

Holy Ghost, Providence, Rhode Island, Records CMS.021

Finding aid prepared by Olha Della Cava (attributed)

This finding aid was produced using the Archivists' Toolkit

July 03, 2020

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Center for Migration Studies
circa 1979
307 E. 60th Street
New York, New York 10022

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Summary Information

Repository	Center for Migration Studies
Creator	Holy Ghost Church (Providence, R.I.).
Title	Holy Ghost Church (Providence, R.I.) Records
Date [inclusive]	1894-1971
Extent	4.0 Linear feet in 3 boxes labelled 1, 2, 3, and 3A.
General Physical Description note	in 3 boxes.
Language	English

Language of Materials note Materials in CMS.021 are in Italian and English.

Abstract CMS.021 documents activities at Holy Ghost Church, an Italian-American Roman Catholic parish in the Federal Hill area of Providence, Rhode Island, between the church's founding, by Father Luigi Paroli, in 1889, and the parish's ninetieth anniversary in 1979. Chronologically, the bulk of the collection dates from the tenure of Father Flaminio Parenti, 1922-1964. In terms of types of material, the bulk of the collection consists of photographs from Father Parenti's personal collection, followed by ephemeral publications, clippings, both loose and arranged in scrapbooks, photocopies of documents about the parish on file elsewhere. Some documents cover the development of what became the Scalabrini Villa Skilled Nursing Home and Rehabilitation Center in North Kingston, Rhode Island, founded in 1955 by the same order of priests that founded Holy Ghost.

Preferred Citation note

Center for Migration Studies of New York; Holy Ghost Church records (CMS.021); Box; Folder.

Biographical/Historical note

Holy Ghost was founded as a mission of a community of priests so early in their development they did not yet have a name. They became known as the Society of Saint Charles-Scalabrinians, after their patron saint, Reformation-era Archbishop Charles Borromeo of Milan, and their found, John Baptist Scalabrini, Bishop of Piacenza in northwest Italy. Bishop Scalabrini was concerned about the fate of the many migrants leaving Italy in his day, and created several organizations to address the issue. He founded a community of clergy in 1887. The first members of the community arrived in the United States later that year, starting with missions in New York and Boston, and moving out as they discovered community of Italian immigrants in need of pastoral care.

In 1889, one member of the group, Father Luigi Paroli, obtained permission from Bishop Matthew Harkins of Providence to establish a parish for the growing number of Italian immigrants living in the Federal Hill area of the city. The congregation outgrew its original quarters, and in 1901 a new "basement church" was established. Attending that event was Bishop Scalabrini, who was visiting his priests' U.S. missions that summer and fall. By 1910, Holy Ghost had completed its church, purchased a rectory, and opened a day nursery and a kindergarden.

Holy Ghost's history in the mid-twentieth century is identified with its long-time pastor, Father Flaminio Parenti. A native of Piacenza, Italy, Parenti was sent to the United States in 1909 and served at parishes in New York, New Haven, and Providence before becoming pastor of Holy Ghost in 1922. By July of that year, he secured enough donations to redecorate the church interior. A parochial school followed in 1923, then a larger rectory, a convent for the nuns staffing the parochial school, and a new facade for the church. In 1955, Father Parenti led in the construction of what became the Scalabrini Villa Skilled Nursing Home and Rehabilitation Center in North Kingston, Rhode Island. These activities merited recognition by the papacy, which awarded Father Parenti a Papal Cross, and by the Italian government, which awarded him the title Cavalier of the Crown of Italy, and, later, a Star of Solidarity. Father Parenti retired from the position of pastor in 1964, to be succeeded by Father Joseph Invernizzi, but continued to live at Holy Ghost until his death in 1973.

Scope and Contents note

CMS.021 documents in multiple formats the activities of an Italian-American Roman Catholic parish from nineteenth-century migration to twentieth-century urban renewal. Souvenir booklets in Boxes 1, 3, and 3A provide overviews of the parish history. File folders in Box 2 contain three sorts of documents that are more like primary sources. About a third of the folders hold programs and other ephemera from parish events and from the founding of a nursing home associated with the parish. Another third holds newspaper clippings about the parish and its nursing home. A final third holds what must be

a small amount of the parish correspondence generated over the years, and photocopies pertinent to Holy Ghost's history from other archives. The first box documents parish events visually. It contains photograph albums and loose photographs of the clergy, parish organizations, parochial school activities, and also the 1948 consecration of Bishop Russell Joseph McVinney as Bishop of Providence. Some of the photographs document the personal life of Holy Ghost's long-serving pastor, Fathe Flaminio Parenti, with images of family, friends, vacations, and the 1947 celebration of his twenty-fifth year as pastor. The collection contains material for the history the Catholic clergy, especially those who were members of religious orders, Italian Americans, the city of Providence, Rhode Island, and the care of senior citizens.

Arrangement note

The items in CMS.021 are in three groups. Photographs are in Box 1. Box 2 contains newspaper clippings, in scrapbooks and in file folders, and published ephemera from the parish and nursing home. Photocopies of church records from elsewhere and miscellaneous parish records start in Box 2 and continue into Box 3. Souvenir booklets start in Box 3 and continue into Box 3A.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Center for Migration Studies circa 1979

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 acquired the contents of CMS.021 from Holy Ghost parish in the about 1979.

Processing Information note

The original typescript finding aid to CMS.021 is unsigned and undated. It may have been done by Olha Della Cava, the CMS librarian at the time. During her tenure as intern and consultant, Nicole Greenhouse inputted the finding aid using standards found in *Describing Archives: A Content Standard*. In 2020 Mary Brown expanded the finding aid notes and added an inventory.

Existence and Location of Originals note

Box 2, Folder 9, contains photocopies of Holy Ghost records from 1889 to 1976 compiled by Father Decimo Crevani from an unknown source. Box 3, Folder 5 contains photocopies of documents pertinent to Holy Ghost from the years 1889 to 1893 from the General Archives of the Society of Saint Charles-Scalabrinians in Rome.

Related Materials

Related Archival Materials note

Holy Ghost is a mission of the Saint Charles Province of the Society of Saint Charles-Scalabrinians. Additional material on the parish may be found in the provincial records, CMS.078, 078A, 078B, and 078C. The records in 078 and 078A are filed by name of correspondent, so there is material in the folders for correspondence from Father Luigi Paroli and Father Flaminio Parenti. The records in 078B are filed chronologically. The records in 078C are filed by subject, with folders for Holy Ghost and Scalabrini Villa Skilled Nursing Home and Rehabilitation Center.

Controlled Access Headings

Corporate Name(s)

- Scalabrinians.

Geographic Name(s)

- Providence (R.I.)

Personal Name(s)

- Parenti, Rev. Flaminio, 1922-1973

Subject(s)

- Church work with immigrants |z Catholic Church.

Collection Inventory

	Box
Green scrapbook with souvenir programs from parish and school events. 1927-1941	1
White photograph album with miscellaneous photographs of family, friends, parish activities, and Father Flaminio Parenti's twenty-fifth anniversary as pastor in 1947. 1931-1949	1
Black photograph album with photographs of Bishop Russell Joseph McVinney's episcopal consecration. 1948	1
Blue photograph album of Father Flaminio Parenti's seminary days, vacations, family, friends, and work at Holy Ghost. 1894-1931	1
Grey envelope of miscellaneous photographs. circa 1910	1
Grey envelope of group photographs of Scalabrini Fathers. no date	1
Grey envelope of Holy Ghost Church and school and blessing of the convent. 1954	1
Grey envelope of photographs of Father Parenti with clergy and lay dignitaries. 1939-1964	1
Grey envelope of photographs of school production with children in costume. no date	1
Grey envelope of photographs of various church organizations. 1923-1954	1

Grey envelope of photographs of Father Parenti. 1910, 1953		1
Green scrapbook of newspaper clippings about Holy Ghost parish. 1922-1950		2
	Box	Folder
File folder of clippings regarding Holy Ghost parish. 1923-1956	2	1
File Folder of clippings regarding Father Parenti. no date	2	2
File folder of clippings regarding opening of nursing home. 1955	2	3
File folder of blueprints, building specifications, insurance information, and financial records for nuring home. 1957-1967	2	4
		Box
Red souvenir book marking Father Flaminio Parenti's twenty-fifth anniversary as pastor. 1947		2
Green souvenir book marking Father Flaminio Parenti's fiftieth anniversary of ordination to the priesthood. 1958		2
	Box	Folder
File folder of programs from tributes to Father Flaminino Parenti. 1933-1971	2	5
File folder of printed informatoin of the Pious Society of the Missionaries of St. Charles, as the Society of Saint Charles-Scalabrinians was called until 1973. 1967	2	6

File folder with manuscripts of a play based on religious themes and a compendium of feasts celebrated in honor of the Virgin Mary and saints. no date	2	7
File folder of miscellaneous real estate documents.	2	8
File folder of photocopies of official record sof Holy Ghost Church compiled by Father Decimo Crevani. 1889-1976	2	9
File folder of newspaper clippings, donor lists, and announcements concerning a fundraising campaign. 1927	2	10
File folder of parish and parochial school histories, with a charter of accountability. 1973	3	1
File folder of annual financial statements. 1920-1960	3	2
File folder of miscellaneous financial records including lists of donors and monthly reports of contributions to Bishop's Campaign. 1940-1965	3	3
File folder of miscellaneous correspondence, originals and photocopies. 1899-1943	3	4
Photocopies of documentation pertaining to Holy Ghost parish located in Rome at the General Archives of the Society of Saint Charles-Scalabrinians. 1889-1893	3	5
File folder with corporate papers for Holy Ghost parish, minutes, resolutions, etc. 1890-1920, 1955-1960	3	6

	Box
Souvenir booklets of annual reunions. no date	3
Souvenir booklet of Holy Ghost's fiftieth anniversary 1939	3
Souvenir booklet of Holy Ghost's parochial school's fiftieth anniversary. 1973	3
Souvenir booklet of Holy Ghost's seventy-fifth anniversary. 1966	3
Souvenir booklet of Holy Ghost's ninetieth anniversary. 1979	3A
File folder on interior modernization including tenth annual donation list, clippings, and committee worksheets. 1944	3A