the church of the Holy Rosary was built in East Cleveland. On the death of their respective pastors, however, both churches were taken over by the diocese, whose bishop, in any case, was somewhat less than sympathetic to national parishes.

Father Angelo Chiariglione arrival in Cincinnati has already been noted. The work he had started was continued by Father Vincent Sciolla and Father Pietro Lotti. The mission in preparation for the laying of the cornerstone of the church had been preached by Father Gambera, who later wrote enthusiastically about the fervent and generous support for the new church and the work of the committee in charge of it, the members of which lent their expertise in the matter of contracts and the actual construction. Like New York, it was as different from New Orleans as spring from winter, he wrote, and he marveled somewhat at the differences between one Italian colony and another. The church of the Sacred Heart in Cincinnati was opened in 1893, a school followed in 1897, and the parish became the center of various services for Italians throughout the city.

In Iron Mountain, then a mining town of miserable huts and muddy lanes, the Italian workers had long been neglected from a religious point of view. In 1902, Father Pietro Sinopoli got them together and they, too, built a church themselves on donated land. Father Sinopoli, who was himself an artist, finished the interior. The church was dedicated to Our Lady of Lourdes and had a successful history until the mine was closed.

The first Italian migrants in Kansas City, mostly Sicilians and Calabrians, had come up from New Orleans, working on the railroad or in search of jobs in the

meat packing plants. They settled in the north end of the city, where they found a hostile environment in a predominantly anti-Catholic setting and were not welcomed by the local Catholics who labeled them members of the "Black Hand" and therefore subversive. Bishop John Hogan asked Bishop Scalabrini for a priest to look after his 2,000 Italians, and the first to arrive was Father Ferdinando Santipolo, in 1891, who started what has been described as one of the most difficult Scalabrinian missions. Most of the Italians at the time were unemployed and funds for a church were difficult to come by. Services were held in a succession of temporary chapels until finally a wooden church was dedicated in 1895. Eight years later, this burned down on Holy Saturday night and the then pastor, Charles Delbecchi, dashed through the flames to save the Blessed Sacrament and then jumped out a window to save himself. Undaunted, he immediately gathered his parishioners together, a collection was taken up and a new church was started in 1905, dedicated to the Holy Rosary. The parish went on to have a checkered but substantially successful history.

In St. Louis, earlier experiences with an Italian priest and parish had completely disenchanted the Italians themselves as well as Archbishop Peter Kenrick and had left a stiff skepticism in both that was difficult to penetrate. In 1889, on a stopover during one of his journeys, Father Zaboglio met with a negative reception from the Archbishop when he suggested a Scalabrinian mission for the Italians. It was only several years later and after long negotiations that Father Gambera, then the Provincial Superior, obtained permission to conduct a mission in the city.

There were about 18,000 Italians in St. Louis, settled in different parts of the city, the Sicilians in Little Italy; the northern Italians - mostly from Italy's Lombard region and more or less successful merchants - were in southwest St. Louis on what was called "Dago Hill." The usual factional dissensions existed between the two groups and they mocked each other's festivals and processions as late as the 1920's. The mission, however, preached by Fathers Cesare Spigardi, Robert Biasotti and Gambera, was received so enthusiastically that to accommodate the large attendance, it was given in three different churches. Under Gambera's guidance to avoid recalling past history no contributions were requested, no committees formed or meetings called. Instead, within a matter of two days and with the approval of the Archbishop, a former Presbyterian church was rented and dedicated to Our Lady Help of Christians. With this fait accompli and the talents and charm of Father Spigardi, who was named pastor, the Italian community was revitalized. Originally from Mantua, he was well acquainted with the region from which the Lombard immigrants had come, and he had already worked among the

Italian immigrants in New Jersey, Boston and Kansas City. A resolute and energetic man, determined, as he said in an interview, to lift the immigrants above their squalid surroundings with a church of their own, he founded a second Italian church in midtown (1902) which was dedicated to St. Charles Borromeo. From there he established a mission station on the "Hill" in a modest wooden chapel named for St. Ambrose, to which he and his assistants traveled to say Mass. In 1905 it was recognized as a separate Italian parish. Many years later, a new St. Ambrose, in the building of which the old factionalisms were submerged in creative cooperation, became the focal point of the social and economic life of the community.

The pioneering activity of the Scalabrinians reached for a time into West Virginia, Illinois and Montana, but it was Chicago which became the flourishing center of their work in the West. Italian immigration into Chicago had begun in 1860 when it was still a small city of 150,000. By the late 19th century, the profile of the Italian community, numbering about 100,000, was very much like that in other cities, namely, there were several highly successful merchants, especially in the fruit and produce business, then the construction workers, stonecutters and small shopkeepers, and finally the very poor who took any job they could get. There were the same patterns of discrimination and exploitation, the same low-paid work in factories and the same rivalries among the Italians where their saints and villages of origin were concerned. And Chicago, too, had its pockets of misery.

It was Archbishop James Quigley who brought the Scalabrinians to Chicago, his appreciation of them and friendship with them having begun in Buffalo where, as mentioned earlier, he established the city's first permanent Italian parish. He is known to have been a strong and vigorous personality, a devoted and energetic churchman, an able administrator and innovator. Among other things he prompted the foundation of two universities, Loyola by the Jesuits and De Paul by the Vincentians. The Canadian born son of Irish immigrant parents, he always took a deep interest in the situations in which immigrants found themselves. His studies abroad - in Innsbruck and Rome - had given him an appreciation of cultural diversity, and it was while he was a student in Rome, where he earned his doctorate in Sacred Theology, that he developed a fondness for the Italians and their many individualistic ways. He established nine parishes for Italians in Chicago, whose pastors were either Italian or knew the language.

The first Chicago parish taken over by a Scalabrinian was that of Guardian Angel, which under Father Edmund Dunne had developed from a catechism class in a school of that name, to a chapel and finally a church, opened in 1889. Father Dunne is remembered affectionately for his work among poor Italians, and his

aims were practically identical with those of the Scalabrinians, i.e., to keep the immigrant faithful to his religion through his own language for as long as necessary and to help him at the same time to become a good American citizen. When in 1903 Dunne became chancellor of the Archdiocese, Archbishop Quigley asked for a Scalabrinian, and Father Pacifico Chenuil was named pastor of Guardian Angel. The parish and its activities flourished rapidly and in 1911 it was divided, giving rise to a new parish, that of Our Lady of Pompei, with a new church and eventually a school. Chenuil, while still pastor of Guardian Angel, was also for a time Provincial Superior. In 1903 a second parish was given to the Scalabrinians at the death of its pastor and the request of the parishioners for an Italian priest. This was Santa Maria Incoronata, the patron saint of most of the parishioners, who had had the statue of that name brought from their hometown.

In 1905, the valiant Father Gambera arrived in Chicago to take charge of the parish of Santa Maria Addolorata and found it in shambles. The previous pastor had been less than satisfactory, to put it mildly, and when told to leave, he stripped the church and rectory of their furnishings, locked the church doors, left as his legacy a debt of over $100,000, and became such a nuisance the police had to intervene. The church building, with a leaking roof and broken windows was a disaster, the rectory uninhabitable, the people disillusioned and disaffected, and the previous benefactors clamoring for their money back. After all his years in the missions, Gambera seemed to be back where the Scalabrinians had started seventeen years before. His first congregation consisted of two old men and about ten little old ladies. Appalled but undismayed, he proceeded to rebuild and restore the church. At his request, Mother Cabrini, then in Chicago, sent him two of her Sisters to start a catechetical school for the youngsters, and he himself, by dint of instructions during Mass and the missions he preached, revived the religious devotion of his parishioners, with "prayers, patience and perseverance." In two years, Santa Maria Addolorata was on its way to becoming a model parish. The catechetical school, soon numbering 700 pupils and staffed by volunteers, was an enormous success, and the Archbishop liked to drop in unexpectedly to chat with the children, whom he greatly enjoyed. Gambera battled the more presumptuous and money-grubbing feast-day committees, paid off the debts, founded an all-purpose day-care center, organized a host of religious societies and other activities, and until his retirement in 1921 because of age and ill health, he had the affection, respect and devotion of his people, endeared to him by his "zeal and boundless charity," according to the history of the parish. This speaks of him as a gifted preacher who drew in people from all parts of the city and says: "So deep was the

esteem and admiration that the whole Italian Community of Chicago had for him that nothing was done without his advice and approval."

Not much is known of the early history of two other parishes, St. Michael and Saint Callistus, which, however, emerge later as successful parishes under Scalabrinian pastors.

In 1905 Archbishop Quigley named Beniamino Franch, a young Scalabrinian destined to have a major influence on the Congregation, as pastor of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Melrose Park, a suburb of Chicago. The church and parish owed their origin to a pious woman who vowed to celebrate the annual feast day of Our Lady if her husband was cured of a serious illness. He was, and in 1894 the first celebration took place. Then with the help of friends she had the statue of Our Lady of Mount Carmel brought from her hometown and a small wooden church was built, surrounded mainly by empty fields and served by an Italian to say Mass and administer the sacraments. There were twelve people at Father Franch's first Mass and the offertory collection produced the sum of seventy-five cents. But Franch, a short stocky man of quiet determination and great prudence and tact, was an excellent organizer. He overcame the initial diffidence of his first congregation and by 1909, he had a beautiful new church, consecrated by the Archbishop. He remained pastor of a steadily growing and active parish for fifty-five years, during nineteen of which he also served as Provincial Superior. His pastoral care reached out to a small Lithuanian community in Melrose Park. He learned their language so he could minister to them more effectively, welcomed them to the use of the parish church and sought out Lithuanian priests whom he invited to come to them.

By 1906 there were nineteen Scalabrinian parishes in the United States, divided into two provinces: the Eastern, named for St. Charles Borromeo, with its headquarters in New York City, covered the ten parishes in New England, New York State and a mining town in West Virginia; the Western, named for St. Joh the Baptist, with its provincial office in Chicago, covered the four parishes in that city and the others in Cincinnati, Cleveland, St. Louis, Kansas City and Iron Mountain.

Chapter 6

Bishop Scalabrini's Visit to the United States

"I am pleased with what I see.

" Bishop Scalabrini in the diary of his visit.

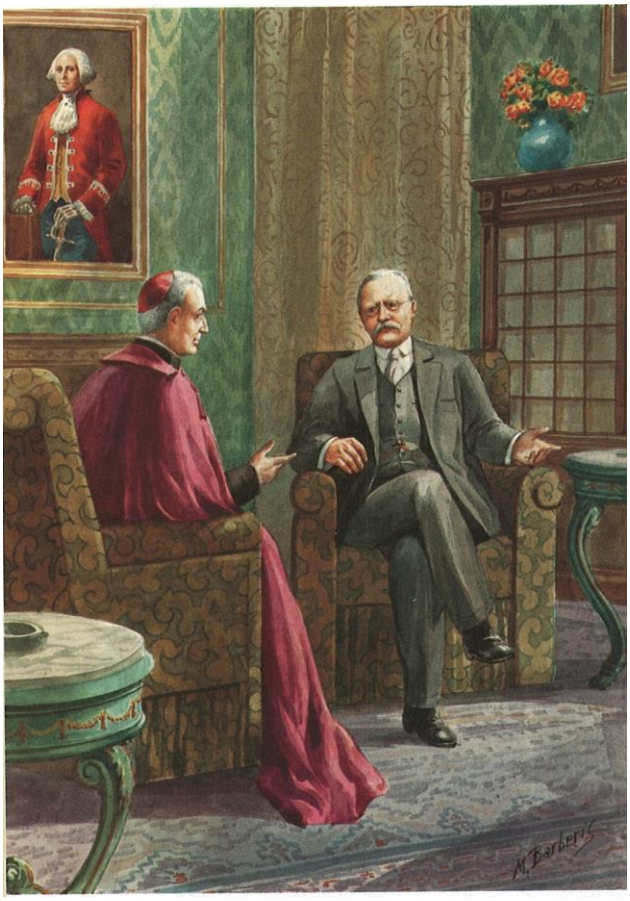
The highlight of the early Scalabrinian years in the United States was the visit in 1901 of their Bishop and Founder. He had for some time wanted to visit the missions in America, his priests were pressing him to do so and so were the Italian communities they served. But the Propagation of the Faith, with jurisdiction over missionary matters, hesitated to give permission for the visit for fear of offending the American bishops who might conceivably view it as interference in their particular dioceses, invaded as they were by a multiplicity of different nationalities. Bishop Scalabrini was himself extremely sensitive to the susceptibilities of his brother bishops, reflected also in his insistence that his missionaries undertake no initiatives without the approval of the local ordinary. Finally, the indomitable Father Gambera, then the Provincial Superior, decided to resolve the difficulty. He wrote to the bishops in whose dioceses the Scalabrinians were working, asking their opinion about the advisability of such a visit. Without exception they replied that a personal visit to his missions by Bishop Scalabrini was desirable, opportune or necessary and all offered him the hospitality of their residences. On his trip to Rome in August 1900, having first consulted with Scalabrini Gambera presented the replies to the Propagation of the Faith and the visit was confirmed.

With the blessing and instructions of Pope Leo XIII, who held him in special regard, Bishop Scalabrini set sail for New York on July 18, 1901, on the Liguria, on which he had been given free passage. His purpose in undertaking the trip, as he explained in several interviews in the States, was to learn as much as possible about the condition of the Italian immigrants so that he might more intelligently direct his missionaries. He also had a second agenda, namely, to revitalize the St. Raphael Society and to promote the establishment of schools in the Italian parishes run by his priests.

Bishop John Baptist Scalabrini leaving for New York, July 18,1901.

Bishop John B. Scalabrini with retreatants at Dunwoodie Seminary, August 1901.

Bishop John B. Scalabrini blesses the cornerstone of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Utica, September 15, 1901.



Painting depicting Bishop Scalabrini with President Theodore Roosevelt on October 10th at 10:00 A.M.

The first thing he did on boarding the ship was to visit the emigrants in third class, somewhat bewildered but deeply moved by this unwonted episcopal presence among them. Throughout the journey he served in effect as ship's chaplain, saying Mass, hearing confessions, teaching catechism, giving some their First Communion, Confirming others, counseling and comforting. His letters to his secretary, Father Camillo Mangot, which were published in Piacenza's newspapers, form a kind of diary of the voyage and of his trip through the United States. They are a lively testimony to his enthusiasm and energy, his quick, warm response to people and the joy he took in being their pastor. Wherever he went, as he noted himself, he received a "joyful welcome," to say nothing of special programs - receptions, concerts, parades, fireworks and liturgical celebrations -for the preparation of which entire parishes were mobilized months in advance. Everywhere he was met by assorted dignitaries, local leaders and Italian societies, each with its own band and all in gala array, while the entire Italian community and crowds of non-Italians as well lined the streets, greeting him with applause as he passed. The churches he visited were inevitably filled to overflowing in an atmosphere of deep devotion and reverence. While all this had somewhat the flavor of a hero's welcome alive with the Italian love of spectacle, it is not hard to imagine the welling up of nostalgia, pride and affectionate gratitude in the hearts of the many who greeted in him their beloved land, the father, the village priest they had left behind, come now to bless them in the person of this unassuming bishop with his benign and cheerful manner and his candid but warm-hearted speech.

In New York he was accompanied to St. Joachim's by an escort of sixty horse-drawn carriages. The city he found astonishing. "Four million people engaged in feverish activity, elevated trains, etc. Here there is truly a ferment of new and grandiose ideas," he wrote. This incessant, rapid, hectic movement, the many resources of the country, helped him understand the "inventiveness and mental effervescence and the occasional eccentricity" of its people. He visited Ellis Island with Archbishop Corrigan and dined with the Commissioner who took him on a tour of the harbor. He was impressed by the speed and efficiency with which the migrants were processed, but at the same time he took note of the unthinking cruelty with which they were often treated. A particular incident caught his attention: a guard gave a migrant a vicious blow on the legs with a heavy cudgel because he was not moving fast enough, burdened as he was with two heavy suitcases and his way blocked by the crowd in front of him. The migrant set down his suitcases and struck the guard in return.

The incident impressed Bishop .Scalabrini enough so that he recounted it to President Theodore Roosevelt as an illustration of how violence begets a violent

response. This was during the cordial visit he had with the President, when they discussed a number of immigration matters, Roosevelt speaking English and Scalabrini in French, but apparently with no difficulty in understanding each other. For his part Roosevelt told the Bishop that Italian emigration was worthy of respect, that Italian workers were necessary where there was difficult and dangerous work to be done, because their intelligence and steadfastness were without comparison.

While in New York, Scalabrini visited the centers for other nationalities established by their respective St. Raphael Societies and admired the arrangements made for the Irish and German immigrants. As already noted, he attended with Archbishop Corrigan three meetings which reconstituted the Italian St. Raphael Society and he blessed the Casa San Raffaele, or hostel in Bleecker Street, which Father Gambera had improved and enlarged.

While he was in Boston, where he was given an elaborate welcome he said it was difficult to describe, the news came that President McKinley had been shot. He asked that all but the religious functions be canceled and the Italian community, though deeply disappointed, joined him in prayer for the fatally wounded President. Scalabrini at this time delivered a memorable homily against violence and organizations seeking "to undermine the constitutional authority," that was widely reported in the press, in marked contrast to the usual stereotype of the "violent" Italian.

His hundred days in the United States, in the course of which he traveled thousands of miles and gave over 300 homilies and other talks, were in effect the kind of comprehensive pastoral visit characteristic of him. He went wherever his missionaries were working, talking with them, blessing their initiatives and dedicating special service centers. Literally hundreds of children received their First Communion or Confirmation at his hands. Soon after his arrival, he was at Dunwoodie, where he was charmed by the landscape but not by the "American" food, to preach a retreat for his missionaries and other Italian priests who had traveled some distances to hear him in what must have been a deeply emotional spiritual experience. In Providence he blessed the crypt of Holy Ghost Church and said the first Mass celebrated there. In Utica he laid the cornerstone of the church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, and in St. Louis he arranged for the purchase of the church the Scalabrinians had been renting. His last public function in the United States was the blessing of the orphanage for boys founded in Newark by Father Morelli. His first biographer, Father Francesco Gregori, relates that when he came out of the church with the Blessed Sacrament to bless the dense crowd gathered there, they all fell to their knees as one person, in a demonstration of such lively

faith that the Protestant mayor of the city later told the Bishop, "If I see another sight such as this, I'll lose my faith and become a Catholic." Toward the end of his stay he gave the retreat to the four deacons he had summoned from Piacenza, and ordained them in the church of Our Lady of Pompei (New York), among them Father Pio Parolin and the Polish Stephen Duda who went to join Chmielinski in Boston.

For Bishop Scalabrini it was understandably a pleasure to hear his missionaries praised by one bishop after another and to receive requests for more of them to serve the Italians in their diocese. "How happy I am to have come," he wrote, "and to see that, despite a failing of one or another of our priests, the work progresses and our missionaries are seen as true apostles, not only by our poor emigrants, but also by the bishops, the clergy and the American laity."

What he regretted was the persistence of regional factionalism among the immigrants, which he deplored because if they were united their progress could be so much greater. In his many talks to them he admonished them to get over it, to learn to be "open-minded and forget clannish ties." He was aware of the prejudices and frustrations they suffered, and he emphasized education as a means of overcoming them and working their way out of the confines of the ghetto. While he told them to be faithful to their religion, to keep the traditions and language of their forefathers and their sense of being Italian, he also urged them to learn the customs and ways of the country, to observe them as much as possible, in short, to be good, educated citizens. And he frequently spoke of the need to establish parochial schools for the children of Italian immigrants in the various national parishes founded to serve them. His view of the school went beyond the goal of the American public school system and the American Church, which was to form ideal, patriotic, knowledgeable Americans. He envisioned a learning environment that would nurture a healthy pride in one's own culture, which in turn would create a deep appreciation of and respect for all cultures.

The large, enthusiastic turnouts which greeted and listened to him everywhere he went captured the attention of the secular as well as the Catholic press, both Italian and English. Newspapers announced his arrival in various cities, carried biographical sketches of him, described the receptions accorded him and the ceremonies and functions that attended his presence. His views on the United States and the future of the Italian immigrants became prime news items. Knowledgeable and well aware of the ways and influence of the press, he was generous with interviews, inevitably charming his interlocutors with his easy graciousness. Through them and through the reports of his various addresses and homilies he reached the larger American audience beyond the Italian community

with a new perspective on the immigrants and their needs. His coming with the blessing of Pope Leo XIII reflected the desire of the Holy See to investigate the immigrants' situation in American cities and its concern for their welfare. His presence obviously cheered and heartened his missionaries and was a source of both pride and inspiration to the immigrants. In contrast to the demeaning stereotypes and the usual disdainful or, at best, condescending articles in the American press, here was a learned, eloquent, internationally honored dignitary of the Church, treated with esteem and respect and widely quoted in that same press.

For Bishop Scalabrini, America, which had for a century "become the great crucible of the old European nations," was destined to play a providential role in the history of humankind; it was a promised land for the Catholic Church, where the Gospel promise of "one fold one shepherd" would be fulfilled. These ideas were elaborated in an often quoted address he gave to the prestigious Catholic Club of New York at the elegant reception they held in his honor. In the richness and variety of America's resources he saw a great design of God, who "with full hands poured on the people born here the genius of material progress, the blessings of social prosperity.... All the gifts which God has made for the rest of the world are all together here in America." In his view, America was a land from which the Old World would learn lessons of the "true economy of liberty, of brotherhood, of equality, ... that peoples of different origins can very well conserve their language, their proper national identity and at the same time be politically and religiously united free of the barriers created by jealousy and division and without the weapons to impoverish and destroy one another.... One day, here in America, if inertia, ignorance of the ways of God, the resting on one's past laurels, the oppression of saintly aspirations, do not deviate the people from God's plan, all nations will have numerous rich, happy, moral, and religious generations, who, while conserving the characteristics proper to their nationality, will be closely united."

On his return to Italy in November of 1901, Bishop Scalabrini gave a full report of his journey to Pope Leo XIII, who listened with great interest, and he communicated his observations and recommendations to the Vatican Secretariat of State, the Propagation of the Faith and Italy's Foreign Minister. He soon afterwards embarked on a pastoral visit to his diocese, and in 1904 at the age of 65 he set out on another wearying journey to his missions in Brazil, for which he learned Portuguese, and to Argentina where he planned the establishment of the St. Raphael Society in Buenos Aires. He found that the Italian immigrants in South America were politically "tolerated rather than protected." But his impressions of his missionaries are applicable to those in both continents: "Our missionaries are in

turn apostles, doctors, farmers, artisans, counselors; that is the secret of their influence. They know personally each of their sheep."

Chapter 7

Consolidation and Development

"If we concentrate too much
on the difficulties without taking
other considerations into account
we shall end by accomplishing nothing."

Bishop John Baptist Scalabrini

With the outbreak of World War I there came a pause both in the flow of emigration and the growth of the Society. By that time the pattern of parish work in the United States was fairly well established. Its great merit lay in its adaptation of the traditions and mentality of the immigrants to the unfamiliar American customs and structure of parish activities. The successes of the early Scalabrinian Fathers are a tribute to their flexibility, patience and sense of balance, as well as their spirit of sacrifice and dedication, for they, too, were coping with an environment totally different from the town and village churches from which they had come and with an unaccustomed conglomeration of dialects, traditions and temperaments for which they were not always prepared. Religious ministry was, of course, their first concern, and the salient characteristic of their approach was their practice of seeking out and visiting Italian families, inviting them personally whether to a mission or to the church services they were about to establish. Then came catechism classes for the children, and next for the adults. Daycare centers or nurseries for the children of working mothers were common initiatives and so were special programs for young people, from athletic teams to singing and dramatic groups. Libraries, recreation centers and a newspaper were soon features of Scalabrinian parishes, and in many of them there were the inevitable cooking and/or sewing classes for girls. While they had their problems with some of the more aggressive and greedy patron saint societies, for the most part the Scalabrinians built on those societies as a means of furthering attendance at Mass and the sacraments. No Scalabrinian was a pastor very long before there was a flowering of new societies (some like the Holy Name Society well-known in American parishes) which met specific needs and helped to create a sense of community. Parish schools were established where finances - always a major

headache - permitted or, as in Chicago, there was the invaluable help of the Archbishop.

The key figure in the parish was the pastor, who, as in all immigrant groups, had to be all things for all people. A representative of *Italica Gens*, Father Giuseppe Capra, who visited the missions in the United States in 1916 and found the Scalabrinians extremely popular and beloved by their parishioners, wrote a vivid description of the constant daily comings and goings in the rectory of men, women and children seeking help from the pastor, who had to be a kind of all-purpose guardian angel. They brought personal and family problems to him to solve or mediate. They came to him for comfort and advice, for help in getting a job, to entrust their money or other valuables to him for safe-keeping, to ask him to monitor contracts and business agreements, and he often found himself acting as notary public, legal defender, protector and judge. He found beds in the hospital for the sick, places for orphaned or abandoned children and acted as intermediary vis-a-vis the Italian consul or the United States Government. Several hundred, and at special times several thousand a year were provided with basic material assistance.

While the priest was the center of authority and the recipient of respect and praise, he was also, as Father Gambera pointed out in his memoirs, the target of the malcontents, the rebellious and the detractors. The Scalabrinian zeal to go where needed meant that often there was one priest working alone and doing the work of three. As one of them later put it, "We worked 25 hours a day." How? "By getting up an hour earlier!" And sometimes there was the heartbreak when a parish they had started grew beyond their financial resources or available personnel and had to be given up to the diocese or another religious community. The need to fund-raise was another new burden for them, but they plunged in and soon became experts at raffles and bazaars "all ‘Americana." Picnics in the countryside with hundreds in attendance seem to have been their own invention and everyone had a great time, thanks in part to the love of the Italians for family affairs. By this time, too, the Italian immigrants were economically better off, taking pride in their churches and participating in parish and community life. At the same time, the Congregation was extending its work in South America.

Internally, meanwhile, the Scalabrinian Society was dealing with predictable growing pains. Bishop Scalabrini had founded it in a quick and courageous response to what he understood to be an extremely urgent need. Anxious though he was to get priests to the poor and neglected emigrants as soon as possible, he was aware of moving into a new field in different areas not entirely familiar to him. Rather than outline a specific structure in a hurry, he at first set forth simple rules

or guidelines contained within a five-year commitment to serve, it being his hope and intention to develop the structure of the Society carefully and gradually on the basis of experience. Its very simplicity undoubtedly facilitated the response and accommodation the early Scalabrinians were able to make to the requests being pressed on them. But their Founder was also concerned for the stability and future continuity of the work and envisaged a Congregation that was both religious and missionary, involving complete dedication and providing a unity of spirit, methods and aims for those working in different and far distant places. In 1895 he issued a new Rule which established permanent religious vows (i.e., poverty, chastity, obedience) and required a novitiate of at least one year. This was to be tried for a period of ten years. The announcement of the new Rule was received with enthusiasm by the seminarians and it was accepted by most of those who had made or renewed the five-year commitment. Given the frustrating gap between the personnel available and the desperate pleas for more priests to meet the increasing requests, Bishop Scalabrini continued to accept priests for the short term promise.

The Commission of the Propagation of the Faith charged with examining and approving the rules of new institutions did not look in favor on the introduction of religious vows, since it was convinced that emigration was a temporary phenomenon. Scalabrini apparently found occasion to explain his views in person, obtained an oral approval of the vows and insisted they be followed. He did not, however, submit the new Rule for official approval until 1900 and then only for a trial period of ten years because he knew from experience, as he said, "there is always something to learn and to modify." He placed new emphasis on preparation for the religious life and also issued a number of new "housekeeping" dispositions for the provincials in the United States, governing the spiritual life of the missionaries, the management of their residences and finances, including the support due the Motherhouse.

What dispositions he intended to make after his trips to North and South America he did not have time to work out. While he was making plans for a second National Catechetical Conference and a diocesan pastoral visit, a long time disturbing ailment came to a climax and he died, after surgery, on June 1, 1905. He had been both Founder and Superior General of the Society of St. Charles and his unexpected death had an understandably shattering effect. At the request of the Pope, the Propagation of the Faith placed Domenico Vicentini, then rector of the Motherhouse, in charge of the Congregation until an election could be held. Three months later this resulted in his becoming Superior General, a post in which he sought and received confirmation from the Holy See.

Archbishop William O'Brian greeting Scalabrinian Priests. Chicago 1936.

Fr. Florian Girometta, provincial Superior, with members of the John the Baptist Province, 1960 ca.

Fr. William Pizzoglio, 1904-1975. Pastor of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Utica, famous for his musical compositions.

Fr.Francesco Minchiati and Fr. Corrado Martellozzo.

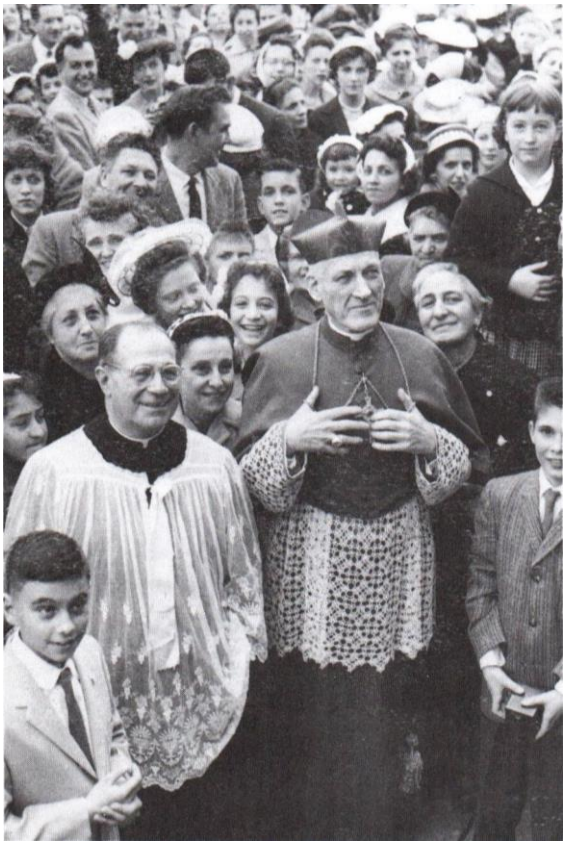
Archbishop Amleto Cicognani, Apostolic Delegate to the U.S. at the youth center of Holy Rosary, Kansas City, Missouri with Fr. Luigi Donanzan, 1950 ca.

Cardinal Richard Cushing
with Fr. Lodovico Toma
and Fr. Nazareno Properzi.

First Scalabrinian Sisters
in the U.S.A.
Sr. Marina Poggi,
Sr. Laura Migliorini,
Sr. Albertina Vezzaro,
Sr. Gaetana Borsatto, 1941.

Fr. Hilary Zanon with
St. Roch's Boy Scouts,
Johnston, RI. 1955.

Burning the mortgage of St. Roch, Johnston, RI, (from left) Fr. Raphael Larcher, Msgr. William Murphy, Fr. Angelo Susin, Fr. James Viero. Jan. 1959.



Blessing St. Tarcisius School, Framingham, MA, Cardinal Richard Cushing with Fr. Silvio Sartori, 1959.

Hamilton, Ontario, 1965

Senator John Pastore, RI and Judge Edward Re with Superior General Fr. Giulivo Tessarolo, 1964.

Opening of the new school of St. Bartholomew's Parish. Providence RI, 1953.

Cardinal Francis Spellman at the blessing of the new convent in St. Joseph's Church. Little Italy, New York. April 20, 1958.

The two Provincial Superiors, Fr. Nazareno Properzi and Fr. Benjamin Franch (seated center) with one of the first classes of sacred Heart Seminary in Chicago, 1945 ca.

Card. Sabbatani at our Lady of Loreto in Providence, RI, with Scalabrinians.

Vicentini was a strong, sturdy man, known for his characteristic modesty and aversion to the limelight. He had served several years as a Stigmatine missionary in Egypt and was in Khartoum when all missionaries had to flee during the insurrection against the Egyptian military occupation led by the self-proclaimed Mandi, Muhammad Ahmad. He returned to Cairo in 1884 and went back up the Nile with General Charles Gordon to help release the missionaries the Mandi had taken prisoner. He then headed a mission to the Red Sea and when this was closed down, he returned to Italy. In 1890, at the age of forty-three he joined the Scalabrinians. He was among their early missionaries in North America, serving as pastor in New York and Boston, and then for five years as Provincial Superior. He was a man who loved order and at times felt uncomfortable or inadequate in the somewhat catch-as-catch-can beginnings of the Scalabrinian missions and he periodically informed Bishop Scalabrini of his willingness to resign. Scalabrini, however, made him Provincial Superior in South America, where he served for nine years and built a fair number of churches.

After his election, Vicentini named Paolo Novati as Vicar General and Rector of the Motherhouse. He brought to his new responsibilities his notable experience in Providence, where he had served as diocesan consultor and was the revered and highly successful pastor of Holy Ghost parish and later of Sacred Heart in Boston. He had become known as an eloquent preacher and as a strong but sensitive administrator, who endeared all who approached him. So the post-Scalabrini period could be said to have started with two men who had done pioneering work, had been well tried and tested in the field and were familiar with the problems that remained to be solved or clarified.

Vicentini's first circular letter to all the Scalabrinians called for renewed commitment to their vocation, dedication to preaching Christ by word and example, and for unity and harmony in moving the work forward. His visit to the missions in the United States in 1906 underlined for him the need for some adjustment of the Rules. For one thing, since the missionaries, because of circumstances, often worked alone - at the most there were occasionally two or three together - and given the distances between one mission and another, community life as envisaged in a religious congregation was hardly possible, nor could the vows of obedience and poverty be observed in their strict sense, as for example in asking permission of a superior for each expenditure. Some had taken religious vows (most of these were graduates of the Institute in Piacenza), some had temporary vows and were but loosely associated to the Society through solemn promises. Tensions began to surface between those in one and those in another category, made even more likely by the fact that the earlier Scalabrinians were

mature men, their personalities already fixed; many of them had come from previous positions of authority and from different backgrounds both of experience and education. On his return, Vicentini decided to tidy up the differences, to give all members equal status and to bind all by the same rules and obligations, something many had been requesting for some time.

Finally, after a number of consultations, including a circular to all members of the Congregation, and a consultation in detail with the Propagation of the Faith, new proposals, based on the original rules plus some modifications, slowly wound their way through the scrutiny of consultors, experts and the pertinent Vatican Commission. In 1908, a new Rule was approved for a trial period of indefinite length. The Scalabrinians were now to be bound by a voluntary, simple "oath of perseverance," that is, a solemn commitment to remain in the society for life from which they could be released only by the Holy See. The permanent vows already taken were "commuted" to the new oath. Thus, instead of a religious congregation the Scalabrinians became again a "pious society" and a number of dispositions were adopted related to personal finances and the support owed the Society. It was undoubtedly an anguished period for Vicentini as well as for many of the members who felt the spirit of the Founder was being diluted if not lost altogether, it having been his intention to develop eventually a religious congregation. His far-sighted vision and optimistic flexibility had accepted the necessary accommodations pastoral needs demanded of religious rules. Vicentini, of a more legalistic turn of mind, was uncomfortable until the same rules applied to everyone. His critics then and later, however, gave him credit for assuring the continuation of the Society, keeping alive its original purpose, and maintaining it as an association recognized by the Holy See.

Father Vicentini served three terms as Superior General, during which he divided the North American missions into two provinces. A first General Chapter held in 1910 placed each of them under the protection of a patron saint for whom it was named (i.e., St. Charles Borromeo for the Eastern and St. John the Baptist for the Western province). The Chapter also elected a General Council and took a number of organizational decisions, including the formula for the "oath of perseverance," and criteria for the election of local and provincial superiors. The twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the Society was celebrated with great solemnity in 1912. A message from Pope Pius X contained great praise for Bishop Scalabrini, whom Pius had always held in high regard, and "affectionate esteem for the apostolic men whom his zeal had gathered together. ..to carry out in the name of Christ their mission among the far-off citizens of Italy." At this time a statue of Bishop Scalabrini was unveiled in the Church of San Carlo al Corso in Rome, and

on June 1st, the anniversary of Scalabrini's death, the cornerstone of a new seminary was laid in Crespano (Italy).

Quite apart from the uneasy efforts to restructure the Society after the Founder's death and provide some form of coordination among the missions, the Scalabrinian parishes in the Americas continued to flourish and expand as the Italian colonies steadily increased and the need for more priests grew with them. Then World War I took young men to the battlefront rather than to the seminaries and the dioceses of Italy and all religious orders suffered a drop in vocations. This was true also of the Scalabrinian Institute in Piacenza, which was reduced to a few students, while in the field the same missionaries kept doing the work of many, some of them beyond their strength or age. It was only after the war was over that it was possible to hold a second General Chapter, which took place in April 1919. Delegates from the two North American provinces stressed the need to recruit new members as well as to tighten the administration. Brazil became the South American province and the two North American provinces were recombined into one. In the attempt to satisfy some of the concerns expressed by the delegates, the Chapter established uniform stipends for the Missionaries and the Brothers, adopted provisions for the old and retired, and gave the Provincial Superiors the faculty to accept into the Society, without the previous authorization of the Superior General, priests they found living abroad who had "given sufficient proof of their ability and goodness." These measures contravened or modified the 1908 Rules that had been approved by the Holy See, something the Chapter had no right to do, and in the end gave rise to further troubles.

Father Pacifico Chenuil was elected Superior General. A highly educated and vigorous man, he had done yeoman work in Chicago as the pastor of the church of the Guardian Angel, building up the parish, which became known for the organization of its Sunday School and for the variety of activities for young people and adults conducted under the aegis of the "Guardian Angel Club." He had served as an archdiocesan consultant at Archbishop Quigley's request and had been honored by the Italian Government for the funds he raised during World War I for refugees and war prisoners. (Most of the Italian parishes, in fact, had been generous in supporting the Italian and then the United States war efforts.) Chenuil felt that the work of the Society should be modernized, that new methods and new criteria should be developed, and he hoped, he said, that eventually the missionaries would be able to do without the priest assistants who were not members of the Society, some of whom were not an unqualified success. To accomplish these aims and to carry out the recommendations of the Chapter he embarked on an aggressive recruitment program and quickly accepted into the

Society some thirty-seven priests, thirty-two of whom he sent immediately to the United States and five to Brazil. None of them, however, had had any preparation or orientation for the work they were about to do and new tensions developed between these new missionaries and the others. While the new recruits filled and therefore maintained Scalabrinian positions that might otherwise have been lost for lack of personnel, the internal malaise in the Society deepened. The free-wheeling recruitment and the new economic measures which were intended to aid it added but other elements to the growing tensions, compounded by the lack of a common attitude toward the Society and its work as between the "old" and the "new" missionaries. Some of the latter, who had been quickly accepted, seemed motivated more by the desire to get to the United States and better their personal lot than by a missionary impulse to do the work for which the Scalabrinian Society had been created.

Although in 1912 Pius X had established a Special Office for Migrants in the Consistorial Congregation with jurisdiction over all work for migrants, due to his death and the outbreak of war in 1914, it was not until 1923 that the Scalabrinians were moved from the jurisdiction of the Propagation of the Faith to that of the Consistorial Congregation. While this was to supervise migrant-related matters, the Congregation for Religious was to oversee matters within its competence. (Sometime around 19121914, the United States had ceased to be a "mission country.") Both Congregations now got into the act and the change altered the course of the Scalabrinian community, which was fast heading into a crisis. The Secretary of the Consistorial Congregation (now called the Prefect of the Congregation of Bishops) was Cardinal De Lai, a dynamic, strong-willed personality with enormous influence in the Church, having served in a number of other "congregations" or offices of the Holy See including the Secretariat of State. He quickly took note of the violations of the 1908 Rules and asked for a complete report on the entire Society, its members, parishes and activities. Chenuil's description of the situation reflects his lack of understanding of Bishop Scalabrini's intentions regarding religious vows, particularly the vow of poverty. While he clearly outlined the problems besetting the Society he blamed them on the policies of the past and he criticized the Founder for being too indulgent toward those who did not measure up to the requirements of financial support of the Society and for being too occupied by his own diocesan duties to give the necessary attention to the Scalabrinians. It is difficult not to detect something of a sour note in some of his observations since, as one of the old-time Scalabrinians, he had made a number of suggestions to the Bishop when he visited the United States, but none had been

acted upon before his death. Even more interesting is his dead pan assertion that the new missionaries were better and more competent than the early ones.

The emigrant flow to the Americas had increased in 1920 and 1921, but in the United States there was a period of economic sluggishness and a resurgence of protectionism. A series of legislative measures adopted in the 1920s by the United States Congress had the effect of severely restricting immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe. Chenuil apparently became convinced that the Scalabrinian Society would cease to exist within another twenty years or so as the migration phenomenon petered out. He also did not seem to understand Bishop Scalabrini's view of migration as a continuing phenomenon from a cultural point of view, namely, that the migrants' culture, at the heart of which was their Catholic faith, was to be preserved so that, in a sense, service to the migrants would continue through the second and third generations. Chenuil suspended accepting any more students in the Christopher Columbus Institute, dismissed three recently admitted and ordered the fifteen students in philosophy and theology to finish their studies. Then the Institute would come to an end. His management, apart from its busy beginning, was hardly a morale building exercise and created a climate of discouragement and lack of confidence.

Meanwhile, the Holy See in 1923 decided that an "apostolic visitation" was in order and chose Father Serafino Cimino of the Friars Minor to conduct it. He felt his many duties did not permit him to leave Rome and so proposed to carry it out through correspondence. He asked for reports from all members and for month-by-month accounts of all parish activities for the period of January 1921 to June 1923, and most pastors responded. Of all the replies he received about ten were negative, but they expressed personal grievances and in some cases quite slanderous charges. Communications from the American bishops were all laudatory, however. Cimino's only visit was to the Institute in Piacenza. The seven senior students, who were devoted to it and worried about its future, under the leadership of the oldest among them, Francesco Tirondola, remained as uncommunicative as possible. Cimino found the Institute in good order, but on the basis of his rather cursory investigation he presented a negative report on the Society to the Consistorial Congregation. In February 1924, the latter decided to place the Scalabrinian Society directly under the Prelate for Emigration, where it would eventually disappear as a separate entity; the graduates of the Institute in Piacenza and the Scalabrinian priests were to join the graduates of the Pontifical College of Priests for Italian Emigration founded by Pius X in 1914.

Pope Pius XI had known Bishop Scalabrini personally and admired him, and while he approved placing the Society under the Consistorial Congregation he also

wanted it to retain its separate identity and remain a viable Society. Cardinal De Lai became the Superior General of the Scalabrinian Congregation but neither he nor his assistant, then Archbishop Raffaele Rossi, appeared to be entirely satisfied with the Cimino report. The Cardinal sent Rossi to visit the Institute in Piacenza and asked Monsignor Amleto Cicognani (later Apostolic Delegate to the United States) to visit the Scalabrinian missions in the United States. Two successive rectors of the Institute in Piacenza had done their utmost to keep it going despite the fact that Chenuil had written it off and it suffered from an abysmal lack of funds. Though he had decided no new students were to be accepted, Chenuil could not refuse two applicants sent him by a popular member of Parliament. The then rector, Father Enrico Preti, took advantage of this to accept six more and by the following year there were twenty-six.

Rossi brought considerable experience to his visit to Piacenza. Formerly Bishop of Volterra, where his own seminary was a model one, he had visited many seminaries and houses of studies and colleges on behalf of the Holy See. He was a kindly and witty man with a fund of anecdotes, who could converse easily and naturally with students of any age. He inspired confidence where Cimino had inspired resistance and the seminarians opened their hearts to him. He was greatly impressed by their devotion to the Founder, to the spirit of the Institute and to the Scalabrinian Society itself, which they desired to see continued with either the oath of perseverance or the religious vows restored. They declared they would not go to serve among the emigrants as secular priests. Rossi's favorable report confirmed De Lai's intention of rebuilding the Institute for the future and he proceeded to repair and restore it. Meanwhile, Cicognani's visit to the missions resulted in a very positive report. He recommended that the Society be preserved, and while making suggestions for strengthening it he observed that the Scalabrinians who were faithful to the spirit of their Founder were preferable to all others who were working with the Italian emigrants. De Lai is said to have exclaimed, "The Lord has called me to save what I wanted to destroy."

The Rules of 1908 were brought up to date and the Society entered a period of reorganization and steady growth. New minor seminaries were founded in Italy, Brazil and the United States, and particular emphasis was placed on "formation" or training in the original spirit of the Society. Cardinal De Lai, strict but benevolent, remained a concerned and devoted Superior General until his death in 1928. His successor, Cardinal Perosi, continued in the same vein, but it was Rossi who exerted a major influence on the Society and is sometimes referred to as its second founder. In 1930, after Perosi's death, he became Cardinal Secretary of the Consistorial Congregation and as such assumed the post of Superior General of the

Scalabrinians, which he held until his death in 1948. Raffaele Carlo Rossi, a slight man of serious countenance and dignified and simple bearing was a Carmelite. Despite his intense modesty and predilection for a life of contemplation, his vow of obedience had brought him reluctantly up through the Church hierarchy, first as Bishop of Volterra, then as assistant to Cardinal De Lai who never took no for an answer, and finally as Cardinal Secretary of the Consistorial. He was a fine organizer, endowed with sensitive insight and judgment, and a prudent but flexible administrator. He was also a person of vision and though a very different personality from Bishop Scalabrini, he thoroughly understood his spirit and intentions and was devoted to the Scalabrinians. His main concern was to return the Society to its original spirit and ensure its continuity.

During Rossi's tenure Francesco Tirondola, who had greatly impressed him on his visit to Piacenza, became successively Pro-Rector of the Motherhouse, Rector of the seminary, Superior of the five Scalabrinian houses in Italy, and later was elected Vicar-General. Very much against his father's wishes Tirondola had entered the Verona Fathers (Sons of the Sacred Heart) at the age of fourteen. The Superior thought him too old for the minor seminary and persuaded him to become a lay brother. He served as shoemaker for the Order and cheerfully performed a number of domestic duties, remaining with it for fourteen years despite an early attempt by his father, outraged at his humble position, to get him back home. When he left the Verona Fathers, he joined the Scalabrinians at the invitation of Father Vicentini (then Superior General) who promised him he could enter the priesthood. World War I intervened and Tirondola was drafted into the Army. He served in the medical corps at the front for four years, first as a corporal then as a sergeant, and was decorated for bravery under fire. His letters during this period reveal him as a person of deep human feeling and intense faith, intensely lived. At the age of thirty-three he resumed his studies at the Institute in Piacenza, where he became the confidant of the older boys, a father figure to the younger ones, and the ringleader of the seniors (later known as the "Tirondola Seven") during the visits of Cimino and Rossi. He was a heavy-set, outgoing man with a kindly, humorous face and a powerful personality. Street wise and shrewd, he had a flair for getting things done quickly, for problem solving and conciliation. He was somewhat authoritarian (a former sergeant, after all) but a good educator who had faith in his students and knew how to get the best out of them. After hearing him speak, one of his former students recalls, "we thought we could conquer the world." In 1938 Cardinal Rossi sent him to visit the missions in Brazil and in the United States, where he was received by many missionaries whom he had taught. In the United States he was greatly impressed by the abundance evident everywhere and the

general practice of religion. A man of original ideas he was sometimes carried away by his zeal and had to be restrained by Rossi's firm and gentle tact. "He is a great good man," Rossi is quoted as saying of him, "but at times he forces me to hold on tight to my patience."

The balance between the impulsive initiatives of one and the considered, timely interventions of the other proved a blessing. The Scalabrinian Society recovered its health and vigor and proceeded to grow and expand its membership and activities under the strong co-management of the gentle, wise, reflective Carmelite and the dynamic, strong-minded, impetuous Tirondola, surely the "oddest of couples," as the Scalabrinian historian Father Mario Francesconi dubbed them. When Cardinal Rossi died Tirondola in his grief uttered perhaps the ultimate comment on their relationship. "I am the one who made him a saint," he said.

In 1933, after considerable reflection and consultation with both the members of the Society and the seminarians, Cardinal Rossi recommended the return to religious vows. Pius XI re-instituted them in February 1934 and the Pious Society now became a religious order, properly so-called, a return to what Bishop Scalabrini had originally envisaged. The first profession of vows took place in April 1934 in the Motherhouse in Piacenza. Again, the Rules were brought up to date. Added was the "general" purpose of the Congregation, namely, the sanctification of its members through the observance of the religious vows; the "particular" purpose was extended to include in the overall mission the descendants of the Italian migrants.

Chapter 8

Growth and Change

My dear friends, the world
is moving forward and we
must not stay behind because
of some formalistic difficulty
or the dictates of a mistaken prudence.

Bishop Scalabrini, Pastoral Letter,1891

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, the Scalabrinian parishes continued to grow. Schools were established, old churches beautifully restored, splendid new ones built, and parish activities multiplied. Solidly reorganized internally, the Scalabrinians were now called upon to respond to a succession of external changes.

The newly formed Bureau of Immigration in the National Catholic Welfare Conference (now the United States Catholic Conference) initiated an efficient, coordinated program of assistance to immigrants, organized mainly on a diocesan basis, which coincided with the end of the St. Raphael Society. The NCWC also developed an educational series of Americanization programs for use in schools and settlement houses, with which the Scalabrinians cooperated in various ways, having from the beginning emphasized the virtues and importance of good citizenship while preserving the cultural bond with the Italian homeland. The second and third generation Italo-Americans, despite the persistence of old prejudices and stereotypes, had moved up the economic ladder, natural leaders were emerging among them and they were taking their place in the American mainstream. They were American citizens and their first language was English, so the need for priests fluent in English was obvious. As their economic conditions improved, Italian families moved to the better residential areas or joined the exodus to the suburbs. Sometimes they were followed by an "auxiliary mission" of the original parish church; sometimes new churches were built and new parishes formed. Back in the center city new Scalabrinian initiatives came into being around the old churches: activities for the elderly, religious/social centers, recreational centers for teenagers, cultural centers, radio programs to reach out to the increasingly scattered Italian population. New highways and urban renewal rolled through many cities, often demolishing the original parish churches, but frequently new and more beautiful churches took their place, built through stunning

cooperative efforts on the part of pastors and congregation (cf. Our Lady of Pompei in New York.)

It had long been part of Bishop Scalabrini's plan to provide seminary training for the sons of immigrants. A United States seminary for them had been variously proposed over the years by Scalabrinians in the United States and notably by Archbishop Cicognani, but for a time resources were concentrated on seminaries in Italy. The idea was taken up again and warmly promoted in the Western Province, headed by Beniamino Franch, pastor of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Melrose Park, who had steadfastly overcome obstacles and threats during his tenure and had become a revered symbol of strength and stability. He had a perceptive and clear-eyed appraisal of the Scalabrinian parishes and their needs. One of his councilors was the scholarly and also strong-minded Remigio Pigato (later Superior of the Western and then of the Eastern Province) who in 1935 formally proposed the establishment of a seminary. With characteristic Humilitas it was started with ten students in the former rectory of the church of Santa Maria Addolorata. William O'Brien, an auxiliary bishop of Chicago, became a generous provider for the seminary and helped in the purchase of land for a proper location. This was found in Melrose Park (now Stone Park), at that time a broad expanse of meadowland. Both Scalabrinian provinces keenly felt the desire to see the seminary built and developed. In 1937 it was solemnly inaugurated as the Seminary of the Sacred Heart by Bishop O'Brien, representing Cardinal Mundelein. The ceremony was also attended by Father Tirondola (on behalf of Cardinal Rossi) and some 20,000 persons, including government and church personalities and enthusiastic members of Scalabrinian parishes who had come from miles around. During the 1930s other seminaries were established in Italy and Brazil. One, in fact, was inaugurated on the 100th anniversary of Bishop Scalabrini's birth not far from Como near the town where he was born, again made possible by the great generosity of Bishop O'Brien. It was named the Scalabrini-O'Brien seminary.

In 1940 Sacred Heart Seminary in Melrose Park included students from both provinces. Father Franch appointed as rector Father Armando Pierini, who developed it over a period of eleven years and was responsible for a number of other significant initiatives in the Chicago Archdiocese. He was firmly rooted in the Scalabrinian tradition. His parents had been confirmed by Bishop Scalabrini and he had served as altar boy to Monsignor Francesco Gregori, Scalabrini's biographer, who teasingly called the bright, wide-eyed Armando a little goose, as he tutored him in his study among piles of boxes filled with Scalabrini's papers.

Originally the students at Sacred Heart Seminary were to finish their studies and enter the novitiate in Piacenza. World War II interrupted this plan, however, and in 1944, the seminary included a novitiate, which later, for lack of room, was moved to the Scalabrinian house on Staten Island. The Rules, which set forth the acceptance of the children of Italian immigrants in the seminary, was now slightly modified to include "young men of other nationalities and origin who had grown up among Italians," a small, first, almost unnoticed step in the gradual process of outreach that characterized the next decades.

During World War II halo-Americans, like other "hyphenated" citizens, had served in the United States armed forces, and many were called upon to support United States government influence in Italy in various ways in the immediate post-war period. They were fully integrated American citizens. Following the war a relatively small number of Italians emigrated to the United States, most of them going to countries in Europe - often on a temporary work basis - or to Australia and Canada. Meanwhile, the war had created a new phenomenon of refugees and other displaced persons from many countries, some of them finding a haven in Italy itself. In Latin America the economic situation produced an increase both in internal migration and in migrant movements from one Latin American country to another. All of these developments were having their effect on the specific mission or "charisma" of the Scalabrinians.

In 1935 Francesco Gregori's biography of Bishop Scalabrini was published, the first to present his ideas and personality in some depth as well as his place in the Church and history. This provided a new occasion for reflection on the application of the Founder's original conception of the Society to changing circumstances. In its steady expansion into new directions and initiatives, the Society's basic fidelity to his ideas and activities confirms the far-sightedness of his vision. And its progress through real and threatened difficulties was ensured by a succession of General and Provincial Superiors who shared the vision, had a realistic understanding of the changing times and the practical approach necessary to make the necessary adaptations acceptable.

Cardinal Rossi, who had served as Superior General since 1923, died in 1948. His successor, Cardinal Piazza, gradually ceased to serve as Superior General. He became instead "Cardinal Protector" of the Scalabrinian Order, but still retained jurisdiction over the opening and closing of missions and parishes, and the naming of local superiors and pastors. This proved to be a solid "protection" for certain Scalabrinian parishes as some American bishops, never enthusiastic about national parishes to begin with, were beginning to view them as no longer necessary. In 1951 the Scalabrinian Society became independent of the

Consistorial Congregation and elected one of its own as Superior General, Francesco Prevedello. Under his leadership it expanded to Chile, Australia, Canada and West Germany. It also responded to a new problem situation growing within its ranks.

Prevedello pointed out that the descendants of Italian immigrants now considered themselves Americans, Brazilians, Argentinians, etc. They therefore found it difficult to understand how they fit the concept of "missionary" if they were assigned to parishes composed of people like themselves. Prevedello wanted the outreach to non-Italian migrants, which was already taking place in a number of parishes, to be explicitly stated in the Rules. This started a long and sometimes heated debate. On the one hand there were those who maintained that Scalabrini had intended the Society for Italians and by extension their descendants, period. On the other, there were those who called attention to Scalabrini's concern for all migrants, evidenced by his acceptance of Polish priests to work among the poles in Boston, his proposal for a central Vatican office for all migrants, the fact that he sent a missionary to a tribe of Indians in South America. While the debate went on for a time in the upper reaches of the Society, its daily history had already created the answer. As pastor of Santa Maria Addolorata in Chicago, Gambera had gone out to the Poles and Lithuanians in nearby towns, as Franch did later. As early as the 1920s Scalabrinian parishes in the Chicago archdiocese had opened their doors to the Mexicans, Porto Ricans, and Chinese who were moving into their area, and by the 1960s Masses were regularly being said in Spanish as well as Italian. In New England Scalabrinian parishes included French Canadians, Poles, Lithuanians (Framingham) and Portuguese (Bristol, Rhode Island). And the flying missions in South America were not limited to the Italian settlers but included various nationality groups from Europe as well as the indigenous inhabitants of the locality.

When he became Superior of the Western and then the Eastern Province, Ugo Cavicchi, one of the "Tirondola Seven", well known for his firm dedication to Scalabrini's principles, took particular interest in the Hispanic immigrants and favored the opening to all migrants. A survey of the Scalabrinian parishes made clear that many of them were "mixed," that many of their national and territorial parishes were by the 1960s populated by immigrants of other nationalities. In 1966 the debate was resolved once and for all with the adoption of Article 23 of the Rules of Life of the Society. This defined the Scalabrinian mission as work for migrants of different nationalities, for internal migrants and for seamen. It was actually a description of the work they were already doing.

Meanwhile under Francesco Prevedello (1951-1957) and Raffaele Larcher (1957-1963), both of them gifted and farsighted Superiors General, there was considerable expansion of Scalabrinian activity in relation to three traditional concerns: new migrants, whether in Europe, the Americas or beyond; migrants' needs on board ship; and flying missions.

New Migrants

Australia

In 1952 the Consistorial Congregation asked for a Scalabrinian priest to accompany a group of Italians going to Australia. Raffaele Larcher, then the treasurer of the Order, sailed with them as ship's chaplain in February of that year and thus had the opportunity to explore the territory, as it were, and to make preliminary contacts for Scalabrinian missions. The Superior General, Francesco Prevedello, appealed to the two North American provinces for volunteers. Four of the twenty who responded, two from the Western and two from the Eastern province, set out in October 1952 for what were to be the first two Scalabrinian missions in Australia, one a tiny parish in Silkwood in the northeastern part of Queensland, and the other at Unanderra at a three mile distance from the industrial and mining center of Wollongong, seat of a new diocese, about fifty miles south of Sydney.

Australia at the time had entered a period of very rapid economic development, and a major movement of Italian migrants there occurred in the twenty years following World War II. Most of them were young bachelors intent on improving their economic fortunes, and they tended to move from state to state and from suburb to suburb in search of ever better jobs. There were plenty of these on sugar cane plantations and in the processing plants in Queensland, the mines and mills of New South Wales, the fruit growing and packing plants in Victoria, and in the busy harbors along the Australian coast.

In 1947 the Australian Bishops' Conference had established a Federal Commission for Catholic Immigrants to assist the thousands of newcomers to find their way through the unfamiliar procedures and customs of Australian society. In general this assistance was organized on a diocesan basis, a quite different set of circumstances from that encountered in the early days in the United States. A number of religious Orders, through their Italian or Italian-speaking members were engaged in various ways in religious ministry to the Italian immigrants and at first

the Australian bishops felt they were well enough provided for. It was the new dioceses, starting from scratch, that first welcomed the Scalabrinians, but as they became known the requests for their services increased. At first the Italians encountered the familiar types of discrimination and lack of social acceptance that characteristically attends the strange newcomer in a foreign land. Many did very well in a relatively short time, however, and achieved their ambition to own their own home or business.

In Australia there were no national parishes or other types of specific arrangements for ethnic groups. The Scalabrinian missionaries were assigned to territorial parishes composed largely of Australians, some other nationality groups and a certain percentage of Italians. From these parishes they went throughout the wide, outlying areas, preaching the flying missions, visiting families, hospitals, construction sites, mines, to meet the needs they found among the Italians. From the small parish of St. John in Silkwood, for example, missionaries went out to say Sunday Mass in a succession of chapels in the surrounding area, and some fifteen missions a year were preached throughout the diocese of Cairns along with several more in the neighboring diocese of Townsville.

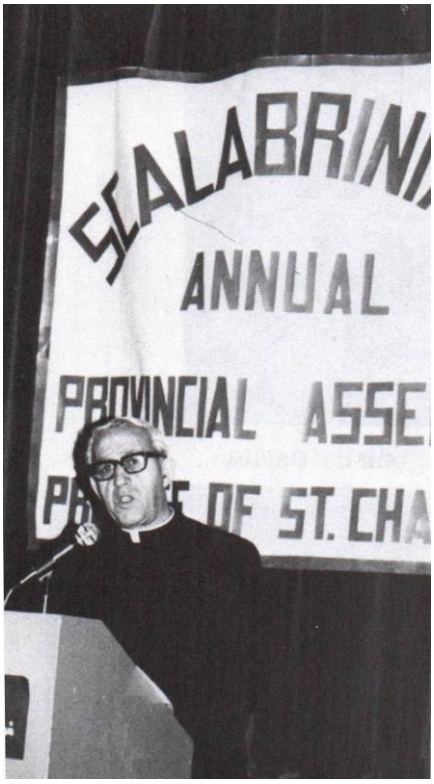
Unanderra, when the Scalabrinians arrived, was a little agglomeration of small houses inhabited by workers in the steel mills in Wollongong, for which Unanderra was intended to become the "bedroom" suburb. They found nothing awaiting them - no church, no place to live. It was for them to build up the parish as the place itself developed into a town. They soon transferred their major attention to Wollongong, where most of the Italians were to be found and there they established the Sacred Heart Center to meet a local need. Where Italian workers - mostly without their families - were employed in the factories, mines, ports or other industrial centers, there was need not only for the special pastoral ministry for which the Scalabrinians were noted but also for a special type of social assistance such as could be provided by a social/recreational center, a kind of home away from home, and Wollongong’s Sacred Heart Center was the first of several. This and similar centers became a base for missions not only to outlying communities but also to others sometimes thousands of miles away. At the centers themselves, along with their many other services and activities, language courses were a regular feature - English for the Italians, Italian for interested Australians - and courses explaining Australians and Italians to each other. Labor schools were organized, and radio programs carried the comforting message of the faith along with popular Italian melodies to far flung groups of workers.

The number of Scalabrinian parishes grew steadily, to Sydney and Newcastle in New South Wales, to Melbourne and its suburbs in Victoria, to

Adelaide in South Wales, (the departure point for journeys to the opal mines), and to the port of Hobart in Tasmania. A notable aspect of Scalabrinian activity was the involvement of lay people, who helped in getting assistance to the needy, visiting the sick, particularly in following up and continuing the initiatives begun through the flying missions and acting as a bridge between the Italian migrants and their Australian pastors. A natural consequence of this was the formation in Melbourne in 1960 of the Italian Catholic Federation, which soon had chapters in other cities. The close cooperation between the Scalabrinian missionaries and the Australian clergy did much to lower cultural barriers and considerably diminish residual discriminatory attitudes in the Catholic community. In 1962 the Scalabrinian missions in Australia, originally part of the Western Province of North America, were gathered into a separate independent province named for St. Frances Xavier Cabrini. It has continued to grow and has reached out to the Philippines, where there is now a Scalabrinian seminary in Manila.

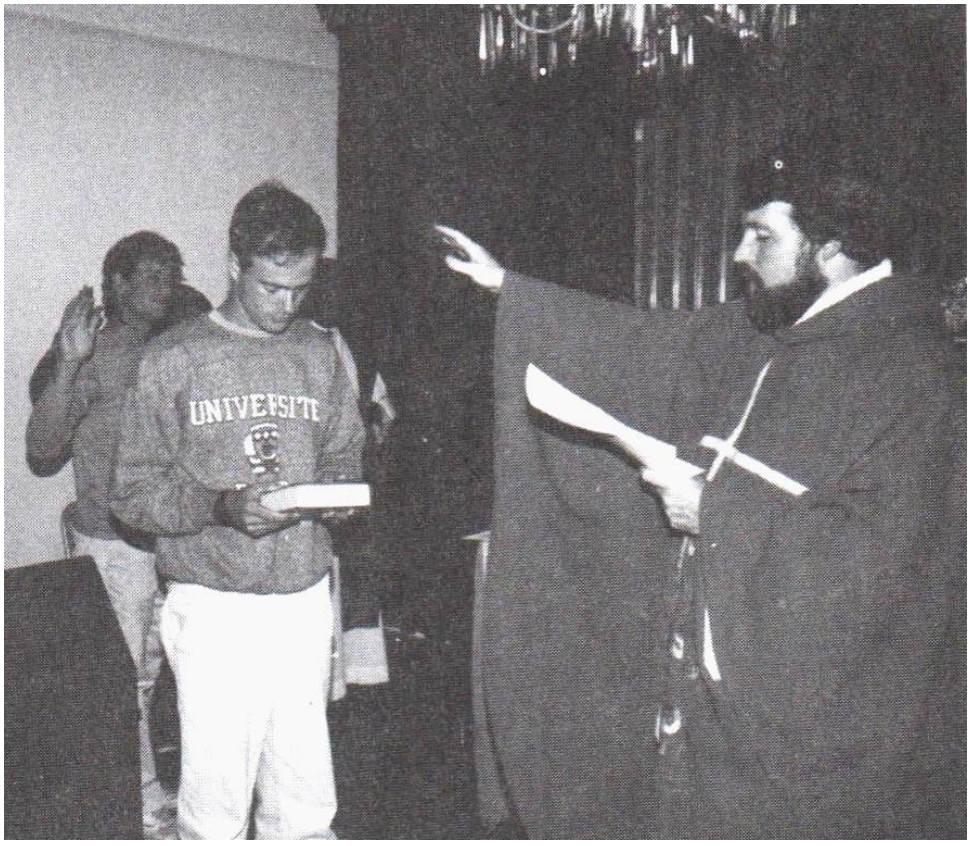
Canada

From the end of the nineteenth century Italians were to be found across southern Canada in mining and lumber camps, farming areas, towns along the railways as well as in major cities like Montreal and Vancouver. Italian or Italian-speaking priests, both secular and members of religious Orders, provided some religious assistance to them, which varied from place to place, but there was no special pastoral activity for them. The first appeal for help for the Italian immigrants in Canada came in 1895 in a letter to Bishop Scalabrini from a Franciscan Father Agostino, who was writing from Montreal. It describes hostile and discriminatory attitudes toward the Italians on the part of the general public, the clergy and the Archbishop of the Diocese. Much of it parallels the situation in the United States in the same period even to the hesitation of the bishop to go counter to the wishes and practices of the entrenched local clergy. Father Agostino was all the more distressed since neither he nor the Franciscans had the wherewithal to provide the material and social assistance the Italians needed, especially in winter. The Italian priest helping him could earn only about twenty-five cents a day from Mass stipends and had to seek benefactors himself in order to survive. Agostino deeply felt the injustices in the local attitudes since the Italians, though poor, were hardworking, created no scandals, were attached to their religion and paid their taxes to the city and their tithes to the clergy just as the Canadians did. But they were too poor to maintain schools and these as well as other forms of assistance were often provided by Protestant churches, so there was the threatening specter of proselytization again. Bishop Scalabrini's reply is not known. In 1906 he referred a request from Vancouver for a Scalabrinian priest to



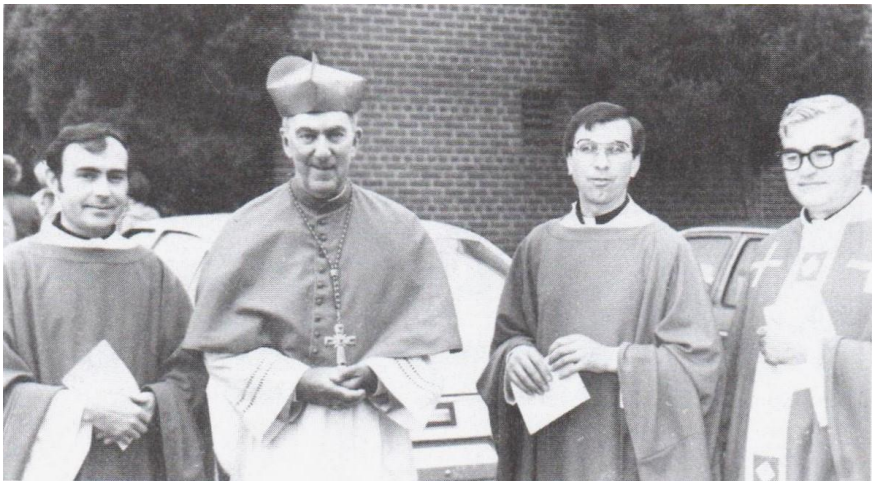
Annual Assemblies of the Province of St. Charles Borromeo in the 80s.

Assemblies of the Province of St, John the Baptist.



Cardinal Leger visits Notre Dame de Pompei, Montreal, (left to right):

Fr. Tarcisio Bagatin,
The Italian Consul,
Fr. Giovanni Triacca,
Fr. Danilo Zanon,
Fr, Charles Zanoni,
Fr. Giuseppe Duchini.



Cardinal J. H. Carter at St. Paschal Church, Thornhill, Ontario with (left to right)

Fr. Francis Geremia,
Fr. Joseph Durante,
Fr. Joseph Invernizzi

Feast of the *Madonna di Pompei*, Montreal.

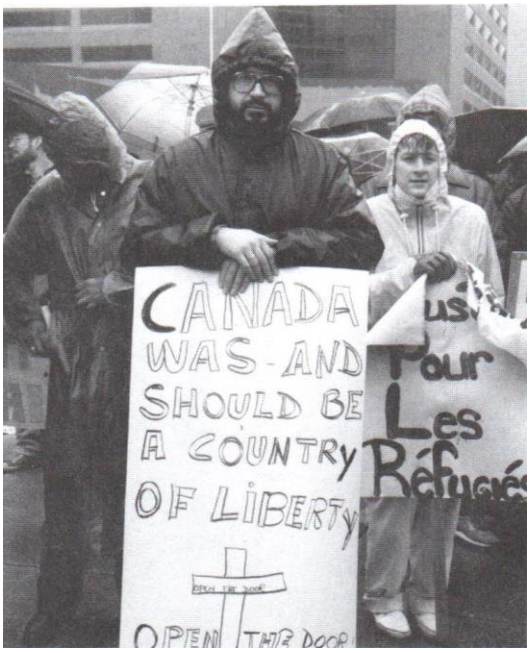
Fr. Adolfo Nalin and Sr. Maria Alda Cigolini. St Peter Church, Los Angeles, 979.

Fr. Carlo Titotto with Vietnamese Refugees sponsored by St Anthony's Parish. Thunder bay, 1983.

Fr. Lino Santi at a logging camp, Northern Ontario, 1981.

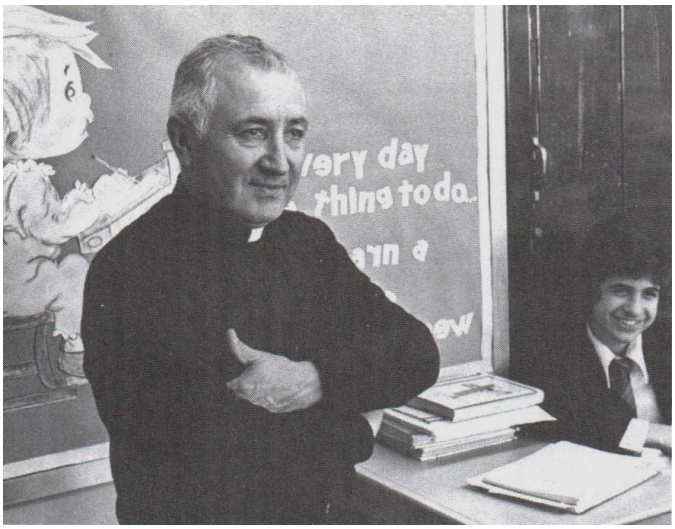
Fr. Richard Bezzegato, Windsor, Ontario. 1980.

Fr, Umberto Rizzi breaking ground for St. Dominic's church, Thunder Bay.



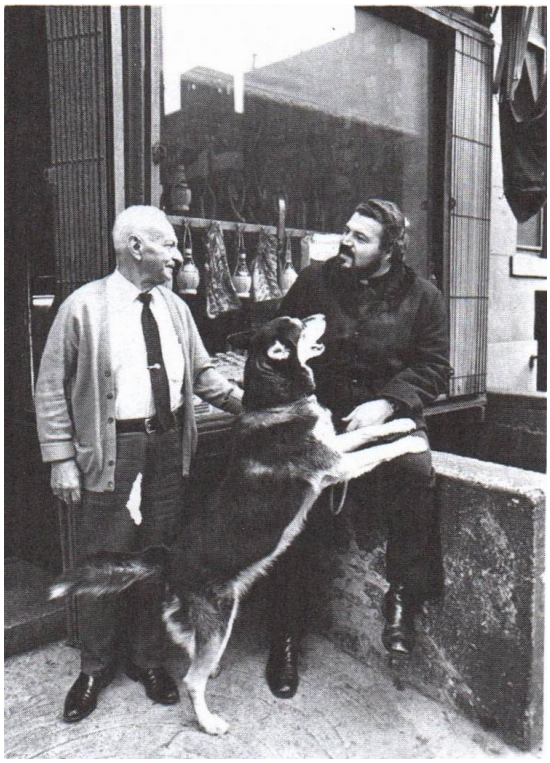
Fr, Ezio Marchetto, Toronto,1987.

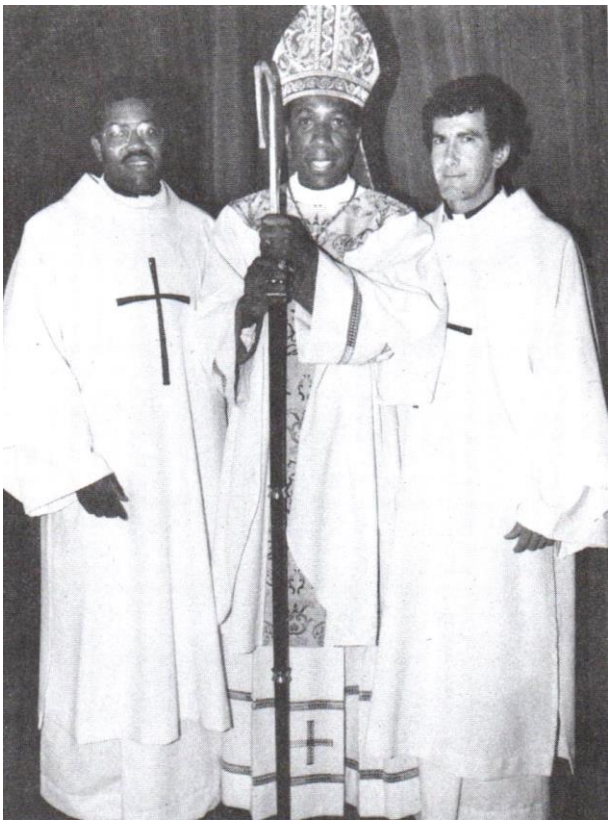
Fr, Santo Cigolini, Toronto, 1986.



Fr. Joseph Bizzotto.

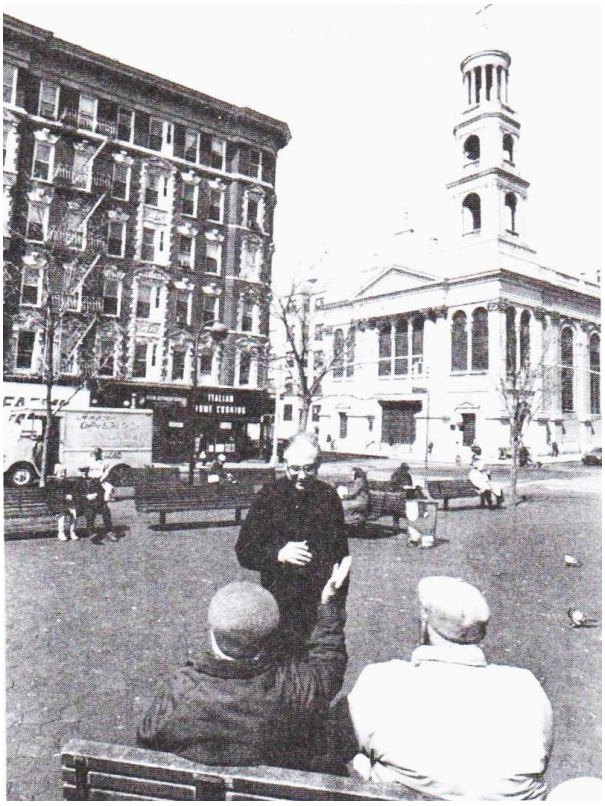
Fr. Joseph Moffo.





Bishop Emerson J. Moore, New York, with new Scalabrinian Deacons Giovanni Bizzotto and Jaques Fabre, 1985.

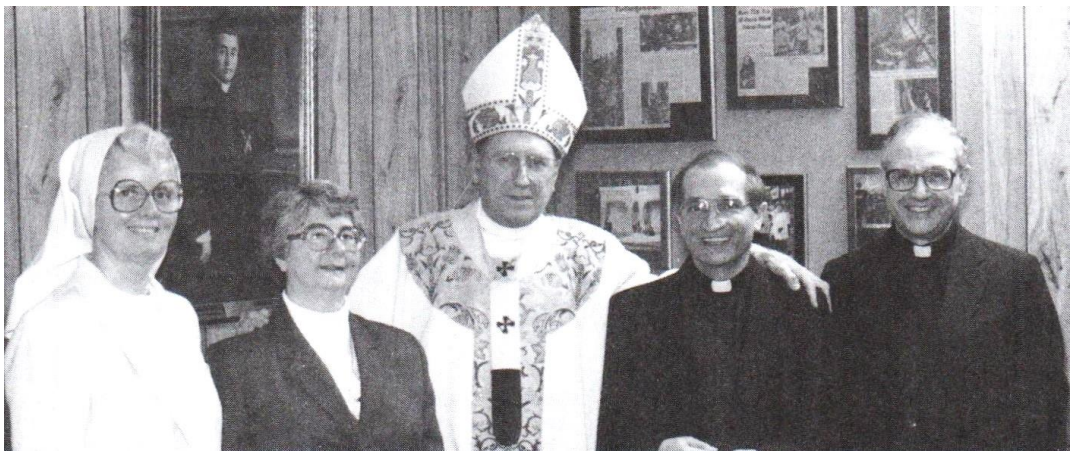
Fr. Charles Zanoni.



Fr. Silvano Tomasi receiving the Religious Perpetual Profession of Ralf Bove and Robert Royal. Toronto 1977.

Dedication of Scalabrini Piazza and Monument, Providence RI, 1987.

Cardinal J. O'Connor with Cabrinian Sisters and Scalabrinian fathers at centenary of St. Frances Cabrini arrival in New York,1989.



Father Gambera, who was then Provincial Superior of the North American province, but none was available.

The major Italian immigration movement into Canada took place after World War II, with an average annual influx of twenty thousand. Canada needed manpower and Canadian centers in Europe encouraged immigrants to come to work on the farms and in the factories. Once the immigrants had made some headway, they migrated to the cities, set up their own small businesses and generally made steady economic progress. These newcomers were a different breed from those of the nineteenth century. They had had at least five years schooling, a variety of skills and a certain amount of sophistication. While there were manual laborers among them, there were also professionals, technicians and others idled by the aftermath of the war, as well as import/export entrepreneurs in search of new markets. The largest numbers were to be found in Toronto, Montreal and Hamilton. Like the Australians, the Canadian bishops at first resisted efforts to provide any special pastoral ministry for them, deeming it unnecessary, but as the Italian population increased it was welcomed and Scalabrinian assistance was requested. In some cases, the Scalabrinians took over established parishes, sometimes beginning as co-pastors or associate pastors. In either case, they reached out as usual to the Italians beyond the parish boundaries, through Sunday Masses, special services or flying missions; the latter often gave rise to permanent missions or parishes, as had been the case throughout Scalabrinian history. Canada, then, presented great numbers of "new" Italian migrants, which had been the original concern of the Congregation, and the expansion into Canada was led by the Superiors of both United States provinces.

There had been a Scalabrinian presence in Canada before the 1950s, however. In 1929, Father Manlio Ciufoletti, pastor of the church of the Guardian Angel in Chicago, was sent to the parish of Holy Rosary in Winnipeg by the then Provincial Superior, Father Franch, in response to a request from Bishop Alfred Sinnott. The parish had been founded in 1914 by an Oblate Missionary but had subsequently had an uneven history. Father Ciufoletti did admirable work in developing it, but when he left for Italy in 1934 it reverted to the diocese. It is interesting to note in a letter written in 1931 Ciufoletti's view that Canada's vast virgin territory would, in the next fifty to a hundred years, become the America of gold and adventure, supplanting the United States, which, he thought, was already surfeited with products and industries.

A still earlier presence, in Hamilton, Ontario, was longer lasting. An Italian settlement had been founded there at the turn of the century, mostly by an extended family group. As more and more Italians came to work in the mills and on the

outlying farms, Bishop Thomas Dowling appealed to the Scalabrinians for a priest who could minister to them in their own language. Father Giovanni Bonomi arrived in March 1908 and met the usual difficulties, compounded by an economic depression and widespread unemployment. Nothing daunted, he took a census of the Italian speaking community, visiting them wherever they were to be found and gathering them for Sunday Mass, at first in a chapel of the Cathedral of St. Mary. In 1910 the Bishop created the parish of St. Anthony as an Italian national parish, and while the church was being built, services were held in St. Ann's Catholic School. The new church, built with the assistance of Bishop Dowling, who contributed to it the gifts of money he had received for his twenty-fifth anniversary, was opened at Easter in 1912.

Later, as Hamilton was caught up in the rapid economic development moving through Ontario, a second church became necessary to take care of the fast growing number of Italian immigrants. It was built in the western part of the city, dedicated in 1923 to Our Lady of All Souls, and became the Italian national parish. In 1933, St. Anthony's became for a while a "mission" of St. Ann's Church; Father Charles Mascari, who had grown up in All Souls parish and was the first Italo-Canadian to be ordained a priest, was appointed as special assistant to serve there. Under his leadership the growing community became a parish again and a handsome new church, the present St. Anthony's, was dedicated in 1954. Father Bonomi, while he did not renew his Scalabrinian promise but became a diocesan priest, remained pastor of All Souls until his retirement in 1953. He insisted that the Scalabrinians continue the work in Hamilton, which they did, and subsequently the bishop assigned both parishes to them. The present bright, airy All Souls is the original church. Both churches are now close to the center of today's bustling city of Hamilton, which has grown up around them.

In 1954, the Superior of the Eastern Province, Corrado Martelozzo, addressed a circular letter to fifteen Canadian bishops, offering the help of the Scalabrinian Congregation for the Italian immigrants. The inward flow was growing, not only from Italy but from some thirty other countries as well, and the Canadian hierarchy became generally known for openness and sensitivity to the newcomers. In 1956, at the invitation of Cardinal McGuigan, the Archbishop of Toronto, the Scalabrinians started the parish of St. Catherine of Siena in Cooksville, one of a cluster of rural villages southeast of Toronto, halfway on the road to Hamilton and in early times the first stagecoach stop. It had no church but it did have a four room school and the first Scalabrinian Mass was said in one of its corridors. Daniel Zanon, from Our Lady of Pompei in New York, set about forming into a community a Catholic population of several nationalities and he

built a church and rectory. The church of St. Catherine of Siena was dedicated in October 1961, and absorbed into its warm, attractive interior a number of relics dear to the Scalabrinians, brought from the demolished church of St. Joachim - the baptismal font, the marble altar rail, and the main altar at which Bishop Scalabrini said Mass on his long ago visit to the United States.

Meanwhile, highway construction was bringing new workers to the area and in the 1960s Cooksville and its sister villages were united and incorporated in the city of Mississauga, named for the Indian tribe which had originally inhabited the area. The city is sharing in Ontario's economic boom and steadily growing as people flock there from the eastern part of Canada. The parish has grown and developed with it and is a multi-cultural territorial parish serving all Catholics within its boundaries and reaching out to the Italians beyond them. Canadians, Filipinos, Indians, Pakistanis, Sri Lankans, Central Americans and assorted Europeans now worship together in St. Catherine's. Surrounded in the beginning by apple orchards, it sits today on Mississauga's main thoroughfare just a little south of the city's busy center and City Hall, which was built on a former cow pasture once part of the parish territory.

The church of St. Paschal Baylon, at the northern edge of Toronto was also built on former farmland, once part of the parish of St. Edmund but given to the Scalabrinians by its pastor, Auxiliary Bishop Francis Marrocco, Episcopal Vicar for Ethnics in the Toronto Archdiocese. It was situated on the border with Thornhill in an area heading for rapid development and one from which missions could be preached in other churches. Father Vincent LoSavio started the new parish in a rented house, saying Sunday Mass in the Legion Hall where, old parishioners recall, the lingering evidence of Saturday night celebrations sometimes competed with the fragrance of flowers and incense. LoSavio, remembered as an enthusiastic and colorful personality, immediately set about building the church, which was dedicated in December 1959. He was an all-round athlete and especially devoted to young people, devoted to him in return, and he then turned to developing a sports field and building a parish hall, in which one of his legacies is the cement floor in the gymnasium that still serves as a fine roller skating rink. From the inception of the parish, an assistant has served as chaplain and member of the board of the Workman's Compensation Hospital, looking after some 300 to 400 immigrants - mostly Italians and other Europeans - injured in construction work.

At the other end of Toronto, the parish of St. Anthony, originally composed of various nationality groups, including Irish and Italians, had become increasingly a Portuguese enclave as the number of immigrants from Portugal multiplied after

its change of government and the loss of its African colonies. In 1977 the Scalabrinians took over the parish as a result of an agreement with the Toronto Archdiocese and it became the base for their special ministry to the Portuguese. There was no one to meet or greet the new pastor, the Brazilian Father Santo Cigolini, when he arrived on a sunny June morning, but he found his way into the church and the rectory and cheerfully introduced himself to the congregation on the following Sunday. The parishioners seemed at first to be constantly moving in and out of the parish, but it settled into a steady, traditionally religious and very generous community of "new" immigrants. The parish also has food and clothing deposits for "illegals" passing through and a program of sponsorship for refugees from Afghanistan, Iran and Ethiopia whose relatives are waiting for them.

Montreal remains the Canadian city with the second largest number of Italian immigrants. In 1957 there were four churches for them but these were already outgrown and there was no particular effort to reach the Italians dispersed throughout the metropolitan area. As their lot improved they were steadily moving out of the Old City into the northern sector. While the Scalabrinian Superior General, Raffaele Larcher, was in Canada on a visit, Cardinal Leger asked him for a priest to work among the Italians, but preferably a European and one who spoke French, thus reflecting a general reservation on the part of his clergy about the "Americanized" priests from the United States. Giovanni Triacca, formerly the provincial superior in France, was sent to Montreal where the Cardinal appointed him "vicar" of the parish of St. Remy but charged him with the care of all the Italians in that area. The pastor of St. Remy, obviously an understanding man, relieved him of his "vicar" duties so he could devote himself full time to the Italians, and he also rented him a cottage near the church for offices and a dwelling. The Consolata Fathers then gave up a part of their parish and the "mission" of Our Lady of Pompei was born; it became a national Italian parish in 1961. It soon had a day care center and a school, English speaking in accordance with the wishes of the children's parents. The Scalabrinians defended then and later the parents' right to choose the language school they wished for their children despite the English/French pressures and tensions that have characterized the province of Quebec.

A new church was dedicated in 1967 by Cardinal Leger just before he left for missionary work in Africa. The parish extended to three municipalities - Montreal, Montreal North, and St. Leonard - serving about 10,000 Italian families. The Scalabrinian priests are also chaplains for some sixteen English speaking Catholic schools. The parish has become a center of assistance not only to recent immigrants but also to those moving into the city from other parts of Canada, all of

whom found the sympathetic help they needed in coping with new social and economic problems, political situations and bureaucratic procedures. In cooperation with the Technological Institute of Montreal, the parish has run a series of training courses in special skills, thus facilitating the integration of the migrants into the society and their economic advancement as well as furthering their spiritual development with an innovative pastoral approach.

For a time, the Scalabrinians also had the largely French parish of St. Elizabeth of Portugal to the south of the city. From there they went out to conduct missions in La Salle and Lachine, suburbs of Montreal. The "Mission of the Holy House of Loreto" was established in Lachine in 1961, now known as the Mission of the Annunziata. The Italian families in La Salle were assigned by the Archdiocese to the parish of St. John Bosco, staffed by the Consolata Fathers, who built the church Madre dei Cristiani, and asked for the Scalabrinians to develop and run it.

During this same period the Scalabrinians of the Western Province were extending their missionary activity into Western Canada. In 1956, Armando Pierini, then the Provincial Superior, visited several dioceses to learn the situation of the Italian immigrants and was cordially received by their respective bishops. The first parish entrusted to the Scalabrinians was that of the Holy Spirit in New Westminster, a poor suburb of Vancouver, and though a very small parish, it served as a base for reaching the Italians in the city itself. Then came the church of Our Lady of Sorrows in Vancouver, which in 1959 was half Italian and half Portuguese. In 1960 a mission from Our Lady of Sorrows was started for the latter mainly railroad and construction workers living in the poorest section of the city; other Portuguese were reached through flying missions and eventually an independent parish was established, dedicated to Our Lady of Fatima. In the early 1970s the parish of St. Helen's in Burnaby (a suburb of Vancouver) was added to the roster. Since 1983, the Scalabrinians have owned and edited a major Italian newspaper, L'Eco d'Italia, published in Vancouver, a multi-purpose paper which serves the Italian migrants throughout British Columbia and along stretches of the Canadian and United States coasts. Also, in the early 1970s the Archbishop of Vancouver asked the Scalabrinians to come to the troubled church of St. Stephen, where Father Lawrence Sabatini solved its problems. He became an auxiliary bishop of Vancouver and then went on to head the diocese of Kamloops, a logging and mining area in the hilly interior of British Columbia, 250 miles northeast of Vancouver. Its Indian name means "where the rivers meet." The diocese is a beguiling blend of "old" and "new," embracing Canadians, immigrants and several thousand native Indians whose ancestors were brought into the church by Oblate

missionaries 150 years ago. The small Italian communities living along the Columbia River found a home, so to speak, in the Church of St. Francis of Assisi in Revelstoke, which the Scalabrinians took over in 1964 at the request of the bishop and which later welcomed into its fold a number of Portuguese and Ukrainians of the Greek Rite. By this time the immigrant flow into Canada was increasingly composed of Asians, Caribbeans, Hispanics, Portuguese and refugees of several other nationalities.

In Thunder Bay, situated 200 miles north of Duluth on the cold northwest shore of Lake Superior, the Scalabrinians first received the parish of St. Anthony in the Port Arthur section, and ten years later that of St. Dominic in Fort William. The churches in both these "twin" sectors of Thunder Bay had been started around 1912 and had had a long, often difficult history, punctuated by fires and other reverses. Their survival and development was due to a succession of variously gifted and totally dedicated Italian priests who left indelible memories in the annals of both churches. From 1952-1969 the pastor of St. Anthony's was Father Joachim Bortignon, a friend and "spiritual brother" of the Scalabrinians During his long tenure several of them served as his assistant, and on his retirement the Scalabrinian Umberto Rizzi became pastor. He is described in the parish history as "diminutive in stature but colossal in determination," with an intense interest in the immigrants and a deep understanding of human nature. Like many another Scalabrinian he, too, began by renovating a dilapidated church and rectory, doing much of the actual work himself. Under him and his successors there was a flowering of different societies and a healthy social life in the parish, which again included Portuguese, Hispanics, and most recently Vietnamese. Periodically a missionary sets out from the parish to visit a number of outlying lumber camps, bunking down with the workers, who are also of varied nationality and who entrust their problems to him, certain he will find solutions for them once he gets back to the city.

Grain from the great wheat-growing provinces of Canada comes by rail to Thunder Bay and is stored in silos for the winter. In the spring, as the ice-breakers finish their chore, the harbor comes alive with ships that will take it via the Great Lakes, the St. Lawrence and the Atlantic to Europe, Africa and South America. Here another traditional Scalabrinian apostolate, that to the seamen, was developed in close cooperation with the Anglican clergy, providing religious services and visits aboard ship and social activities on land, from language courses to inter-ship soccer games. Father Carlo Titotto, while pastor of St. Anthony (1981-1986), became deeply involved in this apostolate and was appointed Catholic chaplain of the ecumenical center by the bishop. With his friend Deacon David Bradford of the

Anglican Church, he organized the National Convention of the Apostleship to Seamen and in 1981 was appointed Director of Chaplains in Canadian Ports.

Several missions were established within a 120 mile radius of Thunder Bay, while the list of Scalabrinian parishes in Canadian cities kept growing. The parish of Saint Maria Goretti was founded in Edmonton in 1958, and has since been joined by two more, Our Lady of Fatima and St. Pius X, with a special Mission for the Spanish-speaking. In Calgary two former parishes (one Italian and one territorial) were merged to form Our Lady of Grace, an Italian/English church dedicated in 1985 which serves the local Canadian community and the Italians throughout the city. The Italian community in Windsor (across the lake from Detroit) grew steadily over the years from a few families to several thousand and in 1966 Bishop Cody asked the Scalabrini-ans to take over the parish of St. Angela Merici. In 1957 he had asked for a Scalabrinian to serve the Italians in Sarnia, at the mouth of Lake Huron, and Father Angelo Calandra began this ministry. In 1959 he was named pastor of St. Peter's in that city and it has remained a Scalabrinian parish with a mixed congregation of Canadians, Italians and Portuguese. There is no fixed seamen's center in Sarnia but an ecumenical Catholic/Anglican "mission" provides the usual special services to the crewmen of the saltwater vessels along its five miles of docks. The pastor of St. Peter's serves as the Catholic Port Chaplain. Volunteers help meet the crewmen, take them to church and shopping and the precious phone calls home are made from the parish rectory.

Venezuela

In 1976 the flourishing Scalabrinian parishes in Venezuela were attached to the Eastern Province. Venezuela, too, had had considerable immigration history, with Germans and Italians encouraged at the beginning of the 20th century to establish agricultural and other rural settlements. After World War II, the rapid development of industries and construction demanded increasing manpower, and between 1948 and 1958 about 125,000 Italians moved into Venezuela along with the mass inrush of other Europeans. They had the services of several religious Orders and about fifty Italian priests, almost all of them graduates of the Pontifical College for Emigration in Rome. A change of government stopped the immigrant flow from abroad for a while, but at the same time there was an increase in clandestine immigration from other Latin American countries, mainly Colombia.

In the 1890s the Scalabrinian Giacomo Annovazzi had conducted several missions in Venezuela over a four year period, including a stint among the Indians on the shores of the Cuyuna River, until ill health caused his transfer to Argentina.

When in 1958, at the urging of the Consistorial Congregation and the Apostolic Nuncio in Caracas, the Scalabrinians returned to Venezuela they started with practically nothing, living and saying Mass in rented quarters - the first to arrive, for example, Giovanni Simonetto, lived at first in a shelter for the sick poor. Again, the humblest beginnings gave rise to healthy parishes with new or restored churches and religious services radiating from them to outlying missions and chapels. The 1960s saw the steady development of Our Lady of the Rosary of Pompei in Caracas; St. Charles Borromeo in Maracay (Aragua); St. Peter in Barquisimeto (Lara); Our Lady of the Rosary, the Italian Mission of Puerto Cabello, the Mission of Valencia (Carabobo), this last for both Italians and Portuguese, and three large Scalabrinian schools.

In Caracas a Scalabrinian is by right vice-president of the Italian consul's committee for assistance to immigrants, and the retirement home for the elderly is also run by a Scalabrinian priest. Still another is a kind of multi-purpose missionary, teacher, catechist, social worker and man for all help for the shifting population of English speaking migrants from the United States, Canada, Australia, Singapore and India - a whole new twentieth century phenomenon of economic nomads created by multinational corporations.

United States

In California, which has been called the Italy of America, the Italians found a congenial natural environment, went into industry and agriculture and became major elements in the state's economy. They established the wine industry, manned fleets of fishing vessels and are credited with being largely responsible for the great development of the fishing and food canning industries. The Western Province extended its activities to California at first through the establishment in 1958 of a kind of "flying" missionary attached to the Italian Catholic Federation. This last was started in the 1920s by Luigi Providenza, a young Italian immigrant in San Francisco, in cooperation with other lay persons and the pastor of Immaculate Conception Church in Stockton, where the first chapter was established. Chapters were formed in other parishes and with a small core group of priests the Federation organized missions, retreats, bible study classes and discussions of religious themes. Its main emphasis was on the family apostolate. Five branches were formed in Chicago - the first in 1950 at St. Michael's - and Cardinal Stritch named Father Luigi Donanzan as diocesan director. By 1958 the Federation had 110 chapters or branches with about 11,000 members. At Providenza's request a first Scalabrinian, Antonio Dal Balcon, was assigned to work with the Federation. Under its sponsorship a succession of Scalabrinian

missionaries preached missions all over the state and kept busy "migrating" themselves, lecturing, visiting families, holding meetings and assisting in parishes where there were large numbers of Italians. In California their problem was not poverty, but there was no lack of religious and spiritual needs to be met.

In 1961 the Archbishop of San Francisco asked the Scalabrinians to run the parish of Holy Cross in San Jose. They modernized the church, paid off the debts encumbering it and established a catechetical program reaching over a thousand children. The parish now is composed mainly of Mexicans. The parish of St. John in King City was assigned to the Scalabrinians in 1968, and the first Scalabrinian pastor was Rino Spada who had worked with the Italian Catholic Federation for eight years. Almost half the parish is Mexican, mostly "braceros." Impressed by the work of the Scalabrinians with the Federation, Cardinal McIntyre asked them to take the church of St. Peter in Los Angeles. This had been established as an Italian church in 1904 and had been run successively by diocesan clergy, Salesians and Claretians. By the 1960s most of the Italian families had moved to the suburbs and their place had been taken by Mexicans and Chinese, who had their own missions. Since, however, it was the only Italian church in the city, the Italians for the most part had remained loyal to it, returning for major religious ceremonies. And they expressed their attachment to their roots in the several dozen Italo-American religious and charitable organizations they created and the cultural activities they promoted. An attempt to coordinate the diverse individual groups had been made with the establishment of the "Federated Italo-Americans." But it was under the energetic leadership and determined efforts of Luigi Donanzan when he became pastor that St. Peter's again became the center of the religious, social and cultural life of the Italian community, which he rallied and unified around two major projects, the building of a cultural center and a residence for the elderly.

In 1960 the Scalabrinians accepted another challenge when Archbishop O'Boyle turned over to them Holy Rosary parish in downtown Washington, D.C. It had been founded, at the request of the Apostolic Delegate and the Archbishop of Baltimore, by Father Nicola De Carlo, a Southern Italian priest then studying at Catholic University. He began with a chapel in a rented house and steadily built up the parish until, after World War I, it was possible to build a church. This was dedicated in 1923. By this time the parish had a number of flourishing organizations engaged in various social and community activities. Official visitors from Italy were received at special Masses, attended by Italian embassy and other diplomatic personnel. Father De Carlo retired at age 81 in 1960; enter the Scalabrinians, Giulivo Tessarolo and Joseph Spigolon. Despite the Archbishop's assumption that Holy Rosary had a very limited future, they proceeded to

thoroughly revitalize the parish within the next four or five years, and to restore and embellish the church. It resisted and survived a highway plan and now sits on the edge of a large area of Washington scheduled for elegant urban renewal.

From an initially small parish serving the early immigrants that once lived in its neighborhood, it has become the center of the Italian community of the District of Colombia, reaching out to Italian Catholics throughout the broad metropolitan area, who return to it on Sundays and the major feast days of the Church as well as for their personal "feast days," marriages, baptisms, confirmations. It is the church of the Italian embassy and for a new breed of "migrants" who come and go through the nation's capital, from industrialists and political personalities to chefs, from doctors working at the National Institute of Health to students and researchers at Washington's several universities and other institutions. And it is the parent of two characteristically Scalabrinian foundations - a cultural center and a home for the elderly.

Fr. Mario Bordignon (center) and Fr. Andrew Brizzolara with seamen,1968.

Italian Prime Minister Aldo Moro at Holy Rosary Church, Washington D.C. Fr. Joseph Spigolon Pastor.

President Eisenhower with Fr. Cesar Donanzan.

Fr, Joseph Cogo at the ACIM office.

Fr. Mario Trecco, editor of *L'Italo Americano,* Los Angeles, welcomes Italian Prime Minister Amiltore Fanfani, 1982.

Fr. Peter polo preparing his radio program for the Italian community of Rhode Island, 1985.

Fr. Dominic Rodighiero editing *Insieme*, the Catholic Italian weekly of Montreal.

Cardinal Bernardin at the Italian Cultural Center in Chicago.

Fr . Augusto Feccia, founder of the Italian Cultural Center, 1976.

Fr. Angelo Calandra, as Provincial Superior, blessing the migrants monument in front of Villa Scalabrini, Chicago.

Fr. Armando Pierini, founder of Chicago's Villa Scalabrini.

Fr, Silvano Tomasi addressing the first CMS conference, In Defense of the Alien, 1975.

Casa Italiana,
Washington D.C.

Italian prime Minister Giulio Andreotti at Casa Italian with Fr. Cesare Donanzan, 1987.

Italian President Cossiga with Fr. Cesare Donanzan. Washington, D.C. 1989.

Chapter 9

Old Wine in New Bottles

"The changes in the social situation
and in men's attitudes make it necessary
to change our strategy for the care of souls."

Bishop John Baptist Scalabrini

While parish ministry remained the primary means of reaching immigrants old and new and their descendants, the twenty years between 1950 and 1970 were also a period of adaptation, of pursuing the original Scalabrinian aims in new circumstances and entering new fields that carry into modern times the legacy of action left by their Founder.

Popular Missions

In 1957 a formal Mission Band was established, echoing Bishop Scalabrini's original idea of a center from which flying or itinerant missionaries would radiate. From 1958-1965 missions were preached in New Jersey, the Midwest and Canada, mainly by Father Corbellini, who stretched the scope of the missions he preached through radio programs and articles in the local newspapers. This particular type of mission field had become crowded by then with mission bands of other religious Orders, but he brought to it a typical Scalabrinian element in his visits to families, especially those long strayed from the Church. For a number of reasons, the ideal of a permanent center for itinerant missions was never realized but parish-based missions reaching out to immigrants in surrounding communities remained a useful strategy as evidenced by the history of Scalabrinian parishes.

Seamen Centers

The idea of ships' chaplaincies returned for a constituency quite different from the huddled immigrants of the last century. In 1964 Captain Mario Vespa, vice-president of the Home Lines, asked for Scalabrinians as chaplains for its cruise ships. After considerable discussion and negotiation his proposal was accepted. The chaplain had a two-fold mission - to the vacationing passengers and

to the members of the crew (most of them Italian and Colombian), and both with the usual human complement of personal concerns and problems. In addition to being pastor aboard ship, the chaplains gave crewmen lessons in religion and English and organized social and recreational activities for them. Captain Vespa also promoted the idea of a seaman's center in New York, which had the support of the then Provincial Superior, Cesare Donanzan. This prompted a survey of centers already in existence, for by then the special needs of "transit" workers - e.g., sailors and airplane pilots - were recognized and the object of special ministries.

The New York center, *La Casa del Marinaio* or "house of the sailor", was established at 352 West 44th Street and blessed by Cardinal Cooke. In its first eighteen months it was used by some 30,000 seamen. Since then, the decline in passenger ships and New York harbor's loss of shipping in general has greatly reduced the number coming to the center. However, *La Casa del Marinaio* is open during the vacation season from March to November, when seamen can find a cheerful atmosphere evocative of home, place phone calls to families across the sea (a favorite service), relax in its comfortable lounge or bar, have a good meal at an affordable price in its roomy restaurant and get advice on how best to spend their short leave in the city. If there are personal problems the hospitable Center Director is at hand for advice and help.

For a time, at the request of the Los Angeles Archdiocese the Scalabrinians staffed the seamen's clubs in San Pedro and Wilmington, California, visited by a thousand crewmen a month of all nationalities and religions. Scalabrinians now serve this particular group of twentieth century migrants in Canada's Thunder Bay and Sarnia (as we have seen), New Castle (Australia), Buenos Aires (Argentina), Montevideo (Uruguay) and Manila (Philippines).

The American Committee on Italian Migration

One inheritor of Bishop Scalabrini's active involvement in promoting just and reasonable legislation for migrants is the American Committee on Italian Migration (ACIM), directed since its inception in 1952 by diligent and practical-minded Scalabrinians. The aftermath of World War II, with its unprecedented numbers of displaced persons and refugees in Europe, gave rise in the U.S. Catholic community to the National Catholic Resettlement Council, an arm of War Relief Services, the U.S. Bishops' relief and development agency now known as Catholic Relief Services. Diocesan councils of the NCRC, with the cooperation of other agencies and local parishes, provided a range of services for the displaced or "DPs" as they were called, finding them lodging or housing and employment, and providing an orientation into the puzzling new life in the United States. The

Eisenhower Administration, which had responded positively to the need to solve the immediate problems posed by the large displaced population in Europe, was beset in the early 1950s by requests for help for evacuees and displaced survivors reduced to statelessness in the Mediterranean countries, among them Italy, where camps were filled with refugees from Yugoslavia and other European countries, evacuees from the Middle East and the lost colonies in Africa, thus multiplying the thousands idled in the economic chaos left by the war. The Displaced Persons Act was about to expire and various nationality groups were calling the attention of the U.S. Government to those in Southern Europe which it had not included.

The American Committee on Italian Migration was originally the idea of Monsignor Luigi Ligutti, the Executive Director of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference. Through his efforts, together with the then Monsignor Edward Swanstrom, Director of Catholic Relief Services, and Scalabrinian Father Luigi Donanzan, in charge of immigration and refugees in the Chicago Archdiocese, the Committee was formed in 1952, and with the support of Cardinal Stritch of Chicago became a member agency of the NCRC. Judge Juvenal Marchisio, prominently associated with successful American relief programs in Italy was named President, and Scalabrinian Father Cesare Donanzan was named Executive Director, a post in which he served with distinction until 1966. The Committee, with a board of directors composed of Italo-American businessmen and professionals, developed chapters in some 137 American cities. Through creating public awareness, skillful use of the techniques for mobilizing pressure on Congress, and the persistent, patient and delicate diplomacy of its president and executive director, ACIM exercised considerable influence for the improvement of U.S. immigration policy as it made its difficult way through the political labyrinth of legislative procedures and unyielding personalities.

A first success of ACIM and its allies among other agencies was the Refugee Relief Act of 1953, which admitted 250,000 refugees from Southern Europe. Among them were 60,000 Italians for whom ACIM assumed the responsibility of securing sponsors. These Italian immigrants, a good number of them professionals or possessed of skills in short supply in the United States, made a favorable impression and created a more sympathetic climate in the Government. Many had come alone, either because they lacked the means to bring their families with them or because they were unaware that under the restrictive U.S. immigration laws it would be several years before they could be reunited. The great obstacle was the McCarran-Walter Act of 1952 which incorporated the "national origins" quota system developed in the 1920s with the specific aim of favoring Northern Europeans and excluding Southern and Eastern European immigrants. In a

concerted drive to achieve the reunion of families ACIM became to a high degree the spokesman for all groups concerned to reunite spouses and children. It brought its influence to bear on the Kennedy-Walter Bill of 1957, which admitted 25,000 Italians and 45,000 other nationals to join family members and relatives in the United States as well as on other measures between 1959 and 1962 that facilitated the entry of 45,000 non-quota Italians and the same number of other nationalities. In all of these the work of ACIM was central. It was work that continued until, having enlisted the support of President Kennedy and then of President Johnson, it saw the Immigration Reform Act adopted in 1965. This did away with the hated "national origins" quotas and substituted new criteria for admission based on family relationships to American citizens or resident aliens. President Johnson chose to sign it at the foot of the Statue of Liberty, thus eliminating, in his words, the "harsh injustice" which had distorted "U.S. immigration policy for over four decades."

ACIM continued to monitor the new legislation and to provide the material and the social assistance required by the increased number of Italians entering the country. In a sense it carried forward the tradition of the St. Raphael Society, and it still does in cheerful quarters on the floor above the Casa del Mari-naio. Under another Scalabrinian, Joseph Cogo, who became executive director in 1966, ACIM continues its watchdog function over the administrative practices that implement immigration legislation and the various proposals made from time to time as the immigration picture changes. Brief programs on the radio (WEVD) three times a week and twice monthly on TV (channel 31) and participation in RAI, the Italian radio program which reaches sixty-seven Italian language stations, all provide up to date information on current developments in immigration law and policy. One of the techniques ACIM has used over the years to maintain critical awareness of immigration issues is the holding of national symposia attended by members from across the country and addressed by experts in the field and members of Congress, with whom it is possible to pursue a fruitful dialogue.

The ACIM office in Naples is a source of information and assistance for would-be emigrants to the United States, who on arrival find the help they need in the New York office. This aids both new and old immigrants with the multiple forms, affidavits and certificates with which modern bureaucracy tends to define human persons, deals with the Italian government regarding property and pensions, and with applications for citizenship, plus providing all the necessary translations. Many come to the office for confirmation of information received elsewhere. It provides counseling as well as social services, undocumented aliens being the latest group to seek guidance as they try to meet the amnesty provisions of the

Immigration Reform and Control Act. ACIM is now working to eliminate some of the consequences of the 1965 law which negatively affect immigration from European countries.

Homes for the Elderly

While the shifting patterns of new immigration in the United States claimed one kind of attention, a new need for older immigrants was coming to the fore in poignant ways. They frequently found themselves quite alone, their resources limited and relatives, if any, living at long distances. The language barrier and the mind-set of their traditional ways made it difficult for them to find the understanding and care they needed in existing institutions, even Catholic ones. In Chicago, Father Armando Pierini, who had become familiar with the situation, had long wanted to see a "home" established for them where they could spend their declining years in a familiar environment. At a Columbus Day dinner in 1945, attended by Italians from all over the Chicago archdiocese expecting to hear the usual speeches, he launched the proposal for an "Old Peoples' Home for Italians." He was aided and abetted by two stalwart lay allies who had experiences to tell that confirmed the need. There followed a succession of committees, surveys in the Italian parishes, and finally the approval of Cardinal Stritch, who urged the pastors of all the Italian churches in the archdiocese to support it, while the Scalabrinians remained responsible for it. The fund-raising campaign brought the Italian community together in an unprecedented cooperative effort that reached from small local parish societies to the upper levels of business, the professions and the performing arts and involved literally hundreds of volunteers. Festivals and entertainments on the grand scale, and annual banquets that became the gala social events of the season attracted not only Italian-American businessmen and professionals but many of other ethnic origins and religious persuasions as well.

Begun in 1951 and built in three stages, Villa Scalabrini, as it is now called, is situated in Northlake, not far from Melrose Park and accommodates over 250 persons. From the beginning its organizing genius was Father Pierini, who not surprisingly became its director. To aid the first fund-raising campaign he instituted a weekly radio broadcast in Italian which still continues in existence. The "Scalabrinian League," composed of laymen, had as its immediate goals, beyond the spiritual welfare of its members, the payment of the Villa's mortgage, planning for its future expansion and eventually helping other charitable and educational works of the Scalabrinians. Chartered as a non-profit organization in the State of Illinois it took over the fund-raising responsibilities and was joined almost immediately by the Ladies Auxiliaries of Villa Scalabrini, who, in addition, ensure

the recreational and other human touches for life in the Villa. At the celebration of its 25th anniversary, Cardinal Stritch called Villa Scalabrini "one of the show places of the charitable works of the diocese."

Another long-lasting idea of Father Pierini's, who seemed to have no lack of them, was a newspaper, mainly for the English-speaking and second generation Italians. The Scalabrinian League began to publish it in 1960 under the title *Fra Noi* ("among ourselves") with Pierini as editor. Today a professional staff continues to provide a chronicle of Chicago's Italian community. Next to Villa Scalabrini there now rises a building of attractive and functional apartments for retirees, whose residents, if and when the time comes, can obtain the necessary care from or in nearby Villa Scalabrini.

In North Kingston, Rhode Island, the parishioners of Holy Ghost Church were trying to decide on a project of use to the community for which the various Italo-American groups could combine their efforts when young Father Peter Bracchi arrived, fresh from the enthusiastic campaign for Villa Scalabrini in Chicago. His spirited persuasion won the day for a home for the elderly, the idea for which had been simmering through the parish discussions. It received the blessing and permission of Bishop Russell Mc Vinney and a lively fund-raising committee was formed headed by Senator John Pastore. He was aided and supported by Father Flaminio Parenti, the tough go-getter pastor of Holy Ghost parish, who took up the promotion of the home at Bracchi's untimely death in a plane crash and was chosen coordinator of the project by the Bishop. In record time enough money was raised to purchase from Rhode Island Hospital the 100 acre property and complex of buildings but recently vacated by the Crawford Allen Hospital for Children. The necessary repairs and adjustments were made and in 1957 Bishop Mc Vinney inaugurated the "Bishop Scalabrini Home for the Aged," beautifully situated on a lovely, landscaped point overlooking East Greenwich Bay and affording a splendid view from each of its windows. At first it was a retirement residence, under the direction of Father Attilio Bordignon. Its forty-five residents lived together like a family, sharing the chores for its upkeep, the women tending to the housekeeping and the men taking care of the grounds, and both helped by a number of volunteers. As age brought frailty and others of its dubious gifts to the residents, it became necessary to add a nursing facility. With a growing need for its accommodation and through the efforts of the usual, reliable Scalabrini Villa Guild, it was possible to transform the home into a full-fledged, three-tiered retirement/nursing home in 1971, now known as Scalabrini Villa. From 1979 to 1988 its director has been the cheerful, kindly, quietly energetic Father Angelo

Susin, and the present director, Father Edward Marino is launching a major development of the Villa's services.

When Father Luigi Donanzan took over the parish of St. Peter in Los Angeles in 1962, he promptly moved to carry out the two ambitious projects he had in mind: an Italian cultural center and a home for the elderly. He had brought with him his creative experience as one of the principal fund-raisers for Chicago's Villa Scalabrini, and by the end of the 1970s another Villa Scalabrini was opened in Sun Valley, a quiet suburb of Los Angeles. The Italians throughout Southern California had already been mobilized and responded generously to the establishment of the cultural center, so a solid community of individuals, societies and organizations, now used to working together and proud of their first elegant accomplishment, was already in place when Donanzan, giving them little respite, started a campaign for a retirement home. There followed six years of fund-raising activities from impressive banquets to garden parties and coffee klatches, marked by two spectacular and highly productive galas. One was a tribute to the ever popular Jimmy Durante, and another was held to honor Frank Sinatra's mother, Dolly, a staunch supporter of the projects initiated by St. Peter's, who had recently died in a plane accident. At her son's request the chapel, dining room and kitchen of Villa Scalabrini, paid for by the proceeds of the banquet, were dedicated to her memory.

In 1975 Father Emilio Donanzan was named Executive Director of Villa Scalabrini with the responsibility of developing and building it for the Italian-American community of Los Angeles. Its dedication in 1979 coincided with the Diamond Jubilee celebration of St. Peter's Church. Its maintenance and support are ensured by an organization of "Scalabrini Associates." It is a handsome complex, its residential quarters built around nine garden-courtyards; it sits in peaceful rural surroundings but with easy access to shops and needed services. Its concept, design and functionalism have won the praise of architects and state officials. Here, too, the combination of a lengthening waiting list and the growing frailty of the original residents have prompted the building of an additional wing which houses an intermediate care facility, opened in August 1988.

A somewhat more complicated history gave rise to still another "home" outside Washington, D.C. In 1954, Holy Rosary's founder, Father De Carlo, had bought 120 acres in Mitchellville, Maryland, about twenty miles distant from the parish rectory. He had had great plans to turn it into a multi-purpose complex, which would include a farm (he actually began this), an orphanage, a bilingual school and a retirement center, the whole enclave to be named Villa Rosa in honor of his mother. The plan fell through and in 1957 he offered it to the Scalabrinians,

prepared at the time to turn the parish over to them also, which they assumed, as noted earlier, in 1960. After De Carlo's death in 1961 and protracted negotiations with the Archdiocese, Villa Rosa became the property of the Scalabrinians. A highly successful festival/picnic put the area on the map for the Italian community, which rallied to support the newly projected home for the aged. With a hefty contribution from Archbishop O'Boyle and the support of the then Apostolic Delegate, it was opened for its first fourteen guests in April 1967. Father Anthony Dal Balcon became its director, supervised the building of its five wings and accessory buildings, and it was solemnly inaugurated in 1970. It is situated in a tranquil stretch of lovely Maryland countryside, over which the original mansion presides like a dignified dowager. The access road is lined with cypress trees planted by the director, and its bright sunny rooms now house over 100 people.

Cultural Centers

Still another apostolic model further developed in the 1960-1980 period is to be found in the Italian cultural centers which echo one of Bishop Scalabrini's early concerns for the preservation of the migrants' culture as the matrix of their faith. Socio-cultural recreation centers of one kind or another had from the beginning been features of many Scalabrinian parishes, tailored to the needs of the parishioners, sometimes the youth, sometimes the elderly. In the United States three large centers - in Los Angeles, Chicago and Washington, D.C. - are particularly well known for the quality of their programs and for the outreach not only to the second and third generation Italo-American population but to other Americans as well. Concerts, lectures, plays, exhibits, classes in Italian language and culture, seminars and other activities preserve an awareness of the many-faceted Italian heritage. The Centers are a source of recognition for Italian-American achievements in the various arts, and new achievements are fostered through scholarship programs. Newcomers find a place to feel at home while they make their way into the new society and temporary visitors find a welcome and a comfortable point of reference. From a pastoral viewpoint the Centers are considered a means of outreach to those scattered over a broad area both through the activities themselves and through newsletters and radio programs.

The *Casa Italiana* in Los Angeles, opened in 1972, was the first city-wide project undertaken by Father Luigi Donanzan, as he began his pastorate at St. Peter's. It energized the Italian community of Southern California and brought it a productive unity through the generous cooperation it engendered. Columbus seems to have a continuing role in the life of the Scalabrinians, for the campaign for this Center, too, was launched at a Columbus Day banquet in 1967, and similar annual

banquets were steady sources of fund-raising. A simple but elegant one-story building houses the Casa Italiana, which can accommodate over 1,000 people in its main hall and has the suitable facilities and equipment for its many activities, from opera productions to Americanization classes. Painting, sculptures and wall decorations are plentiful reminders of Italian life and culture. While St. Peter's ministers to the religious needs of the people, carrying out the primary mission of the Scalabrinian Fathers, the Casa Italiana is considered by its staff as ministry to their social nature. It has also been an effective means of re-gathering them around their church.

In Chicago the *Centro Culturale Italiano* was begun modestly in 1970 in the original seminary building in Stone Park (formerly Melrose Park), whose staid exterior is belied by the warm welcome and light one finds within. It now boasts an art gallery, an inviting resource library, courses in music as well as language, exhibits of Italian crafts and a permanent "Italians in Chicago" exhibit designed to preserve their history and heritage. The Center is in charge of coordinating the Italian-speaking apostolate in the greater Chicago area. Its staff works with local parishes, providing a number of services from Sunday Mass and instruction for the sacraments to family counseling, and it cooperates with the American Committee on Italian Migration in supplying its characteristic social and other services. It also cooperates with several Italian radio programs, thus meeting the spiritual and cultural needs of many people who would otherwise not be served. Associated with the Center is the Centro Latino for the Hispanics with branches in various Chicago parishes, and an associated Montessori school is experimenting with the teaching of Italian or Spanish to the three-to-six year olds.

The *Casa Italiana* in Washington, D.C. was opened in 1981 and is another reaffirmation of "our cultural and spiritual allegiance to our heritage and our grateful pride in our country, the United States..." as phrased by its founder-director, Father Cesare Donanzan. Dante, Michelangelo, Verdi and Marconi, in shining white Carrara marble, stand across its facade in evocative welcome. In addition to the customary Center activities, it holds open house after the Sunday Masses in Holy Rosary Church which is next door. If you stop in for a coffee plus other goodies, you will probably find yourself rubbing elbows with a Federal judge, a Congressman or two, students, diplomatic and government personnel and "parishioners" from the greater Washington metropolitan area. Among its sponsors is the Italian government, a far cry from the fledgling government of 1870 intent on avoiding cooperation with any religion-related institution.

Centers for Migration Studies

A major Scalabrinian contribution to both the Church and society in the United States and throughout the world is the expertise and rich, varied source material in the Centers for Migration Studies, which continue, in modern ways and times, the example of Bishop Scalabrini himself, whose careful study and research were the basis of his writing, lectures and recommendations on the Italian phenomenon. The purpose of the centers is "to study and examine in depth the phenomenon of migration and related problems," carrying out a work of "documentation and research, of analysis and reflection, from both the sociological and theological-pastoral points of view." (Art. 29 of the Rules). Their objective is to sensitize, in the spirit of Bishop Scalabrini, public and Church opinion, and especially government authorities and workers in the field of migration, through analysis of the causes of migration, its various aspects and its consequences for the migrant societies. They are a tool, also, for continually updating the pastoral approach to migrants, which, rooted in reality and studied with the eyes of faith, is a means of evangelization and at the same time advances human development. Among the many activities of the centers is the issuance of publications of various kinds, both popular and scientific, symposia, workshops, cooperation with universities, participation in and contributions to national and international conferences and organizations.

The first Center was established in Rome in 1963, *Centro Studi Emigrazione Roma (CSER),* now housed in a handsome old villa that lends a touch of elegance to its conference rooms and library, the only one in Italy specializing in migration studies. At about the same time the Center for Migration Studies on Staten Island was in the process of development and its history is interwoven with that of St. Charles Seminary. In 1954 a group of seminarians began to publish a mimeographed newsletter called Emigration Digest, which reported on legislative problems affecting immigrants and refugees. After a hiatus of a few years, their successors issued a more ambitious International Migrant Digest, carrying reprints, book reviews and legislative news. In 1966, under the editorship of Father Silvano Tomasi, it became the International Migration Review, featuring original articles geared to the academic world and migration specialists. A board of directors and an annual subsidy from the American Committee on Italian Migration set the Center on its way and it now enjoys an international reputation. It issues a number of specialized publications in addition to the scholarly International Migration Review, which is now a quarterly, Migration World, a bi-monthly with a more popular orientation, and a substantial number of books on related subjects. It also sponsors symposia and topical meetings, including an annual conference in

Washington, D.C. which concentrates on the legal aspects of migration and refugee policies and experience.

At the heart of the Center, directed by Father Lydio Tomasi, is its "special" library and archives now a well-known resource center on immigration, ethnicity and refugees, with some 21,000 volumes, 2,000 monographs, over 400 migration-related magazines, newsletters and journals, and some 500 dissertations as well as a collection of microfilms. An important section, known to librarians as the "gray area," contains quasi-public material, much of it not available elsewhere, such as conference working papers and processed collections of the old ethnic press in the United States and Italy. It has probably the best current collection of refugee materials, eighty percent of it in the "gray area." It houses also the archives of both North American provinces. A recent Center/Library production is the World Directory of International Migration Study Centers, the first of its kind, that lists information on the various institutions, their migration-related activities, research programs underway and library resources. The library is understandably, therefore, a magnet for church historians, social historians, authors, journalists, students and assorted researchers. The United States National Conference of Catholic Bishops is among those making use of the Center's research on pastoral ministry for migrants and was assisted by the Center in the preparation of some of its pastoral statements on migrants. Some dioceses have adopted or implemented recommendations regarding the establishment of diocesan immigration offices, a concept initially developed by the Center.

There are now ten centers for migration studies under Scalabrinian auspices throughout the world which conduct similar types of activities. Located as they are in different countries and continents, their research, publications, conferences, etc., provide a kind of global view of the highly diversified and many-layered migration experience. In 1980, the centers joined to form the Federation of Centers for Migration Studies "G.B. Scalabrini" (FCMS), which publishes a newsletter and holds biennial meetings in different countries. Its purpose is to link the various approaches to migration and to coordinate common resources and projects, thus providing a unique network of information and analysis as the migration and refugee movements, impelled by one crisis or wretched situation after another, are increasingly universal and continue seemingly without end.

Other activities

Over the years Scalabrinians have been serving in a variety of councils and committees on migrants in Italy, Canada, Australia and in the dioceses and national bishops' conferences in both Americas. From 1949-1973 they administered, at the

behest of the Congregation of Bishops, the Pontifical College for Emigration (*Pontificio Collegio per L'Emigrazione*) which prepared secular priests for work overseas. As noted earlier, since its establishment in 1970 by Pope Paul VI, a Scalabrinian priest has served as secretary of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Travelers, which also includes in its purview the apostolate for seamen, airplane pilots, nomads, and gypsies.

Chapter 10

Meeting New Challenges

"The Third World is here among us."
Silvano M. Tomasi, c.s.

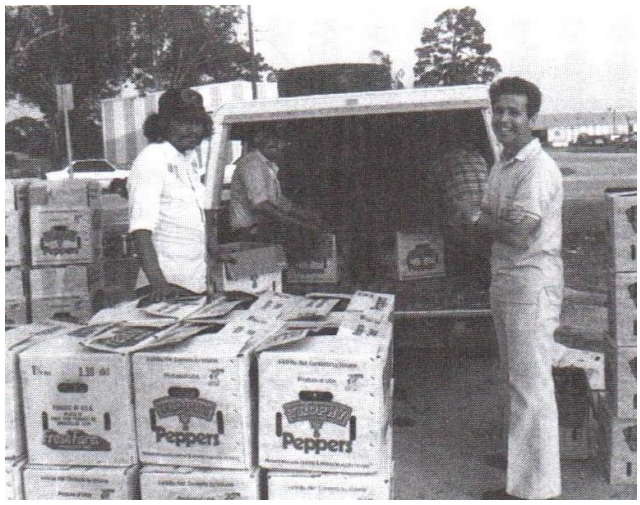
In the last two decades immigration from Italy to North America has dwindled to little more than a trickle. Italian migrants have been going mostly to European countries, often on a temporary basis, and Scalabrinian foundations are there to serve them. Italy itself has become a country of internal migration from the rural south to the industrialized north, and of immigration from Asia and North Africa, so a new field for the Scalabrinian "mission" has opened at home, so to speak. In North America the immigrant population is composed increasingly of nationality groups from the various countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, of Chinese and other Asians (from Vietnam, Cambodia, the Philippines), swelled by the tide of illegal or "undocumented aliens" that has given the United States such a headache and for which it has not yet found a satisfactory policy even in the Immigration Control and Reform Act of 1986.

At one level there has been a sea change in the attitudinal climate the new immigrants encounter. Culture shock is now a respectable phenomenon, studied and viewed with sympathy. Ethnic diversity is conscientiously respected and cultural differences are no longer treated with humiliating disdain or patronizing tolerance but rather with tactful interest, sometimes superficial but more often genuine and responsive. The official United States Church in the nineteenth century was hard pressed to take in the different ethnic groups pushing at its unfamiliar doors, and the strange, miscellaneous Italians seemed a particular problem for some to cope with amid the pressures for Americanization. That assimilation into the host society must be accepted as the gradual process it is and be accompanied by relevant measures of support is no longer a debatable policy premise. The pastoral letters of the United States Bishops sum up Church teaching and concern with respect to migrants, describe the various aspects and issues of the current (im)migrant picture in the country and make practical and pertinent recommendations to the civil society and to the different levels of Church structure and membership. In short, they "invite all people of goodwill to open their hearts to

Fr. Ettore Rubin, Delray, Florida, 1980.

Fr. Robert Royal, Newark, New Jersey, 1981.

Fr. Isaia Birollo, Immokalee, Florida, 1989.



Toward the establishment of a Scalabrinian Seminary in Mexico (from left) Fr. Alvirio Mores, Fr. Silvano Tomasi, Fr. Angelo Calandra and Fr. Luigi Gandolfi. July 10,1980.

Seminarians in Guadalajara, Mexico with Fr. Pietro Sordi Provincial Superior of the Western Province, 1987.

Fr. Francesco Bordignon, 1984

Members of the Venezuelan Delegation, 1987.

Fr. Sante Cervellin, Venezuela

Inauguration of the Seminary in Bogotá.

welcome and love the migrant and refugee," with the reminder that "there are no aliens in the Church" (Together a New People, November 8, 1986).

At another level, however, history repeats itself in the resentments and discriminations the new immigrants encounter, in the uneasy fear - real or maneuvered - that they are usurping or competing for jobs, and in the exploitation and marginalization visited upon them even in some of the old forms. Those who for some reason return home still take with them seductive tales of life in the United States which inspire others to seek their fortune too whatever the obstacles. And there are instances where new immigrants still feel ill at ease in the Church, despite the welcome and the special pastoral attention accorded them, simply because of the overall unfamiliar environment.

The Scalabrinians have been quick to respond, receiving and serving in their parishes the new ethnic groups that moved into old Italian neighborhoods even before the outreach beyond the Italian immigrants was formally articulated in the Rules. The hyphenated descendants of the first immigrants - Italo-Brazilians, Italo-Americans, Italo-Canadians, if you will - trained in the same spirit and spirituality in the expanding network of seminaries, have moved with their Italian colleagues to meet the new opportunities. Many of the original Scalabrinian parishes have been adapted to the needs of the Hispanic and Portuguese newcomers, especially in Chicago and other centers in the Western Province. Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Melrose Park, for example, is a handsome new modern church with a multi-ethnic but largely Hispanic congregation where descendants of the "old" migrants are learning to accept the "new." Since 1960 the parish of Santa Maria Addolorata boasts a new modern church and school and is now largely Hispanic.

At St. Callistus the pastor, Father Alex Peloso, found himself helping numbers of young Hispanic workers, many of them undocumented. He took training in labor relations and gradually formed the Confederation of Hispanic-American Workers for the protection of the poorest and the powerless, because the regular trade unions, he found, "often neglect the poor worker, the one unable to defend himself, who does not know English and often suffers a great deal of injustice." The Confederation exerts a mediating influence between the corporations and the trade unions, provides a number of services for the workers, and has established a credit union which numbers some 700 members. The labor courses the Confederation organizes are attended not only by Hispanics but also by their Black and Polish co-workers, who share the same problems and types of exploitation. And there are many other examples. Vietnamese find "their" church in Holy Rosary in Kansas City which has the services of a full-time Vietnamese priest as associate. St. Anthony's in New Haven is also, at their request, the center

for the Filipinos living in Connecticut. In New York City, Chinatown has more or less absorbed what was once "little Italy" and St. Joseph's is largely a Chinese parish, with a Chinese priest as associate to the Scalabrinian pastor, and a school whose student body is 85% Chinese.

In the 1980s the Scalabrinians have also gone to meet the Third World among the Hispanic and Haitian migrant workers in Florida's sunlit farmlands. In 1984 they accepted the parish of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Immokalee in southwest Florida, an extensive settlement of packing plants, farm owners' villas and the motley spread of trailers and other workers' housing ranging from the modest homes of the "legals" to the crowded huts of the poorest and the transient.

Most of the workers are Mexican (many of them illegal) and there is a large number of Haitians among them who were "boat people" in the early 1980s. The parish congregation is largely a mobile one for when the Florida harvesting season is over, most go north to work for the summer, returning again in the fall. A few manage to save enough to buy their own small house; for others their dwelling, such as it is, may or may not be the same each time. Like the immigrants of a century ago, these latter day nomads are very poor, hardworking, usually cheerful and content with simple pleasures like an evening of singing to the accompaniment of the ever ready guitar. Sometimes one succeeds in earning enough to buy a pick-up truck and go into business for himself, and the Haitians particularly tend to move out in search of better jobs. But unlike the long ago immigrants they seem trapped in a perpetual cycle, often beset by uncertainties and defined by the long rows of vegetable plants they daily scurry along as fast as possible to fill the buckets of produce for the fifty cents each one brings them.

The parish provides a variety of services in a bright, clean, friendly environment. There is a food deposit and one of clothing, both kept supplied by donations and arranged in a department store order that clearly respects the dignity of the destitute. They are presided over by School Sisters of Notre Dame who also run a soup kitchen that provides a meal for 100-400 persons a day during seasonal unemployment. Social services and fund-raising are under the direction of a layman and the parish is known far beyond its boundaries for the kind of help that tides a person over the zero days. "Is this the place to come for rent -- for gas?" are the burden of frequent phone calls. Visits to families are among the familiar Scalabrinian features of the parish along with youth groups, to which parents are invited to promote dialogue between them. While Mexicans and Haitians have separate activities in their own language groups, they come together in church functions and festivities. The graceful little church, in which the prayer services have an intensity rare in city churches, has already outgrown its regular

congregation and many religious functions are held outdoors. The Scalabrinians in charge of Our Lady of Guadalupe are Italian-born Isaia Birollo and Haitian-born Jacques Fabre, both of whom are fluent in Spanish and Creole as well as English and attest to a growing cooperation among the three language communities.

In Delray Beach behind the prosperous facades of condominiums and the gracious enclaves of private villas lies another expanse of migrant workers' camps which house, in the barest of quarters, Mexicans, Porto Ricans and Guatemalans. Most are men, many "illegal", and a number of them have traveled thousands of miles on foot in search of a little wherewithal to take back to the families they left behind. There is nothing in the camps for them but twelve hours of back-breaking work a day to provide the northern states with tomatoes and poinsettias. They, too, suffer the classic form of social injustice and discriminatory treatment that seem inevitably to be visited on the poor and the marginalized.

Our Lady Queen of Peace Mission, founded some twenty years ago, was taken over by the Scalabrinian Fathers in September 1987. The Mission, under the direction of Father Hector Rubin and Father Peter Bennett, serves the small number of Americans who live and work in the surrounding community, and the Mexican-Americans who are now more or less well established. But their primary concern is the Hispanic migrants. Masses in English and Spanish are celebrated in the modest chapel which, during the week becomes a day care center. Visiting families, making personal contact with the workers, the many social services needed, and help in regularizing their status under the new immigration law keep two Scalabrinian priests and four Spanish Claretian Sisters more than busy. A third Scalabrinian seems to be the over-all shepherd of several thousand Haitians who fled from Duvalier and his Ton Ton Macoutes and, though never granted asylum or refugee status by the United States, began settling in this area in the early 1980s. Farm workers at first gradually moved into service and other jobs in the city and are now taking advantage of the amnesty provisions in the Immigration Control and Reform Act of 1986.

The arrival of Father Roland Desormeaux, a Haitian Scalabrinian, to head the Mission of Our Lady of Perpetual Help and the dedication of their "own" church (December 1987) have given the Haitians cause for joyful celebration. Father Roland spent several years at the church of St. Therese of Lisieux in Brooklyn, from where he reached out to the numberless Haitians scattered throughout the greater New York area and gave them a sense of community; he is remembered by them with great affection. In the Mission, though it is part of the parish of St. Vincent Ferrer, the Haitians now have a priest of their own national background, who identifies with them and leads them in worship in Creole, their

own language. The Church thus confirms their identity and gives them the opportunity to celebrate their culture. It is on that basis - the proud awareness of "who they are" - that Father Roland believes they can move forward and take their place in America without feeling they are losing a part of themselves. It is his hope to reach out eventually to the other Haitians dispersed through Palm Beach County, who encounter all the historical difficulties of immigrants and are doubly disadvantaged because they are both foreign and black.

The clandestine migrant who is deported presents still another category of man-made misery. At the border between Colombia and Venezuela, on the outskirts of Cucuta, Scalabrinian priests continue the tradition of the old St. Raphael Society. A hostel accommodates over 100 deportees a night. They are mainly Colombians with a scattering of other South Americans who have gone in search of work in Venezuela with or without the necessary documents. There they are ferreted out at work, at home, or wherever, kept in dirty prisons anywhere from 30 to 90 days, often beaten or otherwise maltreated by Venezuelan border guards before they are turned over to the Colombian police, whether or not they are Colombians. The police bring them to the hostel in groups of forty or fifty at any hour of the day or night. There they have the respite of a clean bed and food and whatever help they need for their immediate future.

The Scalabrinians assumed the direction of this mission in 1979 with the arrival of Chicago-born Father Alex Dalpiaz, who with other Italo-American or second generation Scalabrinians maintain the tradition of flexible adaptability bequeathed to his missionaries by their Founder. Two months after his ordination Father Alex was a roving missionary among the migrant cane cutters working in the tropical, insect laden heat of North Queensland, Australia. He then became pastor to "old" and "new" migrants in Silkwood and its surroundings, was moved to Tasmania where he built the Scalabrinian church and parish for the Italian community there, and in another complete change was appointed director of the seamen's mission in Buenos Aires, the first such mission the Scalabrinians accepted, where he also served as chaplain to the English-speaking Catholics in that city. In Cucuta Father Alex conducted a survey among the deportees, and enlarged and reorganized the welfare center (*Centro Diocesano de Migraciones de Cucuta*) where they and internal migrants from all over Colombia find counseling, medical help, other services and often a job. Radio, TV and news bulletins keep public opinion aware of the migrants. The Scalabrinians also take care of the church of the Nativity of Our Lady (Natividad de Nuestra Senora), the church of the very, very poor who live in the barrios around Cucuta or in little huts across the hot, inhospitable plain from which they extract a subsistence living.

In 1982, Father Alex became the director of the migration and tourism department of the Colombian Bishops' Conference, later serving as consultant to CELAM, the Conference of Latin American Bishops, and as executive secretary for Latin America of the International Catholic Migration Commission, a post which coordinated all the efforts for people on the move - migrants, refugees, seamen.

Bogota, the capital of Colombia, an old and once lovely city situated high up in the Andes, is now coping with the phenomenon of rural-urban migration that has created a ring of poverty around most of the major cities of Latin America, and it is host as well to numbers of political refugees from Chile, Nicaragua, El Salvador and Haiti. Loyal to Bishop Scalabrini's conviction that migrants are best served by priests of their own nationality, the Scalabrinians opened a seminary in Bogota in 1987.

In Tijuana (Mexico), a fast growing city, part glitz and glamor and part shanty town, the migrant situation is a shifting scene of tragic misadventures, appalling exploitation and stubborn hope. The Scalabrinians who are there in response to the concern of Bishop Emilio Berlie Belaunzaran see in it the early days of Fathers Maldotti and Bandini re-enacted in even more painful and uglier terms. Thousands of Mexicans, driven by sheer economic necessity and their numbers swelled by countless Central Americans, swarm through the city to try and retry to cross the forbidden border into the United States. Most of them are between twelve and thirty years of age and about one-fifth of them are women, usually with children. They run the risk of being robbed, raped, maimed or even killed by gangs of thieves who roam both sides of the border. To get them across smugglers (coyotes) exact fees of $300 to $500, shared with corrupt Mexican immigration police, and they may or may not abandon their hopeful charges on the way. The dealer who undertakes for another fee to guide the undocumented to lodgings and employment may simply take the money and disappear; an employer, when found, may promise to pay them their salary later and then turn them in to avoid doing so. The exploitation of those who have "made it" safely over the years is a well-known story in the United States.

Tijuana receives over a half of the undocumented who are caught and deported; in 1986 there were some 1,200 of these a day, although the number has dropped considerably since the adoption of the Immigration Control and Reform Act of that year with its provisions for amnesty. The deported, ashamed to go home empty-handed, take any job, even the most menial and ill-paid, hoping to try another crossing, and are easy victims for exploitation all over again, sometimes ending up in the clutches of drug dealers and pimps. If they are from Central

America they destroy their identification papers in order to pass as Mexicans and stay in the city to find a job or perhaps to try again. Instead, they may end up in jail until they can find the means to bribe their way out. Those with relatives in the United States are often held for ransom on ranches where torture is not unknown. It is not unusual for unaccompanied minors to be thrown into crowded prisons where they are introduced to drugs and prostitutes and fast lose their innocence along with their dreams.

In the face of such daunting need, the Scalabrinians have established a multi-purpose center which includes the trim, three-story *Casa del Migrante* that can house and feed two hundred persons a day and a social service department elastic enough to meet unpredictable needs. The Center provides medical help, financial aid and encouragement for a deportee to go home with some dignity and works to get detainees out of the prisons and youngsters off the streets, where they are recruited by drug dealers. It helps to unite migrants of any age with relatives in the United States and when advisable refers them to other appropriate agencies. Assisting the work of the Center are the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles (Scalabrinian Sisters also founded by the Bishop), who visit the prisons, especially where there are minors, to bring help, comfort and eventually release. A striking feature of the Center is the number of volunteers who devote their time and energy to it, from doctors and social workers to the women who cook and clean the hostel.

First director of the Center has been Father Florenzo Rigoni, who makes a daily statement by wearing the white habit and cross of the missionary despite the Mexican law against wearing "religious" apparel, and whose bright black eyes command immediate attention. He has served migrants in Italy, West Germany and on Italian freighters, and like many good missionaries he can if necessary take a turn as electrician, plumber or amateur physician. A theologian with an analytical cast of mind he is a thoughtful student of and commentator on today's migration phenomenon, as intense in his thoughtfulness as in his compassion.

The Center is a sparkplug in the local community and his description of it is a neat, concise summary, of the Scalabrinian mission: as a "human" presence it is an expression of solidarity with those who suffer; as a presence of the Church, it is a concrete rendering of the Gospel of St. Matthew (Chapter 25); and it fulfills the specific vocation of the Scalabrinian Congregation as ministry to "people on the move." Another Scalabrinian, Robert Simionato, is presently the director of the Casa and the brisk, creative pastor of the nearby church of San Felipe de Jesus, an "almost parish," with a complement of activities ranging from youth groups to Bible study classes, that serves its small middle class neighborhood on the edge of a shanty town.

As evening darkens, one or the other, or both, will be found saying Mass for the migrants gathered in the entrance of Zapata Canyon, aptly nicknamed the "canyon of death" who, with the hope born of desperation, are waiting for the opportunity to make it successfully across the border. The Fathers pray with them, bless them, comfort them as best they can and tell them of the Center's services. Helicopters of the United States border patrol fly back and forth overhead and in the distance shine the lights of the glass towers of the other Tijuana.

A seminary in Guadalajara represents a second Scalabrinian commitment to Mexico's migrant population. The critical and demanding situation presented by the millions of Mexicans living within the United States and the thousands more still pressing against her borders prompted two joint meetings of the Committees on Migration of the American and Mexican Bishops' Conferences to exchange information and explore avenues of cooperation. One result was a unanimous recommendation that the Scalabrinians extend their special apostolate with a foundation in Mexico that would prepare young Mexicans to work among their migrant countrymen and at the same time assist the local church, particularly in sensitizing people to the various aspects of the migrant movement. The seminary - or Scalabrinian College Associate House - opened in 1987, is on the outskirts of Guadalajara, a picturesque city with a population of two and a half million and many of the problems of the Third World. It is situated in the heart of a vast rural region from which there is the largest number of emigrants, leaving behind only women and old people in many of its little towns and villages. It has been said that when the United States speaks of deporting a million Chicanos, Guadalajara trembles. The seminary, though in the jurisdiction of the Western province, is a cooperative undertaking of both American provinces and fulfills the aim of the Congregation "to foster new vocations in lands of emigration as well as in those of immigration" (Art. 18 of the Rules).

In addition to its vocation program, the Scalabrinian foundation in Guadalajara is a center for mission outreach to outlying parishes, for work among the dwellers in the poor shanty towns around Guadalajara, and of realistic information for would-be emigrants. At the request of the Archbishop the Scalabrinians also serve the English-speaking residents in Guadalajara and Lake Chapala, for whom he established an archdiocesan-wide "parish" (*vicaria funcional*). They are mainly professional and other retirees from the United States, a distinctly twentieth century kind of "migrant," but with some of the problems and needs of anyone who moves from one land to another. While they are by no means poor, they too feel the need to worship and to hear the Gospel message in their own language, to have a priest who understands both them and the country in which

they are living and can help them understand the needs of the impoverished Mexicans and migrants. Their pastor is Father Peter Corbellini, with long experience among the Mexicans in the United States, a former professor of philosophy and theology at Loyola University in Chicago, and a brilliant and witty lecturer whose activities belie his years.

Summary

"We are living the Pentecost!"

a Scalabrinian Seminarian

It is a hundred years since the first dedicated, enthusiastic Scalabrinians began their mission in New York in July 1888. They and the hundreds who followed them have lived out the words addressed to them by their Founder as they departed on the first missionary journey to the Americas. They struggled, overcame dangers and opposition, healed suffering and paid their way in personal sacrifice as they forged parish communities, built churches, schools, hospitals and other institutions adapted to the changing times. Throughout their first century their achievements stated a clear message: there is a special pastoral approach for migrants adapted to their needs and they are not only reached but are enthusiastic and responsive when they are approached accordingly and not as a problem. The concept of a pastoral methodology for migrants, inherited from Bishop Scalabrini, they developed and adapted to the different situations and geographical areas in which they work. With their message and this "pluralism of pastoral activity," they have given migrants a sense of belonging both to the local and the universal church and so have made a particular contribution to the Church's efforts "to include in one community of faith people from a hundred diverse cultures and then lead this new People of God toward a creative service in a pluralistic society" (Together a New People, 1986). In the North American provinces, they have been an integral part of the process that has shaped both American society and the immigrants who have entered it.

The Scalabrinians come to the beginning of their second century with a strengthened organization, a unifying sense and philosophy of their mission and a deepened knowledge and understanding of the ideas and writings of their Founder, tested over the decades in varied and often trying experiences, and they are prepared in many ways for the changes in the overall context of today's migration movements. The relevance of the term "missionary", once associated in the popular mind with distant and exotic lands, has a new and immediate applicability; for with the technological and political revolutions in communications and decolonization, in practically every country the so-called "mission field" is within its own borders, whether it is newly independent, poor and developing, or affluent and

industrialized. It is wherever any people, outside of their homeland or ethnic community are experiencing the pains and problems, the discriminations and traumas of migration, and whose conditions and needs require specific pastoral care. They are the "mission" to which its Rules of Life commit the Scalabrinian Congregation, with the century-old emphasis on the priority to meet the migrants' religious needs, bringing them together in communities of faith, charity and worship, and on the preference to be given the poor, the neglected, the marginalized. To meet this ever-expanding and increasingly diversified "mission field" the Congregation, since the 1970s has become multi-national and multi-racial.

One thing remains unhappily the same. Everywhere the encounter of many different cultures and customs is still unsettling, and everywhere there is still the tendency to regard the stranger as an intruder, a rival, a burden. To sensitize parishioners, even descendants of the "old" immigrants, to the drama the newcomers are undergoing remains a work that is never ended.

Unlike the migrants of the last century, who found an open door, though beyond it there were humiliations and sufferings, today's migrants find gates barred against them. If they are opened for a while the welcome they promise may be temporary, and the increasing emergence of returnees and deportees is yet another stage in the contemporary migration phenomenon, in which some see the tides of frustration among the rejected rising dangerously.

Bishop Scalabrini was known for his availability to all whose needs he knew, for his willingness to innovate and change, to adapt to the needs of his time. In their history his heirs have shown a spirit of availability, of willingness to adapt to circumstances, and of sympathetic response to new forms of apostolate. They continue in twenty countries with what they call their "pinch of originality" to serve today's masses of migrants and refugees.

Bibliography

Archives

1. The Archives of the Missionaries of St. Charles-Scalabrinians. Via Calandrelli, 11 - 00153 Rome.

The papers and records of the parishes and activities of the Scalabrinians in North America and other parts of the world are preserved in these archives: letters and reports of missionaries, official correspondence with American bishops, personal memoirs. This documentation was made available and served as the primary source of information.

2. Center for Migration Studies of New York. 209 Flagg Place - Staten Island, New York 10304.

This Center houses a variety of records and memorabilia pertaining to the parishes, projects and activities of the Scalabrinian Missionaries in the United States and Canada in particular and these have been organized for consultation, cf. Nicholas Falco, MIS, *A Guide to the Archives of the Congregation of the Missionaries of St. Charles-Scalabrinians*. New York: Center for Migration Studies, 1988.

Books

Archdeacon, Thomas J. *Becoming American: An Ethnic History*. New York: The Free Press, 1984.

Battistella, Graziano. *Itinerant Missions: Alternate Experiences in the History of the Scalabrinians in America*. CMS Occasional Papers. Pastoral Series, No.6. New York: Center for Migration Studies, 1986.

Bodnar, John. *The Transplanted*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985.

Bondani, Valentino e Vito. *Paternità di Servizio: Raffaello Carlo Card. Rossi e gli Scalabriniani*. Rome: Postulazione Generale, 0.C.D., 1981.

Caliaro, Marco and Francesconi, Mario. *John Baptist Scalabrini, Apostle to Emigrants.* New York: Center for Migration Studies, 1977.

De Paolis, Velasio. *Evolution of the Mission of the Scalabrinian Congregation*, CMS Occasional Papers. Pastoral Series, No 4. New York: Center for Migration Studies, 1985.

Dolan, Jay P., *The American Catholic Experience*. New York: Doubleday, 1985.

Francesconi, Mario. *Giovanni Battista Scalabrini: Vescovo di Piacenza e degli emigrati*. Rome: Citta Nuova, 1985.

Storia della Congregazione Scalabriniana, V ols. I-VI, Rome: Centro Studi Emigrazione, 1972 - 1982.

Gregori, Francesco. *La Vita e l'Opera di un Grande Vescovo*. Turin: L.I.C.E.

Roberto Berruti, 1934. *Venticinque Anni di Missione Fra Gli Italiani Immigrati di Boston,* Mass., 1888-1913. Milan, 1913.

Kessner, Thomas. *The Golden Door*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1977.

Linkh, Richard M., *American Catholicism and European Immigrants (1900-1924)* New York: Center for Migration Studies, 1975.

Morison, Samuel Eliot, *The Oxford History of the American People*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1965.

Mormino, Gary Ross, *Immigrants on the Hill, Italian Americans in St. Louis, 1882-1982.* Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986.

Perotti, Antonio, ed., *La società italiana di fronte alle prime migrazioni di massa* Rome: Centro Studi Emigrazione, 1968.

Rosoli, Gianfausto, ed., *Chiesa ed emigrazione italiana tra '800 e '900*. Rome: Centro Studi Emigrazione, 1982.

Sassi, Costantino, *Parrocchia della Madonna di Pompei a New York 1892-1942.* Rome: 1946.

Tessarolo, Giulivo, *The Church's Magna Charta for Migrants*. New York: Center for Migration Studies, 1962.

Tomasi, Silvano M., *Piety and Power, The Role of Italian Parishes in the New York Metropolitan Area 1880-1930*. New York: Center for Migration Studies, 1975.

The Pastoral Action of Bishop John Baptist Scalabrini and His Missionaries among Immigrants in the Americas 1887-1987, CMS Occasional Papers, Pastoral Series, No 2, 1984;

The Response of the Catholic Church in the United States to Immigrants and Refugees, Idem, No 3, 1984;

A Scalabrinian Mission among Polish Immigrants in Boston: 1893-1900, Idem, No 5, 1896;

"A Lesson from History: The Integration of Immigrants in the Pastoral Practice of the Church in the United States", *People on the Move*, XVII (July, 1987), 33-50.

Unpublished Dissertations

Brizzolara, Andrew, *"The Visit of Bishop John Baptist Scalabrini to the United States and Its Effects on the Image of Italian Immigrants as Reflected in the American Press of 1901."* M.A. Thesis, Hunter College, City University of New York, 1986.

Liptak, Dolores, *"European Immigrants and the Catholic Church in Connecticut, 1870-1920"*, Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Connecticut, 1979.

Stibili, Edward Claude, *"The St. Raphael Society for the Protection of Italian Immigrants, 1887-1923"*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Notre Dame University 1977.