

**Church of Santa Maria Addolorata,
Chicago, Illinois, Records
CMS.055**

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Center for Migration Studies
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Summary Information

Repository	Center for Migration Studies
Title	Church of Santa Maria Addolorata, Chicago, Illinois, Records
Date [inclusive]	1905-1953
Extent	0.25 Linear feet 1 half-size document box
Location note	CMS.055 is housed at the Provincial House for the Saint Charles Province of the Missionaries of Saint Charles-Scalabrini, 27 Carmine Street, New York, New York 10014.
Language	English
Language of Materials note	CMS.055 is in English and Italian.
Abstract	CMS.055 documents, via correspondence, newspaper clippings, photographs and published ephemera, activities at Santa Maria Addolorata, a Roman Catholic parish founded for Italian immigrants in Chicago, Illinois. The material covers the period 1904-1953 with an emphasis on 1904-1913, when Father Giacomo Gambera, a member of a community of male religious now called the Society of Saint Charles-Scalabrinians, came to Addolorata and began corresponding with this friend and provincial superior, Father Antonio Demo.

Preferred Citation note

Center for Migration Studies of New York; Church of Santa Maria Addolorata Records (CMS.055); Box; Folder.

Biographical/Historical note

The Archdiocese of Chicago opened Santa Maria Addolorata, which translates into English and Our Lady of Sorrows, in 1903. In 1905, then-Bishop James Quigley entrusted the staffing of the parish to a community of priests and brothers organized to minister to migrants in Italian and in their new homes. Today, their organization is known as the Society of Saint Charles-Scalabrinians, after their founder, Giovanni Battista Scalabrini, and after the name he chose for them and also after the founder himself.

The first Scalabrinian priest at Addolorata was Father Giacomo (James) Gambino. Father Gambino had met Mother Cabrini when they were both entering the mission field in New York in 1889; he invited her to take charge of Addolorata's religious education program, which she did. Father Gambino also contributed a rectory, a kindergarten, and a day nursery. He helped to create parish organizations while respecting the Italian laity's traditional feast day events for patron saints. He returned to Italy in 1921, and then returned to New York, as a hospital chaplain, a position he occupied at the time of his death in 1934.

The church building Father Gambera knew went up in flames in 1931. The parish rented a vacant Norwegian Lutheran Church, at the northwest corner of Erie and May Streets, and had it ready for Easter Sunday, April 5, 1931. Addolorata's parochial opened in 1939, staffed by the nuns of the Italian Daughters of St. Mary of Providence.

In 1952, construction of the Northwest (now Kennedy) Expressway wrought even more extensive damage than the 1931 fire had; church, rectory and parochial school were condemned to make way for the highway. In 1955 Addolorata broke ground at its present location in 1955 and opened its parochial school in 1958. The present church opened in 1960. By then, Addolorata faced a new challenge, residential assimilation. The new highway bisected the old parish, leading many parishioners to look for churches that could be accessed without crossing major traffic routes. Those who had ended up on Addolorata's side of the highway underwent residential assimilation, moving to suburban homes that were much like those of their non-Italian neighbors.

Into the neighborhood came a group of new, not-yet-assimilated immigrants. Addolorata's pastoral staff reached out to them, recapturing the vision of the founder of the Scalabrini order that all immigrants receive linguistically and culturally appropriate pastoral care. Addolorata remained in the care of the Scalabrini Fathers, and remained an immigrant church, albeit one that ministered to more recent immigrants.

Scope and Contents note

CMS.055 is a fragmentary record of activities at Santa Maria Addolorata, a parish that opened for the Italian immigrants of Chicago in 1903. The records extends to 1953, and consists of correspondence, ephemeral church publications, newspaper clippings, photographs and a souvenir journal.

The richest Series in the collection is the correspondence. The Archdiocese of Chicago staffed Addolorata initially, but soon turned to Italian-based communities of male religious as the most reliable way to secure a steady supply of clergy with the necessary language skills. The archdiocese brought in as staff for Addolorata men from a religious congregation that had been founded by Bishop Giovanni Battista Scalabrini of the Diocese of Piacenza in Emilia-Romagna only eighteen years earlier, in 1887. The order has since taken its founders name as is known as the Missionaries of Saint Charles-Scalabrinians. The particular Scalabrinian sent to Chicago was Father Giacomo Gambera, who had been a priest for ten years when he joined the Scalabrinians in 1889 and had been in the United States for sixteen years when he came to Chicago. One of Father Gambera's friends in the mission field was Father Antonio Demo; in 1897, when Father Gambera was serving as provincial superior of the American community he had appointed Father Demo pastor of Our Lady of Pompei in Greenwich Village. Father Gambera remained at Addolorata until 1921; correspondence with Father Demo from 1905 to 1913 has been preserved.

The rest of the collection is less systematic. Aside from the correspondence the oldest items in the collections are newspaper clippings from 1905 and 1913. There are also two monthly bulletins from Addolorata dated February 1922 and February 1924, a souvenir journal from 1953 and a photograph that may be as late as 1960.

CMS055 may be helpful for students of Italian Americana, the city of Chicago, and the Scalabrinian community.

Arrangement note

CMS.055 is arranged into two Series: Letters and Miscellaneous Documents

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Center for Migration Studies February 1987

Revision Description

In 2016 the finding aid to CMS.055 was entered into Archivists Toolkit in accordance with rules outlined in Describing Archives: A Content Standard 2016

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

The Center for Migration Studies acquired CMS.055 from the parish itself, mostly likely in the late 1970s, when Silvano M. Tomasi, Provincial Superior of the Saint Charles Province, requested that parishes donate their older materials to the fledgling Center for Migration Studies.

Related Materials

Related Archival Materials note

Giacomo Gambera, c.s., Papers (CMS.069) Missionaries of Saint Charles-Scalabrinians, Province of Saint Charles Records, (CMS.078)

Controlled Access Headings

Corporate Name(s)

- Scalabrinians.

Geographic Name(s)

- Chicago (Ill.)

Personal Name(s)

- Demo, Antonio
- Gambera, Giacomo, P.S.S.C., 1856-1934

Subject(s)

- Church work with immigrants |z Catholic Church
- Italian Americans |z Illinois |z Chicago

Other Finding Aids note

The original inventory is available in print upon request.

Letters

Collection Inventory

Letters 1904-1913	
	Box
Letters 1904	1
Letters 1905	1
Letters 1906	1
Letters 1907	1
Letters 1908	1
Letters 1910	1
Letters 1910	1
Letters 1913	1
	Bin
Undated	1
Miscellaneous Documents 1905-1960	

Miscellaneous Documents

	Box
Calendario Mensile February 1922, February 1924	1
Newspaper clippings 1905, 1913	1
Photographs circa 1960	1
Souvenir Journals 1953	1