

**Guide to the Father Giacomo  
Gambera, P.S.S.C., Papers  
CMS.069**

**Finding aid prepared by Nicholas J. Falco**

---

This finding aid was produced using the Archivists' Toolkit  
September 24, 2013

Center for Migration Studies  
April 1987

## Table of Contents

---

<u>Summary Information</u> .....	3
<u>Biographical/Historical note</u> .....	5
<u>Scope and Contents note</u> .....	5
<u>Arrangement note</u> .....	5
<u>Administrative Information</u> .....	6
<u>Controlled Access Headings</u> .....	7
<u>Other Finding Aids note</u> .....	7
<u>Bibliography</u> .....	7
<u>Collection Inventory</u> .....	8
<u>General Correspondence</u> .....	8
<u>Sermons or Other Writings</u> .....	8
<u>Miscellaneous Documents</u> .....	8

## Summary Information

---

<b>Repository</b>	Center for Migration Studies
<b>Creator</b>	Gambera, Giacomo, P.S.S.C., 1856-1934
<b>Title</b>	Father Giacomo Gambera, P.S.S.C., Papers
<b>Date [bulk]</b>	Bulk, 1910-1928
<b>Date [inclusive]</b>	1901-1928
<b>Extent</b>	0.5 Linear feet In one document box.
<b>Language</b>	English

**Language of Materials note** CMS 069 contains material in Italian and in English.

**Abstract** CMS 069 contains materials found in his room at the time of the death of Father Giacomo Gambera, P.S.S.C., and therefore may be considered to document his life the way he saw it. His document collection consists mainly of correspondence with Father Antonio Demo, whom Gambera mentored when he entered the mission field but who went on to be Gambera's provincial superior and to offer him a home in his old age. This archival collection documents Gambera's own thoughts in two ways. It preserve two notebooks and some loose papers on which he had written sermons, sometimes series of them for a nine-day novena or for a liturgical season such as Lent. It also contains two memoirs he wrote, one covering his life up to 1928 and the other his life between that year and 1934. The first memoir has been translated into English, and the translators' copies of their work are filed with CMS's copy of the original.

**Preferred Citation note**

Center for Migration Studies of New York; Father Giacomo Gambera Papers (CMS 069), Box 1, Folder  
Name.

## Biographical/Historical note

---

Giacomo Gambera was born in Brescia, Lombardy, September 17, 1856, grew up there and was ordained a priest there May 31, 1879. On November 20, 1889, wishing to do something to assist Italian immigrants and somewhat at loose ends as a sister had died, he took what he thought were five-year temporary vows with an as-yet unnamed order of priests created by Bishop John Baptist Scalabrini to minister to migrants in transit and in their new homes. (The community was known as the Pious Society of Saint Charles in Gambera's lifetime, and became the Society of Saint Charles-Scalabrinians.) The migrant ministry became his life's work. He served in New Orleans from 1889 to 1893, and was there to help restore the community after the 1891 lynching; his contribution was to invite Mother Frances Xavier Cabrini, whom he had met in Boston, to help with the work. He then served in Pittsburgh from 1893 to 1895, then became the fifth pastor of Sacred Heart in Boston, Massachusetts, serving from January 17, 1895, to November 12, 1901. Before he left Boston he was already commuting to a new position, second official chaplain of the Saint Raphael Society for the Protection of Italian Immigrants, with offices in New York City and on Ellis Island. From 1901 to 1921 he was the first member of his religious order to staff Santa Maria Addolorata in Chicago. During this time he was able to return to Italy for a visit; the week he did so Pope Pius X died and World War I started. In 1921 he returned to Italy for his health. His superiors ordered him back to the mission field in 1925, and he returned to Chicago as chaplain to Columbus Hospital. In 1928, he retired to the rectory of Our Lady of Pompei in Greenwich Village, where he had a longtime acquaintance with the pastor, Antonio Demo. He died August 13, 1934.

---

## Scope and Contents note

---

CMS 069 documents the life of Father Giacomo Gambera, a priest who between his arrival in the United States in 1889 and his retirement in 1928 served in parishes in New Orleans, Pittsburgh, Boston, New York, and at the Saint Raphael Society for the Protection of Italian Immigrants on Ellis Island. The documentation includes correspondence, newspaper clippings, and Father Gambera's own sermons and memoir. The content covers Italian-American life, particularly religious life, from the 1880s to 1934. It also provides a case study of one man's migration experience.

---

## Arrangement note

---

CMS 069 is arranged into three Series as follows: I. General Correspondence II. Sermons and Other Writings III. Miscellaneous Documents

---

## **Administrative Information**

---

### **Publication Information**

Center for Migration Studies April 1987

### **Revision Description**

Inputted into Archivist's Toolkit by Mary Brown, edited for DACS compliance by Nicole Greenhouse. August 2013

### **Conditions Governing Access note**

Open to researchers by appointment.

### **Conditions Governing Use note**

Copyright is owned by the Center for Migration Studies. Permission to publish materials must be requested before use.

### **Immediate Source of Acquisition note**

CMS 069 came to the Center for Migration Studies from the Saint Charles Province of the Society of Saint Charles-Scalabrinians, then located at 27 Carmine Street, New York, New York 10014, some time before April 1987.

### **Processing Information note**

In 2013, this collection was entered into the Archivists' Toolkit in compliance with DACS and folder descriptions were simplified from the original print finding aid. (The original finding aid is available in print upon request). Folder titles in the container list online may vary from the the physical folder titles. Folders were renumbered in 2013.

### **Existence and Location of Copies note**

A select amount of photocopies are located with the original finding aid.

## Controlled Access Headings

---

### Geographic Name(s)

- Chicago (Ill.) | z Religion
- New Orleans (La.) | z Religion

### Personal Name(s)

- Demo, Antonio

### Subject(s)

- Italian Americans |x Religion.
  - Priests |z United States.
- 

## Other Finding Aids note

---

The original inventory is available in print upon request.

---

## Bibliography

---

Giacomo Gambera, *A Migrant Missionary Story*, translated by Thomas Carlesimo and edited by Mary Brown. New York: Center for Migration Studies, 1994.

## General Correspondence

## Collection Inventory

	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
<b>General Correspondence 1901-1928 (Bulk, 1920-1928) 2 folders, 1 of truly general correspondence and 1 photocopies of correspondence to Frances Cabrini</b>	1	1
<b>Sermons or Other Writings 1910-1915 (Bulk, 1910-1915) 1 bound volumes; 1 folder</b>	1	2
<b>Miscellaneous Documents 1910-1934 (Bulk, 1928-1934) 6 folders</b>		
	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Clippings 1910 (Bulk, 1910)	1	3
Autobiography 1928 (Bulk, 1928)	1	4
Memoir 1929 (Bulk, 1929)	1	5
Autobiography 1934 (Bulk, 1934)	1	6
Translation -- Clarke, Serafina M. 1988 (Bulk, 1988)	1	7
Translation -- Carlesimo, Thomas F., c.s. 1993 (Bulk, 1993)	1	8