

Saint Peter's Church, Los Angeles, California, Papers CMS.051

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

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January 1987
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Summary Information

Repository	Center for Migration Studies
Title	Church of Saint Peter, Los Angeles, California, Records
Date [bulk]	Bulk, 1965-1977
Date [inclusive]	1947-1982
Extent	1.0 Linear feet 1 document box; 1 half-size document box
Location note	CMS.051 is housed at the Provincial House of the Saint Charles Province of the Society of Saint Charles-Scalabrinians, 27 Carmine Street, New York, NY 10014.
Language	English
Language of Materials note	CMS.051 is mostly in English, with some Italian.
Abstract	CMS.051 documents, through office files, photographs, and published ephemera, activities at Saint Peter's, a Roman Catholic parish in Los Angeles, California, that since 1961 has been staffed by the Society of Saint Charles-Scalabrinians, an order of male religious organized in 1887 to minister to migrants in transit and in their new homes. The collection focuses on one pastor, Father Louuis Donanzan, and his work establishing Casa Italiana, a sociocultural center, and Villa Scalabrini, a home for the elderly.

Preferred Citation note

Center for Migration Studies of New York; Saint Peter's Church, Los Angeles, California (051); Box;
Folder.

Biographical/Historical note

Thomas James Contaty, Bishop of the Diocese of Monterey-Los Angeles, authorized the creation of Saint Peter in 1904 as an Italian national Catholic Church; the word "national" indicated Saint Peter's was not the usual parish, charged with the care of Catholics living in a particular geographic area; instead the "borders" were linguistic, and Saint Peter's cared for Catholics who needed to speak Italian. The congregation started meeting in a chapel on North Spring Street, then moved into what had been a memorial chapel on North Broadway. Saint Peter's was in the process of constructing its present building, also on North Broadway, when its old chapel burned down; the present building was completed in 1947.

For the first thirty-nine years a series of Italian-speaking diocesan priests served Saint Peter's. In 1943, a young Claretian priest, Father Michael Cecere, became pastor, providing some much needed stability in leadership; it is no accident that Saint Peter's present church went up at that time. This was also the period in which Saint Peter's became a territorial parish, its staff ministering to Catholics living within certain geographic boundaries as well as to Italian speakers regardless of residence. In 1961, the Society of Saint Charles-Scalabrinians, a congregation of male religious founded in 1887 to minister to migrants in transit and in their new homes, began staffing the parish. As the Scalabrinians had commenced their migrant ministry among Italian immigrants, the Italian congregation at Saint Peter's was a suitable venue for their work. Under Father Luigi Donanzan, Saint Peter's dedicated its Casa Italiana socio-cultural center (February 13, 1972) and its Villa Scalabrini home for the elderly (April 22, 1979). Fr. Luigi also involved Saint Peter's in local Italian events such as the Columbus Day banquet, and added to Saint Peter's calendar celebrations of the feastdays of saints popular among the Italians who lived in the area.

Scope and Contents note

CMS.051 documents activities at Saint Peter's, a Roman Catholic parish in Los Angeles, California, originally founded as an Italian national parish, that is, with a mandate to minister to Italian Catholics regardless of where they lived.

Although Saint Peter's was founded in 1904, the collection is densest after 1961, when Italian-speaking priests from the Society of Saint Charles-Scalabrinians came to staff it. The Scalabrinians were founded in 1887 to minister to migrants in transit and in their new homes. Having been founded in Italy, the organization focused on the care of Italian immigrants. The first Scalabrinian pastor at Saint Peter's, Joseph Chiminello, was near the end of his career. The second, Luigi Donanzan, was younger and more full of ideas and of energy. Even more than documenting the Scalabrinians' impact on Saint Peter's, CMS.051 documents Father Luigi Donanzan's influence on Saint Peter's.

The collection is fragmentary. The Series of documents related to the Casa Italiana and to the Villa Scalabrini consist of promotional materials, news clippings, programs and photographs. The Series of

Photographs divides into three sub-series: eight depicting Father Mario Trecco and his connection with "L'italo-Americano, an Italian-language newspaper serving Southern California; twenty photographs from Father Luigi Donanzan's tenure at Saint Peter's; and a folder of negatives that could not be identified. The Series on Publications contains one 1947 history, one 1982 appreciation of Father Luigi Donanzan on his birthday, one book on the Italian Americans of Los Angeles published in 1979 in conjunction with the dedication of Villa Scalabrini, and newspapers and a history book from the Italian Catholic Federation, an organization with which Luigi Donanzan was associated. The Series of Miscellaneous documents contains material Father Luigi received from his brother Caesar, also a Scalabrinian father.

Arrangement note

CMS.051 is arranged in five Series:

I. Documents Relating to Casa Italiana II. Documents Relating to Villa Scalabrini III. Miscellaneous Photographs IV. Publications V. Miscellaneous Documents

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Center for Migration Studies January 1987

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.051 came to the Center for Migration Studies from Saint Peter's, Los Angeles, California.

Processing Information note

In 2016, this collection was entered into the Archivists' Toolkit in compliance with DACS. (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.

Controlled Access Headings

Genre(s)

- Photographs

Geographic Name(s)

- Los Angeles (Calif.)

Subject(s)

- Church work with immigrants |z Catholic Church
- Italian Americans |z California |z Los Angeles

Series I: Documents Relating to Casa Ialiana

Collection Inventory

Series I: Documents Relating to Casa Ialiana	Box 1
Series II: Documents Relating to Villa Scalabrini	Box 1
Series III: Miscellaneous Photographs	
"L'italo-Americano" newspaper	Box 1
Miscellaneous	Box 1
Negatives	Box 1
Series IV: Publications	Box 1-2
Miscellaneous Docuemnts	Box 2