

Church of the Sacred Heart, Boston, Massachusetts

CMS.062

Church of the Sacred Heart

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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 the Sacred Heart, Boston, Massachusetts
Date [bulk]	Bulk, 1960-1970
Date [inclusive]	1899-1970
Extent	2.0 Linear feet 3 documents boxes and 1 bankers box
Location note	Since 2012, CMS.062 has been housed at the Provincial House of the Saint Charles Province of the Society of Saint Charles--Scalabrinians, 27 Carmine Street, New York, New York 10014.
Language	English
Language of Materials note	CMS.062 is mostly in English, with some Italian.
Abstract	CMS.062 documents activities in the Italian-American Roman Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart in the North End of Boston, Massachusetts, between the time the local community came together to organize the parish in 1889 to the 1970s. Documents include clippings, ephemeral publications, financial papers, meeting minutes for the society that organized to found the parish, and organizational records of parish societies.

Preferred Citation note

Center for Migration Studies of New York; Church of the Sacred Heart (CMS 062); Box; Folder.

Scope and Contents note

CMS.062 documents the history of Sacred Heart Church, which served an Italian-American community in Boston's North End. One unusual feature of the collection is the degree to which it documents the origins of the church. Officially, local ordinaries create the parishes in their sees. Historically, local ordinaries create parishes in response to some signs of a developing Catholic community in a particular location. In the North End, community leadership was formalized into an organization called the San Marco Society, which had adopted a particular vision: a church that belonged to the community and not to the Archdiocese of Boston, something neither canon law nor the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts permitted.

One step in regularizing the status of Sacred Heart parish was that both the San Marco Society and the Archdiocese of Boston accepted the ministry of an order of priests founded in 1887, just about the time the Boston Italian community was also coalescing. The order had been founded by Blessed John Baptist Scalabrini for the purpose of ministering to migrants. Scalabrini placed the order under the patronage of Saint Charles Borromeo; it has become known as the Society of Saint Charles-Scalabrinians. Priests from this order staffed Sacred Heart during its entire history.

Sacred Heart's archives in the period after the founding of the parish consist of announcements, clippings, financial records and ephemeral publications. There is another well-documented aspect of the parish's history in the 1950s and 1960s. In the years after World War II, Congress passed several laws that admitted Italian immigrants over and above the small quota allotted Italy in the immigration laws of the time, and in 1965 Congress revised the laws to eliminate that small quota and re-open long closed Italian migration. Migrants who settled in the Boston area and gravitated to Sacred Heart organized their own society within it, taking the name Catholic Action (Azione Cattolica) after the name of an Italian organization dedicated to bringing the values of the Church to bear on the world. At Sacred Heart, Azione Cattolica functioned more as a way for recent Italian immigrants to find people most like themselves, and to acclimatize themselves to their new community at their own pace. As the organization was dedicated to maintaining a Catholic presence in the world, it encouraged its members to participate in the parish life, thus adding to activities at Sacred Heart. The organization was cresting about the time the clergy at Sacred Heart, following a directive from the Scalabrinians' provincial leadership, collected documentation at the parish and forwarded to the province headquarters, which turned it over to the Center for Migration Studies.

Arrangement note

This collection is arranged into seven series:

Series I: Parish Announcements Books

Series II: Financial Records
Series III: Commemorative Journals
Series IV: Newspaper Clippings
Series V: Miscellaneous Documents
Series VI: Records of the Society of San Marco
Series VII: Records of the Azione Cattolica Italiana Di Boston

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Center for Migration Studies

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

Society of St Charles-Scalabrinians Provincial Office 27 Carmine Street New York, New York 10014

Processing Information note

In 2015, 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.

Controlled Access Headings

Corporate Name(s)

- Church of the Sacred Heart (Parish: Boston, Massachusetts). -- Archives

Function(s)

- Azione cattolica (Italy)
- Italian Catholic Action

Subject(s)

- Church records and registers|z Boston |z Massachusetts
- Church work with immigrants |z Catholic Church.
- Italian Americans |x Religion.

Other Finding Aids note

The original inventory is available in print upon request.

Series I: Parish Announcements Books

Collection Inventory

Series I: Parish Announcements Books 1913-1920**Scope and Contents note**

There are two volumes in this series, one covering the period of December, 1913 to April 29, 1917; the other being for May 6, 1917 to November 21, 1920. For the most part, these volumes list the masses to be offered for the week, baptisms to be performed, and occasional items of interest to the parish (these items are written in Italian).

Series II: Financial Records 1922-1937**Scope and Contents note**

This series is very fragmentary and consist only of one account book covering the period of January 1922 to December 1929. Receipts and expenditures are listed in Italian. Only half of the volume has been utilized, and there is one page at the back of the volume listing in February 5, 1937 entry.

Series III: Commemorative Journals 1912-1976**Scope and Contents note**

These journals were published by the church on special occasions such as parish reunions and anniversaries when dinner dances and social gatherings were held. They consist essentially of greetings and advertisements from parishioners, friends and local merchants. Th journals range from 1912 to 1976. The earliest two journals were sponsored by the Yound Ladies Sodality of the church. More specifically, journals for the following years are found between 1912-1976.

Series IV: Newspaper Clippings

Series IV: Newspaper Clippings 1910-1923, 1970-1977**Scope and Contents note**

This file contains 30-40 newspaper clippings or tearsheets dated for the most part, between 1910-1923 and a very few 1970-1977. Most if the earlier clippings concern concerts performed by groups under the direction of Miss Rose Casazza, an early parishioner and organist of the church.

Series V: Miscellaneous Documents 1904-1970**Scope and Contents note**

These items which number about 50 in quantity can be roughly divided into the categories of publications; notes of work sheets; and souvenir prayer cards; play-bills, photographs and similar. They are dated ca. 1904-to 1970, especially the earlier years. The publication include items such as a 1904 report on Scuola Italiana of Boston, a 1944 English/Italian prayer book named "My Good Friend", and a history titled Venticinque Anni di Missione Fra Gli Italiani Immigrati Di Boston, Massachusetts, published in 1913 Milan, Italy. Among the playbills and the other items are playbills for performance of events sponsored by the church in 1915 and 1917; a 1925 prayer card concernining the death of a lay-brother, Vincent Arcelli; a 1970 report titled the Population Movement in the North End in 1969; and a 1970 letter between Fr. Domenico Rodigihiero of the church and Fr. Silvano Tomasi of the Center for Migration Studies in Staten Island.

Series VI: Records of the Society of San Marco 1886-1936**Scope and Contents note**

The Society of San Marco was officially known as the Societa' Cattolica di San Marco, the organization was found around 1884, and is credited with purchasing an unused Protestant church where visiting Catholic priests could hold services for the growing Italian population of Boston's North End. The structure they purchased at 86 Beverly Street served as the first Sacred Heart Church when the Scalabrini

Series VII: Records of the Azione Cattolica Italiana Di Boston

Fathers arrived to officially established the parish in 1888. Composed of many of the leading citizens of the area, the society was very closely allied with the Scalabrini Fathers and endeavored to aid them in whatever way they could, and played a prominent part in opening the Scuola Italiana San Carlo Borromeo, a parochial school and meeting hall for the youth of the area, this occurring at the turn of the century.

The records of the San Marco Society are very fragmentary consisting of only some 60 items including two volumes containing the minutes for meetings held by the society from 1899 to 1941. More specifically, one volume covers the period from November 15, 1899 to November 2, 1914, while the other commences with January 4, 1915 and terminates with January 6, 1941.

Also included in the records is a small dues book issued to a member where dues could be recorded for the period 1908-1923. The volume also contains the Society's Constitution. Also among these records are about 50 miscellaneous bills for the period 1934-1936 submitted to the society for various services. This small grouping includes several listings of the dues paid by members at various meetings (Seduta).

Finally, the records also contain photocopies of about seven communications between the Vatican and Archbishop Williams of Boston concerning the Society. These communications are dated 1886-1890 and some are more than one page in length. The photocopies were made December 1977, most likely by Fr. Silvano Tomasi, at that time director of the Center for Migration Studies.

Series VII: Records of the Azione Cattolica Italiana Di Boston 1950-1970**Scope and Contents note**

The organization Azione Cattolica Italiana (A.C.I.) was founded in Boston in 1958 as a religious, social and cultural society for the Italian speaking individuals of the Boston area, especially younger individuals. The organization operated out of Sacred Heart Church, which had Scalabrini chaplains, and was similar in scope to other Italian Catholic action groups founded in many other Scalabrini parishes and Catholic parishes. Included, is a variety of materials such as photographs, minutes, newsletters and announcements and notices, all in varying degrees of completeness, virtually all are written in Italian.

Box**Folder**

Series VII: Records of the Azione Cattolica Italiana Di Boston

Statutes and Regulations 1971	4	1
Minute Books and Related Books of Memoranda Directories or Notes 1958-1975	4	2
Financial Statements 1968, 1969 and 1970	4	3
Notices of Events 1967-1972	4	4
Incontro 1971-1974	4	5
Newspaper Clippings 1968-1972	4	6
Photographs	4	7
Tenth Anniversary Celebration 1968	4	7
Pro Sicily Fund 1968	4	9
La Vetta 1960-1962, 1964	4	10
Miscellaneous Documents 1956-1973	4	11