

# **Silvano M. Tomasi Papers**

## **CMS.126**

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This finding aid was produced using the Archivists' Toolkit

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Center for Migration Studies  
29 February 2020  
307 E. 60th Street  
New York, New York 10022

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository</b>	Center for Migration Studies
<b>Title</b>	Silvano M. Tomasi Papers
<b>Date</b>	1965-1989
<b>Extent</b>	6.0 Linear feet 12 Hollinger boxes, 1 half-size Hollinger box, and one oversize folder containing certificates.
<b>Location note</b>	CMS.126 is housed at the Center for Migration Studies, 307 East 60th Street, New York, New York 10022.
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Language of Materials note</b>	The majority of the material in CMS.126 is in English. Some of Silvano Tomasi's correspondence is in Italian. As Director of Pastoral Care for Migrants and Refugees in the U.S. Catholic Conference he received material from immigrant and refugee communities in many languages.
<b>Abstract</b>	CMS.126 documents the intertwining of several roles played by Silvano M. Tomasi, c.s.: an Italian American and scholarly observer of Italian Americans; a leading member of a congregation of male religious; and an expert on immigration issues who became Director of the U.S. Catholic Conference Migration and Refugee Service. These experiences shaped the young Father Tomasi's subsequent career as an archbishop and member of the papal diplomatic corps. The collection covers the 1970s and 1980s, and consists mainly of correspondence, organizational records, and ephemeral publications, with a few personal items such as photographs and awards.

**Preferred Citation note**

Center for Migration Studies of New York; Silvano M. Tomasi, c.s., Papers (CMS.126); Box; Folder.

## Biographical/Historical note

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Silvano M. Tomasi was born on October 12, 1940. He and his brother Lydio F. Tomasi were early vocations to the priesthood and the Society of Saint Charles-Scalabrinians, a congregation of male religious founded in Italy in 1887 to provide pastoral care to migrants and refugees. Silvano Tomasi received his Bachelor of Arts from the Collegio Scalabrini-O'Brien in Italy in 1960, then traveled to the United States to complete his training.

John Baptist Scalabrini, founder of the religious organization that later bore his name, advocated a broad vision of the pastoral care of migrants that included collaborating with secular authorities in developing and executing policies. After Scalabrini's 1905 death, the need to earn a living kept Scalabrinian priests and brothers doing what dioceses and archdioceses paid them to do: staff Italian-speaking parishes. Silvano Tomasi belonged to the generation that revived the founder's more holistic vision, and thus he seldom served in a parish. In 1964, he helped to incorporate the Center for Migration Studies of New York to collect and disseminate data on contemporary human international migration in the interest of supporting socially just treatment of migrants and refugees. In 1965, Joseph Maria Pernicone, Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of New York, ordained him to the priesthood. In 1966, he began work as executive director of CMS and editor of its interdisciplinary scholarly quarterly *International Migration Review*.

Meanwhile, Silvano Tomasi was also acquiring the credentials necessary for acceptance in the modern, professional world. He received his Master of Arts from Fordham University in 1967 and his Doctor of Philosophy from Fordham in 1972. CMS published his dissertation in 1975 as *Piety and Power: The Role of Italian Parishes in the New York Metropolitan Area, 1880-1930*.

At that point Silvano undertook the activities that generated many of the documents in CMS.126. In 1976 he became President of the Center for Migration studies while his brother Lydio became Executive Director. One reason for this change was that Silvano Tomasi had been elected provincial superior of the Scalabrinians' Saint Charles Province, a position he held from 1977 to 1981. In 1983, he became Director of Pastoral Care for Migrants and Refugees, an office of the United States Catholic Conference. In 1987, he was elected to another term as provincial superior, but relinquished the position in 1989 when Pope John-Paul II named him Secretary to the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, a position that required him to relocate to the Vatican.

On June 27, 1996, Pope John-Paul II appointed Silvano Tomasi Apostolic Nuncio of Ethiopia and Eritrea. As papal diplomats are generally members of the hierarchy, Pope John-Paul also named him Titular Archbishop of Cercina. In 2000, the position of Apostolic Nuncio to Djibouti was added to the portfolio. On June 10, 2003, Paul John Paul appointed him Permanent Observer to United Nations Office and Specialized Agencies in Geneva, Switzerland. It was from this position that Archbishop Tomasi retired to Rome on February 13, 2016.

## Scope and Contents note

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CMS.126 documents the career of Archbishop Silvano M. Tomasi, c.s., at a particular place and time, when he overlapped his role as an educated professional in the field of human migration studies with his identity as an Italian American, a priest, and a member of a religious community. It is a case study of an issue that is still of concern to the Church as fewer are called to the clergy and the numbers of educated laity increase.

At first, the pattern of Silvano Tomasi's life seemed clear. He was going to be a priest, and that meant he would be an educated man who used that education in the service of others. He was going to be a Scalabrinian, so his leadership skills would be especially important. The Scalabrini Fathers were founded to be migrants with the migrants. In the United States, they historically staffed Italian-American parishes and were part of the leadership of Italian-American communities.

At this point, the one difference in Silvano Tomasi's career was that he did not serve in a parish. In 1964 he had helped the Scalabrinians' Saint Charles Province to incorporate the Center for Migration Studies in an effort to broaden the ministry to migrants by contributing scholarship on them that could be used to undergird sensible policies for national and local governments to adopt for immigrants in transit and settled ethnic communities. At that time, the young Father Tomasi's work was not just with CMS. He gathered material on Joseph Columbo's Italian American League for Civil Rights, and he was a founding member of the American Italian Historical Association, now the Italian American Studies Association. His work still focused on the Italian-American community, but his job was not parish leadership.

That role as a scholar rather than community leader in the Italian-American community led to another development. Since the 1950s, the Scalabrini Fathers had been working, largely within their own community, to re-appropriate the charism of their founder, John Baptist Scalabrini, for a modern day. In 1965, the Second Vatican Council, through its document *Perfectae Caritatis*, called on all religious communities, the Scalabrinians included, to re-examine their present ministries in the light of their founding traditions and their history. As this re-examination required the participation of the members of the community, and as the Scalabarinians were an especially far-flung community, serving migrants on several continents and in several languages, the process continued into the 1970s. Silvano Tomasi participated in it as a member of the community, as the provincial superior of his oldest province, and as someone whose scholarship alerted him to changes in human migration and thus in changes in the services the migrants required. His contributions to this period in Scalabrinian history are documented in the CMS.126's Series on the Scalabrinians.

Revitalizing the Scalabrinians overlapped with the opportunity to create a new ministry. In 1968, the U.S. Catholic hierarchy began the process of reorganizing the National Catholic Welfare Conference Bureau of Immigration that had been founded in 1922. Originally, the Bureau of Immigration had a Director in Washington, who oversaw overall operations and who monitored the federal government with an eye to providing a Catholic social justice perspective on the questions of the day. There were also "port offices" in El Paso and in New York that provided hands-on care of migrants and refugees at the critical moment of crossing borders. Not coincidentally, the Director of the Bureau of Immigration and the directors of

the El Paso and New York offices were laymen. It was a time when the American Church hoped that an educated Catholic laity, not just the clergy, would maintain a Catholic presence in public life.

When in 1983 the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops asked Father Silvano Tomasi to be Director of its reorganized Pastoral Care for Migrants and Refugees, it seemed to represent a step toward clericalization, to having the clergy provide the leadership. CMS.126 makes available the documents that would test this hypothesis. During his time as Director, Father Tomasi organized the national observance of Migration Week, scheduled for the Sunday after the Epiphany (the feast of the Three Kings, whose warning led the Holy Family to flee to Egypt). He supported the hierarchy as it collected information and developed a Catholic response to new issues in migrants and refugee care, especially in the field of undocumented immigrants. He visited new Catholic immigrants communities of Haitian Americans and Vietnamese Americans, where he interacted with clerical and lay leadership arising out of those communities. He put his scholarship and the generations of experience the Scalabrinians had acquired in the service of new migrants and refugees facing new problems and developing new social structures to address them.

The transition from providing specialized pastoral care through religious orders with the appropriate charism to providing pastoral care through the local Catholic hierarchy and through educated professionals is the major thrust of CMS.126. The collection also touches on other issues. The Vatican saw migrants as people in transit, and thus as having something in common with other people characterized by a lack of geographic stability. Therefore, the collection documents the pastoral care of circus workers and of pilgrims visiting shrines. Interested as he was in Scalabrinian history, Silvano Tomasi was in touch with older colleagues who remember Rafael Cardinal Rossi, who, as Secretary of the Sacred Consistorial Congregation had overseen Scalabrinian community affairs in the 1930s and 1940s. The collection may be of interest to scholars of Italian-American history, the Scalabrini Fathers, and twentieth-century American Catholicism, but the folder-by-folder inventory indicates that many other topics are documented as well.

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## Arrangement note

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CMS.126 is arranged in four Series:

- I. Migration and Refugee Service
- II. Other
- III. Personal
- IV. Society of Saint Charles--Scalabrinians

## Administrative Information

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### Publication Information

Center for Migration Studies 29 February 2020

### Conditions Governing Access note

Open to researchers by appointment.

### Conditions Governing Use note

The Center for Migration Studies cannot guarantee that it has the copyright to every item in CMS.126. It is incumbent upon researchers to secure copyright permissions before publication.

### Immediate Source of Acquisition note

Silvano M. Tomasi deposited the contents of CMS.126 at the Center for Migration Studies some time before accepting the position of Apostolic Nuncio to the Ethiopia and Eritrea.

### Processing Information note

During the fall of 2019 Mary Brown, and CMS volunteers Mary T. Sanders, Sonia Lau, and Cecilia Wang opened the seven bankers' boxes that originally comprised CMS.126. Upon examination of the contents it became clear that the collection could be arranged into three Series representing different aspects of Silvano Tomasi's career in the 1970s and 1980s: personal documents such as his *curriculum vita* and the awards that he won, his work at the U.S. Catholic Conference's Migration and Refugee Service, and his membership in the Scalabrini Fathers. Documents that fit none of these descriptions went into a Series called "Other." Each Series was then arranged alphabetically by subject and numerically by date, with proposals for new file names being written on the existing Manila folders. Once the arrangement was in place, the contents of the files were transferred into archival folders and labeled, with news clippings and photographs slipped into envelopes kept with the subject folders. The archival folders went into archival boxes, which were also labeled. Scans of photographs were made, and a finding aid was prepared.

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## Related Materials

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### Related Archival Materials note



CMS.008, 008A, 008B, and 008C, the American Italian Historical Association/ Italian American Studies Association Records. Silvano Tomasi was a founding member of the AIHA.

CMS.023 and 023A, National Catholic Welfare Conference Bureau of Immigration Records. This is the predecessor to the US Catholic Conference Pastoral Care of Migrants and Refugees. While it contains nothing of Silvano Tomasi's time at the agency, it may provide background on specific issues.

CMS.078C, Society of Saint Charles-Scalabrinians Province of Saint Charles Records. Silvano M. Tomasi was Provincial superior from 1977 to 1981 and 1987 to 1989.

CMS.084 and 084A, Center for Migration Studies Records and one addendum to CMS's records.

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## Controlled Access Headings

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### Corporate Name(s)

- Scalabrinians.
- United States Catholic Conference.

### Personal Name(s)

- Tomasi, Silvano M.

### Subject(s)

- Church work with immigrants |z Catholic Church
- Church work with refugees |z United States
- Italian Americans |x Religion
- Italian Americans |x Social life and customs

## Series I: Migration and Refugee Service (MRS)

## Collection Inventory

<b>Series I: Migration and Refugee Service (MRS) 1969-1989</b>		
	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Africa--Multiple Countries 1984-1986	1	1
Africa--Sudan 1980-1987, undated	1	2
Africa--Trip 1984	1	3
<b>Scope and Contents note</b>		
A delegation of U.S. Bishops visited refugee camps in Africa on July 5-28, 1984. This folder documents this trip and gathers other information on the African refugee situation that year.		
Africa--Zimbabwe Medical Clinic 1984-1985	1	4
Bevilaqua, Anthony Joseph Cardinal Correspondence 1980-1986	2	1
<b>Scope and Contents note</b>		
Anthony Joseph Cardinal Bevilaqua (1923-2012) was successively Auxiliary Bishop of Brooklyn, Bishop of Pittsburgh and Archbishop of Philadelphia. During the 1980s he chaired the National Conference of Catholic Bishop's Committee on Migration and Tourism and so was often		

## Series I: Migration and Refugee Service (MRS)

in touch with Silvano Tomasi. Cardinal Bevilaqua is represented in many folders in this collection.		
Bevilaqua, Anthony Joseph Cardinal Newsclippings undated	2	2
Bevilaqua, Anthony Joseph Cardinal Photographs undated	2	3
Brochures undated	2	4
Chronological 25 November 1980 - 18 June 1983	2	5
Chronological February 1983 - 1 July 1986	2	6
Chronological 1984	2	7
Chronological 1985	2	8
Chronological January - May 1986	2	9
Chronological June - August 1986	3	1
Chronological September - December 1986	3	2
Chronological January - February 1987	3	3
Chronological March - June 1987	3	4
Circus 1985, undated	3	5

## Series I: Migration and Refugee Service (MRS)

Conference: Ninth Plenary Meeting, Pontifical on Migration and Tourism 24-26 October 1988	3	6
<i>INS v. Stevic</i> 19-23 August 1983	3	7
<b>Scope and Contents note</b>		
This folder contains an <i>amicus curiae</i> brief on <i>INS v. Stevic</i> , a Supreme Court case. Predrag Stevic was appealing for refugee status out of fear he would be persecuted if he returned to his native Yugoslavia. The case concerned whether this subjective fear was sufficient to stay deportation or whether there might be a higher standard.		
Legislation 1982	3	8
Legislation 1983	3	9
Legislation 1984	3	10
Legislation 1985	3	11
Legislation 1986	3	12
Legislation 1987	3	13
National Migration Week 1984	4	1
<b>Scope and Contents note</b>		

**Series I: Migration and Refugee Service (MRS)**

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The U.S. hierarchy observes National Migration Week the Sunday following the Feast of the Epiphany (the event precipitating the Flight into Egypt) in early January each year. These folders document the hierarchy's planning for that observance during the mid 1980s. Folders may contain public relations material and/or memos, correspondence, and financial documents concerning planning.

National Migration Week 1985	4	2
National Migration Week 1986	4	3
National Migration Week 1987	4	4
National Migration Week 1988	4	5
National Migration Week 1989	4	6
National Conference of Catholic Bishops November - December 1986	4	7
Organizational Matters 1983-1988	5	1
Organizational Matters undated	5	2
Pastoral Care--Asian 1983-1987	5	3

**Scope and Contents note**

This folder contains documents that treat more than one Asian ethnic group (e.g., Cambodians and Hmong)

## Series I: Migration and Refugee Service (MRS)

Pastoral Care--Cambodian 1969-1986, undated	5	4
Pastoral Care--Chinese 1983-1987	5	5
Pastoral Care--Filipinos 1985-1986, undated	5	6
Pastoral Care--Haitians 1980-1987	5	7
Pastoral Care--Hispanics 1980-1986, undated	6	1
Pastoral Care--Hmong 1985-1987	6	2
Pastoral Care--Italians 1983-1987	6	3
Pastoral Care--Korean 1985, undated	6	4
Pastoral Care--Laotians 1984-1985, undated	6	5
Pastoral Care--Olympics 1984	6	6
Pastoral Care--Polish 1980-1987, undated	6	7
Pastoral Care--Reports 1984-1987	6	8
Pastoral Care--Vietnamese 1981-1989	6	9
Pontifical Council on Migration and Tourism 1985	6	10

## Series II: Other

Pontifical Council on Migration and Tourism 1986	6	11
Pontifical Council on Migration and Tourism 1987	7	1
Publications 1985-1986	7	2
Sanctuary Movement 1986	7	3
Shrines and Pilgrimages 1984-1987	7	4
Telephone Messages 1983-1985	7	5
Theology of Migration Project--Correspondence 1987	7	6
Theology--Unpublished Articles undated	7	7
Unauthorized Immigration 1974-1988, undated	7	8
<b>Series II: Other 1971-1987</b>		
	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
American Italian Historical Association 1983	8	1
American Italian Historical Association 1984	8	2
American Italian Historical Association 1985	8	3

## Series II: Other

American Italian Historical Association 1986	8	4
American Italian Historical Association 1987, undated	8	5
Congress of Italian American Organizations--Miscellaneous Papers 1971-1972	8	6
Congress of Italian American Organizations--(CIAO) Constitution undated	8	7
Ephemeral--Literature Alphabetical: A--Sacchetti undated	8	8
Ephemeral--Literature Alphabetical: Schey--Z undated	8	9
Institute for the Italian American Experience 1979-1980, undated	8	10
Italian American Civil Rights League Clippings--Magazines undated	8	11
Italian American Civil Rights League Clippings--Newsprint 1971, undated	8	12
Italian American Civil Rights League Clippings--Photocopied 1971, undated	9	1
Italian American Civil Rights League--Correspondence 1971-1972	9	2
Italian American Civil Rights League--Promotional Materials undated	9	3



## Series III: Personal

Italian American Civil Rights League--Unity News 1971-1972	9	4
Northeast Italian Apostolate Conference 30 May 1987	9	5
Zulka, William J. 1984-1985	9	6
Tomasi, Silvano M, c.s. "Assimilation and Religion: The Role of the Italian Ethnic Church in the New York Metropolitan Area, 1880-1930." Ph.D. Dissertation, Fordham University 3 May 1972	9	7
<b>Series III: Personal 1965-1987</b>		
	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Cabrini Medical Center Dinner Dance 1986	10	1
Chronological 1973-1987, undated	10	2
Clippings--Catholic News 1967-1971	10	3
Clippings--Crociato 1967-1970	10	4
Clippings--Fra Noi 1967-1969	10	5
Clippings--Miscellaneous 1970-1982	10	6
Clippings--Newsprint 12 March 1983- 26 December 1986, undated	10	7

## Series III: Personal

Clippings--Osservatore Romano 1970	10	8
Clippings--Photocopies April 1983 - June 1986, undated	10	9
Clippings--Progresso Italo-Americano 1969-1972	10	10
Clippings--Staten Island Advance 1967-1971	10	11
First Mass 20 June 1965	10	12
<i>Italian Newcomer: The Italian Language Apostolate Newsletter</i> January - May 1970	10	13
Photos 1-16 (Photo 17 with Certificates) undated	10	14
Publications undated	10	15
<b>Scope and Contents note</b>		
This folder contains articles by Silvano M. Tomasi, c.s. "Considerazioni sulla proposta di revisione della legge sull'immigrazione in U.S.A.," <i>Italiani Nel Mondo</i> , undated.		
"Post-War Italian Immigration to the United States: Volume and Social Characteristics," undated.		
"Hope and Despair for Indochinese Refugees," <i>Scalabrinians</i> , 5:3, Spring 1984.		
"Hope and Despair for Indochinese Refugees," <i>Scalabrinians</i> , 6:1, Summer 1984.		

## Series III: Personal

"Pastoral and Canonical Innovations of the <i>Pastoralis Migratorum Cura</i> ," undated.		
Resume 1983	10	16
Tribute 1980	10	17
Plaque Congress of Italian American Organizations undated	10	18
Plaque Vietnamese Catholic Federation 1984	11	1
Plaque Italian Seaman's Club of New York 1980	11	2
Three Dimensional Italian American Civil Rights League Pins 1973-1974	11	3
Three Dimensional Ordina della Stella della Solidarieta Italiana 1971	11	4
5 Large Certificates and Photographs 20 June 1965 - 21 April 1971	14	1
<b>Scope and Contents note</b>		
This folder contains large certificates and photographs of Silvano M. Tomasi:		
Papal Blessing on First Mass, 20 June 1965		
Honorary Membership in Delta Tau Kappa, International Social Science Honor Society, 5 May 1970		
Photo with Richard Nixon and two unidentified men, Photo 17, 22 January 1971		

**Series IV: Society of Saint Charles-Scalabrinians**

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Italian Club of Staten Island, 25 March 1971

Ordine Della Stella Della Solidarieta Italiana, 21 April 1971

**Series IV: Society of Saint Charles-Scalabrinians 1976-1989**

	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Announcements 1983-1984	11	1
Calendar 1986	11	2
Chronological 23 April 1979 - August 1980	11	3
Chronological 6 June 1981 - 23 August 1983	12	1
Chronological 14 September 1983- 17 December 1984	12	2
Chronological 1 January 1985 - 28 September 1985	12	3
Chronological 2 October 1985 - 27 December 1985, undated	12	4
Chronological 2 May 1986 - 3 June 1987	12	5
Chronological 5 January 1986 - 28 April 1986	12	6
Conferences--Chicago, Illinois 10 October 1987	12	7
Conferences--Los Angeles 20-23 April 1989	12	8

## Series IV: Society of Saint Charles-Scalabrinians

Conferences--Piacenza 3-5 Dicembre 1987	13	1
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Congregational Study 1976-1977	13	2
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Ethnic Ministry--Haitians 1983	13	3
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**Scope and Contents note**

This folders concerns the Haitian Ecumenical Action Project, which supported socioeconomic development in Thomazeau, Haiti.

Ethnic Ministry--Mexicans 1983-1985	13	4
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**Scope and Contents note**

This folder contains correspondence pertaining to the recruitment of Mexican candidates for the Scalabrinian community, their formation in Guadalajara, and the establishment of an immigrant aid center in Tijuana.

Ethnic Ministry--Philippines Jnauary 1983 - 6 June 1985, undated	13	5
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General Chapters 1979-1986	13	6
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Laicato Cattolico e il Servizio ai Migranti in Mons. Scalabrini 27 September 1987	13	7
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Provincial Assembly 1988	13	8
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**Scope and Contents note**

**Series IV: Society of Saint Charles-Scalabrinians**

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This folder contains financial data concerning the period 1986-1988, reported to the Provincial Assembly in 1988.

Provincial Superiors 1980	13	9
Publications 1981-1987, undated	13	10
Rossi, Raphael Cardinal, O.C.D. 1986	13	11

**Scope and Contents note**

Cardinal Rossi served as appointed Superior General of the Scalabrinians. In 1986, Silvano Tomasi tried to identify living Scalabrinians with personal memories of Cardinal Rossi for an historical project.

Tessarolo, Giulivo, c.s. 1983-1986	13	12
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**Scope and Contents note**

Giulivo Tessarolo, c.s. served at various times as pastor of the Scalabrinians' Holy Rosary Church in Washington, D.C., as the Superior General of the Scalabrinians, and with the Pontifical Commission on Migrants and Tourism, which put him in a good position to observe the distinct characteristics and common interests of the religious orders, Vatican offices, and U.S. government agencies involved in immigration matters.